

February 4 – March 11, 2017

DAVID DIAO

HongKong Boyhood



Postmasters Gallery is pleased to announce "HongKong Boyhood," an exhibition of paintings by DAVID DIAO, his first show of new works since his comprehensive career retrospective at the Ullens Contemporary Arts Center in Beijing in 2015.

Born in 1943 in Chengdu, China, Diao is known for complex weaving of personal history with the history of modernist painting and design. He superimposes images and text on luscious, largely monochromatic surfaces. Diao's paintings visualize data, both private and public, that maps his life's trajectory from mainland China through HongKong to the United States and New York where he has lived since 1964. "HongKong Boyhood" (a tip of the hat to Walter Benjamin's "Berliner Kindheit") is about the five and a half years Diao spent there.

Events surrounding the loss of my home in China due to the Communist takeover has festered in my mind my entire life. Beginning in 2007, I finally painted some 30 works that zeroed in on this obsession. The resulting show was entitled, "I lived there until I was 6..." and consisted of paintings of maps, site and floor plans, deeds and other material evidence that the house actually existed. All photographs were lost. It was a harrowing escape from Chengdu to HongKong in late October 1949.

The present show continues the story but focuses on the 5 odd years before emigrating from HongKong to the US in 1955. One memory is of my neighbor Li Lihua, the famous movie star, and her glamorous life downstairs in contrast to our refugee drabness. Maps to establish locale and emblems of institutions in my life became paintings. The internet is a wondrous source for images that supplant the lack of a private archive. But in the end what is a child's world but home, school, church. In working on these paintings I realize that during the entire period there I was mostly waiting to grow up. Besides America was beckoning.

- David Diao, Jan 10, 2017

David Diao has been showing with Postmasters since its founding in 1985. This will be his twelfth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Postmasters Gallery located at 54 Franklin Street in Tribeca | Tuesday through Saturday 11 – 6 with Thursday hours extended to 8pm | Contact Magdalena Sawon or Paulina Bebecka with questions and image requests at postmasters@thing.net | www.postmastersart.com