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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

FREE SPEECH AND THE WAR ON IMAGES

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REM KOOLHAAS ON THE SMART LANDSCAPE



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large-scale format for the first time—was something of a homecoming for Tseng. Staged in Hong Kong, where East does indeed meet West, the exhibition included two large-scale color portraits from 1983, exhibited for the first time since that year, and both titled *East Meets West Manifesto*. Presented on either side of a red wall, the images show Tseng in his Mao suit poised between a Chinese and an American flag: In one, he faces the viewer, in the other, he is reading Mao's Little Red Book. Over the latter image a quote is scrawled in white: THERE ARE TWO WINDS IN THE WORLD TODAY, THE EAST WIND AND THE WEST WIND. EITHER THE WEST WIND PREVAILS OVER THE EAST WIND, OR THE EAST WIND PREVAILS OVER THE WEST WIND. The implicit point is that both sides—East and West—prevail.

You might call Tseng's a romantic stance: one in which the fluid forces of globalism are greater than those of the people caught in the tidal waves of geographical, cultural, and political flows and exchanges. This was a position the artist developed further as he turned his attentions to the subject of nature. In *Grand Canyon, Arizona (Vista with Shadow)*, 1987, for instance, the artist is pictured standing on a rock, no longer in close-up, but merely one feature in a vast, monumental landscape. This theme continues in a series of rare sepia prints taken from the "American West Portfolio," which depicts the Arizona landscape in 1987. In these tranquil images, Tseng's figure becomes smaller and smaller until he is barely visible—truly one with the world.

—Stephanie Bailey

SEOUL

Lee Kwang-Ho

KUKJE GALLERY

"Picturing Landscape," Lee Kwang-Ho's exhibition of eighteen new paintings, revealed his attempt to depict the Gotjawal Forest of Jeju Island, 280 miles south of Seoul in the southernmost part of Korea. *Gotjawal* literally means "bush forest" in local dialect, and the region is known to host a mixed vegetation system (with both tropical and



Lee Kwang-Ho, *Untitled 6901, 2013*, oil on canvas, 8' 6" x 16'.

polar flora—for instance, palms and evergreens) and abounds in vines and shrubs that cover trees and rocks and overflow onto the ground. Lee's challenge in painting the Gotjawal was that—in contrast to his previous subjects, people and cacti—the forest, a confusion of foliage and vines, presented no substantial bodies to render. The artist realized he needed to create a sense of depth and space without having any discrete objects with which to evoke volume, surface, and chiaroscuro, as in his past work.

Each image has been painted from a digital photograph displayed on a computer monitor, which Lee finds results in a more transparent depth of vision than painting from printed photos. Through the twenty-seven-inch monitor, Lee sees only a portion of his gigantically blown-up original photo; the shrubs, branches, and trees appear almost abstract and unrecognizable. Matching the colors he sees on-screen, he applies the hues to the corresponding coordinates on the canvas and uses rubber brushes (marketed as Colour Shapers) and etching needles to define each branch or blade of grass, pushing or scraping off the still-drying paint. Some strokes reveal the whiteness of the canvas ground; the process, based on adding and subtracting color without thought of the object to be rendered, is much like making an abstract work, and yet the results can be almost frighteningly lifelike, at least in some passages. When the strokes intersect thousands of times, as in *Untitled 0420, 2014*, the scratched lines and streaks of pushed paint create a sense of perspective and thus reality in the demonically tangled bush; the complexity and verisimilitude absorb the gaze as it navigates from the seemingly tangible close-up of leaves and bramble to the receding winter sky topped with shades of blue-gray cloud.

The light sparkling on the snow-glazed forest in *Untitled 1304, 2013*, lends its colors to yellowing undergrowth and its surroundings glowing with surreal intensity, set among the chaos of dry bushes in cold shadow. What grabs the attention in *Untitled 6901, 2013*, the largest panoramic painting in the show, is the lower-left corner, with its backlit tree trunks and rocks topped by a layer of snow and patches of subdued ultramarine shadow; only slowly does the eye follow along the fallen tree trunk as the scene theatrically opens up to a clearing.

Those paintings (except for *Untitled 0420*) were hung in the light-filled ground floor; the mood changed dramatically upstairs, where the walls were painted ash gray and the spotlights were dimmed for a group of nocturnal scenes. As hard as one tried to examine *Untitled 0295, 2013*, for instance, its details were barely visible even after one's eyes adjusted to the darkness of the room; the scene is pitch-dark and the silhouettes of botanical forms almost impossible to make out. Yet strangely, the painting exudes a sense of spatial orientation, of depth, of the physicality of the forest and the dampness of air seeping through obscurity. It really was as if one had wandered out one night into the forest beyond the pictorial window. Lee told me that he was battling depression when he was attempting to materialize the dark forest, seeking a multisensory relation to his surroundings and conveying it through brushstrokes. His works may portray woods, shrubs, and snow-covered clearings, but they do so without romanticism or nostalgia; instead, they manifest the artist's vigilant effort to capture what unfolds in front of him.

—Shinyoung Chung

SINGAPORE

Yang Fudong

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

Yang Fudong is an auteur. His invention of a filmic culture for the Chinese art world—that special milieu in which the intelligentsia and the nouveau riche have met on and off since the early twentieth century—casts everyone who comes in contact with his project, from actors and collaborating artists to collectors and other viewers, in roles on the theatrical stage that defines his approach to the screen.

The most resonant works here took the viewer beyond the diegetic confines of Yang's cinematic universe and captured the backstage of his productions, where a psychological study of image and character on