

Zheng Chongbin: Wall of Skies

Curated by Britta Erickson, Ph.D.

May 30^{Sat} – August 08^{Sat}, 2015

Opening Reception: May 30^{Sat}, 16:00-18:30

After the acclaimed “Impulse, Matter, Form” of 2013, Zheng Chongbin (b. 1961, Shanghai) returns to Ink Studio with the solo exhibition “Wall of Skies,” which opens on May 30, 2015, and coincides with two important international group exhibitions featuring the artist: “From a Poem to the Sunset” at Daimler Contemporary Berlin and “Personal Structures - Crossing Borders” at the European Cultural Centre, Venice. In addition to his latest paintings, “Wall of Skies” showcases an eponymous light-and-space installation designed specifically for Ink Studio’s galleries and a new rendition of Chimeric Landscape, his environmental video installation concurrently on view in Venice. On May 31, Ink Studio will host a conversation between the artist and art critics Maya Kóvskaya and Robert Morgan.

Throughout his career of three decades, Zheng Chongbin has held the classical Chinese ink tradition and Western pictorial abstraction in productive mutual tension. Systematically exploring and deconstructing their conventions and constituents—figure, texture, space, geometry, gesture, materiality—he has developed a distinctive body of work that makes the vitality of matter directly perceptible, not picturing but instantiating nature’s entropic processes and fractal structures in the interactions of ink, acrylic, paper, and light. In him painting is both ontology and phenomenology, at once immanent in the world and realized in perception.

Maintaining his commitment to painting, Zheng Chongbin now extends his meditations on the medium and his explorations of its ontology and phenomenology into the dimensions of space and time. With an installation entitled Wall of Skies, he transforms Ink Studio’s main gallery into an immersive environment. He mounts a monumental work of ink on paper on a complex folded structure fully enclosed by a tilted ceiling and slanted walls, creating a delicate interplay of nonparallel lines and planes. Freed from architectural and perspectival positioning, the viewer continually recreates the space by navigating the installation’s surfaces, recalling the sanyuan or “three distances” of classical Chinese landscape paintings. Resolving neither into painting, nor sculpture, nor pure light and space, Wall of Skies insists on its material presence even as its objecthood is dissolved in a spatial experience.

In Chimeric Landscape, Zheng Chongbin presents entropic processes and emergent

order in a stream of homologous imagery spanning temporal and physical scales—topological variations in still and turbulent water, the motion of blood cells and liquid molecules, the explosion and diffusion of ink on paper, the etching of river ways through a landmass. An accompanying soundscape similarly dilates or contracts natural processes to the scale of human perception. As images and sounds morph into each other, as they arise from and dissipate into silence and blankness, time itself becomes unsettled, textured, and vital. Just as his paintings and installations both suggest and resist perspective, *Chimeric Landscape* releases the viewer into the infinite flux of the world only to make it perceptible as form.

Zheng Chongbin lives and works in San Francisco and Shanghai. He has previously exhibited at the European Cultural Centre, Venice (2015), Daimler Contemporary Berlin (2015), the Microsoft Innovation Center, Beijing (2014), the Shanghai Himalayas Art Museum (2014), Ink Studio, Beijing (2013), Christie's New York (2013), Zhejiang Art Museum (2013), the Hong Kong Art Center (2012), Saatchi Gallery (2012), Shanghai Gallery of Art (2011), the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (2010), Shanghai Duolun Museum of Modern Art (2009), the Pacific Asia Museum (2009), Busan Museum of Modern Art (2008), China National Academy of Painting (2008), and the Third Chengdu Biennial (2007). His works may be found in the collections, among others, of M+, Hong Kong; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the British Museum, London; the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; and in the Daimler Art Collection, Berlin; the DSL Collection, France; and the Marina Bay Sands, Singapore. Zheng is the subject of a documentary film, *The Enduring Passion of Ink*, and an in-depth monograph, *Zheng Chongbin: Impulse, Matter, Form*, edited by Britta Erickson and distributed by D.A.P. in the United States.

Ink Studio was founded in 2012 to present new developments in experimental Chinese ink painting to international curators, critics, collectors, and institutions in a tightly-curated program of solo and group exhibitions, bilingual monographs (published with D.A.P.), and short documentary films. Artistic Director Dr. Britta Erickson, one of the leading scholars and curators of contemporary Chinese art, has been working with China's most important ink artists since the 1980s. For Ink Studio, she organizes four museum-quality exhibitions per year—each, a unique curatorial collaboration between Dr. Erickson and the artist. Ink Studio is a member of the New York ACAW Consortium along with Asia Society, the Museum of Modern Art, and Guggenheim Museum. Past exhibitions include: Zheng Chongbin: *Impulse, Matter, Form* (Spring, 2013); Chen Haiyan: *Carving the Unconscious* (Fall, 2013); Wang Dongling: *The Origins of Abstraction* (Fall, 2013); Huang Zhiyang: *The Phenomenology of Life* (Spring, 2014); Yang Jiechang: *This Is Still Landscape Painting* (Spring, 2014); *Ink and the Body* (Fall, 2014); Li Huasheng: *Process, Mind and Landscape* (Fall, 2014); and Bingyi:

Intensive/Extensive (Spring, 2015).