

Exhibition: *Ink Dreams: Selections from the Fondation INK Collection*

On View: September 19–December 12, 2021

Location: Resnick Pavilion

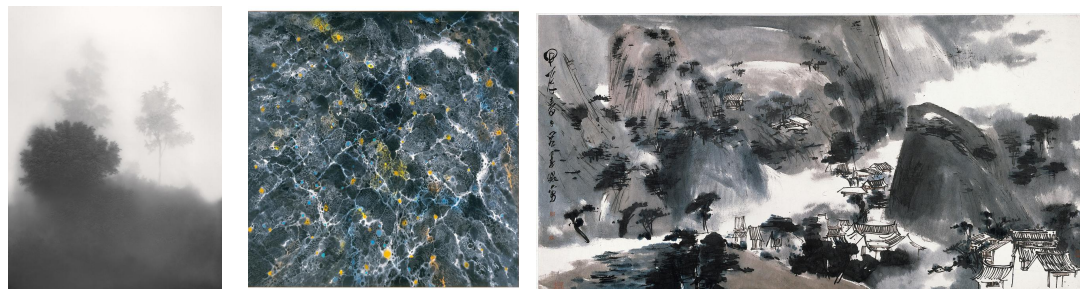


Image captions on page 3

(Los Angeles, CA—July 19, 2021) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Ink Dreams: Selections from the Fondation INK Collection*. Beyond the concrete materials of ink and paper, there is an intangible spirit uniting works of East Asian ink painting. *Ink Dreams* explores how this spirit of ink translates to other mediums, global makers, and contemporary times. Comprising 78 works of photography, sculpture, video, and painting, the exhibition proposes a new view of ink art for the contemporary era, one that incorporates qualities from the ink painting tradition and new adaptations of traditional subject matter, unbounded by traditional materials. The exhibition, curated by Susanna Ferrell, Wynn Resorts Assistant Curator of Chinese Art at LACMA, features the work of 53 artists from Asia, Europe, and North America, including Chen Haiyan, Shirazeh Houshiary, Lin Tianmiao, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Xu Bing, Yang Jiechang, and others.

Ink Dreams is the first major presentation of work from the Fondation INK Collection, a 400-piece collection of contemporary art in the spirit of ink that was promised to LACMA in 2018. Since the gift was announced, LACMA has borrowed key works from the Fondation INK Collection for special exhibitions, including *Wu Bin: Ten Views of a Lingbi Stone* (2018), as well as *Sam Francis and Japan: Emptiness Overflowing* (2023) and additional exhibitions to be announced. LACMA is also committed to publishing a series of systematic catalogues of the Fondation INK Collection over the next several years, including a 256-page catalogue that accompanies *Ink Dreams*.

“We are thrilled to present this inaugural exhibition of work showcasing the Fondation INK Collection,” said Ferrell. “Reflecting the larger collection, *Ink Dreams* offers a unique and novel understanding of contemporary ink art as a genre defined by soft qualities and common themes as opposed to one defined solely by the materials of ink and paper.”

“LACMA is indebted to the immense generosity of Gérard and Dora Cognié, profound collectors and founders of the Fondation INK Collection,” said LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director Michael Govan. “The transformative gift will position LACMA as a leader among U.S. art museums that collect, exhibit, publish, and promote contemporary ink art.”

About the Exhibition

Ink Dreams features 78 works by 53 artists and is organized in three thematic sections—apparitions, meditations, and dreamscapes, each referencing trends within Chinese ink art history, in order to create through-lines between past and present ink practice. **Apparitions** includes works that use translucent layering and negative space or absence as important compositional elements. In this section, Hiroshi Sugimoto’s *Lightning Fields* (2009) series showcases the artist’s mastery of black-and-white photography. Sugimoto contrasts the deep black ink of his gelatin silver prints with white flashes of electricity, documenting the sparks of a high-voltage generator in his darkroom. **Meditations** relates to both religious and non-religious meditation, and the use of repeated gestures and prolonged contemplation in art making. In *Meditations*, Lui Shou-kwan’s *Zen Painting* (1996) series embodies the concept of sudden enlightenment through thick, swift brushstrokes. Finally, **Dreamscapes** features contemporary renderings of the imaginary landscape, a frequent subject of historical East Asian ink painting that aims to depict the artist’s own inner landscape as opposed to a landscape found in nature. Chen Haiyan records her dreams in a dream journal, which she later returns to as inspiration for her paintings and woodblock prints. These dreamscapes often feature Chen herself in scenes that are both tense and whimsical, such as *Horse and Rose* (2005).

Also included in *Dreamscapes* is an installation of Xu Bing’s *Background Story: Ink Variation (from Lui Shou-kwan)* (2016), accompanied by Lui Shou-kwan’s *Wood Houses in the Mountains* (1964). Directly inspired by Liu’s *Wood Houses in the Mountains*, Xu recreated the painting in the style of his own *Background Story* series, an ongoing series of multimedia installations that draws inspiration from historical Chinese painters. From the front of the work, fine brushwork and subtle tonal variations are observed, but from behind, an open-back light box is revealed, cluttered with layers of debris. *Background Story* is, nonetheless, an ink artwork, embodying the spirit and appearance of an ink painting, as well as engaging with the history of copying as both a sign of respect and a method of learning that has been part of Chinese ink art practice for centuries. Lui’s *Wood Houses in the Mountains* and Xu’s *Background Story: Ink Variation (from Lui Shou-kwan)* are installed together for the first time in the exhibition.

Publication

Ink Dreams: Selections from the Fondation INK Collection

Co-publisher/distributor: DelMonico Books/D.A.P. Hardcover with paper-laminated cover. Edited with text and interview by Susanna Ferrell. Text by Britta Erickson, Stephen Little, Einor K. Cervone, Wan Kong, and Celia Yang. Including the work of more than 50 contemporary artists—from Xu Bing and Lin Tianmiao to Lee Ufan and Hiroshi Sugimoto—and featuring artists from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore to South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Europe and the United States, this book offers a reevaluation of what defines ink art, arguing that it is not the conceptual threads of its history that define what contemporary ink art can be. Exquisitely designed and illustrated, this publication features one of the most important collections of contemporary ink art in the world, from the Fondation INK.

Credit

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

This exhibition is made possible through the generosity of the Fondation INK.

All exhibitions at LACMA are underwritten by the LACMA Exhibition Fund. Major annual support is provided by Meredith and David Kaplan, with generous annual funding from Terry and Lionel Bell, Kevin J. Chen, Louise and Brad Edgerton, Edgerton Foundation, Emily and Teddy Greenspan, Marilyn B. and Calvin B. Gross, Mary and Daniel James, David Lloyd and Kimberly Steward, Kelsey Lee Offield, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony and Lee Shaw, Lenore and Richard Wayne, Marietta Wu and Thomas Yamamoto, and The Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation.

About LACMA

Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of more than 142,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

Location: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90036. lacma.org

Image captions: Rhee Kibong, *Wet Psyche—No Wind*, 2010, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, promised gift of the Fondation INK, © Rhee Kibong, photo by Maurice Aeschmann, Geneva; Wucius Wong, *Deep in the Mountains #2*, 2005, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, promised gift of the Fondation INK, © Wucius Wong, photo by Maurice Aeschmann, Geneva; Lui Shou-kwan, *Wood Houses in the Mountains*, 1964, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, promised gift of the Fondation INK, © Helen Ting, photo by Maurice Aeschmann, Geneva

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