
**Qiu Zhijie
Ni Youyu
Shang Yang
Gu Wenda
Hao Shiming**

Revolution in Tradition : China's post-ink painting era
April 1 - May 31, 2015



Press release

More than just a form of artistic expression, ink art and especially ink painting, sometimes referred to simply as “Chinese painting” (*guohua*, literally “country-painting”), is a cultural signifier that plays an important role in constructing national identity. This millennia-old ink painting language is the most representative characteristic of Chinese and Oriental art, and has been reinterpreted and extended upon throughout China’s art history. Now, in the 21st-century, contemporary artists who reference the Chinese ink tradition no longer have to conform to the basic components of ink painting—that is, working with ink, brush and paper. The genre has expanded to include new media, conceptual, performance and installation art, and continues to inspire young Chinese artists who do not even consider themselves ink artists. Still, “ink,” as a symbolic mark of China’s heritage, spirit, and culture remains firmly rooted.

Curated by independent ink painting scholar Tiffany Wai-Ying Beres, *Revolution in Tradition: China’s post-ink painting era* is a pioneering exhibition aimed at showcasing the exciting developments in Chinese art and its connection to the long tradition of ink painting. The exhibition will demonstrate how a group of important artists have, over the past decades, been highly active in developing, conceptually innovating, and even subverting the legacy of *guohua*. While some of these artists may embrace unorthodox materials and methodologies—Shang Yang (b. 1942), Gu Wenda (b.1955), Qiu Zhijie (b. 1969), Hao Shiming (b. 1977), and Ni Youyu (b. 1984)—each of these artists left his distinctive mark in the evolution of Chinese ink art by incorporating aesthetic and philosophical sensibilities of Chinese artistic traditions into a new and more international discourse.

In the past five years, contemporary *ink art* has increasingly become a favored topic for museums around the world, including the 2014 exhibition “Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the “Ink: The Art of China” at the Saatchi Gallery in 2012, the “Shanshui- Poetry Without Sound?” at the Museum of Arts in Lucerne, Switzerland in 2011, and the “Fresh Ink” show at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 2010, among others. Responding to new and exciting developments in contemporary art currently emanating from China, Galerie Nathalie Obadia will be the first gallery in France to showcase the diversity of contemporary ink art practice. Juxtaposing the work of celebrated contemporary masters with current rising talents whose work is increasingly receiving serious critical attention, *Revolution in Tradition* will provoke the viewer into a reconsideration of the conventions underlying traditional art forms, and to confront the cultural implications of those conventions.

Tiffany Wai-Ying Beres, curator of the exhibition *Revolution in Tradition: China’s post-ink painting era*

One of the most important Chinese artists of the past half-century, **Shang Yang** (b. 1942) is regarded as a visionary artist who, for over thirty years, has helped to define the revolutionary developments taking place in Chinese painting. Like most artists who grew up during the Cultural Revolution, Shang was trained in the soviet realist oil painting tradition and rose to become a prominent professor within the academy system. However, in the 1980s, as part of the influx of new ideas coming from the west and New Wave Movement of experimentation, the artist systematically “unlearned” his training. Throughout his career, Shang has systematically deconstructed and interrogated the origins of abstraction in both traditional Chinese and contemporary Euro-American artistic practices.

Shang Yang has had an immense impact on twenty first-century Chinese contemporary art and he has received many notable accolades, including the prestigious Chinese Art Awards “Lifetime Achievement Award” (2013). Due to his limited production, Shang Yang has only selectively held solo exhibitions within China, most recently at the Suzhou Museum (2013), and also the Tsinghua University’s Academy of Arts & Design Center, Beijing (2012), and the Beijing Center for the Arts (2009). However, Shang Yang has participated in numerous group shows around the world, including: France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Australia, Hungary, Belgium, Spain, America, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, and others. His works have been collected by every major museum in China. This will be Shang Yang’s first collaboration with a European Gallery.

Gu Wenda (b. 1955) is responsible for significant developments in the ink painting genre, not to mention Chinese contemporary art in general. A graduate of the Shanghai School of Arts in 1976, and later the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou where he studied ink landscape painting, Gu began radically experimenting in ink painting in the 1980s, building upon and appropriating traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy into his conceptual projects. Today, Gu is considered a pioneer for exploring the radical possibilities of the medium through series of environmental installations and large-scale semi-abstract works. Working between Shanghai and New York, Gu is concerned with themes of regionalism, national identity, universality, and the gaps between language and culture. The most famous of his projects includes the “United Nations” (begun 1993), in which Gu collected human

hair from countries around the world, and wove them into banners with text in invented languages.

Gu Wenda has had various solo and group exhibitions around the world, and at several notable public institutions. His works have been collected by the Ashmolean Museum, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the British Museum, the China National Museum of Art, China, the Fukuoda Art Museum, the Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Art, the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York, Princeton University, New Jersey, the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), San Francisco, the Shanghai Museum of Art, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Most recently, Gu was awarded the Prudential Eye Lifetime Achievement Award (2015).

Acclaimed artist, curator, critic, **Qiu Zhijie** (b. 1969) was born in Fujian Province and studied printmaking at the China Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou from which he graduated in 1992, and where he is now a professor in the Department of Inter-Media Art. Since the 1990s he has become one of the most active conceptual artists in China, as well as one of the most diverse--he works in a variety of artistic media including, video, ink, photography, installation, and performance art. Many of his most famous works translate traditional techniques into conceptual forms, particularly with regards to his use of ink art and written Chinese calligraphy.

In addition to numerous international group and solo projects, Qiu Zhijie has had solo exhibitions at public institutions such as the China Academy of Art Museum, Hangzhou (2015), the Nanjing Art Academy Museum (2014), the Foundation Querini Stampalia, Venice (2013), the Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (2010); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2010), the Ullens Contemporary Arts Centre, Beijing (2009), the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (2008); and the Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai (2008). He exhibited at Museo Diocesano d'arte sacra during the Venice Biennale in 2013 and was curator of the 2012 Shanghai Biennale.

Hao Shiming (b. 1977) is a graduate from Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts and is a standout among his contemporaries for the way he has come to work both with and against the ink painting tradition. In most of his work, Hao constructs or deconstructs his subjects using double-lined painted threads. At once a commentary on lines, the fundamental element of all brush painting, as well as tradition and identity, in his paintings each thread is inextricably linked to the others, even when broken and falling apart. Exploring the dualities of modern Chinese life, in Hao's paintings it is as if the forces of nature have stopped, and all that is left of a subject is its idea, an idea that seeks the freedom to experience life unencumbered by the social, cultural and historical expectations and yet is too entangled to separate from the background on which it was painted.

Given the time-consuming nature of his artwork, Hao has a limited output of approximately twenty works a year. Hao Shiming has had solo exhibitions in Wuhan, and Shanghai, as well as a solo exhibition project at Art Basel Hong Kong 2014. He has exhibited extensively throughout China, and participated in group shows in the United States as well as Belgium.

Ni Youyu (b. 1984) was born in Jiangxi province, and studied ink painting at the Fine Art College of Shanghai University. The recipient of the 2014 Chinese Contemporary Art Award's (CCAA) "Best Young Artist of the Year" award, Ni works in an unrestricted variety of artistic media, and typically frames his work by a conceptual intention to reference and expand upon Chinese aesthetic traditions. With great freedom, Ni mixes traditional and modern, Eastern and Western artistic concepts, to provoke the viewer into a reconsideration of the conventions underlying traditional art forms, and to confront the cultural implications of those conventions.

Ni Youyu has had solo exhibitions at the Nanjing University of Arts Museum (2014), the Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2013), the Museum Project Space affiliated with the German Consulate in Shanghai, and he was the youngest artist to have a solo show at the Shanghai Art Museum in 2012. To date, Ni has participated in group exhibitions in New York, Singapore, Germany, Taiwan, Switzerland, and Korea.

About the Curator

Tiffany Wai-Ying Beres 庞惠英 is an American curator who was classically trained in Asian art history and antiquities. Born in San Francisco to a bi-racial family, Ms. Beres grew up practicing ink painting and calligraphy, stimulating her interest in Chinese art. A Brown University graduate and Fulbright Scholar, she has lived and worked in China for over eight years, curating exhibitions in China, Hong Kong, the United States, Singapore and France. Previously, Ms. Beres served as the International Affairs Officer and a Chinese ink painting specialist for China Guardian, Mainland China's first auction house. Fully fluent in Mandarin, Ms. Beres' is a frequent lecturer on Chinese art history and her writing on Asian contemporary art has been published in *Orientations*, *The Asian Art Newspaper*, *ArtAsiaPacific*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, among others.

-> **French version**
-> **English version**

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

PARIS - BRUXELLES

REVOLUTION IN TRADITION:

China's Post-Ink Painting Era

1er Avril - 30 Mai

Bourg-Tibourg



Hao Shiming

The Classics 201401, 2014
Encre sur soie
176 × 55 cm (69 1/4 × 21 5/8 in.)



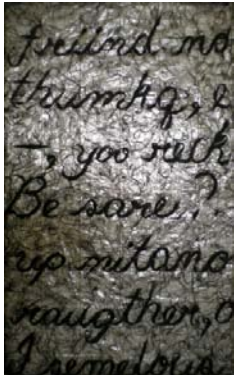
Hao Shiming

The Classics 201402, 2014
Encre sur soie
176 × 55 cm (69 1/4 × 21 5/8 in.)



Hao Shiming

The Classics 201403, 2014
Encre sur soie
176 × 55 cm (69 1/4 × 21 5/8 in.)



Gu Wenda

Metamorphosis English Series #2, 1995-2005
Cheveux humains, colle, corde
197 × 122 cm (77 1/2 × 48 in.)



Gu Wenda

Metamorphosis Hindi Series #2, 1995-2005
Cheveux humains, colle, corde
197 × 122 cm (77 1/2 × 48 in.)



Gu Wenda

Metamorphosis Arabic Series #2, 1995-2005
Cheveux humains, colle, corde
197 × 122 cm (77 1/2 × 48 in.)



Gu Wenda

Metamorphosis A Series #1, 1995-2005
Cheveux humains anglais, arabes, indien synthétiques, colle, corde
197 × 122 cm (77 1/2 × 48 in.)



Gu Wenda

Metamorphosis A Series #3, 1995-2005
Cheveux humains anglais, arabes, indien synthétiques, colle, corde
197 × 122 cm (77 1/2 × 48 in.)



Gu Wenda

Metamorphosis A Series #5, 1995-2005
Cheveux humains anglais, arabes, indien synthétiques, colle, corde
197 × 122 cm (77 1/2 × 48 in.)



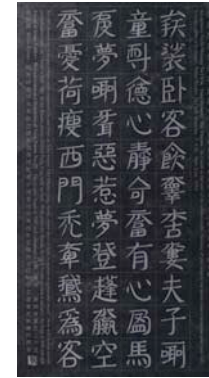
Gu Wenda

Metamorphosis A Series #6,
1995-2005
Cheveux humains anglais,
arabes, indien synthétiques,
colle, corde
197 × 122 cm (77 1/2 × 48 in.)



Gu Wenda

Metamorphosis Chinese Series
#3, 1995-2005
Cheveux humains, colle, corde
197 × 122 cm (77 1/2 × 48 in.)



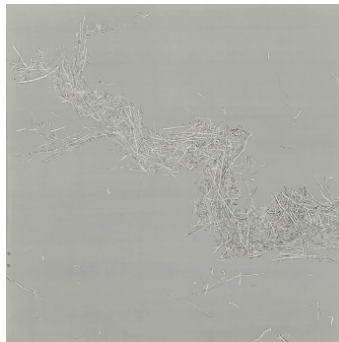
Gu Wenda

Retranslation & Rewriting of Tang
Poetry #25 - From the Forest of
Stone Steles Series, 1993-2005
Encre sur papier de riz
avec bordure de soie
176,5 × 96 cm (69 1/2 × 37 3/4 in.)
Edition de 25, ed 25/25



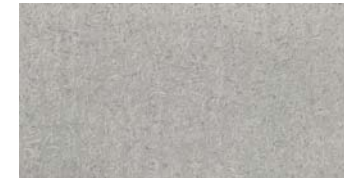
Gu Wenda

Gu's Phrase Stone Steles #6
Yi Shu Ai Lian,
Encre sur papier de riz
176,5 × 96 cm (69 1/2 × 37 3/4 in.)
Edition de 50, ed 47/50



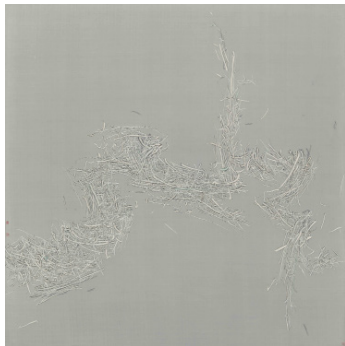
Hao Shiming

Vegetation 201502, 2015
Encre sur soie
136 × 136 cm (53 1/2 × 53 1/2 in.)



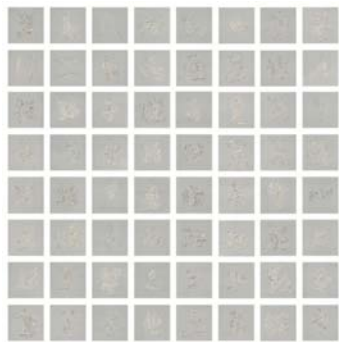
Hao Shiming

The Thousand Character
Classic 02, 2014
Encre sur soie
136 × 260 cm (53 1/2 × 102 3/8 in.)



Hao Shiming

Vegetation 201501, 2015
Encre sur soie
136 × 136 cm (53 1/2 × 53 1/2 in.)



Hao Shiming

The Thousand Character Classic,
2014
Encre sur soie
64 pièces de 28 × 28 cm
259 × 259 cm (102 × 102 in.)



Gu Wenda

Mythos of Lost Dynasties i
Series #14, 2005
Encre sur papier de riz avec
bordure de soie
91,4 × 183 cm (36 × 72 in.)

L'EXPOSITION CONTINUE À LA GALERIE DU CLOÎTRE SAINT-MERRI
THE EXHIBITION CONTINUES AT THE CLOÎTRE SAINT-MERRI GALLERY