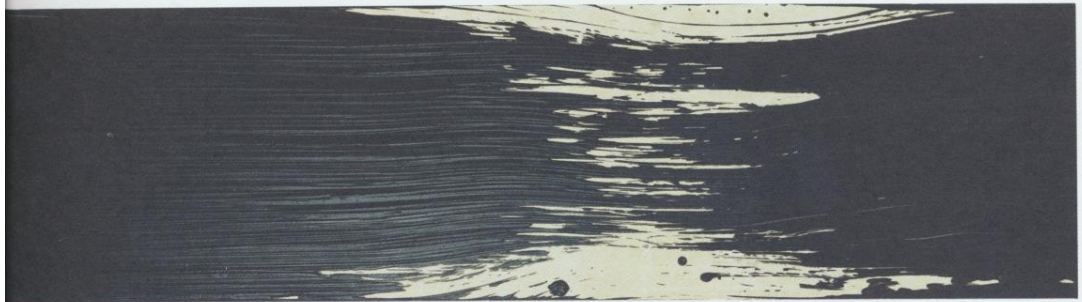


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Fractalscapes III (A1)



L'un 2012



Fabienne Verdier

Standing on the canvas that covers a majority of the studio floor, the artist grips the bicycle-like handlebars to move the enormous paintbrush, suspended from the ceiling and carrying up to 68 litres of paint.

As her unique method proves, Fabienne Verdier is no conventional painter. Yearning to “master the notion of spontaneity in painting” and dissatisfied with the arts education available in her native France, Verdier moved to China in 1984, at the age of 22, to study at the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute. “I was fascinated by the illustrations of the works by Chinese painting masters,” she recalls. “The purity and incredible dynamism of the lines, and the spiritual freedom exuded from them propelled me to leave for China.”

For 10 years, Verdier studied under master calligraphers and painters, including her late mentor Master Huang Yuan, who taught her to discover a new form of abstraction via Chinese calligraphy. “My Western aesthetic knowledge was totally put to question,” she says.

Now based back in France, Verdier is one of the only Western artists known for employing a Chinese medium in her art, and to great success. Her massive abstract paintings—made with the extraordinary method chronicled in the acclaimed documentary *Painting the Moment*—can command hundreds of thousands of dollars. In addition to solo exhibitions throughout Europe and Asia, Verdier’s work is also part of the collections owned by institutions such as the Centre Pompidou and the Fondation François Pinault in Paris, and the Chinese Ministry of Culture in Beijing.

Both French and Chinese, traditional and modern, spontaneous and planned—her work itself is a dialogue about the dichotomies inherent in life. “We have within us both rationalism and intuition; we are torn between analytical rigour and total spontaneity; divided between a necessity to calculate and to imagine without constraint,” she explains. “From these apparent contradictions come energy and the meaning of life itself. It is this tension that runs through all of us that I aim to explore in my work.”

For “Now and Then: Reflections on Contemporary Ink,” the show presented by Art Plural Gallery in Singapore this month, Verdier created six new works in which she aimed to “invent a series of rhythms that recalls the relentless dynamism of life.”

Vernier is currently working in New York with the Juilliard School, researching the immateriality of sound and music and hoping to create a series of installations based on her findings. She is also collaborating with architect Jean Nouvel on the National Art Museum of China, based on the concept of shaping a building to imitate the energy, simplicity, and power of a single brush stroke. “My old masters would have been very proud,” she says. ■

“Now and Then: Reflections on Contemporary Ink” by Art Plural Gallery runs from 22 to 25 January at Art Stage 2015



Color flows 6 (left), Peinture du 2 Septembre 2014