



Ling Jian, *Bad girl 3*, 2007, oil on canvas, 250 x 180 cm. Courtesy: Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin / Diehl + Gallery One, Moscow. Photography: Marcus Schneider, Berlin



China is a volcano of social and economic reforms, the intensity and speed of change here since the late 80's have probably never been equalled in history. The resulting revolution in understanding, misunderstanding, innovation and experimentation on all subjects, has in turn been extravagantly manifested in the arts. _____ Indeed, as China's booming economy marches ever onward, contemporary Chinese art has become the latest "next big thing" in the international art market, sending galleries, collectors and investors into a financial frenzy. It is bloody nice stuff too, so you certainly get what you pay for! Styles range from realism to expressionism; from surrealism to abstract; these popular genres skilfully underlined by one of the world's most innovative digital-art scenes. _____ Right now is China's Art moment, galleries and exhibitions the world over proudly display an array of these flamboyant commie-canvases. The artists have exploded into action after years of being forced to operate underground, and now, rather than skulking in the creative shadows, they perform unbound. Rising from obscurity to fame so rapidly, naturally causes a surge of popularity; these modern-Ming heroes have quickly become the latest must-have guests on many a swanky celebrity party list. In addition, run-down urban communities that were once the oppressed artists' hideaway, have now transformed to super-chic city quarters, the cappuccino-sipping playgrounds of China's creative genius. Interestingly, the crushing high-rise architecture predominant in these once dilapidated districts is now the ingenious backdrop-subject of many of these contemporary paintings and designs.

WANG NIANDONG

One of the most prominent of these liberated urban-artists is Wang Niandong. Born in 1978, Wang belonged to a very traditional and cultured set. Inspired by his artistic Grandfather, he left his native Sichuan province to study at the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing. He finished his graduate studies back at the Sichuan Fine Art Institute where he currently teaches. At first glance his meticulous approach to art appears glossy, the realism so absurdly apparent that the untrained eye could easily glance past what seems to be strictly