

Press Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KLEIN SUN | 畫凱
GALLERY | 廊尚

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Cai Dongdong: Fountain 泉 February 18 - March 19, 2016

Opening reception: January 18, 6 - 8 PM

Klein Sun Gallery is pleased to announce "Fountain 泉," a solo exhibition of mixed media installations by Beijing-based artist Cai Dongdong, on view from February 18 through March 19, 2016.

Outsider artist Cai Dongdong first discovered photography not in the confines of a studio, but out of the rigid environment of military service. Cai joined China's People Liberation Army at a young age - he was handed a camera and given the instruction to use it, and quickly found himself in the role of a military portrait photographer. Thus, Cai's first subjects were the soft, youthful faces of soldiers, the haunting visual remnants of which can be found even in his recent work.

A strange dissociative experience exists in the works that make up "Fountain 泉." In these photo sculpture works - manipulated silver gelatin prints from which objects, like a tap or an arrow, protrude - memories of Cai's bleak past, and of static images of China, are narrated by their physical deconstructions. The photographs are taken either from the artist's own archives or are hand-developed negatives from the era of the Cultural Revolution, uniquely accessible to Cai due to his background.

The title is directly taken from Duchamp's original parody of industrialist objectification - and although a urinal does not feature in Cai's series, the pastoral well tap or the symbolically militant arrow are just as mockingly scathing in their commentaries on the separation of object and objectification. More explicitly, the very architecture of the pieces mixes traditional photography with contemporary structures. By emphasizing the formalist properties of these mediums, Cai's parody of a parody is much more than a superficial Dadaist dig at the way we view objects and art. Instead, he is nodding to the power of the image, a lesson he learned long ago when his first shots captured the faces of China's military youths.

Cai Dongdong was born in Tianshui, Gansu, in 1978. Recent group museum exhibitions include "Links - Locality and Nomadism," The Galaxy Museum of Contemporary Art, Chongqing, China (2015-2016); "Beyond the Earth - The First Xi'an Contemporary Photography Exhibition," Xi'an Art Museum, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China (2015); "Chinese Photography: Twentieth Century and Beyond," Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, Beijing, China (2015); "Unfamiliar Asia: The Second Beijing Photo Biennial," CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China (2015); "China 8: Contemporary Art from China on the Rhine and Ruhr," Folkwang Museum, Essen, Germany (2015); "2nd Three Shadows Experimental Image Open Exhibition," Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, Beijing, China (2015); and "Pull Left - Not Always Right," Urban Arts Space, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH; Hillstrom Museum of Art, Saint Peter, MN; and "Unboundedness," China Cultural Center, Berlin, Germany (2013-2014).

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by Hai Jie. For press inquiries, please contact Ysabelle Cheung at the gallery ([212.255.4388](tel:212.255.4388)) or via email at ysabelle@kleinsungallery.com. For all other inquiries, please contact Casey Burry at the gallery ([212.255.4388](tel:212.255.4388)) or via email at casey@kleinsungallery.com.