

# SUI JIANGUO

12 September – 18 October 2014

Opening reception: Friday, 12 September, 6-8 pm

*Valet parking*



*Schwarzwald*, 2014  
bronze, 93 x 199 x 80 in. (236.2 x 505.5 x 203.2 cm)

**Venice, CA – L.A.** Louver is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Chinese artist Sui Jianguo that includes eleven sculptures, which span more than 15 years. This is Sui's first exhibition at L.A. Louver and his U.S. gallery debut.

Ranging in scale and subject matter, the works embody Sui's interest in both figurative and non-representational form, as well as varied approaches to making sculpture. Two figurative works challenge social and political ideologies. The earliest, *Bound Slave* (1998) borrows from Michaelangelo's *The Rebellious Slave* (1513). Sui clothes this celebrated form in a "Mao suit," the iconic garb of China's Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Zedong. Cast from bronze and painted white, Sui effectively conceals the expressive nude with the garment synonymous with Mao's repressive regime. In *The Right Hand* (2008), Sui portrays Mao's right arm. Derived from the portrait of Mao with his outstretched hand, Sui renders the disembodied arm lifeless, as if it is an archeological relic, and thereby depriving the gesture of its potency.

All other sculptures in the exhibition are dated 2014, and include the largest sculpture, *Schwarzwald*. Inspired by time Sui spent in Germany's Black Forest, the viewer is confronted by a monumental wall (measuring 93 x 199 x 80 in. [236.2 x 505.5 x 203.2 cm]) of seemingly viscous black drips that cascade and puddle onto the floor. Formed from plaster poured over an armature, Sui allowed the materials to take shape without his direct manipulation. Cast in bronze, the work is an extraordinary feat of construction.

Sui also used this freeform method in *The Blind #9*. This sculpture is cast in aluminum and originated from the artist dropping chunks of clay from a two-story building to make the piled form from which the metal is cast. The hand is completely removed from process in the bronze *The Blind #8*. Using only his bare feet, Sui kicked a mound of clay with successive blows, leaving behind imprints that seethe with tension and aggression. These two *Blind* works belong to Sui's most recent series in which he places a physical constraint or "handicap" on his approach. In doing so, he set aside his formal training as a sculptor to engage with the materials in an immediate and tactile manner, without preconceptions. Sui created a number of these works while blindfolded, and succeeds in ensuring a pure transference or record of each encounter with the material. After molding the clay, with vision impaired, Sui took each piece and enlarged it in bronze, leaving his impressions and fingerprints intact. He then applied a patina to the surface, adding further distinction to his mark making. As Sui's friend, renowned sculptor Richard Deacon observes, "[Sui] has been willing to upend all that he has learnt and to operate with new sets of principles, although carrying forward into changed circumstances his accumulated technical knowledge... The rich consequence is that expressiveness does not get in the way of expression."



*The Blind #12*, 2014  
bronze, 31 1/2 x 43 1/4 x 27 1/2 in. (80 x 110 x 70 cm)  
Edition of 3

Born in 1956 in Qingdao, China, Sui Jianguo came of age during Mao Zedong's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Shandong University, Jinan, China in 1984, and earned his Master of Fine Arts from the prestigious Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing in 1989, a time of severe political strife in China. Sui Jianguo has been the subject of solo exhibitions worldwide, including *Remembrance of Space*, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, 1994; *Deposition of Fault*, New Delhi Culture Center, New Delhi, India, 1995; *You Meet the Shadow of Hundred Years*, Victoria College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australia, 1997; *Sui Jianguo: The Sleep of Reason*, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, CA, 2005; *Revealing Traces*, Joyart, Beijing, 2008; *Motion/Tension: New Work by Sui Jianguo*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, 2009; *Sui Jianguo's Discus Thrower*, The British Museum, London, UK, and *Sui Jianguo: Imprisonment and Power*, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Singapore, 2012. Notable group exhibitions include *Reality, Present and Future: Chinese Contemporary Art*, Beijing International Art Museum, Beijing, China, 1996; *Transience: Chinese Art at the End of the Twentieth Century*, David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, 1999; *Between Earth and Heaven: New Classical Movements in the Art of Today*, Oostende Museum of Modern Art, Oostende, Belgium, 2001; *Busan Sculpture Project*, Busan Museum of Art, Busan, South Korea, 2004; *On the Edge: Contemporary Chinese Artists Encounter the West*, Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, CA, 2005; *The Progress of China: The Contemporary Art of Estella Collection Exhibition*, Louisiana Contemporary Art Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2007; *Art and Chinese Revolution*, Asia Society, New York, 2008; and *Future Returns: Contemporary Art from China*, Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, 2014.

A fully illustrated catalogue, with texts by British artist Richard Deacon and Chinese curator and art theorist Su Lei, has been published on the occasion of the exhibition.

**Concurrently on view at L.A. Louver, 12 September - 18 October**

SECOND FLOOR

**Frederick Hammersley.** *Organics and Cut-ups, 1963-1965*

SKYROOM

**Mark di Suvero.** *Sculpture*

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