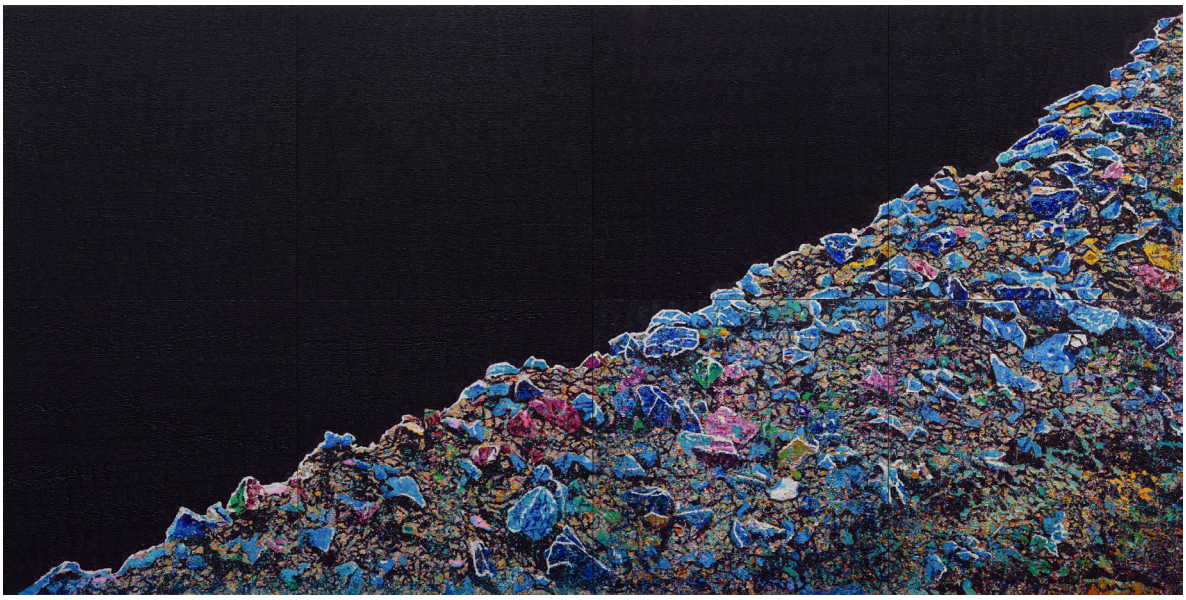
Press Release

Zeng Fanzhi

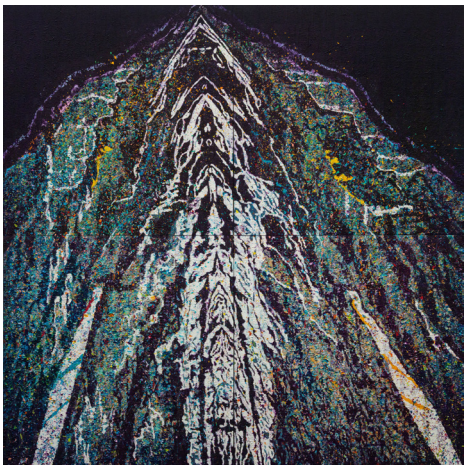
5 November 2026 – 23 January 2027
Hauser & Wirth New York, 22nd Street



New York... For his first New York City exhibition in over a decade, Zeng Fanzhi will present a new sculpture and a suite of resplendent new paintings that conjure imagined celestial landscapes and topographies. The works advance the celebrated Beijing-based artist's ongoing investigation of color, perception and the material possibilities of paint. The exhibition introduces the latest chapter in Zeng's practice, following on from his critically admired presentation 'Zeng Fanzhi: Near and Far/Now and Then' on view during the 2024 Venice Biennale, organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

Informed by many years of research into color theory and the paint-layering techniques pioneered by the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, Zeng's latest paintings employ the principle of 'mélange optique,' or 'optical mixing,' in which hues are layered and placed alongside one another alla prima on the canvas rather than blended on the palette. Seen from a distance, these coalesce into images of landscapes and geological formations; observed up close, that legibility dissolves into mesmerizingly complex fields of pure pigment.

Zeng's dramatic optical effects are the result of a highly kinetic process: working wet-on-wet, Zeng uses multiple paint brushes at once, creating twin marks that are directed yet deliberate in their loss of total control. Each new tier of oil paint disrupts the ones still actively drying beneath it. His decision to deliberately undermine his own authority over the final image—a process that distances his hand from what it lays down—results in the defining dynamism of his art's physical surfaces. Zeng's approach harkens to the perceptual experiments of 19th century masters while pushing into a distinctly contemporary expression: his grand oils evoke both the dense impasto of pointillism while manifesting the fractured pixelation of 21st century digital imagery.





In these works, Zeng's visions evoke unfamiliar worlds beyond any fixed sense of time or place, appearing both futuristic and prehistoric. Jagged formations evoke the rugged terrain of an uncharted planet, where rock formations, trees, bodies of water and enigmatic alien presences appear within the landscape. Beyond them, pitch-black horizons open onto the infinite expanse of the universe. Across these imagined geological strata, radiant swaths of turquoise, yellow and deep crimson appear like crystalline fossils or fragments of bioluminescent matter. Central to these works is the tension between structure and the unknown: precise grids and lines suggest systems of mapping and excavation, while the movement and accumulation of Zeng's brushwork disrupt the order they establish. Several works collapse multiple spatial planes within a single composition, creating a sense of disorientation and suggesting a world that feels both unfamiliar and otherworldly.

The new sculpture on view extends these ideas and techniques into three dimensions: a blue onyx obelisk-like object suggests both abstract form and an artifact from another as-yet untraversed place. Although constructed from naturally occurring gemstone, this blue and cream banded quartz stabile strikes the viewer as something excavated from the imagined planets depicted in Zeng's paintings. Like those canvases, it occupies an ineffable realm between image and matter. The artist's oscillation between landscape, abstraction and imagined archaeology invite reflection on time, memory and humanity's place within a vastly larger continuum.

In 2027, Zeng will have two forthcoming solo institutional exhibitions, in Europe and Asia respectively.



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Caption and courtesy information:

All images:
Zeng Fanzhi
Untitled
Oil on canvas
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2024 – 2025
8 panels
Overall: 300 x 600 cm / 118 1/8 x 236 1/4 in

2025
4 panels
Overall: 300 x 300 cm / 118 1/8 x 118 1/8 in

2025
180 x 270 cm / 70 7/8 x 106 1/4 in
Photo: South Ho

2026
2 panels
Overall: 220 x 440 cm / 86 5/8 x 173 1/4 in