

PearlLam Galleries

Hong Kong

Qiu Deshu solo exhibition
**'Night and Day':
The Art of Qiu Deshu—1979 and After**



Qiu Deshu (b. 1948), **Fissuring**, 1987, Acrylic on Xuan paper and canvas, 115.5 x 175.5 cm (45 1/2 x 69 1/8 in.)

Exhibition Dates

29 May–21 July, 2015

Monday–Saturday, 10am–7pm

Pearl Lam Galleries, 6/F, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong

Hong Kong—Pearl Lam Galleries will present a solo exhibition that explores both recent and historical works by Chinese abstract artist Qiu Deshu (b. 1948) that span four decades of his career in a curated exhibition by Philip Dodd, former Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London.

Qiu Deshu has played an important role in Chinese art over the last 35 years. He was the driving force behind one of the early movements of independent art post-Mao through the group he co-founded, the Grass Painting Society. From early on in his career, he was internationally recognised for his remarkable work, and has been collected by major museums, including the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. He was one of the seminal Chinese artists of the 1980s, who made groundbreaking experimental ink art. Qiu encountered early in China the art of major Western painters, such as Jackson Pollock, and developed his

own artistic territory due in his 'fissuring' technique that transcends medium and subject to both honour his cultural heritage and simultaneously reject it.

Night and Day is Qiu Deshu's first one-person show at Pearl Lam Galleries Hong Kong and, appropriately, it has an ambitious career-length character with the earliest work a stunning 1979 piece entitled 'Abstract Calligraphy', representations of his seminal works from the 1980s and 1990s, and more recent work that reinvents landscape painting.

Achieving independence has been an overriding ambition in Qiu Deshu's work. This exhibition has been curated to show the variety of forms, inclusive of Western and Chinese resources, through which that struggle has taken place. Through his career Qiu has used collage as a form of 'creative destruction' as well as the influence of early 'Abstract Expressionism' to transform the traditional language of ink painting to make something resolutely contemporary.

It was in the 1980s that Qiu devised his signature technique of tearing Xuan paper, reconfiguring the pieces and mounting them to form images, creating lines, or "fissures" as he aptly coins his personalised style. The process of creation, destruction, and recreation conveys aspects of the artist's experiences of an early education in traditional Chinese painting, and of life through the Cultural Revolution. By making inventive use of its hue, delicacy, pliability, and water permeability, he rubs and carves the delicate Xuan paper, slowly building on top of a base layer of coloured Xuan paper that is mounted on the canvas. This unique approach is similar to the technique used in scroll mounting, but while his work is indebted to Chinese landscape traditions, Qiu has consistently pushed their boundaries to form a contemporary idiom of creative expression.

"Qiu Deshu's work is a revelation—a genuinely experimental artist, he has revised both the traditions of Chinese and Western painting to produce something distinctive which has enabled him to explore the inner freedom that has been his life ambition."

—Philip Dodd, Curator

"I am delighted to present this major Qiu Deshu retrospective exhibition at Pearl Lam Galleries Hong Kong for one of China's most important abstract artists. Philip Dodd's curatorial direction brings the artist's unique fissuring technique, and his impact on art history, the academic attention it deserves."

—Pearl Lam, Founder of Pearl Lam Galleries

About Qiu Deshu

Qiu Deshu (b. 1948, Shanghai) received an early education in traditional Chinese painting, seal carving, and scroll mounting. His engagement with experimental ink painting began in the late 1970s. In 1979, Qiu co-founded the Grass Painting Society (*Cao Cao Hua She*), one of China's first experimental art societies in the post-Mao era. The Society was a group of twelve artists who advocated independence of spirit, technique, and style in painting. In his works of this period, the influence of concepts drawn from Western modern art is evident, but Qiu's choice of materials remained rooted in traditional Chinese art. He is one of China's earliest professional artists in the 1980s. The artist currently lives and works in Shanghai, China.

Qiu Deshu has held numerous solo exhibitions dedicated to showcasing his fissuring technique, including; *Qiu Deshu, Ink Painting from 1980 to 2012* (2012), Michael Goedhuis Gallery, London, UK; *Fissuring—Qiu Deshu Water-Ink Exhibition* (2008), Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China; *Qiu Deshu—Ten Years After the Grass Painting Society* (2007), Shanghai Duolun Contemporary Art Museum, Shanghai, China; and *Fissuring—The Paintings of Qiu Deshu* (1994), Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China.

Major group exhibitions include *Oil & Water: Reinterpreting Ink* (2014), works by Qiu Deshu, Wei Jia, and Zhang Hongtu, Museum of Chinese in America, New York City, USA; *Light Before Dawn: Unofficial Chinese Art 1974–1985* (2013), Asia Society Hong Kong Center, China; *Ink: The New Ink Art from China* (2012), Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; *Taste of the East: Masterpieces of Chinese Art* (2012), Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China; *Open Flexibility:*

Innovative Contemporary Ink Art (2009), Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan; and *China Without Borders* (2001), Goedhuis Contemporary at Sotheby's, New York, USA.

Selected collections include the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, USA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA; National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China; and Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China.

About Philip Dodd

Philip Dodd (b. 1949) is a curator, writer, and award-winning BBC broadcaster. He was the Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) London from 1997 to 2004.

Dodd has curated exhibitions in London, New York, Moscow, Beijing, Indonesia and Singapore, with artists as various as Damien Hirst, Yoko Ono, Zhu Jinshi, and Steve McQueen. Most recently, he has curated a major 100-work retrospective of Sean Scully, which opened at CAFA Beijing, and will move to Jakarta.

Dodd is also Chairman of Made in China (www.madeinchinauk.com), which has helped to develop many art projects between China and the West, including Photo Shanghai Fair in Shanghai, the award-winning British Pavilion by Thomas Heatherwick at the 2010 Shanghai Expo, and the Global Private Museum Summit that brings together annually 40 private contemporary art museum owners, most recently at Art 15 London.

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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