

Press Release

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ELI 藝萊 KLEIN
畫廊

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Zhang Dali Retrospective

December 20, 2012 - February 18, 2013

Eli Klein Fine Art is pleased to present a retrospective exhibition featuring the work of one of China's most dynamic artists, Zhang Dali. Showcasing pieces from his most celebrated series, this exhibition reflects on current growth and development within China.

Much of Zhang Dali's art focuses on the rapidly changing spatial environment in China. His series, Dialogue, and the slightly later series, Demolition, focus on the forced modernization of Beijing. His spray-painted, and then eventually physically-removed, outlines of human heads depicted across countless condemned walls, make a silent but biting protest about the destruction of traditional Beijing life.

Zhang Dali's work is extremely versatile as his sculptural work, Chinese Offspring, clearly illustrates. To recognize the Chinese migrant worker's dedication to China's growth, the artist created this body of work celebrating these unsung heroes while exploring massive disparity between poverty and wealth. Since 2003, he has created over 100 of these life-size, resin-cast figures and each one possesses a unique tattoo—as the artist issues each with a number, title, and his own signature of legitimacy.

In his Slogan series paintings, Zhang Dali appropriates various Chinese propagandistic slogans from the streets of Beijing into his paintings. Though civilians feel numb to these omnipresent slogans, subconsciously they are affected by the messages. Through these paintings, the artist expresses his concern and reflects on the spiritual impact from this external social force.

In 2003, Zhang Dali started researching historical photographs released by official publications and created the Second History, a series of 130 works. The artist collected these historical images which were altered by the government to use as a tool for propaganda and political control. Zhang Dali then matched images originating in the same negative, comparing the ways in which alterations were used by the government. This body of work allows many Chinese to see for the first time the reality behind the images they were so familiar with.

The most recent series, World's Shadow, brings the artist to a new medium. Photograms allow Zhang Dali to explore the interaction between shadows and objects, taking note that the shadows are often overlooked. The transient nature of shadows plays well with Zhang Dali's central themes; nature is replaced by concrete and steel, just as tradition is replaced by modernization.

