

# 見山

## MOUNTAIN VISION

Leo Gallery Shanghai

DURATION: 2025.4.26-6.15

OPENING: 2025.4.26 4-7PM

ARTIST: Bian Qing

CURATOR: Bao Dong

VENUE: 3F, Ferguson Lane, 376 Wukang Road, Xuhui District, Shanghai



## FOREWORD

Leo Gallery is pleased to present *Mountain Vision* (见山), a solo exhibition by artist Bian Qing, on view from April 26 to June 15, 2025. Featuring works from the past fifteen years, the exhibition traces Bian's sustained engagement with the theme of *shanshui* (landscape), offering both a mid-career reflection and a renewed inquiry into the relationship between seeing, language, and image.

The title *Mountain Vision* is drawn from a well-known Zen Buddhist phrase found in *Wudeng Huiyuan* (五灯会元): "Seeing the mountain as a mountain, not as a mountain, and again, just as a mountain." This layered process of recognition serves as both a metaphor for Bian Qing's method and a key to entering his work. In his paintings, seeing refers to an experiential act of looking, while understanding unfolds through the dimensions of language, culture, and structure. His practice hovers between the construction and deconstruction of imagery, retaining the visual echo of landscape painting while consistently challenging its form and meaning.

Since 2010, Bian has been developing a systematic visual investigation rooted in the motif of landscape. His early works employed repeated wiping and blurring techniques in oil, rendering mountainous forms that appear half-concealed, as if shrouded in mist. These images evoke not a geographical reality, but a poetic echo — resonating with the idealized nature of traditional literati painting and mirroring a contemplative mode of seeing, where a tranquil world corresponds with an open, clear mind.

With the series *Hidden Mountain Collection* and *Unveiled Mountain Collection*, Bian began shifting landscape from a natural image to a cultural archetype. Rather than depict the shape of mountains, he engages them in visual dialogue. Blue-green and ochre tones intertwine with mi-dot textures (mi-dian), while seal-script brushwork tentatively engages the spirit of Wei-Jin aesthetics across the

canvas. The composition becomes a reassembled grammar of painting, where familiar techniques are inverted and recontextualized.

In more recent series—*Back Mountain Collection*, *Chenzhou Collection*, and *The Unravelled Collection*—Bian further distills the image into spatial relationships of line, form, and color. What he extracts from tradition is no longer image, but method. He no longer paints mountains, but constructs a visual language that can contain the thought of mountain. His brush no longer narrates but begins to weave—and at times, to build. His mountains increasingly resemble structures of thought rather than topographic forms, and in doing so, become ever more themselves.

It is worth noting that Bian's painting approach carries both the fragmentary quality of literati notes and the density of philosophical writing. Each work unfolds like a visual inquiry—sometimes calm and declarative, sometimes abruptly interrupted. It is both statement and question. His images resist closure, remaining in a state of becoming, as if thought continues to meander across the canvas. *Mountain Vision* does not simply present a body of work—it stages an ongoing movement of thought through painting. Between seeing and knowing, Bian Qing asks again and again: What is a mountain? What is it to see? What does it mean to understand? His works are not representations of landscape, but visible pathways of thinking.

## ARTIST INTRODUCTION

**Bian Qing** (b. 1983, Tianjin) graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts at Minzu University of China and currently lives and works in Beijing. Bian's artistic practice revolves around landscapes and still life, employing contemporary concepts to deconstruct traditional painting elements. By integrating classical brushwork techniques such as outlining, texture strokes, rubbing, dotting, and colouring, he reconstructs these elements, reshaping traditional methods within the framework of contemporary painting. In his work, landscapes and still life are interconnected through a shared structural logic. Bian's practice is both a reflection on tradition and an in-depth exploration of the relationship between pictorial language and sensory media. His paintings should not be simply categorized as observational studies but rather understood as a distinctive practice guided by the "rules of sensibility".

Some of his recent solo exhibitions include: *Awaiting*, Leo Gallery, HongKong, 2024; *Mountain Wave*, Asia Art Centre, Beijing, 2017; *Qi*, Ginko Art Centre, Beijing, 2016; *Anthology of Hidden Mountains*, China International Gallery Exposition, Beijing, 2014; *Something from Nothing*, Today Art Museum, Beijing, 2012 among others.

His group exhibitions include: *Song of Soul*, Soul Art Center, Beijing, 2024; *Mountain Ridge*, WS Gallery and Leo Gallery, Shanghai, 2023; *Moving Forward*, Songzhuang Contemporary Art Archive, Beijing, 2023; *Moving Forward*, Cang Art Museum, Hangzhou, 2022; *Post-tradition: Imagine, Translate and Reconstruct*, AC Cube, Chengdu, 2022; *Paintings Redrawn*, Leo Gallery, Shanghai, 2021; *Situation Baroque*, Agricultural Exhibition Center, Beijing, 2020; *Beyond Tradition*, Agricultural Exhibition Center, Beijing, 2018; *Unbounded*, Casa del Mantegna, Italy, 2017; *Confronting Anitya—Oriental Experience in Contemporary Art*, Xi'an Art Museum, 2016 among many others.

## CURATOR INTRODUCTION

**Bao Dong** is an art critic and curator based in Beijing, founder and art director of Beijing Contemporary Art Expo. In contributing essays to the artistic dialogue and other forms of involvement, Bao has established himself as a leading curator and critic of work by the new generation. His articles have been widely published in art journals and artist monographs both at home and abroad. He has curated many exhibitions for a wide range of art institutions including Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Guangdong Art Museum, the Art Center of Chulalongkorn University, Guangdong Times Museum, Shanghai & Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal Shanghai etc. He was awarded Asian Cultural Council (ACC) fellowship grant in 2014, and became a nominee of Independent Curators International's (ICI) 2014 Independent Vision Curatorial Award. Recently he was awarded Yishu Awards for Curating Contemporary Chinese Art 2016.