

Pearl Lam Galleries

Shanghai

THE GREAT GAME OF GO: A Solo Exhibition by Qian Jiahua

Exhibition Dates 13 January–16 March, 2024 Monday–Sunday, 10:30am–7pm
Venue Pearl Lam Galleries, 203, 2/F, 117 Xianggang Road, Shanghai, China

Shanghai—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *The Great Game of Go*, a solo exhibition by Qian Jiahua in Shanghai. This meticulously curated exhibition showcases Qian's latest artistic innovations with a case study approach, offering an insightful exploration into how a Chinese artist integrates Eastern philosophy with abstract paintings. Qian engages in a creative play between “order” and “chaos” based on her authentic feelings on the present era, expressing her perception of the artworks' inherent coherence and self-contained lives.

Each cultural era manifests its unique artistic expression, irreplicable in essence. In our modern times, the glory of classical art has faded into the past. Adhering blindly to the norms of ancient Greek art in the present day would only yield creations with form but devoid of a contemporary soul. In this era, artists strive to find a sense of “chaos” amidst the “order” of traditional art, a chaos born not of aimless whimsy but from a deep, personal engagement with their own experiences and emotional insights. In today's artistic context, interpreting a work merely as “abstract” could be misleading. Instead, the concept of “the inner sound” of a painting, as discussed by Kandinsky in his “Reflections on Abstract Art”, provides a more accurate key to understanding Qian's creations.

In 2022, Qian embarked on an innovative journey by dismantling and re-stretching canvases from old paintings in response to a shortage of materials. The resulting texture and physical creases formed by the movement of the canvas offer a new painting interface. In artworks such as *Left Tilt 30 Degrees* and *Parasitic Growth*, viewers can observe the progressive relationship between dots, lines, and planes. The artist conveys an aesthetic harmony and visual stimuli through the balance of controlling the composition and introducing unexpected elements. Drawing inspiration from Lucio Fontana, who transcended the flatness of the canvas to connect with a universal dimension, Qian's reconstruction of canvas is a physical exploration of cosmic laws amidst chaos.

In *Reversal of Fortune*, Qian employs a fusion of collage and overlay techniques, layering auspicious Chinese cultural patterns and simple imprints under acrylic paint to create a textured effect and graininess reminiscent of aged relics. Through negation and reconstruction, covering and revealing, this process transforms highly symbolic imagery into tangible painterly materiality. These subtle traces, challenging to discern in digital reproductions, invite viewers to engage physically with the artwork, discovering its nuances under varying light conditions.

Black Water uniquely utilises two shades of black with contrasting sheens to transcend the base content of the painting, establishing a conceptual plane beyond the physical surface of the canvas. This technique challenges the traditional flat plane of painting, and also establishes a distinct artistic

language. Between glossy and matte finishes, white lines pierce the boundary of the painting, creating a dynamic interplay of conflict and balance, while accentuating the spatial dislocation prompted by the material's differing gloss levels. Similarly, in *Gold Produces Water*, Qian simply uses three shades of gold to reveal the infinite intricate variations.

Another highlight of the exhibition is a series of new works inspired by the logic algorithms of daily shopping app recommendations. For example, the work *Brick* is modelled on yoga bricks as suggested by big data analytics, while *Gold Cushion* and *Backrest* evolved from the formation of *Brick*. The inspiration for *Rock*, an installation the artist will be setting up live at the exhibition, came from Qian's online purchase of volcanic rocks, where a natural object's precise dimensional division for sale contrasted against the buyer's imprecise selection based solely on their personal experience. The artist arranges volcanic rocks in a "wheel" based on their scales, symbolically returning them to a natural scale for human perception. These works represent the artist's physical engagement with and visualisation of the force majeure of computational algorithms, responding to or decelerating their overwhelming influence on individual perception and consumption.

In addition to the signature theme of imbalance, Qian's new creations introduce another layer of perspective: smooth versus textured, screen versus scene, and virtual versus real. The artist's seemingly methodical, architecture-like precision in creation unfolds spontaneously, without preliminary drafts or plans. "I desire every stroke to be reliable and effective," Qian asserts, referring to the raw intuition shaped by authentic life experiences, memories, and desires.

About Qian Jiahua

Qian Jiahua (b. 1987, Shanghai, China), graduated from the China Academy of Art in 2011 and currently lives and works in Shanghai. Her paintings emphasise a flat perspective, where colours, lines, and planes mutually support each other, exhibiting architectural precision and a sense of rhythm, without drawing preliminary sketches or setting preconceived plans. Balance and harmony are the keystones of her work. The artist's spontaneous approach to creation embraces the unexpected, allowing for serendipity. Her canvases are layered with randomness, interaction, and equilibrium, capturing dramatic moments comprised of genuine life experiences, memories, and desires. These elements culminate in the paintings as visually striking features like stacked layers, tugging, and sharp angles, characteristic of her work.





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 Art Cologne, Art Basel, Frieze Masters, and West Bund Art and Design.

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