



Australia China Art Foundation
澳大利亞中國當代藝術基金會

Facing East

24th April – 2nd June 2012

Chen Hangfeng, Gao Weigang, Ji Wenyu & Zhu Weibing, Miao Xiaochun, Pu Jie, Ren Bo, Wu Daxin, Wu Junyong, You Si and Zhang Bojun.

Opening 6 – 8pm, Tuesday 24th April 2012

Ausin Tung Gallery
164 High Street, Prahran, Victoria, Australia
Tue – Sat 10-6pm (or by appointment)
+61 3 9521 1929

Various visions

Edward Sanderson, Art critic, Beijing

Facing East: Chen Hangfeng, Gao Weigang, Ji Wenyu & Zhu Weibing, Miao Xiaochun, Pu Jie, Ren Bo, Wu Daxin, Wu Junyong, You Si and Zhang Bojun.

Facing East presents the broad range of contemporary art from Chinese artists, covering the continuing presence of China's deep traditions, the ambiguity of the connections between recent history and daily life, and the place of Chinese society on a precarious balancing point between the influx and outflow of social and culture tides.

To "face East" is essentially an act of looking from "here" to an "other" culture, with both sides often conveniently proscribed as monolithic. The assumptions based on this starting point are such common occurrences that we perhaps don't give them a second thought. Over the years the theories of Post colonialism have developed the idea of the periphery, away from the hegemonic "West," but equally away from an assumption of a coherent "East."

China is but one part of this "East" and within China there are many developments, fast and slow, which afford a myriad of images and perspectives. Like any society, China is in continual development, and—if we are paying attention—continually subverts our assumptions about it.

In *Facing East* we see works by recent generations of artists, living out their own internalised and internationalised histories and cultures in vivid and vibrant ways, taking on or discarding influences as openly as they reflect or reject their own.

The deft practice of artist **Ren Bo** flies under the radar of our assumptions. Her two videos work with colour in ways that reflect its part in defining form. In *Flowers*, the camera pans over a border in full bloom, popping with intensity in mesmeric movement as if viewed from the window of a moving vehicle. *Dream of Spring* sets up blurred swathes of colour that coalesce to reveal paint smeared across the artist's body and pressed into service by the application of a sheet of glass.

In the documentation of the performance piece *Great Wall Project*, **Wu Daxin** records the fleeting moment of his filigree dome hanging with ice panels in the early morning environment of the Great Wall. These domes, with their suggestion of Byzantine shapes, seem to reflect the continual movement of cultures across the expanse of China.

The abstract flows and patterns in **You Si**'s formidable ink scrolls create a universe of swirling forms. Like leaves blowing in the wind, the patterns take over the space, in an intensely abstract maelstrom of forms.

If You Si's massed shapes swarm in organic whirling patterns, **Zhang Bojun's** masses take on more structured form. Zhang's complex works are made up of thousands of individuals photographed at one of Beijing's notoriously overcrowded railway termini. Seen en masse, these swathes of people create orderly patterns of light and dark, reflecting an underlying (or perhaps overlaying) structure, maintaining an order in the chaos.

Rather than overwhelmed in a mass of humanity, **Ji Wenyu** and **Zhu Weibing's** sole observer sits on a stone at the base of the epic outflow from a hydroelectric power station. The natural landscape as presented for contemplation, as represented in Chinese scroll paintings, is now difficult to locate in the highly instrumentalized landscapes throughout the world. The observer must now find their place within a man-made environment. Wonder and the sublime still exist, but must be tempered with an understanding of man's own responsibility as part of these surroundings.

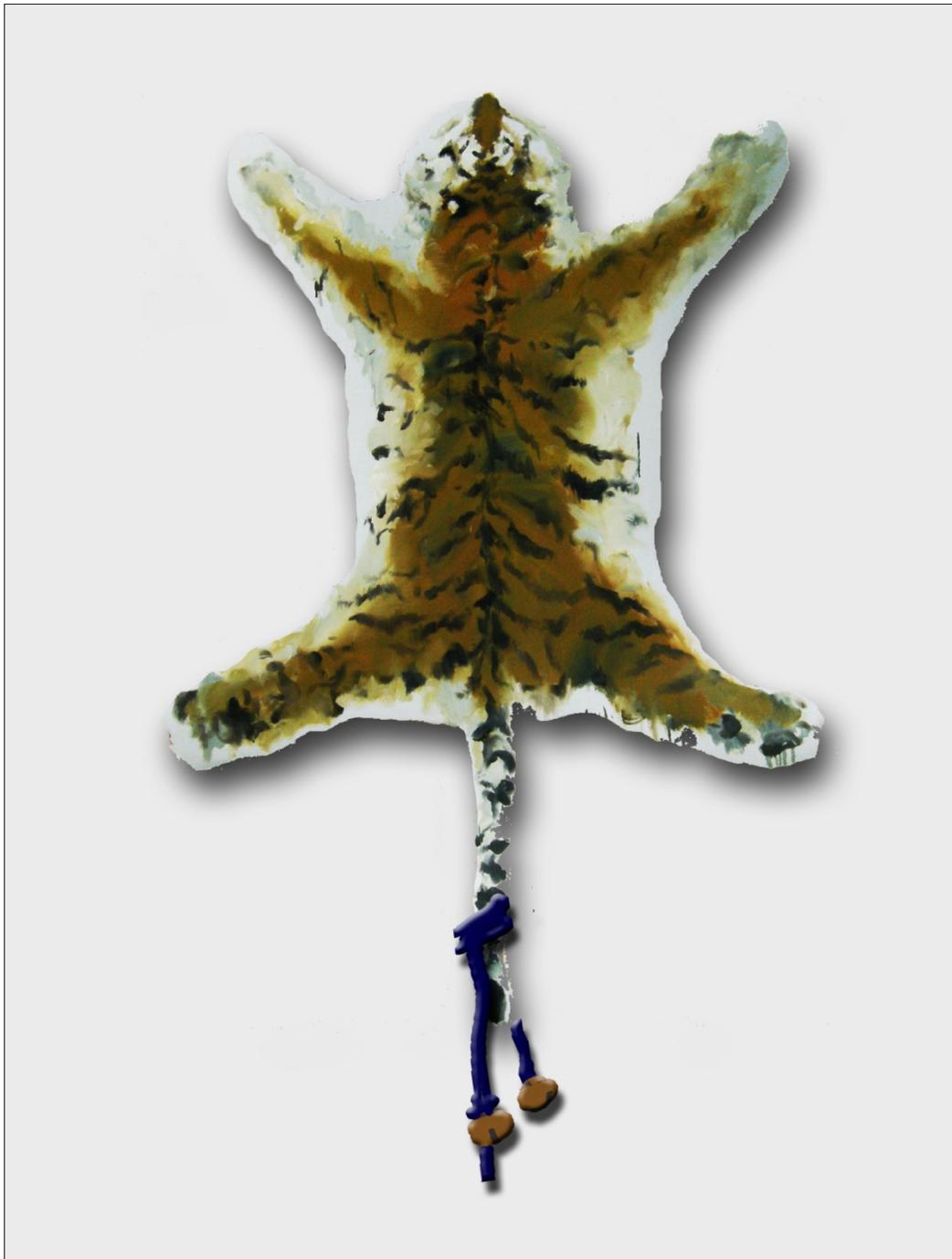
This awareness of the layering of experience plays a vital part in **Pu Jie's** work. The paintings show the hard-edged strokes of a stylized woman's head overlain with another face that emerges from the monochromatic background. The former seems to represent the world through a simplifying lens, akin to the tropes of advertising or ideology, whereas the background presents something of a less simplistic image from history, where the role of the people represented, their features and expressions are left ambiguous.

The work of **Gao Weigang** also thrives on its play with reality, mimicking and mocking the forms of objects and their meanings. *Nothing can go wrong*, a painting of a tiger pelt with a bell attached to its tail, seems to suggest that no matter where this tiger was, it would always be exposed by its accouterment. Looking back at a previous work by Gao, *Intuition* (2010), which simply presented an original, traditional scroll painting of a realistic tiger skin, one might say this new piece refers to realistic painting itself as an eternal trap for the subject.

This ambiguous nature of symbols is played to the full in **Wu Junyong's** works. The detailed worlds that the depicted figures and events inhabit refuse to settle on clear meanings, and the ridiculous and threatening nature of the events casts a pall over the futile activities therein. The reasons behind the complexity of the artist's lush symbol-world are left vehemently open to interpretation.

Behind every symbol lies a meaning, but the dissolution of the symbol allows for transference of meaning from its intended to a new position where subversion can take place. **Chen Hangfeng's** work lifts logos to relocate them in new arrangements, crossing the boundary from the relation of symbol-to-brand, to a terrain in which the symbol dissolves to reveal a new meaning. *The Last Supper* records chickens pecking away at KFC's Colonel Sanders' logo, drawn out using seed. The chickens that eat their fill of the Colonel will ultimately be sacrificed for food, making for an ironic circle of life.

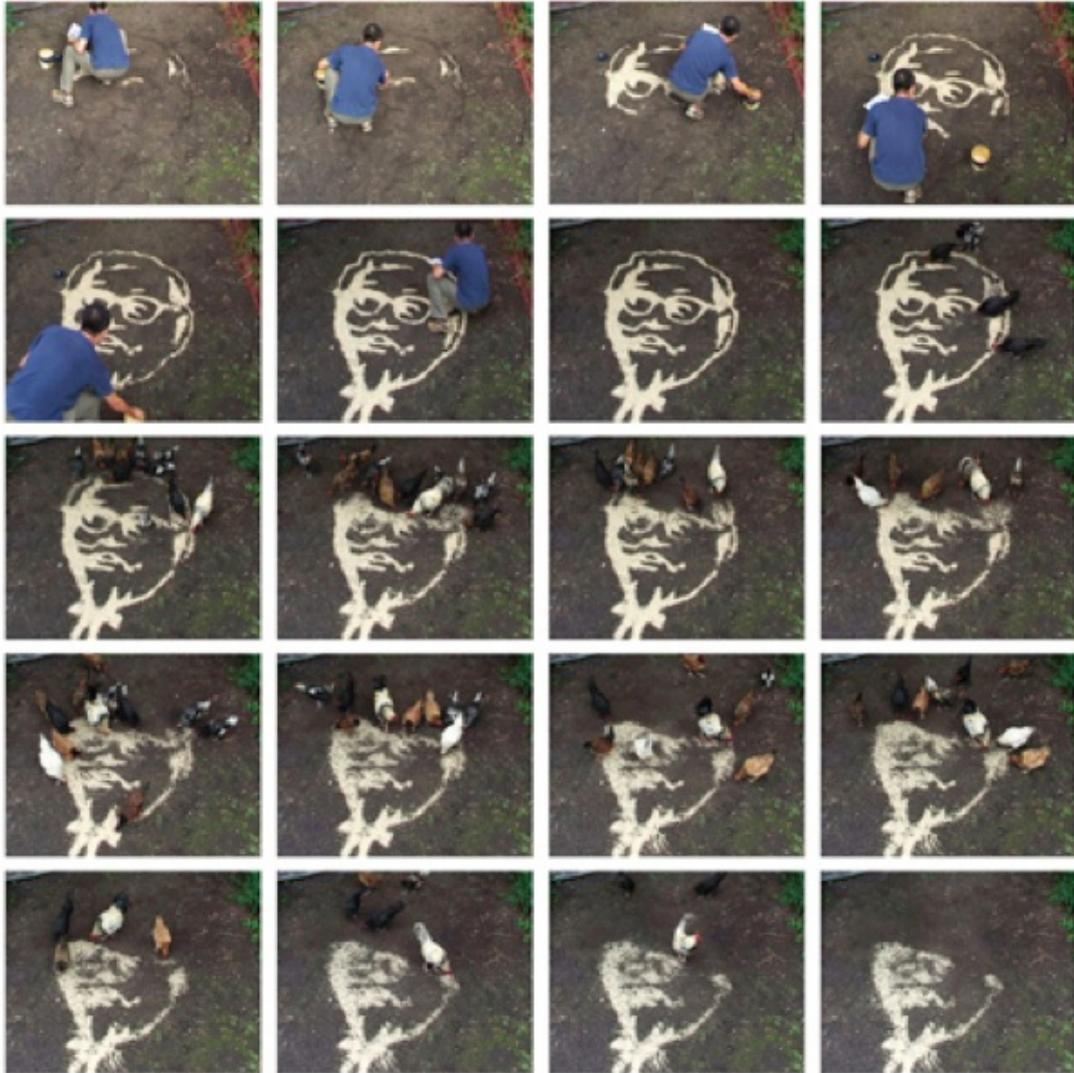
Lastly **Miao Xiaochun** presents "RESTART" and "Disillusion." The former is a three-dimensional animation in which Miao explores human existence through a comprehensive and emotional journey. Set to the score of Beethoven's Missa Solemnis, "RESTART" is a visual symphony in which the characters travel through time and space, referencing the canon of art history. Meanwhile, "Disillusion" evokes Kafka-esque surrealism as the artist delicately presents the fragility of human life through a dance of virtual figures made of disintegrating linear elements and spherical forms.



Gao Weigang
Perfectly Safe
2012
Oil on canvas - installation
220 x 180cm
7,500 AUD



Pu Jie
Feeding
2010
Oil on canvas
200 x 250cm
87,000 AUD



Chen Hangfeng
The Last Supper: Fast Food (video)
2008
00:05:31
Single channel video with sound DVD, PAL Edition: 3/5 + 1AP
Edition: 3/5 + 1AP
4,200 AUD

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