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With thanks to publishers **Harper Collins** and booksellers **Gleebooks** for their support of this event.

Press Release

The Asia-Australia Arts Centre will hold a one-day exhibition of seven Chinese ink paintings by 2000 Nobel Laureate Gao Xingjian—including the 300 cm painting *Goût de l'encre*—to celebrate the new HarperCollins publication of his book *The Case for Literature*. Gao Xingjian's paintings grace the covers of the HarperCollins editions of *Soul Mountain* (2000), *One Man's Bible* (2002), *Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather* (2004), and *The Case for Literature* (2006).

Mabel Lee of the University of Sydney who has made Gao Xingjian's works available in the English language will present a talk on the topic: "Art and Literature in the Life of Gao Xingjian".

This is the first exhibition of Gao Xingjian's paintings in Australia, and includes four original works, three limited-edition prints, and a number of posters for his plays.

Gao Xingjian's first solo exhibitions were held in 1985, in Beijing, Berlin and Vienna. He has held more than forty solo exhibitions in France, Sweden, Germany, Poland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, USA, Spain and Belgium. In 2005 a major retrospective exhibition of sixty works was held at the Singapore Art Museum, and in 2007 he will hold a solo exhibition at Notre Dame University in Chicago.

His paintings have been included in major international exhibitions, and have been collected by private collectors from all parts of the world.

His public collections include those held at:

Morat Institut für Kunst mit Kurinstwischerischaft, Frieberg, Germany;

Leibniz Gesellschaft für Kulturellen Austausch, Berlin, Germany;

Ostasiatiska Museet, Stockholm, Sweden;

Krapperrus Konsthall, Malmo, Sweden;

Maison de la Culture de Bourges, France;

Arothèque de Nantes, France;

Taipei Fine Arts Museum;

Théâtre Molière, Paris, France;

National History Museum

Nobel Foundation, Sweden

La Ville de Marseille, France

Gao Xingjian and *The Case for Literature* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2006)

Born 1940 in Ganzhou, Jiangxi Province, China, Gao Xingjian graduated with a major in French literature in 1962. He enjoyed celebrity status in China when his plays *Alarm Signal* (1982) and *Bus Stop* (1983) were staged in Beijing. This was soon after the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) when writers were singled out for harassment and criticism. In 1983 *Bus Stop* was banned, and he was barred from publishing until the Eradicate Spiritual Pollution petered out at the end of the year. But he continued to be harassed for his writings, and in 1987 he relocated to Paris, where he was able to fully explore his creative potential as a writer and artist. He has stamped his credentials internationally as playwright, novelist, artist and public intellectual.

The essays in Gao Xingjian's *The Case for Literature* provide insights into the enormous obstacles he has had to overcome as a writer who expresses himself mainly in the Chinese language. His wide knowledge of Chinese and Western literature, his powerful intellect, and his uncompromising attitude towards the pressures of political or religious ideologies, the collective or market forces informs these essays, and argue for literature that is "without isms", that is "cold literature" or literature that is driven only by literary concerns and is uncontaminated by the need to promote political or any other causes. His observations and insights derive from one whose instinct to self-expression through writing was severely repressed for over twenty years of his adult life. These essays provide a key to understanding his great novels *Soul Mountain* and *One Man's Bible* as autobiographical works that he was driven to write.

Paintings exhibited

Limited-edition prints:

1. *Goût de l'encre*, 300 x 34 cm (1996).
2. Prelude (no title) to *Goût de l'encre*, 33x 24 (1996).
3. *Parfait*, 25 x 27 cm (1999).
4. *Luminosité*, 32 x 28.5 (1998).

Original works:

1. (Untitled) 45.5 x 40.5 cm (2000): approximations of this image of a hut appears in paintings such as *House in a Dream*, 72.5 x 73.5 cm (1993); and in *Realm of Dream*, 91 x 97 cm (1994).
2. (Untitled and undated) 22 x 16 cm: this thin solitary figure appears in the painting *Soul Mountain*, 64.2 x 46 (2000).
3. (Untitled and undated) 24.5 x 25 cm: this thin solitary monk-like figure appears in the painting *Contemplation*, 60.5 x 45 (1994).