

NEWS

BRIEF

Barbara Hutton (1912–1979).

Within the space, works of the participating artists interrupt and converse with museological pedagogy. Like in the case of Chinese ceramic export ware, where the order for subjects such as the Judgment of Paris was conveyed by hearsay to their manufacturer, some of the participating artists were presented with the challenge of working together from a distance.

Clark House Initiative, established in 2010 by Zasha Colah and Sumesh Sharma, is a curatorial collaborative focused on ideas of freedom and equality. Through reexamining history and studying its representation and visibility, insights are gleaned into the possibilities of alternative economies and freedom. Clark House Initiative recalls political and artistic figures into contemporary history, questioning the recent rise of fascism in India based on exaggerated rumors of economic prosperity and nationalist pride.

Para Site is Hong Kong's leading contemporary art space and one of the oldest and most active independent art institutions in Asia. It produces exhibitions, publications and discursive projects aimed at forging a critical understanding of local and international phenomena in art and society. Para Site fully supports the democratic aspirations of the people of Hong Kong. It is financially supported by the Springboard Grant under the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

This exhibition is curated by Sumesh Sharma, Clark House Initiative, and Qinyi Lim, Para Site. Exhibition and venue is supported by University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong. The content of this program does not reflect the views of the Government of the HKSAR.



Bhupen Khakar in collaboration with Dafen Village. **The celebration of Guru Jayanti**, 1980/2014, oil on canvas. Courtesy of Shireen Gandhi.

The Bruna Celeste Gallery, Fung Ping Shan Building is at 94 Bonham Road, University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong, Pok Fu Lam. Tel: (852) 2241 5500. Website: www.hkumag.hku.hk.

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SINGAPORE

Dreams Of Desire

Art Plural Gallery will present *Dreams of Desire*, a solo exhibition featuring the work of Chinese artist Fu Lei. Running from November 14 to December 30, 2014, Fu's exhibition shows five large oil paintings, made exclusively for the occasion, and a selection of drawings.

Fu's paintings capture the notion of excess in today's world. Plump figures adorned with pearls and dainty high-heels frolic amongst toads, flamingos, snails, and fruit in an absurd yet uncannily familiar world. The subtle point of a toe as it emerges from the tangle of flesh reveals the underlying theme of lust, framed by the sheen of draped silk sheets and the enveloping wing of a crane in a display of somewhat *faux* modesty.

Although set in the clouds, just beyond the periphery of our realm, Fu's baroque scenes address the real subject of vice and desire in contemporary society. Despite being based in the thriving 798 Art Zone in Beijing, Fu stresses that his observations of lust and gluttony extend beyond contemporary China: "The inspirations of my creation come from the freedom of not fixing my mind on any culture, region, pattern, or even species." Fu Lei holds a mirror up to the viewer without interrogating them, allowing them a mere moment of guilt, shame, or perhaps despair before the eye begins to notice the absurd and humorous motifs that are carefully arranged amongst the orchestrated jumble.

Indeed, the artist is fully committed to escapism, per-

petually searching for avenues to enter his imagination or to "flee away from the real world and escape into a realm of illusion." By leading the viewer up into the clouds, the artist allows them a brief glimpse into a world that they have always wanted to experience, a kind of wonderland that exists only in the mind. In this world, the vices of lust and gluttony are re-imagined, stripped of their negativity, and redefined as marvelous dreams of desire.

As one of the first few studios established in the 798 district, Fu Lei's studio marked the beginning of a new Chinese art landmark, now known as the 798 Art Zone. His early works assimilated vivid colors and decorative delights from Chinese folk art. In 1998, he began to use ironic plump figures to show the indolence and ambiguousness of human nature. Today he stands fast in working in the 798 amongst a handful of others, using his unique artworks to identify the present day.

Born in Beijing in 1958, Fu Lei graduated from Fine Arts School at the Hebei Normal University in 1982 and pursued a career as an art teacher before becoming a full-time artist in 1992. In 1994, he presented his first solo exhibition at the Beijing Restaurant.

Art Plural Gallery is at 38 Armenian Street. Tel: (65) 6636 8360. Website: www.artpluralgallery.com.

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Fu Lei, **Paradise No.13**, 2014, oil on canvas, 170 x 300 cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist and Art Plural Gallery.