

JEANNE BODEN
TAMING ENERGY



Front cover:

M.A.R.C.

My brother died.

His torment turned tranquility.

His spirit into mine.

Oil on cotton, 60 x 60cm, 2019

Jeanne Boden

Mobile +32 497 063196

jeanne@chinaconduct.com

www.jeanneboden.com

www.jeanneboden.typepad.com

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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I offer my endorsement of Jeanne Boden – artist and author.

I have been intensively cooperating with Jeanne since the first moment we met more than 10 years ago.

I myself am a lifelong artist who has traveled the world, extensively in Asia, and shown artworks in prestigious exhibitions, like German House New York, the Venice Biennial, the Shanghai Biennial, the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam, the Taiwan National Museum, and the China Art Museum to name just a few. Also, I have curated numerous exhibitions and coordinated several art publication projects. Together with Jeanne Boden, I had the opportunity as an artist-partner to publish the limited edition of the art photography book *Shanghai Soulmates* in 2016.

Jeanne Boden's work in general – and her paintings in particular – are characterized by a casual and simultaneously contemplative aesthetic. They result from a nomadic perception, which is driven by her constant movement between West and East.

Instantly, we recognized the fact that we inhabit the same 'third space' in-between Europe and Asia. This common in-between state creates a special bond that is enriching and inspiring and leads to intensive aesthetic and philosophical interaction between us.

Her inspirations and artistic creations – being rooted in and imbued with inventive elements of contemporary Western art – are profoundly reflective of her insight into the literati traditions of China. I recognize this outstanding spirit in her work, which I find very, very beautiful and profoundly serene.



Rolf A. Klünter
Shanghai, 12th January 2020

Wandering through mountains and water ►

Series of five paintings, oil on linen, 40 x 120cm, solid oak float frames, 2017–18

Wandering through mountains and water invites the viewer to stroll through, dwell upon, float on and embrace tranquility in the calm of high mountains and rippling water from mountain wells.

In this series of oil paintings, I find inspiration in the principles of Asian art and philosophy, which I have been studying throughout my life. Rather than using the format of the traditional handscroll with its linear sequence leading the viewer step by step through a landscape, I created five scenes that are at once connected and disconnected. Like a matrix, each of the five scenes opens a 'door' to the hidden landscape behind it, providing the viewer with a whole universe to disappear into. The emptiness in between the powerful blue brushwork wants to offer an escape route from human concerns.





ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Taming energy and moving along

Since I was young, I have been fascinated by the beauty of Chinese characters. Even before I could read or write them, I had copied some of them on the wall of my room, huge unfathomable symbols belonging to a world I was about to discover. Few people spoke about China back then in the early 1980s. Politics seemed absent. China was a place far away, on the other side of the globe, seemingly beyond all reach. Drawn to the beauty of the script, I started my journey of studying Chinese language, philosophy, and art. The more I understood, the more I wanted to know. Endless adventures, endless wandering and meandering, disclosed boundless treasures. I learned about the principles of ink painting. In the beginning all ink painted landscapes looked the same to me. But then I began to understand and to see their beauty. I could dwell on them for hours and hours, discovering new things behind each tree and rock, behind every bend in the mountain path. When I went hiking in the mountains to the South of Beijing for the first time in the early 1990s, I felt as if I was walking in a painting.

The painting surrounded me, absorbed me. I became part of it. I was a tiny little spot in the majesty of nature.

I was drawn to the free-spirited 16th century ink painting of Xu Wei with his wild brush and passionate energy. It felt as if we had become very close friends. I was comfortable in his company, as if we had known each other forever. I discovered Wu Guanzhong and could not stop looking at his work, just a few lines creating a landscape or a cityscape. When I started painting, it was as if both Xu Wei and Wu Guanzhong were holding my hand, leading my brush, showing me how to do it. It felt as if I had been painting my whole life. The brush followed my energy, my spirit and suddenly landscapes, seascapes and cityscapes began to appear. Oil paint is my vehicle because it has a life of its own, it speaks to me, just as I respond to it. Oil paint and brush sync with my body and mind in a fascinating dance. I like it and it likes me. It feels like an extension of who I am. Painting tames my energy and moves me along and while I'm painting the canvas absorbs my essence.



Mustard Seed Nostalgia

Series of three paintings, oil on linen, each 60 x 60cm, solid oak float frames, 2019

The *Mustard Seed Garden* is a classical book on Chinese ink painting. It describes the working of the *Tao (Dao, The Way)* in traditional ink painting and how that can be transferred into the practice of painting. This series of three paintings is inspired by three examples from the section *Book of Rocks*.

BIOGRAPHY

Jeanne Boden shares her time between Asia (China, Hong Kong, Taiwan) and Europe. Asian art and philosophy have deeply influenced her life and artwork. She graduated with a Masters in Oriental Languages and Cultures with her thesis *The inerasable spirit of Xu Wei*, a painter, poet, writer and dramatist in 16th century China known for his eccentric personality and revolutionary painting style. She obtained her PhD in Oriental Languages and Cultures from Ghent University with her PhD thesis *What is Chinese in Contemporary Chinese Art?*

As an artist Jeanne trained in photography and painting. (Art Academy Wetteren, Academy of Fine Arts Ghent, Sint Lukas Academy Ghent with Viviane Verbeke, Gerolf Van De Perre and Francis Bekemans). In China, Hong Kong and Taiwan Jeanne worked closely together with artists such as Xu Bing, Zhang Peili, Wang Bing, Jessey Tsang, Victoria Lu (Lu Rongzhi), Rolf A. Klunter, Wayn Traub and others. Her artwork is inspired by Xu Wei and Wu Guanzhong.

Oil painting has become her main artistic method. Jeanne's paintings have been described as powerful, strong in composition, color and touch. Strong color contrasts in combination with a direct touch mark the specific character of her work. She is best known for her large blue and white oil paintings, and for her brightly colored oil paintings. Now and then, her poetic reflective side (also an essential part of her writing) comes out, like in the fragile oil on paper work *Anticipation*.

Jeanne's artwork is held in private collections in both Brussels and Ghent in Belgium; Roch, Wales, and Winchester in the United Kingdom; and Stockholm in Sweden.

***I love Hong Kong #1, #2, #3* ►**

Series of three paintings, oil on linen, each 40 x 120cm, 2017–18

I love the buzz of Asian cities. Hong Kong is my number one with its international mix of people and blend of ancient Chinese traditions with ancestor worship, fortune telling, traditional Chinese characters, local small shops with obscure products alongside high rise buildings and contemporary design. It was here that I met Wu Guanzhong, one of my favorite artists, whom I call the Van Gogh of the East.

I painted these works in 2017 and 2018. Hong Kong was a Chinese world of its own that had escaped Communist destruction. In 2019 China brought an end to everything Hong Kong had been. *I love Hong Kong* was painted with love for a place that no longer exists. It is now a tribute to my Hong Kong friends.





Anticipation

Oil on paper, 35 x 50cm,
solid wenge box frame with
UV protected art glass, 2018

A cycle is never a circle.
Incorporating all things.
What will be next?



Jeanne Boden

Mobile +32 497 063196

jeanne@chinaconduct.com

www.jeanneboden.com

www.jeanneboden.typepad.com

◀ *I love Hong Kong #1* (detail)