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Li Shan, *Mao (Rouge Series)*, 1995

CHINESE POLITICAL POP

November 8, 2008 – February 28, 2009

Nathan Bernstein Gallery is proud to present an exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Political Pop Art. The exhibition brings together some of the most controversial art works by the leading Chinese Avant Garde artists of the 20th century, and includes paintings and sculptures that have rarely been seen by the public.

One of the most controversial and explosive artists of the Chinese Pop Movement, Wang Ziwei's works have had Chinese censorship up in arms for two decades. In his new series titled *Aggression*, Ziwei juxtaposes the iconic image of Mao with aggressive behavior and war imagery, which was cause enough for the series to be banned from the Beijing Art Museum.

A rare work from Li Shan's *Rouge Series* is just one from a series of three, which includes an original color paper print of Mao from the early 1970s. Fear of reprisal from the Chinese government forced the artist to keep this work by his side, not showing it publicly until just one year ago, outside of China.

Introduced into China during the 1980s, Pop Art provided artists with an ideal way to comment on the country's evolving identity, from the Cultural Revolution, to its subsequent opening to commercialization. Pop Art was a movement that praised ordinary things in every day life and, as the language of Chinese politics is part of every day life, it proved relevant to China's history and culture. On the canvases of artists such as Wang Ziwei, Li Shan, and Wang Guangyi, the Pop aesthetic was more than a mere imitation of the Western version of the art form. Chinese Political Pop Art evolved into a historical commentary, social and political, and in this, it thrived.

Artists included in the exhibition include Liu Fenghua, Wang Guangyi, Zhang Hongtu, Sheng Qi, Li Shan, Ren Sihong, Wang Ziwei.

For more information, please contact Denise LaDuca at 212-288-8970 or denise@nathanbernsteinart.com.

Gallery hours during the exhibition are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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