

# BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

## MEDITATIONS IN NATURE: NEW INK

Presented by Jehan Chu and curated by Olivia Wang

28 MARCH – 7 MAY 2014

PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY 27 MARCH 6-8 PM

Cai Xiaosong 蔡小松

Arnold Chang 张洪

Koon Wai Bong 管伟邦

Li Huayi 李华弑

Liu Dan 刘丹

Luo Jianwu 罗建武

Master of the Water Pine  
and Stone Retreat 水松石山房主人

Ou Da Wei 区大为

Tai Xiangzhou 泰祥洲

Zhang Yirong 张艺蓉

**Ben Brown Fine Arts Hong Kong** is pleased to present *Meditations in Nature: New Ink*, an exhibition curated by Olivia Wang that brings together ten contemporary artists working in the time-honored tradition of Chinese ink painting. Each of these artists have found a unique form of self expression in this traditional method, bringing a two thousand year old art practice firmly into the contemporary realm. These mystical, meditative, nature-inspired works pay reverence to the rich artistic past of China and demonstrate that artists do not have to make radical departures from the past in order to innovate.

Chinese ink painting is deeply connected to the natural and spiritual world. *Literati* painters, Chinese scholars and philosophers versed in the arts, have been finding inspiration in the depths of nature since the Tang dynasty. While ink painting is not necessarily a literal rendering of nature, these painters seek to record the sublimity and spiritual wonder of it through their work. These works, painted with ink and brush on paper or silk, often depict trees, mountains, rocks, waterfalls, lakes and rivers—celebrations of the majestic power of the natural world as well as metaphors for human values and emotions.

The exhibition features works by Cai Xiaosong, Arnold Chang (Zhang Hong), Koon Wai Bong, Li Huayi, Liu Dan, Luo Jianwu, Master of the Water Pine Stone Retreat, Ou Da Wei, Tai Xiangzhou and Zhang Yirong. While each of these contemporary artists hold great reverence for the traditions of Chinese ink painting, they have put their own unique mark on the practice. In his *Planet* (2009) works, Cai Xiaosong upends the customary Chinese ink depiction of rocks by painting intricate striations and veins of rocks on round sheets of silk, suggestive of planets orbiting in space, and referencing the ancient Chinese belief that the universe is a manifestation of the forces of nature. Luo Jianwu's *A Thousand Year Old Camphor* (2014) and *Crouching Dragon Pine at the Jietai Temple* (2014) are ethereal renderings of trees that exist in the artist's mind and imagination following his meditative forays into the wilderness. Tai Xiangzhou, who employs 10th century paper-making techniques and uses Qianlong-era ink in his work, found inspiration for *The No. 1 of Big Dipper* (2014) in a rock he observed at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. The Master of the Water Pine and Stone Retreat, an artist deeply interested in the scholarly customs of the *literati*, complements his ink paintings with English texts and poems.

*Meditations in Nature: New Ink* offers a fresh perspective on a revered ancient practice by showcasing a group of talented and innovative contemporary artists extending the boundaries of the ink tradition.

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**Tai Xiangzhou**, *Paradise Mountain V*, 2013, ink on silk, 41 x 327 cm (16 1/8 x 128 3/4 in)



**Luo Jianwu**, *Crouching Dragon Pine at the Jietai Temple*, 2014, ink on paper, 77 x 129 cm (30 1/4 x 50 3/4 in)



**Master of the Water Pine and Stone Retreat**, *Recalling the World of the Insubstantial Hermit*, 2013, ink and colour on cloud-dragon paper, 78 x 70 cm (30 3/4 x 27 1/2 in)

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