

Artistic April

► UCCA line-up kickstarts city's exhibition season

By Zhang Zihan

Paintings, installation artworks, photos and live performances, spring in Beijing always brings with it an artistic revival in the city as various exhibits will be unveiled through April. Today, Metro Beijing previews some of the exhibitions on the April schedule of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA).

Meat, apple and art

UCCA visitors will have the chance to see a major 30-year retrospective of Chinese artist Gu Dexin, as his *Gu Dexin: The Important Thing Is Not the Meat* exhibition began on March 24, featuring watercolors, pen drawings, animations and installations.

The exhibition is regarded as an attempt to give a comprehensive overview to Gu's career as it covers more than 100 of his most significant works from his earliest amateur paintings to his last piece. The exhibition is also regarded as a personal history of contemporary art in China. Apples and meat slices have been permanent inspirations for Gu. These icons appeared frequently throughout his life, symbolizing his thoughts on life and death.

Born in Beijing in 1962, the artist received no formal art education. He started his art career in the late 1970s and won an international reputation after being invited to participate in *Les Magiciens de la Terre* at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris in 1989. He later created a series of artworks which criticized politics and finally decided to end his career and return to "normal" life in 2009.

Hanging Garden In Ink

UCCA's public exhibition space will be lightened by Jennifer Wen Ma's art from April 15, as the artist will bring a living artwork of plants painted in black Chinese ink. The piece will be hung in the nave of the UCCA.

Ma's installation examines the illusion of material wealth and the power of nature and myth as she drew inspiration from the hanging gardens of ancient Babylon. In her artwork, the top and bottom halves of the ink garden are mirror images of each another, creating an effect of reflection on water. The

flowers will grow during the exhibition and vivid colors will poke through the black.

Jennifer Wen Ma was born in 1973 in Beijing and moved to America in 1986. She has created a wide range of works covering installations, videos, drawing, fashion design, performances and public art. She was a member of the core creative team for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and its chief designer for visual and special effects. She won an Emmy Award as an associate producer for the NBC broadcast of the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony.

Circus and The New Yorker

A creative exhibition containing installation art, painting and performance named *GUEST* will be showcased from April 15. The exhibition comprises five of China's most convincing young talents: Li Ming, Lin Ke, Lu Pingyuan, Xu Qu, and Zhao Yao. Inspired by MadeIn company, which has been focusing on expressing art in a variety of ways, the five artists will present themselves in the form of a circus. The exhibition will create a carnival and escape from life through the frenetic disorder of the circus, aiming to make visitors laugh at themselves and finally accept this chaotic reality.

Also on April 15th, an exhibition named *Beyond Words: Photography in The New Yorker* will be unveiled. The exhibition contains 100 photo works taken by 65 different photographers around the world from 1890 to 2010 with every image having been published in *The New Yorker*.

Exhibition: *The Important Thing Is Not the Meat*

Date: March 25 to May 27

Exhibition: *Hanging Garden In Ink*

Date: April 15 to May 27

Exhibition: *GUEST*

Date: April 15 to May 27

Exhibition: *Beyond Words: Photography in The New Yorker*

Date: April 15 to June 10

Tickets: 10 yuan (Free admission Thursday)

Address: UCCA, 798 Art District

Contact: 5780-0200

Gu Dexin's *The Important Thing Is Not the Meat* Photo: Eric Gregory Powell

New print painters show their 'Diagnosis' at CAFA

The SO artist group presents their first exhibition at the CAFA Museum after their graduation from the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) years ago starting today. The exhibition, named *Diagnosis*, features print paintings by the five artists, Shi Haopeng, Qin Guanwei, Xu Hongxiang, Wang Guozhao and Wang Haonan. All the works were created after 2006.

According to the curator Li Fan, who was also their former teacher at CAFA, the show is not only a review of the five young artists' journey but

also a picture of how young artists survive under pressure and persist in their creation of art.

"It is a long road for young art graduates to grow into artists after leaving school. How they created art independently and sought out inspirations is the challenge that many will face or are facing," he said.

Artist Qin Guanwei brings his oil painting *Funeral*, portraying butterflies flying out of the body of a dying pig. Xu Hongxiang showcases his *Scenery* collection finished in 2011. The exhibition is also the group's

first attempt to become an artistic team sharing a common art dream. A seminar will be held at CAFA before the exhibition this morning.

Where: CAFA Museum

When: From Monday to April 8th

Tickets: Free

Contact: 6477-1575

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Xu Hongxiang's *Scenery* collection at CAFA Museum Photo: Courtesy of Xu Hongxiang