

[Press release]

Objects of Play: Hoo Mojong Centennial Retrospective at Asia Society Hong Kong Center

**A Must-See Exhibition in Hong Kong art month 2025:
Rediscovering a Forgotten Asian Female Modernist Master**



Hoo Mojong (1924–2012), *Toy Series*, 1968, Oil on canvas, 130×97cm, Private Collection

Hong Kong, March 21, 2025 | *Objects of Play: Hoo Mojong Centennial Retrospective* will open at Asia Society Hong Kong Center on March 26, 2025, marking one of the key exhibitions during the 2025 “Hong Kong Super March” and Art Basel Hong Kong. As the fifth installment of Asia Society Hong Kong Center’s Chinese Contemporary Female Artist Series, this retrospective is not only Hoo Mojong’s (1924–2012) first major institutional solo exhibition in Hong Kong but also a significant international re-examination of the artistic legacy of this pioneering modernist. The exhibition will bring together nearly one hundred representative works spanning Hoo’s almost century-long life and artistic career, including oil paintings, drawings, prints, and rare archival materials. Through the lens of Global Multi-modernism, the exhibition highlights her unique contributions to 20th-century modern art history.

This major retrospective is co-organised by Asia Society Hong Kong Center and Bao Foundation, and curated by Valerie Conghui Wang, the Director of Bao Foundation and the Director of Zhi Art Museum. This exhibition not only fills a gap in Hoo Mojong’s international institutional recognition but also marks the official launch of Bao Foundation, founded with a vision of reimagining the “East.”

Centennial Retrospective: A Forgotten Asian Female Modernist Artist

Hoo Mojong’s life spanned multiple cultural contexts. Born in Ningbo and raised in Shanghai, she later lived in Taipei, São Paulo, and Barcelona before settling in Paris, where she created art for 37 years. Actively engaged in the Parisian modernist art scene, Hoo received widespread recognition in Europe. However, unlike fellow Chinese émigré artists such as Zao Wou-Ki and Chu Teh-Chun, her work has not been systematically studied, classified, or defined within international art historical discourse. While influenced by European modernism, Hoo was a trailblazer in her day, developing an artistic language that transcends the categorization East-West cultural synthesis framework, and was never fully integrated into the mainstream discourse on global modern and contemporary “women’s art.” This exhibition not only traces the evolution of her art but also seeks to reconsider her position within the narrative of modernism.

The exhibition curation is structured around five simple verbs, each serving as a thematic anchor that reflects Hoo Mojong’s artistic evolution, life journey, and philosophy:

- **ROAM: The Lone Traveler** – Early years of traveling the world, forging an independent artistic vision.
- **PLAY: The Light of Paris** – Developing a unique modernist language in France’s vibrant artistic atmosphere.
- **REFINE: The Eternal Everyday** – Drawing inspiration from ordinary objects, discovering the divine in everyday life.
- **RETURN: The Flowers of Home** – Reconnecting with her Eastern heritage, redefining her spiritual ties to her origins;
- **ETCH: The Queen of Copperplate** – Breaking the boundaries of traditional printmaking, pioneering new visual expressions between East and West.

“Without a doubt, Hoo Mojong was a trailblazer in her day, an unrivaled figure among 20th-century Asian women artists. Her exceptional legacy, eloquent yet unassuming, transcends time and remains vitally contemporary today,” notes **Valerie Conghui Wang (Curator, Director of Bao Foundation, and Director of Zhi Art Museum)**

“We are thrilled to continue our *Chinese Contemporary Female Artists* series with *Objects of Play: Hoo Mojong Centennial Retrospective*, our 5th edition in this groundbreaking series. This exhibition will illuminate Hoo Mojong’s significant contributions to the Chinese diaspora community,” adds S. Alice Mong, **President of Asia Society Hong Kong Center**.

Inspired by the recurring motifs in her works, the exhibition design merges Hoo Mojong’s artistic essence with an immersive spatial experience. +c architects abstract her depictions of everyday objects—apples, bread, pumpkins, etc.— and transform them into large-scale installations, creating a dynamic spatial dialogue between the viewers and her work. The colour palette embraces her signature earthy tones of reddish-brown, ochres, and turmeric yellows, combined with shifting light and shadow, allowing visitors to experience her visual language and spiritual world as they move through the space.

Exhibition Highlights: Significant Works and Rare Archival Documents on Public Display for the First Time

This exhibition will feature several major works by Hoo Mojong, including:

- **Toy Series** (1968) - The work from the same year she won an award at “Salon des Femmes Peintres” in Paris, a series that established her position in the European art scene.
- **Two Baskets of Apples** (1978) - This large-scale work is being exhibited publicly for the first time. Through a refined figurative approach, it captures the most ordinary objects and the simplest aspects of everyday life, creating a quiet and introspective space that emerges from reality yet remains deeply personal.
- **Squat** (1970) - A modernist masterpiece infused with Eastern minimalism, this portrait exudes a sculptural structure and sense of weight, with fluid brushstrokes refining its radiant texture.
- **Buy Bread** (1972) - Hoo Mojong’s printmaking is a highly representative part of her artistic practice. The prints she created in Paris share remarkable similarities with the works of her Western contemporaries, yet they also embody a distinct Eastern humanistic sensibility. However, her contributions to modernist art history in this regard have yet to be fully explored. Through sketches, engraved copper plates, archival materials, and print works, this exhibition will illuminate how she expanded the expressive boundaries of modernism through the language of printmaking.

Since its establishment in 2017, the Asia Society Hong Kong Center’s *Chinese Contemporary Female Artists* series has presented solo exhibitions of pioneering female artists, including Fang Zhaoling, Pan Yu-Lin, and Irene Chou.

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You can download the digital press materials from the link below:

<https://egnyte.suttoncomms.com/fl/KUwVsqODtC>

Notes to Editors:**About the Artist**

Hoo Mojong (1924-2012) is a trailblazer in modern Chinese art who bridged the artistic languages of East and West. Hoo is widely acknowledged as one of the most outstanding Chinese women artists after Pan Yu-Lin (1895-1977). She has become an emblematic figure in twentieth-century Asian modernism.

Born in Ningbo and raised in Shanghai, Hoo left home in her twenties to live overseas: from Shanghai she moved to Taiwan, then to São Paulo and on to Madrid, before finally settling in Paris, where she lived and worked for the next 37 years as a painter and printmaker. Her extensive travels around the world proved personally rewarding and provided her works with a multicultural inspiration. In Paris, she joined the Académie de la Grande Chaumière—known for its freedom and independence—then embarked on a career as an independent artist. In 1968, her oil painting *Toy Series* took a major award at the “Salon des Femmes Peintres” and brought her acclaim in Paris. Toward the end of the 20th century, she returned to China and held important solo exhibitions at various museums, including the National Art Museum of China (2007), the Shanghai Art Museum (1996, 2002, and 2011), and the China Art Museum in Shanghai (2024). Hoo Mojong holds an important position in Chinese modern art history and is an underrated master. She embodies the centrality of Asian women to reconsidering global art history.

About the Curator

Valerie Conghui Wang is the Director of Bao Foundation and the Director of Zhi Art Museum, specializing in global curatorial practices in Eastern aesthetics and Asian art. She holds a Master’s Degree in Aesthetics from the Philosophy Department of Peking University. She was a senior reporter at China Central Television, a specialist at Sotheby’s and Christie’s, and then the founding Director of Zhi Art Museum. Through case studies and retrospective exhibitions, she explores the global impact of Asian art. She has curated important exhibitions such as *Fantasy Luis Chan: A Retrospective Exhibition* (2018), *Wei Ligang: Universality* (2019), and *The Art of Escape: Gao Yu* (2023). She also initiated the Open East: Asia Museum Forum (2019) to advance the re-narration of Asian art within the international context.

For *Objects of Play: Hoo Mojong Centennial Retrospective*, she aims to expand the global visibility of Asian women artists and reconsider their position in international modernism.

About +c architects

+c architects was founded in Berlin in 2012 and opened its Shanghai office in 2017. The studio conducts an extensive design practice in various countries including China, Germany, and the Netherlands.

+c architects is a multifaceted firm that devises everything from table lamps to new urban areas and from the interior design of a concept store to an entire museum. At every scale of design, +c architects conveys a sensitive understanding of cities, architecture, and daily life through its unique practice. It approaches design as not an assemblage of symbols and forms but as an aggregative reflection on the genius loci, conceptual underpinnings, logical frameworks, and practical subjects.

Sponsorship and Support

Objects of Play: Hoo Mojong Centennial Retrospective is co-organized by the Asia Society Hong Kong Center and the Bao Foundation, co-presented with Mr. Yang Bin and Ms. Yan Qing, as well as the Mountain Art Culture and Education Foundation.

This exhibition is co-sponsored by Roger Dubuis and Plaza Premium Group (環亞集團) in a strategic partnership with Meta Media Group. Exhibition program partners include the Musée Cernuschi, French May, and the Foundation for Art and Culture.

Cultural partners for the exhibition include CUPPAR and ZAIART, while the co-creation partners are Wucangshan Design Studio and +c architects. Cathay Pacific is the airline partner for the exhibition, with lighting support provided by ERCO.

The exhibition is specially supported by LYC Collection. Special thanks also go to Aye Gallery, the Frank Lin Art Center, and Alisan Fine Arts, for their contributions to this exhibition.

Public Programs

This exhibition will be accompanied by a series of public programs, academic symposiums, and interdisciplinary dialogues, exploring the narratives of overseas Chinese women artists, the global discourse on Asian modernism, and the diversification of art history. These initiatives will further expand the exhibition's academic framework and public impact.

Opening Symposium

Echo of the Waves: Rediscovering Chinese Women Artists in the Diaspora

14:00 - 16:00, March 25, 2025

Miller Theater, Asia Society Hong Kong Center,
9 Justice Dr, Admiralty, Hong Kong

During the exhibition, a themed symposium titled *Echo of the Waves: Rediscovering Chinese Women Artists in the Diaspora* will be jointly presented 藝術新聞 / *The Art Journal*, the Asia Society Hong Kong Center, and the Bao Foundation, with special support from Chanel. The discussion will take Hoo Mojong's personal experiences and artistic journey as a starting point, expanding into the roles and contributions of overseas Chinese women artists in modern and contemporary art history.

The symposium will focus on the historically marginalized group of overseas Chinese women artists, re-examining their creative achievements within the global diasporic art community and exploring how they reconstruct cultural and gender identities through artistic practice. From a global perspective, the symposium will also address the multiple dimensions of transnational feminism and diasporic culture within the context of modern and contemporary art, offering new insights into the historical positioning and future development of overseas Chinese women artists.

Academic Symposium

From Hoo Mojong: Asian Perspectives on Multimodernism and the Global Reshaping of Art History

14:30 - 15:15, March 28, 2025

Exchange Circle, Art Basel Hong Kong
Level 1 Concourse Near Entrance 1A

In addition, during the Exchange Circle at Art Basel Hong Kong 2025, the exhibition will present an academic symposium titled *From Hoo Mojong: Asian Perspectives on Multimodernism and the Global Reshaping of Art History*, focusing on how Asian art has shaped the pluralistic narratives of modernism.

Beyond this academic symposium, the exhibition will feature a range of public programs, including guided tours, artist and curator talks, research workshops, and educational outreach activities, allowing audiences to engage more deeply with Hoo Mojong's artistic language and creative trajectory. Additionally, in collaboration with local and international academic and art institutions, the exhibition will launch related publications, research materials, and online content. These initiatives aim to advance

academic research and public discourse on Asian women modernist artists, ensuring that this subject continues to evolve and generate broader cultural impact.

About Bao Foundation

The Bao Foundation is a creative platform dedicated to re-examining and enhancing the appreciation of Eastern art, culture, and philosophy within a global framework. Rooted in the sustained exploration and practice of Eastern thought, the foundation was established amid significant global historical shifts. From its base in Hong Kong, with branches extending into mainland China and Asia, the foundation collaborates with artists, curators, researchers, and scholars who share its vision, fostering a reimagining of the “East” through interdisciplinary projects. Through active participation in the co-construction of global artistic and cultural discourse, the foundation aims to build bridges between cultures, promote deeper transcultural resonance, and drive global collaboration and understanding. Founded in Hong Kong, the Bao Foundation operates in close synergy with its affiliated institutions: the Zhi Art Museum in Chengdu and the Bao Room by the Bao Foundation in Shanghai. The establishment of the foundation marks the emergence of a unique and closely connected network of institutions working together to realize a shared vision of reimagining the “East.”

Current Programs of the Bao Foundation

Han Mengyun: What Migrates Shall Remain & Enrooting: The Heterogeneous Phenomenon

Zhi Art Museum

Chengdu, China | December 15, 2024 – June 8, 2025

Sevil Tunaboylu: Remainder

Co-commissioned by **Sharjah Art Foundation & Bao Foundation**

Sharjah Biennial 16

Sharjah, UAE | February 6 – June 15, 2025

Breaking Out: Shinya Azuma’s Guide to Surviving the Absurd City

Bao Room by Bao Foundation

Shanghai, China | March 19 – May 8, 2025

Objects of Play: Hoo Mojong Centennial Retrospective

Asia Society Hong Kong Center

Hong Kong, China | March 26 – July 6, 2025

About Asia Society Hong Kong Center

Asia Society Hong Kong Center (ASHK) is an independent non-governmental educational organization established in 1990 by a group of Hong Kong community leaders led by Sir Quo-wei Lee, then Chairman of Hang Seng Bank. It is one of the 16 centers of Asia Society’s diverse network across the globe, with the mission to navigate shared futures for Asia and the world in the fields of arts and culture, business, and policy. Since 2012, ASHK has been situated in the former Explosives Magazine of the Victoria Barracks, a site steeped in history, cultural significance, and natural beauty. The 1.3-hectare site, housing four former British military buildings, was built by the British Army in the mid-19th century for explosives and ammunition production and storage. Through conservation, restoration, and adaptive reuse, the heritage site has been transformed into a cultural and intellectual hub, combining heritage preservation with a distinct modern aesthetic complete with world-class performance and conference facilities that offer a broad range of arts and culture, business and policy programs, and exhibitions to the community. ASHK was established entirely with local funding and is supported through membership dues, fundraising events, and contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations that support and advance its mission.