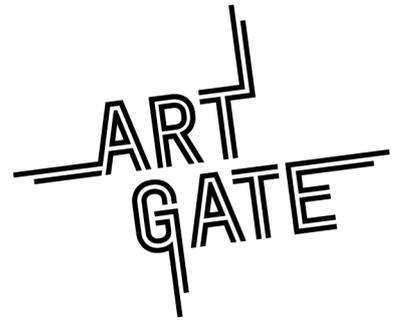


## PRESS RELEASE

AN EXHIBITION CONCEPT WITH  
ZHANG FANGBEI (CHN) AND CE JIAN (GER/CHN)  
FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> UNTIL 3<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017 AT „HAUS VIONVILLE“



In response to the leading position of China in the international art market, ARTGATE Consulting is conceptualising an exhibition with the artists Ce Jian (GER/CHN) and Zhang Fangbai (CN) with accompanying company events in the art nouveau villa “Haus Vionville”. At the intersection of the new German-Chinese silk road and in the heart of the city of Düsseldorf, the presentation of these artworks also highlights the increasing cultural relevance of China for North Rhine-Westphalia. The exhibition juxtaposes two generations of Chinese artists:

**Zhang Fangbai**, born in 1965 in Hengyang in the province Hunan, is considered to be one of the first renowned painters who were educated at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing after the Cultural Revolution. With his long-standing variations of the *Eagle-Pictures*, which are deeply rooted in the tradition of Chinese painting, he establishes a new tendency of contemporary Chinese art. Zhang Fangbai occupies himself with the eagle theme since the 1990s as his attempt to take up the spirituality of earlier artist generations again and bestow them with a renewed, increasing relevance.

The grown, deep relation of the artist with the king of the heavens, understood around the world as symbol of power and pride, shows in each of his paintings. In his eagle frozen on canvas Zhang Fangbai has created an enduring witness of history, disclosing humiliation and a loss of power. One can almost feel the act of strength through which the artist, with his bulky brush, has created, almost modelled these heavily structured images interspersed with plant fibres. Only in rare cases does he put accents of colour in his mainly grey eagle figures, often expressively shaped by deeply black contours. With his works he realises a unique composition of traditional ink stylistics with the techniques of oil painting.

Zhang Fangbai’s oeuvre is currently receiving appreciation of the highest level in China and is gaining more and more attention in the West. His works have been recognised by exhibitions at the National Art Museum of China, at the Museum of Contemporary Art and in the Today Art Museum in Beijing, at the 55th Venice Biennale, at the China Oil Painting Society & UNESCO, Paris and at the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf.

**Ce Jian**, born in 1984 in Jinan in the province of Shandong, came to Germany at the age of four and grew up in Berlin. She graduated from the Universität der Künste Berlin as a student of Georg Baselitz, Daniel Richter and Robert Lucander. In addition, she studied art and image history at the Humboldt University where she completed her doctoral thesis on the painting of Chuck Close and her relation to technical paintings in 2017. Despite her young age, Ce Jian’s artistic maturity is astounding.

With her CAPTCHA series Ce Jian reflects on the effects of technically generated image worlds, binding them into compositions that oscillate between absolute abstraction and “readable” signs and landscaped formations. A captcha (Completely Automated Public Turing Test to tell Computers and Humans Apart) is normally used to avoid the abuse of Internet forms in order to identify if a human being or a machine/robot is involved. It can be a distorted combination of numbers and letters intended to be recognised and typed in or pictures that must be selected with regard to a specific question.

For Ce Jian captchas are a strategy to approach the problem of abstraction. Fundamentally, a technical-mathematical formalism provides the basis of a captcha. She translates this as a methodological principle in her paintings by creating analogies in her compositions without imitating them. The spontaneous momentum and materiality displayed in the execution of the process form an important counterpart to the rational concept. Her realisation follows formal rules that have been developed based on captchas, but the result remains uncontrolled and thus unpredictable for long stretches.

With the series *New Folks*, Ce Jian deals with constructed, artificial and staged role models and body concepts. In this she works with contemporary as well as historical sources from media, science and art history with different overlapping iconographic codes. Consequently, well-known gestures, postures and costumes are cited and newly questioned from current perspectives. In the age of genetic engineering and optimized bodies, Ce Jian's pictorial deformation of bodies reflects – today and at the time – the persisting aversion against abnormality and nonconformity.

Ce Jian lives in Berlin and works between Berlin and Beijing. Her works were most recently displayed at Peres Projects Berlin, White Space Beijing, Whiteconcepts Berlin and at Galerie Philine Cremer in Düsseldorf. Amongst others, she is regularly represented at the art fairs Art Basel Hong Kong and Art021 in Shanghai with White Space Beijing. In 2013, she showed her works in a solo show at the Konfuzius Institute Düsseldorf.