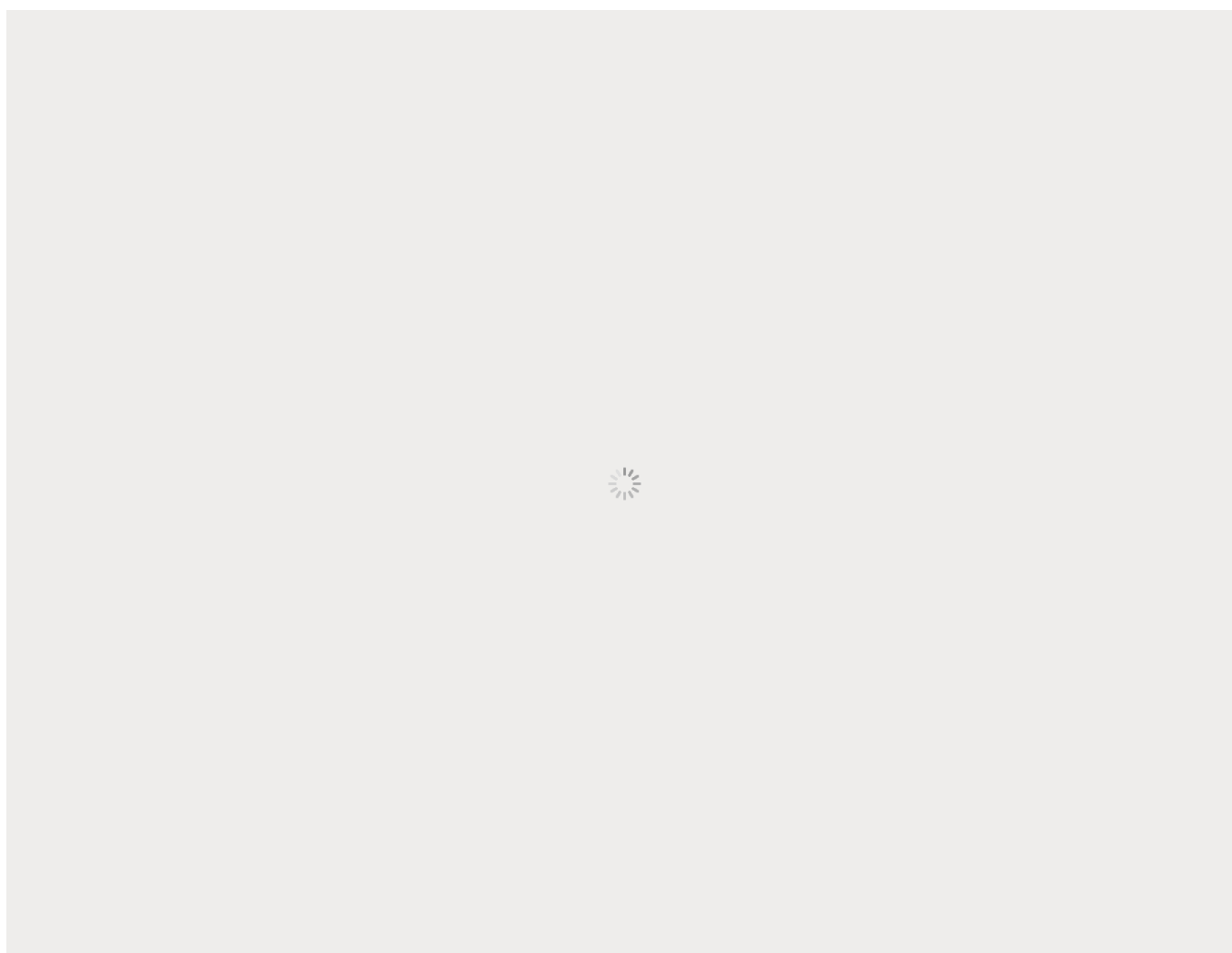


Video | The Unknown Story of the Road to "Abstract Art": An Interview with Peter Wayne Lewis

Phoenix Art 2016-01-21



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Phoenix Art Exclusive Report

On January 14, 2016, the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art welcomed the opening of the dual solo exhibitions of Peter Wayne Lewis and Derek J. Brown. Both artists have unique historical ties with Beijing: Brown became the first American artist to hold a solo exhibition at the current National Museum of China in 1988; and Lewis began to create in 2007 at the studio "Oasis" in the northern suburbs of Beijing. , For nearly 10 years. Including the two solo exhibitions of Peter Wayne Lewis and Frederick J. Brown, many ex-

hibitions planned by Ullens in 2016 will explore the state of art in the early days of China's reform and opening up.



▲The main entrance of Ullens Center for Contemporary Art



▲A group photo of guests



▲Peter Wayne Lewis: Booster exhibition site



▲Frederick J. Brown: Memory 1988 exhibition site



▲Conversation scene

At the beginning of 2016, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art kicked off the 2016 exhibition plan with the dual solo exhibition "Peter Wayne Lewis: Booster" and "Frederick J. Brown: Memory 1988" And academic direction. Based on the historical background and artistic experience of these two artists, it is concluded that during the special transformation period of Chinese art in the 1980s, there were very few important overseas artists like Rauschenberg who were closely related to the early Chinese art environment. It also had an impact on the current state of Chinese art at that time. And like Peter Wayne Lewis began to create in China in 2007, it can be said that his creations are gradually integrating into Chinese culture, and on the road of "abstract art" research, the Chinese elements are further combined with the existing artistic language. Fusion.



▲Exhibition site





▲Peter Wayne Lewis played Munch 2012-2015 Acrylic on canvas 107 x 91cm x 15



▲Frederick J. Brown "Hotel Space (Courage and Redemption)" 1980 Acrylic on canvas 140.9 x 193 cm



▲Works of Frederick J. Brown

As Frederick J. Brown, who has the same deep understanding of Chinese culture, jazz and American abstract art as Lewis, he became the first to hold an exhibition at the Revolutionary History Museum (now the National Museum of China) in 1988 American artist. These two artists are also extremely important art experiencers in China. For this exhibition, we also interviewed Peter Wayne Lewis to listen to his historical relationship with Chinese art and his thoughts on "abstract art" for the past 10 years.

Dialogue with Phoenix Art

(For your convenience, "Phoenix Art" is referred to as "Q", "Tian Feiyu" is referred to as "Tian", and Peter Wayne Lewis is referred to as "Lewis")

Tian Feiyu



▲Tian Feiyu, Director of Ullens Center for Contemporary Art

Q: Since Ullens opened a double solo exhibition by two foreign artists in 2016, and also successfully held the Kentridge exhibition in 2015, can you talk about the plan for 2016?

Tian: We have always been active on the boundaries of "Chinese and foreign" art, and exhibitions on overseas artists have actually been organized since the opening of Ullens. The Kentridge exhibition held in 2015 received a good response, and Rauschenberg's solo exhibition will be planned this year, which is what everyone is looking forward to. We all know that Rauschenberg has a special relationship with China. Based on his in-depth contacts with the Chinese art circle in the 1980s, this time we will show his huge paintings nearly 400 meters long. It took him nearly 18 years to create, and it also covers his two years in China. time. In fact, many exhibitions this year are exploring the early stage of reform and opening up, including this one: it presents the works created by Lewis in Beijing and all the works of Brown's solo exhibition at the Museum of Revolutionary History in 1988.

The next exhibition is about the architecture of the "International Hotel" in the early period of reform and opening up in August. This is to explore the traces of ideals left over from that period of idealism from another standpoint; at the same time, we are also continuing to explore painting. For example, Wang Yin's solo exhibi-

tion, which will open at the end of March, will present more than 40 works of the past five years. He directly uses the medium of painting as a research object to record the experience of Chinese modernity. This exhibition is very worth looking forward to. There is also a large-scale solo exhibition of Zeng Fanzhi at the end of the year, which also hopes to sort out some of the artistic context of this artist. It also includes Hao Liang's continuous exploration of the possibility of Chinese traditional aesthetics for contemporary art.

Q: How did the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art lead to this exhibition of Lewis and Brown by chance?

Tian: Actually, Beijing and China have become centers of international art, but we rarely discuss foreign artists working in China. This group has not received much attention. Peter Wayne Lewis is very senior in this circle. Probably all his creations were completed in Beijing, nearly 10 years. There is a certain connection between the creations of the two artists in this exhibition: the same state and the imagination of cultural exchanges are reflected in the works.

Q: How do you interpret the musical elements involved in the works in this exhibition?

Tian: I think these musical elements are extremely perceptual in Lewis's creation, not focusing on a kind of conceptuality. This is different from many rational abstract paintings in China. In some cases, domestic abstract paintings regard the creative process as its own aesthetic reasons, and the concepts shown are extremely accurate. It is also interesting to compare these two abstract methods.

Peter Wayne Lewis



▲Artist Peter Wayne Lewis

Q: Can you talk about your creative experience in China over the past 10 years, and the relationship with the exhibition's name "Booster" and music?

Lewis: I came to Beijing 10 years ago and owned my current studio "Oasis" in the northern suburbs, which prompted me to complete a work as large as the one I am currently showing. At the same time, my experience in Beijing has also influenced my creation. My works have absorbed a lot of Chinese culture. In addition to being a painter, I also have an interactive relationship with Chinese culture, life and art.

Q: How do you understand and treat "abstract art"?

Lewis: When you see these photos, you can describe them as "abstract", but in reality the camera will also record the photos. Maybe these photos look concrete and real, but they are also abstract in nature. fabricated. The non-abstract, non-fictional thing is the ongoing conversation between us, which is real. After this interview, you will upload the video to TV networks and other platforms. These are multiple and composite media, which are sensations, but also not real. Television, photos, etc. are all fictitious, so to me these paintings are real, and they exist in this world through different forms of expression. For me, painting is actually a way of recording, my experience of the world, so in the past ten years I have had three

or four months to create in Beijing each year. This exhibition is by far my most important personal work exhibition.

For example, the origin of Chinese characters "Oracle" is a documentary thing like the earliest written on clay in Europe or Ancient Egypt. It can also be seen as an abstract language, which carries a kind of " Narrative" role. Often history is recorded in many different ways. So the ancient Chinese language was slowly presented in this historical record. One of my favorite painters is "Bada Shanren", and I have seen his exhibition in Washington. His grasp of language, form and structure is wonderful. Our understanding of space has similarities, such as white space, which is actually full of energy. I think his works are not abstract, but very real. As an artist, he has done a good job in expressing reality with abstraction, reflecting life and death, love, and everything that exists in the world in his works. His works represent everything as a whole.

Q: In what context did you and Mr. Brown meet, and for what reason did you present this exhibition together?

Lewis: Mr. Brown was the first American artist to exhibit at the National Museum of China in 1988. The two of us met at an exhibition and later became friends, and we had some common ideas about art. Later, at an exhibition in China, we attended the event together as representatives. That exhibition was a very important boundary for Chinese art at that time. At that time, we had some exchange activities with Tsinghua University, and also held lectures and exhibitions. Our common point of view is: Art is a gift of human spirit, trying to understand what real art is. This is what we have done for this society as a "producer of culture" in the past 30 years.

About the artist

Peter Wayne Lewis



▲Artist Peter Wayne Lewis

Peter Wayne Lewis was born in Jamaica in 1953 and is currently a professor of painting at the Massachusetts Institute of Art and Design. He lives and works in Beijing, Boston and South Orange County, New Jersey. In 2015, Lewis held a solo exhibition "Beijing Booster" at the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami. Lewis' recent exhibitions include: "Booster Painting" (North Miami Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, 2015); "Latin American Art Today" (Promo-Arte, Tokyo, 2014); "The Fifth Beijing International Art Biennale" (National Art Museum of China, Beijing, 2012); "Seeing Jazz" (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1997).

Frederick J. Brown



▲Artist Frederick J. Brown

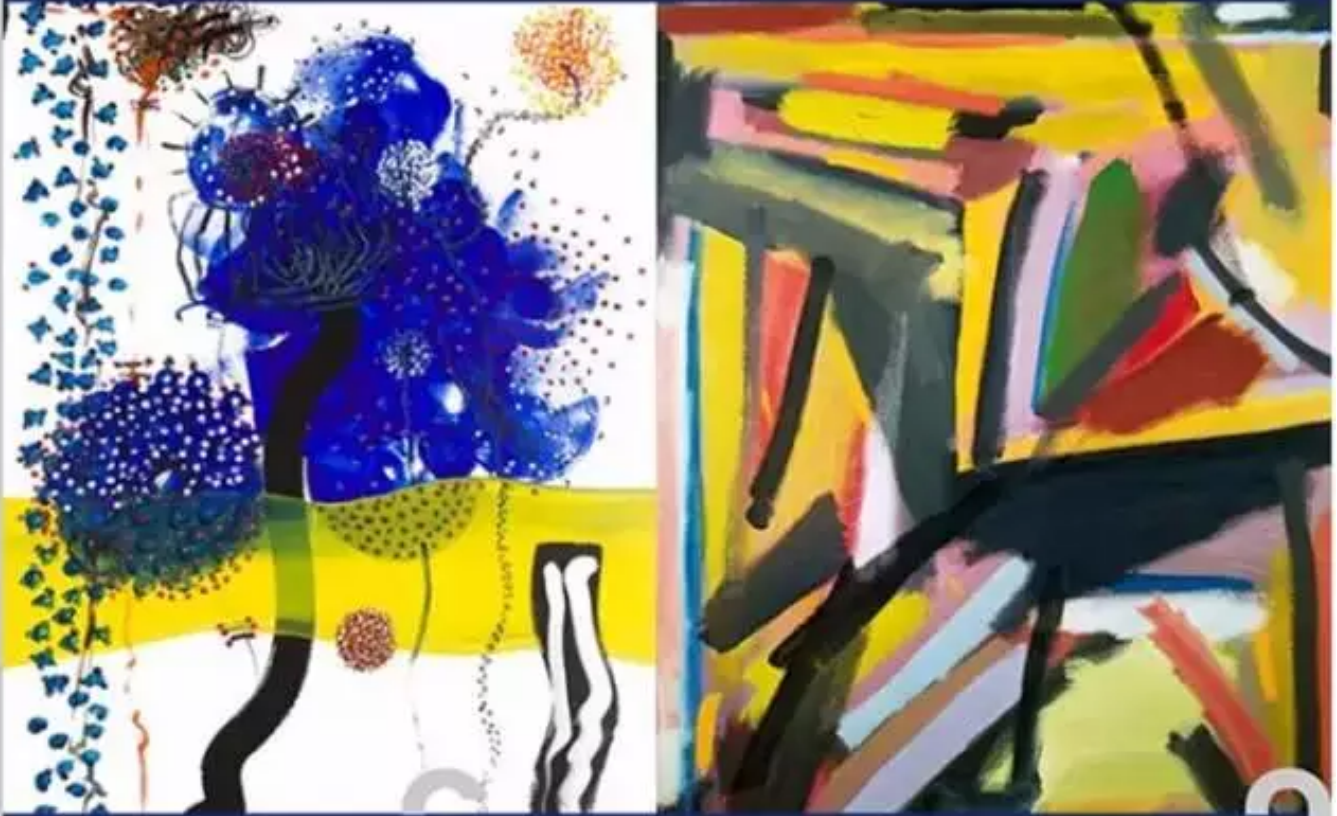
The works of Frederick J. Brown (1945-2012) are collected by public and private institutions worldwide, including the Smithsonian National Museum of American

Art, the Metropolitan Museum and the New Orleans Museum of Art. Brown was born in Georgia and studied in Chicago. He was influenced by modernist art masters in his early years and taught at the former Central Academy of Art and Design from 1985 to 1987. Brown is famous for his series of portraits of jazz and blues musicians, and has a place in American painting history.

Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA)

UCCA is an independent public welfare art institution that serves the public. It is located in the core area of Beijing's 798 Art District. It was founded by Belgian collectors, Ullens, and officially opened in November 2007. UCCA has extensively cooperated with well-known and emerging artists both locally and internationally, holding academic exhibitions and a wealth of public projects, and is committed to continuously promoting the development of Chinese contemporary art and promoting international exchanges. Ten thousand visitors present the most forward-looking art and culture.

彼得·韦恩·刘易斯 暨弗雷德里克·J·布朗



Peter Wayne Lewis & Frederick J. Brown

2016.1.15 – 2016.3.13

UCCA

Ullens Center for
Contemporary Art
尤伦斯当代艺术中心

彼得·韦恩·刘易斯，《蓝色植物（15）》，2015，布面丙烯，79 x 101 cm。
Peter Wayne Lewis, *Plant (Blue 15)*, 2015, acrylic on fabric, 79 x 101 cm.

弗雷德里克·J·布朗，《红色之舞》，1970/1971，布面油画，101.2 x 111.4 cm。
Frederick J. Brown, *Dance of the Red*, 1970 or 1971, oil on canvas, 101.2 x 111.4 cm.

▲Exhibition poster

Exhibition name: Peter Wayne Lewis and Frederick J. Brown

Exhibition time: 2016.01.15-2016.03.13

Exhibition location: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA)

(Phoenix Art, Li Ning, Li Xing, Beijing Reporting Editor Lee)

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