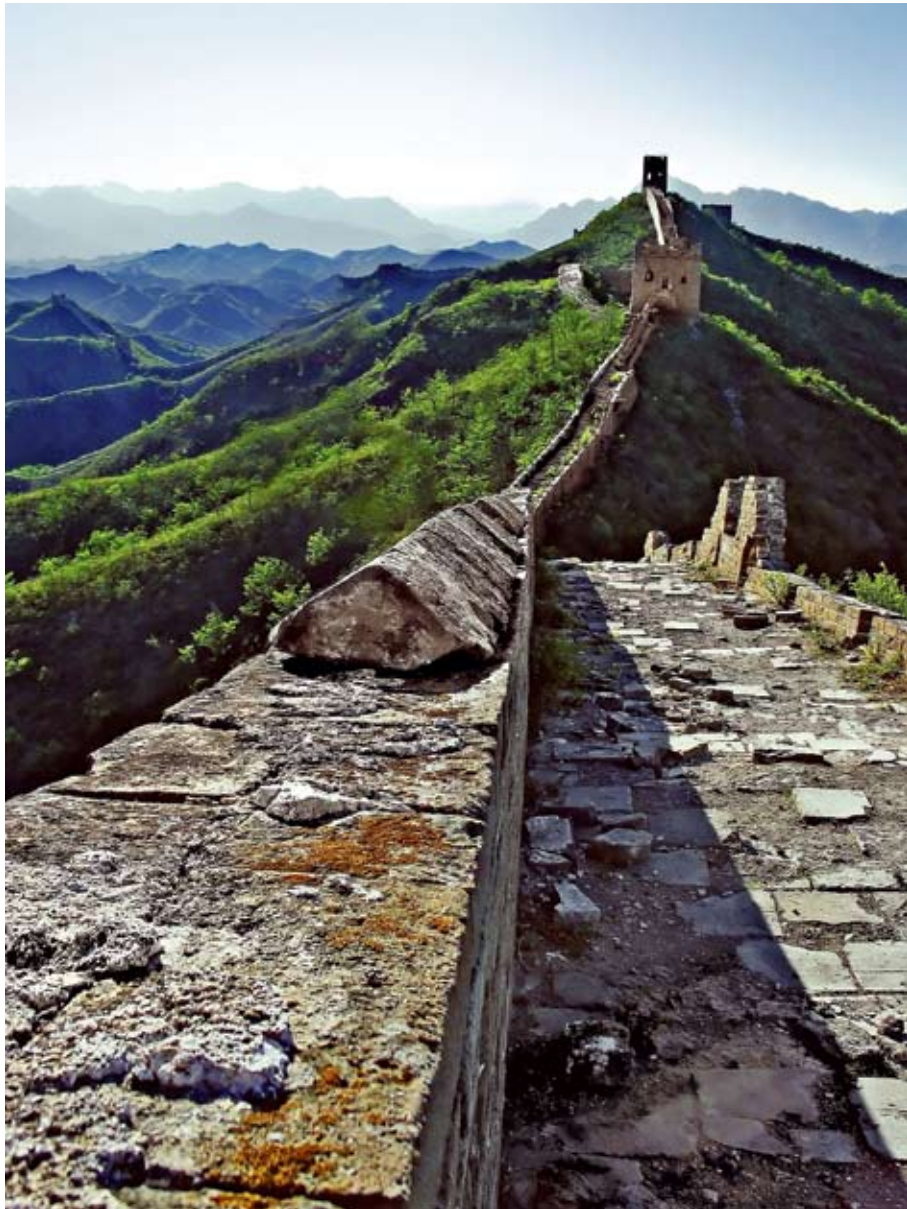


REMOTE LANDS

An elite/indigenous experience in some of the most unexplored corners of Asia

BY JILLIAN BLUME

Experience a private audience with the Queen of Bhutan in her palace. Take the Tangula Express to Potala Palace, formerly the residence of the 14th Dali Lama, and view the extraordinary pearls, jewels, and antiques. Helicopter over the island of Bali to a remote village and see the Sanghyang fire dance performance. Have dinner in the home of a prominent Bangkok family and see their collection of antiques and contemporary Asian art. Visit the Maharaja of Burdwan and stay at his palace in Darjeeling. Remote Lands, a luxury travel company focused exclusively on Asia, can arrange all this — and all in one trip if you're up for it.



Opposite page: artist Zhao Kailin
Dreams of Hsin Niang II
46" x 58" oil on linen
Chinese Contemporary Fine Art, Laguna Beach, California
www.chinesecontemporaryfineart.com
The gallery owner also owns BengBu Studio in the Anhui Province, China, a private working studio for the artists.

Above: The Great Wall of China, adjacent to the the Commune by the Great Wall, an architectural landmark and hotel in Beijing.



“For many seasoned travelers, Asia is the last frontier,” asserts Catherine Heald, Remote Land’s Chairman and CEO. “And if they’ve gone to Asia before, they did the same old, same old thing. They went to the same monuments; they followed the same well-trodden path. We feel very strongly that it is important to do something completely different and unique, to have a truly extraordinary experience. And that’s why we like some of the places that are quite unusual.”

Unusual in Remote Lands terms means islands in Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, with names like Pamalican, Boracay, Flores, and Komodo. Resorts like the five-star Nihiwatu, an unspoiled sanctuary on Sumba Island with remarkable accommodations for only a handful of guests, where clients can experience some of the best surfing and deep-sea fishing in the world — and spend a day with the Sumba people, whose culture has remained intact and unchanged since the Stone Age.

“Our job is to make our clients’ dreams come true, to surpass their expectations,” says Bruce Lazarus, Remote Land’s resi-

dent art expert and Director of Marketing. “Asian travel is a passion for us. We’ve all had other successful careers, but this is something we’ve all dreamed of doing. We travel passionately.”

But Remote Lands is not a travel agency according to both Heald and Lazarus. They are travel *designers*.

“What we sell, we create client by client,” explains Heald. “It’s totally personalized and tailor-made for each client. We create unique experiences that are not normally available and that are totally customized for the client. We choreograph the complete journey and design each day perfectly for each client.” Or, as Lazarus succinctly puts it — “before our clients walk the steps, we walk the steps.”

Remote Lands strives to achieve insider access and cultural immersion for their clients. “Spending time with the local people in their homes makes for a much richer and more authentic form of travel,” Heald says. “Instead of just going to a village and looking at the people and then going back to your fancy hotel, we say go to the village and go into a home and then have lunch with them. Eat their food. It’s

the willingness to eat their food and drink their tea and talk to them about their lives that makes a trip extraordinary. When you sit and look into a person’s eyes, you see their emotion — and that’s when people connect.”

Their specialty is trips that embrace a great deal of contrast, or “lunch with a nomad, dinner with nobility,” as Heald explains. They arrange itineraries with a mix of incredible luxury that includes cities and countryside, natives and nobility. They might suggest, for instance, a trip to Bhutan, a country high in the Himalayas between India and China where the native people embrace their cultural heritage. There, very special Remote Land clients who share philanthropic interests can meet the Queen of Bhutan at a tea reception, and then have lunch with a local family in a remote village. They can experience a private tour of the National Museum of Bhutan with the museum’s director, and then have dinner with a reincarnate lama known as a Rinpoche.

“Our challenge is to keep pushing the envelope, and to travel to more exotic places, and provide more extraordinary experi-



Opposite page: monks sweeping the Clubhouse at the Commune by the Great Wall.

Above: one of the remarkable views from the Commune by the Great Wall.

ences,” Lazarus says. “So even in remote countries like Burma — a country that most people have never been to, and many don’t even know where it is — we’re not content to just go to the more well-known cities, like Yangon and Bagan and Mandalay. Rather, it’s the experience of going to much more authentic places as well as the more traditional places that gives our clients incredible and unique experiences.”

Of course, we’re talking about visiting these places in the lap of luxury. Travel with Remote Lands includes private jet (either your own or one chartered through the company), yachts, exotic cars and personal drivers, chefs, personal trainers,

security personnel, and whatever any client needs. But though they focus on luxury travel, what sets them apart is not the price of the trip but the insider access Remote Lands offers. This includes access to royalty, artists and writers, museum curators, academic experts, political figures, and even Tibetan monks. They call the experience “elite/indigenous” to indicate a balanced trip where their clients meet a cross section of a society — “from monks to maharajas, farmers to financiers.” And one of the most unique experiences Remote Lands is able to arrange is their “thematic journeys” such as their unique and extraordinary art journeys.



Artist JIANG HUAN
The Marriage Bed
 oil on canvas
www.arcadiafineart.com
 Arcadia Fine Arts,
 New York, NY

ART JOURNEYS

Catherine Heald lived in Hong Kong for seven years, and her Asian travel passion could be considered genetic — her great grandparents traveled around the world numerous times in the 19th century on Asian art buying expeditions.

Bruce Lazarus has managed to combine his three greatest passions in life — art, travel, and Asia — in his role at Remote Lands. Starting out with a degree in art history, he joined Sotheby's auction house, specializing in decorative arts, and then went on to work at Hirschl & Adler Galleries in Manhattan. Later on, he started his own business as an art consultant and dealer in American and European decorative arts where he worked with leading collectors and museums.



Artist ZHAO KAILIN
In the Palace Garden
 54" X 46" oil on linen
www.chinesecontemporaryfineart.com



Many Remote Land clients have expressed interest in the evolving Asian art market, and through Lazarus' expertise and contacts in the art world, Remote Lands has created some of the most unique art-focused journeys in the world. "Almost everyone who travels with us, in one way or another, is a collector," Lazarus says. "The older art cultures such as Thailand and India and China are certainly fascinating, but in addition to that, what's less known and emerging even as we speak is the contemporary Asian art scene, especially in China and India."

China's contemporary art scene could be considered a renaissance movement, as only a decade ago there were very few noteworthy contemporary art spaces in China. Unofficial exhibitions were organized in secret and were often closed down within hours of opening. Today the official attitude toward art has dramatically changed, and Chinese contemporary art has gained international attention.

Although exciting art is also coming from India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Korea, and Pakistan, China is the engine behind the emergence of a vibrant, contemporary Asian art scene in which Asian art has been selling for significant prices. International dealers have been descending on China to acquire new works, while Chinese artists, traveling abroad, have been dazzling audiences. Private collectors are catching up with American museums in terms of building significant collections of Asian contemporary art, while museums are focusing more on Chinese contemporary art, including the Guggenheim museum in New York City, which recently established a department focused exclusively on this field.

"We have clients that specifically want to travel to Asia experience the contem-

Artist ZHANG XIAOGANG

Bloodline Series, 2005

78½" x 102½" Oil on canvas

Est. Sale Price: £500,000 – £700,000

Sold at auction in London: £804,000

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Phillips du Perry & Company, New York, NY

Pages 72-73

Artist WANG GUANGYI

Mao AO, 1988

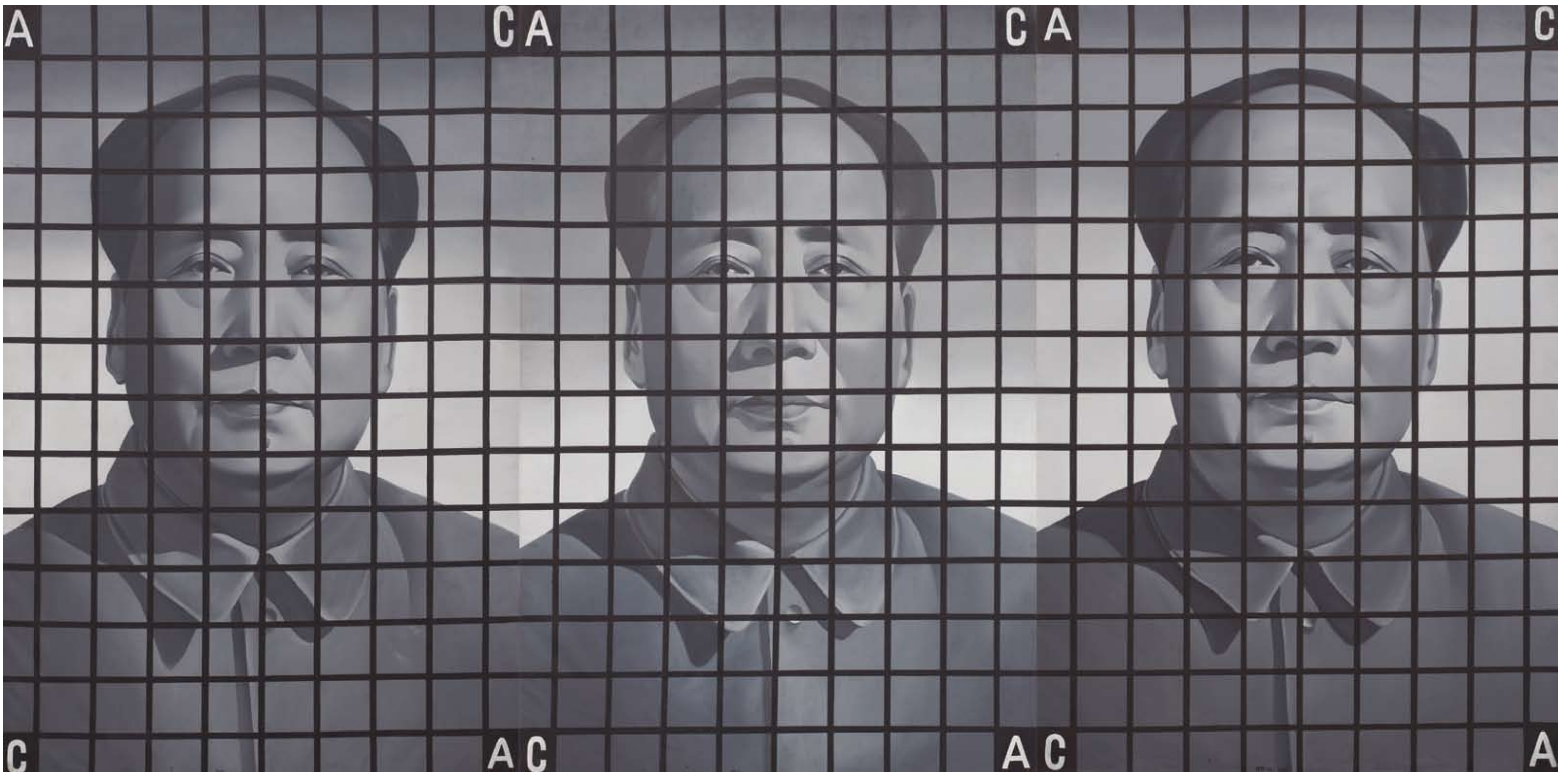
69½" x 140½" Oil on canvas in three parts.

Est. Sale Price: £500,000 – £700,000

Sold at auction in London: £2,036,000

www.phillipsdeputy.com

Phillips du Perry & Company, New York, NY



porary art scene,” Lazarus says. “Shanghai is the art scene’s ‘capital,’ followed by Beijing, Delhi, Bombay, and Bangkok.”

According to New York art dealer Michael Goedhuis, a pioneer in Chinese contemporary art who has spent over two decades specializing in Asian art, “The reason why the Chinese contemporary Art world is the focus of attention in the West is that there is a growing realizing that China is the dominant reality for the rest of history,” he explains. “China is economically,

financially, sociologically, and psychologically becoming deeply influential on the whole course of the modern world.”

Remote Lands recently designed an art-centered trip for clients to Shanghai and Beijing. “Of course they were going to see the Forbidden City and the 19th century aspects of Shanghai,” Lazarus recalls. “But they also went to galleries, museums, art studios, and collector’s homes. When they went to a museum, they didn’t just walk around the museum — they met the

curators or the directors, they dined with the artists, they were invited to people’s homes to see how collectors over there live with the art and share this passion.”

These clients were interested in a particular artist, and they wanted to try to commission a work. So Remote Lands arranged for thefor scholarly experts to act as guides. On this particular trip, they made arrangements with an expert in East Asian studies to take the clients to the M50 Gallery District in Shanghai where

they met some of the artists and went to their studios and toured the art museums with the curators. “And if there’s a particular artist that a client is interested in, and that artist is not currently in the exhibition, we’ll try to get them access to go down to where the artist’s works are being stored in the museum,” Lazarus says.

Remote Lands arranged for their clients to stay at a hotel called The Commune By the Great Wall, a property where twelve prominent Asian architects

were given the chance to each design a structure, and the buildings became the accommodations for guests. It’s often described as an architectural museum and an exhibition of cutting-edge modernism. The original 11 villas of “Walnut Valley” are large, luxurious experimental mansions, while “Stone Valley” includes 31 new villas. “It’s a cross between a museum and a hotel because what they built is very important in and of itself and extremely unusual for Asia.

It’s a quirky, fascinating place that’s adjacent to the Great Wall. So when you’re taking a bath and looking out the window, you’re looking at the Great Wall,” Lazarus explains.

Traveling by charter jet, the clients went to Bangkok and met another “personal curator” to take them around to the galleries, art studios, and museums. They also visited The Land Foundation, an art commune outside of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, where the rice fields are cultivated,



artist ZHAO KAILIN
Whisper
 62" x 40" oil on linen
www.chinesecontemporaryfineart.com



Above: artist CUI XIUWEN
One Day in 2004
 120 cm. x 100 cm. Stampa Digitale
www.marellagallery.com
 Marella Gallery, Beijing China

the land is worked, and individual artists design and build different structures used for living, working, relaxing, eating, and meditating, while also working on their own art projects.

These clients gave the foundation a large donation to go toward building a meeting center where the visiting artists can interact. (Remote Lands feels passionately about giving back to the local people and makes substantial contributions to many Asian charitable organizations.)

Remote Lands' art trips are designed so clients can be immersed in the art culture, both living and seeing it. "We'll put you together with the right people," Lazarus says. "It's all about behind-the-scenes, insider-access."

Top: the Suitcase House at the Commune by the Great Wall.

Page 76: Amanjiwo, an Aman Resort in Central Java, Indonesia. One of the luxurious retreats enjoyed by Remote Lands clients on art journeys, it is surrounded by extraordinary cultural and beauty.

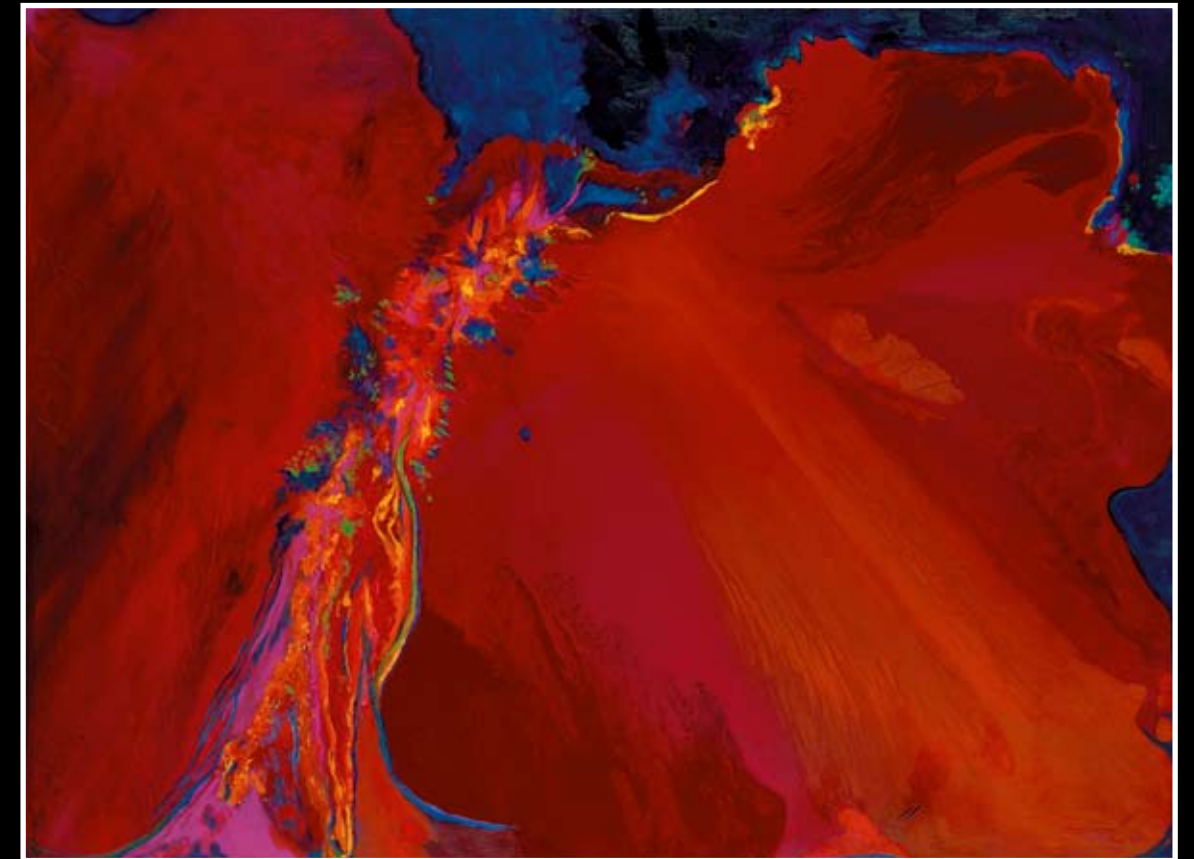


BESPOKE TRAVEL

“Everything we do is bespoke,” Heald affirms, “because no two trips are alike. What we offer, we create client by client. It’s totally personalized.” Remote Lands is on call 24/7, and have even held their clients hands (symbolically and telephonically) when culture shock has set in 9,000 feet up in Shangri-La. They will take care of every single detail of your trip, from chartering the jet to hiring chefs. But what really puts Remote Lands in a class of their own is their

insider access and personal knowledge, which allows them to create authentic and unique journeys customized for every client. “It’s the difference between off-the-rack and made-to-measure,” Lazarus says. “We don’t start with a stock size and then alter it. We create a specific pattern just for you. It’s always couture here.” ✈

For information, visit www.remotelands.com, or call 646.415.8092.



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