

# Collection Close-up

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## 李錦濤 **Laurens Lee** (b. 1949)

### 《有飛行物的風景》 *Landscape With Flying Object*, 1987

oil on canvas

Richmond Art Gallery Permanent Collection

I painted landscapes, but it was not just about the trees and the houses. I do not just paint what I saw. Personally, I added some imagination...what would happen if there was an object in the sky?

– 李錦濤 Laurens Lee

In 《有飛行物的風景》 *Landscape With Flying Object*, Burnaby-based artist 李錦濤 Laurens Lee transforms a quiet suburban street into a fantastical scene. Lee manipulates colour expressively, uses gestural mark-making, and familiar images rendered eerily, creating a surreal narrative. This oil painting depicts a simple residential scene that is mysterious, grounded in the ordinary yet whimsical and dreamlike. For this work, Lee drew on his neighbourhood walks with his daughter to her piano lessons in Burnaby of the 1980s. With its dim lighting of an overcast afternoon, *Landscape with Flying Object* exudes a melancholy atmosphere, which the artist attributes to this difficult period as an immigrant fresh out of art school and a father of two. A curious object hovering in the sky evokes Lee's need to make room for new perspectives, as well as an invitation to the viewer to imagine with him. "I want to provoke and excite through depictions of the common, the everyday; those familiar spaces which may contain greater depth and meaning than what is seen," Lee wrote about his solo exhibition, *Laurens Lee Paintings* (1988), at Richmond Art Gallery, where this work was first exhibited.

Lee was born in Hong Kong in 1949. There, he expressed himself by writing poetry in Cantonese. However, after moving to Canada in 1976, he turned his attention to visual art, unable to communicate himself as effectively in a second language. During his studies at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, American and German Expressionist artists like Willem de Kooning and Max Beckmann influenced his work.

*Collection Close-up* is an ongoing initiative highlighting works from the Permanent Collection that share formal or thematic connection with the Gallery's featured exhibitions. This work was selected for its themes of migration and adventure, its evocation of the cosmos, and the unique shifts in perspectives brought about by the experience of new landscapes, all of which are also present in *Lam Tung Pang: Out of This World*.

- Maria Filipina Palad