

PearlLam Galleries

Singapore

Presence of Whiteness:

ZHU JINSHI dual-space solo exhibition

Singapore—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *Presence of Whiteness* by Zhu Jinshi, its first dual-space solo exhibition since the opening of the new gallery in Dempsey Hill. Following his recent solo at Pearl Lam Galleries Hong Kong, which featured a series of black and white paintings, Zhu Jinshi will present over 20 coloured paintings created between 2012–16 at the Dempsey Hill space. The works can be seen as a dialectic of colour as concept; in keeping with his “detached from colour” series of paintings, here colour is transformed into enriched bodily forms traversing between whiteness and colour-filled three-dimensional space on canvas. Meanwhile, the Gillman Barracks gallery will feature works consisting of painting, installation, and text that span a fifty-year period, delineating a personal history of persistence and destruction as well as attachment and reflection.

Dempsey Hill

Exhibition Dates 10 January–5 March, 2017 Daily, 11am–8pm

Venue Pearl Lam Galleries, 15 Dempsey Road #01-08, Dempsey Hill, Singapore 249675

When "white" returns to an object through the medium of paint, then "white" should all the more be an "object" instead of a painting.

—Zhu Jinshi

“Whiteness” signifies not only a minimalist reduction to its extreme, the blank canvas, but also carries with its emptiness the potency of the inner mind. The collision and conflict of these two roles is both an intersection of cultural language and syntax, and a vivid embodiment of every decision the artist makes when confronting a blank canvas, colour, and paint. Zhu prefers to convey colour three-dimensionally through thick applications of paint; he embraces the splendour of colour through its materiality, facing directly the challenge and surprise of paint. For him, paint embodies time, while the presence of whiteness is where time freezes. Using a custom-made palette knife, he pulls and pushes, flips and shovels—bodily movements that are exercised above the canvas. Where to fill, where to empty, where to collapse, where to fall, where to determine, and where to hesitate construct the presence of whiteness in the painting, composed of revolutionary moments of action. In this three-dimensional space, the white paint grows fearlessly within different levels; whereas colour and paint either expands; overlaps; or hides in crevices, edges, or cracks. In the end, paint becomes a game played out by a materialised body and an escalating vision.

Zhu Jinshi’s painting is not to be viewed in stillness, neither is it aesthetic ecstasy achieved by the medium of paint. The subject is not immersed in the work, but is instead made to stand out; these works are a result of metaphysical transformation and a fermentation of the artist’s action as it relates to a quintessential subject that marches forward on an elusive path full of obstacles and doubts. The landscape on the canvas imitates the ascending and descending altitude; the river of paint rumbles Mother Earth to her astonishment, letting the falling particles and mass sediment float or rush to the

summit of the forest, fall into the valley of a mountain, soar on top of the wave, hang in the middle of a cliff, such as in *Western Hills* and *Such a Master*. Calligraphy inadvertently returns and winds on the canvas surface; the argument with tradition vanishes in the writing with paint, leaving monochromatic calligraphic traces. Non-calligraphy does not indicate anti-calligraphy, but instead materialises the sentiment of calligraphy. Consequently, destruction arrives and holds the subconscious hostage, relentlessly cutting off the flow of writing without any hesitation, such as in *Sidaokou (Four-Way Intersection)*. During the metamorphosis of the subject, time breaks for the halt of paint, space ends where emptiness is revealed, and the absence of paint is also the revelation of paint.

Gillman Barracks

Exhibition Dates 10 January–31 April, 2017 Wednesday–Saturday, 11am–7pm; Sunday, 12–6pm
Venue Pearl Lam Galleries, 9 Lock Road, #03-22, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108937

Looking back at the end of the 1970s in Beijing, the revolving machine in the factory had more passion and ease and less political rigidity and confinement. On a coarse piece of cardboard slightly smaller than a sheet of A4 paper, Zhu produced his first series of figurative paintings, including *Factory Series III* on show at the Gillman Barracks gallery space. In Zhu's *1985 Sunshine*, produced as an abstract painting in the mid-1980s, he attempted to alienate himself from abstract art in Western Modernism with a touch of Chinese calligraphy aestheticised into abstraction. The visual arts (which Zhu mostly took in through publications), aesthetics, and philosophy that he was immersed in imperceptibly fuelled his painting style, which fell more firmly under "abstraction". Exhibited along with this painting is a wooden frame installation initially created in 1994, during a time when Zhu gave up practising painting for installation works. The fact that the size of the wooden frame installation is the same as that of his *1985 Sunshine* painting is a profound coincidence that echoes the origin of the interrelation between Zhu's painting and installation practice: collision and interchangeability. In the new millennium, Zhu picked up painting again, in order to object the objected, and the brushes with covered paint (2006–09) witnessed an unfolding path in Zhu's reflection and experimentation regarding the presence of paint.

Also on show is a newly created text and paint installation—five canvases, sized 160 x 180 cm, each are covered with black paint and made five centimetres thick. Every table of paint is 250 kg, continuing Zhu's tradition of using painting materials as installation, while the paint tables are accompanied by wall text (part of a conversation with Yu Haiyuan, editor of *Kuart*). The interweaving of installation and non-installation, painting and non-painting all leads back to the artist's persistent construction of the subject, accompanied by his concern for the language of painting. The simplicity and thickness of painting becomes the crucial point of the performance in paint and space, as the presence of whiteness, such as the crevices, cracks, and blankness, resonates with the traditional idea of *liu bai*. Every accretion of one centimetre of paint signifies the indispensability of absence.

About Zhu Jinshi

Born in Beijing, China in 1954, Zhu Jinshi is a pioneer of Chinese abstract art and installation art. Zhu began painting abstract works in the late 1970s and moved to Berlin in 1986, splitting his time between Berlin and Beijing since 1994 before settling in Beijing in 2010.

Zhu's solo exhibitions include *Detached from Colour* (2016), Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong; *Zhu Jinshi* (2016), Yuan Art Museum, Beijing, China; *Zhu Jinshi* (2016), Blum & Poe, New York, New York, USA; *Performance in Paint: Zhu Jinshi* (2015–16), Inside-Out Art Museum, Beijing, China; *Zhu Jinshi: Boat*, a Yi Pai installation (2015), organised by Pearl Lam Galleries and Hongkong Land at Exchange Square, Hong Kong, China; *Zhu Jinshi: Simplicity* (2014), Pearl Lam Galleries, Singapore; *Zhu Jinshi: The Reality of Paint* (2013), Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong; *Zhu Jinshi* (2012), Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, USA; *Power and Territory* (2008), Arario Gallery, Beijing, China; and *Fang* (1990), DAAD gallery, Berlin, Germany. Group shows include *Black* (2016), Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, California, USA; *Perfection by Chance—A Yi Pai Series Exhibition* (2015), Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong, China; *Thick Paint: Jean Fautrier, Franz West, Zhu Jinshi* (2014), Luxembourg & Dayan Gallery, New York, USA; *28*

Chinese (2013–14), The Rubell Family Collection, Miami, USA; *Orient/Ation*, 4th International Istanbul Biennial in Turkey (1995), Istanbul, Turkey; and the *1st Xing Xing (Stars Group) Exhibition* (1979), Gallery in Beihai Park, Beijing, China. His works have been collected internationally by notable public and private collections, including the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, USA; Brooklyn Museum, USA; Busan Museum of Art, Korea; Delphine Arnault, France; Deutsche Bank, Germany; Mario Testino, UK; The Rubell Family Collection, USA; Guangdong Museum of Art, China; Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada; and White Rabbit Collection, Australia.

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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