

# Bradley Ertaskiran

*Long Time No See*  
Rick Leong  
May 4 to June 17, 2023

Bradley Ertaskiran is pleased to present *Long Time No See*, a solo exhibition by Rick Leong. This new series of landscapes, deeply rooted in the Canadian West Coast archipelago landscapes on the brink of irrevocable change, continues Leong's long-standing preoccupation with depicting the interconnectedness of all living things.

Leong paints plants, trees, and animals from both observation and memory, imbuing them with a sense of fleetingness and impermanence. Drawing inspiration from Classical Chinese landscape painting, Leong's scenes are harmonious and expansive, combining bold and flattened shapes with expressive, washed brushwork. Often, Leong's compositions balance busy elements with vast negative space, like clusters of tentacle-like vines bustling against a naked blood-red sky. Here, and typical of Leong's larger practice, is a sense of both halted and passing time, in which nature's phenomenological changes are fossilized into a single scene. Leong captures quiet, drawn-out moments in hazy monotones: tree branches stretching and swaying in the wind, a tide receding back across its shores, a deer halting at an unexpected sound. We too hold our breath, as if an exhale would alter the scene before us.

Leong's scenes overflow with living organisms, encapsulating a sense of grand potential where flora and fauna are bountiful and extravagant, often at a monumental scale. Throughout, Leong presents an abundant natural world left to its own devices, in which species flourish and reproduce in perpetuity without competition from others, including the extractive tendencies of humans. Even the exhibition's few urban scenes seem peacefully overtaken by nature: a tower or overpass overgrown with shrubs and trees, and thriving. Yet despite the calm and tranquility inherent to Leong's landscapes, his use of acidic hues allude to the alarming reality of our environmental moment. In turn, Leong's utopian imaginings reflect both the positive and realistic state of our current climate reality, urging us to consider the potential for harmony in our natural world.

Leong's canvases act as their own ecosystems, a symphony of life both revealed and concealed within. Like a whisper, *Long Time No See* hints at the unseen and the unknown, as if a secret life exists in the background of Leong's works, evading our recognition and consumption. Leong's work invites us to look a little closer, to slow down and observe the world around us with greater care and attention. *Long Time No See*, words uttered upon a long-time reunion, reconnects the artist with landscapes of his past, and underscores the delicate balance between human activity and the ecosystems we inhabit.

Born in Burnaby, British-Columbia, Rick Leong currently lives and works in Victoria. Leong received his BFA from the University of Victoria (2003) and an MFA from Concordia University in Montreal (2007). Solo exhibitions have been presented at Art Windsor Essex (Windsor), Arsenal Contemporary Art (New York), Empty Gallery (Victoria), Bradley Ertaskiran (Montreal), The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (Victoria), among others. Leong's work has been included in numerous group exhibitions staged at the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Montreal), the Contemporary Art Gallery (Vancouver), The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (Victoria), PHI Foundation (Montreal), Esker Foundation (Calgary), and the Richmond Art Gallery (Richmond). His work can be found in numerous collections, including the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, the Canada Council Art Bank, and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

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