

Press Kit

November 2016

Fang Lijun

Forbidden Areas

Musée Ariana, 11 November 2016 - 2 April 2017

Press visit: Thursday 10 November at 16.00

Exhibition opening: Thursday 10 November at 19.00

ariana



musée
suisse
de la céramique
et
du verre

10, avenue de la Paix

1202 Geneva

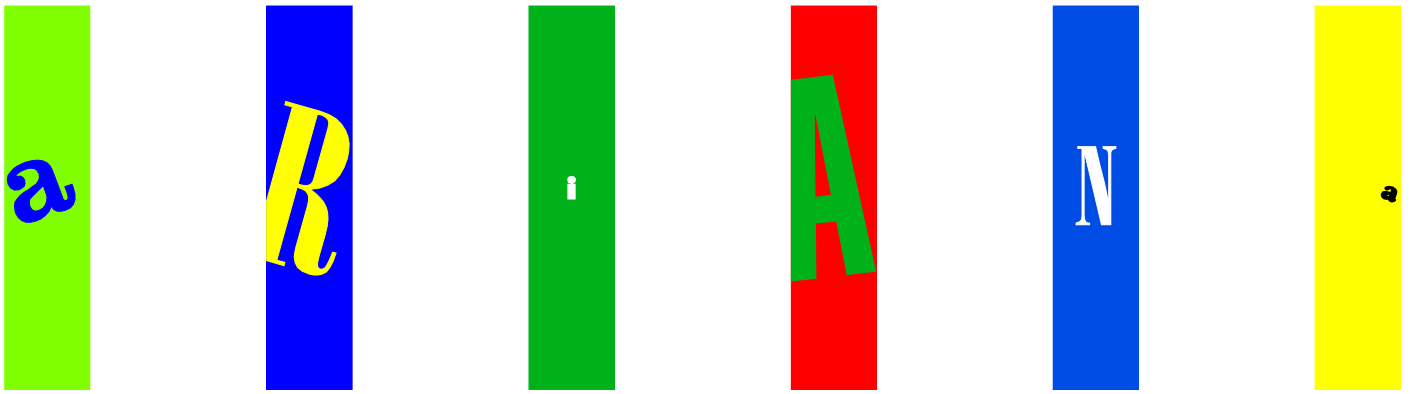
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Un musée

Ville de Genève

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Fang Lijun

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MUSÉE ARIANA, GENEVA, 11 NOVEMBER 2016 - 2 APRIL 2017

Geneva, October 2016 – Fang Lijun (China, 1963) is one of the major artists of the Chinese contemporary avant-garde. Best known for his realistic graphic works that feature portraits of himself, the artist has been conducting research over the past few years in Jingdezhen, the cradle of porcelain, that challenges and develops his sculptural work, less well-known but just as remarkable as his painting. Organized with the support of and in close cooperation with the gallery Art & Public I Cabinet PH, this exhibition focuses primarily on the ceramics, supplemented by graphic works by the artist.

Fang Lijun (China, 1963) belongs to the first generation of independent Chinese artists who formed a community in the Old Summer Palace (Yuanming Yuan) in the suburbs of Beijing. Fang Lijun shot to fame in the early 1990s as a pioneer of the movement known as Cynical Realism. His works are exhibited in China and throughout the world. In addition, there is a growing demand for his work on the art market and he is well represented in many important private and public collections in the field of contemporary art.

His graphic work is based on the self-portrait; his drawings, engravings and paintings are populated by endlessly cloned characters with shaved heads, their faces contorted in a silent scream, or swimming in - or against (?) - the current. He associates his own image with those of his country's thugs and petty criminals, the *Liumang* with shaved heads. According to the Geneva gallery owner and collector Pierre Huber, "The people he represents appear to be experiencing emotions such as resignation, indifference and anger, as well as the desire to survive and deal with the conflicts of a mass society. In his work, he mirrors what he sees as the passivity of a Chinese society moving forwards trancelike towards the unknown, suspended between sky, clouds, mountains and water, a sort of ideal vision, at the same time perfect and naïve, beautiful and absurd." Yet the artistic approach of this scholar of modern times is characterised by a profound respect for traditions and ancient techniques, which he masters perfectly.

Fang Lijun also expresses himself brilliantly in three-dimensionality. His first area of study, as is often forgotten, was ceramics. In recent years, he has returned to this medium in Jingdezhen, the famous centre of porcelain manufacture in China. His sculptures contrast sharply with his graphic works. Composed of diaphanous porcelain bricks – and more recently just edges of bricks! - stacked with rigorous geometry, the modular sculptures push the material to its absolute limits. Firing plays a key role in the process. It causes the strict arrangement of the bricks to distort, tear apart and sag, before setting them with a life-giving or fatal blast of air. The artist is constantly seeking the critical point between perfection and destruction; he examines empty space, translucency, light and fragility. The expressive force of the modules, whether monumental in size or small enough to fit in the palm of your hand, is impressive. Could

these very delicate and sometimes highly tortuous, open or closed walls of bricks be a reference to the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City, or represent a kind of inner prison or a subtle form of political criticism?

Fang Lijun's sculptural work, which he develops in parallel to his graphic work, is still little known. In it, the artist is not afraid of taking risks by moving away from the figurative universe that made him famous. He explores porcelain, that ancient material characterised by great technical difficulty, with rigour, passion and originality, as a new means of expression. As he affirms: "I like to develop the same theme through a range of expressive means, like different states of my own life. As you've seen in my studio, I'm completely free and open to any form of creation."

Thanks to the special relationship between Pierre Huber, a leading expert on the Chinese contemporary art scene, and Fang Lijun, the Musée Ariana is very pleased and honoured to be able to welcome this exceptional artist to its gallery spaces. The exhibition may focus on the ceramic sculptures, yet, as a counterpoint and in a fascinating interdisciplinary dialogue, selected graphic works testify to the artist's depth of expression. A trilingual catalogue (English / Chinese / French) accompanies the exhibition.

Anne-Claire Schumacher, Exhibition curator

Fang Lijun's Biography

1963	Born in Handan, Hebei province (China)
1983	Diploma in Ceramics, Hebei School of Light Industry, Tangshan (China)
1989	Graduated from the China Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing and began his career as a professional painter
2004-2012	Visiting Professor and Supervisory Expert at 18 Chinese universities and colleges
2009	Designated by the Chinese National Academy of Arts as Appointed Artist at the Contemporary Art Academy of China (CAAC)
2012	Ambassador for Peace of the Peace and Development Foundation, Official Partner of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in China
2013	Director of the Contemporary Art Research Centre of the Chinese National Academies

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Musée Ariana

Swiss Museum of Ceramics and Glass

10 Avenue de la Paix | 1202 Geneva

T +41(0)22 418 54 50 - F +41(0)22 418 54 51

www.ariana-geneve.ch

Open Tuesday to Sunday 10.00 – 18.00, closed Mondays

Entrance fee (5 CHF/ 3 CHF), free for under 18s and on the first Sunday of the month

On other Sundays: two for the price of one

Exhibition opening: Thursday 10 November 2016 at 19.00 with the artist in attendance

Press opening: Thursday 10 November 2016 at 16.00

or on request: presse.ariana@ville-ge.ch

Publication :

Isabelle Naef Galuba, Pierre Huber, Anne-Claire Schumacher

Fang Lijun - Espaces interdits

trilingue français – chinois – anglais

5 Continents, Milan 2016

CHF 28.-

Exhibition organisation:

Isabelle Naef Galuba, Director of the Musée Ariana

Exhibition curated by:

Anne-Claire Schumacher, Curator of the Musée Ariana, anne-claire.schumacher@ville-ge.ch

in collaboration with Pierre Huber, galerie Art & Public | Cabinet PH, www.artpublic.ch

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EVENTS

Guided tours

On the first Sunday of the month, admission free

4 December 2016, 5 February, 5 March and 2 April 2017 at 11.00

Guided tour for teachers

Wednesday 16 November 2016 14.00 – 16.00

Reservation required, limited number of places available.

Guided tour in Chinese

Sunday 5 February 2017 at 15.00, admission free

Guided tours on request

in French, English and German

Guided tours for classes, please place request 15 days before the chosen date

Brunch “Shedding Light on an Exhibition”

Sunday 13 November 2016, 11.00 - 14.00

By way of an aperitif, a lecture in French by Pierre Huber, gallery owner, collector, founder of the Shanghai Art Fair and joint curator of the exhibition, on the theme “*Facettes de l'art contemporain dans la Chine d'aujourd'hui*” (Aspects of Contemporary Art in China Today). The lecture will be followed by a brunch prepared by the Ecole hôtelière de Genève, and then by a guided tour of the exhibition.

Cost: 30 CHF per person, reservation required (50 people maximum)

Film screening

Saturday 26 November 2016 at 20.00

“Voyage en Occident” (Journey to the West)

A French documentary by Jill Coulon which follows a group of Chinese tourists on a whirlwind tour of Europe. This screening is organised in collaboration with the FIFOG (Festival international du film oriental de Genève), and will be followed by a discussion in the presence of the filmmaker.

Admission free, limited number of places available.

“Ravioli Party” to celebrate the Chinese New Year

Saturday 28 January 2017 11.00 - 14.00

Reservation required

Adults: 30 CHF, children aged 12 and under: 10 CHF

Visitor Services

Monday-Friday

T +41 22 418 54 50 / 54

F + 41 22 418 54 51

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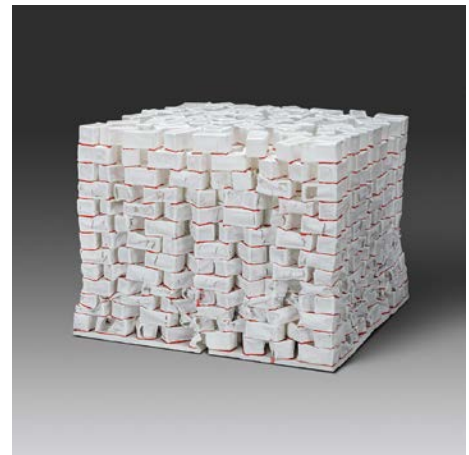
01 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
08.09.2013
Porcelain
142 x 116 x 80 cm
Private collection

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



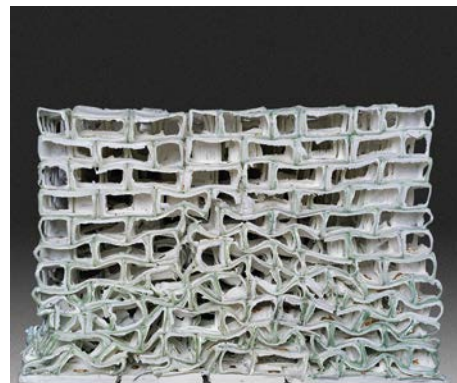
02 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
2015
Porcelain
45,5 x 44 x 35 cm

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



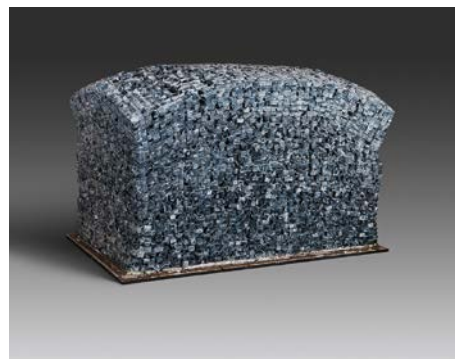
03 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
2015
Porcelain
45 x 43 x 32 cm

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



04 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
28.08.2013
Porcelain
147 x 99 x 97 cm

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



05 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
2016
Porcelain
110 x 115 x 100 cm

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



06 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
02.09.2013
Porcelain
145 x 118 x 78 cm

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



07 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
2013
Porcelain
50 x 55 x 38.5 cm
Private collection

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



08 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
24.9.2013
Porcelain
22 x 21 x 27 cm

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



09 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
22.09.2016
Oil on canvas
270 x 120 cm

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



10 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
Mid-autumn, 2012
Ink on paper
68.7 x 48.2 cm

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



11 Fang Lijun (China, 1963)
Summer 2015
Ink on paper
135,9 x 68,8 cm

Photo : Studio Fang Lijun



12 Portrait of the artist, 2012

Photo : Courtesy Art & Public I Cabinet PH



NOTE TO JOURNALISTS

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www.ariana-geneve.ch.

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With thanks,

Musée Ariana- Press Service – 10 avenue de la Paix - 1202 Geneva – presse.ariana@ville-ge.ch