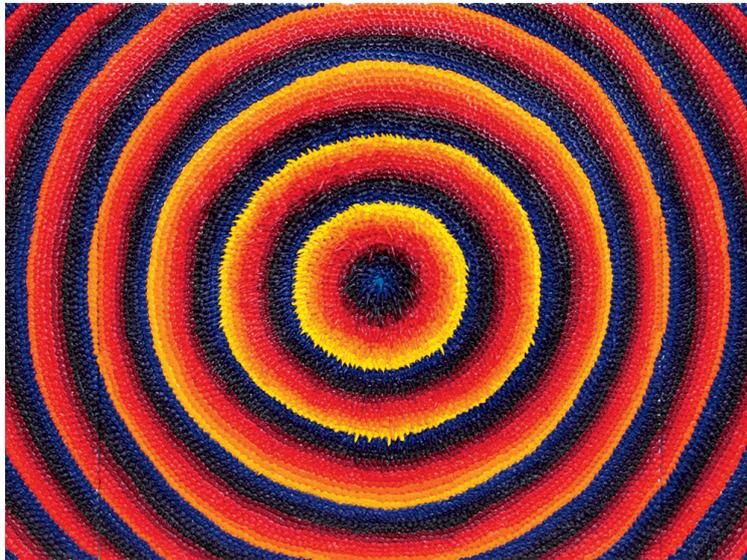


MAMA Gallery Debuts Solo Exhibitions from Ren Hang and Li Zhenwei
By Murat Oztaskin | June 23, 2016

The People's Republic of Art! Rising Chinese art stars are venturing west... to express themselves.



Change of art! Chinese artists—such as controversial photographer Ren Hang, whose work is banned from public display in his native country—are flocking to the west to exhibit what they can't show in the east. here: Li Zhenwei, *Origin #7*, 2015. Oil on canvas. 39.5" x 118".

Photographer Ren Hang and painter Li Zhenwei, both 29 and Beijing-based, will each enjoy their first solo exhibitions in the US when two of China's finest emerging artists land at Downtown's MAMA Gallery this summer.

"What We Do Is Secret" (June 18–July 23) will present Hang's surrealist, sexually explicit portraits. Irreverent and combative, his photography will find an especially open audience in LA, say MAMA Gallery cofounders/co-directors Adarsha Benjamin and Eli Consilvio. "There is more freedom in LA," says Benjamin, "less restrictions and attitudes" than in other global art centers and in China, where Hang's work is banned from display. Li Zhenwei's exhibition, "Irrational π Transcendent" (September 12–October 23), will feature a dozen new paintings all based around pi. The never-ending, never-repeating geometric constant determines the densities, spacing, and hues of color, as in his recent *None, #20*, an oversize canvas almost 20 feet wide covered with dots applied directly from tubes of oil paint. Like pi, the patterns of dots never repeat.

The exhibits are the latest instances of what is an ever-growing cultural correspondence between the LA and Chinese art worlds. Since the start of 2014, LA-based galleries have increased participation in Art Basel Hong Kong; Beijing's Ullens Center for Contemporary Art staged a show on LA artists; the Orange County Museum of Art mounted a show on young Chinese artists; and so on. It's a product of two progressive art sensibilities finding one another—and feeding one another. "I know there is something about LA that resonates with my own sensibility," says Zhenwei, who will visit LA for the first time this summer. "I believe the culture and atmosphere will bring a different kind of inspiration to my art." 1242 Palmetto St., LA, 213-256-0036