

LÉVY GORVY 厲為閣

LÉVY GORVY'S INAUGURAL EXHIBITION IN HONG KONG

Return to Nature | Zao Xue Han Zhang

26 March – 18 May 2019

Lévy Gorvy
Ground Floor, 2 Ice House Street
Central, Hong Kong



LEFT: Pierre Soulages. *Peinture* 162 x 130 cm, 6 octobre 1963, 1963. Oil on canvas, 63 7/8 x 51 1/4 inches (162 x 130 cm). © 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris. Photo: Studio SEBERT. RIGHT: Wu Dayu. *Untitled-35*. Oil on canvas, 22 13/16 x 15 3/16 inches (58 x 38.5 cm).

Hong Kong—Lévy Gorvy is delighted to present *Return to Nature* (Zao Xue Han Zhang), the inaugural exhibition at Lévy Gorvy in Hong Kong. Opening on 26 March, *Return to Nature* offers a lineage of Eastern and Western artists whose practices look to the natural world for cohesion and clarity. Including works by Wu Dayu, Song Dong, Wassily Kandinsky, Hao Liang, Agnes Martin, Joan Mitchell, Claude Monet, Chung Sang-Hwa, Pierre Soulages, Pat Steir, Yan Wenliang, Wu Yinxian, and Zao Wou-Ki, among others, the exhibition will span our new 2,500-square-foot space on the ground floor of the historic St. George's Building.

The words of the exhibition's title are found in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Wen Xin Diao Long), an influential book of literary theory written by Liu Xie of the 5th century Southern Dynasty. "Zao Xue" means to keep the spirit pure, while "Han Zhang" refers to a breadth of mind. Indeed, in times of moral, cultural, and political crisis throughout the histories of Eastern and Western art, artists have returned to such fundamental qualities; they look to the assuredness of

ancestral roots and inherited traditions, the vibrant materiality of nature, and the existential mysteries of spirituality. In 1941, Wu Dayu wrote letters to his students Wu Guanzhong and Zhu Dequn explaining, “I have no time for philosophical discussions. All I can do is to adhere closely to nature, breaking from the shackles of staleness in life, to create with my heart, hands and eyes and present to the world something original and pure.” The artists in *Return to Nature* likewise choose not to participate in the chaos of humanity, seeking instead to grapple with a reality seemingly more solid and unified than our own.

Here, the conception of nature is not limited to the natural landscape. It includes the physical world that surrounds and encompasses us, from the microparticles in our exhaled breath to the pull of gravity. In nature, the artists in this exhibition find examples of creative processes that unify, simplify, and connect. In tradition, they find new pathways for a contemporary voice. Instead of seeing the affairs of humankind and the workings of nature as separate, these artists forge an intimate merging of the human imagination with the creative capacity of nature.

The artists featured in *Return to Nature* pursue ideas of “Shu Yue Wu Zang, Zao Xue Jing Shen”—which means to rid oneself of internal obstacles—and “Han Zhang Su Zhi, Bing Jie Yuan Qing”—or, to keep one’s talent implicit and to cultivate inner purity and excellence. In so doing, these artists collapse the bounds of abstraction and figuration or locate the landscape itself in the body. Some works here recall, in gestural abstractions, sensuous memories of nature, while still others employ images of nature to make visible the ways in which politics have the power to contour our very understanding of the most fundamental aspects of life.

On view from 26 March through 18 May, *Return to Nature* will be the major exhibition of the spring season at Lévy Gorvy. Our first exhibition in Asia is a preface on which we hope to build our understandings of Eastern and Western cultures and histories. Our goal is to transcend the cognitive boundaries of geographical divisions, and to return to the love and exploration that are the very essence of art. We look forward to sharing our future exceptional exhibitions with discerning collectors and audiences in Asia.

In conjunction with the opening of Lévy Gorvy’s Asia headquarters, the gallery is pleased to announce its Chinese name: *Li Wei Ge* (厲為閣), a translation which demonstrates the gallery’s professionalism, connoisseurship, and unique vision.

About Lévy Gorvy

Lévy Gorvy cultivates a program devoted to innovation and connoisseurship in the fields of modern, postwar, and contemporary art. Founded by Dominique Lévy and Brett Gorvy, Lévy Gorvy maintains gallery spaces at 909 Madison Avenue in New York, in Mayfair, London, and in Central, Hong Kong. The gallery fosters continued dedication to the living artists and artists’ estates it represents and offers a robust program of exhibitions and multidisciplinary events. The gallery also produces ongoing art historical research and original scholarship, publishing exhibition catalogues, monographs, and other key publications. Our Zürich office, Lévy Gorvy with Rumbler, offers bespoke private advisory services to collectors and institutions around the globe.

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