

A brush without boundary

Two cultures one passion

Martin Alton and Shuhua Jin

Paintings, drawings and experimental work

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La Galleria, 30 Royal Opera Arcade, London SW1Y 4UY (020 7930 8069) www.lagalleria.org

Shuhua Jin

Shuhua Jin's career as an artist began in 1975, in the rigid society of Communist China. He was a significant contributor to the Shanghai Oil Painting and Sculpture Institute.

However despite his growing success, he soon felt restricted by the traditional approaches and themes of painting and experimented increasingly with Western themes and concepts.

In 1989, Jin travelled to London after being invited to lecture at the Chinese Cultural Centre and soon after, started his new art venture - searching, creating and exhibiting. It was from here that he began working on his new abstract paintings. He produced a series of three paintings, 'Break', 'Knots' and 'Existence' - all of which reflected the uncertainty he faced in his new life in London. With the eventual reunion of Jin's family and acceptance from the Western world, he continued to paint with power and emotion, developing a new series of paintings by creating figures from a variety of geometric surfaces and deep vibrant colour.

Throughout the last decade, Jin has been evolving his painting styles and techniques. His brush strokes have become more fluid and less rigid, exuding confidence and strength. The forms of the human body are emphasised with mixed-sex structural compositions, through which, according to Jin, the expression of the power of human spirit radiates through the lines, forms and colour, he has also begun to increasingly amalgamate traditional Chinese painting brush forms and materials in his abstract work.



Behind easel
Oil on canvas
by Shuhua Jin

Martin Alton

Martin Alton has been an artist for over twenty years and his work has been sold to clients in the United Kingdom, South Africa and the United States. Using many different mediums, Alton has developed his personal painting vision. His work is demanding and sometimes confrontational, but the result is always thought-provoking. Alton's art is about coming to terms with one's inner-self in a busy and competitive world. How do we make order out of confusion? The innocence of our childhood is lost forever, and as adults, we have a faint recollection of a better place.

Alton's work has echoes of the alienation and angst of Sartre. Words gave Sartre the power to rationalise a world from which he felt detached. Painting does the same for Alton. "In life I feel a bit of an Outsider," Alton reflects, "but I think this detachment has advantages for an artist."

"Drawing from life," says Alton, "is one of the most important aspects of the visual arts and often reaches a level of communication that can be lost. My drawings extend the idea of drawing towards a more complete work of art and not simply a working study for a painting. The constant theme in my work is life itself. How do we cope with the every day? And how do we come to terms with our ageing bodies? Drawing the human figure is the most direct way to attempt an answer to these timeless questions."



Anointment (detail)
Oil on canvas
by Martin Alton

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