



# EDEL ASSANTI

Gordon Cheung | Tears of Paradise

Opening reception: 6-8pm, Thursday 16 January 2020  
Exhibition: 17 January - 7 March 2020

74a Newman Street, London ,W1T 3DB, UK  
+44 207 63 78 537 [art@edelassanti.com](mailto:art@edelassanti.com)

*To achieve a great leap, an entire generation must be sacrificed.*

*Liu Zhijun, Minister of Railways 2003-2011, People's Republic of China*

Edel Assanti is pleased to present Gordon Cheung's fourth solo show with the gallery, *Tears of Paradise*. This exhibition is the latest in a series in which Cheung witnesses and interprets the emergence of China as a twenty first century global superpower, framing current events in the context of the Century of Humiliation and the Opium Wars.

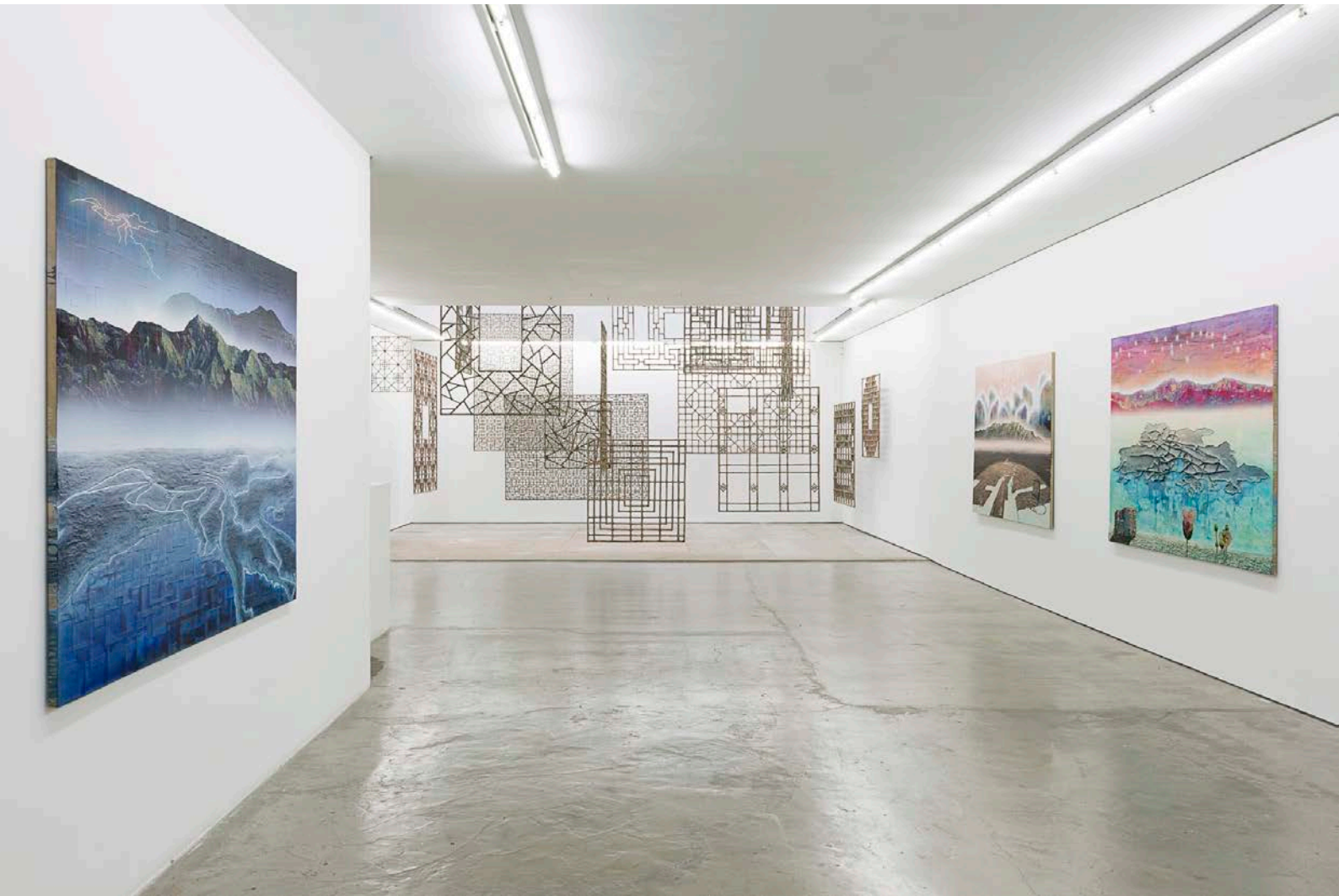
Five paintings in *Tears of Paradise* depict aerial perspectives of real and part prophetic landscapes, each relating to specific sites in China that collectively comprise the largest infrastructural project in human history. The sprawling cityscapes are rendered from satellite imagery, built up as reliefs on the canvas in hardened sand and pigment. The scenes' relationship with reality is destabilized by the overall compositions, which feature floating cities below glimmering constellations that mark out future geopolitical maps, such as the "One Belt One Road" trade route.

Science fiction narrative and aesthetics have always been a cornerstone of Cheung's practice – here they are employed to explore the intersections of old and new architecture in China's futuristic cities, which are composed of layered expressions of history and civilisation, forming a feedback loop that continually defines identities. These worlds are overlooked by backdrops of wistful mountains, layered in sprayed acrylic paint, inspired by the dynastic classical landscape paintings hanging in the Great Hall of the People.

The works map the administration's planned consolidation of some of the worlds' largest cities into several inconceivably large megalopolises. In one work, the cities of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei float like drifting islands, inviting contemplation of the future city of "Jing-Jin-Ji" – with a population of 100 million residents in an area larger than Britain. In another we see the Pearl River Delta Region, encompassing nine prefectures whose planned combination will total 120 million inhabitants. The paintings are traversed by unfathomable infrastructural endeavours – such as the building of 700 miles of high speed rail, or the 50km bridges being outlaid across the country. Cheung appropriates images of these projects from online news sources, rendering them as inkjet prints on the newspaper that forms the backdrop to the works. These sites are depicted in a state of flux – pieces in a monumental puzzle of centralised state planning designed to bolster and sustain the Chinese economic miracle.

Cheung's paintings blend real and foreseen events to articulate the speed and complexity of change, constantly weighing human costs. Suspended in the middle of the gallery is a monumental sculptural installation, entitled *Home*. Made from financial newspaper and bamboo, Cheung's window installation refers to homes in China with traditional window designs that were demolished for rapid urbanisation. The sculpture hovers between states of being, suggesting a ghost architecture that would have supported the windows. The visitor is pulled back down to ground level from the god-like, macro perspective of the paintings. The windows act as a demarcation between the march of unstoppable progress, and the framework of identity, history and culture that define the individual; in *Tears of Paradise*, we are left pondering the greatest paradigm shift the world has ever seen from each point of view.

Cheung graduated from Central Saint Martins in 1998, completing an MA at the Royal College of Art in 2001. Solo exhibitions include *Home* at Galerie Huit, Hong Kong, 2018; *New Order Vanitas* at Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens, USA, 2017; *Gordon Cheung* at The Whitaker, UK, 2017; *Here be Dragons* at Nottingham Castle Museum (2016); *Lines in the Sand* at Leila Heller Gallery Dubai (2016); *Altered States* at the Arizona State University Art Museum (2010), *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* at the New Art Gallery Walsall (2009); *The Promised Land* at Jack Shainman Gallery (2009). Cheung's work features in numerous public collections worldwide, including Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The British Museum, The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Hood Museum of Art, Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, San Antonio Museum of Art, Speed Art Museum, The Whitworth Art Gallery, Arizona State University Art Museum and The Yale Center for British Art. Cheung lives and works in London.









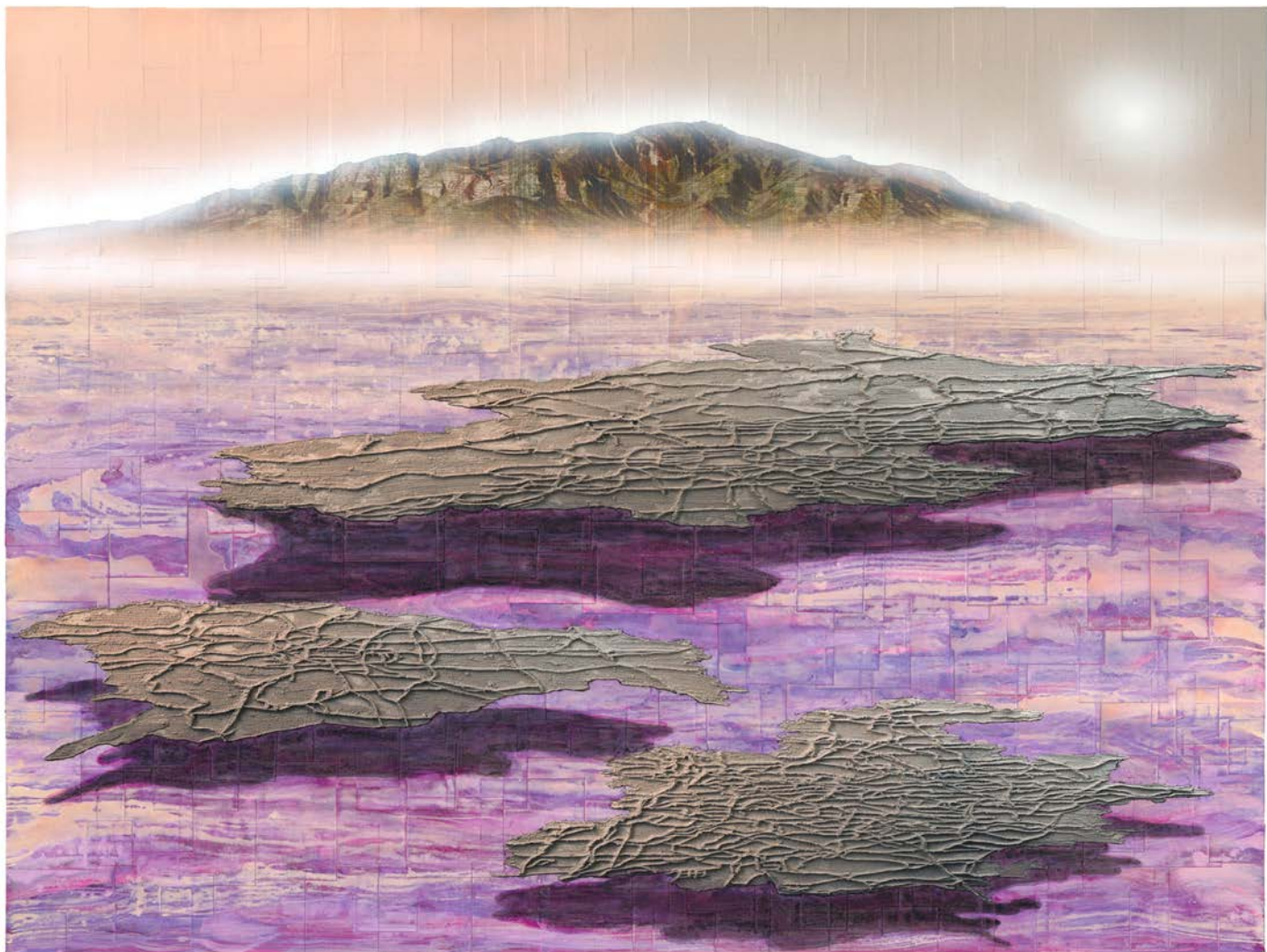




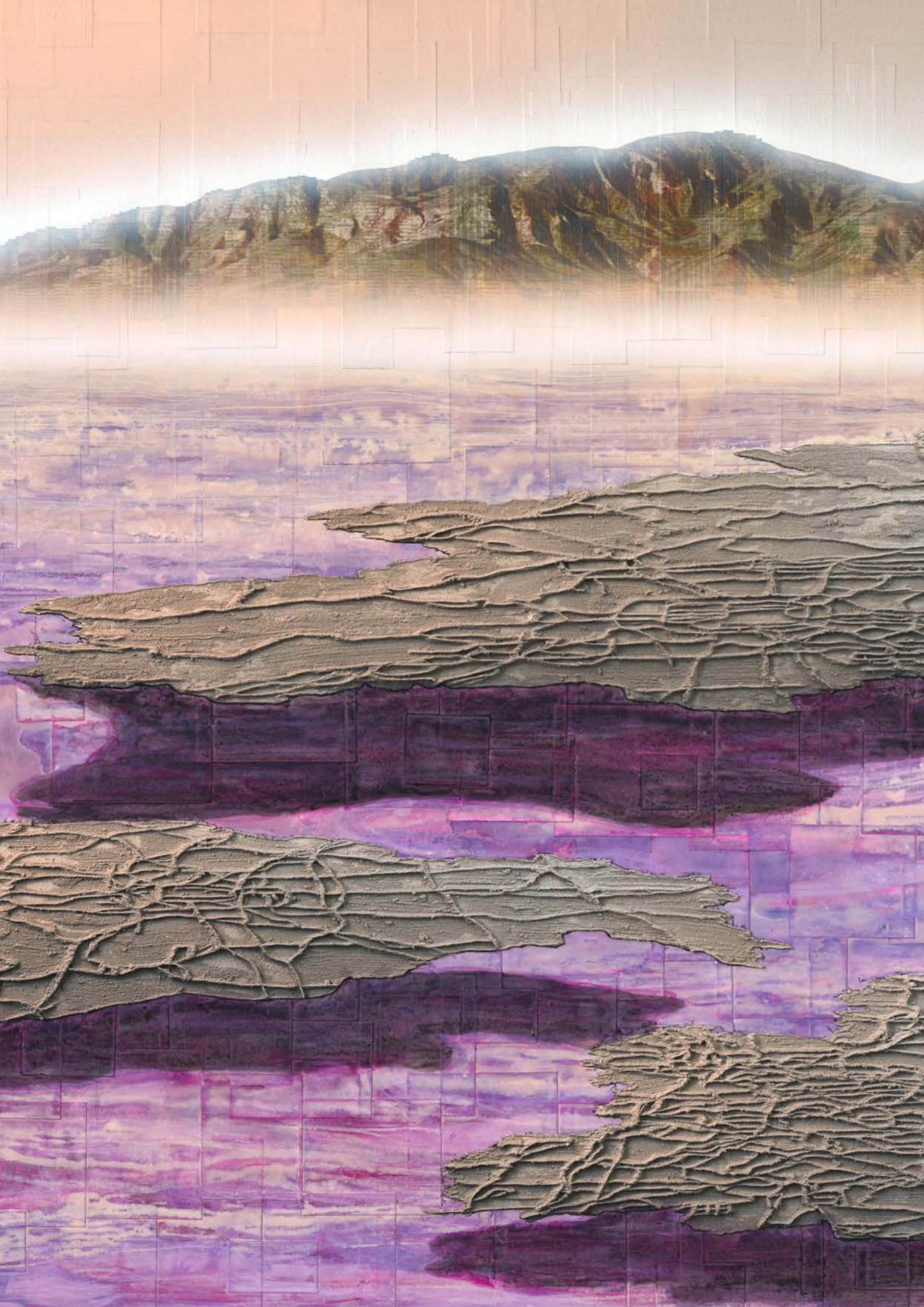
*Desert of the Real*, 2020  
Financial newspaper, archival inkjet, sand and acrylic on canvas  
150 x 200 cm  
59 1/8 x 78 3/4 in.  
£35,000 + VAT

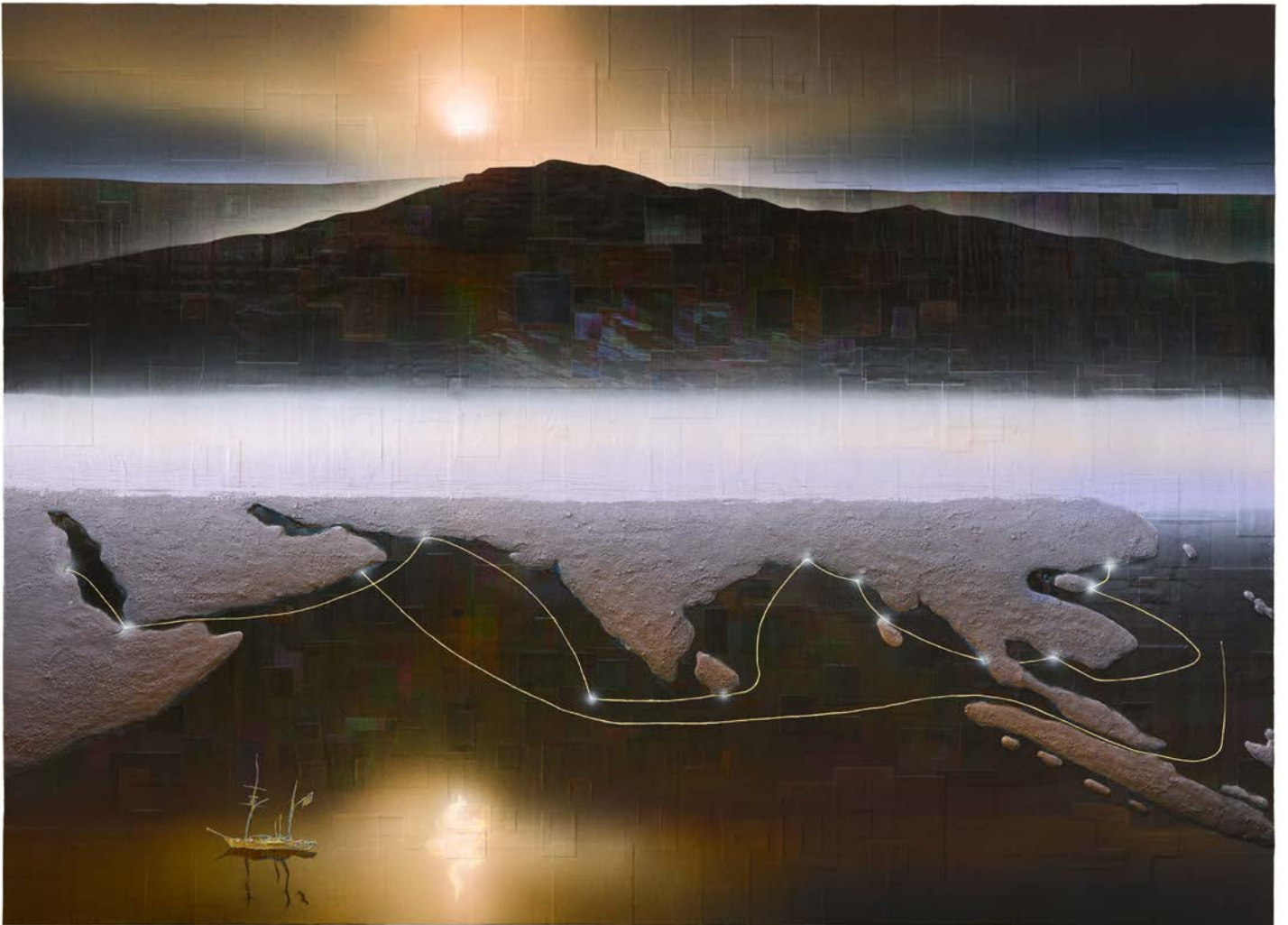






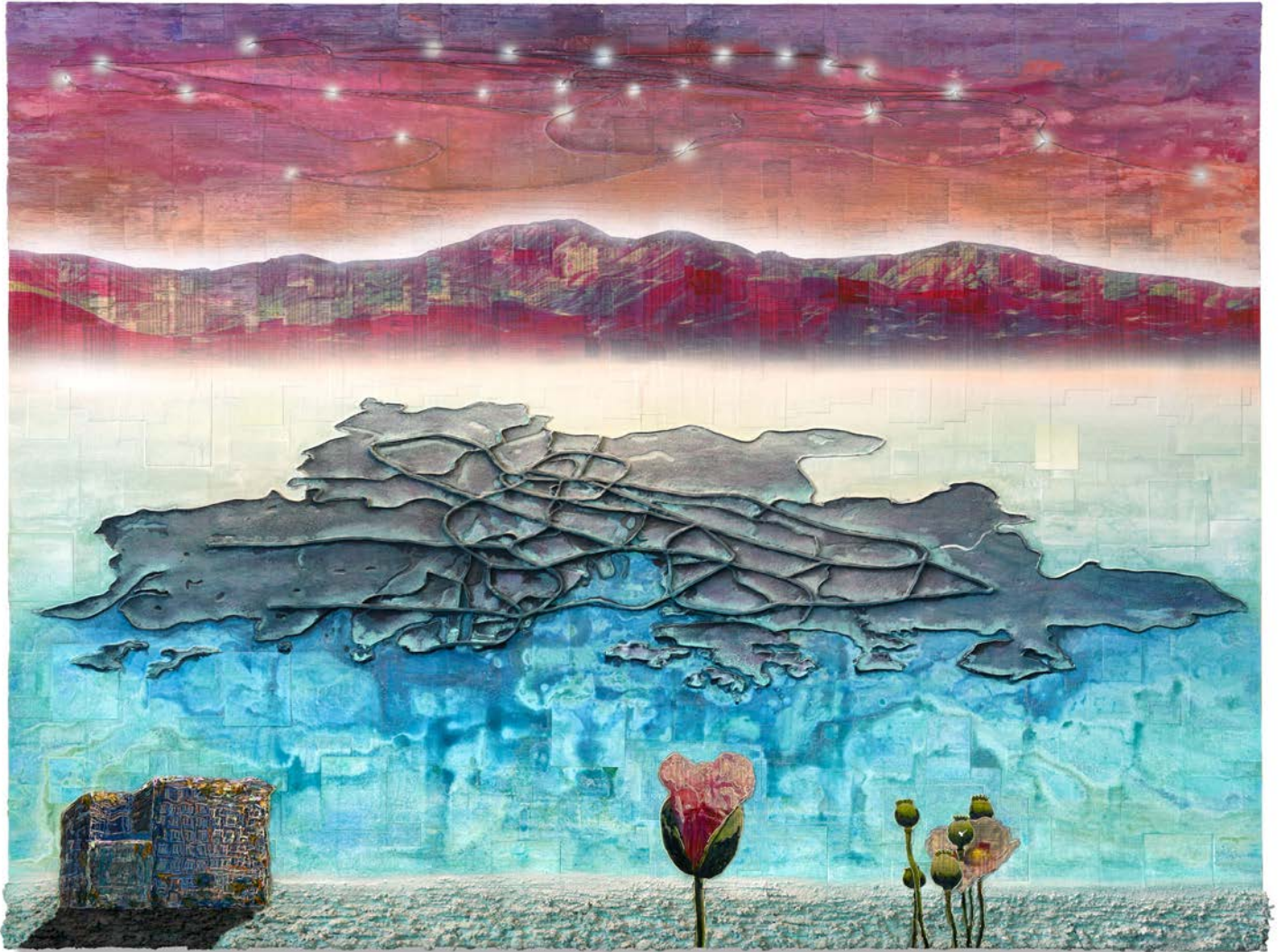
*Jing Jin Ji*, 2020  
Financial newspaper, archival inkjet, sand and acrylic on canvas  
150 x 200 cm  
59 1/8 x 78 3/4 in.  
£35,000 + VAT





*String of Pearls*, 2020  
Financial newspaper, archival inkjet, sand and acrylic on canvas  
150 x 200 cm  
59 1/8 x 78 3/4 in.  
£35,000 + VAT





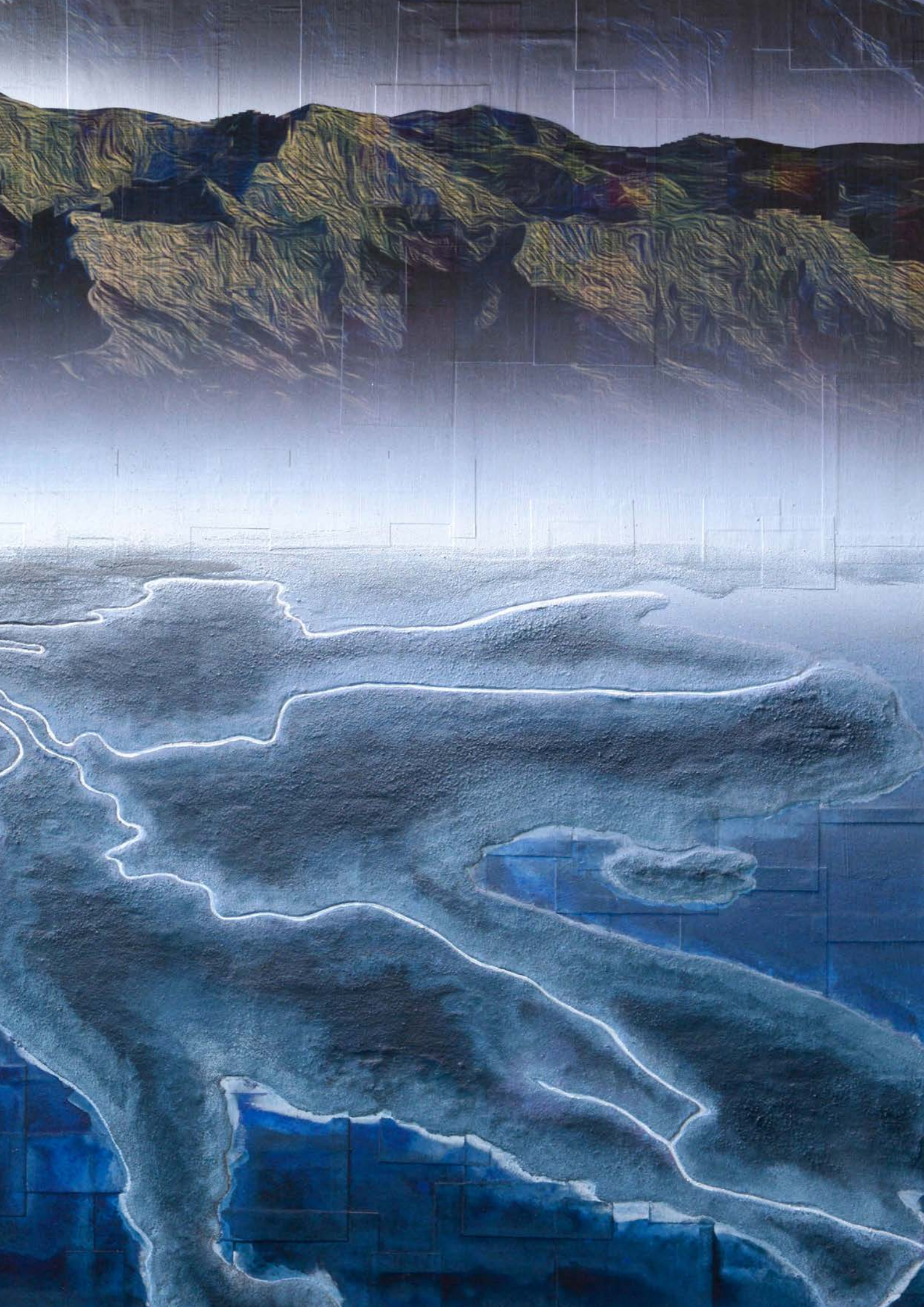
*Tears of Paradise*, 2020  
Financial newspaper, archival inkjet, sand and acrylic on canvas  
150 x 200 cm  
59 1/8 x 78 3/4 in.  
£35,000 + VAT





*Towers of Water, 2020*  
Financial newspaper, archival inkjet, sand and acrylic on canvas  
150 x 200 cm  
59 1/8 x 78 3/4 in.  
£35,000 + VAT







*Megalopolis*, 2020  
Financial newspaper, archival inkjet, sand and acrylic on canvas  
150 x 200 cm  
59 1/8 x 78 3/4 in.  
£35,000 + VAT





Home, 2020  
Financial newspaper and adhesive  
Dimensions variable  
Small: £8,000 + VAT  
Medium: £15,000 + VAT  
Large: £20,000 + VAT  
Extra Large: £24,000 + VAT  
Whole Installation: £185,000 + VAT





FTWeekend

# Critics' choice

Life&Arts



'Nisyros  
(Vivian's  
bed)'  
(2016-17)  
by Vivian  
Suter

## **Gordon Cheung**

Edel Assanti, London

The raw material of Cheung's collage paintings is the mashed up stocks and shares pages of this newspaper, on which he layers in spray paint, acrylic, pastel, ink, a hallucinatory mash-up of colours and forms suggesting the tensions and sublimities of contemporary urban life and Utopian/dystopian technological possibilities. The vast new paintings here contemplate the infrastructure projects for China's mega city Jing-Jin-Ji, an economic region around Beijing and Tianjin with a projected population of 100m; in contrast also displayed are 30 traditional Chinese window lattices suspended beneath the gallery's skylight.

*edelassanti.com*

January 17-March 7



Gordon Cheung: Tears of Paradise review

By Rosemary Waugh

23 January 2020

Gordon Cheung's landscapes are vast. Massive craggy mountains dominate the skyline, mega cities consume the plains, great swathes of ocean bite into the coastline. There are representations of giant bridges, world-conquering shipping routes, recordbreaking railways and passages of superhighway.

Then, things get darker, more unpleasant. The low-hanging white clouds are pollution bands, the flatplan of living quarters is really an internment camp for 're-educating' the Muslim Uyghur minority, and there's an oily sludge pooling at the base of a building.

Cheung, a British-Chinese artist, borrows from sci-fi and computerised imagery. The five paintings in this show started life as collaged squares of the Financial Times, layered up to create a pixelated effect. Even the one sculptural installation here, a series of hanging papier mâché frames recreating traditional Chinese window lattices, looks disconcertingly like the early 2000s Windows logo or multiple apps open on a desktop.

There's nothing futuristic about Cheung's images, every single reference point is drawn from contemporary China or its history. The plans for a supersized city that's bigger than the whole of Britain is real. So is the monumental One Belt One Road trade route forming links with the rest of Asia and Europe. And so are those camps.

But Cheung's works are closer to large-scale documentary projects than scathing criticism. They're also surprisingly beautiful, with areas of pearly green and black like the iridescence of a cayuga duck, or bits of hyped-up pink bursting out of an opium poppy.

In a way, these are the modern-day equivalent of Caspar David Friedrich's sweeping, sublime-seeking landscapes of the nineteenth century. Only instead of causing shock and awe through nature, Cheung does it via the human additions to a landscape. It's impressive – and it's also bloody terrifying.

# GORDON CHEUNG | CV

Born in 1975

Lives and works in London, UK

## Education

2001 Royal College of Art, MA Fine Art Painting, London, UK  
1998 Central Saint Martins, BA (Hons) Fine Art in Painting, London, UK

## Solo Exhibitions

2020 Tears of Paradise, Edel Assanti, London, UK  
2019 Cross Pollination, The Atkinson, Southport, UK  
Gordon Cheung, Edel Assanti, London, UK  
2018 Home, Galerie Huit, Hong Kong  
2017 New Order Vanitas, Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens, West Palm Beach, FL, USA  
Gordon Cheung, The Whitaker, Rossendale, UK  
Unknown Knowns, Edel Assanti, London, UK  
2016 Lines in the Sand, Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, UAE  
Here Be Dragons, Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Nottingham, UK  
30 Years of CFCCA: Gordon Cheung, Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, Manchester, UK  
2015 The Abyss Stares Back, Edel Assanti, London, UK  
Breaking Tulips, Alan Cristea Gallery, London, UK  
2014 Gordon Cheung, Art14 with Edel Assanti, London, UK  
2012 The Solar Cry, Edel Assanti, London, UK  
Techno Sublime, Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale, UK  
2011 The Light that Burns Twice as Bright, Alan Cristea Gallery, London, UK  
The Sleeper Awakes, Other Gallery, Shanghai, China  
2010 Altered States, Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, AZ, USA  
2009 Gordon Cheung, ROOM Artspace, London, UK  
Gordon Cheung & Jonathan Seliger, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn, NY, USA  
The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, New Art Gallery Walsall, Walsall, UK  
The Promised Land, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, USA  
2008 Wilderness of Mirrors, Galerie Adler, Frankfurt am Main, Germany  
Death by a Thousand Cuts, Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, Manchester, UK  
The Fall of the Rebel Angels, Alan Cristea Gallery, London, UK  
Gordon Cheung, Kirkby Gallery, Liverpool, UK  
Technophobia, Harris Museum, Preston, UK  
2007 God is on Our Side, Unosunove Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy  
Paradise Lost, Laing Art Solo Commission, Newcastle, UK  
The 1000 Yard Stare, Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth, UK  
Gordon Cheung: Recent Paintings, Djanogly Art Gallery, Lakeside Arts Centre, The University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK  
2006 Heart of Darkness, Galeria Thomas Cohn, São Paulo, Brazil  
2004 Hollow Sunsets, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London, UK  
2002 Sprawl, Domo Baal Gallery, London, UK

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2019 2219: Futures Imagined, ArtsScience Museum, Singapore  
The Evolution of Communication, Frank F. Yang Art & Education Foundation, Shenzhen, China  
2018 Summer Exhibition 2018, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
Transmission, Galerie Huit, Hong Kong  
The Sky's Gone Out, Arthouse1, London, UK  
History in the Making, Alan Cristea Gallery, London, UK  
2017 Karachi Biennale 2017, Karachi, Pakistan  
Into the Wild Abyss, RAMM Museum, Exeter, UK  
Young Masters Art Prize 2017, Royal Over-Seas League, London, UK; travelling to The Royal Opera Arcade Gallery, London, UK  
Turkish Tulips, Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam, Netherlands; travelling to the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, UK and the Horniman Museum, London, UK  
A Decade of Gifts and Acquisitions, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT, USA  
I Lost My Heart to a Starship Trooper, Griffin Gallery, London, UK  
Summer Exhibition 2017, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
Searching For Magic And The Distorted Image Falling From Your iCloud, Dot Project, London, UK  
2016 Telling Tales, Collyer Bristow, London, UK  
2015 Summer Show, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK  
Vita Vitale, Azerbaijan Pavilion, 56th International Art Exhibition (All the World's Futures), la Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy  
Clarks: Rebooted, Design Shanghai; Salone del Mobile, Milan; Frieze New York; London Fashion Week; London Design Festival; Frieze London  
20th Anniversary Exhibition, Alan Cristea Gallery, London, UK



## Selected Group Exhibitions (Cont.)

- 2014 Show Me the Money: The Image of Finance, 1700 to the present, Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sunderland, UK  
Contempo: International Contemporary Art Festival, Varna, Bulgaria  
How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare, Pristine Gallery, Monterrey, Mexico  
Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London UK  
Look at Me: Portraiture from Manet to the Present, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA  
TIME::CODE, WhiteBox, New York, USA  
New Editions and Acquisitions, Alan Cristea Gallery, London, UK  
Permanent Contemporary Collection, San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, TX, USA
- 2013 Wild New Territories, Botanical Gardens and Museum, Berlin Germany  
Currents: Recent Art from East Tennessee and Beyond, Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN, USA  
Wild New Territories, Simon Fraser University Gallery, Vancouver, Canada  
Now Playing Everywhere: A Survey of Social and Political Works from the Stéphane Janssen Collection, Arts Center, Mesa, AZ, USA
- Mesa The Big M 'On The Precipice' Tour, ISIS Arts, Newcastle, UK  
Accumulator III, Limerick City Gallery of Art, Limerick, Ireland  
Accumulator II, Oriel Myrddin Gallery, Carmarthen, Wales
- 2012 Wild New Territories, Camley Street Natural Park and The Foundling Museum, London, UK; travelled to Berlin-Dahlem Botanical Garden and Botanical Museum, Germany; SFU Galleries, Vancouver, Canada  
Difference Engine, West Cork Arts Centre, Cork, Ireland  
Immortal Nature, Edel Assanti, London, UK
- 2012 Cheer Up, It's Not the End of the World, Edinburgh Printmakers, Edinburgh, Scotland
- 2011 40 ARTISTS - 80 DRAWINGS, The Burton Art Gallery and Museum, Devon, UK  
Future Can Wait, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA, USA  
John Martin, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, UK  
John Martin: Painting the Apocalypse, Millennium Gallery, Sheffield, UK  
Public Enemy Number 1, Exhibit 320, New Delhi, India
- 2010 Recent Acquisitions, Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN, USA  
Press Art: The Annette and Peter Noble Collection, Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria  
Wasteland, WhiteBox, New York, USA  
We the Artists, National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad & Tobago, Port of Spain, Trinidad  
Public Enemy Number 1, Exhibit 320, New Dehli, India  
Premio Lissone, Museo d'arte contemporanea, Lissone, Italy  
Reich Sein, Künstlerverein Walkmühle e.V., Wiesbaden, Germany  
Beijing International Art Biennale, Beijing, China  
Negotiable Values, Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, Manchester, UK  
Dazed and Confused Chinese New Year, New Loon Fung, London, UK  
New and Classic works by Eleven Artists, Alan Cristea Gallery, London, UK  
Superunknown, Edel Assanti, London, UK
- 2009 PS: Parsing Spirituality, Affirmation Arts, New York, USA  
Projections, Carré d'Art - Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes, France  
Difference Engine, Cake contemporary arts, Kildare, Ireland  
British Friends of the Art Museums of Israel Charity Art Auction, Sotheby's and Louise Blouin Foundation, London, UK
- 2008 Jerwood Contemporary Painters, Jerwood Visual Arts, London, UK; travelled to Royal West of England Academy, Bristol, UK  
Painting the Glass House: Artists Revisit Modern Architecture, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT, USA; travelled to Mills College Art Museum, Oakland, CA, USA (2009)
- 2007 Currents: Recent Acquisitions, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., USA  
The Lucifer Effect, Gallery Primo Alonso, London, UK  
Drawing from History: Permanent Collection and Loans, Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe  
Blood Meridian, Galerie Michael Janssen, Berlin, Germany Arrivals/Departures, Urbis, Manchester, UK
- 2006 Fresh, Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA, USA  
John Moores 24, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, UK  
Stéphane Janssen: The Collector, Amarillo Museum of Art, Amarillo, TX, USA  
ASU Collection, Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, AZ, USA
- 2005 British Art Show 6, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK; travelled throughout UK  
Faux Realism, Royal Academy Pumphouse Gallery, London, UK
- 2004 Thermo 04, The Lowry, Salford, UK  
Le Petit Paysage, Liverpool Biennale, Liverpool, UK; travelled throughout UK
- 2003 Yes, I am a Long Way from Home, Nunnery Gallery, London, UK; travelled to Wolverhampton Art Gallery, West Midlands, UK; Herbert Read Gallery, Canterbury, UK; Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art Intervention, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, UK
- 2001 Trans-, Kyoto Art Center, Kyoto, Japan  
ARTfutures, Contemporary Art Society, London, UK  
CD1, Marlborough Fine Art, London, UK

## Awards and Residencies

2010	Premio Lissone, award finalist, Museo d'arte contemporanea, Lissone, Italy
2007	Artes Mundi Prize 3, nominee
2006	Braziers International Artists Workshop, residency, London, UK deciBel Visual Arts Award, finalist, London, UK
2005	Arts Council England, funds awarded; travelled to Hong Kong and China Arts Council of England Individual Arts Award
2004	The BOC Emerging Artist Award, London, UK Pizza Express Prospects Prize, finalist Jerwood Drawing Prize, finalist, London, UK Breathe Residency, Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, Manchester, UK
2003	Triangle Arts Trust International Artist Fellowship, Gasworks, New York, USA VASL Residency, Lahore and Islamabad, Pakistan Diffuse Asia, residency, Kyoto Art Center, Japan Lexmark European Painting Prize, finalist
2000	Socrates Travel Award; travelled to Berlin, Germany John Minton Travel Award; travelled to Paris, France TI Travel Award; travelled to Budapest, Hungary Paris Studio Residency, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France The Gilchrist-Fisher Award, finalist
1999	SPACE, residency, Old Street, London, UK
1998	Arte Viva Residency and Competition, First Prize Winner, Painting, Italy

## Selected Collections

Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe, AZ, USA  
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, CA, USA  
British Museum, London, UK  
Central Saint Martins, London, UK  
Frank F. Yang Art and Education Foundation, Shenzhen, China  
Government Art Collection, UK  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., USA  
Hiscox Collection, London, UK  
Hood Museum of Art, NH, USA  
HSBC Art Collection  
Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN, USA  
Minneapolis Institute of Art, MN, USA  
Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA  
The New Art Gallery Walsall, Walsall, UK  
Royal College of Art, London, UK  
San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, TX, USA  
Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY, USA  
Progressive Corporate Art Collection  
UBS Art Collection  
Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK  
Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT, USA