

Guo Fengyi at KWM artcenter

Artist: Guo Fengyi

Curator: Aimee Lin

Venue: KWM artcenter, Beijing

Exhibition Title: This Too Is Guo Fengyi

Date: June 3 – August 3, 2020

Images of work courtesy of Long March Space, Beijing

Installation views courtesy of KWM artcenter, photographer: Sun Shi

Press Release:

KWM artcenter is pleased to present the Chinese artist Guo Fengyi's solo exhibition entitled *This Too Is Guo Fengyi* from 3rd June to 3rd August, 2020. The exhibition contains two sections. In the main hall there are 14 works on paper and one group of early drawings and notes. In the screening room, we are presenting Guo Fengyi's archive from the Long March Project, an experimental text from the writer Jia Qin and an interview between the artist Xu Tan and Guo Fengyi from 2007. This exhibition aims to re-introduce Guo Fengyi's artistic practice to a new public. By way of literally following her brush strokes one can perceive the evolution of her mysterious imagery's formation.

Curatorial Statement

Guo Fengyi's drawings were first introduced to China and subsequently to an international contemporary art public through "The Long March Project: A Walking Visual Display" initiated in 2002. The exhibitions *Guo Fengyi: Who Is Guo Fengyi* (2005), *Guo Fengyi: I Am Guo Fengyi* (2009), and the exhibition *Guo Fengyi: Landscape Portrait* (2014) directly set out to establish the artist's identity primarily followed by presenting a criteria through which the artwork could be appreciated. Guo Fengyi's 30 year extraordinary history of visibility and acceptance internationally has helped a reevaluation of her work in China. At the beginning she was recognised as an "alternative" or an "outsider artist". In the exhibition *Guo Fengyi: To See from a Distance* at The Drawing Center, New York in spring 2020, the Director of the institution and Art History expert Laura Hoptman pointed out that Guo Fengyi was an artist who 'broke the narrow and unchanging nature of contemporary art'. The phenomenon of Guo Fengyi over 3 decades has contributed to a profound widening of how people perceive what can be considered art.

Nowadays with a renewed understanding, there's no need for us to pontificate over a contemporary definition of Guo Fengyi's art. We no longer need to position Guo within the category of 'controversial' or 'outsider artist'. Therefore, today in 2020, through *This Too Is Guo Fengyi*, we hope to provide every audience, whether professional or not, a chance to further recognize Guo Fengyi and concentrate on her art without the restraints of any prejudgements. Her art is informed by her life long mystical practices and the wisdom gained from outside conventional knowledge systems. Her drawings demonstrate her curiosity and her insight into life and the universe, the traditional and the contemporary, and Chinese and world culture. Her work reveals her voice, her story and how she brings wisdom, strength and inspiration to others through a unique language.

Through this exhibition, we would like to present Guo Fengyi from different perspectives. Firstly from her 'I' perspective which exists in her paintings, notes and words, and is represented in the world we have created in the main hall of KWM artcenter. Secondly, in the screening room, from a 'she' perspective, in the form of photos, documentaries and memoirs from the documents of the Long March Project, in the experimental text by the writer Jia Qin and an interview made by the artist Xu Tan as a part of his "Keyword Project" in 2007. Guo Fengyi's voice as well as the reflections from others all are presented at KWM artcenter

Due to the artistic and personal charm of Guo Fengyi, this exhibition is supported by many people including artist Xu Tan and He Chi, John Tain from Asia Art Archive, Theresa Liang from Long March Project and her team. Guo Fengyi was an artist who started to draw with the purpose of curing. In her practice, a path to explore her wisdom and view a new way to relate with the world is offered. These, considerations, among others, we hope the viewers experience.

About the artist

Guo Fengyi (1942-2010, Xi'an, China) is a female artist whose artistic practice articulates a particular journey of spiritual and metaphysical significance, belonging to an older generation whose embrace of Chinese folk culture imparts a unique knowledge of history, myth and mystery. Her works on paper are composed of finely controlled brushwork that blend and weave into a composition of lustrous images; suggestions of both human figure and otherworldly beings.

Guo Fengyi began practicing Qigong (a traditional Chinese health maintenance practice that cultivates the qi energy within the body) as a way to alleviate illness. Accompanying her ever-deepening study into the philosophies of mysticism, she began having powerful visions that she felt compelled to give form to through drawing, as a way to adjust the balance between her body and her spiritual world. The subject matter of her works, as well as the concepts and physical structures she uses, comes from traditional Chinese systems of thought; cosmology, acupuncture energy maps, divination, sage kings, geomancy and dynastic grave sites – all of which have become dispensable in a modernizing China. Through her works, Guo Fengyi acts as a convergence point of traditional and contemporary thought, preserving cultural memories hidden deep within Chinese society. Through the physical act of drawing, Guo Fengyi charges the events of today's world with a profound significance, both as an act of creativity as well as an act of everyday life.

Guo Fengyi's first foray into the contemporary art world was her participation in the 2002 Long March Project – A Walking Visual Display, in which she produced site specific works at Lijiang, Yunnan Province, China, and collaborated with American artist Judy Chicago. Those works bore titles such as Lugu Lake, Lijiang, The Mosuo, Kunming, and If Women Ruled the World.

Link: <http://www.kwmartcenter.com/en/2020/05/30/this-too-is-guo-fengyi/>