



PRESS RELEASE

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SHEN JINGDONG

HERO

Curated by Eric C. Shiner

August 5-30, 2008

Opening reception on August 7, 2008, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

ChinaSquare is pleased to present **SHEN JINGDONG: Hero**, curated by **Eric C. Shiner**. The exhibit will be on view August 5th to 30th with an opening reception on Thursday, August 7th, from 6 to 8 pm. Born in Nanjing in 1965, Shen Jingdong received his masters degree from the Nanjing Institute of Arts in 1991. He was then conscripted to the Military Drama Troupe until 2007. Shen Jingdong's work taps into the vulnerability of the venerable by examining heroes of China's Cultural Revolution – most notably, members of the military. Serving in the military drama troupe for 16 years provided the artist ample exposure to military life and time to consider soldiers as sentient beings, rather than mere emblems of Communist thought. The plastic, manufactured soldiers Shen paints is in contrast to the observed humanity from his experience, but allows one to view these cultural icons as government play things gazing out with placid, unquestioning expressions. The mix of ideological and consumerist subject matter definitively places Shen's work -- alongside works by Takashi Murakami -- in the post-pop period, attempting to digest the nation's transition into a consumer-driven society.

Not surprisingly, such critical examination of the validity of Communist ideals has not gone unnoticed by China's central government. Just two years ago, one of Shen Jingdong's installations grouped Chairman Mao with political dictators of other countries and was promptly banned from a major Beijing international art festival. Despite the controversy surrounding his work, pieces have already been collected by the China National Museum of Fine Arts and the Art Retreat Museum in Singapore. Well-received both critically and at auction, there is every reason to believe Shen Jingdong's talent will continue to unveil itself.

Eric C. Shiner is an independent curator and art historian specializing in Asian contemporary art. An assistant curator of the Yokohama Triennial in 2001, Shiner is an active writer and translator, a contributing editor for *Art Asia Pacific* magazine, and adjunct professor of Asian art history at Pace University in New York City.

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies this exhibition. For more information please contact the gallery at info@chinasquareny.com.