



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pacific Asia Museum Announces Exhibition

Calligraffiti: Writing in Contemporary Chinese and Latino Art



Across the Divide; by Xu Bing, Vince Cavallo, Scud, Duce, and Santo; Pasadena, CA, 2003; Oil and Acrylic on Vinyl; Pacific Asia Museum Collection.

Pasadena, CA: August 14, 2009 – Pacific Asia Museum presents a multi-cultural exhibition that explores the idea of art as a strategy for breaking down concepts of painting/writing, legibility/illegibility, insider/outsider and Asian art/Western art. Curated by Collette Chattopadhyay, ***Calligraffiti: Writing in Contemporary Chinese and Latino Art*** will be on view from September 17, 2009 through January 17, 2010 and includes works by artists Chaz Bojorquez, Vince Cavallo, Cre8, Desi W.O.M.E., Duce, Fung Ming Chip, Gronk, Gu Wenda, Julianna Hernandez, Keo, Leo Limon, Man One, Minette Lee Mangahas, Sano, Scud, John Valadez, Vyal, Xu Bing, Yu-Kan Yang, Zhang Dali, Zheng Chongbin, and Zender.

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Calligraffiti: Writing in Contemporary Chinese and Latino Art addresses issues of power and culture, questioning the idea of universality. “Writing” in art is a central theme, permitting the exploration of correlations between calligraphy, the elevated form of writing, and graffiti, its historically devalued twin. Suggesting that these visual practices mirror each other, the exhibition presents works that critique or parody social and artistic frames of reference.

Working from within and without established concepts of history and place, the works gathered in this exhibition offer new interpretations of the past and the present. Premised on the idea that art is a world that mirrors the realities of life, they suggest that through “calligraffiti” (calligraphy + graffiti), knowledge can be constructed that simultaneously embraces the elevated and debased, intention and chance, reality and myth. Layering languages, histories and philosophies, the assembled works collectively trace evolving paradigms of artistic thought and practice. They redress the closure of past ideological frameworks to enhance greater respect and understanding for social multiplicity and understanding of cultural differences.

About the Murals

Calligraffiti: Writing in Contemporary Chinese and Latino Art highlights three large scale murals created at a workshop held at Pacific Asia Museum in 2003 in conjunction with the exhibition, *Drawing the Line: Contemporary Artists Reassess Traditional East Asian Calligraphy*. There, some forty attendees, ranging from museum trustees to L.A. graffiti artists, discussed the use of words and text in contemporary art.

Following the conversation the group gathered in the museum’s parking lot. There, the artists collectively created the murals shown in this exhibition. In the center of one of the murals, Xu Bing wrote *Art for the People* affirming his belief that class and social derivation pose no bar to the creation or appreciation of art. Some painted atop others’ work, extinguishing previous painted interpretations of reality. The murals thus mirror the processes by which cultural narratives emerge, exist or disappear in the public sphere.

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These murals explore connections between culturally elevated and devalued interpretations of art and reality. At its conceptual core, this exhibition proposes an inextricably intertwined relationship between calligraphy and graffiti, suggesting that knowledge of one informs and thus validates its mirrored other.

About the Site Specific Work by Gronk

During the week of August 23, 2009, Los Angeles based artist, Gronk, will paint a site specific work exclusively for this exhibition. Following the artist's standard practice, when the show closed in January of 2010, the work will be painted over and the wall returned to its usual state.

Instead of presenting a work that could be of relevance anywhere, site specific works are temporary images painted for a specific location and event. Gronk offers complex visual meditations on reality, variously commenting upon the social, historical, and cultural relevance of a given space, exhibition or event.

Calligraffiti: Writing in Contemporary Chinese and Latino Art is made possible in part by the support of the Pasadena Art Alliance, Pasadena Arts and Culture Commission, and Rene Balcer and Carolyn Hsu.

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Pacific Asia Museum is one of only four institutions in the United States dedicated exclusively to the arts and culture of Asia and the Pacific Islands. The museum's mission is to further cultural awareness and understanding through the arts. Since 1971, Pacific Asia Museum has served a broad audience of students, families, adults, and scholars through its education and outreach programs.

Pacific Asia Museum is located at 46 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California 91101. Museum opens Wednesday through Sunday 10 am to 6 pm. Admission is \$9 general, \$7 students/seniors, and free for children ages 11 and younger. Admission is free every 4th Friday of the month.

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