

New York Exhibition

## Rick Leong

THE DESIRED PATH

Nov 6 - Dec 18, 2021



Rick Leong, Exit, 2021, 72 x 96 in, oil on canvas

Arsenal Contemporary Art New York is delighted to present the first solo exhibition of Victoria-based painter **Rick Leong** in the United States. Leong's landscapes, distinctly Canadian in their subject matter, are imbued with Chinese historical forms that defines the artist's hybrid visual vocabulary. If this idiosyncratic style is a way for the artist to negotiate his shared heritage, it also serves to critically engage with the history of Canadian landscape painting, one dominated by white settler figures of the likes of Lawren Harris, Tom Thomson and Emily Carr.

For Leong, the formation of a personal identity and the feeling of belonging are intrinsically linked to one's relationship with the landscape. British Columbia, wedged between the jagged, ice-capped peaks of the Canadian Rockies and the vast and turbulent Pacific Ocean is where Rick Leong grew up, and where he still calls home.

For his debut solo exhibition on American soil, Leong turns his attention to the manufacture of biota within interior spaces like botanical gardens and biodomes. His representation of flora is posited at the intersection of two traditions: botany and landscape painting. Through this adept correlation, Leong marks a parallel between the encounter with nature in a domesticated realm and the experience of going to a gallery or museum.

As ecological crises and the impact of climate change threaten both the biosphere and entire communities around the globe, nature has become the subject of much attention and fascination. Human creativity and inventiveness are being deployed to engineer a sustainable management of

space and resources. Rick Leong's work is focused on the dependency of humans on nature and *The Desired Path* offers an urgent and rigorous visualization of this symbiotic relationship.

**Rick Leong** (b. 1973, Burnaby, BC) Lives and works in Victoria, BC. He holds an MFA from Concordia University (Montreal, QC), and a BFA with Honours, from the University of Victoria (Victoria, BC). Recent exhibitions include the Esker Foundation (Calgary, AB), Bradley Ertaskiran (Montreal, QC) and Empty Gallery (Victoria, BC).

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