

ELI KLEIN

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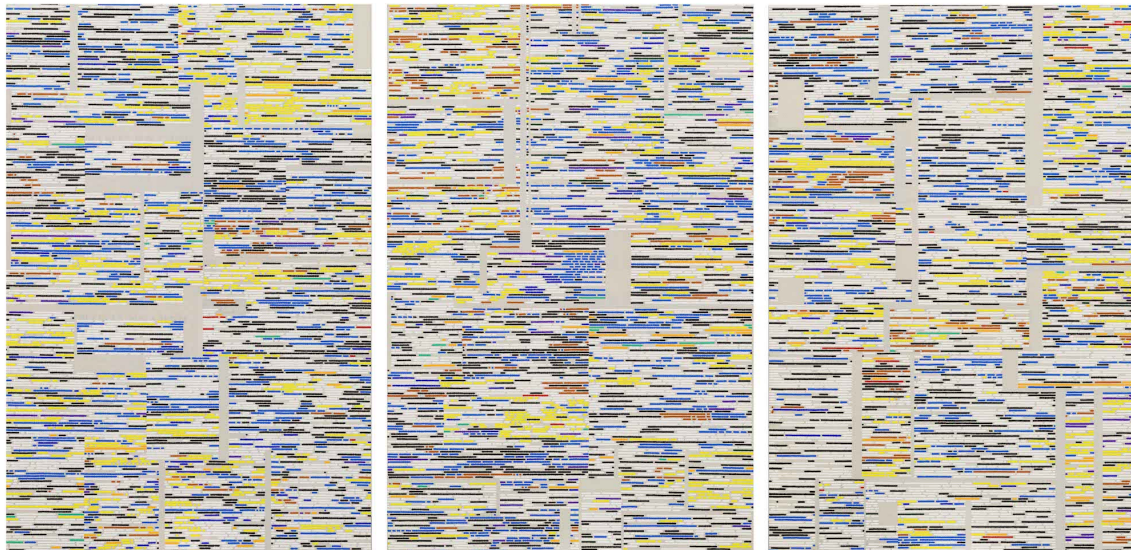
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHEN FAN: Works in Abstraction, 1992 - 2017

398 West Street, New York, NY 10014

November 29, 2018 – February 16, 2019

Opening Reception with the artist: November 29, 5–8 PM



Shen Fan, *Punctuation-17-001*, 2017, Acrylic on newspaper mounted on wood in three (3) parts, Overall: 35 3/8 x 70 7/8 inches (90 x 180 cm), Each: 35 3/8 x 23 5/8 inches (90 x 60 cm), Courtesy of Shen Fan, ShanghART Gallery and Eli Klein Gallery

New York, NY, October 18, 2018—[Eli Klein Gallery](#) will present a solo exhibition of work by Shanghai-based artist Shen Fan, a pioneering figure of abstract painting in China. A leading Chinese artist whose career spans nearly 40 years, Shen is an artist who defies being categorized into a certain style or school. The upcoming exhibition will survey a wide range of his works and examine his own unique takes on Chinese abstraction. Titled *Shen Fan: Works in Abstraction 1992 – 2017*, the exhibition includes a range of works that illustrate Shen's ability to combine Western expressionism with Eastern philosophy and traditional Chinese art practices to pave a unique path for contemporary Chinese abstraction.

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The exhibition will be on view from November 29, 2018 through February 16, 2019 and will feature twelve works from three important periods of Shen Fan's career from 1992 to 2017: oils on paper from the early 1990s, *Shan Shui (Mountain and River)* paintings from the early 2000s, as well as three recent acrylics on newspaper from the *Punctuation* series. At a time when an increased number of historical and contemporary Asian artists with deep roots in Eastern philosophy are receiving their overdue attention in the U.S. and in Europe, the upcoming exhibition will continue that dialogue by spotlighting the career of an important figure in the development of Chinese abstract art.

Contemporary art in China was mostly dominated by Social Realism until it experienced a profound shift in 1978 with Deng Xiaoping's establishment of a new Open Door policy for the country. With the sudden availability of Western art publications, many artists began to adopt the Western style as a new mode of creating art, yet Shen rooted his work in Eastern philosophy in his pursuit of modernity. While Western Abstract Expressionism is often associated with action painting and direct, energetic brushstrokes, in his oil on paper works from 1992 and 1993, Shen's indirect imprinting of ink through the gesture of rubbing—a technique that has been practiced in China for thousands of years—symbolizes Confucian values of order and moderation and other Eastern philosophical principles.



A number of abstract paintings from 2004 to 2009 illustrate Shen's reinterpretation of *Shan Shui*, the traditional Chinese landscape painting, and his unique understanding of nature. For example, while traditional Chinese paintings influenced by Taoism present water as soft and feminine and rocks as rigid and masculine, Shen's *Shan Shui* paintings completely subvert this dichotomy by depicting water with straight lines and mountains with curves. While the composition of these paintings may seem asymmetric at a first glance, a perfect balance is achieved with borders that are intentionally left blank—a key element in traditional Eastern paintings.

Finally, in his more recent acrylics on newspaper from his 2017 *Punctuation* series, Shen eliminates texts from Chinese newspapers such as

Shan Shui-C 31, 2008
as, 54 3/8 x 27
(9 cm),
an,
and

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People's Daily until only the patterns and structures of the paragraphs are left, exploring such themes as censorship and surveillance as well as the temporality of words.

A fully illustrated digital catalog with an essay by Will Fenstermaker, Editor at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Associate Editor of *The Brooklyn Rail*, accompanies this exhibition.

About Shen Fan

Born in 1952 in Shanghai, China, Shen Fan graduated from the Fine Arts Department of the Shanghai Light Industry Institute. His work has been exhibited in museum shows around the world including solo exhibitions: *The Collection*, Shen Fan Solo Show, The Collection Studio, Lincoln, UK (2008); *Ceramics Work of Shen Fan*, European Ceramics Workcenter, S'-Hentogenbosch, The Netherlands (1998); *Un/Limited Space, #1 Shen Fan*, Consulate General of Germany, Shanghai, China (1997); *Shen Fan*, Consulate General of France, Shanghai, China (1997); and *Shen Fan's Works on Paper*, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China (1988). His work has been part of group shows including *Myth/History II: Shanghai Galaxy*, Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China (2015); *China 8, Contemporary Art from China at Rhine and Ruhr*, Lehmbrock Museum, Duisburg, Germany (2015); *A Fragment in the Course of Time, Landscape of Chinese Ink Art in 1980s*, Himalayas Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2014); *In Time - 2012 Chinese Oil Painting Biennale*, National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China (2012); *Shanghai*, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, USA (2010); *The 1st International NanoArt Exhibition*, Science and Culture Arts Center, Suzhou, China (2010); *Shanghai Kaleidoscope*, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada (2008); *Beyond Dimensional Space*, Duolun Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, China (2004); *New Voices: Contemporary Art Dialogue Among Taipei, Hong Kong and Shanghai*, Liu Haisu Art Museum, Shanghai, China; Hong Kong Art Center, Hong Kong, China; National Taiwan Art Education Institute, Taipei, Taiwan (1998); *Quotation Marks, Chinese Contemporary Paintings*, National Art Museum, Singapore (1997); *China! Touring Exhibition of Modern Art*, Artist's House, Vienna, Austria; Charlottenburg Exhibition Centre, Copenhagen, Denmark; Zacheta Modern Art Mudrum, Warsaw, Poland (1997); and *China! Touring Exhibition*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany (1996). Shen Fan's works have been collected by major museums including: The National Art Museum of China; Shanghai Art Museum; M+ Museum, among others. Shen Fan currently lives and works in Shanghai, China.

About Eli Klein Gallery

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Founded by Eli Klein in 2007, Eli Klein Gallery has an international reputation as one of the foremost galleries specializing in contemporary Chinese art and continues to advance the careers of its represented artists and hundreds of other Chinese artists with whom it has collaborated. During its formative years, it established a reputation for introducing to the West fresh, contemporary, and often challenging works by emerging Chinese talents. Now, as the leading dealer of Chinese contemporary art outside of China, Eli Klein actively promotes cross-cultural awareness and investment at the highest level amongst some of the world's most influential nations. The Gallery has been instrumental in the loan of artwork by Chinese artists to over 100 museum exhibitions throughout the world, has published 40 books/catalogues, and has organized more than 75 exhibitions for Chinese art at our prestigious venues in New York City.

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