

1. Fan Dongwang
Dragon #1
acrylic on paper
76x76cm
2. Fan Dongwang
Dragon #2
acrylic on paper
76x76cm
3. Fan Dongwang
Dragon #3
acrylic on paper
76x76cm
4. Shoufay Derz
‘洗手 (xǐshǒu) Wash Hands’
single-channel HD video, variable duration
5. Fan Dongwang
Edmond Capon
acrylic on canvas
142x155cm
6. Fan Dongwang
Dragon
acrylic on canvas
142x140cm
7. Shoufay Derz
Covering (1, 4, 2)
pigment print
30 x 45cm unframed / 41.9 x 56.9 cm framed
8. Fan Dongwang
Double Faces,
wooden sculpture
48x29 x8 cm
9. Fan Dongwang
White Figure
wooden sculpture
60x32x14cm
10. Fan Dongwang
Fish & Bird
wooden sculpture
34x70x15cm
11. Fan Dongwang
Shout
wooden sculpture
42x20x10cm
12. Jason Phu
Only Cost 131,118,610,078 Water Boiled Peanuts
ink on Chinese paper
100 x 57 cm
13. Jason Phu
i am your mummy
paint and spray paint on canvas
102 x 87 cm
14. Jason Phu
i am your daddy
paint and spray paint on canvas
102 x 87 cm
15. Jason Phu
I go to help worm, worm squiggles everywhere, I kick worm away
ink on Chinese paper
diameter 30 cm
16. Jason Phu
What the cat eats, ants and flies do not touch
ink on Chinese paper
diameter 30 cm
17. Jason Phu
This pear will rot but it will stand tall until it is a gross brown mess
ink on Chinese paper
diameter 30 cm
18. Jason Phu
I threw my slipper, I didn't hit my target, my little friend scurries away
ink on Chinese paper
diameter 30 cm
19. Jasmine Poole
Middle Kingdoms
Zine
20. Jasmine Poole
Middle Kingdoms
Photographic wallpaper grid various x 20 images
29.7 x 42.0cm / 42.0cm x 29.7 cm
21. Jason Wing
Concrete Sky
paper scroll (5/10)
120 x 35cm
22. Fan Dongwang
Gum Tree (Moon light)
acrylic on canvas
138x156cm

WATER DRAGON – Chinese Australian Diaspora

The Dragon in Chinese culture is a potent, auspicious symbol originally associated with Emperors representing imperial power, it is today, still seen as a symbol of power, strength and good luck. In contrast the Dragon in Western culture is however, regarded as an evil being, a destroyer and a transmitter of disasters, making it the enemy of everything in the world.

WATER DRAGON as a title is a play on words and has a multiplicity of meaning, though in this particular case it is representative of the Australian Eastern Water Dragon, a reptile native to Australia and found along the Eastern Coast and in Sydney.

Fan Dongwang, Jasmine Poole, Jason Phu, Jason Wing and Shoufay Derz are five multi-disciplinary, Chinese-Australian contemporary artists who within their practice explore identity, cross-culture, the influence of traditional Chinese artmaking techniques and the presence it has in their work. The notions of memory and history mixed with contemporary Australian-Asian culture are investigated not only through artistic medium but also through poetry, text, humour and documentation.

Fan Dongwang has combined his traditional Chinese carving technique with acrylic canvas paintings to create his unique visual language referred to as *Sculptural Painting*. His large and colourful paintings fuse together diverse cultural imagery to paint a picture of Australian identity and his wooden sculptures are a three-dimensional reference to these carved canvases. In this exhibition the collection of Chinese Dragons and Australian Gum trees are coupled with a stunning portrait of Edmund Capon AM OBE, who was Director of the Art Gallery of NSW for 33 years, and was responsible for amassing the Asian Art collection to what it is today. Edmund sadly passed away in March this year and Dongwang's portrait of Edmund has never been shown in Sydney before so it is a lovely tribute to Edmund's life.

Dongwang's Gum Tree by Moonlight echoes across the room and speaks directly to the photographic works of Shoufay Derz. These photographs and video work *Wash Hands* comprise part of her body of work entitled *The Wish*, based on a poem by *Rumi* and were the result of the artist's residency in Hill End, site of a now abandoned gold mine. The burnt trees in their almost scorched deep frames, coloured from boiled eucalyptus leaves, not only relate image and materiality, but also place, as the location has played a prominent role in Chinese-Australian history. Words play an important part in Shoufay's work and the artistry of scribing in its physical form; paper, stylus, ink, hands, are fundamental. In, '洗手(xǐshǒu) Wash Hands'. The ritual hand washing is symbolic of cleansing and healing and here, a cast of Shoufay's mother's hand is being cleansed by the artist with ink to try and find a common language.

Like Shoufay, Jason Phu's multi-disciplinary practice incorporates the use of text and poetry. There are at times contradictory references from traditional ink paintings and calligraphy to mass-produced objects, everyday vernacular to official records, and personal narratives to historical events. His humorous works on Chinese Rice paper depict traditional Chinese symbols in contrast to the Majestic Chinese Dragon, such as worms, cockroaches and rotten fruit. This use of humour is a device to explore experiences of cultural dislocation. Jason sees himself as a storyteller, stories of his own, of his parents of religion, as stated by Jason 'I am inspired by Buddhist Zen paintings, which all really build up to my poetry – which drives my narratives. I get my inspiration from 18th Century Buddhist monks, copying their techniques of painting with stone, or inks and calligraphy; but then layering English and Chinese poetry into the mix and creating my own contemporary narrative'.

The stories of others is explored in the work of Jasmine Poole, a multidisciplinary artist and photographer. Jasmine's practice explores the act of storytelling and the sociology of space and objects and her body of work *Middle Kingdoms* explores the Chinese restaurant as a notable part of Australian culture. Jasmine has a fascination with the landscape these restaurants are scattered within, the physical space they occupy and how they exist as records of immigrant histories and cultural exchange at a time when Australia was a very different place. These kingdoms, littered across NSW, symbolise more than just a place to have a meal. For many immigrants they were a life changing opportunity that enabled a journey to belonging.

Lastly, Jason Wing's Concrete Sky consists of five manipulated traditional paper scrolls that hang from the ceiling. These traditional scrolls depict scenes of nature, seasons and represent the earliest form of ancient Chinese

storytelling. With the presence of cut out grid-like formations that fashion as windows on skyscrapers within the long rectangular scrolls, this work signifies the vastly changed landscape of modern China. Jason is inspired by 'Nature and man, the urban environment and respect for nature, his cultural influences and a sense of positive universal spirituality'. Jason explores issues of bi-cultural and Indigenous political identity, environmental awareness and spirituality with a street-wise flair, pertinent to his own Chinese-Aboriginal heritage.

These selected artists are Sydney based, with the former hailing from the Inner West and relevant to The Adelaide Perry Gallery at PLC Sydney, as it is situated amongst great talent with artists' studios in its surrounds. Water Dragon is a chance to embrace our multicultural suburb and city and further explore Chinese Australian culture.

Courtney Wagner, Curator at the Adelaide Perry Gallery