



Li Hongbo 李洪波

A former book editor and designer, trained in a variety of artistic fields from Fine to Folk and Experimental art, Li Hongbo plays with the appearances and connotations of paper. The material is to him an endless source of inspiration and interpretation. Li Hongbo observed that honeycomb paper is a folk art present in many aspects of life in China, from children's toys to festive decorations. Dismantling one such object, he discovered how simply it is made and the amazing flexibility, resilience and strength of the paper material once built into layers of hexagonal cubes. The artist reproduces the mechanical process manually, making it a painstaking craft, which requires a whole new level of perfection to achieve the machine made rendering. The thousands of layers of brown paper are cut, folded and glued together to look just like what they originated from: wood. The artist then carves the block of paper as if he was sculpting wood. Common brown paper, usually associated with wrapping and meant to be discarded, is then interpreted in shapes of much more valued objects, such as a pair of porcelain vases or even human figures, to give it a whole new significance.

The presentation chosen by the artist invite participation from the audience. Li Hongbo plays with elasticity of the material and installs it in the most unexpected circumvolutions, sometimes wall-mounting the three-dimensional sculpture, stretching the accordion like parts of his creation into variable forms every time. A life-size human silhouette, looking as if made of solid wood, can thus expand into a large scale paper installation. Whether Chinese or Western the viewer feels the attraction for this toy like a work of art, reminiscent of a 'slinky' to Westerners or of the "paper gourd" to Chinese. Participation and interaction are key components of the work and keep expanding the possibility of Li Hongbo's creation; his artworks are challenging cultural references and inviting the spectator to not only reflect but partake in the work, blurring the boundaries of art and ordinary object, 'do not touch' and play, precious and impermanent.

"This visual impact had me realize that an alternative possibility existed in the language of paper texture and form: from concrete to abstract; from physical to the intangible; from standardization to liberation; or vice versa. The continuity of paper has thus become a key element in the language expression here; its gathering and dispersing, ups and downs, twists and turns have presented to us a set of unpredictable images." - Li Hongbo

Born in 1974 in Jilin Province, China, Li Hongbo lives and works in Beijing. He graduated in 1996 from the Fine Arts Department of Jilin Normal University with a bachelor's degree, then went to the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing and obtained in 2001 an M.F.A. from the Folk Art Department and an M.F.A. from the Experimental Art Department in 2010. Li Hongbo's works have entered such prestigious collection as the Sydney based White Rabbit collection and the UBS collection for Americas. The artist's works have been shown by institutions notably afore mentioned White Rabbit Gallery in Sydney (2010-11) and in Beijing at the Found Museum in solo (2011) and group shows (2010) and Sishang Art Museum (2010).