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***The Preservation of Fire: On Lines and Material***

**Exhibition Date: October 19 - December 15, 2018**

**Artists: Qin Feng, Ann Niu, Wang Tiande, Kwang Young Chun**

Crossing Art is pleased to announce: **The Preservation of Fire: On Lines and Materials**. This exhibition highlights a group of four acclaimed Chinese and Korean artists whose use of expressive lines and unique materials creates a convergence of the traditional and the contemporary. The title references a quote attributed to Gustav Mahler: “tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire.” This sentiment sums up the vibrant work that these artists create. They each refer to their cultural heritage in order to develop searingly contemporary art. The traditions that the artists embrace do not restrict them, but instead propel their inspiration towards innovation.

Considered preeminent in post-modern ink painting, Qin Feng moved to Berlin in the ‘90s where he began to combine Western modernism and Chinese ink traditions. He splatters ink across the canvas much like an Abstract Expressionist, yet he is simultaneously working as a calligrapher. Qin Feng mixes his ink with coffee and tea to further symbolize the blending of traditions from his life in China, Europe and America. Qin's interest in balancing the dynamic between positive and negative space within his compositions mirrors his interest in exploring the delicate harmony between humans and nature, and his lines serve as meditations on time and motion.

Ann Niu has lived in Japan, the United States and South Korea, but started her professional career in San Francisco. Her fluid lines also capture the gestural qualities of calligraphy, but her work is more grounded in the natural world. In the *Little Scholar Stones* series, she brings to life these ancient objects of meditation. These stones were used as a source of inspiration and as a symbol of the potential of life. Through layered paint, he tries to capture their complex surfaces and the power within. Ultimately, Ann Niu is telling the stories of the stones.

Wang Tiande, born in Shanghai in 1960, began working with his unique technique while at an artist's residency in Paris. Lines in his landscapes can never be precise since they are created by burning the

paper with incense or cigarettes. Just beneath that burnt layer is another landscape image created with ink. The contrast between the destroyed surface and the obscured, but well-defined, underlayer creates a uniquely textured experience that suggests vibrancy and decay. Through his innovative use of materials, Tiande reinvents traditional Chinese script and painting. His work explores the spiritual potential of ink painting. It is that kind of experimentation with a nod to traditional culture that permeates these artworks.

One of the most celebrated South Korean artists, Kwang Young Chun moved to the United States in the '70s. Inspired by packages of Korean medicine, he stacks small triangles to create artworks that are part-painting, part-sculpture. The resulting surface of these works mirrors many textures in the natural world: from mountains to our own skin. Chun wraps his triangles in colored mulberry paper, a material inextricably linked to Korea. To Chun, they represent a basic unit of information, thus as he arranges them in a mass, he is compiling the profundity of the human experience, something Chun believes is simultaneously in harmony and discord.

These distinguished artists take pride in the materials produced by their forbearers and use them to boldly forge a new path. These artists represent unique ways to preserve the fire that burns across generations. It is through this innovation that they celebrate the traditional.