

DOUBLE HAPPINESS:

The Chinese Self portraits of Farrell and Parkin

30th July - 22nd August 2009

Boutwell Draper Gallery
Sydney

Farrell and Parkin's Chinese Self Portraits do not reflect their desire to be Chinese or to even capture Chinese culture from a westerners point of view, they show the effect of Chinese culture seeping into their lives from first hand experience.

This effect to represent themselves within the Chinese context was not immediate and didn't manifest itself during their four month Artist in Residency at the Beijing Art Academy in 2000 but later during a second residency at the Red Gate Gallery International Studio Program in 2006. The first of these images were made during this period using materials (paper cuts and kites) that they had first seen in 2000.

The ancient and exquisite symbolism inherent in North Asian art struck a deep chord as they witnessed and absorbed the culture first hand. Farrell and Parkin's collaborative journey making art together (Double Happiness) had at its very core their research of Western symbolism from the Renaissance, creating modern contexts for ancient beliefs. Their love of symbolism as story telling, which is so much a part of their experiences in China, brought about their Chinese Self Portraits.

China is a dragon that is still misunderstood in the West. Farrell and Parkin's self portraits are their own attempt to unravel that mystery... if only for themselves.