

For Immediate Release
October 14, 2009



**“Half the Sky:
Eight New Large Works by Qi Zhilong”**

*Opening Thursday, October 29, 2009, from 6-8pm.
Qi Zhilong will be present at this inaugural reception.*

*This exhibit coincides with Carnegie Hall’s citywide festival
“Ancient Paths, Modern Voices” celebrating Chinese culture.*

New York, NY – AW Asia is pleased to present an exhibition of eight new large paintings by contemporary Chinese artist Qi Zhilong. The show includes a series of portraits presented alongside a selection of original Chinese propaganda works from the Cultural Revolution period. Positioned against examples of this original propaganda, Qi Zhilong’s latest “Female Liberation Army Women” imagery takes on a haunting historical resonance. This resonance is one of the hallmarks of much contemporary Chinese art created by Qi Zhilong’s generation of artists.

Drawn from the iconography of the Cultural Revolution, Qi Zhilong’s bright portraits of female soldiers have earned him an international reputation, and he is widely recognized as one of the leading artists in China’s Political Pop movement. His works have reinvented and subverted the classic female soldier, transforming her from a revolutionary “plain Jane” into a contemporary symbol of Chinese beauty. Depicting

young women as part pin-up model, part girl-next-door, these works explore the changing face of Chinese society through the female portrait.

During the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in China, young people played a crucial role in the spread of Mao Zedong's political ideology. Whether as Red Guards or young pioneers, or simply as part of the youth of the day, all young people adopted the uniform of the People's Liberation Army, a rather austere uniform intended to diminish social difference and put the sexes on an equal footing. There was also a particular emphasis on eradicating bourgeois tendencies, and concerns about one's appearance. Women were pressured to deny their femininity to conform to the social norms of the day. Qi Zhilong's elegant paintings have turned this notion upside down.

Thirty years ago the ubiquitous image of Chairman Mao was almost the only portrait seen in the public realm. Nowadays China's cities are filled with oversized billboards of attractive women advertising the latest luxuries and beauty products. With their bold and nostalgic blend of past and present, Qi Zhilong's paintings reflect the changing role of women in Chinese media and culture today.

Qi Zhilong has exhibited his works in museums such as the Galeri Nasional, Indonesia (2009), the Museum Bern, Switzerland (2005), and the Beijing Art Museum (1996). He has also exhibited at international galleries in China, Australia, Europe, and the United States. His works can be found in a number of private collections, including the renowned Sigg Collection of Chinese contemporary art.

For more information about Carnegie Hall's *Ancient Paths, Modern Voices* festival, please visit www.carnegiehall.org/chinafestival.

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