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Springing into abstract art with an extra challenge

Pan Zheng

Japanese artist Aki Lumi is bringing his latest exhibition to Shanghai's Vanguard Gallery, a spring treat for fans of abstract art.

The show, starting on Saturday, showcases Lumi's three paper-and-photography collections — "The Garden," "Mechanic" and "Trace."

Born in Tokyo, Lumi now lives in Paris and, with his art partner, Yuki Onodera, is a member of the art ensemble Les KiKi. His works have a core message — that's an independent system, or "regulation" which differs from the existing material system and is created by himself.

Produced with compasses and rulers, Lumi's artworks feature complicated yet regular lines, integrated tightly with each other. In his photographic collections, "photo" is no longer the result of photography but an ultra extensity that Lumi can create on a computer.

"I'm interested in those artificial matters created by human beings, especially tools. You know, tools began human history, and help human beings perceive our universe," says the artist.

When asked why his art often concerns mechanics and systems, Lumi answers: "We use tools to measure the Earth, distances between stars and times — that's our criterion for understanding the world."

Lumi's works break the conventional way of observing and thinking and recompose the two-



dimensional world everyone sees. There are two or more parallel worlds co-existing in the same dimension. They're harmonious but harsh, natural but illusory, chaotic but solid.

When this static illustration on paper is decoded by your brain, it will be interfered by the accepted knowledge of the viewer. Are they organic or inorganic? Regular or irregular? It is the stereotypical vision of the subconscious brain that Lumi's art pieces challenge.

"There are fusions in my work. It's very important for me that there's not just one way, but many roads and rivers mixed," Lumi says.

He has displayed his art philosophy in Europe, Japan and the United States, and he's not a newcomer to China, either.

"I've visited China, and this is the eighth time," he says.

Lumi says there are always different reactions when he exhibits his works in different countries. European contemporary art has developed very fully. "China is a new field for contemporary art that is dynamic and energetic and has all the possibilities."

When talking about Shanghai, Lumi compares it to Paris, where he lives now.

"I moved to Paris in 1993 and find it a cosmopolitan city which suits many foreigners. I think Shanghai is the same. I can feel the mixed cultures and characters in this city. It's very interesting," he says.

Date: April 11-May 5, 10am-6pm

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