

LI Shan

Chinese 1942

Li Shan graduated in 1968 from the Shanghai Drama Academy. His paintings have demonstrated a strong Expressionist vocabulary since the 1970s, and since then have shown increasingly Primitivist tendencies, including the incorporation of sexual imagery—a taboo subject in Maoist era painting. His Primal Beginnings series are intense expressions of the emotional turmoil. In 1988 Li Shan created his Mona Lisa series, a combination of lotus flower imagery from popular paintings and images of the Mona Lisa, which seeks to demonstrate the expressive power of allegorical symbols embedded in vulgarized images. This theme becomes stronger and clearer in his recent Rouge Series, in which the artist uses huge canvases, finely detailed airbrush technique and hermaphroditic images to create a climate of emotional unease and to express the sense that people have been "neutered" by the combined social effects of knowledge, language and authority. Li Shan is one member of "New Art From China: Post-1989" and became internationally known as his Political Pop style.