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Headline: The Sichuan connection

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Catch the work of two Chinese artists, both with connections to Sichuan but have very different styles of expressing their take on pop art

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CHINESE artists Yang Mian and Feng Zhengjie have much in common. Both have chosen to work in contemporary art. Feng spent his childhood in Sichuan and Yang lives and works there.

Plus, pop art and its effects on society infuse their work.

But, stylistically, their work couldn't be more different. While Yang's work is hyper real, Feng's is haunting and surreal.

Primary Colours, an exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum, brings together 25 art works by Feng. The term is a paradox because the first thing that comes to mind when looking at his art is neutral tones.

The artist admits as much.

In an e-mail interview, he says: "Ben Se (Primary Colours) means something simple and natural but when you look at the colours red, blue and yellow, they are vibrant and dramatic. In the same way, my works reflect conflicting ideas; the perfect features of the women I paint and their mystical inner feelings and emotions."

Perhaps those inner feelings are explored through the unsettling, vacant eyes of the women subjects. He says he has been fascinated by Chinese pop culture



WHO'S BAAAD?: Yang's perfectly chiselled sculptures of Michael Jackson (right) and Madonna are not to be taken at face value.



PHOTOS: FENG ZHENGJIE, YANG MIAN/LINDA GALLERY

'My works reflect conflicting ideas; the perfect features of the women and their mystical inner feelings'

Feng (on the left is one of his paintings)

and draws on motifs from popular culture and folk art in his work.

Beyond women, he also explores the demands made on people by an increasingly consumeristic society.

Fellow artist Yang explores this too, focusing attention on beauty: how it should be represented and the price of dotting on celebrities.

In an exhibition of 10 paintings and four sculptures at the Linda Gallery called *Those Were Classics*, he explores the concept of beauty from a male perspective, with a view to drawing attention to the concept of inner beauty.

He connects the past with the present, and the East with the West through sculptures of Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe.

But perfectly chiselled sculptures of Michael Jackson and Madonna are not something Yang would like people to take at face value.

Rather, he wants people to question whether these past and present celebrities should be the benchmark for beauty.

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> *Those Were Classics* is on at the Linda Gallery, Block 15 Dempsey Road, 01-03, till Feb 17, 11am to 7pm daily. Admission is free.

> *Primary Colours*: Feng Zhengjie is on at the Singapore Art Museum from Jan 29 to April 20, 10am to 7pm daily. Free admission after 6pm on Fridays and from noon to 2pm on weekdays. At other times, entry fee for adults is \$8 while students and senior citizens pay \$4.