

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Asia Society Hong Kong Center presents
Light Before Dawn: Unofficial Chinese Art 1974-1985**

On view at Asia Society Gallery (Former Magazine A)
May 15 - September 1, 2013

(Hong Kong, May 13, 2013) Asia Society Hong Kong Center today announced that ***Light Before Dawn: Unofficial Chinese Art 1974 – 1985***, will be unveiled to audiences at Asia Society Hong Kong Center from May 15-September 1. The exhibition offers a revealing look into the spectrum of work created by three of China's most influential contemporary art groups: Wuming (No Name), Xingxing (Stars), and Caocao (Grass Society).

Light Before Dawn presents the works of twenty-two artists from the three art groups of Wuming, Xingxing and Caocao, emerged from the Cultural Revolution, who sought artistic truth in the authenticity of human desire, pain and dreams, explored the personal meaning of creativity, and asserted the value of the individuals. Crossing the boundaries of subject matter and style, they questioned, re-evaluated and redefined the forms, the nature of beauty and the art of China.

Distinctive in their art approaches, the Wuming group retained an interest in representations of nature, the Xingxing group explored historically Western modes of modernism, absorbing anew, progressive styles developed in Europe and America during the early twentieth century, including surrealism, cubism, and abstract expressionism while the Caocao group, trained in the native medium of ink and color on paper, attempted to shed both the legacy of socialist realism and the burdens of tradition by turning to new forms of abstract ink painting.

Although each movement took a distinctly different artistic approach, they were united in their commitment to pushing Chinese art beyond the borders of Socialist Realism. Works in the exhibition trace the beginning of modernism in the post-Mao era. The exhibition aims to shed light on the little-known artwork of this era, which helped to set the stage for the emergence of a contemporary art movement in China and also on the global scene.

Ephemera, personal items of the artists and more than a hundred works from twenty-two artists will be on view including *The Hall of Supreme Harmony* by Zhang Wei, *Dancing Woman* by Ma Desheng, *Silence* by Wang Keping, *Moonlight Night* by Wang Aihe, *Empty No. 1* by Qiu Deshu, *Snow at Wumen Gate* by Ma Kelu and alike.

The exhibition is guest curated by **Professor Kuiyi Shen** of University of California San Diego, a leading expert on Chinese contemporary art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and **Professor Julia F. Andrews** of The Ohio State University, who was the first American art historian to conduct research in China after formal establishment of U.S. - China relations in 1979.

“The true essence of *Light Before Dawn* lies not only in the beauty and versatility of Chinese contemporary art, but also in the stories and hardship little known to the public, which are deeply moving. We are thrilled to present this exhibition to the Hong Kong audience,” S. Alice Mong, Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong Center noted.

“Bank of America Merrill Lynch is committed to a diverse program of arts and culture projects globally based on the belief that a thriving arts and culture sector connects societies and economies throughout the world. Bank of America Merrill Lynch’s support of the arts ranges from our own Art Conservation and Art in our Communities programs to sponsorships such as our partnership with the Asia Society as Lead Sponsor for the “Light Before Dawn” exhibition,” said Matthew Koder, President of Asia Pacific, Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

Light before Dawn is made possible by:
 Lead Sponsor, **Bank of America Merrill Lynch (BAML)**
 Airline Sponsor, **United Airlines**
Carolyn Hsu-Balcer and René Balcer
 Logistics Partner, **Michelle Art Services**
 Supporting Organization, **Asia Art Archive**

List of Artists

Wuming	無名畫會	Xingxing	星星畫會
Du Xia	杜霞	Ai Weiwei	艾未未
Li Shan	李珊	Huang Rui	黃銳
Ma Kelu	馬可魯	Li Shuang	李爽
Shi Xixi	史習習	Ma Desheng	馬德升
Shi Zhenyu	石振宇	Qu Leilei	曲磊磊
Tian Shuying	田淑英	Wang Keping	王克平
Wang Aihe (professor)	王愛和	Yan Li	嚴力
Wei Hai	韋海	Caocao	草草社
Zhang Wei	張偉	Chen Jialing	陳家冷
Zheng Zigang	鄭子鋼	Chen Juyuan	陳巨源
Zheng Ziyang	鄭子燕	Jiang Depu	姜德溥
		Qiu Deshu	仇德樹

For more information about the exhibition, please visit <http://asiasociety.org/hong-kong/exhibitions/light-dawn-unofficial-chinese-art-1974-1985>

Exhibition admission:

Adults (Non-members): HK\$30

Seniors (aged 60 or above) and individuals with disabilities: HK\$15

Asia Society Members, Full-time students & children (aged under 18): FREE

Moreover, an evening forum with guest curators, collector, and participating artists about **Light Before Dawn: Unofficial Chinese Art 1974-1985** will be held on May 16 from 7:00pm - 8:15pm.

For more information about the forum, please visit <http://asiasociety.org/hong-kong/events/evening-minds-behind-light-dawn>

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About Asia Society

Founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd in New York as a not-for-profit, non-government educational organization, The Asia Society is a leading educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context.

Asia Society Hong Kong Center

As one of the eleven centers of The Asia Society, Asia Society Hong Kong Center (the "Hong Kong Center") was established in 1990 by a group of Hong Kong community leaders, led by Sir Q.W. Lee, the honorary chairman of Hang Seng Bank. As the leading regional knowledge-based platform for furthering the understanding of the countries and cultures of Asia and global issues that impact the region, Asia Society Hong Kong Center boasts extensive regional and international networks of leaders and scholars, and recognized expertise in business and policy, arts and culture, and educational programming for a wide range of audiences. In February 2012, the Hong Kong Center established its new permanent home in Admiralty, Hong Kong.

About Asia Society Gallery (Former Magazine A)

Built between 1863 and 1868, Asia Society Gallery is the oldest building in the Former Explosives Magazine, the historic fabric and features of this imposing structure have been thoughtfully restored and adapted for use as a modern exhibition space of international museum standard. Asia Society Gallery brings together established artists and aspiring talent who share a commitment to promoting Asian arts and culture, and to bringing the best and culturally inspiring in visual arts to the Hong Kong public.

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Website

<http://asiasociety.org/hong-kong>

Social Media

Facebook.com/asiasocietyhongkong

Twitter.com/asiasocietyhk

Opening hours of Asia Society Gallery

Tuesday to Friday: 11am–5pm

Weekends & public holidays: 10am–5pm

Last Thursday of the month: 11am–8pm

Closed on Mondays

About Bank of America Merrill Lynch

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