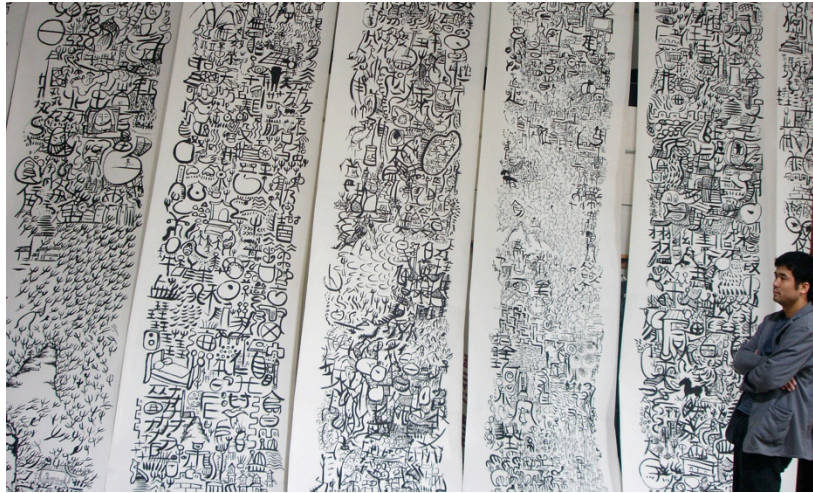


ETHAN COHEN



ETHAN COHEN PRESENTS 'HU RENYI: RETHINK INK GRAFFITI'

Ethan Cohen Gallery presents the series 'Re-thINK Ink', two solo exhibitions by renowned Chinese contemporary ink artists, Hu Renyi and Lan Zhenghui. In the upstairs gallery, Hu Renyi 'Re-thINK Ink: Graffiti', and in the lower gallery Lan Zhenghui. 'Re-thINK Ink: Landscape'. The show aims to re-contextualize the ancient genre as it undergoes transformation by modern practitioners forging the past with the future.

HU RENYI: RE-THINK INK GRAFFITI

September 9th to September 25th, 2016

Invoking 2000-year-old traditions of ink painting through its multiple iterations, Hu works with large monumental scrolls in serial sequence. His floor-to-ceiling works, each a fusion of Chinese art-historical memory suggesting ancient narratives both pictorial and calligraphic, take the eye along episodic journeys. They might be modeled on room-length scrolls that tell the story of a battle or depict the life of a city as one sees in Yuan-era originals. There is the panoramic sweep and attention to detail, the teeming ant-life evanescence of the whole woven into a texture of enchanted miniature dramas playfully interacting line by line. Yet they border on the calligraphic as if the figures were hieroglyphs in abstraction cascading down the page suggesting fleetingly the flow of streams down mountainsides – as in so many literati landscapes.

While continually evoking the art-historical pageant of Chinese ink painting, Hu never loses sight of his medium as a contemporary form. Accordingly, we see palpable visual references to the graffiti art of Keith Haring and cartoon figuration in a kind of multi-

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linear dance. The large scrolls certainly function as installations. Hu himself is fully immersed in the practice of performance art and often his ink works feel like accompaniment to performance or its product. He specifically refuses categorization purely as an ink-painter. "It's a dialect for me," he says, "I wanted to use ink as the way I speak. I can use this dialect but I am also very universal." Hu compares ink painting to the language of children, at once deeply personal and emotionally uninhibited. Installation, performance, ink painting, calligraphy, graffiti, and narrative miniature story-telling all combine in a dense unfolding of ancient memory into contemporary expression.

Hu Renyi was born in 1977, in Suzhou, China. His work has been shown in Minsheng Art Museum, Chi K11 Art Museum, V-Art Center, Today Art Museum, Changjiang Contemporary Art Museum, Berkshire Museum, and the Taft Museum of Art. In 2008, he was invited to join the Fine Arts teaching faculty at the School of Visual Arts (SVA) in New York City, where he now lives.

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