

# Pearl Lam Galleries

Hong Kong Pedder Building

## Revelation

PANG TAO solo exhibition

Exhibition Dates 21 June–12 September, 2019 Monday–Saturday, 10am–7pm

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

Hong Kong—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *Revelation*, a solo exhibition by Chinese female artist Pang Tao (b. 1934), featuring a selection of paintings from the 1970s to the present. Although Pang was one of the earliest artists in modern China to explore abstract painting, she has been largely ignored by Chinese modern and contemporary art history. This show aims to illuminate Pang's original artistic experimentations in the historical context of Chinese contemporary art.

Pang Tao is the daughter of Pang Xunqin and Qiu Ti, two important members of the early Chinese avant-garde art group the Storm Society (*Jue Lan She*), which was formed in the 1930s. The artistic life of Pang had long been nourished by her parents as well as the generation of artists from before 1949, who were devoted to modern art since the beginning of the 20th century. In her later formative years, Pang worked as an independent artist and an educator in academia from the 1950s to 1970s, a period marked by the Cultural Revolution. Not interested in engaging with politics, Pang was discounted as academic and conservative, and her works did not spark much critical debate within the binary categorization of art as either “new” or “traditional” at the time. Pang lived in Paris for a year in 1984 and was among the first group of artists who were sent to Europe to study art.

The exhibition starts with work from the late 1970s that were influenced by the socialist realist style of new China. One highlight is *Just Borrowed Catalogue* (1979), which depicts Pang's daughter, Lin Yan, gazing afar and holding onto a much sought-after Rembrandt catalogue. *Breaking Waves* (1979) is an expressive seascape that conveys a deep longing for freedom and captures the artist's own struggle to make art for art's sake after the end of the Cultural Revolution. *Untitled 87* is a painting from 1987 that experimented with mixed media that altered the viewer's perception of light and colour.

The exhibition title, *Revelation*, is taken from Pang's notable series *Revelation of Bronze* that she began in the early 1980s and continued into the new millennium. The series serves as a significant point of departure when Pang consciously moved away from realism towards full abstraction. In this groundbreaking series, Pang flattens the imagery of bronzeware from the Shang dynasty in a meticulous manner and develops the painting through a formal exploration that goes well beyond decoration. The picture plane is imbued with patches of different colours and is delineated with fine lines to give the representation of a monolithic artefact an illusionary solidity. *Revelation of Bronze – C32* (1992) depicts the shape of the bronze vessel with overlapping geometric shapes. The relation of points, lines, and planes becomes prominent with black, white, grey and yellow hues. A series of preparatory drawings will also be on view to convey Pang's working process.

Pang states, “I chose the subject matter of bronzeware from the late Shang dynasty because they are culturally distinct... My wish has been to renew and re-enact the vigorous imagination of my ancestors by freely applying vivid colours to these patterns. I hope in doing so that these works will be set apart from their ancient predecessors and their counterparts in the West.”

## About the Artist

Born in 1934 in Shanghai, Pang Tao began to study painting with her artist parents during her childhood. Her father, Pang Xunqin, was an important founder of the artistic system in the new China. He studied modern art in Paris in the 1920s and initiated the Storm Society (*Jue Lan She*), a modern art group, with fellow artists in 1931. He was also involved in the founding of the Central Academy of Arts and Design in 1956, where he served as vice president. Her mother, Qiu Ti, returned to Shanghai in 1930 after studying oil painting in Tokyo, and she won an award in an exhibition organized by the Storm Society before joining the group. Before 1949, Pang's parents had been involved in the secret activities that led to Shanghai's liberation.

In 1949, Pang enrolled at the Hangzhou National Arts Academy (now China Academy of Art). Two years later, Pang retook and passed the entrance examination for the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), and she transferred into the painting department's Class A. Upon her graduation in 1955, Pang Tao was offered a teaching position in the printmaking department. In 1980, Pang Tao started to experiment with sand as a medium for oil paintings. Her en plein air paintings produced during her excursion to Guilin demonstrate a remarkable shift in her style. Although she still adopted traditional, descriptive methods, Pang also began to develop an abstract style in these paintings. Since the early 1980s, Pang began to create her remarkable series of paintings featuring bronzeware.

Pang's works have been exhibited extensively around the world. Exhibitions include *China in Revolution: Sketches of the Maoist Era* (2019), Musée Cernuschi, Paris, France; *Pure Land: Images of Immortals in Chinese Art* (2016), Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford, UK; *Golden Age and Light: Dunhuang Arts Exhibition* (2007), NAMOC, Beijing, China; and Two Shores City Arts Festival – *The Blossoming of Realism: The Oil Painting of Mainland China since 1978* (2006), Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan.

## 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 and Shanghai 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.

Pearl Lam Galleries represents an increasingly influential roster of contemporary artists. Chinese artists include Su Xiaobai and Zhu Jinshi, who synthesize 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 Leonardo Drew and Yinka Shonibare CBE, 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 that engages specifically with the region, collaborating to produce thought-provoking, culturally relevant work.

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## Press Enquiries

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