

Tang Contemporary Art presents:

The Divine Earth: Zou Jianping Solo Exhibition

Artist: Zou Jianping

Curator: Yuan Tingxuan

Exhibition Dates: 13 January - 24 February 2024

Venue: Tang Contemporary Art Bangkok

Opening Reception: Saturday, 13 January at 4:00 PM

Zou Jianping is a significant artist who stands as a pivotal force in the development of modern and contemporary art in China. His persona seamlessly fuses the realms of publication and creation, navigating interdisciplinary spaces with a nuanced and multifaceted approach.

Evidently, in the historical development of contemporary Chinese art and the associated events linking art and the market, Zou Jianping's narrative seems to have been overlooked. The Tang Contemporary Art space in Bangkok is organizing this exhibition in the hope of acknowledging and highlighting the richness of his later artistic endeavors. After reaching the age of sixty, Zou Jianping embarked on a journey from the ancient city of Changsha, passing through the Maiji Mountain toward the distant horizon of Kashmir. His essence radiates a sublime nobility, adorned with an exceptionally heroic demeanour. Several years later, Zou Jianping's artistic series exploring the western frontiers was presented in the poetic form of mud and sand.

Mud and sand are often metaphorically used to refer to the vast grasslands and wilderness, but in Zou Jianping's art, they transcend mere symbolism. Beyond the mainstream discourse of art, his works unravel a vast world, tearing through the essence of the brutal wild, particularly in the visual reinterpretation of the Western region. Zou Jianping's works do not indulge in superficial admiration of Western customs; instead, he penetrates the Zen image, soaring through the heavens, cultivating the barren in the sands of time and cultural currents, contemplating in silence, resulting in a series of intricately patterned and vibrant hues of red. In his works, these mud and sands become the soul of the Western region, the dust of history, a reshaping of Eastern vitality, and the burial ground of civilization. The earth is a romantic symbol of primal essence in his works, and mud and sand serve as the constituent materials of the earth. As a substrate of the Earth's surface, mud and sand form the foundation of all terrestrial ecosystems. Zou Jianping's Desert series delves into contemplation, dissolving the materialized significance of mud and sand as soil. They seamlessly merge with the natural life of falling leaves, entwined roots, flying moths, chirping insects, and the artificial constructs of books, gloves, and motorcycle gear. In his creations, everything becomes a poignant note in the meticulous reconstruction of meaning.

The Bangkok exhibition primarily showcases Zou Jianping's scale and depth of experience in the desert, tracing his journey through the vast wilderness. In his recent work, he pays poignant homage to family, particularly his elderly mother, wife, and children, while reflecting on the significance of seeds and rice. Over these years, Zou Jianping's trajectory has shifted from the bustling urban landscape to the serene vastness of the desert, a return from the untamed wilderness to a reconnection with life. In the presence of each meticulously crafted mud and sand painting and the Han spirit painting, Zou Jianping's exploration of spiritual landscapes, though firmly grounded in the present, seems to transcend earthly constraints. Beneath the wings of time, his creations take flight into the boundless expanse of the sky.

About Artist

Zou Jianping

B. 1955 Hunan, China

Zou Jianping graduated from Hunan Normal University and pursued further studies at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts. He is the Honorary Chairman of the Hunan Artists Association, a member of the Chinese Artists Association, and an art consultant at the Yungang Grottoes Research Institute. Zou resides and works in Changsha.

His exhibitions include: 1990, China Modern Art Exhibition (Pacific Asia Museum, USA); 1991, Modern Culture and Contemporary China (Moscow Central Art Museum); 1997, China Art Grand Exhibition (Shanghai Library); 1998, The 13th Asian International Art Exhibition (The National Art Gallery of Malaysia); 1998, The First International Ink Painting Biennial of Shenzhen (Shenzhen Guan Shanyue Art Museum); 1999, The 14th Asian International Art Exhibition (Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan); 1999, Gate of the Century: 1989—2000 China Art Grand Exhibition (Chengdu Museum of Modern Art); 2000, New China Painting Exhibition (Shanghai Liu Haisu Art Museum); 2000, The Second International Ink Painting Biennial of Shenzhen (Shenzhen Guan Shanyue Art Museum); 2001, 20 Years of Chinese Ink Experiment (Guangdong Art Museum); 2002, The 17th Asian International Art Exhibition (Daejeon Museum of Art, South Korea); 2002, The Third International Ink Painting Biennial of Shenzhen (Shenzhen Guan Shanyue Art Museum); 2003, BEAUTIJUF DESIRE Art Exhibition (Tang Contemporary Art, Bangkok Space); 2005, Nomination Exhibition of Contemporary Prosperous Chinese Painting (National Art Museum of China); 2006, The First Contemporary Visual: China Contemporary Art Yearbook Exhibition (Beijing World Art Museum); 2006, The Fifth International Ink Painting Biennial of Shenzhen (Shenzhen Art Museum); 2006, "Contemporary Art in the Chinese Cultural Context" Biennial Exhibition (Today Art Museum, Beijing); 2006, China Contemporary Art Chengdu Biennial Exhibition (Chengdu Museum of Modern Art); 2009, Shanghai New Ink Art Exhibition (Shanghai Duolun Museum of Modern Art); 2009, Trends in Hubei and Hunan: Chinese Contemporary Art in Hubei & Hunan (Guangdong Art Museum), etc.

Zou Jianping is a significant figure in the development of contemporary and modern art in China. With nearly 46 years of dedication to artistic endeavors, he epitomizes the nuanced and diverse nature of a contemporary artist, seamlessly integrating publication and creative expression, venturing across disciplines and embracing a composite approach to his craft.

This solo exhibition in Bangkok showcases Zou Jianping's recent works, and we plan to elaborate on three aspects:

Firstly, at 65, artist Zou Jianping embarked on a self-driven journey covering 33,000 kilometers. His path took him across the Kizil Caves and the Kumtura Caves in the Aksu region of Xinjiang, the Bezeklik Caves in Turpan, and the ancient Guge Kingdom and Piyang-Dongga Caves in Tibet. Utilizing a systematic and evidentiary approach, he revitalized the paintings and historical images of the Western Regions, sparking a renewed understanding of the integrative characteristics of Chinese culture.

Secondly, the "Great Bird Series" integrates traditional patterns from Hunan, deeply embedding the artist's own destiny into the development context of contemporary art. Zou Jianping describes himself as "I am a bird. If I die, I die in the sky!" The series unfolds through the imagery of birds, continuously questioning the ultimate dedication of the artist's spirit.

Thirdly, Zou Jianping unveils the "Grand Vase Series," using diverse materials that reflect his sustained quest for new romantic expressions. He emphasizes the construction of rational order while exhibiting a profound humanistic concern. Through his writings, one can often sense his compassionate and romantic delicacy, expressing a deep concern for the world. Beyond the canvas, Zou Jianping navigates between the sacred and the mundane, drawing inspiration from both the transcendent and the everyday collisions of the worldly. Through his symbolic language, he metaphorically articulates personal appeals and seeks redemption within the confines of the secular. Notably, his chosen medium involves the use of mineral-rich soil—black clay, red clay, and white clay—forging sharp implements that serve as the eloquent vocabulary of his artistic expression. In this, he imparts a divine quality to the very earth from which his creations emerge. Zou's works appear to both exalt and dissolve the divine. The conventional altar of the gods discreetly recedes, inviting the divine back into the human sphere, ultimately restoring and narrating the timeless stories of humanity.

About Tang Contemporary Art

Since its founding in Bangkok in 1997, Tang Contemporary Art has opened 7 spaces in Beijing, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Seoul to promote the development of experimental art in different regions. In the past 20 years, Tang Contemporary Art has organized groundbreaking exhibitions in its gallery spaces, and also cooperated with important art institutions in China and abroad to accomplish outstanding art projects. The gallery strives to initiate dialogue between artists, curators, collectors and institutions working both locally and internationally. A roster of groundbreaking exhibitions has earned Tang Contemporary Art internationally renowned recognition, establishing its status as a pioneer of the contemporary art scene in Asia.

As one of China's most influential contemporary art platforms, Tang Contemporary Art maintains a high standard of exhibition programming. Tang Contemporary Art represents or collaborates with leading figures in international contemporary art, including Ai Weiwei, Huang Yongping, Shen Yuan, Zhu Jinshi, Chen Danqing, Liu Qinghe, Liu Xiaodong, Chen Shaoxiong, Wang Yuping, Shen Ling, Shen Liang, Wu Yi, Xia Xiaowan, He Duoling, Mao Xuhui, Wang Huangsheng, Yang Jiechang, Tan Ping, Wang Du, Yan Lei, Yue Minjun, Wang Jianwei, Yangjiang Group, Zheng Guogu, Lin Yilin, Sun Yuan&Peng Yu, Qin Ga, Wang Qingsong, Yin Zhaoyang, Feng Yan, Guo Wei, Chen Wenbo, Ling Jian, Qin Qi, Yang Yong, Peng Wei, He An, Zhao Zhao, Xu Qu, Chen Yujun, Chen Yufan, Xue Feng, Cai Lei, Li Qing, Wang Sishun, Xu Xiaoguo, Li Wei, Liu Yujia, Wu Wei, Yang Bodu, You Yong, Li Erpeng, Jade Ching-yuk Ng, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Adel Abdessemed, Niki de Saint Phalle, AES+F, Michael Zelehosk, Jonas Burgert, Christian Lemmerz, Michael Kvium, Sakarin Krue-On, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Natee Utarit, Kitti Narod, Gongkan, Entang Wiharso, Heri Dono, Nam June Paik, Park Seungmo, Jae Yong Kim, Diren Lee, Dinh Q. Lê, Rodel Tapaya, Jigger Cruz, Ayka Go, Raffy Napay, H.H.Lim, Etsu Egami, etc.

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