

邬建安

群山



Wu Jian'an

Mountain Ranges



Mountain Ranges

By John Tancock

Painstakingly created from layers of many thousands of writhing figures cut from brightly colored paper, Wu Jian'an's *Mountain Ranges* is his most complex installation to date. A devotee of the most extreme forms of decorative patterning, whether found in ancient Chinese artifacts or more recent psychedelia, Wu Jian'an brings to Hong Kong an evocation of a world of the imagination that has long since disappeared but needs to be recalled.

Since 2006 when the SARS epidemic led to the creation of *Daydreams*, his first mature series of paper cuts, he has delved ever more deeply into the world of Chinese mythology and history. For his subsequent exhibition *The Heaven of Nine Levels* (2008), he turned to *Chiyou* and *Xingtian*, ancient warriors who achieved ever-lasting fame for their bravery in adverse circumstances. Both were defeated in their rebellion against Emperor Huangdi, their courage inspiring Wu Jian'an to pay homage to them in *The Head of Chiyou* and *Xingtian*. It is *Xingtian* who, Wu has said, "planted a very strange seed in my imagination" and whose head is the focus of attention in the installation *Mountain Ranges*.

Paralleling Wu Jian'an's ever growing interest in China's ancient past is a willingness to explore different media to more fully express the vivid dramas that occupy his imagination day and night. In the 2008 exhibition he moved from paper cut to carved ox-hide and laser cut brass while in *Mountain Ranges* it is the spatial possibilities of paper cut to which he has devoted his attention.

Initially the relationship between the head of *Xingtian* in the center of the gallery and the colorful mountainous landscape on the walls is not immediately apparent. However, closer inspection of the layered surface reveals that the entire panorama is constructed from many thousands of agitated figures, creating an entirely different effect from the misty peaks familiar from so many classical Chinese landscapes. In spite of the fact that *Xingtian* was defeated in battle, this

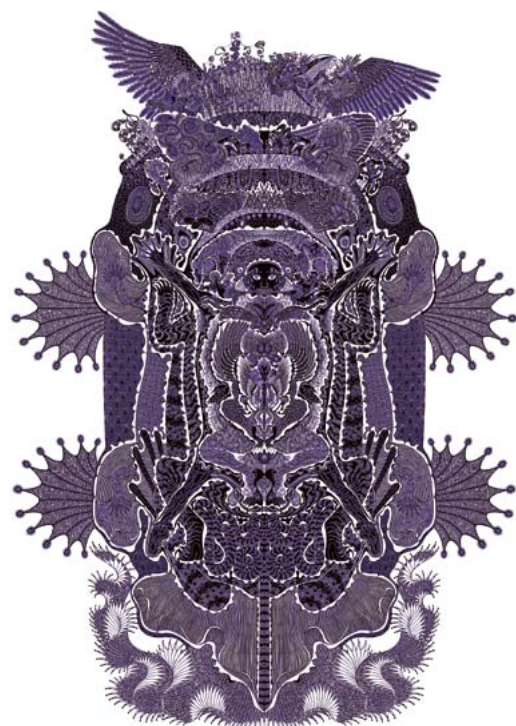


Fig 1
九重天, 2008
剪纸
版数 5
250 x 180 cm

The Heaven of Nine Levels, 2008
Paper cut, 9 Panels
Edition of 5
98 3/8 x 70 7/8 in

did not act as an impediment as eyes and mouth moved from his head and emerged from his body, enabling him to surpass all others in bravery.

The walls are divided into eleven panels. Through slight modifications of the contours of some of the peaks and without disrupting the dynamics of his composition, Wu Jian'an transforms them into suggestions of celebrated mythological figures, many of whom are still remembered in modern festivals and contemporary parlance. Among the references are Fuxi and his consort Nuwa, creators of the human race who also exerted a considerable civilizing influence as well as Chang E, Goddess of the moon, who is united with her husband Houyi the Archer only once a year on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month. This myth is the origin of the popular Moon Festival. Equally beloved is the legend of the celebrated beauty of the Tang Dynasty Yang Guifei and the general An Lushan.

Through his use of traditional Chinese themes and techniques, Wu Jian'an creates an environment in *Mountain Ranges* that is also a critique of the current state of Chinese society. Not political in any obvious sense, he feels deeply that China has lost its way since becoming a world power and no longer has respect for its traditions. He would like to see China emulate the courage of the hero *Xingtian*, finding a way back to the sources of its spiritual and intellectual greatness without abandoning the benefits achieved by its opening to the western world in the recent past.

In a world of increasing conformity, Wu Jian'an is noteworthy for the idiosyncrasy of his position, both as a practicing artist and as a troubling social critic. *Mountain Ranges* is simultaneously a dazzling display of technical skill and a probing analysis of connections between China today and its fabled past.

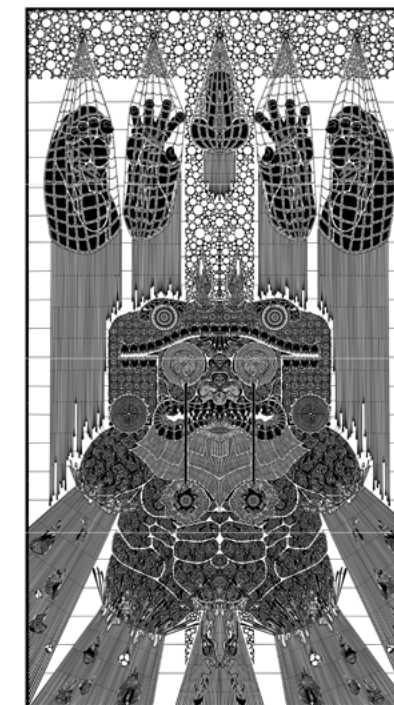


Fig 2
凌迟蚩尤, 2007
稿图
363 x 230 cm

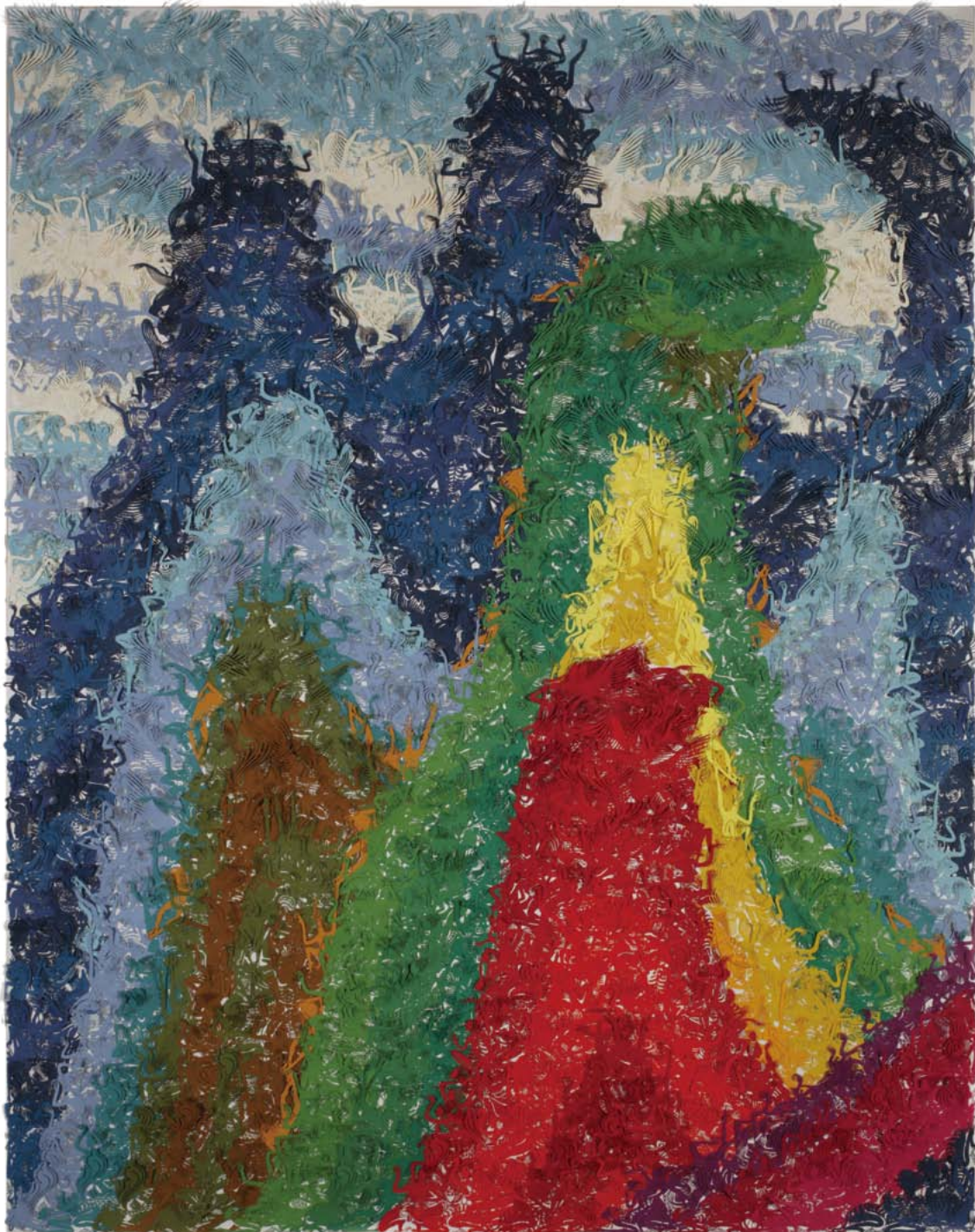
Execution of Chiyou by Lingchi, 2007
Study for stainless steel work
142 7/8 x 90 x 1/2 in



伏羲, 2011
剪纸
250 x 200 cm

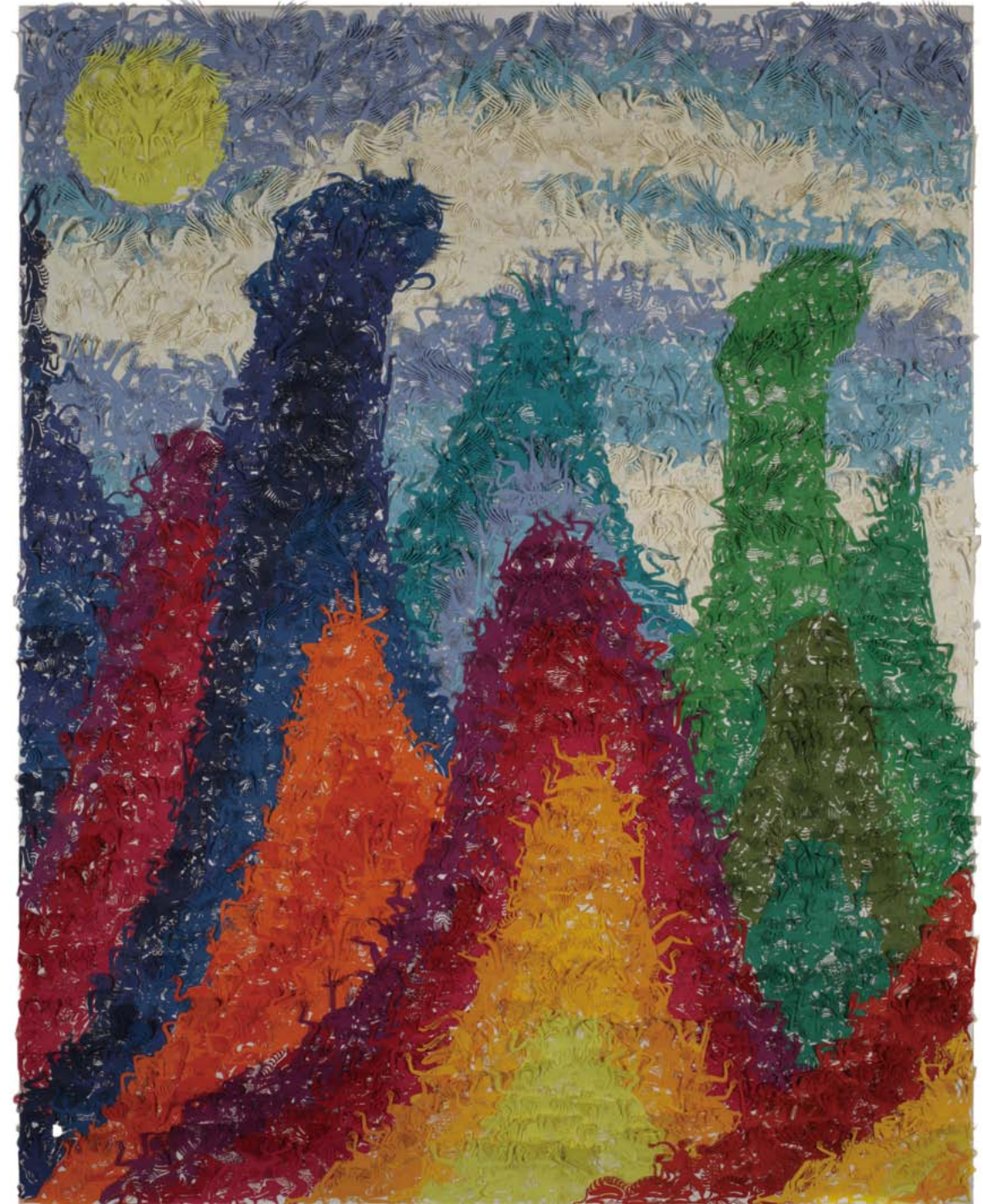
Fuxi, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 78 3/4 in





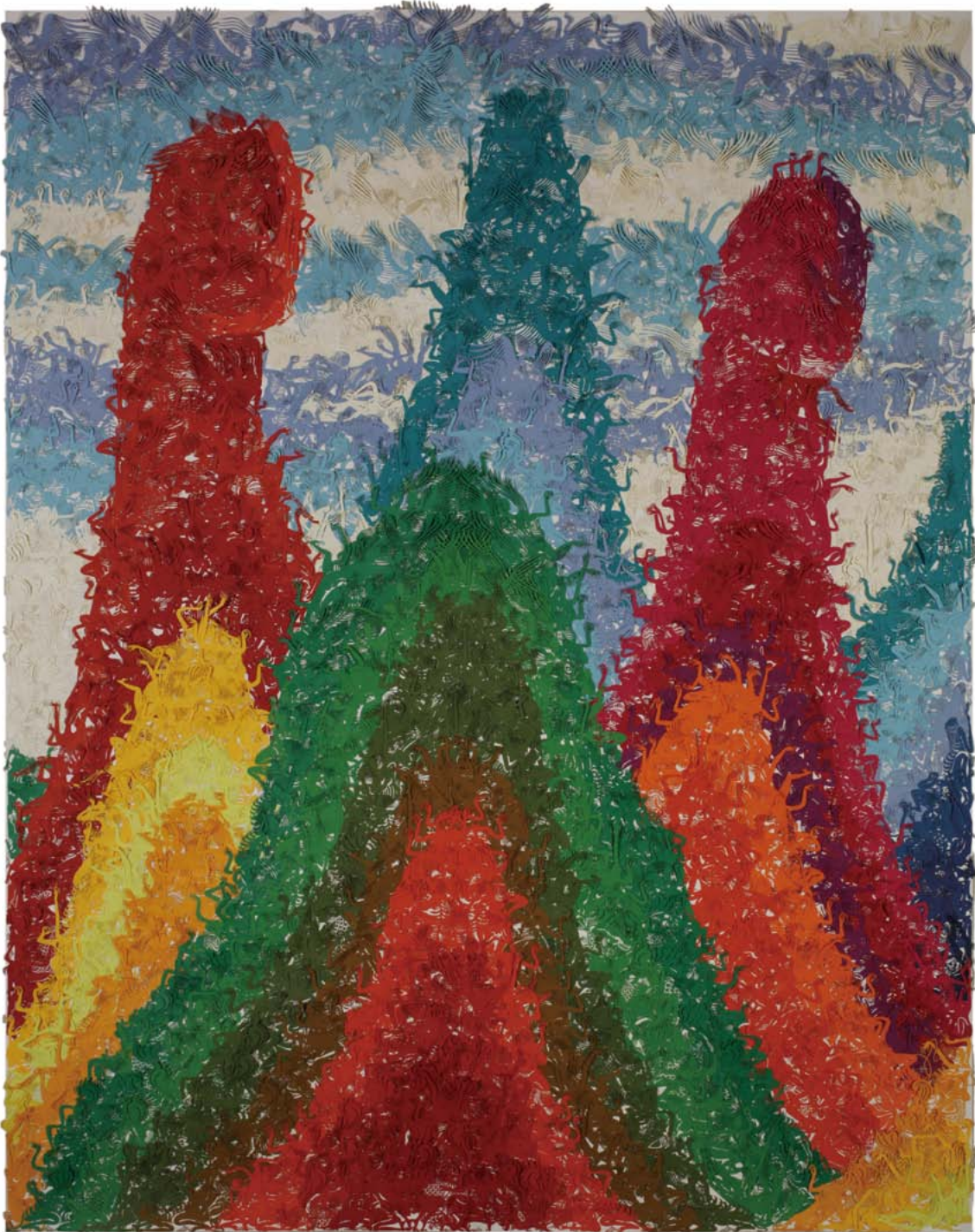
相恋, 2011
剪纸
250 x 200 cm

Fused in Desire, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 78 3/4 in



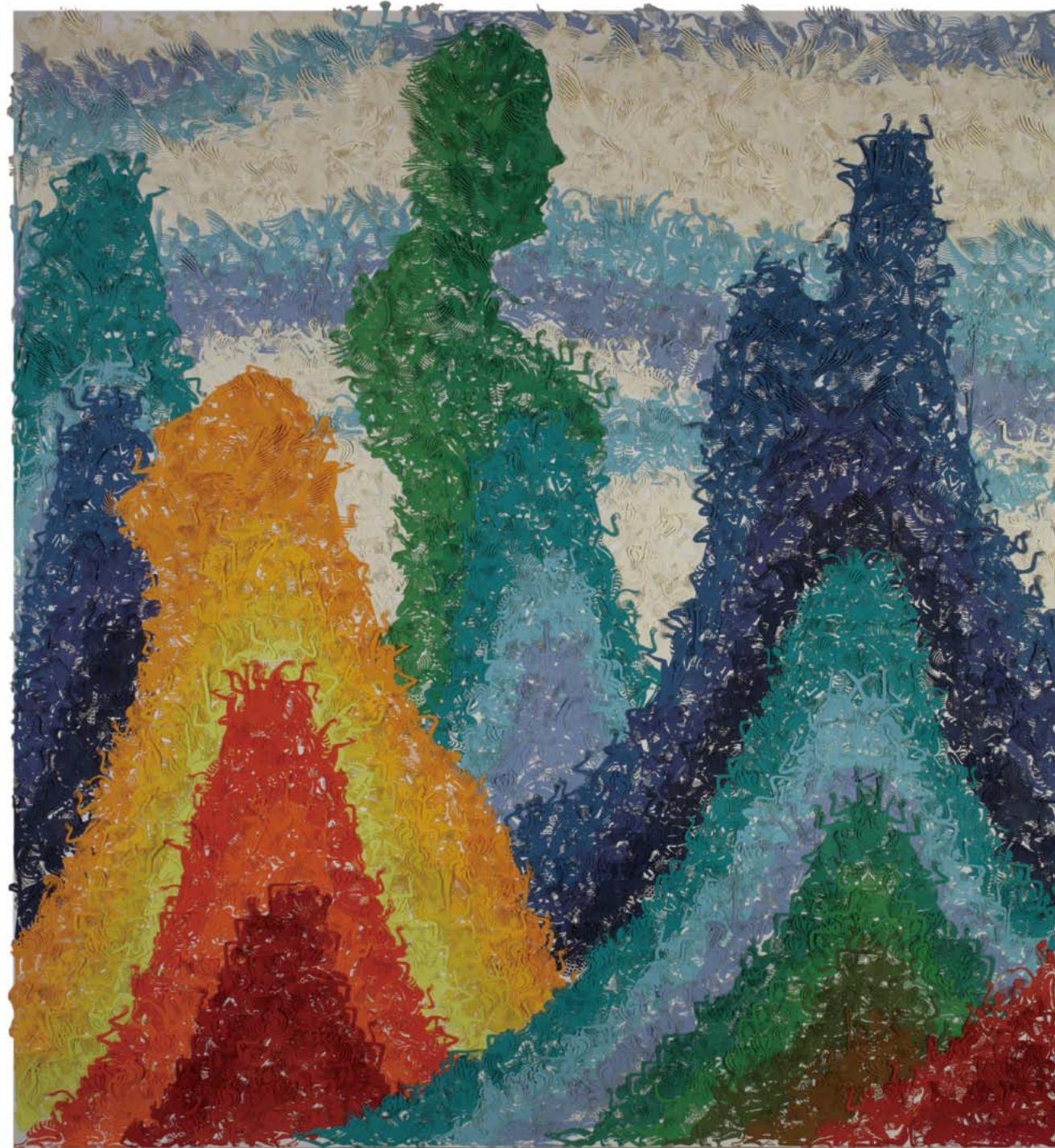
望月, 2011
剪纸
250 x 200 cm

Gazing at the Moon, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 78 3/4 in



双茎, 2011
剪纸
250 x 200 cm

Double Phallus, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 78 3/4 in



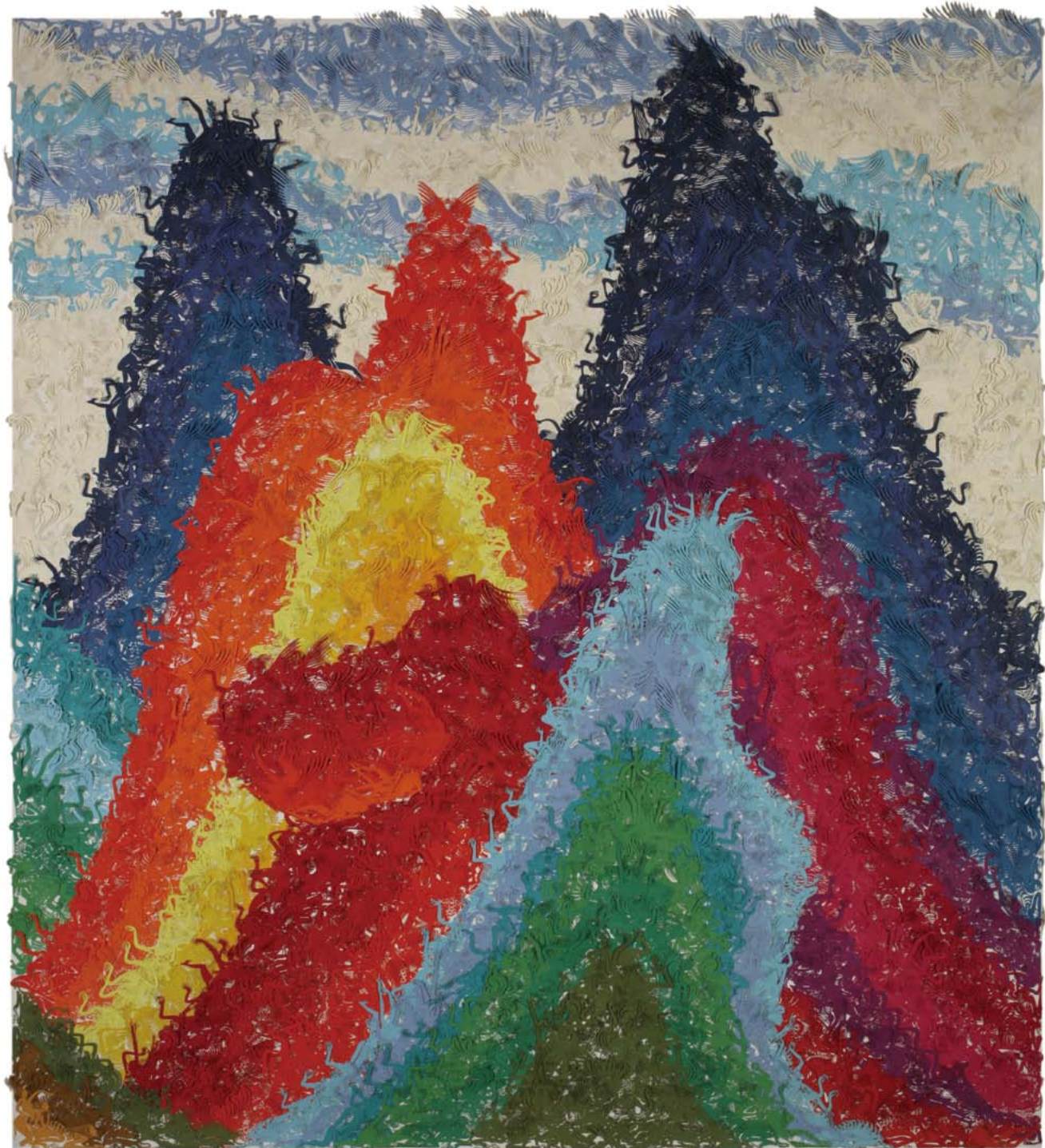
贵妃, 2011
剪纸
250 x 230 cm

Guifei, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 90 1/2 in



双人, 2011
剪纸
250 x 240 cm

Coupling, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 94 1/2 in



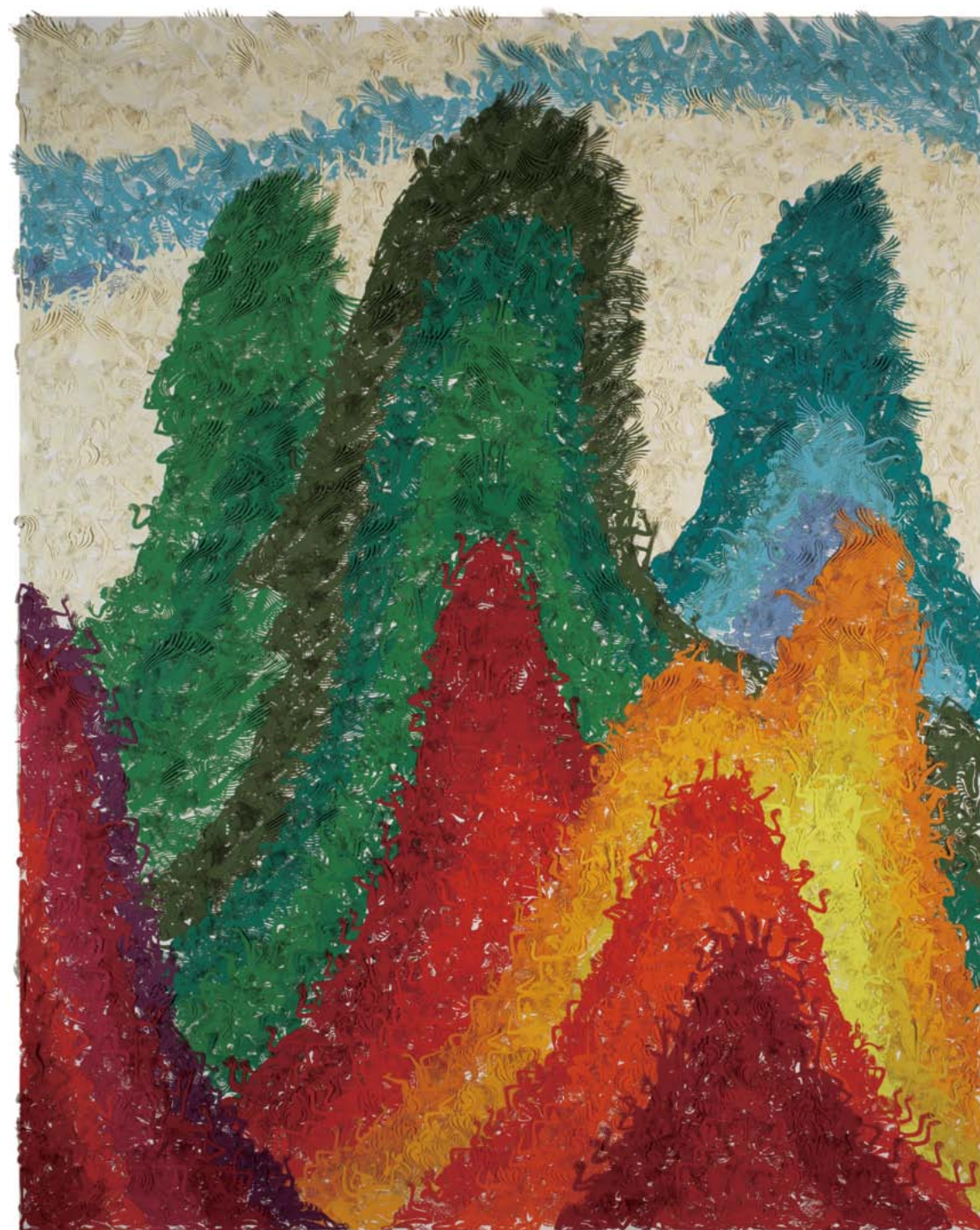
睡将军, 2011
剪纸
250 x 230 cm

The Sleeping General, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 90 1/2 in



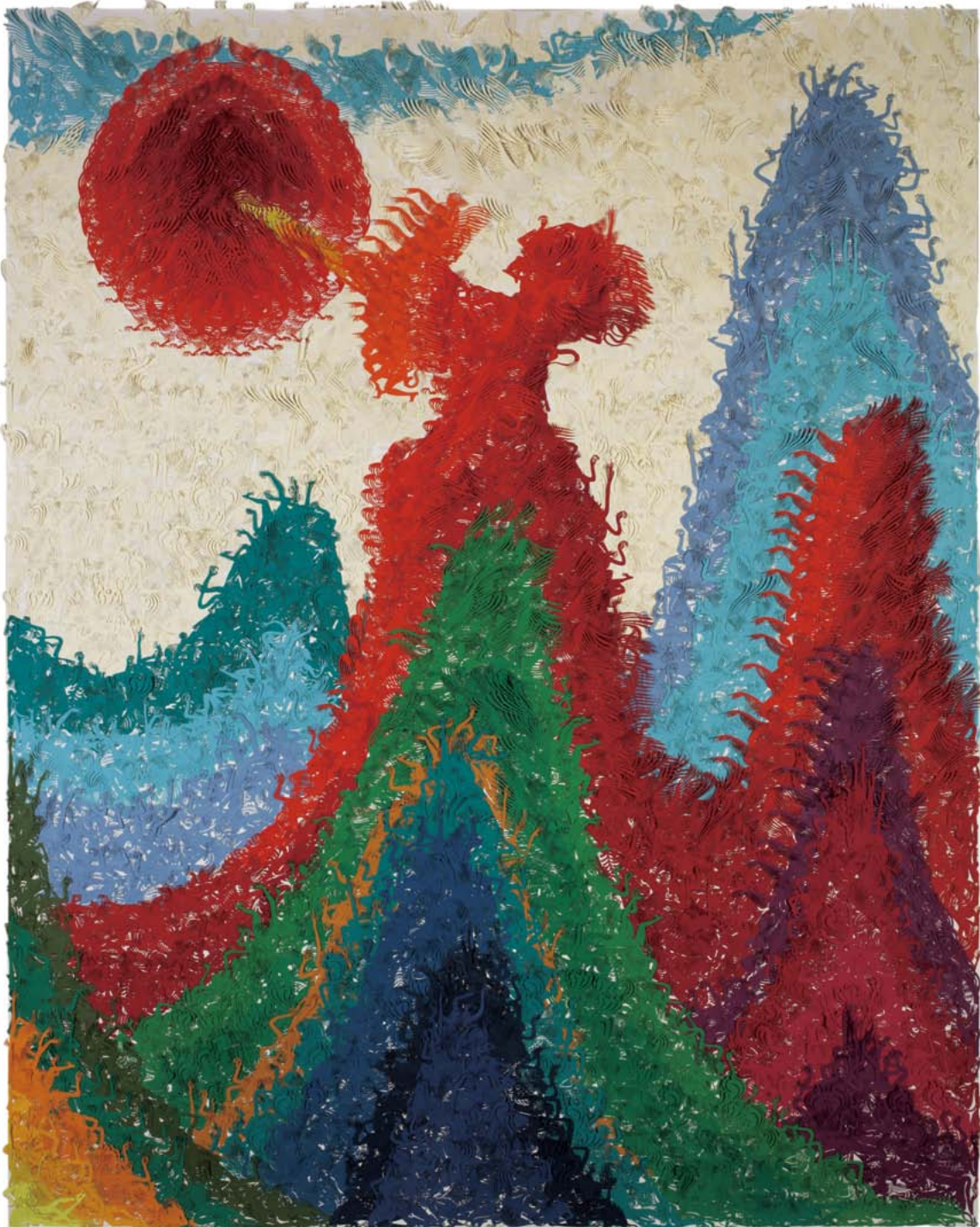
牡鹿, 2011
剪纸
250 x 200 cm

Stag, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 78 3/4 in



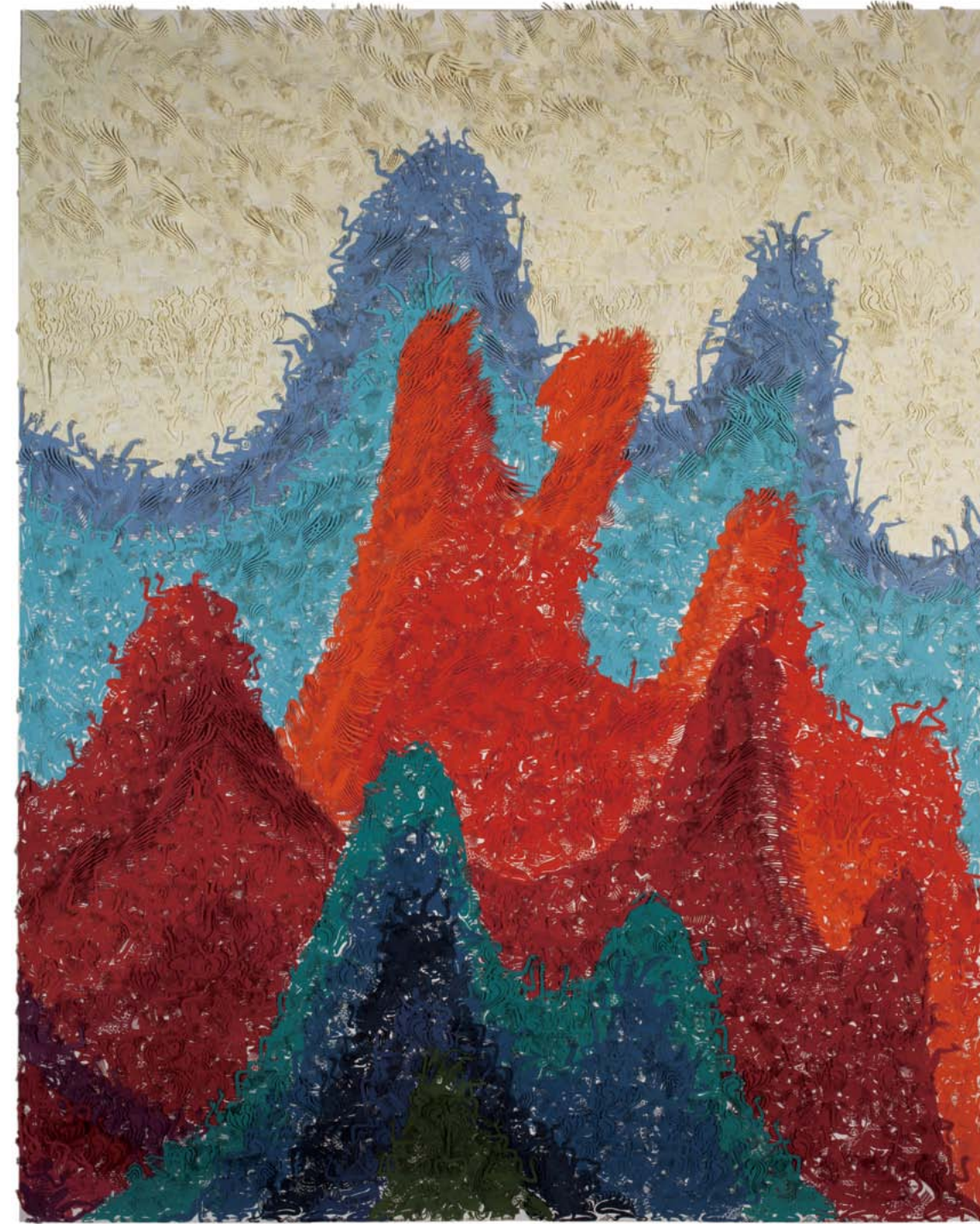
望乡, 2011
剪纸
250 x 200 cm

Gazing Homewards, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 78 3/4 in



射日, 2011
剪纸
250 x 200 cm

Archer Houyi Fells the Suns, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 78 3/4 in



女娲, 2011
剪纸
250 x 200 cm

Nuwa, 2011
Paper cut
98 1/2 x 78 3/4 in



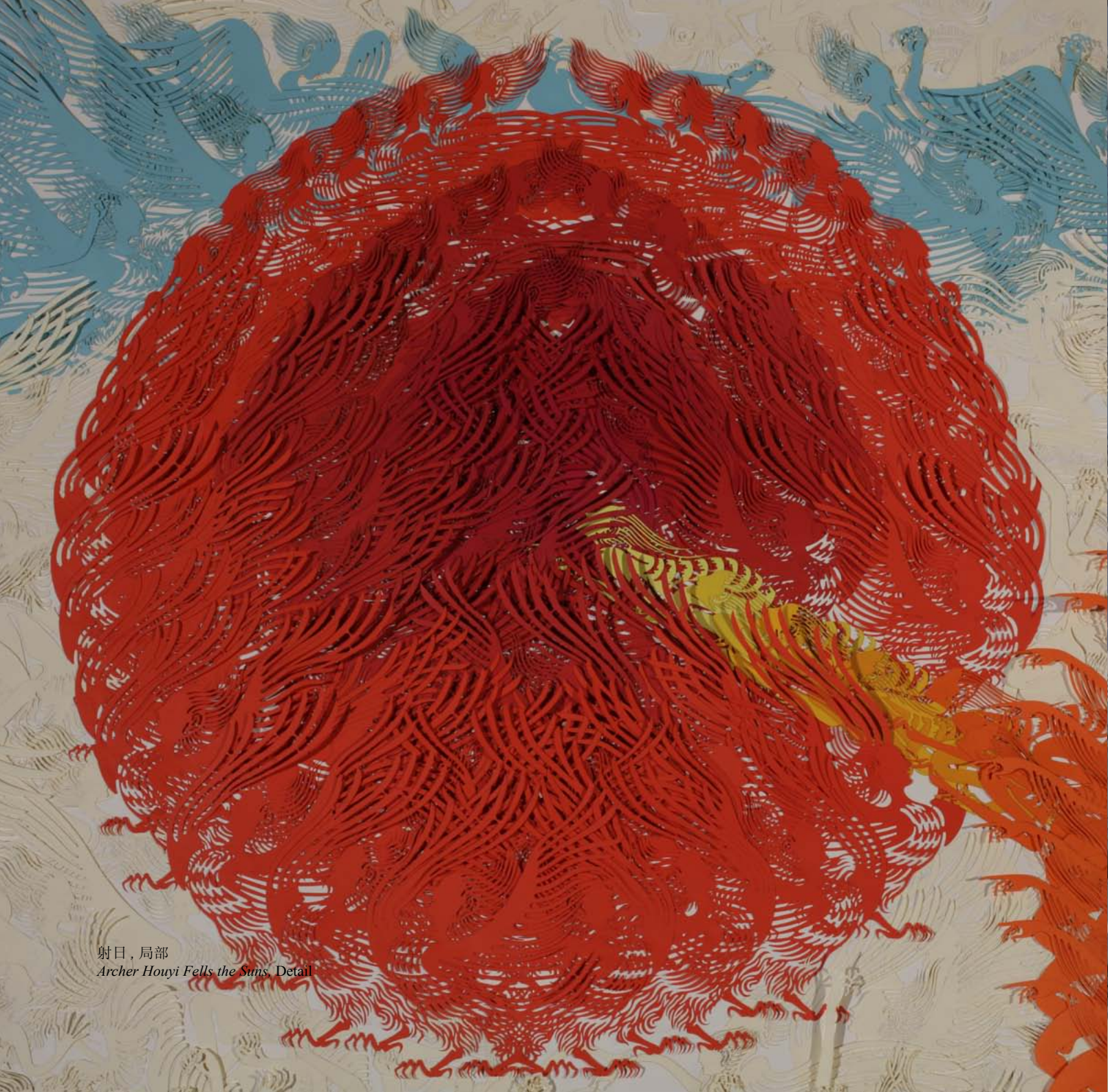
刑天首级，局部
The Head of Xingtian, Detail



刑天首级, 2011 石膏, 人发
The Head of Xingtian, 2011 Plaster of Paris, human hair



射日·局部
Archer Houyi Fells the Suns, Detail



射日, 局部
Archer Houyi Fells the Suns, Detail



望月, 局部
Gazing at the Moon, Detail



相恋：局部
Fused in Desire, Detail



望月, 局部
Gazing at the Moon, Detail



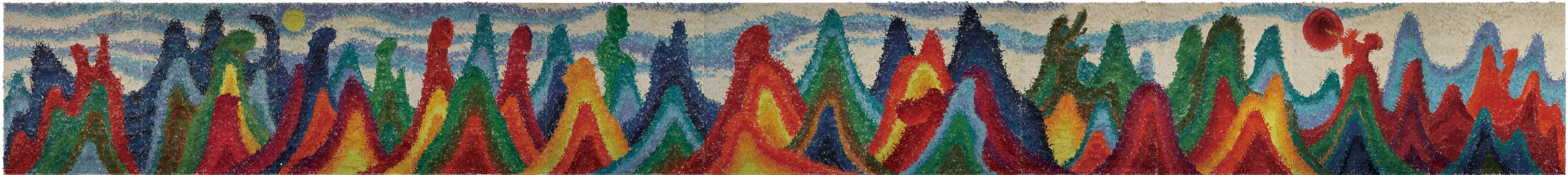
女娲, 局部
Nuwa, Detail



贵妃, 局部
Guifei, Detail



双凤, 局部
Double Phoenix, Detail



群山, 2011
剪纸
250 x 2300 cm

Mountain Ranges, 2011
Paper cut, 11 Panels
98 1/2 x 905 1/2 in



射日, 局部
Archer Houyi Fells the Suns, Detail

群山

唐冠科

邬建安《群山》由无数个色彩缤纷、精镂细刻的纸人组成，是他创作至今最为复杂的一件装置作品。邬建安一贯热衷于从中国古代文献或是现代迷幻中发掘的异样装饰图案，这件作品将为香港大众带来一度消失但又不可避免被重新唤醒的想象空间。

非典疫情期间激发了邬建安2006年展出的《白日梦》，形成其第一组成熟的剪纸作品。之后他逐渐深入到中国历史与神话世界中。在其2008年的展览《九重天》中，艺术家以蚩尤与刑天为题材。这两名古代武士通过在逆境中的英勇善战而取得了经世不衰的英名，虽然后来都败于黄帝之手，他们的勇气激发了邬建安的创作灵感，而通过作品《蚩尤与刑天首级》来向两位武士致敬。邬建安曾说过，“刑天在我的想象力中种下了非常奇特的种子”，而刑天之首也是此次《群山》作品中的焦点。

随着对中国传统文化兴趣的加深，邬建安坚持不懈地探索和运用各类材质来诠释日夜缠绕在脑海中的精彩故事情节。在2008年《九重天》的展览中，他用手工镂刻牛皮和激光切割黄铜板来替代剪纸，而此次《群山》的装置则是他最近从平面的剪纸衍生到三维空间的探索。

乍一看，位于展览中央的刑天首级与四周彩色山峦的关系可能并不明显。然而，通过仔细的观察你会发现整个群山全景是由无数个造型生动的古神组成，与中国传统山水画中雾气环绕的朦胧山峰形成对比。尽管刑天不敌、被黄帝斩首，但这并没有阻止其化双乳为目，脐为口，操干戚以舞，他的英勇肝胆已经远远超越了世人。

装置的墙壁被分为11个部分。在没有影响连绵群山整体构图的情况下，



Fig. 3
刑天, 2006 - 2007
手工镂刻牛皮, LED
灯箱
275 x 165 x 143 cm

Xing Tian, 2006 - 2007
Hand carved ox hide mounted on
LED lightbox
108 1/4 x 65 x 56 1/4 in

艺术家对各个山峦轮廓作了微妙的转变，将他们喻指为至今家喻户晓的日常用语及传统节日中的11位著名传说人物。比如人类及文明的创造者伏羲与他的配偶女娲；每年只有在八月十五才能团聚的月神嫦娥及丈夫后羿，这个神话就是中秋节的起源；以及唐朝美女杨贵妃与将军安禄山的旷世传说。

通过运用中国传统主题与手法，邬建安创作的《群山》同时也是对中国当代社会的一种批判。虽然没有涉及到政治，他认为随着经济改革发展，中国逐渐成为一个具有国际影响力的大国，但同时在此过程中也失去了方向，特别是越来越忽略对传统文化的尊重。他期待今天的中国能够效仿刑天的英勇气概，在对西方世界开放的同时，重新追溯本身的传统文化与智慧精髓。

无论作为艺术家还是社会评论家，在当今日益同化的世界中，邬建安的独特观念值得我们深思。《群山》不仅精彩地体现了艺术家的娴熟技艺，同时也是对中国今日与传统之间关系的探索与分析。



Fig. 4
九重天现场图片：日本福岡亚洲美术馆，2009
Installation view: *The Heaven of Nine Levels*, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan, 2009

【简历 Biography】

1980 生于北京，祖籍上海金山。
2002 毕业于北京广播学院广告系，获学士学位。
2005 毕业于中央美术学院，获硕士学位并留校任教。
现生活、工作于北京

个展

2008 《九重天》，前波画廊，北京，中国
2006 《白日梦》，前波画廊，纽约，美国
2005 《寻影初记》，中央美术学院油画系陈列室，北京，中国

群展

2010 《造型》，中央美术学院美术馆，北京，中国
《一江春水》，林肯郡博物馆，林肯郡，英国
《Beyond Mediations——第二届 Mediations 双年展》，Zamek 文化中心，Poznan，波兰
《大声展：分享主义》，三里屯 SOHO，北京，中国
《后传统：放大的切片》，上海多伦现代美术馆，上海，中国
2009 《共再生——第四届福冈亚洲三年展》，福冈亚洲美术馆，福冈，日本
《Always—As it was》，唐人画廊，曼谷，泰国
2008 《重访“孤星”》，前波画廊，北京，中国
《A+A' 2008 第三回展》，多伦美术馆，上海，中国
2007 《网：再现空间、时间与文化》，前波画廊，北京，中国
《A+A'2007——A+A 第二回展》，中央美术学院陈列馆、四川大学美术馆、重庆美术馆，北京、成都、重庆，中国
2006 《源于生活——首届学院实验艺术文献展》，中央美术学院主楼展厅，北京，中国
《新民间运动——公共生活的重建》，北京优库现代艺术空间，北京，中国
《图画手工》，偏锋新艺术空间，北京，中国
2005 《未来考古学——第二届南京三年展》，南京博物院，南京，中国

1980 Born in Beijing, China
2002 Graduated from Beijing Institution of Broadcasting, received B.A. degree
2005 Graduated from Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing, received M.A. degree
Currently lives and works in Beijing.

Solo Exhibitions

2008 *The Heaven of Nine Levels*, Chambers Fine Art, Beijing, China
2006 *Daydreams*, Chambers Fine Art, New York, USA
2005 *Searching for Piyongxi (Shadow Play)*, Oil Painting Department Gallery, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China

Group Exhibitions

2010 *Modelling*, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China
River Flows East-Landscapes of the Imagination, The Collection, Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire, Lincoln, UK
Beyond Mediations- the 2nd Mediations Biennale, Zamek Culture Center, Poznan, Poland
Sharism-Get It Louder 2010, San Li Tun SOHO, Beijing, China
Post Traditions: Enlarge the Cross Section, Shanghai Duolun Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, China
2009 *Live and Let Live: Creators of Tomorrow—The 4th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale*, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan
Always—As It Was, Tang Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
2008 *Another Lonely Planet Revisited*, Chambers Fine Art, Beijing, China
A+A' 2008 The Third A+A, Duolun Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, China
2007 *Net: Reimagining Space, Time and Culture*, Chambers Fine Art, Beijing, China
A+A' 2007 The Second A+A, Gallery of Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing; Sichuan University Museum, Chengdu, Sichuan; Chongqing Art Museum, Chongqing, China
2006 *Coming from Daily Life---1st Academy Documentary of Experimental Art*, Zhulou Art Space, Beijing, China
New Folk Movement---The Reconstruct of Communal Living, U Space, Beijing, China
Painting and Handwork, PIFO New Art Studios, Beijing, China
2005 *Archaeology of the Future: the 2nd Triennial of Chinese Art*, Nanjing Museum, Nanjing, China



CHAMBERS FINE ART 前波画廊