

Liu Guofu
In Praise of Blandness

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LIU GUOFU
IN PRAISE OF BLANDNESS

16 Sep - 22 Oct 2022
3812 Gallery London

13 Apr - 7 May 2021
3812 Gallery Hong Kong



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淡之頌

In Praise of Blandness



Blandness is the calm after the splendor.

淡是絢爛後的平靜。



Painting of Entropy

Joshua Gong

When viewing paintings by Liu Guofu, there appears to be a slow dispersion on canvas, and smooth energy flows out of the flat surface. Such a condition may associate with blandness. However, deep and great power seems to release in slow motion. Although the emotional catharsis is not as strong and spectacular as that of Romanticism - which utilises terrifying beauty to astonish the onlooker, conversely, the majestic movement is in accord with the universe, flowing towards the eternal and the ideal. This is the painting of entropy, a cosmological concept that determines the transition between order and chaos.

¹ Erwin Schrödinger, 1944, *What is Life? The Physicist's Approach to the Subject - With an Epilogue on Determinism and Free Will*, Cambridge University Press.

The concept of entropy stemmed from the field of physics. It is a thermodynamic quantity representing the unavailability of a system's thermal energy for conversion into mechanical work. If entropy increases, the total energy would gradually dissipate. However, it was Erwin Schrödinger, who, in 1943, during the lecture *What is Life*, imparted and applied entropy to the field of biology. He interpreted entropy as the degree of disorder or randomness in the system. Namely, the rate of structure-energy configuration corresponds with the value of entropy in this way: A positive Entropy increase suggests the transition from order to disorder, while when the negative entropy appears, chaos would gradually transform into order.¹

Forms of life correlate with birth, ageing, illness and death, and so does the process of creating art. Guofu's painting illustrates such a dispersed state, synthetically combining the state of creating, the form of art and the pattern of life. His painting is of entropy. The artist internalised the external movements by certain principles. Through his brush, the visual presentation embodies such a change of order.

Regarding the study of Aesthetics, there are three ways to observe and interpret the art of Liu Guofu: principle, skill and trend. These three aspects are derived from Han Feizi, the great synthesiser of classical Chinese philosophical thinking. Here they can be used according to the triangle mode of public value, proposed by Mark H. Moore, professor at the JFK School of Government at Harvard University. Moore asserted value, competence and support as three key measurements. The three can be paired with the traditional Chinese value system in examining Guofu's art. That is to say, the value of Guofu's abstractness lies in the principle of painting, his artistic competence is reflected by his pictorial skills, and the support manifested the trend of images.

The principle of painting:

When Filippo Brunelleschi, the innovative Renaissance architect, envisioned the installation of the grand dome on Santa Maria del Fiore, he did not only pursue the spectacle but also the principle of space.

The issues that Guofu wanted to address in front of the canvas were how to reorganise the visual and rediscover ideas from the age of antiquity. Which has become more urgent, particularly in this age of chaos and mediocrity, when society is muddled in a stupefying situation. His images project an outstretching principle, within which a well-functioning colour-brushwork field has been built. Regarding the composition, the seemingly monochrome colour is constructed by thousands of nuanced strokes and transformed into a field of heart, reflecting the painter's artistic judgement. The traces were made from the uniformity of the artist's heart and hands. These are the tail of time. Although, the images in detail appear to be lustrous and bizarre, all are under the painter's control; as a result, the overall tone is sombre, rigorous and faithful. Guofu has organically decontextualised the line and ink-effect of Chinese calligraphy into his painting of abstractness. One of the high principles in Chinese art is "To learn from nature and to gain the source of heart". Ancient thinkers in China tended to convey their ideas via symbols based on aesthetic objects. Namely, to take the external semblance as the starting point of observation, then to analyse, interpret, synthesise, and internalise, for emotional expression.

Confucius sighed in front of a river, "The passage of time is just like the flow of water, which goes on day and night."

This is what Confucius unearthed when observing the patterns and semblance of rivers and mountains – the change of time cannot be altered by the will of human beings. The interference of entropy in energy flow is eternal. The humanistic emotion was imparted to the cruelty of time.

Guofu has created a resemblance of potential energy within the limited flat surface. Viewing from different angles, one can find the uniformity of the principle is in accord with the universe. There are analogies between the rhythm of clouds, mists, mountains and waters and the brushstrokes. Only by following such a principle could the picture represent the natural sense of mindflow. Such a principle, with a decisive depiction of entropy embodies the value of Guofu's painting.



The skill of art:

When Leonardo da Vinci was trying to portray a subject, he hesitated in capturing the perfect posture, and it was precisely this pondering that electrified his wild imagination and intoxicated his beautiful soul. A way to represent time was what he endeavoured to achieve.

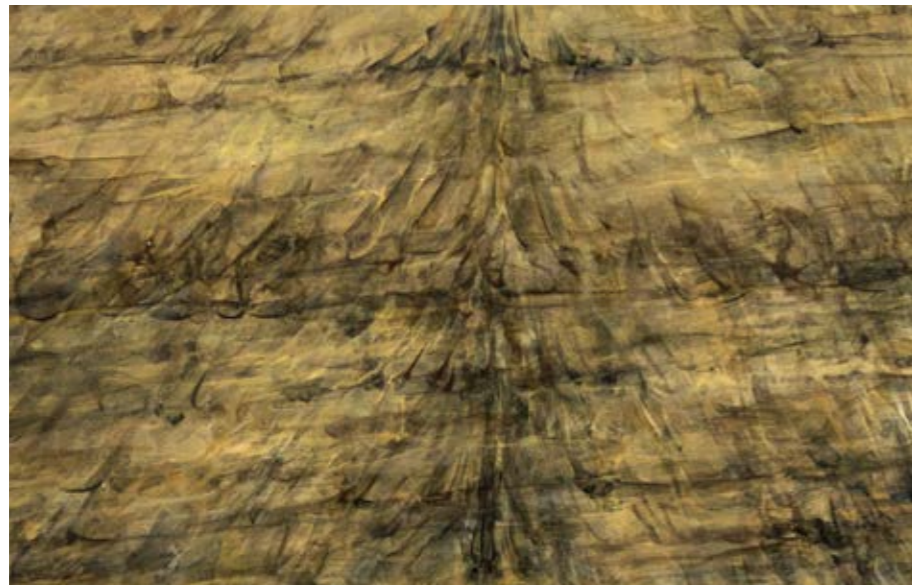
The marvels of Guofu's painting lie in his particularity in perfecting the details. His meticulous image-making skill enables the artist to render the surface with the notion of revitalisation. First, the canvas is made with a subtle texture. Then colours were applied and carefully washed for creating an effect of translucency. In this case, the chiaroscuro is not restrained by laws of linear perspective; instead, with the echoes from various light sources, the lines and colours are imparted with aromatic vitality. Then the artist could capture the decisive moment, posture and charm by applying the primer. Therefore the spirit of the image can be unearthed, and the best possible configuration can be conveyed. Such a skill testifies the competence of Liu Guofu as a professional artist.

Song Di (c. 1015-1080), a famous artist and theorist of the Northern Song dynasty, described a scene of painting, the procedure of which is very similar to Guofu's:

² Shen Kuo, 11th century, Dream Pool Essays, Northern Song dynasty.

First, a cracked wall is required. Then a piece of plain silk can hang on this broken wall. Before drawing, the artist would observe it in the morning and evening. Through the semi-transparent silk, the cracks form zigzag lines, from up to down, all resemble patterns of mountains and waters. The artist could ponder the images, envisioning the high ones as mountains, the low ones as waters, the pit part as valleys, the holes as creeks, the more visible part as the foreground, and the less visible part as the background. With the guidance of the imagination and artistic skill, the painter can capture the coming and going images of humans, birds, grass and trees. Then these pictures can be projected naturally. The final result would seem to be made by the universe, instead of by human hands. This is the so-called live brush.³

It is due to the professional skill of Guofu, that he has developed the eye to discover great forms of painting, the mind of plasticity and the skill of painting lights. In his painting, human imagination and the creativity of the almighty merged organically in one. Thereafter, the painting is full of live brush. Even in his old age, Leonardo could not forget the first sight he laid on the water flow in the Arno valley when he was young. He never stopped drawing the marvellous view of the infinite energy and ephemeral patterns of water flow. Unfortunately for Leonardo, the incarnation of the Renaissance man, even his observation is constrained by a middle-range field of view. Therefore he was perpetually perplexed by the randomness of energy dispersion. If one can look at the water flow from a distance as far as from outer space, or via a close-up view through a microscope in slow-motion, the flow may appear flat and diffusing, conveying entropy change. Guofu's skilfulness lies in that he can use abstract pictorial language, and masterfully transform the figure on canvas. This is precisely his artistic competence.



³ Zhang Yanyuan, 9th-10th centuries, Notes of Past Famous Paintings, Tang dynasty.

The trend of image:

Nearly all sciences explore the patterns of life and nature, and only those, who experienced and witnessed the ebbs and flows, can distinguish the false glory and fabricated notions, so that the internal and external trends can be synced.

Guofu's pictures are the visualisation of his cognition. Admittedly the artist lives in the secular world. Therefore he cannot prevent his heart from being enslaved by the body. Nevertheless, as a creator, he can make and erase images with endless possibilities by his unbridled mind within the limited dimension of the universe. His heart commands the painting hand, and his will flies alongside the lines. The status is similar to Zhang Yanyuan's description of Wu Daozi, one of the greatest masters in ancient China: "The notion is preceded the brush; even if the picture is exhausted, the meaning would be everlasting, because the brushwork extends the wilful mind."⁴

Zhuangzi once postulated: "Our life is limited by boundaries, but cognition has none." Artworks are made by humans, whilst the invaluable ones will surpass the boundary of mortality.

Painting is the trace of the human spirit, gradually dispersing in the dust of history. When the sun sheds the first golden ray on the shore of souls, it is there waiting for the fisherman to return. Alas, there was once a momentous moment in history, a fisherman told the first Chinese poet, Qu Yuan, who was obsessed with patriotism: "The sane one will not be stopped by objects; instead, one will follow the trend of the world." After listening to such kind and wise advice, the poet still could not be persuaded. Soon after, the fisherman oared the boat, leaving. Meanwhile, the poet, jumped into the river, sinking.⁵ Guofu is situated in the contemporary world full of conflicts and clashes. He also cannot help but feel the sorrow of the decadence of the motherland or even the apocalypse of the entire world. Sadly, it is easier to relocate a mountain than to remove human obsession. Only by staying calm, collected and bland, can one widen the horizon of cognition. This is a revelation of the famous idiom: "One can't show high ideals without simple living; One can't have lofty aspirations without a peaceful state of mind." Tragically, the one who coined this phrase cannot be liberated from his political ambition. Zhuge Liang, one of the most brilliant minds, stopped thinking when societal actuality exhausted his final breath. After that, it can be said, the state of blandness is like a lofty cold peak, nearly impossible to arrive at. Nevertheless, the image trend Guofu created, realised such a blandness.

⁴ Lin Fengmian, 2014, Catalogue Raisonné, Vol. 5, China Youth Press, pp. 290-291.



No matter how hard an object is, under the influence of entropy, it will deconstruct from order to disorder, from an entity to a myth, from an upsurge to a dispersion.

Such a dispersion can be recognised as a potential trend, an artistic phenomenon. Wu Dayu, the forerunner of modern art in China, once posited: “The beauty of the potential trend, is like the mass of non-entity and is as abstract as geometric architecture. Both marvellous music and choreography have fortuitous and ineffable rhythms. They all have the beauty of potential trends.”

Liu Guofu is an artist, which means he is a creator, who endeavours to communicate with his audience. They shared the rhythms of breath and fate. If, in painting, the space of imagination is blocked by physical walls, the trend will also be constrained by objects, therefore, it cannot evolve with the world.

Nearly a hundred years ago, the forebearer of Chinese art modernisation, Lin Fengmian, outlined these areas for the later generation to explore: “mediating the arts of the East and West; introducing western Art; categorising Chinese art; creating future art.”⁴ It may appear to be very simple. However, only few Chinese artist can achieve it. Liu Guofu has carefully compared the traditional ink painting (aura, rhythm, thought, scene, brushwork and ink) and Western oil (plasticity, colouring and chiaroscuro), and then captured the essence of image-making. Unlike those who superficially borrowed Western pictorial languages and grafted them into piles of nonsense, Guofu has pursued truth instead of prettiness. This particular persistence in art is invaluable and indispensable.

The image Guofu created, illustrates a trend, that unifies his cognition and action, mediates the world’s tendency and individual choices, and combines the visible and the ineffable. It is the blandness that supports the weight of his artistic conception.

Conclusion:

Last but not least, admittedly, art is interpretable while ineffable. What is legible can be explained with reason. Meanwhile, the indescribable is the undercurrent myth. Such a myth in art is not to befuddle the audience; instead, it exists due to the perceptual activities in human minds. It is the combination of principle, skill and trend. It is also the complacency of value, competence and support. These images are like glimmers during the sunset, dusts in the galaxy, flowing in the sea of mind, floating in the field of the heart. They have surpassed reason in the world of sense, taking the leap of soul. When we meditate in tranquil surroundings, it is like deducing entropy, disseminating energies from the inner world to outer space. The artist transferred the order and disorder of nature into another visual world via his bodily language, so that the trace of creativity can be extended and the legend of life can be circulated.

熵之繪

文 / 龔之允博士

¹ 薛定諤，1944，《生命是什麼——生物細胞的物理學見解》，劍橋大學出版社

觀賞劉國夫的繪畫作品，給人以一種淡然彌散的感覺。這種感覺並非索然無味，而似乎有一種能量在緩緩釋出。這種勢能並不似浪漫主義那樣，用強烈的對比、誇張的動態和險峻的形勢給人一種窒息的衝擊，而是一種磅礴緩釋宇宙狀態，在雋永和彼岸之間徘徊。他所描繪的是一種熵的增減態勢。

熵的概念源於物理學，意為在熱能轉化為動能的過程中，無法完全轉化的能量。也就是說，如果熵值增加，能量整體會出現彌散性的衰減。奧地利物理學家薛定諤（Erwin Schrödinger）於1943年「生命是什麼」的講座中把這一概念轉引至生物學，認為熵的增減與生命的秩序相對應：熵增（有序至無序）；熵減（無序至有序）。

生命的形態經歷生、老、病、死，藝術的創作也經歷類似過程。國夫畫作中所表現的緩緩釋出，是對創作狀態、藝術形式和生命形態的綜合描繪，是一種熵之繪。畫家把外在無序的世界通過內化，形成一定的秩序，再通過畫筆化為新的視覺形態，表現秩序的變化。¹

從美學的角度，可以有三種方式來觀察和理解劉國夫的藝術魅力：法、術、勢。這三個方面脫胎於中國諸子百家時代最後的集大成者韓非的思想框架；但在這裡根據藝術和美學的角度，作為三個維度的代詞，以形成一種新的公共價值的三圈理論：價值、能力和支援。劉國夫的抽象性繪畫的價值在於他繪畫的法度，其能力體現在造藝的方術，其支持源於其最後形成的勢象。



繪之法：

當歐洲文藝復興建築第一人布魯諾萊斯基（Filippo Brunelleschi）立誓建造佛羅倫斯大穹頂的時候，他追尋的不僅僅是奇觀，更是空間的法度。

如何在社會精神狀態普遍昏聩的時代，通過視覺的重新排序，恢復古典時代的理想，是劉國夫在面對畫布時，需要思考的重大問題。他的《傲》、《冷山》、《空寒》、《彌漫》和《花》都呈現出了一種向外開張的法度。在構圖上，看似單一的色彩，在細微萬千的筆觸組合下，轉化為反映判斷力的心田。色彩的場域通過藝術家的心劃筆刻，留下了光陰的痕跡。雖然看上去似乎光怪陸離，實際上都在畫家的掌控之中，嚴謹、平正、肅穆。國夫把中國書法中的線條與用墨進行了有機的分解。「外師造化、中得心源」。中國的古代先賢常常托物言志，以外觀為出發點，對洪宇之道進行剖析、解讀、綜合、內化，然後抒發情感。

子在川上曰：「逝者如斯夫，不舍晝夜」。

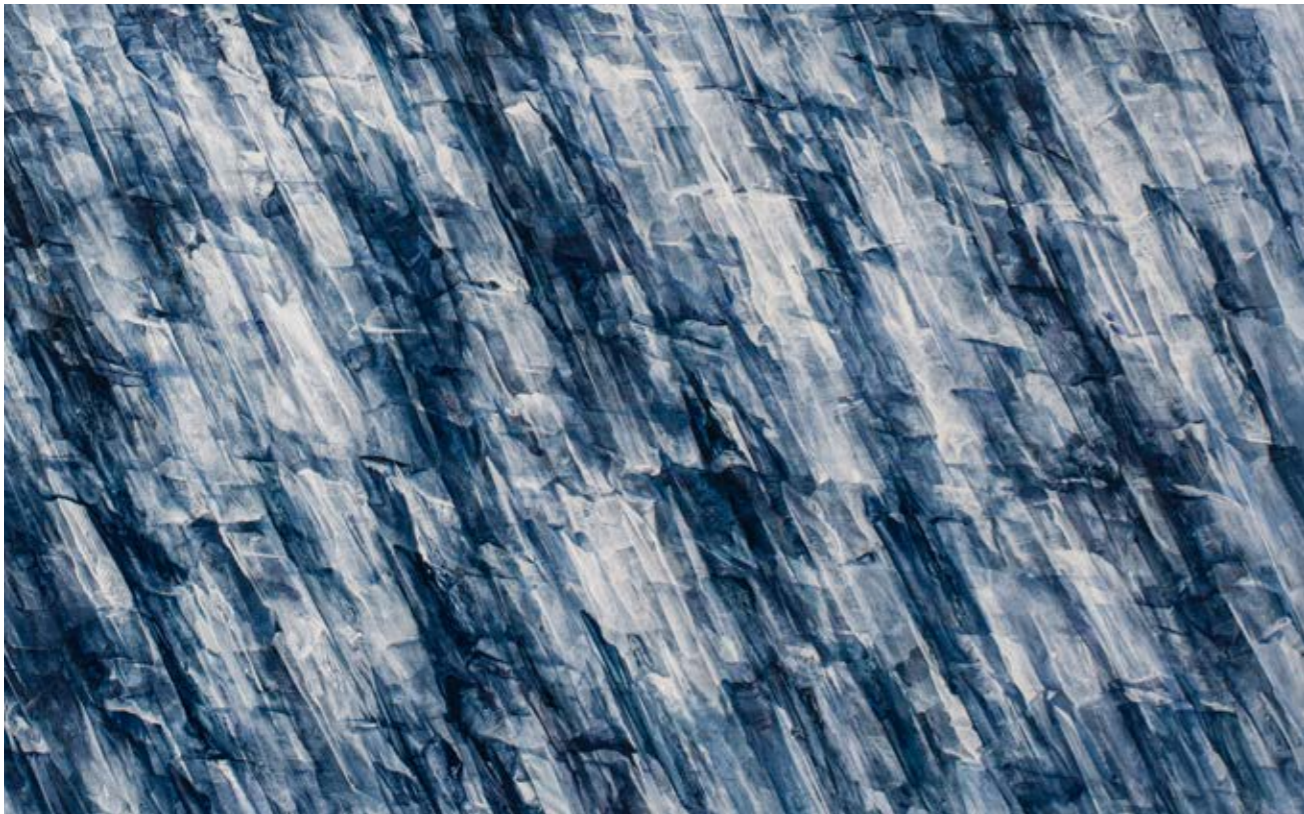
這是孔子在觀察山川地勢時，對於時空變化的人文感歎。他感歎着時不我與，勢能流轉的恆常。

國夫在有限度的平面畫布上，創造了一種緩緩流轉的勢能。從不同的角度看，都能感覺其法度與天地合。淋漓的筆勢，與自然界中雲、霧、山、水的動態規律形成類比。正是這樣的法度，使得他的畫面整體呈現出一種天然去雕飾的自然感官。這樣的法度，對熵的決定性的描述，正是國夫繪畫價值的體現。

藝之術：

當李奧納多·達文西（Leonardo da Vinci）在描繪對象時，遲遲無法定格，不停琢磨，不斷切磋，如癡如醉，他尋找的是一種呈現時間的方術。

劉國夫的作畫之術，體現在他對細節的雕琢，在充滿質感的畫布上，通過洗去色彩，創造出油畫顏料的流動感。這使得光影不再被固定的外在光源所限制。在不同角度和不同光源的關照下，劉國夫繪畫的線條和色塊都富有氣韻，有很強的生命力。他再通過膠狀的穩定劑，把最具魅力的那一瞬間固定下來。這樣，圖像的神韻得以發現，須臾間的妙能得以傳神。這樣的技術，體現的是劉國夫作為職業藝術家的能力。



⁴ 林風眠，2014，
《林風眠全集》
(頁 8-10)，中
國青年出版社

² 沈括，北宋，11
世紀，《夢溪筆
談》

³ 張彥遠，唐，9-
10世紀，《歷代
名畫記》

北宋畫家宋迪曾經論述這樣一番作畫場景，和國夫的作畫過程何其相似：

「先當求一敗牆，張絹素訖，倚之敗牆之上，朝夕觀之。既久，隔素見破牆之上，高平曲折，皆成山水之象，心存目想，高者為山，下者為水，坎者為穀，缺者為澗，顯者為近，晦者為遠；神領意造，恍然見人禽草木飛動往來之象，了然在目；則隨意命筆，默以神會，自然景皆天就，不類人為，是謂活筆。」²

正是國夫有着純熟的技法，才使得他能夠有發現繪畫形式的眼目、構思造型的心神、揮灑光影的繪術。在他的畫作中，人的想像力與造物者的創造力有機融合於一，於是畫面充滿了活筆。李奧納多至老年也不能忘懷青年時代在阿諾村目睹流水的場景，依然耕筆不輟，在筆記中描繪無常之水的恒常。這位文藝復興時代的畫家，他的觀察局限於中景，於是他只能困惑於這剪不斷理還亂的力量。如果在外太空遠距離觀察，或者以顯微鏡-慢鏡頭的視角來目測，那麼水流也許是平面的，是彌散的，體現的是熵的增減。國夫的繪術在於，他能夠從另一個方面，用一種抽象性的繪畫語言，一種專業的技術，把這樣的形象轉化到了畫面上。這是藝術家能力的具體顯現。

象之勢：

幾乎所有人類科學所探索的都是人與自然勢態，只有經歷大起大落，榮辱不驚的人生，才能賦予人超脫五蘊的虛妄，認清人與自然的共勢。

國夫的圖繪，是其認知的視覺化。畫家處於俗世，難免為「心為形役」，但他卻能在有限度的洪宇之中，用手繪的姿態，延伸出了無限度的造像與去像。心會手指，意達筆飛。正如張彥遠品評吳道子時所言：「意在筆先，畫盡意在，雖筆不周而意周也。」³

莊子曰：「吾生也有崖，而知也無涯」。藝術產生於人，而有價值的藝術必然能夠超越人的生命界限。

繪畫是心靈留下的殘影，漸漸彌散在歷史的塵埃之中。在白駒過隙的瞬間，晨光一米，照射在靈魂的渡口，等待着棹槳的歸客。是的，在那個歷史驚鴻一瞥的瞬間，漁夫對着充滿我執的詩人屈原說：「聖人不凝滯于物，而能與世推移。」詩人面對這樣的勸誡無法超脫。不久，漁夫棹舟而去，詩人沉入江底。國夫處於當代大爭之世，對於「亡國乃至亡天下」，亦有所感。奈何撼山易，撼我執難。只有淡薄，才能彌遠。這是所謂的「非淡薄無以明志、非寧靜無以致遠。」結果卻是兩京未可復，祁山難以出，星落五丈原。由此可見淡薄境界的高冷難攀。國夫所造之象，成全了這種淡薄。

即便再堅硬的物質，在熵的度量下，也會從有序轉化為失序，從實質轉化為玄虛，從澎湃轉化為彌散。

這種彌散可以被稱為一種勢象。中國早期探索抽象藝術的吳大羽曾說：「繪畫的勢象之美，似無形質的重感，又似建築的體勢而抽象。好的樂曲音響和舞蹈使動姿都有韻致，勢象美。」

劉國夫作為畫家，也是一位元造物主，與畫面和觀眾，同呼吸、共命運。繪象如果被物理的界限阻隔了想像的空間，那麼勢象也會被物所凝滯，無法與世推移。近乎百年之前，中國藝術現代化的先行者林風眠在探索現代之法和創新之道時指出：「調和中西藝術、介紹西洋藝術、整理中國藝術、創造未來藝術。」⁴ 看似簡單的四句箴言，實際能做到的中國藝術家，畢竟寥寥。劉國夫在比較傳統繪畫的「氣、韻、思、景、筆、墨」和西方油畫的「構造、色彩、光影」之後，發現了象的本質規律，而沒有像很多對這方面認識較為膚淺的人那樣「執華為實」。這一點尤為可貴。

劉國夫所造就的象，呈現了一種勢態，是他認知與行動的統一，是天下大勢與個人判斷的協同，是玄虛與實在的結合。而這種態度的淡薄，支持着藝術家深厚的意境。

總結：

最後，不得不承認，藝術有「可說」與「不可說」。可說的是能為理智所理解的部分，不可言說的是妙不可言的隱秘。那種神秘，不是要故弄玄虛，而是在於人的心理悸動，是法術勢的融合，是價值、能力和支持的互相成全。就如夕陽餘輝下的一抹金色，銀河門轉中的一粒塵埃，這些形象流傳於腦海，浮現于心田，在感官的世界中，超越理性，靈魂得以飛升。靜心冥思，仿佛負熵而行，化內而外，把自然的無序與有序，用生命的語言轉譯為虛象，延續創造的軌跡，以傳達生命的傳奇。

Blandness is the starting point of all things.
It is the existence of uncertainty and infinite change
that is constantly updated.
Blandness is the expression of things
that cannot be expressed,
and of existence that are ready to disappear.

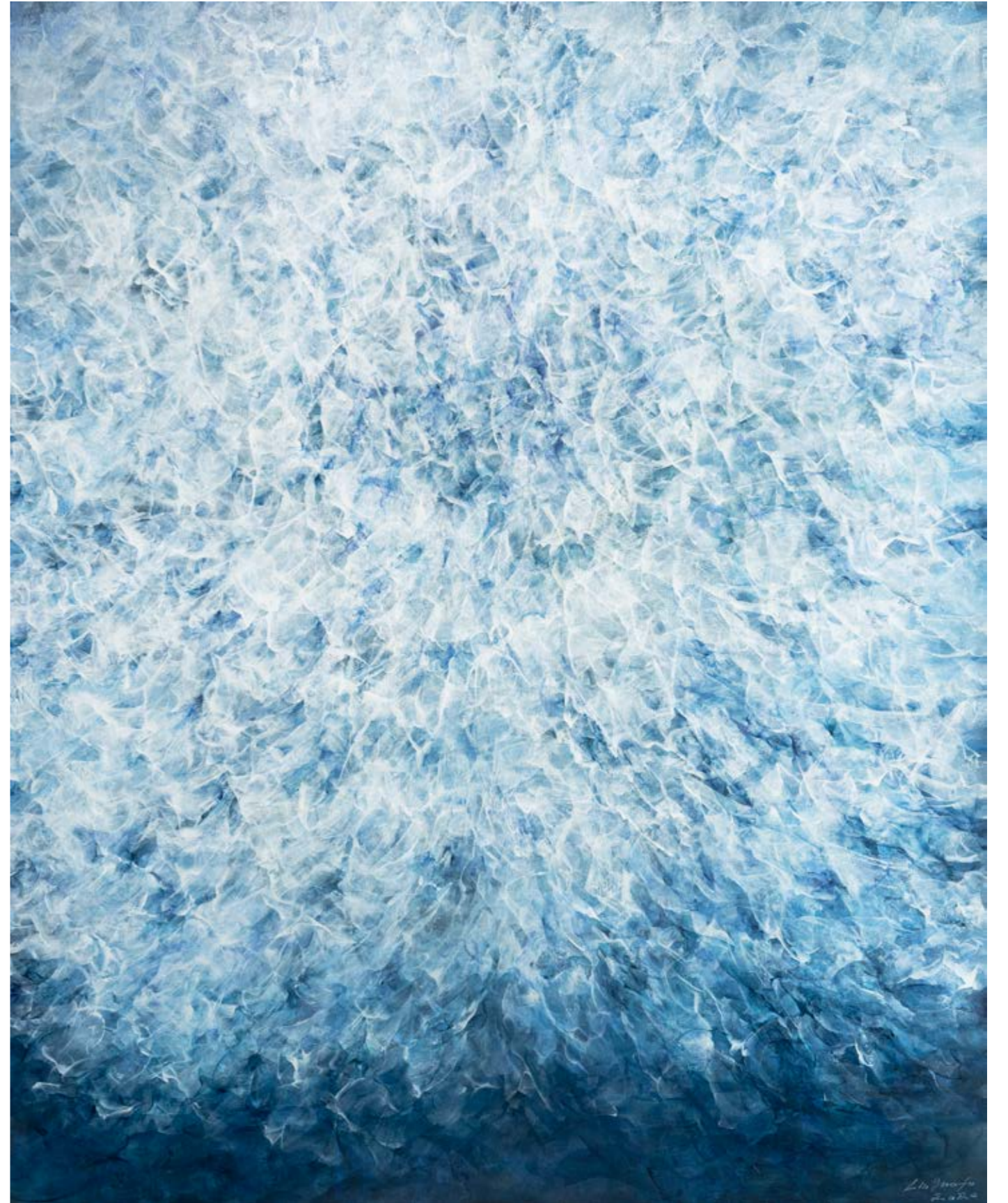
淡是一切事物的起點。
淡是不確定的存在。
淡是無窮變化，不斷更新。
淡是表達了無法表達的事物，
是即將消逝的存在。

Artworks

展覽作品

Flower No. 7
《花 - 7》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
160 x 130 cm
2020





Cold Mountain No. 11
《冷山 - 11》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
160 x 120 cm
2022

Pervasion No. 24
《弥漫 - 24》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
120 x 90 cm
2017





Pervasion No. 35
《弥漫 - 35》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
90 x 120 cm
2018



Empty Cold 2019-1
《空寒 2019-1》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
190 x 150 cm
2019

Blandness is the path towards emptiness.

淡是奔向混沌的途徑。



Flower No. 3
《花 - 3》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
150 x 150 cm
2017



Pervasion No. 26

《彌漫 - 26》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩

180 x 200 cm

2016

Private Collection, Asia

亞洲私人收藏



Open Space No. 65

《敞 - 65》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩

90 x 140 cm

2018



Cold Mountain No. 8
《冷山 - 8》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
120 x 170 cm
2018

Private Collection, Germany
德國私人收藏

Cold Mountain No. 9
《冷山 - 9》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
120 x 90 cm
2022

Private Collection
私人收藏





Pervasion No. 36
《弥漫 - 36》

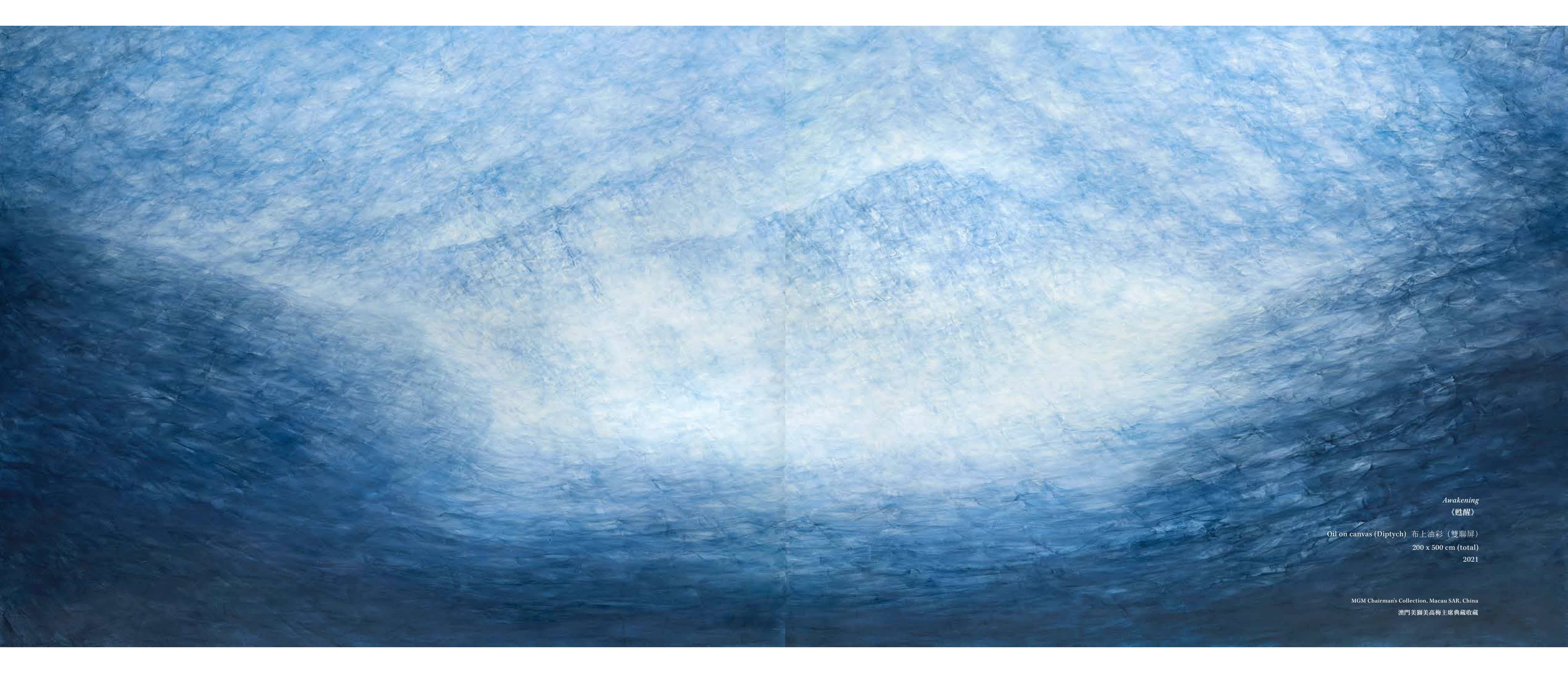
Oil on canvas 布上油彩
150 x 180 cm
2017 - 2018

Blandness is nature itself.

Blandness is a deep insight, a magnificent present, and a profound aftertaste.

Blandness links human and the universe, also inspires imagination.

淡是本質，是一種深刻的洞察，是宏大的臨現，
是博大的餘留，是將人與宇宙的連接，引發幻想的湧現。



Awakening

《甦醒》

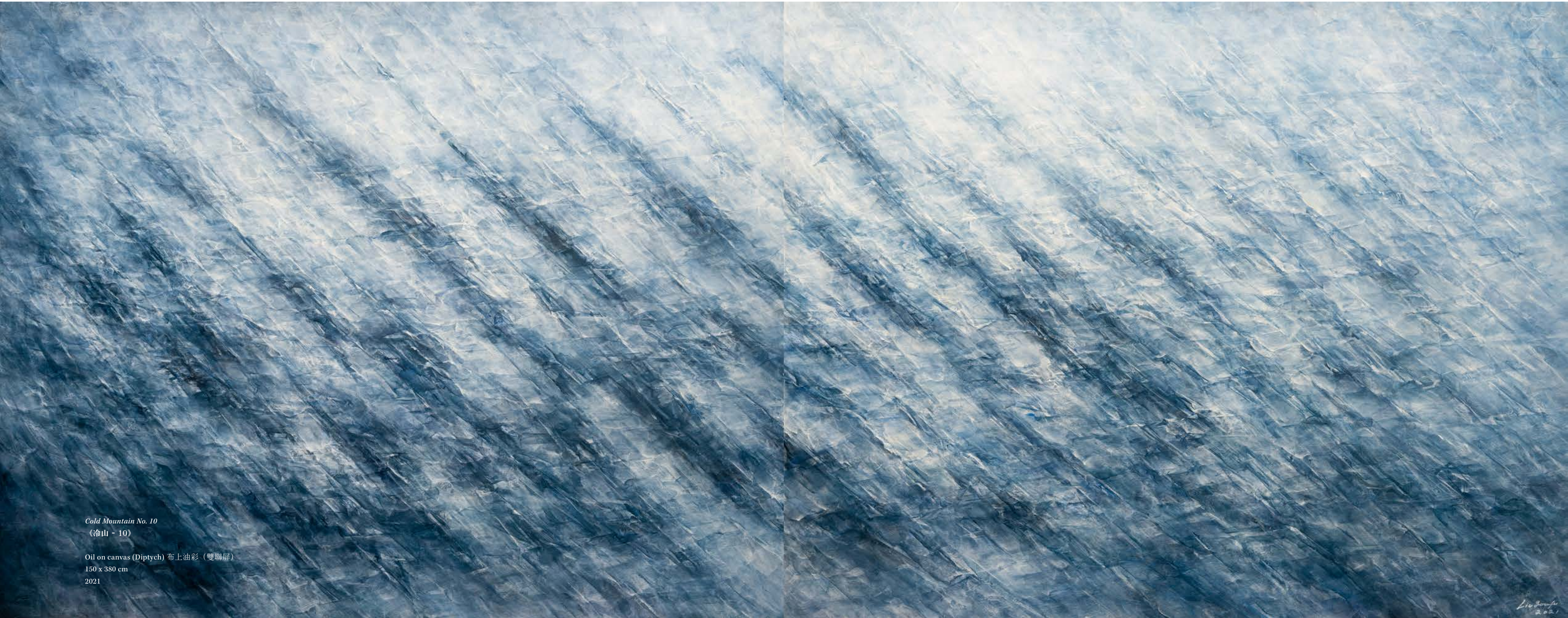
Oil on canvas (Diptych) 布上油彩 (雙聯屏)

200 x 500 cm (total)

2021

MGM Chairman's Collection, Macau SAR, China

澳門美獅美高梅主席典藏收藏



Cold Mountain No. 10
《冷山 - 10》

Oil on canvas (Diptych) 布上油彩 (雙聯屏)
150 x 380 cm
2021

Li Gangfu
2021

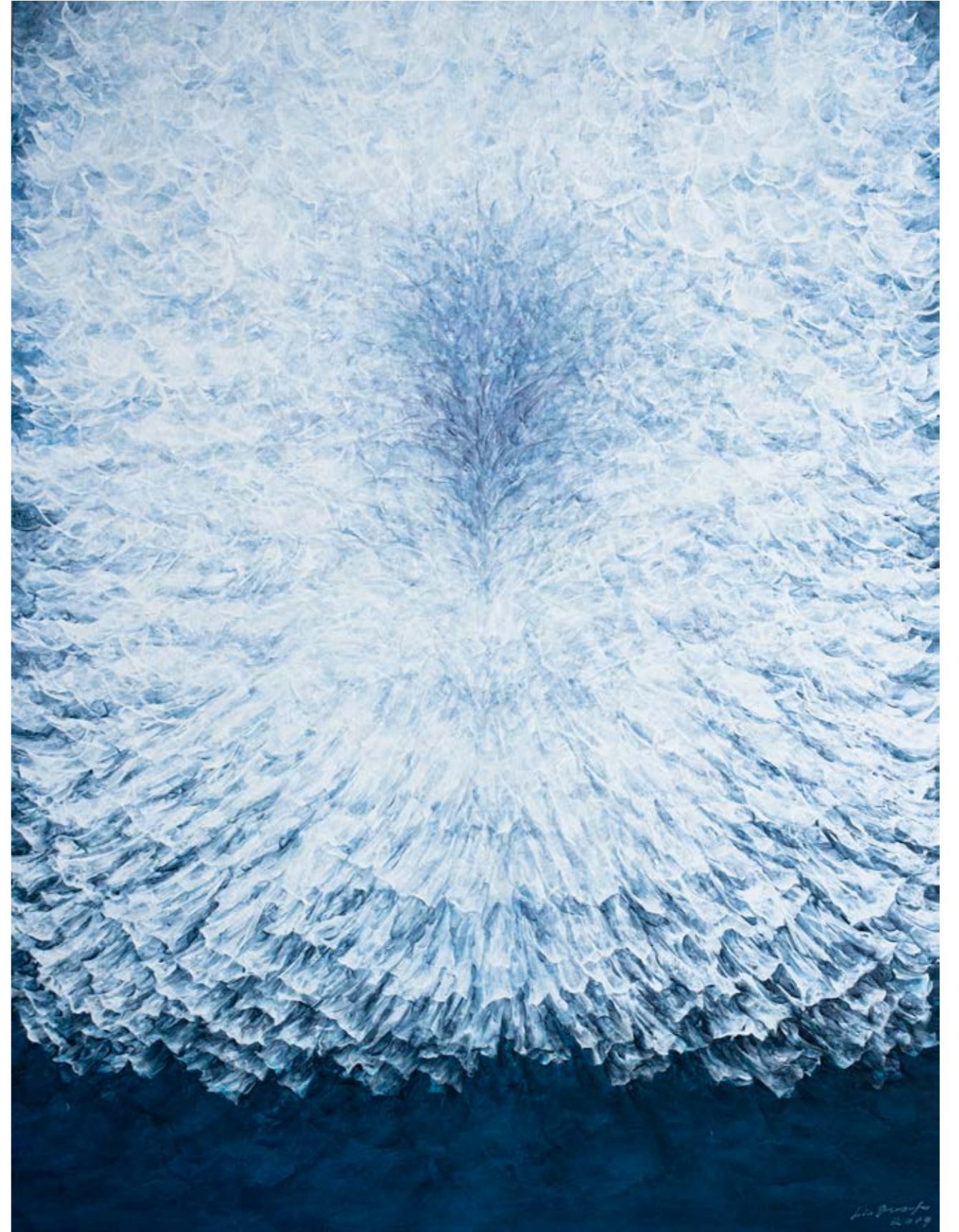


Cold Mountain No. 15
《冷山 - 15》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
190 x 150 cm
2022

Flower No. 5
《花 - 5》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
160 x 120 cm
2019





Cold Mountain No. 17
《冷山 - 17》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
160 x 120 cm
2022



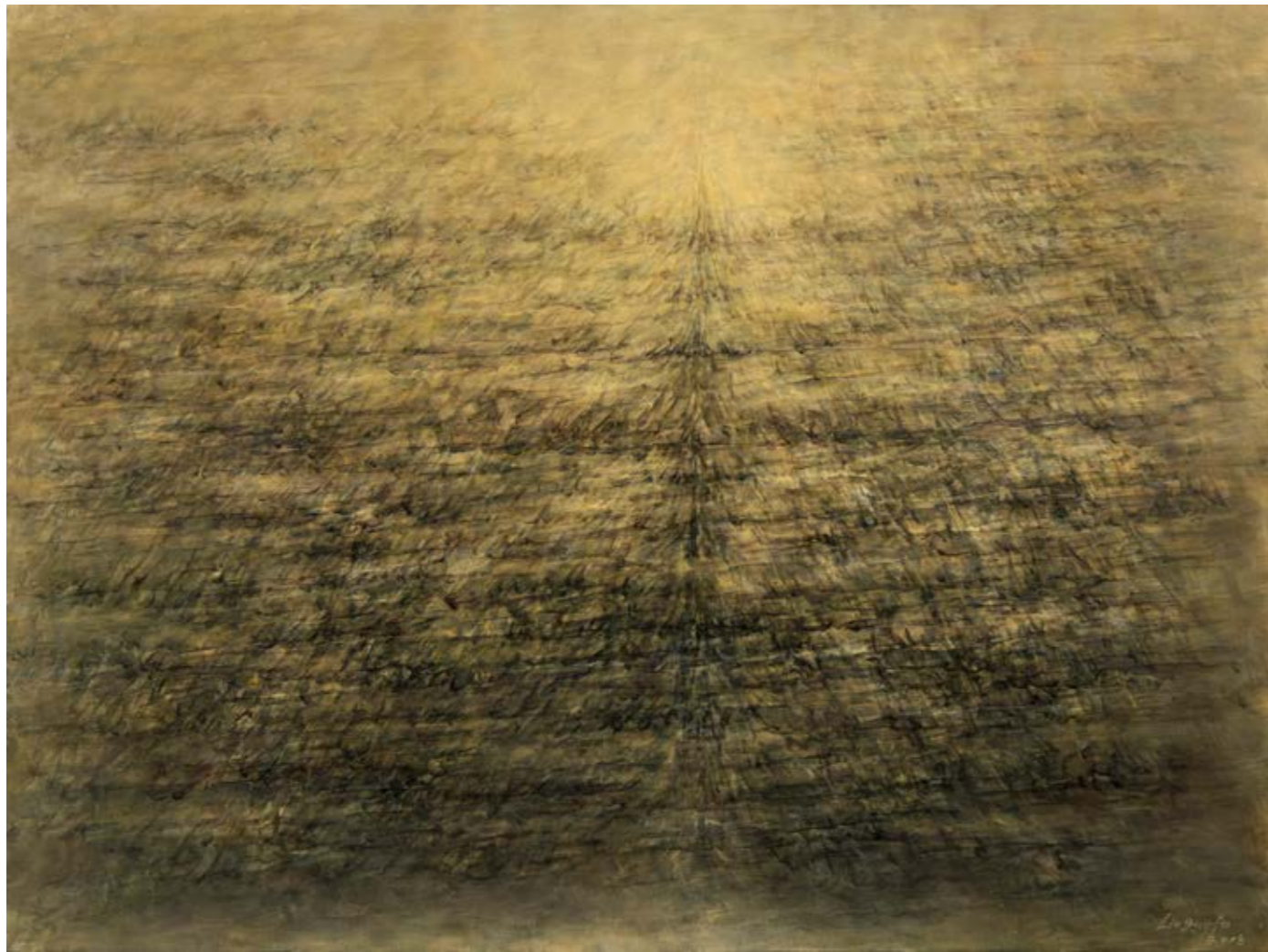
Flower No. 8
《花 - 8》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
190 x 150 cm
2019 - 2020

Private Collection, Asia
亞洲私人收藏

Blandness is the field of infinite growth.

淡是無限生發的場域。



Pervasion No. 32
《彌漫 - 32》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
90 x 120 cm
2018



Open Space No. 67
《敞 - 67》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
120 x 90 cm
2018

Private Collection, U.K.
英國私人收藏



Flower No. 6
《花 - 6》

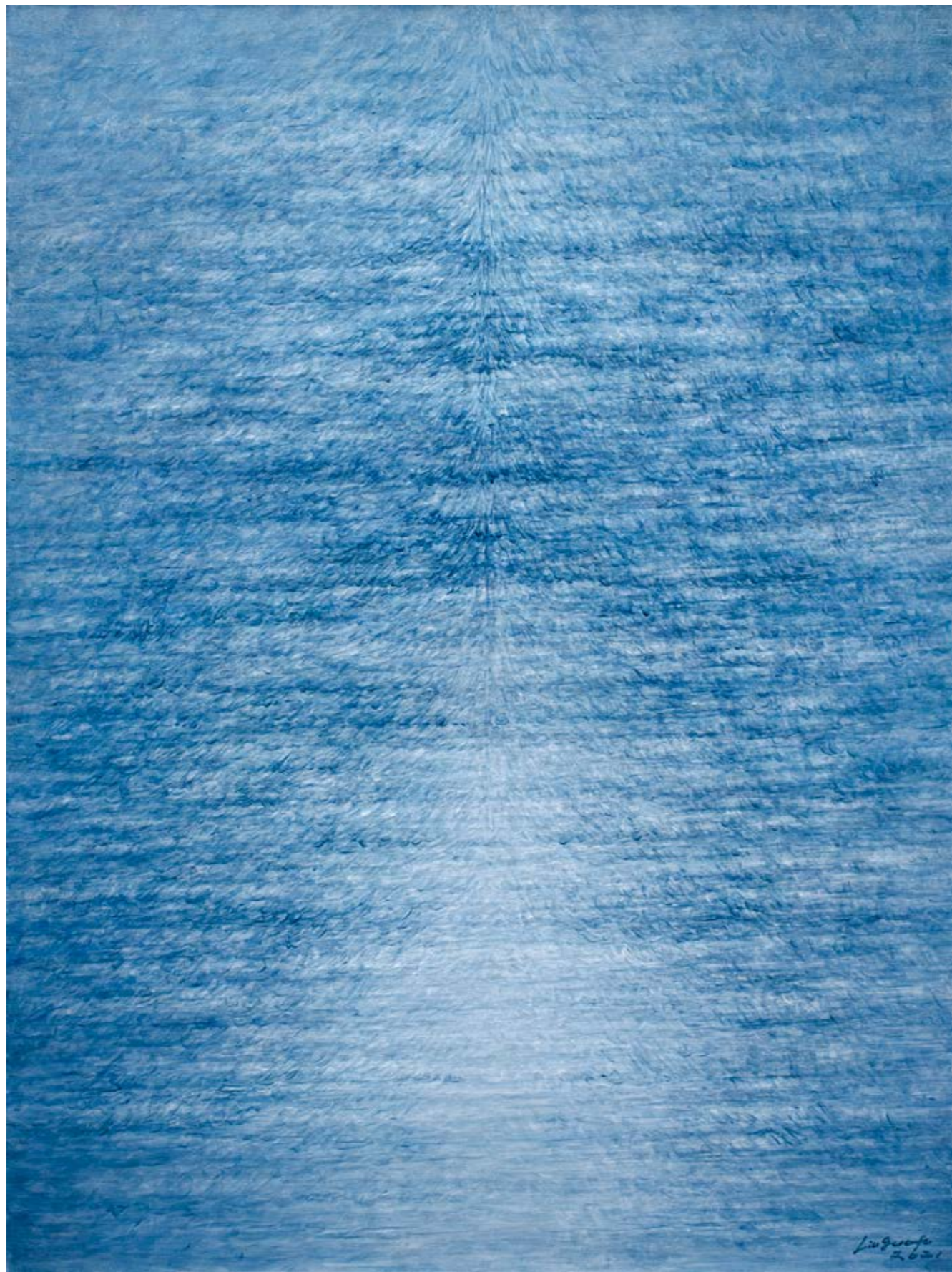
Oil on canvas 布上油彩
180 x 150 cm
2020

Private Collection, Asia
亞洲私人收藏

Pervasion No. 37
《弥漫 - 37》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
160 x 120 cm
2021





Open Space No. 68
《敞 - 68》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
120 x 90 cm
2021

Blandness is a state of boundless possibilities.

淡是無限打開的狀態。



Pervasion No. 38
《弥漫 - 38》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
90 x 120 cm
2021



Pervasion No. 29
《彌漫 - 29》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
90 x 140 cm
2018

Private Collection, Hong Kong
香港私人收藏



Open Space No. 66
《敞 - 66》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
90 x 120 cm
2018

Private Collection, U.K.
英國私人收藏



Cold Mountain No. 6
《冷山 - 6》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
190 x 150 cm
2017

Private Collection
私人收藏



Pervasion No. 13
《弥漫 - 13》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
180 x 150 cm
2016

Private Collection
私人收藏

Blandness has a hidden poetic quality and latent potential.

淡具有隱秘的詩性，潛在的未來。

Flower No. 17
《花 - 17》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
120 x 90 cm
2022

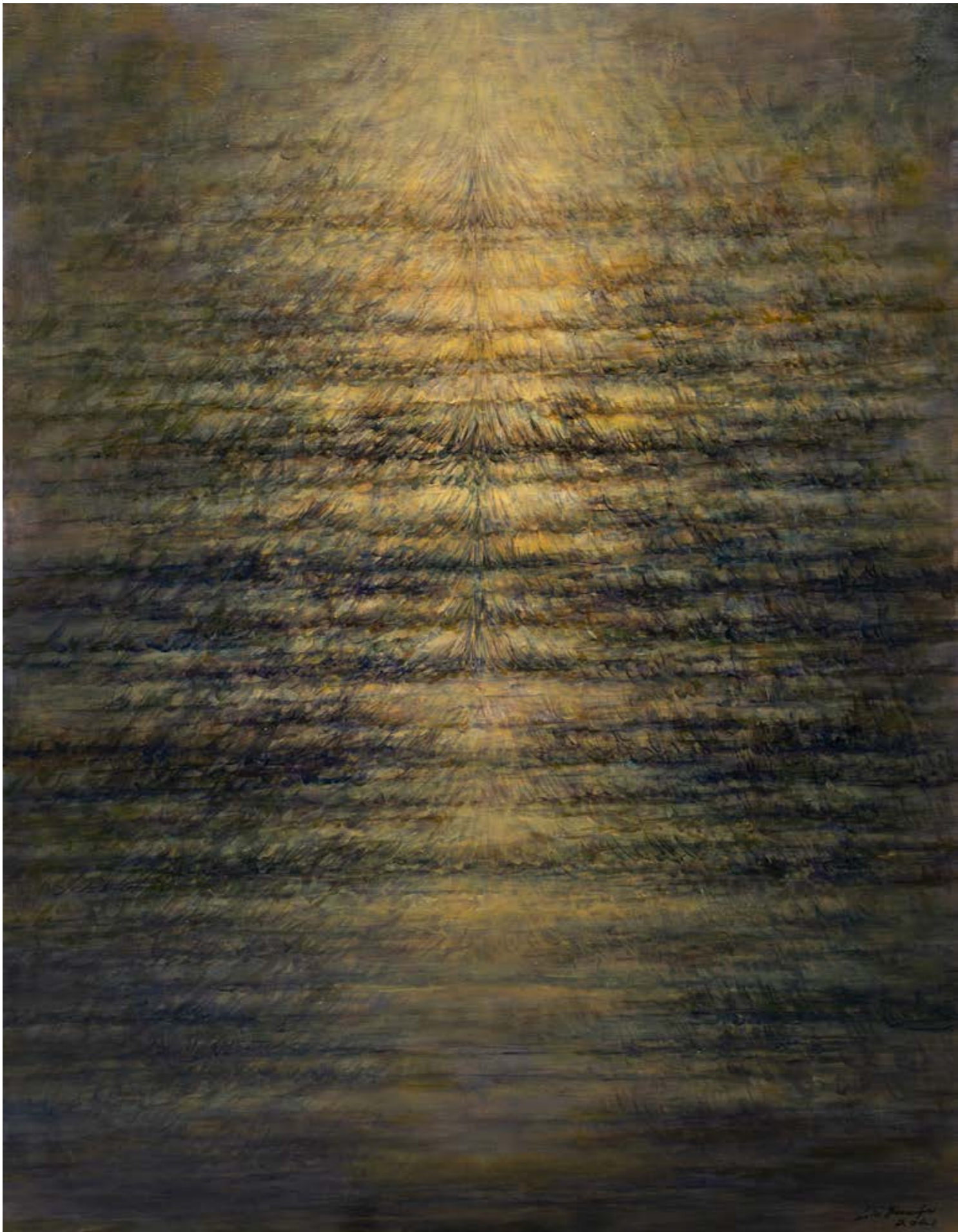


Cold Mountain No. 7
《冷山 - 7》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
180 x 130 cm
2018

Private Collection, U.K.
英國私人收藏





Pervasion No. 42
《弥漫 - 42》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
148 x 116 cm
2022



Pervasion No. 5
《彌漫 - 5》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
150 x 130 cm
2014

Private Collection, Asia
亞洲私人收藏



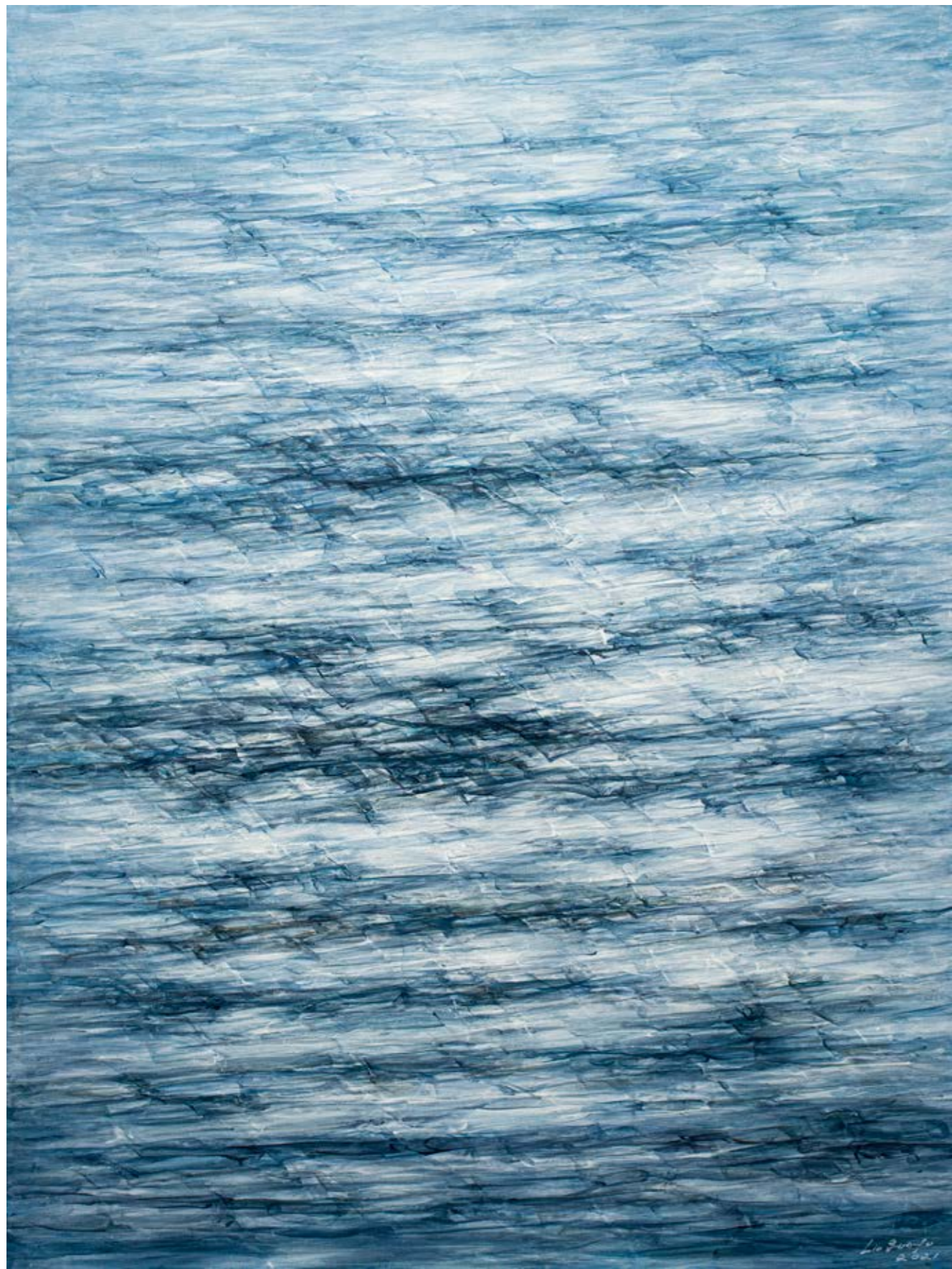
Pervasion No. 34
《彌漫 - 34》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
90 x 120 cm
2018

Private Collection, U.K.
英國私人收藏

Blandness goes beyond limitations and certainty.

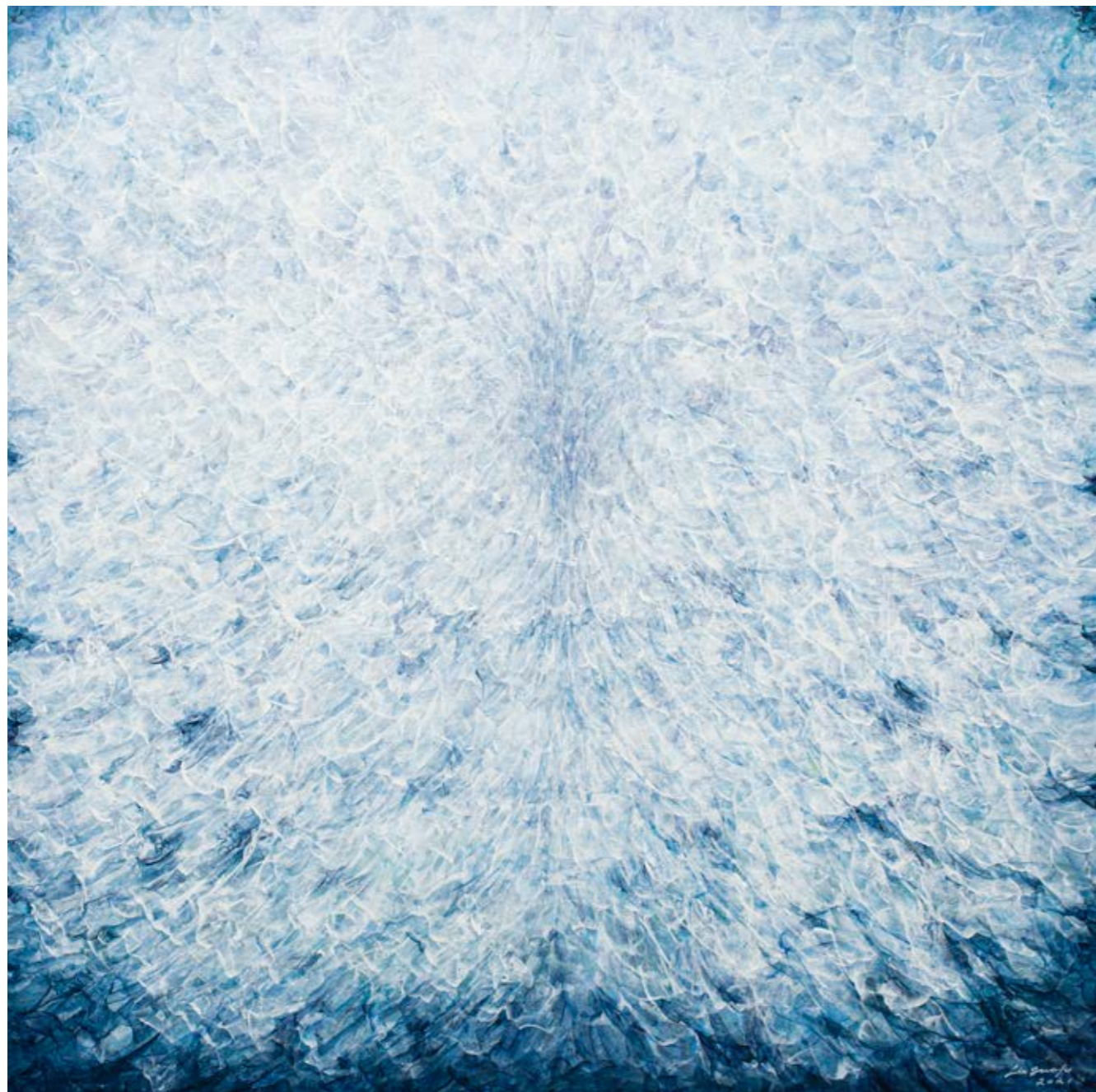
淡是迴避限制與確定。



Pervasion No. 39
《弥漫 - 39》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
160 x 120 cm
2021

Private Collection, Dubai
杜拜私人收藏



Flower No. 13
《花 - 13》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
150 x 150cm
2021



Empty Cold 2022-1
《空寒 2022-1》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
120 x 90 cm
2022



Flower No. 12
《花 - 12》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
120 x 90 cm
2021

Private Collection, Dubai
杜拜私人收藏



Cold Mountain No. 5
《冷山 - 5》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
190 x 150 cm
2015-2016

Private Collection
私人收藏

Blandness is silence, a rejection of noise and a refusal towards excessive desire.

淡是沉默，是拒絕喧嘩，是對過度欲望的拒絕。



Flower No. 14
《花 - 14》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
160 x 120 cm
2021

Flower No. 9
《花 - 9》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
150 x 150 cm
2020





Pervasion No. 31
《弥漫 - 31》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
120 x 90 cm
2018

Flower No. 11
《花 - 11》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
90 x 120 cm
2020

Private Collection
私人收藏



Blandness is clarity, it is water,
it is inexhaustible and possesses the best taste in life!

淡是清澈，是水，是品嘗不盡的，
淡是人間最好的滋味！

Empty Cold 2020-1
《空寒 2020-1》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
190 x 150 cm
2020





Pervasion No. 21

《彌漫 - 21》

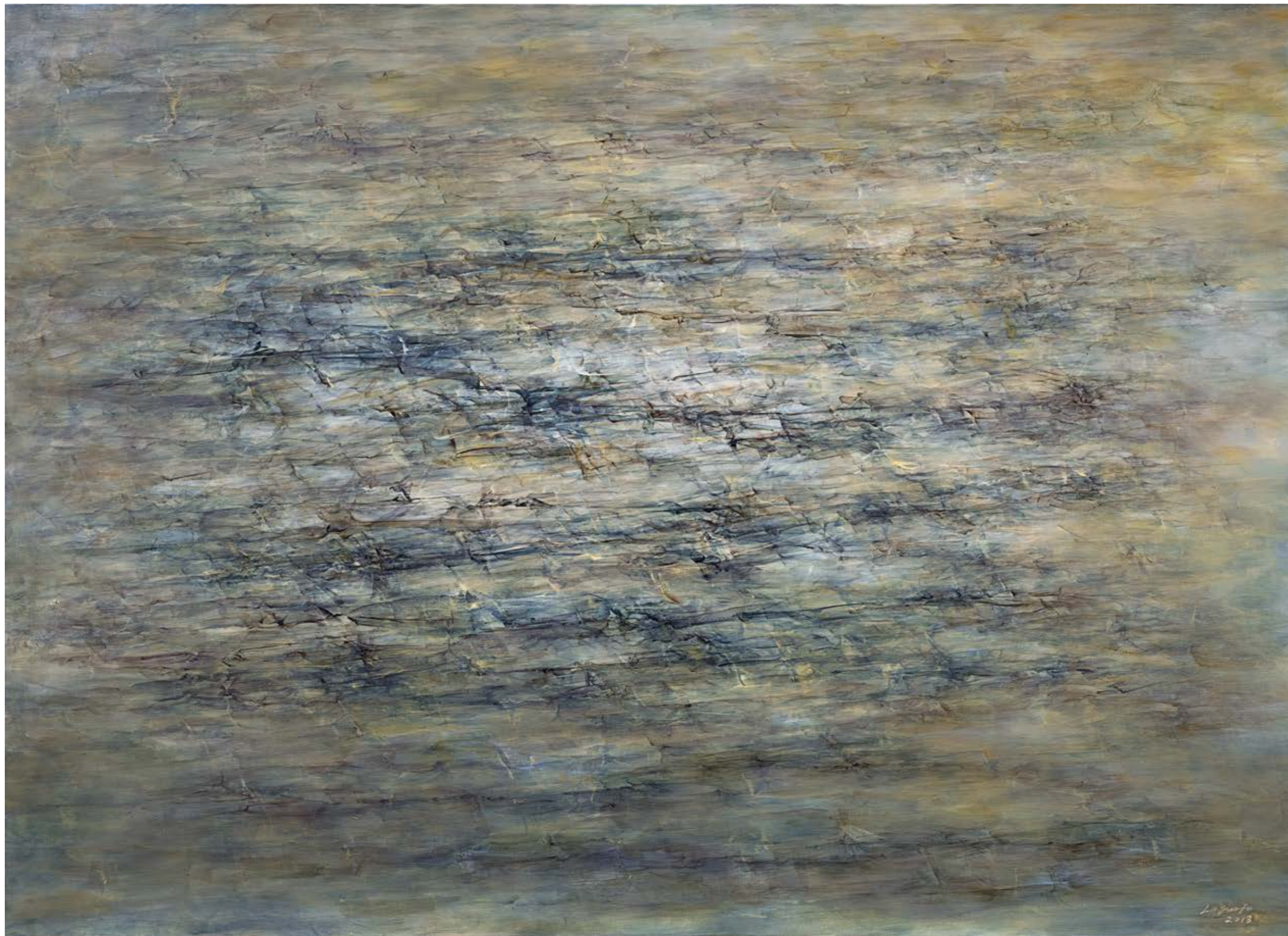
Oil on canvas 布上油彩

90 x 120 cm

2016

Private Collection, U.K.

英國私人收藏



Pervasion No. 1
《弥漫 - 1》

Oil on canvas 布上油彩
130 x 180 cm
2013

Private Collection
私人收藏

**Academic Conversations on Liu Guofu
and his Blandness Aesthetics**

In Praise of Blandness

Moderator:

Calvin Hui

Guest Speakers:

Dr Malcolm McNeill, Dr Joshua Gong

Calvin: Welcome to our webinar presented to introduce Nanjing artist Liu Guofu on the occasion of his latest solo exhibition, *In Praise of Blandness*, a discovery of the mystics of his abstract painting. It's a great pleasure for me to share this panel with two experts of Chinese art and history: Dr. Malcolm McNeill, Director of the Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art and Senior Lecturer in Arts Education, School of Arts at SOAS University of London. Malcolm has professional experience at several of the world's leading museums, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, and art market institutions such as Christie's in London. Malcolm and the SOAS team have been supportive in bringing academic expertise for our Chinese contemporary art and ink art exhibitions over the past two years in London. Dr. Joshua Gong, the research editor of Unicorn Publishing Group, is a leading expert on contemporary Chinese art and chinoiserie. He was a lecturer in the art history department of Shanghai Normal University and the University of Sussex. His monologue *Iconography and Schemata: A Communicating History in Painting between China and the West, 1514-1885* is a recognised landmark in the field. Joshua, as the artist suggested the title, *In Praise of Blandness*, for his latest solo exhibition, what do you think of or how do you interpret the theme?

Joshua: Okay, thank you, Calvin. I was very much inspired by the artist, but before, I saw his work and I had this feeling, but I can't explain it in a legible way. It's something ineffable I can't explain, but I can feel it. There's a very deep traditional Chinese style, especially the literati art style, of observing the relationship between the individual and the society, as well as between nature and the culture. So, in Chinese culture, we do not put nature and man-made culture into binary opposition, but we have the concept of the unity of nature and man. And when I view Guofu's painting, I can see he's trying to blur the boundary between those two very distinct fields, which were intensively studied in the West after the 18th century, but they were polar opposites. Later, I had an in-depth exchange with the artist and he suggested that the title of a book by a French sinologist and philosopher, Francois Julian, *éloge de la fadeur*, which is a monograph on Chinese aesthetics be used as the exhibition title, which is *In Praise of Blandness*. I think the philosopher captured the essence of this Chinese spirit, while Guofu's visual language represents such a feeling,

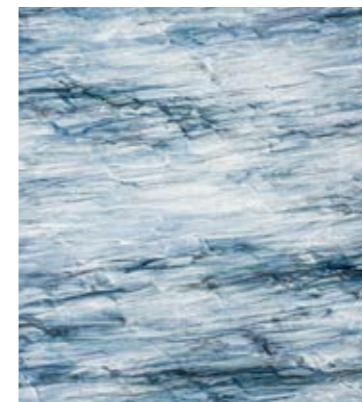


and it served as an open discussion for us to understand his works. This is not just some unique Chinese concept or approach, it's a universal concept that occurs during the development of our society, especially in the industrial one. This concept has been eclipsed by positivism or materialism at the point. But now we are in the 21st century, and the world is very deeply linked and globalised. This concept can be embraced by all communities from different cultures. Therefore, I think Guofu's artistic expression and theme suggestions can guide us well to understand his artistic innovation. So Guofu he emphasised that he wanted to express to the audience and collectors that he is focused on how to paint rather than what to paint. In this case, as viewers, we try to read or appreciate his work by knowing how he paints rather than just from the appearance of his painting. So that's what I thought when I was trying to comprehend his work, especially the emotion being conveyed from the surface so that I can feel something deep and try to elaborate a little bit further. But our audience or everyone who see Guofu's art shouldn't be limited by my view. I'm just trying to give us a cue to understand, and a method to approach his works rather than narrowed the view saying this is how we do it.

Calvin: Well, I also found the term 'blandness' very interesting, especially when I first started to work with Liu Guofu in 2012. I do appreciate the word 'blandness' because the subtlety from Liu Guofu's painting actually delivers such sense and also in the aesthetics. Also, I remember Dr Xia Kejun once said, Liu Guofu's painting is the infusion of 'light' and 'chi'. So we the Chinese always talk about 'chi', but it's all about the energy and also very atmospheric, something like the light with air. So while light brings out itself, air helps disperse the lights to every corner of Liu Guofu's work. And also the colours, the iconic blue-greyish colour Liu Guofu uses is actually very calming but then it can also be very dynamic. Well, especially in the last two years when I saw Liu Guofu's works begin to evolve and from very subtle brushstrokes to very dynamic and rich brushstrokes. I definitely want to share or discuss with you both how you see this blandness and how you interpret it when you see Liu Guofu's painting.

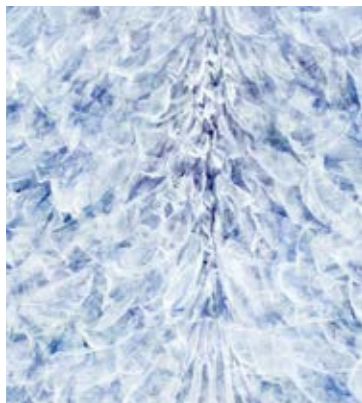
Malcolm: Thank you Calvin, yes absolutely, I think they're wonderful works. Although I only had a brief encounter with these paintings, the visual experience is something I will never forget. They're extremely compelling. And I was really struck, both in your comments and in Joshua's comments, by the way you both focus in on the kind of the emotional impact of these paintings, of these canvases. These is something that draws you in. They require your attention and they're quite immersive and impactful.

They're not immediately legible. Again, they don't translate into kind of iconographies or particularly structured forms. This can be seen from his latest series, '*Cold Mountain*' and '*Flowers*'. These are very explicit iconographic subjects. We know what this is on a certain level because we've been told it by the artist. We have this voice of absolute authority that tells us this is a rock, this is a flower. But yet the way that we respond to it is so different from, say, other contemporary artists like Liu Dan, who paint these almost hyperrealist ink paintings of scholars rocks. This is something profoundly different from that. And that's partly, I think, down to media, partly down to the artist's sentiment. And it circles back to this title of this exhibition that the artist came up with himself, which I was first, as a side note, absolutely fascinated to hear. It comes from a French sinology text that slightly blew my mind because this concept, to me, it pulled me into very different areas of thinking than 18th century French scholarship or 19th century French scholarship on China. In short, I think, yes, this blandness, as you put it 'Dan' (淡) in Chinese when I was preparing for this discussion and doing a bit more background research on the artist, the places I was going to were not a reaction to the empiricism of the 18th century. It wasn't about kind of getting beyond the scientific optical perspective, but it's about, our predilection to look, and look, and look closely and assume we understand things because we can perceive them, trusting our vision in a way. It was much more of a kind of desire in preparing for this discussion, to go and look at much older texts. And in fact, it was the very text that got me into the study of Chinese culture in the first place. The Dao Dejing that I went back to, and particularly in verse 35, I think there is kind of injunctions that talk about this ineffable way, this ineffable Dao as being 'Dan', as being bland, and that's where the term starts to unravel for me. And the difficulty of translation, whether from French to Chinese or Chinese back to English or where we find it, that this core concept at the centre of this really compelling exhibition is as ineffable as the paintings





themselves, that it carries with it so many different implications that we can talk them around in circles and circles here. But of course, the thing you all have to do is to go to either 3812's website or to their galleries and see these paintings in person to have this experience. But that 'Dan' or that blandness, as we might call it, or perhaps dilution or even dissolution, it describes at its root, is the reduction of the concentration of something. And it sort of sits somewhere between dilution but also, by implication, in Liu's work, in distillation. So I guess, in a very convoluted way, what I'm trying to say here is that these works, as Joshua put, much more eloquently than I have and Calvin underscored are so emotionally affecting. That while the title actually did cause me to kind of raise an eyebrow the first time I heard it, why would you call an exhibition centre on blandness? Is that very tongue in cheek? Or is this something that requires our attention, and when you're in front of it, something that compels our attention and pulls you in. It pulls you in with this kind of subtle simplicity of colour and light and structure and form that is breaking down kind of complex structures, whether they be rocks, whether they be flowers, whether they be landscapes, whatever form Liu has turned his brush to. That instead pull you into these immersive pictorial spaces that are actually also subtly three dimensional because they're oil paintings. There's a sense of light and form and volume, but also texture there. So I think for me, it's that emotional affect that they have when we encounter the paintings that makes this title, this idea of blandness, initially, one that I was slightly kind of raising an eyebrow at, then thinking, well, okay, maybe this is drawing from ancient Daoist philosophy. Now I have to rethink my thinking because it's actually situated in the artist's understanding of a much more complicated, much more international way of thinking about the concept. But fundamentally, it's about our immersive emotional experience in these dilute, but also pure spaces that we're kind of pulled into. All three of us have them as backgrounds to our presentation just now. These three different series of the artist's that we can see in this discussion provide very different kinds of emotional impact, but equally pull us into these spaces that require us to kind of look and linger and stay. And that's my response to it, I think, to really echo that, and think about dilution and allowing yourself to be absorbed into that dilute space is one of the things I find so compelling and so resting about the artist's work.



Calvin: I actually want to add one more point about the 'Dan' (淡), the blandness. To me, it's more like an emotional state of the artist himself. It's also something about the quality of the aesthetics from our tradition. Joshua mentioned about the integrity. It's the moment that I found Liu Guofu may also embrace that spirit and that quality to show his emotion and also his humanistic concern through his paintings. That's why I would see from the emotional perspective, no matter how dynamic or how strong the brushstrokes or how fragmented, and then this blandness is always with the artist, as this is the artist quality, very sophisticated, very elegant. It's very long-lasting and eternal artistic quality. That's how I feel. But when we see the artist, he also uses very chaotic brushstrokes, very fragmented. Joshua, I think you also have a different interpretation when you see these brush strokes and the texture of the canvas. So, you introduce the term 'entropy', right? How do you come up with this term?

Joshua: There are several concerns why I come up with this term because I was thinking how to summarise Guofu's visual representation – it looks simple but it is actually very sophisticated. Because when I look at his image or painting colour field, I can see it's very calming but it's not fixed. It's moving. So visually you can feel a very slow-motion movement there. And it's very similar to Leonardo da Vinci when he painted the water while he trying to understand water, then tried to slow it down to observe the movement. I was thinking it must have something to do with energy or the way we understand how the universe moves. And then I think about the very original, very beginning of the inquiry about the universe, how it moves. Then entropy is something I think is suitable because we have an artist as a thinker or mediator who pulls the information, and perceives the vast information into his brain. Then he digests and tries to find a simple way to show us what he's like, then transformed from his thoughts to his hand, working it out. And I think this in part has something to do with counter entropy effect because entropy suggests chaos. In order to maintain order and make us feel comfortable, we have to do something.

Even though as audience we see it's very calming, but I can see the artist's struggle when we think about it, how he tried to do something new in the contemporary art field. There are so many of them, so many intellectual artists working on this field trying to understand, to present the so-called the truth of our life. It is not easy then in order to make such inquiry while not only just breaking the rules but also



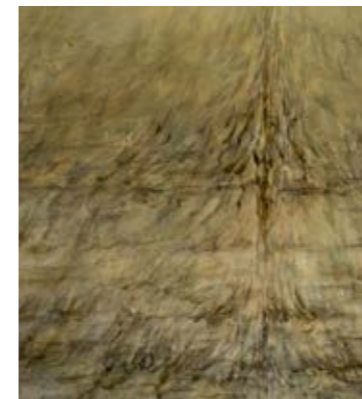
to give a suggestive or constructive solution itself is not easy. So, I think entropy itself is in part very associated with what he was doing. Secondly, I also think this term enhances engagement, especially with Western audiences. I think science is something we can agree upon from both Chinese and Western intellectual circles, especially at the very beginning of the 20th century when Chinese was trying to reinvent the national culture. They think science is very important. But to understand science not just narrowly focus on science, but how science complements our way of understanding humanity is what's important. I think entropy itself is not just rising from the field of physics, but it has much wider meaning. Eventually it suggests how we understand organisms or let's say biology in a wider scope. I think that's the reason why I particularly selected this concept not only for us to understand, but it is also very appropriate in interpreting and explaining Guofu's art so we can have a very contemporary, while solid understanding about his work.

Calvin: Joshua, would you compare 'entropy' and 'blandness' because it seems like two different concepts. Are they conflicting or are they complementing? I mean in this context with Liu Guofu's painting.

Joshua: I think it's complimenting rather than a high contrast because I think the reason why Chinese society or Chinese intellectuals have this concept of blandness is, first of all, they admit there's entropy. There's something out of our control while we still try to make the relationship harmonious even though we admit there is something not harmonious there. The understanding of itself, some of the things, let's say the physical or the external world is not entirely at your disposal. But you can try to position yourself into a place where both you and the inner world and the external world feel happy or feel less struggle. This feeling represented in Liu Guofu's works. When you look at it, you feel yourself naturally calm down. It's not because the external world or our metropolis is calmed down by itself. They still work on their own way. And individually we might seem very insignificant in our society, to put it that way. If I die today, the world still moves, so it doesn't matter. But I think the idea of admitting this and trying to understand and live this way because you realise the truth of the harsh world yet you still feel happy to live on. This is a great will to this life or to this surrounding, while blandness has something to do with that. Because when you admit it, you will feel calmer and less

anxious because you already know what's going to happen. The only thing you need to do is try to live with it, find the best way to enjoy, to find the truthful meaning of this life while filtering those chaotic or not so useful information. The information could be visual, could be verbal, or could be audio. So, I think those two concepts complement each other once we know the philosophy behind it.

Malcolm: Joshua, I love that comment and also that kind of frank comment about entropy, conceiving of modern society is a system with entropy operating in it. And also that quite candid comment if I die today, the world continues moving, That makes me think about, or it prompts me to think about how I think about entropy and then to come back to Liu Guofu's work. But at least my very basic understanding of the concept is that entropy is a law of thermodynamics. That it refers to energy contained within any contained system, whether that system be an experiment, whether that system be a city as you describe it, whether that system be modern human civilization, or that system be the entire kind of universe in which we exist. Everything in that is tending towards a stable state of the minimum complexity, that everything tends towards what you describe as disorder. But I think in some sense this is only disorder when we centre human experience within it, when we center this kind of idea that we as thinking cognate combinations of molecules and things are the principle around which the universe is ordered because it is the principle around which we order everything. We centre ourselves in what we do and centre humanity. But this seems quite convoluted. But bear with me for a minute because I think to come back to Calvin's question, about where does entropy, where does this kind of collapsing of order into the most simple possible arrangement relates to blandness relate to the dilution of literally in the Chinese term, the dilution of a liquid to a very kind of dilute state. Where does connect? And again, perhaps where I was overreaching and researching this topic, to go back to those early Daoist texts, this idea of hun dun '混沌' of the kind of the primordial chaos from which all things emerge in classical Chinese philosophy is remarkably similar in my very naive understanding of both early Daoist philosophy and of thermodynamics that this kind of tendency towards chaos has a parallel there. So, at a conceptual level, there's that linkage, but where does that connect to the artist's work? And for me, there's this difference that on one level, if I really try and think about what entropy



means and apply it to myself, I am utterly terrified. I find that notion that everything is tending towards kind of it completely blows my mind and it fills me with fear because of the vanity of my own desire as a human being to continue my own existence. And the idea that I and everything I know and everything I could know and could understand will eventually collapse to the most simple arrangement of molecules is terrifying. Or not even molecules of neutrons, protons and electrons, whatever that may be. Again, I don't really get this stuff. But when we come to Liu Guofu's painting, when we look at that simplicity, that blandness, which does have a conceptual link to that concept, the emotional impact is the inverse of that. In looking into one of these rocks, these flowers, these pervasions, as he describes, and the kind of diffuse surfaces of colour and line and form, which I think we are going to talk a bit more about in a moment, they impact me in such a different way. And again, it comes back to that kind of willingness to let go of vanity in a way through immersing yourself in a sensory experience. They tend to pull you away. Or I can only really speak for myself here. They pull me away from my anxieties, from my sort of cognitive worries. I cease to worry about the kind of the practicalities of my life. Finance, childcare, professional advancement, the things that I have to do in a day. They start to kind of fade away. The more time I spend with one of these paintings, because they are these and I want to say distilled, but in fact they're dilute in a way, they're not concentrating something. Instead, they're allowing the superfluous to be removed and bringing it down...

Joshua: Flatten the wave, let's say.

Malcolm: Yeah, there's this kind of flattening of formal structures, whether they be petals or porous surfaces of a limestone rock, they blur around the edges quite literally. We look at the painting of petals.

Joshua: Yeah, I think it's something to do with our scope. If you have a bigger vision, those high dynamic range becomes new. That's why I think the flat surface and the artist trying to do or use his energy, he was ahead of us, to find a method which is hidden on the surface. Immediately you won't feel it, you feel your engagement with the work, rather than thinking about the artist's effort. But because I was talking to the artist, I was asking him how you achieve such effect? And he said it's anti entropy in this way, because he was anxious in terms of his own artistic invention.

Calvin: Well, the whole process Liu Guofu has been going through is about risk taking. Every brushstroke could be a risk-taking approach, and it is also a lot of uncertainties on the canvas that the artists has to tackle, and eventually he found the balance, and this artist is really an interesting guy, especially working so closely with him. And he would never finish a painting, he said, until the point where we must have the painting delivered to London, we have to stop. But then he can continue to deconstruct and reconstruct and then to deliver this, I think the whole process, I think the artist is also trying to challenge himself and it's also a process of life that's very meditative to break through all these risks and uncertainty. And it creates such chaotic beauty that attracts so many different viewers, no matter you're from which backgrounds. I remember in the exhibitions that we organised in the gallery or recently in Masterpiece, and a lot of viewers or collectors, they haven't heard of Liu Guofu's name, but then they were attracted by the painting. And they also found the type of internal connection when they stood in front of the painting. I found at this point, it is the value, the universal value that the artist is actually sharing with the world. That's very contemporary, because sometimes this artist is a very subtle person. He tried to deliver his emotions, no matter anger, anxiety, happiness. All these emotions actually convert into brush strokes in a painting. And this is also some kind of like status quo of how Chinese people are living nowadays, they try not to really express too expressive, but they try to be subtly to deliver their emotions. So that's why I found, on one hand, that this is very unique. This abstract painting could be very universal in terms of aesthetic appreciation, but at the same time, it's also something that really relates to Liu Guofu's own cultural background.

Joshua: I think Guofu's images suggest that they have huge capacity. It's organic in a way because you can see it's growing, but you can't describe it, whether it's heavily influenced by Western art or heavily influenced by Chinese art. It's heavily influenced by whole art, let's say by both, because we now learn everything. We are not constrained by a specific timeline.

Calvin: How about how you both appreciate or interpret the Asian or Chinese aesthetic qualities through Liu Guofu's art in a more like historical or cultural context, using Liu Guofu's painting or his brushstrokes and the way he tried to project or suggest an image actually influenced by Chinese Asian paintings?

Malcolm: For me, I don't see Chineseness in Liu Guofu's work. I'm aware of it. I'm aware of it because I know the artist biography, encountering it in your gallery in St. James and in your stand at Masterpiece, Calvin. It feels like there's a context that tells me this is there. And I suppose in some of them with the title 'Rock' and then some of the images that have these kind of the 'yin shi' (形式) the kind of scholars rock, these forms, they have an implication attached to them. But no, they don't read to me. They don't immediately have a kind of legibility as Chineseness. There's a conceptual richness underneath there, and we've discussed at length about this kind of subtle feeling. And I think I suppose perhaps there's a distinctive I wouldn't want to say Chinese approach or Asian approach.

I say a distinctive Liu Guofu take on responding to the borders of abstraction and, as Joshua has said, a kind of a particular take on what postmodernism can do. And I appreciate it can be quite an overly intellectualised term that can turn people off sometimes. But fundamentally, I think Joshua put it so well in saying this is asking, not telling, and this is prompting us to ask questions. There's an openness to how we respond to these works, which I think is facilitated by the way that Liu Guofu very delicately treads that line between these historical precedents that we've been hearing about these rich concepts that he's developed over his career. But no, to answer your question very directly, Calvin, I don't experience him as a kind of fundamentally Asian artist. And I think actually at the core of that is maybe my own sort of habitual response to kind of look for the brushstroke and to look for things having spent several years in the art market looking at more traditional paintings, that kind of legibility of the mark and that ability to trace and recreate the process of construction. Perhaps it's because I'm less familiar with oil, but certainly I can't do that so readily in Liu Guofu's painting. And I think that in a sense is a very different take. I think maybe Joshua can say much more about where this sits in a kind of a lineage of Asian modernism, or perhaps he has another take, another response to Calvin's prompt.

Joshua: I think Malcolm suggests something very well. I very much appreciate. Yes, we can say there's not immediate or apparent Chineseness into it because in my opinion it's because he didn't specifically copy any iconography. But he grasped the essence of Chinese aesthetics. But that aesthetics we can use a phenomenon logical term saying we understand the intention behind image making and the ancient

Chinese people already raised it, but it's not specifically Chinese, it's universal. It's just later on there are specific representation projects those ideas, and we think it's Chinese, but fundamentally we think we understand what they are that Guofu had been thinking deeply. He reinvented this because he didn't want to copy. And also that kind of copying, or studying the method or patterns, specifically the issues those Chinese are done because you can see repetitions all the time, especially in the late official recolonised Si Wang let's say, those kind of art. I'm not saying they are bad, it's just saying fundamentally, systematically, they do not have too much constructive suggestions. But in order to make something new, you need to go back to the very origin of thinking about it. Recently I've been reading Zhu Qingsheng's work. He's writing about different systems. I think he suggested that the Chinese way and the Western way, they kind of split into separate ways in the 13th century, Giotto and Nizan, they're both spread in certain way. Nizan focused on calligraphy or 'Shufa' (書法) and Giotto more of representational image. But before that, it's still very much not distinctive, it's still universal. So in terms of gene, let's talk about it. Like a gene, we have it. Some of the genes are not apparent, but they are still there. But now we try to make them reserve again. Then Guofu's one we can see from because I'm Chinese, I'm embedded with this cultural burden or inertia so I can see the Chineseness there. But I think it's not necessary for Westerners to think, I have to understand in a Chinese way. No, we are thinking it's very much a universal feeling of it. Everyone can comprehend or get something or the energy, from the surface. And that's how I think Guofu in a way achieved what he wants to do. Something with great capacity and also with a very simplistic presentation for you, for audience to get into this vastness.

Calvin: To end this webinar I want to quote Liu GuoFu's saying 'Each person's brush strokes the traces they leave in the world'. Malcolm McNeil, Joshua Chinnery. Thank you

劉國夫的「淡」之美學 學術研討會

《淡之頌》

主持人：

許劍龍先生

嘉賓：

莫友柯博士、
龔之允博士



許：歡迎來到我們的網絡研討會。今天討論的主題是最新的劉國夫個展「淡之頌」，探索隱秘的抽象繪畫之旅。國夫是一位來自南京的藝術家。今天我非常榮幸能夠邀請到兩位資深的中國藝術史家：來自倫敦大學亞非學院的莫友柯博士，他是該學院研究生課程主管及藝術教育資深講師。莫友柯博士與世界一流的美術館和機構，如維多利亞和阿爾伯特美術館、佳士得拍賣行等長期合作。莫友柯博士及其亞非學院團隊，在過去的兩年中，對我們在倫敦的中國當代藝術和水墨展覽給予了學術支持。另一位與會者是來自英國獨角獸出版集團的學術編輯龔之允博士。他也是一位資深的中國當代藝術和中國風研究專家。他曾在上海師範大學和英國薩塞克斯大學藝術史系擔任講師。他的專著《圖像與範式：早期中西繪畫交流史，1514-1885》是首部以交流史為視角的藝術通史專著。之允，藝術家建議其最新個展名為「淡之頌」，請問你怎麼看或理解這個主題呢？

龔：劍龍，非常感謝你的介紹。不僅是題目，藝術家本人也引發了我很多思考。在此之前，我看了他的作品，就產生了一種無以名狀的感覺。我可以感受到一種妙不可言的意境。他的繪畫蘊含了很深的中國思想，特別是文人畫的內涵，外師造化、中得心源，探索了個性與共性的關係。在中華文化觀念中，我們並不希望把自然與人為的文化進行二元對立，而是推崇天人合一的理念。當我觀賞國夫的畫作時，我可以感受到，他在調合自然與人文兩個場域。西方在18世紀之後的深入研究了這兩個對立的場域。後來我和藝術家進行了深入交流，他建議使用法國漢學家和哲學家朱利安探討中國美學的知名著作《淡之頌》作為其展覽題目。我認為朱利安他提煉出了中華文明的內核，而劉國夫的視覺語言集中體現了這樣的感覺，為我們理解和討論他的藝術給出了議題。當然「淡之頌」並不只是中國思想所獨有，它也是普世的。只不過，隨着社會的發展，特別是在工業文明時代，這樣的觀念被唯物主義和進步主義所遮掩，但如今我們來到了21世紀，世界的聯繫越發緊密，進一步促進了全球化。這樣的思維才能夠被來自不同文化和國家的社區群體所接受。因此我認為國夫的藝術表現和主題建議，能夠很好地引導我們瞭解他的藝術創新。國夫強調說，他想向觀眾和收藏家表達這樣的觀點：他致力於研究怎麼畫，而不是畫甚麼。基於這樣的觀點，我們作為觀眾，可以思考他的畫法內涵，而不是他畫的表象在我試圖理解他的作品時，我也是這麼想的。特別是他用了甚麼樣的方法能在畫面上向我們傳遞一種深入靈魂的情感。我也希望能找到方法來闡釋。儘管如此，我希望喜歡國夫作品的觀眾不用局限在我的觀點來理解。我只是給出了方便理解的提示，並不希望用狹隘的視野來限制大家的思維。



許：我也覺得「淡」這個字非常有意思，特別是自2012年與國夫合作以來，我有更深刻的感受。我還記得2011年我在北京、上海和南京看到國夫的作品。我覺得「淡」這個詞意味深長，確切地闡釋了國夫畫作中所傳達出來的感官和美學涵養。我還記得夏可君博士曾說國夫的畫作是「光」與「氣」的彌散。我們中國人總是會討論「氣」，實際上指的是能量，像光與氣結合的「蘊」。當光照射時，氣幫助了光彌散在國夫作品的每個角落還有色彩，國夫採用了經典的藍灰色，讓人感到寧靜致遠，同時又變化豐富。特別是最近兩年，我看到國夫作品的演變，從非常微妙的筆法，發展到現在的非常豐富的筆觸。我特別想和大家討論和分享，然後想知道你們是如何看待「淡」和國夫的作品。

莫：謝謝劍龍，我覺得國夫的作品太神妙了。雖然我和這些畫作只是有短暫的接觸，但視覺體驗讓我難忘。這些畫作非常扣人心弦。兩位評論，引發了我的深思。我注意到你們都不約而同地關注到了畫作所散發出來的感染力。有一種東西吸引着你們，讓你不得不關注，非常有感染力和影響力。這種感覺不是一下子就能說得清的，而且畫作也不能用舊有範式或具體形式來膚淺解釋。在他最近的系列《空寒》和《花》中，我們可看出一些特徵。這些都是顯而易見的意象。我們之所以會知道這些形象是甚麼，是因為藝術家告訴了我們，我們聽到了作者權威的聲音說，這是花，但我們回應的方式卻非常不同，不同於其他當代藝術家，譬如用超寫實水墨繪制賞石的劉丹。國夫的作品有非常深層次的獨到之處，我認為這既與藝術媒介，也和藝術家多愁善感有關。回到藝術家自己給展覽起的主題，我從一開始，就產生強烈的興趣想要知道。這竟然來源於一位法國漢學家的論著，這讓我感到非常震撼，因為這讓我想起了18和19世紀法國學者對中國的研究。簡要地說，在我準備此次討論，並且研讀關於藝術家背景材料的時候，我並未料到這是對18世紀經驗主義的回應。《淡之頌》說的不是對要超越科學視學，而是我們仔細觀看，並且相信我們瞭解了某些事物，因為我們能夠感知他們，亦要相信我們的視覺。我是在準備這次研討過程中，進一步產生了一種求知慾，希望閱讀更古老的文獻。實際上，《淡之頌》提到的東西與我學習中華文化的初心一致。我再次研讀了《道德經》，特別是第35章，裡面談到了不可言說的「道」也就是「淡」，讓我豁然開朗。這本書的翻譯也非常具有挑戰性，從法語到中文，從中文到英文。「淡」這一主題確實與這場讓人震撼的畫展非常切合的，並且賦予了它諸多不同的內涵，我們可以進行持續不斷的討論。當然你可以到3812畫廊網站，或者畫廊現場觀賞近距離畫作，但是「淡」、稀釋或者彌散，描述的是一種根性，是一種對集中濃度的削減。劉國夫作品所展示的狀態大概介於稀釋與蒸餾淨化之間。我說得有點繞，慚愧不如之允和劍龍說得那麼精辟，但確實畫作有



這種感染力。此外，當我看到展覽的題目時，確實讓人感到驚訝，為甚麼是「淡」？是當真的嗎？或者確實是需要我們關注的議題。當你面對它時，確實能被深深吸引。你能感到畫作的色彩和光影有一種微妙的極簡處理，但仔細想又極為複雜，不論國夫繪制形象是否起源於賞石、花卉、山水，他都能把形象轉化成這樣。

與以往沉浸繪畫場域不同的是，他的繪畫因為是油畫的緣故，有一種微妙的空間感。除了光影、形狀和體積，還有質感。因此對我來說，這就是我們在面對畫作時體會到的感染力。「淡之頌」的主題一開始讓我驚訝，然後想了想，也許和道家思想有關。現在我要重新思考，因為藝術家所思考的問題其實非常深入複雜，是非常內在的觀念。儘管如此，淡除了可以指我們沉浸式的觀感，也可以指那個吸引我們的純粹空間。我們現在會議的背景用了國夫三個系列圖像。雖然這三個系列傳遞了不同的情感，但我們都能沉浸其中，引發我們深思，讓我們流連忘返。這就是我的回應，我想這與「淡化」相呼應，讓你能夠沉浸在一個稀釋的空間內。這讓我感到引人入勝，在畫家的作品中感受平寧。

許：關於「淡」，我想再補充一點。對我來說，這更是藝術家自身的精神狀態，同時也從我們傳統中繼承而來的深層美學，之允提到了完整性。此刻，我覺得國夫也許也尊崇這樣的精神，並且以身作則，把他的情感和人文關懷注入到了畫作中。這也是為甚麼我能感知畫作包含的情感，無論筆觸多麼強烈或者多麼碎片化，「淡」的感覺與藝術家如影隨形。這就是藝術家的創造力，智慧與高雅並存。這是一種雋永的藝術品味。這就是我的感受。不過當我們見到藝術家的時候，看見他的筆觸非常有張力、碎片化。之允，我知道你對這樣的筆觸和畫面質感還有不同的解讀。你引用了「熵」的概念，對吧？你怎麼想到採用這個術語的呢？

龔：我在思考術語的時候，有多重考慮，到底如何才能歸納國夫看上去簡單，實際又體現大智慧的視覺表現。因為當我觀賞他的圖像和色彩場域的時候，我感覺很平靜，但畫面並不是靜止的，它在動。視覺上，你能感受到緩慢的動態。這非常像達文西在思考水流的時候進行繪制的情況，他試圖讓動態慢下來，以便觀察動態。我想，這必定是和能量，或者我們思考宇宙運轉規律有關。然後我就開始從源頭思考，宇宙如何運轉。熵，我感覺是一個非常適合術語，來闡釋作為思想者的藝術家如何吸收各種資訊，然後進入大腦進行思考。他吸納了各種可能性之後，又用一種淡然的方式來向我們展示他的選擇，思維通過雙手的動作，展示出來。這一過程，在我

看來是一種負熵的效果，因為熵代表着秩序。為了維持秩序，讓我們自身感覺舒適，我們必須做些事情。儘管作為觀眾的我們感覺國夫的作品很平靜，但我可以感受到他的艱辛，在當代藝術中尋找新的形式。有那麼多才智出眾的藝術家都在努力尋找一種新的體現我們生活真理的方式。這是非常艱難的，除了要打破陳規，還要樹立有建設性的新規則——破而後立。因此我認為藝術家做的正是負熵前行的工作。此外，我想這一術語也能增強參與感，特別是與西方觀眾。科學是大部分中國與西方知識分子都認同的事物，特別是在20世紀初，中國在重塑國家和民族身份的時候。新文化運動者認為科學非常重要。我們理解科學，並不同於只局限在科學領域，而是用科學來輔助我們認知人文精神。這點尤為重要。我認為熵這一概念不只是物理學上的闡述，而有更廣泛的意義。它幫助我們用有機的或者從生物學更廣闊的角度來認知世界。我想這是我選擇這一概念來闡釋國夫藝術的原有。不僅能幫助我們理解，同時也確實恰如其分地揭示其藝術特點，用更具說服力的當代視角來理解。

許： 之允，你是否比較過「淡」和「熵」？它們似乎是不同的概念。他們在劉國夫的作品中，是互相矛盾的還是相輔相成的呢？

龔： 我認為兩者是相輔相成的，而不是爭鋒相對的。中國社會或中國知識界之所以有「淡」的特質，是因為我們承認熵的存在。確實有一種出乎我們控制的力量。與此同時，儘管有諸多不和諧的因素存在，我們仍試圖維護一種和諧的關係。我們會理解事物本身，而外部的世界並不完全受你主觀意志掌控。但你仍可把自身置於兩者之間，主、客觀世界中，保持樂觀，或者不感到急躁。這種感覺在國夫的畫作中體現明顯。當你觀賞國夫畫作時，你自然就會平靜下來，這並不是因為外部世界，或者我們所處的都市自身平靜了下來。它們仍然按照自己的軌道運轉。作為個體的我們相對所處的社會來說，也許微不足道。如果我今天逝去，世界照樣運轉，我沒有那麼重要。儘管如此，我認為承認這一點，並試圖理解生活的本質，因為你已經認識到了世界殘酷的真相，但仍平靜地生活下去。這是生命偉大的意志——負熵，而「淡」是這種意志的體現。當你承認這一點，你會感到平靜，不再有那麼不安，因為你已經知道會發生甚麼。唯一可以做的事情，就是安之若素，用淡然的態度來應對焦慮不安的失序，或者說無意義的資訊。資訊，可以是視覺的，也可以是聽覺的。我想「熵」和「淡」，一旦我們理解了其哲學含義，就會認為他們是互補的。



莫： 之允，我非常喜歡這樣的評論，你非常坦誠地闡釋了「熵」，認為現代社會體系中伴隨「熵」運轉。還有非常坦誠地說，如果我今天逝去，世界照樣運轉。這引發我對熵的思考，並且回歸到國夫的作品上。就我的基本認知，熵是熱力學概念。它指的是在特定系統中的能量，不論這是一個實驗的系統，還是你所描述的城市。無論這個系統是現代文明，或者是指我們所在的整個宇宙。所有這些都朝向着一個穩定的、簡單的方向進行，如你所說，所有一切都變得失序。但我認為，在某種意義上，只有當我們以人類經驗為中心時，當我們以這樣一種想法為中心時，即我們認為分子和事物的同源組合是宇宙有序的原則，這才是無序。是我們主觀規定了秩序。我們以人類活動為中心，以人文主義為中心。雖然這似乎相當令人費解。但請耐心聽我解釋，因為我想回到劍龍的問題，關於熵在哪裡，這種秩序崩潰到最簡單的可能安排與平淡有關，與中文術語中字面意思的稀釋有關，將液體稀釋到一種非常稀的狀態。兩者之間的關係在哪裡呢？再一次，也許是我過度研究了這個話題，追溯到早期的道家文獻，中國古代思想所提出的「混沌」的那種在中國古典哲學中出現的原始混沌。在我單純的理解中，早期道家的思想和熱力學都對混沌有着類似的平行闡釋。從觀念上講，兩者有聯繫，但與藝術家作品的又有怎樣的關係呢？對我來說，在某種層面上，如果我真的嘗試思考熵的含義並將其應用到自己身上，我會感到非常害怕。我發現一切都在向某種方向發展的想法完全讓我大吃一驚，它讓我充滿了恐懼，因為我作為一個人想要繼續我自己的存在的願望是虛妄的。我和我所知道的一切，以及我所能知道和能夠理解的一切，最終都會崩潰成最簡單的分子排列，這種想法是可怕的。或者甚至不是中子、質子和電子的分子，不管是甚麼。我真的分不清這些東西。但是當我們來到劉國夫的畫作面前時，當我們看到那種樸素、那種平淡，確實與那個概念有概念上的聯繫時，情感上的影響卻是相反的。正如他所描述的，在觀察這些岩石中的一塊，這些花朵，這些滲透，以及顏色、線條和形式的那種彌散表面，我想我們可以稍後再談，它們以何種不同的方式影響我。再一次，它回到了那種透過讓自己沉浸在感官體驗中來放棄虛妄的意願。他們傾向讓你超然於世俗。這只是我的感受。國夫的作品讓我遠離焦慮，使我能從認知上的擔憂中解脫出來。我不再擔心我生活中的實際情況。財務、育兒、職業發展，這些都是我每天要做的事情。它們逐漸淡然。這愈發使我想花更多時間來觀賞畫作，因為它們就是這些，我想說淡然，但實際上它們在某種程度上讓人坦然。它們不計較具體的得失，而是讓人寵辱不驚.....

龔：我們也可以說，它讓焦慮的波動變得平靜。

莫：是的，有這種形式結構的扁平化，無論是花瓣還是石灰岩的多孔表面，它們的邊緣做了虛化。我們觀賞花瓣就是這樣。

龔：是的，我認為這與我們觀賞視野有關。如果你有更博大的視野，那些高動態範圍就會變淡然。這就是為甚麼我認為藝術家嘗試用扁平化語言的原因。他領先於我們，找到了一種隱藏在表面下的深層方法。你不會立刻感覺到它，你會感覺到你與作品的互動，而不會即刻覺察藝術家所付出的艱辛。但是我在和藝術家溝通的時候，我問他，你是怎麼達到這樣的效果的？他這樣說是負熵，因為他為藝術創新感到焦慮。

許：劉國夫創作的整個過程就是一場冒險。每一筆都可能是一種冒險的方式，畫布上的不確定性也是藝術家們必須解決的問題，最終他找到了平衡。這位藝術家真的是一位有思想深度的人，尤其是和他合作得如此密切之後，就有更深的體會。而且他說他永遠沒法完成一幅畫。直到他意識到必須把這幅畫送到倫敦，那麼我們必須完成。但接下來他還可以繼續解構和重構，然後繼續創作。我認為整個過程，藝術家也在嘗試挑戰自己，也是充滿冥想的生活過程，以突破所有這些風險和不確定性。它創造了如此失序的美麗，吸引了如此多不同的觀眾，無論你來自哪個背景。記得我們在畫廊或者最近在倫敦巨匠臻藏藝術博覽會舉行展覽時，雖然很多觀眾或者收藏家都沒有聽說過劉國夫的名字，但他們都被畫作所深深吸引。而當他們站在畫作前時，他們也發現了內心精神的共鳴。我由此發現，這就是藝術家真正與世界分享的價值，這是普世的。同時也非常當代，因為這位藝術家有時是一個非常微妙的人。他試圖表達自己的情緒，無論是憤怒、焦慮還是滿足。所有這些情緒實際上都轉化為筆觸，並付諸於畫面上。而這也是對當今中國人生活方式的一種類似身份的引用，他們盡量不去誇張表達，而是盡量微妙地傳遞情感。所以這就是為甚麼我發現，一方面，國夫的藝術是非常獨特的。抽象畫在審美上可能非常普遍，但同時也與劉國夫自身的文化背景息息相關。

龔：我認為國夫的圖像有非常博大的涵義。在某種程度上是有機的，因為你可以看到它在成長，但你無法限定說它是深受西方藝術的影響，還是深受中國藝術的影響。它深受整個藝術體系的影響，無論東西文化，都可以被融入。我們不受具體時代的限制。



許：請問兩位，如果把劉國夫的作品置於歷史或文化語境，如何解析他的繪畫、筆法，和圖像中的亞洲或中國美學審美價值？他的繪畫方法是否受到了中國繪畫的影響？

莫：對我來說，我不認為劉國夫的作品中帶有「中國性」，我能看出來，是因為我透過了解藝術家的生平，還有在劍龍在倫敦聖詹姆士街區的3812畫廊，對此有所瞭解。感覺就像有一個上下文告訴我，這是存在的。我會假設在他的一些作品中，如以《空寒》為名，或一些具有文人石這種表達形式的畫作中，會有這些「中國性」的隱喻。但我實際觀賞畫作時，這些資訊並不突出。它們並沒有直白地傳達中國性。畫面中有豐富的美學觀念，我們已經詳細討論過這種微妙的感覺。而且我想對我來說，國夫的作品並不局限在表現中國或亞洲藝術路徑的獨特之處。我認為劉國夫對抽象的邊界做出了獨特的回應，正如之允所說，這是對後現代主義所能做的一種特殊的回應。我可以理解這是一個過於學術的術語，但有時會讓人望而卻步。但總的來說，我認為之允說得很好，國夫的畫作做的是設問，而不是定義，這促使我們提問。我們對這些作品的反應是開放的，我認為劉國夫非常巧妙地與這些歷史先例劃清界限。我們瞭解到他在職業生涯中一直致力於豐富藝術觀念，而不希望被特定範式所束縛。但是，不，要非常直接地回答你的問題，劍龍，我不認為他從根本上應被標籤為亞洲藝術家。而且我認為實際上這可能是我自己對尋找筆觸的習慣性反應。我長期在藝術市場接觸更傳統的繪畫，這讓我產生了標籤、追蹤和歸類藝術品的敏感性。或許是因為我對油畫不太熟悉，但在劉國夫的畫中，我肯定無法輕易給出辨識標籤。我想，在某種意義上，這是一種不同尋常的看法。我想也許之允可以更詳細地說明國夫藝術在某種亞洲現代主義的譜系中所處的位置，或者他可能有另一種看法，回應劍龍的問題。

龔：我覺得友柯提出了非常好的觀點。我深以為然。是的，我們可以說它沒有直接或明顯的中國性，因為在我看來，這是因為國夫沒有專門複製任何圖像。但他抓住了中國美學的精髓。這種美學我們可以用現象學術語來理解。我們追溯的是圖像製作背後的意圖，並且中國古代已經給出了答案，但這並非中國所專有，它是普世的。只是後來這些美學觀念，以具體範式呈現，以至於我們認為它是中國的。但從根本上，我們認為國夫思考的是，繪畫的初心。他再次發現和發明了繪畫，因為他不想複製。還有那種臨摹，或者研究方法或模式，正是中國藝術現代化遇到的突出問題。因為你總是可以看到重複，尤其是清王朝所推崇的四王，就是摹古。我不是說

他們不好，只是從根本上說，他們沒有太多有基礎、有系統、有建設性的貢獻。但是為了創造新的東西，你需要回溯本源。最近一直在看朱青生教授的文章。他討論了中西藝術的不同體系。他認為中國和西方藝術，到了13世紀才發展出非常不同的方向，代表性人物是喬托和倪瓚，它們都以某種方式傳播開去。倪瓚專注於繪畫的書法，而喬托則更多地關注意象。但在此之前，兩個體系沒有甚麼特別的不同，其理念都是普世的。我們可以用基因學來討論。就如同我們都有基因。有些基因是隱性的，但它們依然存在。只不過現在我們再次把隱性的變得顯性。我們可以感受到國夫的藝術基因，因為我是中國人，我被這種文化包袱或慣性所影響，所以我可以看到他藝術中的中國性。但是我覺得西方人沒必要一定要用中國的方式去理解。不，我們認為他的藝術是放諸四海皆可的。每個人都可以從繪畫表面感知或獲得其蘊含的能量。這就是我認為國夫在某種程度上實現了他想做的。內涵豐富有機，但他為你提供了看似非常簡單的視覺場域，讓觀眾能融入廣闊的空間。

許： 我想引用國夫的話來為此次研討會進行總結：「每個人的筆觸都是他們在世界上留下的痕跡」。感謝莫友柯和龔之允的與會。



Liu Guofu

Liu Guofu was born in 1964 in Nanjing, and graduated from the Oil Painting Department of the Nanjing University of Arts in 1985. He currently lives and works in Nanjing. His artworks meld motions of light with air. While 'light' brings out its depth, 'air' helps disperse the 'light' to every corner of the work. His use of his symbolic blue-greyish colour is fundamental to his works. Up close, the brushstrokes are chaotic and fragmented, yet from a distance the brushstrokes gather to form a poetic tranquillity.

Liu Guofu's oil paintings have been exhibited in many major cities. Highlights include a group exhibition in Kunstraum Villa Friede, Bonn, Germany in 2014, a solo show in 2011 that toured the Jiangsu Provincial Art Museum, Nanjing, Today Art Museum, Beijing, and the Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai; In the same year, he also participated in the Parallel Exhibition at the 54th Venice Biennale. In 2016, Liu Guofu was honoured by renowned French brand Martell as Martell Artist of the Year in Hong Kong. He was commissioned by MGM Cotai to create a large-formatted painting for the MGM Cotai Chairman's Collection which will be permanently displayed in Macau. His paintings were collected by Shanghai Art Museum in Shanghai, Jiangsu Provincial Art Museum in Nanjing and Zhuzhong Museum of Art in Beijing.

Dr. Xia Kejun, acclaimed philosopher and art critic, once described Liu Guofu's oil paintings as a magical spectacle: 'Among Chinese contemporary oil painters, I have yet to see a single one who is so richly imbued with the dejected and pessimistic qualities of modernity, or can convey the lofty desolation of Shan Shui landscape painting with such clear form and spiritual power. This is truly an "otherworldly landscape", the most magical spectacle of the soul.'

劉國夫

劉國夫，1964年生於南京，1985年畢業於南京藝術學院油畫專業，現工作及生活於南京。

他的作品中，光感與氣感充分融合，「光」給畫面帶來了內在的深度，而「氣」則把光彌散到畫面的每一個部分。他運用美妙的藍灰色去構成畫面的基調，其畫筆下的作品氣象蒼茫。從近處看，筆觸凌亂且破碎；從遠處看，筆觸經過疊加形成後的效果卻是虛靜而通透的。

劉國夫曾在多間美術館舉行個展，包括上海美術館（上海）、今日美術館（北京）及江蘇省美術館（南京），並參與過許多世界各地的學術群展，其作品並廣獲著名私人機構及企業收藏，包括美高梅主席典藏（澳門）、上海美術館及江蘇省美術館等。劉國夫於2016年被法國知名干邑白蘭地品牌馬爹利選為「香港馬爹利非凡藝術人物」。

著名中國哲學家、藝評家夏可君曾如此形容劉國夫的油畫作品：「在中國當代油畫家之中，我還沒有看到誰如此具有現代性憂鬱與悲情的氣質，能夠把一種深沉的孤獨（氣氛）與一種執著的尋覓（光芒）內在結合起來，把古代山水畫至高的荒寒之境以如此明確的形式與精神的強度表現出來。是的，這是『異景』，是靈魂最為奇異的景象。」

Solo Exhibitions

- 2022 *In Praise of Blandness: Liu Guofu Solo Exhibition*, 3812 Gallery, London
- 2021 *In Praise of Blandness: Liu Guofu Solo Exhibition*, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2018 *Vibrating Double Shadows: Liu Guofu Solo Exhibition*, 3812 Gallery, London
- 2016 *Phantom Brushstrokes: Liu Guofu Solo Exhibition*, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2015 *Painting Salon of Liu Guofu*, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2011 *Fantastic Scenery: Liu Guofu Solo Exhibition*, Touring Exhibition, Today Art Museum, Beijing/ Jiangsu Provincial Art Museum, Jiangsu/ Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2022 *Spirit and Landscape*, 3812 Gallery, London
Masterpiece London Art Fair, 3812 Gallery, London
Blessings, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2021 *Awakening' MGM Chairman's Collection Exhibition*, MGM, Macau
- 2020 *RECONNECT: The Summer Exhibition 2020*, 3812 Gallery, London & Hong Kong
- 2019 *Mind-Scape V: Summer Group Exhibition*, 3812 Gallery, London
3812 Gallery Artists Group Exhibition, INK NOW Taipei Art Expo, Expo Dome, Taipei Expo Park, Taipei
- 2018 *Pulse/Thread: 3812 Gallery Artists Group Exhibition*, 2018 ART TAIPEI, Taipei Convention Centre, Taipei
- 2017 *Summer Show 2017*, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
Elements - Wang Jieyin and Liu Guofu Joint Solo Exhibition, 2017 ART TAIPEI, Taipei Convention Centre, Taipei
- 2016 *3812 Gallery Artists Group Exhibition*, Fine Art Asia 2016, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong
Mind-Scape III: 3812 Gallery Artists Group Exhibition, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2015 *Mind-Scape II: 3812 Gallery Artists Group Exhibition*, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
Space Matter, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong

- 2014 *3812 Gallery Artists Group Exhibition*, Fine Art Asia 2015, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong
Empty Cold – Infra-mince of Snow-scape, SOKA Art Center, Beijing
Social Landscape, Sichuan Fine Art Institute, Chengdu
The heavy footprints – The exhibition of Nanjing International Art Festival, Nanjing International Art Festival, Nanjing
Dialogue 5:5: Chinese and German Artists' Group Exhibition, Kunstraum Villa Friede, Bonn
Chinese Artists in St.Urban – A Passage to the Alps #1, Art-St-Urban Modern Art, Lucerne
- 2013 *Forms of the Formless – Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Art*, Sishang Art Museum, Beijing
YWSZ: The Jiangsu Blank to Blank – Inframince Exhibition II, Soka Art Center, Beijing
Contemporary Art Study Exhibition, Zhejiang Art Museum, Hangzhou
Moving Beyond, Z-art Center, Shanghai
Forms of the Formless - Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Art, Hubei Art Museum, Wuhan
Moving Beyond: Painting in China, 2013, Summer Hall, Edinburgh
Mind-Scape: 3812 Gallery Artists Group Exhibition, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong

Public / Corporate Collections

MGM Cotai Chairman's Collection (Macau), Shanghai Art Museum (Shanghai), Jiangsu Provincial Art Museum (Nanjing), Zhuzhong Museum of Art (Beijing)

個展

- 2022 「淡之頌 — 劉國夫作品展」, 3812 畫廊, 倫敦
- 2021 「淡之頌 — 劉國夫作品展」, 3812 畫廊, 香港
- 2018 「顫動的重影 — 劉國夫個展」, 3812 畫廊, 倫敦
- 2016 「虛筆 — 劉國夫個展」, 3812 畫廊, 香港
- 2015 「劉國夫繪畫沙龍」, 3812 畫廊, 香港
- 2011 「異景 — 劉國夫個人作品展」, 巡迴展覽, 今日美術館, 北京 / 江蘇省美術館, 江蘇 / 上海美術館, 上海
- 2013 「沉實的足跡 — 南京國際美術展特邀展」, 南京國際美術展, 南京
「對話 5:5 — 中德藝術家聯展」, 德國波恩當代藝術館, 波恩
「共振計畫 — 瑞士2014 無形之形: 中國當代抽象藝術展」, 聖·烏爾班當代藝術博物館, 琉森
- 「中德文化年“無形之形” — 中國當代藝術展」, 寺上美術館, 北京
「對白 — 虛薄藝術第二回展」, 索卡藝術中心, 北京
「應無所住·江蘇當代藝術研究展」, 浙江美術館, 杭州
「逾越」, 張江美術館, 上海
「中德文化年“無形之形” — 中國當代藝術展」, 湖北美術館, 武漢
「逾越 — 中國繪畫2013」, 夏宮, 愛丁堡
「心·景 — 藝術家聯展」, 3812 畫廊, 香港

主要聯展

- 2022 「精神與風景」, 3812畫廊, 倫敦
「倫敦巨匠臻藏藝術博覽會」, 3812畫廊, 倫敦
「萬象萌生」, 3812畫廊, 香港
- 2021 「甦醒」美高梅主席典藏特展, 美高梅, 澳門
- 2020 「重新連線」夏季特展, 3812畫廊, 倫敦及香港
- 2019 「心·景 五: 夏季藝術家聯展」, 3812 畫廊, 倫敦
「3812 畫廊藝術家聯展」, 水墨現場台北展博會, 台北花博公園爭艷館, 台北
- 2018 「脈·絡 —— 藝術家聯展」, 2018台北國際藝術博覽會, 台北世貿展覽館, 台北
- 2017 「夏季展覽 2017」, 藝術家聯展, 3812 畫廊, 香港
「元素—王劼音與劉國夫雙個展」, 2017台北國際藝術博覽會, 台北世貿展覽館, 台北
- 2016 「3812畫廊藝術家聯展」, 典亞藝博2016, 香港會議展覽中心, 香港
「心·景 三: 3812畫廊藝術家聯展」, 3812 畫廊, 香港
- 2015 「心·景 二: 3812畫廊藝術家聯展」, 3812 畫廊, 香港
「空間之奧」, 3812 畫廊, 香港
「3812畫廊藝術家聯展」, 典亞藝博 2015, 香港會議展覽中心, 香港
- 2014 「空寒 — 自然的虛托邦」, 索卡藝術中心, 北京
「社會風景 — 中國當代繪畫中的風景敘事」, 四川美術學院當代藝術研究所, 成都

公共 / 企業收藏

澳門美獅美高梅主席典藏(澳門)、上海美術館(上海)、江蘇省美術館(江蘇)、北京築中美術館(北京)



About 3812 Gallery

With gallery spaces in the heart of Hong Kong and London, 3812 has both Europe and China written into its DNA. It represents Hsiao Chin, one of the major postwar painters whose work can be found in M+ and New York's Metropolitan and who lived in Milan for 40 years and some important ink artists, including Raymond Fung from Hong Kong, whose works are in The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and Hong Kong Palace Museum as well as Nanjing based painter Liu Guofu, whose meticulous works are in Macau's MGM Chairman's Collection and Shanghai Art Museum; and it stages 'fascinating' exhibitions (to quote Colin Gleadell, the art market expert) such as 'Looking East: St Ives Artists and Buddhism' - exploring the debt of British art to Asian philosophy.

Co-founded by Calvin Hui and Mark Peaker, 3812 represents and exhibits both modern and contemporary Chinese and British artists, fostering dialogues between them. The gallery regularly places their work in major public and private collections - and has participated in important art fairs such as Masterpiece. 3812 continues to develop its vision through representing contemporary artists of various genres such as the much-acclaimed Beijing-based Zhao Zhao, the Artist of the Year Award of Art China (AAC) in 2019, whose works were exhibited extensively, including in New York's MoMA PS1 and his one person show at the Long Museum in Shanghai in 2022 and the sensuous porcelains of Li Hongwei, collected by the Art Institute of Chicago and the British Museum among many other museums.

Our Name

People often ask what 3812 means? The name was born in 2010 in the French ski resort of Chamonix when founders Calvin Hui and Mark Peaker joined friends to ski the infamous La Vallée Blanche off-piste run. La Vallée Blanche route starts atop the Aiguille du Midi where the treacherous 'arête' ridge (3,812m) must be navigated. The descent that day, under the clear blue skies and towering peaks of Mont Blanc, as we carved our turns in the white powder of La Mer de Glace inspired our passion and imagination. From this inspiration and in homage to the challenges overcome, our name was decided, and 3812 Gallery was born.

關於 3812 畫廊

3812 畫廊由許劍龍和 Mark Peaker 於 2011 年在香港創立，並於 2018 年拓展至英國倫敦聖詹姆斯萊德區。2021 年，於香港中環雲咸街再開設另一全新畫廊空間。

3812 是一個擁有中英文化基因的品牌，分別於香港和倫敦的黃金地段開設畫廊。從 2016 年開始，3812 代理旅居米蘭逾 40 年的戰後華人抽象藝術大師蕭勤，其畫作可見於全球各大博物館，包括香港 M+ 及紐約大都會藝術博物館等；3812 亦與多位水墨藝術家合作，包括香港的馮永基，其作品被美國舊金山亞洲藝術博物館及香港故宮文化博物館等收藏；而南京藝術家劉國夫細膩獨特的油畫廣被重要私人及企業收藏，包括澳門美高梅主席典藏及上海美術館等。資深藝術市場作者 Colin Gleadell 曾稱讚 3812 主辦的藝術展覽獨具匠心，如「放眼東方：聖艾夫斯藝術家與佛教」，此展為探討東方哲學對英國現代藝術發展的影響與關連提供了一個新視覺。

3812 聚焦代理現當代中國和英國藝術家，促進藝術文化的對話及交流。畫廊曾發表「東方根性·當代表現」的文化理念，致力推廣其藝術家的作品給公共及私人收藏，同時亦參與重要的藝博會，如倫敦巨匠臻藏藝術博覽會。並將透過與來自不同領域的當代藝術家合作，持續地實踐其策展與文化視野，如榮獲 2019 年 AAC 藝術中國年度藝術家大獎、駐北京藝術家趙趙，其作品曾於世界各地展出，包括紐約現代藝術博物館 PS1，並於 2022 年在上海龍美術館舉行其大型個展；以及蜚聲國際的當代陶藝大師李鴻章，其作品被芝加哥藝術博物館及大英博物館等國際級美術館收藏。

3812 的由來

人們經常問 3812 有何含義？2010 年，畫廊創辦人許劍龍和 Mark Peaker 與友人到法國莎慕尼 (Chamonix) 著名滑雪勝地白色山谷 (La Vallée Blanche) 旅遊，並挑戰難度，在正規跑道外滑雪。我們從南針峰 (Aiguille Du Midi) 頂上開始，雪山海拔 3812 米高，危機四伏。那天，在晴朗的藍天及巍峨的白朗峰 (Mont Blanc) 上，我們在茫茫白雪的冰川之海自由穿梭，激情及想像力就此迸發。這瞬間的靈感啟發我們把畫廊命名為 3812 畫廊。



London 倫敦

Opening Hours 開放時間
Monday - Friday 10:00am - 6:30pm

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3812 畫廊

Hong Kong 香港

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