

galerie du monde

Wang Gongyi Solo Exhibition

Exhibition Period: 13 April – 4 June 2022

Venue: Galerie du Monde, 108 Ruttonjee Centre, 11 Duddell Street, Central, Hong Kong



Some Time When the River is Ice (2018-2021)

Watercolor, gouache, pastel and mineral pigment on raw Xuan paper, 146 x 288 cm

HONG KONG – Galerie du Monde is pleased to present one of China's most important women artists Wang Gongyi's third solo exhibition in Hong Kong from 13 April to 4 June 2022, debuting Wang Gongyi's new paintings inspired by the dualities of softness and wildness of nature based on her observations of the forest landscapes in Portland and Lake Tahoe.

Born in Tianjin, China in 1946, the Portland-based artist Wang Gongyi's artistic focus shifted from the politically charged messages of her early work towards abstraction and oriental philosophical expression concerning Dao and spontaneity, to the meditative and serendipitous exploration of natural forms. She uses various media including lithography, etching, ink painting, calligraphy and installations.

After the Cultural Revolution, Wang Gongyi pursued a master's degree in the Department of Printmaking at the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou. She graduated in 1980 and stayed at the academy to teach. In the 1980s, Wang Gongyi gained national recognition after being awarded first prize in the National Youth Fine Art Exhibition for her powerful suite of seven woodcuts depicting the Chinese feminist and revolutionary martyr Qiu Jin. This work called for social reforms and represented the passion of a new generation. It has become an important work in the historical narrative of contemporary Chinese art. Her rising profile afforded her the opportunity to further her studies abroad. From 1986, she participated in cultural exchange programs and residencies in France and United States as a visiting artist, and settled in Portland, Oregon in 2001.

Coming of age during the Cultural Revolution and China's period of international isolation, the time spent in France has greatly expanded Wang Gongyi's worldview. There, she was exposed for the first time to the broad possibilities prevalent in modern European artistic practice regarding what art could be. This culture shock prompted her to reexamine traditional Chinese culture and artistic techniques that had been overlooked in revolutionary China, and to update and apply these elements into her own art practice.



Bright Star (2017) Mixed media on treated Xuan paper, 69 x 138 cm

"In Chinese paintings, lines are foremost, then come texture strokes (cun), shading (ca), dots (dian) and washes (ran). Once disassociated from form, they become independent elements.

The ancients said, 'learn from nature from without, be inspired by the heart from within'. Only when your subconscious is filled with this can you paint it without thinking. Thus, when the Chinese paint landscapes, they already have a deep understanding in their hearts of the fluid interchange that takes place in nature between mountains and water, clouds and water, and individual trees.

*One clear aim I have now is to play around with possibilities between emulating the ancients and nature. There is much room for exploration between the two."*¹

– Wang Gongyi

In Wang Gongyi's diverse body of work, she consistently employs spontaneity and chance in both the inspiration and execution. Instead of painting with the intention to challenge and subvert established rules and conventions, she believes artistic expression is beyond interpersonal barriers and established artistic norms.

Through her paintings, Wang Gongyi shows the world both the unfiltered essence of her subject and the profound personal insights into her state of mind. Wang Gongyi's art comes *from life* and aims to *transcend life*.

¹ Excerpt from "Wang Gongyi's Works and Dialogues on Art", Published by China Academy of Art Press in 2011

Important Early Works by Wang Gongyi



Qiu Jin (1980), Woodcut, printed with oil-based ink, dimensions variable
 News clipping from "Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Art Magazine" (工農兵畫報), 1980, issue #10.
 Wang Gongyi's suite of *Qiu Jin* prints are in the Ashmolean Museum Collection.



The Seashell Diary (1997-1998), Charcoal on paper, dimensions variable, 140-part work

Wang Gongyi's long-time curator, Ms. Jenn Jung Jiu noted, "Wang Gongyi's 'dot paintings' can be seen as a record of nature's symbols and life's secret codes. The enormous ensemble of 140 conches in the *Seashell Diary* is, as the title suggests, a record of life written in dots: 140 conches, 140 days, 140 dots."

About artist Wang Gongyi



Born in Tianjin, China in 1946, Wang Gongyi joined the Tianjin People's Fine Arts Publishing House as an editor after the Cultural Revolution. In 1978, she pursued a master's degree in the Printmaking Department at the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (now the China Academy of Fine Arts), and after graduating in 1980 she stayed at the academy as a teacher. Wang Gongyi gained national recognition after being awarded first prize in the National Youth Fine Art Exhibition for her powerful suite of seven woodcuts depicting the Chinese revolutionary martyr Qiu Jin. In 1986, Wang Gongyi was invited by the French Ministry of Culture to study art as a visiting artist, and in 1992 she went to Aix-en-Provence and Lyon to further her studies in printmaking. After her residencies at the Museum of Oregon State University and the Pacific Northwest College of Art, she relocated to the United States in 2001 and has since been based in Portland.

Wang Gongyi's works are in many important institutions and collections internationally, including: Ashmolean Museum, UK; China Academy of Art; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Portland Art Museum, US; The National People's Congress, China; The National Art Museum of China; Shanghai Art Museum, China; USC Pacific Asia Museum, US; and Zhejiang Art Museum, China, among others. In 2022, Wang Gongyi's works are being featured in Centre Pompidou's "Women Artists of the 20th Century" program.

About Galerie du Monde

Founded in Hong Kong in 1974, Galerie du Monde has been specializing in modern and contemporary works by internationally established Chinese artists for 48 years. The gallery also nurtures and promotes emerging talent, presenting a varied program of solo and group exhibitions with a strong focus on works of art on canvas, paper, sculpture, photography and new media. To celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2014, Galerie du Monde introduced the GDM Project series to strengthen the gallery's support to a wider group of artists from different geographical regions, providing them the opportunity to exhibit outside of their own areas.

Website: www.galeriedumonde.com

Instagram: @galeriedumonde

Galerie du Monde opens from Monday to Saturday, 10am – 7pm

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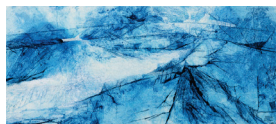
Blue Sierra

Watercolor, Gouache, Pastel and Mineral Pigment on Suzhou Pi Xuan Paper
211 x 148 cm, 2021



An Encounter with an Old Tree

Ancient Ink, Mineral Pigment, Acrylic and Pastel on Suzhou Pi Xuan Paper
212 x 149 cm, 2020-2021



Some Time When the River is Ice

Watercolor, Gouache, Pastel and Mineral Pigment on Raw Xuan Paper
146 x 288 cm, 2018-2021



Learning the Language of Trees

Ancient Ink, Watercolor and Charcoal Stick on Suzhou Pi Xuan Paper
149 x 212 cm, 2020-2021



Leaves of Grass No. 18

Ancient Ink, Watercolor and Pastel on Suzhou Pi Xuan Paper
148 x 212 cm, 2020-2021



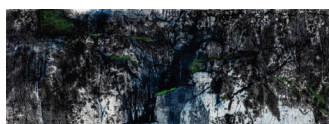
Waterfall

Watercolor and Pastel on Raw Xuan Paper
180 x 97 cm, 2021



Alceste

Ancient Ink, Mineral Pigment, Pastel and Acrylic on Suzhou Pi Xuan Paper
212 x 149 cm, 2020-2021



Earth Unbound

Ancient Ink, Pastel, Acrylic and Chinese Pigment on Raw Xuan Paper
146 x 365 cm, 2019-2020



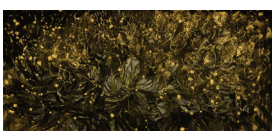
All the Time in the World

Ancient Ink, Mineral Pigment and Acrylic on Raw Xuan Paper
180 x 97 cm, 2009-2021



Early Spring

Ancient Ink, Watercolor, Pastel and Mineral Pigment on Suzhou Pi Xuan Paper
145 x 150 cm, 2017-2021



Bright Star

Mixed Media on Treated Xuan Paper
69 x 138 cm, 2017