

Exhibition: **2008 ARTE CHINO
TINTA Y PAPEL CONTEMPORÁNEOS**

**IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern
29th July – 31st August 2008**

Organised by: **Institut Valencià d'Art Modern**

Curated by: **Yang Jianzhong**

Sponsored by:  **上海市对外文化交流协会**
Shanghai International Culture Association



The exhibition forms part of the agreement entered into by the IVAM and the Shanghai International Culture Association, which led to the presentation of contemporary painting made by Chinese artists at the IVAM last year. The current exhibition comprises a selection of thirty works by five artists: Yang Zhengxin, Chen Jialing, Zhang Guiming, Dai Mingde and Lu Fusheng, who were trained in the traditional language of the Shanghai school but have evolved towards new forms of expression. In them all, Chinese aesthetic and spirit constitute the element that generates the transformation of their language. For example, Zhang Guiming's colours are derived from the masks of Peking opera; Chen Jialing has spent his whole life performing research into paper and the way it absorbs ink; Dai Mingde has made his way to abstraction starting from Chinese calligraphy; Lu Fusheng simplifies the signs and symbols of the landscape to express silence and the essence of life and finally Yang Zhengxin initiates his renovation by means of the study of native Australian art. The catalogue of the exhibition contains texts by Chen Xiejun, director of the Shanghai Museum, Lang Shaojun, Pan Gonkai, Wang Chong, Dong Lu, Pan Yuechang, Pen Lai and a selection of short texts by de Zhang Ping, Xie Chunyan, Zhang Piecheng and Fan Jinyuan.

Drawings in Chinese ink and wash occupy an important place in the world of painting. Traditional Chinese ink and wash painting may seem excessively static and isolated when compared with Western oil painting, Even so, at the present time, the world of Chinese ink and wash is the object of both constant praise and polemic.

Chen Jialing, Zhang Guiming, Yang Zhengxin, Dai Mingde and Lu Fusheng are five modern masters of ink and wash who live in Shanghai. Their works are far removed from tradition; the brushstrokes and layout of traditional pieces are deconstructed and reinterpreted from a completely new point of view; they are works inspired by modern artistic forms.

The five artists in this exhibition have followed the same process of learning from past successes in order to change. They use the same tools their ancestors used (brush, ink, paper or ink stone), but they approach aesthetic culture with totally different ideas, methods and techniques.

Chen Jialing once said in an interview, “Whether you draw from tradition or emerge from tradition, the process is intense and tough. You are your own worst enemy, because you have to overcome the way of thinking that was ingrained in the education of the past, renounce the usual techniques and experiment over and over again until you are illuminated by the light of success.”

Zhang Guiming’s innovation resides in the fact that he breaks away from tradition by means of the distortion and decoration of classical elements and by the reconstruction of a new scheme where he simplifies and signals the abstract ideas of painting by means of bright colours.

In his majestic, mystic paintings, Yang Zhengxin shows his explosive strength and dazzling randomness with strong, bold brushstrokes. Under the premises of maintaining the essence of traditional Chinese ink and wash drawing, he uses Western techniques and traditional charm to attain modernity.

Dai Mingde’s works, with the pictography of Chinese characters as a basis and abstract art as an axis, presents before us calligraphic painting. Calligraphic painting is the heir and conveyor of Chinese painting and calligraphy and the traditional Chinese tendency to create a new paradigm Dai Mingde’s painting combines traditional ink and wash drawing with modern Western styles.

Lu Fusheng reveals in her works modern intellectual meditation and a pursuit of a vital historical ontology. The language and figures she represents in her works are the expression of the artist’s education, tolerance and tastes.

If we pause to view the works of these five artists, we can clearly feel their process of meditation and their rise to perfection, a long-term process of artistic refinement, of hard, complicated struggle from the purest and simplest scenes. It does not only involve an accumulation of sensibility in the use of brush and ink or skill in addressing figurative languages, but the transcendence of spirit and mind.

The art of ink and wash has been one of the contributions of Chinese culture to the world, and also a feature of Oriental civilisation. Today we have delved into the world of art, which contributes to the freedom and rebirth of brush and ink that raises history and age-old culture to a higher level. It belongs to the Chinese nation, but also belongs to the world and human beings.