

Yang Longhai 杨龙海

Critique & Brief Introduction

Yang Longhai, born in Guizhou (China) has proven to be one of the most eclectic artists of his generation. While his educational background and training as a painter remains common ground alongside his contemporaries, the artist's arrival to Shanghai catalysed a radical personal transition. Although his skill as an illustrator and oil painter continue to represent a lesser body of his work, his experimentation with collaborative creations, applied practice with electronic and new media technologies now constitute his greater accomplishments.

This evolution and transformation came from Yang Longhai's characteristic adaptability and innovation. Exposure to diverse media came gradually by course of a continual experimentation with other artists of diverse backgrounds and nationalities which heightened his conceptual strength and his ironic, humorous, and inventive spirit, ever increasing since the inception of the current series.

The artist, in collaboration with the collective "Liu Dao", now presents over fifty works, the culmination of nearly two years of labour with various debris, found objects and the cast-off, discarded items he fuses together in his creations. Hazard and randomness are as signatory as the perpetual computer generated cycles that breathe life into the LED panels at the core of his compositions.

Yang Longhai stimulates our visual experience: it is a direct and frontal appeal to our perception of things. Images animate his artworks and tremor behind a collage of hubris, torn newsprint, archaic calligraphic texts, and various dialectics on sexuality, common people and extreme amplifications of the human physical body. The artist invites the viewer to behold brief episodes of self-portraiture with references to consumerism and political pop-iconography imbued with a laconic sense of humour and abandon. Elsewhere, more abstract and conceptual creations obscure the human figure to near eclipse: we sense the ephemerality of life's vicissitudes, the alienation and cold echo of light and transistors punctuating the silent, faceless figures.

Yang Longhai has immersed himself in the work of new media with a relentless passion, blindly, insistently and without intentions or the pretext of a determined « end ». To MacLuhan, "the medium is the message", and while the young artist is not the first, he holds a particular insight and instinctual talent while caught in the creative act. Appreciably, a dose of humour may infuse within the casual spectator a lighter sense of being, an aspect felt by the random observer yet from an unconscious dimension of the artist.

The pervasive sphere of new technologies and myths associated with their impact in the milieu of contemporary art merge and surface in the sincere and sardonic voice of the artist/engraver/illustrator/painter. Yang's sense of abandon in his work reveals an inner strength and quiet demeanour, traits that are the sole apparent consistency in his artistic trajectory for the last few years.

Without further contextualization or pretext, I invite you to explore the casual accident that governs his work, his constituent humour and levity of spirit. Doubtless, Yang Longhai has ceased to question, embracing the immediacy of creation in response to the haste, noise and stimulus of the metropolis of Shanghai.

R A Suri - 04.02.2008