

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Francesco Clemente, *Paradigm*, 2007, Watercolor on paper,  
24 x 18 inches; 61 x 45.7 cm.

## The Tree

June 26 - August 30, 2009

Opening reception on Friday

June 26th, 6-8pm

James Cohan Gallery Shanghai is pleased to present its summer group exhibition *The Tree* opening on June 26 and continuing through August 30, 2009. This exhibition brings together over 30 international artists who explore the subject of trees in various aspects. The show is also inspired by the city of Shanghai with its many tree-lined streets and lanes and its wonderful history with the Plane tree first planted by the British and French in the 1840s. These trees are one of the outstanding features of this remarkable city and are symbolic of Shanghai's colonial and post-colonial

history. They provide shade and shadow, a dramatic and ever-lasting sense of seasonal change amidst a city in constant flux.

*The Tree* offers both whimsical as well as poetic perspectives by such artists as **Francesco Clemente**, whose extraordinary watercolor depicts human forms as boughs and branches within a tree that could, at any moment, become a cloud. Or in the work by **Philip Taaffe**, from his *Composite Nature* series, where the underlying patterns and structures of the natural world have been central to his work during the past decade. More atmospheric views are found in **April Gornik's** charcoal drawing, a darkened meadow of trees, and in the paintings by **Yuko Murata** and **Joan Nelson**, whose works take us on a journey to serene and melancholic forests.

Also on view are photographs by the renowned Californian photographer **Bill Owens** known for his classic and uncanny images of American suburban life, as seen in his 1971 photograph titled, "My dad thinks it's a good idea to take all the leaves off the tree and rake up the yard. I think he's crazy." While in **Myoung Ho Lee's** portraits of single trees—accurate and mysteriously staged—examine the character and individual identity of the tree itself.



Bill Owens, *My dad thinks it's a good idea to take all the leaves off the tree and rake up the yard. I think he's crazy*, 1971, Black and white photograph  
20 x 16 inches; 50.8 x 40.7 cm

# JAMES COHAN GALLERY SHANGHAI

The very structure of a tree is the focus for many artists: **Ward Shelly's** *Media Role Models*, a tree-shaped timeline, charts historical figures and events influenced by the media. **Roxy Paine's** ink drawing illustrates a proposal for a monumental stainless steel tree as a two-dimensional billboard for signage or advertisement. **Shi Jinsong's** *Short Pine Tree* reconstructs an enlarged, idealized and hybrid bonsai with various types of bleached tree roots, trunk and branches. In **Yan Lei's** painting, which was once exhibited at *Documenta XII*, the artist documents his intervention project executed in Shenzhen in 2003, where the artist arranged for a plot of tree-lined land to be removed from the hands of speculation and real estate investment for a two-year period.

*The Tree* exhibition also includes works by **Jessica Backhaus, Manfredi Beninati, Chen Jie, Lorenzo de Los Angeles, Carroll Dunham, David Dupuis, André Ethier, Alicia Framis, Lynn Geesaman, April Gornik, Guo Hongwei, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Yun-Fei Ji, Amy Kao, Yayoi Kusama, Michael Lin, Frank Majore, Keith Mayerson, Robin O'Neil, Hiraki Sawa, Shi Jing, Mark Steinmetz, Sun Xun, Alison Elizabeth Taylor, Yuken Teruya.**

Three newly commissioned works for this exhibition are also featured: Beijing-based artists **Sun Xun** and **Guo Hongwei**, and a new work by **Michael Lin**. **Sun Xun's** installation *On Darwinism* combines drawings, paper cut-outs and shadow theater. **Guo Hongwei's** hand-drawn illustrated book is made to resemble a special issue of the international contemporary art journal *Parkett* that features historical works related to or inspired by trees for over the past fifty years. **Michael Lin's** new installation *Money Tree-Evergreen* evokes a scene once common to the daily hustle and bustle of Shanghai, where street peddlers used to ride Chinese manufactured bicycles selling paper pinwheels.

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