

Post Politics: Seven Chinese Artists of the New Generation (Written in English and translated into Chinese by me)

In *The Next Generation*, Artshare presents with insight what it believes to be potential major artists of the coming age. Eleven artworks and seven Chinese artists, including Yang Zhenzhong, Han Feng, Yuan Yuan, Zhou Zixi, Chen Xiaoyun, Zhu Xinyu and Pan Jian, are featured. All born in the 1970s or later, these artists demonstrate an impressive level of technical skills, creativity, and maturity across medium and style. They are ready not only for a local, but global art stage. All of them are at transition points in their careers: whether making an entrance into important collections across continents, or getting supported by renowned cultural institutions. Their key works featured in this show serve as a vivid reference of their standards, potentials and caliber.

This exhibition is notably different from our previous *Continental Divide* show. All the artworks are distant from, if not void of, political and national sensation. While political pop art featured in *Continental Divide* was an adaptation of the traditional to the modern, artworks selected in *The Next Generation* have taken an even wider leap away from the entangled past of China by not referring to it. Rather, all the oil and acrylic paintings share an interest in exploring solitude, isolation and the concept of a journey – themes common to all human beings. There is a deep melancholy that transgresses most of the works shown. Yang's two versions of *The Passage* juxtapose an enclosed tunnel-like space with the presence of light. The rich but subtle layers of colour suggest a journey into the unknown, but with certain hope and serenity. By contrast, Han's similar interest in enclosed space took a different turn. *The Corridor*, an acrylic painting, features a monotone corridor without obvious light source. Is it a dead-end or just another turn? We are not sure. But there is something about the dimension and colour that unsettles the viewer. Also interested in space and solitude, Yuan and Zhu focus on outdoor areas. Yuan's *Abandon Plant* and *Warehouse* show the buildings in great texture, with the use of coarse lines. On the other hand, Zhu Xinyu projects solitude into serene and almost magical spaces – in the wood and over the city. *The Walk* in particular reminds one of a quest – a journey that must be pursued alone. The image is highly recognizable among other literature and cinema works of today. Adding to this series of calmness is Zhou's

Afternoon, a perfect example of solitude time set aside for introspection. By contrast, Pan Jian's *Behind the Shadows* almost has a menacing air around it with its use of colour, despite depicting the same image of woodland as Zhu. Last but not least, Chen's portrayal of thorns and irregularity project a struggle between freedom and slavery, space and occupance. They definitely add dischord and tension to the series.

Although the interpretation of artworks are always subjected to different readings, the selected pieces clearly focus more on personal quests than on political and national agenda. This is widely representative of the new generation of Chinese artists. As such, they appeal to the broader questions concerning human beings, rather than localized issues, thereby speak to a larger audience. They will have a major impact on the perception of the Chinese, and Asian art in the global scene.

Artshare has spoken to collector Sylvain Levy, co-founder with his wife Dominique of the influential DSL Collection (www.dslcollection.org), to understand what he looks at when discovering new artists.

A – artshare.com

L – Sylvain Levy

A: What questions you typically ask yourself (or the artist) when you discover a new work from a new artist?

L: Art is about creativity and diversity. I am interested when an artist expresses in his own way, with his own tools, something that arouses emotion, reflection or pleasure in me.

A: What are the most decisive factors when you decide to acquire a work from an artist new to your collection?

L: I look at whether the work matches my ultimate vision for DSL Collection. Objects in the collections are used as words to build a story -- one that reflects our personal lives as collectors. Consequently, collecting a work only happens if the work makes sense with the rest of the collection. DSL collection is not a "trophies collection."

A: What would be your advice to somebody starting his collection in Chinese contemporary art?

L: I never give advice, because a collection should always be a personal adventure. Personally, I always preferred "to walk on the wild side" because as Van Gogh said, "you do not find flowers on paved road", meaning that you have to take risks by not choosing only established artists, although they are essential in a collection.

I think it is also important to develop connoisseurship by "doing your homework", which means going to galleries and museums. For Chinese Contemporary art, you have to be very selective because there is a great number of artists, but most of them are shooting stars that may not last.

A: Taking Zhu Xinyu as an example, what makes his work so special to you?

L: When I visited his studio, I was struck by the volume of quality works that I saw. I wanted to collect many of them! I have also noticed that his creativity has not reduced with time.

A: Many of the artists in DSL Collection are either already very accomplished artists or rising stars. What, in your opinion, has made your choices so "successful"?

L: I shall not speak of "successful choices". We had the chance to visit a lot of studios and hence, the choice of collecting great works. Collecting is about access: access to the good works, important art players, valuable information and naturally to the market. The real success, to us, means that the collection as a whole is considered an interesting and personal story that inspires other people to discover Chinese contemporary art.

後政治時代：七位新時代中國新星

大部分作品都帶有濃郁的憂鬱色彩。楊振中的兩幅作品《過道》同時展現密封的空間與外來的光線。作品微妙的層疊色彩暗示通往未知的不明確旅程。然而，由於藝術家巧妙地運用光，令旅程同時帶有希望與神聖的意味。相反，韓峰描繪的通道卻帶有截然不同的色彩。他的作品《走廊》採用單一紅色調，而且並沒有明顯的光線

描繪。是一個死胡同嗎？還是柳暗花明？我們不知道。不過可以肯定藝術家的用色與透視讓觀者有種不自然的感覺。另外兩位藝術家袁遠和朱新宇同樣對空間和疏離感興趣，但卻選擇把這種情感投射在室外空間上。袁遠的《廢棄車間》和《倉庫》採用粗曠的線條，賦予建築物豐富的質感；朱新宇則把疏離感投射在森林和城市裡。他筆下的空間幾近帶有魔法，呈現一種無法言喻的神秘。The Walk 展示的是一條通道——一條必須獨自尋索的道路。這個影像在現代電影文學中也經常出現。周子曦的《午後》呈現一幅寧靜而有靈氣的畫面，讓人不期然想到冥想與獨處，跟 The Walk 有異曲同工之妙。同樣是繪畫叢林，彭劍的《影子的背後》運用的顏色使影像帶有一種危機感。最後，陳曉雲的兩幅作品展現了自由和約束、空間和佔有之間的永恆爭鬥，為整個展覽增添了豐富不和諧調。

Artshare 特意訪問了收藏家 Sylvain Levy，了解他考慮收藏新藝術家時注意的項目。Sylvain 和太太 Dominique 聯合創造了舉足輕重的 DSL 收藏 (www.dslcollection.org)。

A：當你發現一位新晉藝術家的新作時，你會問自己（或藝術家）甚麼問題呢？

L：藝術是關於創意和多元性的。我希望看見藝術家用自己的方法和技巧表達他自己的想法，讓我對作品有所感受、反思或感動。

A：你在考慮是否把一位新藝術家的作品加入你的收藏的時候，通常會考慮甚麼問題？

L：我會考慮作品是不是符合 DSL 收藏的宗旨。一套收藏中的每一件作品，都是故事的一部分 – 一個關於我們作為收藏家的故事。如果一件新作和收藏其餘的作品有所共鳴，它就有可能成為收藏的一部分。DSL 收藏並不以展示「獎杯」為目標。

A：對於一個剛剛開始收藏中國當代藝術的人來說，你有甚麼提醒？

L：我從來不提醒別人，因為我覺得收藏是一場個人歷險。我自己喜歡探索「無人之地」，因為正如梵高所說：「鋪好的道路上沒有花朵。」縱然有名的藝術家是一套收藏中不能或缺的部分，但我們必須帶有冒險精神，探索他們以外的可能性。

我認為，做充足的功課培養鑑賞力是很重要的。這包括逛博物館和畫廊。就中國當代藝術而言，你必須小心選擇，因為藝術家人數很多，但大部分的光芒都不會恆久。

A：以朱新宇為例，他的作品對你來說有何獨特？

L：當我探訪他的畫廊時，我很驚訝看到大量優質作品。有很多我都希望加進收藏呢！我發現，長時間從事藝術工作並沒有減弱他的創意。

A：DSL 收藏中很多藝術家都是有名氣的藝術家，或者是後起之秀。你憑什麼做出成功的選擇呢？

L：對我來說，沒有甚麼叫做成功的選擇。我們有機會探訪很多畫廊，也因此有收藏優質作品的選擇。收藏是講求網絡的：我們跟好的作品、市場夥伴、重要資訊和市場本身也有很好的聯繫。對我們來說，真正的成功是人們認為收藏是一個有趣而獨特的故事，並從中取得啟發，進一步探索中國當代藝術。

後政治时代：七位新时代中国新星

大部分作品都带有浓郁的忧郁色彩。杨振中的两幅作品《过道》同时展现密封的空间与外来的光线。作品微妙的层叠色彩暗示通往未知的不明确旅程。然而，由於艺术家巧妙地运用光，令旅程同时带有希望与神圣的意味。相反，韩峰描绘的通道却带有截然不同的色彩。他的作品《走廊》采用单一红色调，而且并没有明显的光线描绘。是一个死胡同吗？还是柳暗花明？我们不知道。不过可以肯定艺术家的用色与透视让观者有种不自然的感觉。另外两位艺术家袁远和朱新宇同样对空间和疏离感兴趣，但却选择把这种情感投射在室外空间上。袁远的《废弃车间》和《仓库》采用粗旷的线条，赋予建筑物丰富的质感；朱新宇则把疏离感投射在森林和城市里。他笔下的空间几近带有魔法，呈现一种无法言喻的神秘。The Walk 展示的是一条通道 -- 一条必须独自寻索的道路。这个影像在现代电影文学中也经常出现。周子曦的《午後》呈现一幅宁静而有灵气的画面，让人不期然想到冥想与独处，跟 The Walk 有异曲同工之妙。同样是绘画丛林，彭剑的《影子的背後》运用的颜色使影

像带有一种危机感。最後，陈晓云的两幅作品展现了自由和约束、空间和占有之间的永恒争斗，为整个展览增添了丰富不和谐调。

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A: 当你发现一位新晋艺术家的新作时，你会问自己（或艺术家）甚麽问题呢？

L: 艺术是关於创意和多元性的。我希望看见艺术家用自己的方法和技巧表达他自己的想法，让我对作品有所感受、反思或感动。

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A: 对于一个刚刚开始收藏中国当代艺术的人来说，你有甚麽提醒？

L: 我从来不提醒别人，因为我觉得收藏是一场个人历险。我自己喜欢探索「无人之地」，因为正如梵高所说：「铺好的道路上没有花朵。」纵然有名的艺术家是一套收藏中不能或缺的部分，但我们必须带有冒险精神，探索他们以外的可能性。

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