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SOTHEBY'S HONG KONG TO HOLD CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART SPRING SALE 2012 ON 2 APRIL

Hong Kong Public Exhibition: 31 March – 2 April | Auction: 2 April



Highlighting The Auction Debut Of Zhang Xiaogang's 1993 Creation *Bloodline - Big Family: Family No. 2* (Est. HK\$25-35 million / US\$3.2-4.5 million) The Earliest Work From Zhang Xiaogang's Bloodline Series Ever Offered At Auction

Hong Kong, March 2012 Sotheby's Hong Kong will hold its Contemporary Asian Art Spring Sale 2011 on 2 April at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, presenting a meticulously selected group of contemporary Chinese artworks of great historical importance, among them *Bloodline - Big Family: Family No. 2* (Est. HK\$25 – 35 million / US\$3.2 – 4.5 million), the earliest work from Zhang Xiaogang's *Bloodline* series ever offered at auction. Also highlighted are two important early works of Cynical Realism, namely *1993 No. 4* by Fang Lijun and *A Good Dog* by Liu Wei, which are expected to stir intense bidding. This season Sotheby's is delighted to introduce a special section dedicated to *Without-ism*, presenting to collectors contemporary Chinese art from a fresh perspective. Offering **152 lots**, the sale is estimated to achieve a total in excess of **HK\$158 million / US\$20 million***.

This season Sotheby's will also present **Fang Lijun's *Dream of Peace*, specially created for the Peace and Development Foundation (PDF)**. Proceeds will be donated to the Foundation for its future development.

2011 has been a remarkable year, in which Sotheby's Contemporary Asian Art sales achieved an astounding HK\$970.4 million / US\$124.4 million, the highest ever annual total for contemporary Asian art auctions worldwide. The two sales of *The Ullens Collection* brought a total of HK\$560 million / US\$72 million, setting auction records for multiple artists, rendering it the highest-value single-owner collection of contemporary Chinese art ever sold.

Evelyn Lin, Sotheby's Head of Contemporary Asian Art, said, "The past century has seen a true flourishing in art in Southeast Asia, Greater China and beyond. Sotheby's has long appreciated the differences between these stylistically diverse realms of art stemming from distinctive periods, each having a unique collecting history and market. Our experts have, therefore, focused on their respective area of expertise, developing substantial understanding of the artworks and the market in order to assist collectors on their quest for ideal objects to expand their collections. The focused professionalism of our team of experts has provided Sotheby's with incomparable experience and advantage in organising high-quality and engaging auctions for all collectors.

2011 has been a notable year for Sotheby's sale of contemporary Asian art. Apart from the active participation of collectors across Asia, we attracted strong bids from all over the world, which is solid proof of the market's recognition of our direction and effort. The confidence of our collectors has enabled us to gather museum-quality and historically important contemporary works, especially contemporary Chinese paintings. Continuing our fine tradition of scrupulous planning, meticulous categorisation and centralised selling, we proudly present the historically significant and immensely valuable early works, *Bloodline - Big Family: Family No. 2* by Zhang Xiaogang (1993) as well as *1993 No. 4* by Fang Lijun, the first-ever piece that the artist exhibited abroad. In addition, we are delighted to introduce a special section devoted to recent works by emerging faces in contemporary Chinese art, bringing new artists and their works to our collectors and continuing to expand the market."

HIGHLIGHTS

I. Debut Of The Earliest Work From The *Bloodline Series* Ever Offered At Auction

Zhang Xiaogang (b.1958) *Bloodline - Big Family: Family No. 2* Oil on canvas 1993 110 by 130 cm

Est. HK\$25 – 35 million / US\$3.2 – 4.5 million, pictured on P.1

During Sotheby's Hong Kong 2010 and 2011 sales, several early works by Zhang Xiaogang were offered, including *Forever Lasting Love* series (triptych) (sold at HK\$79.06 million / over US\$10 million, setting world auction record for any contemporary Chinese art) and his *Bloodline: Big Family No. 1* (sold at HK\$65.62 million / US\$8,412,820, setting world auction record for Zhang Xiaogang's *Bloodline* series). This spring, Sotheby's will bring to the market the auction debut of another masterpiece by Zhang Xiaogang, *Bloodline - Big Family: Family No. 2*, the earliest example of the *Bloodline: Big*

Family series ever offered at auction. Never seen before in public, this work was initially purchased in 1996 and has remained in a private collection in Europe.

Zhang Xiaogang travelled to Europe in 1992 and in the following year created *Bloodline - Big Family: Family No. 2*. As the first instances of his signature series and a precursor to subsequent works, the paintings wielded decisive influence on the artist's ensuing development. Inspired by old portraits from the Cultural Revolution, Zhang created *Bloodline - Big Family: Family Nos. 1 and 2* based on old portraits of his own family. The former, after its initial showing in 1993, was immediately acquired by the Tokushima Art Museum in Japan, while the latter had been kept in Europe until recently. In the latter, a composition portraying the standard single-child family, the artist based the toddler on his own second eldest brother. Despite visible traces of the artist's earlier expressionist style, this painting tips its hat to surrealism. Characteristics such as gender-neutral human figures and subdued colours can all be traced to the artist's subsequent output, indicating the significance of this early work.

II. Two Masterpieces Of Cynical Realism

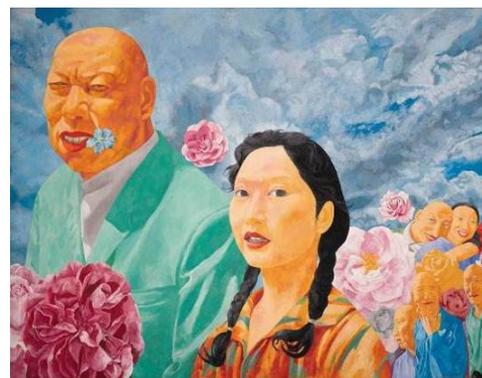
Cynical Realism was one of the most important artistic movements in the post-1989 era. After the ground-breaking China /Avant-Garde exhibition, artists were faced with loss of ideals and the reality of politics. The new generation started to adopt a more pedestrian and roguish attitude in their creations. By the mid-1990s, this group of artists gradually established their names outside China, showing their works in numerous international exhibitions with much acclaim. This season, Sotheby's brings two major works of Cynical Realism to collectors: Fang Lijun's *1993 No. 4* and Liu Wei's *A Good Dog*.

Fang Lijun (b. 1963) *1993 No. 4* Acrylic on canvas 1993 180 x 230 cm

Est. HK\$18 - 25 million / US\$2.3 - 3.2 million

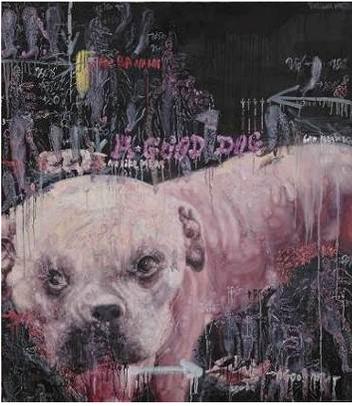
1993 No. 4 was Fang Lijun's contribution to the 1993 Venice Biennale - the first time a Chinese artist made his mark in an international exhibition.

This work is symbolic of Fang's artistic career of the 1990s and important for the development of Cynical Realism. As early as 1988, Fang began to use the image of a cynical, roguish, humorous bald man as *leitmotif*, and in 1992 his work was featured on the cover of the *New York Times Magazine*, attesting to the West's recognition of Fang as one of the most prominent Chinese artists of his time. *1993 No. 4* is a breakthrough masterpiece: the artist daringly employed gaudy colours, a marked aesthetic departure from earlier works dominated by softer hues. This painting depicts a man with a blue flower between his teeth and a woman with Chinese braids against a background of smirking people, accentuating the vulgarity of China's rapidly evolving society. It is an embodiment of its time. This series wielded immense influence on the artist and his future development, as gaudy colours became his signature. 1993 No. 4 has been held in a private European collection since 1994. Its appearance for the first time in Asia is highly significant.



Liu Wei (b. 1965) *A Good Dog* Oil on canvas 1995 170 x 150 cm

Est. HK\$12 - 15 million / US\$1.5 - 1.9 million



In 1995, Liu Wei's *Do You Like Pork?* featuring the female body rose to prominence when it was exhibited at the 46th Venice Biennale. After Liu's return to China, he abandoned social themes in favour of an exploration of pure pictorial interest. *A Good Dog* was created during this important juncture. An important early work depicting this household canine, this painting is a fine example of his widely celebrated, highly charged and strongly expressive style. The ease with which Liu wielded his brush, in addition to the ostensibly meaningless symbols and images of high-heeled shoes on the canvas, confirm an artist's considerably different outlook from his peers. When Political Pop became all the rage, Liu, known as *China's most gifted* artist, refused to follow that trend. *A Good Dog* attests to the uncompromising side of Liu Wei's character.

III. Rationalist Painting - Key Artistic Trend In The 1980s

The 1980s was an important decade in the development of contemporary Chinese art. Information pouring in from abroad inspired young art students to explore the infinite possibilities in the art of painting, resulting in a blossoming diversity of styles that led to the '85 Art Movement comprising two general camps: *Rationalist Painting* and *Current of Life*. The former was represented by the Northern Art Group, Zhejiang's Lake Society and Jiangsu's Red Brigade. They turned away from social realism, preferring contemplation on life, the universe and human existence as viable subject matters and ultimately veritable goals for art, forging the path for abstraction in Chinese art. This season, Sotheby's has selected three representative works by this group, all testimonies to the triumphs and tribulations of this fervent decade.

**Wang Guangyi (b. 1957) *Mao Zedong: AO* Oil on canvas 1989 87 x 63 cm
Est. HK\$4 - 6 million / US\$510,000 - 770,000**

Wang Guangyi was the most prominent advocate of Rationalist Painting in the 1980s. During the middle of the decade when fervent and abstract humanistic passion caught people's imagination, Wang proposed the "cleansing of humanistic passion". In 1989, at the China / Avant-Garde exhibition, Wang exhibited his *Mao Zedong* triptych, which has since become emblematic of that ground breaking moment. Featuring the great helmsman of China worshipped during Cultural Revolution, this series revises the symbolic image of Mao, bringing idolatry back to reason and exploring the possibility of rationality in artistic expression. *Mao Zedong: AO* is one such example from the series. When the *Mao Zedong* triptych was first exhibited, the four corners of the canvas were marked "AC" instead of "AO" because of political concerns. Preserving the original concept of the artist with the corners marked with "AO", the present painting offered is truly a collectible.



**Zhang Peili (b.1957) *Swimmers* Oil on canvas 1985 73 x 115 cm
Est. HK\$4 - 6 million / US\$510,000 - 770,000**

In December 1985, students from the Zhejiang Academy of Arts who formed the "Youth Art Group" organised an exhibition entitled '85 *New Space* -

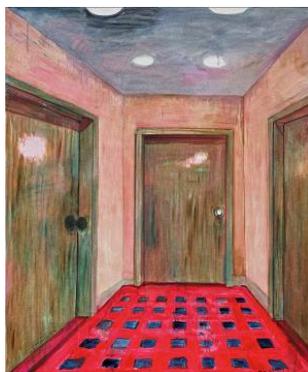
emphasising indifference and rationality in their artistic presentation - as part of the '85 *New Wave*. *Swimmers* was among four paintings by Zhang Peili included in '85 *New Space*, two of which featured swimmers, while the others depicted musicians on wind instruments. Their minimalist style and pronounced outlines subverted social realism and the convention of impassioned expression, generating debate among critics on the dichotomy of *cool* rationality and *hot* passion, which defined a crucial chapter in contemporary Chinese art history. Revered as the *father of Chinese video art*, Zhang Peili began his early paintings featuring swimmers are extremely rare on the market. A chronicle of the early contemporary Chinese artists' devotion in defying the convention of painting, and of their courage in expressing themselves with newly found freedom, this work is of extreme historical significance.

IV. *Without-ism* - Return To The Purely Pictorial

A group of Chinese artists who emerged in recent years have abandoned social and political discourse in their work. Instead of forging a passionate dialogue with the Chinese national spirit like their forebears from the 1980s, aspiring to conquer the West through Political Pop as their predecessors from the 1990s, or embracing the unbridled materialism like the new generation of artists brought up on cartoons, these younger artists refrain from adopting a critical stance with regard to society. On the contrary, they return to the art of painting, focusing on capturing their own state of mind and existence as well as the exploration of purely pictorial interest. Compared to Political Pop, Cynical Realism and conceptual art of the 1990s, this new crop of artists are more concerned with the aesthetics and technique of painting, where content is no longer a vehicle for conveying ideologies or morals. This spring, Sotheby's organises a special section entitled *Without-ism*, introducing a new perspective in contemporary Chinese art. Artists featured include Zhang Enli, Wang Xingwei and Jia Aili.

Zhang Enli (b. 1965)

Currently residing in Shanghai, Zhang Enli has mounted solo exhibitions in America, Europe and China in the past three years, making a name for himself in the West and within China with his distinctly personal visual language. His latest works display his signature style that connects directly with traditional ink paintings with thinly applied pigments and freehand brushwork, which also prompts the West to re-evaluate the medium and vocabulary of oil painting. Abandoning concern for social or political realities in his choice of subject matter, Zhang devotes his attention to objects and their psychological connotations. Depicting corrugated cardboard boxes and glass containers, *Container (two works)* (Oil on canvas, 2003 and 2004, 40 x 50 cm, Est. HK\$280,000 - 350,000 / US\$36,000 - 45,000, pictured right) and *Glass (two works)* (Oil on canvas,



2002 and 2004, 50 x 40 cm, Est. HK\$280,000 - 350,000 / US\$36,000 - 45,000) belong to the artist's early experiments, the former featured as cover art for his printed catalogue. For the artist, these seemingly mundane objects offer much food for thought. Cardboard boxes, for instance, symbolise the legacy of family and the emptiness of such vessels analogous to what parents leave for their children, who are a generation that have lost their traditional heritage. The large canvas *Standard Room* (Oil on canvas, 2009, 240 x 200 cm, Est. HK\$900,000 - 1.2 million / US\$120,000 - 150,000,

pictured left) is also filled with ambivalence. Featuring closed doors set against a wall, it is analogous to those containers: hidden therein are psychological depths waiting to be discovered. The bright red hue can be traced to the artist's early expressionist work and represents that only passion and warmth in a scene that is wholly alienating.

Wang Xingwei (b.1969) *Untitled (Moondoor)* Oil on canvas 2007 200 x 200 cm

Est. HK\$1.2 - 1.6 million / US\$150,000 - 200,000

Wang Xingwei has recently devoted his energy to absurd and humorous works that question, subvert and reinterpret the art of painting. His works are distinguished by their notable conceptual nature that far surpasses many of his peers, making Wang a true vanguard. He refuses to follow any established style, borrowing from visual images as varied as European classics, commercial paintings and academic studies, exploring the manifold possibilities of the art of painting. In *Untitled (Moondoor)*, an American cartoon figure painted with clean outlines in Art Deco style – an important recurring subject in Wang's works – stands in front of a Chinese arch door, and behind him is a traditional Chinese rock garden. This juxtaposition of Chinese landscape with a comic figure enriches the content and increases possibilities for contemporary Chinese painting.



Jia Aili (b. 1979) *It's Not Only You Who Is Pale (triptych)* Oil on canvas painted wooden chair 2007

300 x 600 cm Est. HK\$2.5 - 3.8 million / US\$320,000 - 490,000



A graduate of the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, Jia Aili is one of the most sought-after emerging artists in the past few years. His 2007 work *On The Field Of Hopes* (Est. HK\$350,000 - 450,000 / US\$45,100 - 58,000) achieved HK\$1.94 million / US\$248,717 at Sotheby's Hong Kong Contemporary Asian Art Spring Sale in April 2010, proving his recognition among the collecting community. Jia is a successor to the heritage of Soviet social realism (a distinguishing feature of the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts) and a true master of large canvasses. Already featured in several important publications on art, *It's Not Only You Who Is Pale* is a momentous triptych that combines installation and painting. This portrait of the final catastrophe bears hints of the desolate heavy industrial areas in China's northeast. A man with black wings stands in the middle of the landscape wearing a gas mask. At a distance, smoke rises from a vacant hospital bed, and

in front of the canvas is a suspended white wooden chair. With strong and impactful brushstrokes radiating from the canvas, he portrays apocalyptic devastation and overwhelmingly ominous images of death and destruction filled with tragic desperation that echoes the work's title. They are manifestations of emerging Chinese artists' sense of despair in an environment rampant with rapid economic growth.

Charity Auction – Peace and Development Foundation

Fang Lijun (b. 1963) *Dream of Peace* Oil on canvas 2011 180 x 250 cm
Est. HK\$2.8 – 3.5 million / US\$360,000 – 450,000



Peace and Development Foundation
 和平發展基金會



Painted by Fang Lijun, *Dream of Peace* will be offered by Sotheby's Hong Kong this April to benefit the Peace and Development Foundation (PDF). PDF is the official partner in Hong Kong of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is mandated to projects addressing the issues of human development and the alleviation of poverty, climate change and environmental conservation in Hong Kong, the Pearl River Delta and mainland China. Fang Lijun enthuses, "Through my contribution I hope to express my respect for those people who do

dream of or work towards peace"

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

Images available upon request | Press releases and sale information are now available at www.sothebys.com/hongkongspring2012

NOTES TO EDITORS

Sotheby's Hong Kong Spring Sales 2012 Calendar

Auction Date	Room	Category	Exhibition
31 Mar			
12pm	Room 1	The Classic Cellar from a Great American Collector IX	----
1 Apr			
10am	Room 1	Finest & Rarest Wines Including Wines Direct from Château Angélu, Louis Roederer and Colgin Cellars	----
2 Apr			
10am	Room 1	Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Paintings	31 Mar – 1 Apr
2:30pm	Room 1	20th Century Chinese Art	31 Mar – 2 Apr (until 1pm)
5:30pm	Room 1	Contemporary Asian Art	31 Mar – 2 Apr (until 4pm)
3 Apr^			
10am & 2:30pm	Room 1	Fine Chinese Paintings	31 Mar – 2 Apr
2pm & 5pm	Room 2	Magnificent Jewels and Jadeite	31 Mar – 2 Apr
4 Apr^			
10am	Room 1	Ru – From A Japanese Collection	31 Mar – 3 Apr
10:15am	Room 1	The Meiyintang Collection, Part III – An Important Selection of Imperial Chinese Porcelains	31 Mar – 3 Apr
11:45pm	Room 1	Water, Pine and Stone Retreat Collection, Scholarly Art II	31 Mar – 3 Apr
2:30pm	Room 1	A Private Collection of Scholarly and Imperial Works of Art	31 Mar – 3 Apr
3:30pm	Room 1	Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art (Various-owner sale)	31 Mar – 3 Apr
11am & 2pm	Room 2	Important Watches	31 Mar – 3 Apr

Hong Kong Exhibition and Auction Venue

Hall 5, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (New Wing)

1 Expo Drive, Wan Chai, Hong Kong *^Two salesrooms will be set up for concurrent bidding*

Asia Travelling Exhibition Calendar

Exhibition Date	City	Venue
7-8 March	Shanghai	Four Seasons Hotel
10-11 March	Beijing	Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Financial Street
17-18 March	Singapore	Regent Hotel
24-25 March	Taipei	Fubon International Conference Hall