

**Li Gang "A Tranquil Order"**

Exhibition: January 14 – April 9, 2011

Opening: Friday, January 14, 2011, 6 - 8 pm



Li Gang  
"It" (No. 7) 2010  
transparent packing tape on acrylic board  
180 x 120 cm

**Li Gang – "A Tranquil Order"**

By Nataline Colonnello

Featuring artworks realized between 2008 and 2010 across a range of media, "A Tranquil Order" is significant not only as Li Gang's first solo exhibition, but also as the artist's debut in the international art world.

Executed in a number of media ranging from painting and photography to installation, Li Gang's works stand out for their linguistic innovation and the utilization of an extraordinarily varied range of materials comprising not only *objets trouvés*, but items as diverse as tape meters, pieces of plastic, wood, packing tape and garbage. Basing on an analytical, sociological and philosophical approach, Li Gang combines these unrelated elements and through their decontextualization and manipulation, purposely alters their original reference, sense, and symbolic value.

The two installations "One Square Meter" (No. 1) and (No. 2), each 100 x 100 cm, created after Li Gang (\*1986, Dali, Yunnan Province) moved to Beijing in 2008, focus on the subject of distance as an empirically computable measurement of space. For the realization of this work, the artist utilized tape measures; standardized instruments generally employed for the accurate calculation of distances and space. However, when these model units are sewed together strip overlaying strip, following a strictly logical method, they eventually reveal chaotic relations that ultimately disrupt the mathematical precision of the medium and of the producing process itself.

"Down Coat" 2010 (58 x 124 cm) is a photographic work related to a semi-perishable installation consisting of three transparent plastic coats, each filled with the garbage the artist collected from three different public venues in Beijing: the Central Academy of Fine Arts, the 798 Art District and Chaoyang Park. In this work, the detritus gathered by the artist in these selected places serves as the basic criterion for his analysis of the social habits and living conditions of these three investigated sample communities.

"Between" 2010 (127 x 64 cm) is a c-print documenting a former temporary site-specific installation Li Gang created in a public space using found and reclaimed materials. Drawing inspiration from the large crutch formation on the trunk of a

tree, the artist filled the void space between the split boles with a wooden structure built by means of the branches coppiced from the same tree. Though this action, Li Gang aimed to metaphorically close the interpersonal gap that might exist between two people.

In "It" 2010, a series of 9 works (each 180 x 120 cm) realized in transparent packing tape on black acrylic board, Li Gang magnifies the size of a found stone and scrutinizes its surface from nine different angles. This series conceptually refers to the relationship between Nature and man-made environments, as well as to the qualitative transformation of a common object that, through the superimposition of innumerable layers of packing tape across its surface, becomes both reconfigured in a new, ethereal light and is lent volumetric dimension.

"Fleeting Time" 2008-2009 is a series of 19 works (canvas 100x 80 cm, plastic bag with scraped oil paint 19 x 12 cm) resulting from a radical metamorphosis of both state and content. Starting to question the visual and conceptual exhaustiveness of his own paintings, Li Gang scraped the whole surface of each of these 19 canvasses completely off, reducing the previously depicted images into dust. The artist collected these paint scrapings from each single work into a different plastic bag in which he also stored a small reproduction of each original picture. At the end of the process, each work included not only the chipped canvas and the plastic bag containing the paint dust, but also the picture of the painting at its previous stage of incarnation.

As Li Gang explains, "To me the dust and the empty canvas are like the soul and the body of a human being, where once the soul is gone, what is left is just a mass of flesh [...] I wanted to capture the feeling of enjoyment created in people's hearts when they were looking at those works for the first time, to me only this represents a success."