

Liang Hao: Pacing the Void

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From May 18 to September 8, 2024, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art presents “Liang Hao: Pacing the Void,” featuring the artist’s most representative wooden sculpture series, as well as a new series of plaster sculptures conceived for the occasion of this exhibition. “Liang Hao: Pacing the Void” is the artist’s first institutional solo show and a retrospective of her works and practice over the past decades.

Exhibition Period:

2024.5.18 – 2024.9.8

Location:

UCCA New Gallery, West Gallery

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BEIJING, China—UCCA Center for Contemporary Art presents “Liang Hao: Pacing the Void,” the artist’s first institutional solo show. The exhibition features over 50 sculptures, including two wooden series, and a new plaster series commissioned by UCCA. A culmination of her decades-long career in sculpture, this exhibition traces the chronological progression of her sustained efforts in exploring the relationship between non-representational form, materiality, and space, and pays tribute to her practice that has forged alone unencumbered by the limitations of national borders, gender, and a linear view of history. “Liang Hao: Pacing the Void” is curated by UCCA Curator Neil Zhang.

While studying at the Sculpture Department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (1980 – 1985), Liang Hao was simultaneously influenced by her training in Chinese socialist realism and the rise of an artistic new wave. Faced with the encounters and stimulation by a plethora of discourses, Liang Hao yearned to expand her horizon. After graduation, she enrolled at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in the United States to continue her studies. Immersed in the forefront of the contemporary art scene, Liang Hao became inspired visually, conceptually, and culturally. From then on, she strived to abandon her previous artistic language and embark on a series of explorations and experiments, while reflecting on her own traditions, the legacy of modernism, and the influence of artists active in the 1990s such as Eva Hesse and Richard Serra, all of which inspired epiphanies and formal transformations.

From the 1990s onwards, Liang Hao became drawn to the power, vitality, and organic texture intrinsic to wood as a material. She began to focus on creating wooden sculptures in abstract shapes, often using an industrial chainsaw to cut the material directly into pieces that she would then place standing or lying around in space. The subtle changes in form, the construction of the space, and the relationship between the works are all essential to Liang Hao’s practice.



In 2007, upon returning to Beijing after almost 20 years of living in the United States, Liang Hao continued to follow this path in pursuit of a purer sculptural form, attempting to strip away all forms and images and focus single-mindedly on fully abstract and non-representational expressions that are true to the heart.

This exhibition is divided into two sections based on the materials of wood and plaster, reflecting the chronological progression of the artist's career. The West Gallery presents two series of wooden sculptures, including "Untitled (Segmentation)" (2015 – 2018), featuring works made from wood cut directly by an industrial chainsaw, and "Untitled (Splicing)," which began around 2018 and builds on the cut form by incorporating joinery and recombination techniques. Underlying the variety of method, Liang Hao's interventions with wood have all transpired through a dialogue with its form. This process also allows her to enter into a state of intuitive surrender to nature, where she may probe deeper into her inquiries into energy, space, and the language of sculpture itself.

The buoyancy of the new series of plaster sculptures "Untitled (Amalgam)" (2023 – 2024) in the New Gallery stands in contrast with the primal and contemplative ambience of the wooden series in the West Gallery. Since 2023, Liang Hao has been revisiting plaster, the most basic sculptural material. Because it is predominantly used for molds and inherently fragile, few artists would deliberately employ plaster as the final material for their works. However, by casting plaster molds on the surface of wooden logs before splicing and shaping it into form, Liang Hao manages to transfer a part of the wooden form and texture onto a new material that, at the same time, transcends the imagery of trees and becomes liberated from their original structural and material forms, attaining a new state of freedom and metaphysical poetics. For Liang Hao, "Every cut or move to shape the material is an attempt to advance, challenge, or even disrupt familiar forms, which requires a great deal of courage." In this sense, the experimentation of the latest series of works is not only about transformation at the material level, but also for the artist to reflect on and anticipate the unfolding of her own career in art.

The title of the exhibition "Pacing the Void" refers to the process of the sculptor's body constantly, physically moving through space as she works, while alluding to the artist's way of life as she traverses across different cultures and countries over the years without belonging to any one locale. For Liang Hao, artworks are incidental of the artist's practice—the state of life reflects the state of art-making. As she once remarked, "How minute and transient I am in



this vast and eternal universe, and yet I can make myself part of it by becoming one with nature. The journey keeps on. My work will lead me to a future that I cannot foresee.”

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Public Programs

During the exhibition, UCCA will host a conversation between artist Liang Hao, curator Neil Zhang and art historian Michael Cavayero to explore the diachronic convergence of Eastern and Western artistic traditions in Liang’s works, and discuss how her practice has evolved around non-representational sculptural forms and the connections between materials and space since the 1980s. For the latest information on our public programs, please visit UCCA’s official website, WeChat account, and social media platforms.

About the Artist

Liang Hao (b. 1960, Beijing) received her Bachelor’s degree in Sculpture from the Central Academy of Fine Arts (1985) and a Master’s degree in Sculpture from Cranbrook Academy of Art (1989). Her works were included in exhibitions such as “Central Academy of Fine Arts Professors Exhibition” (CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China, 2013); “Inside Out 2012” (Inside-Out Art Museum, Beijing, China, 2013); “Touched by Women’s Hands” (Smithsonian Institution – Flushing Town Hall, New York, USA, 2008); and “Global Roots: Artists from China Working in New York” (Stewart Center Gallery, Purdue University, IN, USA, 1998).

About UCCA

UCCA Center for Contemporary Art works to bring the best in art to ever wider audiences, global dialogue and cultural exchange. Opened in 2007, its Beijing flagship is registered as a non-profit museum, occupying over 10,000 square meters of regenerated factory space at the heart of the 798 Art District. UCCA also operates UCCA Dune in Beidaihe and UCCA Edge



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in Shanghai. In addition to its exhibitions, public programs, and research initiatives, UCCA includes a charitable foundation (UCCA Foundation), a comprehensive children's art education program (UCCA Kids), and a platform for commercial collaborations (UCCA Lab). Consistently ranked as China's leading art institution, UCCA has pioneered an integrated operating model distinct in the world.

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