



WINTER/SPRING  
2009 @

**WILSON  
STREET**

**MICHAEL KEIGHERY**  
*NEUROTICA*  
18 July to 9 August 09

**BERND HEINRICH &  
ROSS THORNTON**  
*OBJECT, SPACE AND HARMONY*  
15 August to 6 September 09

**HANNA KAY**  
*WATERWAYS*  
12 September to 4 October 09

**FAN DONGWANG**  
*ENTERING THE DRAGON*  
10 October to 1 November 09



## WILSON STREET GALLERY

### location

30-34 Wilson St  
Newtown NSW 2042

### gallery hours

Wednesday - Sunday 11am - 6pm

### enquiries

Phone 02 9516 3144  
info@wilsonstreetgallery.com.au  
www.wilsonstreetgallery.com.au

### Front Cover:

**Fan Dongwang**

*Dragon* (detail)  
acrylic on canvas  
180 x 180 cm

### Back Cover:

**Hanna Kay**

*Shallows* (detail)  
oil and tempera on linen  
150 x 160 cm

# Welcome to Winter/Spring 09

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Every exhibition we mount at the gallery surprises us. Before the exhibition starts we preview images of the artists' work and view paintings and sculptures in the artists' workshops. But hanging an exhibition adds unexpected dimensions. The connections and congruencies come to life. The conceptual motivations of the artist crystallise.

What astonishes us most is how different each exhibition looks in the gallery. The space is transformed. We fall absolutely and completely in love with the new configuration, regret the end of each exhibition, but then are completely won over by the new.

In preparing this edition of the quarterly, we are particularly struck by the contrasts. Visitors to the gallery over the next few months will be treated to such an array of styles! Yet we do know that there is an underlying constant in how we choose our artists – a love of fierce independence, and a fundamental appreciation of beauty which makes each piece a composition where your eye, mind and heart can linger.

This edition focuses on the next four exhibitions in our main gallery. But behind the scenes, our BackStreet Gallery is coming to life with a flexibility and spontaneity that is hard to predict. Watch out for our announcements.

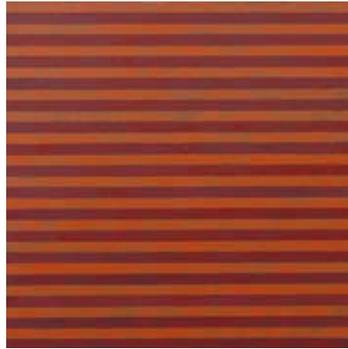
**Janet Clayton**  
Director



**MICHAEL KEIGHERY**  
*NEUROTICA*

**18 July to 9 August**

Michael Keighery's obsession with society's hypocrisy is pithily expressed in these ceramic and mixed media objects, with disturbing wit and irreverence.



**BERND HEINRICH &  
ROSS THORNTION**  
*OBJECT, SPACE AND HARMONY*

**15 August to 6 September**

Two abstract artists achieve an elegance of composition and concept using divergent approaches and media.



**HANNA KAY**  
*WATERWAYS*

**12 September to 4 October**

These works capture a surface of stillness and reflection, at the same time luring the viewer into depths and undercurrents.



**FAN DONGWANG**  
*ENTERING THE DRAGON*

**10 October to 1 November**

Saturated with colour, Fan's images evoke the shifting perspectives of ancient and contemporary Chinese culture.

*Every good painter paints  
what he is*

Jackson Pollock





## Fan Dongwang

### *Entering the Dragon*

10 October to 11 November

Born in Shanghai, Fan Dongwang studied traditional Chinese art at the Shanghai School of Arts and Crafts during the 1970's. He later completed a Master of Arts at COFA, UNSW in 1995 and a Doctor of Creative Arts at Wollongong University in 1999. He currently lives and works in Sydney.

Fan's work has had extensive exposure in both China and Australia including public exhibitions at the Shanghai Art Gallery since 1982, the Shanghai Museum Inaugural Art Exhibition in 1986, the Shanghai International Art Festival in 1987, and the National Gallery of Australia in 2002. His work has been featured in numerous group and curated exhibitions including the 2004 Australian Drawing Biennale in Canberra and 'Shanghai Star', a national touring exhibition with other leading international Chinese artists initiated and organized by the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. Fan's works are held in many public collections throughout Australia and China.

Melissa Chiu, Museum director for the Asia Society, New York, discusses Fan's theory of 'shifting perspective' in her recently released book, 'Breakout: Chinese Art Outside China'. *'The constantly shifting perspective can be understood as a symbol of the uneven and at times unsettling nature of Fan's synthesis of different cultural influences.'*

Rod Pattenden, reviewing Fan's work for the Australian Art Review wrote *'Fan Dongwang is a highly refined practitioner who presents a unique and complex vision. He provides in the flash and brilliance of (his) works, a way of considering our own cultural identities in this current period of rapid change and the sometimes limiting and monochromatic effect of globalization.'*

Fan Dongwang's works are anything but monochromatic – they blaze with colour and dramatic contrasts, visually confronting and seductive. This artist's conceptual language is equally bold. Yet, through his technical mastery and formal aesthetic sensibility, the dichotomy between tradition and pop, between lyric and staccato, is transformed into a stunning harmony.

Portrait by Efy Alexakis (above)

**Fan Dongwang** (opposite page)  
*Dragon Head Red* (detail)  
acrylic on canvas  
180 x 180cm



# Resurrecting the Dragon

## An essay by Rhonda Davis

Senior Curator, Macquarie University

*Fan Dongwang brilliantly undermines the archetypal dragon as evil; his dragon stands as the superhero which belies Western orthodoxies*

Rhonda Davis

The slaying of the dragon by the St. George symbolised in Western Christian ideology that good prevails over evil. The dragon, as an iconoclastic visual representation of evil has been challenged by leading Chinese-Australian artist, Fan Dongwang. In his latest series, Fan resurrects the dragon as guardian spirit revealing a depth of expression that is symbolic of the increasingly stronger relationship between China and Australia. The composite effectiveness is evident throughout Dongwang's oeuvre in his remarkable fusion of Chinese tradition with a range of Western elements.

The significance of Dongwang reworking the mythological dragon within a post colonial context predicates a deeper understanding of cultural relations. The dragon series makes direct encounter with issues such as nationalism and its formulation, identity and Australia's ongoing relationship with China. On a national level, the series is exploring the impact of cross-cultural relations, and on a personal note, Fan is conveying his own ambivalence in living between two cultures – these major elements are bought to the fore through the vehicle of the dragon.

Fan Dongwang brilliantly undermines the archetypal dragon as evil; his dragon stands as the superhero which belies Western orthodoxies. Instead, the inversion of the dragon is allegorised and used as a device for changing perceptions about fixed identities, nationhood and authenticity.

The Chinese emperor morphed into the body of the dragon allows us to explore new interpretations of traditional forms and symbols. From a Chinese-Australian perspective, Dongwang redresses the balance between tradition and innovation, past and present, collective ownership and identity. The centralised figure of the Chinese emperor dressed in the guise of the dragon, with piercing fixated eyes, is enticing. The large scale and structure of the work implies an overarching potency. The solid masses of bold, vivid colours adorn the emperor, with the figure simultaneously executed in a flat and three dimensional perspective – the undeniable power of the dragon spirit looking over us and beyond is effectively suggested through the strength of this brilliant colour and form configuration.

Fan Dongwang's work exudes freshness and vision to create a spatial effect of illusion that propagates transitory sensations of motion, as the forms within the surface oscillate forward and backwards. The surface flattened, employing devices sourced from pop and hard edge abstraction mixed with Chinese vernacular, Fan's reinterpretation of these modernist devices of space and form rather become the catalyst for exploring cross-cultural narrative and meaning.

The bold outlines and symmetrical arrangements are cleanly rendered throughout the picture plane. The smooth high-gloss surface evokes a sensual experience and also testifies to Fan's meticulous technique for which he is renowned. Indeed, Fan's work is distinguished in the way he dispenses colour into a three-dimensional space with illusionary depth – forms undulating and interconnecting in space. With laser-cut precision, each form is a carefully measured tonal value that collectively beguiles the viewer into a prolonged stance of reverence to the masterfully crafted, illusionary effect.

The forms sculpted and modulated are reminiscent of Chinese jade carving. In this regard, Fan Dongwang eloquently characterises his approach to painting within the Australian context as a constant in nourishing and renewing his Chinese heritage: "I employ a new method of 'painting as relief sculpture' to produce this painting the same way as ivory carving – to use the brush to 'carve (paint) out' of the painting's surface, as if carving an ivory relief or low relief sculpture."

The iconographic elements of Fan Dongwang's work engender a continued dialogue within a fluid system of communication and exchange. As Dongwang considers, "My continuing movement between China and Australia enables me to develop a constantly shifting perspective."

The intricate patterning and design work depicted in Fan Dongwang's "Jade Dragon" underpins our renewed interest with beauty and aesthetics. The "Jade Dragon" promises to bring good fortune, health and liberation into the domestic and national realms of shared spaces where people are not restricted by boundaries and borderlines. Fan Dongwang has renewed the spirits of our lands through the powerful symbol of the dragon.



**Fan Dongwang** (left)  
*Dragon Emperor*  
acrylic on canvas 245 x 180cm

**Fan Dongwang** (opposite top left)  
*Orange Dragon*  
colour pencil on paper 76 x 76cm

**Fan Dongwang** (opposite top right)  
*White Dragon*  
colour pencil on paper 76 x 76cm

**Fan Dongwang** (opposite bottom right)  
*Green Dragon*  
colour pencil on paper 76 x 76cm

**Fan Dongwang** (opposite bottom left)  
*Yellow Dragon*  
colour pencil on paper 76 x 76cm



2009  
EXHIBITIONS

**SURVIVAL – THE STRENGTH  
OF WOMEN**

10 January – 26 February  
Recent works by Aboriginal  
women artists

**BEN HALL  
FIELD MAPS**

31 January – 22 February  
Recent works

**LAURE MOLINA &  
SARAH TOMASETTI  
LIMINAL**

28 February – 22 March  
Mixed media and paintings

**GRAHAM KUO  
NEW WORKS**

28 March – 26 April  
Paintings and works on paper

**KATE BRISCOE  
ROCKFACES**

2 May – 24 May  
Recent works

**MARNLING PRESS &  
WHALING ROAD STUDIO**

**PRINTED IMAGE**  
30 May – 14 June  
Contemporary printmaking

**RONI FELDMAN  
COLLECTIVE DISSOLVE**

20 June – 12 July  
New works

**MICHAEL KEIGHERY  
RECENT WORK**

18 July – 9 August  
Ceramics and mixed media

**BERND HEINRICH &  
ROSS THORNTON  
OBJECT, SPACE AND HARMONY**

15 August – 6 September  
Paintings and mixed media  
works

**HANNA KAY  
WATERWAYS**

12 September – 4 October  
Recent paintings

**FAN DONGWANG  
ENTER THE DRAGON**

10 October – 1 November  
Recent works

**SUZANNE ARCHER  
SHELF-LIFE**

7 November – 29 November  
Painting and sculpture

**TEXT**

5 December – 20 December  
Paintings, works on paper,  
artists' books by gallery and  
invited artists



ROBYN GORDON &  
AN MORISON  
*PANOPLY: ART JEWELLERY*  
18 July – 2 August

**FUTURE EXHIBITIONS**

BRIGID COLE  
MARIA CHRISTOU  
TELLY TUITA

GALLERY  
ARTISTS

SUZANNE ARCHER  
BRONWYN BANCROFT  
DEBORAH BECK  
JAMES BLACKWELL  
KATE BRISCOE  
BILL BROWN  
MICHELLE COLLOCOTT

HEATHER SHAIN ELLYARD  
FAN DONGWANG  
RONI FELDMAN  
CHRISTOPHER GENTLE  
ROBYN GORDON  
BEN HALL  
BERND HEINRICH  
NOLA JONES

ANNE JUDELL  
HANNA KAY  
MICHAEL KEIGHERY  
GRAHAM KUO  
MANNE SCHULZE  
ROSS THORNTON  
SARAH TOMASETTI



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