

Streams of Eventide at Galerie Ora-Ora – a Solo Show by Xiao Xu

(Hong Kong – March 17, 2018)

Graduating from Sichuan Fine Arts Institute with a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree in Chinese Painting in 2007 and 2010, Xiao Xu has become one of the leading forces in contemporary ink in China. An artist who acknowledges his own love of the dark dreams and myths imbued in his paintings: "It might be that I see too many dark sides of the world." Galerie Ora-Ora welcomes Xiao Xu to our first solo show in our new space on 17F of H Queen's.

Xiao Xu's solo show at Galerie Ora-Ora invites you to enter the gateway that leads from reality to abstraction, beginning a psychological expedition of conflictual forces, past angular icebergs and labyrinthine towers. In these artworks, the artist has broken free, and runs into wide landscapes of his own creation.



Pure Mountain Stream, Ink on Paper, 123 x 243cm, 2017

Lonely Fairyland by Xu Lei

There are artists that choose not to place themselves at the fulcrum of creation, but to set off in pursuit of the traces of art history, simultaneously seeking renewal and subordinating their feelings and reason to the great tradition. In particular, Chinese painting has the kind of depth and force necessary to encourage this, and such a situation is quietly happening at the moment, as we turn to successive dynasties of the past.

This new retro movement, as I said many years ago, may be seen as a resurrection of the past. Its biggest difference to the past lies in the modernity of our current perspective, looking back from an angle of unprecedented change. Looking at Xiao Xu's works, we view the scenery from above, and the nature of the vegetation. It is as if we have entered a distant fantasy. But if we look closer, we find this departure actually comes from a contemporary entrance, a more recent adventure like Alice in Wonderland, where we accidentally fall down a rabbit hole into a new autumnal landscape.

In Xiao Xu's recent works, the image of Alice in Wonderland overlaps with another traditional Chinese classic, that is, the visit to *Dongtian* (grotto heaven) and *fudi* (blissful lands). *Dongtian* is an important concept in Taoism, which refers to the mountain resort inhabited by immortals, and Tao Yuanming's *Peach Blossom Spring* also describes such a path, and in the Song Dynasty's Zhao Boju's *Autumn Colours along Rivers and Mountains*, the Ming Dynasty's artists Liao Yi and Qiu Ying and so on, all reflect the *Dongtian* landscape through their unfathomable darkness, as we journey towards the illusion of infinite sky.

Similarly, starting from the cave in his work "Heavenly Sky", Xiao Xu wanders into a self-hypnotic dreamscape. This world is uncharted, almost dispassionate, just like as described in *Heaven and Earth Palace* from the Song Dynasty's Taoist classic *Cloud Gupta*.

Xiao Xu does not necessarily want to describe the *Dongfu* Heaven and Earth in the context of Taoism, but as an annotation of his works, the description seems to be appropriate. In Xiao Xu's early works, he has presented the backdrop of a sparse forest field, clouds steaming, occasionally strange spirits, auspicious cranes and other beasts, with the metal fence as a point of division between worlds. After several struggles, Xiao Xu has finally broke through the fence and fled into the world of *Dongtian*. He is now free, and the depth of the perspective is also adjusted. Sometimes the landscape is far reaching, sometimes lofty, sometimes far away, and there is no certain order, perhaps because this fairyland itself is disorderly, weightless. Occasionally there are medieval castles like ice, upside down, a kind of mirage in a misplaced universe; books, like birds, flock together, their strangeness enriching the infinite distance, an expedition of psychological illusion.

This world that has been constructed in shades of grey, seemingly of ink, and yet not like ink, tainted with massive "white powder", forming a picture of controlled planes and volumes: "Holy sap withering into dust, wood chips concealed with enigmatic incense". These are the characteristics and breakthroughs of Xiao Xu's works. And yet, under these cold clouds, what will people find? An escape from the real world, straying into a world of heavenly caves, yet still encountering no one, modern people's sorrow is as that of the ancients – thousand years of solitude, perhaps never ending like the mountains and rivers themselves.

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Featured Artist: Xiao Xu

Duration of *Streams of Eventide*: Monday, 26 March to Wednesday, May 9

Gallery Opening Hours:

Monday – Friday from 10am to 7pm

Saturdays 11am to 7pm

Location: Galerie Ora-Ora, 17F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong

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The artist is available for comment, please contact us for interview arrangements.

About Galerie Ora-Ora

Ora-Ora began in Hong Kong in 2006, with globally-sourced artists who are thought-driven innovators. Our artists interpret history and philosophy to bring new perspectives to our modern world and the lively dialogue of east and west. Recognized for our support of Asian contemporary art, we have grown to represent artists from Asia, Europe and the US across a variety of media.

Ora-Ora was founded by Alfred Leung and Henrietta Tsui-Leung. Henrietta then co-founded the Hong Kong Art Galleries Association, which built connections and possibilities in the growing Hong Kong art industry. The gallery continues to develop alliances and partnerships with institutions globally to enable discovery of our artists in fresh environments. From our base in Hong Kong, we travel regularly to meet our clients at global art fairs and our international exhibitions.

2018 marks a new chapter in the Ora-Ora's story as we enter our new gallery space on the 17th Floor of H Queen's, in Central, Hong Kong.

XIAO XU

Xiao Xu was born in 1983 Chongqing, China. Xiao graduated with undergraduate degree from the Tradition Chinese Painting department of the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 2007. And was Admitted to Master of Fine Arts from the Tradition Chinese Painting department of the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in 2007.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 "Envisioning the Immortal Island", MOCA, Taipei
2013 "In Search of the Supernatural: Xiao Xu Solo Exhibition", Hive Center For Contemporary Art, Beijing, China

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 "Texture of Time" – The Artwork Exhibition of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, National Art Museum of China, Beijing
- 2016 "Painting as Strait Gate", Hive Center For Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
"Annual Review Exhibition of China Contemporary Ink Painting 2015-2016", Today Art Museum, Beijing, China
- 2015 "Luo Zhongli Scholarship 10th Anniversary Retrospective Exhibition", CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China
"中国新水墨联展: 六城纪", Shandong Art Museum, Shandong, China
- 2014 "Moxiang Feichangtai", Jiangsu Art Museum, Jiangsu, China
"Contemporary Ink Show: Devotion to Ink", Maritime Museum, Hong Kong, China
"Shuimo/Water Ink: Enchanted Landscapes", S|2 Sotheby's Contemporary art gallery, New York, U.S.A.
- 2013 "The 8th International Ink Art Biennale of ShenZhen", Guan Shanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen, China
"The 9th National Exhibition of Chinese Hue Art Paintings: Hue Art Paintings at Contemporary Era", National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China
"诸子癸巳印象——70先锋当代水墨邀请展", ZHuzi Yishuguan, Nanjing, China
"New Ink-An Exhibition of Ink Art by Post 1970 Artists from the Yi Qingzhai Collection", Sotheby's Art Space, Hong Kong, China
"Illusion/Image: Contemporary Chinese Ink Art Series", Hive Center For Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
"Evolution", Avant-garde Contemporary Art Center, Nanjing, China
"The Wisdom of the Era Exhibition Tour of AAC", Today Art Museum, Beijing, China
- 2012 "Group show: Silent Ink", Mizuma & One Gallery, Beijing, China
"2012 Xingongbi document exhibition: Onward from Concepts", National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China
"The Chinese Scholar-Ink Paintings and Works of Art", Fuller Building, New York, U.S.A.
"Sketching the Heart", Gallery Beijing Space, Beijing, China

- 2010 "Luo Zhongli Scholarship Exhibition", Chongqing Art Gallery, Chongqing, China
"Nomination Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Gongbi Art: Changing View",
Times Art Museum, Beijing, China
"2010寒舍秘籍: 新世代年度展—當代水墨", My Humble House, Taipei, Taiwan
"The Trio Eternal", Funart Space, Beijing, China
- 2009 "Contemporary Art Exhibition: Green", China World Trade Center, Beijing, China
"Hong Kong International Antique Art Fair", Hong Kong, China
"Dream • searching", O gallery, Beijing, China
"Our Annual Art Exhibition 2009", Huang Jiaping, Chongqing, China
"Pilgrimage to the East" New Ink Group Exhibition, Beijing, China
- 2008 "In the way" graduate landscape tour exhibition of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute 、
Sichuan University, Southwest University, Chongqing, Chengdu, China