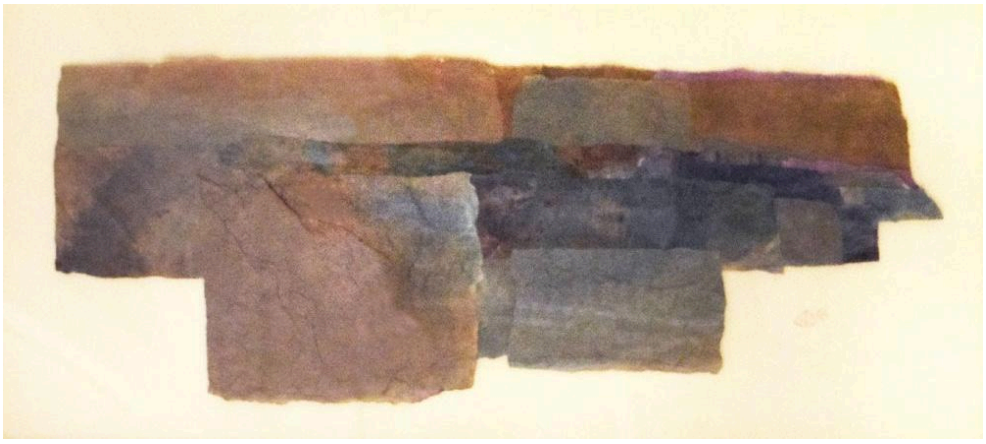
CONTEMPORARY ART

QUALIA

Me, Nature, As One

A group show that explores the interconnection of nature and the self and reimagines traditional Chinese landscape painting through abstraction

November 21, 2026 - January 2, 2027



Victoria Yau**,** *Grand Canyon 5:00 PM*, 1987, Watercolor collage, 19.75 x 30.75 in, 50.17 x 78.12 cm

DATE (Palo Alto, CA) - Qualia Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Me, Nature, As One*, a group exhibition featuring seven Chinese artists spanning multiple generations whose work demonstrates the gradual evolution and reimagination of traditional Chinese *shanshui* landscape painting. Featuring works by Victoria Yau, Zhang Yu, Stella Zhang, Meng Huang, Xu Hongming, Jiang Heng, and Chu Chu, the exhibition presents work that imbues nature with spirituality, subjective internal landscapes, and existential philosophy. An opening reception will be held on November 21, 2026 from 4pm - 6pm and the exhibition will be on view through January 2, 2027. For more information, please visit www.qualiagallery.com.

Rooted in the centuries-old tradition of *shanshui*, literally translated as "mountain and water," Chinese landscape painting does not merely represent nature itself but its spiritual essence as well as the broader philosophical concern of humanity's relationship to nature. The artists in *Me, Nature, As One* reinterpret classical landscape painting while retaining its underlying philosophical inquiries.

Central to the exhibition is the notion that the self and nature are not separate but fundamentally inform each other as a byproduct of subjective experience. In particular, Victoria Yau treats landscape as an extension of herself, even referring to her paintings as "[the daughters] she

never had in her physical life." One such daughter, *Grand Canyon 5:00 PM,* utilizes layered watercolor collage not merely to capture the texture of the rock formation, but to convey its depth and quiet permanence. Yau, with great restraint and precision, blends historical ink and watercolor painting with abstract expressionism to represent the land, sky and sea in a manner inseparable from her own perception.

In Stella Zhang' work, the relationship between external, topographical landscape and internal, psychological landscape becomes particularly pronounced. Her semi-monochromatic works depict black-and-white photographs of mountainous terrain, weathered boulders, and craggy stone surfaces. Interwoven into the curvature and sharp angles of mountains is Zhang's preoccupation with the distinctive psychological and sensory experience of being a woman – that is, the pervasive stress and inherent bodily contortion.

Chu Chu similarly questions the distinction between nature and its representation through works that combine photography, mixed media, crystalline forms, and calligraphy. Her compositions reconstruct images of the natural world through processes of layering. In doing so, nature is revealed as something mediated by memory, culture, and perception.

In Jiang Heng's *Falling Flowers* series, the fleeting beauty of nature becomes a meditation on time, transience, and the impermanence of contemporary existence. Torn fragments of brightly colored rice paper imprinted with news are suspended against dark backgrounds, resembling flower petals falling, signifying the passage of time. This becomes a metaphor for the temporality of existence.

Xu Hongming creates luminous, atmospheric, cloud-like images meant to do justice to the origins of *shanshui* as opposed to what it became within literati circles, a restrictive practice without the opportunity to experiment. Returning to the truth-seeking purity of original *shanshui* and incorporating elements of Western abstraction, Hongming describes his painting practice as, "trying to envision the wholeness of the universe, of the matter that is ever-present, if not readily visible."

Zhang Yu treats the medium of ink itself as the site of his experimental and theoretical process, departing from the methodology of the literati painters and modern abstraction to create something innovative and distinct. In his *Divine Light* series, textured objects with a rocky surface are eclipsing bright, transcendental light, suggesting a kind of infinitude surrounding singular objects of unknown mass, origins and significance.

Across the exhibition, the tradition of *shanshui* is reinterpreted through abstraction, medium experimentation, and introspection. The artists succeed in demonstrating that abstraction does not remove humanity from nature. Rather, it offers the opportunity to approach nature's complexity properly and reconcile our place within it.

About Qualia Contemporary Art

Located in downtown Palo Alto, the heart of Silicon Valley, Qualia Contemporary Art is dedicated to showcasing outstanding established and emerging artists working in a variety of media. The gallery is committed to building lasting relationships with artists, collectors, curators, and scholars nationally and internationally, and providing a vital platform for dialogues on contemporary art and culture in the Bay Area and beyond.

Gallery Contact

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