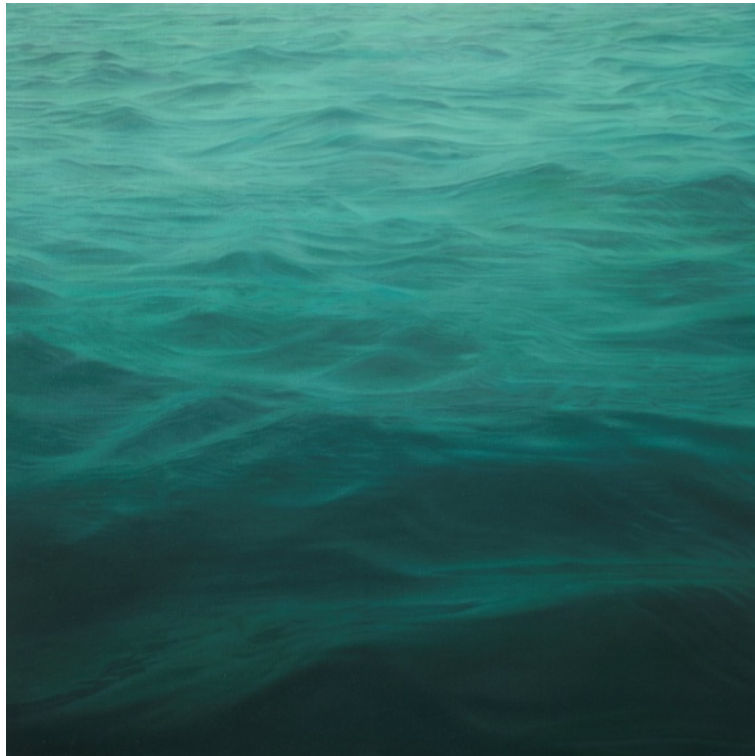


For immediate release

GALERIE ORA-ORA PRESENTS ??? SQUARED METER OF OCEAN

A Group Exhibition curated by CURATION COLLECTIVE Xⁿ OFFICE, featuring artists from Japan, China and Hong Kong, including: Hiroshi Sugimoto, Peng Jian, Ni YouYu, Yang YongLiang, Li Qing, Yang Xun, Yang JinSong, Liu Ren, Cai DongDong, Ding BeiLi, Ding ShiWei, Shao WenHuan, Shi ZhiYing, Cheung Sze Lit, Lin Qing, Shang YiXin, Ma LingLi, Gregory Halili and Li Shun

22 November 2018 – 5 January 2019



Yang Xun, *To Ma Yuan – Fine Waves No.1*, 100 x 100 cm, Oil on Canvas. Image courtesy of the artists and Galerie Ora-Ora.

Hong Kong – October 24, 2018: Galerie Ora-Ora is delighted to present **??? Squared Meter of Ocean**. This group exhibition brings together contemporary artists from China/Hong Kong/Japan using different media and forms of works to present a seascape or an abstract sea.

The Ocean is enriched with history.

Ten thousand years ago, ice sheets melted fiercely, rising tide of water inundated the land between the New Guinea Islands and Australia and engulfed the Bering Land Bridge. Since then, various small civilizations had been trapped in their respective worlds and forgotten for centuries. With the expedition of the "Great Waterway", the dots across the world were reconnected via ships in forms of colonization, trading, monetary flows, and exchange of cultures. And Hong Kong is one of the civilizations derived from such currents.

Evidently, the bond between man and the ocean is not limited to their interdependence of existence.

There is a sub-category in Western landscape painting called 'Seascape Painting'. Ancient Chinese paintings took the civilization on land as its core subjects of portrayal and thus traces of ancient Chinese seascape paintings are rarely found. Ancient Chinese believed that China was a land at the center of the world surrounded by the ocean. The vast area of the ocean beyond the land belonged to the immortals who lived in Penglai, the abbot, and the Pazhou, as well as the Lord of the Sea. From the cradle of Chinese literature through present days, the spiritual image of the ocean is often discussed in contrast with rivers and lands. Zhuangzi adopted the wisdom embodied by the Lord of the Sea to reflect the ignorance of Hebo, Lord of the River. Confucius: "道不行，乘桴浮於海". And now, the ocean becomes as mysterious as the other side of the planet, free with infinite possibilities of imagination and metaphorical ideas with its freedom, abundance and divinity.

Different from the Chinese culture, the ocean in Japanese paintings had always been an important subject of embodiment in across different periods in history. The tales in the classical Japanese chronicle *Kojiki* ('An Account of Ancient Matters') even attributed the birth of the land to the gods stirring the sea. Japanese artists portrayed the Ocean in everyday context with various media and contemplated the meaning of existence and death while gazing at the sea. Yukio Mishima compared the ocean and the land to life and death: "The debris on the land is swarming, and it is possible to face the eternity here... just like the end of the human being can only face the deadliest and most ugly face." Stood majestically on the soil, the Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion) with ultimate beauty, looked "as if a beautiful ship that sails through a mass ocean of Time." The trivial, disappointing reality of the land immediately became insignificant compared to the fine-looking sea. During the period when Shōmei Tōmatsu went to Okinawa to film the series of 'Pencil of the Sun', the island of Hateruma was still under the occupation of the US military. He nevertheless put the focus of his camera to the reflection of an interesting looking piece of cloud above the sea. The unspeakable pain of the people there was temporarily dissolved into the peaceful water. When putting it into the post-war context, such piece of cloud captured by the lens of the Japanese Master of Photography seemed to bear countless metaphorical meaning.



Yang Yongliang *The Heating at Daybreak*, 2018, 40 inch screen. Image courtesy of the artists and Galerie Ora-Ora.

Yet, the sea in Hong Kong is yet entirely different again. When Hong Kong artists began to examine the abstract meaning of the sea, it was already occupied as a colony for economic and trade exploitations. The waves that surround the island continue to recede, giving way to the newly filled land. The seascape is now only visible to those standing above the city's skyline.

Art in the contemporary world could no longer be divided by geographical boundaries. Yet, the significant meanings embedded in the ocean have never been altered.

Yang Yong-Liang, who is famous for his unprecedented style of video art, adopts modern digital technology to present on multiple screens the scene in the water maps of Ma Yuan from more than a thousand years ago in Song Dynasty. While it may seem intuitive and overly simple to transform the images of the ancient painting into a digital representation, it in fact requires exceptional skill and knowledge. Through his video



Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Sea of Okhotsk, Kamui*, 1996, 50.8 x 61 cm, Gelatin silver print, Version 25 (#2/25). Image courtesy of the artists and Galerie Ora-Ora.

art, Yang hints at the simplicity and eternity of the ocean beyond time and space within the culture of mankind, serving as a tribute to the history. Shao Wen-Huan paid a similar tribute but with a distinctively different approach. He refers to ancient paintings (such as the "Xiangxiang" of the five generations of Dong Yuan) and used digital illusionary effect technology similarly used in blockbuster movies to create a sea of wonderland. It is a form of "anti-photography", a new "painting" of the digital code generation.

Japanese photographer and architect Hiroshi Sugimoto is well-known internationally for his precise and distilled seascape portraits. The seas and terrains in his photographs appeared as if they are in two separate universes that run in at different time trajectories and in distinctive ways. He reckons that there is a unique way of measuring time in the sea, and therefore uses virtual focus, long-exposure lens to break free from the conventional concept of time and space, looking through the sea in search of the beginning of time when the universe was still merely a chaos.

More often, the ocean is not depicted as literal and specific but an abstract symbol, a kind of imagination and ostentation. "Easy Travel" by artist Ni Youyu is a collage series of seascape photographs. NI has collected tens of thousands of old photographs taken by unnamed photographers around the world for many years. He classifies them, cuts, reorganizes and gradually collages them in an "anti-photoshop" way. A subjective seascape. Photography is no longer photography, but a fragment of time and space. Li Qing cut the film fragments of the sea collected for two years to form the video work "Sea". The

interaction between man and sea from slow to intense, and finally back to the quiet sea level. At the same time, in his painting, he used the classic seascape painting from the history of Western art, but deliberately dug the center of the picture. The absent scenery evokes more delusions to complement his video works.

In the book 'Vertigine Della Lista', Umberto Eco talks about infinity. He said that the purpose of the frame is to suggest that we have an example of an infinite set in the picture. In this exhibition, the art space of Galerie Ora-Ora shall naturally be suggesting an infinite sea of Art. Each of the artists in *Ocean* provides pieces of one or a few pieces of the sea, and the fragments were aggregated to form a small open sea. We shall calculate the exact total area of the open sea to formulate the final name the exhibition.

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Gallery Opening Hours:

Monday – Friday from 10am to 7pm;
Saturdays 11am to 7pm

Notes to Editors -

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 between 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 builds connections and opportunities 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 now we have entered our new gallery space at H Queen's in Central, Hong Kong. The opening show, *Screaming Books*, on view 1 – 17 May 2018, embodied the spirit of a gallery which is, as ever, both research-based and future-focused. Other acclaimed exhibitions held in 2018 include: "Eventide" – Xiao Xu solo exhibition, and "Inspirations" – Huang Dan latest solo exhibition.

About Hiroshi Sugimoto

Born in Tokyo in 1948, Hiroshi Sugimoto received art education in western oil painting. He graduated from the United States and became a famous photographer and artist. Known as the "last modernist", his creation brings East and West historiography, philosophy and aesthetics to photography, which is the ultimate in photography and promotes photography to the level of art. In addition to photography, he also worked in interior design, drama stage, shrine and other architectural work. In 2001, Sugimoto was awarded the Hasselblad Foundation International Photography Award. In 2005, the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Japan, hosted an extremely important and successful large-scale photography retrospective exhibition "End of Time", displaying works by Sugimoto across 30 years from 1975 to 2005. The series of more than 100 pieces from different past periods, together with new and unpublished works, has been the most complete presentation of the artist's life works. The number of visitors to this exhibition set a record for the museum.

About Peng Jian

Peng Jian was born in 1982 in Yueyang, Hunan, China. As his father was an engineer, Peng grew up surrounded by well-planned, highly complex architectural calculations and was inspired with the interest and attention in art. In 2013, he graduated from the Chinese Painting Department of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou and obtained a master's degree. Peng Jian's works are bright and bold, and the lines are sharp and angular, guiding the architecture of traditional Chinese "boundary paintings". He used the tools of the ruler that brought the building to life during the imperial system.

About Ni Youyu

Ni Youyu was born in Jiangxi, China in 1984, and graduated from the Chinese Painting Department of the Fine Arts College of Shanghai University in 2007. Ni won the Best Young Artist Award in the China Contemporary Art Awards (CCAA) in 2014. Throughout his diverse body of work in painting, printmaking, sculpture, installation, and video, Ni Youyu often draws inspiration from the aesthetics and philosophy of traditional Chinese in paintings. His main solo exhibitions in recent years include: "Simplified History", "Inseparable Image", "Bubble", "Inch Time", "Ni Youyu" (Hong Kong Basel Personal Project 2015). Ni lives and works in Shanghai, China.

About Yang YongLiang

Yang Yongliang, born in 1980 in Jiading, Shanghai, studied traditional Chinese art such as Chinese painting and calligraphy for nearly 10 years with Yang Yang from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In 2003, he graduated from the Department of Visual Communication Design of the China Academy of Art. In 2005, he began experimenting and creating contemporary ink painting, photography, and video art. Yang Yongliang's works are widely exhibited internationally, including the Moscow Biennale, the UCCA Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, the National Gallery of Victoria, etc., and are also collected by many art institutions, including the British Museum and the Saatchi Gallery in London, and the New York Metropolis. Museum and Brooklyn Art Museum, Boston Art Museum, Massachusetts, San Francisco Asian Art Museum, Paris DSL Collection, Melbourne National Gallery of Victoria, Australia Sydney White Rabbit Art Museum, Hong Kong M+ Sigg Collection, Shanghai Art Museum, Swiss PAE Art Collection agencies, as well as Shanghai Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.



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About Li Qing

Born in Shaoxing, Zhejiang, China in 1981, Li Qing graduated from the Oil Painting Department of the China Academy of Art (CAA). He received his master's degree in 2012. He is currently teaching at the Oil Painting Department of the CAA and living in Shanghai and Hangzhou. Using various subjects including everyday reality, emotional life, news events, historical memory and art history images, Li Qing puts painting in paradoxical mirror games. Behind his conceptual creations is a sensibility between illusion and reality, time and existence. Since 2011, Li Qing has been working on the series "Adjacent Windows". He combines the physical objects of old window panes and frames with paintings outside the window. When the viewer observes this virtual landscape, the familiar view creates a feeling of estranged distance. Recent solo exhibitions include: "Seaview" (2017, Fritz Expo, New York, USA), "Li Qing Personal Project" (2016, Hong Kong Contemporary Tang Art Center), "Eight Sets" (2015, Seoul Arario Museum), "Cathedral" (2015, Beijing Beehive Contemporary Art Center) and "Zoom in" (2014, German-based Consulate General of Shanghai Cultural and Education Office Goethe Institute).