

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

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Exhibition dates:
May 28, 2011 - June 10, 2011

Floating Lives, Drifting Dust —“Curated by Gu Wenda” / Su Zhiguang: Drift

May 28, 2011. Beijing.

In the twelfth edition of UCCA's long-running “Curated by...” series, which aims to foster a new generation of Chinese artists by pairing them with established guest curators, acclaimed international artist Gu Wenda introduces the work of young experimental artist Su Zhiguang. Using dust and dirt collected from the streets of Beijing, Su Zhiguang transforms a mundane substance into an artistic medium, imbuing it with a renewed significance.

“For Su Zhiguang, dust is both medium and metaphor,” writes UCCA Director Jérôme Sans in his exhibition foreword, “a substance symbolic of the fluidity and chaos of China's modern cities. Like an urban anthropologist, he collects and archives the detritus of our floating lives, painstakingly cataloguing the samples for posterity.”

Curator Gu Wenda notes that the three works in this exhibition, *Dust Manual*, *Dust Tiles* and *Dust Insects*, *Dust Flowers*, were created using 256 different “dust samples” collected by the artist in 3 locations in Beijing. *Dust Manual*, an elegant volume of 46 “sketches” rendered in dust, was modeled after *Mustard Seed Garden*, an early Qing Dynasty manual of painting, while *Dust Insects*, *Dust Flowers* are Warholian prints combining contemporary western and classical Chinese motifs. “These works reveal material drift and humanist notions of survival, as well as the cross-pollination of eastern and western culture,” writes Gu Wenda in his curator’s foreword.

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Artist Su Zhiguang feels that “collecting is a form of behavior not unlike the wind. Gathering the dust that has settled over the streets of Beijing and reassembling it in an exhibition affords it the opportunity to be seen as something extraordinary, viewed as a cultural specimen in its own right.” He says that in this, his first solo show, he chose to render images in dust because images “offer a relatively independent means of documenting the truth about human history. Every image is a summary of a unique individual perspective; when these images are presented in the guise of art, they acquire an even more sacred place in our society. Freely disseminated and passed from person to person, they come to dominate our visual historical memory.”

By elevating ordinary dust to something extraordinary, Su Zhiguang’s *Drift* allows us to ponder the transient nature of our contemporary reality, and wonder at what shifts might lie ahead.

The "Curated by..." series is free to the public thanks to the generous support of Bloomberg.

Related Events at UCCA

Artists' Talk: Drift

Date: May 29, 2011 / 14:00-15:30 / UCCA La Suite

Guests: Su Zhiguang, Gu Wenda

Language: Chinese with English translation

Migrant School Students' Art Program: Rainbow Journey 10: Colorful Sand Painting

Date: June 2, 2011 / 14:00-16:00 / UCCA Loft

Guest: Su Zhiguang

Language: In Chinese only

About Su Zhiguang

Su Zhiguang (b.1983, Guangdong Province) is a young experimental artist currently working towards his M.A. degree from the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), where he also received his undergraduate degree from the Department of Experimental Art. An introspective artist, Su's use of materials reflects his thoughtful

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observations of the world and his own anxieties. Su Zhiguang has actively participated in several experimental art exhibitions supported by the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

About Gu Wenda

Acclaimed artist Gu Wenda, one of the leading lights of the “1985 Chinese New Wave” movement, is known for his works dealing with dislocation, mutation, modernity and tradition. He has crafted elegant works of calligraphy, installations involving found materials such as human hair, and site specific projects for the United Nations. He is one of the most recognizable and influential Chinese avant-garde artists in the world today.

About the UCCA “Curated by...” Series

Initiated in July 2008 by UCCA Director Jérôme Sans, the UCCA “Curated by...” series invites established Chinese artists to recommend emerging talents and curate exhibitions for them. The series helps to forge connections between artists of various ages working at different stages of their careers, and provides valuable exposure and exhibition opportunities for young Chinese artists, particularly those who have never held a solo exhibition before. Thus far, UCCA has presented 11 “Curated by...” exhibitions in its Black Box & White Cube space. The average age of the young artists showcased in these exhibitions was 30 years old; the youngest was a second-year student at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing. In 2011, Bloomberg began sponsoring the “Curated by...” series, thus enabling UCCA to make the series free to the public.

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.