

For Immediate Release

## Galerie Ora-Ora to Present First Exhibition in New H Queen's Space in March & Launches 2018 Programme

Group show *Screaming Books* inaugurates the gallery from March 1 -17

6th participation at Art Basel in Hong Kong with curated exhibition *Leap to Light*



Peng Jian, *Composition*, Ink on Paper, 2017, 163cm x 146cm. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Ora-Ora

**Hong Kong – 5 February 2018** – Galerie Ora-Ora is proud to celebrate the opening of the new space in the H Queen's building with an inaugural exhibition that explores the contrasts and harmonies of art and literature. The first exhibition kicks-off the gallery's 2018 programme in the new venue that utilises the natural light of the 17<sup>th</sup> floor, and all the features of this purpose-built building for galleries.

Opening on March 1, *Screaming Books*, the literature-themed group exhibition features eight contemporary Chinese and Hong Kong artists including Halley Cheng, Hung Keung, Peng Jian, Pang Wei, Xiao Xu, Xu Lei, Zhang Yanzi together with an iconic calligraphy graffiti work by Tsang Tsou-Choi, the "King of Kowloon". Influenced by ancient and classical literature famed in Chinese and Western references, the gallery's first show for the year asserts the universality of art, exploring its aptitude for unfettered expression, emotions and meanings.

The exhibition title partly originates from Alexander Rodchenko's poster of a Russian writer and socialite Lilya Brik screaming "Books!", a cry of union between art and words. *Screaming Books*

asserts the universal power of the image, distilled into a coherent group showing of contemporary Chinese ink art. The relationship between literature and visual art has been at times harmonious, at times fraught with tension. In line with today's era of globalisation, contemporary Chinese art reflects the artists' willingness to draw on a dazzling variety of literary influences throughout their creations.

"Art and literature are not opposing forces, but divided souls screaming for each other in the night. *Screaming Books* is a tightly-curated scholarly exhibition which gathers leading artists for whom our shared legacy of literature is an inspiration," said **Henrietta Tsui-Leung, Founder and Owner of Galerie Ora-Ora**. "Celebrating the opening of our new gallery space at H Queen's, *Screaming Books* marks a significant milestone in our gallery's history and reflects our long-standing vision in promoting contemporary ink to a wider audience from Hong Kong and beyond."

Building on the philosophical contexts and inspirations from literature, *Screaming Books* displays contemporary ink works by Chinese artists who have been incorporating literary influences throughout in different ways. Xu Lei and his students Hao Liang and Xiao Xu, for example, may be seen as an embodiment of the contemporary *literati*. Taking Xiao Xu as an example, his artistic practice bears the influences of Franz Kafka's oeuvre as well as the magic realism of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Peng Jian, Peng Wei and Zhang Yanzi, on the other hand, find inspiration in the literary language and imagery of the past in order to reinvent with modern interpretations. Peng Wei delves into the correspondence of artists of the past, pairing their words with her image: this union creates new levels of awareness and understanding. Peng Jian's towers of books form the landscape architecture of a library while Zhang Yanzi's *Tianwang Buxin Dan* references a traditional medical recipe. Finally, there are the experimental innovators who seek to turbocharge the power of books to spread ideas. One such disruptor is Hong Kong artist Hung Keung, who has used the form of a video forum to explore the solitary nature of reading, creating an apparent psychological dichotomy. Another example is Tsang Tsou Choi, a fabled street artist in Hong Kong who was a challenger to social order: seen as a relentless, committed synthesizer using art and words to spread ideas.

March will also see Galerie Ora-Ora's sixth participation at Art Basel in Hong Kong, running concurrently with a second gallery show presenting the illusions and imagination of Xiao Xu through a series of new paintings. Following the successful participations at Art Basel Hong Kong in the past, the gallery is returning to the fair for the sixth consecutive year. For the 2018 edition, Ora-Ora will present a themed exhibition, *Leap to Light* (ABHK Booth 3C31), aiming to channel the opposing forces of the modern world into a springboard for forward momentum. The featured artists include Huang Dan, Hung Keung, Peng Jian, Xu Lei, Xiao Xu, Zhang Yanzi, and Sweden-based Finnish artist Juri Markkula. Their works aim to harness the power of the leap, revelling in the uncertainty of the moment of change. It is a show of boldness and conviction, rather than compromise and consensus. From Zhang Yanzi's experimental installation, to Huang Dan's paintings stripped of colours and dissecting nature, to Xiao Xu's eerie dreamscapes, Ora-Ora challenges visitors to address the fears and hopes of the leap itself.

Running concurrently with Art Basel Hong Kong will be a solo exhibition by Xiao Xu, opening from 26 March until 12 May at H Queen's. Xiao Xu, one of the most promising emerging Chinese artists, operates in the dark spaces between opposing arguments and mutually hostile forces. From inverted cities suspended between gravity and weightlessness, to bright icebergs carved out of granite, Xiao Xu probes the liquid illusions of water and land. These paintings do not include the guiding creatures from previous series, but simultaneously expand and narrow his focus to present landscapes which are both deeply personal and resolutely universal.

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**Notes to Editors:**

**About Galerie Ora-Ora**

Ora-Ora began in Hong Kong in 2006, with globally-sourced artists who are thought-driven innovators. Our artists interpret history and philosophy to bring new perspectives to our modern world and the

lively dialogue of east and west. Recognized for our support of Asian contemporary art, we have grown to represent artists from Asia, Europe and the US across a variety of media.

Ora-Ora was founded by Alfred Leung and Henrietta Tsui-Leung. Henrietta then co-founded the Hong Kong Art Galleries Association, which built connections and possibilities in the growing Hong Kong art industry. The gallery continues to develop alliances and partnerships with institutions globally to enable discovery of our artists in fresh environments. From our base in Hong Kong, we travel regularly to meet our clients at global art fairs and our international exhibitions.

2018 marks a new chapter in the Ora-Ora's story as we enter our new gallery space on the 17th Floor of H Queen's, in Central, Hong Kong. Our opening show, *Screaming Books*, embodies the spirit of a gallery which is, as ever, both research-based and future-focused.