

Huang Xu

From Purity to Obscurity

10 July – 4 August 2012

In a departure from his earlier photographs of remodeled plastic bags, contemporary Chinese artist Huang Xu's latest exhibition at Jan Murphy Gallery presents a series of oversized and otherworldly flowers. Of this exhibition, Xu says: "The *Flowers* series is derived from the idea of the 'Four Gentlemen' – plum blossom, orchid, chrysanthemum and bamboo – alternatively called the 'Four Noble Ones'. These plants were Confucian symbols for the four qualities of a learned man – one of the most popular themes in traditional Chinese painting.

In this series, I try to keep the Confucian spirit but reinterpret and re-present the 'Four Gracious Plants' through the contemporary medium of photography. I chose black as my background colour, to symbolise the darkness of our society, and to indicate mystery and unpredictability. In traditional Chinese painting, the space is usually open and suggestive of the void, with emptiness used as a compositional and spiritual counterpoint to the actual subject matter. I occupy the whole space with one subject – the flower.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Xu is a regular exhibitor in Beijing, Europe and Australia, and a graduate of the Beijing Academy of Fine Arts. He is represented in collaboration with China Art Projects.