



FOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS in INK

Liu Dan | Master of the Water,
Pine and Stone Retreat | Xu Lei |
Zeng Xiaojun

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Curriculum Vitae 108

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INTRODUCTION

Craig Yee

Beijing-based gallery INKstudio marks its debut in the official program of Asia Week New York with a selection “The Four Accomplishments in Ink”—a gathering of four great ink artists who are themselves noted connoisseurs and collectors of art.

For the classic literati artists of the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing, art making—whether it be poetry, calligraphy or painting—was always a deep philosophical, historical and aesthetic engagement with the past. Liu Dan (b. 1953) was one of the first Chinese artists to emigrate to the United States in 1981 and is perhaps best known for his monumental landscape paintings in which land and water take the unexpected form of dynamic and chaotic flows or the shape of human figures. Liu Dan’s oeuvre also includes monumental scholar’s rocks painted in a neo-Song, hyper-realistic style. Liu Dan calls these rocks the “stem cells of the universe.” To him, they are a microcosm of the larger macrocosm that, when transformed into sculpture for aesthetic contemplation, provides a mirror of infinite possibility to the mind of the both artist and observer. From a distance, Liu Dan’s portrait *Taihu Rock of the Liuyuan Garden*, seems hyper-real—every convolution and hollow, every ridge and surface highlight—is convincingly rendered in graded shades of light and dark. Closer inspection, however, reveals a language of brush and ink that is almost completely abstract. Although connoisseurs of classical Chinese painting will be familiar with the aesthetics of *bimo*—a mode of depicting form using individually legible and expressive brush gestures—Liu Dan’s brushwork will be disturbingly unrecognizable, resembling nothing that has come before it. The artist himself describes the process as “painting something known with something that is unknown.”

Over the past forty years, the “Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat,” has acquired one of the most esteemed collections of Chinese antiquities. As one of the earliest dealers of contemporary Chinese ink art in London and Hong Kong, the artist developed deep personal relationships with some of

the foremost literati painters of our time including Liu Guosong, Lui Shou-kwan, Ho Huai-shuo, Fang Zhaoling, Chen Chi-kwan, Tseng Yu-ho, C.C. Wang and Liu Dan. From these masters, he learned the art of literati landscape painting but adds to this a Western education grounded in philosophy and history, the literary sensibilities of a gifted writer and poet, and a lifetime of experience handling, researching and authenticating Chinese works of art. Very early on, he fell in love with the handscroll commissioning major works in this distinctive format by his fellow artists and teachers. For “The Four Accomplishments in Ink,” INKstudio has selected four handscrolls by “Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat,” two of scholar’s rocks and two of landscapes all of which feature the Master’s own poetry and English-language calligraphy.

Xu Lei (b. 1963) is widely recognized in China as the foremost artist in the revival of *gongbi*, a form of high imperial painting dating back to the Tang and Song Dynasties that employed a fine brush-line to depict figurative subjects in a realistic manner. His exquisitely detailed portrayal of solitary, usually non-human subjects in interior settings evokes a sense of mystery and surrealism, paving a new path to a literary if somewhat melancholic modernity that integrates poetic imagery and realist technique—what art critic Jeffrey Hantover described as “the quiet resignation of the realist”. In his solo exhibitions at Marlborough Gallery in 2018, Xu Lei debuted a new series of works set not within the confines of our human interior spaces but out in the world in the natural landscape. These landscapes, however, are not natural landscapes, but cultural ones—specifically, a-historic collages of selected art historic masterworks. Working in the early twenty-first century, Xu Lei’s art historic sources extend beyond the Chinese cultural sphere. According to the artist, the origins of *gongbi* painting lie in the religious mural painting of the Tang Dynasty and is technically similar to European fresco painting of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and Persian miniature painting which draws upon its own tradition of wall painting. Using such technical means, Xu Lei, in works such as *Interact Trees*, brings the garden landscape of the Persian 15th century, the French 18th century and the Chinese Song-dynasty along with their associated metaphoric significations into an aesthetically unified artistic space. For sinologists, the particularly Chinese focus on history will be familiar. For Chinese art historians, the range of global cultural and historic references will be completely new.

As evidenced by his impeccable collection of late-Ming furniture, scholar’s objects and scholar’s rocks, Zeng Xiaojun (b. 1954) epitomizes the collector-artist ideal in China today. As an artist, Zeng Xiaojun has one simple rule: he only paints objects in his own collection or objects that he has seen in person. For him, painting an object is way of studying it, absorbing its aesthetic qualities and elevating his own artistic sensibilities and sensitivities in the process. *Poetic Pattern of Song Ware II*, for example, is a depiction of *jiaotai*, a type of porcelain ware made by mixing clays of various colors into spontaneously swirled patterns. Blown up almost two-meters square, Zeng renders the abstract patterns of the Song ware in a way that mimics the detailed, up-close examination of the connoisseur. His use of natural, traditional pigments is masterful and subtle; indeed, his extreme sensitivity to color is perhaps the hallmark of his art. By reproducing this centuries-old masterpiece with his transformative execution, Zeng engages in a dialogue with Song-era Chinese intellectuals whose pursuit of spiritual and moral cultivation led to this unique aesthetic union of manmade form with natural beauty. This dialogue is also reflected in Zeng’s role as an one of today’s most accomplished collectors and connoisseurs of Chinese antiquities—an abiding passion that has provided Zeng with an endless array of objects for contemplation and transformation through painting.

INKstudio is an art gallery based in Beijing. Its mission is to present Chinese ink art as a distinctive contribution to contemporary transnational art-making in a closely-curated exhibition program supported by in-depth critical analysis, scholarly exchange, bilingual publishing, and multimedia production. Representing more than 13 artists, including Bingyi, Dai Guangyu, He Yunchang, Li Jin, Li Huasheng, Wang Dongling, Wei Ligang, Yang Jiechang, and Zheng Chongbin, the gallery exhibits works of diverse media, including painting, calligraphy, sculpture, installation, performance, photography, and video. Since its inception in 2012, INKstudio has regularly appeared at art fairs such as the Armory Show (New York), Art Basel Hong Kong, and West Bund Art & Design (Shanghai) and placed works into major public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Brooklyn Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art and M+, Hong Kong.

LIU DAN 刘丹

Liu Dan (b. 1953) was one of the first Chinese artists to emigrate to the United States in 1981 and beginning in the 1990's became the foremost proponent in a revival of Song and Yuan aesthetics in contemporary Chinese art. Whether landscapes, scholar's rocks, or old cypress trees in the Forbidden City, all of Liu Dan's creations emerge out of a deep aesthetic engagement with the past, reflection on metaphysical questions related to ontology and cosmogony, a focus on compositional structure and movement through meticulous, preparatory draughtsman-ship in a mode not unlike European old-master drawings, and the performative execution of the final work using traditional Chinese brush techniques and materials. Liu Dan sees his hyper-realistic depictions of natural forms as moments or "folds" in a nature's dynamic unfolding of material reality. Realism, thus deployed, is not a mode of picturing material objects but rather—through a deep aesthetic engagement with the artistic past and a corresponding experiential engagement with the natural present—of capturing in experience both the material and metaphysical process of forming. Along with Xu Bing and Cai Guoqiang, Liu Dan is one of the few contemporary Chinese artists to successfully bridge diachronic and encyclopedic institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum, the British Museum and LACMA with contemporary and modern art institutions such as the Centre Pompidou and the Guggenheim Museum.

Born in Nanjing, Jiangsu, in 1953, Liu Dan has emerged as one of the most gifted of a particularly talented generation. He studied the Confucian classics, poetry, painting, and calligraphy with his grandfather at an early age. After the Cultural Revolution, Liu studied traditional painting under Ya Ming (1924–2002) at the newly reopened Jiangsu Academy of Chinese Painting, Hangzhou, from 1978 to 1981. In 1981, the U.S. Embassy arranged for Liu and his American fiancée to leave China and settle in Hawaii where they married. There, he studied Western art and developed his distinctive synthesis of realism, classical Chinese painting, and metaphysics. Liu Dan moved to New York in 1992 where he met Ai Weiwei, Xu Bing and other prominent

expatriate artists from China. Unlike his newly arrived compatriots, Liu Dan eschewed mass culture, conceptualism, and political activism, and chose instead to research further the methodological and metaphysical foundations for his distinctive syncretic practice. After fourteen years he returned to China in 2006 to begin mentoring a younger generation of artists interested in engaging with China's indigenous artistic heritage.

Liu Dan's work was featured in "Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World" at the Guggenheim Museum (2017-2018) and in 2019, his work will be exhibited as part of the Centre Pompidou's ongoing exploration of non-Western modernities following upon its 2014 exhibition "Modernités Plurielles." His work was also featured prominently in "Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China" at the Metropolitan Museum (2014) and in major group shows as the China Institute Gallery in New York (2006, 2014), the British Museum in London (2012), the Musée Guimet in Paris (2012), the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2011), the Princeton University Art Museum (2009), the Israel Museum in Jerusalem (2008), the Louisiana Museum of Art in Denmark (2007), the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University (2006), the 6th Shanghai Biennale (2006), the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai (2004), the Art Institute of Chicago (1999), and the Yale University Art Gallery (1999).

Liu Dan has also had major solo museum exhibitions at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (2016), the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University (2016), and the Suzhou Museum (2013), the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst in Berlin (2005), and the San Diego Museum of Art (1999), the Contemporary Museum in Honolulu (1993) and the Honolulu Academy of Arts (1989). In recent years, he has worked with Paul Kasmin Gallery in New York, Eskenazi Gallery in London, and Gagosian Gallery in Hong Kong. He is currently working on a major solo exhibition at INKstudio in Beijing.

01

Liu Dan: Taihu Rock of the Liuyuan Garden

刘丹：留园太湖石

2019 | Ink on xuan paper | 83 7/8 x 53 7/8 in, 213 x 136.8 cm [LD002]

出閶門外三里而近有劉氏寒碧莊焉嘉慶初為劉君蓉峯所有故即以其姓姓其園而曰劉園也咸豐中余往遊焉見其泉石之勝花木之茂亭榭之幽深誠足為吳中名園之冠及庚申辛酉間大亂劫至吳下名園半為墟莽而閶門之外尤甚曩之閶城溢郭慶合而雲連者今則劫榛塞路荒蕪途每一過之故蹟新木輒不可辨而所謂劉園者蘇然獨存同治中余又往遊焉其泉石之勝花木之茂亭榭之幽深蓋猶未異於昔而蕪穢不治無修葺之者矣發燕麥搖蕩於春風中殊令人有今昔之感至光緒二年為毗陵人盛旭人方伯所得乃始修之平之樓之剔之嘉樹榮而佳卉茁奇石顯而清流通涼台澳館風亭月榭高下：遮還相屬方伯求余文為之記曰寒碧之名至今未熟於人口然則名之易而稱之難也吾不知從其所稱而稱之曰劉園吾則曰留園不易其音而易其字即以其故名而為之新名昔袁子才得隋園氏之記曰寒碧之名至今未熟於人口然則名之曰留園斯二者將毋同余嘆曰美哉斯名乎稱其實矣夫大亂之後兵燹之餘萬台傾而曲池平不知凡幾而此園能幸而無恙豈非造物者留此名園以待賢者乎是故泉石之勝留以待君登臨也花木之美留以待君之攀玩也亭台之幽深留以待君之遊息也其所留多矣豈止如唐人詩所云但留風月伴煙蘿者乎自此以往窮勝事而樂清時吾知留園之名長留於天地間矣因為之記俾後之志吳下名園者有可考焉光緒二年冬十月舊史氏德清俞樾記戊戌年腊月初九寫蘇州留園太湖石金陵劉丹并題



O1

Liu Dan: Taihu Rock of the Liuyuan Garden

刘丹：留园太湖石

2019 | Ink on xuan paper | 83 7/8 x 53 7/8 in, 213 x 136.8 cm[LD002]

Beginning in 1980s, Liu became intrigued by rocks. To him, “rocks are the stem cells of nature, a symbolic microcosm of the material world.” Traditionally Chinese scholars and artists utilized rocks as models of mountains in their urban gardens, in their landscape paintings and in their deployment of poetic and philosophical metaphor. To Liu Dan, such scholar’s rocks are a microcosm of the larger macrocosm that, when transformed into sculpture for aesthetic contemplation, provides a mirror of infinite possibility to the mind of the both artist and observer. Through the meticulous study of a single rock, Liu attempts to see the macroscopic universe from a particular microscopic vantage. He transforms a tangible object into an aesthetic meditation on the nature of form and of forming. His aspiration is for his audience is to use the rocks he paints as an aesthetic key to renew their imaginative engagement with the world.

From a distance, Liu Dan’s portrait *Taihu Rock of the Liuyuan Garden*, 2019, seems hyper-real—every convolution and hollow, every ridge and surface highlight—is convincingly rendered in graded shades of light and dark. Closer inspection, however, reveals a language of brush and ink that is almost completely abstract. Although connoisseurs of classical Chinese painting will be familiar with the aesthetics of *bimo*—a mode of depicting form using individually legible and expressive brush gestures—Liu Dan’s brushwork will be disturbingly unrecognizable, resembling nothing that has come before it. Liu Dan executes all of his brushwork using traditional materials: traditional *maobi* (classically used in calligraphy and literati brush painting), xuan paper and ink. His actual brush strokes, however, bear no formal or expressive relationship to classical Yuan-Ming-Qing *cunfa* or texture strokes. Rather, in order to create a hyper-real experience that leads us to a state beyond the real, to a state of “not knowing,” Liu Dan must invent a brush language—*bifa* or brush method—that has no precedent. The artist himself describes the process as “painting something known with something that is unknown.”

ARTWORK INSCRIPTION

Three miles outside the Changmen gate sits the Cold Green Manor. However, people often recognize it as the Liu Garden. During the early Jiaqing period of the Qing dynasty, it belonged to Liu Rongfeng, from whose surname the garden acquired its nickname—*Liu Yuan* (the Liu Garden). I visited the garden in the mid-Xianfeng period, and was deeply impressed by the abundance of its rockeries and springs, the beauty of its flowers and plants, as well as the complexity of its winding paths and exquisite pavilions. I must say that it was the best garden in Wu County at that time. During the Taiping Rebellion from 1860 to 1861 (corresponding to the Chinese year of *Gengshen* and *Xinyou*), nearly half of the famous gardens of Wu County were abandoned, especially those outside the Changmen gate. The previously busy and crowded city then suffered a severe decline. Weeds grew so wildly that the road was almost hidden, making it difficult even to recognize the tracks of carriages after they hand passed by. Yet, the Liu Garden remained unaffected. During the mid-Tongzhi period, I visited the garden again, and all the rockeries, springs, flowers, plants, paths and pavilions I admired before still retained their elegant beauty. Those abandoned gardens, on the other hand, were extremely desolate, lacking proper maintenance and care. Standing in front of these barren gardens in the warm spring breeze, one contemplates nothing but their tragic fate and the passage of time. In the second year of the Guangxu reign, the Liu Garden was acquired by the governor Sheng Xuren from Piling County. He started to renovate and re-decorate the entire garden—trees and flowers flourished, rockeries rearranged, watercourses dredged, and pavilions well-laid out. When the weather was nice in spring or autumn, Sheng often organized banquets and literary gatherings in his garden and guests from all around the city were invited. People loved to visit and tour around his garden, and the name Liu Yuan was frequently heard outside the Changmen gate. Sheng then asked me to write about his garden. “Do you still want to use its original name? Have you thought about giving it a new name?” I asked. “No, no.” he replied, “Cold Green Manor is hardly known. It is easy to name a garden but difficult to get people familiar with the name. So I will stick to the well-known Liu Yuan, but change the character for the surname *liu* 刘 to the word *liu* 留 that means ‘stay’ or ‘linger’ – same pronunciation, different character. Thus, I am adopting its original name, but with my own modification. It is the same concept Yuan Zicai had in mind when he acquired the Sui Garden from the Sui family—he changed the surname *sui* 隋 to the word *sui* 随 that means ‘follow’ or ‘adapt’. Yuan and his Sui Garden, me and my Liu Garden, are we not doing the same thing?” “What a beautiful name!” I remarked, “And it truly describes the garden—so delicate that people always linger on. Countless buildings and watercourses were destroyed after the chaos caused by the war. The Liu Garden, however, remained intact. Is it not waiting for a virtuous owner like you? The magnificence of all the rockeries, springs, flowers, paths, and pavilions is waiting for your appreciation and enjoyment. The garden has left so much for you, as opposed to the Jingu Garden, which was abandoned after the decline of its owner Shi Chong, as described in the Tang poem: the empty garden is only accompanied by the blowing wind and the cold moon.” From then on, I know that the name *Liu Yuan*, now meaning the ‘Lingering Garden’ will exist forever, even without those lavish banquets and enchanting music. Thus, I wrote this *Notes on Lingering Garden* as a reference for those who have the ambition of constructing famous gardens in Wu County. Former history officer Yu Yue from Deqing County, in the winter (second month) of the second year of the Guangxu reign.



而近有劉氏寒碧莊焉嘉慶初為劉君蓉峯所有故即以其姓姓其園而曰劉園也
間大亂跡至吳下名園半為墟莽而閭門之外尤甚曩之闐城溢郭塵合而雲連者
又往遊焉其泉石之勝花木之亭榭之幽深蓋猶未異於昔而蕪穢不治無修葺之
始修之平之攘之剔之嘉樹榮而佳卉茁奇石顯而清流通涼台澳館風亭月榭高
也吾不如從其所稱而稱之人曰劉園吾則曰留園不易其音而易其字即以其故
二者將毋同余嘆曰美矣哉斯名乎稱其實矣夫大亂之后兵燹之余高台傾而曲
待君登臨也花木之美留以待君之攀玩也亭台之幽深留以待君之遊息也其所
名長留於天地間矣因為之記俾後之志吳下名園者有可考焉光緒二年冬十月

MASTER OF THE WATER, PINE AND STONE RETREAT 水松石山房主人

“The fundamental role of art is the evolution of consciousness—art, defined as any creative response to experience, is one of our most sophisticated and flexible languages for exploring and expressing an infinite range of meaning from the banal to the profound and from the precise to the undefinable. The artist, therefore, is involved in the transmutation of consciousness: raising it constantly from lower to higher levels.”

Over the past forty years, Hugh Moss (b. 1943)—whose studio name is “Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat”—has amassed one of the most esteemed collections of Chinese antiquities. As one of the earliest dealers of contemporary Chinese ink art in London and Kong Kong, the artist developed deep personal friendships with some of the foremost literati painters of our time including C.C. Wang (1907–2003), Fang Zhaoling (1914–2006), Lui Shou-kwan (1919–1975), Chen Chi-kwan (1921–2007), Tseng Yu-ho (1924–2017), Liu Guosong (b. 1932), Ho Huai-shuo, (b. 1941), Liu Dan (b. 1953) and Hong Hoi (b. 1957). From these masters, he learned the art of literati painting but added to this a Western education grounded in philosophy and history, the literary sensibilities of a gifted writer and poet, and a lifetime of experience handling, researching and authenticating Chinese works of art. Moss recounts the moment his career representing living artists lead to a life making art, “Within a decade I found myself agent to many of the world’s leading Chinese artists. In the mid-1970s, when I asked one of them, Wang Jiqian (C. C. Wang, 1907–2003) whom I had known for some time as a collector of antiquities and a client, how best to go about understanding Chinese painting, he responded with the single word: ‘Paint!’ I was in his home in New York at the time. Having watched him, and others including Fang Zhaoling paint, it didn’t look at all difficult to do, however long it might take me to do it *well* but it also looked like a lot of fun and given the extraordinary opportunity to learn from the best, I took it. After a lifetime of dealing in, collecting and studying other, mostly dead, people’s art I was suddenly part of a living world of creativity.”

As an Englishman engaged in the traditionally Chinese art of literati painting, Moss has a propensity for written allegory and poetic imagery which he inscribes on his paintings in the form of English calligraphy written with a Chinese *maobi* or calligraphic brush. He elaborates, “the Chinese tradition of painting has long since linked painting, calligraphy and poetry, but in this sense ‘poetry’ stands for poetic expression rather than poetry as a strict discipline. So it never occurred to me to choose to favour inscriptions, it just came naturally ... recognizing the collective nature of artistic communication, its role in refining consciousness, distilling transcendence from the dusty world of things and reason in the alembic of ink, I was simply following the same Chinese tradition of expressing something beyond the picture but knowingly.”

Although Moss’ aesthetic taste leans towards the classical, his approach to materials—especially paper which he works from both sides—and process—specifically his use of cutting, re-orientation, composing, layering and mounting—is highly innovative. He explains, “In many of my own paintings, separate, pre-prepared elements of the painting are laid down on paper, re-arranged, sculpted or edited with scissors, and then mounted to form a single, integral image ... For me, this method keeps the process exciting all through, as everything has infinite potential, and one need never give up on a sheet of paper. Any mistakes, wrong turns, accidents are transformed into positive and encouraging, rather than negative and discouraging features. If a painting is not working, it doesn’t become a failure, but a potential new path to follow. It is a method that, lacking traditional drawing skills, I have found a vastly encouraging and efficient teacher.”

Very early on, he fell in love with the handscroll commissioning major works in this distinctive format by his fellow artists and teachers. For “The Four Accomplishments in Ink,” INKstudio has selected four handscrolls by “Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat”—two of scholar’s rocks and two of landscapes—all of which feature the Master’s own writings and English-language calligraphy.

ON LANDSCAPES

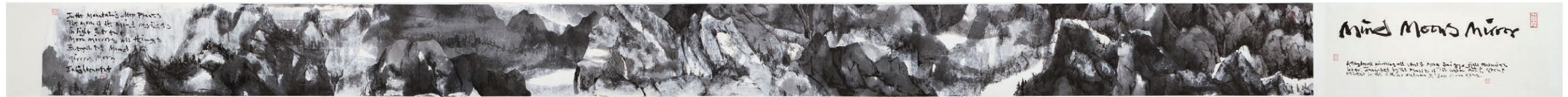
“There are no rules that govern high art, only those that arise out of it. For centuries, the Chinese have interpreted nature to their own ends freely, so I have never felt any constraint to stick to reality—one is stuck in it for so much of one’s time it is a relief to escape it in the studio.”

“Chinese materials have been developed over the centuries of maturity to be dancing partners for the artist, not mute, rigid tools by which one can impose a pre-conceived image. The papers, the more common and more sophisticated surface, are to a greater or lesser extent absorbent and thin so that pigments seep into the surface, and as a rule right through to the other side ... Chinese papers become more of a partner in the art, often surprising you with an effect and, even if you understand your paper really well, they discourage absolute control.”

“I paint first from the side with rougher, small, randomly placed fibres on the surface—the idea is similar to Liu Kuo-sung paper, but the threads are almost impossible to remove without damaging the paper, so are intended as texturing, but the effect can be much the same if used judiciously. Then dipping a large brush and loading it with water and pale ink (or colour) make abstract, expressive, broad strokes—albeit with vaguely landscape shapes if that is the initial impetus—moving the brush sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly so that the slower markings seep through more thoroughly while the quicker ones tend to stay more on the surface, thus leaving random white markings on the other side of the paper.”

“When dry, I’ll turn this over and see the much more subtle markings that have come through the paper and these will immediately suggest something to me, whether landscape, figures or something completely unexpected. Depending upon the power of that image, I will either take that as the next starting point, or turn the paper back over, and with darker colour, perhaps a dryer brush, add a complementary abstract layer. I may do this several times,

but by now the painting itself is a full partner in the process. Now it leads, now I do; sometimes we are dancing perfectly in harmony, sometimes trying to find a rhythm. At whatever stage of this process, I’m always open to changing the orientation of the painting, from vertical to horizontal, or turn it upside down entirely. I’m also open to changing which face of the paper to continue on, back or front. Once I decide which direction to follow, I’ll usually work from that side from then on ... if a landscape remains the background intent, the natural, earlier less intentional strokes will dictate the form and details ... vistas open and pretty-much paint themselves in that I can see the image before tickling it out of the paper with ink and colours. These are inevitably more exciting, more unexpected and powerful than anything I could have dreamed up as a preparatory sketch. All I have to do is follow the lead and transform the potential of the natural, spontaneous markings into a landscape scene with all the mountains and vales, mists and clouds, cliffs and gorges that appear naturally out of the random markings.”



O2

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

Mind Means Mirror

2011 | Ink on cotton paper | 15 x 248 3/4 in, 38 x 631.8 cm [MWPS001]

O2

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

Mind Moons Mirror

2011 | Ink on cotton paper | 15 x 248 3/4 in, 38 x 631.8 cm [MWPS001]

ARTIST INSCRIPTIONS

Title:

Mind moons mirror.

A Handscroll mirroring the verse of monk Saigyo eight centuries later. Inscribed by the Master of the Water Pine and Stone Retreat in the clear autumn of 2011, Hong Kong.

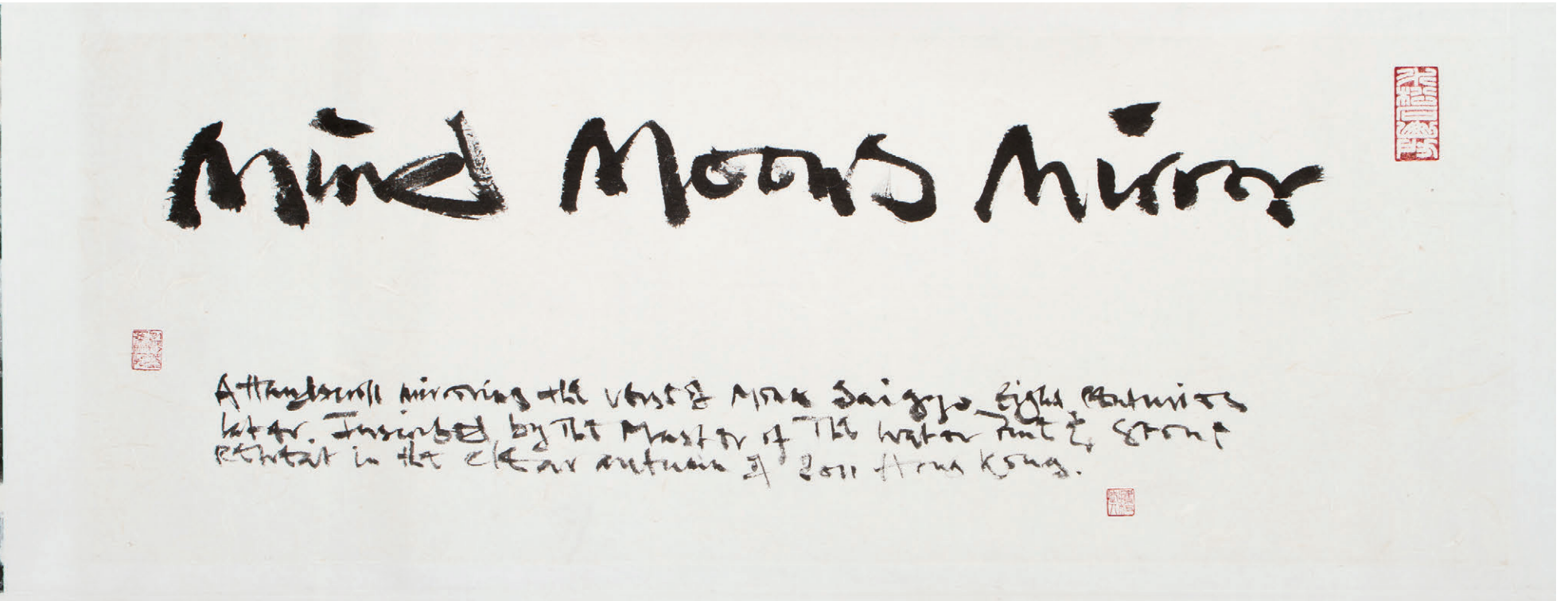
With three seals of the artist, 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (‘TheWater, Pine and Stone Retreat’), 攜杖老人 *Xiezhang laoren* (‘The old man who carries the staff’) and 人磨墨磨人 *Renmomo momoren* (‘Man grinds the ink; ink grinds the man’)

Painting:

In the mountain’s deep places the moon of the mind in light serene. Moon mirrors all things everywhere. Moon mirrors mind. Enlightenment.

With three seals of the artist: 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (‘TheWater, Pine and Stone Retreat’), 人磨墨磨人 *Renmomo momoren* (‘Man grinds the ink; ink grinds the man’), and 无爲 *Wuwei* (‘Without action’).





O2

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

Mind Moons Mirror

2011 | Ink on cotton paper | 15 x 248 3/4 in, 38 x 631.8 cm [MWPS001]

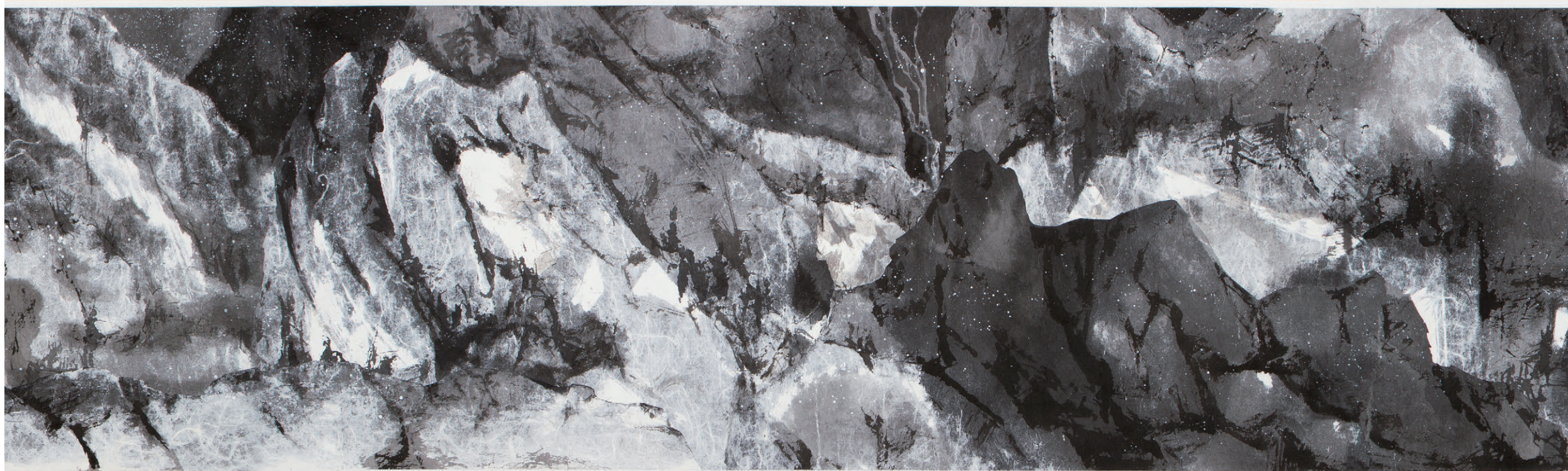


O2

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

Mind Moons Mirror

2011 | Ink on cotton paper | 15 x 248 3/4 in, 38 x 631.8 cm [MWPS001]



O2

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

Mind Moons Mirror

2011 | Ink on cotton paper | 15 x 248 3/4 in, 38 x 631.8 cm [MWPS001]



O2

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

Mind Moons Mirror

2011 | Ink on cotton paper | 15 x 24 3/4 in, 38 x 631.8 cm [MWPS001]



O2

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

Mind Moons Mirror

2011 | Ink on cotton paper | 15 x 248 3/4 in, 38 x 631.8 cm [MWPS001]



03

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

All Nature's Splendours Captured in this Gourd Heaven

2015 | Ink on cloud-dragon paper | 15 3/8 x 282 5/8 in, 39 x 718 cm [MWPS002]

03

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

All Nature's Splendours Captured in this Gourd Heaven

2015 | Ink on cloud-dragon paper | 15 3/8 x 282 5/8 in, 39 x 718 cm [MWPS002]

ARTIST SEALS

With four seals of the artist, 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (‘The Water, Pine and Stone Retreat’), 山外山樵 *Shanwai shanqiao* (‘The mountain woodcutter who is not in the mountains’), 攜杖老人 *Xiezhang laoren* (‘The old man who carries the staff’), and

Flying Cranes (pictorial seal)

ARTIST INSCRIPTIONS

Title Slip:

All Nature’s Splendours Captured in this Gourd Heaven

The Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

With one seal of the artist, 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (‘TheWater, Pine and Stone Retreat’)

Title Panel:

All Nature’s Splendours Captured in this Gourd Heaven

Inscribed by the Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat, recalling a marketplace friend from the Later Han

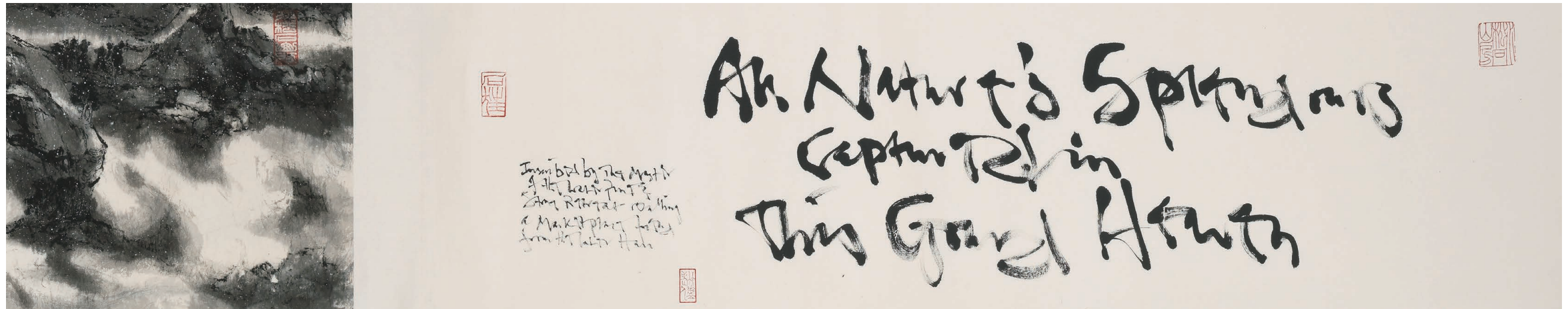
With three seals of the artist, 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (‘TheWater, Pine and Stone Retreat’), 石狂 *Shikuang* (‘Stone Fool’), and 竹虛 老人 *Zhuxu laoren* (‘Old man as Empty Inside as Bamboo’)

Colophon:

At dawn, staff in hand, I climb the crags,
and by dusk settle among the mountains.
Scarcely a peak rises as high as this hut
facing crags and overlooking winding streams.
Forests stretch before the mountain's open gate
boulders heaped round its very steps.
Mountains crowd around, blocking out roads.
Trails wander into bamboo thickets.
Visitors lose their way on coming up
or forget the paths leading home when they descend.
Raging torrents rush through the dusk,
Monkeys howl throughout the night.
Deep in meditation I hold the inner pattern,
nurturing the Way, never severing from it.
My heart is one with the autumn trees,
My eyes delight in the flowering of spring.
I inhabit the constant and await my end,
Content to dwell in peace, accepting the flux of things.
I only regret that there is no kindred spirit here
to climb this ladder of sky and clouds with me.

Within the gourd there is no time, Xie and I dwell on the same mountain. Inscribed at the Garden at the Edge of the Universe, recalling the words of Xie Lingyun, in the winter of 2015

With three seals of the artist, 如如居士 *Ruru Jushi* (‘The retired scholar who believes that all doctrines are equal’), 終日到門惟白雲 *Zhongri daomen wei baiyun* (‘All day long to this gate come only the white clouds’), and 人磨墨磨人 *Renmomo momoren* (‘Man grinds the ink; ink grinds the man’)

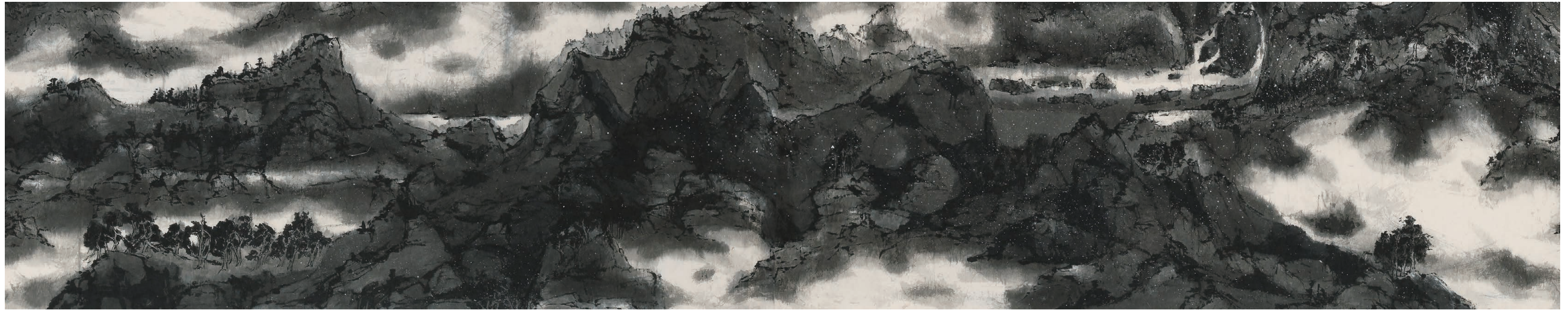


03

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

All Nature's Splendours Captured in this Gourd Heaven

2015 | Ink on cloud-dragon paper | 15 3/8 x 282 5/8 in, 39 x 718 cm [MWPS002]



03

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

**All Nature's Splendours Captured in
this Gourd Heaven**

2015 | Ink on cloud-dragon paper | 15 3/8 x 28 5/8 in, 39 x 71.8 cm [MWPS002]

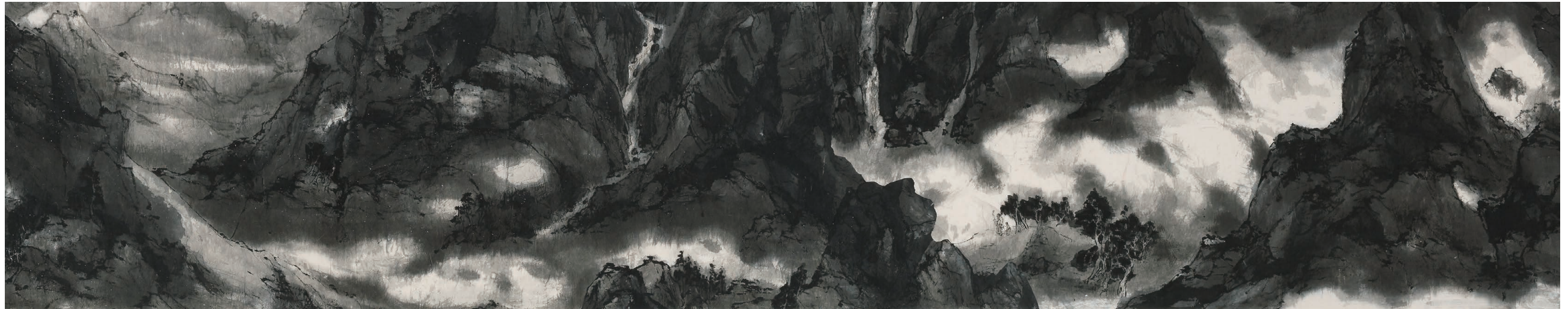


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Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

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2015 | Ink on cloud-dragon paper | 15 3/8 x 282 5/8 in, 39 x 718 cm [MWPS002]

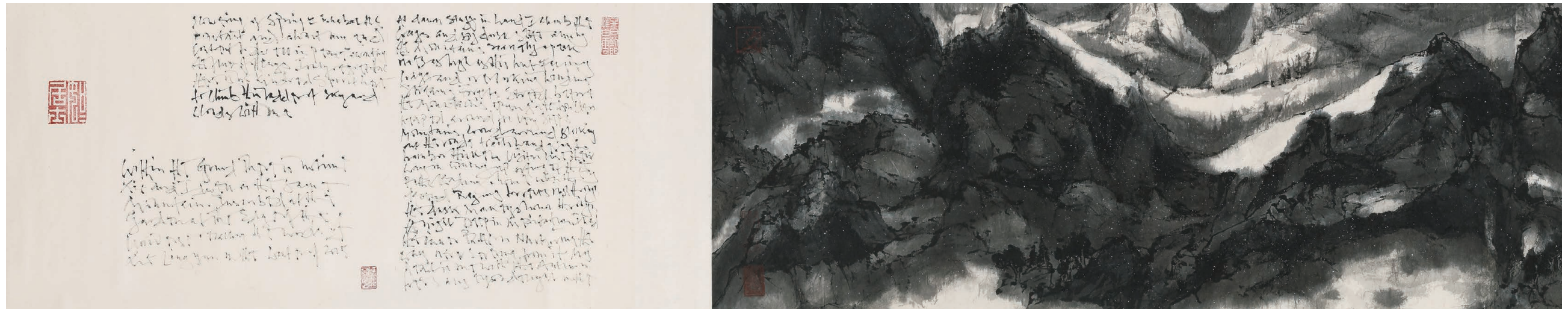


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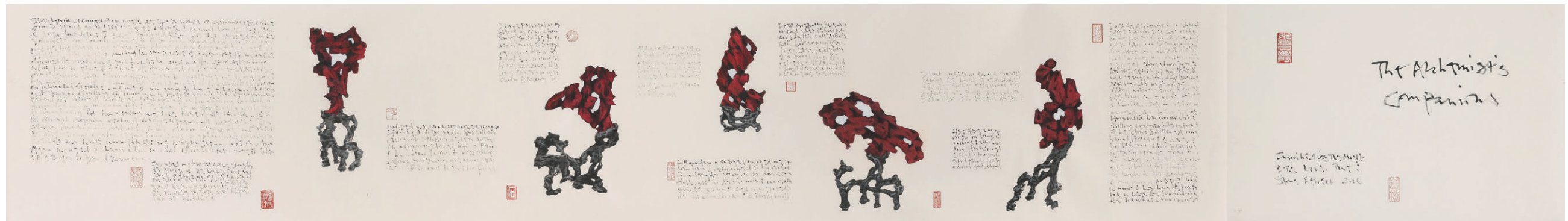
ON STRANGE STONES

“I’ve collected strange stones since around 1960. I found them both fascinating and powerful as sculpture. There was something about the act of taking a stone shaped by nature and setting it on a beautifully carved stand as if it were a precious carving in jade. Then I learned that although the twentieth century had seen the aesthetic that appreciated them almost lost at times, they had been for centuries considered among the highest sculptural expression in the entire culture. So, by the time I came to painting them seriously a couple of decades or so ago, I was thoroughly immersed in the aesthetic, had all the books on the subject, including facsimile copies of ancient Chinese compendiums of strange stone collections, and had studied the genre for years. I understood the roles they played beyond the sculptural; their ability to act as a portal, for instance. The scholar class is often shown in Chinese art strolling the wilderness with a walking staff, boating on majestic lakes, or enjoying the delights of like-minded company in wonderful gardens, but in fact if they were officials, as so many were, they were kept pretty busy. Even when delighting in music, poetry and company, they were largely inhibited from disappearing into the real wilderness for long. It was an ideal as much as a pastime, but their paintings and the strange stones acted as portals, allowing them to gaze into them, meditatively bond with them, and disappear into another realm, a realm where the ideal was realized. It is a similar concept to their idea of immortality in the blink of an eye; you could enter a timeless realm, the land of the immortals, free of constraint in brief moments in the studio or one’s own garden simply by ‘entering’ the stone for what, in real time, may have been a fairly brief sojourn. Beyond the stage of time, however, time in the ‘real’ world does not apply. Indeed, the transcendent realm was often considered to be the ‘real’ one, the one in which the scholars toiled for their emperor was known as the world of dust, or the world of red dust, a quasi-illusionary realm of things and essentially unimportant details.”

“My first impulse was to paint them using ink, not because ink allowed them to look like real stones rather conveniently, but because ink was the

essential material of Chinese painting, colour was often incidental. But always aware of the portal role of strange stones, the inscriptions and stories behind the paintings, which would always come to me as I was painting, never as a preconceived idea, began to develop in their own way as a series of interlinked tales of an alter-ego, wandering immortal staff-master and strange-stone aficionado spanning both the centuries and the world of dust and the transcendent realm. The red stones arose naturally from two aspects: the recognition that the highest role of painting was transformational, as in alchemy and the understanding that in the transcendent realm there were no constraints. The reality of the dusty world did not govern there or even matter, so rocks could be any colour you wanted them to be. That’s where the alchemy entered the equation since mercury, an essential ingredient of the process, is derived from the ore cinnabar, but cinnabar as a stone or rock does not come in pleasantly sculptural forms—one might as well collect lumps of coal—so there are no red strange stone formations that would suit the Chinese aesthetic. The colour of cinnabar, therefore, represented to me the colour of freedom of emancipation from the world of dust. It was also a bundle of fun to mix.”

“The green colour arose out of the discovery of a particularly vivid green ink from Japan ... which reminded me of malachite, a stone I am particularly fond of ... [and one] which does occur frequently among strange stones.”



04

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

The Alchemist's Companions

2016 | Ink and water-colours on cloud-dragon paper mounted down on xuan paper | 18 1/8 x 96
7/8 in, 46 x 246 cm [MWPS003]

04 Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat
The Alchemist's Companions

2016 | Ink and water-colours on cloud-dragon paper mounted down on xuan paper | 18 1/8 x 96
7/8 in, 46 x 246 cm [MWPS003]

ARTIST INSCRIPTIONS

Title Slip:

The Alchemist’s Companions

With three seals of the artist, 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (‘The Water, Pine and Stone Retreat’), 莫 *Mo*, and 士搨 *Shiwei*

Title Panel:

The Alchemist’s Companions

Inscribed by the Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat, 2016.

With two seals of the artist, 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (‘The Water, Pine and Stone Retreat’), and 山外山樵 *Shanwai shanqiao* (‘The mountain woodcutter who is not in the mountains’)

Painting:

I met the Alchemist in a strange stone I discovered cast aside by the waters of an underground river which ran through the end of a deep cave beneath a cliff not far from my mountain retreat. Struggling home with it, I set it up by the hearth and spent a few days becoming familiar with its surface before noticing that it had an identical cave at the base of a similar cliff tucked away amongst its crevices.

The temptation was irresistible; settling comfortably in front of the stone, I followed my usual practice of deep breathing while focusing intently upon the point in the stone where I would enter, stilling the chatter of the birds in the birdcage of my mind. As ever I had no

notion of how long the process took or when the transition, the transmutation, occurred, I just suddenly found myself beyond the World of Red Dust—in the stone. Recalling every detail of the path I had chosen, I climbed it to the foot of the cave.

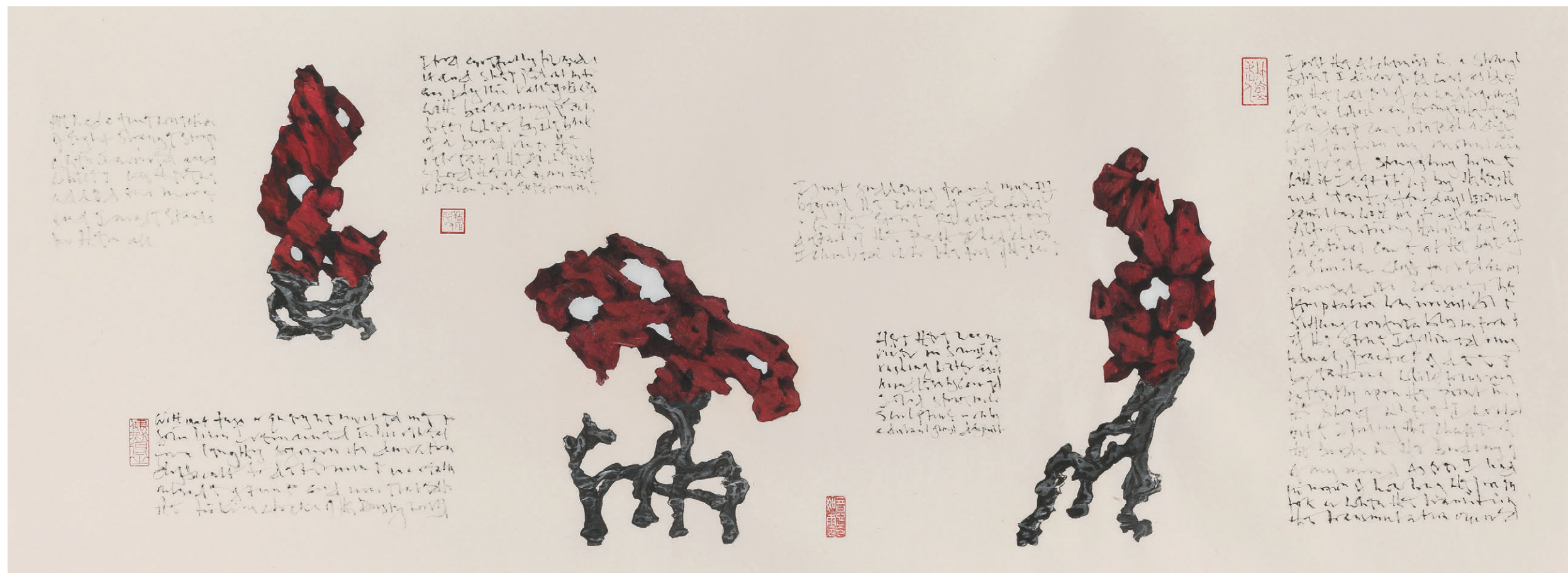
Here there was no river, no sound of rushing water as it mindlessly carved solid stone into sculpture; only a distant glow of daylight. I trod carefully towards it and stepped out into an idyllic valley ablaze with blossoming peach trees where, by the bank of a broad river, the retreat of the Alchemist stood, the old man there to welcome me—expecting me.

Without fuss or query he invited me to join him. I remained in his retreat for a lengthy sojourn, its duration difficult to determine in a realm outside of time and unrelated to the ticking clocks of the Dusty World. He had a fine collection of eight strange stones when I arrived and while I was there we added two more and I made stands for them all. I have painted all ten before as cinnabar stones, suitable for an alchemist. I enjoyed recalling them to the brush, but it occurred to me that since they were stones from another realm of reality, it mattered not what they looked like, so I painted them again but without restraint, splitting the ten now imaginary stones into a pair of handscrolls, one to keep perhaps, although ‘possession’ is meaningless, the other one to give to a friend.

The alchemist claimed that one of the stones would occasionally levitate from its stand as if leaping free, although I cannot say I ever saw it do so, but here I have painted them all still settled into the simulated root stands I made for them from gnarled old peach boughs and the cypresses and pines that clung to crags in the gorge that fed into his valley. Many of his stones were of attenuated forms and we discussed the orientation of each for weeks and months before determining which way to place the stone. He favoured creating a good deal of formal tension when placing them, so as to challenge me to balance his orientation with a stand that would make it look comfortable. It was an intriguing exercise and one I am glad to have entertained again as the focus for recalling an imaginary re-creation of his ten companions. Beyond the Realm of Red Dust perhaps all is imaginary but such a distinction has no meaning there. Perhaps it is the Dusty World that is imaginary. The two realms are like those of the mind: within the rational, reasoning realm of comprehension, the world of the Dao seems imaginary but once in the realm beyond the intellect, the intellectual realm seems imaginary. Or, perhaps, like consciousness itself, the two while incompatible are complimentary like our two legs—no need to discuss which is real, which is best; together they will get you to your destination.

Inscribed on a first set of five stones by the Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat at the Garden at the Edge of the Universe in the new year of an unpredictable 2016 as the monkey emerges with his pouch full of mischief.

With nine seals of the artist, 養石閒人 *Yangshi xianren* (‘An idler who cherishes stones’), 攜杖老人 *Xiezhang laoren* (‘The old man who carries the staff’), 石 *Shi* (‘Stone’), 偶然得之 *Ouran dezhi* (‘Achieved by accident’), 一二三 *Yi er san* (‘One, two, three’), 意氣如雲 *Yiqi ru yun* (‘Spirit as high as the clouds’), 水松石山房主人 *Shuisongshi shanfang zhuren* (‘Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat’), 竹虛 老人 *Zhuxu laoren* (‘Old man as Empty Inside as Bamboo’), and 有意无意 *Youyi wuyi* (‘Between intention and no intention’).

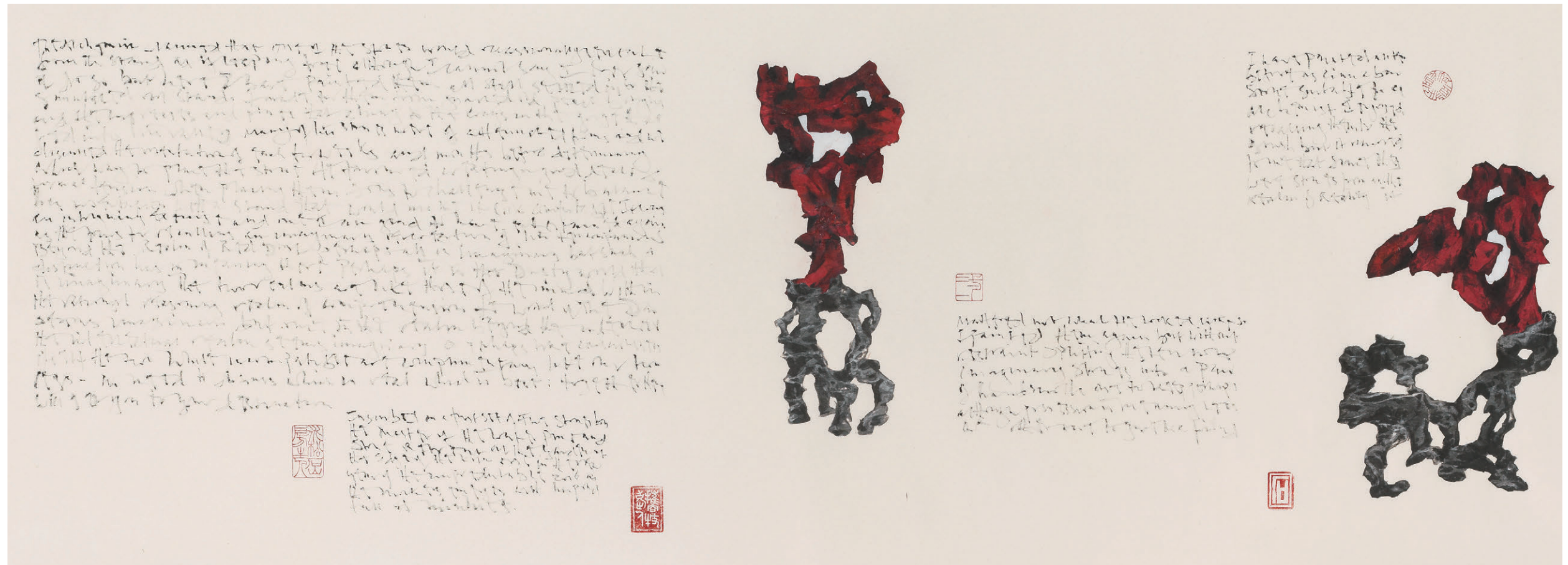


04

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

The Alchemist's Companions

2016 | Ink and water-colours on cloud-dragon paper mounted down on xuan paper | 18 1/8 x 96
7/8 in, 46 x 246 cm [MWPS003]



04

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

The Alchemist's Companions

2016 | Ink and water-colours on cloud-dragon paper mounted down on xuan paper | 18 1/8 x 96
7/8 in, 46 x 246 cm [MWPS003]



05

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

The Mind Garden of the Yunnan Wanderer

2015 | Ink and Japanese green ink on cloud-dragon paper mounted on xuan paper | 11 1/8 x 108 5/8 in,
28 x 276 cm [MWPS004]

05

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

The Mind Garden of the Yunnan Wanderer

2015 | Ink and Japanese green ink on cloud-dragon paper mounted on xuan paper | 11 1/8 x 10 8 5/8 in, 28 x 27 6 cm [MWPS004]

ARTIST INSCRIPTIONS

Title slip:

The Mind Garden of the Yunnan Wanderer

With one seal of the artist, 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (“The Water, Pine and Stone Retreat”)

Title:

The Mind Garden of the Yunnan Wanderer

Inscribed by the Master of the Water Pine and Stone Retreat in the mist-bound spring of 2015

With two seals of the artist, 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (“The Water, Pine and Stone Retreat”) and 攜杖老人 *Xiezhang laoren* (“The old man who carries the staff”)

Painting:

Song Bridge | I spent part of the early Ming dynasty with the Yunnan Wanderer. As a rule he preferred the peripatetic life, although he had a home in the mountains of Yunnan where I first met him as the Ming dynasty settled in for the usual cycle of establishment, glory and collapse.

Wandering Companion | He liked to roam unfettered and free of care, carrying only such possessions as he could conveniently take with him, which consisted mainly of his walking staff, the clothes he wore, and a gourd for wine and a coconut-shell drinking cup tied to his belt, the cup attached by a small gold buckle. The gold, he explained, in case he ever visited some urban centre and needed money—he never did.

Idle Chat | Many years later he visited me in my retreat in the gentle mountains of Zhejiang and stayed for a few years. He had always been a Stone Fool, one of the many things that brought us together, and enjoyed seeking them out on trips into the mountains but he never kept any. Instead he held his collection of strange stones entirely in his mind, the six largest of which stood in an imaginary garden in an imaginary home.

Embracing the Universe | He spoke of this home frequently and his accounts were consistent enough to show that it existed for him as a reality. Set beside a river in the foothills of the south, it was a mansion by eremitic standards with three separate pavilions and an open, thatched meditation hut on a rocky promontory overlooking the river.

Sitting Stone | Behind the buildings was a garden surrounded by a tile-topped wall cut with different shaped openings where he kept his more monumental stones. He was from the forests of the damp south, where everything was permanently covered in lichen, so his imagined stones were also green. He clearly knew the appearance of each down to the last perforation and promontory. For him the garden and his estate were as real as my home was to me, but without the upkeep.

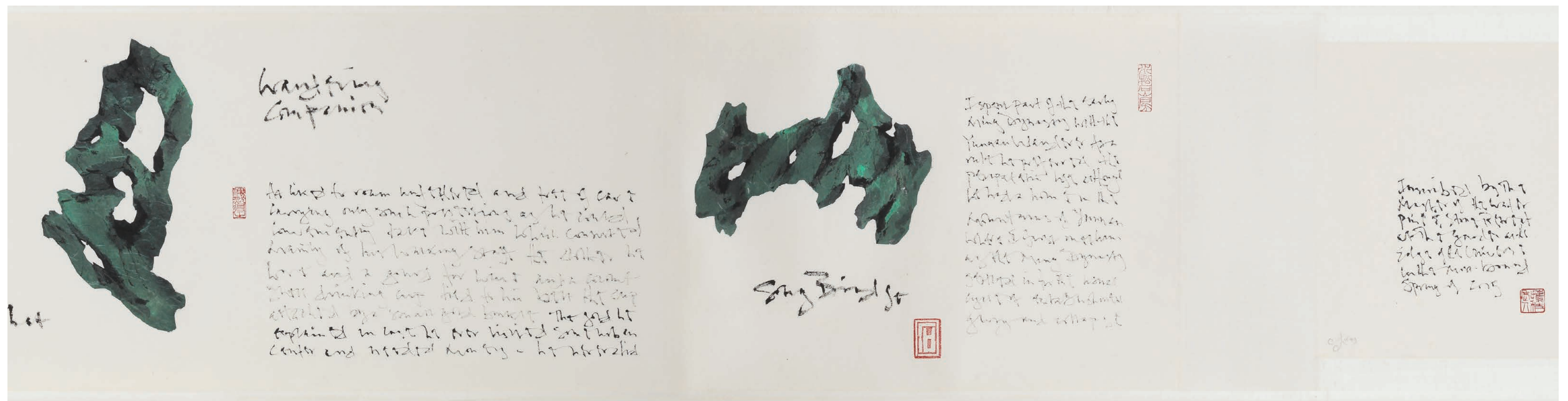
Above it All | Often as the sun was setting, and we would gaze out across the gorge sipping Plum Wine and idly chatting, he would recall his stones and where they stood in the garden, how they were placed in relation to sheltering trees and where each had been found although, as he pointed out, being a Mind Garden he was spared the task of moving them physically into place.

I think I spent as many delightful hours viewing the imaginary stones in his other-worldly garden as I did viewing real stones, such was his mastery of description and commitment to their reality in his mind.

So today I paint the garden and his stones from memory—my own and his as he described each stone to me adding their names and personalities.

Inscribed by the Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat at the Garden at the Edge of the Universe in the spring of 2015.

With ten seals of the artist, 山外山樵 *Shanwai shanqiao* (“The mountain woodcutter who is not in the mountains”), 養石閒人 *Yangshi xianren* (“An idler who cherishes stones”), 石 *Shi* (“Stone”), 誠 *Cheng* (“Sincere”), 竹虛老人 *Zhuxu laoren* (“Old man as Empty Inside as Bamboo”), 人磨墨磨人 *Renmomo momoren* (“Man grinds the ink; ink grinds the man”), 石狂 *Shikuang* (“Stone Fool”), 水松石山房 *Shuisongshi shanfang* (“The Water, Pine and Stone Retreat”), 偶然得之 *Ouran dezhi* (“Achieved by accident”), and 意氣如雲 *Yiqi ru yun* (“Spirit as high as the clouds”).

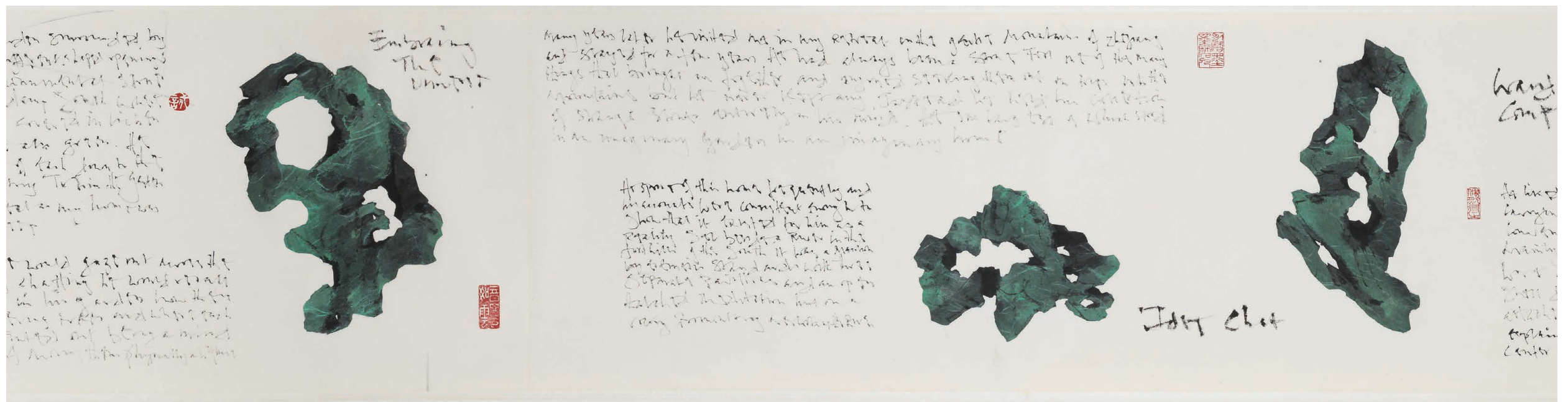


05

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

The Mind Garden of the Yunnan Wanderer

2015 | Ink and Japanese green ink on cloud-dragon paper mounted on xuan paper | 11 1/8 x 108 5/8 in,
 28 x 276 cm [MWPS004]

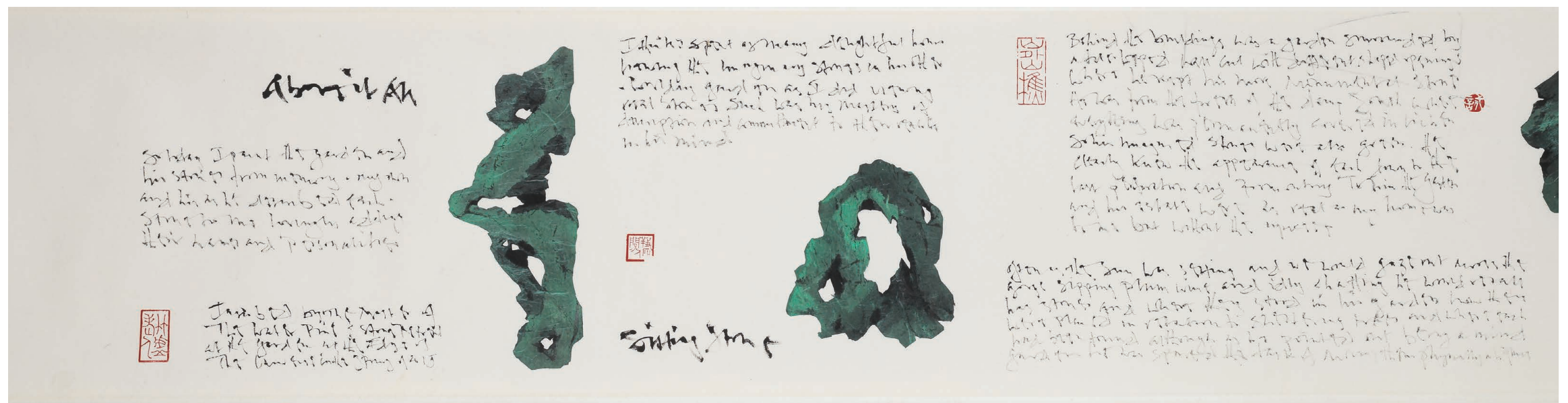


05

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

The Mind Garden of the Yunnan Wanderer

2015 | Ink and Japanese green ink on cloud-dragon paper mounted on xuan paper | 11 1/8 x 10 5/8 in,
28 x 27.6 cm [MWPS004]



05

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

The Mind Garden of the Yunnan Wanderer

2015 | Ink and Japanese green ink on cloud-dragon paper mounted on xuan paper | 11 1/8 x 10 5/8 in,
28 x 27.6 cm [MWPS004]

Master of the Water, Pine and Stone Retreat

Frozen Lingzhi

2011 | Ink on arches paper | 22 7/8 x 15 in, 58 x 38 cm [MWPS005]

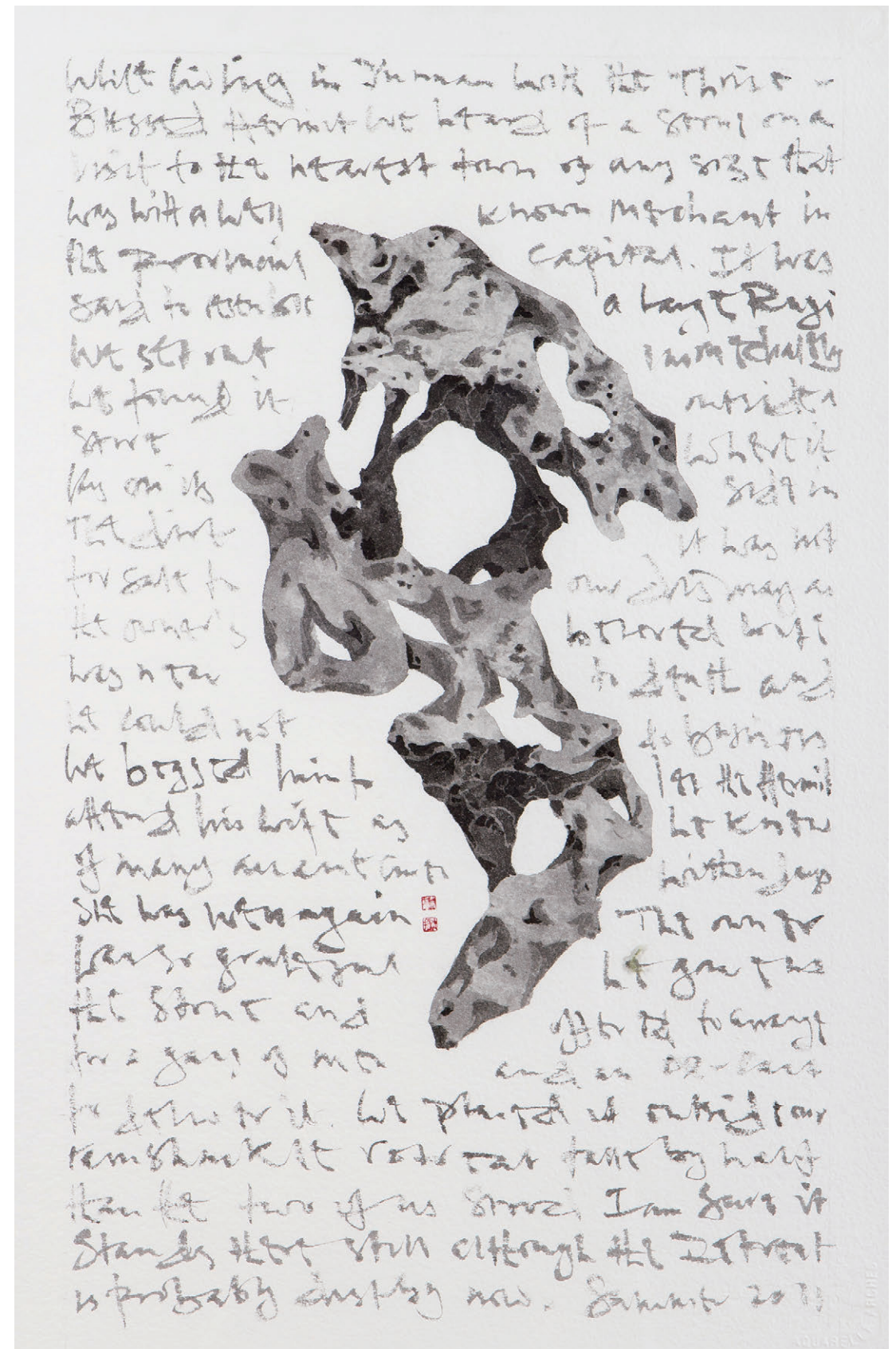
ARTIST SEALS

With two seals of the artist: 莫 *Mo*, and 士攝 *Shiwei*

ARTIST INSCRIPTION

While living in Yunnan with the Thrice-blessed Hermit, we heard of a stone on a visit to the nearest town of any size that was with a well-known merchant in the provincial capital. It was said to resemble a *Ruyi*. We set out immediately. We found it outside a store where it lay on its side in the dirt. It was not for sale to our dismay as the owner's wife was near to death and he could not do business. We begged him to let the Hermit attend his wife as he knew of many arcane cures. Within days she was well again. The owner was so grateful he gave us the stone and offered to arrange for a gang of men and an ox-cart to deliver it. We placed it outside the ramshackle retreat, taller by half than the two of us stood. I am sure it stands there still, although the retreat is probably dust by now.

Summer 2011.



XU LEI

徐累

Xu Lei (b. 1963) is widely recognized as the foremost artist in the revival of *gongbi*, a form of high imperial painting dating back to the Tang (618–907 CE) and Song (960–1279 CE) Dynasties that employed a fine brush-line to depict figurative subjects in a realistic manner. Compared at times with René Magritte, Giorgio de Chirico, Joseph Cornell and filmmaker Ingmar Bergman, Xu Lei’s revival of *gongbi* painting reflects his interests in surrealism and existentialism and the role that these literary forms play in the historic development of a revolutionary consciousness. Unlike the experimental ink artists who engage material, process, gesture and abstraction as modes of indexing both the natural objective and the experiential subjective, Xu Lei embraces figuration, color and narrative to convey a submerged sense of the both personal and shared social-cultural subconscious. His exquisitely detailed portrayal of solitary, usually non-human subjects in multi-layered, interior scenes evokes a psycho-analytic sense of mystery, paving a new path to a literary if somewhat melancholic modernity that integrates poetic imagery and realist technique—what art critic Jeffrey Hantover described as “the quiet resignation of the realist”:

“In exquisitely detailed works in the *gongbi* tradition, Xu Lei uses realism to pull the rug out from under reality. He creates an immediate but fragile world of illusion in which we suspend our disbelief to weave narratives about people we cannot see. ...Xu Lei makes us accomplices, co-voyeurs, peeping through the window of his paintings to the forbidden scenes inside where things are hidden. Like a story unfolding on a stage, the scenes, the artist says, mingle ‘what is true with what is untrue.’ ...For all their technical virtuosity, Xu Lei’s paintings appeal because they are so good for thinking. ... Against a cacophonous world of hawkers selling shiny new commodities of Western materialism and shabby ideological shibboleths, he offers a world of quiet, solitude and stoicism. ...His is an art of melancholy, impermanence and loss. Not the dark and angry art of the pessimist—Francis Bacon for example—but the quiet resignation of the realist.”

Born in Nantong, Jiangsu, in 1963, Xu Lei studied ink painting at the Department of Fine Arts of the Nanjing Art Academy. In the 1980’s, Xu was a crucial member of the 1985 New Wave art movements in China and featured in the 1989 “China Avant-Garde” exhibition at the National Art Museum of China, marking a groundbreaking moment in the trajectory of Chinese contemporary art. While many Chinese artists embraced realism through the canonical methods of Western oil painting in propaganda-driven socialist ideals (Socialist Realism) or individual-centered satirical expressions (Cynical Realism), Xu Lei approached realism by returning to China’s own visual history and advocated for the revival of *gongbi* painting technique and materials.

In addition to his work as an artist, Xu Lei is a highly-regarded curator, art critic, historian and intellectual. From his position as artistic director of the Today Art Museum, Beijing’s most important venue for the exhibition of contemporary Chinese art, he has and continues to shape the contemporary art critical discourse within China. As editor-in-chief of *Classics* magazine, he has influenced a generation of artists and intellectuals in their understanding of classical Chinese art, literature and culture and its central importance to the constitution of contemporary Chinese society. As a scholar at the China Art Research Institute, he has mentored a generation of younger artists on the techniques and cultural history of *gongbi* painting.

In addition to the seminal “China Avant-Garde” exhibition (1989), Xu Lei has exhibited at the National Art Museum of China on four other occasions (1986, 2008, 2013, 2016). Xu Lei was featured in “A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Traditional in the Art of Twentieth-Century China” at the Guggenheim Museums in New York (1998) and Bilbao (2000) and has exhibited at the Shanghai Art Museum (2000, 2012), the Duolun Museum of Modern Art in Shanghai (2003), the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin (2004), the Hong Kong Arts Centre (2007), the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin (2008), the Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden (2008), the China Pavilion at the “12th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale” (2010), and, as a featured artist of “Future Pass—From Asia to the World” at the 54th Venice Biennial (2011) and the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam (2011). Over the past five years, he has had solo exhibitions at the Today Art Museum in Beijing (2013), the Suzhou Art Museum (2015) and the National Museum of China in Beijing (2016) and has exhibited at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing (2013, 2016), the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in Hangzhou (2014), the Minsheng Museum in Shanghai (2015) and. He is now represented in Europe and North America by Marlborough Gallery.



07

Xu Lei: Interact Mountains No. 3

徐累：互山之三

2017 | Ink and color on sized xuan paper | 24 3/8 x 81 7/8 in, 62 x 208 cm [XLo01]

Xu Lei: Interact Mountains No. 3

徐累：互山之三

2017 | Ink and color on sized xuan paper | 24 3/8 x 81 7/8 in, 62 x 208 cm [XL001]

In his solo exhibitions at Marlborough Gallery in 2018, Xu Lei debuted a new series of works entitled *hu* 互 which he translates as “interact” but which also connotes a much richer valence in Chinese that includes the notions of “reciprocal,” “interlocking,” and “mutually defining.” The mutually- complementary and alternately-transforming polarities of *yin* and *yang* are the archetype of the *hu* relationship.

One such *hu* or “reciprocal” relationship is between the present or contemporary and the past or the historic. He sees this relationship as an open question for the art of our day, “If you pile up all of the art of the past, contemporary art is the tip that shows above the water. We’ve gotten to the point that we have knowledge about too much art. This does not prove any great richness of vision. Instead, it proves how lacking we are, how much less penetrating we are than people before us. Our knowledge is fragmentary; it has grand aims but has no strength to follow through. So, what do we do?”

A second reciprocal relationship is one between self and other. As an artist working in a globalized, trans-national environment, Xu Lei frames this question in terms of cultural context; specifically, the cultural-historic contexts from which the artist draws his or her figurative subjects and within which we the viewers frame our personal interpretations. Xu Lei’s historic sources extend beyond the Chinese cultural sphere but are, at least for now, connected by a material and technical thread. According to the artist, the origins of *gongbi* painting lie in the religious mural painting of the Tang Dynasty only later moving from wall to screen and from screen to paper or silk scroll. At this early stage, *gongbi* painting was technically similar to European fresco painting of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the two-meter-long horizontal scroll, *Interact Landscape No. 3*, 2018, Xu puts these two painting languages into a formal, reciprocal dialog. Dominique de Villepin narrates, “Here in the collision of landscapes... Italian renaissance stones try to find their place in fine-drawn ink landscapes of ancient China ... we are direct witnesses of the confrontation of two concepts of matter, of existence, of representation.”

Best known for his psycho-analytically charged interior scenes, Xu Lei’s recent embrace of the landscape genre is arresting. Although the painted scenes are of the outside world, Xu Lei’s landscapes are not scenes from nature, but from culture—specifically, from the history of figurative painting from traditions as diverse in geography, culture and time as human experience itself. Thus configured, space is no longer the existential space of the interior self but the reciprocally-interacting and mutually-defining social and historic space of human art and culture.





08

Xu Lei: Interact Trees

徐累：互树

2018 | Ink and color on sized xuan paper | 24 3/8 x 81 7/8 in, 62 x 208 cm [XL002]

In *Interact Trees*, 2019, Xu Lei populates his newly-constructed landscape scene with a cast of arboreal protagonists from the history of painting. The setting is a passage from the Song Dynasty landscape by Qiao Zhongchang *Illustration to the Second Prose Poem on the Red Cliff* in the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art rendered in the plain ink texture strokes of the Song literatus Su Shi. In the painting's final passage, Xu Lei transplants a secluded and dense forest of wild and tangled trees with a convivial party of "garden" trees, each exquisitely rendered using either ink monochrome or vibrant mineral pigments all in his fine, *gongbi* brush-line. Through such shared, underlying technical means, Xu Lei brings the garden landscapes of the Chinese Song Dynasty, the Italian Renaissance, the Persian 15th Century, the French 18th Century—along with each of their associated metaphoric significations—into an aesthetic dialog that is simultaneously well-mannered and surprisingly compelling. For sinologists, the particularly Chinese hermeneutic focus on history and canonical citation will seem familiar. For Chinese art historians, however, the range of global cultural and historic references will be completely new.

As a footnote, I think it worth noting that although Xu Lei has championed the *gongbi* mode of fine-line figurative painting for much of his career, he can paint brilliantly in a range of art historic styles that share a technical and material basis with *gongbi* painting. For Xu Lei, this includes Byzantine illuminated manuscripts, European medieval and renaissance fresco painting, and Persian miniature painting, amongst many others. Surprisingly, this also includes ink-monochrome landscape painting in the style of iconic literati artists such as Su Shi, Zhao Mengfu and Dong Qichang. Although he downplays the conceptual and aesthetic importance of post-Song literati brushwork in his own artistic endeavors, he has nevertheless mastered a virtuosic command of the literati brush language.





Xu Lei: The Message Tree

徐累：消息树

2019 | Ink and color on sized xuan paper | 30 7/8 x 21 5/8 in, 78.5 x 55 cm [XLo03]



Xu Lei: The Message Tree

徐累：消息树

2019 | Ink and color on sized xuan paper | 30 7/8 x 21 5/8 in, 78.5 x 55 cm [XLo03]

In *The Message Tree*, Xu Lei renders a central peak in the archaistic forms and characteristic monochrome texture strokes of the 17th century calligrapher, landscape painter, art theorist, collector and scholar-official, Dong Qichang. This lone peak, however, finds itself surrounded—right, left, top and bottom—by the vibrantly-colored earthen outcroppings of a European landscape. The artist jokes that Dong Qichang’s central peak is like China’s situation today, surrounded on all sides geopolitically and perhaps also culturally by a constellation of “Western powers.” Standing as “guest” in the relation to the lone, central peak—its “host”—Xu Lei’s eponymous "Message Tree" mediates between these two mutually interlocking realities.

As with *Interact Trees*, every thematic element in *The Message Tree* has a precise, art historic source. The overall composition references Dong Qichang’s *Poetic Feeling in the Qixia Monastery*, dated 1626—currently in the collection of the Shanghai Museum. The work’s title refers to a monastery outside Nanjing, the Southern capital city of the Ming Dynasty where Dong Qichang served toward the end of his career as a high official for the late Ming government. For the composition’s central peak, Xu Lei faithfully recites Dong Qichang’s own imagined reconstruction of the wintry mountain forms of the iconic literati painter and poet of the Tang Dynasty Wang Wei. Wang Wei, in Dong Qichang’s own theory of Southern School painting, is the founding patriarch of the Chan-inspired, literati mode of landscape painting. For the surrounding mountains, in contrast, Xu Lei draws from Italian Renaissance fresco painting; specifically, the Benozzo Gozzoli 1459 masterwork *The Journey of the Magi* depicting the three Sage Kings of the *Gospel of Matthew* as they follow the Star of Bethlehem on their prophesied journey to see the newborn Christ. For the Message Tree, in turn, Xu Lei draws inspiration from the early Dutch 15th and 16th Century painter Hieronymus Bosch; specifically, the 1485 masterwork *Saint John the Evangelist on Patmos*, which depicts the New Testament author of the *Book of Revelations* after he had been banished by the Roman authorities to the island of Patmos for practicing the art of prophesy.

In conversations with the artist, it is clear that Dong Qichang, Benozzo Gozzoli and Hieronymus Bosch are all clearly present in his thinking about painting and visual language. The artist is silent, however, as to whether his montage of specific thematic references also includes Wang Wei and Dong Qichang’s Chan-inspired theory of painting, the *Journey of the Magi* and the Star of Bethlehem or Saint John’s *Book of Revelations*. Is *The Message Tree* itself a prophesy? Xu Lei doesn’t say but is happy to let us contemplate the possibility.

ZENG XIAOJUN

曾小俊

As evidenced by his impeccable collection of late-Ming furniture, scholar's objects and scholar's rocks, Zeng Xiaojun (b. 1954, Beijing) epitomizes the collector-artist ideal in China today. As an artist, Zeng Xiaojun has one simple rule: he only paints objects in his own collection or objects that he has seen in person. For him, painting an object is a way of studying it, absorbing its aesthetic qualities and elevating his own artistic sensibilities and sensitivities in the process.

A graduate of the Mural Painting Department at the Central Art and Craft Academy in Beijing (renamed as the Academy of Arts and Design at Tsinghua University) in 1981, Zeng Xiaojun was trained in both Western draftsmanship and Chinese brushwork. He then moved to the United States and worked in Boston for fourteen years, where he developed a profound passion for studying and collecting Chinese antiquities, and later became one of the most reputed authorities in the field. This lifetime devotion has provided him with an endless array of objects for contemplation and artistic transformation. Drawing upon the aesthetic traditions of Chinese scholarly literati culture, these objects include cypresses, wisterias, miniature landscape (*penjing* 盆景, Jp. bonsai), and swirl-patterned porcelain wares (*jiaotai*, 绞胎), scholar's rocks and scholar's objects. As he himself describes it, "Decades of painting and collecting have helped me tremendously, allowing me to see how ancient people saw nature and the world."

Zeng Xiaojun's current practice includes painting, sculpture and book making. In each case he starts with objects in his own collection or things he has experienced and studied closely in person. In his painting, Zeng uses traditional materials—calligraphic brush, ink, xuan paper and a combination of traditional mineral and vegetable pigments—to sensitively render his subjects. Painting is an opportunity for Zeng to observe his subject with the mind's eye of an artist and "present nature's beauty at its truest." Art, for Zeng, is not about object making; rather, art and particularly painting is an aesthetic practice meant to refine the sensitivities and sensibilities of the artist. Zeng

calls this practice of refinement and elevation "sensitivism" or *minganzhuyi* 敏感主义 and believes it extends beyond the experience of the artist to encompass that of art collector and serious art viewer as well.

Zeng Xiaojun's collection of art and antiquities is currently the subject of a monumental publication by the Beijing Palace Museum, *Art through the Eyes of the Artist* (forthcoming, 2019). His recent works including his paintings of wisteria, cypress, *penjing* and *jiaotai* and his bronze and resin sculpture of scholar's rocks and scholar's objects were featured in a 2018 solo exhibition at the I.M. Pei-designed Suzhou Museum in Jiangsu Province, China. Zeng's artwork has also been featured in exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, 2010), Musée Guimet (Paris, 2012), Sotheby's S|2 (New York, 2016), and Eskenazi Gallery (London, 2016), among others.

10

Zeng Xiaojun: Poetic Pattern of Song Ware II

曾小俊：宋人词意之二

2018 | Ink and color on paper | 81 1/8 x 81 1/8 in, 206 x 206 cm [ZXJoo2]



10

Zeng Xiaojun: Poetic Pattern of Song Ware II

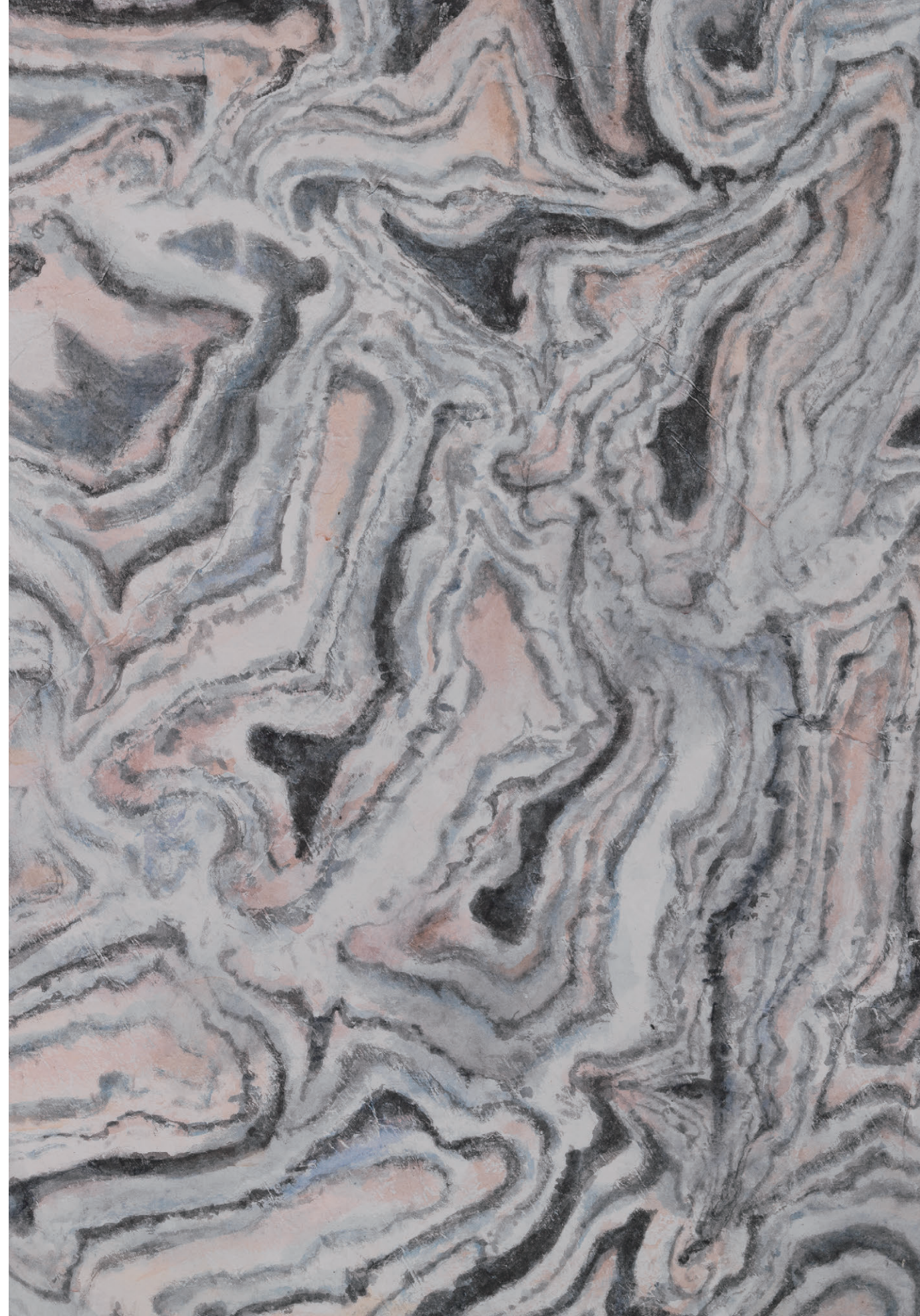
曾小俊：宋人词意之二

2018 | Ink and color on paper | 81 1/8 x 81 1/8 in, 206 x 206 cm [ZXJ002]

“An old Chinese saying says that men are able and nature unpredictable. *Jiaotai* is co-operation between nature and man. It is man-made nature.”

“*Jiaotai*, or porcelain pieces [made from] twisted clay, appeared in the Tang Dynasty and reached maturity in the Song Dynasty. It was made by kneading together clay of different colors, then cast and glazed and fired for unexpected natural effects. Made mostly for daily use by the nobles, only a small number of *jiaotai* pieces remain to this day.”

In the works *Poetic Pattern of Song Ware II* and *IV*, Zeng Xiaojun renders the abstract patterns of Song *jiaotai* ware blown up almost two-meters square. Viewing the enlarged image mimics the detailed, up-close examining eye of the connoisseur. Zeng’s use of natural, traditional pigments is masterful and subtle; indeed, his extreme sensitivity to color is perhaps the hallmark of his art. By reproducing this centuries-old masterpiece with his transformative execution, Zeng engages in a dialogue with Song-era Chinese intellectuals whose pursuit of spiritual and moral cultivation led to this unique aesthetic union of manmade form with natural beauty.



11

Zeng Xiaojun: Poetic Pattern of Song Ware IV

曾小俊：宋人词意之四

2018 | Ink and color on paper | 67 3/4 x 68 3/8 in, 172 x 173.8 cm [ZXJ001]



Zeng Xiaojun: Poetic Pattern of Song Ware IV

曾小俊：宋人词意之四

2018 | Ink and color on paper | 67 3/4 x 68 3/8 in, 172 x 173.8 cm [ZXJ001]

Zeng describes this dialog with Song-era intellectuals as a multi-stage process:

“The making of *jiaotai* is the first phase in the creative process. My collecting and appreciating it is the second phase. Painting them I feel what people felt when they were looking at it a thousand years ago, and this can be the third phase. A thousand years apart, people look at them with their eyes and their hearts. There is no distinction here between the ancient and the modern. A thousand years is a blink in the history of the universe. The more I paint, the more this feeling of the universe calls out to me. *Jiaotai* is the best embodiment of our timeless, human wonder at and appreciation of nature. Painting *jiaotai* is a time-consuming process. One constantly makes changes since *jiaotai*, like *penjing* and wisteria, seem to have a life of their own and do not stay the same. One enjoys it first and then appreciates it; in the end one discovers its vitality in the process of painting it. When making *jiaotai*, one has a certain idea after twisting the clay, but firing will always bring new surprises. It is the same surprise I experience when painting *jiaotai*. What the ancients sought after in *jiaotai* is the same as the patterns we see in rocks and wood. It is the same idea, coming from a deep appreciation of nature.”



Zeng Xiaojun: Xiaogushanguan Penjing V

曾小俊：小孤山馆藏盆景五

2019 | Ink and color on paper | 46 1/2 x 25 5/8 in, 118 x 65 cm [ZXJ003]



Zeng Xiaojun: Xiaogushanguan Penjing VI

曾小俊：小孤山馆藏盆景六

2019 | Ink and color on paper | 46 1/2 x 25 5/8 in, 118 x 65 cm [ZXJ004]



Zeng Xiaojun: Xiaogushanguan Penjing V & VI

曾小俊：小孤山馆藏盆景五、六

2019 | Ink and color on paper

“Planted in shallow containers, *penjing* is usually one or two feet in height. Yet with twisted branches in sophisticated forms, it lives hundreds of years, full of grandeur.”

Aside from painting objects, Zeng Xiaojun finds painting living things and in particular long-lived things such as cypress, wisteria and *penjing*, a particular challenge. He explains, “Things in my collection may be four or five hundred years old, but they are not alive ... I collect mostly what people used in their daily live. It is a good way of finding out how the ancients lived and what their aesthetic sense was like. Trees and plants are also good indications of their owners’ taste. Plum trees, orchids, and bamboos do not live long, only wisterias can live a thousand years and remain vigorous.” According to Zeng, painting living things presents both an unusual challenge and a unique opportunity, “When painting *penjing*, the plant itself is there, but painting them is very difficult because they are alive and they grow ... I have had training painting a persimmon or a bamboo stalk. It takes a few strokes and is easy. But if the thing is alive, you could be painting forever. The paintings grow with the wisteria and the *penjing* ... In *penjing* I see the big in the small and in the wisterias, I see the small in the big ... I see what the ancients saw.”





LIU DAN

1953 Born in Nanjing, China, Lives and works in Beijing, China

EDUCATION

1978-81 Studied at Jiangsu Chinese Painting Academy

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 “Cosmopolis #1.5: Enlarged Intelligence,” Chendu Biennale, Chendu, China
- 2016 “Ink Unbound: Paintings by Liu Dan”, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN
“Liu Dan: New Landscapes and Old Masters”, Ashmolean Museum of art and Archeology, Oxford, UK
- 2015 “Transfigured Echoes: Recent Paintings by Liu Dan,” Eskenasi, London, UK
- 2013 Suzhou Museum, Suzhou, China
“Shuimo/Water Ink: Enchanted Landscapes,” S2 Gallery, New York, NY
- 2005 “About Beauty,” Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Berlin-Dahlem, in Cooperation with The House of the World Cultures, Berlin, DE
- 2000 “Still Expression: Recent Flower Paintings by Liu Dan,” The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, NY
- 1999 “Ink Handscroll,” San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA
- 1993 “Alternative Visions,” The Gallery at Takashimaya, New York, NY, Tokyo, Kyoto, Yokohama and Osaka, JP
“Liu Dan - Recent Paintings,” The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, HI
- 1989 “Works by Liu Dan,” Honolulu Academy of Arts, Honolulu, HI
- 1987 “Mixed-Media Works on Paper by Liu Dan,” The Art Lot, Honolulu, HI
- 1986 “Liu Dan: Recent Paintings and Drawings,” Saxe-Kobler Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 1983 “Liu Dan: Traditional and Contemporary Paintings,” Commons Gallery, University of Hawaii Department of Art, Honolulu, HI

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 “Ink Worlds: Contemporary Chinese Painting,” The Cantor Arts Center at Stanford, Palo Alto, CA
- 2017 “Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World”, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY

- 2017 “Naturalia”, Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, NY
- 2016 “The Shape of Time,” Gagosian Gallery, Hong Kong, China
- 2015 “China Then and Now,” Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, NY
- 2014 “Inspired by Dunhuang: Re-creation in Contemporary Chinese Art,” The China Institute Gallery, New York, NY
“Shuimo/Water Ink: Enchanted Landscapes,” S2 Gallery, New York, NY
“Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
- 2012 “A Century of New Directions: Modern Chinese Painting and Calligraphy,” The British Museum, London
“Rochers de lettrés, itinéraires de l’art en Chine,” Mueée Guimét, Paris
- 2011 “The Art of Writing: Contemporary Art from Three Cultures,” Artforum in der Kurhaus Kolonade, Wiesbaden, Germany
“Fresh Ink: Ten Takes on Chinese Tradition,” Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
- 2010 “Natural Forms in Chinese Ink Painting,” The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, NY
- 2009 “Outside In,” Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ
- 2008 Roof Garden Sculpture, Chinese Embassy, Washington D.C.
“Trees and Rocks,” The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, NY
“Made in China: Contemporary Chinese Art at the Israel Museum,” The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, IL
- 2007 “Made in China: Works from the Estella Collection,” The Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, DK
“Contemporary Trends in Chinese Ink Painting,” The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, NY
- 2006 “Shu: Reinventing Books in Contemporary Chinese Art,” China Institute, New York, NY
“The New Chinese Landscape: Recent Acquisitions,” Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, China
- 2005 “Group Show,” Kaikodo Gallery, New York, NY
“Selected Objects of Scholarly Admiration,” Guanxiang Gallery, Taipei, China
- 2004 “Chinese Contemporary Landscape,” Shanghai Contemporary Art Museum, Shanghai, China
- 2003 “The Esthetics of Eastern Gardens,” Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
“Up Down Left Right: Modern Perception in Chinese Calligraphy,” Plum Blossoms Gallery, New York, NY

- 2001 “China Without Borders - An Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Art,” Goedhuis Contemporary, New York, NY
- 1999 “Spirit Stones of China,” The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
“Worlds Within Worlds,” Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT
- 1997 “Sensuality in the Abstract,” Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1995 “A Celebration of Flowers,” The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, NY
- 1986 “A New Year’s Group,” The Art Loft, Honolulu, HI
- 1985 “Grand Opening Group Show,” The Art Loft, Honolulu, HI
“Amerasianesia,” The Art Loft, Honolulu, HI
- 1984 “Overseas Chinese Artists Exhibit,” Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan, China
- 1983 “Mindscape,” AMFAC Gallery, Honolulu, HI
“21st Annual Exhibit of the Hawaii Watercolor Society,” AMFAC Gallery, Honolulu, HI
- 1980 “Peasant Life,” Jiangsu Province Art Museum, Nanjing, China
- 1979 “Studies from the Caves at Dunhuang,” Worker’s Cultural Palace, Nanjing, China

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- Andrew Mellon Foundation, New York, USA
- The Arthur M. Sackler Museum of the Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, USA
- British Museum, London, UK
- Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York, USA
- The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, USA
- Honolulu Academy of Art, Honolulu, USA
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA
- Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, USA
- Musée Guimét, Paris, France
- Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, USA
- San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, USA
- Supreme Court of the State of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA
- On loan to the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, MO

HUGH MOSS "MASTER OF WATER, PINE AND STONE RETREAT"

1943 Born in London, England

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2016 “Transmutations Art Exhibition,” Yi Yuan Space, Wuhan, China

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 “The Panorama of Hong Kong: Contemporary Ink Painitng 2018”, Hong Kong Modern Ink Painting Society, Hong Kong Central Library, Hong Kong
- 2016 “Strange Stones,” Rasti Chinese Art, Hong Kong
- 2015 “Additional Images,” Rasti Chinese Art, Hong Kong
- 2014 “Meditations in Nature: Strange Ink,” Ben Brown Fine Arts, Hong Kong
- 2013 “Now and Then: Contemporary Ink vs Antiques,” The Fringe Club, Hong Kong

XU LEI

Current Teach at the China Academy of Arts, Beijing
1984 Graduated from the Fine Arts Department of Nanjing Arts Institute
1963 Born in Nantong, Jiangsu Province, China

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2018 “Interact – Xu Lei,” Marlborough Gallery, Madrid
2016 “Chinese National Academy of Arts Series Exhibition of Famous Artists – Xu Lei Solo Exhibition,” National Museum of China, Beijing
“Xu Lei,” Marlborough Gallery, New York
2015 “Fugue - Xu Lei,” Suzhou Museum, Suzhou
2013 “Veneer of the World – Xu Lei,” Today Art Museum, Beijing
2011 “Luna en el espejo – Xu Lei’s Solo Exhibition,” Kwai Fung Hin Art Gallery, Hong Kong
“Solo Exhibition of Xu Lei,” Asia House & Goedhuis Gallery, London
2010 “Silent Voices: Ink Paintings by Xu Lei,” Mee-seen Loong Fine Art LLC, Joan B Mirviss LTD, New York
1997 “Xu Lei’s New Work,” Browse / Darby Gallery, London
1995 “The Mystery of Absence: Xu Lei’s Art Exhibition,” Alisan Fine Arts, Hong Kong
“Walasse Ting & Xu Lei – The International Fine Art and Antiques for Asia,” Singapore

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 “Post-Brushwork Era: Chinese Landscapes,” Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou
2017 “Boundless: Ongoing,” Art Museum of Sichuan Fine Art Institute,
“Chongqing Crisscrossing East and West: The Remaking of Ink Art in Contemporary East Asia,” Yinchuan Museum of Contemporary Art, Yinchuan
2016 “The 9th International Ink Art Biennale of Shenzhen,” Guan Shanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen
“The 10th National Exhibition of Chinese Hue Art Paintings,” National Art Museum of China, Beijing
2015 “Ink and Wash Change in the World of Colors,” Wuhan Art Museum, Wuhan
“Nonfigurative,” Shanghai 21st Century Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai
2014 “Reshaping Shuimo – New Story,” JinLing Art Museum, Nanjing
2013 “The 9 National Exhibition of Chinese Hue Art Paintings,” National Art Museum of China, Beijing

2012 “Sanfanjiuran – New Gongbi Painting Invitational Exhibition,” Shanghai Museum, Shanghai
2011 “Future Pass – From Asia to the World Touring Exhibition,” Venice “Chengdu Biennale Chengdu,” China
2010 “Reshaping History China Art from 2000 to 2010,” Beijing National Convention Center, Beijing
“Pavilion of China at The 12th International Architecture Exhibition,” La Biennale di Venezia, Venice
2009 “The Living Chinese Garde,” The Old State House of Brussels, Brussels
2008 “Zeichen im Wandel der Zeit: Chinesische Tuschemalerei der Gegenwart,” Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin; Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden
“New Age – The Road of Chinese Painting,” National Art Museum of China, Beijing
2007 “Rotation,” Nanjing Qinghe Contemporary Art Center, Nanjing
2006 “The New Classic Five People Exhibition,” Sun Yat Sen Memorial House, Taipei
2004 “Dragon’s Nation: Contemporary Art of China,” Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin
2002 “Behind the Reality Other Modernity,” Dimensions Art Center, Taipei
2000 “Exhibition of 5000 Years of Chinese Art and Civilization,” Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao
1998 “Exhibition of 5000 Years Of Chinese Art and Civilization,” Guggenheim Museum, New York
1996 “Chinese Contemporary Art,” International Art Garden Museum, Beijing
1989 “China / Avant-Garde,” National Art Museum of China, Beijing

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China
Jiangsu Art Museum, Jianhsu, China
Today Art Museum, Beijing, China
Nanjing Arts Institute, Nanjing, China
Asian Division of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., USA

ZENG XIAOJUN

- 1997 Moved back to Beijing
- 1983 Moved to the United States
- 1981 Graduated from the Central Academy of Arts
- 1954 Born in Beijing, China.

EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 “Wander with the creator,” Suzhou Museum, Suzhou, China
- 2016 “Recent paintings by Zeng Xiaojun,” Eskenazi Gallery, London, UK
- “The Literati Within,” Sotheby's S/2, New York, USA
- 2015 “Rest on Water and Gargle with Stone - Chinese Contemporary Literati Art,” Asia Art Center, Beijing, China
- 2014 “Shuimo/Warer Ink: Enchanted Landscape,” Sotheby's S/2, New York, USA
- 2013 “labyrinchs/zeng xiaojun,” Sotheby's Hong Kong Gallery
- “WaterInk,” Sotheby's S/2, New York, USA
- “Through the Eyes of Texas: Masterworks from Alumni Collections Blanton Museum of Art,” Austin Texas, USA
- 2012 “Rochers de lectres,” Musee des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France
- 2011 “Ink Paintings,” The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, USA
- 2010 “Fresh Ink: Ten Takes on Chinese Tradition,” Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA
- 2009 “Selected Works/Zeng Xiaojun,” The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, USA
- 2008 “Trees and Rocks,” The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, USA
- 2007 “Paintings and Drawings by Lin Yan, Weijia, Wenda Gu, Zeng Xiaojun and Chi Xiaoqing,” China 2000 Fine Art, New York, USA
- 2005 “Selected Objects of Scholarly Admiration,” Guanxiang Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
- “Tradition and the Future of Tradition,” China 2000 Fine Art, New York, USA
- 1999 “Zeng Xiaojun,” China 2000 Fine Art, New York, USA
- 1996 “The Paintings of Zeng xiaojun,” China 2000 Fine Art, New York, USA

THIS CATALOG WAS PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION
OF THE EXHIBITION FOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN INK: LIU DAN |
MASTER OF THE WATER, PINE AND STONE RETREAT | XU LEI | ZENG
XIAOJUN , AT INK STUDIO, BEIJING, MARCH 13 TO MARCH 29, 2019.

Curator **MEE-SEEN LOONG**
Editors **CRAIG YEE**
Translator **TINA LIU**
Designers **LI XIAOGUANG, RICKI YUJIE FU**
Publisher **INK STUDIO**

Image Scanning **LONGRI DESIGN AND PRINTING**
Printer **BEIJING JINGE PRINTING CO.LTD.**

Limited Edition **500**
Published **FEBRUARY 2019**

PRINTED IN P.R.CHINA



INK studio 墨斋

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