

Title: Nan Qi Solo Exhibition
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Nan Qi Solo Exhibition

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This scintillating combination of words: Authority, Sex and Money, comprise the title of a current solo exhibition by contemporary Chinese artist Nan Qi.

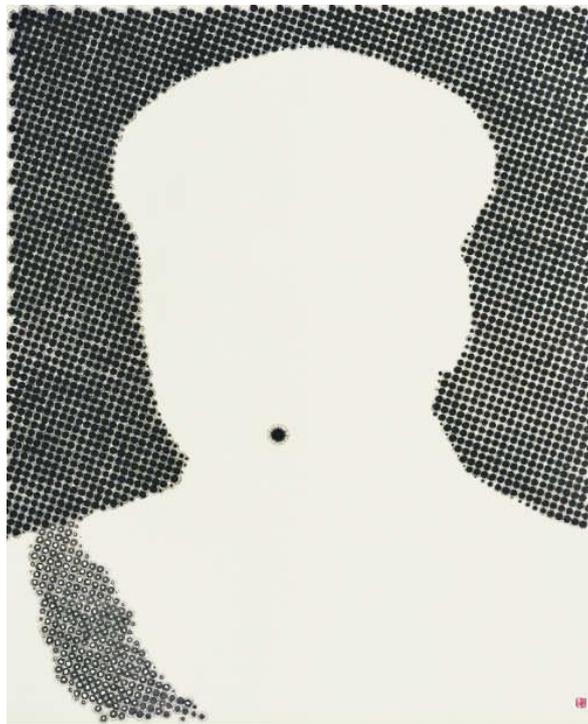
Indeed the ascent of the modern Chinese economy has allowed a Gatsby-esque transformation that is starkly and humorously displayed in Nan Qi's series of paintings. Featuring motifs such as the yuan (Chinese currency) and the Visa logo, Nan Qi seems to place his paintbrush on the pulse of contemporary Chinese society, providing acerbic comment on its current materialist preoccupations.



Red 'Nan' RMB Currency, 红色“南”字人民币, ink on rice paper, 108x70cm, 2013

In contrast to the boldness of the title, you might note that the works are composed in the refined medium of inkwash (shuimo) painting; this lending a sense of tradition, elegance and delicacy to the subject depicted. The starkest, shiniest, gaudiest interpretation of riches is thus effectively captured in a mellow, contemplative style.

Traditional Chinese shuimo painting showcases the play of water and colour on paper, giving a washed-out, sentimental effect to the work. In addition, Nan Qi utilises his (perfected) technique of dots. Having the appearance of a chromatography experiment, the layer upon layer of colour and wash diffuse from the centre, allowing the viewer to read multiple layers of meaning. Twinned with popular icons such as Mao Zedong, Nan Qi's work is packed with symbolism, containing a layered narrative.



Nan Qi - Fortune Dot, 福点, ink and Tibetan incense on rice paper, 155×124cm, 2006

Can Authority Sex or Money be earned in an instant? Perhaps spending an afternoon at Art Plural Gallery might provide you with an answer.

The exhibition will run till 23 November at Art Plural Gallery, 38 Armenian Street.

Words by Cheryl Teo

Images courtesy of Art Plural Gallery