

# Pearl Lam Galleries

Shanghai

## Dreams of Lobsteropolis: A Solo Exhibition by Philip Colbert

Exhibition Dates 12 November, 2022–19 February, 2023 Monday–Sunday, 10:30am–7pm  
Venue Pearl Lam Galleries, 203, 2/F, 117 Xianggang Road, Shanghai, China

Shanghai—*Dreams of Lobsteropolis* is an immersive exposition of new works by London-based artist Philip Colbert that projects the surreal and imaginative lobster world, Lobsteropolis. The overabundance of artworks in the gallery takes on the absurd phenomenon of a dream, whereby the lobster figures are undergoing a perpetual cycle of transformation.

To challenge the scale of a confined gallery space with kaleidoscopic floor and wall designs, Colbert's diverse lobster personas embrace freedom in an uninhibited manner. By staging an imaginary dwelling of a marine crustacean, audiences can indulge themselves in a hyperpop world of total fantasy.

Colbert's long-term interest in patterns of contemporary pop culture and their relationship with art history is reflected in the large-scale inflatable sculpture. Colbert taps into the subject matter of the lobster and, specifically, its art historical reference from the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch still life painting. During the golden age of vanitas painting, the lobster functioned as an icon for expressing mortality. Here, Colbert recontextualises the lobster's iconic meaning in inflatable form akin to a mascot for a brand promotion, while simultaneously paying homage to the soft sculptures made by the late pop artist Claes Oldenburg.

*Flower Studies from the Lobster Land Museum* takes cues from Warhol's famous flower series. Colbert states, "I love the juxtaposition of the shiny, toy-like, 'productified' Warhol flowers against the prickly cactus thorns of Lobster Land." These artworks of appropriation in essence subvert our belief of the flower as an object of eternal beauty and in turn convey its eventual decay.

For the dialogue paintings, the uses of hyperrealism and rich colours are intended to signify our desire for consumerism and, more importantly, to question the logic of image making in an era of mass reproduction.

The *Battle for the Lobstar Planet* series shows Colbert's development of old master style in the sci-fi world of his Lobster Planet, where the natural species battles over the future of the planet. These compositions look to capture that tension between different forces, which is at the heart of life itself.

The sculptures on view make physical the artist's iconic personalities. The lobster figure literally infiltrates different everyday objects to become a series of post-modern hybrid objects. In reference to the stick figure by Keith Haring, *Totem* sculpture (and furniture) is an ode to the expanding community of lobsters, creating a world wherein they multiply and mutate into another lobster world. The furniture on view further blurs the distinction between aesthetics and a functional reading of an object and acknowledges the collective power of the idea of things that are held up by the masses.

The *Painter Portraits* and self-portraits series revisit the classic idea of the artist holding a paintbrush and speak to the existential dilemma involved when looking for meaning within the process of painting. The deeper you look, the more difficult it is to locate the reason and, in turn, the more absurd it becomes.

Through the veneer of pop, colour, and humour, *Dreams of Lobsteropolis* pushes the limits of self-representation in a society of hyper consumption, uplifting this gruelling activity beyond the ordinary self.

## About the Artist

Born in Scotland and living and working in London, Colbert is often referred to as the “godson of Andy Warhol”. Graduating with an MA in Philosophy from the University of St. Andrews, Colbert has garnered a global following for his cartoon lobster persona and his masterful hyperpop history paintings. He has been championed by art world figures such as Charles Saatchi & Simon De Pury. His work powerfully explores the patterns of contemporary digital culture and its relationship with a more profound art historical dialogue.

“I became an artist when I became a Lobster.” —Philip Colbert

## About Pearl Lam Galleries





Pearl Lam Galleries is a driving force within Asia’s contemporary art scene. Founded in 2005, the gallery plays a vital role in stimulating international dialogue and cross-cultural exchange between the East and West.


Following a rigorous programme, Pearl Lam Galleries presents museum-quality exhibitions that re-evaluate and challenge perceptions of cultural practice in Asia. With a thoughtfully balanced roster of Chinese and international artists, the gallery is strategic in its curation, positioning itself as an educator.

The gallery maintains a flagship space in the historic Pedder Building in Hong Kong, whilst the Shanghai gallery is situated in the heritage architecture in the Bund district. With a team of international staff, Pearl Lam Galleries’ reach is global, having presentations at major international art fairs including The Armory Show, Art Cologne, Art Basel Hong Kong, Frieze Masters, and West Bund Art and Design.

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