

PRESS RELEASE

Li Songsong  
*Historical Materialism*  
curated by Gianfranco Maraniello

MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna  
May 22 – August 30, 2015

Public talk with the artist: May 21, 2015 h 5 p.m.  
Opening: May 21, 2015 h 6 p.m.

Li Songsong, considered one of the most important artists of the new Chinese art scene, is coming to **MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna** for his first Italian solo exhibition which opens to the public on 22 May.

Entitled *Historical Materialism*, it features 27 mostly large-scale works painted between 2004 and the present, installed in the stately spaces of the Sala delle Ciminiere.

The exhibition is organized by MAMbo and the **Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden** where it will hang from 31 October 2015 to 7 February 2016, curated by **Hendrik Bündge**.

For his pictorial compositions, Li Songsong starts from photographs and reproductions taken from sources accessible to everyone such as newspapers, magazines, archives, books and the web that immortalize both major events and minor episodes of contemporary history (prevalently Chinese) that have been largely erased from the modern reality of his country.

The artist focuses not so much on the historical event *per se*, but rather on the way it is chosen to be recounted, and how this in turn depends on the attitude of those who recount it, which evolves in the wake of continuous social change.

Li Songsong intervenes on the image using various painting techniques, conserving only the essential elements through **de-composition and recomposition** in square and rectangular fragments slathered with enormous quantities of paint, like a sort of ideal mosaic where figuration and abstraction find a skillful balance.

The artist works on each single component of the painting, finishing them one at a time, and then composes the complete image.

The **density of the pigment** and its multiple layering give the paintings an

almost sculptural quality, a physicality that makes it appear they have never finished drying.

The painting of Li Songsong is tied to **memory** and as such proceeds by fragments: taken individually, the individual 'cells' of the grid that makes up the painting seem nothing more than studies of form and color, but once assembled with the others they generate the complete image, much like memory, which is composed of many layered fragments of ideas. The artist is able to capture the sensation of bringing to mind events that have been re-elaborated with the passage of time, obfuscating them in the process in a blend of sensations, fragments of other memories and shadows of the original.

Although Li Songsong appropriates historical and current events that have marked the Chinese collective memory, whether from the Maoist era to more recent episodes like the Tiananmen Square protests, his paintings do not seek to transcend the **individual dimension**. The subjects identify people or moments that have been decisive in the personal development of a **generation in search of awareness** and understanding of a post-ideological and individualistic life, despite being heirs to a sometimes violent structuring of a uniquely Chinese mass culture.

The installation at MAMbo, in the spacious volumes of the Sala delle Ciminiere, allows the visitor an optimal view of the large-scale works, realized on both canvas and aluminum panels.

The arrangement of the works follows the basic themes of Chinese identity: **childhood education** – *Quingling's Children* (2005), *Flyer* (2005) – **historical passages**, with recognizable protagonists – *The Couple* (2008), *Lu Xun Was Dead* (2012), *Hug* (2010), *Watching a Play* (2004) – **amnesia** – *Forgetting* (2013), *Moon* (2010), *Brain* (2010) – **contemporary vision** – *Big Girls* (2013), *Flowers on the Sea* (2008) – **paradise lost** – *Shangri-La* (2012), *Huangshan* (2012), *Han Qing* (2007) – the **ideological roots** of the Revolution – *Lenin* (2010), *Marx* (2010), *Che* (2010), *The East is Red* (2008), *Cold Banquet* (2004), and lastly, *Historical Materialism* (2014), which gives the exhibition its title and concludes the itinerary.

The exhibition will be open to the public from **22 May to 30 August 2015**.

The artist will **meet the public** on Thursday **21 May 2015 at 5:00 pm**.

Afterwards, at **6:00 pm**, will be the **inauguration** of the show.

The meeting is organized in collaboration with the **Associazione Collegio di Cina**. Admission to both events is free.

The **Education Department of MAMbo** organizes guided visits and educational activities for all age groups throughout the duration of the exhibition. Info and booking: [mamboedu@comune.bologna.it](mailto:mamboedu@comune.bologna.it).

The exhibition is made possible by the kind collaboration of **Pace Gallery** (Beijing, London, New York).

### **Biographical notes**

Li Songsong was born in Beijing 1973.

In 1992 he graduated from the Subsidiary School of the Beijing Central Academy of Fine Arts, where he continued to study, taking a BFA in oil painting in 1996.

Since 2001 he has had numerous group and solo exhibitions in China and abroad.

He currently lives and works in Beijing.

### **Lista o works**

*Cold Banquet, 2004*

olio su tela / *oil on canvas*

collezione privata / *private collection* Peter Fäth

*Watching a Play, 2004*

olio su tela / *oil on canvas*

collezione privata / *private collection*

*Flyer, 2005*

olio su tela / *oil on canvas*

collezione / *collection* Daniela Palazzoli

*Flying, 2005*

olio su pannello di alluminio / *oil on aluminum panel*

courtesy l'artista e / *the artist and* Pace Gallery, Beijing

*Qingling's Children, 2005*

olio su tela / *oil on canvas*

courtesy l'artista e / *the artist and* Pace Gallery, Beijing

*A Ruan, 2007*

olio su carta / *oil on paper*

collezione privata / *private collection*

*Han Qing, 2007*  
olio su tela / *oil on canvas*  
collezione privata / *private collection*

*Flowers on the Sea, 2008*  
olio su tela / *oil on canvas*  
No Hero Enterprises BV

*Taoyuan Airport, 2008*  
olio su pannello di alluminio / *oil on aluminum panel*  
collezione privata / *private collection*, courtesy Pace Gallery, New York

*The Couple, 2008*  
inchiostro acrilico su carta / *acrylic ink on paper*  
collezione privata / *private collection*

*The East is Red, 2008*  
olio su tela / *oil on canvas*  
collezione privata / *private collection*

*Long Live the Revolution, 2009*  
olio su pannello di alluminio / *oil on aluminum panel*  
courtesy Ms. Liu Lan

*Brain, 2010*  
olio su vetro / *oil on glass*  
courtesy l'artista e / *the artist and* Pace Gallery, Beijing

*Che, 2010*  
olio su vetro / *oil on glass*  
courtesy l'artista e / *the artist and* Pace Gallery, Beijing

*Hug, 2010*  
olio su pannello di alluminio / *oil on aluminum panel*  
collezione privata / *private collection*, courtesy Pace Gallery, New York

*Hug, 2010*  
olio su carta / *oil on paper*  
collezione privata / *private collection*

*KongFu, 2010*  
olio su vetro / *oil on glass*

*courtesy l'artista e / the artist and Pace Gallery, Beijing*

*Lenin, 2010*  
olio su plexiglass / *oil on plexiglass*  
courtesy l'artista e / *the artist and Pace Gallery, Beijing*

*Marx, 2010*  
olio su vetro / *oil on glass*  
courtesy l'artista e / *the artist and Pace Gallery, Beijing*

*Moon, 2010*  
olio su vetro / *oil on glass*  
*courtesy l'artista e / the artist and Pace Gallery, Beijing*

*Huangshan, 2012*  
olio su pannello di alluminio / *oil on aluminum panel*  
courtesy Mr. Andrew Xue

*Lu Xun Was Dead, 2012*  
olio su tela / *oil on canvas*  
collezione privata / *private collection*

*Shangri-La, 2012*  
olio su tela / *oil on canvas*  
The Sander Collection

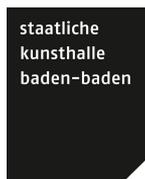
*Big Girls, 2013*  
olio su pannello di alluminio / *oil on aluminum panel*  
collezione privata / *private collection*

*Forgetting, 2013*  
olio su pannello di alluminio / *oil on aluminum panel*  
Cross Family Collection

*Unnamed Lake, 2013*  
olio su pannello di alluminio / *oil on aluminum panel*  
courtesy l'artista e / *the artist and Pace Gallery, Beijing*

*Historical Materialism, 2014*  
olio su tela / *oil on canvas*  
courtesy l'artista e / *the artist and Pace Gallery, Beijing*

The exhibition is organised by MAMbo and



Public talk with the artist in collaboration with

**COLLEGIO DI CINA**  
**中国学院协会**

Further information: [www.mambo-bologna.org](http://www.mambo-bologna.org)

**Ufficio stampa MAMbo**

Elisa Maria Cerra - tel. +39 051 6496653

[elisamaria.cerra@comune.bologna.it](mailto:elisamaria.cerra@comune.bologna.it)

bologna  
**MUSEI**



Istituzione Bologna Musei è sostenuta da



## TECHNICAL SHEET

Title:	<i>Li Songsong. Historical Materialism</i>
Exhibition venue:	MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna via Don Minzoni 14 – Bologna
Exhibition dates:	May 22 – August 30, 2015
Opening hours:	Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday h 12.00 pm – 6.00 pm Thursday, Saturday, Sunday h 12.00 pm – 8.00 pm Closed on Monday
Museum tickets:	Full 6 €; Reduced 4 €
Contacts:	tel. +39 051 6496611 – fax +39 051 6496600 <a href="mailto:info@mambo-bologna.org">info@mambo-bologna.org</a> <a href="http://www.mambo-bologna.org">www.mambo-bologna.org</a>
Guided visits Educational department:	tel. +39 051 6496628 / 611 <a href="mailto:mamboedu@comune.bologna.it">mamboedu@comune.bologna.it</a>
Press:	MAMbo Press Office Elisa Maria Cerra tel. +39 051 6496653 <a href="mailto:elisamaria.cerra@comune.bologna.it">elisamaria.cerra@comune.bologna.it</a>
Exhibition organised with:	Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden–Baden
MAMbo is a Museum of	Comune di Bologna
MAMbo is supported by	Regione Emilia–Romagna Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio in Bologna Fondazione del Monte di Bologna e Ravenna
<i>Focus on Contemporary Italian Art</i> in partnership with	UniCredit