

ULLENS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART 尤伦斯当代艺术中心

FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION FOR YUN-FEI JI IN BEIJING

June 2, 2012. Beijing China

Editorial Contacts:

Baiqu Gonkar, UCCA

+86 10 5780 0243

+86 13161102813

gonkar@ucca.org.cn

Jade Ouk, Sutton PR Asia

+852 2528 0792

jade@suttonprasia.com

Media/UCCA

Members/VIP

Preview:

June 2

Exhibition dates:

June 3 – July 15, 2012

Also available for download from the
UCCA website

Special collaborative performance by The Philadelphia Orchestra Quartet

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) will present the first solo exhibition of artist Yun-Fei Ji, "Water Work", in Beijing, the city in which he was born. This exhibition features new commissions and key works from the last decade, including several scroll paintings over ten meters long, some which have never been seen together. In this exhibition Yun-Fei Ji examines historical developments in contemporary America and China focusing on the effects of grand infrastructural projects and water-related natural disasters on ordinary people.

Born and raised in Beijing, and trained in oil painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Yun-Fei Ji made his artistic name in the 1990s as a painter working in Brooklyn, in the United States, showing in a thoroughly international context. His practice is rooted in observation and the passage of time, using classical materials such as Chinese ink with watercolor, pencil, woodblock, and etching on paper.

His painterly lens switches freely between his two homelands, with some works addressing American events such as Hurricane Katrina while others look at projects and events in China such as the Three Gorges Dam and the North-South Aqueduct. Combining personal research with fictionalized elements, Yun-Fei Ji's work is a socio-environmental document of change and progress, using Chinese symbolism to make universal statements. He deals with loss and human displacement, often adding a mythological dimension to recent happenings.

A special collaborative performance will take place in conjunction with "Water Work", led by the string quartet of The Philadelphia



ULLENS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART 尤伦斯当代艺术中心

Orchestra on Saturday 2 June, 16:00-17:00. Inspired by Yun-Fei Ji's work, the quartet will perform two pieces, Antonín Dvořák's "American" String Quartet No. 12 in F major, Op. 96 (1893) and Dmitri Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 4, Opus 83 (1949), in response to Yun-Fei Ji's solo exhibition, "Water Work", which deftly handles issues of disaster, displacement and social memory through the quiet voice of Chinese ink and unfolding scrolls. This event is part of The Philadelphia Orchestra Residency Week and Tour of China in 2012, in conjunction with the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing. The weeklong residency in Beijing marks the first time any U.S. orchestra has co-created a long-term residency in China. This is also the first time a musical performance directly inspired by an exhibition will take place at UCCA.

Yun-Fei Ji has been involved in a number of important exhibitions internationally, including the 18th Sydney Biennale (2012) and the 11th Biennale de Lyon (2011), as well as shows at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the British Museum, London.

This exhibition is made possible with loans from the U.S. Embassy Beijing, Amber Xiang, Jeff Zou, Chen Mingming, and the James Cohan Gallery.

Related Programs

Artist-led Exhibition Tour Series: Through Your Eyes

Time: Saturday, June 9, 10.00-11.30

Venue: UCCA La Suite

Teachers: Hou Wei, Stéphane Maggiacomo

Language: Chinese with English translation

Exploring our Exhibitions: Water Work

Time: Saturday, June 16, 10.00-11.30

Venue: UCCA La Suite

Teachers: Luo Zhen, Ding Zhaogeng

Language: Chinese with English translation

About UCCA

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art is a not-for-profit art center in Beijing, located at the heart of the 798 Art District. As a platform for

ULLENS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART 尤伦斯当代艺术中心

contemporary art linking China and the world, UCCA offers an average 15 exhibitions a year and over 500 public programs including art talks, film screenings, performances, workshops and public festivals. The international center maintains a special focus on recent developments and historical movements in Chinese contemporary culture, whilst also showcasing the latest in art and design and fostering international exchange.

ucca.org.cn

About Yun-Fei Ji

Yun-Fei Ji (b. Beijing, 1963) received his BFA from the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in 1982, followed by an MFA from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1989. He paints on handmade rice paper with translucent ink or paint based on natural pigments, using ancient techniques including calligraphy. His subjects evoke traditional Chinese landscape painting, as figures and scenes recall tales and epics from Chinese folklore and history. However, his works tell much more contemporary stories. Rather than displaying vistas of villages nestled into traditional mountain landscapes, Ji's works are about moving out, as his subjects include the people who were displaced during the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, as well as those who lost their homes during Hurricane Katrina. While his work echoes the oeuvre of the ancient Dynasty Masters, whose paintings combined compositional and technical brilliance with expression of sorrow and melancholy, Yun-Fei Ji's socially focused subjects (the result of on-site observation, documentary-style research, and an interest in satire), are more global, existential portrayals of human tragicomedy.

Yun-fei Ji developed his artistic practice in Brooklyn, New York, where he began exhibiting in 1990, but has been based in Beijing for the past three years. Group exhibitions include participation in the 2002 Whitney Biennale and the 11th Biennale de Lyon (2011), as well as shows at The Museum of Modern Art, New York and the British Museum, London. In 2012, he will participate in the 18th Biennale of Sydney. Selected solo exhibitions include "Boxers" at the SAFN Museum, Iceland (2004); "The Empty City," which traveled to the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis and the Rose Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA (2004); "Great News Comes From the Collective Farm" at ZenoX, Belgium (2005); "Water That Floats the Boat Can Also Sink It" at the James Cohan Gallery, New York (2006); and the Frieze Art Fair at Zeno X Gallery, London (2010). He received The Rome Prize in 2006 from the American Academy in Rome, Italy. This will be his second solo exhibition in China and first in Beijing.

ULLENS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART 尤伦斯当代艺术中心

About The Philadelphia Orchestra

In 1940, members of The Philadelphia Orchestra played a special benefit concert to aid Chinese hospitals during a time of turmoil. Over thirty years later in 1973, under the direction of Eugene Ormandy, they would become the first American orchestra to perform in China, returning numerous times, notably in 2008 when they helped raise money for victims of the Sichuan Earthquake. Today, at UCCA, they perform as a quartet in response to Yun-Fei Ji's solo exhibition, "Water Work", which deftly handles issues of disaster, displacement and social memory through the quiet voice of Chinese ink and unfolding scrolls.