

Pearl Lam Galleries

Singapore

Fall into Oblivion:

YANG YONGLIANG solo exhibition



YANG YONGLIANG b. 1980, *Fall into Oblivion*, 2015, Digital film, 58'13"

Exhibition Dates 2 April–2 May, 2016 Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–7pm; Sunday, 12–6pm
Venue Pearl Lam Galleries, 9 Lock Road, #03-22, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108937

Singapore—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Chinese artist Yang Yongliang, opening on 2 April, 2016. The exhibition is a blend of moving image, photography, and painting, which showcases the expansive size and scope of Yang's artistic practice. Through his works, the artist examines cultural and personal memory, highlighting moments of alignment—and discord—between the two.

The main highlight, Yang's full-length film *Fall into Oblivion*, will make its Southeast Asian debut at the exhibition. Dressed in kendo armour and chasing after a tripod raven guide, the protagonist in Yang's film takes the audience on a journey through a timeless dreamscape. The film's narrative is influenced by Yang's reading of Tao Yuanming's "Peach Blossom Spring", in which the protagonist chances upon a utopian society detached from the urbane world. The armoured kendo warrior is anonymous and stands as a solitary figure amidst a busy metropolis. Though dignified in his armour, his mind is self-enclosed. He is alone and detached from the chaos of urban civilisation. The film also engages with what has been referred to as Zhuangzi's great dream, where the melding of his lucid dreams as a butterfly with his waking life as a human being leads him to question the existence of any sort of reality.

The audience is pulled into an immersive experience with the transformation of the gallery space into a dark cave-like enclosure, blurring into Yang's typical grayscale aesthetic. The man in the armour leads the audience just as the raven has led him. It is only at the end of the journey that one awakens from oblivion and realises that the answers have already been unfolding along the journey.

An archive room has also been put together with materials and props from the making of the film. Audience members have the opportunity to gain greater insight into the film, to learn about the artist's conceptual development, aesthetic decisions, and technical considerations that arose behind-the-scenes.

Yang will also exhibit two new mixed media paintings. Although he believes that the future is increasingly moving towards digital media, the artist still values painting as part of his practice. To him, new media represents the rational, as it does not involve the direct physical contact of the artist's body. On the other hand, painting and calligraphy are highly emotional, arising directly from motions of the body.

After spending nearly two years focusing on developing his film and video works, Yang has returned to the canvas. His choice of medium is telling of his concerns—he paints mainly with a mixture of acrylic and cement, a material closely associated with the urban landscape. Yet the expressive strokes on the canvas tell a different story from the rigid, grey structures they create. Alternating dense and forceful marks with delicate and minimal imprints, Yang turns the idea of a “concrete jungle” on its head, masterfully using cement to build his mountainous forms, introducing us to the medium's surprisingly fluid nature.

A selection of past digital collage works will also be displayed alongside the new paintings. Yang forges a connection between traditional art and the contemporary world, marrying ancient oriental aesthetics and literati beliefs with the experimental open-mindedness and digital technologies of the modern age. Viewed from up close, Yang's apparently idyllic scenery reveal mountains, forests and lakes covered with sprawling cranes and skyscrapers. His photographic digital collages begin with his database of documentary urban landscape photographs. Replacing brush and ink with his digital editing skills, Yang creates scenes of great architectonic harmony in his commentary on the uncontrolled rapid urbanisation in China. As such, the world that Yang has so assiduously created, embedded in various disciplines, is one that is intently sensitive to public memory.

About the Artist

Born in 1980 in Shanghai, Yang Yongliang graduated from the Shanghai Institute of Design (part of the China Academy of Art) in 1999, majoring in visual communication and design. He now works and lives in Shanghai.

The artist is best known for the intricate landscapes he creates by integrating layers upon layers of urban and natural images together. Drawing from his formal education in the art of traditional Chinese *shan shui* (山水) painting, Yang's work exudes a strong sense of traditional aesthetics, although he continually engages with the modern through his choice of media and content. Poetic and quaint as they appear from a distance, his landscapes unfold themselves as a fable of the development of modern civilisation upon closer views. A sense of psychological turmoil and uneasiness that is characteristic of the modern era can be perceived from the abandoned power tower, the man-made paradise, and the vast but internally empty cities.

Yang has held solo exhibitions in galleries and institutions all over the world, including China, Australia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and the USA to name a few. Major group exhibitions include *2050. A Brief History of the Future* (2015), The Louvre, Paris, France; the 5th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (2014), Fukuoka, Japan; *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China* (2013), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA; the 5th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2013), Moscow, Russia; and *the Creator's Project: Beijing 2012*, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China.

Yang Yongliang's works have been acquired by and are included in the collections of esteemed public institutions such as the British Museum in London, National Gallery of Victoria in Australia, and the Nevada Art Museum in the USA. His works are also in the private collections of Deutsch Bank, The Saatchi Gallery, and the M+ Sigg Collection, amongst others. Most recently, he was one of twelve photographers shortlisted for The Sixth Prix Pictet (2015), one of the world's leading prizes in photography and sustainability.

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.

The four branches of Pearl Lam Galleries in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore represent an increasingly influential roster of contemporary artists. 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, Leonardo Drew, 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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