

Nature and Now: Asian Art in Focus

18 MARCH - 9 APRIL 2023

Friedrichs Pontone presents *Nature and Now: Asian Art in Focus*, featuring the work of 10 emerging and established artists of Asian heritage. The exhibition showcases the unique perspectives and creative styles of a diverse and talented group of Asian artists who are making significant contributions to the contemporary art world.

This exciting exhibition highlights stunning works by contemporary artists who reinterpret traditions in dynamic and innovative ways. Across painting, sculpture, and new media installations, each artist uses experimentation to draw on both Eastern and Western art-making practices, materials, and cultural iconography, creating a dialogue across diverse artistic, social, historical, and cultural traditions.

Grappling with nature and identity, the artists in *Nature and Now: Asian Art in Focus* are pushing boundaries, manipulating materials, and developing unique artistic processes that summon memories of the past in order to subvert the visual language of tradition, move beyond its specter, and forge new currents in Asian art.

Nature and Now: Asian Art in Focus offers a timely and relevant exploration of the role of art in shaping our understanding of identity, diversity, and global culture.

Korean representational artist **Jeong Woojae** invites viewers to experience an ethereal and surreal world of dream-like vignettes, incandescent jewel-toned colors, and the compelling fantasy of a young girl who wills a floating world into existence, offering the viewer a magical space for dreams and a fascinating contemplation of the universe's mysteries.

South Korean contemporary pop artist **JHHI** creates mixed media allegorical images in which she reduces complex concepts of personal interactions and social reality to symbols and patterns composed of simple, yet highly implicit graffiti-like characters, exploring heavy themes of loneliness and alienation.

Hwang Seontae is a South Korean artist whose work depicts coolly delineated, contemporary interiors etched into layers of glass, creating the effect of sunlight entering through the windows, casting pools and patterns of illumination and projecting shadowed forms across the silent spaces. Monochromatic and uninhabited, Seontae's images possess a sense of pause, stillness,

and suspension that articulates a space for contemplation and offers the viewer a moment of clarity and awareness.

Choi Soowhan is a South Korean artist known for his minimalist yet expressive works which often feature a single element or shape repeated in different arrangements to create a sense of rhythm, harmony, and dynamic energy. Meticulously designed by drilling holes into a surface backlit with LEDs, Soowhan's masterfully manipulates material and light to create texture, form, and substance.

Mari Kim is a South Korean artist known for her quirky and whimsical paintings and illustrations. Her works fuse traditional Korean motifs with bold, modern aesthetics—often inspired by popular culture, anime, and animation—resulting in a dynamic and playful style that captivates the viewer.

Lee Jeonglok is a South Korean artist who works with photography to create beautiful and mystical events in elemental landscapes. These large-scale composite photographs feature waterfalls, rivers, islands, rugged mountains, clouds and clusters of neon, delicate, precarious and short-lived butterflies that flutter across the corporeal plain, coalesce for a while, and move on, a metaphor for human life. Jeonglok's work calls up a spirit world that exists in parallel to the physical certainties of place and time and gives us a perspective on the fleetingness of time relative to these epic spaces carved out over millennia, indifferent to, and unaware of, our existence.

Lee Leenam is a South Korean artist who creates interactive and immersive multimedia installations that blend art and technology to create digital reinterpretations of classical masterpieces. His works often incorporate video projections and sound that breathes new meaning and vitality into each pixel of image.

Reef Hsu is a Taiwanese artist whose atmospheric paintings depict painstaking accumulations of uniform, cellular, grain-shaped marks that combine to make a softly-textured, modulated surface. Carefully-rendered color articulates the shifting forms and masses of the compositions, prompting comparisons with the aesthetics of classical landscape painting, as they swirl and bloom across the indeterminate space of the picture plane, containing the processes essential to life.

Bae Joonsung is a South Korean artist creating works that slip between worlds. The artist's subjects are carefully painted, then photographed and combined into a 'lenticular' print, which allows another image to be revealed as the viewer changes their angle of vision. Important to this process is the 'layering' of imagery, that is, an idea of a painting within a painting; alternative versions of a painting can exist within the same surface. He presents a synthesis of past and

present, of reality and artifice, of naked and clothed. The images express the fragmentary and elusive nature of our perceptions.

Samuel Xun is an interdisciplinary visual artist based in Singapore. His practice is centered around the exploration of queer identity, self-therapy, and introspection through sculpture, context-based installation, and textile composition. His works delve into the complex interplay of emotionality, cognisance, and aesthesis, often through the examination of cultural and personal symbols, frequently inspired by film, cultural milieus, and personal narratives.

**friedrichs
pontone**