

Wei Guangqing

魏光庆



Made in China No.3, Oil/acrylic on canvas, 2004, 138x268 cm



The 36 Stratagems No. 19, Oil/acrylic on canvas, 2005, 120x150 cm

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Red Wall – Reading the Mind
 Print/Silkscreen, 2001
 76x57 cm

The visual symbol of the red wall penetrates a large degree of Wei Guangqing's work in which he extends the practice of the double-take: He encourages the viewer to look again or reconsider familiar narratives and styles of images. The series Red Wall takes as its point of departure the Chinese traditional moral classics *The Virtuous Words* with maxims of ethical morals and doctrines of the feudal system. Appropriating this ancient illustrated book, he replaces the original text with the dominant visual symbol of a red wall, maintaining only the original illustrations thus manipulating them with the flat pastiche technique of pop art. The red wall, though, becomes the commanding feature in the basic composition and serves as a new projection screen for a new societal order and new moral standards. It goes without saying that the representation of the wall plays on the various connotations that this symbol embraces: The wall as border device, of inclusion and exclusion, but also as protection of foreign intruders and influence. The seemingly simple yet actually complex and diffuse work is manifested as simultaneously inverted (drawing on ancient philosophy) and explicit (plagiarizing Western pop-aesthetics). The appearance and demonstration of the wall becomes ambiguous in the understanding that it is literally distanced from the nation it purportedly served. In subverting the ancient classics Wei Guangqing does not fully abandon the tradition, rather he confines the recipient to recognize their intertwined meaning in mainstream culture today – in consumerism, politics and faith.

By combining opposing concepts such as past and present, the figurative and the abstract, he represents these as fluid, heterogeneous concepts which cannot be viewed in isolation. The artists' strategy is an eclipse of multiple references to historical philosophy, and at the same time a rather post-modern pastiche of different visual images. With no immediate way to decode these cultural compilations, Wei Guangqing's paintings work like information fragments with no easy way out.

Wei Guangqing was born in Huanshi, Hubei Province in 1963. He graduated from the Department of oil painting of Zhejiang academy of fine Arts in 1985. Today he lives and works in Wuhan. Selected exhibitions include *Made in China – the Paintings of Wei Guangqing*, ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai, China (2005), *China – Contemporary Painting*, Fondazioni Cassa di Risparmio, Bologna, Italy (2005), *Mahjong*, Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland, (2005), and *The First Triennale of Chinese Arts*, Guangzhou Art Museum, China (2002).