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BLANK CHEQUE

AYE GALLERY IN BERLIN

11 March – 22 April 2017

	<p>BLANK CHEQUE</p> <p>AYE GALLERY, BEIJING IN BERLIN CHEN WENJI, CHEN YUFAN, JI DACHUN, LI DAZHI, LUO MINGJUN, SHI XINJI & WANG YABIN</p> <p>11. MÄRZ – 22. APRIL 2017 ERÖFFNUNG: SAMSTAG, 11. MÄRZ, 16 – 19 UHR</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY FINE ARTS AM KUPFERGRABEN 10 10117 BERLIN – MITTE TELEFON + 49 - 30 - 288 78 70 GALLERY@CFA-BERLIN.DE WWW.CFA-BERLIN.COM</p>  <p>aye gallery</p> <p><small>CHEN WENJI „OPPOSITE/PAGES“, 2016</small></p>
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Contemporary Fine Arts is pleased to announce the exhibition “**BLANK CHEQUE**” in cooperation with **AYE Gallery** in Beijing. The show will present works by the Chinese artists Chen Wenji, Chen Yufan, Ji Dachun, Li Dazhi, Luo Mingjun, Shi Xinji, and Wang Yabin.

Upon first meeting AYE’s Yan Qing and Yan Bin in 2012, CFA’s Nicole Hackert and Bruno Brunnet were struck by their curiosity and enthusiasm for the new and their extensive knowledge of art from all over the world. This prompted a fruitful dialogue, and a partnership between our galleries then took shape.

On the occasion of the Georg Baselitz exhibition, “Sigmund,” at AYE Gallery last fall, Nicole and Bruno travelled to Beijing and had the opportunity to visit the studios of some of AYE’s artists, getting to know them and their work personally. Impressed by the variety and quality of the work, and wanting to introduce the artists to Western audiences, they asked AYE’s Yan Qing if she would curate an exhibition at CFA.

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The exhibition's title refers to the curatorial approach taken. A blank cheque, by definition, is signed, but has no designated amount, intended instead to be filled in by the recipient and thus a gesture of complete trust. For this introduction of Chinese art in Berlin, it was important that Yan Qing have total curatorial freedom to select the artists and works she thought best fit.

Indeed, her selection represents not only the great technical and thematic breadth of AYE's program and the Chinese scene, but also aligns with our preferences. Vibrant, fantastical landscapes hang alongside minimal canvases, abstractions juxtapose monochromatic photorealism. The diversity of the work lends many pleasant surprises and makes for an engaging exhibition that is anything but predictable.

Shi Xinji and Wang Yabin both take landscape as their main focus and both draw from Chinese sources and culture for inspiration. The compilation of classic Chinese myths, *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, had a particularly significant influence on Shi Xinji, evidenced in his bright, imaginary depictions of the natural world. Wang Yabin's paintings are similarly colorful, but often more muted and moodier, conspicuously hinting at his interest in and knowledge of the history of Chinese landscape painting.

Chen Yufan and Chen Wenji both work in a minimalist style that is not foreign to Western viewers, though their work remains distinctly Chinese. Chen Wenji's oeuvre has evolved tremendously, but has always dealt with his surroundings, landscape, and philosophy. Chen Yufan developed a unique hole-punching technique using a soldering iron pressed into thick acrylic paint on canvas in works that address relationships between ethnic groups, immigration status, and cultural conflicts among various regions.

Despite calling Switzerland home for the past 30 years, Luo Mingjun's paintings remain intimately tied both technically and thematically to a Chinese lineage. After working extensively in China ink, Luo Mingjun returned to oil on canvas with a distinct monochromatic approach. The resulting sepia tone gives her often autobiographical photorealistic paintings an intimate quality.

In a similarly monochromatic technique, Li Dazhi paints objects from his immediate surroundings. His representations of the everyday, of objects often overlooked, become contemplative icons of mundaneness. The explicit humor of his minimal sculpture, meanwhile, lightens the melancholy of his paintings.

Ji Dachun's work negotiates a visual tension between the East and West, often with wit and irony. His subject matter frequently comes from Western art history or culture (*Bacchus*, for example), but his approach deviates from Western historical predecessors, giving new life to familiar motifs.

All of the artists have exhibited widely in China, and many have exhibited throughout Europe and North America. For some, however, BLANK CHEQUE marks their first exhibition in Berlin and we are thrilled to present their work to our audiences.