For Immediate Release: July 30, 2012
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HAMMER PROJECTS: SUN YUAN AND PENG YU

Los Angeles—Collaborators since the late 1990s, Chinese artists Sun Yuan and Peng Yu create provocative works that take as their subject some of the most compelling and complex issues of our day, from stem cell research and plastic surgery to terrorism and other forms of violence like rioting and dog fighting. Sometimes creating a direct confrontation with their viewers, their works often tap into common fears and anxieties and challenge particular worldviews. They tease out these issues by placing their viewers in the midst of strange situations: a self-propelled garbage dumpster that crashes into gallery walls, lifelike sculptures of elderly world leaders in wheelchairs bumping into one another, and a tall column comprised of human fat removed during plastic surgeries, to describe a few. The single work on view in their Hammer Project—I Am Here (2006)—grapples with the political complexities that inform East-West relations and the lingering conflicts that have deeply affected our relationship to the Middle East. By bringing these issues to the forefront, the artists shed light on prejudices and worries that might otherwise stay dormant. Hammer Projects: Sun Yuan and Peng Yu will be the first presentation of the duo’s work in the United States. This exhibition is organized by guest curator James Elaine.

Artists Sun Yuan (b. 1972 in Beijing) and Peng Yu (b. 1974 in Heilongjian, China) both studied oil painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. As a collaborative duo, they have had solo exhibition at the Vargas Museum, Quezon City, Philippines; Arario Gallery, Seoul; Galleria Continua, San Gimignano, Italy; Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing; Osage, Hong Kong; and F2 Gallery, Beijing. They have shown in numerous group exhibitions including the Aichi Triennale 2010, Nagoya, Japan; the 17th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney; the 2nd and 3rd Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow; the Liverpool Biennial 2006, Liverpool, United Kingdom; the 51st Venice Biennale, Venice; the Yokohama Triennial (2001), Yokohama, Japan; and the 5th Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France. They currently live in Beijing and this is their first exhibition in the United States.
Hammer Projects is a series of exhibitions focusing primarily on the work of emerging artists.

Hammer Projects is made possible by a major gift from The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation.

Generous support is provided by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and Susan Bay Nimoy and Leonard Nimoy. Additional support is provided by Good Works Foundation and Laura Donnelley; the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs; the Decade Fund; and the David Teiger Curatorial Travel Fund.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM
The Hammer Museum, a public arts unit of the University of California, Los Angeles, is dedicated to exploring the diversity of artistic expression through the ages. Its collections, exhibitions, and programs span the classic to the cutting-edge in art, architecture, and design, recognizing that artists play a crucial role in all aspects of culture and society.

Founded by Dr. Armand Hammer in 1990, the museum houses the Armand Hammer Collection of Old Master, Impressionist, and Post-Impressionist paintings and the Armand Hammer Daumier and Contemporaries Collection. Associated UCLA collections include the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, comprising more than 45,000 prints, drawings, photographs, and artists’ books from the Renaissance to the present; and the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden on the UCLA campus. The Hammer’s newest collection, the Hammer Contemporary Collection, is led by works on paper, particularly drawings and photographs from 1960 to the present.

The Hammer presents major single-artist and thematic exhibitions of historical and contemporary art. It also presents approximately ten Hammer Projects exhibitions each year, providing international and local artists with a laboratory-like environment to create new work or to present existing work in a new context.

As a cultural center, the Hammer offers a diverse range of free public programs throughout the year, including lectures, readings, symposia, film screenings, and music performances. The Hammer’s Billy Wilder Theater houses these widely acclaimed public programs and is the new home of the UCLA Film & Television Archive’s renowned cinematheque.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION
For current program and exhibition information call 310-443-7000 or visit www.hammer.ucla.edu.

Hours: Tuesday–Friday 11am–8pm; Saturday & Sunday 11am–5pm; closed Mondays, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day.

Admission: $10 for adults; $5 for seniors (65+) and UCLA Alumni Association members; free for Museum members, students with identification, UCLA faculty/staff, military personnel, veterans, and visitors 17 and under. The Museum is free on Thursdays for all visitors. Public programs are always free.

Location/Parking: The Hammer is located at 10899 Wilshire Boulevard, at Westwood Boulevard. Parking is available under the Museum. Rate is $3 for three hours with Museum validation. Bicycles park free.

Hammer Museum Tours: For group tour reservations and information, call 310-443-7041.
Biography
Sun Yuan (b. 1972 in Beijing) and Peng Yu (b. 1974 in Heilongjian, China) both studied oil painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. As a collaborative duo, they have had solo exhibitions at the Vargas Museum, Deoksugung, Seoul; Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing; Hangzhou Art Museum, Hangzhou; Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing; Tang Contemporary Art, Shanghai; and Beijing Art Museum, Beijing. They are also shown with works in the 5th Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art, Lyon (2000); the 2001 Yokohama Triennial, Yokohama, Japan; the 2nd Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2007); the 17th Biennale of Sydney (2010); the Aichi Triennale 2010, Nagoya, Japan; the Liverpool Biennial 2006, Liverpool, United Kingdom; the 51st Venice Biennale (2005); the 5th Lyon Biennial of Contemporary Art, Lyon (2000); the 2nd and 3rd Moscow Biennales of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2007, 2009); the 2nd and 3rd Shanghai Biennales, Shanghai (2002, 2004); and in numerous other exhibitions in China.

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Organized by guest curator James Elkins.

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In their case, controversy is a good thing. Sun Yuan and Peng Yu do it extremely well because it comes naturally and not, ideally as it should.

Almost as soon as they began working together in the late 1980s, Sun and Peng tragedy struck. Their first project, a small monument to the victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, was broken up by the authorities before it could be completed... (2003), in which (2001) raised the stakes. Curtain, ed. Lili Hernandez and inspired quiet delight in... PROJECTS... as far as it was possible to imagine. But let’s not tempt fate toward life and death, which took their practice just about early work... as she led the dogs to their stands. Oh, and then there was those present, for these breeds are known for their ferocity, the dog made the butt of jokes in Tom and Jerry, the dogs face on moving treadmills. Viewers watched with stunned acerbically titled... several fractured ankles that resulted. Their use of human a closed-off area, was one of the least problematic—despite the primary cause of the controversy. Placing a transp..."fallen" man that was so realistic, aside from the angel’s... In their case, controversy is a good thing: Sun Yuan and Peng Yu do it extremely well because it comes naturally and not, ideally as it should.

The British public was then presented with Old P... consituted of several figures against Animals as Part of Contemporary Chinese Artistic Practice,” in... All images are courtesy of Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin.

Sun Yuan and Peng Yu September 22, 2010 – January 6, 2011

Karen Smith

Notes


3. Steve James, “Super Size Me,” 2004, United States. 86 min. The film is a research exercise on the fast-food sector, which found that McDonald’s meals are among the unhealthiest and least nutritious of any major fast-food chain in the world. The film is a critical commentary on the fast-food industry and its impact on public health.

4. ‘The Wire’ is a critically acclaimed American crime drama television series that ran from 2002 to 2008.

5. “Fallen” Angel (2008), the single figure of a sculpture. Life-size sculpture. Photo by Oak Taylor-Smith.

6. Karen Smith, “Body Link” (1999), a sculpture depicting a woman with a bullet hole in her chest. The sculpture is a critical commentary on the violent and devastating effects of war.

7. “Civilization Pillar” (2001), a sculpture depicting a pillar of light. The sculpture is a critical commentary on the power of art and its ability to bring hope and healing.

8. “Safe Island” (2006), a sculpture depicting a lifeboat in the ocean. The sculpture is a critical commentary on the challenges of survival and the importance of hope.

9. “Old People’s Home” (2009), a sculpture depicting a group of elderly people. The sculpture is a critical commentary on the challenges of aging and the importance of community and support.

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