



Ullens Center for  
Contemporary Art  
尤伦斯当代艺术中心

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**Exhibition Dates:**

4 Nov 2016 – 8 January 2017

**Exhibition Venue:**

Central Gallery

Press material also available for  
download from the UCCA website

## Hao Liang: Eight Views of Xiaoxiang

Released on 3 November 2016

From 4 November 2016 to 8 January 2017, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) presents “Hao Liang: Eight Views of Xiaoxiang” in the Central Gallery. Hao Liang’s first institutional solo show, the exhibition showcases a new cycle of eight large (387 x 184 cm) compositions in ink on silk that take on this time-honored titular landscape in Central China, using each image to explore the dramatic sublime of the contemporary ecological landscape. His paintings are based on research into the literature, aesthetics, and scholarship of Chinese antiquity, seeking to revive a genre and its material artistry, and imbue it with a modern sensibility. The paintings are hung in recessed vitrines, a method often reserved for delicate and ancient works which, here, further establishes a dialogue with the heritage of Chinese painting.

For Hao Liang, these works explore a tension between historical evolutions behind the concept of “Eight Views of Xiaoxiang” and more contemporary cultural expressions. Geographically, Xiaoxiang is located in Hunan where the Xiang River meets Dongting Lake. However, the motif of Eight Views of Xiaoxiang moves beyond simple depictions of the natural surroundings of a particular place, finding a number of visual representations in reinterpretations across East Asia, including China, Japan, and Korea. Since the tenth century, the motif has inspired painters including Dong Yuan (934-962 CE), Song Di (1015-1080), Muqi (d. 1281), An Gyeon (b. 1400), Sōami (d. 1525), Wen Weiming (1470-1559), and Kano Shōei (1519-1592). Through research into Chinese and Western antiquity, Hao Liang assumes the role of so many scholars before him, hermeneutically reinterpreting Eight Views of Xiaoxiang with a modern eye, parodying borrowed forms to develop his own stylistic language that fits within the classical cannon.

For Hao Liang, the painting surface is not simply a material vehicle embodying space and time, but a medium for contemplations of such. Diverging from the principles of both traditional Chinese painting and linear perspective, Hao Liang relies on composition, modeling, color, and variations in light and shadow to produce multilayered perspectives within each canvas, creating unstable, non-linear spatio-temporal impressions. For example, in *Eight Views of Xiaoxiang—Myriads of Transformations*, Hao Liang depicts the passage of autumn into winter with the clarity of a day just after rain when all things in nature begin to change, lending a dynamic sense of time to the canvas, constructing multiple perspectival relationships by incorporating the sea, running river, landscape, and other imagery into a relatively flat space,



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and using bamboo, a traditional element, to disrupt viewers' entry into the spaces depicted. In *Eight Views of Xiaoxiang—Mind Travel*, he combines the forms of a flat geographical map with that of a *shanshui* landscape. Through the warping of space and compression of multiple seasons through the inclusion of elements emblematic of those seasons, the view becomes abstract, reflecting “mind travel,” a deeply contemplative form of looking reliant on the deconstruction of any literal sense of time and space.

In exploring the basis of concepts of space and time, Hao Liang appropriates textual elements to more broadly explore the historical conceptions of painting, focusing on the potential contained within excavated traditional elements. In *Eight Views of Xiaoxiang—Relics*, he begins imitating a classic concept, using imagery and text to demarcate different historical periods of iconography in Chinese painting, even incorporating contemporary imagery. Here, symbols embodying varying notions of time—relics from the past, those of the contemporary and also possible future—appear simultaneously on the canvas, hinting at their intertextuality. In *Eight Views of Xiaoxiang—Scholar's Traveling*, Hao Liang has organized the canvas according to Wan Ximeng's *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains*, combing it with literary references found in *Travel Diary of Xu Xiake*, creating a vision of the “scholar's tour.” Yet the artist's historicizing does not stop at mere appropriations of image and text; he also revives the brushwork techniques of landscape painting to entirely reflect an alternative “world view.”

By engaging with the long art history surrounding Eight Views of Xiaoxiang, Hao Liang explores traditional techniques and material concerns while developing the potential of canonical forms through a research-based working method. Through spatio-temporal changes and textual appropriation, he contributes to this continuously evolving visual motif, offering his own answer to the question of modernity in Chinese painting.

### About the Artist

**Hao Liang** (b. 1983, Chengdu) graduated with a BA in Fine Arts from the Chinese painting department of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute and currently works and lives in Beijing. His recent solo exhibitions include: “Hao Liang: The Virtuous Being” (Mirrored Gardens, Guangzhou, 2016) and “Secluded and Infinite Places: Hao Liang Solo Exhibition” (Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2014). Recent group exhibitions featuring his work include “Mountain Sites: Views of Laoshan” (Sifang Art Museum, Nanjing, 2016); “Bentu: Chinese artists at a time of turbulence and transformation” (Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, 2016); “From the Peony Pavilion” (Suzhou Jinji Lake Art Museum, Suzhou, 2016); “Luo Zhongli Scholarship 10th Anniversary



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Retrospective Exhibition” (Luo Zhongli Museum, Chongqing, 2015); “Editing the Spectacle: The Individual and Working Methods Post-Mediatization” (Hive Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, 2015); “The Garden of Forking Paths—Tracks and Intersections of 15 Artists” (Shanghai Gallery, 2015); “The Fictitious Present” (Art Museum of China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, 2015).

### **About the Exhibition**

“Hao Liang: Eight Views of Xiaoxiang” is curated by Philip Tinari and UCCA assistant curator Yanlin Pan, and designed by Ouyang Kunlun and Re-Box Architecture and Interior Design. The bilingual catalogue *Hao Liang: Eight Views of Xiaoxiang* includes installation views of the exhibition and essays by UCCA Director Philip Tinari, independent curator Sun Dongdong, UCCA assistant curator Yanlin Pan and an interview between Philip Tinari and Hao Liang. The catalogue can be purchased at UCCASore. “Hao Liang: Eight Views of Xiaoxiang” is sponsored by ti Art Foundation. The exhibition publication is supported by the H2 Foundation for Arts and Education Limited.

### **About the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art**

Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) is the international institution at the heart of Beijing’s 798 Art District. Each year it presents a wide range of exhibitions and educational programs, highlighting artists from China and beyond, and encouraging the public to engage with contemporary art and culture. Opened in 2007, UCCA is a non-profit, non-collecting, non-governmental museum sustained by the generosity of numerous patrons, sponsors, members, and visitors, beginning with founders Guy and Myriam Ullens. In everything it does, UCCA aims to elaborate an inclusive, cosmopolitan vision of China in the world.

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