



MEDIA ENFANT #3 | 200 X 200 CM | OIL ON CANVAS | 2006



ENFANT AVEC LAPIN | 150 X 200 CM | OIL ON CANVAS | 2006

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AUTO PORTRAIT AVEC SAC | 180 X 130 CM | OIL ON CANVAS | 2006

# TIANBING LI



AUTO PORTRAIT AVEC MON FRERE #2 | 200 X 160 CM | OIL ON CANVAS | 2006



DEUX ENFANTS AVEC JOUETS SUR NEIGE #2 | 171 X 177 CM | OIL ON CANVAS | 2006

In his most recent "My Other Childhood" series Tianbing Li is addressing China's one-child policy from a different angle. These large-scale portraits show the artist with his imaginary brother. Li used two photographs of himself taken at different ages and combined them on one canvas. The artist describes his own childhood as very bleak and lonely lacking playmates and toys, so by creating imaginary siblings on the canvas and adding colourful toys Li can reinvent the past and relive his – now improved – childhood.

Tianbing Li puts great emphasis on an emotional and artistic approach to his works despite their socio-critical content. He is therefore not constructing overly complex paintings but creates atmospheric pieces, which enable the viewer to access the works emotionally. Li has deliberately not confined himself to a single painting style as he feels that it is only through stylistic variations that he is able to explore the boundaries of the medium. This approach also reflects the artist's cultural background, rooted in the Eastern philosophy that all things are in a constant state of flux. The ongoing advancement of the "self" thus finds its reflection in Tianbing Li's ever-changing artistic expression.

Tianbing Li builds bridges between East and West by merging motifs and techniques from traditional Chinese painting with elements of western iconography. Exploring a wide variety of different painting techniques, the artist finds subtle ways to express his socio-critical views on contemporary Chinese society.

The "Beizitou – One Hundred Children" series refers to a centuries-old traditional motif in Chinese painting. Whereas the traditional representation of a large number of happily playing children stood for prosperity and happiness, Li uses this motif for a more critical discourse on the Chinese one-child policy as well as referring to today's consumer culture and the resulting changes in cultural values. Some of the children's faces feature brand icons of multinational companies while others are inscribed with text excerpts from newspapers or the internet. These markings visualize the omnipresent influences of the media, which the children are exposed to from an early age, so that brand names become associated with alleged guarantees for a good life. The seemingly weathered surfaces as well as the absence of colour represent the rough impact on the children's identity and their loss of innocence. The frequent use of small canvases for the individual portraits clearly distances Li's "Beizitou" series from the colourful and lively precursors in traditional painting, underlining the isolation these children find themselves in today.



AUTO PORTRAIT AVEC MON FRERE #1 | 200 X 160 CM | OIL ON CANVAS | 2006