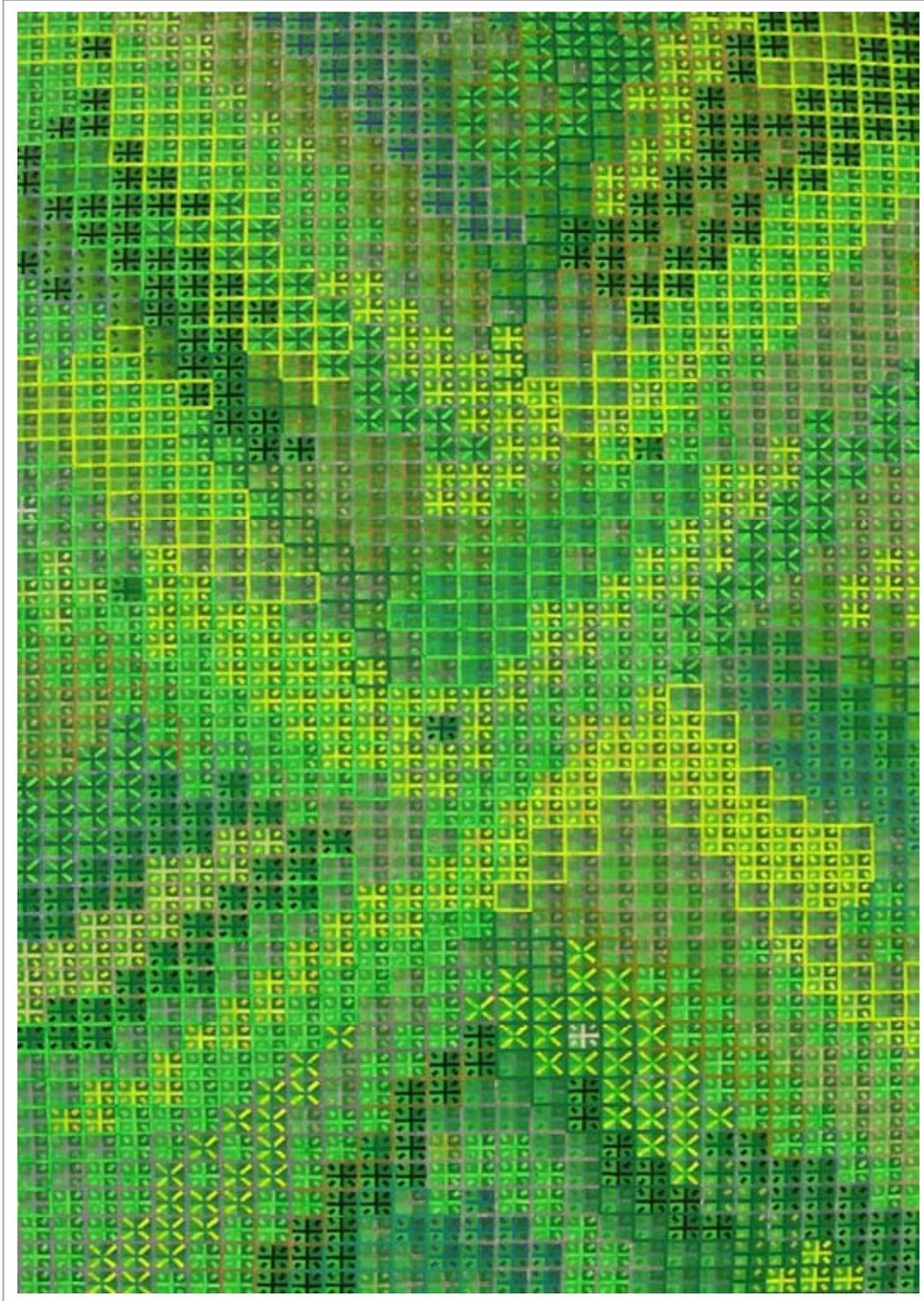
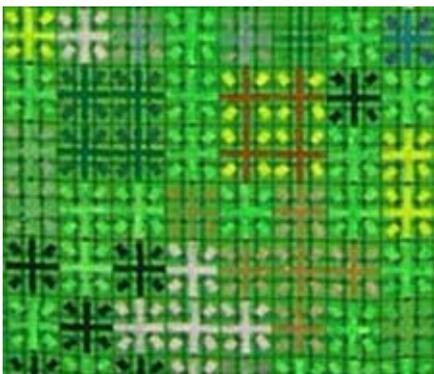


Ding Yi

丁乙



Appearance of Crosses 2005-5, 2005
Oil/Acrylic on Canvas
200x280 cm



Detail of Appearance of Crosses 2005-8, 2005
Oil/Acrylic on Canvas
200x140 cm

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Appearance of Crosses, 2004
Painting on Tartan
135x200 cm

Ding Yi's recognizable painterly signature takes the form of the cross that is repeatedly and carefully constructed across the surface. This minimalist visual rhetoric seems to relativize all other rhetoric and subject matter. Here, painting is not about illusion and the representation of objects. Instead, Ding Yi explores an abstract aesthetic through a systematic repetition and the direct visual pattern of the cross. Created by the layered intersection of vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines across the surface, the paintings encourage the process of perception. Viewed from a distance, everything gradually converges. But viewed up-close, the subtlety of lines and color are vibrantly present. The paintings simultaneously refer to themselves, as paintings per se, and the reality around them that has only been distilled into grids and check pattern. Rather than creating a reality to come, Ding Yi proceeds from the reality already built. He has conceptually integrated the conditions of the work's production and reception within the work itself. The abstract realism of the paintings have, especially, become an analysis of their conditions of production: The repeated motif of the cross has been re-made again and again, indefinitely and continuously for 18 years now. In his visual structures, he seems to be aiming for a meticulous systematization of simplicity opposed to the bombastic rhetoric of the literati tradition. Thus his crosses on the surface have been described as the embodiment of a deliberate "diffusion of pictorial illiteracy".

The formal method of abstraction and the variations within the repetitive patterns makes his work an intriguing case for the relevance of abstract painting in contemporary art. The consistent formal element of the cross in the work embodies a complex interplay of precision and dynamics. Like in Chinese calligraphy, Ding Yi's marks connote a certain correlation between the order of the universe and that of the human. The awakening of the individual in relation to the collective whole, present in Zen practices such as calligraphy, mirrors the role Ding Yi holds in his own art making.

Ding Yi is today regarded as the forerunner of the Chinese abstract artists that has been internationally acclaimed. He has exhibited widely at institutions such as the Venice Biennale (1993), the Yokohama Triennial (2001), and the Guangzhou Biennale (2002).

Ding Yi was born in 1962 in Shanghai where he works and lives today. He graduated from the Shanghai Arts and Crafts Institute in 1983 and from the Shanghai University, Fine Arts Department in 1990.