

"Liu Ding's Store"

Exhibition in Beijing, 13 Nov 2010 – 16 Jan 2011

Opening: Saturday, 13 Nov 2010 – 4 PM to 7 PM



"The Utopian Future of Art, Our Reality: The Weight of An Art History Book + antiques" 2009-2010

Liu Ding's Store

'Liu Ding's Store' employs a utilitarian economic model - a shop - to establish a platform for thinking and discussion centred around the creation of value. 'Liu Ding's Store' was launched in the summer of 2008. Besides selling works online (www.liudingstore.com), 'Liu Ding's Store' frequently makes appearances and sales in an assortment of contexts and situations, from social and cultural events to art exhibitions. 'Liu Ding's Store' is an ongoing project that continues to develop new lines of work. Through different formats that include product pricing, promotion, marketing and circulation, it seeks to investigate, understand and discuss value - particularly the complex characteristics and essence of the subject of value in art - as well as the rules, mechanisms and politics behind the creation of value. In the meantime, it is an art practice that expresses the artist's visions and imagination of politics.

As of the present, 'Liu Ding's Store' has developed four product lines: Take Home and Make Real the Priceless in Your Heart; the Utopian Future of Art, Our Reality; Conversations; and Friendship.

Take Home and Make Real the Priceless in Your Heart is a series of unfinished landscape paintings custom-made in a factory in a large quantity according to the artist's order. The artist has autographed each individual painting, which is thus granted a potential for value appreciation. Thanks to the artist's signature, which also carries a symbolic value, these products are sold at a moderate price (only RMB 1500 each) that attracts many customers. As devised by the artist, such a game fully exposes the speculative nature of value.

The Utopian Future of Art, Our Reality unites objects, products and artworks of differing values and categories based on themes invented by the artist. Each grouping of various items is offered for sale as a whole. Every item within each theme is priced equally, regardless of the differences in their functional, commercial, cultural and social values. In each themed collection of things, everything is equal. Their values are free of any hierarchical or quantitative distinction. This notion implies a radical political imagination.

Conversations is a series of products featuring photographic documentation and sound recordings of non-public conversations the artist conducts with other practitioners in specific contexts. What carries value in this series is

the actual experience of intellectual exchange, mutual inspiration and clashes of ideas. The artist boldly claims these experiences to be of value and prices them, calling for customers of an equally adventurous and forward-looking spirit.

Friendship is the newest product in 'Liu Ding's Store'. What is for sale is an abstract psychological space, an environment and context made up of works and furniture designed by the artist. This context encourages people to gather and spend time together.

Galerie Urs Meile in Beijing is pleased to present all four product lines from 'Liu Ding's Store'. For this project, Liu Ding will invite the renowned antique collector, Mr. Zhu Yeqing, to provide a selection of antique items from his collection to be a part of the Utopian Future of Art, Our Reality. The order underlying the creation of value in the antique business is a model in which objects are in a continuous cycle, existing as contextual references for each other; their values and prices are created and determined through such reciprocal referencing and support. Such a system actually transcends the pure material properties of an object and weaves social, artistic, cultural and economic values together to establish its selling price. This system is in sync with the spirit and order of the Utopian Future of Art, Our Reality. Mr. Zhu's selection of antiques and the Utopian Future of Art, Our Reality are brought together in this exhibition to form contextual references and backing for each other.

A practice of diverse directions and forms, 'Liu Ding's Store' offers a critical contemplation and understanding of the art system. It touches upon the definition of art, the roles and power of artists, the definition of artworks, and the intellectual and economic value imbedded in the relationships and human networks of the art world. What the artist is concerned about in this project is not the revival of these old issues within contemporary society or an historical context, but how to raise these issues again through his own practice in order to initiate effective discussions. This art project, in conjunction with similar issues deriving from those of other artists, will thus generate practical examples for the construction of new forms of institutional critique.

'Liu Ding's Store' has been presented in the following exhibitions and venues: 'Far West', Arnolfini Art Centre, Bristol, and Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK; 'China: Destruction / Construction', São Paulo Museum of Art, Brazil; the Chinese Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale, Italy; the 5th Latin American Biennial of Visual Arts, Instituto Paranaense de Arte, Curitiba, Brazil; 'PAWNSHOP', The Shop, Beijing, China; the Second Moscow Biennale for Young Art, Russia; and "Museum on Paper", Contemporary Art & Investment magazine, Issue No. 45, Sept 2010. 'Liu Ding's Store' will also appear at ZKM Centre for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany and the Frye Art Museum, Seattle, USA.

About Liu Ding

Liu Ding was born in 1976. He currently lives and works in Beijing as an artist and curator.

Liu Ding has participated in a number of major exhibitions such as the Second Guangzhou Triennial, the Fourth Seoul International Biennale of Media Art, and the Chinese Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009. His works have also been featured in many museums and galleries in China and abroad, including: Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK; Arnolfini Art Centre, Bristol, UK; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria; Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway; São Paulo Museum of Art, Brazil; ZKM Centre for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany; Centre PasquArt, Biel-Bienne, Switzerland; Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation, Turin, Italy; Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea; the Luggage Store, San Francisco, USA; Iberia Centre for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China; Shanghai MOCA, Shanghai, China; and the Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China.