



Press Release

Contemporary 'Water Prints' from the China Academy of Art
West Lake Panorama: A Millennium of Woodblock Printing

December 6, 2018

The University Museum and Art Gallery (UMAG) of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) will present *West Lake Panorama: A Millennium of Woodblock Printing* from December 7, 2018 to February 24, 2019. West Lake Panorama celebrates the storied history of printmaking and woodblock technologies which have developed around Hangzhou's West Lake area for the past millennium. Literally known as 'water-printing' (*shuiyin*), the technique of working with water-soluble colours and wooden blocks has been widely used throughout contemporary Chinese printmaking, as the process allows for complex forms of overprinting in order to reproduce a nearly infinite range of colours. The UMAG exhibition includes contemporary ink landscapes ranging from the mid-1980s to the present day, along with Ming and Qing dynasty woodblock editions.

An opening ceremony of the exhibition was held at UMAG today (December 6). Officiating guests included Deputy Curator of the Zhejiang Art Museum Professor Ying Jinfei, Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global) of HKU Professor W. John Kao and UMAG Director Dr Florian Knothe.

Since at least the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), West Lake has served as a wellspring of inspiration for painters, poets, musicians and printers, each engaged in representing the region, and in utilising the classically altered landscape as a basis for further creative work. Between the 9th and 12th centuries a series of artificial features—including causeways, islands and pagodas—were added to the area. Based on these physical 'improvements', West Lake has been celebrated as a canonical example of garden design and the symbiotic fusion of man and nature, as well as a physical embodiment of the Buddhist ideal of peacefulness.

West Lake stands as a living organism, sculpted by human hands and the natural world; it aligns with classical Chinese notions of beauty, landscape design and philosophical discovery. The related artists working in and around Hangzhou have distinguished themselves through their ability to combine traditional forms of woodcut printing with more modern colour palettes and abstract figures. Of particular note are prints produced by the China Art Academy's Purple Bamboo Studio (*Zizhuzhai*), which is one of the few remaining traditional woodblock printing studios, and the very last located within a Chinese academy.

Artworks in the exhibition feature interpretations of the fabled West Lake landscape, including the reproduction of early forms of black-and-white woodblock printing, and the multicolour technique known as *douban*, developed late in the Ming dynasty. By dividing the woodblock into multiple pieces, the *douban* artist is able to print multiple colours with only a single block, and to replicate ink-wash painting styles normally associated with delicate brush work. Hybrid landscape constructions that meld European techniques, such as etching, with a definitively Chinese sense of style are also a hallmark of many prints emanating from the West Lake area.

For more images and captions of the exhibits, please click [here](#).





Details of the Exhibition

Period: December 7, 2018 (Friday) to February 24, 2019 (Sunday)

Opening Hours:

09:30 – 18:00 (Monday to Saturday)

13:00 – 18:00 (Sunday)

Closed on University and Public Holidays

Venue: 1/F, T.T. Tsui Building, UMAG, HKU, 90 Bonham Road, Pokfulam

Tel/Email: (852) 2241 5500 (General Enquiry) / museum@hku.hk

Admission: Free

Website: <http://www.umag.hku.hk/en/>

Connect with UMAG on social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/umag.hku>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/UMAG_HKU

Instagram: #UMAG, #WestLake, #WoodblockPrinting

Weibo: @香港大學美術博物館 UMAG

About University Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong (UMAG)

UMAG was founded in 1953 as the Fung Ping Shan Museum. It was originally established as the Fung Ping Shan Library in 1932 in honour of its benefactor. For more information on UMAG, please [click here](#).

Media enquiries

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