

MADE IN CHINA



Ondrej Brody & Kristofer Paetau

Selected works 2007 - 2011

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Brody & Paetau started producing paintings in China in 2007 with the exhibition "Painting China Now". The exhibition was made out of an installation of 30 oil paintings (30cm X 40cm) depicting victims of torture inflicted by the Chinese government upon their own citizens. All paintings were painted in China according to found photographs documenting Falun Dafa members victims of torture in China. These images are censored in China. Accordingly, out of the 20 painting factories that the artists contacted, only 2 companies accepted to produce the work and sent the artists a price offer. Since then Brody & Paetau have employed their "Chinese assistants" on several occasions, exploiting the cheap labour and challenging the viewers' sense of artistic quality with the Made in China label.

Made in China is one of the most recognizable labels in the world today due to China's rapidly developing large manufacturing industry. The country is the largest exporter in the world and the Made in China label can be seen on a huge range of goods from clothing to electronics. A series of scandals concerning exports, sweatshops, human rights offenses and torture have harmed the "Made in China" brand, but the western art world has nevertheless been eager to establish galleries in China and to sell chinese art on the western art market. Brody & Paetau however, are more interested in the outsourcing/offshoring phenomenon and in testing the limits of their own strategy. They exploit the critical potential of outsourcing to China and make good use of the specific technical abilities of their chinese assistants to 're-produce' any picture in a realistic manner for unbeatable production prices. Brody & Paetau demonstrate that any artist can afford to work with assistants, thus imitating in an ironical way the production process of well known contemporary artists who employ dozens of assistants in order to fill the demand of production of an avid global art market. The critical strategy of the works could be described as 'homeopathic' in the sense of: 'let like be cured by like', by re-enacting and thus calling the attention of the public on problematic phenomenons related to politics, power, economy, and the hypocrisy of the western world facing a totalitarian country as a business partner. The 'China problem' is far from being resolved and the western art world is not exempted from it - as recent scandals continue to prove with the recent abusive detention of Chinas best known artist Ai Weiwei.

Painting China Now 2007

An installation of 30 oil paintings (30cm X 40cm) depicting victims of torture inflicted by the Chinese government upon their own citizens. All paintings were painted in China according to found photographs documenting Falun Dafa members victims of torture in China. These images are censored in China. Accordingly, out of the 20 painting factories that we contacted, only 2 companies accepted to produce the work and sent us a price offer.



Wang Bin Torture in Commercial Quality, High Quality and Museum Quality 2010

In their new work: 'Wang Bin Torture in Commercial Quality, High Quality and Museum Quality' the artists chose an extremely explicit photograph focusing on the massacred torso of a torture victim. Although the original photograph is unsharp, there is no doubt about what it is depicting. Using the Chinese oil painting companies' own product quality grade system, Brody & Paetau commissioned the image to be painted in all three grades: Commercial Quality, High Quality and Museum Quality, each painting measuring 110 cm X 160 cm. What at the first glance appears as cynical artistic exploitation can also be seen as a shock of realities revealed through a conceptual artistic process. On one hand, most civilized countries condemn torture and censorship, on the other, they are eager to profit from China's cheap production forces and ruthless commercialism. The marketing of art in 'Commercial Quality, High Quality, and Museum Quality' is alien to general gallery practice as the artistic and monetary value of a painting is usually not relative to labor time or technical skill.



Wang Bin, born on August 2, 1956, was a computer software engineer at the Institute of Exploration and Development in the Daqing Petroleum Field. He had received science and technology awards on many occasions, and for three sessions in a row, he had been a representative of the employee's assembly at the institute. The Daqing Men's Labor Re-education Camp tried to transform Falun Gong practitioners by force. Wang Bin was beaten to death because he refused to write letters of repentance. The criminals who beat Wang Bin to death include prisoners Cang Shuangcheng, Song Baocheng and Liu Qinghui, as well as police officers on duty: Feng Xi, Lu Renggeng and Wen Qiang (who has since left his post). The three prisoners kept beating Wang Bin for over 40 minutes, until he had only one breath left. During the beating, Feng Xi was twice informed of Wang's situation, but he still leisurely enjoyed watching the torture. Lu Renggeng inspected Wang several times while he was on duty, and when Wang Bin died, he ordered prisoners to place Wang Bin on the balcony to cool off a little. At 11 PM on September 24, 2000, Wang Bin was sent to the hospital and examined by Li Jibiao, the doctor who was on duty. The results turned out to be miserable: a lymph artery was broken; over a dozen of his bones, including his collar bone, sternum and ribs were broken; one of Wang's testicles was also split; the backs of Wang's hands were found to have been repeatedly burned; Wang's nostrils were burned and injured by the lit cigarettes that were inserted into them; and many parts of Wang's body were black and dark purple.

Respect the Leaders 2008

This series of 5 portraits of prominent Chinese political leaders were created by an underground Chinese dissident artist known as 'Apple'. Because of the controversial nature of the works, and the laws governing modern China, 'Apple' is forced to hide his identity and to work under a pseudonym to avoid serious persecution. Once the paintings are completed, 'Apple' and his collaborators 'vandalized' the works in a series of anti-government performances. These completed paintings were purchased and shipped to Europe for this exhibition.



Deng Xiaoping



Jiang Zemin



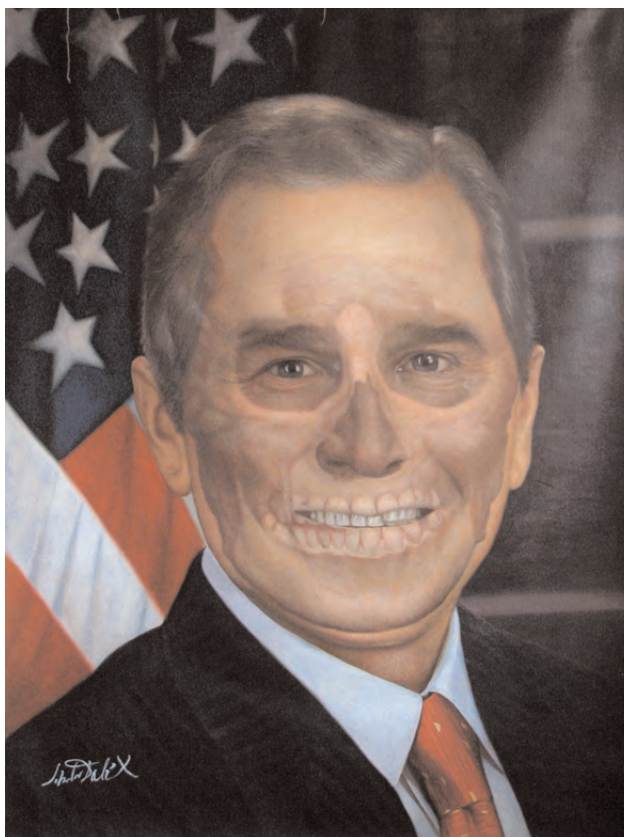
Hu Jintao

Salvador DaliX 2008

The Salvador DaliX paintings are mainly based on pornographic and some political photographs stolen from the internet, then manipulated with the computer and finally painted by 'my assistants' in China: commercial painting companies who specialize in reproducing any picture you e-mail them. All the paintings are 'original' oil on canvas – handmade of course. It seems that the 'Made in China' stamp devaluates the commercial value of the paintings even more than the fact that they were painted by (a poor artists) assistants. At the same time many people admire paintings of famous contemporary artists that are produced by chinese, russian or eastern european assistants who paint for 10 US dollars an hour in New York, Berlin and London. The Salvador DaliX paintings refer to many contradictions and problematic aspects (conceptual, economical, political and visual) that I find interesting.



Installation of 30 Salvador DaliX erotic paintings, oil on canvas, 30 cm X 40 cm each.



Bush Junior & Bush Senior, diptych, oil on canvas, 160 cm X 210 cm.

Child Picassos 2008

Copies of paintings made by immigrant school children in Berlin after works by Pablo Picasso. The 9 paintings (oil on canvas, 30 X 40 cm) were re-painted in 2008 by my chinese assistants.



Chinese Assistants 2011

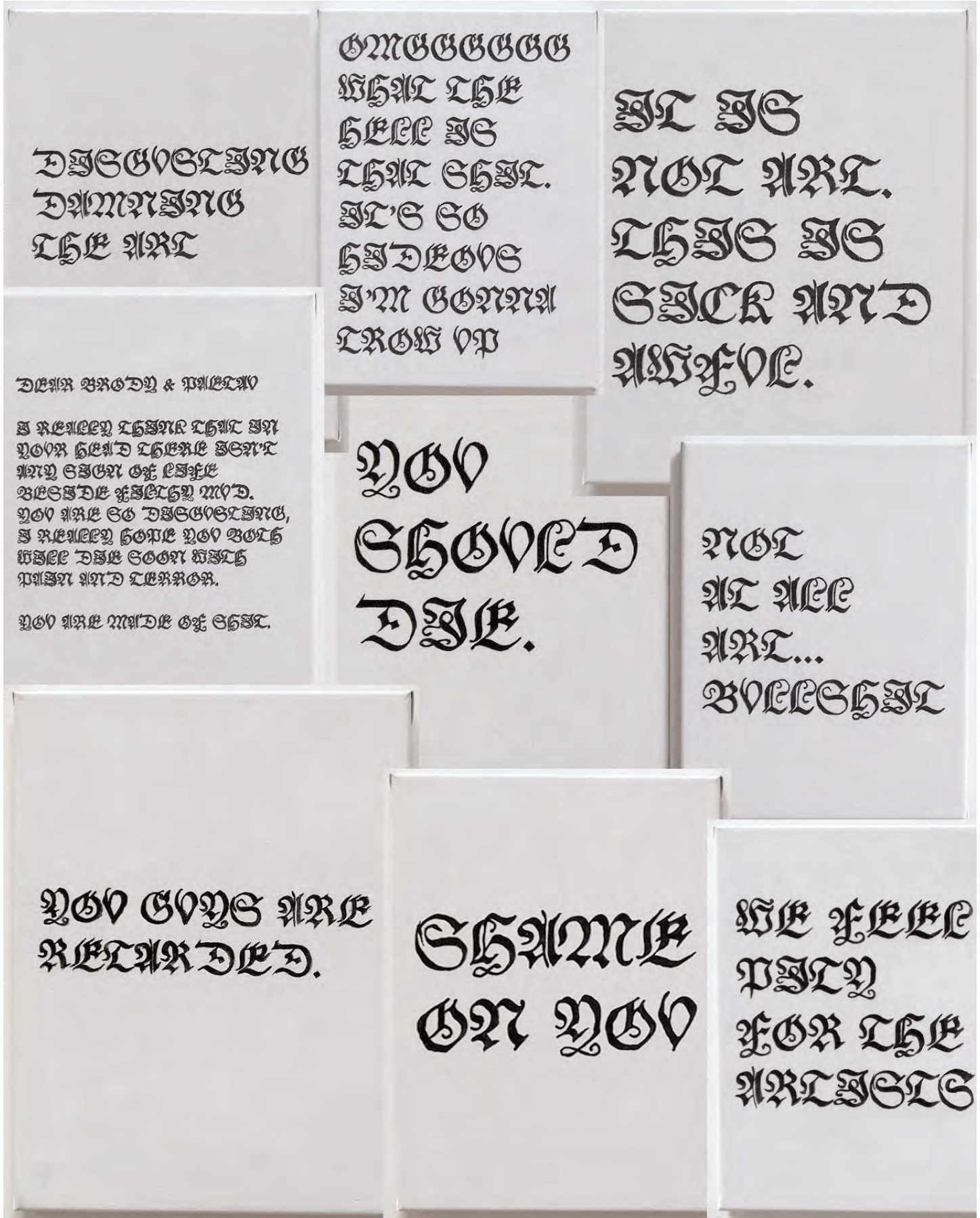
"I have an unusual request for you. I would like to have a series of self-portraits from the assistants/painters from your company. Do you think it would be possible if each assistant would paint a self-portrait for me ? The self-portrait technique and visual look would be entirely up-to the creativity and aesthetic decision of each painter. Please let me know if this would be possible."

"Thanks for your email. We had planned to create these paintings by truelife paint way and make them accurately from their original photos (I sent them to you in my previous email). If so, the finished paintings will be same as the original photos. Now, I understand your meaning and you don't like us to make them as my above paint ways. What you need us to do is ' Let each artist make his private portrait painting by his ideals and different styles, for example, abstract paint style, impressionism paint style, white and black paint style, etc'. Ok, we will do them by your this instruction paint style. If it is ok, please kindly arrange the deposit and we will begin with them. Looking foward to your comments.Have a nice day."



Critique Paintings 2010

The idea of the Critique Paintings came from the numerous negative critiques that people write on our website as a response to our works. While reading the critiques the impression arose that our work is perceived as 'degenerate' by many people. We decided to paint a selection of 30 critiques referring to our work in a calligraphic manner using the Schwabacher typography. These 'critique paintings' point out the degeneracy of our art. 30 oil paintings on canvas, each 30 cm X 40 cm.



DEGENERATE
 DAMN
 THE ART

OMG
 WHAT THE
 HELL IS
 THAT SHIT.
 IT'S SO
 HORRIBLE
 I'M GOING
 TO GET
 IT OFF MY
 WALL

IT IS
 NOT ART.
 THIS IS
 SHIT AND
 I'M
 REMOVING
 IT.

DEAR SON & DAUGHTER

IF YOU EVER
 WANT TO
 BE A
 SUCCESSFUL
 ARTIST,
 YOU MUST
 BE
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 BUSINESSMAN,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 INVESTOR,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 MANAGER,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 LEADER,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 COMMUNICATOR,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 NETWORKER,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 NEGOTIATOR,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 STRATEGIST,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 EXECUTIVE,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 ENTREPRENEUR,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 INNOVATOR,
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 SUCCESSFUL
 VISIONARY,
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 SUCCESSFUL
 CHANGEMAKER,
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 SUCCESSFUL
 TRANSFORMER,
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 SUCCESSFUL
 REVOLUTIONARY,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 GAME CHANGER,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 DISRUPTOR,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 INFLUENCER,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 MENTOR,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 COACH,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 PARTNER,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 COLLEAGUE,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 FRIEND,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 FAMILY MEMBER,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 CITIZEN,
 A
 SUCCESSFUL
 HUMAN BEING.

YOU MUST BE A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN.

YOU
 SHOULD
 DIE.

NOT
 AN
 ART...
 BULLSHIT

YOU ONLY
 WANT
 MONEY.

SHAME
 ON YOU

IT'S
 PURE
 FOR THE
 ARTISTS

Ondrej Brody & Kristofer Paetau

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SELECTED SOLO SHOWS:

2011:

'Made in China', Factory Art, Berlin, Germany

'To Lose', STYX Projects, Berlin, Germany

2010:

'Kunstpreis Balmoral 03', Schloss Balmoral, Bad Ems, Germany 'Degenerate Art', Karlin Studios, Prague, Czech Republic 'Parasites Nr.: 3 – Ondrej Brody & Kristofer Paetau', Olivia Jones, Hamburg, Germany 'Wang Bin Torture in Commercial Quality, High Quality and Museum Quality', Open Source Gallery, New York, USA

2009:

'Exoticism:Trans Rat Fashion Show & Revenge Of The Nature', Divus Unit 30, London, England 'Balkan Exotic', Cultural Center DOM OMLADINE, Belgrade, Serbia,

2008:

'Salvador DaliX', Kressling Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia

2007:

'Painting China Now!', Kiosk, Ghent, Belgium

SELECTED GROUP SHOWS:

2011 (upcoming):

'The Global Contemporary. Art Worlds After 1989', ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany (cat.) (upcoming)

'Citace a interpretace', Galerie NoD/Roxy, Prague, Czech Republic

'Frame Shop', Gitte Bohr Galerie, Berlin, Germany

'Als der Nachbar zum telefonieren kam', Galerie Petra Vankova, Berlin, Germany

'Pilot Survey - Pilotni Setreni', GALERIE BKC: Galerie Mladi, Brno, Czech Republic

'Absurdita? Ironie? Grotoska? No: 2', Galerie NoD/Roxy, Prague, Czech Republic

2010:

'Frame Shop', Galerie Gitte Bohr, Berlin, Germany

'Mediations Biennale / Erased Walls', Poznan, Poland

'XVII Image Symposium THE RUSTLE OF IMAGES', CENTRO DE ARTE 2 DE MAYO, Madrid, Spain

'Decadence Now!', Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech Republic

'Erased Walls', SPACE, Bratislava, Slovak Republic

'Trwa generowanie podgladu', Muzeum Sztuki, Lodz, Poland

'Everyone Has A Different View', The Cutting Room, Nottingham Playhouse, Great Britain 'CopyClash', Trailer, Rotterdam, Netherlands (publication)

'New Media, Sex, and Culture in the 21st Century', MONA Museum of New Art, Detroit, USA 'Trouble with Love', Dvorak Sec Contemporary, Prague, Czech Republic

'Certified Copy', Verbeke Foundation, Belgium

2009:

'Subversiv Messe', Linz 09 Halle, Austria (cat.)

'Littlest Sister 09', Anthony Spinello Gallery, Miami, USA

2008:

'Do gelo da Escandinavia ao fogo tropical, o Barracao Maravilha recria na Terra um inferno de delicias', Barracao Maravilha Arte Contemporanea, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

'Mostra Performance', Barracao Maravilha Arte Contemporanea, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 'Perpetual Art Machine' Video Lounge, SCOPE Art Fair NYC, USA & SCOPE Art Fair Basel, Switzerland

2007:

'Prague Biennale 3 Glocal Outsiders', Prague, Czech Republic. (cat.)

'Rotterdam International Film Festival', Participation with 2 videos, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

'The Tent Show', Kunsthallen Nikolaj, Copenhagen, Denmark.

'El Quinto Pasajero', Museo Tambo Quirquincho, La Paz, Bolivia. (cat.)

'MAC vazio', MAC Museo de Arte Contemporanea de Niteroi, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brasil