

PRESS RELEASE

PHILLIPSX PRESENTS ZAO WOU-KI: INFINITE DIALOGUES DURING HONG KONG ART MARCH

A Selling Exhibition Unites Zao Wou-Ki's Oeuvre with Works by Kindred Artists, Creating a Dialogue Between Eastern and Western Masters of the Postwar Era

On View at Phillips' Asia Headquarters in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District from 6-29 March



Portraits of Artists Jacques Germain, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Zao Wou-Ki, Georges Mathieu, and Jean-Paul Riopelle with art dealer Pierre Loeb at Galerie Pierre, 2 rue des Beaux-Arts, Paris 6th arrondissement, 1953

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Zao Wou-Ki

Retour de pêche, 1953
oil on canvas, 60 x 92 cm.

Hong Kong – 26 February 2026 – [PhillipsX](#), the selling exhibition platform operated by the global Private Sales team at Phillips, is pleased to present [Zao Wou-Ki: Infinite Dialogues](#) from 6-29 March. This selling exhibition offers audiences a rare opportunity to encounter Zao's oeuvre in dialogue with works by artists with whom he shared profound affinities, including Hans Hartung, Georges Mathieu, Sam Francis, Jean-Paul Riopelle, and others. Featuring a remarkable selection of paintings, works on paper, sculptures, and prints spanning more than seven decades of creation, the exhibition highlights the dynamic exchanges between East and West in the postwar era. Coinciding with Phillips' West Kowloon neighbor M+'s *Zao Wou-Ki: Master Printmaker*, it extends a unique moment for audiences to rediscover the artist's legacy in depth.

Zao Wou-Ki's remarkable career was profoundly shaped by his years in Paris from the late 1940s onward, when he became immersed in a circle of artists whose ideas nurtured his reflections on painting and abstraction. In 1951, only three years after his arrival in Paris, Zao began exhibiting at the avant-garde Galerie Pierre alongside leading abstract artists of the time, including Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Georges Mathieu, Jacques Germain, and

Jean-Paul Riopelle—who would go on to become his lifelong friend. Friendships proved pivotal for his career: poet Henri Michaux introduced gallerist Pierre Loeb to Zao in the early 1950s, while Pierre Soulages later connected him with influential New York dealer Sam Kootz, who began representing Zao in 1957. These encounters formed a rich tapestry of artistic exchange, underscoring the networks that propelled his career and the dialogues between East and West that lie at the heart of this exhibition.

Meiling Lee, Senior International Specialist, and Clara Rivollet, International Specialist, Modern & Contemporary Art, Phillips, jointly said: “Phillips’ Private Sales team has built a strong reputation among collectors worldwide, achieving an impressive 66% year-over-year growth in 2025. We are proud to present *Zao Wou-Ki: Infinite Dialogues* in Hong Kong this March, a landmark exhibition celebrating the artist’s enduring legacy and his pivotal role in shaping cross-cultural dialogues that continue to inspire today, while presenting the work of his Western contemporary peers to the public in Asia. We look forward to welcoming collectors and audiences alike to our West Kowloon space during the vibrant Hong Kong Art Month.”



Zao Wou-Ki
Les Attiseurs (The Guardian of The Flame), 1955
oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm.



Jean-Paul Riopelle
Vol de Chute, 1961
oil on canvas, 72.8 x 91.7 cm.



Zao Wou-Ki
Le vert caresse l'orange - 11.06.2005, 2005
oil on canvas, 195 x 97 cm.

At the center of the exhibition is *Retour de pêche* (illustrated page 1), a 1953 work that marked a pivotal moment in Zao’s career as he shifted from still-life compositions toward abstraction. The present work depicts a sweeping oceanic vision where indigo light illuminates two-thirds of the canvas and vessels drift into the night. The sea is articulated through rare, linear brushwork that layers rippling waves into rhythmic order, recalling the Water Painting (Shui Tu) tradition of Song master Ma Yuan—whom Zao deeply admired—and lending the work a distinctive resonance within his early oeuvre. The piece occupies an especially important place in his artistic development, and its distinguished provenance further enhances its significance, having once belonged to New York collector Patti Birch, an early and ardent champion of Zao’s art.

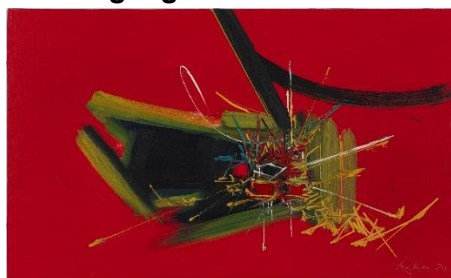
Another highlight is *Les Attiseurs (The Guardian of The Flame)*, distinguished by its provenance as part of Myriam Prévot’s collection at Galerie de France, where Zao later forged a landmark three-decade collaboration. *Le Attiseurs* is one of the first truly abstract works in Zao’s oeuvre where figurative elements in his previous compositions dissolve into abstract signs inspired by ancient Chinese oracle bones inscription.

Painted in 2005, *Le vert caresse l'orange - 11.06.2005* stands as a landmark work created shortly after Zao Wou-Ki’s election to the French Academy of Fine Arts and his major retrospective at the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume. Its vibrant yellow and pink palette recalls the artist’s breakthrough style of the 1980s while evoking the spirit of the Impressionist masters. Most recently, the

painting was featured in *The Way is Infinite: Centennial Retrospective of Zao Wou-Ki* at the Art Museum of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou in 2023, the largest retrospective of the artist in China in over two decades.

Jean-Paul Riopelle's *Vol de Chute* stands out as a fresh-to-market masterpiece, distinguished by its vibrant palette and exceptional impasto that exemplify the artist's dynamic approach to abstraction. Exhibited extensively across major cities—including Montreal (1963), Toronto (1971), Vancouver (1973), and New York (2005)—the work carries a rich exhibition history that underscores its importance within Riopelle's oeuvre. As a close friend of Zao Wou-Ki, Canadian Riopelle shared the cross-cultural dialogues that shaped postwar abstraction, making this canvas a compelling highlight of the exhibition.

Other Highlights



Georges Mathieu
Uxelles, 1970
oil on canvas, 89 x 145.5 cm.



Hans Hartung
T1977-E33, 1977
acrylic on canvas, 65 x 81 cm.



Zao Wou-Ki
Sans titres, 1972
watercolour on paper, 65.5 x 50.4 cm.

Date & Time:

6-17 March, Monday to Friday, 11am-7pm

20-29 March, Monday to Sunday, 11am-7pm

Location: Phillips Asia Headquarters, GF and 3F, WKCDA Tower, West Kowloon Cultural District, No. 8 Austin Road West, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Please visit <https://exhibitions.phillips.com/collections/zao-wou-ki-infinite-dialogues> for updates

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ABOUT PHILLIPS

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