

Liu Zhuoquan & Li Ning

20 November – 8 December 2018



November 24 marks the opening of the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT9) at the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art. In keeping with the focus on Asian art, Jan Murphy Gallery is presenting an exhibition of works by two Beijing based artists, Liu Zhuoquan and Li Ning.

Neighbours in one of Beijing's many burgeoning 'Art Districts', the two artists share much more than studio space. Both Liu Zhuoquan and Li Ning are re-interpreting traditional Chinese art practices in a contemporary manner.

Whilst Liu Zhuoquan's work references the traditional craft of 'snuff bottle' painting – painting on the inside of glass bottles, Li Ning adopts traditional ink paintings as his medium.

Legend of Shanshui – “*Journey among the Streams and Mountains*”, Liu Zhuoquan's latest body of work, references traditional Chinese Shanshui (landscape) painting – in particular, his favourite works by artists active during the Wudai and Song Dynasties. Historically, Shanshui paintings symbolised a yearning by scholars for seclusion and spiritual enlightenment. However, the artist states:

“In my childhood memory, Shanshui paintings were no longer the peaceful and free space where the spirit of literati dwelled, but were contaminated by political ideology. The achievements made by Song Dynasty masters were rarely surpassed by future generations. Therefore I have magnified individual details of these paintings and I represent the works as “fossils of brush and ink”, to express my sorrow for the loss of our glorious Chinese history. They are painted inside glass bottles as if they were ‘specimens’ of the past”.

Li Ning studied oil painting as an undergraduate before pursuing a master's degree in mural painting. He claims he has never studied Chinese ink painting and nor does he consider himself an ink painter. Rather, he turned to ink painting when his more experimental styles—abstract expressionism and conceptualism, were met with disapproval by the Chinese art system.

Not concerned with the more traditional aspects of ink painting, Li Ning's lines do not look like they have been painted using a Chinese brush rather; he applies ink as he would oil paint, simply and directly. His use of 'affordable' traditional bamboo paper allows him the freedom to experiment. While freely admitting to Western influences, including the works of Luc Tuymans and Peter Doig, (particularly the latter's interpretation of forests and water), Li Ning's use of ink on paper allows for a fresh interpretation of their work.



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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Li Ning was born in Shanxi, in 1976 and graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing in 2013, he currently lives and works in Beijing. Li Ning has exhibited extensively throughout China including a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chengdu. This is his inaugural exhibition in Australia.

Liu Zhuoquan was born in Wuhan, Hubei Province in 1964. He currently lives and works in Beijing. He has exhibited his work throughout China, Europe and Australia. His work is included in a number of significant international collections including Uli Sigg, Switzerland; White Rabbit, Sydney; Ten Cubed, Melbourne; Lin Yunqiang, Indonesia and Today Art Museum, Beijing.

Image credit: Liu Zhuoquan *Chinese landscape 1* 2015 glass bottle, mineral pigments, wax 32.0 x 15.0 cm (top left)
& Li Ning *Path through the forest 23* 2016 ink on paper 44.0 x 42.0 cm (bottom right)