

PRESS RELEASE

"Liang Shuo: The Power of the Public Realm, Phase V: Sculpture Toys/Temple Fair"

2004.2.20 - 3.21

Long March Space, Beijing

As the fifth phase of the Power of the Public Realm, the famous sculptor Liang Shuo emerges at the Long March Space under the guise of a folk artist. His work 'Peng, Peng, Peng' uses the visual language of folk art's painted sculpture. Its coloring is bright, its skill is interesting and its source materials stem from the collected unconscious consumer imagery of daily life. The work is both a sculpture and a toy and is modeled after the slowly vanishing folk toy called 'yaojiao'. By using the folk art tradition, the artist allows it to continue to exist. This new piece does not have the sense of mission we are used to see in Liang Shuo's previous works. Trying his utmost to present the surface of material life, it seemed new and exciting and at the same time pointed out real life's ever-present dramatics and absurdity.

The aesthetic, critique, and anti-satire of Liang Shuo's work are more direct and subjective compared to the other 'real' folk artists at the Long March Space. The origin of his transformation from artist to folk artist is quite simple: "It's not possible that works always sell so expensively and rarely; if you make them a bit more fun they will sell better and also more people will like them." This essentially corresponds with the question put forth by the Long March Space's 'The Power of the Public Realm,' - What is an artist's status and what is the relationship between art works and social life?

By presenting his work on-site, the artist experiences the audience's enjoyment. Concurrently, it reverts him to the status of a folk handicraft artist. The process of the performance includes the following: the audience can play with the toys, see the manufacturing process, chat with the artist, and they can also purchase the toys. As a toy the price is reasonable and as an art piece it can be said to be the same.

Address: 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Rd, Chaoyang District, Beijing

Mailing: Long March Space. Mailbox 8530, Beijing. P.R. China 100015

地址：北京市朝阳区酒仙桥路4号798艺术区 | 邮址：北京市8503信箱长征空间 邮编 100015

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This phase of "The Power of the Public Realm" reveals that the popular is not only the popular, that the outstanding is not always outstanding, and that they are combined by rich creativity. Although the expression 'Power of the Public Realm' has had a certain development in its half year/five phase process, it is still worthwhile for the Long March to continue thinking about and investigating it.

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