

PearlLam Galleries

Shanghai

Su Dong Ping solo exhibition **'Landscapes of the Heart'**



Su Dong Ping b. 1958, 2014No. 15, 2014
Oil paint and mixed media on canvas, 151 x 136 cm, 59 2/5 x 53 1/2 in.

Exhibition Dates

9 March–30 April, 2015

Monday–Sunday, 10:30am–7pm

Opening reception: Sunday, 8 March, 2015, 5–7pm

Pearl Lam Galleries, 181 Middle Jiangxi Road, G/F, Shanghai, China 200002

Shanghai—Pearl Lam Galleries Shanghai is pleased to present *Landscapes of the Heart*, Chinese abstract artist Su Dong Ping's inaugural solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition will feature approximately twenty of the artist's recent small-scale and large-scale paintings, composed of oil and mixed media on canvas, or acrylic on plastic board.

Su's 'action paintings', full of rich contradictions and feelings, consist of thick impasto layered with raw images and a combination of compact and expansive brushwork. His masterful use of black in conjunction with an array of contrasting colours produces strong works that radiate energy. In fact, Su believes that the quality of an artwork should solely be determined by the amount of energy the artist expends in its creation.

Although Su's works share similarities with expressionist traditions, his process is very much rooted in traditional Chinese philosophies and calligraphy. He was exposed early on to calligraphy through his father, who taught him the concept of 'bu miao', which means allowing the spirit and thoughts to flow on paper spontaneously and decisively rather than adhering to set rules. To reach such a state, Su enters a meditative trance, clearing his mind of outside distractions. He is then able to be instantaneous and use quick brushstrokes to create his abstract paintings, which he says are a balance of chance and personal preference. The artist believes one must work between the two to actualise freedom and the truth of expression.

Tension is at the heart of Su Dong Ping's works; for him, the act of painting is an emotional and psychological necessity. Born in 1958 in Shenyang, where he continues to be based, Su's works are informed by his formative years, which occurred during and in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. The increased competition to attend art school post-Mao delayed the start of his formal art education, which began in 1979 in the oil painting department of Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts in his hometown. Once there, however, he soon realised that his artistic desires were not going to be fulfilled due to the school's rigid emphasis on Russian social realism, which required precise sketching and conflicted with Su's need for spontaneous expression. Although China was beginning to open up at the time, back then Su had no exposure to abstract expressionism and only saw pictures of works by Matisse, Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Fauvist artists primarily through back channels. Su had to educate himself on different approaches to painting, which is why he believes an artist must persist in the pursuit of his/her own definition of art in order to progress. Having been repressed by societal, educational, and even familial restrictions—as his father believed that the arts should not rebel against accepted traditions and cultural norms—Su has an urge to create art that is subversive and revolutionary.

Art critic Philip Dodd writes, "[Su Dong Ping] produces emotionally charged paintings that are landscapes of the shifting contours of the heart, ever more important in a world where only material objects are seen as valuable."

Pearl Lam says: "I am very pleased to present Su Dong Ping's richly layered, expressive work to a wider international audience. Besides his Shanghai solo exhibition, the Galleries will also feature Su's work at our Art Basel Hong Kong stand. Su is a prime example of a mid-career artist who has yet to achieve the recognition he deserves. The Galleries hopes to change that with Su entering our stable of artists."

About Su Dong Ping

Su Dong Ping was born in 1958 in Shenyang, Liaoning province, where he is currently based. He taught painting and art history for over 20 years after graduating from the department of oil painting at Luxun Academy of Fine Arts in 1983. His revolt against traditional art education models during his school years has led to his becoming a Chinese abstract artist. Su Dong Ping's artistic language is based on the principles of calligraphy, first introduced to him by his calligrapher father. He employs the measure and spirituality of calligraphy, which emphasises a state of casual fortuity and instantaneity, in his abstract paintings. Su Dong Ping layers thick paint day after day onto his chosen canvas, impregnating it with strong emotional and visual tension while infusing it with his life experience, which reflects his sentiments at that very moment. The insight is beyond there and then, beyond the relativity of time, between instantaneity and eternalness, and beyond spatial relativity. His works are cathartic, having escaped from the constraints of time and space, and enter into a state of purity.

Su Dong Ping recently held his solo exhibition *Instant Measure: Paintings by Su Dong Ping* (2013) at the Inside-Out Art Museum in Beijing.

About Pearl Lam Galleries

Founded by Pearl Lam, Pearl Lam Galleries is a driving force within Asia's contemporary art scene. With over 20 years of experience exhibiting Asian and Western art and design, it is one of the leading and most established contemporary art galleries to be launched out of China.

Playing a vital role in stimulating international dialogue on Chinese and Asian contemporary art, the Galleries is dedicated to championing artists who re-evaluate and challenge perceptions of cultural practice from the region. The Galleries in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore collaborate with renowned curators, each presenting distinct programming from major solo exhibitions, special projects and installations to conceptually rigorous group shows. Based on the philosophy of Chinese Literati where art forms have no hierarchy, Pearl Lam Galleries is dedicated to breaking down boundaries between different disciplines, with a unique gallery model committed to encouraging cross-cultural exchange.

Contemporary Chinese Abstract art is heavily represented in the Galleries roster. Influential Chinese artists Zhu Jinshi and Su Xiaobai, who synthesise Chinese sensibilities with an international visual language, are presented internationally with work now included in major private and public collections worldwide. The Galleries has also introduced leading international artists such as Jenny Holzer, Jim Lambie and Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA) to markets in the region, providing opportunities for new audiences in Asia to encounter their work. Pearl Lam Galleries encourages international artists to create new work which engages specifically with the region, collaborating to produce thought-provoking, culturally relevant work.

Press Enquiries

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