

ESKENAZI

ESKENAZI EXHIBITS RECENT PAINTINGS BY ZENG XIAOJUN

FIRST EUROPEAN EXHIBITION DEDICATED SOLELY TO THE
CELEBRATED CHINESE ARTIST AND COLLECTOR

5 October to 25 November 2016



'Penjing VI', Ink and colour on paper, 138.0cm by 180.0cm
Signed: Xiaojun. Artist's seal: Painted by Zeng Xiaojun



Zeng Xiaojun (b.1954)

Eskenazi is proud to present the first European exhibition dedicated solely to the paintings of Zeng Xiaojun (b.1954) which will be on view from 5 October to 25 November 2016 at their gallery at 10 Clifford Street, London. One of the most significant Chinese ink painters working today, Zeng Xiaojun is also a renowned collector, scholar and contemporary champion of the age-old literati tradition. In the mid-1990s, together with Ai Weiwei and Xu Bing, Xiaojun published the pioneering 'Red Flag' art books in China that documented the contemporary art scene, introduced Western art and artists including Andy Warhol and Jeff Koons, and went on to influence the subsequent directions and developments of the country's art scene.

Daniel Eskenazi says: "We're delighted to hold our inaugural exhibition of Zeng Xiaojun paintings, the first European show dedicated entirely to his work. Xiaojun belongs to a small group of artists widely recognized as the most significant contemporary Chinese ink painters working today. This is an area of intimate, thoughtful art which continues to gain a broad and devoted following in the West with an increasing number of collectors, and with exhibitions at some of the world's most prominent museums such as The British Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim in New York, The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Musée Guimet in Paris. Our exhibition follows on from successful solo shows in recent years dedicated to two other exceptional contemporary ink painters, Liu Dan and Li Huayi, and we are excited to be able to showcase the art of Zeng Xiaojun and introduce his work to a new audience this autumn in London."

Zeng Xiaojun was born in 1954, graduating from Beijing's Central Academy of Arts and Crafts in 1981. He moved to the United States in 1983, living in Boston, painting and teaching. Here he developed his deep fascination with traditional Chinese scholarly literati culture.

In the mid-1990s, together with Ai Weiwei and Xu Bing, Xiaojun published a series of pioneering art books which documented contemporary art and disseminated new ideas to a generation of younger Chinese artists. The *Black Cover Book*, the *White Cover Book*, and the *Gray Cover Book* also published translations of western articles and texts, introducing the work of artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Jeff Koons and Andy Warhol, and heavily influencing the subsequent directions and development of the country's art scene.

Xiaojun returned to Beijing in the 1990s. He has spent the last 20 years painting, as well as collecting and studying Chinese furniture and scholar's objects. He has now amassed arguably the finest collections of scholars' rocks, roots and classical Chinese furniture to be found in private hands. He has built impressive studios and gallery spaces in spacious grounds in Beijing: modern buildings and traditional pavilions surround a lake frequented by carp and black swans, within a landscape of carefully positioned ancient pine trees and immense garden rocks from far away provinces. His paintings represent months of labour but are effortless in appearance, offering a contemporary embodiment of the age-old literati spirit.

The exhibition at Eskenazi will include 10 works painted specifically for this show. The seven depictions of *penjing* (bonsai) trees are an entirely new departure for him, following a suggestion from Daniel Eskenazi, who saw the wonderful living examples that Xiaojun has cultivated himself, in typical literati mode. Bonsai, the Japanese term familiar in the West, derives from the Chinese *penjing*, both as practice and name. More closely associated with him as a subject are the two paintings of intricate, twisting tree roots, another obsession of the artist. The final picture is in an entirely different vein: a vastly over-scaled, circular depiction of concentric curvilinear patterns derived from a marbled ceramic of the Song dynasty (960-1279 AD). Paintings by Zeng Xiaojun can be found both in museums and numerous important private collections.

From 3 to 25 November, Eskenazi will also hold an exhibition of ***Early Chinese Art from Private Collections*** (*further details available on request*). The most diverse exhibition of early Chinese art to be held by the gallery in almost 15 years, it will include 24 works of art in bronze, gold and silver inlay, jade and bone, highlighting the artistic brilliance of Chinese artisans over a long period from the late Neolithic era (3rd millennium BC) to the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD).

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Eskenazi Ltd is widely recognised as one of the world's leading galleries for Oriental works of art and its exhibitions are always eagerly awaited for the rarity and beauty of the objects offered. The family business was founded in Milan in 1923 and the Eskenazi name has since become synonymous with expertise in this area. Giuseppe Eskenazi, who has been head of the business for over fifty years, has an unrivalled reputation for his knowledge and love of the subject and clients have included over eighty of the world's major museums as well as private collectors. Visit www.eskenazi.co.uk for further details.

Location:

Eskenazi Ltd, 10 Clifford Street, London W1S 2LJ

Opening hours during exhibition:

Monday - Friday	09.30 - 17.30
Saturday, 8 October	10.00 - 17.00
Sunday, 9 October	10.00 - 17.00
Saturday, 5 November	10.00 - 17.00
Sunday, 6 November	10.00 - 17.00
Saturday 12 November	10.00 - 13.00
Saturday, 19 November	10.00 - 13.00

For further information and images, please contact:

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Penjing I

Ink and colour on paper

Dimensions: 180.0cm by 138.0cm

Signed: Xiaojun

Artist's seal: Painted by Zeng Xiaojun