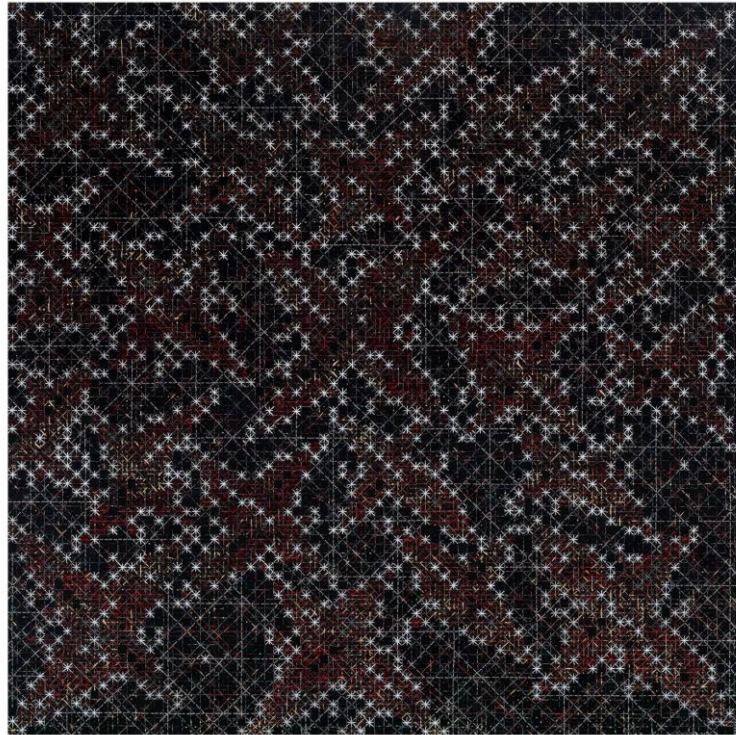


GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



Ding Yi, *Appearance of Crosses 2019-18*, 2019, Mixed media on wood, 240 x 240 cm

Ding Yi

Highlight

January 21 – March 20, 2021
Opening Thursday, January 21 2021

Following the success of the last Parisian exhibition, *Grids*, Galerie Karsten Greve is delighted to present a solo show featuring new works by Chinese artist Ding Yi in Paris. Karsten Greve first presented the artist in 2006 as part of the *Contemporary Chinese Art* group show. This is Ding Yi's eleventh exhibition staged in partnership with the gallery. Twenty pieces, set either on wood or on handmade paper, are on display, including *Appearance of Crosses 2020-13*, created during the coronavirus lockdown in the spring of 2020. In order to give a greater perspective of Ding Yi's artistic research, the gallery is also presenting a number of earlier works by the artist.

Ding Yi's palette is dominated by nuances of bright lime and lemon chrome, interspersed with black, light grey and white speckles of colour. At first glance, the surface, entirely covered with crosses, appears as if it is either a two-dimensional computer-generated print, a stitched composition or a colour screen. The artist's latest works are increasingly characterised by the use of particular types of colour such as neon colour or glitter pigment. Through these colour combinations, Ding Yi explores the depiction of light and the unfamiliar optical effects created by neon signs, head and taillights, lines of vehicles and billboards. The harsh contour of the crosses functions as a fluorescent aureole and vibrates, as would reflected light or gleaming light – hence why the exhibition is titled *Highlight*.

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In the early 1980s, Ding Yi developed his first series of works with a multitude of variations and different colours of crosses. In Ding Yi's paintings the sign + is stripped of all semantic references, having been selected for its simplicity and universality. In China, the cross is in fact associated with a wide range of non-religious connotations. Since time immemorial, the cross has been used as a decorative pattern on porcelain and fabrics; today, the cross is an ubiquitous sign appearing in different contexts of everyday life.

In 1988, Ding Yi painted his first pieces as part of the *Appearances of Crosses* series. The pictures are made through the repetition of the same symbol, a + or a x, manually applied over the entire surface. Several layers of paint and conglomerations of superimposed shapes are the basis from which the artist can develop infinite combinations of colour nuances and spatial depths.

In his earliest pieces, Ding Yi sought to eliminate any trace of the painter's subjectivity and to reduce any visible trace of his gesture to a bare minimum. By using a ruler, he erased any perceptible residue of his own physical involvement in the piece.

From 1990, the artist further liberated his creative process by painting freehand. Shortly thereafter, he started to include unusual materials such as tartan and corrugated cardboard and, more recently, to paint on wood using a wedging technique. The painting surface is incised by hand with an all-over grid. Lines of different widths and shapes uncover layers of pigment, texture, and shades of colour. This manual creation process appears to be the exact opposite of the artwork's appearance. Ding Yi's panels are interactive in that the viewer can perceive the depth of the piece in its entirety whilst also being invited to scrutinize the work to explore its incised surface and the mapping of imaginary cities.

Born in Shanghai in 1962, Ding Yi completed his studies at the Shanghai Arts and Crafts Institute in 1983, before going on to study traditional Chinese painting at the Fine Arts Department at Shanghai University, graduating in 1990. Following his explorations of Socialist Realism, during his time as a student Ding Yi increasingly found inspiration in Western art, while also examining the work of artists dedicated to traditional and contemporary Chinese painting. Ding Yi was one of the first Chinese abstract painters to become famous in the West.

In 1993, he participated in the Venice Biennale as well as in *China Avant-Garde!*, an exhibition of contemporary Chinese art presented at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin; he was invited to take part in the Yokohama Triennale in Japan in 2001 and in the Guangzhou Biennale in China in 2002. In 2008, the Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna in Italy dedicated an important solo exhibition to the artist.

On a regular basis, Ding Yi's works are presented internationally in solo and group exhibitions, for instance in the recent solo exhibition *Appearance of Crosses* at the Nova Contemporary Gallery in Bangkok and in the group show *On Sabbatical* at the West Bund Museum Gallery 0 in Shanghai. His works are also included in the collections of international institutions such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Daimler Collection in Berlin, and the Long Museum in Shanghai. Ding Yi has been a professor at the Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts since 2005. The artist lives and works in Shanghai.

For further information, please contact:
Costanza Ballardini
c.ballardini@galerie-karsten-greve.fr