Blurring the Boundaries: combining a selected painting technique with certain Chinese philosophical concepts to produce outcomes that induce contemplation

An Appropriate Durable Record submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Fine Art

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MFA BFA

School of Art
Design and Social Context Portfolio
RMIT University
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **LIST OF WORKS**.................................................................2

2. **ILLUSTRATION OF WORKS**..............................................7

3. **DOCUMENTATION OF EXHIBITIONS**..............................156
   
   3.1 Selected group exhibitions...........................................157
       2006........................................................................158
       2007........................................................................170
       2008........................................................................177
       2009........................................................................184
       2010........................................................................188
       2011........................................................................201
       2012........................................................................205

   3.2 Solo exhibitions.............................................................208
       Blurring – Painting and the Dao.....................................209
       Water........................................................................219
       Growing......................................................................230
       Beyond objects, it is......................................................238

4. **STUDIO**............................................................................247

5. **CURRICULUM VITAE**.......................................................249

6. **APPENDIX 1: EXHIBITION REVIEWS**..............................253

7. **APPENDIX 2: EXHIBITIONS CATALOGUES**.....................262

8. **APPENDIX 3: REPRESENTATION IN BOOKS**....................277
1. LIST OF WORKS
The moon #1, 2006, oil on canvas 123x30cm……………………………………9
The moon #2, 2006, oil on canvas, 75x75cm…………………………………10
Tree #5, 2006, oil on canvas, 35x27cm………………………………………12
Tree #6, 2006, oil on canvas, 35x27cm………………………………………13
Outside, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm………………………………………15
Fountain #1, 2006, oil on canvas, 60x50cm…………………………………..17
Installation View, Duck #1, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm………………19
Duck #2, 2006, oil on canvas, 100x100cm……………………………………20
Lily pads #1, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm…………………………………22
Lily pads #2, 2006, oil on canvas, 60x60cm…………………………………23
Lily pads #3, 2006, oil on canvas, 60x60cm…………………………………24
Lily pads #4, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm…………………………………26
Lily pads #5, 2006, oil on canvas, 60x60cm…………………………………29
Lily pads #6, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm…………………………………31
Lily pads #7, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm…………………………………33
Lily pads #8, 2006, oil on canvas, 120x90cm…………………………………35
Lily pads #9, 2007, oil on canvas, 60x60cm…………………………………38
Lily pads #10, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm………………………………41
Lily pads #11, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm………………………………42
Lily pads #12, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm………………………………43
Lily pads #13, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm………………………………44
Lily pads #14, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm………………………………45
Lily pads, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm each……………………………..46
Duck #3, 2007, oil on canvas, 120x75cm……………………………………50
Swan, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm each………………………………………53

Fountain #2, 2007, oil on canvas, 60x50cm...........................................55

Fountain #3, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm...........................................57

Fountain #4, 2007, oil on canvas, 27x35cm...........................................58

Fountain #5, 2007, oil on canvas, 35x27cm...........................................61

Fountain #6, 2007, oil on canvas, 120x90cm.......................................63

Waves #1, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm.............................................65

Waves #2, 2007, oil on canvas, 100x100cm.........................................66

Growing #1, 2008, pastel on paper, 66x50cm.......................................68

Growing #2, 2008, pastel on paper, 250x55cm.....................................70

Growing #3, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 70x83cm......................77

Growing #4, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 75x55cm, 55x38cm, 38x27cm, 27x19cm, 19x14cm..................................................81

Growing #5, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 148x84cm....................83

Growing #6, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 75x55cm.....................85

Work 39: Study marks from Huang Binhong’s Chinese ink painting, 2008, charcoal on paper, 55x75cm each.........................................87

Growing #7, 2008, charcoal on paper, 56x315cm..................................89

Growing #8, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 58x345cm....................91

Growing #9, 2008, ink on paper, 75x55cm..........................................93

Growing #10, 2008, charcoal on paper, 75x55cm..................................94

Growing #11, 2008, charcoal on paper, 75x55cm..................................95

Growing #12, 2008, oil on paper on board, 178x126cm..........................97

Growing #13, 2008, oil on paper on board, 178x126cm.........................100

Growing #14, 2008, oil on paper, 188x136cm.....................................103
Growing #15, 2009, oil on paper on board, 151x126cm

Growing #16, 2009, oil on paper, 29.5x21cm

Growing #17, 2009, oil on paper, 29.5x21cm

Growing #18, 2009, oil on paper, 29.5x21cm

Growing #19, 2009, oil on paper, 29.5x21cm

Growing #20, 2009, oil on paper, 29.5x21cm

Growing #21, 2009, oil on paper, 32.5x24cm

Growing #22, 2009, oil on board, 25.5x20cm

Growing #22(a), 2009, oil on plastic on canvas, 21x15cm each

Growing #22(b), 2009, oil on plastic, 21x23cm

Growing #23, 2009, oil on paper, 42x52cm

Growing #24, 2009, oil on board, 25.5x20cm

Growing #24(a), 2009, pastel on paper, 75x55cm

Growing #25, 2009, oil on board, 20x25.5cm

Growing #25(a), 2009, oil on board, 20x25.5cm each

Growing #25(b), 2009, oil on board, 20x25.5cm each

Growing #25(c), 2009, oil on board, 20x25.5cm each

Growing #25(d), 2009, oil on board (above), acrylic on wall (under), 20x25.5cm each

Growing #25(e), 2009, oil on board (left), acrylic on wall (right), 20x25.5cm each

Growing #25(f), 2009, oil on board (under), acrylic on wall (above), 20x25.5cm each

Growing #26, 2009, oil on canvas, 36x36cm

Growing #27, 2009, from left to right, acrylic on wall, oil on paper
and oil on board, 68x88cm, 42x52cm and 25.5x20cm

Growing #28, 2009, from left to right, acrylic on wall, oil on paper and oil on board, 68x88cm, 42x52cm and 25.5x20cm

Growing #29, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings: 28x9cm each

Growing #30, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings, 28x9cm each

Growing #31, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings, 28x9cm each

Growing #32, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings, 28x9cm each

Growing #33, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings, 28x9cm each

Growing #34, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings, 28x9cm each

It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is… , 2010, oil on paper, 178x640cm

It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is… #2, 2011, oil on paper, 178x672cm

It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is… #3, 2011, oil on canvas, 60x50cm

Beyond the fountain, it is… , 2011, oil on paper, 60x50cm

Beyond the fountain, it is … #2, 2011, oil on paper, 178x1176cm
2. ILLUSTRATION OF WORKS
Visual Source for *The moon* #1 & #2
The moon #1, 2006, oil on canvas, 123x30cm
The moon #2, 2006, oil on canvas, 75x75cm
Visual Source for Tree #5 & #6
Tree #5, 2006, oil on canvas, 35x27cm
Tree #6, 2006, oil on canvas, 35x27cm
Visual Source for Outside
Outside, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Visual Source for Fountain #1
Fountain #1, 2006, oil on canvas, 60x50cm
Visual Source for Duck #1 & #2
Installation View, *Duck #1*, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Duck #2, 2006, oil on canvas, 100x100cm
Visual Source for Lily pads #1, #2 & #3
Lily pads #1, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Lily pads #2, 2006, oil on canvas, 60x60cm
Lily pads #3, 2006, oil on canvas, 60x60cm
Visual Source for *Lily pads #4*
Lily pads #4, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Visual Source for Lily pads #5
Study for Lily pads #5, 2006, pencil on paper, 14x14.5cm
Lily pads #5, 2006, oil on canvas, 60x60cm
Lily pads #6, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Visual Source for Lily pads #7
Lily pads #7, 2006, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Visual Source for Lily pads #8
Lily pads #8, 2006, oil on canvas, 120x90cm
Visual Source for *Lily pads* #9
Study for Lily pads #9, 2007, pencil on paper, 21x21cm
Lily pads #9, 2007, oil on canvas, 60x60cm
Detailed View, Lily pads #9
Visual Source for Lily pads #10, #11, #12, #13, #14 & Lily pads.
Lily pads #10, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Lily pads #11, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Lily pads #12, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Lily pads #13, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Lily pads #14, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Lily pads, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm each
Visual Source for *Duck #3*
Study for Duck #3, 2007, pencil on paper, 29.7x21cm
Duck #3 (Step 1)

Duck #3 (Step 2)

Duck #3 (Step 3)

Duck #3 (Step 4)

Duck #3 (Step 5)

Duck #3 (Step 6)

Duck #3 (Step 7)

Duck #3 (Step 8)

Duck #3 (Step 9)
Duck #3, 2007, oil on canvas, 120x75cm
Detailed View, Duck #3
Visual Source for Swan
Swan, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm each
Visual Source for Fountain #2
Fountain #2, 2007, oil on canvas, 60x50cm
Visual Source for Fountain #3 & #4
Fountain #3, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Fountain #4, 2007, oil on canvas, 27x35cm
Visual Source for *Fountain #5 & #6*
Study for fountain #5, 2007, pencil on paper, 29.7x21 cm
*Fountain #5, 2007, oil on canvas, 35x27cm*
Fountain #6 (Step 1)  Fountain #6 (Step 2)  Fountain #6 (Step 3)
Fountain #6 (Step 4)  Fountain #6 (Step 5)  Fountain #6 (Step 6)
Fountain #6 (Step 7)  Fountain #6 (Step 8)  Fountain #6 (Step 9)
Fountain #6, 2007, oil on canvas, 120x90cm
Visual Source for Waves #1 & #2
Waves #1, 2007, oil on canvas, 30x30cm
Waves #2, 2007, oil on canvas, 100x100cm
Growing #1, 2008, pastel on paper, 66x50cm
Visual Source for Growing #2
Growing #2, 2008, pastel on paper, 250x55cm
Visual Source for Growing #3
Study for Growing #3, 2008, pencil on paper, 14.8x21cm
Study for Growing #3(a), 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 55x75cm
Study for Growing #3(b), 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 55x75cm
Study for Growing #3(c), 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 55x75cm
Study for Growing #3(d), 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 55x75cm
Growing #3, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 70x83cm
The more regular the gradient, the strong is effect.
Size, string, depth, & size, location.

Gradients:
- Same size, different location.
- Different size, different location.

A gradient is the gradual increase or decrease of some perceptual quality in space and time. James J. Gibson was the first to draw attention to the depth-encoding effect.

Study for Growing #4(1), 2008, pen on paper, 24x21cm,
Study for Growing #4(2), 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 75x55cm, 55x38cm, 38x27cm, 27x19cm, 19x14cm, 14x9cm
Growing #4, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 75x55cm, 55x38cm, 38x27cm, 27x19cm, 19x14cm
Study for Growing #5, 2008, pencil on paper, 14.8x21cm
Growing #5, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 148x84cm
Study for Growing #6, 2008, pencil on paper, 14.8x21cm
Growing #6, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 75x55cm
Visual Source for Study marks from Huang Binhong’s Chinese ink painting
Study marks from Huang Binhong’s Chinese ink painting, 2008, charcoal on paper, 55x75cm each
Growing #7, 2008, charcoal on paper, 56x315cm
Installation View, Growing #7, 2008, charcoal on paper, 56x315cm
Growing #8, 2008, charcoal and pastel on paper, 58x345cm
Growing #9, 2008, ink on paper, 75x55cm
Growing #10, 2008, charcoal on paper, 75x55cm
Growing #11, 2008, charcoal on paper, 75x55cm
Growing #12, 2008, oil on paper on board, 178x126cm
Growing #13 (Step 1)  Growing #13 (Step 2)  
Growing #13 (Step 3)  Growing #13 (Step 4)
Growing #13, 2008, oil on paper on board, 178x126cm
Growing #14, 2008, oil on paper, 188x136cm
Visual Source for Growing #15
Growing #15, 2009, oil on paper on board, 151 x 126 cm
Visual Source for Growing #16, #17, #18, #19 & #20
Growing #17, 2009, oil on paper, 29.5x21cm
Growing #18, 2009, oil on paper, 29.5x21cm
Growing #19, 2009, oil on paper, 29.5x21cm
Growing #20, 2009, oil on paper, 29.5x21cm
Visual Source and Inspiration of Growing #21
Growing #21, 2009, oil on paper, 32.5x24cm
Visual Source for Growing #22 & #23
Growing #22, 2009, oil on board, 25.5x20cm
Growing #22(a), 2009, oil on plastic on canvas, 21x15cm each
Growing #22 (b), 2009, oil on plastic, 21x23cm
Study for Growing #23, 2009, pencil on paper, 14x20cm
Growing #23, 2009, oil on paper, 42x52cm
Visual Source for Growing #24
Growing #24, 2009, oil on board, 25.5x20cm
Growing #24(a), 2009, pastel on paper, 75x55cm
Visual Source for Growing #25 & #26
Growing #25, 2009, oil on board, 20x25.5cm
Growing #25(a), 2009, oil on board, 20x25.5cm each
Growing #25 (b), 2009, oil on board, 20x25.5cm each
Growing #25(c), 2009, oil on board, 20x25.5cm each
Growing #25(d), 2009, oil on board (above), acrylic on wall (under), 20x25.5cm each
Growing #25(e), 2009, oil on board (left), acrylic on wall (right), 20x25.5cm each
Growing #25(f), 2009, oil on board (under), acrylic on wall (above), 20x25.5cm each
Growing #26, 2009, oil on canvas, 36x36cm
Installation view, Growing #26, 2009, oil on canvas, 36x36cm
Growing #27, 2009, from left to right, acrylic on wall, oil on paper and oil on board, 68x88cm, 42x52cm and 25.5x20cm
Growing #28, 2009, from left to right, acrylic on wall, oil on paper and oil on board, 68x88cm, 42x52cm and 25.5x20cm
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Growing #31, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings, 28x9cm each
Growing #32, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings, 28x9cm each
Growing #33, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings, 28x9cm each
Growing #34, 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 20 drawings, 28x9cm each
Visual Source for *It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is …*
It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is…, 2010, oil on paper, 178x640cm
Visual Source for It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is …#2
It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is... #2, 2011, oil on paper, 178x672cm
Visual Source for *It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is …* #3
It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is… #3, 2011, oil on canvas, 60x50cm
Detailed View, It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain, it is... #3,
Beyond the fountain, it is …
Beyond the fountain, it is..., 2011, oil on paper, 60x50cm
Visual Source for Beyond the fountain, it is #2...
Beyond the fountain, it is … #2 (Step 1)
Beyond the fountain, it is … #2 (Step 2)
Beyond the fountain, it is ... #2 (Step 3)
Beyond the fountain, it is ... #2, 2011, oil on paper, 178x1176cm
3. DOCUMENTATION OF EXHIBITIONS
3.1 Selected group exhibitions
2006
Redland Art Awards, 2006, 2006, Redland Art Gallery, Cleveland, QLD
The Fleurieu Water Prize, 2006, Adelaide, SA
Dear Xiao Yu Bai,

I am writing in response to your entry for the 2006 R & M McGivern Art Prize.

The judges, Tim Fishel, Senior Curator, The Arts Centre, Louise Harding, Sudden Vision, Elinor Melmon of Melbourne Art and Charles Naboom, Director, Charles Nollem Art Gallery, met last week to shortlist the entries.

Fifty entries have been selected for the final exhibition from approximately one thousand and sixty entries.

I am pleased to advise that your entry has been selected for the final exhibition.

Within the next week, I will forward you information that will assist in the preparation for the final exhibition including key timetables and details for the opening night on Thursday 10th August 2006.

In the meantime, if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me on (03) 9298 4515.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Mathew
Curator, VicArt

R & M McGivern Prize 2006, 2006, Maroondah Art Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Border-ing: Space – Time – Memory, 2006, Upstairs Flinders Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Exhibition View, *Border-ring: Space – Time – Memory*
MARS Goes to Treasury Place, 2006, MARS Art Rooms, Melbourne, Australia
Exhibition View, *Goes to Treasury Place*
Impressions of Prince Henry at Little Bay, 2006, Little Bay, NEW, Australia
Exhibition View, *Impressions of Prince Henry at Little Bay*
One Square Foot, 2006, MARS Art Rooms, Melbourne, Australia
Exhibition View, *One Square Foot*
2007
Eutick Memorial Still Life Award, 2007, Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery, NEW, Australia
Mesh, 2007, Span Galleries, Melbourne, Australia
Exhibition View, *Mesh*
Exhibition View, *MLC Acquisitive Art Exhibition*, 2007, MLC, Melbourne
Confinis

confines = to fix boundaries/nearness/neighborhood/contact

With definitions of space continuously changing and population shifts opening new ways of connecting with one another, Confinis presents contemporary artworks that explore mobile relationships and understandings of space and place. It foregrounds the physical and psychological effects of changing notions of space on the identities and cultural production of the participating artists.

Artists: Xiao Yi Bai, Zhang Xiaogang, Yolanda Jueng, Maria Petta, Luciana Peix, Minyan Xu, Niki and Jakob Zager

Supported by Monash City Council through the Cultural Grants Program and The Age Melbourne Fringe Festival

Official opening:
6 p.m. - 8 p.m., Thursday 13 September 2007
To be officially opened by Cllr. Alice Pepper and Professor Elizabeth Grierson, Head of the School of Art, RMIT University.
Featuring a performance by posing Space

Exhibition dates:
Friday 14 September - Sunday 7 October 2007

Floor talk:
2 - 3 p.m., Saturday 22 September. Join the artists as they discuss the inspiration and processes behind their work. Bookings 9693 8822

Counihan Gallery in Brunswick
235 Sydney Road, Brunswick, VIC 3056

Open Monday to Saturday 11 am to 5 pm
Sunday 1 pm to 5 pm
Phone 9387 6862 Fax 9387 4098 counihan@monash.edu.au
Curator: Sabine Burton


Confinis, 2007, Counihan Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Exhibition View, *Confines*
2008
Exhibition View 1, Siemens – RMIT Fine Art Scholarship Awards
Exhibition View 2, Siemens – RMIT Fine Art Scholarship Awards
2008 City of Albany Art Prize, 2008, Vancouver Arts Centre, Albany, Western Australia
Eutick Memorial Still Life Award, 2008, Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery, NEW, Australia
26 September 2008

Keri Ball
5 Margaret Street
Clayton VIC 3168

Dear Keri,

Fleurieu Biennale 2008

Congratulations on being selected as a finalist in the 2008 Fleurieu Biennale. The following artwork has been selected for display in our prior exhibitions:

The Fleurieu Water Prize: Fountain #2

To be eligible for the final judging you are required to deliver your entry to the McLaren Vale office of the Fleurieu Peninsula Biennale (Fleurieu Gallery), 401 Main Road McLaren Vale, SA 5171, between 9am and 4pm, Monday 13 to Friday 17 October, 2008. Please note: the change of venue and date from the original conditions of entry.

Please refer to the conditions of entry for further details about delivery, packing and insurance of art works.

Also attached is a spreadsheet confirming your sale price. You must sign and return to 2 McIlhenny Road, McLaren Vale, SA 5171 by 12pm on Friday 17 October 2008.

While artists are responsible for their work during transit to the venue, the Fleurieu Biennale recommends accredited art transport services as our preferred carrier for the delivery of artwork. If you would like to use accredited art transport services, you can contact them at the following numbers below:

Victoria, Tas and ACT
Janelle Hines
janelle@elexis.com.au
03 9129 5202

New South Wales
Doug Walker
dswalker@picasa.com.au
02 9677 3777

Queensland
Rosa Hall
rosa@laurel.com.au
07 3397 7922

South Australia
Deb Cullen
deb@fleurieu.com.au
08 8339 3799

The final judging will take place in the Fleurieu Peninsula Biennale on 17 November 2008. At the Biennale on 17 November 2008, the winner will be announced at the Gala Awards Dinner on 17 November 2008 in McLaren Vale.

On behalf of the Board of Fleurieu Biennale Inc, I would like to thank you for entering the 2008 Biennale and wish you good luck!

Yours sincerely,

Nick Young
Chair, Fleurieu Biennale Inc.
2009
2009 City of Albany Art Prize, 2009, Vancouver Arts Centre, Albany, Western Australia
Works-in-Progress

DFA Candidates
Sharmiza Abu Hassan (Malaysia)
Mohamed Aloumeis (Libya)
Xiao Yu Bai (Australia)
Naoko Yohmura (Australia)
Ohri Pattanasachol (Thailand)
Ernesto Rios (Mexico)

Have great pleasure in inviting you to their exhibition of work for the Doctoral seminars 2009

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm Thursday 15 October 2009

School of Art Gallery
RMIT University City Campus
Building 2 Level 3
Blouen Street (off Lutroba St)
Melbourne, Victoria 3000
Australia

Exhibition dates: Thurs 15 & Fri 16 October 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Works in Progress, 2009, RMIT School of Art Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Exhibition View, Work in Progress
2010
Siemens – RMIT Fine Art Scholarship, 2010, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Siemens RMIT Fine Arts Partnership

Xiao Bai
Name

Winner of a Siemens Fine Arts Scholarship for

It is a fountain, but beyond the fountain it is...
Title of Artwork

Postgraduate
Category

Albert Goller
Chairman and Managing Director
Siemens Ltd.

25 November 2010
Exhibition View 1, Siemens – RMIT Fine Art Scholarship Awards
Exhibition View 2, Siemens – RMIT Fine Art Scholarship Awards
Exhibition View 3, Siemens – RMIT Fine Art Scholarship Awards
Thinking Through Practice – Art and Design as Research, 2010, Institute of Contemporary Arts, Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore
Exhibition View 1, *Thinking Through Practice – Art and Design as Research*
Is what is..., 2010, Stephen McLaughlan Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Exhibition View 1, Is what is…
Exhibition View 2, Is what is...
A Little Bird Told Me, 2010, MARS Art Room, Melbourne, Australia
2011 City of Albany Art Prize, 2011, Vancouver Arts Centre, Albany, Western Australia
Sensation, 2011, RMIT School of Art Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
Exhibition View, Sensation
R & M McGivern Prize 2012, 2012, Maroondah Art Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
3.2 Solo exhibitions
Blurring – Painting and the Dao
[MARS] invites you to the launch of

Blurring
Painting and the Dao
by Xiao Yu Bai

Boxes, 2006, oil on canvas, 56x48cm

Wednesday 5 April 2006, 7-9pm
418 Bay Street Port Melbourne

To be officially opened by
Professor Richard Perry (VCA, Centre for Ideas)
Richard will speak about Eastern Mysticism,
Zen painting and literature.
With comments by Dr David Thomas,
(Program Coordinator, Master of Fine Arts,
RMIT University).

RSVP essential by April 3 to Andy Dinan
(03) 9681 8425 or rsvp@marsgallery.com.au

Blurring – painting and the Dao, 2006, MARS Art Rooms, Melbourne, Australia
Xiao Yu Bai has chosen for this exhibition of her alluring, meditative paintings a title which at once seems both descriptive and enigmatic: “Blurring.” The idea of the softening and intermingling of boundaries is, of course, a concept that has much currency in contemporary cultural theory: the dissolution of the established canon, the fusion of once distinct folk-music styles in today’s world music, the redefinition of gender roles and of gender itself, the utter melting away of meaningful political labels, the diaphanous line between advertising and pornography, the disintegration of academic compartments into cross-disciplinary studies, multi-media art forms, Fuzzy Logic, Thai lemon-grass enchiladas, and, to end this badinage, the erosion of the critical press into journalistic infotainment. As the late Edward R. Murrow famously proclaimed, “Anyone who isn’t confused doesn’t really understand the situation.”

Gracing these gallery walls and our eyes with images that resonate with a harmony that denies an exactitude of pitch, Xiao Yu Bai refers, however, to a different meaning for “blurring.” In evoking Taoism, she calls our attention not to the contemporary, deconstructive sparkle of “anything goes,” but to more ancient affirmations of what cannot be known. Confucius said: many things, all of which defined and ultimately constituted the laws of order upon which Chinese society has been based for nearly two thousand years. Lao Tzu, the presumed author of the Tao Te Ching, the original text of Taoism, provided the leavening balance to Confucian regulation. While Confucius stated that social order derived from everyone knowing his place, and the boundaries which should not be crossed, Lao Tzu quietly professed that wisdom arose from a basic distrust of the very words which described any value system, even any experience.

The opening lines of the Tao Te Ching seem relevant to Xiao Yu Bai’s embrace of Taoism for her paintings: “The way that can be told is not the constant way; the name that can be named is not the constant name.” This means, among many possibilities, not only that the primordial source of all things pre-existed the forms which were inevitably given names, but also that the ultimate truth that we may know in the here and now cannot be reduced to words. This ineffability is a quality insisted upon by mystics from all religious persuasions, no matter how much poetry they wrote or images they painted to express the inexpressibility of their ecstasy. Certainly the great T’ang Dynasty poet, Han Shan, retreating into the mountains a thousand years after Lao Tzu lived, was insisting on the same unswerving integrity when he wrote:

My mind is like the autumn moon
Shining clean and clear in the green pool.
No, that’s not a good comparison.
Tell me, how shall I explain?

There is assuredly something of this rejection of the false boundaries created by confining words and pre-established images behind the famous poetry contest held when the fourth patriarch of Zen was about to die. (tell story)
The tree of enlightenment is the body
Which contains the mirror of the mind:
Diligently wipe the mirror again and again;
Don’t let it gather dust    (Shenxiu)

Basically the body does not exist
And the mind is not a mirror
Fundamentally there is not a single thing –
Where then can dust collect?    (Hui neng)

In Hui-neng’s rejection of hard-edged, defining terms for what must be a personal, intuitive, ineffable experience of ultimate truth (the words “ultimate truth” here are terrible), lies both Zen Buddhism’s resistance to given form and Taoism’s suspicion of language.

Lao Tzu writes that “The whole world recognizes the beautiful as the beautiful, yet this is only the ugly; the whole world recognizes the good as the good, yet this is only the bad…Therefore the sage keeps to the deed that consists in taking no action and practises the teaching that uses no words.” Elsewhere: “blunt the sharpness; untangle the knots; soften the glare…Darkly visible, it only seems as if it were there.”

Taoism offers a kind of morality, a way to see and to be that is echoed in Xiao Yu Bai’s painting: Stanza 21 of the Tao Te Ching reads:
   In his every movement a man of great virtue
   Follows the Tao and the Tao only.
   As a thing, the Tao is
   Shadowy, indistinct.
   Indistinct and shadowy,
   Yet within it is an image;
   Shadowy and indistinct,
   Yet within it is a substance.
   Dim and dark,
   Yet within it is an essence.
   This essence is quite genuine
   And within it is something that can be tested.

Having said all this, it is important to remember, however that the committed Taoist and the zealous Zen monk did not accept fuzzy thinking as a way to understand or to avoid reality. The Taoist carefully watched the rising and falling of the natural process in order to fathom eternal, if ineffable, truths beyond transient phenomena, and the Zen monk sought in his disciplined meditation to achieve an emptiness of mind that could apprehend the very keen suchness of things. Thus I am tempted to say that Xiao Yu Bai does not wish us to walk away from these walls and view the world outside as if it were a blurred scene, but rather to gain from her paintings a cleansing of vision uncontaminated
by labels and concepts. She provides for us, with virtuosity of technique, both beauty and profundity.

I am thus very happy to declare this exhibition – “Blurring: Painting and the Tao” by Xiao Yu Bai – open for your enjoyment.

-Richard Perry
April 5, 2006
Exhibition View 1, Blurring—Painting and the Dao
Exhibition View 2, Blurring—Painting and the Dao
Exhibition View 3, Blurring—Painting and the Dao
Exhibition View 4, Blurring—Painting and the Dao
Exhibition View 5, *Blurring—Painting and the Dao*
The work of Chinese-born artist Xiao Yu Bai combines western painting techniques with traditional eastern philosophical concepts.

Focusing on natural phenomena such as the moon, water, clouds and the sky, Bai pays particular attention to the manipulation of space, light, the edge of form, colour and surface within her work to explore an atmosphere of calmness and contemplation.

In Chinese thought, Hun Yuan Chi is associated with energy and is controlled by consciousness. The control of Hun Yuan Chi during the painting process is very important for traditional Chinese painters.

Zhi Neng Chi Gong is a unique Chinese exercise system that unites body and mind. “The relationship between Zhi Neng Chi Gong and my life that is both intuitive and intellectual. For example, when I close my eyes, calm my mind, quiet my heart, and maintain a peaceful spirit, my consciousness blurs my physical shape so I blend with surrounding nature. Because of this, I can always feel the Hun Yuan Chi. It makes me feel healthy and relaxed.”

The third concept in Xiao’s work, the Dao, is hard to explain. “Dao has no real shape and is always blurring. Dao is unclear and you cannot catch it, but you can feel it, it is real. You see it, but when you are searching for the edge of a form, you cannot find it. The sky and the earth come from the Dao. Dao is mother of everything.” Bai concentrates on this idea of blurring to indicate movement, time and atmosphere, uniting dualities such as positive and negative, object and subject, outside and inside, actual and virtual.
Exhibition View 1, Water
Exhibition View 2, Water
Exhibition View 3, *Water*
Exhibition View 5, Water
Exhibition View 6, Water
Exhibition View 8, Water
Exhibition View 9, Water
Growing
Growing

An exhibition of drawing & painting by Xiao Yu Bai from “Blurring the Boundaries: combining a selected painting technique with certain Chinese philosophical concepts to produce outcomes that induce contemplation.”

Opening night: Monday 15th September from 5pm to 7pm

Dates: 15th to the 17th September
Viewing on the 16th to 17th by request only.

Location: Project Space, Third floor, Gossard building
Building 49, 67 Franklin Street Melbourne.

Growing, 2008, Project Space, Building 49, RMIT University, Melbourne
Exhibition View 1, Growing
Exhibition View 2, Growing
Exhibition View 3, Growing
Exhibition View 4, *Growing*
Exhibition View 5, Growing
Exhibition View 6, Growing
Beyond objects, it is …
Beyond objects, it is...

An exhibition of painting by Xiao Yu Bai from “Blurring the Boundaries: combining a selected painting technique with certain Chinese philosophical concepts to produce outcomes that induce contemplation”

Opening hours: Friday 5th October from 10:30am – 3:00pm (It is only open this one day)

Location: School of Art Gallery, RMIT, Building 2, Level 2, room 8, Bowen Street

Beyond objects, it is ..., 2012, School of Art Gallery, RMIT University, Melbourne
Exhibition View 1, *Beyond objects, it is …*
Exhibition View 2, Beyond objects, it is …
Exhibition View 3, *Beyond objects, it is ...*
Exhibition View 4, *Beyond objects, it is ...*
Exhibition View 5, Beyond objects, it is …
Exhibition View 6, *Beyond objects, it is* ...
Exhibition View 7, Beyond objects, it is …
4. STUDIO
Franklin Street Studio, Melbourne, March 2006 – August 2012
5. CURRICULUM VITAE
CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Ms Xiao Yu Bai
Address: 5 Margaret St. Clayton VIC. 3168 Melbourne
Telephone: (03) 95441298
Email: xiaobai@optusnet.com.au

6/1996 Move to Australia

Education
2006-2012 Doctor of Fine Art (Painting) Candidate, RMIT University, Melbourne.
2004-2006 Master of Fine Art (Painting), RMIT University, Melbourne.
1999-2003 Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting), Monash University, Melbourne.
1994-1995 Advanced studies (Traditional Chinese Painting), Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China.
1984-1988 Bachelor of Fashion Design, Academy of Art & Design, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China.

Professional Experience:
1988-1994 Full time Teacher, Academy of Art and Design, Light Industrial University, China.

Solo Exhibition
2008 Growing, Project Space, RMIT University, Melbourne.
2007 Water, MARS Melbourne Art Rooms, Melbourne
2006 Blurring—Painting and the Dao, MARS Melbourne Art Rooms, Melbourne.

Group Exhibitions
2012 R&M McGivern Art Prize, Melbourne.
2011 Sensation, School of Art Gallery, RMIT University, Melbourne. The City of Albany Art Prize, WA.
2010 Thinking Through Practice—Art and Design as Research Institute of Contemporary Arts, Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore. Is What is Stephen McLaughlan Gallery, Melbourne. A Little Bird Told Me MARS Melbourne Art Rooms,
Melbourne.
*Siemens—RMIT Fine Art Scholarship Awards, Melbourne.*

2009
*The City of Albany Art Prize, WA.*
*Work in Progress, School of Art Gallery, RMIT University, Melbourne.*

2008
*The City of Albany Art Prize, WA.*
*Eutick Memorial Still Life award, NSW.*
*The Fleurieu Peninsula Water Prize 2008, South Australia.*
*SIEMENS—RMIT Fine Art scholarship Awards, Melbourne.*

2007
*Eutick Memorial Still Life award, NSW.*
*Mesh Span Gallery, Melbourne.*
*MLC Acquisitive Art Exhibition, Melbourne.*
*Confines Counihan Gallery, Melbourne.*

2006
*R&M McGivern Art Prize, Melbourne.*
*1 Treasury place, East Melbourne.*
*The Fleurieu Peninsula Water Prize 2006, South Australia.*
*The Redland Art Awards 2006, Cleveland, QLD.*
*MARS Melbourne Art Room, Melbourne.*
*Upstairs Flinders Gallery, Melbourne.*

2005
*RMIT Master of Fine Arts Students Graduate Exhibition Prize, Melbourne.*
*Willoughby Art Prize, Sydney.*
*Arthur Guy Memorial Award, Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria.*
*MARS Melbourne Art Room, Melbourne.*
*MLC Acquisitive Art Exhibition, Melbourne.*

2004
*Dagmar Art Consultants, Melbourne.*

2003
*Selected works by 2002 Graduate & Post Graduate student from VCA, RMIT and Monash University, Dickerson Gallery, Melbourne.*

2002
*Graduate exhibition, Monash University, Melbourne.*

1999
*The Lucato Peace Prize, Monash Gallery, Melbourne.*

**Awards**
**2012**
*Finalist in R&M McGivern Art Prize, Melbourne.*
2011  Finalist in *The City of Albany Art Prize*, WA.
      Finalist in *A.M.E. BALE*, Glen Eira City Council Gallery, Melbourne.

      Winner in *Siemens Acquisitive Prize*, Melbourne.

2009  Finalist in *The City of Albany Art Prize*, WA.

2008  Finalist in *The City of Albany Art Prize*, WA.
      Finalist in *Eutick Memorial Still Life Award*, NSW.
      Finalist in *The Fleurieu Peninsula Water Prize 2008*, South Australia.
      Finalist in *Siemens—RMIT Fine Art Schoolship Awards*, Melbourne.

2007  Finalist in *Eutick Memorial Still Life Award*, NSW

2006  Finalist in *R&M McGivern Art Prize*, Melbourne.
      Finalist in *The Fleurieu Peninsula Water Prize 2006*, South Australia.
      Finalist in *the Redland Art Awards 2006*, Qld.

2005  Winner in *RMIT Master of Fine Arts Students Graduate Exhibition Prize*, Melbourne.
      Finalist in *Arthur Guy Memorial Award*, Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria.
      Finalist in *Willoughby Art Prize*, Sydney.


**Collections**  Redland Gallery, MARS Melbourne Art Rooms, the Landcom, Siemens and Private.
6. APPENDIX I: EXHIBITION REVIEWS
2006
R & M McGivern
Art Prize

maroondahartgallery

trust

Maroondah City Council
Re-Union: Cities and Natural Sites

The theme for the 2006 R M McGivern Art Prize – Re-Union: Cities and Natural Sites – is a dedication to its benefactor Muriel McGivern, whose love of the Australian landscape, its flora and fauna and particularly that of her local vicinity of Ringwood and Croydon were significant in her own artistic pursuits. Situated between the metropolis of Melbourne and the Dandenong Ranges, Maroondah is a linkage environment where surrounding natural envrons are delineated by urbanisation and raise questions such as how do we accommodate the extending cityscape and its networks of freeways, bridges and urban technologies without diminishing nature, and will mountains, gullies and forests retain a vital presence or become a relic ecology within the artifice of the manmade world?

The works of art in this exhibition are testimony to nature as a poetic entity, as a site of colour, texture or memory. Nature has a universal capacity to measure human activity as an imprint of civilization's progress or regress. The artist is the recorder of this measure, and we see the range of emotional, spiritual, aesthetic and intellectual approaches in the forty works exhibited. These works of art provide us with emblems, gestural marks, realistic views, surreal implications, decorative forms and vibrant colours that impress upon us ideas and moods. As artistic statements they celebrate nature and cities, or represent the tensions inherent in their co-existence. Above all, they ask us to question the image as a metaphor for existence.

A central majestic tree, a resilient giant totem dominates Alex Zubry's canvas. It's powerful presence made all the more significant in a world that is intent on eradicating great timbers. In Tony Lloyd's 'Sky Stone', the immensity of a concrete bridge assumes a monolithic presence, its hard-edged, curvilinear contrasts with the natural brilliance of the evening sky, and the dark, powerful movement is a vital reminder of the urban spread. The silhouette is again present in Wayne Viney's more poetic pastoral oil painting 'Mount Macedon', a serenity that we also find in Xiao Yu Bai's small work 'Tree', where the arboreal image is symbolic of balance, tranquility and mystique, a calming spiritual repose. Susan Knight has used leaves and feathers imprinted directly onto paper, a work that is reflective of memories and the archivist's dream. In contrast, 'Blue 05' by Hamish Carr radiates the tension inherent in the relationship between nature and mankind. His masterful study of an archetypal, Australian sky is given greater emphasis with his Jarrbin, graffiti signage, a powerful interplay of disparate methodologies — skilful, traditional painting and the random spray can. Kathy Wilkins also intersects the beauty of an evening sky with the head of an urban street light.

A number of works are constructed on the grid formation, in particular the dark and brooding painting by Stephen Haley, which, as its title suggests 'United (but not reconciled)' refers to the superimposing of one culture upon another. A subterranean culture subtly emerges through a 'systematic order' of contemporary urbanization, the underbelly being perhaps the cultures of indigenous people or that which preceded them. Dean Bowen's vibrant work is about urban order and mechanization, yet the houses, cars and roads are dynamically orchestrated with colour, composition and joyfulness. Other paintings constructed along a linear grid are Arwen Osborne's 'Deciduous Company' and Carol Van Rees' 'Hawthorn Skyline' where metal girders and beams of industrial factories are an urban metaphor for bushlands and forests. Kate Bergin's 'Crossed Lines' is also a metaphor for urban communication and the ties of technology that bind, whereas the butterflies and moths act as an allegory for the beauty of nature.
UPSTAIRS
BORDER-ING
FLINDERS
SPACE-TIME
MEMORY
XIAO YU BAI
ZSUZSANNA HASE
YOLANDA JUEN
MARÍA PEÑA
LUCIANA PERIN
MIRJANA VUK-NIKIC
JAKOV ZAPER

Upstairs Flinders
First Floor - Entrance off Oliver Lane
137 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000
Tel. + 61 3 9656 3392
Fax: + 61 3 9650 8508
Email: info@flg.com.au
Opening hours:
Tues-Fri 11am to 6pm & Sat 11am to 4pm
Border-ing: Space-Time-Memory

As a teenager travelling in the far north of India I was fortunate to witness a ritual in which the local village became possessed by a holy deity. A crowd of local villagers surrounded the deity during the ritual: men, women and children alike. I was struck by the wildness of the event and the level of such ritual at the base of cultural identity. I was amazed by the strong sense of community, and how the villagers were so closely connected to the religious and social life of the village. The villagers were not just participating in a religious ceremony, but were also engaging in the social and cultural life of the village. I felt a strong sense of connection to the villagers and their way of life. The ritual was a powerful reminder of the importance of community and the role of ritual in reinforcing that sense of connection.

In contrast, in the western world, where the idea of community is often seen as a collection of individuals, the sense of connection to the community is often weaker. This is reflected in the way that we often feel disconnected from the social and cultural life of our communities. The ritual in India was a powerful reminder of the importance of community and the role of ritual in reinforcing that sense of connection.

In recent years, the concept of community has become an important issue in many parts of the world. In the western world, where the idea of community is often seen as a collection of individuals, the sense of connection to the community is often weaker. This is reflected in the way that we often feel disconnected from the social and cultural life of our communities.

In conclusion, the ritual in India was a powerful reminder of the importance of community and the role of ritual in reinforcing that sense of connection. The villagers were not just participating in a religious ceremony, but were also engaging in the social and cultural life of the village. The ritual was a powerful reminder of the importance of community and the role of ritual in reinforcing that sense of connection.

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Confinis
14 September - 7 October
Opening Night: Thursday 13 September

XIAO YU BAI
ZSUZSANNA HASE
YOLANDA JUEN
MIRJANA VUK-NIKIC
MARIA PEÑA
LUCIANA PERIN
JAKOV ZAPER
Confinis

In the unraveling of the ancient Hellenic Republic, the western confinis, which in modern usage embraces both coastal, neighboring, and adjacent cultural and political entities, is a natural manifestation of the profound and direct influences upon their respective societies and cultures. For the ancient Hellenic Republic, the western confinis, through its cultural and political ties, was a natural and integral part of the ancient Hellenic civilization.

Opening to the west, the Hellenic city-state of Athens formed a natural western confinis. However, as the western confinis was the natural and integral part of the ancient Hellenic civilization, it was a natural and integral part of the ancient Hellenic civilization. The western confinis was not only a political and cultural entity, but also a natural and integral part of the ancient Hellenic civilization.

The western confinis was a natural manifestation of the profound and direct influences upon their respective societies and cultures. For the ancient Hellenic Republic, the western confinis, through its cultural and political ties, was a natural and integral part of the ancient Hellenic civilization.

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CHANG SMITH August 2007
A Prize To Conjure With

Newly established as a leading art event in the Australian art calendar, The Flinders Memorial Water Prize brings together a wide variety of art. While the works may be of uneven quality, it is clear that the Water Prize has well and truly arrived, and its organizers have earned the right to expect a similar future.

The Water Prize's aims are ambitious, with the water theme used as a springboard for exploration and experimentation. Participants have been encouraged to find new and imaginative ways to use water in their art, and the results have been fascinating. From traditional watercolor paintings to more contemporary mixed media works, the exhibition has encompassed a wide range of styles and techniques.

The prize money has been generously donated by the Flinders family, who are long-time supporters of the arts. The winners, chosen by a panel of distinguished judges, have been rewarded for their creativity and originality. The awards ceremony was a spectacular event, with live music and performance art adding to the celebratory atmosphere.

The Water Prize is a testament to the power of art to bring people together and inspire new ideas. It has already established itself as an important event on the Australian art calendar, and it is likely to continue to grow and evolve in the years to come. With its focus on water, the prize has also raised awareness of the importance of our natural resources and the need to protect them for future generations.

In conclusion, the Water Prize is a exciting development in the Australian art world. Its success is a reflection of the increasing interest in contemporary art and the growing public appreciation for the role of art in society. With its focus on water, the prize has also brought attention to an important issue and encouraged dialogue on the need for conservation and sustainability. It is clear that the Water Prize has arrived, and we can look forward to seeing what the future holds.
7. APPENDIX II: EXHIBITION CATALOGUES
FLEURIEU PENINSULA BIENNALLE
Discover Award Winning Palettes

Exhibition Catalogue
3-26 November 2006
The Fleurieu Peninsula Water Prize Finalists

**Waterfall**, VC

*Footprint*

Oil on Canvas, 80 x 80
$3,000

**Andrew Evison**, SA

*The Edge of Nothingness*

Acrylic on Canvas, 90 x 150
$4,950

**Stephen Knott**, QL2

*Australian Landscape No. 7*

Oil on Canvas, 90 x 75
$3,800

**James Deane**, SA

*Subterranean*

Acrylic on Canvas, 121 x 100
$2,780

**Kathleen Harris**, VIC

*Light and Air*

Oil on Canvas, 90 x 150
$5,540

**Sue Cocks**, VIC

*Departure*

Oil on Canvas, 117 x 91
$4,091

**Piers Elsey Noble**, SA

*A Family of Building by the Water*

Oil on Canvas, 90 x 80
$597.73

**Ken Orchard**, SA

*P big in a big way*

Oil on Canvas, 50 x 50
$2,200

**Sarah Young**, VIC

*The Midnighties in Bolivia*

Oil on Canvas, 90 x 120
$5,350

24
THE 2008 FLEURIEU WATER PRIZE

Finalists

Judy Edmonds, SA
Water Divide River
Acrylic on Canvas, 120 x 120
$1,575

Wendy Teakol, ACT
Someday Ground - Shape of Rain
Acrylic and Phoner Work on Paper, 120 x 94
$6,400

George Tatters, SA
Sandy Fence
Oil on Canvas, 160 x 110
$4,400
Represented by Studio 13

Shane Hewitt, NSW
In Much Water to Eye To Eye
Oil on Canvas on Hardboard, 120 x 170
$12,000
Represented by Damien Metzger

Mary Waylett, SA
Line of Terraces
Acrylic on Canvas, 81 x 122
$1,200

Peter Haf Fit, SA
Waves of Proof
Acrylic on Canvas, 75 x 90
$2,000
2008 CITY OF ALBANY ART PRIZE

A national annual acquisitive prize for paintings. Exhibition of finalists March 15-30, 2008
XIAO YU BAI

Lily Pads #15

oil on canvas
60 x 60 cm
$1,000

This painting is one of a series of my paintings about lily pads. I want to combine selected western painting techniques with Chinese philosophical concepts such as the Tao and Hu. My intention is to evoke an atmosphere of calmness, peace and contemplation through representations of selected objects and elements: paying particular attention to the manipulation of space, light, shape, the edges of form, colour and surface.

Xiao Yu Bai lives in Melbourne and has a Bachelor, Master and Doctors (ongoing) in Fine Arts in Australia. She has had two solo exhibitions and was a finalist in the Arthur Guy Memorial Award, Wlock Memorial Still Life Award, Peninsula Water Prize and Redkirk Art Award.

MIN-WOO BANG

Journey 97

acrylic on canvas
61 x 91 cm
$3,000

My landscape paintings are purely based on my own memories of mountains, trees, and clouds. I am interested in creating not only the sublime of nature but also psychological emotions through landscape painting. The psychologically inner landscapes are reminiscent of South Korean traditions in landscape painting combined with a dream environment. The landscapes explore my own unconscious space in both Western approaches to painting and the traditional style of the East, specifically Korea.

Min Woo Bang was born in South Korea in 1971, and now lives in Sydney. He gained a Diploma of Fine Arts from the National Art School (1992–1993) and graduated from the Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University, BVA (Honors) and MFA (1994–1999). Min Woo Bang has participated in a number of group shows and held 11 solo exhibitions. Represented by raw Livingstone art dealer, Sydney.
2009 CITY OF ALBANY ART PRIZE

A national annual acquisitive prize for paintings. Exhibition of finalists April 4-27, 2009
FARHANA AHAD
Dulse Artifice I
polymer on canvas
1320 x 950 mm
$6,700

Dulse Artifice I is about the relationship between water and light, written or optical and organic construction. The work is made with black and white, alongside the hard edge and organic form, to emphasize the invisible currents. This work avoids the use of water, instead it’s engaged in systems of visual illusion within the experience of space and the visual sensation itself is vertical. While the painting’s sensation of movement is apparent from the illusion of vertical illusions, and a third dimension can be visualized through the coded visual content through the medium of perception, connecting deeply with the viewer’s physical and psychological responses.

Originally born in Bangladesh, Farhana Ahad came to Australia in 2001 and completed her Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours) at the Queensland University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba. She lives and works in Queensland and has exhibited throughout Toowoomba and Sydney in various spaces and galleries. She has been a finalist for several prizes, holding the current Hue Gallery International 2005, New York.

XIANG YU BAII
Lake #9
oil on canvas
1200 x 750 mm
$4,900

This painting is one of my paintings of water series. In this painting, I want to combine selected western painting techniques with Oriental philosophic concepts Tao and Hun Yuan Qi with the objective of producing paintings that create new combinations of visual imagery. My intention is to evoke an atmosphere of calmness, peace, serenity, and contemplation through representations of the selected field with particular attention to the manipulation of space, light, and color.

Xiao Yu Bao lives in Melbourne and has Bachelor’s Degree and Degree (Honours) in Fine Arts in Australia. She has had several exhibitions and won the RMIT Master of Fine Arts Students Graduate Exhibiting Prize. She was a finalist in the Arthur Guy Memorial Awards, Smith Memorial Still Life Award, Flinders Peninsula Water Prize and Federal Arts Awards. Represented by Melbourne Art Rooms.
Xiao Yu Bai (DFA)

Title of Project: Blurring the Boundaries

Summary: By combining the Chinese philosophy concept of Hun Yuan Qi with blurring techniques in drawing and painting, I aim to produce atmospheres of calmness, energy, and contemplation for the viewer. Nature will be a source for my images and I will pay particular attention to the manipulation of space, light, the edges of form, marks, colour, surface, format and scale.

Research question: In what ways can I use blurring technique in oil painting and drawing to manifest an atmosphere of calm, energy and contemplations derived from selected Hun Yuan Qi?
2011 CITY OF ALBANY

ART PRIZE

A NATIONAL ANNUAL ACQUISTIVE PRIZE FOR PAINTINGS.
EXHIBITION OF FINALISTS APRIL 9 - MAY 1, 2011.
XIAO YU BAI
Is it a fountain, but beyond the fountain... 
Oil on canvas
600 x 350 mm
$3,500

I want to combine Western techniques with Chinese philosophical concepts of Hermeneutics with the objective of producing painting that makes new combinations of visual language. This painting is a sense of giving a sense of a fountain. It is not a fountain that exists in a certain place, but beyond the actual fountain, my intention is to evoke an atmosphere of energy, vital energy and contemplation for the viewer in the journeying of particular attention to the manipulation of space, light, dark, the edge of form, colour, surface, format and style.

Xiao Yu Bai lives in Melbourne and has Bachelor of Master of Doctoral Fine Arts in Australia. She has had more than 30 solo and group exhibitions and wins MFAF Master of Fine Arts Students Graduate Exhibition Prize, Simmons–ART Fine Art Scholarship Award and Somers Acquisition prize. She was a finalist in Arthur Cal Flax Memorial Award, Frida Memorial Still Life Award, Fleurot, Portuguese Water Prize and Revels Art Award.

Represented by Melbourne Art Rooms (MARS Gallery), Melbourne.

JASON BENJAMIN
Cathedral
Oil on canvas
640 x 440
$18,000

Drawing equally from Eastern and Western influences, the motif and composition, the space, form and overall gesture appear to a distinctive rendered seen repeatedly to arrive at a still point acknowledging the fleeting and the enduring.

Jason Benjamin was born in Melbourne in 1971 and has a degree project from his passion; living in Sydney, USA and Paris. Before returning to Sydney for high school. At age 14 he was awarded a scholarship in his high school. At the age of 18 he was awarded a scholarship at the Institute of Fine Arts, Brooklyn, to focus solely on art. Since his first group show in Melbourne in 1991 he has had over 40 solo shows in Australia, Tokyo, London, Hong Kong, Singapore and New York. A touring survey show is being planned for 2013.
2012 Painting

R & M McGivern Prize 2012
8. APPENDIX III: REPRESENTATION IN BOOKS