

Pearl Lam Galleries

Pearl Lam Galleries Announces Its First Participation in

FRIEZE MASTERS 2019

Stand F14

Public Hours 4–5 October, 11am–7pm; 6 October, 11am–6pm

Venue Regent's Park, Gloucester Green, London NW1 4HG, UK

London—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to announce its debut participation in Frieze Masters 2019 (4–6 October), one of the world's premier art fairs, which will be held at Regent's Park in London. As one of Asia's leading galleries, Pearl Lam Galleries will feature a historical survey of paintings by Pang Tao (b.1934), spanning a period 60 years. This unique selection of artworks, which includes work from the 1940s through the early 2000s, reflects the tumultuous changes within China as a result of modernization while shedding light on the artist's lifelong belief that modernism is a universal language not bound by cultural differences or political ideology.

Pang Tao's formative development as an artist was profoundly informed by her parents Pang Xunqin and Qiu Ti—the former as founding member of the early avant-garde art collective the Storm Society, and the latter as the only female artist in this group. While teaching at the Central Academy of Fine Arts from the 1950s until the end of the 1980s, Pang Tao's artistic intent was at variance with the ideology of the institution: she pursued a practice whose content, often described as lyrical and politically insensitive, was at odds with her teaching assignments and state commissioned projects during the Cultural Revolution.

For Pang Tao, the end of the 1970s and the 1980s marked a drifting away from realism and a commitment to experimental abstraction—mostly notably in her *Bronze* series spanning from 1985 to the new millennium. However, Pang Tao's aversion to overtly didactically political work resulted in being placed outside the 85 New Wave Movement that has conditioned the understanding of the development of contemporary art in China by the West.

On view at Frieze Masters is a carefully selected group of artworks illuminates the artist's world view and notions of expansiveness embedded in her oeuvre, including works on paper that reveal the dogmatic socialist atmosphere in the 1970s paired with vibrant en plein landscapes from the early 1980s.

Outside the Window (1947) is a water colour depicting Pang's place of origin in Shanghai. *Just Borrowed Catalogue* (1979) documents Pang's daughter, Lin Yan, gazing afar and holding onto a much sought-after Rembrandt catalogue at a time when few artists were able to travel abroad. *Breaking Waves* (1979) is an expressive seascape that conveys a deep longing for freedom and captures the artist's own struggle to make art after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Pang's works created from the 1950s to the 1970s were primarily monochromatic landscapes of China's countryside inhabited by ethnic minorities. *Weaving the Fishnet* (1979) is a lyrical work that celebrates labour of the working class. *Travels in Lijiang I* (1981) is among the series of sand paintings that signify the beginning of Pang's experimentations with mediums and composition. *Ancient City* (1982) describes a barren landscape in Xinjiang. Pang lived in Paris for a year in 1984 and was among the first group of artists, like Zou Wou-Ki, who were sent to Europe to study art abroad in Paris. *Untitled* (1987) is a painting experimented with mixed media that altered the viewer's perception of light and colour. *White Humor* (1987) is a satirical artwork that blurs the reading of landscape and formal abstraction.

Pang's most notable series, *Revelation of Bronze*, begun in the mid-1980s and continued well into the new millennium, appropriates the motif of bronze ware from traditional Chinese culture. The series serves as a significant point of departure when Pang consciously moved away from realism towards full abstraction.

In this seminal series, Pang flattens the imagery of bronzeware from the Shang dynasty in a meticulous manner and develops the composition through a formal exploration that undermines mere decoration. Also on view is a series of bronze paintings realized from 1986 to 1999 that illustrates her preoccupation, with deconstructing, reconstituting and reanimating the once ornamental symbol of a vessel that embodies Chinese civilization into a liberal form imbued with patches of different colours and delineated with fine lines to give the representation of a monolithic artefact an illusionary solidity.

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. While her surname from her father is "Pang" (庞), her given name, "Tao" (涛), is a rare Chinese character that incorporates the part that means "earth" from her mother's given name. The artist's father, Pang Xunqin, was an important founder of the artistic system in the new China. He initiated the Storm Society (*Jue Lan She*), a modern art group, with fellow artists in 1931. Pang Tao's 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. At the age of four, while in Kunming, Pang won third prize in the National Children's Painting Competition in 1938. In 1948 and 1949, her parents held exhibitions for her and her younger brother, Pang Jun, in Guangzhou and Shanghai, respectively.

Upon her graduation from the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in 1955, Pang Tao was offered a teaching position in the printmaking department. During this early period, she created a range of bright grey paintings with realist features. 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 with her husband Lin Gang in 1981 demonstrate a remarkable shift in her style. Pang Tao lived in Paris for a year in 1984. She was among the first group of artists that the government sent to Europe to study art. The year in Paris inspired Pang Tao to produce and publish *Research on Painting Materials*, her book designed for teaching.

With regard to her own artistic practice, Pang Tao began to create a series of paintings featuring bronze ware in the 1980s. The following decade saw Pang Tao use bronze as her subject matter. She applied a series of techniques including colouration, generalization, and the flattening of shapes. Such experiments persisted into the mid and late 1990s. Pang Tao retired from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1989. She then visited the United States and stayed for a year. On returning to China, she produced a series of collages, which was a continuation of her previous experiments on combining different media. Since 2000, Pang Tao's abstract art has paid closer attention to social reality and has displayed deeper reflections on humanity.

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 including 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.

Press Enquiries

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