Ink

The Art of China

MICHAEL GOEDHUIS

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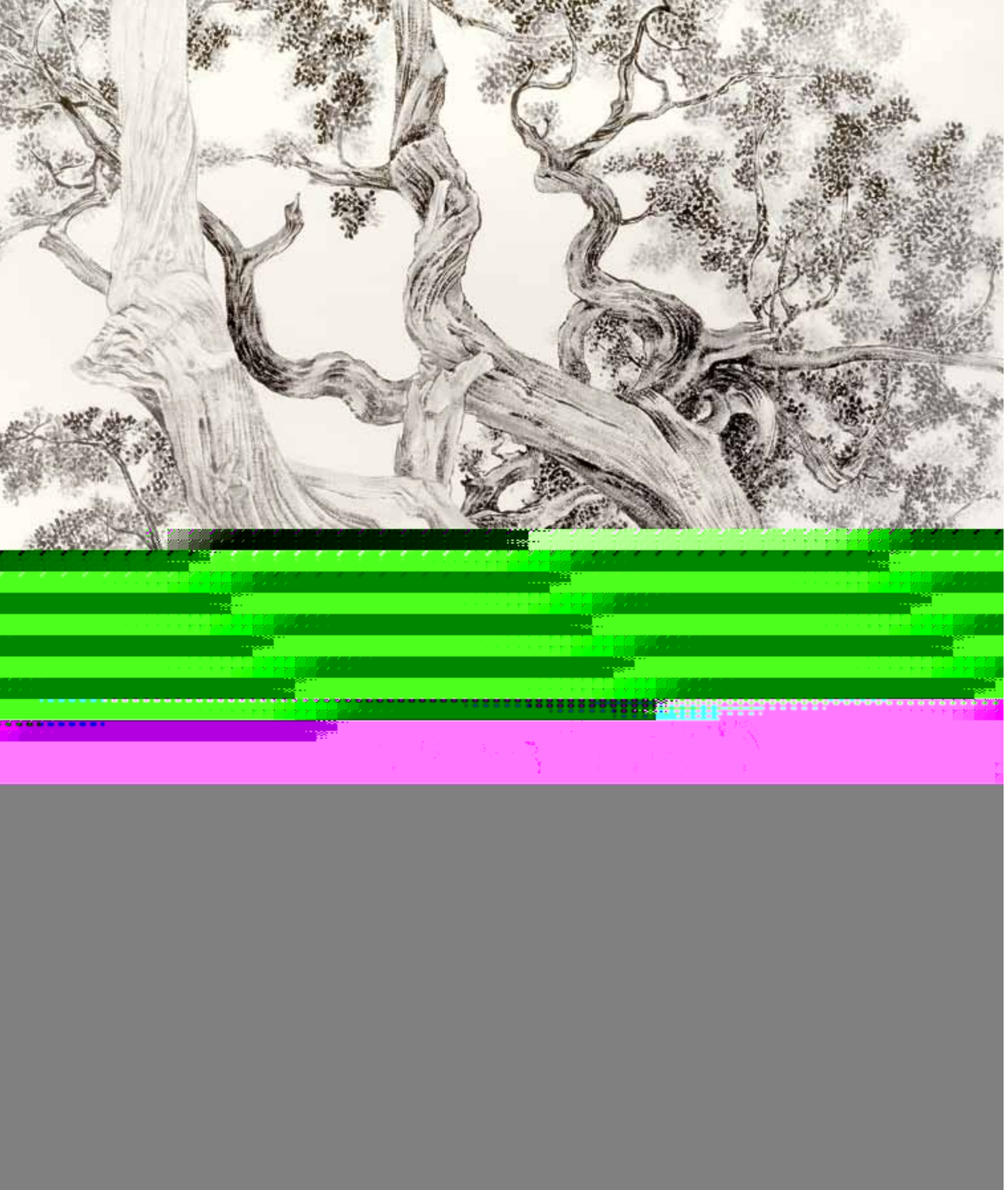

Liu Dan
Old Cypress from the Forbidden City (detail), (p.)

Foreword

“• ˆ , with its links to calligraphy, is one of the foundation stones of Chinese civilisation. Its contemporary manifestations, diverse as they are, therefore draw freely from the classical canon. The constituency for appreciation of the New Ink Art, as it has now become, is a fresh generation of connoisseurs which has begun to develop a broad interest in China”s history in order to better understand the vitality of its contemporary culture.

Contemporary Chinese artists working predominantly in, or with, ink and associated media, are much aware of the elitist connotations of this aesthetic. The early cognoscenti and practitioners were the literati, the gentlemen-scholars of the past ŒŽŽ years, whose gatherings in elegant pavilions or studios were dedicated to the art of living – relishing the fragrance of nature, the conversational intercourse between intellects of similar power and tastes, the connoisseurship of wine and tea, the study of antiquities and painting and the satisfying mutual recognition of their own superiority. These •salons” were indeed not far removed in purpose from the drawing-rooms of ƒ‘th century France where the douceur de vivre reached its peak under the civilised direction of the great hostesses of the era.

This heritage of a certain lofty detachment from material concerns and, in particular, the judgment of the outside world, has released the contemporary ink artist from the pressure to •perform” for the new art-world consumer. Quite to the contrary, he feels free to try to confront his central challenge – how to

render this traditional medium relevant and meaningful to the modern world – without too great a concern for the demands of the market.

So this —rst comprehensive study of the New Ink Art in an institution of international stature is exceptionally timely. It coincides not only with the growing awareness of this vital contribution to contemporary Chinese culture in general but in particular to the current revival of interest in artistic fun-da mentals after the excesses of the last years. A new generation of art lovers has become aware of the paradox that the ink artists, who return to the wellspring of Chinese culture as a source of inspiration and creative refreshment are actu ally, in Britta Erickson"s words: •the most idealistic and intellectually daring of China"s artists".

And the consistent rhythm of experimentation that is in evidence in the wide range of works in this exhibition, from the cultural sensitivity of Liu Dan to the ground-breaking video works of Qiu Anxiong, describes a diverse output that provides a cultivated audience with the opportunity to enjoy not only the subtle connections with the literati past but also the artists" engagement with the realities of contemporary life.

It is then the theme of this exhibition to de—ne just how innovative and audacious the best of these exponents are. Just as Cézanne and Picasso assimi lated the work of Raphael, Poussin, Velazquez and other old masters to develop their own revolutionary language, so the ink artists are grappling with the same challenge – how to express the transformation of their society into works that are meaningful precisely because they take account of the past in order to make sense of the present.

We are deeply grateful to the many lenders who have so generously parted with their works for so long, to the distinguished scholars who have coпtrib uted so generously to the value of the catalogue accompanying the exhibition, and —nally to the Saatchi Gallery and to its director Nigel Hurst for opening its doors to us and to Ink: The Art of China.

Michael Goedhuis

Li Jin
Spring in the Garden (detail)
(p.)

Chen KeZhan
Red – Autumn
(detail) (p.)

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Red Bamboo (and Other Ruminations)

ˆ ˆ „ I visited the National Palace Museum in Taipei – which houses many of the greatest extant masterpieces of the Chinese ink painting tradition – it was in the company of an artist just beginning to make his reputation as an experimental ink painter. •Before you look at anything else," he said, •You"ve got to see this." He led me to an ink painting by the Song-dynasty scholar-artist Su Shi (ƒŽŠ€-ƒƒŽƒ), featuring a bamboo tree deftly brushed in tones of vermilion red, rather than in the traditional black. With great relish my friend proceeded to relate an anecdote concerning a conversation that allegedly took place between Su Shi and one of his critics. •Why did you paint the bamboo in red instead of black ink! Have you ever seen such a thing as a red bamboo in nature?" the critic asked indignantly. •Well", Su retorted, •have you ever seen such a thing as an ink bamboo?"

From my perspective at the edge of the ‰ƒst century, Su Shi"s alleged riposte struck a-phenomenological chord that reverberated across time and place, buzzing certain keys in the discourse of contemporary art. I thought most particularly of the conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth"s seminal ƒ'Œ† work One and Three Chairs which presents di˜erent existential possibilities for the concept of a chair: a real chair, a life-sized photograph of the same chair, and the enlarged text of the dictionary de—nition of a chair. At least to my relatively innocent mind, Kosuth seemed to be asking a question whose implications were similar to that of Su Shi"s: Is •chair" as a fundamental concept altered by the di˜erent ways in which it can be depicted (whether constructed, photographed or reduced to text)? And as for Su Shi, I would frame it like this: while his critic was concerned with bamboo, Su Shi was concerned with the idea of bamboo.

In the same spirit, the present exhibition is concerned less with the phenomenon of •ink" in the Chinese artistic tradition as with the •idea of ink" in that tradition. And the •idea of ink" here is recognized as an aesthetic arena in which contemporary artists can freely negotiate with the tradition, in whatever way that is meaningful or necessary to them, and on whatever level – whether material, structural, historical, spiritual or cultural. The range of artists featured in the show describes the way this discourse has expanded in the last twenty years, attracting an increasing number of artists with diverse backgrounds and with di˜ering – even diametrically opposed – concerns.

The •end of art" and •end of painting" arguments that took hold in the West in the ƒ"Žs with critics like Arthur Danto and Douglas Crimp had a strong resonance in contemporary China, where the end of literati art and traditional ink painting had already been advocated more than —fty years earlier by reformists and continued to be advocated by revolutionaries,

Wilson Shieh
The Queen
(p.)

identi ed with traditional painting styles, I should make some landscape paintings. I went to the Internet to collect some information about late Ming painting, whose intentionally distorted or manner ist style has been much admired. Having selected some paintings from a web page, I printed them together on paper and started looking for similarities between the work and my own experiences. Details in the images were often indistinct due to low resolution. Since traditional brushes and xuan paper were not available in this out of the way area of Scotland (I couldn't see any [texture-stroke] brush work in the paintings anyway), I just used a drafting pen, which I was accustomed to and had on hand. With dense pen strokes on coarse handmade Indian paper, I outlined the landscape to re ect whatever impressions came to mind, from hot springs, tea tast ing, mountain climbing, ower apprecia tion, chess or the sound of breaking waves. Figures in the paintings were composed of cynics and monsters and were meant to allude to the societal chaos in Taiwan at the time. I was constructing narratives relating to ancient scholars being banished to the hinterlands, often combining several classical works to outline a hybridized nar rative of my own ideal of living in seclusion amongst nature.

At the end of the day, metaphorically and ontologically, it all begins with the meditation on a red bamboo.

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The Poetic Imagination in Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting

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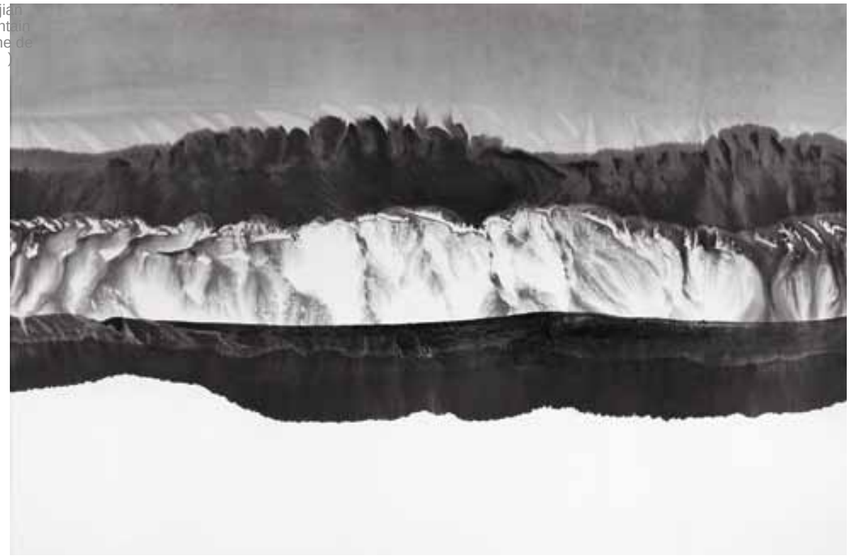
however ancient and prestigious its historical and theoretical , is perfectly suited to address or re™ect the twenty-—rst century"s dilemmas and contradictions. While a quality of timelessness unveils itself through ink painting so too does timeliness reveal itself through the hands of this form"s contemporary masters.

What goes around comes around; the Book of Change, the Yijing, informs the structure of all Chinese ink painting, old and new, as a cosmological key. All image-making is form-making. It is ontological in essence. All form-making is constitutive of description and as description at both general and speci—c levels of potentiality and heterogeneity. The play of texture and linearity, the core of ink painting, is indicative of the phenomenon of energy, of arterial pulsation, of life itself. Through such play the theme of internal contrast and reciprocal becoming is made manifest in all ink painting. Such is the world of ink-painting, old and new.

The Michael Goedhuis exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery brings to the public a selection of works created by virtuosi of the hand. The process and technique of ink painting is arguably one of the most dicecult of the visual arts to master; intractable in terms of the conditions it imposes on the artist; no erasures or changes are possible. Grace, suppleness, and vitality must exist in order for the viewer to connect with the work. No matter what the imagery, ink painting contains a dynamic that few other types of artworks can sustain: that of becoming and of simultaneity. This sensation of passing through engenders feelings of transience, tenuousness and loss. And yet if there is a cast of melancholy to ink painting, it is more than balanced by ink painting"s undeniable capacity to elicit wonderment. While an essential principle of the complementariness of opposites (light/dark, open/closed, empty/full, East/West) pervades many of the works in as in Liu Dan"s Tinkling of Jade-Pendants, Liu Kuo-sung"s Universe is My Heart, Lo Ch"ing"s Ten Thousand Peaks of Red Leaves, Pan Hsin-hua"s One Day other works privilege juxtaposed rather than integrated clusters of changing elements that resist reduction to a common denominator. Lu Hao"s Landscape Series No. 1, Chun-yi Lee"s Mao Triptych, Xu Lei"s Tree of Blue Underglaze, Wilson Shieh"s Ladyland Series and Qiu Jie"s Man in the Cotton Field, for example, are works that have a deconstructive element provoking the viewer to become aware of the logic of binary oppositions.

Sensations of corporealisation and decorporealisation are part of the experience of viewing an art form that doesn"t tolerate mistakes or reit

Gao Xingjian
Dream Mountain
(La montagne de rêve), (p.)



erations. There is often a sensation of gossamer translucency, an otherworldliness that pervades such work as in Wenda Gu"s Ink Valley and White Water, Jia Youfu"s Work, Liu Kuo-sung"s The Universe is My Heart Now, and Yang Jiechang"s Tomorrow Cloudy Sky series. Rapture su˜uses Zhang Yu"s Divine Light Series and Zhu Daopin"s Delicate Fragrance, while change and continuity wrestle with each other in Wucius Wong"s Sky Land Expression, Qui Deshu"s -Panel Mountainscapes and in Yang Jiechang"s Tomorrow Cloudy Sky where a suggestion of apocalyptic doom pervades. Feelings of dreamy sensuousness are evoked by Yang Yanping" s Autumn Song and Gao Xingjian"s La montagne de rêve in contrast to the tension between the natural environment and the man-made, seen in Qui Anxiong"s Flying Soul, Nostalgia, and New Book of Mountains and Seas. Finally, several works in recall classical ink painting"s relation to calligraphy and thus reassert-calligraphy"s corporeal and physiological dimension in updated and often quirkily irreverent ways as in the paintings of Xu Bing, Qin Feng, Qiu Zhijie, Wang Dongling, and Wei Ligang.

Contemporary Chinese ink painting takes many forms. In , panoramic variations co-exist within the genre in terms of approach, subject and content, yet each di˜erence comes with its own visual and psychic attributes, its own emotional ac̈nities and registers.

Ink painting brings us into contact with an immersive intimacy in which humanistic themes of man"s relation to himself, to nature and to the other are played out against the great backdrop of constancy and change. What has moved me more than anything in the viewing and the assessing of such diverse image making is , large and small, is a quality of deep interiority that pervades all the work. John Berger in his essay •The Place of Painting" (in The Sense of Sight) refers to the condition of revelation in measured and thoughtful ways. He writes: •. . At the moment of revelation when appearance and meaning become identical, the space of physics and the seer"s inner space coincide: momentarily and exceptionally she or he achieves an equality with the visible. This is all sense of exclusion; to be at the centre."

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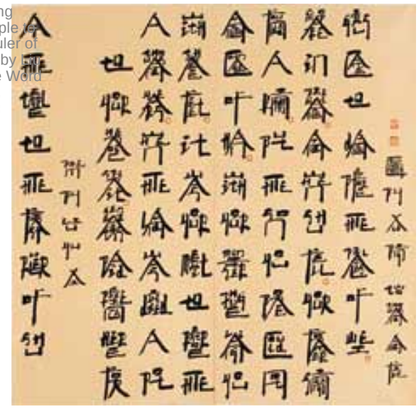
The Archaeological Inspiration for Contemporary Chinese Art

„ ˆ ž • "• •• Ÿ in con - temporary Chinese art. On the one hand, many artists have taken an avant-garde stand that di˜ers profoundly from the classical tradition in Chinese art history. On the other hand, a number of artists, including the most radical ones, claim that they are the true representatives of China"s grand tradition, and that their •post-modern" art is the only way that upholds and continues that tradition. In the deconstruction and re-construction of the theocratic discourse, as well as in practical terms, archaeology plays a signi—cant role. My article sets out to explore the interesting relationship between contemporary art and archaeology.

Looking —rst at the phenomenon known as •Calligraphy-ism" (*fufazhuyi*), we see that many Chinese artists have tried to use Chinese writing, in particular ancient manuscripts, in their works. The classical tradition of calligraphy is based on writing with a brush and ink on paper, and these are thought of as soft materials. But, before the invention and widespread use of paper in the *ƒ*st century , most inscriptions were written on a wide variety of materials, such as animal bone, metal, stone, silk and bamboo. In fact, most of the early calligraphic works that have survived are on materials other than paper. Although the main writing implement at that time was the soft hair brush, many other tools were also used, such as sharp-pointed knives. The phenomenal archaeological discoveries of the past century or so, have revealed a wealth of ancient inscriptions on metal, wood, bamboo, stone and silk. These exciting new sources have enhanced the contemporary calligrapher"s familiarity and ease with di˜erent styles of calligraphy. The concept of •tradition" has inevitably become more ™uid, as calligraphers are able to draw on much wider sources to develop their own technique and style. This parallels the development of the •Stele School" of calligraphy (*beixue pai*) in the Qing dynasty which was inspired by the study of ancient inscriptions on bronze and stone (*jinshixue*). Some time later, at the end of the *ƒ*'th century, the discovery of oracle bone inscriptions (carved on turtle plastra and ox scapulae) revealed for the —rst time the earliest writing of the Shang dynasty. The discovery of bamboo slips and silk manuscripts with inscriptions from the Warring States and Qin-Han periods have also increased the reservoir of ancient calligraphic styles. It is clear that many contemporary pieces of calligraphy have these ancient sources as their inspiration: the Shang dynasty oracle bone inscriptions, inscriptions on ancient bronzes, bamboo slips, silk and stone stele, and the

decorative styles such as •bird script”. We can see that archaeology has become a major source of inspiration for new artistic experimentation, as modern artists —nd stylistic models in the newly unearthed archaeological material.

For many contemporary artists, archaeology not only provides a stylistic model, but also a conceptual framework. It has enabled an extension of the territory of Chinese modern art in a very fundamental way. In spite of the adoption of Western •modernist” and •post modernist” language and methods of expression in China, the fact is that contemporary Chinese art, including calligraphic art, has grown up, quite distinctively, against a Chinese cultural backdrop. Even in Xu Bing”s Heavenly Script



Xu Bing
At the Temple of the First Ruler of Shu, Poem by Yuxi, Square Word Calligraphy, (p.)

there is a conceptual, as well as a stylistic link, with the •magic script” of ancient Daoism. The tradition of the •magic script” can be traced back to the late Han period, in the ‰nd century, and the •heavenly script” of the Daoist canon which was supposed to have been written in red pigment by spirits of the other world. In Daoist practice, secret codes and talismans were often written in a script that was unreadable except to the initiated. Mysterious and powerful, this writing was decipherable only by an accem plished Daoist master. Although the model for Xu Bing”s style is not derived directly from the canon of the classical calligraphic tradition, it nonetheless borrows Daoist art and reinterprets it in a new social context. It is interesting to see how contemporary artists are inspired by ancient popular religious practices that had, and still have today, a strong in™uence on ordinary members of society.

It is the deep obsession with China”s •past” that has led the way for the success of contemporary calligraphy both in China and abroad. For some artists, this has meant a deconstruction and subversion of the traditional art. Wenda Gu has done interesting work in this respect, and has taken Chinese calligraphy into modern art installations. But, for many other artists, the attraction of looking to the past lies in —nding a conceptual and stylistic model, and in recreating the cultural spirit of the original writing. We can see this in the works of Gu Gan, Wei Ligang and Qiu Zhijie, who are at the forefront of the modern calligraphy movement. In Gu Gan”s work we see examples of how the artist employs and transforms di˜erent types of archaic scripts in order to achieve special pictorial e˜ects in the composition. In Wei Ligang”s recent work, he has turned towards the experiment of a •line-movement”; his work may look at glance like a close relative of western abstract art, but is clearly inspired by the simplicity of the use of line in traditional Chinese calligraphy. Qiu Zhijie, on the other hand, seeks the direct correspondence with the ancient inscriptions found on early ritual bronzes and stone stele. The motivation of these artists is to re-invent the essence of old tradition in the process of transition. With the help of archaeology, they have found modernity in archaism. As the sinologist F. W. Mote pointed out, •recovering the past(fugu) is not just a revival of ancient styles, but a more general expression relating to one”s consciousness of past models (•The arts and the ¡theorizing mode¢ of civilization”, in C. F. Murck (ed.) Artists and Traditions, Princeton, ƒ’€Œ). The contemporary artist may consciously create a new model, yet the past lives on in his or her works.

Is it right to talk about •neoclassicism” in con temporary Chinese art? It is clear that we cannot avoid the question of tradition. For almost two decades, Chinese artists and critics, in particular the younger generation, have moved away from the heated debates of •is the tradition of Chinese art dead?” to how can an artist •bring life to the tradition”. Of course, in a new social context, the tradition cannot be maintained inde—nitely. In order to put contemporary Chinese art into per spective, there needs to be some adjustment to the rigidly de—ned boundaries of the tradition of Chinese art. It would seem that T. S. Eliot”s words are —nding resonance with young artists in China today. He wrote that •tradition is a matter of much wider signi—cance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour” (T. S. Eliot, •Tradition and Individual Talent” in Selected Essays; New York, ƒ’Š‰).

Li Xubai
Heart of Zen Inspired through Cloud and Water,

For a brief discus sion on the ‘magic script’, see Tseng Yuho, A History of Chinese Calligraphy (Hong Kong, pp. - .

Liu Kuo-sung
Red Soil Plateau (detail),

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Ink Painting, Politics and Technology

• £ • • •--› •ˆ • in China as one of its great calligraphers, and examples of his work are prominently displayed in spaces both public and private. Up through the late ƒ'†Žs and early ƒ'ŒŽs, Mao actively supported this traditional art form, even facilitating the foundation of calligraphy research institutions in Beijing and Shanghai. It is thus an ironic point of history that during the Cultural Revolution (ƒ'ŒŒ-€Œ) Mao condemned traditional forms of calligraphy and ink painting as being synonymous with elitist and reactionary traditions. As a consequence, among those artists who su˜ered particularly during this period of upheaval were some of China"s leading ink painters and calligraphers. One prominent victim was Pan Tianshou (ƒ'€-ƒ'€ƒ), now regarded as one of the most signi—cant Chinese artists of the ‰Žth century, as well as one of the most important teachers of Chinese ink painting and aesthetics. When the Cultural Revolution was launched in ƒ'€Œ, Pan was serving as President of the Zheijiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou (now the China Art Academy), and he subsequently was singled out for particularly vicious persecution – publicly humiliated, beaten, and paraded through the streets of Hangzhou and other cities as a •Guomindang cultural spy". He died broken-hearted in ƒ'€ƒ, before the Cultural Revolution reached its close, yet continued to be vili—ed even in the aftermath of his death.

Today matters have come full circle. There is now a museum in China solely devoted to Pan Tianshou"s work. It forms part of the lakeside campus of the China Art Academy in Hangzhou, over which Pan used to preside – the lake itself being one of China"s most famous beauty spots, celebrated not least for the misty views that are evocative of Chinese ink paintings. There is also a bronze statue of Pan Tianshou by the waterside and Pan Tianshou"s son, Pan Gongkai, has followed in his father"s footsteps and today is a distinguished painter. Like his father, he served as President of the China Art Academy and he was later appointed as Director of the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing – these being the two most important art academies in China. Pan Gongkai"s powerful, boldly experimental work is represented in the current exhibition.

Whether living and working in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, or as part of the Chinese diaspora in the West, many Chinese contemporary artists cannot wholly abandon, nor do they wish to abandon, the long, uniquely continuous heritage of Chinese artistic culture in which the media of ink and brush play such a signi—cant role. At the same time, they do, however, wish to confront the nature of the extremely globalised world in which they live

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Looking at the diverse styles, themes, intellectual contexts and artistic careers of the artists represented in this exhibition and the accompanying catalogue, the viewer and the reader will immediately become aware of, and possibly be overcome by, the sheer range and complexity of the works on display. But they will also be rewarded by a deeper understanding of contemporary Chinese art in particular and Chinese society in general.

At —rst glance indeed, the exhibition seems to encompass such a great variety of styles that the identi—cation of a central thesis might appear an elusive target. Let me however-sug gest several possible approaches to elucidate the concept that the curator, Michael Goedhuis, has tried to present – the vitality and relevance of ink art to the world today, both for China and beyond.

A good way to begin developing a grasp of the big picture may be by dividing the artists in the exhibition into the following broad categories:

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These artists rely on brushwork and ink or colour washes and include: Fang Jun, Gao Xingjian, Jia Youfu, Li Huayi, Li Jin, Tong Yang-tze, Li Xiaoxuan, Li Xubai, Liu Dan, Liu Qinghe, Lo Ch”ing, Wu Yi, Xu Lei, Yang Yanping, Yuan Jai, Zeng Shanqing, Zeng Xiaojun, and Zhu Daoping.

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These artists use ink and other media and combine Chinese and non-Chinese styles. Artists in this category include: Huang Yong Ping, Chun-yi Lee, Leung Kui Ting, Li Jun, Liu Kuo-sung, Liu Wei, Lu Hao, Pan Hsin-hua, Qin Feng, Qiu Deshu, Qiu Jie, Wang Dongling, Wang Jinsong, Wei Ligang, Wucius Wong, Hong Chun Zhang, and Zhang Yu.

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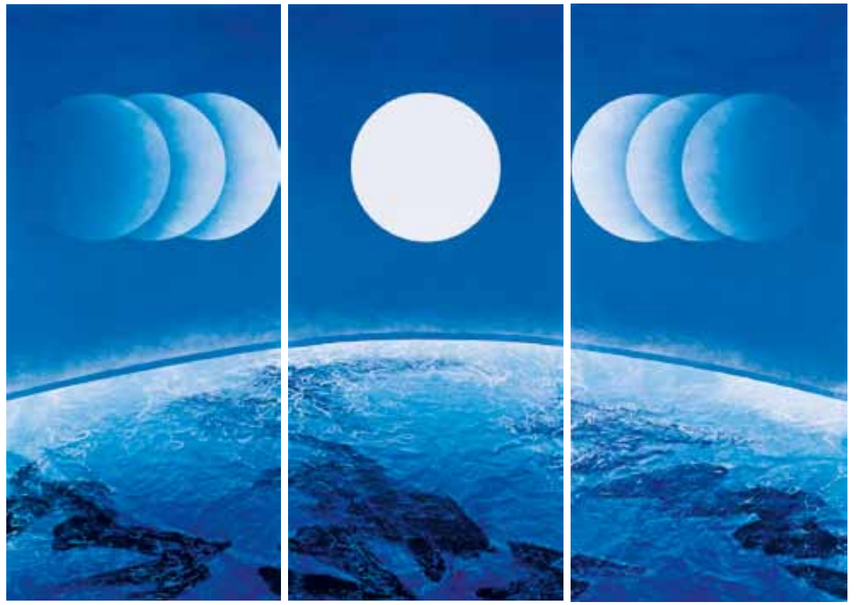
Artists in whose works the historical and cultural relevance of the medium of ink is questioned and the physical and chemical properties of ink are explored. They include: Chen Guangwu, Gu Gan, Wenda Gu, Qiu Zhijie, Wang Tiande, Wei Qingji, Xu Bing, and Yang Jiechang.

Another possible way to begin our journey is perhaps to further divide contemporary Chinese ink painting (including but not limited to works featured in this exhibition) into the following stylistic or thematic categories, keeping in mind that some artists belong to more than one category, as indicated in the list:



Liu Kuo-sung
Rhythm of the Moon, (p.)

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Fang Jun, Ho Huai-shuo, Leung Kui Ting, Li Huayi, Li Xubai, Liu Dan, Liu Kuo-sung, Lo Ch”ing, Tong Yang-tze, Wang Dongling, Wang Jinsong, Wucius Wong, Zeng Shanqing, Zeng Xiaojun, Yang Yanping, and Hong Chun Zhang.

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Liu Kuo-sung, Gao Xingjian, Gu Gan, Qin Feng, Wang Tiande, Wei Ligang, and Xu Bing.

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Gu Gan, Li Jin, Li Jun, Liu Qinghe, Li Xiaoxuan, Wang Dongling, Wang Jinsong, and Zhu Daoping.

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Liu Kuo-sung, Qiu Deshu, Yang Jiechang, Zhang Yu.

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Jia Youfu, Liu Kuo-sung, Wenda Gu, Zhang Yu.

Yuan Jai, Pan Hsing-hua, Xu Lei

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Chen Guangwu, Wenda Gu, Qin Feng, Qiu Zhijie, Wang Tiande, Yang Jiechang

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Huang Zhiyang, Chun-yi Lee, Li Jin, Lu Hao, Miao Xiaochun, Qiu Zhijie, Qiu Jie, Wei Qingji, Wu Yi, Xu Bing, Hong Chung Zhang.

Perhaps the most salient feature of contemporary Chinese ink painting is the audacity and radicalism inherent in the artists” analysis, not only of the very nature of ink painting, but also its theoretical parameters (explored in Xu Bing”s •An Email on Modern Art and Education” —rst published in the proceedings of the ‰ŽŽ’ Beijing International Conference on Art Theory and Criticism, pages Š€†–Š‘Š). Several artists in this exhibition have been included in a series

Qiu Zhijie
Ten Poems
by Su Shi
(p.)

of shows, both inside and beyond the Chinese-speaking world, which address the role of ink in contemporary culture. As clari—ed by Pi Daojian, curator with Huang Huansheng of the exhibition China: Years of Ink Experiment, – held at the Guangdong Museum in ‰ŽŽƒ, the term •Ink Experiment" was intended to highlight the fact that the experiments of contemporary Chinese artists go far beyond simple ink painting and now extend to expressive ink art, abstract ink art, conceptual ink art and installation ink art.

Traditionally, the ink used by Chinese artists for calligraphy and painting was made in the form of dry ink sticks – chie™y pine soot and water-soluble animal adhesive – that were ground with water on an ink stone to produce liquid ink. Contemporary artists also now use commercially prepared liquid ink for convenience. Artists control the density, texture and quality of their ink and, by extension, its tonal variations and it is this ability by which the quality of their work has traditionally been evaluated. Ink"s liquidity of course poses tremendous challenges for the practitioner in addition to the demands placed on them by using a pliant brush made from animal hairs. The Neo-Traditionalists in the exhibition are particular heirs of this grand tradition of Chinese ink painting which goes back, as an elite art-form, more than a thousand years. Liu Dan, Li Huayi, and Zeng Xiaojun are all painters who trace their cultural lineage back to the great masterpieces of the Song dynasty, while at the same time responding to the pictorial imperatives of the contemporary world.

For a related but di˜erent interpretation of this tradition take the work of Gao Xingjian for example. Gao received the Nobel Prize for literature in ‰ŽŽŽ and now lives in Paris in semi self-exile. His style of painting can be characterised as belonging to the great literati tradition of Xieyi (literally •writing of the idea") which allows him to create subtle, intuitive settings that hover between —gurative and abstract art in a way that has been done by many of the great masters in Chinese art history. His paintings explore the expressive possibilities of ink and wash, advanced chiaroscuro shadings and subtle textures.

On the other hand, other artists are challenging this traditional use of the medium of ink, using video documentation and installation in conjunction with ink on paper as in Qiu Zhijie"e Ten Poems by Su Shi

Wenda Gu, who is here represented by two of the monumental paintings that exemplify the intense investigation he has conducted into the nature of art and language since ƒ"š, also deploys other materials in complex installations. At Bates College in ‰ŽŽš for example, his Ink Alchemy presented glass vials of ink created from human hair where his intention was to unify biological ink (from hair) with the materials of subject (the common denominator of humanity) and the medium (ink for painting).

Re™ecting on the development of ink painting since the early ƒ"Žs, the artist Zhang Yu has written: •Experimental ink painting grows out of the root of Chinese art and culture. At the same time, experimental ink painting di˜ers from the formal language of traditional

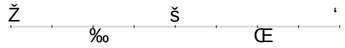
Li Huayi
Autumn Mountains
(p.)

Chinese painting . . it opens a new path outside the traditional system of ink paintings and takes the resources of Chinese and foreign art as the starting point of exploration . . so, it transcends not only the physical and metaphysical, but also the Eastern and Western. What it possesses is new concepts, new ways of understanding the world, new modes of speaking and new views of cultural value".

The exhibition certainly provides a great opportunity for the public to examine these artists in order to explore the extent to which this work can be seen as a bold and relevant embodiment of the zeitgeist of a new generation of Chinese people in the Chinese-speaking world as well as in the diaspora. It also describes the enrichment of an essentially Chinese aesthetic through the incorporation of Euro-American stylistic and ideological innovations that have value in newly de—ning Chinese ideas about beauty, the diaspora, trans-nationalism and global culture.

But it also leaves us suspended with questions, the answers to which, in the dramatic transformation of modern China, have yet to be formulated: how extensively can tradition be re-invented before it is subverted? At what point is creative re-invention an act of betrayal? And —nally, how has selective borrowing from the Chinese classical canon and from Western cultures enabled contemporary Chinese artists to make work that is relevant and meaningful not only for their own society, vital as it now is, but for an increasingly globalized world?

In the following pages, the relative width of the artwork is indicated by a line placed on a standard ruler whose full length is ‘ metres (‰) Œ¼ feet



中國時報
ArtChina

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Autumn Mountains, ‰ŽŽ‘

Ink on paper
‘’ ×ƒ†‰.šcm (ŠŒŽ")

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F E w

Mother, ‰Žƒ‰

Ink and gouache on silk
ƒ'Ž × '˜Žcm (€Ž± × Š†²®¯°")

ŠŒ

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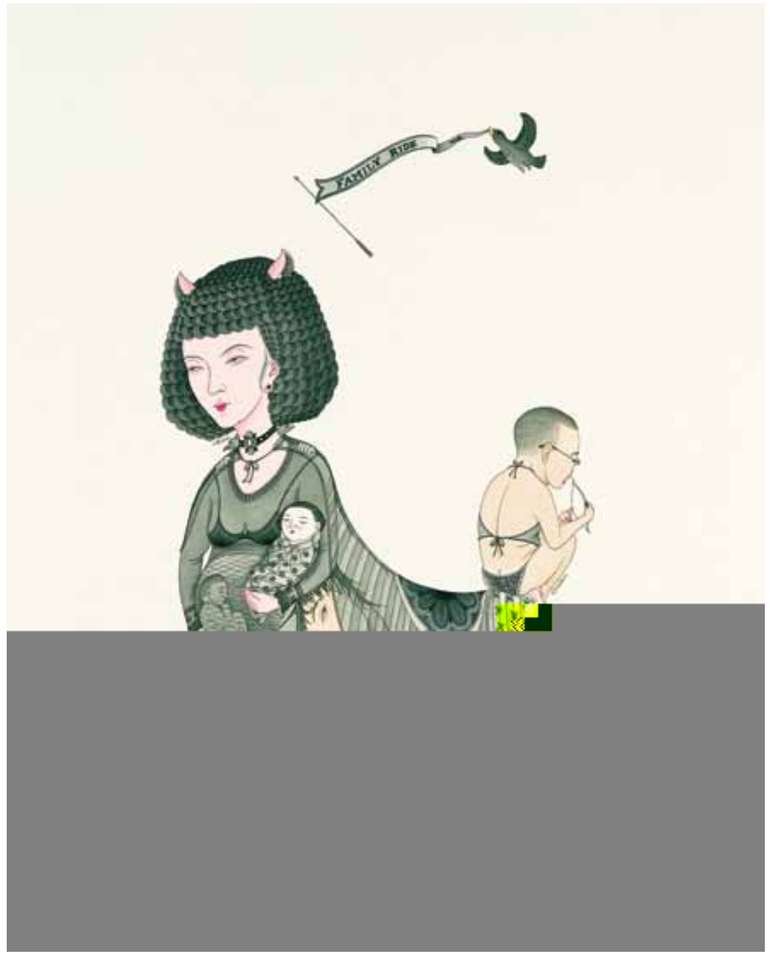
F E w

: Family Ride, ‰ŽŽ‘
: The Queen, ‰ŽŽ€



: Ink and gouache on silk
’Ž × €tm (Š†²®¯° × ‰’½")
: Ink and gouache on silk
’Ž × €tm (Š†²®¯° × ‰’½")

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Spring Dawn (Poem by Meng Haoran), ‰ŽŽŠ

Ink on paper
Š panels, ƒŠŒ œ¤Œ†Š½ × ‰Œ¾") each
Total size: ƒŠŒ ×‹¾Ž‡Š½ × ‘Ž¼")

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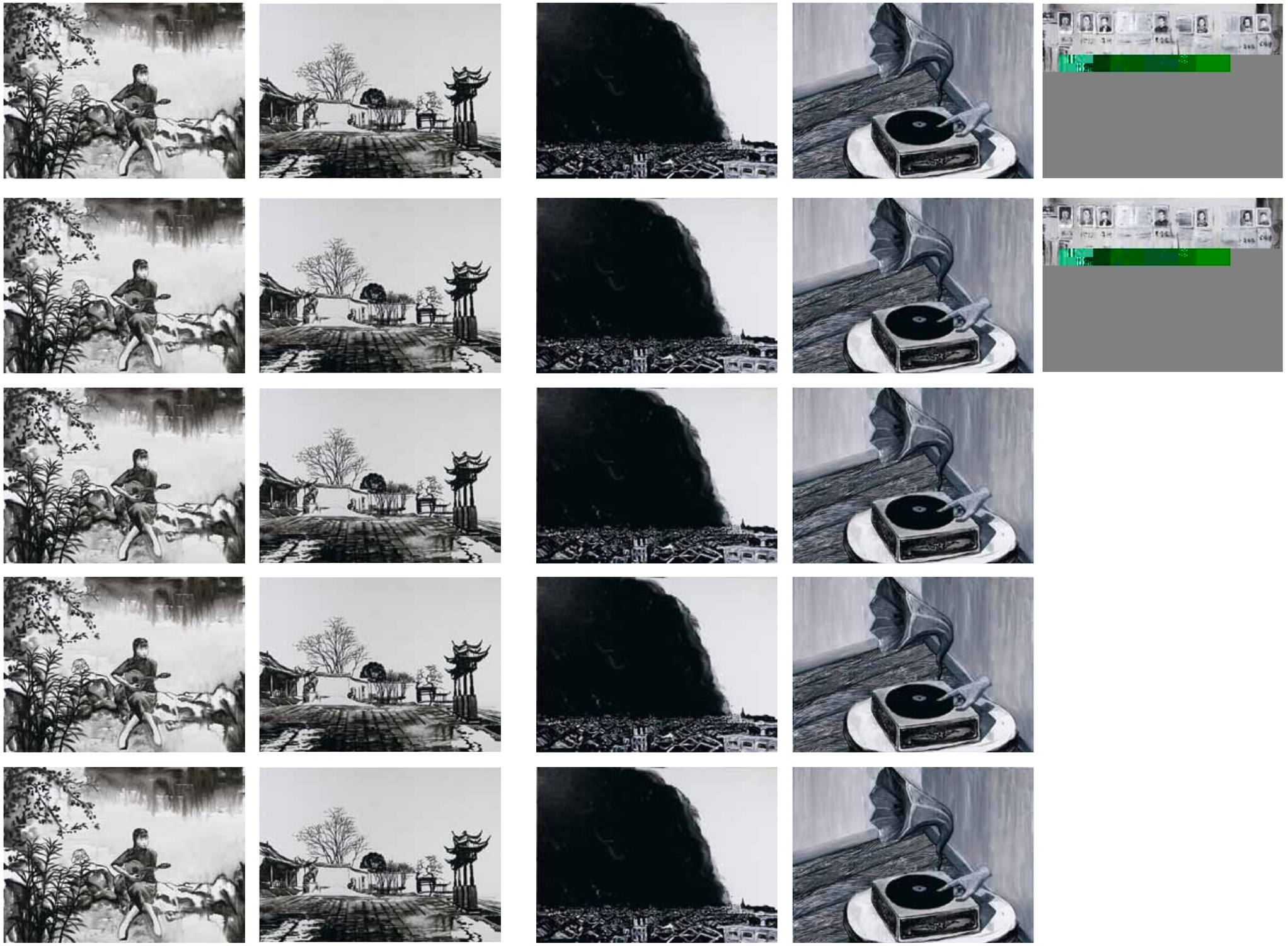
Minguo Landscape, ‰ŽŽ€



Minguo Landscape, ‰ŽŽ€
Ink Animation, ƒš'ŠŠ", š:Š, Shanghai, China

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Little Dragon Playing Ball, ‰ŽŽƒ

Mineral colour on silk
‘š × ƒ€'cm (ŠŠ«®¯° × €Ž½")

†Œ

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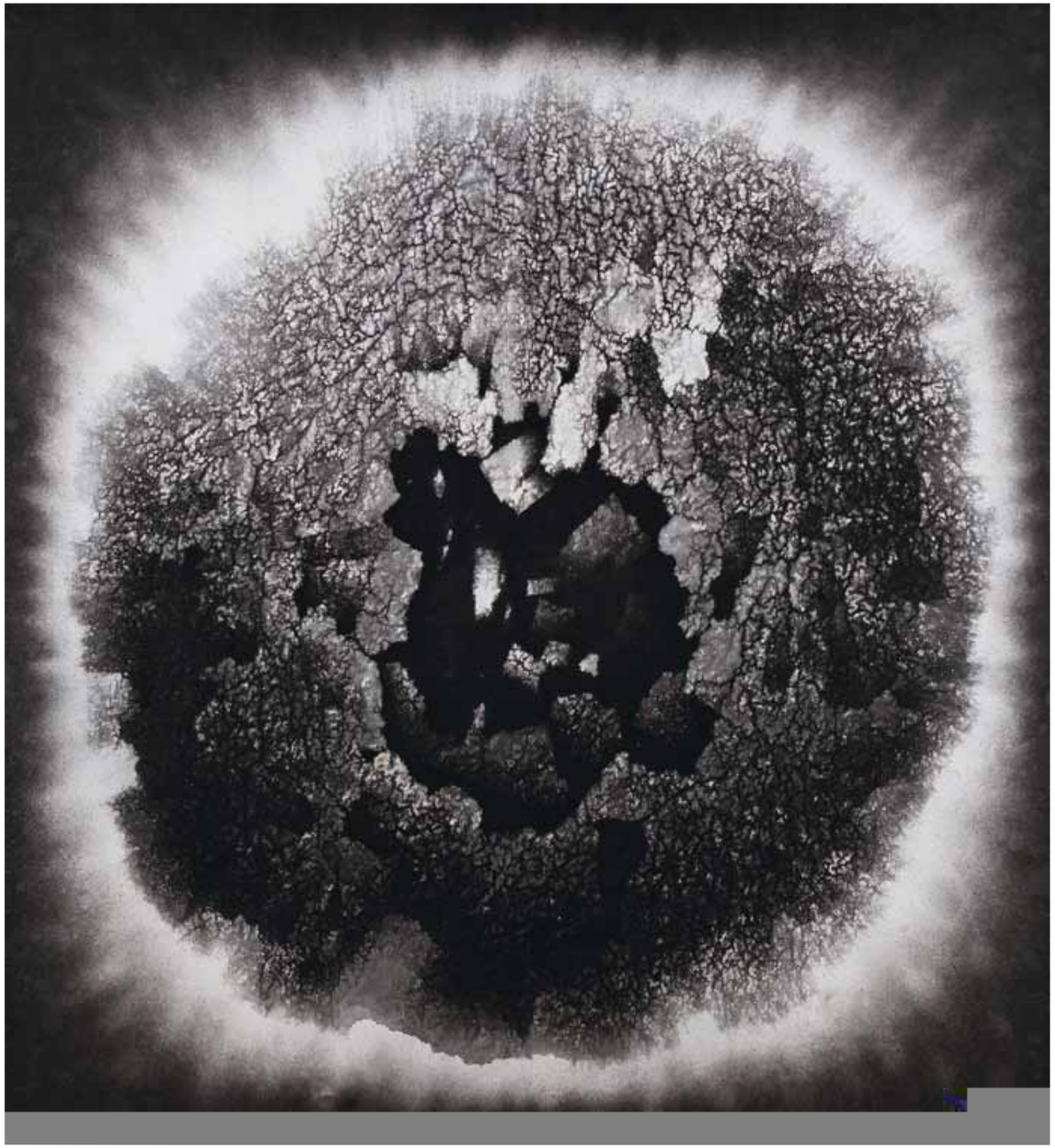
f Õ

Divine Light Series No. :
The Floating Incomplete Circle, *ƒ*’’’



Ink on bamboo paper
‰ŽŽ × %ŽŽ(€¾ × €¾")

†‘

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Full Gallop, ‰ŽŽ†

Ink and colour on paper
'Œ.† × ƒ†€m (Š' × Œ‰")

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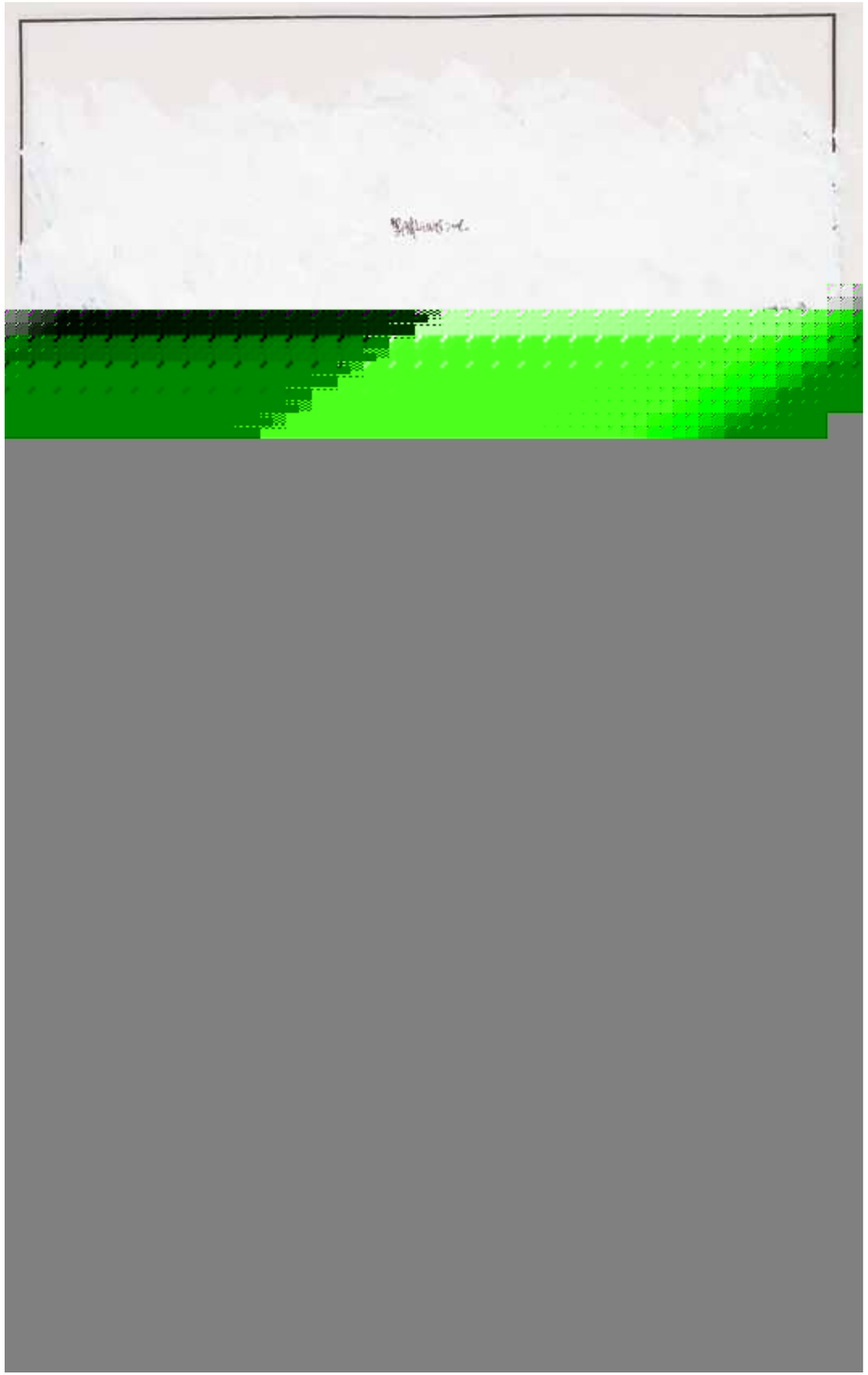
Untitled, ‰ŽŽŒ



Acrylic on paper
’š × †€.‰m (Š€ × ‰‰½")

Œ‘

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Holiday I, ‰ŽŽ€

Ink and colour on paper
Œ‘ × ’ƈm (‰Œ¾ × Š€")

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Old Cypress from the
Forbidden City, ‰ŽŽ€

Ink on paper
‰†'.ƒ × ƒŠ€n‰ƒŽ‰ × †š")

€š

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Tinkling of Jade-Pendants, ‰ŽŽ‘

Ink on paper
‰ƒ† × ƒ‹Ž (‘š° × †'")

€Œ

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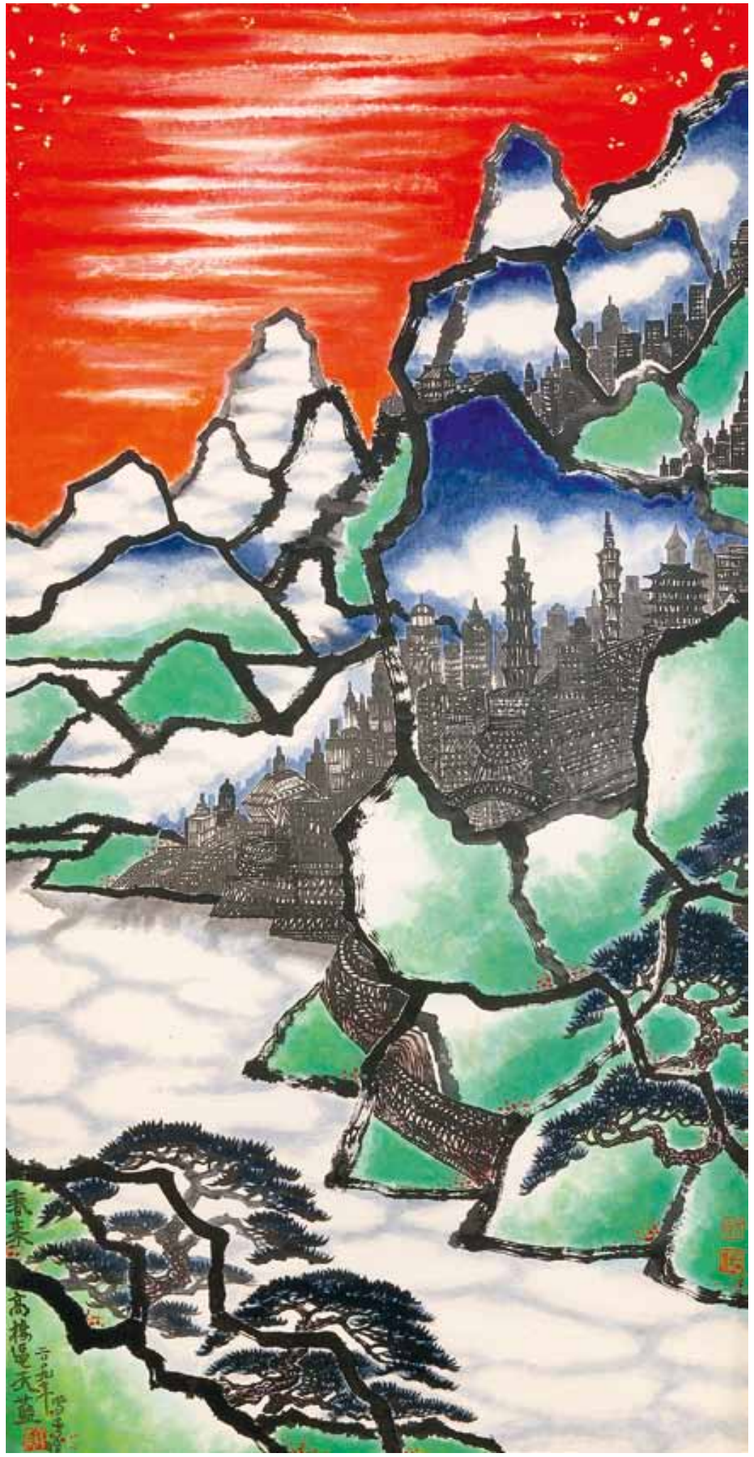
China, All of a Sudden, China!, ‰Žƒ‰



Ink and colour on paper
Two panels, ƒŠ€ ×ŒB'(†Š± × ‰€¼") each
Total size: ƒŠ€ × ¢Ñ (†Š± × †š´")

‘Ž

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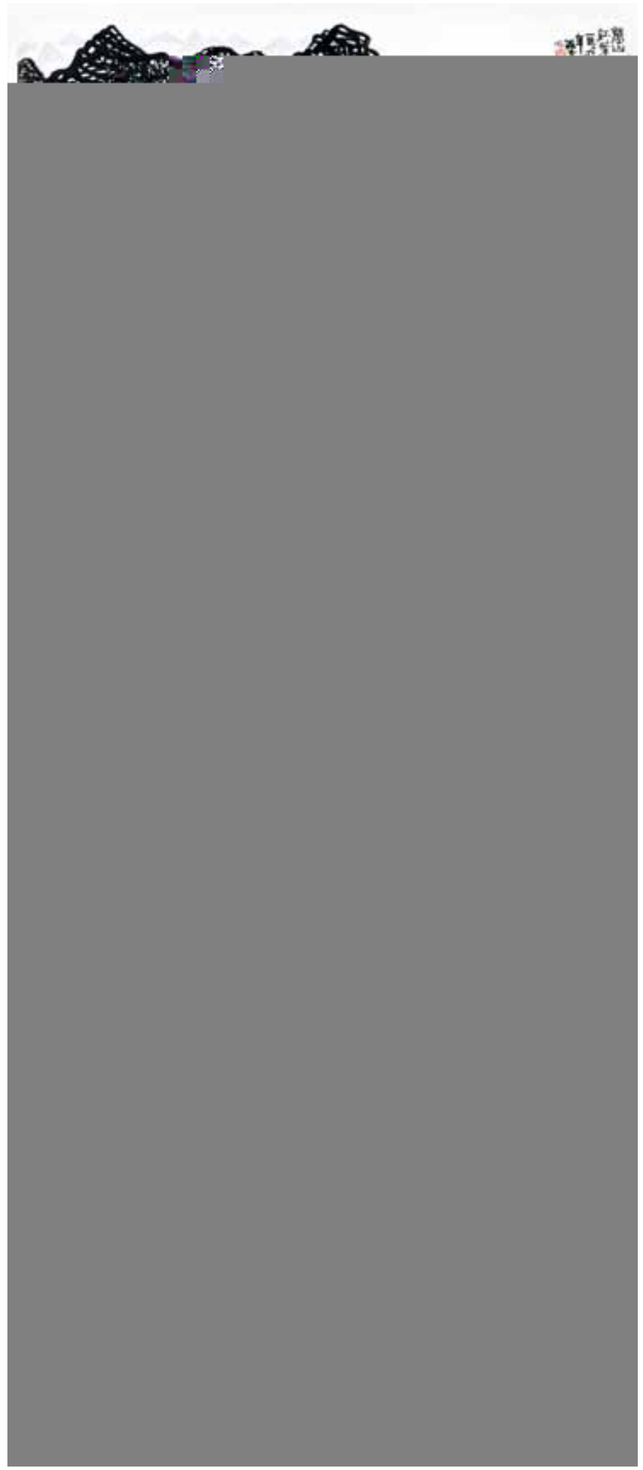
Ten Thousand Peaks of
Red Leaves, *f*''Œ

Ink and colour on paper
‰*f*‰ × ‰ (‘Š²®¯° × Š†º")

‘‰



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Confrontation of Yin and Yang, ‰ŽŽ†

Ink on paper
‰ƒŒ × ƒšš›'(‘† × †€")

‘Œ

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Mao in the Cotton Field, ‰ŽŽ€

Pencil on paper
ƒ†Ž × ƒŒm (†'«®¯° × ŒŒµ")

“

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Lijiang, ‰Žƒƒ

Pencil on paper
ƒ‰Ž × ƒœžž (š€·®¯° × ††µ")

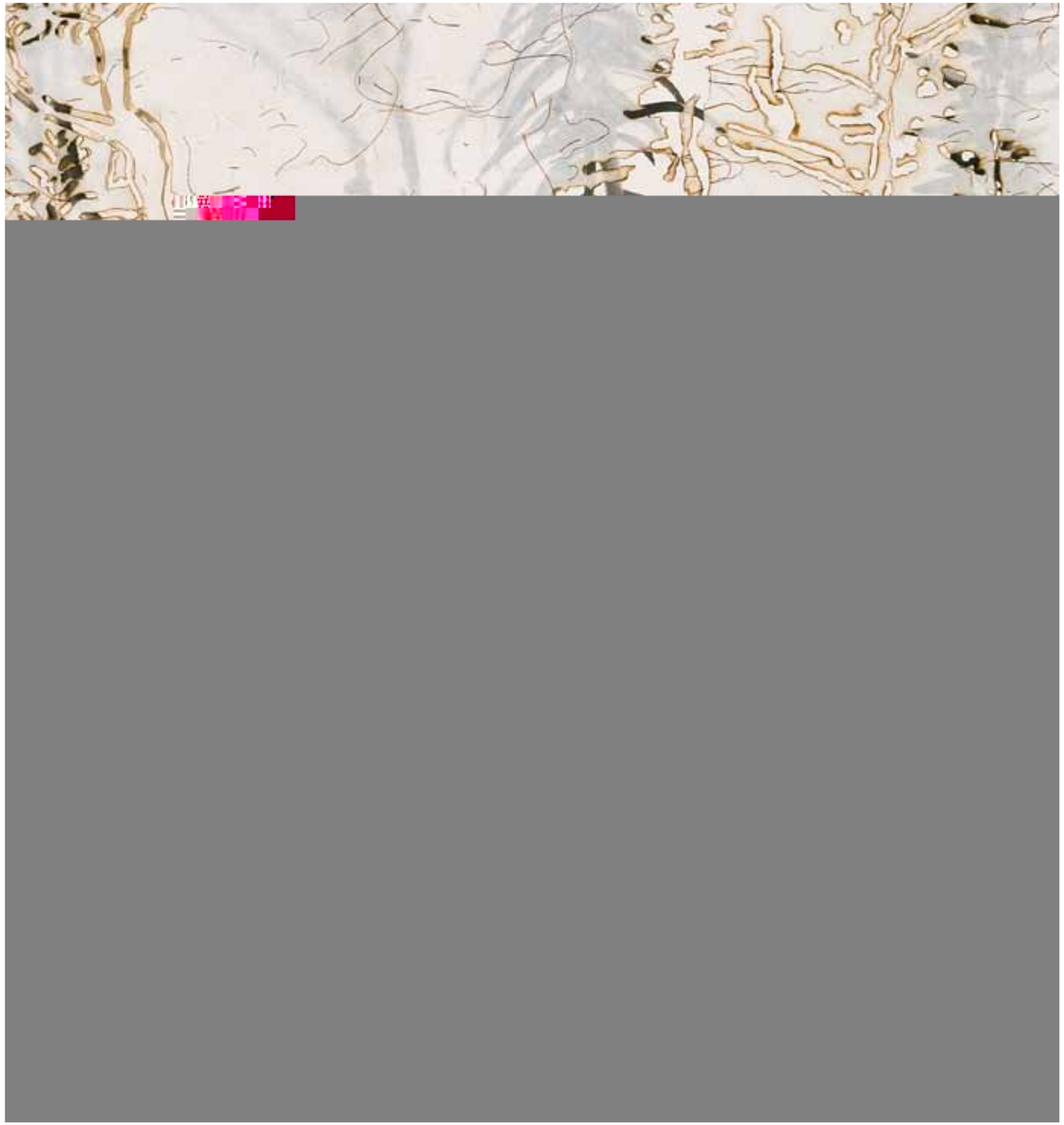
'Ž

¦ ? £

Digital No. -ML , ‰ŽŽ‘

Ink and burn marks on paper
Š† × 'Œ€rh (ƒŠ«·®¯° × Š‘Ž«¬®¯°")

ƒŽŽ



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Landscape Series No. , ‰ŽŽ‘

Ink and colour on silk
ƒƒŽ × ƒšm (šŠ¬®¯° × †š¬®¯°")

ƒŽš

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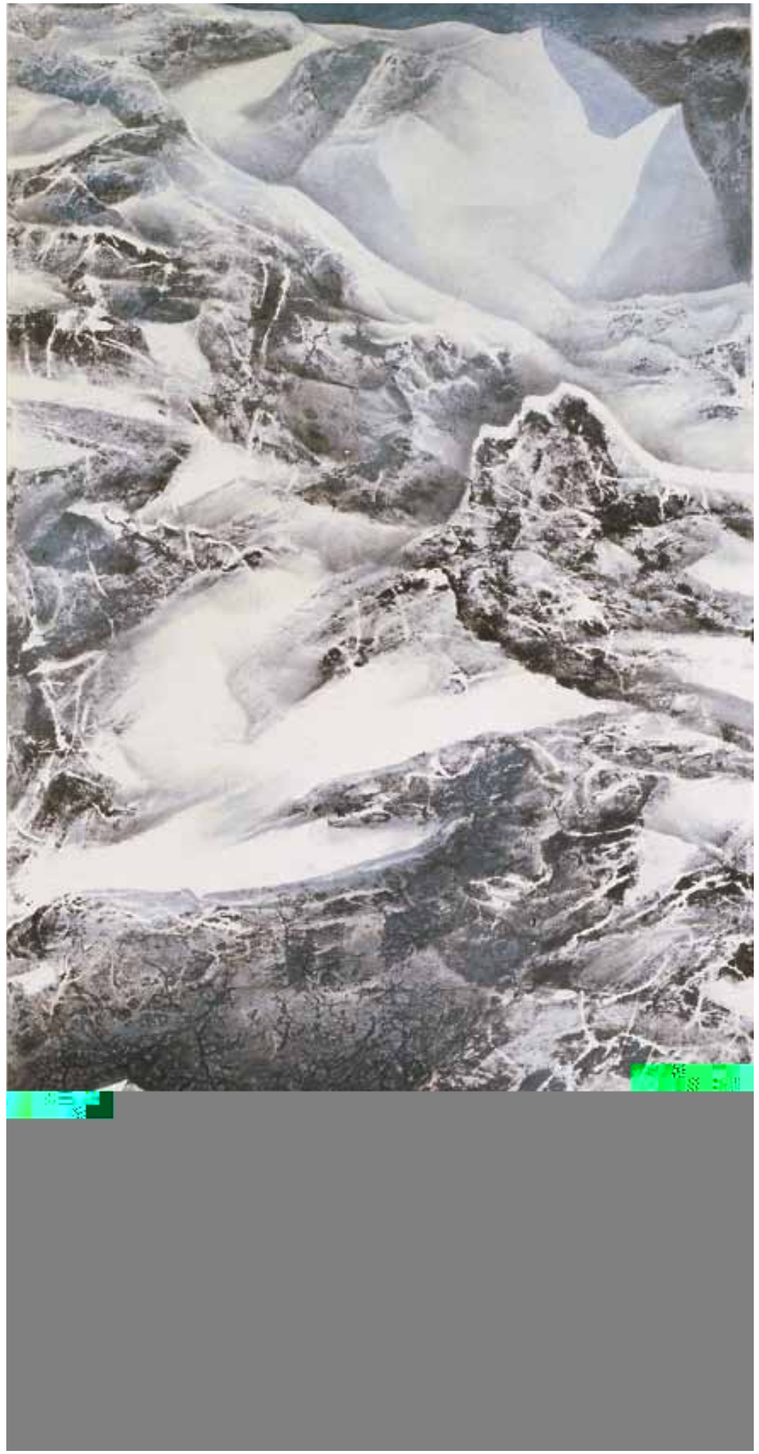
> S ¾

Snow-capped Mountain,
Tibet Series (No.), ‰ŽŽ‘

Ink on paper
ƒ'†.† × '‰œtm (€Š«®¯° × ŠŒ²®¯°")

ƒŽ‘



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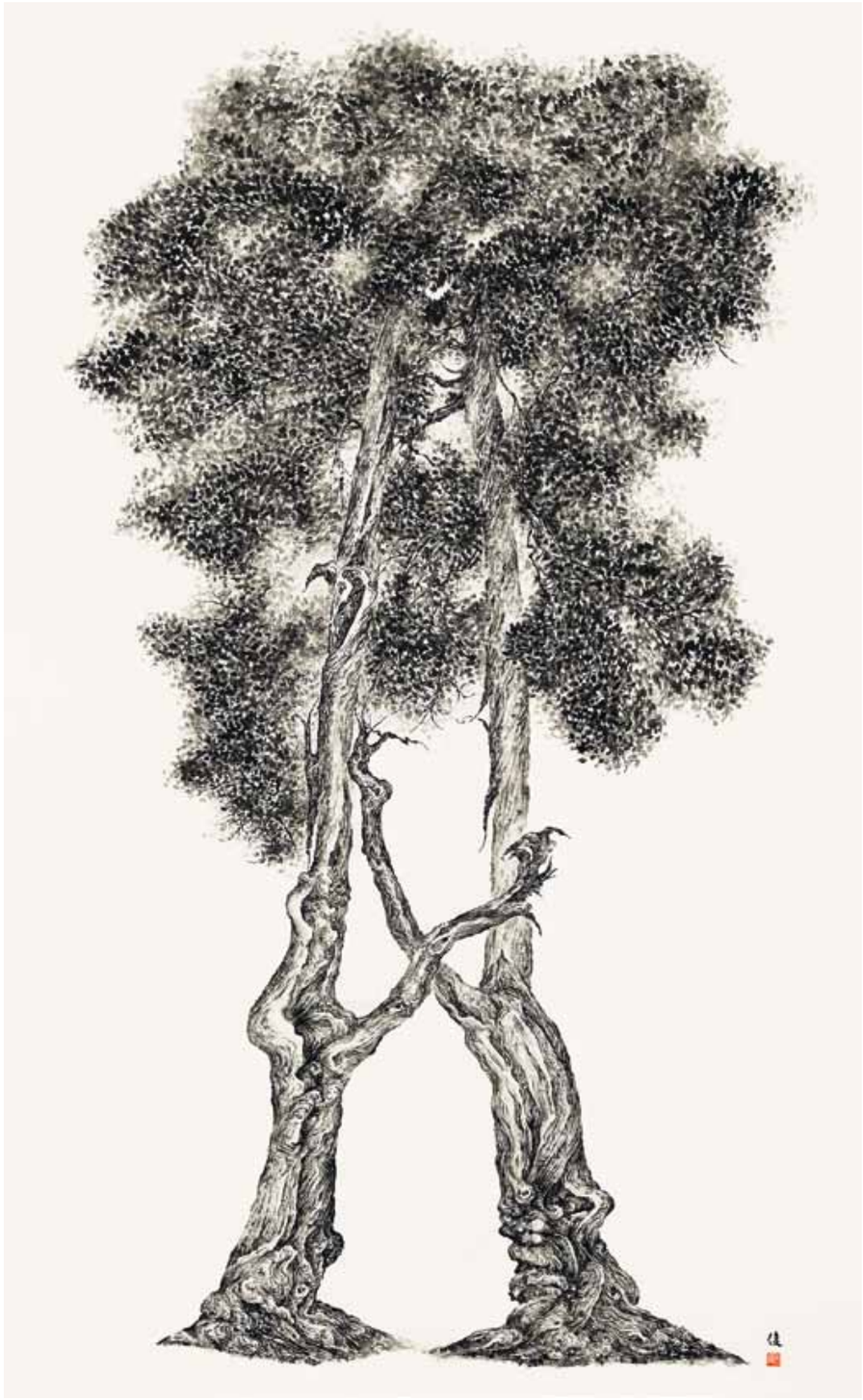
Connected Trees from the Forbidden City No. , ‰ŽŽš

Ink on paper
‰‰Ž × ƒŠm†('Œ½ × †š½")

ƒƒ‰



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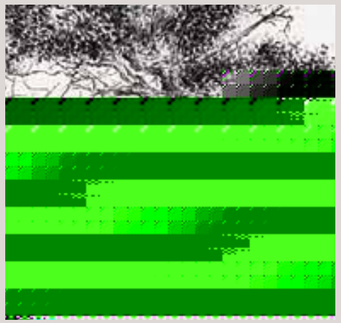
‘Qing’, ‘Qi’, ‘Gu’, ‘Guai’, ‰ŽŽš

Ink on paper
ƒ’’ × šŒ€m (€½ × ƒ‘Š¾")



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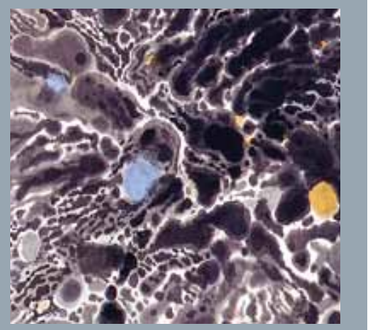
Sky-Land Expression , ‰ŽŽ€

Ink and colour on cotton
‰ panels, ƒ''.ƒ × ''.ƒm (€‘ × Š'") each
Total size: ƒ''.ƒ × ƒ''.‰m (€‘ × €‘¿¹")



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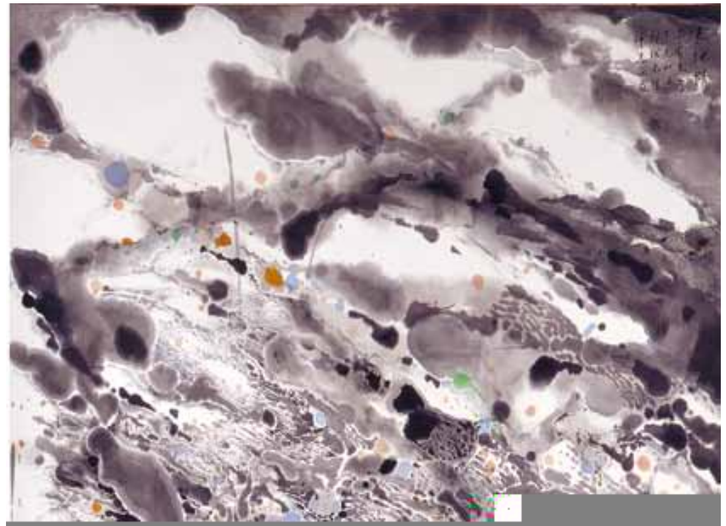


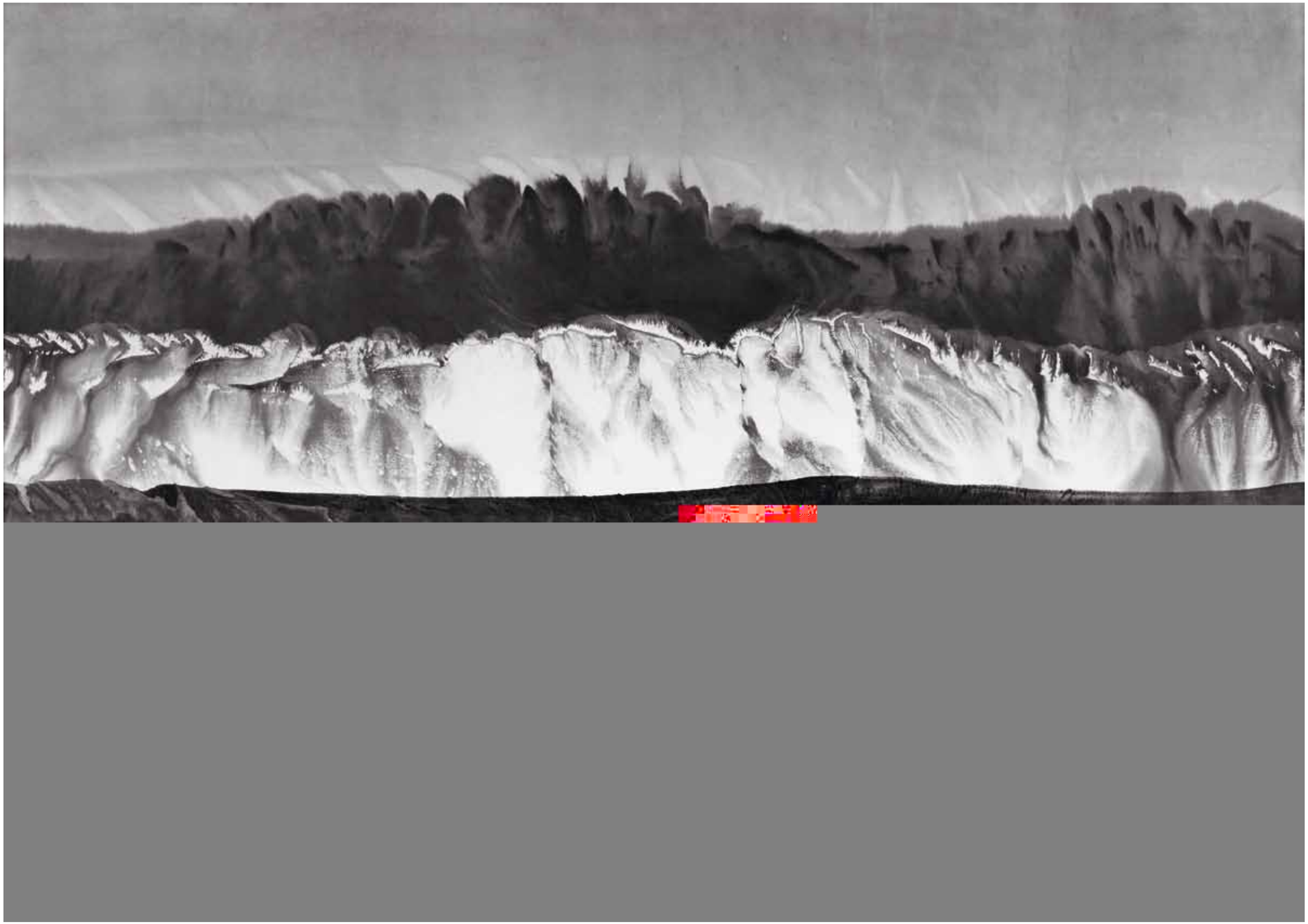
•›
*Jh ò

Women Warriors, ‰ŽŽ‘

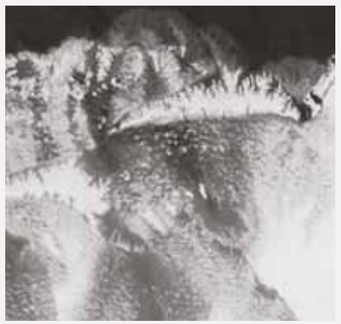
Graphite, watercolour, gouache
and ink on paper
ƒŽŒ.€ × š‘€n6 (š‰ × ƒ'‰")

ƒ ƒ‘

Dream Mountain
(La montagne de rêve), ‰ŽŽ†



Ink on paper
ƒšŒ × ‰ž€(†€½ × ‘ƒ½")



ƒ‰Ž

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Ten Poems by Su Shi, ‰ŽŽš

ƒŽ hanging scrolls & video; ink on paper, ,
Each scroll: ‰Ž' ×
Video transferred to , , single channel,
colour, ŠŽ minutes

ƒ‰š

‹
Ù Ã

Feast, ‰ŽŽ€

Ink and colour on paper
† panels, ‰ŠŽ×m‡$Ž¶®¯° × ‰Ž±") each
Total size: ‰ŠŽ ×‰(Ž¶®¯° × ƒŽš¬®¯°)

ƒ‰‘

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Work , ‰ŽŽ€

Ink and colour on paper
€† × ‘‰ (‰’½ × Š‰¼")

ƒŠ‰

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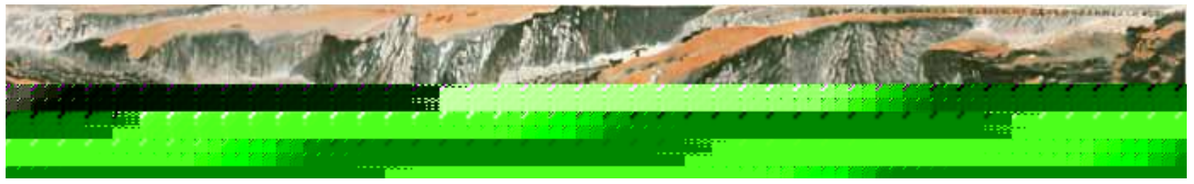
Landscape, ƒ"†

Ink and colour on paper
š'.† × Š‰Œ(ƒ'µ × ƒ‰'¬®¯°")

ƒŠš



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The Deluge No. , ‰Žƒ‰

Ink on paper
† panels, ƒŠ€Œ' cm (†Š«»‰Œ¾") each
Total size: ƒŠ€ × ŠšŽ cm (†Š«¬®¯° × ƒŠŠ±")

ƒŠ‘

£ ž
"‡ × Q

Four de nitions , ‰Žƒ ƒ

Ink and acrylic on paper
ƒ€€.‘ × ƒ’Ž.đm (€Ž × €†")

ƒš‰

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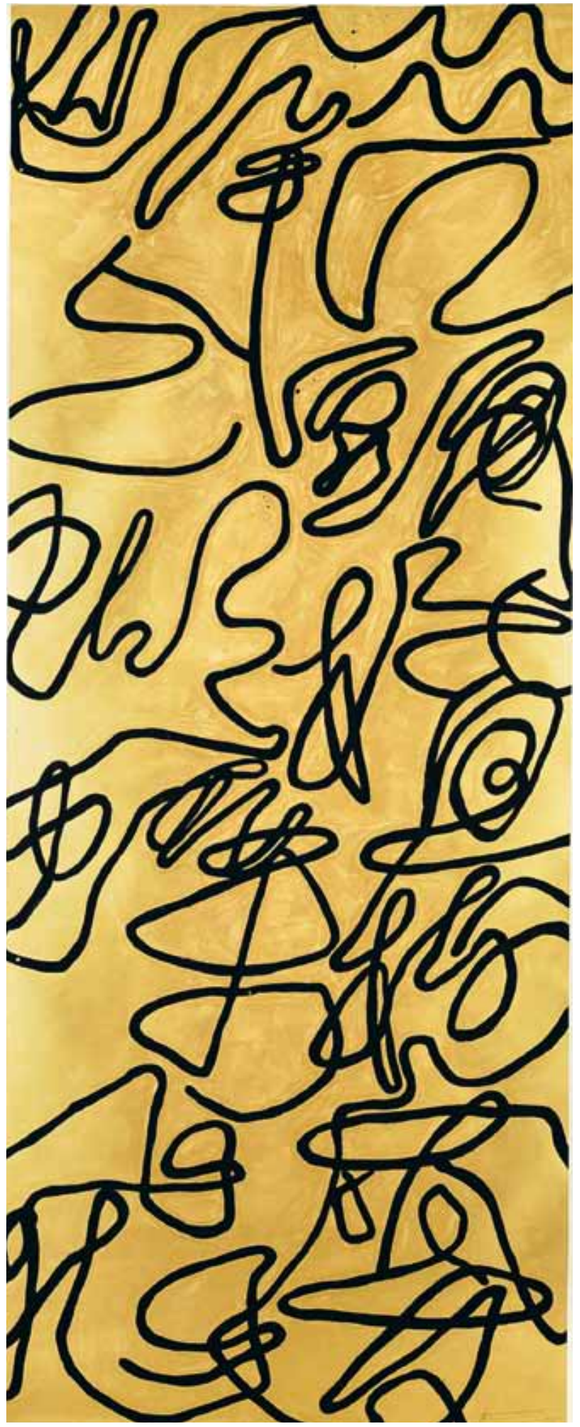
: Frozen River, ‰ŽŽ€

: Fragrant Thornbush Near Streamhead and Butter ies on the Bank, ‰ŽŽ€

: Ink and acrylic on paper
ŠŒŽƒštm (ƒšƒ¾ × †€µ")

: Ink and acrylic on paper
ŠŒŽƒštm (ƒšƒ¾ × †€µ¢)

ƒšŒ



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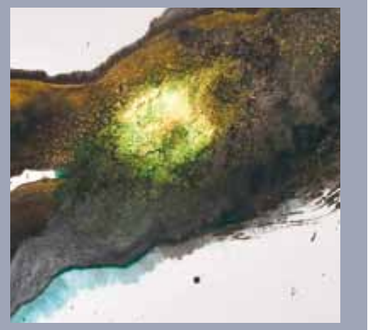
Shi Guī(en Partridge)‰Žƒ Ž

Ink and acrylic on paper
ƒ‘Ž × ’Œm (€Ž± × Š€«·®¯°")



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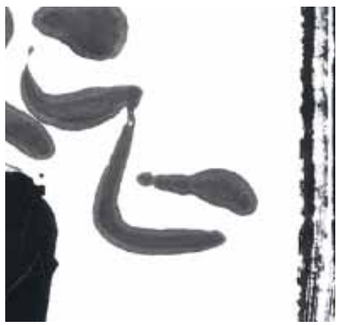
Knowing is not Di cult,
Doing is Di cult (Zhi zhi fei jian,
xing zhi wei jian), ƒ''€

Ink on paper
ƒŠ' × ‰dš (†š´ × ƒŽŽ")



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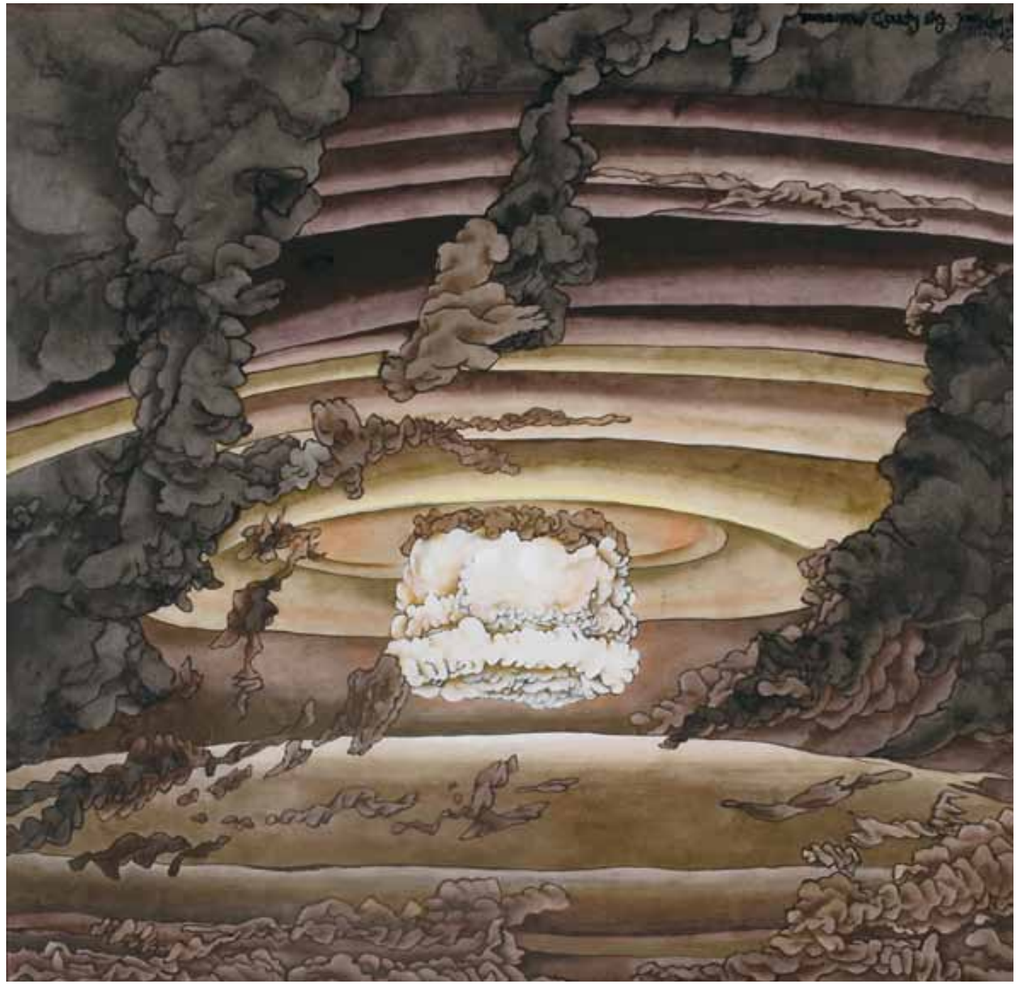
: Tomorrow Cloudy Sky I, ‰ŽŽŒ
: Tomorrow Cloudy Sky II, ‰ŽŽŒ



-: Ink and colour on paper
’Œ × ’’cm (Š€«·®¯° × Š’’)
: Ink and colour on paper
’Œ × ’’cm (Š€«·®¯° × Š’’)

ƒ†‘

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Honeymoon: Love Me Little, Love Me Long,

Ink with gold leaf on handmade paper
‰ŽŽ × ƒœ‰Ž(€'¾ × ŒŠ")

ƒŒ‰

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É]

: Thing-Form , ‰ŽŽŒ
: Stand Higher See Farther, ‰ŽŽ€

: Ink and mixed media on paper
’Ž × ’†cm (Š†²®¯° × Š€´")
: Ink and mixed media on paper
ƒ’Ž × ‰¢‰‰(€Š«·®¯° × ’’·®¯¯°")

ƒŒš

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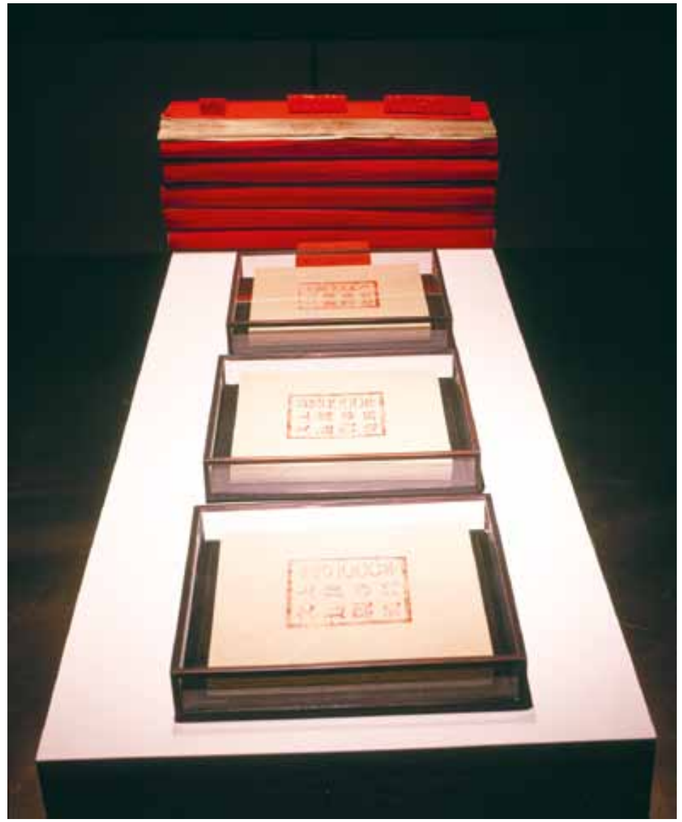
Alchemy Studio, ƒ’’’-‰ŽŽ‰
À : Ink Alchemy
§ ˆˆ „ : Tea Alchemy

ˆ “ : Created in Shanghai Cao Su Gong Ink Factory, China, ƒ’’’–‰ŽŽƒ. Bottle of original human hair, bottle of human hair in semi-charcoal state, bottle of human hair pigment. Genetic ink pigment (made of human hair) in test tube & wood box. Genetic ink stick (made of human hair) in wood & glass box.

ž ˆˆ „: Created in Anhui Jing County Red Leaves Rice Paper Factory, China, ‰ŽŽƒ-‰ŽŽ‰. Copy of classical accordion painting book (in glass box) and sheet of rice paper, made of green tea leaves (‘Ž% green tea).

ƒ€‰



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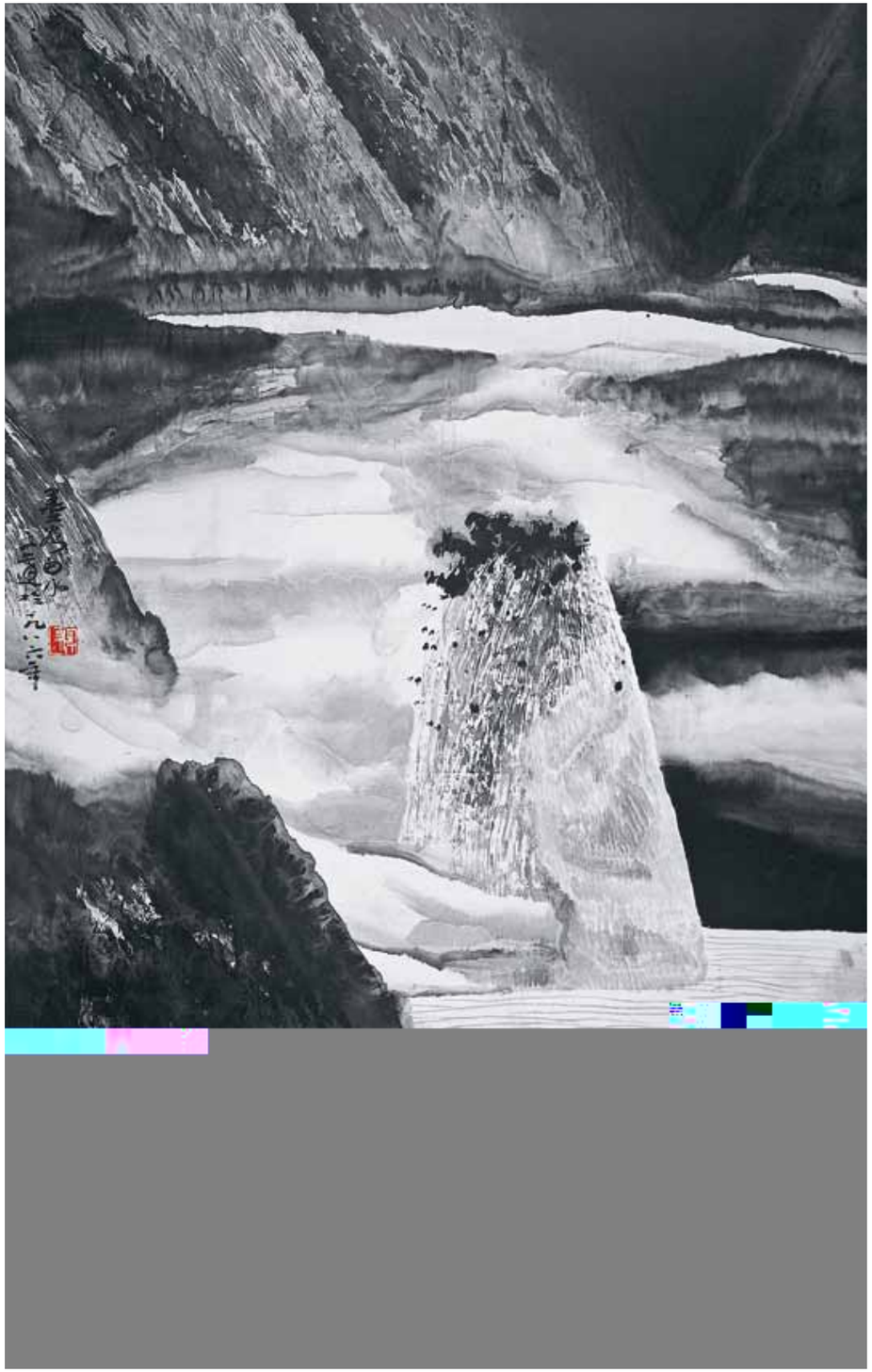
Ink Valley and White Water, ƒ"Œ

Ink on paper
‰€'.† × ƒ€œ€n†(ƒƒŽ × Œ'½")

ƒ€š



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Twin Strands, ‰ŽŽ‘

Ink on paper
‰ panels, ‰€Ž™€†ŽŒ¬®¯° × ‰'½") each
Total size; ‰€Ž ×ƒ™Žƒ ŽŒ¬®¯° × †'")

ƒ€‘

REFERENCE

Contributor Biographies

Independent Curator, Critic and Translator in the eld of Chinese contemporary art

Valerie C. Doran is an independent curator, critic and translator in the —eld of Chinese contemporary art with a special interest in cultural cross-currents and comparative art theory. A contributing editor of Orientations magazine, Valerie publishes frequently on Asian and international contemporary art; she has also translated a number of works by major Chinese art theorists and critics, including Li Xianting, Gao Minglu and Gao Xingjian. She has lectured in art theory and curatorial practice at the Academy of Visual Arts of Hong Kong Baptist University, the School of Creative Media of the City University of Hong Kong and the Para/Site Curatorial Programme. From ‰Žƒ Ž to ‰Žƒƒ she was Honorary Lecturer in the Centre for the Humanities and Medicine at the University of Hong Kong and helped to initiate the Project Arts Programme. Valerie is also an academic advisor of the Asia Art Archive, a member of the Gallery Advisory Committee of The Asia Society Hong Kong, and a member of the International Art Critics Association Hong Kong chapter, of which she was past vice-president. In ‰ŽŽ’ Valerie was awarded the Certi—cate of Commendation from the Hong Kong Home A˜airs Bureau for contributions to arts and cultural activities in Hong Kong.

Professor of Art History at the University of Maryland

Jason C. Kuo has taught at the National Taiwan University, Williams College, and Yale University. He is the professor of art history at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is the editor of numerous exhibition catalogues and anthologies on Chinese art and art history; his awards include Mellon, John D. Rockefeller III Fund, Luce and Fulbright fellowships for research and teaching. Professor Kuo has authored a long list of publications on Chinese art ranging from Wang Yuanqi de shanshuihua yishu (Yuanqi's Art of Landscape Painting, ƒ) to Transforming Traditions in Modern Chinese Painting: Huang Pin-hung's Late Work (‰ŽŽš).

Previous page:
L: Liu Qinghe
Growth II
Ink and colour on paper
x cm (½ x ½")
R: Liu Qinghe
Growth I
Ink and colour on paper
x cm (½ x ½")

Art Critic and Historian

Edward Lucie-Smith is an internationally known art critic and historian, who is also a published poet, an anthologist and a practising photographer. He is generally regarded as the most proli—c and the most widely published writer on art, with sales for some titles totalling over ‰†Ž,ŽŽŽ copies. A number of his art books, among them Movements in Art since, Visual Arts of the th Century, A Dictionary of Art Terms and Art Today, are used as standard texts throughout the world. In Britain he was for many years a well-known broadcaster, appearing regularly on the §§ arts discussion programme The Critics, and its successor Critics' Forum. His appearances on these programmes spanned a period of twenty years. He has written for many leading British newspapers and periodicals, among them The Times of London (where at one time he had a regular column), the London Evening Standard (whose critic he was for two years), the New Statesman, the Spectator, the London Magazine and Encounter. He currently writes regularly for Art Review, and also for Index on Censorship. He also writes for La Vanguardia in Barcelona.

Independent Curator and Critic

Dominique Nahas is an independent cura tor and critic based in Manhattan. He is Associate Professor at Pratt Institute where he teaches critical studies. Mr. Nahas has curated and co-curated many gallery and museum exhibitions over the years. He has been a seminar and critique faculty and visit ing artist coordinator of the New York Studio Residency Program since ƒ'". Mr. Nahas has written hundreds of articles and reviews for a wide variety of art publications such as Art News, Flash Art, Art On Paper, New Art Examiner, Artnet Worldwide, Art Asia-Paci c, New Observa tions, C, Chelsea Arts, d'Art International, and among many other periodicals. He has been referred to and quoted as an expert in contemporary art in The New York Times three times in ‰ŽŽƒ in conjunction with his curatorial e˜orts.

Senior Lecturer in Chinese Archaeology at The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Wang Tao studied at the Yunnan Teachers" University, Kunming and the Postgraduate School of the Chinese Academy of Arts, Beijing, before coming to London in ƒ'Œ. He obtained his PhD from in ƒ'Š and has been teaching there ever since. His research interests and publications have focused on traditional and contemporary archaeological practice in China, oracle bone inscriptions and Chinese calligraphy.

Professor of Asian Art at Harvard University

A native of Jiangsu, China, Eugene Yuejin Wang studied at Fudan University in Shanghai (§ ƒ'Š; ƒ'Œ), and subsequently at Harvard University (ƒ'Ž; PhD ƒ'€). His teaching appointment at Harvard University began in ƒ'€, and he became the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor of Asian Art in ‰ŽŽ†. His book, Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China (‰ŽŽ†) has received the Academic Achievement Award. He is the art history associate editor of the Encyclopedia of Buddhism (New York, ‰ŽŽš). His thirty or so articles published in The Art Bulletin, Art History, Critical Inquiry, Res: Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics, Public Culture, and elsewhere, cover a wide range of subjects, including ancient bronze mirrors, Buddhist murals and sculptures, reliquaries, scroll paintings, calligraphy, woodblock prints, architecture, photography, and —lms. He has also translated Roland Barthes" Fragments d'un discours amoureux into Chinese, and wrote the screenplay for a short —lm, Stony Touch selected for screening in the 'th Hawaii International Film Festival.

Artist Biographies

b. , Singapore

Chen KeZhan is recognised as the country”s foremost abstract ink and wash painter. He studied Chinese traditional painting under Fan Chang Tien from ƒ’€† to ƒ’€’ and then left for Hong Kong where he studied the Lingnan style with Chen Shao-an and calligraphy with Fung Kang-ho. His subsequent years in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts from ƒ‘Š to ƒ‘† enriched his exposure to western modernism. He was selected as one of the artists included in Singapore”s —rst entry to the Venice Biennale in ‰ŽŽƒ. Chen KeZhan”s painting presents a convincing example of how successful the fusion between western abstraction and contemporary Chinese ink painting can be, as well as the further connection between Chinese classical aesthetics and modern variations.

b. , Taiwan

Chun-yi Lee moved to Hong Kong in ƒ’€Ž and graduated from the Chinese University there, where he was deeply in™uenced by his teacher Liu Kuo-sung. Lee obtained his from the Graduate Program of Fine Arts of Tunghai University in Taiwan, and he recently was awarded his PhD in Chinese art history at the Arizona State University. The artist is clearly aware of his hybrid and transcultural experience, both in his art-critical outlook and in his art. Inspired by the ancient technique of Chinese ink-rubbing, he uses a small cork block to stamp the paper with variable pressure and in di˜erent directions; this creates seemingly traditional yet deconstructed landscapes. Mao Triptych: Wan Sui, Wan Shui, Wan Wan Sui is a beautiful example of Lee”s idiosyncratic visual language. Centered between a pair of traditionalist/ modernistic landscapes is a huge portrait of Chairman Mao.

b. , Taipei

Fay Ku immigrated to the United States at the age of three. After graduating from Bennington College, Bennington, , , with a dual § in literature and visual arts, she moved to New York City; in ‰ŽŽŒ she graduated from Pratt Institute with a in art history and in studio art. Ku is one of the brilliant younger generation of Asian American women whose artistic vision – and in her case, accomplished drawing – is directed at examining the tension between gender issues and undercurrents of violence and sexual exploitation. Her seductive yet disturbing depiction of children, young girls, and animals is her way of exploring feelings of alienation from both China and America.

b. , Ganzhou, Jiangxi

Gao Xingjian was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in ‰ŽŽŽ. During the ƒ’ŒŽs and the ƒ’€Žs, Gao worked as

training in traditional Chinese art and philosophy and his experience in the United States have greatly contributed to his sophisticated and very personal style. Liu Dan"s ink paintings, whether of landscapes, scholar"s rocks, or cypress trees, are all fastidiously conceived, complex works which highlight his concern to emphasize underlying compositional structure over virtuoso expressions of showy brushwork.

b. , Bangbu, Anhui

Liu Kuo-sung is universally recognized as one of the earliest and most important advocates and practitioners of modernist Chinese painting. He moved to Taiwan from China in ƒ'š' and in ƒ'†Œ graduated from the Fine Arts Department of the National Taiwan Normal University, in which he studied both traditional brush-and-ink and western-style painting techniques. As one of the cofounders of the Taiwan"s Fifth Moon Painting Society (Wuyue huahui) in ƒ'†€, Liu Kuo-sung sought a new approach to art, which was inspired by both traditional Chinese painting as well as modern styles and techniques, such as Abstract Expressionism. By the mid-ƒ'ŒŽs, Liu gradually developed his own pictorial formulae, in which he combines ink painting with collage and applies ink and colour on special paper.

b. , Tianjin

Liu Qinghegraduated from the Tianjin Academy of Arts and Crafts in ƒ'€Œ, and later received graduate training from both the Folk Art Department and the Chinese Painting Department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. Over the years, Liu has sought to —nd ways to make ink painting relevant to contemporary life and has created a series of paintings that focus on ™eeting moments in people"s daily lives. His broad brushstrokes and vivid draftsmanship, derived from the long tradition of the conceptual sketch (xieyi) style, are used to enhance his depiction of the reality of individual human beings grappling with the hard realities of industrializing China. Water is a frequent subject in Liu Qinghe"s paintings. Depicting the isolation and helplessness of the swimmers in the water, Liu evokes the crisis and pressure that people undergo in contemporary society.

b. , Beijing

Liu Wei, one of the most audacious avant-garde artists of his generation, graduated from the Printmaking Department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in ƒ'", and he continues to live and work in Beijing. Liu was one of the —rst three Chinese artists to be included in the main exhibition of a Venice Biennale, in ƒ'"†. His versatility as an artist is remarkable. Liu Wei"s early paintings, from the —rst half of the ƒ'"Žs, have been characterized as Cynical Realism, an outgrowth of disillusion in the post-ƒ'"' era; most of these works are satires of political leaders, military cadres, and bureaucrats and are accomplished through free brushstrokes and distorted e˜ects of trompe l'oeil By contrast, since the second half of the ƒ'"Žs, his works use splashing and spattering techniques, including painting wet into wet emphasizing the messy physicality and impulsive action of contemporary life.

b. , Qingdao, Shandong

Lo Ch"ing is a poet, painter, and calligrapher. He moved to Taiwan in ƒ'š'. At an early age, Lo learned classical ink painting of the court tradition and subsequently he studied in the English Department of Fu Jen University, and received an degree in Comparative Literature from the University of Washington, Seattle, in ƒ'€š. He has been both a professor of literature and a professor of —ne arts in universities in Taiwan, the United States, the United Kingdom, Prague, and mainland China. His poems have been published and translated into many languages, and Lo Ch"ing is regarded as one of the pioneers of post-modern poetry in Taiwan. He has also been a major innovator in ink painting, for which he has created a new visual vocabulary that deconstructs the classical forms of Chinese landscape by introducing into his compositions abstract and geometric elements as well as unexpected contemporary motifs.

b. , Beijing

Scion of an old Beijing family of Manchu banner men, Lu Hao is one of the brilliant new generation of artists in today"s globalizing Chinese art world. He was appointed curator of the Chinese Pavilion for the †Šrd Venice Biennale in ‰ŽŽ'. Lu is deeply concerned about the brutal urban redevelopment of his native city and the loss of everything con nected with the life of his childhood courtyard home. Although he studied Chinese ink painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, Lu is best known for his works with modern ma-te rials such as Plexiglas, used to create models of major public buildings inhabited with live crea tures. He also utilizes his academic training in ink painting in an alternative approach to express his interest in architecture and current realities.

b. , Wuxi, Jiangsu

Miao Xiaochun is recognized as one of the most creative and technically sophisticated photographers in China today. After attending Nanjing University from ƒ'Œ to ƒ'"' he completed a master"s degree at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, and in ƒ'"† he went to study at the Kunsthochschule Kassel, Germany. In ƒ'"' Miao returned to live in Beijing, where he teaches in the Photography and Digital Media Department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. His sojourn in Germany increased Miao"s awareness of the fragmentation of contemporary Chinese society as well as imposing a recognition that neither the recent past of his own youth nor the classical past of China"s high antiquity can ever be retrieved. While using modern technology to create highly detailed mural-sized photographs of cityscapes and landscapes, often depicted in a European art-historical context, Miao is also engaged in issues of cultural exchange. The meticulously executed drawing here, Carrying the Cross, ‰ŽŽ', is a rare work by Miao that reaches deep into European art history and delineates the historical background to the permanent status of con™ict in religious and cultural life.

b. , Ninghai, Zhejiang

The painter and art historian Pan Gongkai is the son of painter Pan Tianshou. He studied at the Zhejiang Academy of Art (now China Academy of Art). From November ƒ'€' to November ƒ'"š Pan was a lecturer in the Department of Chinese Painting, China Academy of Art, before becoming the head of the department in ƒ'"€. From ƒ'"‰ to ƒ'"š he was a visiting researcher at the University of California. In ƒ'"ƒ Pan was hailed by critics as ¡Literati with Special Contribution¢. From April ƒ'"Œ to May ‰ŽŽƒ he was the president of the China Academy of Art and was appointed president of the Central Academy of Fine Arts ( ) in June ‰ŽŽƒ.

b. , Taitung, Taiwan

Pan Hsin-hua"s brush-and-ink style is —rmly rooted in the Chinese painting tradition. Currently living and teaching in Hualien, Taiwan, he graduated from Taipei National University of the Arts, and his works have been exhibited extensively in Taiwan. Pan skilfully blends both the past and the present in paintings that examine the relevance of tradition in contemporary culture. His archaism echoes the •blue-and-green style" that uses opaque mineral pigments in a mode traditionally thought most appropriate for depicting idealized and utopian world. This follows in the mould of the masters of the late Song and early Yuan dynasties as well as those of the late Ming period who in turn evoked them. At the same time, Pan introduces an ironic and irreverent ™avour into his work by integrating unconventional pictorial elements, often from other cultures, and usually of an explicitly contemporary and playful nature.

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b. , Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

Qin Feng is an iconoclastic artist who is actively involved in China”s avant-garde art movement. He studied mural painting at the Shandong University of Art and was one of the only two people in Shandong Province who radically experimented with imported styles of contemporary art during that period. From ƒ”Œ to ƒ”', Qin Feng taught at the Berlin University of Art while further exploring the possibilities of synthesizing modernism and the ink-painting tradition. In ƒ”', he moved to Boston where he currently resides. Before brushing ink on numerous layers of xuan paper, Qin often dyes it with tea and co˜ee as a metaphorical gesture of two cultures blending together. His ™uid ink and dynamic brush technique has developed into a style that is related to Abstract Expressionism in its openness to chance and emphasis on gesture. His works are a persuasive manifestation of the vitality of the calligraphic tradition.

”
b. , Chengdu, China

Qiu Anxiong was born in Chengdu in the southwest of China. Chengdu was one of the few cities in China during the ƒ“Žs to host a vibrant and experimental art-scene pioneered by two avant-garde artists who were later to become famous – Zhang Xiaogung and Ye Yongqing. In this fertile atmosphere Qiu opened a bar which became the hub for blossoming under ground music and art circles in Sichuan and where much of the groundwork for the internationally recognised Chinese avant-garde of the ƒ”Žs was laid. By ‰ŽŽŠ Qiu had spent some years in Ger many graduating from the Fine Arts Department of the University of Kassel where he absorbed the stylistic and conceptual innovations of western modernism at the same time as he pursued his study of Chinese traditional culture. He returned to Shanghai in ‰ŽŽš and began teaching at Shang hai Normal University which he continues to do so. Qiu Anxiong”s work ranges widely across a broad spectrum of painting, animation and video installation. The roots of his aesthetic remain in the ink painting tradition bolstered by a deep reading in the Chinese classics. He is therefore able to highlight the creative interaction between past and present in works which evoke a dreamy, other-world quality of ancient mythology in acutely contemporary terms thus highlighting the contradiction and absurdity of the world around us. The central themes de—ned by these works and his dismay at the consequences of the new China”s emergence – social disintegration, brutal urban isa tion and uncontained environmental degradation.

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b. , Shanghai

Qiu Deshu, one of the few Chinese artists to have received international recognition since the ƒ“Žs, studied traditional ink painting and seal carving when he was a child. However, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution interrupted his career in art, and he was sent to work at a plastics factory. In the late ƒ’€Žs, Qiu picked up ink painting again and cofounded the Grass Painting Society (cao huashe), one of China”s —rst experimental art groups of the post-Mao period. In the early ƒ“Žs, he developed his signature style of works called •—ssuring” (liebai). This is a metaphor for the artist”s life and artistic career, both of which have experienced dramatic disruptions and setbacks. In these works, he applies vivid colours to xuan paper, which he tears up; Qiu mounts the fragments to a base layer, often leaving space between, to create a pictorial —eld with the •cracks” that he feels are symbolic of life”s journey.

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b. , Shanghai

Qiu Jie started to learn painting by copying illustrations of the Red Guards in newspapers at the age of ten. In ƒ”ƒ, he graduated from the School of Decorative Arts in Shanghai and began to work as an art designer in the Shanghai Instrument Factory. In ƒ”“, recommended by two Swiss artists, Qiu Jie studied multimedia art at the School of Fine Arts in Geneva. Currently living and working in China, France, and Switzerland, Qiu uses the simplest tools – graphite pencil and paper – to express his concern about the life experience of the generation in China who went through the Cultural Revolution. Signing with the sobriquet •The Mountain Man Who Lives Outside His Hometown” (Taxiang shanren), Qiu Jie”s works connect his accomplished draftsmanship to the style of the propaganda posters from the Cultural Revolution era.

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b. , Zhangzhou, Fujian

Qiu Zhijie is one of the most talented and versatile artists in contemporary China. He studied printmaking at the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts, Hangzhou, and graduated in ƒ”‰; teaching there now, he is one of the most in™uential exponents of new media in China. Qiu”s often-conceptual works come in photography, video, performance, stone-carving, painting, or calligraphy; he is also an in™uential curator, critic, and teacher. Many of his works deeply explore the nature and meaning of the cultural tradition he has inherited. For Monument I: Revolutionary Slogans on Economic Issues, ‰ŽŽ€, Qiu utilized one of the most traditional techniques – ink rubbing – to convey slogans exploring public involvement in economic development. The ironic mixture of an ancient method of transmitting texts with contemporary content provokes people to rethink the relationship between tradition and today”s society. He is currently the curator for the ‰Žƒ‰ Shanghai Biennale.

b. , Shanghai

Tong Yang-tze studied calligraphy with her father when she was a child. She received her § from the National Taiwan Normal University, and later studied oil painting and ceramics at the University of Massachusetts, where she received an degree in ƒ’€Ž. Tong, who currently lives and works in Taiwan, has gradually developed her own visual language that bene—ts from her previous training in di˜erent media and art-forms. Tong creates powerful calligraphic works in cursive style (caoshu) that reach toward the extremes of abstraction. Characters are dramatically distorted but usually remain decipherable so that there is a sustained dialogue between content and style, meaning and autonomous gesture. Variations in the width and character of the lines/strokes serve to sustain the e˜ect of movement generated in the execution of each character and contribute to dramatic overall visual e˜ects.

b. , Jiangsu Province

Wang Dongling is one of the most successful and gifted of the modernist calligraphers in China and one of the few who has for many years enjoyed an international reputation. At ƒ€, he was admitted into the Department of Fine Arts at Nanjing Normal University and stu-ied calligraphy. During the Cultural Revolution, Wang survived by writing big-character posters, a job that ironically provided him with an artis tic freedom not available at the university. After the Cultural Revolution he attended the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou, where he is currently vice-chair of the Calligraphy Depart ment. Wang began developing a new form of composition that synthesizes traditional Chinese aesthetics with modernist art. Usually there are no decipherable Chinese characters in his works, which have become closer to abstract painting than to calligraphy. Wang Dongling has been enormously in™uential on the whole development of contemporary calligraphy and ink painting.

b. , Heilongjiang Province

Wang Jinsong acquired a reputa tion in the early ƒ“Žs as one of the most interesting in the avant-garde movement that sprang up during a period of opening and reform. Wang graduated from the Chinese Painting Department of the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in ƒ“€, but he —rst became known for his edgy oil paintings in a mode dubbed Cynical Realism, which acutely and wittily commented on the malaise in con

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b. , Nantong, Jiangsu

Xu Lei studied Chinese ink painting at the Department of Fine Arts of the Nanjing Art Academy and was a professional painter acœliated with the Jiangsu Institute of Chinese Painting. Based in Bejing, he now works at the Graduate School of the China Art Academy, serves as the art director of the Today Art Museum, and is editor-in-chief of the magazine Classics. Xu was an active participant in the innovative art movements in China in the late ƒ‘Žs. He returned to ink painting in the ƒ’Žs. Well-versed in the classic —ne-lingbi(detailed and elaborate) style of painting and in™uenced by traditional art, principally Song painting and woodcut illustrations from the Ming period, as well as by Surrealism and conceptual art, Xu Lei”s beautiful paintings rarely incorporate human —gures. His work was included in the major ƒ‘‘ exhibition A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China organized by Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

b. , Foshan, Guangdong

Yang Jiechang graduated from the Chinese Painting Department of that province”s Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in ƒ‘‰.Â Afterwards he spent two years formally studying Daoism under the Master Huangtao at Mount Luofu, which had a profound in™uence on his art. Upon his marriage to the writer and critic Martina Köppel-Yang, he moved to Paris in ƒ‘‘. Yang”s extensive training in Chinese and European artistic traditions has given Yang Jiechang uncommon versatility: his works range from painting, collage, and sculpture to multimedia installation, site-speci—c works, and performance. Yang gained international recognition through the exhibition of his large monochrome ink paintings in Les Magiciens de la Terreat the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris in ƒ‘‘. He also exhibited in the landmark China Avant/Gardeexhibition at Beijing”s China National Art Gallery that year.

b. , Nanjing, Jiangsu

Yang Yanping is one of the most distinguished contemporary ink painters from China. She studied architecture at Tsinghua University, where she married one of her painting teach ers, Zeng Shanqing. After she graduated in ƒ’†‘, and a brief spell of teaching factory design, Yang decided to study art at the Oil Painting Depart ment of the Beijing Art Academy. At the same time she studied traditional Chinese painting on her own. In ƒ‘Œ, both Yang and her husband were awarded fellowships from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and they have remained in America ever since. Yang is well versed in many traditional styles but has excelled in depict ing the lotus ™ower, a symbol of purity, tran-si ence, the fragility of nature, and the potential for regeneration. Yang”s ideals of high visual quality and an artistic autonomy allows her to embrace modernism without jettisoning the lessons from the classical Chinese world of high culture.

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b. , Taipei, Taiwan

Yao Jui-chung is now recognised as one of the most innovative Chinese artists of his generation. His work runs against the current of much of the mainstream avant-garde in its unabashed delight in producing a visual experience for the viewer that is beautiful as well as intellectually provocative. He is well-known for his works on paper, as well as his versatile experiments in photography, installation, performance, video and sculpture. He is also a curator, art-critic and art historian and has been dedicated to evaluating and promoting Taiwanese contemporary art both in Taiwan and internationally. He graduated from Taipei National University of the Arts and continues to teach at the University. He also represented Taiwan at the Venice Biennale in ƒ’€.

b. , Chongqing, Sichuan

Yuan Jai studied Chinese painting at the National Taiwan Normal University and received her degree from the Catholic University of Leuven in ƒ’ŒŒ. In ƒ’Œ‘ she received her doctorate from th Royal Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Artifacts. Yuan”s early interest in Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Cubism and Surrealism were fun-da mental to her later stylistic development. Upon returning to Taiwan, Yuan Jai worked for decades in the Department of Antiquities at the National Palace Museum in Taipei. Her own paintings were originally inspired by landscapes in thick min eral pigments and often with primitive-looking or archaistic compositions, in the so-called blue-and-green style, which were often on display at the museum. The main pictorial source for her work has been examples of the master paintings in the museum, but Yuan Jai has integrated her own very contemporary structure to create artworks that have been streamlined into geometric elements of vibrant colour.

b. , Beijing

Zeng Shanqing graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, where he studied under the distinguished painter Xu Beihong (ƒ‘‘Œ–ƒ’†Š), whose ideal of combining Chinese in painting with European styles of realistic drawing has deeply in™uenced Zeng. After —nishing his graduate school in ƒ’†‰, Zeng taught at the Central Academy. From that time, Zeng also lectured in the Department of Architecture at Tsinghua University; there he met and married his wife, the painter Yang Yanping. Zeng”s career was disrupted by the Cultural Revolution in the mid-ƒ’ŒŽs, and he was not able to resume teaching and painting until ƒ’€Œ. In ƒ‘‘Œ, both Zeng and his wife went as fellows to the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and they have remained on Long Island ever since. Like his teacher, Xu Beihong, Zeng Shanqing”s best-known subject is the horse. His powerful brushwork and dynamic compositional rhythms embody his profound sympathy for the values of political liberty.

b. , Beijing

Zeng Xiaojun graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in ƒ‘‘ƒ. He moved to the United States in ƒ‘‘Š and lived for the next fourteen years in Boston, where he exhibited and taught until ƒ‘‘€. Drawing inspiration from the literati landscape painting tradition, especially works by Shen Zhou (ƒš‰€–ƒ†Ž) and Wen-Zheng ming (ƒš€Ž–ƒ††) of the Ming period, Zeng extracts rocks and trees from the context of landscape and depicts them as isolated objects. Employing a-deli cate balance between dry and wet, lines and dots, his meticulously executed paintings remind us of the Chinese intellectuals” fascination with these subjects as embodiments of their own spiritual perseverance in times of diœculty and turbulence. Together the work of Liu Dan, Zeng Xiaojun”s ink paintings are a powerful example of how the high culture of traditional China can be reinvigorated for contemporary society.

b. , Shenyang, Liaoning

Zhang Chun Hong grew up in an artistic family. Hong displayed her gift at an early age, and she was admitted into the high school acœliated to Beijing”s prestigious Central Academy of Fine Arts at the age of ƒ†, when she won a national competition. She continued her study at the Chinese Painting Department at the Central Academy until ƒ‘‘š, where she focused on meticulous —gurative painting. In ƒ‘‘Œ, Hong came to the United States. Hong received an degree from California State University, Sacramento, in ‰ŽŽ‰ and another from the University of California, Davis, in ‰ŽŽš. Currently teaching at the University of Kansas, Hong has made art about intercultural and gender issues, and is meticulously portraying long hair as a way of examining a woman”s complete life cycle.

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b. , Tianjin

Zhang Yu has been a key —gure in the —eld of experimental ink painting since the ƒ''Žs. He graduated from Tianjin Academy of Arts and Crafts in ƒ'“ and is now associate professor and dean of the Artistic Design Department at Tianjin Tracœc Vocational College. Zhang took up printmaking in his early years and later changed to ink painting.Â He has pushed the boundaries of ink to an area close to imported modern abstraction. In his Divine Light Sęries Zhang shifts the traditional emphasis of brush to the material of ink itself in his use of rubbing/frottage, collage, and paper tearing. In this way, the painter"s control has been challenged, and the work emerges from the natural variations created by the ink itself. In his role as publisher and exhibition organizer, Zhang Yu has been profoundly in™uential on the evolution of modernist ink painting in China over the past twenty years.

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b. , Shanghai

Zheng Chongbin studied in China before traveling to the United States where he received an from the San Francisco Art Institute in ƒ"ƒ. He received his § from the Chinese Painting Department, Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (now China Academy of Fine Arts), Hangzhou in ƒ''š and subsequently taught at the China Academy of Fine Arts from ƒ''š to ƒ'“. Like many other contemporary Chinese artists, he is bi-cultural, spending his time between China and the US. His work re™ects in™uences from both cultures, and his richly textured ink surface confronts issues of form as well as a loftier metaphysical dimension. His recent projects include a commission for The Sand"s Corporation at Marina Bay Sands Integrated Resort in Singapore and a commission for the San Francisco Asian Art Museum.

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b. , Huangyan, Zhejiang

Zhu Daoping graduated from the Fine Arts Department of Nanjing Art Academyin ƒ'€€. In ƒ'€Š, Zhu"s paintings were —rst exhibited in the annual national art exhibition, and since ƒ'“ he has been the Nanjing Institute of Calligraphy and Painting"s president. In ‰ŽŽš, he received the —rst prestigious Huang Binhong Award, named for the leading literati painter of the early ‰Žth century. Having grown up near Nanjing, Zhu"s art is closely related to the New Jinling (Nanjing) School, painters deeply in™uenced by Fu Baoshi (ƒ'Žš–ƒ'Œ†), who revivi—ed the local landscape tradition of southern China and the Yangtze River. While the dotted surfaces in his paintings are reminiscent of the style of earlier Nanjing masters such as Mei Qing (ƒŒ‰Š–ƒŒ'€) and Shitao (ƒŒš‰€Ž€), Zhu goes further by rediscovering and emphasizing the relationship between dots, lines, and the pictorial surface: he has created a modern aesthetic that is still rooted in the long Chinese tradition of painting.

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