

Richard Saltoun Gallery at Taipei Dangdai, 17-19 January 2020

Stand E23

Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center

Li Yuan-Chia

We are proud to have been the first commercial gallery to rediscover and promote the importance of Li Yuan-Chia, now recognised as one of Taiwan's first abstract and conceptual artists. His greatest period was between 1958 – 1965 when he lived in Taipei, Taiwan and later Bologna, Italy. Richard Saltoun Gallery manages Li's studio that he left in Bologna before moving to London in 1965.

In 2014 Li Yuan-Chia had a retrospective at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum and in 2015 Richard Saltoun Gallery presented the work of Li Yuan-Chia for the first time at Frieze Masters, London (concurrent with a solo exhibition of his work at our gallery in London). This was acclaimed by both art experts and important Chinese and European collectors, many of whom were seeing Li's work for the first time. This was the first time Li's work entered the market.

During the past four years Li's work has been acquired by major museums in Europe and North America. Additionally, the gallery works with some of the most auction houses in the world, providing advice on authenticity and provenance. Due to the promotion of Li Yuan-Chia by Richard Saltoun Gallery, prices have risen by over 10 times in the past 5 years and Li is still considered, by many art experts, to be undervalued.

We are very pleased to bring important works by Li Yuan-Chia to his homeland in Taipei: works which have not been offered for sale since their making, over 50 years ago. Li Yuan-Chia was one of Taiwan's earliest pioneers of abstract and conceptual art. One of only a few Taiwanese artists to gain acclaim in the international art world, his creative scope encompassed ink painting, oil, monochromatic painting, conceptual art, photography and mixed media, including sculpture, environmental art and participatory installations. Li saw himself as a philosopher, photographer, a mathematician and a poet.

Largely regarded as China's 'first conceptual artist,' Li was born of humble beginnings in Guangxi, China. Given up for adoption at a young age, he travelled through a succession of orphanages and ended up in Taiwan. A student of art education at the Taipei Normal College for Teacher Training, Li quickly fell in with the revolutionary Ton-Fan group, where he became known as one of the '8 Great Outlaws' – the first abstract artists of Taiwan. Through his association with the group, and to escape martial law in the country, Li travelled to Bologna, then London, eventually finding his home in Cumbria in a house he purchased from the artist Winifred Nicholson in 1972. The house became the site of his life's work – the LYC Museum and Art Gallery – a place for showing innovative art by over 300 artists, exhibited alongside Roman artefacts, traditional Cumbrian crafts and Li's own experimental artwork, which included paintings, ink drawings, sculpture and photography.

Li participated twice at the São Paulo Biennale. Recent important solo shows include 'Li Yuan-chia: Unique Photographs,' The Whitworth, Manchester (2019); 'Li Yuan-chia,' Sotheby's S|2 Gallery, London (2017); Tate Modern: Display, London (2014); 'View-Point: A Retrospective Exhibition of Li-Yuan-chia,' Taipei Fine Arts Museum (2014); 'Li Yuan-Chia, tell me what is not yet said' at the Camden Arts Centre, London (2001), which subsequently travelled to Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, UK and Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.