

5C ON HING BUILDING, 1 ON HING TERRACE, (WYNDHAM OPP. WELLINGTON ST.) CENTRAL, HONG KONG

TEL: 869-8802 FAX: 530-1791



FINE CHINESE AND WESTERN OIL PAINTINGS

**Press Release:**

**Schoeni Art Gallery Anniversary Show**

**The Origin of Man: Paintings by Alexander Zhacharov**

15th March - 31st March, 1994

To celebrate the first anniversary, Schoeni Art Gallery is organising an unprecedented exhibition which showcases works of internationally renowned Russian artist, **Alexander Zhacharov** (b. 1960, Moscow, Russia). His works are present in museums and private collections all over the world but remain mostly unknown to the Hong Kong audience. It is therefore with great pleasure and pride that the Schoeni Art Gallery invites the Hong Kong public to share the very unusual vision of this artist who, with his distinctive style, delves into issues which have a direct bearing on all of our lives: the origin and the existence of mankind, man's relationship with one another, politics, religion, and man's sexuality.

Zhacharov has also held solo and group shows all over Europe and America and his works are coveted by private collectors in Asia, Europe and America. His recent works consist of a series of very colourful miniatures, inhabited by prehistorical dinosaurs, giant insects and human beings of different races. Through this seemingly surreal universe, Zhacharov tries to address very pertinent issues of Russia's recent political history, the origin of man, the relationship of men among themselves, with their surroundings and other living creatures.

Schoeni Art Gallery is located at 5C-D, On Hing Building, 1 On Hing Terrace, (off Wyndham St, opposite Wellington Street). Opening Hours are from 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Mondays to Saturdays.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact Martha at the gallery. Tel: 869-8802, Fax: 530-1791.

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新聞稿 = Schoeni 畫廊一週年紀念慶典

香港(一九九三年十二月十一日)

"人類之起源 = Alexander Zhacharov 油畫展"

由三月開始, Schoeni 將會推出俄羅斯大師 — Alexander Zhacharov (1960年出生) 之個人畫展。Zhacharov 的作品曾在世界各地裏的博物館及畫廊展出過, 但對香港的觀眾來說, Zhacharov 的名字是比較陌生的。不過, 如今香港的藝術愛好者將會有機會一睹這位俄羅斯畫家的作品, 因為 Schoeni 畫廊將會為 Zhacharov 隆重地舉辦其個人畫展。今次 Schoeni 畫廊所展出 Zhacharov 之作品共有三十多幅, 而他所繪畫的都是我們所認識的時事問題 = 其中包括人類起源及存在之謎, 以及人與人之間的關係、政治、宗教及性。

今次 "人類之起源 = Alexander Zhacharov 油畫展" 所展出的作品, 均是一些色彩非常豐富的



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小畫像，而畫中的人則有恐龍，巨大的怪魚及昆蟲，還有和其它民族一起居住的史前時代。雖然 Zhacharov 所繪畫的題材是比較超現實的，但從他的筆觸中我們不難看到 Zhacharov 所關注的題材正是俄國近代政治局勢的縮影，以及畫家所探討均是我們不可忽視的問題——人類真正的起源及其存在之價值，人與人之間的關係及四週的自然生態。

Schoeni 畫廊位於香港，中環，安慶台一號，安慶大廈5樓C室（威靈頓街對面，雲咸街上）；開放時間為星期一至星期六，上午10:30至下午6:30。

本畫廊備有有關資料，正片及照片，歡迎索取。

如需更多資料，請向劉小姐洽，電話 869 8802

傳真 530-1791



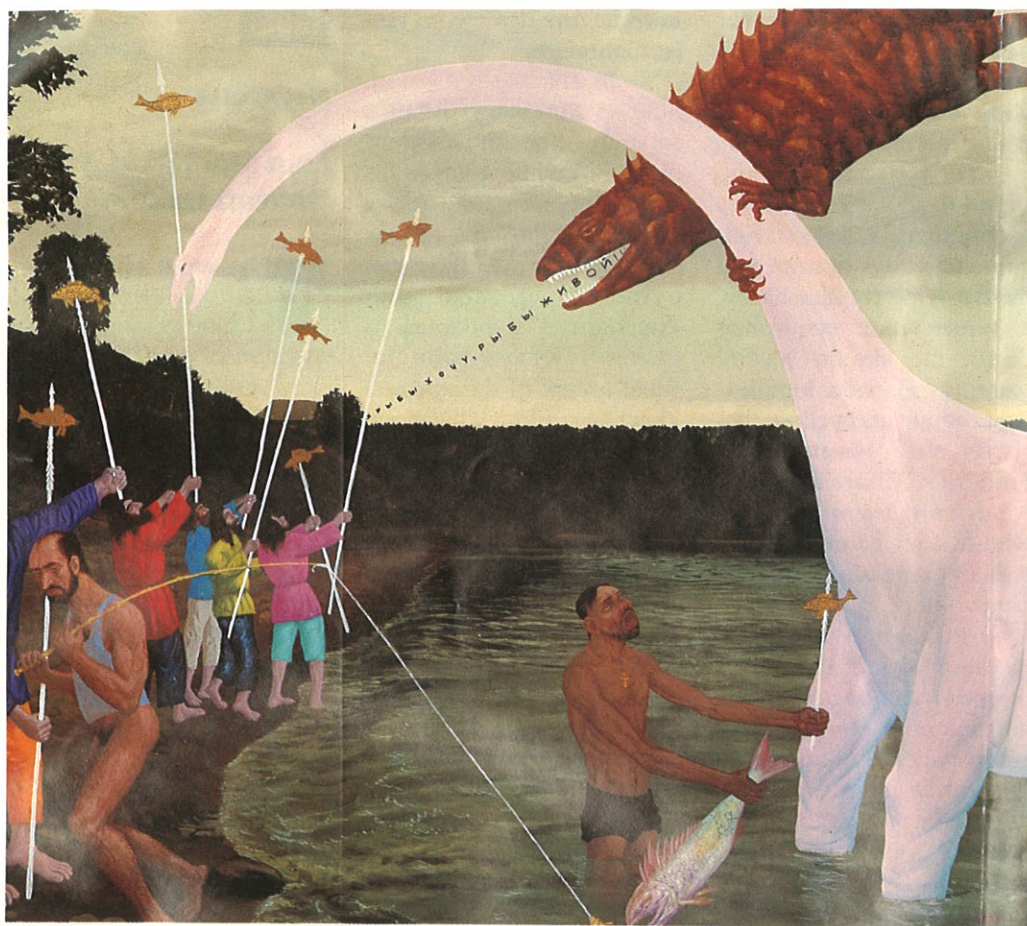
The artist is a lecturer in scenic arts at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. In acknowledging the cross-cultural challenges continually faced by many students there, he was prepared to take several risks in return. Could he, as a European-born Australian, do justice to the intricate atmospheres of the text of a famous Chinese novel? Would Chinese viewers be offended; would he be ridiculed even?

While monitoring the intrigued responses of visitors to the exhibition, Casey van Sebille discovered that, although the title *Hong Lou Meng* was familiar to all, not everyone in Hong Kong had studied the novel. So, to some extent, the learning process was mutual.

Christian icons have readily recognizable themes and common, coded, moral messages. These "icons" had some visual common ground: the richness of red and gold, the symbolism of jade, and sexual motifs perhaps appropriate to Chia Pao Yu, a man submerged in a female environment -- although here they were far more blatantly depicted than the conventions of traditional China would have permitted.

Although the first and final panels contrasted the commencement of the attraction and the snapping tragedy of the relationship, the paintings between noted disparate incidents within the novel and were varied in visual arrangement. Depiction of the human figure was not constant, a panel could be redolent with pure symbolism, and was usually a mixture of both, as in *Dead Flowers Don't Hurt*.

Bold and dramatic, but disparate in display, these



Alexander Zhacharov, *Feeding a Dinosaur*, 1993, oil on canvas, 36 x 40.5 cm.

works were not meant to be seen as an exhibition of stage settings. How could they be brought together as an exhibition of paintings? The mixed visual art/theater training of Casey van Sebille saw him through. He created the atmosphere of a temple to *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, and through the experience undoubtedly made further advances into the depths of the novel, as well as appreciation of the quality of its operatic adaptation in Cantonese: *Erotic Dream of Red Chamber*.

This was achieved by a small watercolor sketch defining the equivalent of a theatrical space for each "scene" being placed above every descriptive label. As thread suspended jade within the printings, so the colored

sketch and the label beside each panel threaded them visually into a whole. All were then drawn towards an enormous horizontal panel of red on the facing wall, this evoked the atmosphere of the novel, the tradition of the Middle Kingdom -- a tradition which could create stability, but also inhibit development, kill love.

Cherry Barnett

### Alexander Zhacharov at Schoeni

Europeans and Africans, colonizers and colonized, heterosexuals and homosexuals, Arabs and

Jews, Russians and Americans -- Alexander Zhacharov offends them all. No one escapes his savage wit, irony, and revulsion at the human condition. In his exhibition of oil paintings at Schoeni's, the thirty-four-year-old Moscow-born artist now living in New York depicts a personal, perverse and often homoerotic primordial world where Hobbes meets the Marquis de Sade. In this world of cannibalism and cruelty, it is each man against the other and all men against nature.

Savagery and despoliation are however rendered with painterly skill and accomplishment: for all their disturbing subject matter, Zhacharov's paintings are beautiful to look at. The sleeping figure in *Blowing*



## EXHIBITION REVIEWS

*Up a Frog*, despite the horror perpetrated on him, is painted with a gently hued body and a beatific face, where in its fine detailing, as in other faces, there is the echo of Indian miniatures and medieval icons and religious paintings of saint and martyr. While for Zhacharov, a sunset may symbolize death, the sky in several paintings glows a luminescent orange and yellow that rivals the beauty of a Frederick Church or the American Luminists for whom such natural beauty was an expression of divine benevolence.

Russian avant-garde painting of the 1980s was marked by a pervasive irony and an encoded rejection of Marxist ideology and Party line: while more traditional in its painterliness to the extreme. His is an aggressive rejection of the virile and virtuous Soviet man and the treachery "family of man" imagery of official propaganda. It is not class that turns man against man, it is human nature. Perversity and cruelty against man and nature transcend ideology and social system. Beneath the wit and painterly surface, there is a deep pessimism in Zhacharov.

For Zhacharov there is no primordial innocence, no Golden Age to return to. Only our clothes and weapons separate us from our violent ancestors: in the background of *Fear*, naked African-Americans jump and prance, clutching their genitalia like Michael Jackson in concert while their baseball bat wielding descendants stalk the frozen Hudson River

in white America's worst racist nightmare.

In Zhacharov's vision, little evolutionary distance separates ape and modern man; and while at times his work uncomfortably raises the possibility he means black man not man, the visual evidence argues that Zhacharov's indictment is generic. What evolution? What ascent of the species? Zhacharov asks -- what moral progress?

In a city where the decorative far outdistances the serious, and money often more than aesthetic vision governs, Schoeni is to be applauded for showing strong, disturbing work that demands an open mind: unfortunately it may be the viewer more than the gallery that benefits.

**Jeffrey Hantover**

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### India

#### New Delhi

#### Han Mei Lin at Azad Bhavan Gallery

**T**he work of Han Mei Lin, a distinguished Chinese artist and member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee, was on view at New Delhi's Azad Bhavan Gallery of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCP) in early March, 1994. Well-known in China for his multi-faceted creativity and talent in multiple media, Han has been active in reviving traditional folk art forms and porcelain making techniques.

The artist's repertoire includes paintings in Chinese traditional style, stone and metal sculpture of enormous proportion that adorn

several city-centers of China, exquisite and rare porcelain, wood carvings embroidered textiles, pottery, and the designing of commemorative stamps for the Chinese Postal department -- little wonder that Han is described as multi-faceted.

The drawings and sketches on view at Azad Bhavan gave the viewer an insight into the masterly verve with which Han combines tradition with modernity in his calligraphic certitude. Animal motifs such as the bull and the horse came alive in the rhythmic rigor of the Han line and as the artist averred, the secret is to master the traditional method but bring a contemporary approach to it. Han paid tribute to the continuity and distinct identity that has remained enshrined in Indian art from ancient times to the present and generously added that artists of the en-

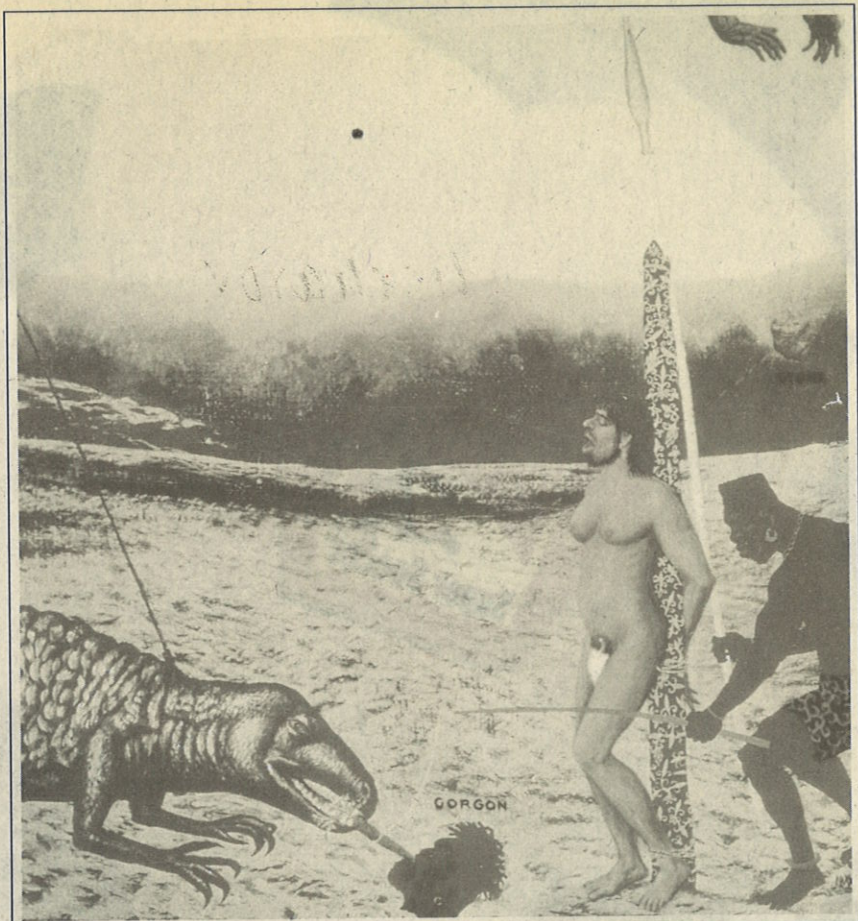


**Satish Chandra, untitled, 1994, oil on canvas.**



侏羅紀或漢堡飽廣告？——

# 原始人類生活圖



慣看博物館裡正襟危坐的「人類的起源」的展覽，看Alexander Zhacharov「人類的起源」系列，便帶來一套俄式的幽默，也無巧不成話令人想起某漢堡飽廣告。Zhacharov一九六零年於莫斯科出生，畢業於莫斯科藝術學院。Zhacharov的作品裡有史前時代的人類、巨大的恐龍、面目特異的怪魚、滿地擺放如家居裝飾品的骨頭、彩色鮮艷的顏色、莫名其妙的構圖、刻意的平面處理、加插如遊戲板的虛線，在在都使作品流露一種戲謔的氣氛。在這種戲謔的氣氛下，畫者輕輕的處理了人與人、人與動物、人與環境、人與不可知的命運的關係。像在他的一幅作品中，恐龍與化了石的人頭爭持著一隻紅蘿蔔，而紅蘿蔔其實是右面的黑人用綫拉扯著的；天使浮在空中拉扯著恐龍，彷彿是阻止爭持的、善良的一面，另一邊的天上也有一隻手拋下石頭，正要跌到黑人的頭頂，危難隨時落到黑人身上。人與動物的爭持，人在不可知命運下的突變，都在這幅如遊戲般的畫面見到。

吳爾芙

## 藝坊



搬運中的白色巨蛋，黑色大恐龍，可有令你想起「侏羅紀」？



《亞利安人》



《晚餐之後》是描述原始人的飯後體操？



紅色的長矛和劍，莫名其妙的貫穿的虛綫和圓圈，使這幅作品如原始時代的康樂棋紙板圖。

9/4. 3. 14