

boundary

JAMES KAO: Starlight

"'Natural' yields to the un-built. Flora and fauna expand in marks of green. Forests, pastures, and in-between farmland ground compression of the built and un-built. Starlight opens up unearthed constructions. Spirits glow in the dark, and now this starlight shines on everything child-like, animal-like, and angelic."

~ James Kao

Which aptly describes the suite of recent paintings and drawings the artist titled Starlight, his celestial mandate to watch the night skies and simply record its elegant environs above and below the horizon. Each work is deceptively simple as landscape yet remarkably sophisticated as composition in its mark-making as drawing on paper or painterliness in its brushwork. And really that is what the viewer should expect, for James Kao is an aesthete, the forgotten mandarin whose scholarly bent reveres the classical while philosophizing the sublime. BSo fundamental questions of what he sees, or rather perceives before him become poetic imagery in concert or conflict of romanticizing or impugning the tradition and history of painting and drawing as craft.

It is not wrong to call him Sifu.

~ Susannah Papish and Larry Lee