



**PRESS RELEASE:**

## The Mini World of Luo Zhenhong

Curator : Ms Victoria Lu Rongzhi

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**Opening night cocktail** : Fri 27 Jun 2008, 6pm - 8pm  
G /F, 90-92 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong

Exhibition Duration: 28 Jun - 5 Aug 2008

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Upon first walking into the gallery and coming across Luo Zhenhong's "Dwarf" and "Mushroom Clouds" series, one's eyes light up, warmed by the colours, the tiny cartoon-like figures with mouths widely grinning, the naked child-like smiling figure atop a mushroom cloud. Why? There is something instantly familiar about them. They draw upon the many cartoons and pop images we have grown up with, which like a panacea soothed us through childhood and adolescence with their lightness and playfulness. But Luo Zhenhong's work is not a superficial simulacra of the commercial world transposed into an art space. His sculptures are not intended to make us feel comfortable; instead they aim to engage the viewer.

Luo's exaggerated and caricatured figures are representations of various occupations, suggestive of the lure of commercialisation and most fundamentally, the struggle for individuality on the world's most populous continent. But they also capture and reflect China's exuberant love affair with all things commercial and consumerable. However, the context is not necessarily assigned or fixed, rather viewer interaction is necessary. Here the artist holds up a carnival mirror - exaggerating, distorting, sometimes allowing us brief moments of clarity - and encourages us to draw our own conclusions from the work.

Stylistically both the "Mushroom Clouds" series and "Dwarf" series have much in common, with their cartoonish, colourful and pop figures. But there are parallels that also run deeper than that. "Dwarf" series stands as a repudiation of social clichés and norms with its comical and grotesque caricatures. "Mushroom Clouds" conjures up images of Hiroshima-Nagasaki and the Cold War's nuclear games. These works warn of the dangers of the nuclear ambitions of great powers. It is an all too clear metaphor for war, violence and destruction and the folly of mankind, the Buddha-like figure floating atop of the clouds hinting at our complicity in these man made destructive forces and our naivety in believing that, like his miniature figure we can rise above the destruction, unaffected and unscathed by it.

In both the “Mushroom Clouds” series and “Dwarf” series we can see peeking through the artist's ideological tendencies. Luo Zhenhong’s figures may appear cute, and cartoonish, but the artist is merely attempting to make a bitter little pill more palatable for our modern, pop-culture and image-obsessed society, delivering us a difficult message in an unlikely colourful package. As a product of pop culture himself, Luo Zhenhong is very much in his element as he holds up to his viewer symbols from mass culture with which to decrypt and understand the sociological context of his work.

Ms Victoria Lu Rongzhi, a renowned Chinese art critic and curator of this exhibition, said, “Time, place and people have come together to make Luo Zhenhong a pioneer of animamix.”



Luo Zhenhong, ‘Dwarf’ series, painted aluminium, image : courtesy of the artist and Contemporary By Angela Li