



Plum Blossoms (International) Ltd
G6, 1 Hollywood Rd, Central, HK
Tel: (852) 2521 2189 / Fax: (852) 2868 4398
www.plumblossoms.com

Artist Statement

This exhibition includes paintings from 2007 to early 2008 created on Tibetan handmade paper and canvas. In this series I have extensively used forms and elements of traditional Tibetan painting which are familiar to me, as I have been imitating and practicing these techniques for a long period of time. These include the drawing of clouds, the modeling of figures, and the unique depiction of time and space in classical Tibetan painting. This body of work has been very significant to me as I feel it has enabled me to fully express my feelings and thoughts.

To locate traditional Tibetan art in a contemporary context is something that I have always been thinking of doing. I try to imagine what a Tibetan painting looks like when it is detached from religion. Although it is indeed very personal, my work does offend many Buddhist believers. I know this is something that they do not want to see, but I am bored with the 'Shangri-la' that Tibetan art has been depicting so far. I want to truly reveal my life, no matter how silly and trivial it is, to depict it whenever it is real. To this extent, I regard my work as realistic.

Based on the thoughts I mentioned earlier, the series 'Mushroom Clouds' and 'Modern Tangkas' share the same concept with the 108 'New Lectons' that I created earlier. People who know Tibetan tradition will realize the big difference between what is traditional and what is contemporary.

Cultural icons such as Mickey Mouse, McDonald's, Mao Suit and The Cross, are actually a reflection of the current cultural state of Tibet affected by the Cultural Revolution and globalization. From my experience there is no longer a single, homogenous culture in Tibet. Rather, it is hybrid and diverse. I am interested in the state of people who are living in this ever-changing society. With the change in Tibet, all these issues can only become more prominent.

One of the other issues confusing me is my identity, as I have both a Tibetan and Chinese background. Many Tibetans do not recognize me as Tibetan. Many Chinese do not see me as Chinese. We have a title to describe this group of people – 'Half Tibetan Half Han'. I always claim that I do not belong to any of these ethnic group, or sometimes, that I belong to the ethnic group of Number 57. I realize that many of my works reveal the confusion of my identity. For example 'Wedding Ceremony' and 'Origin' depict my father's image in the same way as he appeared in my previous works 'Family Portrait' and 'Old Soldiers in the Mountain'. He also features in 'My Father's Nightmare', which will be showing in this exhibition (my father may resemble Mao as they are both from the Hunan province). I will title my next exhibition 'Half Tibetan Half Han'.

Ultimately, I hope that through my exhibition, people will change their preconceptions about Tibet. I would like to state that I'm neither criticizing nor praising. I merely want to document my life, which is not the same as news reporting. A hundred people will each have their own interpretation of my work. Even though I was born and live in Tibet, my interpretation of the place only represents a personal, not authoritative, point of view.

Gade