

BIOGRAPHIES

DAI SHIHE

Dai Shihe was born in Beijing in 1948 and graduated from Beijing Normal College in 1976 and the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) Beijing in 1981. He was visiting scholar at Lapin Academy of Fine Arts in Russia in 1988 and in recent years has travelled to Britain, France, USA, Japan, Australia, Egypt and South Africa. Dai Shihe's works are held in the collections of the China Art Gallery, Beijing, Shanghai Art Gallery, and CAFA Museum Beijing. He has exhibited in Russia, England and throughout China.

Dai Shihe is presently Professor, Head of School of Fine Art and Director of the Department of Oil Painting at CAFA and a Member of the Committee of Oil Painting for the Association of Chinese Artists. He has been the subject of numerous publications, most recently *Dai Shihe: Technique and Production of Oil Paintings* published by Chenxi Cultural Limited Company in 2002.

LAN QIAORU

Lan Qiaoru was born in Taipei, Taiwan in 1980. She graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne in 1999 and the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) Beijing in 2003. In 2000, Lan Qiaoru held her first solo exhibition at the Contemporary Art Gallery, Beijing. Her works have been included in group exhibitions at CAFA Gallery and Sky Bridge Theatre Gallery, Beijing.

Lan Qiaoru has been awarded medals for her work at the Dandenong Art and Music Festival, Victoria in 1996 for portraiture and at undergraduate exhibitions at CAFA in 2000 and 2001. Her work is held in the CAFA art collection.

SHI YU

Shi Yu was born in 1973 in Beijing and was educated at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) High School, Beijing before graduating with a Bachelor in Fine Art from CAFA in 1997 and a Master of Fine Art degree in 2002. Shi Yu continued at CAFA high school as a teacher from 1997-99, and since 2002 has held the position of junior lecturer at CAFA. His work has been included in group exhibitions since 1996, and most recently in 2003 *Documentation of Grand Northwest of China* at the China National Gallery, Beijing. Shi Yu's work is in the collection of the CAFA Museum of Art. Shi Yu was awarded for his works *Street*, *Beijing Impression* and *Nude Lady* at the graduate and undergraduate exhibitions at CAFA in 1996.

WANG HUAXIANG

Wang Huaxiang was born in Gui Zhou Province, China in 1962. He graduated from the Gui Zhou Provincial Art School in 1981 and the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) Beijing in 1988. His working experience includes lecturing in printmedia at CAFA and as head of Flying Land Art Studio in Beijing. Wang Huaxiang has undertaken numerous curatorial and publishing commissions, most recently in 2002 *Touching Upon Realities*, published by He Bei Fine Art, Shi Jiazhuang and *Viewpoints Out of Flying Land*, published by Ling Nan Fine Art, Canton.

Wang Huaxiang has held solo exhibitions at Knight Gallery, Shenzhen, China in 2001, Red Gate Gallery, Beijing in 2000 and Schoeni Gallery, Hong Kong in 1999 and 1996, as well as numerous group exhibitions in Macau, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, America and throughout China. His works are held in the collections of China National Gallery, Shanghai Art Museum, Print Museum of Peter Ludwig, Aachen and the British Woodcut Art Foundation.

DOUBLE SENSE (Origins in China)

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Dai Shihe
Lan Qiaoru
Shi Yu
Wang Huaxiang

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Front image: Shi Yu *Ancient Chinese Engraved Portraiture* 1999
ink, pen on paper 28 x 21.5 cm



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DOUBLE SENSE (Origins in China)

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The drawing exhibition titled *Double Sense (Origins in China)* is showing in Sydney on the 5th year of the founding of the International Drawing Research Institute (IDRI) by its three consortium members, the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing, the College of Fine Arts (COFA), UNSW in Sydney and the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) in Scotland. This exhibition is intended not only to reflect on some changes of drawing teaching and creativity in the transitional period of art making in China today, but also to explore some of the seminal roles of drawing within an interdisciplinary visual discourse. In reviewing the initiatives for setting up IDRI and of its activities of the past five years, I have to say that a triangular structure such as IDRI's is organic and energetic, that a 'trialogue' in the contrasting cultural contexts, has shown obvious advantages over a 'dialogue' between two institutions, agencies or individuals. In so doing, every consortium member of IDRI has tried to involve as many local agencies and individuals as possible in its research and exchanges, as a result, IDRI like an organic cell is growing up rapidly and internationally.

In the year of 2003, IDRI ran a touring exhibition titled *International Contemporary Drawing Art*, the largest ever contemporary drawing exhibition in mainland China, which was hosted first by Xi'an College of Fine Arts in Xi'an, then the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, and finally by Guang Zhou Academy of Fine Arts in Canton. This exhibition has included work from IDRI partners in Scotland and Australia, as well as eight other Chinese institutions. The title *Double Sense* for this exhibition implies that the discipline of drawing has traditionally been a foundation of art practice in China. With radical changes taking place across China in all fields including visual art over the past twenty years, various influences such as Western cultural impact, ignorance of one's art traditions, and rapid economic growth and urbanisation also imply the



Wang Huaxiang *Untitled* 2004 pencil on paper 34 x 25 cm

revelation of the shifting relationship between tradition and modernity, between the local and global; between Chinese and international contemporary art. The work of the four artists featured in this exhibition has reflected changing philosophies and approaches to drawing facing the 'double sense'.

The selection of artists for this exhibition was based on the following thoughts. One thought was that the exhibition, even though on a small scale, should bring together a multi-generational group of artists whose vision has effected changes at least in a local context, and has applied distinctive approaches to drawing. A second thought was that there needed to be a balance between tradition and modernity, a continuity of vision linking the past to the present. A third thought was that the exhibition to some extent should make a research commitment in terms of the work.

Dai Shihe has depicted dinosaurs as his central object. When he draws or paints a figure or still life which includes the image of a dinosaur, this is attractive to him because its origins are so distant from today's human beings. The dinosaur is a reference to something so remote, so far back to a time, coming from 'pre-history'. When he adds the dinosaur image to his composition, which might be a realistic picture of people's everyday life, this confronting relationship brings forward a new interpreting of the meanings of time, history and tradition. The simple image of the dinosaur has this disruptive power.

In Wang Huaxiang's drawings, one can clearly see that the artist has tried to use a multi-perspective approach to the object. It was this generation of artists who were born in the 1960s, who might be regarded as a generation who held no responsibility towards the ruling party's political motivations. Just as Wang has stated, "the more distant one keeps away from an official rank, the closer she or he makes towards a career success".

Born in the 1970s, Shi Yu grew up in an exciting period when China opened its door to the outside world, when the information technology era came, and when urbanisation started to boost, in which collectivism gradually gave way to individualism. Thus, this generation of artists like Shi Yu and those born after him draw more attention to objects of individuality rather than of commonality.

The drawings by Lan Qiaoru are visually more conceptual, and show a mixture of her interest and some kind of uncertainty. She was born in Taiwan, and immigrated to Australia with her parents at a very young age. Her drawings are a good incarnation of her art educational background within a mix of cultural contexts.

Reading these divergent works by these four artists, one might see the changes of this fine tradition in the training of artists in drawing from a local to global context. The purpose of drawing in art education no longer serves as a political tool, although social realism and technique training in a realistic style still dominates art education in China today. As politics and modern history of China has provided these artists with rich resources in terms of evoking and impressing visual effect, their work showcases the process of modernity in the discipline of drawing from the perspectives of art education and creativity, and is also an outcome of their academic commitment in a context of contrasting cultures.

These four artists' work has attempted to provide the viewer with an insight towards the progress of the discipline of drawing and changing philosophies to drawing through the 1990s within the context of the societal development of China. At this point, the International Drawing Research Institute would like to see the possibility of making another 'trialogue' through the exhibition titled *Double Sense*.

Jin Hua
February 2004



Dai Shihe *Portrait on Prehistorical Animals* 2003 acrylic on paper 38 x 53 cm



Lan Qiaoru *Untitled* 2003 pencil on paper 20 x 30 cm