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PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION TITLE: REJOICE OVER VICTORY: THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

EXHIBITION DATES: SEPTEMBER 6 – 28, 2016

GALLERY HOURS: MONDAY – THURSDAY, 11:00 – 5:00

ONLINE AT: CHINA 2000 FINE ART CURRENT EXHIBITION

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PRESS PHOTOS

Chairman Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution – a decade-long period of political and social turmoil – began in 1966 when The May 16 Notification fired the opening salvo of the catastrophic mobilization warning that counter-revolutionary schemers were conspiring to replace the party with a "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie".

What followed was an unprecedented period of upheaval, bloodshed and economic stagnation that only ended with Mao's death in September 1976. Words and propaganda were the backbone of that decade, yet on 16 May 2016, newspapers in mainland China were bereft of any coverage of the Cultural Revolution's anniversary.

Beijing has marked the 50th anniversary of the beginning of one of the most devastating and defining events of 20th century China with silence. China 2000 Fine Art will mark the 40th Anniversary of the end of the Cultural Revolution with an exhibition.

Our September Asia Week exhibition, September 6--28, 2016, entitled *Rejoice Over Victory: the 40th Anniversary of the End of the Cultural Revolution*, will show 10 original works dating from the years prior to 1966 and concluding with a work painted in 1976. The exhibition includes works in gouache on paper, ink on paper, oil on canvas, and pencil on paper.

Of the works in the exhibition, one by Wang Ruihui entitled Good Morning proclaims the industriousness of Shi Chuanxiang, a "model worker", cleaning the streets of a small village before dawn, and reflects the post-1949 Revolutionary optimism of the mid-1950s. Still others voice the hardline Communist conformity



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or militancy of the years 1966 to 1976, or underline the “Mao Worship” that was an ever-present theme of the era. Some of the works are signed by an artist, others are designated to a particular Cultural Bureau, and others are anonymous.

A large anonymous work in oil on canvas from about 1968 depicts a Three-way Alliance Committee Meeting (PLA, Masses, and Cadres) and a returning cadre being welcomed back to the committee. Like most of the paintings of this era, the painting is unsigned because its art embodies the revolutionary spirit while eschewing the personal ambition of the artist. The red pencil handwriting on the reverse shows that the painting was once included in an exhibition: “Show room 3, Exhibition number 22, Painting number 793.”

The work from which we have drawn the title of the exhibition was painted by Qian Han (b.1953) in 1976. The subject of the painting, the Jinan Auto Mechanic, holds high the People's Daily of October 1976, on which, marking the end of the Cultural Revolution, is written the headline:

*Warmly celebrate the appointment of comrade Hua Guofeng as chairman of the Party Central Committee and as chairman of the Central Military Committee.
Warmly celebrate the great victory of the smashing of the "Gang of Four's" evil plot to usurp Party power.*

These paintings are more than propaganda, more than a voyeur's look into a devastating decade for China; they are the prototypes upon which the following generations would base their perceptions of the world. Those who were most vulnerable, youths from the ages of eight to eighteen, artists now in their late fifties who struggled to enter the first classes when the Beijing Art Academy reopened, who had been forced to burn the traditional ideas and works of art, are now determined to reinvigorate Chinese ink painting. Those who have not forgotten the havoc that the Cultural Revolution wreaked on their families and the following generations of artists not feeling the direct effects of the Cultural Revolution but its aftershocks, have reacted to the era, used it, twisted it, mocked it, have become activist artists seeking to keep in check the excesses of government's corruption and tyranny. As Ai Weiwei said in a recent interview, when he first came to New York in the 1980s, all his vocabulary was from that dark period. Remembering that decade by exhibiting its art is more than a cry for “never again.” It gives substance to our acceptance of contemporary Chinese culture and of contemporary Chinese art.