

PEKING ART ASSOCIATES



*Dedicated to Li Yihui.
An embodiment of grace
and, in my mind, what the best vision
of the future of China looks like.*



Peace Series - Couple's Portrait I
 平和系列 - 夫妇的肖像之一
 Watercolour on Paper 纸上水彩
 2013
 76 x 33 cm
 Collection of Ambassador Geoff Raby, Beijing
 芮捷锐大使收藏，北京

Peace Series - Red Heart II
 平和系列 - 红心之二
 Oil on Canvas 布面油画
 2011
 50 x 40 cm

PEKING ART ASSOCIATES



MAKING PEACE WITH HISTORY

JIANG SHAN CHUN'S

PEACE SERIES

COMPILED & EDITED BY E.S. DE WOLFE PETTIT & LI YIHUI

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Peace Series - Heroic Spirit IV

英气之四

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2012

100 x 80 cm

MUSINGS ON JIANG SHAN CHUN

Yang Feiyun, Artist & President of the Chinese Academy of Oil Painting

杨飞云老师

LIFE HAS BESTOWED ON JIANG SHAN CHUN peace and satisfaction, and he expresses his gratitude by being stable and fulfilled. Like every young man who has a passion for painting, his eyes are often brimming with enthusiasm, as well as passion... And as any painter who understands the value of paintings, he never doubts the grandeur of this cause and is able to concentrate and dedicate his life to it. Painters are a group of people who define their core existence with their works. There are far too many different types of emotions and feelings involved, innocent yet complex, direct yet subtle. However, the ultimate question for painters, which takes a lifetime to answer is this: why does one pick up the paint brush and decide to let it define his own very existence?

After years of being a teacher and developing his share of students, Jiang Shan Chun understands like never before: To nurture is to perfect one's self; to educate is to live as an example; to judge is to self reflect; and to act vigorously is to be merciful. We hope you will enjoy his first thematic body of work, the *Peace* series.



为师久了，会积淀下许多滋味，伴随着记忆中一张张鲜活青涩的脸孔慢慢品咂。如同侍弄着一组又一组盆景，顺着各自不同的品性，循着旺盛杂乱的生机，修剪灌溉、梳理清洁，有些模样就罢手放开，顺其自然。以至于淡忘生疏，不经意间再看去，竟需在头脑里搜寻调动，把着些许痕迹以资确认，直至确凿。那滋味仿佛翻出一张尘封的旧画，明知出自己手，却被糅杂着陈旧的新鲜、混合着熟悉的生分搅乱，平复了诸般杂陈，总会分明的冒出这样的慨叹：真是久了。

江山春有着寻常人的生命轨迹，考试、择校、读研读硕、结婚生子、以教授学生和出售作品为生，生活赋予他平淡和圆满，也令他平稳而充实。像每一个热爱绘画的青年一样，他的眼中会有热切的光彩，会有因此而激发出来的热情与困惑；像每一个认同绘画的存在价值的画家一样，他不会怀疑绘画这项事业的庄严与伟大，并能持久而专注的投入。画家是一群专以绘画为其生命内核的人，这里凝结了太多的单纯而又复杂、直白而又微妙的情感，但是究竟为什么必须要拿起画笔，以此作为其存在的方式，竟是每一个画家要用尽一生来回答的问题。

如今早已不是仅靠一腔子热情就能为此行为提供充足支撑的年代，绘画背负了太多的负担：说不出道不明的理由，说得出道得明的藉口，乱糟糟纷至沓来，半推半就，欲罢还休，捆绑着绘画裹挟着画家四处涌动。年青画家之幸运与不幸，都在于此。同样的问题也摆在江山春面前。这些年他有着很多的尝试，一度放弃油画画起了水墨，又曾回避具象进入抽象，在一大段自我封闭式的投入之后，他又重新回到了起点，弯路即是必经之路，成败得失、个中滋味自有切身所感，旁人不得而知。然而此番波折想必会让他对绘画的价值与作为画家的个体命运更有所悟：绘画所需要的技巧与才情，生活所给予的体悟与感知，生命所赋予的际遇与契机……对这些问题的持续梳理和自省，将会使他逐渐走向成熟，建立起属于自己的绘画生命。生命自有其独特的轨迹，如今江山春也为人师久了，侍弄着自己那片盆景，亦会有如下所感：育人实为自修，立人须先自立，观人岂非观己，健行既是慈悲。愿你们喜爱他的首次主题作品集，平和系列。



Peace Series - Reunion II (opposite)
 平和系列 - 相聚之二 (对面)
 Oil on Canvas 布面油画
 2013
 92 x 150 cm
 Collection of Ambassador Geoff Raby, Beijing
 芮捷锐大使收藏, 北京

Memory
 回忆
 Oil on Canvas 布面油画
 2008
 100 x 50 cm
 Collection of The National Art Museum of China, Beijing
 中国美术馆, 北京, 中国

FOREWORD

Emily de Wolfe Pettit

HIDDEN IN A DESK DRAWER FOR NOW OVER SIXTY YEARS, Jiang Shan Chun's acorn of inspiration in seeking to bring to light shared histories of family members and friends known only by oral tradition was the photographic material he discovered several years ago on a trip to his hometown of Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. Dating from the period shortly after the Founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, these photographs show visages of great innocence and expectation in a refined body of work that has culminated in the *Peace* series. While the ages and positions of the sitters vary, what is most striking is the clarity and calm Jiang preserves in each gaze, made more extraordinary when contemplating the irreversible life changes and unspeakable hardships these people were to encounter in the subsequent quarter century, through great famine, familial separation, thorough reversals of social structures, and widespread cultural destruction. Heart-breaking 'past-future' situations are empathetically recreated by



Jiang in portraits displaying not only hyper-realistic exactitude, but also great softness and sentiment, as shown in his *Family Frames* watercolours through highly sensitive textures intended to faithfully recreate their source of well-worn, aged photographs. In *Young Friend II* (page 26), the uniform badge bearing the wearer's identity, number and occupation (in this case, simply 'farmer'), protrudes from his fur collared jacket; a familiar symbol of those times when everyone at work had to wear this distinctive 'insignia of identity'. In the large diptych, *Peace Series - Portrait of Two Families* (pp. 20 - 21), a photographic studio in Hohhot of the late 1950's presents three young sisters - one of whom would be the artist's mother-in-law in the future and is joined in a diptych by its pair of the artist's father - coincidentally the same favourite beauty spot that today no longer exists. The complexion of the series is the three colours that dominated over a quarter of a century of Chinese life from the 1950's until after the end of the Cultural Revolution and everyman's clothing - green, blue, and grey. In contrast to these sombre hues are glimpses of livelier colours in Jiang's later portraits of children of the early 50's - hints of the hope that accompanies youth and a period before disenchantment overran faith. Yet perhaps the fundamental element of Jiang's portraits is the enviable composure with which the artist has approached his subject and the connected sense of calm that overcomes the viewer of these works and almost a complete squaring with past disjuncture. Moreover, the artist seeks to absolve any blame and bitterness for lives interrupted and opportunities lost.

Peace Series - Comrade-in-arms I

平和系列 - 战友之一

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2012

20 x 47 cm

Collection of Mr Michael Charlton, Beijing/UK

乔麦克私人收藏, 北京 / 英国



Peace Series - Tian
平和系列 - 恬
Oil on Canvas 布面油画
2013
100 x 80 cm



Peace Series - Young Friend I
平和系列 - 年轻的朋友之一

Oil on Canvas
布面油画

2011

110 x 85 cm



Peace Series - The 50s
平和系列 - 五十年代
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
51 x 36 cm

While the historical map of past events naturally cannot be re chartered, Jiang has instead chosen to focus on the purity, hope and expectation of these young faces and extract the positive from their upheaval - collective stories, genuine friendships and hope for better days forged in times of hardship.

Whilst his principal interest is portraiture, Jiang Shan Chun is also considered a worthy transcriber of Chinese philosophy into romantic still life and abstraction, made practically possible due to his flair for subtle textural rendering, in both oil and egg tempera. Jiang first presented this genuine versatility through the abstract tempera polyptychs shown in his inaugural solo exhibition *The Refutation of Time*, recently reaching ever grander scale as shown in *Taiji III*, illustrated overleaf. Based on the concept of the "supreme ultimate", *Taiji* is Taoism's highest conceivable principle, creating *yin* and *yang* from places of stillness and movement respectively. This all-pervasive concept underpins traditional Chinese energy systems of cosmology and the elements (*Qi*), which are believed to give rise to the seasons and indeed our own human life cycle - a self-perpetuating, eternal sequence of dualities, with reversal being the movement of the Tao.



To this vast concept Jiang gives pictorial voice through swathes of intertwined light and shade in mineral hues that are chromatically textured to enact infinite spatial and temporal dimensions, achieving inclines to peaks, and declivities to voids through impressive technical prowess as if sculpting painting, soundlessly, without excess. This simultaneous honing of texture for exquisite nuance, along with his consideration of our place in the context of a greater perspective, likely facilitates Jiang's ambition for the *Peace* series. In both his figurative works, Jiang Shan Chun's approach certainly leads the viewer to contemplate and sensorily engage in a journey that is simultaneously tangible and ephemeral.

Himself a professor, now with several museum appearances to his name in group exhibitions at the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC), Jiang Shan Chun mastered his fine technique under the tutelage of Yang Feiyun, a Neo-Realist artist widely respected amongst Chinese critics and collectors alike. For *Making Peace with History*, Jiang's first large-scale series spanning all three of a painter's media in oil, watercolour and tempera, the artist's catalyst was the central question of ongoing legacies and moreover, reconciling two histories: of those who have experienced great upheaval and those who have inherited a different sort of psychological lesion, having not lived it first-hand. Jiang offers a dignity and propriety to his subjects through his delicate and faithful renderings and a much more intimate and deeper view of real people and real stories of a period that is a departure from the bubble-gum, Political Pop works of produced by some artists in China of recent years. Jiang also provides an insight into himself as a tempered, self-restrained character and an orderly mind.

A Beautiful Age
芳龄
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
13.5 x 34 cm



Peace Series - Children's Portrait III
 平和系列—儿童人像之三
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2011
 44 x 24 cm
 Private Collection, Beijing



Peace Series - Children's Portrait IV
 平和系列—儿童人像之四
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2011
 44 x 24 cm
 Private Collection, Beijing



Taiji - The Supreme Ultimate III
太极之三
Tempera on Canvas
布面蛋彩
2012 - 2013
210 x 630 cm overall



My thanks to Jiang Shan Chun for his loyalty and friendship. As we open a new chapter with Peking Art Associates we are honoured to be staging his second solo gallery show in Beijing. My thanks, last but not least, to Li Yihui in helping me to compile this catalogue and meeting the hard task of translating it with sensitivity and her perpetual calm, dedication and grace.



Peace Series - Children's Portrait II

平和系列—儿童人像之二

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2011

24.5 x 17.5 cm



Peace Series - Couple's Portrait III

平和系列 - 夫妇的肖像之三

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2013

76 x 33 cm

MAKING PEACE WITH HISTORY

Emily de Wolfe Pettit

HISTORICALLY, PORTRAITURE IN CHINA HAS HOVERED IN THE SHADOWS of the landscape and calligraphic traditions in a twilight that endured for hundreds of years. It waned with the rise of the towering landscape custom of the Song (960 - 1279) and was then over-shadowed by the scholar-amateur's desire for self-cultivation rather than depictions of physical reality in the successive Yuan. As an artistic genre it only truly came to recognition in the closing chapters of the Ming, moving beyond the largely practical, commemorative practice of ancestral and funerary portraits around the turn of the 17th century with the cult not only of the individual personality of the subject, but also the artist as both professional and the (no less professional and hence commercial) role of the scholar-amateur artist. Commentators of the time marvelled at the fact that the name of the artist could now affect price. They marvelled too at increasingly realistic portraiture created by Chinese artists influenced by the Western images imported by Christian missionaries and its three dimensionality. Yet portraiture's esteem in China has always stood relative to the dominance of *calligraphy* as an indirect yet more profound means of expressing *character*, with the writer's script thought to reveal his innermost self. When considering the genre particular to its development in China, it is worth noting that to this artistic tableau stands the backdrop of traditional Confucian philosophy that dictates the nation, the motherland and then the family unit, that is the collective is all esteemed above individualism. Yet portraiture in China, Western influenced from the late Ming as it is to this day, and often associated with the status or commemoration of the *individual*, has over recent



Peace Series - Red Heart I
平和系列 - 红心之一
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2011
50 x 40 cm



Peace Series - Red Heart III
平和系列 - 红心之三
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2011
50 x 40 cm



Peace Series - Young Classmates I (top)
 平和系列 - 同学少年之一 (上面)
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2011
 20 x 46 cm



Peace Series - Young Classmates II
 平和系列 - 同学少年之二
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2011
 20 x 46 cm



Peace Series - Portrait of Two Families

平和系列 - 两个家庭的肖像

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2012 - 2013

207 x 270 cm overall



decades gained ever-increasing popularity domestically. Even when artistic voids were left by the Cultural Revolution, it was portraiture in the form of technically involved Neo-Realist imagery in which artists sought a kind of private refuge. Likewise, today many of the most recognised contemporary Chinese oil painters internationally are primarily portraitists - Liu Wei, Liu Xiaodong, Mao Yan, Zeng Fanzhi and Zhang Xiaogang. A younger generation of painters such as Jia Aili, Li Songsong and Qiu Xiaofei often portray sweeping scenes that relay a present and historical tension between the figure and their situation and this dynamic recurs across every possible media from Yun Fei-Ji working in watercolour and ink to Zhang Huan in ash.



Whilst very few contemporary Western portrait painters pay tribute to beauty, most being concerned with a Post-Modern, angst-ridden urban condition, Chinese portraiture has in the past quarter century emerged rich in its diversity and is often keen to distance itself from the real-life angst of living memory. It thus diverges from recent developments in Western painting and even its own native painting tradition in which capturing a likeness has never been so important as hinting at the spirit of a subject. First led by the highly academic Neo-Realist movement that celebrates both the beauty of the human form in its most romantic and hyper-realism in depictions of everyday figures, contemporary Chinese portraiture is in many ways backlash to a lack of focus on the plight of the lay person and decades of sugar-coated Socialist-Realist portraiture on a sweeping scale. The Neo-Realist movement has reached milestones over the last thirty years ranging from Luo Zhongli's *Father* (1981) to Leng Jun's so-called *Mona Lisa* (1995); currently there are signs that a younger generation schooled in the rigours that Neo-Realist training brings is moving beyond formalism to seek out more significant messaging that links the historical to the personal whilst underscoring a sense of purity, longed-for dignity, and almost anti-celebrity. Now in his mid-30's, artist and professor Jiang Shan Chun has painted famous figures, but he too seems to find painting the Everyman and recognising dignity in the face of adversity the most compelling encounter - both for the viewer and for himself as the artist. Through his considerable and growing body of work, the *Peace* series, a multi-generational narrative is emerging that seeks to tell another side to the period founding the People's Republic in 1949 leading up to the Cultural Revolution. At the centre of these works is the ideal of human dignity - without the slightest trace of regret or even wonder at what might have been. It is a utopia of the mind through sympathetic but steely strength of character the task of creation Jiang has set himself. And in doing so, the artist retreats from the slightest trace of pity resultant of collective pain and suffering. Considering the epoch's tremendous upheaval, even as a relatively distant backdrop to the artist and his subjects' native Inner Mongolia, it is marvel to the viewer that this be the prevailing tone the artist wished to convey.

Peace Series - Five Girls

平和系列 - 五个女孩

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2012

17 x 47 cm

Private Collection, New York, Beijing



Peace Series - Heroic Spirit II

平和系列 - 英气之二

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2012

100 x 80 cm

Breathing life into large chapters of a country's history is no mean ambition and there is no precedent to the task or rather the manner and scale in which Jiang wishes to realise his artistic quest; in his words, there is a long way to go in creating one branch of an historical family tree of a nation. Unlike other notable Chinese artists who have recorded this period of history, for instance Zhang Xiaogang, whose *Bloodline* series is overwhelmingly symbolic, or Jin Shangyi, whose work is descriptive, Jiang Shan Chun's *Peace* series is a careful balance between both the symbolic and the descriptive. His subjects were real people, people he was or is connected to, either family members or friends and he pays attention to realistic, subtle details to relay this chapter of their life's story, yet the details are deliberately sparse. While his works shown in *The Refutation of Time*, his 2011 solo exhibition, capture fleeting moments of daily life, the *Peace* series is more concerned with the subject's psychology. There is a density to the best of the works, such as *Peace Series - Heroic Spirit IV* (page 5) and an intense focus on the subject - the subject is all - any props or contextual devices are of, or literally on,



the subject, for instance their medals, identity badges, and their very attire declaring their new role in the labour force of the Cultural Revolution *Heroic Spirit IV* (page 39). The context is within the sitter, and by this approach paintings are created that are entirely self-reflecting, if aware the subject is posing for an audience (*Reunion II*, page 6). There is also a remarkably calming, other-worldly quality to the work, which Jiang achieves largely through his subjects' gaze, managing to be wistful and at the same time intensely penetrating (exquisitely captured in *Tian* (page 9) the sailor boy in *Heroic Spirit III* (page 31) and *Teenager I* (page 33). His work thereby becomes a two-way mirror; ultimately it is mystery as to whether we are the viewer or the viewed. Should we question ourselves and our own propensity for civility in times of deep uncertainty, the paintings seem to cry out in a gentle whisper.

The historical document Jiang Shan Chun is building in the form of single, family, couple and children's portraits in oil, pencil and watercolour originates from his perspective of an army family, an insider's insight into a symbolic structure for maintaining the status quo post WWII rather than active engagement with politics or combat (with the exception of the Korean War in 1950-1953). And the artist is keen to anchor the private within the context of the public for a deeper connection between the human and the historic. Based on a family archive of photographs, this relationship between the human and historic dwells materially in the relationship between photography and painting. Photography was once predicted to ring the death knell of painting, particularly portraiture, and the dynamic between the two genres is complex. This relationship has been explored by the German artist Gerhard Richter who has, incidentally, also painted portraits of family groups and soldiers who were members of his family. Arguably, Richter wanted to show that even though his work was based on photographs, as is Jiang's work, it was an illusion, and thereby neutralize a charged

Peace Series - Sisters II
平和系列 - 姐妹之二
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
14.5 x 34 cm



Peace Series - Young Soldier I
平和系列 - 年轻军人之一
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
46 x 28 cm



Peace Series-Young Friend II
和平系列- 年轻的朋友之二
Oil on Canves
布面油画
2011
110 x 85 cm



Peace Series - Family Frames II & III
 平和系列—家庭相框之二，三
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2011
 54.5 x 39.5 cm, 39.5 x 54.5 cm



political chapter in his country and personal family history. Jiang Shan Chun's work is not so much about neutralizing politics in as much as placing politics firmly to the background of personal experiences for his subjects, and a personal encounter for himself and the viewers of his paintings. There is a stillness and distance for contemplation that both the de-politicizing and purely photography-based subjects lend the *Peace* works, versus contact with living models (for instance Jiang's Tibetan portraits, in which the energy is quite different). As with photography today, one can imagine the portrait *Family Frames* (page 27 and opposite), inhabiting a domestic setting. The artist claims he does not wish to create an illusion, but there may be a sub-conscious need to show purity, and to purify. In a sea of Post-Modernism, the apparent innocence of Jiang's subjects is an antidote to not only past but also to present social change.



There is thus the possibility for engagement on various levels for the viewer of these works. Firstly, in the vein of the Neo-Realist verisimilitude there is Jiang's captivating faithfulness to his subject's likeness. However portraiture is obviously its most compelling when the painter captures not only the physical resemblance and the temperament - perhaps through the shadow over an eye or frown moving across a mouth - but offers a glimpse of the character and energy or aura of one's subject. Exceptionally, this is reflected most accurately in Mandarin, having several words for portraiture including *yin tu* ('shadow picture') and *fu shen* ('depicting the soul'). The viewer can sense the meaning of both *yin tu* and *fu shen* in Jiang's strongest character subjects, for instance the army general in *Heroic Spirit I* (page 42), *Young Friend VI* (page 72) and *Young Friend V* (cover), in which the subject's gaze is startling. Jiang's almost spiritual deference is tangible through the finesse with which he treats his subjects and the great sensitivity of his coloration, often using a single family palette within the same work, for instance, the exquisite watercolour groupings on pages 8, 22 and 24. It is as if by perfecting an external reality, an internal search for harmony may be enacted. Then there is the demand to engage on a temporal or historical level with the series. What does not come across in reproduced images of the works is the delicacy of brushstroke and the deep textural layering, the source of a perceptible sense of a passage of time. The artist's intention in doing so is to replicate his source of a well-worn photograph, one that has been kept for a long time, treasured, and looked at over and over. In other words, texture is memory in this series. It is also sculpted stillness, if you like - and literal distance for reflection for both artist and viewer.

Peace Series - Woman's Portrait
平和系列—女像
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
27 x 20 cm

Peace Series - Youth
平和系列—青年
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2011
19.5 x 13.5 cm



Peace Series - Family Frames I

平和系列—家庭相框之一

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2011

54.5 x 39.5 cm

Amongst the artists he admires, Jiang Shan Chun counts the revered Neo-Realist and his former professor Yang Feiyun, who prizes the sheer beauty of the human form and painstaking reproduction of it. Yang Feiyun's romanticism may have influenced Jiang to give the benefit of the doubt in idealising his subjects into angelic, stoic figures in the face of an imperfect human memory. Jiang also acknowledges Chinese portraitist Mao Yan, whose work he describes as "luxuriously nihilistic", stripping away markers of social identity to focus on the "purity of portraiture". Jiang Shan Chun



has said he has decided not to go back to paint his subjects still living to preserve his own brand of purity and he may indeed be attracted to the period of history he paints in this series because hierarchical, social identities as they once were simply did not exist for a while. The Peace works, Jiang's first thematically worked series, is as much a search for self-identity as it is a nation's identity, where Jiang is once again stopping time to make memory, but now without the weight of history, or at least a more nuanced view of it.

Soldier I
战士之一
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
31 x 17 cm

Soldier II
战士之二
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
31 x 17 cm



Peace Series - Heroic Spirit III

平和系列 - 英气之三

Oil on Canvas 布面油画

2013

100 x 80 cm



Peace Series - Teenager I
平和系列 - 少年之一
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2012
100 x 80 cm

IN CONVERSATION WITH JIANG SHAN CHUN

Emily de Wolfe Pettit

"I adore the act of painting, it's so extraordinarily subtle, it is something you can never be too skilled at... To paint the expression of a face and to change that expression, from happy to sad by one minuscule change in the shadow of an eye, makes one never want to do anything else..." - Glenn Brown, 2002

Emily de Wolfe Pettit (EP): The artist Peter Doig has described painting as a viewer "absorbed into a place or landscape", in other words an immersive, almost spiritual experience, whereby painting could be seen as a phenomenon. There is a perceptible spiritual deference in your work, achieved through the finesse with which you treat your subjects and the sensitivity of your coloration. You clearly have great empathy for your subjects.

Q: What are the criteria for your selection? Do you feel it is necessary to have an emotional connection to your subjects? You are also a highly-regarded abstract painter, but you seem to naturally gravitate to portraiture. Are you attracted to the genre because you find it the most immersive experience for the viewer - and for yourself as the artist?

Jiang Shan Chun (JSC): While I paint both the abstract and concrete, the purpose of painting is never a simulation, but the secrets behind the images. Life itself is a great mystery, if even a causal link exists between the known and the unknown, mystery would not exist. The subjects of the *Peace* series are old photos, and moreover real people who lived forty, fifty years ago. Looking from the present perspective, I always have the feeling of time fleeting, and how many significant changes have occurred in China during this period. However, nostalgia is not enough to support the significance of a painting. What attracts me is capturing the beauty, purity and human dignity of the figures at that moment, which is particularly precious now, because life and societal changes have at turns polished, and elsewhere corrupted these traits. The tension between the two periods is where my expansion on portraiture starts.

EP: Historically portraiture has been in the shadow of the calligraphic and landscape traditions in China. Today portraiture is hugely popular in China.

Q: How do you account for the flourishing interest in portraiture in China? Who are the Chinese portrait artists who have influenced you and you admire?

JSC: The value of Chinese traditional culture can not be better carried than by calligraphy and landscape painting. This kind of culture is introspective, self-cultivated, ethereal, and egoless. Portraiture and historical painting are more concerned with delving into the fabric of society which cannot be representative of Chinese traditional culture. Literati paintings are the opposite. Their trajectory is not anti-society as such, but they are certainly not political in any way. Pure self-cultivated painting is stepping into to a highly specialist area, while paintings geared towards social needs has become mainstream. The flourish of portraiture is wrapped up in this historical and ongoing trend. Based on this kind of analysis, there are two artists I am interested in. One is Mao Yan, whose works have a kind of luxurious, nihilistic feeling. The luxury is created by the artist's fluidity of brushstroke, while nihilism comes about as he rids his works of all those factors of identity and experience. The essence of Mao Yan's works is literati paintings, and he goes even further. Self-cultivated and egoless are redundant characteristic of his works. The other artist is my former teacher Yang Feiyun, who is representative of Chinese Neo-Realism and well-known for his classic painting style. To my point of view, classical or



Peace Series - Couple
 平和系列 - 伉俪
 Oil on Canvas
 布面油画
 2013
 100 x 80 cm each

not is not the question. At the core lies his strong desire to analyse society. Professor Yang's painting style is on the pulse of hyper-realism, the study of colour, perspective, space and so on is very deep. I watched him once sketching an old man in the countryside. Every brushstroke showed his honesty and sensitivity. He told me that he always becomes too excitable to be able to control his emotions when he sketches. He has to calm down first and then start to paint. As for me, exploring questions of society maintains my passion for art, even though this process reminds me of the limitations of human beings.

EP: There is the possibility of engagement on various levels with this series. Firstly, there is the faithfulness to your subjects' likeness, but what doesn't come across in reproduced images of your work is the delicacy of brushstroke and richness of texture; texture intended to replicate that of a well-worn photograph, one that has been kept for a long time, treasured, and looked at over and over. In other words, texture is memory in this series. It is also sculpted stillness, if you like - and literal distance for reflection. For the viewer, there is therefore the demand to engage on a temporal / historical level with your work.

Q: Would you ever go back to paint your subjects still living and would you approach them differently this time round - meaning how would you explore further the temporal element?

JSC: Yes, part of my original plan was to paint the subjects who are still living today. But in the end I decided it would overshadow the preservation of innocence - and that is my foremost goal. Firstly, placing past and current portraits into a single exhibit is like giving the questions with answers. Secondly, the comparison would be almost ruthless as it emphasises the cruel nature of time passing. My aim is to show the stillness of my subjects, rather than the changes. The temporal element acts as the background, stressing values of the past. And, as a further temporal element, memory filters a kind of reality on the past with distance to the actual events but much closer to the truth of perspective.

EP: Unlike other Chinese artists who have recorded this period of history, for instance Zhang Xiaogang, whose Bloodline series is overwhelming symbolic, or Jin Shangyi, whose work is descriptive, your work is at once a balance between the symbolic and the descriptive. Your subjects were real people and people you were connected to, either family members or friends - you pay attention to realistic, subtle details that relay their life's journey.

Q: Do you regard it as key to present a multi-generational narrative to express the ongoing repercussions of the period 1949 leading up to the Cultural Revolution and to anchor the private within the context of the public for a deeper connection between the human and the historic?

JSC: These works not only describe a single period, but several periods of history. I didn't distinguish between them intentionally. On the contrary, I wanted to avoid showing any symbol of socio-political events' effects across periods. Social background, individual fates and other factors are important parts in my creation, but cannot be over-emphasised. In my view, the light of humanity is the greatest value, which has universality beyond an age or geographical borders.



Peace Series - Reunion I
平和系列 - 相聚之一
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2013
92 x 150 cm



Peace Series - Young Soldier IV
平和系列 - 年轻军人之四
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
46 x 28 cm

However, there is a kind of tension when facing country, nation, politics, the helplessness and insignificance of human nature then becomes apparent. There are also the ideals connecting human values; when there is too much focus on physical reality the aesthetics may reach a stumbling block - and the secret of life vanishes. It's difficult to balance between ideals and reality, but I hope I achieve this.

EP: To take this question further, traditional Confucian socio-political thought begins with the nation, the motherland, then family unit, that is the collective, all esteemed above the individual. Yet portraiture is often associated with the status of an individual - as a portrait artist you commemorate your sitter. You have painted famous faces, but you seem to find painting the Everyman and recognising their individual identities the most compelling. There is also a moral dimension to your work. You perceive strength in instilling a sense of self-worth, preserving their dignity, and moreover, reinstating their pre-Revolution purity.

Q: Do you see it your duty to portray a moral dimension in recording this period of history? Is this partly why you focus predominantly on younger subjects?

JSC: No. Life itself brings a kind of pure beauty when it starts, which is identical every time. Purity has nothing to do with morality. For traditional narrative paintings, their function was to state the painter's moral stance. My portraiture works are not narrative, but include ingredients made for narrative - my subject's clothing, tags and so on are connected with their time period. However, it is just a path to reach the subject. The identity icons are reflective of their status and situation at the time, but fate is always transient and unpredictable. The aura of my works is made up of factors beyond those found in the paintings, such as the changing times, evolution of society, the unknown fate of individual... One's own moral compass should be their guide and for my works I want to express what I see without judgement. Their beauty is thought-provoking enough, there is no need for additional comment.

EP: The Neo-Realist portrait artists, including your former professor Yang Feiyun, often prize photorealism above all else, and the sheer beauty of the human form, especially the female form. Yet portraiture is most compelling when the painter captures not only the physical resemblance, the character, but the aura of their subject.

Q: Do you think it is more important to place idealism over realism in order to achieve this?

JSC: Pure portraiture does need to negotiate the relationship between the ideal and reality. Any portrait painting would be a failure if it had nothing other than just the image and its form. Research and rational judgment behind the image are more important for the viewer and for the artists. Some artists establish the form by removing the image, but I care more about the information the image brings to me, not only giving the individuals I portray independent voices, but also expressing a story that fascinates me — the visual presentation of an individual's fate. On the other hand, the subjects of my *Peace* works date back thirty to fifty years ago. The filter of time also makes the ideal more overt. I still hope to emphasise idealism, because it accommodates and balances better the complexity of human nature. Speaking on a practical level, the so-called ideal and real, concrete and abstract, are integrated and it is hard to balance or distinguish which comes first.

EP: Your work focuses on your subject, the subject is all - any props or contextual devices are of, or literally on, the subject, for instance their medals, their attire, their badges declaring their new occupation under the Cultural Revolution. The context is within the sitter, thereby creating works that are entirely self-reflecting. There is also a remarkably calming, other-worldly quality, which you achieve through your subjects' gaze, which manages to be simultaneously wistful and penetrating.

Q: Could it be said that your work is intended as a two-way mirror - that is, is it deliberately enigmatic as to whether we are the viewer or the viewed?

JSC: Painting itself is an art of contemplation, which is the same to both the artist and the audience. The uniqueness of portraiture lies in the more prominent, sometimes the only, individual image; secondly, if the eye view of the figure is towards the viewer, it inevitably will produce two-way examine effect. I hope viewers could gain such similar experience in the process of reading paintings. In addition, the subjects I depict are concentrated in 1960s. I prefer stronger faces and more representative state in choosing subjects. Overall, the poor in material and the rich in spiritual of that period showed vivid contrast, which I think is a unique phenomenon in Chinese history, or even human being's history. If those figures in the paintings can feel and see the current China, their thoughts must be able to converge to a great book.

EP: The relationship between photography and painting has been explored extensively by German artist Gerhard Richter, who has also incidentally painted portraits of family groups and soldiers. Richter arguably wanted to show that even though his work was based on photographs, as is yours, it was an illusion and thereby neutralise the charged political context.

Q: While very different stylistically, are you seeking to do the same in your work?

JSC: In my work, I wish to eliminate excessive suggestive and descriptive attributes and instead focusing on subtleties of expression, analysing the figure's character and most importantly, their internal spiritual state. The cause of this or that kind of temperament and state can be partly traced to political circumstances. But politics is about group values over individualism. I have some plans for group portraits, which will be closer to a more complex presentation of group values in visual form.

EP: The *Peace* works are your first thematically worked series. It seems this series is as much a search for self-identity as it is a nation's identity, and indeed an exploration of your own identity.

Q: What does this series mean to you? What conceptual and/ or stylistic aspects of it would you develop next, or perhaps depart from?

JSC: One's country is like a parent, offering a profound sense of destiny, which is the origin of marrow and blood, the residence of spirit and soul. I am an artist, art creation is my life. Yet all the things I can and cannot create in my life are limited to my painting tools. When it comes to my own identity, I am a soldier, which is the biggest change in recent years. Becoming a soldier from as well as a professional artist appears to be a decisive change for me. The fact that I am a Chinese also lends to a profound sense of identity. I will find my way by coordinating my three identities. The reason why those figures I have depicted in this series have experienced eyes and rich confidence is because of their rich life experiences.

As for my *Peace* series, many people may associate this series with nostalgia because the depicted subjects are very old. In my opinion, classicalism is recalling the past of idealism, realism is recalling the past of post-modern age, being cynical is recalling the past with anarchism. What is new? What is old? This is not my concern. One piece of work is one point of view, ten works is a voice, a hundred works is a silent scream, one thousand pieces of works will be an epic poem. There is still a long way to go.



Peace Series - Young Friend III
平和系列 - 年轻的朋友之三
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2011
110 x 85 cm

EP: Photography was once predicted to ring the death knell of painting, particularly portraiture. There is a noticeable difference in the energy of your work that uses photography-based subjects (the *Peace* works) versus live models (for instance in your Tibetan portraits).

Q: Paradoxically, is the distance provided by photography the tool you need to create the stillness and distillation of your work?

JSC: In Western history, the developments in optical instruments and realistic paintings have had widespread repercussions everywhere. The development of technology does not mean the termination of a particular painting style. However, if an art form finally steps into demise, it shows its root vitality has lost its soil. Painting and photography



would not mutually end, because their functions and characteristics are not the same. The advantage of painting is that it records the most exquisite emotional traces and clues of inner thoughts of human through handiwork. Looking at paintings are like observing people - details of behaviour show immediately.

Photography has in my opinion borrowed from painting. Such situation remained the same before the birth of photography hundreds of years ago, which is not surprising at all. Both my *Peace* Series and Tibetan children portraits are actually based on photographs, but the photographs of children in Tibet were taken by myself while those of the *Peace* Series were selected from a personal archive of another era. Stylistic differences originate from the differentiation of themes, and different subjects will have their own ideal performance language, if you will. Of course, I also attach great importance to the sense of distance as an artist engaged in the act of painting. Photography provides quiet meditation and space for contemplation, and also provides distance in time. As for me, subject stability is very important, to suggest the existence of eternity. In relative terms, I can sketch fluently, but the image is constantly in flux, which occasionally makes me feel anxious.

Peace Series - Miniature Portraits V & VI

平和系列—小型人像之五、之六

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2011

22 x 15 cm (L); 26 x 18 cm (R)

Peace Series - Soldier III (opposite)

平和系列—军人之三（对面）

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2011

110 x 85 cm

EP: There are very few contemporary portraitists that pay tribute to beauty; most are concerned with a Post-Modern, angst-ridden urban condition. Your work eschews gratuitous attention-seeking imagery for a genuine empathy to your subject.

Q: In a sea of Post-Modernism, do you see the innocence of your subjects as an antidote to brash commercialism?

JSC: Commercialisation is the general trend which cannot be defied; artists are brands required to be operated and artworks are goods circulating in a marketplace. According to economic principles, good companies sell goods, better companies sell intellectual property, the best companies set standards. What lies behind the art world is not the wider public audience but the commercial world. In this commercial society, even the purest affection can be consumed, and of course this includes art. When it comes to urban identity and Post-modernism, the core maintains the act of consumption, which has replaced value and is the cause of anxiety. This is why I'm preoccupied with depicting China's pre-consumer society. At that time we were not yet alienated by technology and market rules, and were able to maintain hope and dignity of life with confidence. The irony is that, when we look back, the image is so deep and full, no matter the subjects had no money or material possessions which makes me think what should we rely on to enhance dignity of life and peace of mind. Getting back to paintings, I hope to show the inner light of human nature, let those who have suffered and will suffer from disaster to find peace, put anxiety and struggle to the background in the quiet of their eyes.



FURTHER CATALOGUE OF WORKS



Peace Series - Heroic Spirit I

平和系列 - 英气之一

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2012

100 x 80 cm



Battle Companion
战友
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
25 x 36 cm



Peace Series - Couple's Portrait II
平和系列 - 夫妇的肖像之二
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
76 x 33 cm



Peace Series - Teenager II

平和系列 - 少年之二

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2012

100 x 80 cm



Peace Series - Children's Portrait I

平和系列—儿童人像之一

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2011

24.5 x 15.5 cm



Peace Series - Red Scarf I
平和系列—红领巾之一
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
24 x 16.5 cm

Childhood Series 21
童年系列之 21
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2011
23.5 x 16.5 cm





Peace Series - Big Eyes
平和系列—大眼睛
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
18 x 26 cm



Peace Series - Colourful Jacket
平和系列—花棉袄
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2012
21 x 24 cm



Peace Series - Children's Portrait VI
平和系列—儿童人像之六
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
44.5 x 30 cm

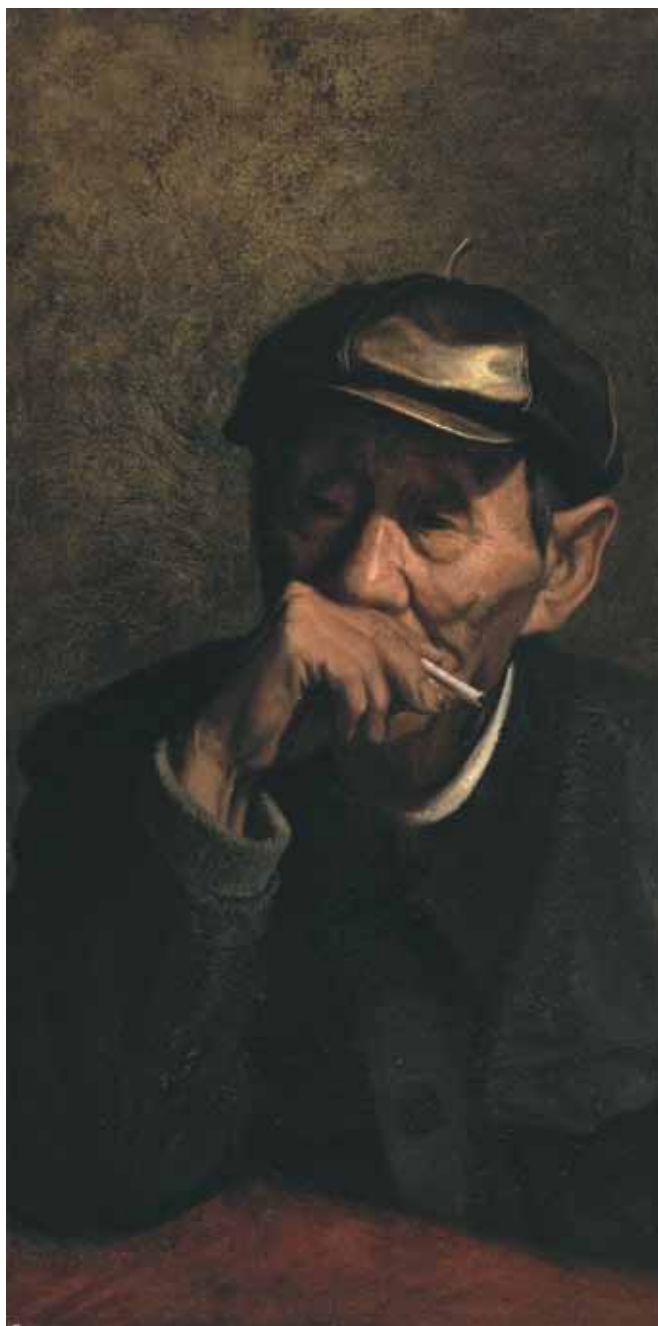


Peace Series - Children's Portrait VII
平和系列—儿童人像之七
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
45.5 x 32.5 cm
Collection of Professor Wu Xiaohai, Beijing
吴小海教授收藏, 北京



Peace Series - 100th Day I
平和系列—百岁之一
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
44.5 x 31.5 cm

PUBLIC & NOTABLE COLLECTIONS



Memory

回忆

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2008

100 x 50 cm

Collection of The National Art Museum of China, Beijing
中国美术馆，北京，中国



China's Temporality - The Present I & II
此时- 此刻
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2010
60 x 50 cm each
Standard Chartered Bank Collection, Singapore
新加坡渣打银行收藏



Zhuang Zi's Butterfly Dream

梦蝶

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2009

180 x 180 cm

Important Private Collection, United Kingdom

重要私人收藏，英国



Time Immutable

歌声已经远去

Oil On Canvas

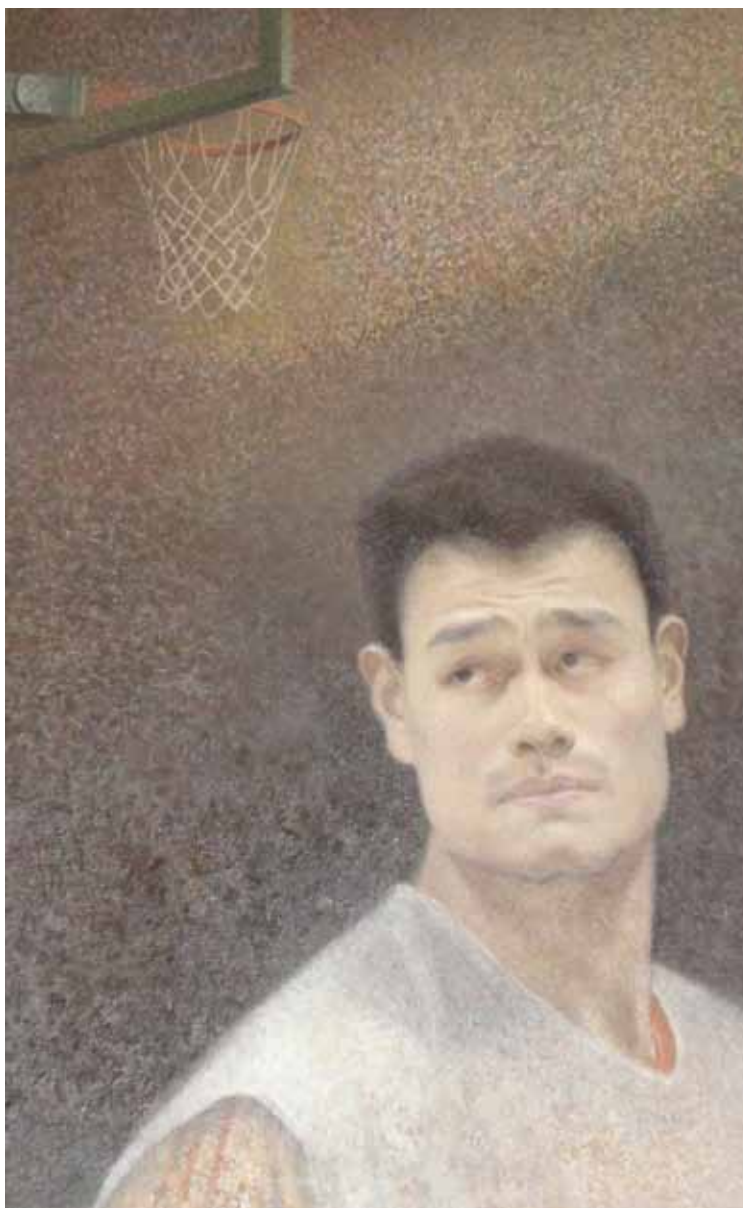
布面油画

2010

232 x 56 cm

Chevron Corporate Collection, The Chairman's Office, Beijing

雪佛龙公司藏品，董事长办公室，北京



Yao Ming

姚明

Oil and Tempera on Canvas

布面油画和坦培拉

2010

100 x 80 cm

Presentation to The China Olympic Museum, Beijing

北京中国奥林匹克委员会订制



Xingjiang Scene

晨炊

Oil On Canvas

布面油画

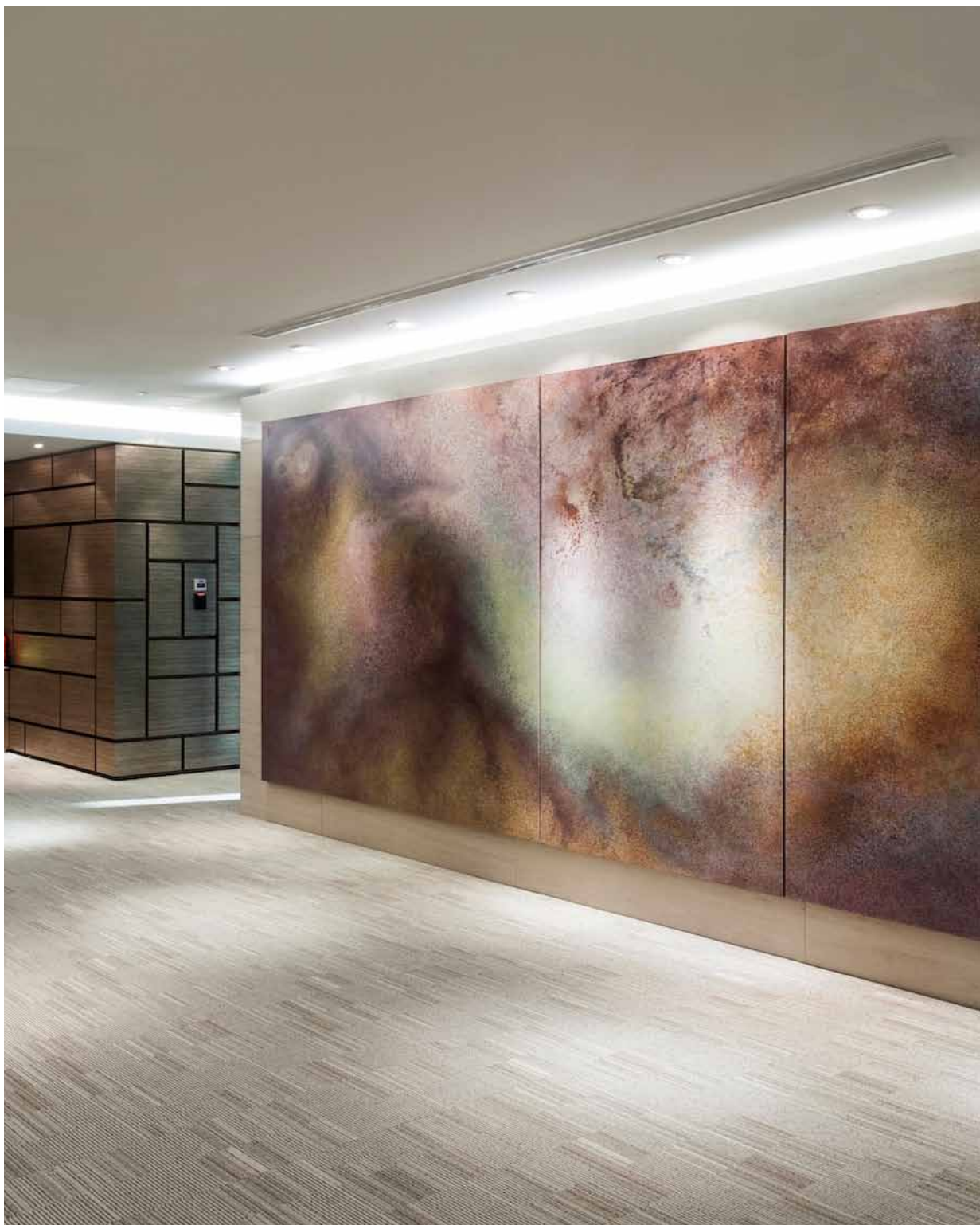
2009

100 x 100 cm

Eleventh Asian Art Festival Committee,

Dalan International Cultural Media Collection

第十一届亚洲艺术节组委会 大瀚国际文化传媒收藏



Taiji - The Supreme Ultimate II

太极

Tempera on Canvas

布面蛋彩

2011

225 x 606 cm overall

Chevron Corporate Collection, China Headquarters, World Trade Centre, Beijing

雪佛龙公司藏品，中国区总部，国贸，北京





Taiji - The Supreme Ultimate I

太极 1

Tempera on Canvas

布面蛋彩

2007

150 x 375 cm overall

Private Collection, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

私人收藏, Abu Dhabi, 阿拉伯联合酋长国





Memory

记忆

Oil On Canvas

布面油画

2009

100 x 100 cm

Heaven, Earth and Man's Museum, Shandong, China

天地人和美术馆，山东，中国

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY



JIANG SHAN CHUN

Born Wang Xin in Inner Mongolia in 1979

Graduated from Oil Department of Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2002.B.F. A. degree

Graduated from Chinese National Academy of Arts in 2009.M.A. degree

Professor, PLA Art Academy, Beijing

Living and Working in Beijing

EXHIBITIONS

2014

Making Peace with History, Jiang Shan Chun Solo Show, Peking Art Associates, Beijing

Guardian Fine Art Asia (GFAA) Inaugural Art Fair, May 26 - June 1st, The China National Convention Centre, Beijing

2013

The Plastic Arts, Exhibition of the People's Liberation Army, The Shen Fa Mahogany Museum, Beijing

2012

The Opening Exhibition of the Hong Zheng Art Space, Songzhuang Art Village, Beijing

2011

Exhibition of the Teachers of the PLA Art Academy, National Art Museum of China, Beijing

The Refutation of Time, Jiang Shan Chun Solo Show, Atkins & Ai Gallery, Beijing

2010

The Exhibition of the Fangzi Gallery Opening, Weifang, China

Hand in heart to see the glorious world—Dual Exhibition of Liu Yujun & Jiang Shan Chun Charitable Donation Exhibition to the Blind Society of China, Dragon Space, Beijing Hong Kong Jockey Club, Beijing

Tracing Sources and Seeking Law, Ordos, China

Tracing Sources and Seeking Law to the West—Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition, Baotou, China

Teachers and students of the Department of Fine Arts Exhibition —50th anniversary of PLA Art Academy, PLA Art Academy, Beijing, China

2009

The Fourth A+A, PIFO New ART Gallery, Beijing

Tracing Sources and Seeking Law—Appointment in Fangzi, Weifang, China

The Eleventh Asian Arts Festival—The Ordos International Art Exhibition, Ordos, China
Seeking and Finding, The First Exhibition of Chinese New Oil Painting Artists, Chinese Academy of Oil Painting, Beijing

2008

Tracing Sources and Seeking Law, China Art Gallery, Beijing
Tracing Sources and Seeking Law, Chan Liu Art Museum, Taipei
Wenchuan, The Fine Arts School Attached To The Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing

2007

Power of Realism, Contemporary Realism Art Gallery, Beijing

2005

The Quest for the Origin of Art, China Art Gallery, Beijing
Sketching Works of Tracing Sources, CAFA Gallery, Beijing

2004

Awarded Works of Charles B.Wang Oil Painting Scholarship, CAFA Gallery, Beijing

2002

Graduation Works of Central Academy of Fine Arts ,CAFA Gallery, Beijing

2001

I See the World, Nokia Sponsored Exhibition, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Gallery, Beijing

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Chevron Corporate Collection, Beijing
Heaven, Earth and Man's Museum, Shandong, China
National Art Museum of China, Beijing
Standard Chartered Bank Collection, Singapore

江山春

1979 年生于内蒙古

2002 毕业于中央美术学院油画系, 获学士学位

2009 毕业于中国艺术研究院, 获硕士学位 解放军艺术学院教授, 现居北京

展览

2014

" 静 - 时光 ", 江山春的平和系列, 北京艺术联盟

嘉德典亚 (GFAA) 首届艺术博览会, 2014 年 5 月 26 日至 6 月 1 日, 国家会议中心, 北京

2013

造型艺术, 中国人民解放军展, 深发红木艺术馆, 北京

2012

宏正艺术空间开幕展, 宋庄艺术村, 北京

2011

时间的悖论, 艾特画廊, 北京 军事美术大师的摇篮 - 解放军艺术学院美术系 30 周年师生展, 中国美术馆, 北京

2010

" 坊茨美术馆开幕展 ", 潍坊, 山东

" 手绘同心 - 江山春·刘禹君慈善捐赠展 ", 北京香港马会 " 龙 " 艺术空间, 北京 " 寻源问道 ", 鄂尔多斯, 内蒙古 " 寻源问道西部行 - 中国油画邀请展 ", 包头, 内蒙古 " 解放军艺术学院建校五十周年美术系师生作品展 ", 解放军艺术学院, 北京

2009

" A+A 第四回展 ", 偏锋新艺术空间, 北京

" 寻源问道——相约坊茨小镇 ",

天地仁和画廊, 潍坊 " 第十一届亚洲艺术节——走进鄂尔多斯国际美术大展 ", 鄂尔多斯 " 挖掘·发现——首届中国油画新人展 ", 中国油画院, 北京

2008

" ' 寻源问道 ' ——油画研究展 ", 中国美术馆, 北京

" 寻源问道 ", 台湾长流美术馆, 台北 " ' 汶川 ' ——中央美术学院附中教师赈灾义卖展 ", 北京

2007

" 写实的力量 ", 当代写实美术馆, 北京

2005

" 神州寻源 ", 中国美术馆, 北京

" 寻源写生作品展 ", 中央美术学院, 北京 2004

" 王嘉廉奖学金获奖作品展 ", 中央美术学院陈列馆, 北京 2002

" 中央美术学院毕业展 ", 中央美术学院陈列馆, 北京 2001

" 诺基亚——我看世界 ", 中央美术学院陈列馆, 北京

公共收藏

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中国美术馆, 北京

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