

a degree in French Language and Literature from the Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages, and proceeded to work as a translator. During the Cultural Revolution, Gao endured a period of "reeducation." In 1983, his satirical play, *Bus Stop*, was banned in China for its "spiritual pollution." Following this cultural persecution, Gao embarked on a series of travels across the Yangtze River, which would later take form as *Soul Mountain*.

In 1985, his second play, *Wild Men*, was the target of yet another vitriolic attack, *The Other Side* was banned before it was even performed. Seeing no reprieve from the oppression, Gao accepted an invitation from Germany's Morat Institute for Art and Art History and the French Ministry of Culture to move to France where he could exercise autonomy over his writing and artistic pursuits.

In October 2000, Gao was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for the novel *Soul Mountain* and for his numerous plays. In the same year, he was conferred Italy's Premio Letterario Feronia and named Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur by the President of France. In 2002, the American Academy of Achievement presented him with the Golden Plate Award and in 2006, he was also awarded the Library Lions Award by The New York Public Library.

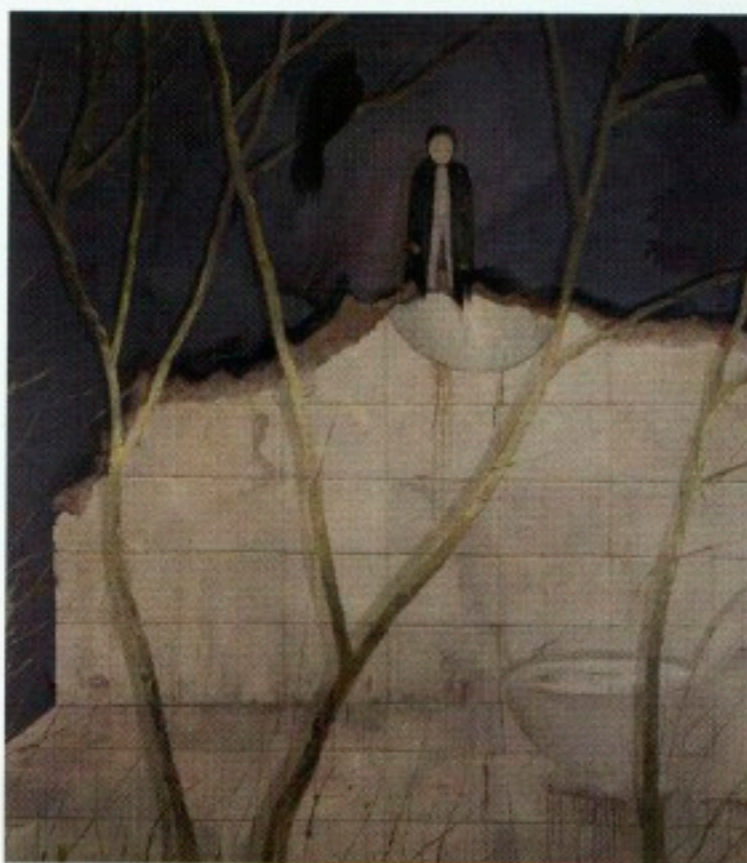
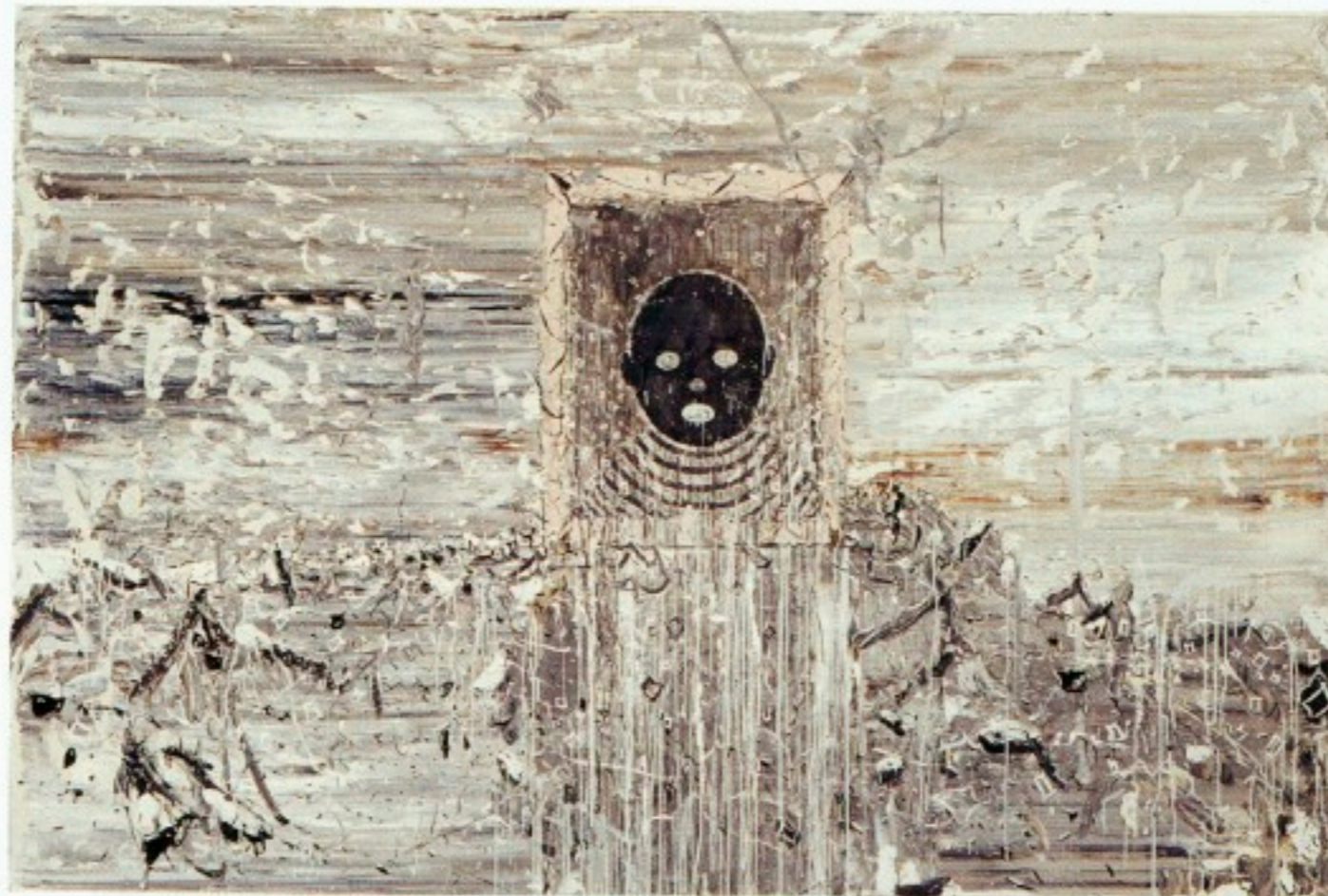
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### THE UNITED STATES

#### New Generation

**T**homas Erben will present the United States debut of Chinese painters Chen Ke, Li Jikai, and Wei Jia, from November 1 to December 8, 2007. This exhibition is curated by Tamar Arnon and Eli Zagury and was coordinated in China



**Top:** Li Jikai, *The Underground Infant*, 2006, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. **Above left:** Wei Jia, *Say good-bye*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 220 x 190 cm. **Above right:** Chen Ke, *Another Me in the World*, 2007, modeling paste and oil on silk, 170 x 120 cm. Photographs: Courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery.

by Mrs. Wei. The three artists, born in the mid to late 1970s, have already established strong reputations in China and are garnering international recognition as the new face of contemporary Chinese painting. Their work illustrates a transitional stage within the process of individualization born out of the recent socio-economic transformations. The use of cartoons or oversimplified human forms, which are a visual constant, reveals a mindset still steeped in the equalitarian conditions of the past yet thrusting into a barren, isolated world, devoid of stability and stripped of humanity.

Chen Ke combines classical techniques and imagery with a contemporary understanding of materiality and the human form. Self-absorbed prepubescent girls stare blindly out from

the canvas while surrounded by chunky washes of acrylic paint, richly imagined textiles, and occasionally mingled with fantastical creatures.

In each of Li Jikai's large-scale, chromatically reductive works, a diminutive human appears in heavily impastoed fields which bleed around the forlorn figure, giving the existential impression of a landscape on the verge of, or directly following, eschatological catastrophe. The relationship between humanity and environment is the focal point in Li's work, often locating the narrative in impossibly life-threatening situations.

Though Wei Jia's work also concerns itself with exterior physical threats, in the tangible form of guns and knives, his focus falls upon the shadowy realms his solitary characters

inhabit. While these surroundings possess both architectural and natural elements, an overriding contextual emptiness leaves viewers with the sense of having visited a limbo where violence exists with unchecked, un-judged supremacy. Jia's expansive, watery works in shades of gray, pink, violet, and black are awash in gothic, mystical scenarios that resist resolution.

These artists have symbiotically set out on a quest in search of self. While Chen's work, which delves fully into the realm of the unreal, supposes optimistically that separation can offer infinite creative outlets, Li remains precariously and undesirably isolated and Wei speaks to a more encompassing view that tempers an intimidating reality with transcendent potential.

Thomas Erben Gallery is located at 526 W 26th Street, 4/F, New York. Tel: (1-212) 645 8701. Fax: (1-212) 645 9630. [www.thomaserben.com](http://www.thomaserben.com).

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### ENGLAND

#### Nature's Labyrinth

**G**rosvenor Vadehra will present *Nature's Labyrinth*, an exhibition of new works on paper and canvas by Paramjit Singh, India's leading landscape painter. This major solo exhibition was shown in Grosvenor Vadehra's premises in New Delhi in October before traveling to London, November 7-30, 2007.

For Paramjit Singh, landscape painting is a genre suitable for expressing the arcane and the ethereal. For him the phenomenal world hides something more than what is immediately perceived. Singh's lush Indian landscapes have an otherworldly quality, most notably due to the complete absence of humans, animals, or birds. His hills and woodlands have no bearing on specific places. This, combined with the landscape's loaded silence, creates an air of serenity and mystery.