

Rick Leong**The Transformation of Things**

with Winifred Lee, Li Desheng, Ping-Kwong Wong

July 16 - October 2, 2016

Reception: July 15, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Curator: Nan Capogna

Victoria-based artist, Rick Leong, explores and synthesizes traditional imagery and symbols found in classical Chinese painting with his experience of the Canadian landscape. Leong, Canadian-born, third generation Chinese, blends his distinctive style with traditional Chinese painting techniques to create works depicting natural and mythical worlds of forests, mountains, night skies, animals and insects. Drawing from research and observations as well as imagination, Leong's striking images are often haunting and fantastical, charged with symbolic meaning particularly relating to Taoist philosophy.

Included in the exhibition are three Richmond artists, Winifred Lee (watercolour painting), Li Desheng (calligraphy) and Ping-Kwong Wong (ceramics) who were invited by the Gallery's curator Nan Capogna and artist Rick Leong to participate. Employing images, symbols and forms drawn from their cultural traditions, their artworks are informed by their experiences immigrating to and living in Canada. Many of Lee and Wong's works originate from observations made close to home; Lee's backyard provides an abundance of flowers and birds to inspire her detailed watercolour paintings and Wong, drawn particularly to birds, views them as a metaphor for his own migration. Li, open to responding to a contemporary artwork by another artist, accepted Leong's invitation to select a text to calligraph over Leong's painting, *Shou Xing Crossing the River*.

In his artist's statement, Leong describes the Taoist notion of the inevitability of change. It is from this concept of "change" and "becoming" that this exhibition emerges. *The Transformation of Things* provides an opportunity to reposition the works of these artists and explore areas of possible intersection. By presenting these diverse artworks together new readings are encouraged and new conversations are likely to emerge.



Rick Leong, *Hidden Hunger*, oil on canvas, 72 x 62 inches, 2016.
Photo Jeremy Herndl.

Rick Leong obtained his MFA in 2007 from Concordia University in Montreal. In 2008, he was a finalist in the Royal Bank of Canada's Painting Competition. In addition to having participated in many group exhibitions at various Canadian and international spaces, Leong has been the subject of solo shows at Two Rivers Gallery, Prince George; Anna Leonowens Gallery, Halifax; the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, the McClure Gallery, Montreal; and Parisian Laundry, Montreal. He has been the recipient of numerous grants from the Canada Council for the Arts. Leong's work is collected widely across Canada, and is included in the collections of the ALDO Group, the Canada Council Art Bank, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Winifred Lee (Wan-Chun Yu) was born in Beijing, China. She completed her secondary and post-secondary education in Taiwan where she began her art studies in private classes under several distinguished art professors. In 1977, she moved to Canada. She maintains a studio in Richmond where she still provides instruction in Chinese painting. In 1980, with friends, she initiated the founding of the Richmond Chinese Calligraphy and Painting Club. She also participated in forming the Chinese Canadian Artists Federation in Vancouver in 1993, and was one of the organizers of the group of twelve Chinese Canadian artists in 1995. Lee has shown locally and internationally, in the United States, England, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Li Desheng, originally from Beijing, is a renowned calligrapher, writer and collector. Currently he is the senior calligraphy instructor at the Richmond Chinese Community Society. As the Founding President of the Canada Hua Feng Artists Association, Li has exhibited in numerous calligraphy and painting exhibitions and has lectured on calligraphy at University of British Columbia and in the Lower Mainland. He has authored over 10 publications on East Asian folklore, cigarette cards and Chinese Opera that has been published in China, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Li's ongoing research continues to inform his evolving calligraphic work.

Ping-Kwong Wong was born in China, moved to Hong Kong in 1956, and settled in Vancouver, Canada in 1994. Wong studied art education at Sir Robert Black College of Education and Grantham College of Education from 1969 to 1972 in Hong Kong and studio ceramics at Hong Kong Polytechnic from 1981 to 1983. He graduated from University of Wolverhampton, U.K. with B. Ed degree in 1992. Wong has exhibited in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Japan, United States, and Canada. He was the recipient of the Hong Kong Urban Council Fine Arts Award (Ceramics) in 1987. Wong is a studio potter and ceramic art instructor.

The artists will be in attendance at the opening and will each speak briefly about their work. The exhibition closes on October 2, 2016.

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Richmond Art Gallery
180-7700 Minoru Gate
Richmond, BC V6Y 1R9

www.richmondartgallery.org
604-247-8300
gallery@richmond.ca



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