

Liu Jianhua

Artist Statement and Biography

Artist Statement

Since 2008, I began to explore “meaningless” and “substance-less” as artistic concepts. I have deepened and refined these concepts in works such as the *Untitled* series (2008), *Horizon* (2009) and *Trace* (2011) exhibited at UCCA under the title *Trace*. These works, produced within the context of China’s rapid socioeconomic development, represent a process of experimentation and accumulated experience. The material I’ve used in *Trace* is porcelain, which has a long and fascinating history in China. Porcelain was invented in China, and it was China that introduced the art of porcelain to the rest of the world.

In my exhibition in the UCCA Nave, there is a strong interaction between the work and the exhibition space: the two long white walls are like vast sheets of paper, with kiln-fired pieces of gleaming black porcelain appearing to drip down the walls like ink. These magnified “ink stains” are like traces of the human mind, imprints of the human soul. When we leave the bustle of the real world and enter this tranquil space, our conflicted psyches are soothed.

Screaming Walls applies a traditional aesthetic concept, established during the Tang Dynasty, known as Wu Lou Hen, or “Water Stains on the Wall.” This refers to the highest state of aesthetic development: finding inspiration in organic, naturally-evolved phenomena. In addition, I have incorporated black ink, which holds powerful artistic and aesthetic connotations in traditional Chinese culture, and is thought to represent all the colours of the spectrum.

Just as norms of human behaviour vary with the individual, so is the trajectory of all things in the universe indeterminate and variable. Throughout history, human beings have constantly subverted the natural order, gotten caught up in a vicious circle, been destined to repeat the same mistakes again and again. The laws of Nature and the traces left by Nature can have a powerful effect on the human mind, but they are so familiar we tend to take them for granted.

Trace is a work that seeks to place the viewer in a contradictory position, a perplexing space between illusion and reality.

Artist Biography

Liu Jianhua China

b. 1962, Ji'an, Jiangxi Province, China

Liu Jianhua is born in 1962 in Ji'an, Jiangxi Province, China. In 1989, he graduated from Fine Art of Sculpture at the Jingdezhen Ceramics Institute. He lives and works in Shanghai, China. From 2004 to present, he teaches in Fine Art of Sculpture in Shanghai University.

Liu Jianhua is one of China's best known sculptural and installation artists whose primary materials are porcelain and mixed media. He was raised up in Jiangxi Province where he spent 14 years in learning the ceramic and porcelain craft at Jingdezhen's factory. He graduated in Fine Art of Sculpture at the Jingdezhen Ceramics Institute in 1989, and within a contemporary context, he started his own experimental practices. Liu's porcelain and mixed media works reflect the economic and social changes in China as well as the problems that follow suit. His Regular Fragile series, first shown at the Chinese Pavilion, Venice Biennale in 2003, is composed of porcelain replicas of daily that privilege appearance and symbolism over function. In 2008, he shifted his previous close and direct attention on the problems emerged in China from globalization and sharp social changes to "no meaning, no content", which declared the fairly new exploration of his creation with works Untitled in 2008 and therefore formed a basic direction leading the perception of contemporary art creation.

Liu Jianhua's works have been exhibited in The 1st Kiev Biennale of Contemporary Arts, 14th international Sculpture Biennale of Carrara, 17th Biennale of Sydney, Vancouver Biennale 2009-2011 (Canada), The 3rd Nanjing Triennial, 2nd Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, The 1st Singapore Biennale, The 6th Shanghai Biennale, Busan Biennale (South Korea), The 50th Biennale di Venezia China Pavilion and exhibitions held by institutions including UCCA (Beijing), Power Station of Art (Shanghai), Kunstmuseum Bern (Switzerland), Today Art Museum (Beijing), Shanghai Art Museum, Guangdong Museum of Art, Asian Art Museum (San Francisco), MaCA Shanghai, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (Germany), Shenzhen Art Museum, Guang Dong Art Museum, National Art Museum of China (Beijing), Groninger Museum (The Netherlands), Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (Austria), Cobra Museum of Modern Art (The Netherlands), Kunst Der Gegenwart Sammlung Essl (Austria), Hamburg Art Center (Germany), Mori Art Museum (Tokyo), Irish Museum of Modern Art (Dublin), Tate Liverpool (Liverpool, London), Marseilles Museum of Contemporary Art (France), Center Pompidou (France) etc.

Liu Jianhua's works have been collected by Hong Kong New World, Bergen Art Museum (Norway), Yuz Foundation, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (Shanghai), Towada Art Center (Japan), Guggenheim Museum (New York), Z-Art Center (Shanghai), The Art Gallery of New South Wales (Sydney, Australia), Shanghai World Expo National Organizing Committee, Shanghai World Financial Center, Santander Bank Art Center (Spain), Today Art Museum (Beijing), Shenzhen Art Museum, Guangdong Museum of Art, Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture, Queensland Art Gallery (Australia), Kawara Museum (Japan), China Club (Hong Kong,

China), Coca-Cola (The United States), He Xiangning Art Museum (Shenzhen), Museum of Arts and Crafts in Frankfurt (Germany) etc. and by private collection.

Awards

- 2013 The 71th Award of Art China - Artist of the Year for Sculptural Art
- 2010 Martell Artists of the Year
- 2010 Global Magnet: Shanghai Public Art Award
- 2005 Dream: The Grand Award of Biennale of Contemporary Chinese Art
Montpellier"(Montpellier, France)
- 2004 Merriment: 1st Chinese Contemporary Art Document Award
- 1995 2nd Yunnan Literary and Art Award

Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 Liu Jianhua, Pace Beijing, Beijing, China
Silent Anomalies, Art & Public Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2011 Discard, Shanghai Pujiang Overseas Chinese Town, Shanghai, China
Screaming Walls, Beijing Ullens Center For Contemporary Art, Shanghai, China
- 2010 Floating Landscape, Z-art Center, Shanghai, China
- 2009 Horizon, Beijing Commune, Beijing, China
- 2008 Dream in Conflict, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Italy
- 2008 No Title, Beijing Commune, Beijing, China
- 2007 Export- Cargo Transit, Shanghai Gallery of Art at Three on the Bund, Shanghai.
China
Daily-Fragile- Tomb, King's Lynn Art Center, King's Lynn, UK
Daily-Fragile, Oxburgh Hall, Oxburgh, UK
Liu Jianhua, Arario Seoul, Seoul, South Korea
- 2006 Anomalous Thoughts, Galleria Continua, Beijing, China
- 2004 Liu Jianhua, Red Mansion Foundation; Hamiltons Gallery, London, UK
- 2003 Do You Really Know about It?, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai, China

- 2002 Liu Jianhua, Hanart Gallery; Taiwan Art Foundation, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2001 Delight and Illusion, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai, China
Porcelain- Like Skin, Hanart Gallery, Hong Kong, China
- 1990 Liu Jianhua, Yunnan Arts Institute, Kunming, China

Select Group Exhibitions

- 2014 Picturing Global China, Oregon University White Box Gallery, Oregon Portland, USA
Arte Fiera Bologna- Discovering ink, BolognaFiere S.P.A.- Viale della Fiera, Bologna, Italy
- 2013 Portrait of the Times- 30 Years of Chinese Contemporary Art, Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China
Insightful Charisma- Inaugural Exhibition of Shanghai Himalayas Museum, Shanghai Himalayas Museum, Shanghai, China
Voice of the Unseen- Parallel Exhibition of the 55th Venice Biennale, Arsenate di Venezia, Venice, Italy
Back to Earth- Rediscovering Ceramics in Art, Herbert Gerisch-Stiftung, Neumunster, Germany
DUCHAMP and/or/in China, The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
The Amazing Shoemaker, Salvatore Ferragamo Museum, Florence, Italy
- 2012 Of Human Scale and Beyond: Experience and Transcendence, Hong Kong Art Centre, Hong Kong, China
REAL LIFE STORIES, The Bergen Museum of Art, Bergen, Norway
Artist in Wonderland- Kuandu Biennale, Kuandu Museum of Fine Art, Taipei, China
Time Traveler, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, China
ARSENAL£ 2012: The 1st Kiev Biennale of Contemporary Arts, Mystetskyi Arsenal, Kiev, Ukraine
2011 Beijing Voice: Leaving Realism Behind, Pace Beijing Gallery, Beijing, China
Surreal versus Surrealism in contemporary Art, IV AM (Institute Valenciano de Arte Moderno Centre), Valencia, Spain
The Hague under the Heavens: Contemporary Chinese Sculpture, the Hague Sculpture and Museum Beelden aan Zee, Hague, Netherlands
Glasstress 2011, Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti, Venice, Italy
- 2010 Big Draft- Shanghai, Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, Switzerland
Martell Artists of the Year, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai; Beijing Today Art Museum, Beijing; Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China
14th international Sculpture Biennale of Carrara, Carrara, Italy
17th Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia