



PUERTA
ROJA 紅門

Press Release

Puerta Roja Presents Artistic Explorations with Bamboo as a Contemporary Medium

Zhu Qi 「竹氣」 by “Lo” launches gallery’s March 2018 programming, ongoing until May 5

The gallery also presents a group show of Spanish and Latin American artists at Art Central (March 26 – April 1)



Laurent Martin "Lo", *Floating Tea House*, weathered bamboo, titan braid thread, lead, 150 x 250 x 250 cm, 250 cm rotation diameter, 2017. Image courtesy of the artist and Puerta Roja.

15 MARCH, 2018 – HONG KONG – Following a successful exhibition opening on February 28 of Laurent Martin “Lo” and his gravity defying bamboo installations, Puerta Roja kick-started the gallery’s exciting March 2018 programming and now announces a return to Art Central for the third time. As one of the major participating galleries with a roster of key Spanish and Latin American artists, the carefully curated group show highlights Puerta Roja’s distinct focus on the use of bamboo as an untraditional medium that defies rigid definitions of art.

At centrally located booth (B02), the gallery presents works by Hong Kong-based Cristina Moroño (Spain), Carlos Aguirre (Mexico), María García-Ibáñez (Spain), Javier León Pérez (Spain), Mariasun Salgado (Spain), artist collective Ventoso (Argentina), and Laurent Martin “Lo”. A highlight piece of the booth by “Lo” is *Floating Tea House* (2017), a large dome-like bamboo installation originally produced for the Wu Yuan Arts and Culture Centre in Taiwan. A fruit of the artist’s collaboration with the Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute, this large work reflects his several-months-long journey along the country’s bamboo routes.

To continue the spirit of cross-cultural collaborations, Puerta Roja is teaming up with Soluna Fine Art, to feature three Korean artists as part of the installation, including a contemporary tea set by



ceramics artist Kanghyo Lee, further celebrating the reference of eastern traditions in contemporary art forms.

Unique collages marrying the East-West influences by Cristina Moroño, the locally based Spanish-born female artist, will be another focal point of Puerta Roja's booth in Art Central. Hailing from the artist's most recent series *Oriente*, the artworks speak of Moroño's personal connections to Hong Kong, where she has lived and worked since 2016. In her artistic practice, Moroño never ceases to experiment and innovate – the works presented at Art Central reflect this spirit, being a direct result of her latest experimentations with raw bamboo pulp. As a return to painting, she combines expressive abstract marks with layers of mixed media, embedding pages from old Chinese art theory books along the way. Utilising this process, Moroño creates exclusive collages, where each piece acts as an autobiographical memento from particular moments in her life.

Adriana Alvarez-Nichol, founder of Puerta Roja and recently appointed Co-President of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association (HKAGA), says: "We are thrilled to return to Art Central with a diverse roster of artists from Mexico, Argentina and Spain. The focus on works by Laurent Martin "Lo" and Cristina Moroño reflect how the gallery continues to contribute to diversity within the Hong Kong art scene, whilst highlighting our roots in the city by works inspired by and developed in Asia."

Coinciding with the fair and currently on view at Puerta Roja's gallery space in SOHO189 Art Lane until 5 May 2018 is *Zhu Qi* 「竹氣」, the first solo exhibition of Laurent Martin "Lo" in Hong Kong. The exhibition is centred around the theme of wind and sails referring to Hong Kong's maritime origins and seascapes. 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. 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 Asia. "Lo" interprets the ancient and traditional material of bamboo whilst alluding to the balance of the four natural elements (earth, wood, fire and air).

"It is a great honour and pleasure to present my new bamboo works inspired by Hong Kong in Hong Kong at Puerta Roja. My artistic practice was born out of fascination with bamboo, which I discovered over 10 years ago by pure chance. Since then my passion for this unique material has taken me all across Asia and I hope that *Zhu Qi* 「竹氣」 is one of many journeys still ahead on my *bamboo routes*," says **Laurent Martin "Lo"**.

Both Laurent Martin "Lo" and Cristina Moroño will be present in Hong Kong during Art Central and available for interviews.

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Media Enquiries:

Candy Sum | Sutton
candy@suttonpr.com | +852 2528 0792

Magdalena Nieduzak | Sutton
magdalena@suttonpr.com | +852 2528 0792

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Art Central | Booth B02
26 March – 1 April 2018
Central Harbourfront, Hong Kong

Laurent Martin "Lo": *Zhu Qi* 「竹氣」
28 February – 5 May 2018
Puerta Roja, 1F, SOHO189 Art Lane,
189 Queen's Road West, Sheung Wan

HKAGA Art Gallery Night
26 March 2018, 6PM – 8PM

HKAGA Art Brunch
30 March 2018, 9AM – 12PM

Both HKAGA events take place across HKAGA member galleries, including Puerta Roja.



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 Cristina Moroño

Born in Spain, Cristina Moroño is an artist in pursuit of constant experimentation. Merging different practices, including photography, etching, engraving, collage and paper making, Cristina oscillates between the figurative and the abstract in her search to capture the passing of time and the ephemeral nature of our lives.

In the series *Second Chance*, Cristina deepens her interest in experimentation by making her own paper serving as both canvas and content. Each is personal memento documenting a particular time in her life. By merging old found objects and new materials, Moroño grants them a second life, a "second chance" to express their form, substance and be crowned with new meanings.

Cristina Moroño majored in printmaking, graduating with honours at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, where she also obtained a Master Degree in Fine Arts. In 2003 she moved to New York and in 2016 she relocated to Hong Kong where she currently lives and works. She has received several prestigious awards, most notably from the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid, a fellowship from the Joan Miro Foundation and the DeArte Foundation's prize "Hotel Puerta America". Her work is held by public and private collections including the National Library and the City Museum in Madrid, the FRIDE Foundation, the Joan Miró Foundation, the Gorbachev Foundation of North America and the Macy's Art Collection in New York. Her work has been exhibited extensively throughout Europe and New York, with her first exhibition in Hong Kong with Puerta Roja in 2016.

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 Amorales 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, appointed 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.