



Press Release

Puerta Roja Presents *Zhu Qi* 「竹氣」, the First Solo Exhibition of Laurent Martin “Lo” in Hong Kong

**In March the Gallery Returns to Art Central with a Group Showcase of Latin
American and Spanish Artists**

Laurent Martin “Lo”: *Zhu Qi* 「竹氣」

28 February – 5 May, 2018

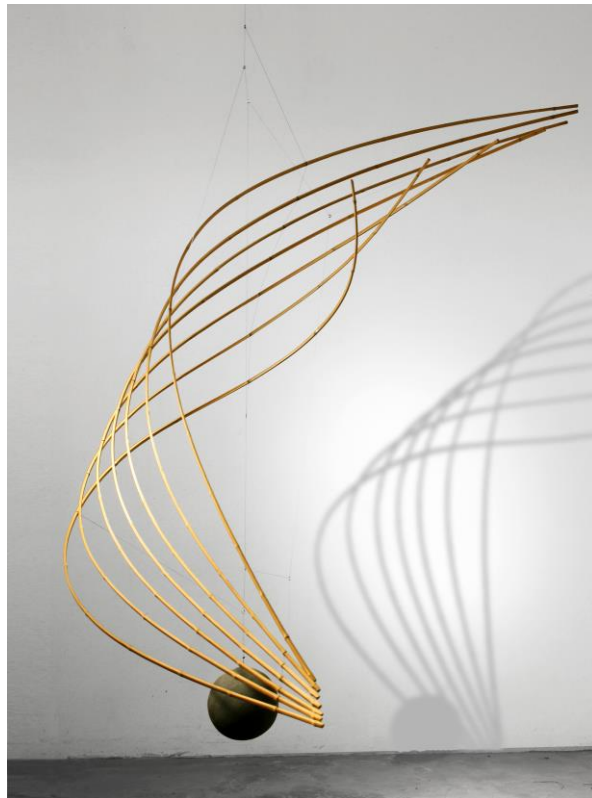
Press Preview: 5 pm on 28 February

Puerta Roja, 1F, SOHO189 Art Lane, 189 Queen's Road West, Sheung Wan

Art Central | Booth B02

26 March – 1 April, 2018

Central Harbourfront, Hong Kong



Laurent Martin “Lo”. *Typhoon*, Weathered bamboo, titan braid thread, leads and ceramic ball,
225 x 210 x 125 cm, 260 cm rotation diameter, 2017. Courtesy Puerta Roja and the artist.

“Without the wind this trap put together [...] would not stand up; it is the wind that makes it a craft that seems endowed with an end and a purpose of its own; it is only the wind that knows where the surf and the surfer and heading”

- *Italo Calvino, Mr. Paloma*



1 FEBRUARY, 2018 – HONG KONG - Puerta Roja is proud to present *Zhu Qi* 「竹氣」, the first solo exhibition of Laurent Martin “Lo” in Hong Kong, with a new series of his bamboo artworks inspired by the artist's travels to Hong Kong and the city's iconic junk boats. Titled *Zhu Qi*, which is the literal meaning for *chi* or energy of bamboo, the exhibition is centred around the theme of wind and sails referring to Hong Kong's maritime origins and seascapes. *Zhu Qi* will run from 28 February to 5 May to initiate the gallery's 2018 programme.

The exhibition displays a brand-new series of works from the artist's *Junk* series, featuring the large-scale mobile installation *Typhoon* as one of the shows highlights. Although from a Western perspective, the artistic practice of Laurent Martin “Lo” has developed around Eastern philosophical and spiritual beliefs he has encountered during his travels across the Asian continent. “Lo” interprets the ancient and traditional material of bamboo whilst alluding to the balance of the four natural elements (earth, wood, fire and air).

The artist's gravity-defying bamboo sculptures swing in the air, drawing curves of harmony like the gracious strokes of Chinese calligraphy. His creations immerse the viewer in the physical and sensorial virtues of the organic material, closely bound to the forces of nature. Following the knots and fibres of the plant, the sculpture is shaped using tension and fishing rods. Like Calder's mobiles, the pieces follow mathematical laws of movement and balance, where his manipulation of the bamboo from solid canes to articulating contours creates elegant mobile sculptures. The result entails not only the bamboo itself, but the intangible hollow space within as well as the shadows and silhouettes they project. A fragile harmony is achieved through opposites: flexibility and strength, fullness and void, light and shadow, movement and quietness.

Parallel to this standalone exhibition on view through to 5 May 2018, Puerta Roja will return to Art Central following the successful participations in the fair's 2015 and 2016 editions. The gallery will showcase works that highlight Puerta Roja's distinct focus on untraditional mediums that defy rigid definitions of art. The booth curation will revolve around Spanish-based artist Laurent Martin “Lo” and his iconic bamboo sculptures as well as works by Carlos Aguirre, María García-Ibáñez, Javier León Pérez, Mariasun Salgado, Ventoso and a brand-new series of artworks by Hong Kong-based Spanish artist Cristina Moroño. From gravity-defying bamboo sculptures, collages resignifying Hong Kong's old art publications, to intricate works on paper, each work conveys a distinct and unique artistic approach.

At booth B02, a highlight piece will be “Floating Tea House” a large-scale bamboo installation especially created by “Lo” for the Wu Yuan Arts and Culture Centre in Taiwan. This large mobile dome-like installation was produced in 2017 following the artist's collaboration with the Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute. It is a result of the artist's several-months-long travels throughout the country where he imparted lessons to emerging contemporary artists and craftsmen and incorporated in his practice new approaches to treating bamboo native to Taiwan.

Another highlight is Cristina Moroño's latest work, where she applies bamboo pulp directly onto the surface of large canvases that are embedded with pages from old Chinese art theory books, thus creating stunning collages merging Eastern and Western influences. The unfamiliar scripts are infused into a soft and expressive field, where the artist assembles an abstract space exploring her personal experience of migration.

Laurent Martin “Lo” and Cristina Moroño, who lives and works in Hong Kong, will be present at the fair and available for interviews.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Laurent Martin "Lo"

Born in France, "Lo" was trained as a visual artist but for many years worked as a creative director in advertising and fashion. "Lo"s first encounter with bamboo was completely circumstantial, but as he recalls "it was love at first sight". Bamboo became his obsession, a passion so strong that drove him to become a full-time artist and begin a journey of discovery which he refers to as his *Bamboo Routes*.

In 2004 he set out for Southeast Asia, travelling to remote areas in Thailand, Vietnam and Laos, learning old techniques from the communities for whom bamboo is an essential resource. Beyond craftsmanship, Lo learned the strong spiritual and emotional charge within bamboo. In 2011, with the support of the World Bamboo Organisation, he began his second journey to Central America to study the spatial properties of the medium, and the use of contemporary techniques to build bamboo structures. He then travelled to Indonesia, Korea and Taiwan, where in 2017 he was invited to participate as the most prominent contemporary artist in *Bamboo Traces: Contemporary International Bamboo Art and Craft Exhibition*, a museum exhibition at the National Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute.

"Lo"s exquisite bamboo creations are well appreciated internationally as well as in the Asia Pacific region. His works have been acquired by prominent collectors around the world, including Hong Kong renowned Architect Mr. William Lim, Fine Jewellery Designer and Board Member of M+ Museum Hong Kong Ms. Kai-Yin Lo and Ms. Vicky Lung the President of Sun Jet Construction Taiwan. Most recently, "Lo"s work was acquired and installed at the Koo House Museum of Art and Design, a private museum in South Korea. Laurent Martin "Lo" is a member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors and currently lives and works in Spain. He is represented by Puerta Roja in Asia Pacific since 2015.

About Puerta Roja

Puerta Roja was founded by Adriana Alvarez-Nichol in 2010 pioneering the promotion of established and emerging contemporary Latin American and Spanish artists in Asia-Pacific. Puerta Roja focuses on exhibitions that expand the understanding of Latin American artists' contribution to the development of global art movements, selecting artists whose discourse remains relevant to Asia Pacific. Its programming has introduced master's works from Mexican modernism to South American geometric abstraction such as Siqueiros, Carrington, Asís, Tomasello and Cruz-Diez. The gallery supports the internationalisation of emerging artists and has presented ground-breaking new media installations by Miguel Chevalier as well as works by conceptual artists such as Carlos Aguirre, Carlos Amoraes and TRES Collective. Exhibitions are regularly accompanied by a talk and community engagement programme.

Puerta Roja is firmly rooted in HK and prides itself in developing bridges that further the regional ecosystem and the local art scene. Its regional focus helps develop deep relationships with established collectors across Asia Pacific and nurture the next generation of collectors. Puerta Roja has significantly furthered its collector base by bringing top international standards to regional art fairs in Indonesia, Taiwan, Korea and Australia. It also collaborates with international collectors, galleries, and dealers representing Latin American and Spanish artists and contributes to their efforts in Asia Pacific. Puerta Roja also intermediates in the secondary market, primarily between Asian and Latin American collections. The gallery proudly supports Para Site, Neptune, the Sovereign Art Foundation and regularly contributes to other social and environmental charities.

Adriana is a founding Board member and the new Co-President of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association in 2018. She also represents Hong Kong at the Asia Pacific Art Gallery Alliance and is a standing judge for the Women of Influence Awards in the Masters of the Arts category.

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