

Huang Hong Tao

Huang Hong Tao's Nameless Hills series was born from his emotional attachment to the rolling hills of the Heilongjiang region where he grew up. In this region, one does not find grand and famous mountains and rivers. In fact, there are no real mountains to speak of, just hillocks and mounds that do not possess the elevation to lay claim to a name.

The artist grew up in a poor rural farming village, and his journey to become an artist was not an easy one. This makes the artist's attachment to this land is all the more understandable.

In keeping with a tradition of Chinese ink painting, Huang Hong Tao's paintings seem to take in the scenery from an elevated point; in reality there is no point on the ground where the artist could possibly take in the entire scene. The trees are not in direct proportion to the hills. This is in contrast to classic Western traditions where, if an artist stood at the base of a hill, he could not possibly see the hills beyond. The concepts of perspective would have constrained the classic oil painter from portraying the hills beyond. To the Chinese scholar and artist, this does not pose a problem as he has already travelled to and can see with his mind's eye the hills beyond. In Chinese ink painting, this is 'seeing the details from a larger perspective'.

There is a dreamlike quality to Huang Hong Tao's paintings. The Nameless Hills series has been a subject for close to ten years. It is not a specific hill or location but a spiritually sacred imagery for the artist, all the more poignant because it is 'unnamed'.

The Nameless Hills series is the subject that 'birthed' him as an artist, and it has nurtured and inspired him, and provided him with serene solitude and certitude through years of angst and growing pains, yearnings and aspirations. In this land, all things are a possibility.

In many of his paintings, Huang Hong Tao has included a figure that appears to be either a person sitting in meditation or a Buddhist statue. The figure - totally out of proportion to the hills and trees - is part of the dreamy, serene landscape and has its roots in a small, earlier series of meditative paintings he execute