

EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Hilliard University Art Museum

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

710 East Saint Mary Blvd.

Lafayette, LA 70503

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Yun-Fei Ji: Looking for Lehman Brothers

Guest curated by Dr. Christopher Bennett

Exhibition Dates: February 3 – May 13, 2017

Artist Talk: Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Reception: Friday, February 3, 6:00-8:00 PM

The Hilliard University Art Museum is pleased to announce *Yun-Fei Ji: Looking for Lehman Brothers*. This solo exhibition marks the artist's first in Louisiana, and is guest curated by Dr. Christopher Bennett, UL Lafayette Art History professor in the Department of Visual Arts. The project is accompanied by a new museum publication, also authored by Bennett, which features an analysis and catalog of Yun-Fei Ji's works in the exhibition.

Yun-Fei Ji is a critically acclaimed Chinese-American painter who is based in Ohio and New York. He earned a BFA from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, and his MFA from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Ji's work has been exhibited in solo and group shows throughout the United States and Europe including the 2012 Biennale of Sydney, the 2011 Lyon Biennale, and the 2002 Whitney Biennial. In 2014, one of his scrolls was shown in New Orleans at the Contemporary Art Center, as part of the *Prospect 3* citywide art triennial. Presently, Ji's work can also be seen in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the exhibition *Show and Tell: Stories in Chinese Painting*, on view through August 2017.

In his work, Ji revivifies the brush-and-ink painting methods typically associated with earlier periods of Chinese art, including literati landscape painting of the Song Dynasty. Using such traditional methods, Ji delves into contemporary global events in which issues of environmental crisis, geographical displacement, and the re-making of place come into sharp focus. His work reinvents the system of symbolic structures found in classical Chinese painting to expose the dark side of industrial development on contemporary life. As Ji states, "I use landscape painting to explore the utopian dreams of Chinese history, from past collectivization to new consumerism."

Yun-Fei Ji: Looking for Lehman Brothers features paintings created between 2007 and 2008, including his iconic hand scroll *The Three Gorges Dam Migration* (2008). In addition to this signature work, the exhibition highlights a suite of paintings and sketches that grapple, retrospectively, with the devastation and aftereffects of Hurricane Katrina. These works by Ji establish parallels between the scope of the financial collapse of 2008 and that of Katrina three years earlier—with the focus persistently falling on the effects that large-scale and global crises have on the lives of ordinary people.



Yun-Fei Ji. *Looking for Lehman Brothers*, 2008. Courtesy James Cohan, New York. Photo by Max Yawney.

Biography

Yun-Fei Ji was raised in China during the Cultural Revolution. Separated from his parents at the age of two, Ji grew up on a collective farm outside Hangzhou where, in the absence of TV and radio, he was kept entertained by his grandmother's telling of ghost stories and folk tales. At the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, Ji studied traditional painting techniques with mineral pigments on mulberry paper in the style of Song Dynasty landscape painting. After relocating to the United States in 1986 on a fellowship from Fulbright College at the University of Arkansas, Ji found his voice as an artist who reinvents the system of symbolic structures found in classical Chinese painting to expose the dark side of industrial development on contemporary life.

Yun-Fei Ji was born in 1963 in Beijing, China. He earned his BFA from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing and his MFA from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. In 2005, Ji was Artist-in-residence at Yale University where he conducted extensive research with the institution's scholars. He received the 2006 Rome Prize and was also later the 2007 Artist-in-residence at the Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art in London. Ji's work has been presented in solo museum exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis; Rose Museum at Brandeis University, Waltham; Peeler Art Center, DePauw University, Greencastle; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. In 2012, Ji's work was the subject of a solo presentation at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, China.

Ji's work has been exhibited internationally. In early 2016, the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum presented *Yun-Fei Ji: The Intimate Universe*, a solo exhibition of the artist's work, curated by Tracy Adler, which traveled to the 2016 to Honolulu Museum of Art, where it runs through February 5, 2017. In 2016 the Cleveland Museum of Art also presented his work in a solo exhibition, *Ji Yun-Fei: Last Days of Village Wen*.

The group exhibition *Unscrolled: Reframing Tradition in Chinese Contemporary Art* at the Vancouver Art Gallery featured his work from late 2014 to early 2015. His work was also featured in *Displacement: The Three Gorges Dam and Contemporary Chinese Art*, an exhibition of four Chinese artists which originated in 2008 at the Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, and toured nationally. Ji's work has been featured in many publications including *The New York Times*, *the Washington Post*, *the New Yorker*, *Modern Painters*, and *Artforum*, and in major public art collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn.

Acknowledgements

Yun-Fei Ji: Looking for Lehman Brothers has been generously supported by the Department of Visual Arts and College of the Arts at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio; and the Friends of the Humanities. Artworks courtesy of James Cohan Gallery, New York.

Upon request, press and media kits are available that include high resolution images and selected literature on the artist.

Museum Hours, Admission & General Information

The Hilliard University Art Museum is located at 710 East Saint Mary Boulevard, on the campus of University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Museum Hours are: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm; Wednesday, 9:00 am to 8:00 pm; Saturday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; closed Sunday and Monday. General Admission: \$5 Adults, \$4 Seniors (62+), \$3 Students (5-17). FREE for Members, UL Students/Staff/Faculty with identification, and visitors under 5. Guided tours of the galleries are available Friday & Saturday at 2 PM, complimentary with admission. For general information, please visit hilliardmuseum.org or call (337) 482-2278.

About the Hilliard

The Hilliard University Art Museum operates on the campus of University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and was originally founded in 1964 as the Art Center for Southwest Louisiana. Featuring a state-of-the-art modern facility that was erected in 2004, the museum houses more than 2,200 objects in its permanent collection, and is the largest art exhibition space between New Orleans and Houston. The Hilliard serves a wide range of educational and cultural needs by fostering cross-disciplinary intellectual discourse on campus and throughout the region. At the core of the Hilliard's mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit the art of our time while celebrating the great diversity of Louisiana's heritage.

Concurrent Exhibitions at the Hilliard University Art Museum

December 9 – May 13, 2017. *Spotlight on Shawne Major*

December 27, 2016 – May 6, 2017. *Sandra Eula Lee: Make of / Make do*, guest curated by Dr. Christopher Bennet, UL Lafayette Art History professor in the Department of Visual Arts

February 3 – August 12, 2017. *Spiritual Journeys: Homemade Art from the Wyatt and Becky Collins Collection*, guest curated by Gus Kopriva

Free Public Programming related to *Yun-Fei Ji: Looking for Lehman Brothers*

Wed Jan 18: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

"Mapping the Spirit of Place"

featuring **Paddy Bowman of Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education**

Artists show us places through their responses to the world around them. They are in a conversation with a community as well as those who view their art. This presentation inaugurates the museum's seasonal theme, "The Politics of Place," through a folk art lens in preparation for the upcoming exhibition of the extensive collection of Wyatt and Becky Collins, "Spiritual Journeys," opening February 3. Exploring how some folk artists approach their work and express their aesthetics will segue into mapping boundaries, unique spaces, and cultural symbols of Acadiana. This interactive presentation includes a sneak peek at the artwork featured in our spring 2017 exhibitions.

Wed Feb 1: 5:30 – 7:00 PM

"Behind the Scenes" Artist Talks with Sandra Eula Lee and Yun-Fei Ji

Learn more about the practices of these two artists, and how their new solo exhibitions originated at the Hilliard Museum. This event includes two slideshow presentations and is co-produced with the UL College of the Arts series of Pulse talks organized by Dr. Christopher Bennett. Please note the program starts at 5:30 PM and is located in Fletcher Hall, Room 134 (ground level).

Fri Feb 3: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Spring Season Opening Reception

Join us in celebration of four new exhibitions! Drinks and light refreshments generously provided by Bon Temps Grill and Republic National Distributing Company.

Wed Mar 15: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

International Film Night at the Museum

Stay tuned for our announcement of an award winning Chinese film on the transformative Three Gorges Dam project. This screening explores the regional dynamics of a people, government and landscape that inform Yun-Fei Ji's scroll paintings. Includes a tour of the exhibition "Yun-Fei Ji: Looking for Lehman Brothers".

Wed Apr 5: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Book Signing and Gallery Tour with Dr. Christopher Bennett

Check out the museum's latest publication, which supports the dual exhibitions "Sandra Eula Lee: Make of / Make do" and "Yun-Fei Ji: Looking for Lehman Brothers". Features a guided tour by guest curator and author Dr. Christopher Bennett, Assistant Professor of Art History at UL Lafayette.

Wed Apr 12: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

"Politics of Place" Panel Discussion

Stay tuned for details on this conversation rooted in the ideas of artists featured in our spring season of exhibitions. The discussion engages local community voices on the interrelated topics of geography, ecology, history, and culture.

Wed Apr 26: 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Guided Tour of Spring Exhibitions

Take one last trip through the exhibition galleries with a tour led by Hilliard Museum staff.