





*David Diao, I was caned by the Headmaster 1, 2016, acrylic and silkscreen on canvas, 78 x 60 inches.*

COURTESY POSTMASTERS GALLERY, NEW YORK

But something is missing in these near-monochromes. Perhaps Diao is suggesting that, in America, not all art histories—and, by extension, not all personal histories—are equal. Whatever visual language crossed the Pacific with Diao got lost in the shuffle of his becoming an American.

The saddest part of “HongKong Boyhood” is that Diao seems unable to reclaim his history. For *Arrive/Depart*, which is split into two monochromes, à la Barnett Newman’s “zip” paintings, Diao constructs two timelines. Various events—the explosion of the first H-bomb, in 1952; the death of Josef Stalin, in 1953—are paralleled with Diao’s time in Hong Kong, which curiously has no entries. Here, Diao has gone in search of lost time and failed to find it.