

PearlLam Galleries

Singapore

Crossfades and Drawn Forms

GOLNAZ FATHI, LAN ZHENGHUI duo exhibition

Exhibition Dates 2 September–11 November, 2018
Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–7pm; Sunday, noon–6pm
Venue Pearl Lam Galleries, 9 Lock Road, #03-22, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108937

Singapore—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *Crossfades and Drawn Forms*, a duo exhibition featuring a selection of works by Iranian artist Golnaz Fathi and Chinese artist Lan Zhenghui. Transforming the gallery interior into an echo chamber of lines and interventions, the exhibiting works include paintings, a series of lightboxes, and a video projection.

Reinterpreting classical forms, Fathi's free abstractions of the written word coalesce with Lan's monumental ink landscapes to form an undulating visual rhapsody. The spiritual and intuitive strokes central to the artists' processes of creation unravel themselves upon closer scrutiny, juxtaposing introspection with expression.

Fathi's practice is rooted in traditional Persian calligraphy, a sacred form of art in the Islamic world. Her motivation is derived from the calligrapher's warm-up exercise known as *shiah mashgh*, or "black practice", where letters are repeated until the page is saturated with black ink. Fathi employs this technique with reverence and delight; she considers it the most natural representation of an artist's individuality. Making contemporary works after years of calligraphy training, Fathi's every gesture on canvas is charged with liberating emotion. Her latest pen on canvas series is directed by her withdrawn state of consciousness, a collision of persistence and surprises as the quivering lines break free of Arabic script. In contrast, her untitled acrylic on canvas work is more controlled with the brushstrokes a graphic intersection of hand and heart becoming one. The lines stand out from the grey background, themselves forming a powerful melody that reverberates against "the sound of silence".

As the visionary Chinese counterpoint, Lan's poised individualism is imbued in his splashes of black ink on Xuan paper, a trait unseen in the ancient Chinese tradition of ink painting. Guided by his profound consideration and emotion of ink, Lan's deep-rooted interest in the medium sparked over 20 years of passionate research in the field; his experiments in scale and ink density catapulted ink painting to greater heights in the international arena. His brushstrokes are made using systemic body movements, incandescent reiterations of muscle, blood, and physical power. Each line and vector comes alive with great emphasis and personality. Influenced by his background in science, Lan's aesthetic moves between the realms of the rational and irrational. Even as Lan presents his state of mind through his paintings, ghosts of natural spectacles like mountains and storms linger on, resulting in layered revelations for audiences.

As the artists move away from the conventions of their disciplines towards abstraction, their art unlocks a boundless sea of connotations and emotive possibilities. The sheer scale of Lan's 6-metre long painting *E04* produces an infinite feeling of space and time. An intangible spirituality emerges from the heavy ink, as its weight and power swell in impact. Fathi's black Plexiglass lightboxes deconstruct the drawn medium by suspending the spirit of her lines using holographic light. In a similar vein of transcendence, Fathi's video projection *Seasons Changing* is a colourized ebb and flow of her pen on canvas triptych *Knotted Roots*, bringing the mysterious tinge of afterlife to a finished painting.

Presented altogether, the dynamic lines and swathes of colour traverse between mediums and schools of practices and thought built on by Fathi and Lan. Driven by their innate meaning—a culmination of discipline, dexterity, and rumination from many years of academic study and refinement of their craft—the collection of drawn forms is a testament to their continuous redefinition of calligraphy and ink painting. A phenomenal transpiration of the essence of art making, Fathi's and Lan's ongoing artistic dialogue between the then and now conflates Eastern and Western ideals, cementing their place at the forefront of Asian contemporary art.

About the Artists

Born in Tehran in 1972, Golnaz Fathi is an influential member of a thriving generation of artists to surface in Iran over the last twenty years. While studying graphic design at Azad University in Tehran, Fathi became fascinated by the expressive potential of traditional Persian calligraphic forms. She later became one of a tiny handful of women trained to the highest level within that discipline, before developing her practice as a contemporary artist. Her works carry traces of meaning that have no known coded alphabet; they express natural emotions in the absence of literary language. Fathi has received a number of awards, including the Best Woman Calligraphist in Ketabat Style in 1995 by the Iranian Society of Calligraphy in Tehran. She was a member of the main competition jury of the Sharjah Calligraphy Biennale in 2010 and was chosen as a Young Global Leader Honoree by the World Economic Forum in 2011. Her works are in the permanent collections of institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; British Museum, London; Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore; Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi; and The Farjam Collection, Dubai. She has also exhibited in museums and galleries around the world, including in Hong Kong, New York, Paris, New Delhi, China, the United Kingdom, South Korea, Germany, and Switzerland. Fathi currently lives and works in Tehran, Iran.

Born in 1959 in Sichuan, China, Lan Zhenghui graduated from Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 1987. His style has been termed “heavy ink” by art critic Liu Xiaochun for the grandiose scale of his works and the weight of power and spirit within them. Chinese iconography haunts his shapes and strokes—the naturalistic allusions to mountains, rivers, and storms surge and fade dramatically to create an immersive splendour of intense emotion. In 2000, he launched a “power brush” movement with some of his fellow artists to promote the natural sense of motion and power in ink brush and oppose contrived methods of expression. His works have been presented internationally with solo exhibitions in the USA, Switzerland, China, Indonesia, and Canada. Notable group exhibitions include the Third Biennale China-Italia, Turin, Italy (2015); *Creating Identities*, 56th Venice Biennale, Kenyan Pavilion, Venice, Italy (2015); *Spiritual as Mountains*, Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong, China (2014); and *28 Chinese*, Rubell Family Collection/Contemporary Arts Foundation, Miami, USA (2013). His works have been collected by the Rubell Family Collection, USA; the British Consulate General Guangzhou; the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Guangzhou; National Art Museum of China, Beijing; the Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou; China Songzhuang Ink Painting League, China; Florida Gulf Coast University, USA; and the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, Canada. Lan currently lives and works in Beijing, China.

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.

Further building on the Galleries' commitment, Pearl Lam Galleries opened a new gallery space at H Queen's, Hong Kong's latest art hub, in March 2018. The five gallery spaces of Pearl Lam Galleries in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore represent an increasingly influential roster of contemporary artists. Chinese artists Su Xiaobai and Zhu Jinshi, who synthesize 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 Leonardo Drew, Jenny Holzer, Carlos Rolón/Dzine, and Yinka Shonibare MBE, 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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