

Yang Yongliang (b. 1980)

“Time Immemorial” 2016

Digital photograph, mounted as hanging scroll
79.4 x 63.7 cm. (31 1/4 x 25 1/8 in.)

At first glance the work seems like a traditional landscape painting done in the orthodox style (fig. 1). Closer inspection, however, reveals an almost shocking pictorial world in which the new has been combined with the old, yielding an image that teems with imagination, life and energy. The upper peaks support houses and towering skyscrapers, looking much like contemporary Hong Kong though even more crowded and densely inhabited. Power and telephone lines connect one section with the next, leading down to the foreground where boats have run aground as though after a severe typhoon. House too are damaged as if by a massive storm, and these flatlands would seem appropriate for the working class of citizens. The visual impact of this juxtaposition of modern structures with traditional style landscape is especially clear when the original landscape matrix for the scene is well-known, as in the use of Fan Kuan’s “Travelling Amidst Streams and Mountains” as the basis for a similar work (fig. 2).

These images are not photographs in the traditional sense, in that they do not correspond with actual scenes, but are technical creations in support of the artist’s vision. Digital images are combined, manipulated, and transformed on the



Fig. 1. Wang Shimin: “Taking Leave for Yushan” 1668, after Howard Rogers, *Masterworks of the Ming and Qing Dynasties*, Lansdale, 1988, cat. 34, p. 68.

Fig. 2. Yang Yongliang: “Time Immemorial” 2016, after Shibunkaku, *Yang Yongliang*, *Time Immemorial*, Kyoto, 2016, p. 3.

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computer and then developed as 8 x 10 negative films, a concept occurring to the artist during a trip to Japan. The result, as can be seen here, demands attention, and forces the viewer to contemplate the image very closely and to rethink the nature of photographs and of landscapes.

Yang Yongliang was born in Jiading, Shanghai. First studying traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy, Yang in 1996 attended the Shanghai Art & Design Academy, where he specialized in decorative art and design. In 1999 he attended the China Academy of Art, Visual Communication Department, in Shanghai, earning a B.A. degree in 2003. In 2005 he embarked on his career as an artist with the stated goal of “creating new forms of contemporary art.”

Contributing to many exhibitions in China, his works have also been seen in South Korea, London, Italy, Germany, France, Greece, Taiwan, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Australia, Japan, and the U.S. His works have been collected by the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, the British Museum in London, the National Library in France, and the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Australia.

