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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Emily Cheng: Mountain Series

On view: Feb 18 – May 8, 2017

<http://www.wmingart.com/exhibitions/emily-cheng-mountain-series>



Emily Cheng

Anhui, 2015

Flashe on canvas

72 x 60 inches (183 x 152 cm)

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"In the mountains' means the whole world is blossoming," and "the mountains belong to those who love them." The whole world is hidden in mountains, and our lives are embedded in the whole world. - *Bring the Mountain into Zazen*, Sensei Joshin Brian Byrnes, Upaya Zen Center, 2016.

W.Ming Art is pleased to present *Emily Cheng: Mountain Series (2015- 2016)*, a solo exhibition organized by Siqiao Lu. The exhibition is on view from February 18 to May 8, 2017.

Emily Cheng began contemplating on the form of mountains during her 2014 residency in Dawang Village, Shenzhen. After living in Southeast China for four months, the New York-based artist travelled to Tibet, Switzerland, Austria, Japan and the Philippines, expanding her experience in the mountains and seeing how such an environment might influence her works. She said, "my relationship to mountains is the most monumental, mysterious and ephemeral connections I have experienced on this planet."

In this exhibition, selected works from Cheng's *Mountain Series* present her visualization of mountains, which combines composited images of the natural formation from various geographical regions and Chinese ink landscape painting with abstract projections that signify practices blending an array of religious and spiritual concepts. Her works are particularly relevant in the new global society where cultural nomads travel the world seeking emergent artistic hybrids.

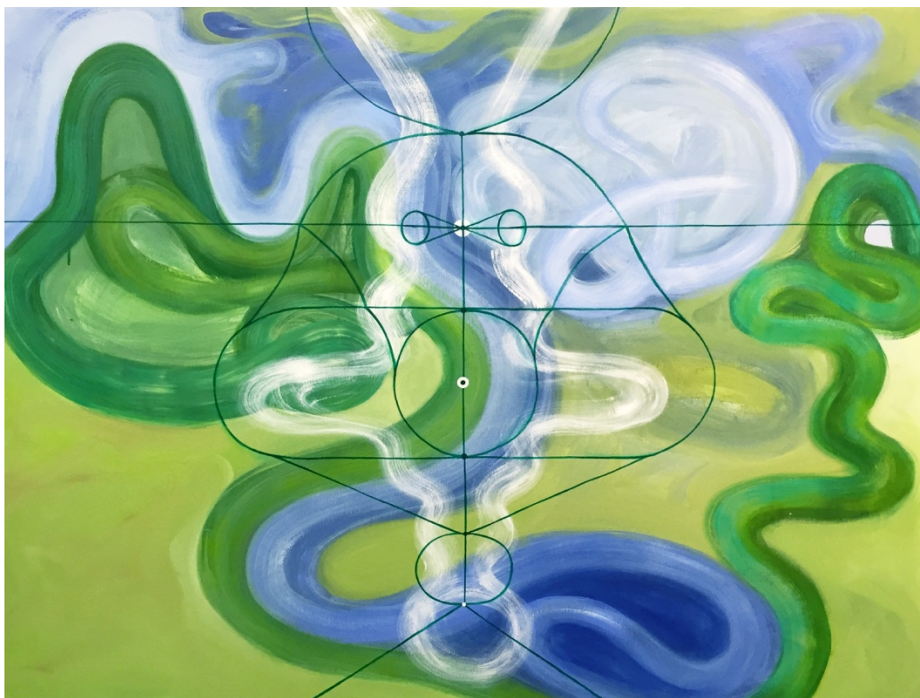
As Cheng is deeply concerned with the interaction between the mind and its surrounding, her canvases capture the integration of her consciousness in the space and the essence of nature. While living in the mountainside outside the village of Dawang, Cheng regularly practiced Tai Chi while absorbing the mountains and lakes around. In *Wutongshan (2015)*, her spiritual visualization has a vague but vital presence over the lush landscape—the path for the viewer is important for her canvases—as it is significant for Chinese landscape paintings to create paths leading through the mountains, so that the eye can meander along the way. In the case of *Hinterglemm II (2016)*, the snow-covered mountain temporarily imprinted by zigzag ski trails inspires Cheng to consider a different form of exchange between the consciousness and the mountain space.

To visualize the standing body within the energy of the landscape, Cheng created abstract structures, which she calls "projections," consisting of geometric shapes combined with images of skulls, houses, chakras and other mysterious signs. Her preoccupation with signs, especially religious iconography was seen in her previous works - for instance, the idea of the

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mandala is integrated with allusions to the ascending chakras present in the human body, and to the forms of religious statuary. By incorporating imagery from different faiths and spiritual systems, Cheng creates a holistic picture for those who are actively engaged in understanding a personal and spiritual universe –a more open-ended solution that gives space and freedom to all viewers alike. When commenting on Cheng, curator Johnson Chang said, “Like the Chinese ideographic character-word, Cheng’s iconic imageries bring out the universal in the culturally specific through the power of visual presence. Most importantly, with her own creative work, Cheng demonstrates the possibility for a new spiritual painting, an art that seeks to ground our spiritual being in the physical, and to create a universal sensibility within time-tried imageries—an act of faith that both confronts and ameliorates the world of image fatigue we live in today.”

Adding to the complexity of the image, Cheng’s canvas is marked by masterful brushwork. Calculated yet effortless, the trace of these strokes make up seemingly chaotic swirls, as well as elegant silhouettes of mountains, lakes and clouds. Such brushwork unifies the canvas containing dissimilar elements, functioning as an invisible force that holds the picture together. Thus, the energy can ascend— not only within but also beyond the canvas.



Emily Cheng
Snap, 2016
Oil and acrylic on canvas
36 x 48 inches (91 x 122 cm)

Emily Cheng

Emily Cheng (b. 1953) is a Chinese-American artist who lives in New York city. Cheng received a BFA in painting from Rhode Island School of Design and attended the New York Studio School for three years. Emily Cheng's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at institutions worldwide, including Shenzhen Art Museum, Shenzhen (2015); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei (2011); Ayala Museum, Manila (2006); Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Manila (1997); The Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati (1994); the Bronx Museum, New York (1989).

Her work has been collected by Shenzhen Museum of Art, Citibank New York, Embassy of the United States in Beijing, current United States Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin and other Chinese collectors.

Her work has been included in recent group exhibitions held at Museum of Chinese in America, New York (2010); MASS MoCA, Williamstown (2010); Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai (2009); Guangdong Museum of art, Guangzhou (2008); Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa (2006); Museum at Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green (2003), Asian American Art Center, New York (2002); Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah (2000). She has been the recipient of several awards including the New York Foundation of the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, Pollock Krasner Award and a Yaddo Fellowship.

W.Ming Art

W. Ming Art is a private art advisory and consulting company founded in 2010 by Xiaoming Zhang. W. Ming represents artists for exhibitions and sales, and provides private sales and art advisory services for private and institutional clients globally. W. Ming has professional team members in Europe, America, and Asia; the company specializes in modern and contemporary art, especially in the field of Asian modern and contemporary works. W. Ming has two office spaces, one in Beijing and the other in New York.

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