

XIYAO WANG

LIGHTLY FLOATS AND DRIFTS THE BOAT

KÖNIG MEXICO CITY

4 FEBRUARY – 27 MARCH 2025

KÖNIG MEXICO CITY is pleased to present LIGHTLY FLOATS AND DRIFTS THE BOAT, a solo exhibition by Xiyao Wang. Inspired by the classical Chinese poem “归去来兮辞” (“Ah, Homeward Bound I Go!”), the artist’s latest body of work reflects her ongoing artistic journey and personal search for self. The exhibition bridges cultural memory, philosophical introspection, and the fleeting nature of time, themes that resonate deeply in both her life and creative practice.

The poem written by the Chinese poet Tao Yuanming (c. 365 - 427) narrates his own story, where he withdraws from civil service to return to his homeland in search of inner peace and truth. Wang draws from its timeless themes of liberation and belonging, weaving them into paintings imbued with movement, serenity, and reflection. The exhibition title borrows from a line in the poem: “舟遥遥以轻飏，风飘飘而吹衣 – Lightly floats and drifts the boat, and gently flows and flaps my gown.” This image of lightness and freedom captures the emotional core of her work: the simultaneous weight and weightlessness of existence and the pursuit of harmony in an ever-shifting world.

While rooted in her upbringing near the Yangtze River, Wang’s work transcends the literal to embrace the abstract. Flowing rivers, bamboo forests, and mountain villages transform into abstract motifs that evoke the emotional resonance of home and memory. These forms – often fragmented and layered – blur the lines between representation and abstraction, reflecting the fluidity of time and space. Infused with the philosophy of Daoism, her works become meditative spaces where nature mirrors human emotions and ephemeral moments are suspended in vivid, dynamic compositions.

At the heart of her practice is the exploration of time – a concept Wang finds both impossible and irresistible to capture. “I want to paint what is impossible to paint,” she says, referring to her attempts to give form to something as fleeting as a moment. Her titles underscore this ephemeral quality: “Before the Sun Goes Down» recalls a moment during a trip when Wang reminded her friends to act quickly before sunset, reflecting the fragility of time slipping away. Similarly, “The Blue of Arles” is inspired by the blue hour, a brief and beautiful time of day that lasts only minutes. “Pirouette” references a fleeting movement, performed in mere seconds, embodying the grace and brevity of the instant. These titles, like her work, point to the delicate balance between capturing and losing a moment.

Through layered textures and dynamic forms, Wang’s paintings depict time as a living force – ever-moving, ever-changing. The river, a recurring symbol, reflects the passage of time, connecting past and present in a single flowing gesture. Her abstract motifs transport viewers into spaces that are both external and internal, inviting them to pause and reflect on the transient beauty of life. The interplay between stillness and motion encourages introspection, while the Daoist philosophy embedded in her practice offers a sense of freedom and transcendence.

LIGHTLY FLOATS AND DRIFTS THE BOAT is an invitation to engage with the ephemeral, to reflect on one’s own journey, and to find a sense of home within oneself. As Wang says, “Home is not a place but a state of the soul.”

KÖNIG MEXICO CITY welcomes viewers to immerse themselves in these poetic and meditative works, where the beauty of the instant takes center stage, and time, though impossible to hold, becomes vividly alive.

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OPENING TIMES

Tuesday – Friday 12 – 6 pm
Saturday 12 – 4 pm
and by appointment

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