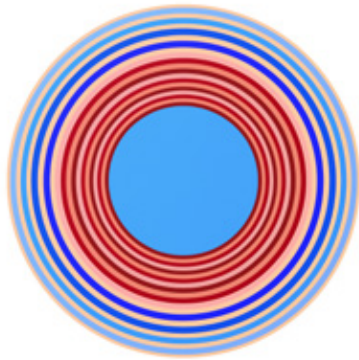


HEMPHILL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, August 29, 2017



CONTACT:

Caitlin Berry
HEMPHILL Fine Arts
1515 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
202.234.5601
caitlin@hemphillfinearts.com
www.hemphillfinearts.com

LINLING LU

September 15–December 16, 2017

Washington DC—HEMPHILL is delighted to announce the exhibition *LINLING LU* on Friday, September 15, 2017, with a public reception from 6:00–8:00pm. The exhibition will remain on view through December 16, 2017.

A circle, seemingly easily understood, harbors one of our great mysteries. As young students we learned the area of a circle is described by the formula $A = \pi r^2$. Herein lies the irrational π , a transcendental number with a continual, nonrepeating decimal, never truly fixed, and always threatening to expand or contract. From ancient to present times, we have been perplexed by the contradiction between our ability to determine, without a doubt, the exact area of a square and our inability to fit the uncertain circle into that square. Π , with its continual nonrepeating decimal, will not allow it. Thus, the circle has a bewildering hold upon us. The persistent unfixedness of π suggests it, and all the circles it formulates are somehow beyond our space and time.

One Hundred Melodies of Solitude, Linling Lu's ongoing series of circular paintings, sidesteps the usual artist-viewer dynamic. Her work connects in a different way. Generally one experiences an artwork as a message sent from the artist to the viewer. In our time, this has meant the creation of artworks bound by the rhetoric of personal expression. Lu's circular paintings bypass this rhetorical position. To grasp the difference, one needs to look closely at the physical qualities of her paintings as well as the physical demands required to create them.

Circles and concentric circles are recurring motifs in modern and contemporary art. From Sonia Delaunay to Kenneth Noland to Gary Lang, the circle is a motif that artists have explored using numerous abstract styles, utilizing the circle as an armature upon which to hang personalized painting gestures. In all these efforts, the qualities of the application of paint, whether stained, textured, sloppy or neat, is essential to an aesthetic strategy. The way each circle is painted is a part of a larger personal statement. Lu's circular paintings, neither impastoed nor stained, betray only the barest trace of their making. Beyond the simple materiality of paint and canvas, there are few traces of the artist's brush, no fingerprints or signature gestures. Lu's optical clarity draws attention away from her, getting out of the way of the experience of the color and the purity of the circles.

It is possible to misinterpret the precision of Lu's circle as an effort to deny her own presence in the paintings. This is not the case. The personal has been moved to a place in time separate from the primary experience of the painting. Its absence is indicated by a lack of expressiveness in the handling of the materials of the painting, yet it is clear the paintings are handmade. Lu's paintings elicit a secondary awareness of the physical control required to paint one perfect concentric circle after another without the aid of masking tape, airbrushes, or stencils on canvases large and small. Once this is realized, one apprehends her impressive skill, the intensity of her labor, and her extraordinary discipline. But the concentrated intention of Lu's effort is the creation of an object free of the interference of personal expression for the singular purpose of our contemplation and meditation. What evidence there is of her hand is a reflection of her devotion.

Lu's selection of colors, not limited by a stylistic palette, is a continually evolving exploration of nature's grand and infinite variety. Her colored concentric circles rely upon π 's persistent unfixeness, so colors do not abut one another, but rather colors vibrate, expanding and contracting into one another, offering us a simple and direct path into one of the most fundamental and irreconcilable mysteries of living in our world. Through Lu's nearly selfless labor, the painting becomes a kind of gift, an offering, from the artist to us.

Linling Lu was born in 1983 in Guizhou Province, China. In 2005 she received a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from Beijing Forestry University. Lu came to the United States in 2006 to attend Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Baltimore, MD, received a BFA in painting in 2008 and an MFA from the Hoffberger School of Painting, MICA in 2011. Her work is included in private and public collections nationally and internationally and the permanent collection of the US Embassy in Beijing. This is her second exhibition with HEMPHILL Fine Arts.

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday–Saturday, 10:00am–5:00pm, and by appointment.

The gallery will be closed November 23 - 27 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE FOR REPRODUCTION.

Image: Linling Lu, One Hundred Melodies of Solitude No. 117, 2017, acrylic on canvas, 46" diameter

###