

ART NEWS



# Phil Akashi Solo Exhibition “A Seal of Unity: A Double Happiness” is presented at Art+ Shanghai

by SUE WANG on Jan 9, 2017 • 3:34 pm

No Comments



Phil Akashi, WISDOM OF HAPPINES Ink, gold leaves and acrylic on canvas with Chinese characters: 囍 / “Double Happiness” 200 x 300 cm 2015

Phil Akashi, who has garnered a notable artistic presence in Asia, is presenting his solo exhibition at Art+ Shanghai, Singapore Art Space. Shortlisted for the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize in 2015, Akashi seeks to engage with the public by bringing issues that affect contemporary society through the visual signifiers of his work. As a self-professed nomad “fascinated by the cultural complexity and aesthetics of Asia,” Akashi identifies himself through his Japanese pseudonym as well as his Chinese name Tao Cheng (涛程).

Through the repetitive gestures found in his artistic creations, which he meticulously inscribes or even jabs with 27,000 punches as he did for the monumental street art project “Tribute to Mandela” (2013), which was awarded major international public art project in 2013 by the Palo Alto Public Art Commission, Phil Akashi strives to rephrase the Asian literati tradition of text and image. Oftentimes, his text becomes the image and his images are comprised of characters, thus eliminating the categorical distinctions so that they are fluidly unified as a single entity.



Phil Akashi, Bali, Archival pigment print and acrylic on Hahnemühle cotton rag with Chinese characters 囍 "double Happiness"; 90 x 115cm, 2015

This notion of merger is eloquently expressed in his current solo exhibition in the series Rings on Fire. He activates the Chinese character of Double Happiness (囍) as the symbol and metaphor of conjugal bliss to succinctly question the double meanings inherent in the realities associated with matrimony. While marriage, across various cultures and countries, is perceived as a bond of lasting love between two persons, such alliances have also been sustained throughout history as a form of social institution and arrangements of political and economic convenience. Through the accumulation and inundation of Double Happiness characters that are relentlessly imprinted upon the surface of the xuan paper, the visual emblem of the individual character becomes not only lost but appears distorted. Seemingly simple yet complexly poignant, Phil Akashi asks the viewer to reflect on the multiple readings and meanings of marriage and its association to happiness.

### **About the artist**

Born 1978 in Brussels, Phil Akashi is a multi-award winning artist based between Brussels, Hong Kong and Singapore. Fascinated by the cultural complexity and aesthetics of Asia, Phil Akashi carved out a unique artistic identity. He chose the pseudonym “Akashi” meaning “bright stone” to express his passion for the multifaceted Japanese culture. While living in China, he also enriched his identity with a Chinese name Tao Cheng “涛程” meaning “big wave journey” where the two characters are intentionally reversed in order to challenge the structure of the Chinese language. Along with his Chinese name, Japanese pseudonym and Western background, Phil Akashi plays with paradoxes and shares how he views the world as a trans-cultural element.

Phil Akashi has participated in solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Europe and Asia. His artworks are in the royal and in private collections worldwide and he has been featured in many international publications such as the MoMA, Guggenheim, Artribune, and Fine Art International.

### **About the exhibition**

**Exhibition Dates:** January 8 – March 12, 2017

**Venue:** Art+ Shanghai Singapore Art Space

**Address:** 108 Grange Road, #15-06 Cliveden at Grange, 249595 SINGAPORE

Courtesy of the artist and Art+ Shanghai, for further information please contact

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