

**WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY**



Australia-China Institute
for Arts and Culture

Chasing the Mountain Light

Yan Zhang

Venue

Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture Gallery
Room 03, Ground Floor, Building EA
Western Sydney University Parramatta South Campus

Exhibition Period

18 July — 4 October 2019

Gallery Opening Hours

Monday — Thursday 10.00am — 3.00pm

Friday 11.00am — 3.00pm



Chasing the Mountain Light

Artist statement

Mountains are the most magnificent landforms on our planet. Since the first camera was invented over a century ago, mountains have become one of the most prominent subjects for photographers.

Photography is the language of light.

I use this language to express my deepest personal feelings, to connect myself with the natural world: I capture the color of the sky, the tide of the ocean, and the impressions of the land.

My mountain photography started in New Zealand – a country of mountains.

In July 2013, I was on a family holiday in Mount Cook in the South Island of New Zealand. A severe storm meant that my family and I were stuck in a motel room for three days, going nowhere. To pass my time, I read a book in the motel lounge room. The book was called *True South*, authored by Pat Barrett.

In that moment, I was inspired by Barrett's images of New Zealand's high places – I wanted to use my own camera to capture the grandness of New Zealand mountains, and beyond.

New Zealand's Southern Alps was where I gained a mountaineer's viewpoint on peaks and glaciers; I chased the light as it painted these mountainous landscapes in mystery and splendor.

Mountains have become my good friends. I travel near and far to see them: from the Southern Alps to Eastern Sierra, Patagonia to Himalaya.

Mountain photography is part of my life journey, it reveals my creativity, unlocks my mindset, and helps me to become more self-aware.

Mountains are our beautiful, natural keepsakes of the world. I hope to use my photography works to illustrate the beauty and splendor of mountains, and to inspire the greater conservation of our land and planet.

Yan Zhang (张焰)

Yan Zhang is a professor of Artificial Intelligence in the School of Computing, Engineering and Mathematics at Western Sydney University, where he leads the Artificial Intelligence Research Group (AIRG).

Zhang is also a photographer, and an outdoor and mountaineering enthusiast.

In recent years, Zhang has devoted his time and efforts to mountain and alpine landscape photography. Alongside the pursuit of capturing the sublime beauty of nature, Zhang hopes to use his photography works to inspire the conservation of our natural resources and environment.

Photography Highlight – Publications and Awards

2019 – *New Zealand Geographic* magazine in its January/February issue published a 12-page feature photo-story about Yan Zhang's alpine photography, entitled "Moonlighting".

2019 – *The Climber* magazine in its autumn issue published Yan Zhang's panorama image "Chasing Glacier Light".

2019 – *Australian Photography* magazine in its April issue published Yan Zhang's photography article and works (11 pages), entitled "Night Light – How to Make Unique Mountain Sky Images at Night".

2019 – 《大众摄影》 (Chinese photography magazine *Popular Photography*) in its May issue published a feature photo-story of Yan Zhang's alpine photography, entitled "雪线之上" ("Above the Snow Line").

2019 – 2018 International Landscape Photography Competition: the 101-Selection.

2019 – Memorial Maria Luisa (MML) International Mountain, Nature and Adventure Photo Contest: Highly Commended (Mountain Landscape).

2018 – Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year: Shortlist (Landscape).

2018 – New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year: Finalists (Landscape).

2018 – Australian Top 20 Emerging Photographers Competition: Yan Zhang's Portfolio was made into Top 20 and was ranked at 17th.

2018 – 《摄影之友》 (Chinese photography magazine *Photography Companions*) in its February issue published a feature photo-story (5 pages) about Yan Zhang's alpine photography, entitled "激进探险者背后的平静" ("Calmness inside the Adventurer's Mind").

2018 – *Australian Photography* magazine in its January issue published Yan Zhang's photo as this issue's front cover page.

2017 – *Australian Photography* magazine in its December issue published Yan Zhang's photo-story and works (9 pages) about his 40-day photography expedition to Patagonia, entitled "Chasing the Light".

2017 – 2017 Epson International Pano Awards - Top 50 (Amateur Landscape/Nature): ranked 17th and the Gold Award.

2017 – 2017 New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year: the 2nd Prize (Landscape).

2017 – 2017 International Chromatic Photography Awards: the 1st Prize (Landscape - Professional).

2016 – Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year: Finalist (Landscape).

2016 – *New Zealand Geographic* magazine in its September issue published Yan Zhang's one image in a feature photo-story, entitled "First Ascent".

2016 – 《大众摄影》 (Chinese photography magazine *Popular Photography*) in its September issue published Yan Zhang's image as this issue's front cover page.

2016 – 《大众摄影》 (Chinese photography magazine *Popular Photography*) in its September published a feature photo-story (8 pages) about Yan Zhang's landscape photography, entitled "自然探索中的风光大片" ("Landscape Photography in Natural Exploration").

2015 – *Practical Photography* magazine in its February issue published Yan Zhang's an image in a two-page spreads.

2015 – Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year: Finalist (Landscape).

2014 – Australian Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year: Finalist (Landscape).

2014 – *Colours* magazine (Garuda Airlines in-flight travel magazine) in its February issue published Yan Zhang's image "Li River" in one page.

2014 – Memorial Moria Lusia (MML) International Mountain, Nature and Adventure Photo Contest: Highly Commended (Mountain Landscape).



Location: Patagonia, Argentina



Under Moonlight

Frame size: 1120mm * 690mm

Zhang climbed to the top of a mountain and camped overnight there, where the Fitz Roy peaks were directly in front of his campsite. It was in a pre-twilight period, and some thin clouds around the peaks were already changing their colours by the illumination of the rising sun, while the full moon still hung high in the sky and shone brightly on the Fitz Roy peaks.

View from Gorge

Frame size: 740mm * 700mm

From a hill 10 kilometres outside of El Chalten in Patagonia, Zhang witnessed a beautiful sunset where the sky reflected on the river in the gorge, forming an appealing golden line towards the Fitz Roy peaks.

Location: Patagonia, Argentina







Location: Yosemite National Park, USA



Gloomy Mountain

Frame size: 840mm * 660mm

Zhang had always wanted to visit Yosemite National Park, and finally got a chance to spend two days in this amazing mountain area recently. On Zhang's first day in the National Park, it was raining all day and looked pretty gloomy in the mountain valley. However, from a photographer's eyes, Zhang knew that this weather would create an atmosphere for making unique photographs. Zhang took this image under heavy rain, using an umbrella to protect his camera.



Snowing Night at Great Wall

Frame size: 840mm * 660mm

Jingshanling is a section of Great Wall, 10.5 kilometres long with five passes, 67 towers and three beacon towers. It is located in the mountainous area in Luanping County, Hebei Province. During Zhang's stay in the village of Jingshanling, he woke up at 3:45am and was surprised to find it had been snowing heavily, so he hiked to the Great Wall and witnessed this beautiful snowy night there.



Location: Greaat Wall, China

Location: Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand



Tasman Valley

Frame size: 840mm * 660mm

In the late afternoon, Zhang flew in a Cessna Ski plane 300 meters above the Tasman Valley. From the sky, he saw that the rivers originated from the far away snowy mountains formed impressive traces down the valley under the afternoon sunlight.



Braided River

Frame size: 840mm * 660mm

Lake Pukaki is the largest alpine lake running from a north-south direction along the northern edge of the Mackenzie Basin in New Zealand's South Island. Originating from Mount Cook Range, the Tasman River feeds into Lake Pukaki. The pale blue colour is the result of finely ground rock particles created by the motion of glaciers.



Location: Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand





Moonlight

Frame size: 840mm * 660mm

Winter is a great time to visit Mount Cook National Park. This image recorded a magic moment of the Tasman Lake on a peaceful winter morning. Zhang's camera captured the star trails and their reflections in the lake, by using a long exposure. The mountain peaks to the left were shining with the light of the rising sun, while a setting moon in the west illuminated the mountains to the right.



Location: Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand



Breaking Dawn

Frame size: 840mm * 660mm

The eastern horizon has already started to glow, but the reflections of stars linger on the snow of the Tasman Glacier, still visible thanks to the lingering moonlight. This image was a product of Zhang's four-day expedition to the Tasman Glacier, where he climbed to the top of Hochstetter Dome (2,834 metres); the highest point in Tasman Glacier.



Location: Tasman Glacier, New Zealand

Dreamland

Frame size: 620mm * 850mm

This photo was taken in the morning on the last day of Zhang's 40-day Patagonia expedition.

It was a clear night when Zhang witnessed a beautiful starry sky at this location. However, soon after sunrise, some low clouds moved in and partially blocked the Fitz Roy peaks.

This resulted an illustration of mysterious and moody scenery picture here, just like in a dreamy world.

Location: Patagonia, Argentina





Location: Mount Aspiring, New Zealand

Night of the Climbers

Frame size: 840mm * 660mm

Mount Aspiring is a 3,033-metre-tall mountain located on the South Island of New Zealand. As Zhang attempted to reach the mountain summit, he was stuck on the mountain for five days due to severe storms. By the time he had to descend, the mountain had just returned to its calmness. This image was a result of over 400 frames Zhang took over a 10-hour period overnight. It captured the amazing Milky Way as well as the climbers' headlight movement from the Todd Colin Hut to the mountain summit.





Glory of the Mountains

Frame size: 620mm * 850mm

Zhang with his climbing partner, Mark, used a narrow window of clear weather to undertake a two-day trip to a high point of the Mount Cook Range.

A spectacular sunset occurred on the first evening. Near their campsite, Zhang found that the edge between the twin tarns provided an interesting leading line in this composition, while far away from the summit of Mount Cook and other peaks provided a beautiful backdrop.

Location: Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand



Location: Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand



Tasman Lake

Frame size: 840mm * 660mm

The lakes under alpine mountains is especially beautiful, as they shine like pearls amongst surrounding snow-covered mountains. It was elegant and magnificent. This photo shows the whole of the Tasman Lake in Mount Cook National Park. To view it as such from a north-south direction can only be done either via a serious climb to a high point of the Malte Brun Range, or by flight.



Glacier Light

Frame size: 1120mm X 690mm

From 23.5 kilometres in length, the Tasman Glacier is the longest glacier in New Zealand. It is 4 kilometres wide, 600 metres thick, and is located entirely within Mount Cook National Park. After 45 minutes of traversing the glacier in the dark, Zhang finally arrived at the Tasman Saddle – the morning shooting destination. The wind was very strong in this open area, and when the sun appeared from behind the mountain peaks, it suddenly shed great light on this magnificent glacier.



Location: Tasman Glacier, New Zealand



About ACIAC

The Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture (ACIAC) at Western Sydney University was founded for the purpose of facilitating collaboration and engagement between Australia and China in a culturally smart way.

ACIAC positions itself as a hub and national resource centre for cultural exchange between Australia and the entire Sinosphere, and for cross-cultural collaborative research in the arts and other cultural fields.

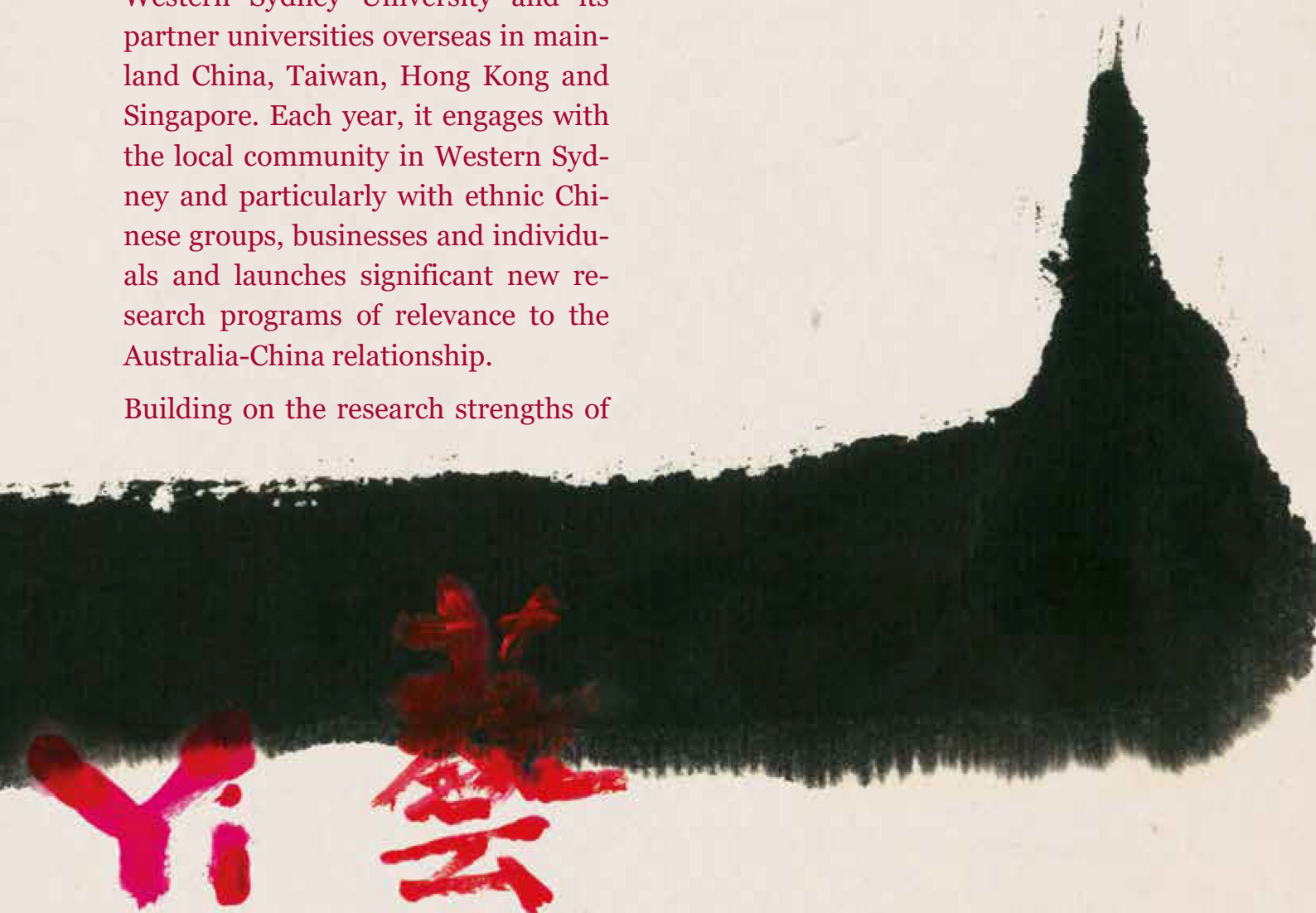
ACIAC promotes exchanges between Western Sydney University and its partner universities overseas in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Each year, it engages with the local community in Western Sydney and particularly with ethnic Chinese groups, businesses and individuals and launches significant new research programs of relevance to the Australia-China relationship.

Building on the research strengths of

Western Sydney University and on existing exchange programs in the University, ACIAC will stay committed to the enhancement of bilateral understanding between members of Australian and Chinese cultures and to the development of deeper ties through an open, intellectual and dynamic engagement.

For more information, please visit

westernsydney.edu.au/aciac/about





MASTER OF CHINESE CULTURAL RELATIONS



BE A CULTURAL NAVIGATOR

This Master program is offered by the Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture, in collaboration with the School of Humanities and Communication Arts. A challenging degree program which is designed to meet the needs of cultural institutions and government departments increasingly engaged in cultural exchanges between Australia and China.

The course will help you develop an understanding of Australian and Chinese cultures and their cultural policies, intercultural communication, international business management, and cultural diplomacy.

This degree program requires 18 months full-time study. Individual units may be taken separately and students in full-time employment can spread their studies over successive years. Australian students may engage critically with local culture through one unit of study in China. Students who only complete part of the course can obtain a certificate or diploma. The first year of this program is focused

on coursework, and the second year on a major research project. The purpose of the project is to encourage students to apply the knowledge and skills from previous units to a real-life setting which may involve a work placement in Australia. For both domestic and international students, this Masters program also provides a pathway to higher degree research study.

The Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture will offer scholarships to Master of Chinese Cultural Relations (MCCR) students. The scholarships will provide a cost of living stipend and cover all or partial tuition fees. Equal numbers of these scholarships are available to domestic and international applicants. Applications will be considered based on previous academic achievement and relevant work experience.

For more information, please visit

www.westernsydney.edu.au/ACIAC

Contact Information

+61 2 9685 9944

ACIAC@westernsydney.edu.au

Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture

Ground Floor, Building EA, Parramatta South Campus

Western Sydney University

Locked Bag 1979

Penrith NSW 2751 Australia



WESTERNSYDNEY.EDU.AU/ACIAC