

Joshua Liner Gallery

548 W. 28th Street, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10001

Pema Rinzin

Compassion Transformed

January 27–February 26, 2011

Opening reception: Thursday, January 27, 6–9 PM

New York, NY December 22, 2010 -- Joshua Liner Gallery is pleased to present *Compassion Transformed*, an exhibition of new paintings by the New York-based Tibetan artist Pema Rinzin. Making his solo debut in New York, this is Rinzin's first one-man exhibition at Joshua Liner Gallery.

A master in the art of Thangka painting, Pema Rinzin has adapted the techniques and mystical motifs of this centuries-old Buddhist tradition to create spellbinding abstract works of contemporary art. Originally used in scrolls that depict the life of the Buddha, other deities, and religious figures, traditional Thangka featured the use of ground mineral pigments and gold applied to paper or silk cloth, as well as works in embroidery. Thangkas were objects of meditation, stimulation and religious education. The imagery is characterized by great intricacy in decorative pattern and brilliant color, which serve to advance the spiritual objectives of enlightenment and transcendence, while also conveying the artistic vision of individual master painters through unique expressions of style and composition.

In his stunning abstractions, Rinzin demonstrates how the individual artist can place his own stamp on a traditional form—he both transforms and transcends classical Thangka, while preserving its ancient artmaking techniques. His *Peace and Energy* series includes four large works on canvas that present a compelling image for contemplation: in each, a dynamic embolus of layered “handkerchief” forms hums at the center of each picture against a traditional monochromatic background of bright orange, purple, white, or yellow. The fluttering, interlocking forms are thoroughly contemporary, but each carries a unique pattern derived from the ancient Buddhist traditions, and the whole is shot through with pulsing striped flames of blue, white, black, and gold.

In Rinzin's *Water* series of four large works, these flames become an intricate network of liquid-like wave forms. This design is oriented vertically to carry upward an interpenetrating pattern of elaborate decoration, itself suggesting both sea foam and the blossoming of cherry trees. Rinzin's *Lost Portraits*, however, take an entirely different tack. This series of three large works foregrounds the contemporary in hard-edged abstractions of classic Buddhist figures, each rendered in hot colors and spattered with sumi ink. Up close, the shattered facets comprising the figures reveal delicate patterns from both traditional Thangka and contemporary design. *Compassion Transformed* will also feature a variety of smaller works on paper.

As a young painter growing up in Dharamsala, India, Rinzin studied with Kalsang Oshoe, Khepa Gonpo, Rigdzin Paljor, and other master artists, but his work is equally inspired by Western art history, including such influences as Gustav Klimt, Wassily Kandinsky, and William Blake. During his residency at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, Rinzin gained notice with his inclusion in the Rubin's 2010 group exhibition *Tradition Transformed*, the city's first museum exhibition of contemporary Tibetan artists.

“After moving to New York, I was immediately exposed to street- and former graffiti artists,” says Rinzin. “They inspired me in their works with everyday life and raw emotion. Now, my art is really about my own life journey, which I strongly express in my compositions and abstract forms.”

Born in 1966 in Tibet and raised in India, Pema Rinzin received a degree in Tibetan Traditional Thangka Painting and Fine Art from Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) Painting School in Dharamsala, India (where he also taught) and was twice honored “Best Tibetan Thangka Painter” (1979 and 1981); he currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Solo exhibitions of his work include: *Tibetan Fine Art Exhibition*, Villa Dessauer, Bamberg, Germany (2005); *Photo and Color Exhibition*, Tibetan Art and Color Studio, Wurzburg, Germany (2001); *Tibetan Fine Art Exhibition*, Hobbit Theatre, Wurzburg, Germany (1999); and *First Tibetan Fine Art Exhibition*, Alexander-Schroeder-Haus, Wurzburg, Germany (1996). Selected group exhibitions include: *Tradition Transformed*, Rubin Museum of Art, New York and *The Barnstormers*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York (2010); and *Big! Himalayan Art*, Crow Collection of Asian Art, Dallas, TX (2008) and Rubin Museum of Art, New York (2007). His *Sixteen Giant Paintings* are on permanent display at the Shoko-ji Cultural Research Institute, Nagano, Japan. From 2005 to 2008, Rinzin was artist-in-residence at the Rubin Museum of Art, and in 2007 he founded the New York Tibetan Art Studio, the only studio in the Western Hemisphere dedicated to the teaching and preservation of Tibetan art in both traditional and contemporary forms.



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1. *Peace and Energy (Purple)* Ground mineral pigments and gold on canvas 41 x 61 in. 2009
2. *Water* Ground mineral pigments and gold on canvas 53 x 44 in. 2009
3. *Lost Portrait #1* Ground mineral pigments and gold on wood 48 x 36 in. 2010