

# Curatorial Statement

Abby Chen



2010 marks the third year of the Chinese Culture Center's Xian Rui Solo Art Exhibition series. Xian Rui started out with a bang in 2008, and I am pleased to announce that Stella Zhang has been chosen as this year's artist to carry our momentum forward.

Born in Beijing in 1965, Stella Zhang is currently based in Palo Alto, California. Educated in both China and Japan, she is of the prominent generation of artists who made contemporary Chinese art a respected force worldwide. However, as an introvert partial to frequent movement and relocation, Zhang herself remains relatively unknown and completely under-appreciated.

While her new exhibition unquestionably embodies Xian Rui's "fresh and sharp" theme, *O-Viewpoint* takes an acute departure from the previous exhibitions in the series, as it pushes greater boundaries, not to mention sensibilities, with a uniquely intimate and private voice.

Zhang's search for self is what she calls "O," a representation that encapsulates both her impulses and abnegation.

The debut of *O-Viewpoint* is, in essence, an outward display of the complex inner landscape mapped by one woman's emotions. An unexpected angle, a familiar metaphor, and the contrast of a thorny delicacy build a doorway to the mass of feelings and sensations seething beneath the surface of Zhang's work. *O-Viewpoint* hums like a whisper, sometimes soothing, sometimes shrill, and always a little foreboding.

The exhibition of *O-Viewpoint* will pit a private point of view against a very public one. This tension will beg several questions. How do these inward reflections interact within an external realm and, particularly, within our community? How will a communal gaze perceive Zhang's intricate internal visions? Will we as an audience truly be able to provide an open platform for intimate self-expression? The answers to these questions are as integral a part of Zhang's art as they are critical to the future of Xian Rui.

The goal of the Xian Rui series is to challenge perceptions, probe boundaries, and engage fresh perspectives, and *O-Viewpoint* does more than surpass such standards.

It is a brand new body of work that chronicles the beginning of a transformation for Stella Zhang as an artist. It is also undoubtedly the most personal and provocative exhibition the Center has presented thus far.

The journey of *O-Viewpoint* is a circular one. As it continues to loop, its path might cross upon itself, but the substance never replicates. *O-Viewpoint* ends as it begins; it is ruin and it is rebirth.

**Abby Chen**, *Head of Contemporary Art at the Asian Art Museum*