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PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION TITLE: STRONGER TOGETHER—MELDING CULTURAL IDIOMS

ARTISTS: ROY LICHTENSTEIN (1923-1997), ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG (1925-2008), XU BING (B. 1955)

EXHIBITION DATES: MARCH 6 – 30, 2017

OPENING PARTY: MARCH 10 FROM 2—5 PM

ASIA WEEKEND: MARCH 11 AND 12 FROM 11 AM TO 5 PM

GALLERY HOURS: MONDAY – THURSDAY, 11:00 – 5:00

ONLINE AT: CHINA 2000 FINE ART CURRENT EXHIBITION

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China 2000 Fine Art is pleased to present the Asia Week NY exhibition **STRONGER TOGETHER-MELDING CULTURAL IDIOMS** in their location at 1556 Third Ave, Suite 601, in Manhattan. The exhibition focuses on the work of two western artists, Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Rauschenberg, both of whom created their final projects by re-examining an earlier allure for Chinese artistic expression and translating this affinity into their own unique idioms. The exhibition consists of three very large works, one by Lichtenstein titled Landscape with Poet (1996) and two by Rauschenberg titled Lotus III and Lotus V (from the Lotus Series, 2008). And on the eastern wall, hanging scrolls in Square Word Calligraphy by Xu Bing (b. 1955), whose creative genius is rooted in bringing the world—east and west, rich and poor, young and old—closer together.

“Landscapes in the Chinese Style” was the last complete series of paintings created by Roy Lichtenstein. At the age of 21 while in the army, Lichtenstein discovered his affinity for Chinese art, continued to engage with Asian art as a university student in Ohio and then sporadically throughout his career. But it was an encounter with a 1994 exhibition of splendid landscape monotypes and pastels by Edgar Degas (similar to what was recently on view at the Museum of Modern Art) that really moved him, until his death in 1997, to create this Chinese inspired series of paintings, prints and sculptures. Primarily interested in Song dynasty landscapes, Lichtenstein sought to incorporate broad ideas about space



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and atmosphere from ancient Chinese art, and not to appropriate direct imagery, as he had done in his early pop-works of the 1960s. In addition, Lichtenstein played with the idea of abstract painting like the Chinese artists of the past - only the tiniest details on the large canvas suggest to the viewer that the work is Chinese inspired. The small figure on the lower left as well as Lichtenstein's refined use of varying sized Ben-Day dots define the pictorial space, unlike the artist's earlier use of bold outlines. The dotting reflects a traditional Chinese painting technique while the incongruous rice picker's hat on the poet triggers a recognition factor, a visual cliché that serves to underpin the Asian feel of the pictures. This series of work is a stunning example of how the artist subtly infers the cliché, or stereotype, of the Westerner's generalized view of ancient Chinese art. He finely blends his own past techniques and mechanics of painting and print making with ancient inspiration for a fresh and mature late work.

"The Lotus Series" (2008) is the last printed project completed by Robert Rauschenberg before his death. The prints which combine intaglio printing and digital impressions are based on the artist's photographs from his trip to China between 1982 and 1985. This project stands out in Rauschenberg's printed oeuvre for its method of production and use of new printing tools. While the imagery in The Lotus Series is hardly new, Rauschenberg's reuse of these motifs – more than two decades after he took the photographs – is itself a fascinating aspect of the project. There is a tension between the nostalgic, faded photos of China and the rendering of these in the digitally enhanced colors and high-resolution output on paper. With this series, Rauschenberg blends the traditional with the innovative, prompting the viewer to look at a receding past with the hyper clarity that today's technology has made possible and to reflect on the very ability, or inability, to function in a constantly changing and developing environment.

Square Word Calligraphy is a new kind of writing, almost a code, designed by Xu Bing. The idea of inventing this new form of writing came to Xu Bing when he observed the attitude of awe and respect with which non-Asians regard Chinese calligraphy. Intrigued, he sought to create a work that would demystify calligraphy, and reward the Westerner's engagement. For Square Word Calligraphy, Xu Bing designed a system whereby English words are written in the format of a square, so as to resemble Chinese characters, using the concept of classical Chinese stroke order.

BIOGRAPHY

Roy Lichtenstein (October 27, 1923 – September 29, 1997) was a prominent American pop artist. During the 1960s his paintings were exhibited at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York City and along with Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, James Rosenquist and



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others he became a leading figure in the new art movement. His work defined the basic premise of Pop Art better than any other through parody. Favoring the old-fashioned comic strip as subject matter, Lichtenstein produced hard-edged, precise compositions that documented while they parodied often in a tongue-in-cheek humorous manner. His work was heavily influenced by both popular advertising and the comic book style. He himself described Pop Art as, "not 'American' painting but actually industrial painting".

Robert Rauschenberg (October 22, 1925 – May 12, 2008) was an American painter and graphic artist whose early works anticipated the pop art movement. Rauschenberg is well known for his "Combines" of the 1950s, in which non-traditional materials and objects were employed in innovative combinations. Rauschenberg was both a painter and a sculptor and the Combines are a combination of both, but he also worked with photography, printmaking, paper-making, and performance. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1993. He became the recipient of the Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts in 1995 in recognition of his more than 40 years of fruitful art making.

Xu Bing (b. 1955) finds his family roots in Wenling of Zhejiang province. He was born in Chongqing, China in 1955. In 1977 he entered the printmaking department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing (CAFA) where completed his bachelor's degree in 1981 and stayed on as an instructor, earning his MFA in 1987. In 1990, at the invitation of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he moved to the United States. Xu served as the Vice President of CAFA from 2008 to 2014 and is now a professor at CAFA, advising PhD students. He currently lives and works in Beijing and New York. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC; the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; the British Museum, London, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Joan Miro Foundation, Spain; National Gallery of Prague and the Spencer Museum of Art, Kansas, among other major institutions. Additionally, Xu Bing has shown at the 45th, 51st and 56th Venice Biennales; the Biennale of Sydney and the Johannesburg Biennale amongst other international exhibitions.

Over the years, Xu Bing's work has appeared in high-school and college text-books around the world including Abram's "Art Past – Art Present," Gardner's "Art Through the Ages" and Greg Clunas's "Chinese Art" a volume in the "Oxford History of Art" series, Jane Farver's *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin 1950s – 1980s* (Queens Museum of Art Press) and *Art Worlds in Dialogue* (Museum Ludwig Press). In 2006, the Princeton University Press published "Persistence/Transformation: Text as Image in the Art of Xu Bing" a multidisciplinary study of Xu Bing's landmark work "Book from the Sky." In 2008, Professor Robert Harrist, Chair of Chinese Art at Columbia University, New York, began teaching a graduate seminar entitled "The Art of Xu Bing." In 2011, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts published "Xu Bing: Tobacco Project" and Albion published "Xu Bing". In 2012, the New York University Press published "Xu Bing and Chinese Contemporary Art" (edited by Hsingyuan Cao and Roger T. Ames) and Beijing Culture and Arts Press published "Xu Bing: the Birth of the Phoenixes" (edited by Zhou Zan).



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In 1999, Xu Bing was the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship in recognition of his “capacity to contribute importantly to society, particularly in printmaking and calligraphy.” In 2003 Xu Bing was awarded the Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize, and in 2004 he won the first Wales International Visual Art Prize, Artes Mundi. In 2006, the Southern Graphics Council awarded Xu Bing their lifetime achievement award in recognition of the fact that his, “use of text, language and books has impacted the dialogue of the print and art worlds in significant ways.” He was awarded Doctor of Humane Letters by Columbia University in 2010, the 2014 Department of State-Medal of Arts for his efforts to promote cultural understanding through his artworks in 2015. He was appointed A.D. White Professors-at-large by Cornell University in April 2015.