

INTERVIEW: PEARL LAM OF PEARL LAM GALLERIES

BY JING DAILY



Pearl Lam. (The Art Gorgeous/William Louey)

With a purple pouf and a penchant for extravagance, gallerist Pearl Lam is practically an icon in China's contemporary art scene. For the past 10 years, she has been a source of fascination for Western media, who have unveiled her jaw-dropping luxurious home furnishings and Chinese contemporary art collection and have dissected her more than 20-year journey toward opening three high-profile galleries located in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Singapore. These spaces showcase works by both China-based contemporary artists and international artists making a debut in Asia's fast-evolving art market. Lam was born in Hong Kong and studied in both the United States and the UK. Inspired by her explorations abroad, she later returned to Hong Kong and expressed to her traditionally minded parents, who were highly successful bankers, that she wanted to open a gallery where she could exhibit a curation of art from the East and West from a variety of periods. They didn't give their full support, at least at first, because they didn't see her passion translating into a stable career. She proved them wrong when her efforts quickly caught the attention of the art world. She eventually opened her first gallery in Shanghai in 2005 to support cultural exchange between the East and West as well as encourage Chinese collectors to pay attention to Chinese contemporary artists amid a societal obsession with Western culture. She also funds an artist-in-residence program that encourages international artists to create works influenced by China experiences.

The Art Gorgeous recently interviewed Lam, who shared details on her fascination with Chinese artists who draw inspiration both from Chinese and Western cultures. Read an excerpt from the article below.

What's your favorite art-related blog or app?

ArtInfo, The Art Newspaper app, and Randian Online for more Chinese/Asian-related art news.

What's/are your favorite work(s) of art?

I love Beijing-based artist Zhu Jinshi's heavy impasto oil paintings, where the vibrant colors appear to drip off the canvas. They are rich in texture and are a prime example of Chinese and Western influences converging together onto the canvas.

What in the art world are you most excited about at the moment?

I'm really excited by Chinese contemporary abstract art, which has so much depth and, in recent years, is finally getting more worldwide recognition. I love how it is rooted in traditional Chinese philosophies like Taoism and Buddhism, and how its origins and intentions are different from Western expressionism.

Where is your next art trip/travel going to be?

I'll be heading to Hong Kong for the opening of Leonardo Drew on the 12th November, then Beijing for one of our artists opening in a private museum and Shanghai for ART021.

In your eyes: what is the most arty city?

There are too many to narrow it down to just one; there's Shanghai, Beijing, London, New York, Paris, etc.

Which artists should we have on our watchlist?

Look out for up-and-coming Chinese artist Ren Ri, who makes geometric sculptures out of beeswax by manipulating bees; Su Dong Ping, who is an older Chinese abstract painter just starting to break out onto the international art scene; and Gatot Pujiarto, an established Indonesian artist working in mixed media who is also exhibiting more internationally now.

Where are you off to next?

I will be meeting with the exhibition team at my Hong Kong Pedder Building gallery to go over details for Leonardo Drew's solo exhibition, which will open this month.