

Peng Wei

Artist Statement and Biography

Artist Statement

The scrolls and album leaves of ancient Chinese landscape paintings provide steady inspiration and the structure for *Letters From A Distance*. They are not landscapes paintings; they are painting installations on scrolls and album leaves. Through paintings and printed materials, I show the ambiguous and intersecting visual relationships between representation and replication.

This series hopes to express a few ideas.

A: In confronting traditional landscape painting, I don't simply look at a few pictures by great masters. I see the whole piece as a material object and a total work of art, which includes the wrapping, the cover, the silk ties, the jade pin, and the box for the painting. Of course, this total work of art also includes the inscriptions. These masterworks are not simply paintings, because they are entirely perfect hand-crafted pieces. When the ancients painted, viewed and mounted paintings, my entire process was governed by a balanced aesthetic. The depiction of the myriad changes of the landscape, the addition of inscriptions, and the need to personally unroll the scroll means that each piece is a classic handmade text. These masterworks have distant links to ancient Roman painted scrolls and prayer books from the Middle Ages, in that they are all handmade books composed of both image and text. Therefore, I am not painting traditional landscapes; I am "painting and making" scrolls and album leaves according to ancient patterns and my own sensibilities, which is a subtle and delightful twist on the originals.

B: Classic landscape paintings attempt to command nature; my paintings "command" exquisite scrolls and album leaves, but nature is only one part of the work. Because the scrolls or album leaf is painted by hand, these paintings are easily misread as ancient landscape paintings. This misreading transposes traditional landscape paintings and modern conceptual art, but this transposition is something I have produced, something I anticipated, and something that gives my work a double meaning.

C: Of course, these games I play with painting come entirely from modern printed books. I observed painting (classical) and literature (inscriptions), and then I used the private correspondence of Western literary masters to "distort" the inscriptions, and even titles, of classic landscape paintings. As a result, the concept of the West has entered into Chinese landscape texts. Even as I appropriated classical painted images, the letters and poems of Western artists replaced the inscription. Paintings and inscriptions were part of an interesting conversational game between ancient scholars. In my turn, I have started a dialogue between the letters of Western scholars and the paintings of Chinese literati, but they also converse with a modern audience.

D: After I finish every painting, I use modern digital technologies to replicate the work, creating a copy. The replicas are the same dimensions as the works, and are placed together with the originals.

E: On a deeper level, I attempt to separate myself from tradition using the most traditional means possible, such that traditional texts and contemporary ideas become one on the page. This series shows the irreplaceability and persistence of tradition, while also breaking with tradition. Through nearly imperceptible subversion, I carefully protect tradition's integrity.

F: The scrolls, album leaves, and boxes that I have replicated and displayed as an installation are offerings to the painted classics that have lasted for centuries yet retained their power. They are offerings to the poems and letters of Chinese and Western writers and mementos of pieces that I have sold and will never see again. These mementos are also expressions of gratitude for modern printing technologies; this modern art of replication has provided the inspiration, basis, and vehicle for my work. In my slow journey through many books, I discovered that Jean-Claude Carrière was right. "The past never stops surprising; it is more titan than the present, more perhaps even than the future."

Artist Biography

Peng Wei **China**

b. 1974, Chengdu, China

Received her Bachelor's and Master's Degree from Nankai University in Philosophy and Oriental Art. From 2000 to 2006, she served as editor of ART Magazine in Beijing. Currently, she works as a professional artist affiliated with the Beijing Fine Art Academy.

Her works have been collected by the National Art Museum of China, the Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the Guangdong Art Museum, the He Xiangning Art Museum, the M+ Museum, the Uli Sigg Collection, the DSL Collection, etc.

Solo Exhibitions

- 2013 Letters from a Distance, Tina Keng Gallery, Taipei
- 2011 Take Off The Shell: Peng Wei Works 2002 – 2011, He Xiangning Art Museum, Shenzhen
- 2010 Body & Robe: Peng Wei's Solo Exhibition, Tina Keng Gallery, Taipei
- 2009 Paper Skin, Peng Wei's Solo Exhibition, Artside Gallery, Beijing
Peng Wei's Painting Installation Exhibition, Opposite House, Beijing
Don't Forget Me: Peng Wei's Works, Yintai Center, Beijing
- 2007 Woven Clouds, Peng Wei's Exhibition, Plum Blossoms, Gallery Hong Kong
- 2004 Embroidered, Solo Exhibition, Plum Blossoms Gallery, Hong Kong

Exhibitions

- 2013 SHUIMO- Water Ink: Chinese Contemporary Ink Paintings Sotheby's New York New York
Brack Trough: Work by Contemporary Chinese Women Artists, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick
The 9th National Exhibition of Chinese Hue Art Paintings, National Art Museum of China, Beijing
The 8th Shenzhen International ink Painting Biennale, Guan Shanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen
Real Life Stories- the Chinese Contemporary Art exhibition, the Bergen Art Museum, Norway

- 2012 Water Stains On The Wall: the Carrier of Formation - Contemporary Art Exhibition
Zhejiang Art Museum, Hangzhou
On The Top of Fashion: The 1st Female Contemporary Art Exhibition the Yue Art
Museum, Beijing
Sketching the Heart: about Scenery Gallery Beijing Space, Beijing
Passing Through Memory: Opening Exhibition Suzhou Jin Ji Lake Art Museum
Suzhou
Water and Ink once more: 2000-2012 Chinese Contemporary Water and Ink Art
Invitation Exhibition
Hubei Art Museum & Today Art Museum, Wuhan & Beijing
- 2011 Shan Shui: Landscape in Chinese Contemporary Art Luzern Art Museum, Luzern
Reflection: Chinese Contemporary Art Exhibition, Edgar Frei Private Gallery, Bern
Pure View: 2011 Chengdu Biennale Contemporary Art Exhibition, Music Park,
Chengdu
- 2010 Reshaping History: China art from 2000 to 2010 Guangdong/ Beijing/ Shanghai Art
Museum, Guangdong & Beijing & Shanghai
The 7th Shenzhen International Ink Painting Biennale Shenzhen Art Museum,
Shenzhen
- 2009 Europalia International Arts Festival: Attitudes-Female Art in China, The European
Centre of Contemporary Art Brussels
- 2008 Hidden Life Apartment Diary Exhibition, Lin & Keng Gallery Beijing
New Scene: The Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Ink Paintings, Berlin National
Museum & Dresden National Art Collection Museum Berlin & Dresden
Hypallage: The Post-Modern Mode of Chinese Contemporary Art, the OCT Art &
Design Museum, Shenzhen
Ink Not The Ink: The Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting Exhibition, Shenzhen
Museum of Art & Philadelphia Museum of Art, Today Art Museum Beijing, Shenzhen
& Philadelphia & Beijing
- 2006 PURITY AND INNOCENCE: Three Chinese Women Artists Exhibition, Neuhoff
Gallery, New York
- 2005 Temperature: International Celebration of Andersen's 200th Birthday Anniversary -
Chinese
Contemporary Art Invitational Exhibition
Kunsten Museum of Modern Art Alborg & National Art Museum of China, Alborg &
Beijing
The 2nd Beijing International Art Biennial, National Art Museum of China Beijing
Century and Heaven: 2005 Chengdu Biennial, Chengdu
- 2004 Dot-Radiation and Far-Reaching-Vision Expression from Paper and Ink National Art
Museum of Malaysia And Guangdong Museum of Art, Malaysia & Guangzhou

The 10th Asian International Art Exhibition, Fukuoka Asia Art Museum Yokohama

2003 The First Beijing International Art Biennial, National Art Museum of China Beijing
The Second National Chinese Paintings Exhibition, National Museum of China Beijing

Publishing

2003 Splendor in Ink and Wash, Sichuan People's Arts Publishing House

2002 Peng Wei's Painting, Chinese Illustrated Magazine Publishing House