

QIU Anxiong

(born 1972 in Chengdu, China. Lives and works in Shanghai.)



Tian Zhi Xiu Yue (Close to Heaven, Fix the Moon, 2023), 4K video animation, 8:33, colour, sound

"Tian Zhi Xiu Yue" (Close to Heaven, Fix the Moon) is Qiu Anxiong's animated work in the style of traditional Chinese ink painting. Stylistically a reference to times past, this work marks his first venture into creating coloured ink animations, adopting the colour scheme of Chinese green-blue landscape painting that was already well established by the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The story on which Qiu bases this film, which he has transformed into one of the earliest examples of "science fiction", also dates from this same time. Qiu Anxiong's literary adaptation, that lyrically addresses the topic of travel through space and time, is based on Duan Chengshi's Tang Dynasty novel "Youyang Zazu", which recounts a story about two scholars who, while wandering in the mountains and getting lost, encounter a person in white who claims to come from the moon. This person describes the moon's shape and material composition, how moonlight comes from the reflection of the sun's light, and mentions that 82,000 households are working

on repairing the moon, of which he is presumably one. Qiu Anxiong combines this literary fable with Albert Einstein's famous "Twin Paradox," to structure the entire animation. In an illustration of the principle that time is relative, this paradox supposes that: one of a pair of twin brothers travels through space at the speed of light. For him, the journey does not seem long, but upon returning to Earth a light year later, he finds his twin has aged significantly, while he remains unchanged. To him, it's been a year, but for his brother on Earth, decades have passed. The animation sets the astronaut, who travels through the universe and arrives in the Tang Dynasty via a wormhole, as the man in white, meeting the two lost scholars in the mountains. This work infuses the traditional Chinese ghost story genre with elements of science fiction, creating a meeting of past, present and future. The juxtaposition of mythological narratives with modern technological tales, collapses time to create a spectral landscape where historic characters and future selves coexist.

ARTIST BIO

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Shanghai-based artist Qiu Anxiong works with painting, sculpture, installation, animation, and is best known for his animated drawings in the style of traditional Chinese ink painting, which have established his practice at the forefront of contemporary experimental ink painting. He renowned for his immersive animations and installations that reimagine classical Chinese ink painting as living narrative maps of environmental and societal transformation. Trained at the Sichuan Academy of Art (1994) and Kunsthochschule Kassel, Germany (2003), he fuses hand-drawn, monochromatic ink-wash sequences with digital animation to create allegorical worlds where mythic creatures traverse landscapes disrupted by industrialization and ecological crisis, critiquing modern civilization's impacts on nature. Qiu Anxiong's work merges classical myth-making with urgent ecological critique, he transforms ancient narratives into living, paradoxical terrains—where folklore morphs into futuristic prophecy. Landscapes become animated archives, where development ravages and redraws ancestral landscapes. His art redefines time as layered and cyclical, confronting viewers with worlds both familiar and eerily alien, and prompting reflections on cultural continuity, environmental destruction, and the stories we tell ourselves in between.

Qiu Anxiong has participated in notable international Biennales, such as: 12th Sharjah Biennale (2015); 7th Asia Pacific Triennale (2012); 4th Singapore Biennale (2011); 9th Gwangju Biennale (2010); 6th Asia Pacific Triennale (2009); 10th Taipei Biennale (2010); 52nd Venice Biennale (2007); 5th Busan Biennale (2008); 5th Shanghai Biennale (2004). Among a vast number of international exhibitions, in 2013 he participated in and *Ink Art: Past as Present in Contemporary China* at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, which subsequently collected his work. Qiu Anxiong's work is held in major museum collections around the world: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA; MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA;

Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA, California, USA; Arken Museum of Moderne Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark; Spencer Museum of Art, Kansas, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway; Kunsthale, Zurich, Switzerland; White Rabbit Collection, Sydney, Australia; M+, Hong Kong, China; Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China; Power Station of Art, Shanghai, China. Selected recent solo exhibitions include: *A Meandering Song of Early Spring*, Chengdu Fosun Foundation, Chengdu, China (2025); *Echoes of Time*, Beijing ZiWU, Beijing, China (2023); *Anima Animal Animism Animation*, Amanyangyun-Saisen Art, Shanghai, China (2023); *Roam the Earth*, Casa Mirror-SURPLUS Space, Wuhan, China (2022); *Anthropogene – Siberia*, SPURS Gallery, Beijing, China (2021); *New Classic of Mountains and Seas*, Modern Art Base, Shanghai, China & Boers-Li Gallery, New York, USA (2018); *New Classic of Mountains and Seas*, Boers-Li Gallery, Beijing, China (2017); *Return*, July Art Space, Shanghai, China (2016); *E-Motion*, Galerie Enrico Navarra, Paris, France (2014); *Qiu Anxiong*, Wooson Gallery, Daegu, South Korea (2014); *New Classic of Mountains and Seas Part 2*, Aken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, Denmark (2013), and many others.