







• SPATIAL MOBILITY: IT IS ALSO VIOLENCE TOWARD SPACE

The process includes the transformation of cities, the destruction of neighborhoods, and the transition from a horizontal to a vertical society.

The break between tradition (nature/temples) and modernity seen in the destruction of cities, along with Zhang Dali's skull traced and cut out of walls marked for destruction, both highlight violence and the absence of direction.

Yang Yongliang also shows how the Chinese are lost in spaces undergoing destruction. The resulting feeling of solitude cuts off one's life, one's history.

The loss of structuring in the space one lives in brings about a disappearance of one's personal and familial history. Spaces reserved for temples become secular spaces, roads that once led to someone's school now lead nowhere. Space is deconstructed then reconstructed. People can no longer recognize their hometowns. The sense of continuity in people's lives is lost.

Finally, migrants from outside these new urban communities are like rootless people cut off from their history, as they are now forced to abandon the villages they came from. Zhang Dali emphasized this phenomenon in his work on migrants entitled *Chinese Offspring*. He explores the processes of instability and uprooting, and believes this phenomenon to be the very paradigm of uncertainty (destabilization in both time and space).

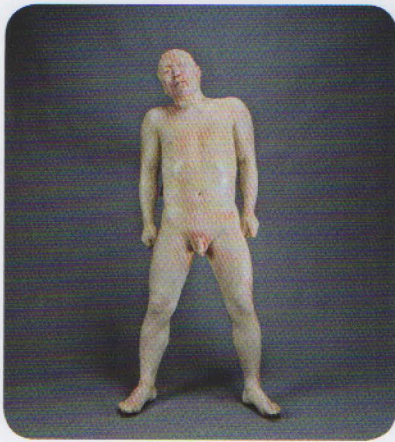
Dolls representing migrants are hung upside down as a metaphor for their incapacity to complete their destiny. They become a paradigm of Chinese society. Their faceless heads have frequently been placed near the inscription "Chai (to be destroyed), seen in any new neighborhood or on a building to be destroyed. Zhang Dali produced a series of portraits signed AK-47, which trace the form of the human face to express the suffering of this faceless society, the system's violence against individuals.

The destruction of urban spaces, forced migrations, expropriations, expulsions, being forced to move house: all of these upheavals construct spaces without memory, and break the rhythms of history. Periods are pitted against other periods, places against other places, rather than a sense of progression. No one is surprised by the contrasts



Mu Chen et Shao Yinong, *Hengjiang*, 2003 (above).





Zhang Dali, *Offspring No. 22, AK47 (DH1)*, 2007, AK47 (137), 2006, AK47 (DH4), 2007.



Page 93: Zhong Biao, *Passer By*, 1996 (top left), *Friend*, 2004 (top right), *Midday Sun*, 2006 (bottom left), *When Love Has Become The Past*, 1997 (bottom right).

between the latest towers and mansard roofs, and construction rubble, potholed roads and destroyed wastelands.

Foreign artists seek to replace the layers, history and testimony of this society. A French artist, JR, photographs the very wrinkled faces of elderly women in Shanghai, who seek to maintain the city's lived memory. And Vhils, a young Portuguese artist, highlights the layering by using a jackhammer to show the depth of history.

- THE SOCIETY OF FRAGMENTATION, POSTMODERNITY

The Shattering Present: Too Many Ruptures to Rethink the Present, To Live in the Present: The Postmodern Society of Collusion

China today represents this coexistence of different times and paradoxical spaces in a total fracturing, a kind of madness. It's a fragmented world. Zhong Biao's statement ("What a Great Country: You Can Do Anything,) must surely be understood in the sense that no paradox is untenable. Chen Wenbo paints Asians with blue eyes, while Wei Guangqing paints adolescents with dyed hair.

China sees itself as the rise of a schizophrenic society in which there is collusion between ideologies, lifestyles, and relations to history and modernity, but not true integration. There is the schizophrenic cohabitation of two cultures (society as a whole and in each individual), or the collusion of cultures. Zhong Biao often opposes generations: luscious young girls in close-up, lascivious, often colorful, unenthusiastically awaiting who-knows-what-future, rebelling against graying parents wearing communist armbands, or brisk and energetic workers. It is more a present of concomitance and collusion where brands are very present onlookers, intrusive, and symptoms of a hardly assimilated modernity.

There is the presence of incomprehension, cut and pasted human landscapes, empty gazes, disdain, superimposed scene in a cold and empty stupefaction. Brands represent insignificant spots of color in the fog of a murky reality.



in which he recovers the grace of the grand Chinese master Xia Gui from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in which empty space becomes dream after having given in to the temptation of the West... Only to wind up paying homage to the champagne of the “Taittinger Collection”!

*“I think China will conquer the world again, in the next 30 to 50 years, with our cultural renaissance,”* said Jiang. *“Today, many of the kids of the craftsmen do not want to continue. It is easier for them to work in a coffee restaurant. If they feel their know-how can have a larger use in our daily life, maybe more of them will be willing to continue with this way of life.”* Jiang thinks that the country can now look towards the future by developing its own culture.

In the summer of 2012, the Pernod Ricard group conducted an experiment in the village of Dimen, in the Guizhou region of China. They wanted to show how to understand the spirit of Dong culture, from the transmission of rice wine production, opera, and weaving, to community life, which enabled a certain approach to the luxury industry to be revived: authenticity, rediscovery of childhood emotions, harmony with nature, highly technical craft, and oral transmission. The presence of Angel Chang, a young Chinese-American who contributes to programs on the transmission of weaving, helped correlate all of the attributes of luxury: creation, emotion, and transmission.

## RECONSTRUCTING SYMBOLIC RESONANCES, SEARCHING FOR UNIVERSALITY



Liu Jianhua, *Colored sculpture-Merriment*, 1999.

In 2008, at the Ullens Center in Beijing, twenty-two Chinese artists were commissioned to create artworks for Dior: Wang Du, Zhang Huan, Huang Rui, Li Songsong, Zhang Dali, Xu Zhongmin, Liu Jianhua, Lu Hao, Wang Qingsong, Yan Lei, Zhang Xiaogang, Wen Fang, Shi Jinsong, Wang Gongxin, Shi Xiaofan, Liu Wei, RongRong & Inri, Tim Yip, Qiu Zhijie and Ma Yansong. The exhibition confronted over one hundred pieces of Dior couture, from the “new look” to Galliano’s designs, and works by these Chinese artists. The artists, through their interpretation of Dior, show how art and major brands can correlate in their understanding of the world, in their contradictions and in the search to overcome these contradictions. There is fine smithwork at the heart of a brand that is totally unrelated to pure courtier work...The ash work of Zhang Huan enables the differences between the soul of Dior and his own to be transcended. In the ash of incense a memory, wish, and hope are expressed. Wen Fang’s brick wall provides an interesting paradigm: it juxtaposes the creative jumble of Dior fashion with the





Zhang Dali, *AK47 (L1- Galliano)*, 2008 (left)  
Wang Qingsong, *Nutrients*, 2008 (right).



uniformity of Chinese fashion, and the essential role of brick, for construction and destruction, in an allusion to the fall of the Berlin wall.

Wang Qingsong composed *Nutritive Liquid*: the iconography of *The Last Supper*, by Leonardo da Vinci. The Last Supper is placed in a hospital. There are building bricks to highlight the fact that China is constantly under construction. The roof is caved in to accentuate this impression. Drips are present to give added meaning and impact beyond what a luxury article of clothing is able to provide. Curious onlookers watch the spectacle through the window. The artist is sick, in hospital, and surrounded by his apostles, who represent a cross section of Chinese society. The scene also refers to a painful episode in the life of W. Q.: his mother with lung cancer left untreated at the hospital.

In many of his works, Qingsong, through the reappropriation of major Chinese and Western works, reveals the exaggerations of Western consumerism and cultural imperialism. But through this work, he shows that John Galliano “proposes the successful marriage of cultures,” the combining of Chinese, Japanese, French, and Spanish costumes. The fraternity between past eras, Hokusai and the new look, the First and Second Empire, Klimt and the sixties, the kimono and European-style art of drapery. Through all of these elements, we understand the complexity of the connection between art, brands, and the problematics of contemporary China.

There was a confrontation between the suits by Kris Van Assche with black bowties, which shows how we can reconsider Dior suits when compared with adult clothing or the military uniforms worn by Chinese children.

Zhang Dali, AK-47, wrote “To be destroyed” on Galliano’s portrait, as it is written on the walls of Beijing. It is thus a form of

P. 188: Zhang Huan, *Giant No. 1* (top),  
*Giant No. 2* (bottom).





“license to kill,” and Zhang Dali was very surprised that Galliano accepted. There is complicity between the two men regarding the violence that links creative power and the annihilation of this power. They share views on the destruction of a city, the poverty of the migrants, and the “savagery” of growth.

Zhang Huan on the giant he created: “Basically, what concerns me is fundamental humanity. So you can tell me that it’s about a great woman, a humanized saintly giant.” The other interpretations related to a pregnant, sick, nauseous woman: China in a state of nausea. For the institutional exhibition, at the MOCA, the only idea retained would be that of salvation. The Ullens exhibition, in which Chinese artists capture Dior in all of its provocation and creativity, while expressing universal human truths and the suffering of an authoritarian China turned upside down by its transformations. Brands as a springboard for art to extend itself, to allow itself excesses, and liberate itself.