

USC Pacific Asia Museum Exhibition Announcement



EXHIBITIONS: *The Rent Collection Courtyard: Fifty Years* and *The First Wave: Modern and Contemporary Chinese Paintings in the USC Pacific Asia Museum Collection*

ON VIEW: September 26, 2014 through February 22, 2015

On Sept. 26, 2014, USC Pacific Asia Museum presents two concurrent exhibitions—*The Rent Collection Courtyard: Fifty Years* and *The First Wave: Modern and Contemporary Chinese Paintings in the USC Pacific Asia Museum Collection*—that reflect the political and cultural changes in China from 1960s-1980s.

This is only the second time the landmark installation *The Rent Collection Courtyard: Fifty Years* has been shown in the U.S. since its debut in 1965 in Sichuan, China. The sculptures of starving Chinese peasant farmers bringing their rent—usually rice grown by them—to the residence of their feudal landlord, LIU Wencai, was a forceful Communist critique of practices of serfdom and servitude in Imperial China. The sculptures gained accolades from JIANG Qing, wife of China’s revolutionary leader MAO Zedong, as an exemplary work of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). The exhibition contains a critical essay on the sculptures and their legacy in setting the stage for later waves of Chinese contemporary art. The edited scale models from USC Pacific Asia Museum’s permanent collection give a glimpse of the impact the original sculptures had when they were created, and provide an opportunity for a conversation about this seminal work, still largely unfamiliar to American audiences.

In the 1980s, Chinese artists experienced unprecedented cultural, political and social changes that made ideas from the outside world more accessible than during the Cultural Revolution. USC Pacific Asia Museum's 1987 exhibition ***Beyond the Open Door: Contemporary Paintings from the People's Republic of China*** was the first U.S. exhibition to introduce the most talented and artistically adventurous young Chinese artists, showing how they were experimenting with Western art theories and practices. Five years later, the museum exhibition ***I Don't Want to Play Cards with Cezanne and Other Works: Selections from the Chinese "New Wave" and "Avant-garde" Art of the Eighties*** illustrated how Chinese contemporary art had matured after a time of intellectual change and creative experimentation. With select examples from these two pioneering exhibitions at USC Pacific Asia Museum, ***The First Wave: Modern and Contemporary Chinese Paintings in the USC Pacific Asia Museum Collection*** reassesses Chinese art of the 1980s and how art from this period fits into the continuum of Chinese art history.

About USC Pacific Asia Museum

USC Pacific Asia Museum is the only museum dedicated to Pacific Asia at a major research university in the United States. The museum's mission is to further intercultural understanding through the arts of Asia and the Pacific Islands. Since 1971, USC Pacific Asia Museum has served a broad audience of students, families, adults and scholars through its education and outreach programs.

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Image captions:

Left: ***The Rent Collection Courtyard: Fifty Years*** (detail), China, late 1970s–early 1980s, clay, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Whitehead

Right: LI Chao (b. 1962), ***I Don't Want to Play Cards with Cezanne***, China, 1988, gouache on paper, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Ralph S. Riffenburgh in honor of Roger, Stephen and Bruce Riffenburgh

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