



Cass Sculpture  
Foundation

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## Jennifer Wen Ma

Molar, 2016

Glass, Tyvek, Plexiglass, Chinese  
ink

W x H x D cm

Available for sale





This work is a new site-specific installation for the Main Gallery of Cass Sculpture Foundation that merges mythological, spiritual and humanistic notions of paradise. Jennifer Wen Ma sought to bring the landscape indoors by creating a work that alludes to both natural and artificial scenery. In this setting, a seemingly capsized tree appears to pierce through the ceiling to give birth to an enchanting landscape below. The tree is made of black Tyvek, a lightweight construction material, which gently shrouds a cluster of clear glass teardrop forms. Together, these unlikely materials produce an evocative landscape. Ma is concerned with the notion of paradise as an on-going investigation of mythical gardens from the Hanging Garden of Ancient Babylon to the Garden of Eden. In the Old Iranian context, *paridayda*, was associated with 'walled enclosures' including gardens and menageries. In this work, a walled enclosure is reproduced using shards of mirrored Plexiglas, reminiscent of ice, to surround a dark landscape. Visitors are invited to enter the work to explore and experience the landscape. Inside they find a sleek, dark surface ruptured by pools of Chinese ink. Chinese ink is characteristic of classical Chinese landscape painting and Ma's practice is committed to exploring it within a contemporary framework. Within the pools of ink sit glowing golden-coloured glass orbs that appear as the fallen nectar of the capsized tree above and allude to the restorative capacity of nature.





Jennifer Wen Ma's works comprise various media, such as installation, video, drawing, performance, public art and fashion design. She has also developed large-scale events and performances, some of which include a project for the Opening Ceremony at the Beijing Olympics and a new Opera entitled *Paradise Interrupted* with Huang Ruo. Ma has worked with Chinese ink since 2008 in unconventional formats, most commonly in installation. Often, Ma works with live plants, which she paints using Chinese ink to create three-dimensional landscape paintings. She employs Chinese ink due to its rich historical significance and symbolic meaning as well as for its non-toxic qualities that allow the plants to survive. Many of her works take landscape or nature as their subject matter and often encourage viewer involvement. Her approach to nature frequently has a romantic sensibility creating works that result in imaginative installations.

Click [here](#) to see an interview with Jennifer Wen Ma during the install of her work *Molar*, produced and filmed by Studio International.

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Jennifer Wen Ma was born in 1973 in Beijing, China. In 1986, she moved to the United States where she received her Master of Fine Art degree in 1999 from Pratt Institute, New York. She works and lives between New York and Beijing.

Notable exhibitions include; *Paradise interrupted, Opera* commissioned by Spoleto USA Festival & Lincoln Centre Festival, Metropolitan Museum of Art (2015); *Unscrolled*, Vancouver Art Gallery; *Nonuments*, 5x5 Project, Washington D.C. (2014); *Forty Four Sunsets in a Day*, Hanart Square, HK; *Performa 13*, NYC; (2013); *Hanging Garden in Ink*, UCCA, Beijing (2012); Artistic Director for *The Republic of China Centennial Grand Countdown* in Taipei; *Lingua Franca*, St. Moritz Art Masters, Switzerland; *Inked*, Eslite Gallery, Taipei (2011); *The Biennale of Sydney* (2010); *Tide-Inked Spring*, Art Space NIJI, Kyoto; *Echigo-Tsumari Triennial*, Niigata; *Brain Storm*, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.; *Everything is Museum*, Guggenheim, Bilbao (2009); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NYC; The National Art Museum of China, Beijing (2008). Permanent public installations include works for the city of Colle di Val d'Elsa, the Digital Beijing Building and Nature and Man in Rhapsody of Light at The National Aquatic Centre, Beijing. In 2008, Ma was one of the seven members on the core creative team for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics, and the chief designer for visual and special effects. She won an Emmy for the US broadcast of the ceremony.