
Post - Photography

20 Sept - 11 Nov, 2014

Press Release

Chen Shaoxiong (b. 1962, Guandong Province, China)

WassinkLundgren:

Thijs groot Wassink (b. 1981, Netherlands)

Ruben Lundgren (b. 1983, Netherlands)

Yan Lei (b.1965, Hebei Province, China)

Zhang Xiao (b. 1981, Shandong Province, China)

The four artists on exhibit share a common acuity in adapting the camera's lens and photo images for non-traditional purposes. These are not photographs about photography. Instead, these are works inspired by the popular press, contemporary material, and daily life. The Beijing based curator Feng Boyi notes in regard to WassinkLundgren's work, "In fact, these photographs do not seem the slightest bit artistic, and this is meant to counter our habitual ways of understanding and appreciating photography". The same could be said for the commercial fonts appropriated on canvas by Yan Lei and Chen Shaoxiong; the Xinhua News Agency press pix repainted by Chen Shaoxiong; or, the company business envelopes re-printed by Zhang Xiao.

The artists rely on photography to edit a new reality; starker, multi-layered, and more in keeping with what we see around us. Each artist is compelled to depict the real world of street images; less idealized, less formulaic, less fashionable, less curated, avoiding - and negating - the seductive power of happy endings. These are not works of beauty, of pretty surfaces or blind optimism. These are works by keen observers of daily life who happen also to be adept with photography, video-technology and digital printmaking. The equipment comes in handy; primarily as tools for life recording rather than art producing.

Nevertheless, within these idiosyncratic annals of lives acutely observed, there are also stories to be told, stories with insight into a variety of issues. Stories of rapacious land development, small acts of corruption, street skirmishes against authority, and advertisers' omnipresent propagandizing. Told by artists aware of photography's powers of immediacy, photography less contemplative and more agitating.

- Beijing, Sept. 2014