

ZHENG CHONGBIN:
LEVITY AND GRAVITY



Chambers Fine Art and Shin Gallery are pleased to present *Levity and Gravity*, a solo exhibition for Bay Area based artist Zheng Chongbin. Born in Shanghai in 1961, Zheng graduated from the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts (now China Academy of Art) in Hangzhou in 1984 and taught painting there until 1988. In 1989 he received a fellowship from the San Francisco Art Institute to study installation, performance, and conceptual art, receiving his MFA in 1991.

A resident of the San Francisco Bay Area for over three decades, Zheng is inspired by the region's distinctive atmospheric and environmental effects and rich ecologies, as well as by the California light and space movement. This will be the artist's third solo exhibition in New York.

Cast of Shadow, 2021. Ink and acrylic on Xuan paper. 185 x 143 cm (72 4/5 x 56 1/3 in).



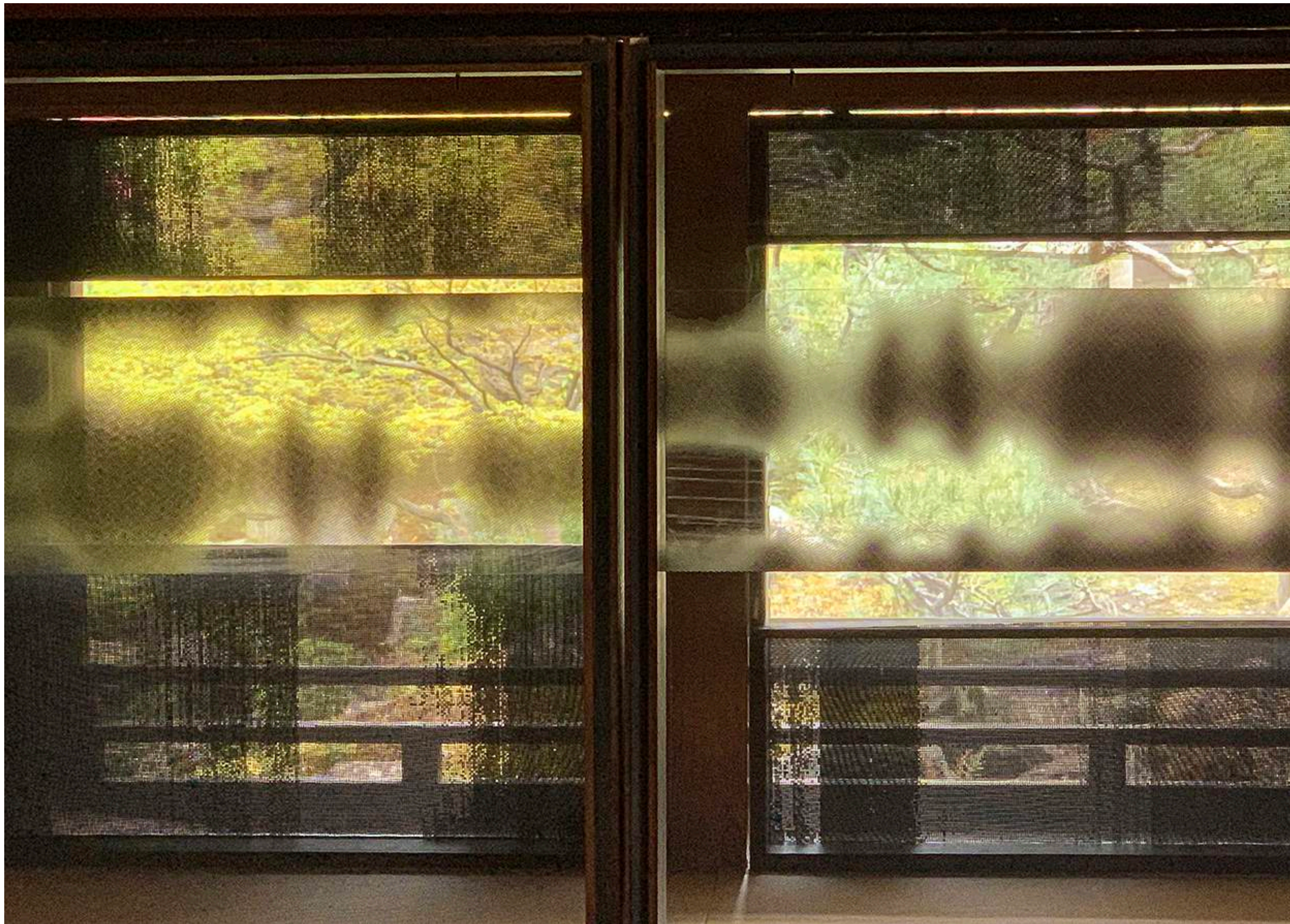


Zheng moves freely across a variety of media, a versatility that is highlighted in his large-scale installations *I Look for the Sky*, currently installed in the atrium of the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and *Liquid Space*, that transformed the Kennin-ji temple in Kyoto in 2019, along with his immersive video pieces *Material Play*, shown at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in 2017, and *Wall of Skies*, exhibited at the Shanghai Biennale 2016-17 in The Power Station of Art.

Wall of Skies, 2016-17. Installation shot at The Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China.



Liquid Space, 2019. Installation shot at Ryosoku-in Temple, Kyoto, Japan.



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Complementing these public projects, the current exhibition *Levity and Gravity* provides contrast and context to Zheng's artistic practice.

The works presented in the exhibition continue his longstanding experimentation with painting for which he has developed a personal language that mixes traditional Chinese elements (ink, Xuan paper) with Western tools and materials (brushes, acrylic, and other media) to create abstract, overlapping planar forms, often mounted on wood or aluminum.

Trace of Time C, 2021. Ink and acrylic on Xuan paper. 173 x 141 cm (68 1/8 x 55 1/2 in).





Studio Image. Zheng Chongbin at his studio, San Francisco, USA

Conversant with Western theory and Chinese classicism, Zheng recognizes the deep cultural meaning that is embedded within the traditional materials he uses, but rather than treat them as historical or ‘found’ objects, he activates them, allowing ink, paper, acrylic and water to interact with one another, generating endless visual possibilities.

Shimmering Cloud, 2021. Ink and acrylic on Xuan paper. 109 x 95 cm (43 x 37 1/3 in).





Fractals naturally appear as the materials coalesce, and Zheng has devised various methods to manipulate these processes so that they appear ‘frozen’ in time. Areas of his paintings thus resemble natural structures ranging from neurons, blood vessels, and tree branches to mountains, rivers, and coastlines, but by instantiating their formation rather than by objective depiction.

Shimmering Wind, 2021. Ink and acrylic on Xuan paper. 135 x 112 cm (53 x 44 in).

The notion of time is an integral aspect of Zheng's painting process, due to the performative nature of working with ink and acrylic; directing the flow of these materials requires the artist to intervene at key moments, both with his brush and by folding and rotating the various strips and sheets of paper.

The element of chance comes into play, as unexpected outcomes compel the artist to react to the various material agents, collaborating with them in real-time.

Cross Section 2021. Ink and acrylic on Xuan paper. 119 x 107 cm (46 7/8 x 42 1/5 in).





Zheng's *I Look for the Sky* involves a multi-layered construction that spans the entire atrium of the Asian Art Museum, installed several stories high. In her catalogue essay for the exhibition, art critic and scholar Maya Kóvskaya writes, "The immersive environmental installation by Bay Area-based artist Zheng Chongbin offers an unexpected and playful encounter with the natural world. The artwork reveals our entanglement with the dynamic physical properties of nature..."

These iridescent patterns suspended in space embody a series of virtual skies located within the airy interior of the museum's sky-lit atrium". The experience of creating the piece gave the artist a newfound perspective on the way we perceive levity and gravity, hence the title of this new exhibition in New York.

I Look for the Sky, 2021. Installation shot at Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, USA.



I Look for the Sky, 2021. Installation shot at Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, USA.

Central to Zheng's art is a view of the world as always in flux, consisting of flows of matter and energy that repeatedly cohere and dissipate. This idea of flux in relation to the space above and below us is the inspiration behind this recent body of work; whereas previous paintings have resembled a 'bird's eye view' of a landscape below, many of these works evoke the act of looking upward.

Cast of Shadows and *Cast of Light* seem to mimic the areas of undulating light and shadow when looking up at the artist's recent installation works. *Fault Line A* and *Shimmering Cloud* appear more object-like, and there is a weightlessness to them as if the compositions are suspended in mid-air.

Fault Line A, 2021. Ink and acrylic on Xuan paper. 260 x 180 cm (102 1/3 x 70 4/5 in).





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Zheng Chongbin's works are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), British Museum, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, M+ Museum (Hong Kong), the Marina Bay Sands (Singapore), and the Daimler Art Collection (Germany).

He has had solo and group exhibitions at the Hong Kong Museum of Art (Hong Kong), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), LACMA (Los Angeles), Brooklyn Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Asia Society Museum Houston, the Shanghai Art Museum (Shanghai), Shanghai Biennale 2016-2017, the Palazzo Mora, the Venice Biennale (Italy), the University of Alberta Museum, (Alberta, Canada), the Taipei 2010 Contemporary Ink Painting Biennial (Taiwan), the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the Asia Pacific Art Museum, Pasadena, the Pusan Museum of Modern Art (South Korea), the Third Chengdu Biennale (Chengdu), and the National Art Museum of China (Beijing).



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