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Gallerist Pearl Lam docks Zhu Jinshi's 'Boat' at Art13 London

By Malaika Byng

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By Ellen Himelfarb

An ambitious paper and bamboo installation by Chinese artist Zhu Jinshi was the centerpiece of [Art13 London](#), a new international art fair that launched last week with a similarly impressive scope.

'Boat' is the masterwork of Zhu Jinshi, one of two contemporary Chinese artists brought to London by the Hong Kong- and Shanghai-based gallery [Pearl Lam](#) (the other is Su Xiaobai, a disciple of the late Joseph Beuys). The 12m-long cylindrical vessel was docked at the heart of Olympia's Grand Hall and echoed the space's heroic arched-glass ceiling.

Pearl Lam made, perhaps, the biggest splash at Art13, the largest art fair to launch in London in more than a decade and a spin-off of [Art HK](#), the fair that helped shape Hong Kong into a world-class contemporary-art hub. Unlike [Frieze](#), that other ambitious London art fair, Art13 had a decidedly international presence, with about half its content coming from non-Western artists and a significant delegation from Asia.

This, according to Lam, stems from an effort to demystify Asian cultures and philosophies for the Western consumer.

'To understand us, you really need to know about our roots, our art, how we behave. Everything is rooted in 5,000 years of culture,' said Lam. 'A fair for me is not just about buying art but understanding other cultures.'



Information

Between 1 and 3 March, Art13 London hosted more than 120 galleries from 31 countries. Art HK will open in Hong Kong on 23 May

Website

www.hongkongartfair.com

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'Boat' was assembled over three days by an army of workers imported from Hong Kong. It constitutes 8,000 sheets of rice paper, a medium with cultural and historical resonance in China. The delicate layering of the paper, supported by 800 slender shafts of bamboo, belies the sheer size and visual impact of the work.

The piece can be seen as a metaphorical arrival of Chinese culture to the world stage and the implications of its arrival for East and West. This cultural conversation is a recurring theme of Lam's artists, even those she brings back from the West to her galleries at home in China. 'Our gallery has always been about cross-cultural exchange,' she says. 'It's about cross discipline. It has always been that way.'