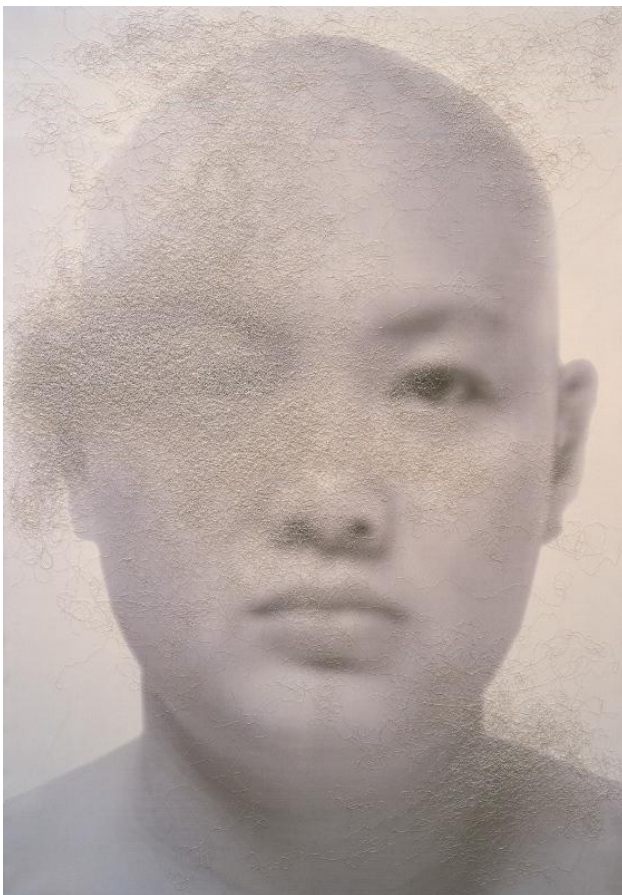


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**ASIA SOCIETY MUSEUM PRESENTS *BOUND UNBOUND: LIN TIANMIAO*,
FIRST RETROSPECTIVE OF ONE OF CHINA'S FOREMOST WOMEN ARTISTS**

EXHIBITION INCLUDES NEW INSTALLATIONS AND WORKS NEVER SEEN OUTSIDE OF CHINA

On view at Asia Society Museum, New York
September 7, 2012 through January 27, 2013



Focus, 2001. Digital C-Type print on canvas, hair, silk threads, and cotton threads. 95 ¼ x 5 x 69 ¾ in.
Collection of the artist

Asia Society Museum presents the first major solo exhibition in the United States of leading Chinese artist Lin Tianmiao. Surveying her work since 1995, the exhibition highlights the remarkably consistent focus on the human form that is embodied in her work.

Bound Unbound: Lin Tianmiao comprises a series of installations, sculpture, and two dimensional works that fill Asia Society's entire Museum space. Included are several large-scale, complex installations. Many of the works in the exhibition have never been seen outside of China and several are new works on view for the first time.

"Lin Tianmiao is one of only a handful of female artists to have emerged from her generation born in the 1960s in China," says Asia Society Museum Director and exhibition curator Melissa Chiu. "Her subjects and use of materials evoke domestic female labor and emotional struggles, orienting the works towards feminist interpretations. Yet the western idea of feminism does not necessarily translate in China. This exhibition aims to map Lin's consistency of vision, allowing us to see how her ideas on physicality have evolved and

been transformed. It also provides insight into her artistic development during one of the most important periods of change in the Chinese art world, the 1990s to today."



Here? Or There? (detail), 2002. Fiberglass, fabric, thread, mixed media. Dimensions variable. Collection of the artist, courtesy Galerie Lelong.

The exhibition is accompanied by a full-color, 136-page catalogue and includes an interview with the artist, as well as essays by Chiu and Guo Xiaoyan, Deputy Director and Curator, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China.

The exhibition—which is organized chronologically—takes its title from one of Lin’s early installations, originally shown at Beijing’s Central Academy of Fine Arts Gallery. For *Bound and Unbound* (1997), Lin carefully wound unbleached white cotton thread around nearly 800 household objects. The installation was unusual for its time in that it incorporated a video element: a hand cutting threads with scissors was projected onto a screen made of thread. The work is typical of many of her installations: large in scale and incorporating thread, sculpture, video and multimedia.

Beginning in 2000, Lin began to use images of her face and body in her work. One of her best-known series of works is *Focus*, in which black and white images of herself, her son and many others are printed on canvas then

reinterpreted by using various sewing, embroidery and thread winding techniques. These portraits—including her self-portrait, which is on view in the exhibition—evolved into full figure images, then into an installation of three dimensional figures created for the Shanghai Biennale in 2002. *Here? Or There?*, which is also on view in the exhibition, comprises nine figures and six video projections. The figures are dressed in manifestations of all of Lin’s embroidery and thread winding techniques. The “costumes” provide us with a new understanding of the human body beyond our daily experience. They blur the boundaries between our emotional and physical presence, casting doubt on the meaning of our own existence.

Following *Here? Or There?* Lin began creating works that depicted the body more explicitly, exploring the conflicts that occur between individual bodies and the community. *Endless* (2004), includes three elderly male figures with pink satin stretched across their stooped, gaunt bodies. They stand around a pool of pink thread.

Lin’s most recent works use bones, which the artist calls “the only perfect object left in the world.” She states: “Bones do not have the difference of hierarchy, culture, classes, politics and social property between them. I use



Endless (detail), 2004. Fiberglass, silk, mixed media. Dimensions variable. “Non Zero,” Beijing Tokyo Art Project, 2004. Collection of the artist, courtesy Galerie Lelong.

them causally to transform, continue or reconnect with my artistic imagination.” She adds, “They are also another way that I incorporate my body into my art.”

The artist

Lin Tianmiao was born in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, China in 1961. The daughter of two artists, Lin was deeply influenced by her parent’s traditional East Asian culture when she was a child. It was much later in her life as a textile designer and then as a visual artist that those traditional skills reemerged and evolved as materials; texture, physicality and hand work became driving forces in her art. She and her artist husband Wang GongXin spent time in New York in the late 1980s and early 1990s and were part of the Chinese artistic diaspora community that included Ai Weiwei, Xu Bing, Chen Yifei, Chen Kaige and Tan Dun. Lin returned to China in 1995 when she began to create art. Today, she lives and works in Beijing.

Lin Tianmiao is only one of a handful of female artists in China who has maintained a high profile on the international art scene. Her work is included in the collections of museums such as the Brooklyn Museum, the International Center of Photography and The Museum of Modern Art.

Related programs and exhibition funding

In conjunction with the exhibition, Asia Society will present a series of public programs focusing on the creative output of Chinese women, including music, theatre, poetry, literature and film. *Bound Unbound: Lin Tianmiao* is part of Asia Society’s yearlong programmatic focus on China titled China Close Up. Through major exhibitions and programming in arts and culture, policy and business and education, Asia Society explores China’s vibrant past and present as a window onto its exciting future. Details are available at AsiaSociety.org/ChinaCloseUp.

Major support for this exhibition is provided by The Coby Foundation, Ltd., Carol and David Appel, Artron, and the W.L.S. Spencer Foundation. Additional support is provided by Will and Helen Little and Sarah Peter.

About Asia Society Museum and Contemporary Asian Art

In the early 1990s, the Asia Society Museum was one of the first U.S. museums to establish an ongoing program of contemporary Asian art exhibitions. In addition, Asia Society Museum was the first U.S. museum to organize solo shows of now widely recognized artists Montien Boonma, Cai Guo-Qiang, Dinh Q. Lê, Yuken Teruya, and Zhang Huan.

Asia Society Museum is located at 725 Park Avenue (at 70th Street), New York City. The Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 A.M.–6:00 P.M. and Friday from 11:00 A.M.– 9:00 P.M. Closed on Mondays and major holidays. General admission is \$10, seniors \$7, students \$5, and free for members and persons under 16. Free admission Friday evenings, 6:00–9:00 P.M. The Museum is closed Fridays after 6:00 P.M. from July 1 through mid-September. AsiaSociety.org/museum