



The Representation of Landscape In Vision of Phenomenology : A Studio Practice

Jia Mei

School of The Arts (SOTA USM)
Universiti Sains Malaysia

**Higher Degree by Research Art Exhibition
Eight / Season 2025**

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Pameran Seni Ijazah Tinggi melalui Penyelidikan
Higher Degree by Research Art Exhibition

Pameran Ke Lapan / Musim 2025
Exhibition Eight / Season 2025

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A Studio Practice/ by Jia Mei

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Studio Lukisan, SOTA USM.
School of The Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

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Profile

JIA MEI (b. 1980)

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Jia Mei is a contemporary artist, currently pursuing PHD degrdd at the school of arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia. She explores landscape representation from the perspective of phenomenology, focusing on how landscape is experienced and perceived. Her artworks seek to a phenomenological transformation of ontological reciprocity between the subjective and objective experience, which is a model of more-than visual and more-than symbolic expression.

Education

2002 graduated from Hainan University Academy of Fine Arts with a Bachelor degree.

2006 graduated from Henan University Academy of Fine Arts with a Master degree.



Introduction

In a phenomenological framework, the representation of landscape is understood as an active, lived encounter rather than a mere visual record of the external environment. A phenomenological approach to painting underscores an expression of an individual's subjective, sensorimotor engagement with the world rather than a straightforward replication of observed scenery.

From this perspective, the landscape is not an isolated "object" set apart from the perceiver but is constituted through the painter's intentionality: the directedness of consciousness toward phenomena. Elements like color, form, and perspective hold significance not merely for their representational qualities but for how they emerge within the painter's bodily awareness and experiential horizon. In other words, the emphasis shifts from what a landscape looks like to how it appears to the painter in a given moment of perception, enriched by memory, emotion, and the subtle interplay of sensory modalities.

Based on the phenomenological understanding of painting, the three series of artworks explore the relationship between perception, consciousness and materiality in studio practice, corresponding to the three objectives respectively. Studio experiments in making art attempt to exemplify the key factors of landscape representation in vision of phenomenology through three stages: embodied experience & Phenomenal Transparency, abstraction & image-consciousness, and material agency & performative Practice. Each phase builds upon the previous one, forming a recursive and dynamic inquiry into the relationship between perception, artistic representation, and material practice.

Part 1

Phase 1: Embodied Experience and Phenomenology

The first stage investigates the reciprocal relationship between the perceiver and landscape, emphasizing phenomenal transparency, a concept derived from Merleau-Ponty's notion of the intertwining of subject and object. Here, landscape representation is explored through spatial layering and optical ambiguity, embodying the fluid, multi-sensory nature of perception. In the series, I employ techniques, such as layering, fragmentation, glazing, and fluid compositions which destabilize figure-ground relationships and foreground the embodied nature of visual experience.

A key transition from this phase to the second stage is the realization that perception is not a passive reception of external reality but an active constitution of mental images. This shift moves the inquiry beyond direct sensory engagement towards image-consciousness, where perception is mediated by mental and imaginative constructs.



The Impression of Kai feng city, Jia Mei, 2022, 70 × 90 cm, multi-media on canvas



Childhood in My Hometown, Jia Mei, 2022, 70× 90 cm, Pastel on paper



Tanmen Fish Port, Jia Mei, 2023, 100 × 100 cm, Acrylic on canvas



Navigation Manual of South China Sea, Jia Mei, 2023, 70 × 100cm,
Acrylic, oil paint, and paper on canvas



Landscape Representation of the Campus of USM (1), Jia Mei, 2024, 70 × 50 cm, Acrylic on Canvas



Landscape Representation of the Campus of USM (2), Jia Mei, 2024, 100 × 70 cm, Acrylic on Canvas



The Landscape of USM (3), Jia Mei, 2024, 90× 100cm, Acrylic on canvas

Part 2

Phase 2: Material Agency & Performative Practice

The second phase explores abstraction as a transformative strategy that interrogates the relationship between perception, imagination, and representation. Rooted in Husserl's theory of image-consciousness, abstraction in this phase is employed not merely as a stylistic device but as a means of suspending representational content to reveal the intrinsic qualities of perception. The resulting works reconstruct landscape as a dynamic and multi-dimensional space, where sensory perception and imagination intertwine. Techniques such as layering, printing, spraying, and overlapping color masses emphasize this interplay, bridging the tangible and intangible dimensions of landscape perception.

This phase acknowledges that abstraction does not merely represent external reality but actively reconfigures it through imaginative interpretation. As a result, the artistic process begins to foreground the agency of materials themselves, shifting towards a performative engagement with artistic media.



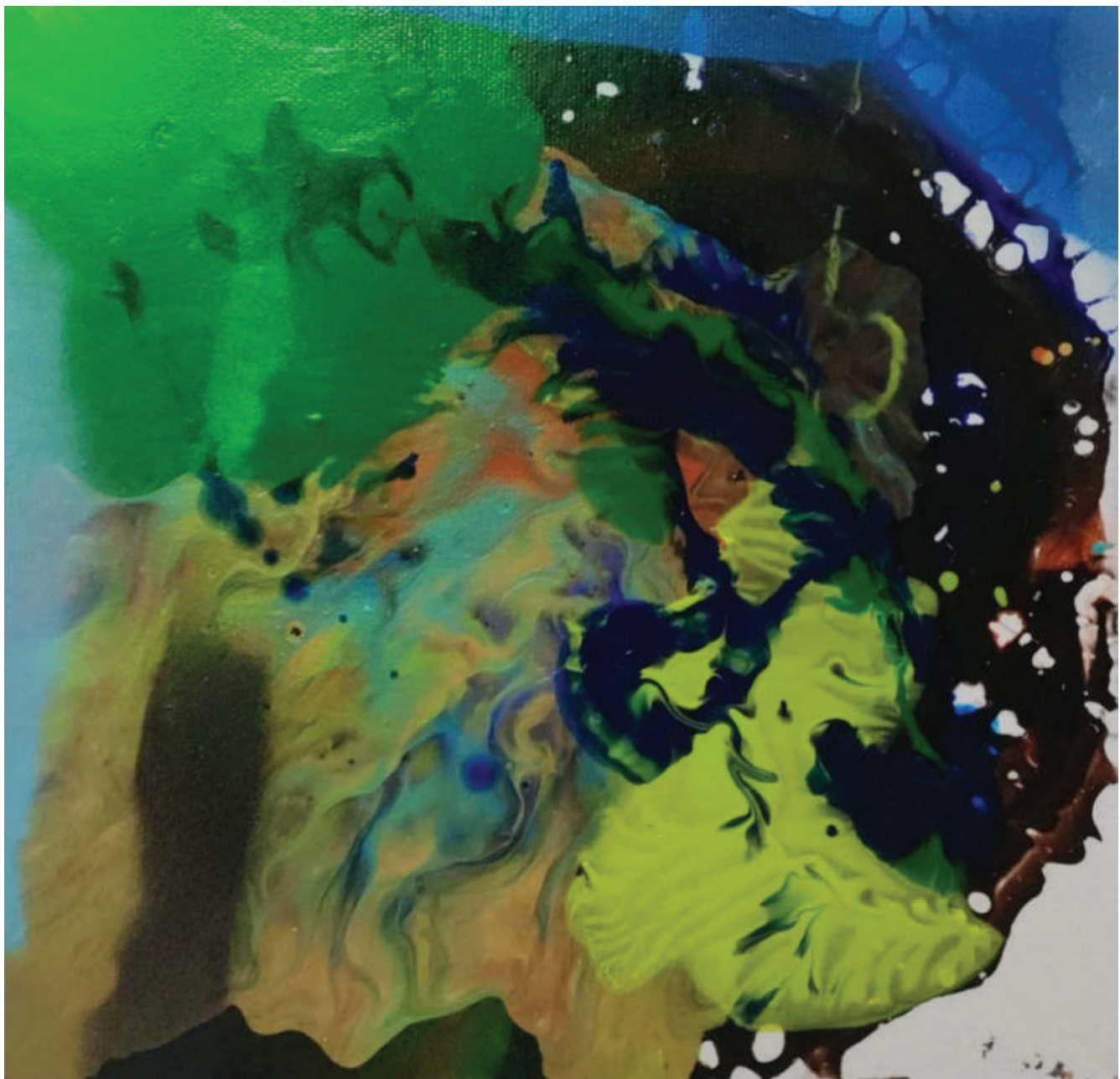
Abstrat Landscape 1, Jia Mei, 2024, 70 × 90cm, Liquid acrylic on canvas



Abstract Landscape 2, Jia Mei, 2024, 80 × 50cm, Liquid acrylic on canvas



Abstract Construction 1, Jia Mei, 30 × 30cm, Liquid acrylic on canvas



Abstract Construction 2, Jia Mei, 30 × 30cm, Liquid acrylic on canvas



Abstract Landscape 3, Jia Mei, 2024, 80× 50 cm, Liquid acrylic on canvas



Abstract Landscape 5, Jia Mei, 2024, 50× 70 cm, Liquid acrylic on canvas

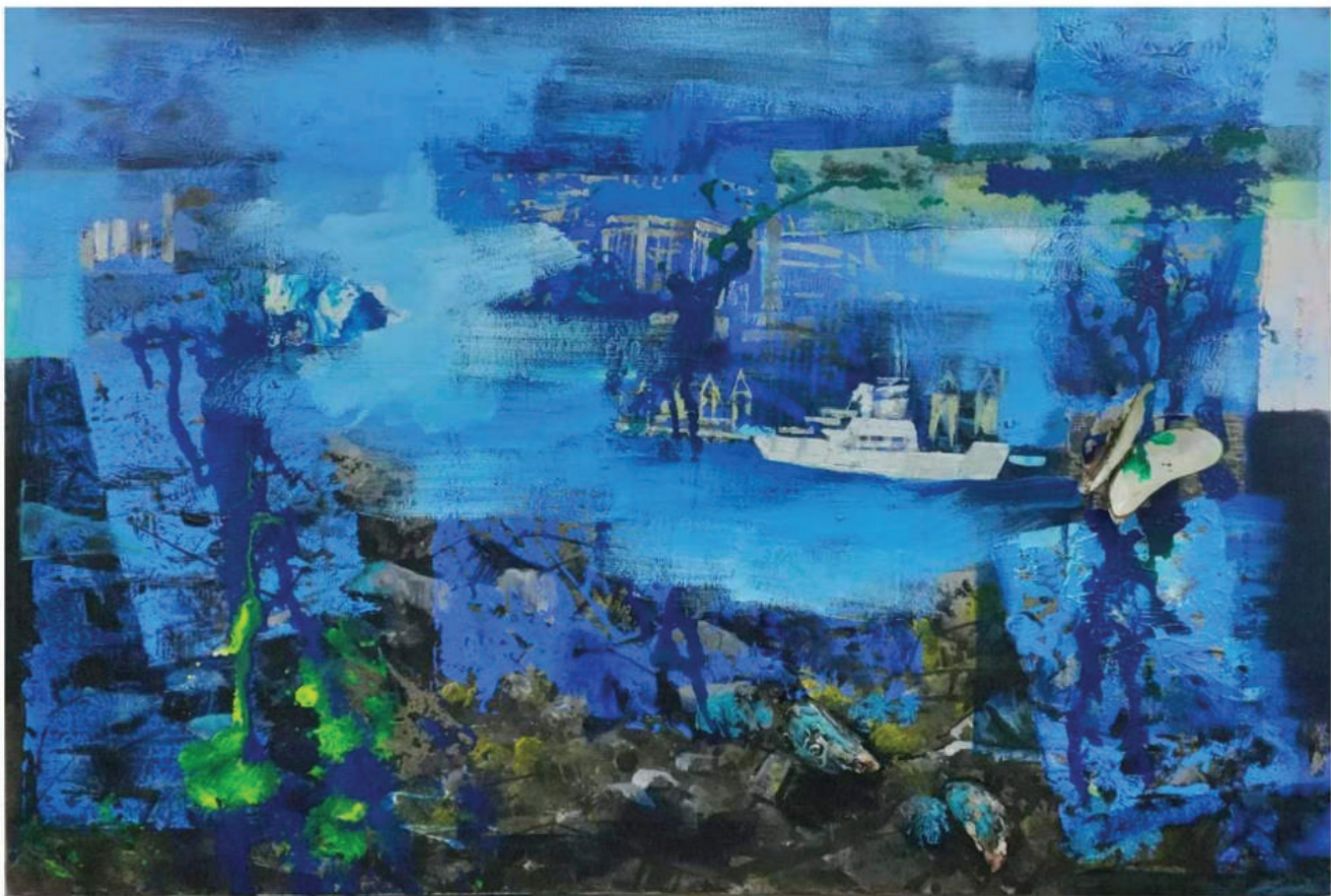


Abstract Landscape 5, Jia Mei, 2024, 70 × 50 cm, Liquid acrylic on canvas

Part 3

Phase 3: Material Agency & Performative Practice

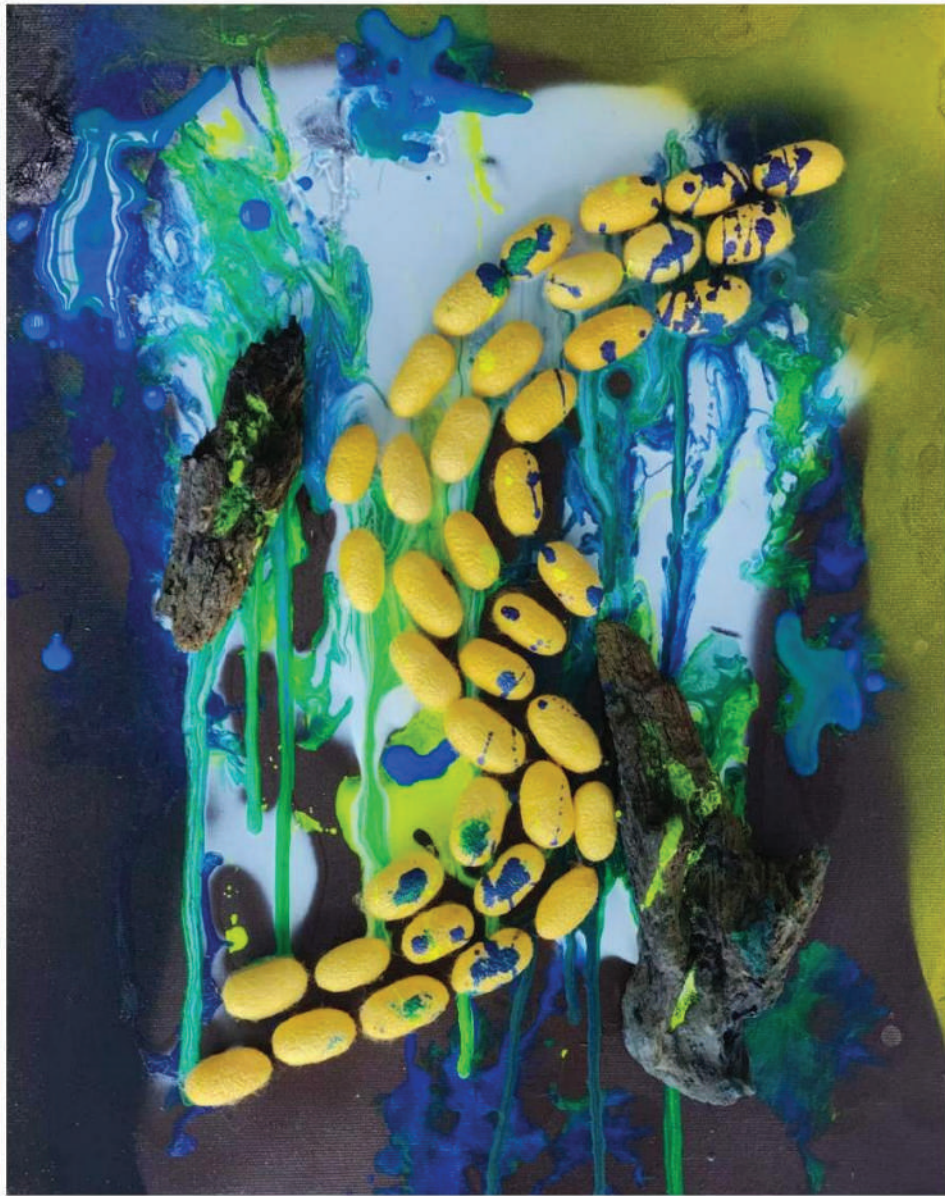
The third phase advances the research by foregrounding the performative nature of material practice, drawing from new materialism and Deleuze's concept of "becoming". At this stage, landscape representation is no longer about depicting external reality or mental images but rather about engaging with the expressive autonomy of materials. Painting is approached as a dialogic and experimental process, where textures, pigments, and gestural interactions co-constitute the final image. Techniques such as thick textures, layered pigments, and gestural marks emphasize the vitality and responsiveness of the medium, reinforcing the notion that landscape emerges through artistic practice rather than being pre-determined by external referents.



Gurny Bay, Jia Mei, 2024, 120 × 80cm, Mixed-media on canvas



Salamat Penang, Jia Mei, 2024, 100 × 120 cm, Mixed-media on canvas



Material Experimentation 1, Jia Mei, 2024, 30 × 50 cm, Mixed- media on canvas



Residential landscape in My Hometown, Jia Mei, 2024, 150 × 120 cm, Mixed-media on canvas



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