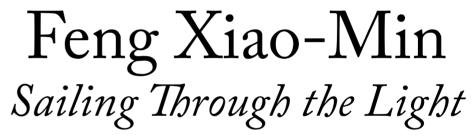
Feng Xiao-Min Sailing Through the Light

OPERA GALLERY



NEW YORK

OPERA GALLERY

April 22 - May 17, 2025



FOREWORD

Opera Gallery New York is pleased to present 'Sailing Through the Light,' an exhibition featuring 26 paintings created between 2009 and 2025 by the Paris-based artist Feng Xiao-Min. In this new body of work, Feng takes us on a journey through an imaginary world. Evoking sailing boats navigating a sea where the horizon blends with the sky, Feng's immersive paintings and an electric light seems to guide them. Feng creates an experience, a moment of immersion where the viewer becomes the traveler.

'Sailing Through the Light' offers catharsis in an age overwhelmed by information, movement, and uncertainty. In *Composition* $n^{\circ}26.7.21$ (2021), the scene is immersed in deep midnight blues, evoking a tranquil yet mysterious atmosphere. At the center of its composition, two small radiant lights emerge from the distance, resembling lighthouses or solitary boats navigating through a seemingly endless sea. The painting invites the viewer into a dreamlike voyage where time stands still.

These imagined landscapes represent Feng's transformative experiences with nature. For Feng, painting has always been an emotional and sensory experience intrinsically tied to the surrounding environment: "I observe nature at different times of the day and use variations in color to express my own sensations. Light, for me, has a duality—it represents both hope and anxiety." Playing with contrasts between celestial light and dark fog, Feng seeks to bring a "natural serenity of the mind" through his paintings.

In *Composition n°6.4.23* (2023), warm ochers and deep blues dissolve into one another as the sunset fades. To the left, a coastline emerges. Mountains, plains, and beaches gently shape the horizon. The resulting image leaves the viewer's imagination wide open, evoking a distant land that feels both familiar and dreamlike.

Feng's artistic language merges Eastern philosophy with Western abstraction. Like the legendary Qing Dynasty painter Shitao (1642–1707), Feng approaches painting and calligraphy as "two branches from the same root." He manipulates acrylic paint as a calligrapher manipulates ink, precisely controlling the flow of paint and water. His work embodies a balance between tradition and modernity, incorporating a broad range of influences—from Chu Teh-Chun to J.M.W. Turner to Zao Wou-Ki.

With 'Sailing Through the Light', Feng has created a contemplative body of work that invites us to pause. His compositions serve as a reminder that even in an ever-changing world, serenity can be found in the quiet beauty of nature.

Gilles DyanIFounder and ChairmanIOpera Gallery GroupI

 \leftarrow Feng Xiao-Min, *Composition* $N^{\circ}6.4.23$, 2023 (detail)

Dan HalimiVictoria Mouraux Durand-RuelHead of Private SalesArt AdvisorOpera Gallery New YorkOpera Gallery New York

FENG XIAO-MIN, FROM HUANGPU TO THE SEINE BY BARBARA POLLACK

For an artist to evoke both emotion and spirituality is quite an achievement, given that these two states of being are often in opposition to each other. Feng Xiao-Min is an artist who goes a step further, creating a space of harmony and inner wisdom, even while the world is ever increasingly violent and chaotic. In his upcoming exhibition, one of the earliest paintings, *Composition n°26.11.20*, 2020, was created to reflect on the artist's isolation during the pandemic. We can almost discern bare trees poking through the dust of a wind-swept desert. In contrast, two years later, we might read a message of hope in the moonlight seascape in *Composition n°26.5.22*, 2022. Of course, both would be a mistake, imposing a narrative on fundamentally indecipherable compositions of form and light.

China-born, Paris-based artist Feng Xiao-Min is often described as a bridge between eastern and western cultures. The calmness he achieves, however, is not the result of a collision or conflict. It is achieved through a blending of elements from both Chinese and western art history; it is the result of finding the connection between Post-Impressionism and diasporic Chinese abstraction. Patience is required to achieve this balance, yet it is a natural consequence of the life that Feng Xiao-Min has had and is living.

"Contrary to the perception that it was solely inspired by the Western tradition, 'Yi Pai' (Chinese abstraction) is an aesthetic expression heavily rooted in Chinese heritage and Eastern philosophy," writes leading contemporary art curator Gao Minglu. Feng Xiao-Min evokes the authenticity that Gao seeks. Yet his work goes a step further and expands beyond such limitations. His is a confluence of traditions-from Taoism to literati painting, from J.M.W. Turner to Rothko-fashioning a world from a pursuit of universality.



← Feng Xiao-Min in his studio in Fontainebleau, March 2025 © Nicolas Brasseur



↑ Nanjing Road, Shanghai, 1930s Born in 1959, Xiao-Min grew up in a Shanghai very different from the chaotic city of today with its spaceship architecture and Pearl River Tower. Before the revolution in 1939, Shanghai had been a bastion of culture with nightclubs, theaters and art movements of its own. By the time, Xiao-Min attended art school there, it had been recreated by the Cultural Revolution and its erasure of all considered things "decadent," including modern art. But, the artist came from a family of intellectuals and the beauty of calligraphy was instilled in him. Even today one can spot the influence of the shadowy mountain scapes of scroll paintings and the uncanny effects of ink-and-water brush work in his works.

The artist graduated from the fine art academy in Shanghai where he would have been trained in realism, particularly the social realism of propaganda. The usurpation of realist techniques by the state, inspired many artists to seek an alternative practice in abstraction, searching back into earlier roots of ink painting. For Xiao-Min, his escape was through the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts. One can only imagine the culture shock he experienced in Paris and the overdose of art in its magnificent museums. Inundated with western art, Xiao-Min was seeking a way to liberate himself both from the realism of the China of his youth and reviving the grace of the ink paintings of his family.

Drawing amphitheatre, Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris, 1981 © All Rights Reserved ↓



Paris was not only a bastion of western art. It was also the center of a diasporic Chinese art community, especially strong in the years after Tiananmen Square. In Paris, the young artist encountered such masters as Zao Wou-Ki and Zhang Daqian, two individuals of an earlier generation who broke ground in western appreciation of Chinese abstraction. They singularly made headway gaining renown from western institutions, long before Chinese contemporary art had become trendy. In 1999, another Chinese emigre in Paris, Chen Zhen, represented France in the Venice Biennale under the direction of global curator Hou Hanru, originally from Beijing.

When Feng Xiao Min met Zao Wou-Ki, the elder artist had already become a world figure. Their conversation represents the dialogue found in their paintings and threading through discussion of Chinese abstraction in the late-20th century. Known for adapting western abstraction to an eastern point of view, Zao Wou-Ki created wild strokes and an explosive palette which invigorates the canvas. The movements of his body can be traced by the movements of the brushstrokes, but the use of color is sophisticated and reflects the lights and spectacles of a modern city. At first glance, Xiao-Min's work is just the opposite. His calm horizontal strokes instill a sense of serenity and lures viewers into a meditative state. The rich colors, like a sunset harbor scene or a lone skier on a blue snowy slope, convey stories from a supersaturated landscape. The artist leaves his works untitled so as not to interfere with his audience's imagination.



↑ Chen Zhen at the Venice Biennale 1999 © Marcello Mencarini. All rights reserved 2025 - Bridgeman Images

Feng Xiao-Min and Zao Wou-Ki, 2002 © GU Lp \downarrow



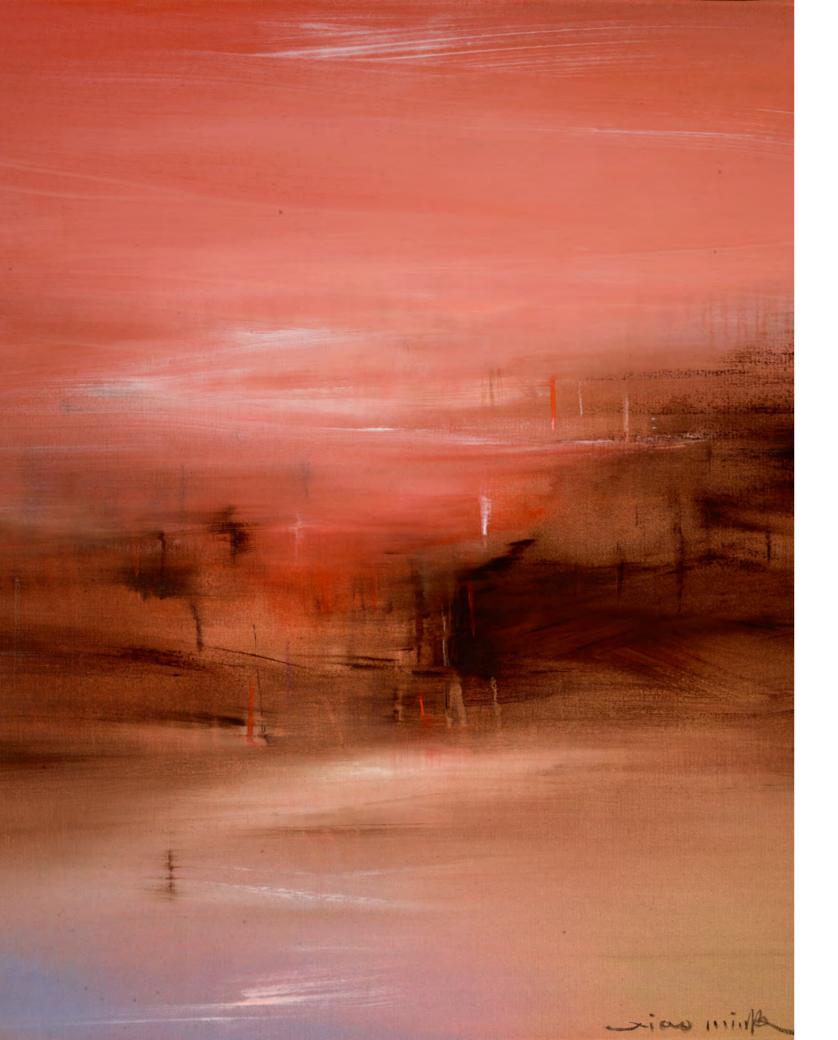
Xiao-Min admits the influence of J.M.W. Turner, one of the artists he most appreciated when he came west. Turner's white clouds of gunfire smoke and his misty ports seem like obvious influences on the Chinese artist's rain-drenched scenes. But the connection is much more complicated because there is not a whiff of violence or conflict in Xiao-Min's paintings. His artworks do not explore inner conflicts or the tensions of the world as we might find in Jackson Pollock or Willem de Kooning. In contrast, his paintings insinuate a moment when inner turmoil has been resolved, allowing us to sit quietly and enjoy the spatial relationships of a composition with no sharp edges.

In his most recent work, Feng Xiao-Min incorporates a brilliant iridescent light and array of neon-like colors into his paintings. A pairing of a tangerine "sky" above an olive green "land" marries two clashing hues in a harmonious manner in *Composition* $n^{\circ}16.11.24$,2024. The latest work in the show, *Composition* $n^{\circ}18.1.25$, 2025, conjures up a seascape sunrise with yellow mist, purple depths and inflections of white Cirrus clouds, freely punctuating the sky. To achieve this level of balance in this very modern age is a true accomplishment. Yet again, it must be emphasized that freedom from content and the release of form is a liberation from prescribed art-traditions, whether we are speaking of the routine of calligraphy or the dictates of social realism.

So instead of thinking about Chinese contemporary art and western art history as on a collision course, Xiao-Min sidesteps differences and finds a synchronicity. Just as this traveler migrated in pursuit of art, he offers us all a passport to a world devoid of trade routes. Its similarity to Chinese classical paintings comes from a nostalgia for a country already erased at the time he was born. It is this time warp that the artist best captures, a place that we are surprised to recover and we regret to depart.



Rain, Steam, Speed -The Great Western Railway, J.M.W. Turner, 1844, oil on canvas, The National Gallery, London \rightarrow



ARTWORKS

Blue Rhapsody (Triptych) 2009

Acrylic on paper laid on canvas Signed and dated 'xiao-min 09' on the lower right

190 x 294 cm | 74.8 x 115.7 in



Composition n°16.6.19 2019

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

114 x 146 cm | 44.9 x 57.5 in

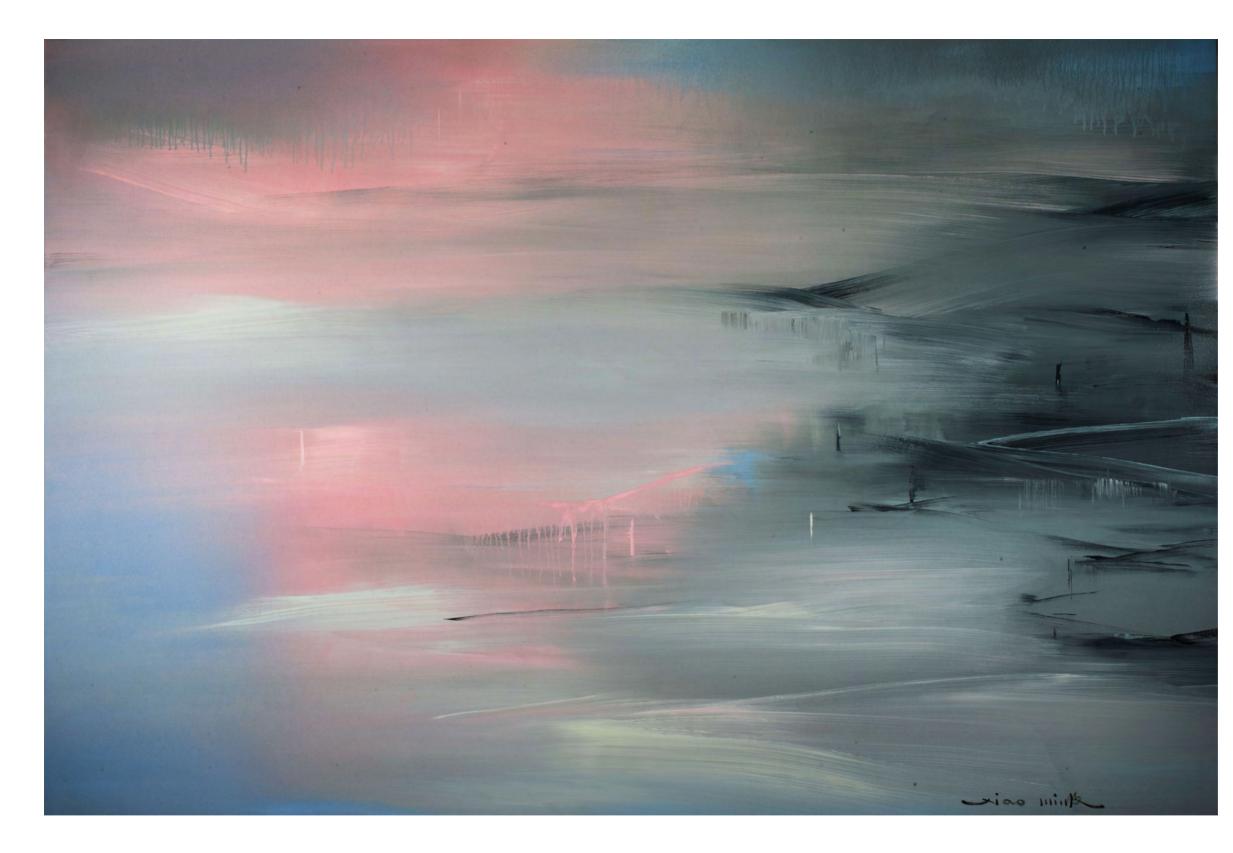




Composition n°26.11.20 2020

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

130 x 195 cm | 51.2 x 76.8 in



Composition n°3.12.21 2021

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

130 x 195 cm | 51.2 x 76.8 in

Composition n°26.7.21 2021

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

210 x 300 cm | 82.7 x 118.1 in





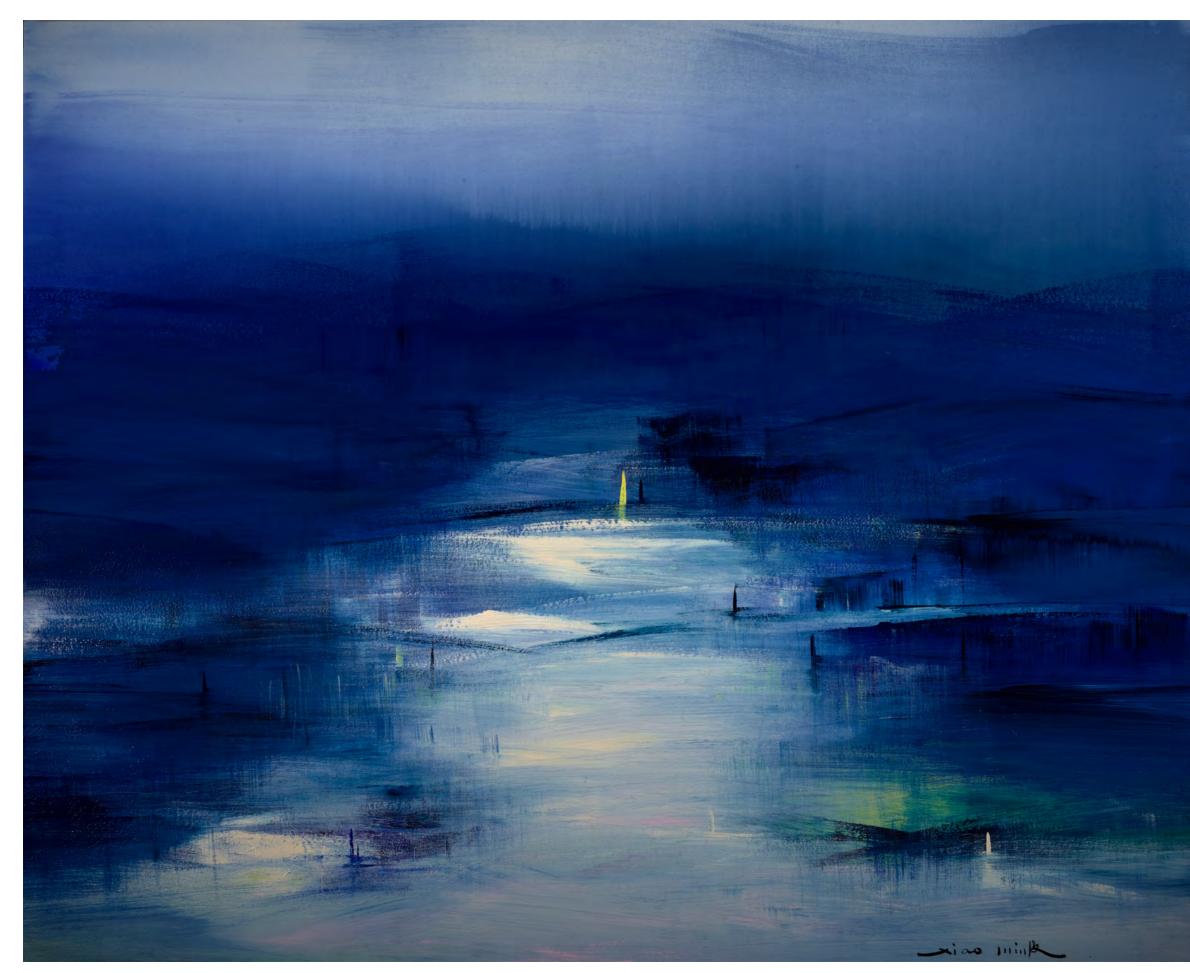
Composition n°26.7.22 2022

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right









Composition n°26.5.22 2022

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

Composition n°26.6.22 2022

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right



Composition n°12.12.22 (Triptych) 2022

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

195 x 291 cm | 76.8 x 114.6 in







Composition n°6.4.23 2023

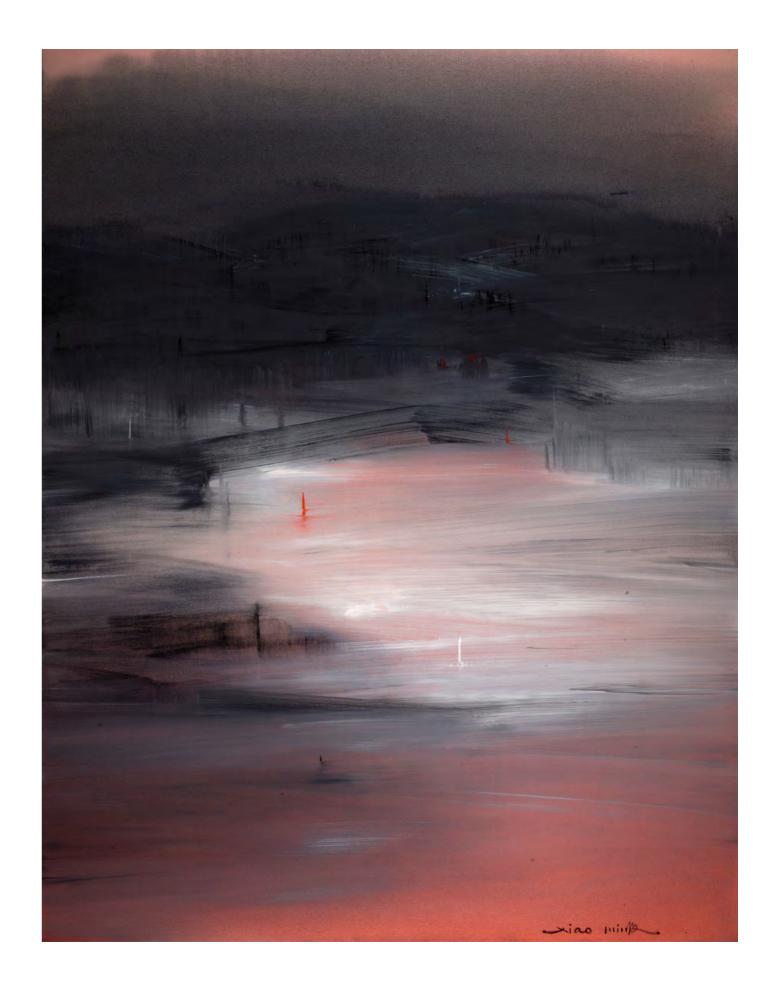
Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

195 x 130 cm | 76.8 x 51.2 in

Composition n°12.5.23 2023

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

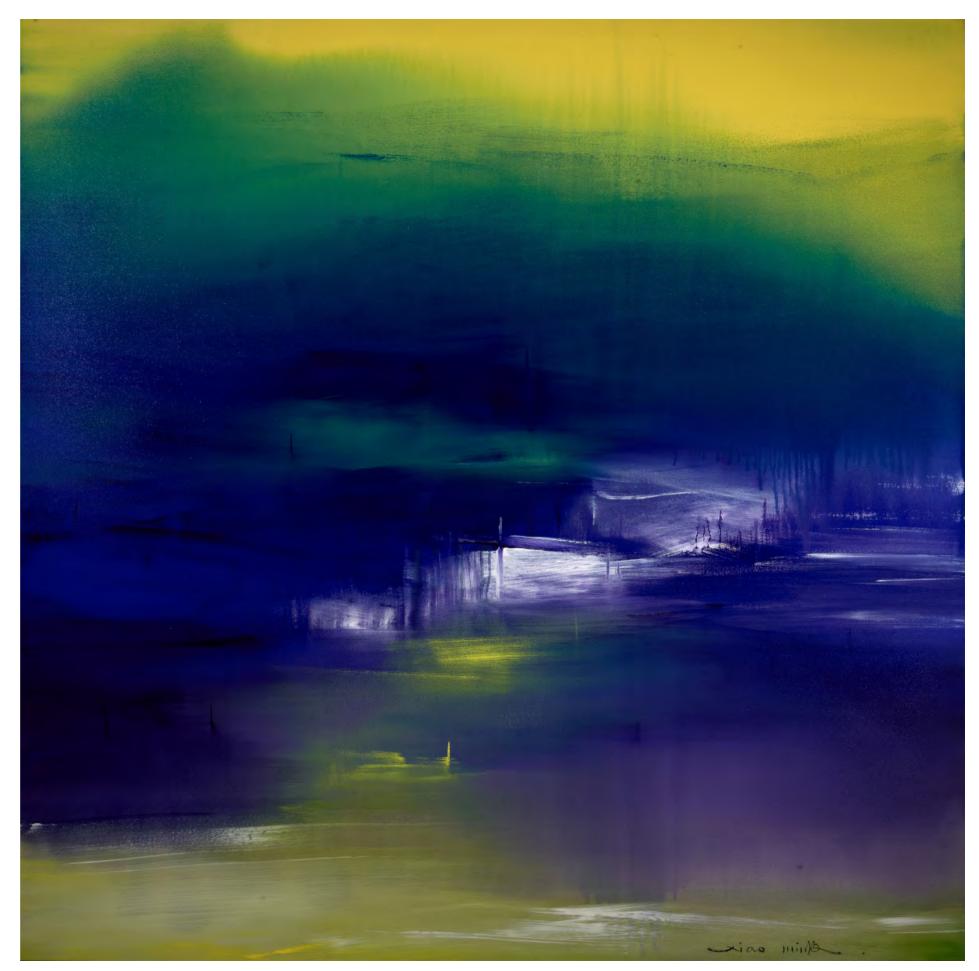
146 x 114 cm | 57.5 x 44.9 in



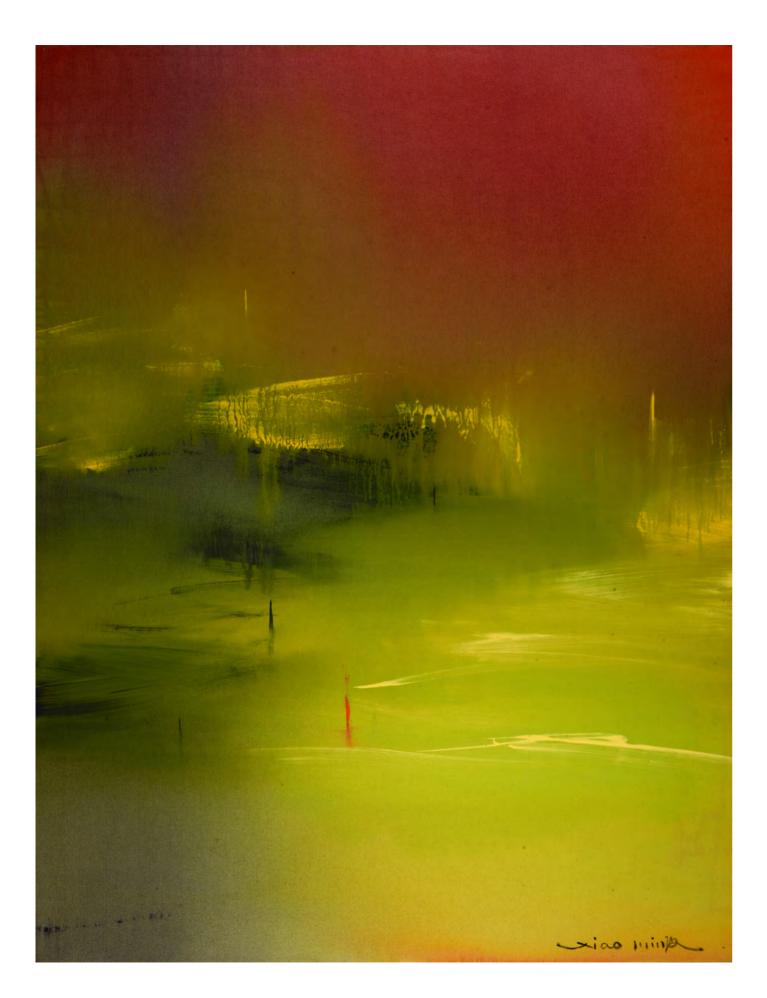
Composition n°19.9.23 2023

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

150 x 150 cm | 59.1 x 59.1 in



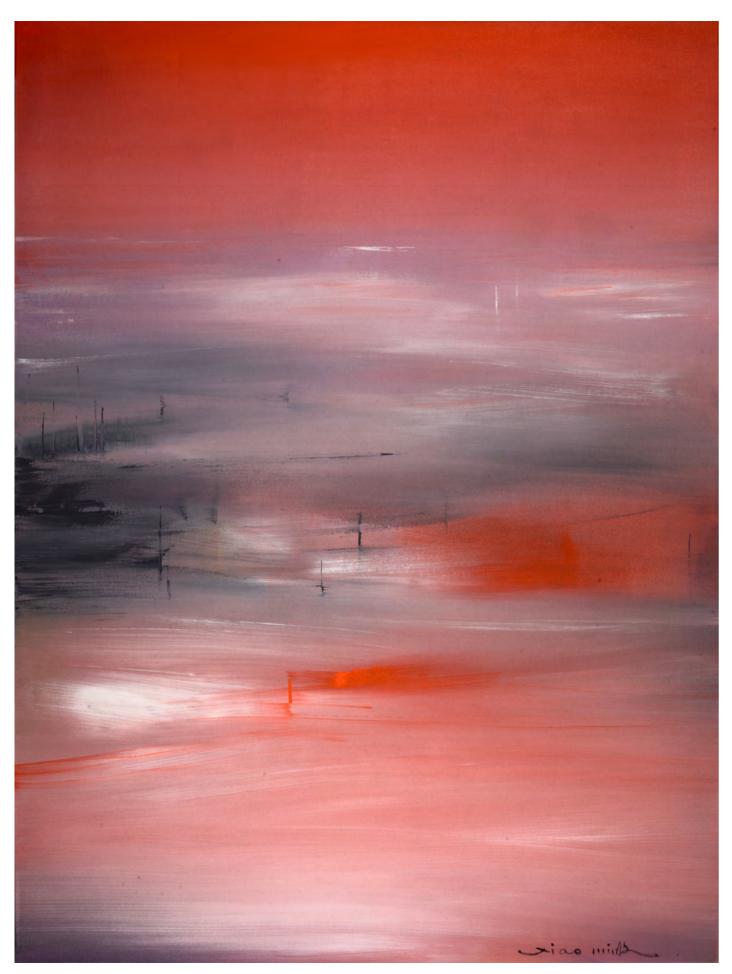




Composition n°1.8.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

116 x 89 cm | 45.7 x 35 in



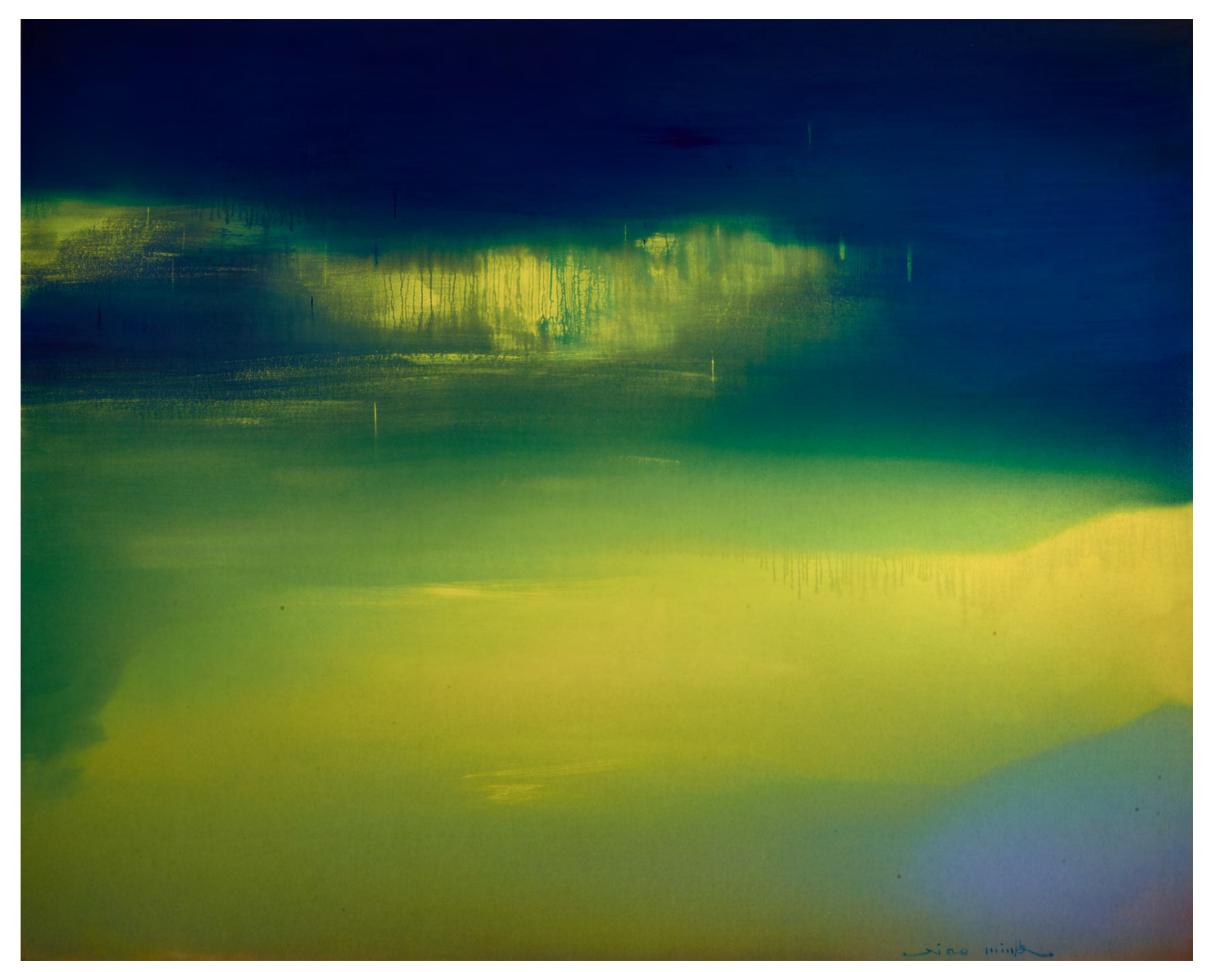
Composition n°2.7.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

130 x 97 cm | 51.2 x 38.2 in

Composition n°8.3.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right



Composition n°8.7.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

97 x 130 cm | 38.2 x 51.2 in







Composition n°10.2.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

195 x 97 cm | 76.8 x 38.2 in



Composition n°10.6.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

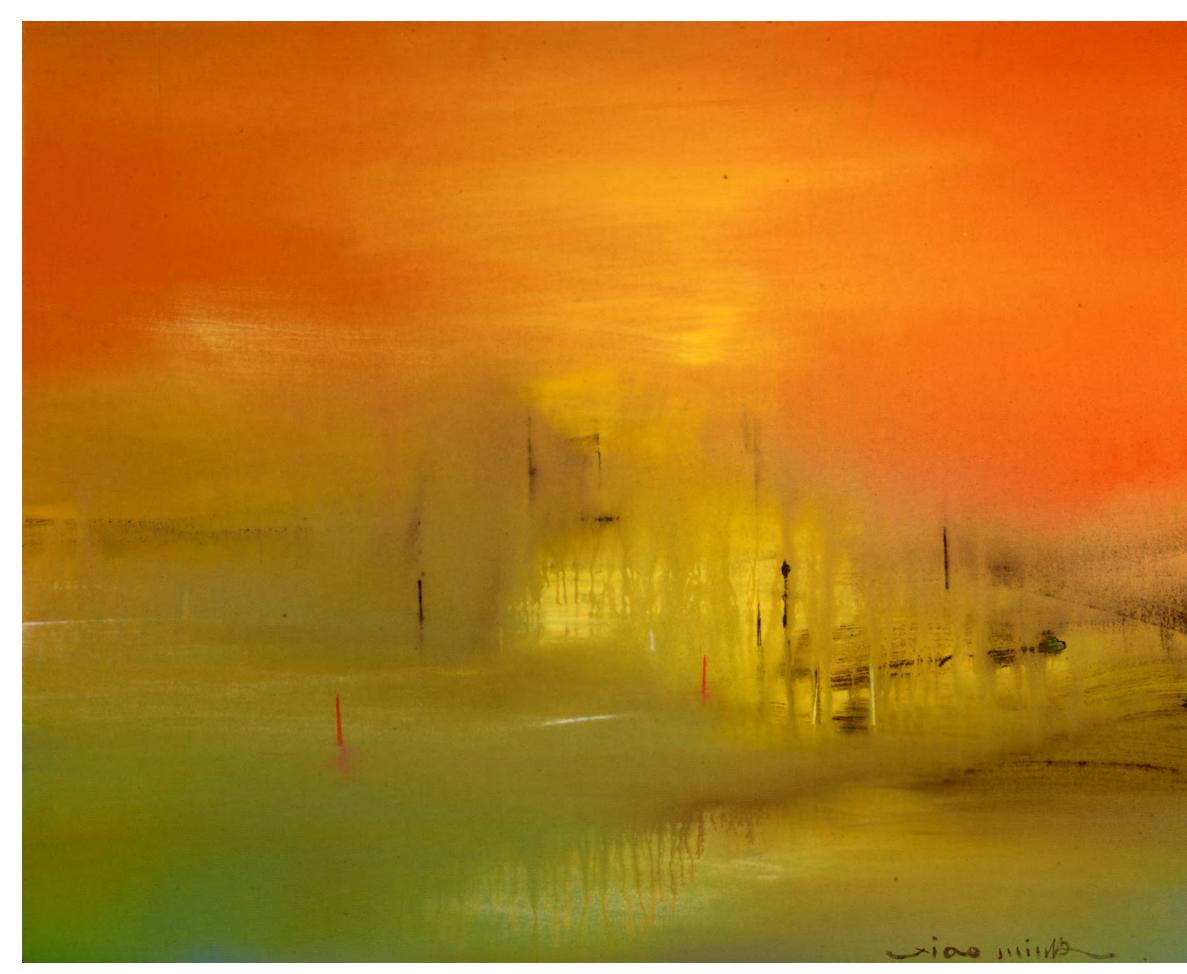
97 x 195 cm | 38.2 x 76.8 in

Composition n°25.9.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

81 x 100 cm | 31.9 x 39.4 in

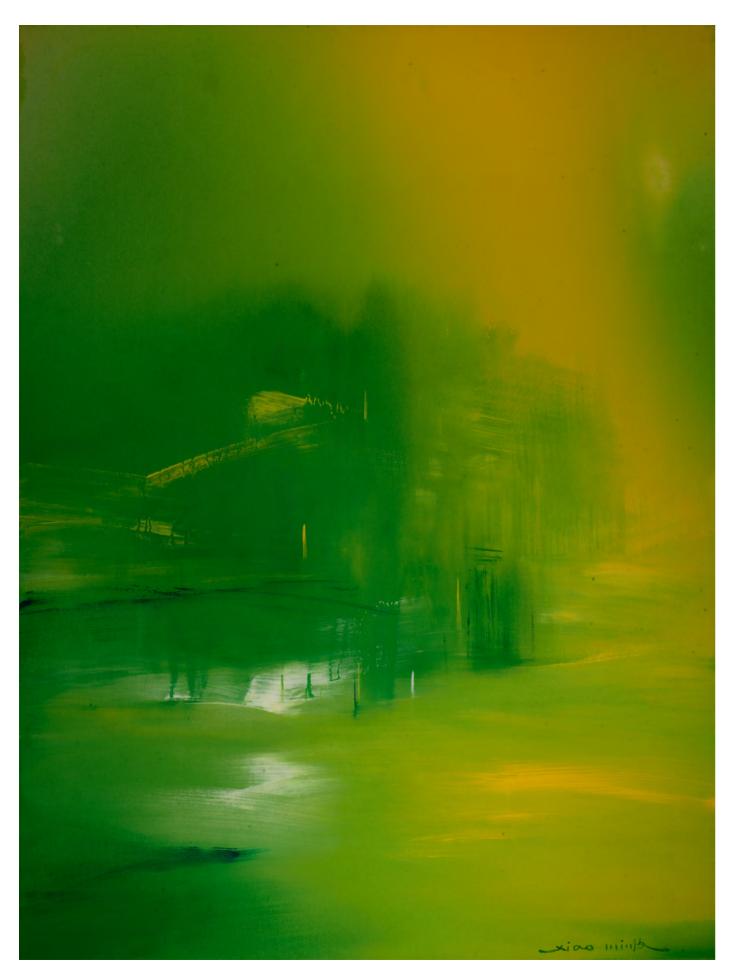




Composition n°16.11.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

65 x 81 cm | 25.6 x 31.9 in



Composition n°20.8.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

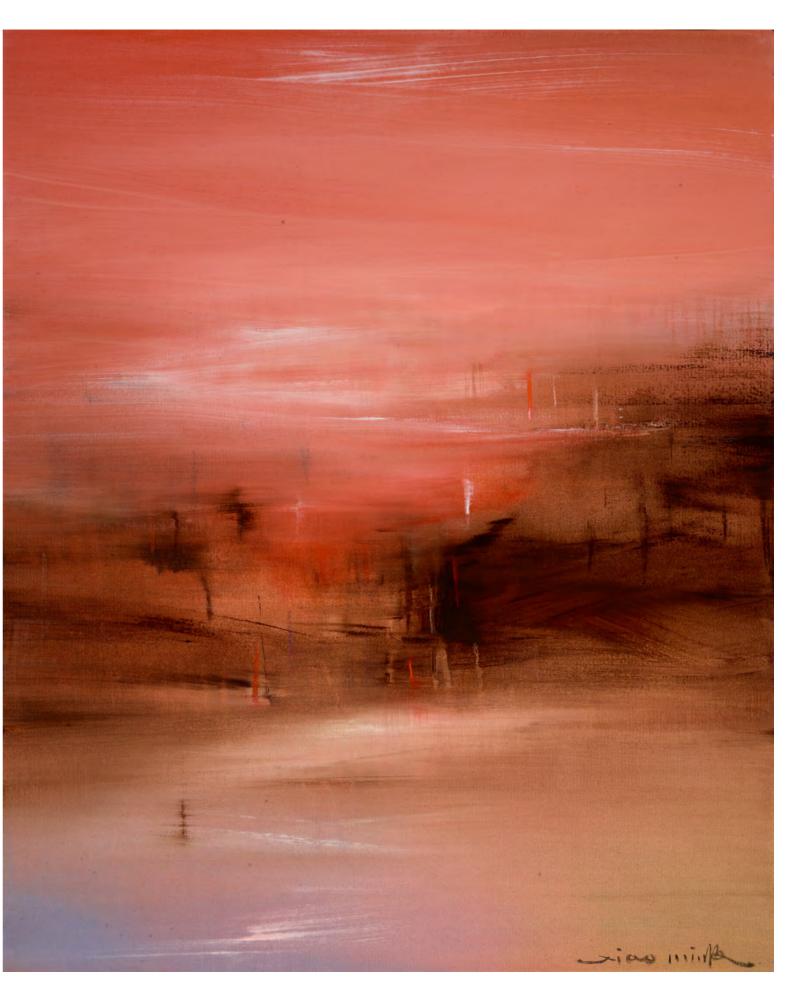
130 x 97 cm | 51.2 x 38.2 in



Composition n°28.11.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

73 x 60 cm | 28.7 x 23.6 in





Composition n°10.12.24 2024

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower left

130 x 97 cm | 51.2 x 38.2 in



Composition n°28.12.24 2024

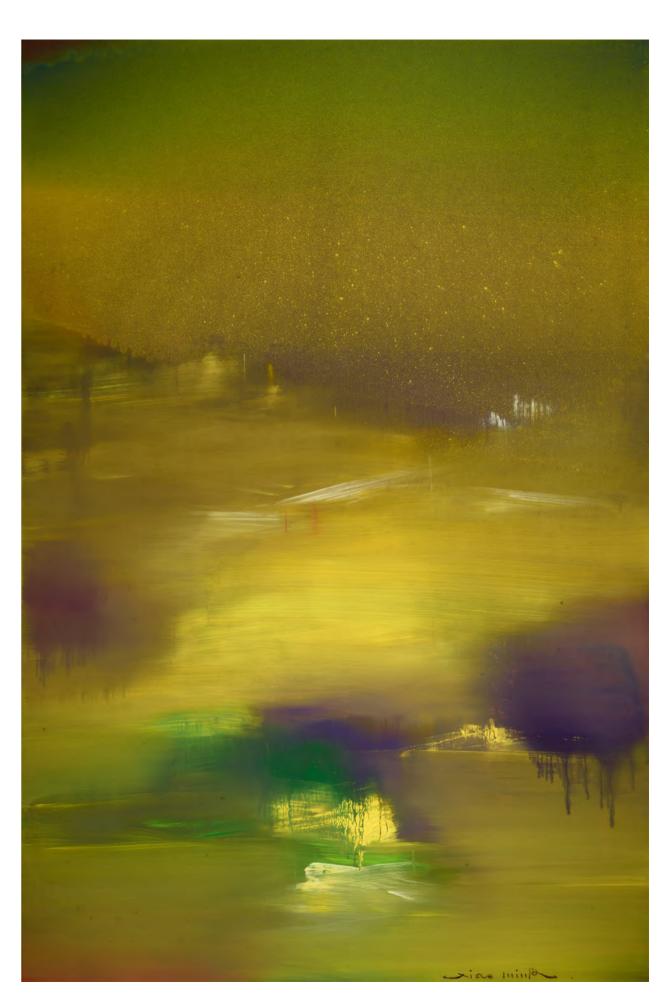
Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

130 x 97 cm | 51.2 x 38.2 in

Composition n°9.1.25 2025

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

195 x 130 cm | 76.8 x 51.2 in





Composition n°18.1.25 2025

Acrylic on canvas Signed 'xiao min' on the lower right

130 x 195 cm | 51.2 x 76.8 in



BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1959 in Shanghai, Feng Xiao-Min is a French-Chinese artist. His passion for art was evident early on. He was raised in a family of intellectuals, with his mother's side hailing from a banking background, and received a quality education guided by his father, who broadened Feng Xiao-Min's horizons to the world of art.

After graduating from Fine Arts studies in China, he moved to France in 1988 and enrolled at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts in Paris. Feng was later invited to teach at the prestigious institution from 1997 to 2000. Afterward, he decided to forego teaching to focus solely on his own creations.

Feng's artwork celebrates the fusion of Eastern aesthetics and Western techniques depicting his visions of landscapes from dusk to dawn. No specific subject or location inspires Feng. Instead, he focuses on the powerful visual impact created by the blending of color and spatial configuration of the whole image. Taking inspiration from his training in traditional Chinese calligraphy, Feng uses acrylic on canvas and skillfully mimics the Chinese aesthetic of ink on paper, often being known to paint on the floor to control acrylic and water flow.

Today, his artworks are collected and presented in private and public collections, including galleries, museums and foundations, both in France and internationally. Feng Xiao-Min frequently exhibits at international art fairs and biennales and was commissioned to produce work for the 2017 BRICS summit. Several French publishers have also issued books about his paintings. Furthermore, some of his works have been chosen to illustrate publications by the French Éducation Nationale.

Feng Xiao-Min currently lives and works in Paris.

← Feng Xiao-Min in his studio in Fontainebleau, March 2025 © Nicolas Brasseur

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 'Brush of Light', Opera Gallery, Hong Kong 2024 Art Paris, Opera Gallery, Paris, France Art Central, Opera Gallery, Hong Kong
- 'Reflections', Opera Gallery, Singapore 2023 Art Central, Opera Gallery, Hong Kong French May Arts Festival, Opera Gallery, Hong Kong ART021 Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair, Opera Gallery, Shanghai, China FAB Paris, Opera Gallery, Paris, France Commemorative exhibition of Wu Dayu and Zao Wou-Ki, group exhibition, Putuo Cultural Pavilion, Shanghai, China
- 'Abstraction, A Visual Reality', group exhibition, Opera Gallery, Dubai, UAE 2022 Art Paris, Opera Gallery, Paris, France Art Busan, Opera Gallery, Busan, South Korea
- Group exhibition, Opera Gallery, Seoul, South Korea 2021 'Compositions', Opera Gallery, Paris, France Art Paris, Opera Gallery, Paris, France La Biennale Paris, Opera Gallery, Paris, France
- Art Central, Opera Gallery, Hong Kong 2020 ART021 Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair, Opera Gallery, Shanghai, China Group exhibition, Opera Gallery, Singapore

'Feng Xiao-Min: Inspired Resonance', Opera Gallery, Hong Kong 2019 'Yi Xiang Jiang Nan', group exhibition, Suzhou Art Museum, Suzhou, China 'Abstraction Athwart Worlds: Ties Between Modern Worlds', group exhibition, Opera Gallery, Hong Kong Art Central, Opera Gallery, Hong Kong Art Taipei, Opera Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan ART021 Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair, Opera Gallery, Shanghai, China 'The Monaco Masters Show', group exhibition, Opera Gallery, Monaco

'Asia Abstract', group exhibition, Opera Gallery, Hong Kong 2018 Art Taipei, Philippe Staib Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan Shanghai Art Fair, Philippe Staib Gallery, Shanghai, China 'Blossoming: Gallery Collection', Gin Huang Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan 2017 Taipei International Ink Painting Exhibition, National Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Taipei, Taiwan 'The Master of Colors', Jing'an Sculpture Park Art Center, Shanghai, China Philippe Staib Gallery; Sophia C Art Gallery, Xin Zhu, Taiwan Art Taipei, Philippe Staib Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan Shanghai Art Fair, Philippe Staib Gallery, Shanghai, China 'Regent Fantasy', Gin Huang Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan

- Opera Gallery, Monaco

2016 Art Busan, Philippe Staib Gallery, Busan, South Korea 'From France to Korea - World Contemporary Artists from France', SOMA Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea Shanghai Art Fair, Philippe Staib Gallery, Shanghai, China Art Taipei, Philippe Staib Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan Art Kaohsiung, Philippe Staib Gallery, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

2015 'The Masters of Shapes and Colors', joint exhibition with Antoine Poncet, Yishu 8, Beijing, China Art Taipei, Philippe Staib Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan Shanghai Art Fair, Philippe Staib Gallery, Shanghai, China Art Kaohsiung, Philippe Staib Gallery, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

2014 'Dans les yeux de Gérard Xuriguera', Yohann Gallery, Paris, France 'A Fragment in the Course of Time - Landscape of Chinese Ink Art in the 1980s', Shanghai Himalayas Museum, Shanghai, China Opera Gallery, Dubai, UAE Opera Gallery, Hong Kong Opera Gallery, Paris, France Galerie Image of China, Singapore Shanghai Art Fair China, Philippe Staib Gallery, Shanghai, China

2013 'Rencontre', Goldenberg Gallery, Paris, France 'Intersection', Linz Gallery, Paris, France 'Dessins - traits et encre', Linz Gallery, Paris, France Asian Galleries Art Fair, Purple Roof Gallery, Shanghai, China International Art Fair, Purple Roof Gallery, Shanghai, China

2012 2011	'International Contemporary Ink Painting Exhibition', Zhongshan National Gallery, National Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Taipei, Taiwan 'Shanghai Contemporary', Purple Roof Gallery, Shanghai, China International Art Fair, Purple Roof Gallery, Shanghai, China 'Dialogue des Civilisations', Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France	2006	Châteauroux M China Internati Beijing, China International A Ifa Gallery, Sha Tian Qing Gall
	'Le Carré Rive Gauche', Artco France Gallery, Paris, France 'Artistes Marseillais / Artistes Chinois / Correspondances ?', Alcazar, Marseille, France Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair, Purple Roof Gallery, Shanghai, China International Art Fair, Purple Roof Gallery, Shanghai, China 'Convergence in the Lion City', Galerie Image of China, Singapore	2005	82 Gallery, Pari 'Le Mur du Sor Grand Palais, H Academy of Fir
2010	'Art Beijing', Purple Roof Gallery, Beijing, China 'Contemporary Watercolour Exhibition between Shanghai and Hong Kong', Hong Kong Biennale, Yun Feng Gallery, Hong Kong Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair, Purple Roof Gallery, Shanghai, China International Art Fair, Artco France, Shanghai, China 'Dialogue des Civilisations', traveling exhibition, Zhejiang Provincial	2003	Group exhibitic Galerie de l'Hô Actée Gallery, C Shanghai Bienr Anting Museur Salon du Dessir
	Museum, HangZhou, China; Si Nan Exhibition Center, Shanghai, China		
2009	'Contemporary Watercolour Exhibition', Shanghai Duolun Museum	2001	Actée Gallery, C
2007	of Modern Art, Shanghai, China International Art Fair, Purple Roof Gallery, Shanghai, China	1998	Château de l'Or
2008	International Contemporary Watercolor Biennial, National Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, Taipei, Taiwan	1993	Salon d'Art, Liv Everarts Gallery
	Beijing Contemporary Art Fair, Artco France, Beijing, China 'Contemporary Watercolour Exhibition', traveling exhibition, Academy of Fine Arts and Sciences of Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine;	1992	Musée Duhame Salon d'Automi
	Association of International Culture of Shanghai, Shanghai, China	1985	Shanghai Cultu
	International Art Fair, Purple Roof Gallery, Shanghai, China	1981	Shanghai Cultu
2007	82 Gallery, Paris, France Frédéric Moisan Gallery, Paris, France International Art Fair, Ariane Bomsel Gallery, Shanghai, China	1977	Shanghai Muse

x Museum, Châteauroux, France national Gallery Exhibition, Ariane Bomsel Gallery, na d Art Fair, TQ Gallery, Shanghai, China Shanghai, China Gallery, Shanghai, China

Paris, France Son', Musée Cinquantenaire, Brussels, Belgium s, Hong Kong 'Fine Arts, Shanghai, China

bition, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France Hôtel Claridge, Paris, France ry, Charenton-le-Pont, France lennial, Shanghai Museum of Fine Arts, Shanghai, China; seum of Modern Art, Shanghai, China; Weimar, Germany

ssin et de la Peinture à l'Eau, Espace Auteuil, Paris, France

ry, Charenton-le-Pont, France

l'Orangeraie, Brussels, Belgium

Livry sur Seine, France llery, Paris, France

amel, Mantes-la-Jolie, France omne, Grand Palais, Paris, France

ultural Center, Shanghai, China

ultural Center, Shanghai, China

luseum of Fine Arts, Shanghai, China

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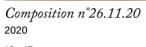
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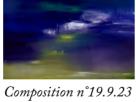
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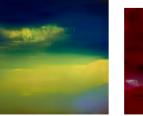
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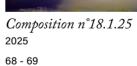
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CREDITS

This publication was created for the exhibition Feng Xiao-Min, 'Sailing Through the Light'

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