

Art Radar

Contemporary art trends and news from Asia and beyond

9 contemporary art exhibitions at Asian Art In London 2016

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Asian Art in London 2016 takes place from 3 to 12 November 2016 in the British capital.

Asian Art in London 2016 features a rich programme of talks, lectures, guided visits, auctions, events and shows of Asian art. *Art Radar* spotlights 9 gallery exhibitions of contemporary Asian art taking place during the 10-day event.



Han Bing, 'Coiled Dragon Pillars', 2007, single exposure C-print photo on aluminium , edition 1 of

6, 100 x 150 cm. Image courtesy the artist and FitzGerald Fine Arts.

Asian Art In London 2016 is now in its 19th edition and runs from 3 to 12 November. **Asian Art In London** brings together over 60 of the world's top dealers, major auction houses and museums for an annual ten-day celebration of Asian art.

The **programme** (PDF download) offers gallery selling exhibitions, auctions, receptions, lectures and seminars at various venues throughout the city. *Art Radar* highlights some of the contemporary art exhibitions presented by galleries around London during the event.



Zao Wou-Ki, 'Untitled', 1986, ink on paper, 67.5 x 69 cm. Signed and dated lower right. Dedicated lower right: Pour Genevieve Monnier, Amities, Zao Wou Ki 86. Provenance: Former collection Genevieve Monnier, Paris. Image courtesy Aktis Gallery.

1. "China Black: Zao Wou-ki and Wang Keping" — Aktis Gallery

Aktis Gallery presents an exhibition of works by Chinese master Zao Wou-Ki (1920-2013) and contemporary artist Wang Keping, two of the most influential Chinese artists who emigrated and settled abroad. Zao Wou-Ki, for

decades an auction favourite, is renowned for his distinctive abstract ink-style paintings, while Wang Keping has made a name for his sculptural practice that has influenced generations of contemporary artists.

"China Black" features a selection of ten Chinese ink paintings by Zao Wou-Ki, ranging from 1950 through to 2000, providing a fascinating insight into the span of Zao's artistic practice, shown alongside a group of 16 sculptures by Wang Keping .



Wang Keping, 'Couple', 2012, cedar, wood. Male: 66 x 23 x 25 cm; Female: 61 x 26 x 19 cm. Monogrammed on each base. Provenance: Artist's estate. Image courtesy the artist and Aktis Gallery.

Zao Wou-Ki, the most influential Chinese artist of the lyrical abstraction movement, was born in 1920 in Beijing and died in 2013. After studying at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, he moved to Paris in 1948 and made the city his permanent home. Among his major influences is Paul Klee and his work is abstract, inspired by both the calligraphic styles of China and the Impressionists. He cited among his influences Matisse, Picasso and

Cézanne.

Wang Keping, who spent more than 30 years living in Paris, is one of China's first contemporary sculptors. He was born in 1949 in Beijing and entered the contemporary art scene in the late 1970s alongside fellow artists **Huang Rui**, **Ma Desheng**, and **Ai Weiwei** as a founding member of the early Beijing contemporary art group The Stars (Xing Xing), which championed artistic freedom in China. His wooden sculptures range from 30 centimetres in height to monumental scale, and evoke "sensual beauty, grotesque deformity and sublime abstraction".



Zeng Xiaojun, 'Penjing I', ink and colour on paper, 180 x 138 cm. Signed: Xiaojun. Artist's seal:
Painted by Zeng Xiaojun. Image courtesy the artist and Eskenazi Ltd.

2. "Recent Paintings by Zeng Xiaojun" — Eskenazi Ltd

Contemporary ink artist Zeng Xiaojun (b. 1954) has created ten new works for this exhibition. Born in Beijing in 1954, Zeng graduated from the Central Art and Craft Academy of Fine Arts in 1981. Two years later, he moved to the United States and lived for the next 14 years in Boston, where he exhibited and taught until 1997. In the mid-1990s, Zeng published the pioneering 'Red Flag' art books in China with Ai Weiwei and Xu Bing. The *Black Cover Book*, the *White Cover Book* and the *Gray Cover Book* documented contemporary art, introduced Western art and artists including **Marcel Duchamp**, **Andy Warhol** and **Jeff Koons**, and disseminated new ideas to a younger generation of Chinese artists.

Zeng is a 'contemporary literati', and he developed his connoisseurship in classical Chinese furniture and objects of the traditional scholar's studio while in the United States. Later in the 1990s he returned to China where he finessed his painting skills and his literati knowledge. He has a fine collection of scholar's rocks, roots and antique furniture, and has built studios and gallery spaces in Beijing to house it.



Zeng Xiaojun, 'Bonsai VI', ink and colour on paper, 138 x 180 cm. Image courtesy the artist and Eskenazi Ltd.

Starting from depictions of nature, Zeng embarks into a journey of self-discovery, drawing inspiration from the literati landscape painting tradition, especially works by Shen Zhou (1427 – 1509) and Wen Zhenming (1470 – 1559) of the Ming dynasty. Zeng extracts rocks and trees from the context of the landscape and depicts them in great detail as isolated objects. The artist replays Chinese intellectuals' fascination with these subjects as embodiments of their own spirituality and perseverance in times of difficulty and turbulence.

In this show, Zeng presents ten new works, seven of which are representations of bonsai trees (or penjing in Chinese), which are inspired by the living examples collected by the artist. In addition there are two paintings of intricate tree roots, which the artist also collects, and large scale circular depiction of concentric curvilinear patterns derived from a marbled ceramic of the Song dynasty (960- 1279 AD).



Han Bing, 'Tower', 2007, single exposure C-print photo on aluminium, edition 1 of 6, 150 x 100 cm, 59 x 39.4 in. Image courtesy the artist and FitzGerald Fine Arts.

3. "Han Bing: Urban Amber" – FitzGerald Fine Arts at Dorsett Shepherds Bush

"Urban Amber" is a series of around 20 photographs mounted on aluminium and four transparency light box units by Han Bing. The images were all taken in a period of six years and have been on display at the New York gallery before being shown in London.

The photographic series visualises the drama of China's transformations as the nation goes through what the artist calls the "theatre of modernization". The images, which at first glance seem digitally enhanced and retouched, are single exposure photographs of reflections in toxic waters and cesspools.



Han Bing, 'Red Flags Flying on Skyline Cranes', 2005, single exposure C-print photo on aluminium, edition 1 of 6, 100 x 150 cm. Image courtesy the artist and FitzGerald Fine Arts.

FitzGerald Fine Arts write in the press release:

[Urban Amber] offer a subtle beauty and serenity in their juxtapositions of material and metaphysical forms. Intentional distortions of direction and form are commentary on photography's own identity in the digital era. Urban Amber highlights the detritus of a society fixated on industrialization, not stopping to look at its own morphing reflection.

Han Bing also works with multimedia projects, performance art, film and documentary, site-specific installations, painting and social art projects. He grew up in an impoverished village in rural China, and currently lives and works in Beijing. The artist has had influential solo shows at the **Centre Pompidou**, Columbia Museum of Art, National Art Museum of China and Guangzhou Art Museum among others.



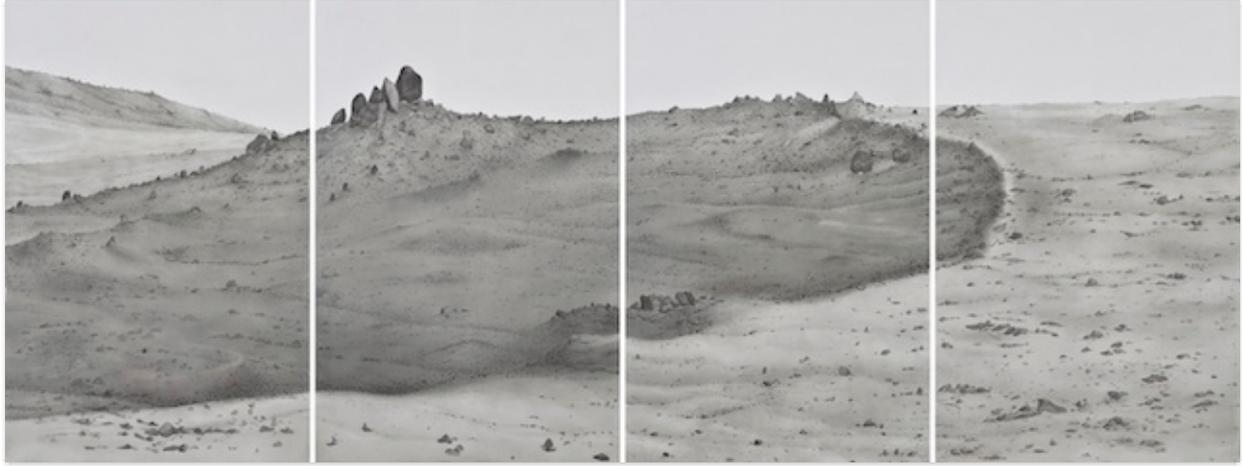
Katsunori Hamanishi, 'Silence -Work No. 5', from AAL 2016 exhibition" Katsunori Hamanishi: Master of Mezzotint – Meet the Artist" at Hanga Ten, London. Image courtesy the artist and Hanga Ten.

4. "Katsunori Hamanishi: Master of Mezzotint, Meet the Artist" – Hanga Ten

Born in 1949 in Hokkaido, Hamanishi Katsunori studied at Tokai University. He is one of a group of Japanese artists who have dedicated their artistic practice to the exploration of the rich, dark, three-dimensional effects achievable through mezzotint techniques. Mezzotint is a printmaking process of the intaglio family, and technically a drypoint method, which originated in Europe in the 17th century. It was the first tonal method to be used, enabling half-tones to be produced without using line- or dot-based techniques. Tonality can be used in mezzotint by roughening the plate with thousands of little dots made by a metal tool with small teeth, called a rocker. In printing, the tiny pits in the plate hold the ink when the face of the plate is wiped clean and thus high level of quality and richness can be achieved in the print.

Katsunori's early subjects – twigs, branches, rice stalks, rope – are presented in a three-dimensional form on paper, each image has been painstakingly burnished on the plate. More recently he has begun to introduce colour into his works of Japanese architecture and landscapes, adding metal plates or gold or silver leaf to his compositions.

His work is the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the **Art Institute of Chicago**, **The British Museum** in London, the **Osaka National Museum of Art**, the **Taipei Fine Arts Museum** and the **Art Gallery of New South Wales**, among others. In 2004 he held a major exhibition at the Worcester Art Museum with mezzotint master Hamaguchi Yozo.



Ali Kazim, 'Untitled' (From the "Otherland" Series), watercolour pigments on paper, 152 x 457 cm.
Image courtesy the artist and Jhaveri Contemporary.

5 . "Ali Kazim: Ruins" — Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai & London at Rossi & Rossi

Pakistani artist **Ali Kazim** was born in 1979 in Pattoki, Pakistan and is now based in Lahore, where he studied at the National College of Arts. He graduated with an MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art, London in 2011. He has exhibited worldwide and his work is in numerous public collections, including the **Metropolitan Museum of Art**, New York, The British Museum, **The Victoria and Albert Museum**, **Queensland Art Gallery**, Australia, Burger Collection, Hong Kong and **Kiran Nadar Museum of Art**, New Delhi, among others.

Kazim's work explores notions of the body. His extraordinary skill in rendering the human body, using the traditional techniques such as *siyah qalam* and *pardakht*, has resulted in a series of delicately sensual male portraits.



Ali Kazim, 'Untitled (Ruins)', pigments on polyester drafting film, 32 x 42 cm. Image courtesy the artist and Jhaveri Contemporary.

As the body, material is also a metaphor for the artist. In this new series, his subject are the ruins of an ancient city near Lahore along the River Ravi. It is the abandoned site of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation, which today serves as a burial site for local communities. Kazim uses tracing paper and eliminates colour and brushstrokes in his compositions, in order to capture a landscape that is scattered with terracotta pieces and pottery shards come to light with the monsoon rain. **Jhaveri Contemporary** quotes the artist as saying:

"I like the idea of tracing traces of ruins on tracing sheets," he writes, "placing these shards on a smooth translucent surface, carefully, one by one, as though performing a sacred ritual."

The gallery goes on to explain about the series of work:

The careful recreation of shards of red pottery are the artists attempt to reconstruct a past and draw attention to a legacy that has been eclipsed by the arrival of Islam. Through the most subtle of means the new paintings question the relationship between the pre-Islamic cultures of the region and the political entity that is today's Islamic Republic of Pakistan.



Jiang Dahai (b.1946), 'Red Obscure', 2016, acrylic on canvas, from AAL 2016 exhibition "Jiang Dahai – Diffusion" at Mayor Gallery. Image courtesy the artist and Mayor Gallery.

6. "Jiang Dahai: Diffusion" – Mayor Gallery

Now based between Paris and Beijing, Jiang Dahai was born in Nanjing, China in 1946, and graduated in 1986 from the Oil Painting Department at the Central Academy of Arts in Beijing. He subsequently went to France to study Western art, where he spent almost two decades. Returning to China in 2008, he became Professor at the same school where he studied in Beijing.

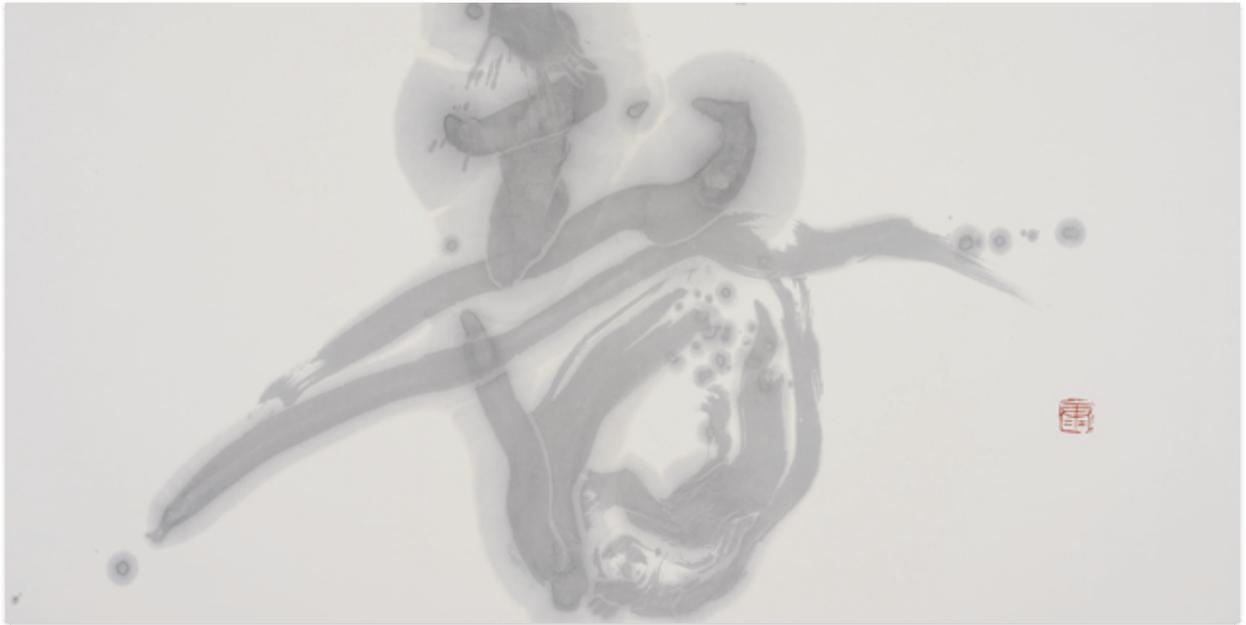
Jiang Dahai's most recent solo exhibitions include a retrospective in 2015 at The National Museum of History in Taipei and in 2009 at the **Today Art Museum** in Beijing. His exhibition "**Carte blanche to Jiang Dahai**" at **The Musée des Arts Asiatiques – Guimet**, Paris opened on 19 October 2016 and will run until 6 February 2017.



Jiang Dahai, 'Limitless', 2016, acrylic on canvas, 130 x 160 cm. Image courtesy the artist and Mayor Gallery.

In his painting practice, Jiang has assimilated both Eastern and Western art forms. Composing meditative tableaux that have become known as 'cloud paintings', the artist paints with a method that echoes the Abstract Expressionist action painting, building his canvases with up to 15 layers of colour.

Jiang aims to re-create the essence of the Chinese aesthetics and meditation through his rich, almost monochrome canvases. Through his clouds paintings, the illusion of vaporous mists recalls the traditional Chinese landscape, which find "the subtle balance between the emptiness and the openness, the saturation and the void".



Koji Kakinuma, 'Oto (Sound)', ink on paper. Image courtesy the artist and Mika Gallery/Shouun Oriental Art.

7. "Jomon and Kakinuma" – Mika Gallery/Shouun Oriental Art, New York & Tokyo

Opened in 2003, New York-based Mika Gallery is dedicated to representing Japanese art from prehistory (the *Jōmon* period) to the 19th century and beyond. Owner and Director Mika Seki established the Tokyo-based space Shouun Oriental Art in 1987. Today the Tokyo and New York venues host exhibitions of both classical and contemporary art that is deeply rooted in the artistic traditions of Japan.

Koji Kakinuma was born in 1970 in Yaita City, Tochigi Prefecture, Japan. He started studying Japanese calligraphy at the age of five, and began apprenticeship under his father Suiryu Kakinuma and afterwards with Yukei Teshima, a Sanitsu or "three brushes" of the Showa Era, and Ichijo Uematsu. Kakinuma graduated from the Department of Visual and Performing Arts, Tokyo Gakugei University. His work is based on traditional calligraphic techniques, but defies convention. He works with large-scale calligraphies using giant brushes and a new method he developed, called 'trancework'. He is the first living calligrapher to ever hold a solo exhibition at the Kanazawa 21st Contemporary Art Museum in Japan. His works are two- and three-dimensional and also include films and extensive performances, including at the Metropolitan Museum, Washington D.C. Kennedy Center and Philadelphia Museum among others.



Tsherin Sherpa, 'Contemplation', 2015, gold leaf, acrylic and ink on cotton, 122 x 98.5 cm (48 x 38 in). Image courtesy the artist and Rossi & Rossi.

8. "Classical Selection 2016" — Rossi & Rossi

Rossi & Rossi is this year celebrating its 30th anniversary and has published *Thirty Years: 1987–2016*, with essays by renowned art historians Pratapaditya Pal and Steve Kossak, highlighting significant works of art exhibited and sold by the gallery over the past three decades. The book also features an interview with founders Anna Maria

Rossi and her son Fabio Rossi by Elizabeth Knight, of *Orientations* magazine. Founded in 1985, Rossi & Rossi has established itself as one of the most important dealers of antique works in the field of Indian, Himalayan and South East Asian art. Since 2005, the gallery has also been representing contemporary art from Asia, with particular focus on Tibetan artists. The gallery, with its original location in London moved from Clifford to Dover Street in 2014, has established a new exhibition space in Hong Kong in 2013.

In the exhibition during Asian Art In London 2016, Rossi & Rossi presents a selection of both antique and contemporary works of art, representative of the scope of artistic practices featured by the gallery, and offering an insight into the development of art in the Himalayan, South and Southeast Asian regions. The juxtaposition of old and new creations allow for an observation of influences, inspiration and cross-pollinations present in the contemporary practices of artists from these areas. An understanding of historical practices is the key to better appreciate the art of today.



Chen Jiang-Hong, 'Untitled (BA 149)', 2009, mixed media. Image courtesy the artist and Gallery Elena Shchukina.

9. "Returning Home: Chen Jiang-hong" – Gallery Elena Shchukina

Paris-based since 1997, Chen Jiang-hong was born in Tianjin in 1963. He studied at the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing and he now works as painter and an illustrator of children's books. He has published numerous illustrated books based on ancient stories and legends from China, and his illustrations mix graphic novel with traditional ink and wash techniques.

As a painter, Chen has merged eastern and western traditions, influenced by his experience of living between two cultures on opposite sides of the world. As quoted in the press release, Chen wishes to

"bring the culture to which I am attached to life, to allow it to cross boundaries, and to allow others to be a part of it. I try to tell stories in such a way that they become universal."

Chen drips, sweeps and splashes ink and oil with long wolf-hair brushes onto canvasses laid directly onto the floor, referencing both the traditions of Chinese calligraphy and of Western abstraction. In his compositions, subtle forms seem to break through only to merge back with the abstract.

C. A. Xuan Mai Ardia

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