



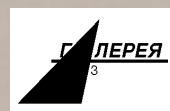
Xu Ke  
Chai Yiming

# AWAKENINGS

14.05 to 25.05 2010



roots contemporary



Press release

# AWAKENINGS

**Exhibition AWAKENINGS in A3 Gallery 14.05 to 25.05  
Opening on May 13**

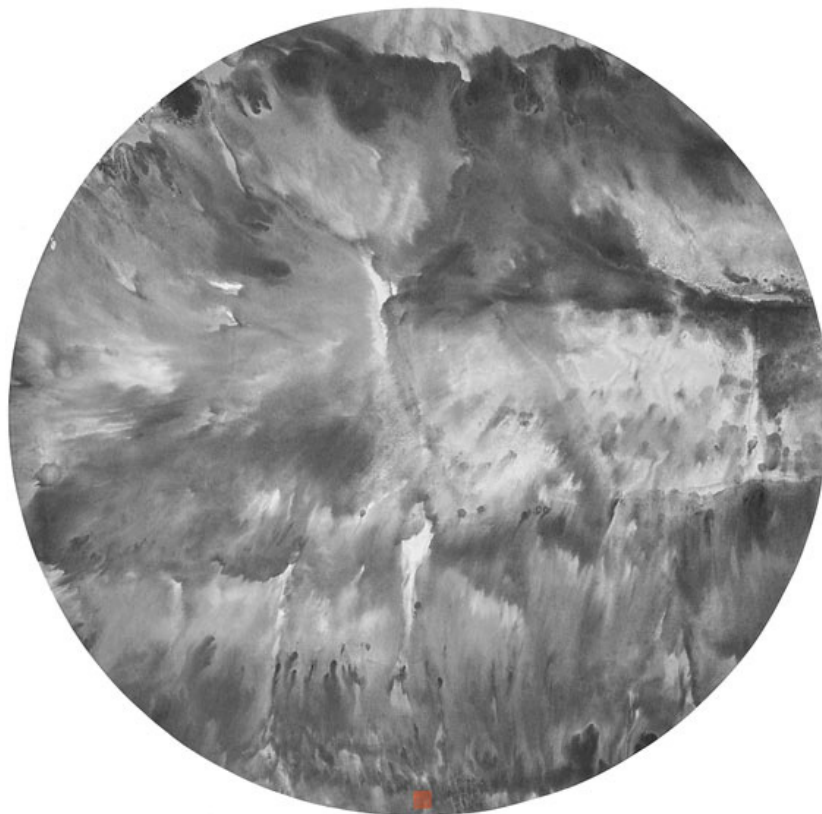
In May 2010, Roots Contemporary will be exhibiting two Chinese artists illustrative of the rising Chinese ink painter's market.

These two artists have in common many years of forbidden representation: Abstract and Erotic. Although they belong to different movements their art has been deeply influenced by the Cultural Revolution. Both were passionate enough to resist and continue against all odds.

More and more calligraphers are seeing this as favorable moment to get known by Chinese Collectors. Many galleries in Shanghai and in the rest of China are featuring Contemporary Calligraphers as a new trend.

After a decay of Pop Art and great success, the Chinese Collectors are finding a way back to their Roots in a contemporary way.

Xu KE and ChaiYiming live and work in Shanghai. They have been exhibited in Roots Contemporary Brussels during the Europalia China 2009-2010 in two solo exhibitions "Utopias" and "Wasted Generation".



# CHAI YIMING

Chai Yiming is like a sorcerer: only when God wakes up in him and gives him the urge to work, does he set to work. He is only a vector, allowing a higher existence to control him.

The multiple worlds which are apparent in Yiming's works amaze the viewer. In these worlds, reality becomes a fantasy, nothing has anything to do with the profane world and everything evolves in a somnambulistic state. The artist himself then becomes a "waking sleepwalker", walking in all directions. Or to put it differently, Yiming is a "sleeping" artist: in this sleeping state, he is permanently creating. Whenever he leaves daily life behind and enters the unfettered world of his art, a myriad of images pour out of his chaotic consciousness onto the paper, like snowflakes falling onto the ground. He then drifts among these aimless images, and this for him is a happy and light-hearted moment.

He also has a special liking for the world of eroticism. There, in his universe, he is the only male, and all creatures of the opposite sex are his lovers. He squanders the energy of his life wantonly, releasing pheromones whenever and wherever possible. The numerous and disordered images - aggregations, inversions, bodies grafted onto each other - roll and roar out of his imagination, but are just the tip of the iceberg. The sophistication of "San jie" (three worlds - the human, the god, and the devil), the secret sadness of yin and yang, his burning desire and his wild notions are all cynical and inconceivable. The rational, lucid mind becomes a source of chaotic, primeval creativity. He is like a great kaleidoscope; images are continuously flowing out of him to embellish his paintings. The artist is like a filter, trapping the debris of human emotion. He plays games in his paintings.

If the viewer gazes at his paintings again and again, and seeks to interpret the abundant, unexpected language of his images, there is bound to be a misunderstanding: He simply paints, and, being a true sorcerer, minds or concepts are just a heap of useless junk for him. All his paintings are just an unconscious dark shadow, a few scattered fragments, and tell of transient mirages. He is driven by his past experience. He gallops among the dimensions of space and time, transforming his numerous memories into images. He is a virtuoso dancer on paper. His paintings are not just pure imagination, but faithful records of parts of his life. The painter spontaneously sets out his diverse and complex memories: he used to be a foolish donkey, a smart flying eagle, a dreg; he used to be a black and white shadow, a kind of monster or ghost, or an unimaginable mystical object. But somewhere deep inside us, we understand, because we used to be those things too, we are of the same kind.

In short, Chai Yiming is an artist with a child-like perception and a masterful understanding of Calligraphy.

20.10.2005  
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roots contemporary

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# Wasted Generation

Xu ke, a child of Shanghai, was born in 1958. He graduated from the Shanghai Industrial Art School and Shanghai Fine Arts Academy during a time of great chaos. It was not until he was 40 that he was able to start his career as an artist. In the intervening years he worked, as best he could, on various things and then eventually as theater set designer in the Cultural Place in Shanghai.

He is typical of the “wasted generation” - the generation who lived and grew at the time of the cultural revolution, having to abandon all personal development to serve “the great leap forward”. During that time education was restricted, traditions were no longer perpetuated and lost, and, of course, there was no more “scholar’s desk”.

The scholar’s desk was a space for reading, writing, questioning, exchanging ideas – the striving for continual improvement and betterment. It was meticulously ordered with paper, ink, brushes, books, tea, boxes and a dream stone.

Further, the scholar’s desk was a place for calligraphy. In its long history of scriptural evolution and refinement, Chinese calligraphy was practiced within a strict framework and governed by restrictive rules rooted in centuries of practice.

The other important element in the scholar’s study room was the “dream stone”.

The “dream stone” is a slice of limestone in which mineral deposits have formed a sort of Landscape (Shan Shui). To be able to feel the landscape of a “dream stone” one has to free one’s mind and let it travel far beyond the limits of one’s material surrounding. It is also said in Chinese tradition that “dream stones” contain a certain “qi” or energy that the scholar needs in his work.

Xu Ke’s work is all about calligraphy and “dream stones”. He represents the new generation of emerging artists that uses the 5000 year old calligraphy technique and turns it into a contemporary expression. It is precisely the image China now wants to give to the rest of the world: traditional and modern at the same time.

The broken scholar’s desk represents the shattered dream of Xu’s generation’s ambitions. In contrast, the “dream stone” remains, in an abstract form, quiet and peaceful. The positive energy of these stones has never disappeared in Xu’s mind.

Today Xu has transformed the chaos of his youth into a mediating art.



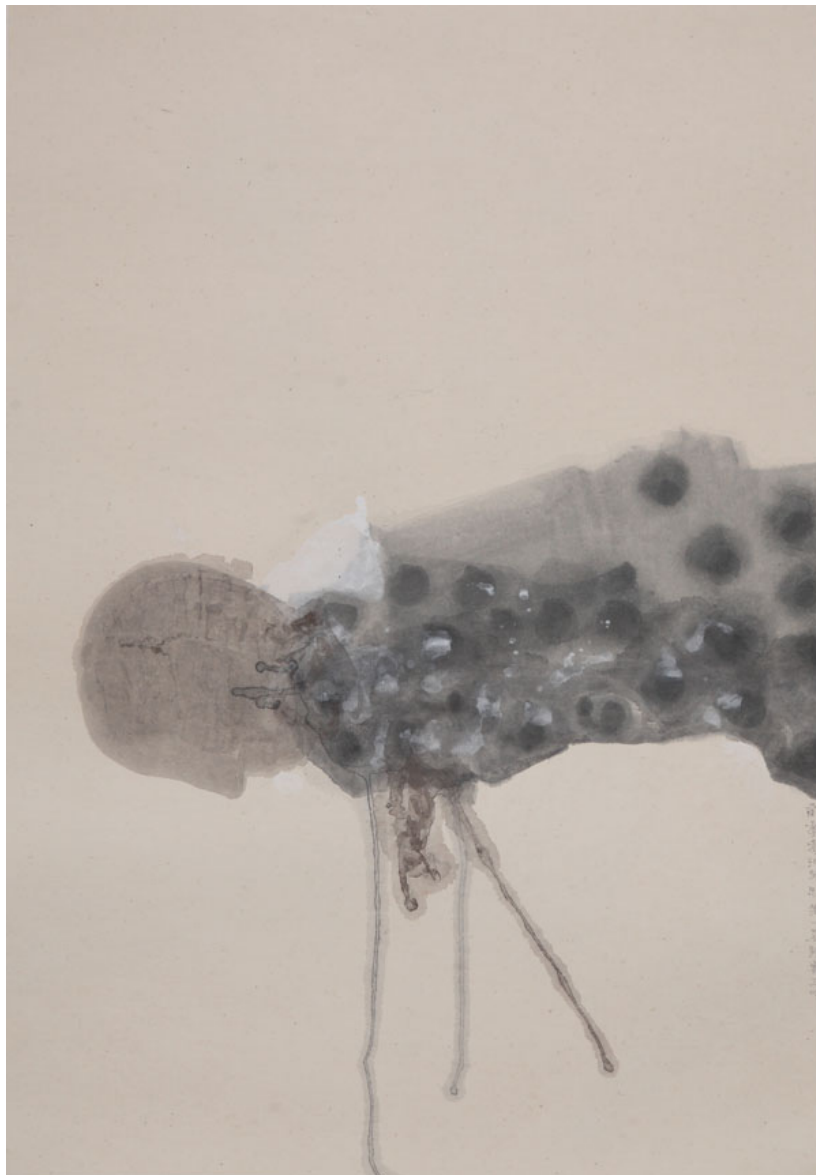
# ROOTS CONTEMPORARY

Founded in Brussels, Roots Contemporary exhibits works by Chinese and Russian artists exploring the transformation underway in their countries after decades of isolation from the outside world.

China and Russia share a history of communist rules and are now forging strong national identities. Works shown at Roots Contemporary interpret the reaction of society and the individual to the evolving transformation and the clash between tradition and modernity as global influences flow in.

With their "roots" anchored in two profoundly different civilizations, Russian and Chinese artists approach the same underlying themes from entirely different poles.

Roots Contemporary exhibits also in Paris and Moscow.





The exhibition:

# "Awakenings"

Chinese Contemporary Calligraphy  
from 14.04 to 25.04. 2010  
Opening 13.04.2010 at 19h00

Venue:

A3 Gallery

Moscow,

Starokonushenny pereulok, 39

Tel.: 691-84-84

[www.a3gallery.ru](http://www.a3gallery.ru)

Open every day except Mondays and  
Tuesdays from 11.00 to 19.00

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