

Wall Street International

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AGENDA - Hong Kong, Arts

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Spiritual as Mountains

27 March – 9 May 2014 at Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong



Su Xinping, *Grey No. 7, 2012, oil on canvas, 160 x 250 cm*

Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *Spiritual as Mountains*, a group exhibition which explores contemporary Chinese spiritual and cultural values through artworks inspired by the spirituality of nature and Chinese traditional culture. Curated by renowned Beijing-based curator Wang Chunchen, who curated the China Pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale, the exhibition showcases around 25 works by seven Chinese contemporary artists born between 1942 and 1968: Xu Bing, Xia Xiaowan, Su Xinping, Jizi, Wang Huangsheng, Lan Zhenghui and Zhang Wei.

Instead of looking to the West, these artists look within their own culture for inspiration. Since ancient times, the Chinese have held a deep fascination with nature and landscapes, using them to express the psyche and inner spirituality. Literati have long used mountains in particular to communicate a bold, masculine spirit. These artists continue the tradition with their installation, sculpture, ink painting, and oil painting works, which embody the spirituality of nature and vitality of mountains. While some works literally depict scenes of nature, others realise its essence and strength in an abstract way.

Highlights include Xu Bing's 5.5 metre long Mustard Seed Garden Landscape Scroll (2010), which was exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In this work, the internationally acclaimed artist lifts landscape motifs, such as leaves, rocks and mountains, from a 17th century Chinese landscape painting manual, complete with instructional text, and rearranges them to form a new landscape composition, which he proceeds to carve onto woodblocks and print onto rice paper. While art students learn landscape painting by replicating, Xu reveals the creative possibilities of copying which is very much relevant in China today.

Xia Xiaowan's glass installation Landscape—Taihu Rock (2007) uses 18 pieces of 6 mm glass to create a three-dimensional painting of a scholar's rock (also known as a spirit stone), which is valued for its beauty and ability to connect its beholder with nature and spiritual aspirations. Xia's technique allows audiences to view the rock from multiple angles, playing with space and perspective.

Zhang Wei, who studied sculpture in the former USSR, will make his Hong Kong debut with six bronze sculptures which depict majestic mountains and plateaus, symbolising the power of the Chinese spirit.

Su Xinping's oil on canvas paintings from his Grey and Landscape series are allegorical, yet also infused with a surreal ambiguity. The desolate landscapes allude to the harmful effects of rapid modernisation in China, while also conveying his inner soul and roots in the northern grasslands.

Jizi, Wang Huangsheng, and Lan Zhenghui have created diverse works all using ink on Xuan paper and their works flow with the liveliness of the medium. Jizi, who is exhibiting in Hong Kong for the first time, infuses his landscapes with colour and free brushstrokes, creating movement in time and space through layers of ink. His landscapes are less about actual scenes of mountains and more about the enduring essence of nature. Artist Wang Huangsheng, who is also the Director of the Art Museum of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, uses free flowing lines in his Flowing Imagery series. His meditative process captures emotions and translates them onto paper. Lan Zhenghui's bold, heavy brushstrokes communicate the weight of power and spirituality in an abstract way, and will be on full view in works including a scroll that is over six metres long.

The curator Wang Chunchen says, "The spirit of China is comparable to that of a mountain, in that it is lasting, constant, and embodies indomitable perseverance and vitality. If it did not possess this charm and value, its natural landscapes would not be the chosen subject of so many artists' works and their investment of decades of effort in artistic creation."

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Opening hours Monday - Saturday From 10.30am to 7pm **Related images**

- 1.Su Xiping, Grey No. 7, 2012, oil on canvas, 160 x 250 cm
- 2.Zhang Wei, Mountain No. 10, 2006, Bronze, 37 x 44 x 36 cm
- 3.Wang Huangsheng, Flowing Imagery 201302012, 2014, Ink on Xuan paper, 69.5 x 137.5 cm
- 4.Jizi, Dimension of Ages, 2013, Ink on xuan paper, 183 x 145 cm
- 5.Xia Xiaowan, Landscape Taihu Rock, 2007, special pencil
- 6.Lan Zhenghui, E69, 2014, 84 x 78 cm

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