



23 July 2009 by sinopop

“Running Teacher Fan” in the 798 Biennale?



We all remember “Running Teacher Fan,” the poor sap who, after abandoning his students in the classroom during the Sichuan earthquake, proceeded to be butchered by Chinese media as the anti-hero. “My sense of self-preservation is too strong,” he was quoted as saying.

Later, Ai Weiwei defended him in his legendary blog, commending his honesty and bravery in admitting his un-noble actions in a time of hero fetishizing, especially in comparison to

the Sichuan Ministry of Education, which still won’t face up to the sub-standard construction on schools that caused their collapse.

As if taking Ai’s lead, Zhu Qi, artistic director for the upcoming “798 Biennale” will include Fan Meizhong, the notorious “Running Teacher Fan” in the biennale as an artist. Publicity stunts, or significant attempt to bring art in 798 to a new social dimension? We will have to wait until August 15th to find out.

In a post on the artnow.com.cn site , Zhu Qi writes: “I’m not saying that I agree with Running Teacher Fan’s sense of values, however, the fact that he can honestly voice his opinion is worthy of appreciation.”

“我并不认同范跑跑的价值观，但范跑跑能真实地表达自己的态度和看法是值得欣赏的。”



And he’s not the only “vocal” participant, in an exhibition titled “The Soulful Society VS The Net Spirit” (社会魂vs



网络魄) infamous Chongqing “rustynail” dweller (钉子户) Wu Ping, the woman who refused to vacate her home (pictured at left) will also be participating, as well as some disabled, and there’s even a program that trains unemployed workers to be artists, the “Laid off Art Rehabilitation Program.” Hm. How does one qualify?

The whole thing will be going off in the 706 space within the 798 complex, one of the main venues of the Biennale. Dates are August 15 to September 12, 2009. Although a little unclear on the details, or what, exactly, they will be

making “art” of, Zhu Qi seems unhindered by the fact that these folks have probably never considered themselves artists before they received a call from his assistant.

Zhu Qi gives two reasons for his decision in his post: the first, Chinese contemporary art should take its lead from reality; the second, a biennale shouldn’t necessarily be a collection of highlights, but also a platform for which to discuss issues.

[Read Zhu Qi’s post here \(Chinese only\)](#)

[Preview the Biennale at the official website](#)

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[“Kàn Bù Wán” exhibition photos»](#)

In Chinese pinyin, Kàn Bù Wán literally means, “You can’t finish looking.” These works by the emerging artist Wang Yifan embody the statement— with five 24-hour videos and 20,000 characters written over eleven canvases, it would take one more than 120 hours to see this exhibition in its entirety. The artist doesn’t hope that anyone will [...]

[Folk Art at the National Museum»](#)

Now on display at the National Museum of Art is a rare glimpse of the museum’s folk art collection, the gifts of the devoted folk art researcher Wang Shucun, who carefully preserved and hid these items throughout many turbulent years of history. The exhibition only runs until April 14, but is highly recommended.

Its not rare [...]



[Wang Guangle Made His Coffin...»](#)

until May 14

According to tradition in his hometown, elderly people will paint their coffins with one layer each year. Wang Guangle has adopted this to the canvas, in remarkably more colorful layers than we might see on coffins. As always, his work reveals time, patience, and the somewhat unexpected results of turning concept into canvas.

[Huang Liang Solo Exhibition & 12 Young Chinese Artists in “Look Deeper”»](#)

In Platform China’s project space, Huang Liang offers a morbid encounter with illness. Misdiagnosed with cancer in his early adulthood, cool shades of clinical gray seem to still haunt his memory. Although Huang Liang’s tactile painting style of oil on canvas is nothing new, or unfamiliar from academic artists, Huang shows talent with paints.

Small, unframed and unmounted canvases of hospital scenes are arranged across the wall like snapshots, juxtaposed with enormous canvases depicting X-rays.

- [books](#)

- [“New Generation Artists” and Yin Jinan»](#)

Recently re-reading Yin Jinan’s two critical responses to the Chinese art world, “Knocking on the door alone” (1993) and “Step-motherism” (2000), two books that should be noted for their critical response and theoretical interpretations on the world of Chinese contemporary art. Both books are published by Sanlian Bookstore, are in their 4th and 2nd [...]



- [China Museums: At Long Last»](#)

Miriam Clifford, Cathy Giangrande and Antony White, have reportedly spent four years combing through China’s hundreds of museums in a search for the most appealing to Western audiences. The result is an in-depth guide to China’s museums that opens up new territories for English-speaking audiences, presumably Western travelers, but for a special, more adventuresome set interested in witnessing China’s cultural growth from a more native perspective. “China: Museums” includes the major players, such as the Forbidden City as well as Chinese equivalents of what could be called “Roadside museums.”



- [Looking For Me: FOUND»](#)

Some of us look forever, others never seek—perhaps they’re already found “ME.” New September 2008 publication is a compilation of short texts and artwork images documenting China’s new generation of “Post 70s” artists. Included within are 30 artists, each artist includes a short introduction, three full pages of color images, and up-to-date artist resumes, there is even a photograph of each artist, in the old school, i.d. photo style.

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- [November 2008](#)
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- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
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- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
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