
History Lessons

Group Exhibit

Sept 4 - Nov 15, 2010

Press Release

At the risk of over-idealizing social realism art school training, we can't help but notice the common denominator in artists' works from China: Realist depictions of fragments from collective memory eg momentous bygone events rendered as history painting. Rather than debating the aesthetic pros and cons of such Russian inspired art academy training, we present an informal survey exhibit of historic elements as they recur across various artworks, art mediums, and artists output.

This sample of recent artworks share a common concern with the past, ties that bind to seemingly unable to break the history, despite present day exhortations to "Look Forward To A Brighter Future". While racing ahead to build a "New China", a China of breakthroughs in economics, science and technology - and culture - the heavy weight of "History", (History with a capital "H"), remains; unavoidable and inescapable, as a psychological load which must be carried by all individuals, from the past through to the present and into the future.

Artists, as we know, are adept at making seen that which is more often left unseen and unspoken. Artists, undeterred by taboos and fascinated by that which is left forgotten, have an uncanny ability to excavate and make fresh and provocative what others would relegate to dusty bins and history volumes for library shelves.

Artists often remind us that however much we try to ignore the past and move forward into the future, History's call is, relentless and "imbedded" onto our collective consciousness via socialisation and every day tools of civic education. We see and often ignore History's admonitions, emanating from official monuments, national greetings holiday, housing estates' communal blackboards, military tunes, comic book heroes, and many other well-known icons of communal education.

Despite our best efforts to keep eyes forward and fixed on the future, "History", forever a part of our collective peripheral vision, will inevitably rear its head, opening its Pandora's Box of powerful imagery, indelibly our subliminal thoughts and involuntary, reflexive memory.

Special thanks to INSTITUTIONS OF CHINART

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