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MadeIn Company

Sleeping Life Away

17 March – 16 May 2012



Sleeping Life Away, 2011
Mixed media (fabric, leather, feathers)
280 x 187 cm

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present the first exhibition in France by *MadeIn Company*, a “contemporary art company” founded in 2009 by the artist Xu Zhen, aged 35, a rising star in Chinese contemporary art, who comes from Shanghai.

The iconoclastic creation of a renowned artist who, in the age of the artist as star, has decided to forgo his personal identity, *MadeIn* is a unique entity on the contemporary scene, a kind of “unidentified artistic object” that challenges the sacrosanct notion of the author with intelligence and ironic humour. *MadeIn Company* is a genuine business which employs a score of men and women to “research infinite cultural possibilities,” as its founding charter states. Moving between straight reality and parody, this application of the corporate model to art-making has resulted in the creation of a think tank capable of coming up with powerful and surprising artworks in a wide variety of media (paintings, sculptures, installations), which are always seen from a curatorial viewpoint.

For its first exhibition at Galerie Nathalie Obadia, *MadeIn Company* has thus put together an authentic conceptual programme announced by its manifesto-like title, *Sleeping Life Away*, which alerts visitors to the danger of collective anaesthesia in the age of mass consumption and the reign of communications (image over substance) in politics.

Six alluring and colourful large-format collages offer an alternative vision of human history. The combination of Chinese and western imagery gleaned from the Internet – traditional Chinese prints, French 19th-century caricatures, medieval images, exotic bestiaries – mediated through a patchwork of sensuous materials (fabric, feathers, sequins, beads, etc.) brings to mind the folkloric dimension of big traditional tapestries while distancing the epic yet ridiculous narratives of the dominant ideology.

In this same spirit of demystifying imperial, military and colonial propaganda, three series of imposing sculptures are installed in the gallery. These black, bulky pieces recalling primitive totems feature soldier figures: in one, a man with peaked cap advances proudly on the back of a lion, epitomising the ambiguity of power which, while claiming to protect, becomes tyrannical. This ambiguity is heightened by the contrast between the grandiose dimensions of these icons, some of them over three metres high, and the insubstantial

nature of the foam from which they are made – as insubstantial as these empty and deceptive mass representations.

MadeIn Company has exhibited in numerous international institutions, notably the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, Kunsthalle Bern, the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, the S.M.A.K in Ghent, and the Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai. *MadeIn Company* featured in the 8th Shanghai Biennale in 2008 and at the Busan Biennale (South Korea) in 2010.

With *Sleeping Life Away*, Xu Zhen is leading his “Company” (almost in the theatrical sense of the word) towards a productive act of emulation, prompting viewers to emerge from their existential torpor and question their assumptions about the world and its hallowed representations.



Warlord's Family, 2011
Mixed media (foam)
320 x 260 x 160 cm

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MadeIn Company

BIOGRAPHY

MadeIn Company was founded in Shanghai in 2009. Xu Zhen was born in 1977 in Shanghai, where he lives and works.

SOLO SHOWS (Selection)

- 2012 *Sleeping Life Away*, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris
- 2011 *Action of Consciousness*, ShanghART Gallery & H Space, Shanghai
 - Physique of Consciousness*, Long March Space, Beijing
 - Physique of Consciousness*, Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Switzerland
- 2010 *Don't Hang Your Faith on The Wall*, Long March Space, Beijing
 - Seeing One's Own Eyes*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK
 - Spread-by MadeIn at ShanghART Beijing*, ShanghART Beijing
- 2009 *MadeIn -- Seeing One's Own Eyes-Europalia*. China, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium
 - Lonely Miracle: Middle East Contemporary Art*, James Cohan Gallery, New York, USA

GROUP SHOWS (Selection)

- 2011 *Never Forget the Image Struggle*, TOP Contemporary Art Center, Shanghai, China
 - Rijksakademie OPEN LIVE #4*, Amsterdam, Holland
 - Growing Up*, Exhibition celebrating, Shanghai World Financial Center, Shanghai
 - FIAC 2011 Grand Palais, Paris, France
 - LIVING AS FORM*, Creative Time, Long March Space, NYC, USA
 - Moving Image in China: 1988-2011*, MINSHENG ART MUSEUM, Shanghai
 - Taikang 15th Anniversary Collection Exhibition*, National Art Museum of China
 - How we to do?*, Heng Lu Art Museum
- 2010 *Rehearsal: 8th Shanghai Biennale 2010*, Shanghai
 - Thirty Years of Chinese Contemporary Art*, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai
 - Jungle: A Close-Up Focus on Chinese Contemporary Art Trends*, Platform China, Beijing
- 2009 *Breaking Forecast-8 Key Figures of China's New Generation Artists*, UCCA, Beijing
 - The New Attitude of image*, Tang Contemporary Art Center, Beijing

CURATORIAL PROJECTS

- 2011 “Prevent 2012” *Doomsday Party*, TOP Contemporary Art Center, Shanghai, China
 - Never Forget the Image Struggle*, TOP Contemporary Art Center, Shanghai, China
 - My Communism: Poster Exhibition*, TOP Events, Shanghai, China
 - TOP Events- Shanghai, China