

WANG GUANGYI

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PARIS DEBELLEYME

23 Wednesday - 23 Saturday



The Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to present an exhibition by Chinese artist, Wang Guangyi. This will mark the artist's first show at the gallery.

Born in China in 1958, Wang Guangyi studied art within the context of the cultural revolution initiated by Mao Zedong in the 1970's. His initiation to drawing and painting, therefore began by creating reproductions of Chinese propaganda posters. These works quickly confirmed his talent as a painter. This period was the beginning of the exploration of the themes that would be further developed in his later paintings, sculptures and installations.

He believed that a strong and rational civilization could save a culture that had lost its beliefs.

Wang Guangyi is clearly utopian. Many of his series, created in the 1980's, etch themselves resolutely into the history of his country and express his ambivalent feelings during this period; caught between blind faith and the destructive revolt of a country, between a heroic spirit and consumerism.

This exhibit at the Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, presents five large-format paintings (from 2 to 9 meters wide) from a series begun in the 1990's entitled «Great Criticism».

It is through the demonstrative pictorial power of these works, that Wang Guangyi gained the recognition he so deserves. "he abandoned ideals of painterly language and form in favor of a bold style directly juxtaposing the imagery of political posters of the cultural revolution with consumerist advertising. This ambivalent association perfectly translated the tension between the cultural reality and his own critical distance. He states it precisely: « Art lacking its own critical backbone is unable to generate true power (...)

In the series of paintings known under the title Great Criticism, Wang Guangyi's faith in a utopian world (« belief that a healthy, rational and vigorous culture can save a lost civilization ») was not completely destroyed by the appearance of a new pop style. Simply, he began to articulate his memory of the dogmatic period of Chinese communism and his own cultural heritage around the desire for material satisfaction newly appearing in a consumer society. The works describe the heroic illusions of the past, and their degeneration in a material society. (...) During the past decade, Wang Guangyi has consolidated his reputation as an artist who has completely renewed Chinese painting
Huang Zhuan

Wang Guangyi is the leader and founder of the Political Pop Art movement that emerged in China in the late 80's. Since then, he has influenced an entire generation of Chinese painters.