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November 12, 2019

Helwaser Gallery presents Lin Yan: Origin Point

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 21, 2019 from 6-8pm

Exhibition Dates: November 21, 2019 - January 30, 2020

Helwaser Gallery is pleased to present *Origin Point*, a solo exhibition by Chinese-born, Brooklyn-based artist Lin Yan. Lin Yan is known for her site-specific installations, sculpture, and two dimensional works, which she produces through working with *Xuan* paper, a type of handmade paper traditionally used for Chinese calligraphy and ink. Within the last fifteen years, Lin Yan has worked almost exclusively with *Xuan* paper, approaching it as a medium in and of itself, emphasizing its materiality through crumbling, folding, layering, and casting them into various forms. Often executed without color, Lin Yan's works locate significance in the textural and affective qualities of *Xuan* paper, serving as meditative and poetic statements on her chosen subjects.

In this exhibition, Lin Yan responds to the destruction of the Amazon rainforest and the broader conversation on the ongoing climate emergency through the installation *Alioth* (玉衡) (2019). The work consists of assembled cast reliefs of tree branches and trunks; these reliefs are made through a particular process of layering *Xuan* paper on the bodies of trees until they harden and fragment, and are later mended, stitched together, and re-constructed to form the installation. Attached to the ceiling, the work's fragile, delicate appearance stands in sharp contrast to the qualities of solid groundedness usually associated with actual trees. The installation also consists of an arrangement of fine threads on the ceiling, executed in a pattern that takes after that of the Big Dipper, which the work's namesake (the Alioth star) is part of. Reflecting the artist's continued engagement with narratives surrounding ecological disaster, and the use of her appointed medium to address them, the work presents an awareness of two essential components of the living ecosystem – the sky and earth – and the unity between them. The fifth work in the artist's public installation series, entitled *Regeneration of Hope* (希望重生) (2017- present), *Alioth* (玉衡) builds on the series' contemplation of the relationship between nature, man, and the universe.

¹ The Big Dipper consists of seven stars found within the constellation Ursa Major. Within Chinese astronomy, the Big Dipper is popularly considered as a symbol for a sense of direction and purpose.

In *Leaves are Gone #3* (落叶 #3) (2014-2019), *Xuan* paper was used to cast reliefs of tree bark; stained with black ink, these works resemble petrified tree trunks, forming a somber counterpoint to the formal lightness of *Alioth* (玉衡). Alongside these works is a series of vertical paper works, entitled *Common Words* (常见字) (2018), bearing the imprinted word “empire” and “pray”. These works were created from casting bricks, which the artist found within Brooklyn, onto *Xuan* paper, allowing the conceptual weightiness of these words to stand against the largely empty ground of each work.

Also on show are a selected series of smaller-scale works, such as *Ending Game II* (清场), (2018), and *Between Day and Night* (日夜之间 3) (2019). Alongside her engagement with environmental issues, these works provide more insight into Lin Yan’s broader practice. Through their imagery, structure, and lyricism, Lin Yan’s works point their viewers towards the relationship between man, nature, and cosmology.

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About the artist:

Lin Yan (b. 1961, Beijing) graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, and pursued her studies further at L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, as well as the Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania. Her work has been included in multiple exhibitions worldwide, including *The Latent Paradigm* (2019), Today Art Museum, Beijing, China; *Mind the Gap* (2019), The Delaware Contemporary; *Crisscrossing East and West: The Remaking of Ink Art in Contemporary East Asia* (2017), Museum of Contemporary Art, Yinchuan, China; *The Dark Matters* (2017), White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia; The 3rd CAFA Museum Biennial (2016), Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Beijing, China, amongst others. Her work is included in the permanent collections of many public institutions such as Chengdu Contemporary Art Museum; Deutsche Bank Art Corporate Citizenship; Museum of Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China; National Museum of China, Beijing, China; Long Museum, Shanghai, China; and White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia, among others.

About the gallery:

Based along Madison Avenue, Helwaser Gallery presents mid-career and established artists, including Anton Ginzburg, Boedi Widjaja, Christina Kruse, and Lin Yan. It also specializes in the work of post-war masters, such as Tom Wesselmann, Alexander Calder, Adolph Gottlieb, and Helen Frankenthaler, among others. In 1986, the gallery was founded in Paris and initiated significant exhibitions, including a retrospective on Jean Dubuffet (1996), and others on French cubist masters, notably George Braque, Jean Metzinger, and Pablo Picasso. In 2008, Helwaser Gallery marked its inaugural relocation to New York with the group exhibition *Red*, exhibiting Hans Hofmann, Andy Warhol, and Jean-Michel Basquiat amongst others. In 2019, Helwaser Gallery reopened its present space with a public exhibition program, presenting internationally recognized artists. The gallery program emphasizes a dialogue between contemporary art and modern art historical movements.

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