



"Vj g"Art of Discovery," *Departures*. November 2013.

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WATCHING TIDES RISE

The ART of DISCOVERY

*An Artist and an Artisan Explore Creativity Through a Shared Theme:
Considering the Power of Memories*

The Art of Discovery explores shared cultural stories evoked by art and travel, pairing an emerging artist with an artisan specializing in hospitality. For the third and final installment, American artist Titus Kaphar and Charles Zhao, executive sous chef of The Ritz-Carlton Beijing, Financial Street, present works inspired by the theme "Dream. Travel. Adventure."

The first time artist Titus Kaphar drastically altered one of his paintings—by whitewashing the woman in a portrait of a Union soldier and his wife—he realized the effect enhanced her presence. "I find this kind of erasure haunting in its ability to portray presence and absence simultaneously."

In *Watching Tides Rise*, a 19th-century clipper lists at full sail, while a sense of foreboding looms with ribbons and heavy strokes of tar overtaking the ocean. Kaphar pulled down the upper corner of the canvas to reveal a white absence to suggest that blankness can be less threatening than memory.

"Sometimes the fear of the past keeps us from pursuing our future, and in that sense it's necessary for us to leave where we are to get to where we want to be," the artist explains.

Art very much inspires the imaginative creations of Ritz-Carlton chef Charles Zhao, who believes an outstanding pastry chef must be a passionate artist. "Whether it's a small flower or a giant building, I always look at things in a different light and extend the inspiration into my work."

COURTESY OF TITUS KAPHAR/FRIEDMAN BENDA

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Zhao dreamed of becoming a chef as a boy and started his culinary career in 1989, when he was 20. Several months ago he was promoted to executive sous chef at the Ritz-Carlton Beijing, Financial Street, but he still works closely with the pastry team.

"I always try to introduce local ingredients in my desserts and cakes to enhance a classic flavor with innovative elements to surprise customers," says Zhao.

His desserts are works of art, not only visually but also in texture and flavor. In Zhao's "Cake of the Forest," the colors are earthy and luxurious. The swirls of white and dark chocolate in the triangular wafer represent water, similar to an ukiyo-e, the classic Japanese woodblock print. As it's eaten, the crunch of the pecans and hazelnuts mimic the sound of footsteps while hiking.

Zhao knows a visit to The Ritz-Carlton is a personal adventure and carefully designs culinary experiences to elicit lasting memories for his patrons. Seeing a guest's contented smile is always his ultimate reward.



FROM FAR LEFT TO RIGHT:
Titus Kaphar,
Watching Tides
Rise, oil and
tar on canvas,
78"x109"x6.5",
2012; Cake of
the Forest.

CAKE OF THE FOREST



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