

Mystic Meanderer, Solo Exhibition by Eric Jiaju Lee — review by Franklin Mount

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Mystic Meanderer, Solo Exhibition by Eric Jiaju Lee

Silk Road Gallery, 83 Audubon Road, New Haven, Connecticut. Through November 19, 2016

AT THIS POINT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, SOME IMPRESSION OF “Chinese art” has embedded itself in American culture. That impression often may be no deeper than that of misty mountain landscapes—a common and superficial take on traditional Chinese painting.

Eric Jiaju Lee’s work explores the infiltration of traditional Chinese painting into the emerging world culture. His work exists specifically at the intersection of traditional representation and modern abstraction.

In Lee’s new solo show “Mystic Meanderer,” we see the evolution of this influence. In “Anima Rising” (2010) and “Double Up” (2010), Lee gives us vivid colors and sharp shapes set against a black background. The shapes vary from simple circles to complex, almost fractal patterns. I could see this interplay as commentary on color and shape, perhaps evoking microscopic life forms. Then I would step back, take another look, and see deep space, unimaginably vast structures on a gargantuan scale. Lee is fascinated by how consciousness attempts to comprehend the incomprehensible: creation itself.



(<https://i0.wp.com/sensitiveskinmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/1-2010-anima-rising.jpg?ssl=1>)
Anima Rising



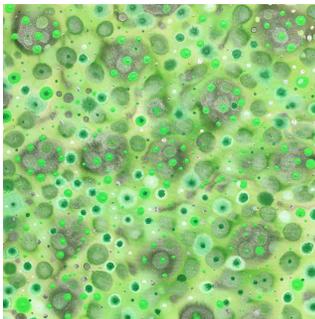
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Luna's Landing



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Purple One



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Greenlicious

A later work in the show, “Luna’s Landing,” from 2013, presents us with a circular canvas populated by gray and white circles overlaying darker backgrounds. The first impression is an abstraction of a full moon in the night sky. At closer look, the repeated patterns evoke mysterious, unplumbed depths. I recalled 1940s pulp science fiction, theories of the moon as a honeycomb of alien civilizations.

“Purple One” (2016) suggests static forms stirring themselves, awakening and flowing. “Greenlicious” (2016) is perhaps the most pure exploration of nature in this show. A prime concern of Lee is the relationship between nature and consciousness. The colors in Greenlicious are, as the cliché goes, “found in nature.” I could see algae blooms or a microscopic examination of the surface of a leaf. Stepping back and taking a fresh look, the painting suggested to me nature at its most peaceful and productive: a vision of human existence in harmony with its creator.

–Franklin Mount

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DEBORAH PINTONELLI

I have a date with Henry Henderson. We worked together one long summer canvassing for Greenpeace. Yes, I was one of those annoying young people who stop you on the street when you ...

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MAX BLAGG

A collaboration between Max Blagg and Alex Katz for the Marine Series' Exhibition Catalogue, Jablonka Gallery, Berlin, 2008. This piece is an excerpt from the forthcoming book, S...

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PATRICK O'NEIL

San Francisco, June 24, 1997
I'm in a dark, trash-filled alley between tall brick buildings. Two men stand in shadows. I can't see their faces. I hand one of them money and ...

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Santa Barbara-1980 / San Francisco-1982

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MATT MCLAREN

Santa Barbara-1980 I didn't have a mattress yet. It had been three months, but I still lay in my room on my dirty clothes, arranged under a fitted sheet. Ron stood in my doo...

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Serge Gainsbourg's Histoire de Melody Nelson
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BERNARD MEISLER

Here's a Friday night treat for you all - the complete concept film of Serge Gainsbourg's classic "rock opera", Histoire de Melody Nelson. There's little doubt that Melo...

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