



# INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST HILDA SHEN

*July 25, 2019*

***Artist Hilda Shen was born in 1954 in Minneapolis, United States. She received her B.A. in Music and East Asian Studies from Oberlin College, and her M.F.A. in Sculpture City University of New York, Queens College.***

*Currently, she lives and works in Brooklyn and teaches at Parsons/The Newschool. Shen's sculptures, prints, drawings, and installations have been shown in Brooklyn, throughout the New York City area, Seattle, and Beijing.*

*She acted in Public Hearing, a film by James Kienitz Wilkins, which premiered in the USA at MoMA/PS1 in 2013, and more recently in Common Carrier at BAMcinemaFest in 2017. Shen created large installations at WaveHill (New York), Tenri Cultural Institute (New York), China2000 Gallery (New York), and the Smithsonian Flushing Town Hall (New York).*

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*Hilda Shen at Fou Gallery, photograph by Nadia Peichao Lin ©Hilda Shen, courtesy Fou Gallery*

*Her 30-foot wide wall piece, *RecurrentRiver*, is permanently installed at Riverdale Country School in New York.*

*She received residencies at Willapa Bay AIR, The Bloedel Reserve,*

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Millay Colony for the Arts, Yosemite National Park, and Platte Clove.

**China-Underground: As a sculptress, the direct relationship with matter is a primary element for the realization of your artwork. Can you tell us about this connection? How did you discover your passion?**

**Hilda Shen:** *Playing with materials is always intertwined with playing with concepts – materials and purpose are inseparable for me.*



*Hilda Shen, Range of Mountains, 2014-2019. Glazed clay, Variable dimensions, ranging between 1-4 inches ©Hilda Shen, courtesy of Fou Gallery*

**How did your artworks for this exhibition come about?**

*The director, Echo He, and the curator, Tansy Xiao, arranged that Jisook and I exhibit together.*

**Can you tell us what materials you used for the realization of your artworks and why?**

*Since the work in this exhibit dates from 2000 to the present, the use of specific materials chronicles my interests and concepts at different*



Installation view of Jisook Kim & Hilda Shen: *Orogenies*, photograph by Nadia Peichao Lin ©Hilda Shen and Jisook Kim, courtesy Fou Gallery

***Is there a message that you would like to be perceived by those who enjoy the exhibition?***

*I think that viewers arrive at their own interpretations, hopefully by viewing the exhibit in person.*

***Can you share with us some memories related to an experience in the mountains that contributed to the creation of one of your artworks?***

*I have walked and experienced a great deal of landscape, both unpopulated and urban. Among these, two are notable: my residency in Yosemite National Park, in which I hiked most of the trails, expanded my sensibilities regarding scale and altitude. Having a studio at the Elizabeth Foundation of the Arts in midtown Manhattan, with its “valleys” between high rise buildings, inspired a desire to*



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*include man-made references in my work.*

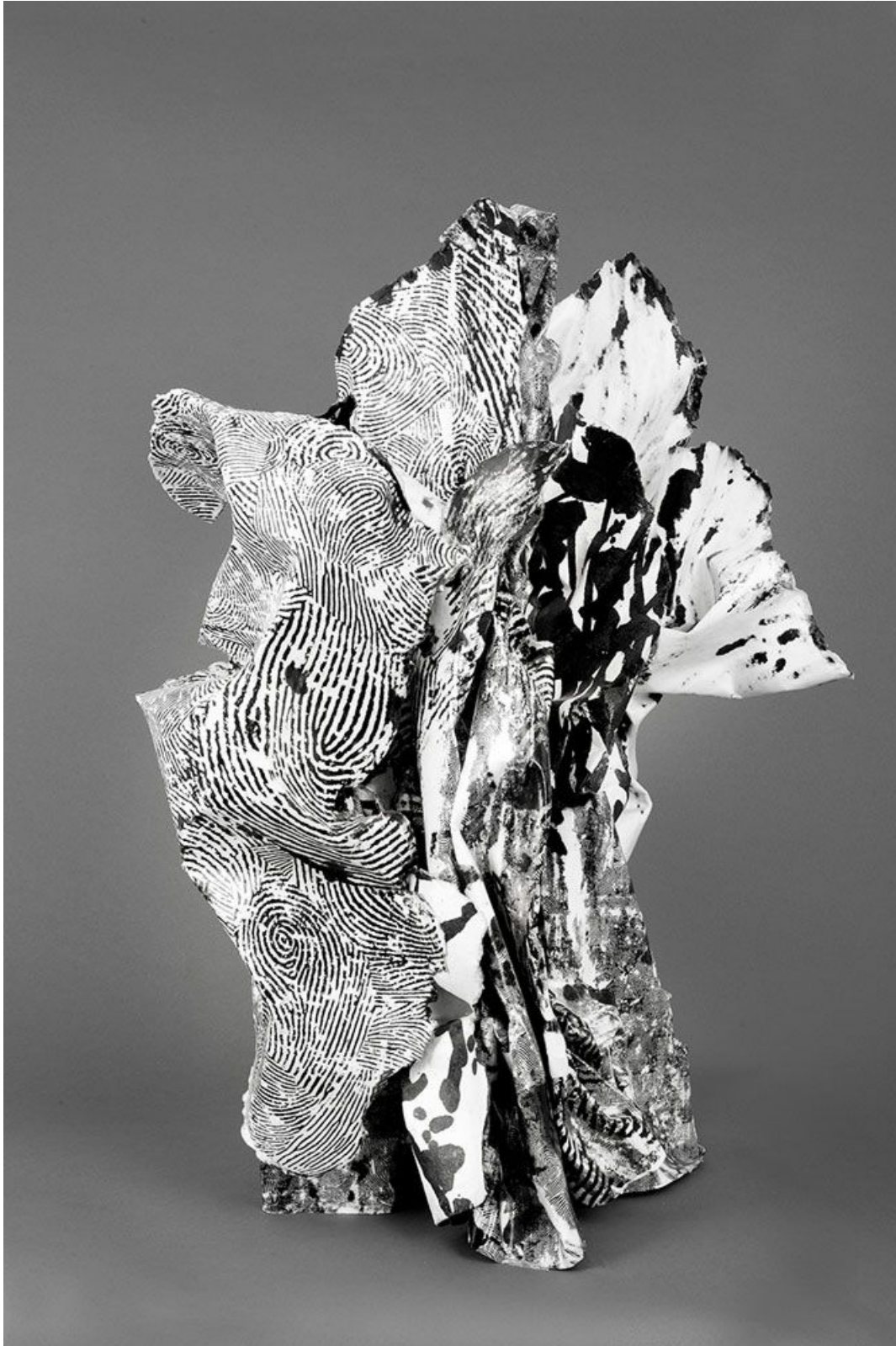


*Installation view of Jisook Kim & Hilda Shen: Orogenies, photograph by Nadia Peichao Lin ©Hilda Shen and Jisook Kim, courtesy Fou Gallery*

***How do you think the relationship between nature and the human being has changed in the period of increasing global urbanization and increasing use of technology?***

*We're at the end of a long history of exploitation of nature, worldwide. There will be a narrowing of species, and most of nature as we currently know it will no longer exist. So will most humans be extinguished, except those who are privileged; technology will enable these humans to survive somehow.*

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*Hilda Shen, Rock Strata, 2003. Paper, ink, wax, 14 x 18 x 25 inches ©Hilda Shen, courtesy of Fou*

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**Nature and art contribute to overcoming cultural differences. What are the main benefits?**

*Nature is healing to us unless it's in stress which it is now. I don't believe that art overcomes cultural differences; rather, I believe that it reveals them.*

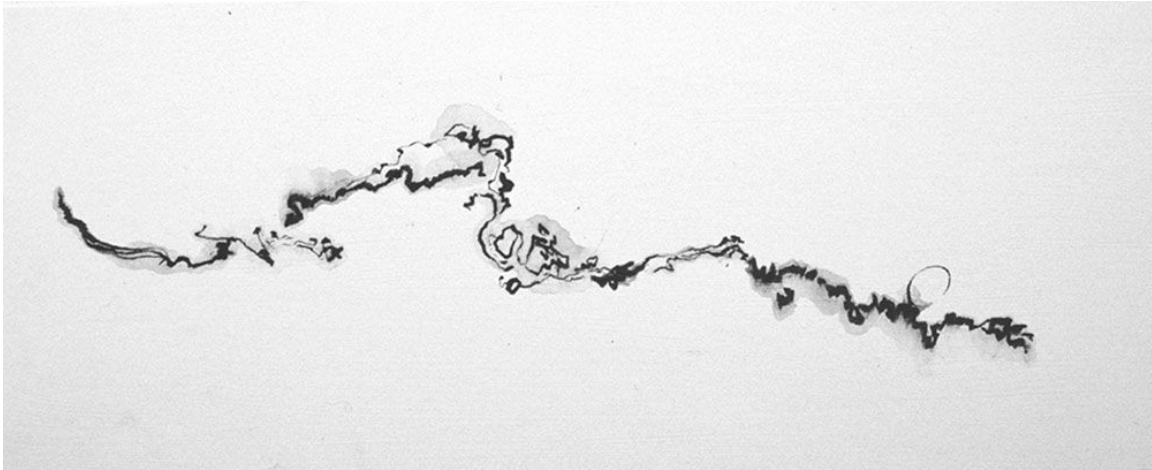


*Hilda Shen, Range of Mountains, 2014-2019. Glazed clay, Variable dimensions, ranging between 1-4 inches ©Hilda Shen, courtesy of Fou Gallery*

**In your artworks, nature plays a significant role. What do you think about the current environmental situation?**

*It is the leading crisis of our time.*

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*Hilda Shen, One-Line Landscape V, 2000. Pencil on paper, 6 ¾ x 16 ½ inches ©Hilda Shen, courtesy of Fou Gallery*

***Your background is rich in multicultural and interdisciplinary experiences. Can you tell us which were the greatest difficulties and greatest satisfaction during your artistic career?***

*There are too many difficulties! It's too long a story. When someone truly understands my work, it is great. But really, I'm most interested in the present, in what is happening now in the studio – this defines what being alive is for me.*

Thanks to **Fou Gallery & Hilda Shen**

<https://china-underground.com/2019/07/25/interview-with-artist-hilda-shen/>