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## LEAP

### 意-相

#### ABSTRACTION IN CHINA

吴山专和英格/WU SHANZHUAN & INGA SVALA THORSDDOTTIR

林天苗/LIN TIANMIAO

1986珠海会议/ZHUHAI SYMPOSIUM

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无题(第12届伊斯坦布尔双年展), 2011

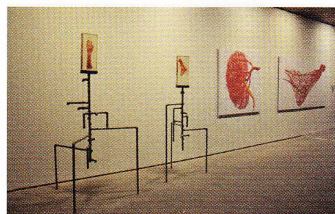
UNTITLED  
(12<sup>th</sup> ISTANBUL  
BIENNIAL), 2011

借由菲力克斯·冈萨雷斯-托雷斯作品激发出的策展灵感,使得展览从源头处就规避了千篇一律的双年展做法。

Although this year's biennial had its shortcomings, in drawing inspiration from the works of one artist—here, the late Felix Gonzalez-Torres—the curators managed to move the exhibition away from the stereotypical biennial format, something that is worthy of praise on its own.



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超有机  
SUPER-ORGANISM

我们关注这个展览的理由有两条:一是王璜生在担任“央美”美术馆馆长之后所启动的一个新的双年展,二是展览的学院背景。

For this new biennale, we first take a look at the initiatives of newly appointed director of the CAFA Art Museum Wang Huangsheng, and then, at how the academy lurks behind it.

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第四届广州三年展  
THE FOURTH GUANGZHOU TRIENNIAL  
INAUGURATION  
EXHIBITION

内容萎缩为形式、形式退守到态度,与权力和资本的轻易合谋,种种弊端都在这届三年展——得到显而易见的呈现。

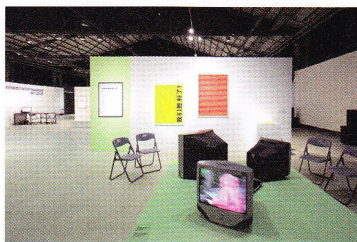
Content atrophying into form, form regressing into attitude, and the complicit affair between the forces of power and capital: all kinds of grievous manipulations take place in this triennial, where they are visibly exposed one by one.

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谋断有道  
THE SOLUTIONS

与同层展厅的“溪山清远”相比,这个设计展不仅看上去显得更像“当代艺术”,而且讨论问题时的态度也更为严肃。

Held on the same floor as “Pure Views,” “The Solutions” appeared not only more as an exhibition of “contemporary art,” but also as a more serious discussion of the issues at hand—even if the Chinese titles of the two exhibitions read as one and the same.

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小运动  
LITTLE MOVEMENTS

三位策展人努力将“自我实践”表述为一种带有普适性的自觉行为,也就在意识形态上否认了与那种常见的、以中国国情为表征的话语系统之间的联系,哪怕只是修辞上的相通性。

Three curators strive to express “self-practice” as a universal, conscious behavior, and deny any connection between ideology and the oft-heard discourse characterized by an emphasis on the unique conditions of China, despite any rhetorical similarities.

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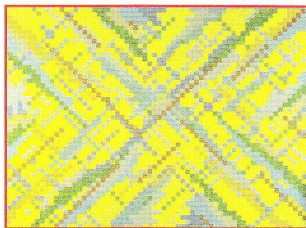
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BLOOMING IN THE  
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CHINESE ART, 1974-1985



本期封面 ON OUR COVER

丁乙  
《十示 2007-10》  
2007年  
丙烯、成品布  
200 × 280 厘米

Ding Yi  
Appearance of Crosses  
2007-10  
2007  
Acrylic on tartan  
200 x 280cm



## 终极循环

“一天二十四小时是个终极循环。”克里斯蒂安·马克雷今年八月份的一天在横滨与我共进咖啡时说。这么说的时侯，他自然是指自己最近的惊世之作《钟》，该作品从上百部影片中提取现成的钟表镜头，剪辑成一个24小时走动的实时时钟。对于一个一辈子沉浸在蒙太奇和循环、被记录时间中的艺术家，他这句话听起来不止调皮，还有颠覆性；这是一件自觉地把机械和数码逻辑反过来运用于自然的作品。

当我们又回到十二月夹在迈阿密博览会和圣诞节之间的忙乱期时，一年的时间似乎才是一种更终极的循环。似乎今年是一个更富有终结意味的圈。《艺术界》的今年是漫长而又愉快的一年，我们努力地以新颖、别样的方式记录和推进围绕中国当代艺术的对话。第六期，也是最后一期蓝脊的《艺术界》总结了我们过往关注的众多话题，包括教育和设计，还有处在不同事业发展阶段的艺术家，从毕业生到已过世多时的创作者。

本期中，《艺术界》资深编辑孙冬冬收集组织了一系列文本——批判性的、描述性的——探讨中国新近艺术史中“抽象”的地位。关于抽象问题的争论，自从上世纪八十年代初在《美术》杂志爆发以来，就是中国当代艺术的关键问题之一，亦即非直接再现的表现方式的艺术史地位问题。在这次广泛的调研中，我们除了肯定早期上海抽象画家的价值（丁乙，他的作品出现在本期杂志的封面，他的大型个展将在本期杂志付梓之际在上海民生美术馆开幕），也审视了年轻一代的抽象画家，对他们来说，抽象的表面其实来自异常具体的形式和社会探索过程。

以此作为今年的尾声却也恰如其分，因为我刚刚结束作为《艺术界》编辑总监的两年任期，即将赴任尤伦斯当代艺术中心馆长一职。不过我还是希望能继续深切关怀《艺术界》的成长，尽管我已经将日常事务交接给我长期以来的合作伙伴林昱，并且将更多的责任移交给我的同事们。我们希望《艺术界》的明年会比过去更出色。我们已着手准备和调研一系列有挑战性的主题和艺术家。请继续留意有关中国艺术界的理论状况问题，以及对外交流在将艺术移入移出这个特殊语境时所扮演的突出角色。

过渡期总是有喜有忧的，不过我很乐观地相信，当2012年12月到来时，即将装点您书架的绿色书脊《艺术界》将比过去任何时候都出色。

田霏宇

二零一一年十二月一日



# THE ULTIMATE LOOP

"The day is the ultimate loop," or so Christian Marclay remarked to me over coffee in Yokohama one morning in August. He was talking of course about his magnum opus, *The Clock*, which traces in real time the contours of a single twenty-four hour period using found footage from hundreds of films. The comment came off as cheeky, even subversive, given his career-long interest in montage and cyclical, recorded time; it was an application of the logics of the mechanical and the digital applied, self-consciously and in reverse, to the natural.

As we find ourselves back in December, in that fraught final window between Miami and Christmas, it seems that the year may be an even more ultimate sort of loop. This year at LEAP has been a long and happy one, as we have worked to document and where possible prod the conversation around contemporary art in China in new and different ways. Our sixth and final blue-spined issue wraps up a sequence in which we have looked at topics including education and design, and at artists at every possible point in their careers, from the freshly graduated to the long deceased.

For this issue, LEAP senior editor Sun Dongdong has assembled a collection of texts—some critical, others more descriptive—about the place of abstraction in China's recent art history. Since debate first broke out in the pages of *Meishu* in the early 1980s, this has been one of the key questions for contemporary art in China, namely the place of expression that is not directly tied to representation. In a wide-ranging survey, this package at once does justice to the early abstractionists of Shanghai (pace Ding Yi, whose work adorns our cover and whose major show opened at the Minsheng Art Museum just as we were going to press) and looks at a younger generation for whom abstract appearances are actually the product of incredibly concrete processes of formal and social inquiry.

It somehow seems a fitting note on which to end a year that also marks the end of my two years of exclusive involvement in LEAP's editorial direction. As I move into a new role as director of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, I look forward to maintaining a substantive involvement in the magazine's continued evolution, even as I hand the day-to-day editorial reins to my longtime deputy Aimee Lin and confer expanded responsibilities upon the rest of the LEAP team. Our hope is that next year will be LEAP's best yet, with an ambitious range of topics and artists already under research and preparation. Stay tuned for issues focusing on questions including the state of theory in the Chinese art scene and the distinct role played by diplomatic exchanges in moving art into and out of this special context.

Transitions are always bittersweet, but I am optimistic and confident that when December 2012 loops back around, and a yet-unwritten stack of green-spined LEAPs adorn your bookshelf, the magazine will be looking better than ever.

**PHILIP TINARI**

December 1, 2011



# 丁乙：概括的·抽象的 DING YI: SPECIFIC · ABSTRACTED

上海民生现代美术馆 MINSHENG ART MUSEUM, SHANGHAI 2011.12.10~2012.01.29



展览现场，2011年  
上海民生现代美术馆

View of "Specific · Abstracted," 2011  
Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai

1986年，一个24岁的年轻人做了两件事。其一，原名“丁荣”的他给自己起了个艺名：丁乙；其二，他在一张84厘米见方的画布上画上格子与X，取名为“禁忌”。这两件看似无关的事件，从个人意识出发，将对意义的压缩和简化付诸行动，成为丁乙艺术道路的重要转折。在研习了塞尚并深受其影响之后，受困于中西方文化夹击的丁乙感受到一种难以名状的、复杂的压力。他意识到无论东西方艺术，在传统面前循规蹈矩或依样画葫芦都是死路一条，应该“让艺术变得更陌生，没有绘画性，没有表现性”。

这种亟欲突出重围的心态可从《禁忌》一画中的一窥端倪。这张画被安排在美术馆主展厅的入口处，是整场展览中唯一一张“十示”系列以外的布面作品。它既是此次展览的一个隐性题眼，也可被视为丁乙艺术生涯真正的出发点。这张画看上去质朴沉实，还带有表现主义风格及1980年代特有的理想色彩。方格规划界限，黑叉表达决绝。画面传递出的仪式感——来自于手工而非形式，在接下来的二十几年

中，虽已在丁乙的绘画里改换颜面，却不曾淡化。展览主要回顾了丁乙1986年至今创作，其中包含35件布面绘画与26件纸上作品，对了解艺术家“十示”系列绘画的来龙去脉及其对中国抽象绘画的影响十分有益。

事实上，自1980年代末以来，丁乙的“十字画”对于中国抽象绘画的重要性不言而喻。他那简洁而著名的“+”与“x”，不仅易于辨识和记忆，更以其视觉的规定性和秩序感纾解时代的嘈杂与喧嚣，他以重复性的手工劳作放弃心理层面的幽冥，将绘画还原为最朴实的工作，消解人们对经典建构的愿景。由此去看《禁忌》之后的一系列以“十示”命名的画作，便可理解展览标题“概括的·抽象的”的要义，其提点的并非是物质形式的简化，也不是精神品性的提纯。意义的衰微、叙事的消失开启的是一种更为豁达的、开放的意识演绎方式以及日复一日劳作、用身体践行的日常观念。

丁乙曾提出“让画没有意义”，这在注重知识理



论、哲思启蒙的年代，在艺术界掀起文化批判大旗的语境中，若非戏言，实则需要有相当冷静与理性的洞察力。这种意识透露出丁乙对图像膜拜与观念漩涡的隐忧和警惕，随之而来的，是艺术家一种自然的、自觉的选择偏离。尽管丁乙的“+”来自印刷中用于校准坐标的十字线纹，并于1988年将之十分标准地画在第一张“十示”作品里（在红黄蓝三原色的背景下，它们看起来就像一个个准星儿），但他当时的选择与状态并没有被锚定到当时的主流艺术范畴。

丁乙如何以画家的身份自处？这个问题在此刻凸显出来。1980年代中后期，同在上海的许多年轻画家不约而同地参与抽象实验，产生了独具地域特征与美学旨趣的“上海抽象”，这是丁乙创作的背景之一。而在画“十示”以前，丁乙还做过行为艺术，关注当时中国的现代主义艺术运动。但他本分地回到画布前，用尺子、胶带和鸭嘴笔打格子、画十字，再填色。就绘画而言，丁乙曾受到关良、吴大羽、郁特里罗、塞尚、马蒂斯、蒙德里安、弗兰克·斯特拉等人的影响，后两者尤其是斯特拉的“硬边绘画”对他“十示”风格的形成意义重大。所以在早期的“十示”作品中，丁乙更注重对人工痕迹的消弭和画面机械质感的营造，由此形成其简洁、中立、理性的视觉语言。这种语言风格在后续创作的变化发展中得以不断强化。

丁乙绘画的转向，也许很难简单地归因于他对图像叙事和意义阐释的审慎，抑或回避对所处时代和社会环境的主观表达，也无法以某种抽象艺术的发轫来一言以蔽之。当把丁乙的绘画路径放入具体的历史时期与个人情境中去回溯时，更能理解艺术家不断在探寻与怀疑、内部与外部、吸收与继承之间找到平衡点，才是其艺术逐渐成熟的标志。结果是，对丁乙而言，直观、清晰的视觉叙述和规则比什么都重要。

丁乙绘画的另一个显著特点是对实验的热情，这恰恰是此次展览的一个统一要素。在他二十余年的创作中，他尝试运用各种媒介工具，除了常见的帆布、油彩与丙烯，还有麻布、成品布、瓦楞纸、扇面、木炭、粉笔、圆珠笔、油画棒、铅笔、马克笔等等。其实验的丰富性可在一个独立的小展厅中慢慢研究，这里以墙面和展柜的方式陈列了一系列丁乙的纸上作品与手稿。其中，以彩色铅笔和墨绘于宣纸上的长卷《23个圆》与《十字草》，以水墨表现十字研究，除了使人想起丁乙在上海大学美术学院学习国画的经历，亦看到他对中国传统美学的审视与思索。

其实，从早期的“硬触觉”，到开始徒手画画的“口语化”阶段，到多元的材料实验，再到用荧光色与金属色来表达上海的都市迷幻，丁乙的“十示”系列一直在变。它们清晰的轮廓下隐含着多样性与复杂性，其如细胞繁殖般的生长系统与丁乙掘进的作画方式以及随机的色彩原则息息相关。在这样的方式下，每一张画都拥有独特的基因密码，生命的坐标亦不相同，其绘画的当代意义在流动的景观里显现出来。

展览的重头戏是丁乙二十多年来创作的“十示”布面绘画。丁乙追求平凡色彩中颜色的光辉所流下来的笔触。他对颜色的运用遵从光的规律，色彩具有极其活跃的弥漫性。有趣的是，丁乙往往只能用

有限的颜色去模拟自然或城市的色调与光感，如粉笔的八色、荧光的四色，以及今年四幅新作中的黑白灰。这四幅新画在展厅后部一个敞开的四方空间里展出，如一个不连续的、暗哑的紫色循环，淌过先前被五光十色浸染的眼睛，让身心清静。从彩色复归黑白，或可理解为丁乙对于城市与生命的感悟，繁花过眼，世事云烟，尘埃落定。

自始至终，丁乙都在面对限制。十字、格子布、色彩如是，连他创作的时间也要受制于身体和眼睛的状况。丁乙最近一次在国内的个展已是五年前的事了，他不是一个多产的画家，他对作品的自律要求甚高，甚至会放慢作画速度以增加创作难度。对许多人来说，画“+”与“X”能有多难？在丁乙的画中，这不是一个有关语言、形式、构图与涵义的问题，而关乎如何从杂乱无章的生活中整理出秩序，在某种受限的环境中去突破限制。从简单到复杂再重回简单，其核心是观念，而非抽象，且观念亦不是深奥的黑洞。 吴蔚

In 1986, a 24-year-old youth did two things. First, he changed his name from Ding Rong to Ding Yi. Second, he drew a grid pattern with the letter X on an 84-square-centimeter canvas and called it *Taboo*. These two seemingly unrelated things, proceeding from the consciousness of this one person, would put into practice the compression and simplification of meaning, an important turning point in the course of Ding's art. After studying and being heavily influenced by Cézanne, the artist was attacked on both sides by both Western and Chinese culture, and he felt a complex and indescribable pressure. He was aware that no matter whether in Eastern or Western art, faced with the traditional options of toeing the line or mechanically copying, he was doomed, and that he must "make art more unfamiliar, without the characteristics of painting, without being expressive."

This mentality, with its anxious, expectant energy, can be glimpsed in *Taboo*. This painting—the only canvas not part of the "Crosses" series on display here—hangs at the entrance of the art museum's main exhibition hall. It is this exhibition's hidden gem, and could also be considered the true starting point of Ding Yi's artistic career. The painting has a look of both simplicity and gravity, with its expressionist style and notes of the idealism of the 1980s. Demarcated by the crosshatch pattern, the black X's convey resolution. The sense of ritual the picture plane exudes comes from a kind of handmade informality, and although on the surface it has since been replaced in the subsequent 20-plus years, it has not been diluted. Including 35



works on canvas and 26 works on paper, the exhibition serves as a retrospective of Ding's work from 1986 until today, and is instructive towards understanding the artist's "Crosses" series in detail, as well as its influence on abstract painting in China.

In fact, the importance of Ding Yi's "Crosses" to Chinese abstract painting since the end of the 1980s goes without saying. His simple yet celebrated "+" and "x" motifs are not only easy to identify and recall, but their visual regularity and sense of order mitigate the noisiness and chaos of the age. The manual repetition they necessitate serves to renounce despondence, restoring paintings to their simplest function, dispelling viewers' hope to see classical construction. After *Taboo*, then, seeing Ding's "Crosses" series offers an explanation of the exhibition's title "Specific • Abstracted," which is suggestive not of the simplification of material form, nor of purity of spirit. What the degeneration of meaning and the disappearance of the narrative initiate are an even more clear, open-minded method for deduction, and the idea of working with the body: the toil of manual labor, day after day.

Ding Yi once proposed "making painting meaningless." In an age that emphasizes theoretical knowledge and philosophical enlightenment, with the art world hoisting the banner of cultural critique, unless one works in jest, what is needed is very calm and reasonable insight. This kind of mentality reveals Ding's wariness of the worship of images and the whirlpool of ideas. With this wariness comes his natural and conscious decision to deviate. Even though Ding's "+" motifs are the product of the grids used for calibration and coordination in printing, his first "Crosses" painting in 1988 also featured the same standard of lines—against a red, yellow, and blue background, they look like the crosshairs of a gun—his decisions and state of mind were not at all anchored in the mainstream art categories prevalent at the time.

How does Ding Yi identify himself as an artist? This is a prominent question at the moment. During the mid- to late-1980s, many similar young painters in Shanghai inadvertently participated in abstract experimentation, leading to the unique, aesthetically-minded "Shanghai abstract" style. This forms part of Ding's background. Before painting "Crosses," he had also done performance art, following China's modernist art movement of the time. But before he was content to return to the canvas, he used a ruler, tape, and a pen to draw grids and crosses and then color them in. In terms of his

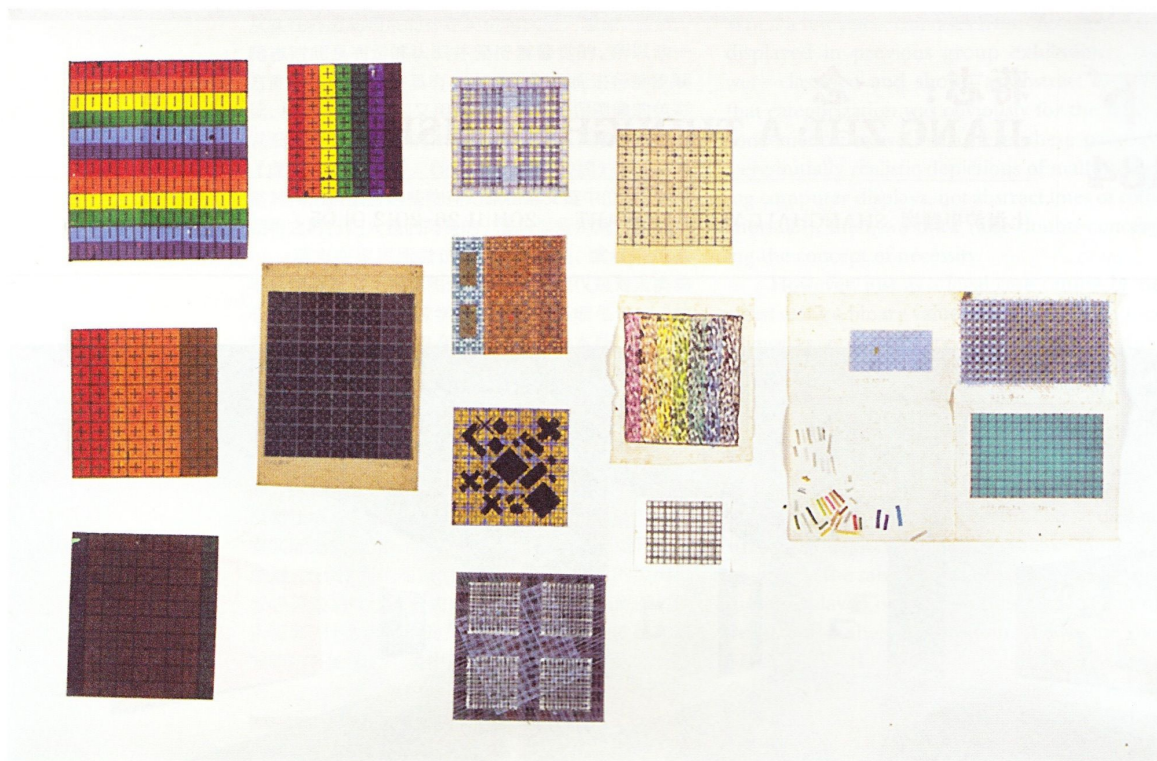
painting, Ding has been influenced by Guan Liang, Wu Dayu, Maurice Utrillo, Cézanne, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, Frank Stella and others, the latter two—and this is especially true of Stella's hard-edge paintings—were of great significance to the formation of the style he used in "Crosses." In the early "Crosses" period, Ding paid extra attention to eliminating all traces of the man-made and to lending the picture plane a mechanical quality, thereby forming a very terse, neutral, and rational visual language. Through the transformation and development of his works that followed, this style of visual language came to be constantly strengthened.

It is perhaps difficult to attribute the turning point in Ding Yi's paintings to his caution toward pictorial narration and the interpretation of meaning, or to his evasion of the subjective expression of the surrounding time period and social conditions. There is no simple way to tidily sum up the origins of a certain kind of abstract art. When positioning Ding's paintings into a specific historical period and into the context of the individual, one may better understand the artist's incessant doubt and probing, both internal and external, for the balance between absorption and progress; herein lies the gradual maturation of the artist. What this means for Ding Yi is that the regulation and expression of a direct, clear visual sense is priority.

One other notable feature of Ding Yi's paintings is their display of his enthusiasm for experimentation; this is the essential unifying element of this exhibition. In his 20-plus years of practice, he has tried to use the tools of a variety of mediums. Other than the common canvas, oil paint, and acrylic, he has also used linen, tartan, corrugated paper, fans, charcoal, chalk, ballpoint pen, pastels, pencil, marker, and other materials. The richness of his experimentation can be slowly assessed in a separate space, his paper works and drafts presented on the walls and in display cases. Among these, the long scrolls done on *xuan* paper using colored pencil and ink, *23 Circles* and *Cross Sketches*, are studies of crosses in ink wash. Bringing to mind the time Ding spent experience studying traditional Chinese painting at the Fine Arts College of Shanghai University, the scrolls also reveal his examination of and rumination on traditional Chinese aesthetics.

From his early "hardened feelings" phase up to the start of his free-hand painting "colloquialization" phase and through his experimentation with different materials to his using fluorescent lights and metallic colors to depict a





《草图13件》  
1987-1989年  
丙烯、铅笔、纸，尺寸各异

13 sketches, 1987-1989  
Acrylic, pencil, paper  
Dimensions variable

hazy Shanghai, Ding Yi's "Crosses" series has undergone constant change. The diversity and complexity of the underlying implications of the works' distinct contour—reminiscent of cell reproduction and growth—are closely bound together with Ding's methods and random color schemata. In this kind of method, each painting has a unique genetic code—the coordinates of each life are different. And the contemporary significance of his paintings is now emerging in the mainstream landscape. The most important part of the exhibition resides in his "Crosses," which represent more than 20 years of work.

Ding Yi seeks brushwork that allows the brilliance of ordinary colors to flow forth. His utilization of color follows the rules of light, such that it comes to possess an extreme vigor. What is interesting is that Ding is able to simulate natural or urban light with a limited palette: here in eight chalk colors, there in four fluorescent colors, and the black, white, and gray of the four works from this year. These four new paintings are displayed in the back of the exhibition hall in a wide-open square space in non-continuous, muted and plain circulation, seeping into viewers' eyes previously contaminated by too much

color, purifying body and mind. Going from color back to black and white, it may be possible to understand how Ding feels toward the city and life—like flowers blooming before your eyes, there is the nebulous mass of human affairs, and then everything dies down.

From start to finish, Ding Yi constantly pushes the limits. His crosses, his grid patterns, and even the time he spends on these creations are all subject to the limits of the eyes and body. Ding's last solo exhibition in China was already five years ago. Far from being prolific, his self-discipline and high expectations ultimately slow down his painting speed and increase the difficulty of his work. Some wonder how difficult making his "+" and "x" symbols can really be. In Ding's paintings, this is not an issue of language, form, or composition and connotation, but one concerning how to give order to a completely chaotic existence—breaking through the restrictions of a constrained environment. From simplicity to complexity and then returning to simplicity, the core is the idea, and not an abstraction. Moreover, this idea is not some insurmountable black hole. **Azure Wu** (Translated by Caly Moss)