

Qiu Zhijie: Journeys without Arrivals

Solo exhibition, 01.04 – 24.09.2017

The solo exhibition *Qiu Zhijie: Journeys without Arrivals* is the first comprehensive overview of one of the most important Chinese artists of his generation. The wide spectrum of his artworks – ranging in media and entangling different temporalities and geographies – unveils an intimate portrait of the artist as a polymath, whose artistic work is an integral part of a larger, holistic approach to life. Embracing the concept of Total Art, Qiu demonstrates the role of art as a powerful engine for coming to terms with change, tradition and globalisation in China and across the world.

The opening of the exhibition takes place on Saturday 1 April. At 16.00 there is a word of welcome by Charles Esche, director Van Abbemuseum, followed by an opening speech by curator Davide Quadrio and an artist talk between Qiu Zhijie and curator Annie Fletcher.



Qiu Zhijie, ink rubbing map from the series “-isms” at the End of the World, 2016.

The exhibition proposes that Qiu’s work might be seen as a series of unending journeys. Whether it is his reinterpretation of scroll painting; his travels in Tibet; or his response to the great modernist icon of the Nanjing River Bridge, the works are always looking to preserve, update and revolutionise elements of different traditions at the same time.

Qiu’s work has the exceptional quality of creating the forms through which this can happen. The individual images and sculptures retain recognisable elements from their material sources and craft origins while putting them to use in completely contemporary scenarios. In this way, Qiu breaks with the past as proposed by western modernism towards a recycling of ancient ways of thinking for a demodernising, global cultural present. The recognition of this potential to incorporate and yet move beyond modernity from a Chinese origin is the key to understanding how the works might be influential.

Qiu Zhijie (1969, Zhangzhou) experienced the rapid changes in Chinese society over the last decades as it has opened itself up to economic and cultural globalisation. As the largest state in the world, developments in the People’s Republic will always affect the whole planet, but its recent history is one of learning from elsewhere as much as innovating from within. Such intercultural encounters are the basis for much of Qiu’s work. He draws on certain pictorial traditions, from calligraphy to handicraft techniques, and pushes them into the present. There, they are seen not as victims of a new age, but as systems of thinking that can account for what is happening today at least as much as the traditions of western modernist aesthetics. It is in this context that he represents an ideal example of an artist as a go-between, whose broad ideas and engagements – as an artist, merchant, teacher and political activist – become strong, resolute and profound gestures/images of the contemporary world.



Qiu Zhijie, *Tattoo*, 1994.

Press release
March 2017

Publication

Transcultural mediators Francesca Girelli and You Mi, together with the curatorial team, have produced an illustrated guide that directly addresses the challenges of conveying the complexity of Qiu Zhijie's practice in the European context.

Mediation programme

The exhibition is accompanied by a mediation programme with a.o. lectures, workshops and guided tours and connects different worlds; Chinese wisdoms and western philosophy, the past and the present, daily life and art, crafts and new media, et cetera.

Curators

Charles Esche, Annie Fletcher, Davide Quadrio.

Partners

The exhibition is developed in collaboration with – and will travel to – Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève (15.02.2017–28.01.2018, co-curated by Andrea Bellini) and Lunds Konsthall (16.02 - 27.05.2018, co-curated by Åsa Nacking).

Subsidisers

The exhibition is supported by Fonds 21 and Galleria Continua.



Qiu Zhijie, *Rainbow 1*, 1995.

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SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

For the editors:

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Van Abbemuseum

The Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven is one of the leading museums for contemporary art in Europe. The museum has an intensive international collection of more than 2,700 works of art, including key works by Lissitzky, Picasso, Kokoschka, Chagall, Beuys, McCarthy, Daniëls and Körmeling. Questions in the field of art and society are raised by the museum in an experimental way. An open attitude, hospitality and the exchange of information are important for the Van Abbemuseum and we encourage both ourselves and the visitors to think about different subjects, for example about the role of the collection as a cultural "memory" or about the museum as a public space. As a result of international cooperation and exchange, the Van Abbemuseum is also a place where cultural cross-pollination takes place. It is a source of wonder, inspiration and imagination.

Van Abbemuseum,
Bilderdijklaan 10, Eindhoven.
www.vanabbemuseum.nl

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday 11.00 – 17.00. Thursday 11.00 - 21.00.

Admission

Adults: € 12.00 / Groups of 10 or more: € 9.00 / Young people 13-18 years old, students, CJP holders, Eindhoven city pass (stadspas) holders: € 6.00/ Children under 13 years of age, Museum card: free / Family pass (2 adults and max. of 3 children until 18 years): € 18.00. Tuesday 15.00 – 17.00: free.