



**Liu Ye**  
**Red – Yellow - Blue**  
**8 - 14 January 2004**

Liu Ye's work is admired by young and old alike. His canvases need no explanation as they take the viewer into an endless world, where the actors and actresses are on stage frozen in time, revived by his brush using his signature colours of red, yellow and blue.

With a palette of bright colours and influences from Vermeer and Mondrian, Liu Ye creates a fantasy world that manifests his emotions.

Liu Ye has exhibited at the Guangdong Museum of Art and held solo-exhibitions at various galleries in China and Berlin. Liu Ye is also one of the participating artists in the Chinart Exhibition, which has been shown in Duisburg at the Kueppersmuehle Museum, in Rome at the MACRO and in Budapest at the Ludwig Museum.

Exhibition catalogue is available. For further enquiries, please contact Ms Selina Liu.

Exhibition venue:

21-31 Old Bailey Street, Central, Hong Kong

Tel (852) 2869-8802

Fax (852) 2522-1528

[galler@schoeni.com.hk](mailto:galler@schoeni.com.hk)

[www.schoeni.com.hk](http://www.schoeni.com.hk)

Gallery Hours:

10:30 – 18:30. Monday – Saturday. Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays.



Manfred Schoeni  
cordially invites you to meet Liu Ye  
and preview his solo exhibition

Liu Ye  
Red · Yellow · Blue

Cocktail Reception

Thursday, 8 January 2004  
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm  
Main Gallery  
21-31 Old Bailey Street, Central, Hong Kong

T (852) 2869-8802  
F (852) 2522-1528  
gallery@schoeni.com.hk  
www.schoeni.com.hk

Exhibition continues through 14 January 2004  
Illustrated catalogue available  
Ashanti wines will be served

Gallery Hours: Monday - Saturday, 10:30 am - 6:30 pm.  
Closed on Sundays & Public Holidays.

劉野 LIU YE 紅 黃 藍 RED YELLOW BLUE





# Pretty uneasy

Photo: Wang Yu



A Beijing artist's paintings of young girls mix the bizarre with the innocent. **Didi Kirsten Tatlow** finds the source of his inspiration

**ONE LITTLE GIRL** holds a sun. Another breast. These doll-like figures seem innocent, sometimes erotic and often funny, but their actions clash with their apparent youth to create unease.

These are the classic, unsettling images of Beijing artist Liu Ye (not to be confused with the young mainland actor of the same name) whose seventh solo show, "Red Yellow Blue", opens at Schoeni Gallery on January 8.

The painter has touched a nerve in his homeland and sold well in recent years. About half of Red Yellow Blue's 42 paintings are already in private collections.

**"What I paint aren't children. They're more like adults who've never grown up ... Fairy tales and philosophy represent two extreme poles of thinking"**

Many of them, unusually, were bought by mainland collectors and loaned for the show.

In his hangar-like studio, a former missile factory on Beijing's outskirts, Liu draws heavily on a Chinese-brand cigarette and blows the smoke into the air. The 39-year-old says he never meant to paint children. "Anything I paint is actually myself", he says. He flips through his newest catalogue and points to a quotation from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture Of Dorian Gray*: "Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter, it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself."

"What I paint aren't children," Liu says. "They're more like adults who've never grown up. Or maybe overgrown children." Does that mean the soft-spoken, round-faced artist, who looks quite a lot like some of his child subjects, is a

child at heart? "A person has many facets, home town to study traditional design at the School (now University) of Arts and Crafts. He says it was an agonising time, when his imagination was constantly at war with the discipline required in technical drawing.

The conflict between rational thought and the imagination is still a key theme of Liu's work. The artist illustrates this tension by pointing to the difference between the rationality of philosophy and the imaginative quality of fairy tales, both of which have been major influences on his thinking. "Fairy tales and philosophy

represent two extreme poles of thinking, which he was a child, and found a book chest under a bed at home. He opened it and found a treasure trove of banned fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm, as well as Chinese tales such as *Journey To The West*, involving the colourful Monkey King. While the madness of the Cultural Revolution raged outside, Liu read the books in secret. Other key influences are Mondrian, Belgian painter Rene Magritte and Japanese animation artist Hayao Miyazaki. Mondrian drew strict, geometric paintings that mostly used the primary

colours that inspired the name of Liu's

captivity and only in. In another piece, *Gun*, a young girl with a big red bow in her hair kneels on a rocky plateau, holding a rifle. Ahead of her is a vast, empty red space. Far off, in a corner of the painting, a pine tree peeks into the frame, an allusion to classical Chinese art. The overall impact is disturbing – as Liu intended. The painting was a work in progress on September 11, 2001. Shocked by the events in New York, Liu changed the composition.

"I was going to paint a girl staring at a spaceship," he says. "I'd just seen Stanley

Kubrick's film, *Space Odyssey 2001*, and I like a Chinese sage who decides to retreat into the simple life. "I watch cartoons and soap operas," he says. "It's not healthy to think too deeply. The surface of my paintings is cute, happy, pretty. But in reality my feelings aren't those feelings. I'm more of a pessimist. This world, to me, is not a happy place. But I don't like to force my feelings on other people."

"Red Yellow Blue", Schoeni Gallery, 21-31 Old Bailey St, SoHo, tel: 2869 8802. [www.schoeni.com.hk](http://www.schoeni.com.hk). Jan 8-14.



Beijing artist Liu Ye's images of young girls, including clockwise from left *Yellow*, *Gun* and *Uncle Lei Feng*, have touched a nerve in his homeland