

Press Release

Afterimage: *Dangdai Yishu*

aaajiao | Li Binyuan | Lin Tianmiao | Ma Qiusha | Wang Youshen | Xiang Jing | Shen Xin | Yu Hong | Zhao Zhao
Curated by Victor Wang

3 July – 7 September 2019

67 Lisson Street & 27 Bell Street, London

Opening: 2 July, 6 – 8pm

Lisson Gallery's summer exhibitions continue the gallery's long-running commitment to presenting new art and new approaches to art as defined by guest curators. This year, curator Victor Wang offers a fresh interpretation and alternate trajectory for the development and genealogy of *dangdai yishu* (the Chinese phrase for 'contemporary art') as an open and discursive term, rather than a temporal or geographical definition. Taking a critical distance from established movements and narratives, 'Afterimage: *Dangdai Yishu*' brings together work by several generations of artists born between 1960 and 1990. It includes seminal figures Wang Youshen, Yu Hong, Lin Tianmao and Xiang Jing, as well as a younger group of practitioners – Shen Xin, aaajiao, Li Binyuan, Ma Qiusha and Zhao Zhao, some of whom have not shown in the UK.

Employing a framework of critical research rather than prior validation and repositioning both Chinese and Euro-American assumptions, 'Afterimage: *Dangdai Yishu*' attempts an overdue appreciation of the impact and lineage of what Wang calls the 'post-figurative condition' or *hou juxiang zhuangtai*, set in motion by China's '85 New Wave movement, and now reflected in the current artistic scene in China. Although denied a prolonged dialogue with 20th century Modernism, the threads and development of video (*yingxiang yishu*), installation (*zhuangzhi yishu*) and performance art (*xingwei yishu*) in Chinese contemporary art are more entangled and rich than would be suggested were they mere by-products of Western art-historical concepts or of the artistic and political upheaval following the Cultural Revolution.

Many important local concepts and artists emerged from an era of experimentation during the 1980s, including Yu Hong, a painter who began her annual ritualised acts of self-portraiture, entitled *Witness to Growth*, in 1999, in which she depicts herself or a personal event, in tandem with a contemporaneous newspaper story or magazine article from the same year. Wang Youshen was also active in the early 1990s, making similarly timely political statements including an audacious pasting of newspaper pages across an entire section of China's Great Wall – an act of cultural commentary, or perhaps restoration, which he will be recreating across various walls of the Lisson Gallery.

A younger generation born after those tumultuous years and working within a global context will also be represented in the show, from aaajiao, whose DIY wall-coverings are infested with 404 messages from blocked websites from the continuing era of internet censorship within the so-called 'great firewalls' of .cn, to the nuanced video portraits depicting the diversity of ethnic groups found in the contested region of Xinjiang, an inspection of nationhood and alienation by Zhao Zhao.

Instead of simply defining Chinese art by geography or dividing it into pre-modern and post-modern, Wang proposes a lineage in which decades of figurative art and teaching have resulted in the conditions necessary for the current period of post-figuration, through interdisciplinary practices with pluralistic outputs. In relation to Chicago-based Professor Wu Hung's theories of a globalised and 'deterritorialised' Chinese art landscape – partly expounded in his book *Making History* of 2008 – Wang posits a 'transcategorical' tendency linking the profusion of media, identities and nationalities within his grouping of *dangdai yishu*, as he explains in this extract from his curatorial statement:

"Following the radical transformations set in motion by China's '85 New Wave movement in the 1980s, and the subsequent post-reform policies, the early 1990s and the early 2000s saw several radical developments in the visual arts. Among them was the broad exploration of artistic techniques that

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readdressed or countered the standardized forms of art education in the region, centred on teaching technical skills from the academies. There was also an acceptance of the concept that all materials, not just the traditional ones used in painting, calligraphy, writing and sculpture, could be used to make a work of art, as well as an increased access to video-making technologies and the rise of artistic movements, temporary exhibitions and socially based and ‘idea’-based art forms that embodied questions of identity, class, gender and larger socio-political relations.”

About the curator

Victor Wang is an independent curator and exhibition-maker based in London and Shanghai. He is Associate Curator at Performa, New York, editor of the recent publication ‘Performance Histories from East Asia 1960s–90s’ (DRAF 2018), and a Visiting Lecturer at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing. Wang has curated ‘Richard Tuttle: Introduction To Practice’ (2019), at MWOODS Beijing, and is co-curator of the forthcoming ‘Micro-Era. Time-based Media-Art from China’ (2019), at the Nationalgalerie Berlin – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, as well as presenting the first museum and gallery solo exhibitions in China of British artist Haroon Mirza (2019) at the Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing; Michael Dean (2018) at ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai; Estonian artist Katja Novitskova (2017) at Cc Foundation & Art Centre, Shanghai; Brazilian artist Jac Leirner (2016), at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Pavilion, Shanghai, and French-Algerian artist Neïl Beloufa (2016), at the chi K11 art museum, Shanghai. Wang also curated the first presentation in the United Kingdom of Shanghai-based artist Xu Zhen’s ‘XUZHEN Supermarket’ (2007/2017), and the group exhibition ‘Zhongguo 2185’ at Sadie Coles HQ, London; he also curated the first performances in the United Kingdom of influential Korean artists Kim Ku Lim at the David Roberts Art Foundation (2018) and Lee Kun-Yong at the Korean Cultural Centre UK (2017) London.

About the artists

aaajiao (b.1984 in Shaanxi, China) | **Li Binyuan** (b. 1985 in Yongzhou, China) | **Lin Tianmiao** (b.1961 in Taiyuan, China) | **Ma Qiusha** (b. 1982 in Beijing, China) | **Shen Xin** (b.1990 in Chengdu, China) | **Xiang Jing** (b.1968 in Beijing, China) | **Wang Youshen** (b.1964 in Beijing, China) | **Yu Hong** (b.1966 in Xi'an, China) | **Zhao Zhao** (b.1982 in Xinjiang, China)

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and develops 60 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York as well as its new space in Shanghai. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt and Richard Long among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as other artists of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith, Susan Hiller and Roy Colmer.

In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, John Akomfrah, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes and Wael Shawky.

Opening Hours

Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

For press enquiries, please contact

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