

PRESS RELEASE

Press Contact

Rachel Eggers

Associate Director of Public Relations
rachele@seattleartmuseum.org
206.654.3151

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SEATTLE ASIAN ART MUSEUM PRESENTS IMMERSIVE EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART

Beyond the Mountain features works by six artists including video, multimedia installation, painting, and photography

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1300 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

206.625.8900

seattleartmuseum.org



SEATTLE - The Seattle Asian Art Museum presents *Beyond the Mountain: Contemporary Chinese Artists on the Classical Forms* (July 22, 2022–June 30, 2023), the second special exhibition there since the 2020 debut of the reimagined and reinstalled museum. *Beyond the Mountain* features work by six contemporary Chinese artists that takes as inspiration the classical mediums and subjects of Chinese art—ink on paper, archaeological artifacts, and landscape painting—to tackle urgent and complex present-day issues. Creating in a range of media, including video, multimedia installation, painting, and photography, these artists address ideas including globalization, migration, and the impact of human life on the natural world.

Beyond the Mountain is curated by FOONG Ping, Foster Foundation Curator of Chinese Art. The artists on view are Chen Shaoxiong, Ai Weiwei, Zhang Huan, Yang Yongliang, Lam Tung Pang, and Tai Xiangzhou; Yang Yongliang and Lam Tung Pang are new to Seattle audiences. Each of the five artists' work engages with traditions from the Chinese cultural imagination to explore concerns relevant around the world, such as street protests, rapid urbanization, and pandemic lockdowns. On view for a year, it will include a six-month rotation for light-sensitive works.

"*Beyond the Mountain* is a feast for the senses, with video, sound, images, and kinetic installation creating a dynamic experience," says Foong. "I hope visitors discover the eloquent voices of these artists—as I did when putting this exhibition together—in reflecting on many of the urgent questions we're all facing together."



Foong developed the exhibition partly in collaboration with students at the University of Washington during her 2020 spring seminar, “Exhibiting Chinese Art,” held on Zoom due to the pandemic. Wanting to make the online class fun and engaging, Foong divided the students into teams, assigning each team three seemingly unrelated artworks as guides for developing cohesive and imaginative curatorial frameworks. “*Beyond the Mountain* wouldn’t be what it is without their insights,” says Foong. “I wanted to challenge my students and they really impressed me. While the exhibition had been in the works for a very long time, I was excited to include a few of their ideas into the show.”

EXPLORING THE EXHIBITION

ink/protest



Ink and brush are key to the classical Chinese art forms of calligraphy and painting. *Ink Media #4* (2011–2013) by Chen Shaoxiong (Chinese, 1962–2016) observes the deeply connected global language of today’s street protests by reconceptualizing the raw emotions of images captured from internet media as 10 ink paintings (five in each rotation).

An accompanying video montage animates the power of collective action; its soundtrack features Jasiri X’s “Occupy (We the 99)” and a Taiwanese version of “Do You Hear the People Sing” from the 1980 musical *Les Misérables*, today a protest anthem sung in many languages.

artifact/culture



The provocation in Ai Weiwei’s *Colored Vases* (2010) lies in the brightly colored, dripping industrial paint that he gleefully applies to clay pots of unknown origin; are they in fact from China’s Han dynasty? Defacing artifacts that are usually venerated as part of the Chinese nation’s history and culture, Ai (Chinese, b. 1957) questions those very values.

proverb/nature

In the photograph *To Add One Meter to an Anonymous Mountain* (1995), the naked bodies of Zhang Huan (Chinese, b. 1965) and his artist friends are stacked on the top of Mount Miaofengshan, becoming momentarily taller than the peak. By performing an old Chinese saying, “Beyond the mountain, there are higher mountains yet,” they expose the human hubris of challenging the natural world.

landscape/cityscape

Yang Yongliang (Chinese, b. 1980) fools our eyes to comment on the human and environmental costs of uncontrolled urbanization. *The Departure* (2019; 8:30 minutes) and *The Return* (2019; 6:30 minutes) are projected onto screens over ten feet tall, making monumental the classical form of ink paintings. As you watch, you see what looks like intricate ink paintings are in fact eerie

digital and analog landscapes, stitched together from thousands of photographs and videos of Asia's megacities.

landscape/escape



The Great Escape (2020) is a kinetic installation conceived during lockdown at the pandemic's onset by Lam Tung Pang (Hong Kong, b. 1978). A six-sided lantern painted with landscape imagery and video projections surrounds a scale-model home that evokes a mountain retreat. Visitors can circulate around the installation and peek inside at its inner workings. With this work, the artist meditates on notions of escape and escapism—from

Chinese traditions of retreat into transcendent nature to the escapades of magician Harry Houdini.

HOURS & TICKETS

Museum Hours

- Friday–Sunday 10 am–5 pm
- Thursday–Sunday 10 am–5 pm (July 7–August 25 only)
- Holiday hours on the website

Ticket Prices

- Adult: \$14.99 advance / \$17.99 day of
- Senior (65+), Military (with ID): \$12.99 advance / \$15.99 day of
- Student (with ID), Teen (15–18): \$9.99 advance / \$12.99 day of
- Children (14 and under): FREE
- SAM members: FREE

Special Prices

- Free Last Fridays: Free to all

Details are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on planning a visit, go to seattleartmuseum.org.

Image credits: *To Add One Meter to an Anonymous Mountain*, 1995, Zhang Huan, chromogenic print on Fuji archival paper, 50 7/8 x 71 in. Gift of the Contemporary Art Project, Seattle, 2002.23 © Zhang Huan. *The Departure*, 2019, Yang Yongliang, Chinese, born 1980, single-channel 4K video (black and white, sound), 8:30 minutes, Courtesy of Yang Studio of Yang Yongliang, T2019.30. *Ink Media #4*, 2011–2013, Chen Shaoxiong, ink on rice paper, 18 1/8 x 27 9/16 in. Asian Art Acquisition Fund, 2014.33.2. © Chen Shaoxiong. *Colored Vases*, 2010, Ai Weiwei, ceramic with industrial paint, dimensions variable (approx. 17 x 22 in. each). Robert M. Shields Fund for Asian Ceramics, 2013.33. © Ai Weiwei. *The Great Escape*, 2020 and 2022, Lam Tung Pang, Chinese, born 1971, installation with video projection, ink and pencil on paper, scale model, acrylics and UV-print on plywood, Courtesy of Lam Tung Pang Studio.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8,

2020, following an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a "museum without walls," free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.