

L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht presents:

Liu Ding “Traces of Sperm”

May 9 to July 12, 2008

You and your friends are cordially invited to the opening on Friday, May 9, from 7 p.m.

The artist will be present.

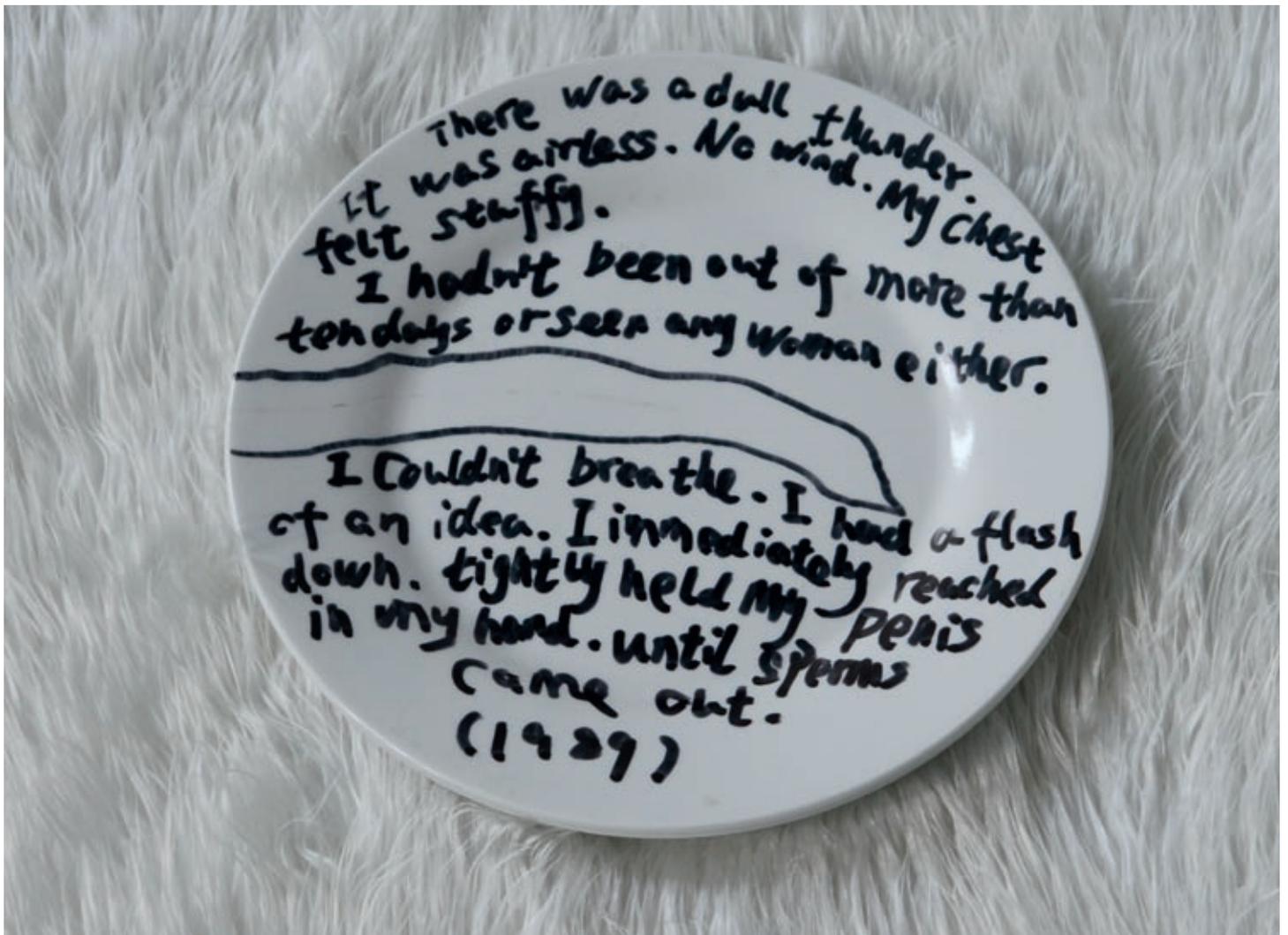
This exhibition will present a recent installation work by Liu Ding. The artwork is constructed from oil paintings, furniture and utensils from daily life, and Liu Ding has made breakthroughs in his familiar creative form to complete this special work. The installation site is arranged as a scene from daily life, with furniture and utensils in their normal places. When the audience walks in, they immediately notice two giant paintings hanging on the wall: one is of a giant erect penis, and the other is completely filled by the face of a woman covered in semen. The two paintings are extremely rational in the arrangement of the details and overall expression and wholly without any artificial trappings, intentionally maintaining a distance from the viewer to avoid any psychological reactions. Looking back at the furniture and everyday objects, the style of the reclining chair, table and shelf appear simple and even lazy, without any symbolic traits, and the bright sheen on the surface gives the whole scene an air of magnificence with a touch of the abnormal. The audience must be driven by this visual strike to move closer to these objects. Each object bears an inscription, as if the audience is in a museum antique exhibition paying homage to the remnants of history. Each inscription is different, handwritten by the artist in the first person, revolving around the theme of “sex”, and organized chronologically.

Liu Ding hopes to explore new creative potential through this work, and this is the reason that he added the text compo-

nent. Meanwhile he asks the audience to behave as if they were in a museum, moving their feet, stopping to read and eventually entering into the special situation that the artist has set up. This is an experiential artwork, and strictly speaking, it has already surpassed the category of installation. In the unhealthy context of artists constantly making installations “bigger” and more “absolute”, Liu Dong asks in response, what kind of artwork can move us and make us think? Furthermore, is the force of the visual form still enough to carry our desire for expression? The crux of this question lies in the massive tension between art history and artistic creation; have concepts hollowed us out, or have we hollowed out concepts? A powerful conceptual work will create a passage between personal spiritual history (whether or not the artist disappears in the end, or the audience has cultural and psychological differences) and social history (whether it is historical, cultural, religious or political), and its specific creative form should serve this purpose.

The addition of text has added to the work’s historical orientation. Text in itself is timely. Every text talks about historical people and people history, and the spiritual qualities of the text are manifested through this. The textual and other visual forms come together to make the work more complex, establishing a three dimensional structure of the internal and external aspects of the work and enriching the work’s potential. We actually saw a sprout of this in Liu Ding’s last important





Exhibition detail

work, Tiger (2007), where the experience of reading Jorge Luis Borges served as the prehistory for the artwork. What's important, beyond the function that casting off text and reading has had for Liu Ding's generation of artists, is that the mutual use and functions of various art forms casts doubt on the legitimacy of each form, and reminds the artist and the audience about the resources that were ignored in the act of focusing, catalyzing a wholly new vitality within each form.

"Sexual desire" is the medium of expression for this work. As one of the most symbolic, iconic and subversive concepts in the modern and contemporary context, "sex" has already become the most representative of social texts, the best habitat for all manner of discourse. People are continually exploring the deep psychological and social structure of "sex", searching for associations of "sex" within all kinds of layers, from instinct to power, speech, structure and culture. The "sex" (desire) in Liu Ding's work serves as a starting point. Here, "sex" (desire) does not exist physically; it is not the repressed or the tamed or the opposite of virtue. Here the artist treats it as an intuitive spiritual phenomenon, an

instinctual spiritual desire. This kind of "sexual desire" is no different in essence from "the pear blossoms have bloomed, time for a spring rain" (written on the furniture), and it is not controlled by our so called "subjective" consciousness or intellect, so it is spiritual in a different sense. At the same time, it has not lost its material nature, which has been preserved retrospectively through text. While it has turned "sex" into a historical testament, Liu Ding focuses more on the symbolic function of "sex" (desire) and the spiritual drives it emits.

"Sex" also directly references the body. The body is full of desire, ability and will, or in other words, it is desire, ability and will. Foucault says that we've always believed the body to be under the power of physiological processes, with no history of which to speak, but this is wrong. He says that the body is in the process of change, and follows the different rhythms of work, rest and celebration, and that it can be poisoned by drugs, eating habits and moral order, and it restrains itself. In other words, the body is a location, and historical events are always unfolding upon it; the body is moving, changeable, and can be struck by all forms of historical and



Exhibition detail

cultural dialogues. It has never had a static form. Liu Ding has marked the text written on the furniture and implements with indicative times (different historical points between 1960 and 2008), but maybe there is no historical appearance on a purely objective foundation. The choice of these points in time merely point out to us that history is fluid, not progressive. The possibility of distinguishing history itself falls upon the “body”, and the audience is asked to trace the spiritual marks left by the “body”. History can only be perceived within the structural relationship between these spiritual marks and personal experience as well as memory.

Liu Ding's works often create a special set of circumstances for the audience, using various forms and techniques to add to the artwork's dramatic feel. The audience may be drawn down the wrong path, or lost within the fragmented presentation of social and individual spiritual expression. And all rules are hypothetical; the impenetrable labyrinth better represents the spiritual reality than a straight path does. Because of this, the viewer will surely be “drawn down the wrong path”, which is the only way to draw closer to the “truth”.

Liu Ding's “labyrinth” is multidimensional, even dangerously ulterior in motive. He has inadvertently established a spiritual utopia through this method, moreover, he has been inadvertently repeating allusions to the “nihility”. The dramatized installment has taken pains to dilute the latent influence of speech, and the “wrong path” has just happened to dissolve the possibility of “ambiguity” – Liu Ding's job is to do his best to draw closer to history, “naked”, to attain the goal of rethinking.

Liu Ding

1976 born in Changzhou Jiangsu Province, China, works and lives in Beijing

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (selection)

2007

THE RUINS OF PLEASURE, Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy
WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE, L.A. Galerie Frankfurt, SH Fair, Shanghai, China
TIGER, Universal Studios Beijing, China
THE REMAINING LANDSCAPE – NEW PAINTINGS BY LIU DING,
Grace Li Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland

2006

SAMPLES FROM THE TRANSITION – PRODUCTS, L.A. Galerie Frankfurt,
Germany

2005

SAMPLES FROM THE TRANSITION – TREASURE, Long March Project Room,
Beijing, China

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selection)

2008

FAR WEST, Arnolfini, Bristol, UK
NEW WORLD ORDER, Groningen Museum, Groningen, The Netherlands
COMMUNITY OF TASTES, Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing,
China
FREE ZONE: CHINA, Spazio in BSI, Lugano, Switzerland
ART MULTIPLE 2008, Ke Center for Contemporary Arts, Shanghai, China
NEW PHOTOGRAPHY IN CHINA, 2008 Hong Kong City Festival, Fringe Club,
2007
CHINA POWER STATION II, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway

FOREIGN OBJECTS, Project Space, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria
THERMOCLINE OF ART – NEW ASIAN WAVES, ZKM Center for Art & Media,
Karlsruhe, Germany
TIMER – INTIMACY, Triennale Bovisa, Milan, Italy

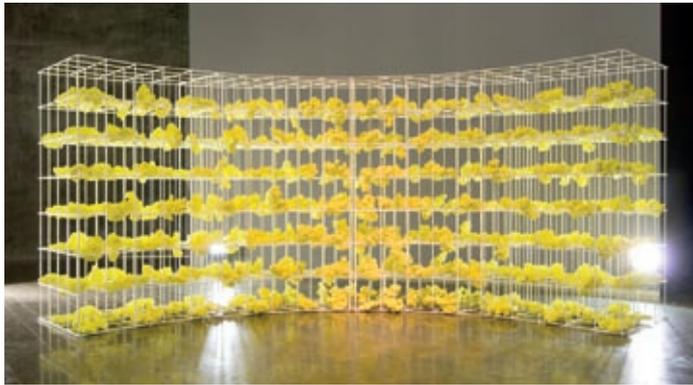
2006

ALLLOOKSAME? Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy
DUAL REALITIES – THE FOURTH SEOUL INTERNATIONAL
MEDIA ART BIENNALE, Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
CHINA POWER STATION I, Battersea Power Station, Serpentine Gallery,
London, UK
BEIJING BIENNIAL OF ARCHITECTURE 2006, The National Museum of China,
Beijing, China
THE AMBER ROOM, Luggage Store, San Francisco, America
CHINESE CONTEMPORARY ART FESTIVAL, Heyri Art Village, Seoul, Korea
LONG MARCH CAPITAL, Long March Space, Beijing
FICTION @ LOVE, MOCA, Shanghai

2005

RENOVATION – RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION, Long March Space, Beijing,
China
BEYOND – the SECOND GUANGZHOU TRIENNIAL, Guangdong Art Museum,
Guangzhou, China
COMPLETE ART EXPERIENCE PROJECT NO.6 – PLAYGROUND OF
AUTHORSHIP, University of Rochester, New York, America
COMPLETE ART EXPERIENCE PROJECT NO. 5 – 24 HOURS,
Beijing Film Studio, Beijing
ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE FUTURE – THE SECOND TRIENNIAL OF CHINESE
ART, Nanjing Museum, Nanjing, China

Previous works



Installation at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, 2007



Installation view „Samples from the Transition – Products“, L.A. Galerie, Frankfurt, 2005–2006



„Cards for visual and intelligent Training“, paint of plywood, each 120 x 120 cm, 2008



PREVIEW

L.A. Galerie, Frankfurt:

Zhao Liang “Videos und Photos”, *July – Aug., 2008*

Peter Bialobrzeski “Lost in Transition”, *Sept. – Oct., 2008*

Exhibitions:

Zhao Liang, 5th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art,
5 April – 15 June 2008

Julian Faulhaber, Kunstverein Recklinghausen, Germany
10 May – 22 June 2008,

New York Photo Festival, *May 2008*

Liu Ding, “Go China”, Groninger Museum, Netherlands,
23 March – 26 Oct. 2008,

“Far West”, Arnolfini, Bristol, *27 June – 31 August, 2008*

Ken Lum, “Shanghai Biennial 2008”, *9 Sept. – 16 Nov. 2008*

New books:

Peter Bialobrzeski, “Lost in Transition”, Hatje Cantz Verlag
Christian Wolter, “Blühende Landschaften”, Kehrer Verlag

Art fairs:

Art Melbourne, *30 July – 3. Aug. 2008*

ShContemporary, Shanghai, *10 – 13 Sept. 2008*