

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

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Exhibition dates:

Jan 15, 2011 - Mar 9, 2011

## Ling Jian reflects on modern standards of beauty and identity in *Moon in Glass*

January 15, 2011. Beijing.

Ling Jian's *Moon in Glass*, co-produced with Tang Contemporary Art and co-organized with Today Art Museum, is two consecutive exhibitions with a shared title, featuring different works. The first part of *Moon in Glass* will be exhibited at Today Art Museum from December 30, 2010 to January 16, 2011, and the second will appear at UCCA from January 15, 2011 to March 9, 2011.

UCCA Director Jérôme Sans describes *Moon in Glass* as "a new series of works employing portraiture, mirrors, installation and spatial design to create a seamless visual experience and an atmosphere that invites contemplation." As visitors pass through the *yueliangmen* (a traditional moon-shaped gate that adorns Chinese gardens) into Ling Jian's exhibition in UCCA's Middle Room, they will find themselves in a garden of a different sort: instead of flowers, there are portraits of beautifully seductive women painted on round canvases and printed on moon-shaped mirrors, as well as a wall of colorful circular mirrors in which we can behold our own reflections.

After many years of living and working as an artist in Vienna, Hamburg and Berlin, Ling Jian returned to Beijing in 2003 and began to focus on works that conceptualized the contemporary Chinese identity. "Ling Jian's 'angels' are both hyper-realistic and stylistically exaggerated,"

writes UCCA Director Jérôme Sans in his preface to the exhibition, “reflecting modern standards of beauty and shades of cultural identity. Reproducing their portraits on moon-shaped glass creates a dual distortion, heightening the abstraction and transforming angels into [...] vehicles of identity, vessels of information in an increasingly abstract age. As we draw closer, their portraits begin to dissipate, replaced by our own reflected images, insecurities and private self-portraits.”

Ling Jian’s ambiguous portraits of beautiful women and androgynous men have been interpreted in various and often contradictory ways, as UCCA Art Department Director Zheng Yan notes in her preface to the *Moon in Glass* exhibition catalogue. “Ling Jian depicts his subjects in a way that is both richly expressive and transcendent,” she writes. “His androgynous characters may be beautiful, seductive, aloof or mournful, but the complex psyches hinted at or hidden behind their facial expressions clamor for our attention, offering us a jumble of conflicting testimony.”

*Moon in Glass* at UCCA was designed to incorporate the viewer into the experience as well, and to encourage people to reflect on their own concepts of identity and self-image. Artist Ling Jian explains that “the use of mirrors emphasizes the harmony between audience and artwork. As we draw closer to the mirrored surfaces...we observe the minute interactions that define the subtle dynamic between self and society.”

\*This exhibition is co-produced with Tang Contemporary Art and co-organized with Today Art Museum to produce two consecutive exhibitions at Today Art Museum and UCCA under a shared title.

## About the Artist

Ling Jian (b. 1963, Shandong Province, China) is a contemporary Chinese painter working in Beijing and Berlin. After receiving his degree from the Central Academy of Arts and Design in Beijing in 1982, he lived and worked for many years in Vienna, Hamburg and Berlin before returning to Beijing in 2003. Ling Jian is most well-known for his realistic, oftentimes distorted, portraits of provocative yet disturbing beauties. Through these seductive portraits, Ling Jian explores themes

of cultural and individual identity within modern society.

### **Related Events at UCCA**

#### **Artists' Talk: Moon in Glass A Dialogue with Alan Chan and Ling Jian**

Sunday, Jan 16, 2011 14:00-15:30

UCCA Auditorium

Chinese with English translation

#### **UCCASTORE Limited-Edition Artwork: Ling Jian's *Hero No. 2***

The subject of Ling Jian's *Hero No. 2*, a limited-edition lithograph available exclusively through UCCASTORE, is an androgynous young man. Despite his outward beauty, his eyes convey a hint of sadness, pain, perhaps even distress. In the space between what is revealed and what is not, we get the sense that this young man is a metaphor for a generation that has seen and experienced everything, and yet can explain none of it. Like Ling Jian's other well-known works, *Hero No. 2* is a vivid illustration of the current state of Chinese society, a work that challenges us to examine the kind of culture we have created.

### **About UCCA**

The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is a non-profit, comprehensive art center founded by collectors Guy and Myriam Ullens in November 2007. UCCA presents exhibitions of established and emerging artists and develops a trusted platform to share knowledge through education and research.