

ARTSY

The Artsy Vanguard 2019: Hao Liang

Artsy Editorial

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Hao Liang. Courtesy of Gagosian.



Detail of Hao Liang, *Day and Night (panel II)*, 2017-2018. Courtesy of Gagosian.

Hao Liang's epic contemporary take on ancient Chinese ink-wash painting has made him an art-world fixture in his home country.

Hao's work pays homage to the history of Chinese literati tradition — the scholar-painters of old who expressed their philosophies through handscrolls, portraits, and majestic landscape paintings where subtle qualities of light and shadow play out over mountain peaks and carefully cultivated gardens. In the young artist's work, the twist is the way in which the silk paintings' ancient origins morph into the contemporary.

Hao combines figuration with abstraction; fuses the influences of Chinese tradition with Wassily Kandinsky, Sergei Eisenstein, and Gilles Deleuze; and introduces timeless subject matter to the modern, industrial world — spinning ferris wheels dot classic landscapes to create a soaring sense of cosmic time and space.

Curator Barbara Pollack noted that Hao “has mastered not only the sensitive application of ink, but the multiple perspectives that reside simultaneously in many scroll paintings.” She added, “He seeks to instill in the modern viewer the sublime sensations that masterpieces of Chinese painting are capable of evoking, while integrating elements of Surrealism and biomorphic abstraction from Western art history.”

Over the past few years, Hao’s star has been on the rise overseas. The artist’s subtly wrought grayscale landscapes of the Hunan province were featured in the central exhibition of the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017; that same year, his work appeared in a group exhibition at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, which acquired one of his scroll paintings. His work has also entered the collection of the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Last year brought his inaugural exhibition at Gagosian — his first solo show in the United States — which sold out before it even opened. ■