

# PearlLam Galleries

Hong Kong Pedder Building

## LABYRINTH(S)

Featuring works by Leonardo Drew, Golnaz Fathi, Gonkar Gyatso, Ni Haifeng, Peter Peri, Kour Pour, Gatot Pujiarto, and Ben Quilty



Kour Pour b. 1987, *Shaolin Mural (Fragments)*, 2015–16, Acrylic on canvas over panel, 244.4 x 183.4 cm (96 1/4 x 72 1/4 in.)

Exhibition Dates 14 July–1 September, 2016 Mon–Sat, 10am–7pm

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

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Hong Kong—Pearl Lam Galleries is delighted to present *Labyrinth(s)*, featuring works by eight contemporary artists: Leonardo Drew, Golnaz Fathi, Gonkar Gyatso, Ni Haifeng, Peter Peri, Kour Pour, Gatot Pujiarto, and Ben Quilty. The title of the exhibition references Jorge Luis Borges's celebrated short story "The Garden of Forking Paths".

In Borges' story, the protagonist Dr. Yu Tsun muses about a lost labyrinth:

I imagined it inviolate and perfect at the secret crest of a mountain; I imagined it erased by rice fields or beneath the water; I imagined it infinite, no longer composed of octagonal kiosks and returning paths, but of rivers and provinces and kingdoms...I thought of a labyrinth of labyrinths, of one sinuous spreading labyrinth that would encompass the past and the future and in some way involve the stars. Absorbed in these illusory images, I forgot my destiny of one pursued.

By investigating the associative potential of their chosen media and forming metaphorical labyrinths with diverse artistic languages that offer unlimited alternatives, the artists in this exhibition examine the notion of infiniteness. The use of different media in turn constructs a huge labyrinth. Audiences can decide for themselves what the artworks really are: paintings, sculptures, photographs, installations, or hybrid fusions. Meanwhile, different artists build up the labyrinth into different universes in specific gradations. They investigate the inner labyrinths of materials, connections between figuration and abstraction, politics of identity, religion, and pop-culture, and indulge the viewers in a visual sublime.

With the exploration of René Guénon's explanation of Eastern and Western traditions, British artist Peter Peri (b. 1971) shifts the complex representations of humans and heaven into symbols and the use of lines as informed by Taoist thinking in his marker pen and spray paint on linen works.

The woodblock pieces by 29-year-old Los Angeles-based British-Iranian artist Kour Pour (b. 1987) are informed by Western abstract tradition and Japanese aesthetics. They are actually a translation of earthquake and volcano maps produced by the Japanese Geological Survey, referring to the shifting and overlapping of different aesthetics with this physical metaphor of transformation. Celebrating the craftsmanship of carpets in different cultures, where decorative motifs trace back cultural histories, *Shaolin Mural (Fragments)*, a piece from Pour's carpet painting series, consists of different cultural patterns such as the Chinese Buddha and decorations, Persian horses, Egyptian gods and figures, as well as Japanese characters.

Interested in post-colonialism and cultural exchange, Chinese artist Ni Haifeng (b. 1964) makes written marks on top of bodies, objects, and environments. Ni states his intention, "The self is examined at various specific temporal/spatial coordinates and can therefore be seen as a cue to the broader historical realities." *The Warehouse* (1988) is a series of photographs from the late 1980s that conveys our desire to project personal memories onto a physical origin that is always subject to change. Ni's photograph *Self-Portrait as Part of the Porcelain Export History* (1999–2001) addresses the way in which colonial history has infringed onto our bodies in the name of otherness, an issue central to the discussion of identity politics during the 1990s.

Influenced by abstract expressionism, American artist Leonardo Drew's (b. 1961) work places an emphasis on concept, materiality, and process. He asserts the physical characteristic of his materials, emphasising their texture, colour, and shape, to create something that is insistently sculptural. The connectivity between humanity and the physical existences is projected from his wooden lines and paper, giving his artwork lives of their own.

Emphasising an infinite series of lines—a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent, and parallel lines—Iranian artist Golnaz Fathi's (b. 1972) works are influenced by traditional Persian calligraphy, but are entirely modern. She practices drawing the lines on paper every day until the paper is covered with black ink. Despite the fact that writing is a significant element in her works, Fathi does not aim to present the existing aesthetic value and form of traditional calligraphy, but instead unites these values and forms with images that can be appreciated in the contemporary world.

The artworks by Gonkar Gyatso, Gatot Pujiarto, and Ben Quilty contain subtle iconography and symbolism. Quilty's investigations surround the issue of masculinity. His works relate to his own past, as well as Australia's wider historical culture. *The Photojournalist (AQ)* (2014) is a portrait of Quilty's cousin, photojournalist Andrew Quilty, who spends his time displaced in countries like Syria and Afghanistan. The work refers to the relationship between identity and current affairs. Gonkar Gyatso's Buddha sculptures are covered with stickers that reference pop culture, indicating how cultural globalisation has affected traditional Buddhism. The works can be seen as the artist's own meditation on what it means to be living in a particular place at a particular time. Gyatso inserts Buddhist and Tibetan iconography into our daily lives. Gatot Pujiarto's works are narrative and figurative. The works are influenced by his daily experiences and surrounding occurrences, and they preserve his memories.

## About the Artists

### LEONARDO DREW

Leonardo Drew was born in 1961 in Tallahassee, Florida, and he grew up in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Drew went on to attend the Parsons School of Design in New York, and he earned a BFA from Cooper Union in 1985. Drew's works are always sculptural, although he tends to avoid making freestanding pieces. Instead, he will often mount objects onto panels or directly to the wall, which can be seen as a nod to his beginnings as a painter and draftsman.

Leonardo Drew's work has been exhibited across the USA and internationally. Major solo exhibitions include Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York, New York, USA (2016); Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong (2015); Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco, USA (2014); *Existed: Leonardo Drew*, Blaffer Gallery, Art Museum of the University of Houston, Houston, USA (2009); Palazzo Delle Papesse, Centro Arte Contemporanea, Siena, Italy (2006); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., USA (2000); The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, USA (2000); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, USA (1995).

### GOLNAZ FATHI

Golnaz Fathi (b. 1972, Tehran, Iran) is one of only a tiny handful of women trained to the highest level within the discipline of traditional Persian calligraphy. An influential member of a currently thriving generation of artists to surface in Iran over the last twenty years, Fathi appropriates the form, practice, and technique of calligraphy in modern media.

Golnaz Fathi has works in the collections of The British Museum, London; The Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi; The Islamic Arts Museum, Kuala Lumpur; The Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore; and Carnegie Mellon University, Doha. She has received a number of awards, including the Best Woman Calligraphist in Ketabat Style in 1995 by the Iranian Society of Calligraphy in Tehran, and she was chosen by a jury to receive the Young Global Leader award in 2011 at the Sharjah Calligraphy Biennale. Fathi currently lives and works between Tehran and Paris.

## GONKAR GYATSO

Gonkar Gyatso (b. 1961, Lhasa, Tibet) moved to London in the late 90s and attained his Master of Art in Fine Art at the Chelsea School of Art and Design. Before that, he studied traditional Chinese painting in Beijing as well as Thangka painting (traditional Tibetan scroll painting) in Dharamsala. Gyatso uses symbols of religious culture and derives inspiration from street art and graffiti. His work comes out of a fascination with material and pop culture, along with a desire to bring equal attention to the mundane as well as the extraordinary, the imminent, and the superfluous.

Gyatso's works have been exhibited in galleries and museums around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, Massachusetts), Tel Aviv Museum of Art (Israel), The City Gallery (New Zealand), The Institute of Modern Art (Australia), the National Art Museum of China (Beijing), the Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art (Scotland), the Courtauld Institute of Art (London), and the Burger Collection (Switzerland). Additionally, he has participated in the 53rd Venice Biennial (Italy), the 6th Asia Pacific Triennial in Brisbane (Australia), and the 17th Sydney Biennale (Australia).

## NI HAIFENG

Ni Haifeng (b. 1964, Zhoushan, China) graduated from Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (now known as the China Academy of Art) in 1986. Afterwards, he joined RED 70%, BLACK 25%, WHITE 5%, a group of artists working with conceptual art and nonsense text. These early works focused on acts of writing, re-appropriations and deconstructed forms of language. Since the mid-1990s, after emigrating to Europe, his work has acquired additional layers that refer to his new identity as a Chinese immigrant, and to issues of (post-)colonialism and "otherness".

Ni Haifeng's works have been exhibited throughout Asia and Europe and have been collected by the M+ Museum in the West Kowloon Cultural District in Hong Kong; Guangdong Museum of Art in Guangzhou, China; Museum Huis Marseille in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Museum De Lakenhal in the Netherlands; Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane, Australia; and other public collections.

## PETER PERI

Peter Peri (b. 1971, London, UK) graduated from the MA Fine Art program at Chelsea College of Art and Design, London in 2003. His drawings are built-up through the accumulation of tiny hair-like pencil lines that lend an obsessive, congested quality to his strict forms and figures. Peri's striated monochrome paintings are characterised by their hard-edged diagonal networks of fine silver and pastel-coloured marker pen lines against blackened and gnarled spray-painted backgrounds. These paintings appear to trace an occult tinged geometric language—a Morse code of shifting lines and shapes—that might be used to describe the world in more elemental terms.

His works are in the permanent collections of Tate Modern, Saatchi Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum, Arts Council of Great Britain Collection; and UBS Funds, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland.

## KOUR POUR

Kour Pour (b. 1987, Exeter, UK) graduated with a BFA from Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, USA in 2010. Inspired by an early education in textiles from his Iranian-born father, who owned a carpet shop in the UK during the late 1980s, Pour's early series of carpet paintings are informed by an interest in carpets and their role in the world as an object of craft—people weaving in a community, the history, the patterns, the figures, as well as their status as collectable commodities. Pour's newest series of work addresses Japonisme, the fascination by Western artists with Japanese art and aesthetics. In his Tectonic paintings series, the artist uses the Japanese Ukiyo-e printing process to produce richly layered and coloured abstract paintings.

Among others, Pour's solo exhibitions include *Onnagata* (2016), Feuer/Mesler, New York, USA; *Onnagata* (2016), Gnyp Artspace, Berlin, Germany; *Samsara* (2015), Depart Foundation, Los Angeles, California, USA; and *Ozymandias* (2014), Ellis King, Dublin, Ireland.

## GATOT PUJIARTO

Gatot Pujiarto (b. 1970, Malang, East Java, Indonesia) graduated from the Department of Fine Art and Design at IKIP Malang in 1995. His works amuse and provoke audiences to reinterpret daily stories as a new reality, to enjoy them through evoking new emotions. The visual sensation in Pujiarto's works is combined with the unique textures that are created by pasting, patching, layering, tearing, binding, and by making fabric patterns.

Pujiarto has been widely exhibited throughout Indonesia and internationally. Exhibitions include *Stitching Stories* (2016), Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong SOHO; *Masquerade of Life* (2015), Pearl Lam Galleries, Singapore; *Shout—Indonesian Contemporary Art* (2014), Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma (MACRO), Rome, Italy; *Indonesian Contemporary Fiber Art* (2012), ArtOne New Museum, Jakarta, Indonesia; and *Jatim Art Now* (2012), National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia.

## BEN QUILTY

Ben Quilty (b. 1973, Sydney, Australia) completed his Bachelor of Visual Arts, majoring in painting at the Sydney College of the Arts in 1994. He later went on to receive a certificate in Aboriginal Culture and History from Monash University in 1996, a Bachelor of Visual Communication at the University of Western Sydney in 2001, and an Honorary Doctorate of Creative Arts at the University of Western Sydney in 2015. Quilty's painting style can be recognised from his thick layering of paint. He uses different types of palette knives, smearing the paint to create his figures.

Recent and other major solo exhibitions include *The Stain* (2016), Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, Australia; *Straight White Male* (2015), Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong; *Ben Quilty* (2014), Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; *Ben Quilty: After Afghanistan* (2013), National Art School, Sydney, Australia (then touring nationally); *Smashed* (2008), GRANTPIRRIE, Sydney; and *Young and Free?* (2004), Jan Murphy Gallery, Sydney.

## 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.

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## Press Enquiries

Eszter Csillag / Pearl Lam Galleries  
eszter@pearllamgalleries.com / +852 2522 1428

Jenny Zhang / Pearl Lam Galleries  
jenny@pearllamgalleries.com / +852 2522 1428