

Scholars & Ink

Artists from NUS and the Alumni



The exhibition *Scholars & Ink* features the works of artists from the extended community of the National University of Singapore (NUS), who work usually with the medium of ink. The title of the exhibition alludes to the status of the five artists as graduates and academics from the University; it also plays on the association Chinese ink has long had with a literati culture in Chinese history. The exhibition proposes ways of seeing modern and contemporary ink painting through the classical “Six Principles” and “Six Essentials of Chinese ink paintings” espoused by Xie He (479-502) and Jing Hao (c. 855-915) respectively. The fact that each of the artists’ practice is diverse, and varies in their degree of reference to ink as a traditional art medium, allows us to discuss the principles and points of evolution Chinese ink has taken since the days it was considered an elite practice and genre. This exhibition is organised to mark the installation of a permanent display of Chinese inks in the Lee Kong Chian Gallery of Chinese Art at the NUS Museum. With the new permanent display, the Museum is also opening up access to its Chinese scroll and paper collection for scholarly and artistic research. This exhibition offers a valuable opportunity to renew our relationship with artists from the broader NUS community and showcase their works alongside those in the Museum’s collection.

Scholars & Ink

CHANG YUEH SIANG / Curator

“ ... And, behind all these, the problem of how to give import, human meaning, to landscape painting, to make it something more than a mere picture. These were all old problems, now confronting artists with new urgency.”

James Cahill, Notes to Lecture 6:
“Five Dynasty Landscape Paintings: The Great Masters”

The association that Chinese ink has with a scholarly practice has perhaps not been helpful to its reception by contemporary audiences. For one, as James Elkins identifies, “obstacles” to the reception of Chinese ink painting include “colophons ... [that] involve textual and historical allusions that make them hard to appreciate”, no more so than for those uninitiated to Chinese classics. Elkins speaks of the average Western viewer, but what he points out is applicable to any viewer, even Chinese ones, “who have not been taught anything about the history of Chinese painting”, and who therefore “cannot see Chinese paintings.”

To them, the images all look the same. Created with brushes and wash, these primarily monochrome works bear subtle distinctions that can be difficult to discern. They can also appear dull, uninteresting, and disengaged from contemporary issues of identity or debates about medium, post-medium, or the politics of art institutions.¹

The obstacles take on a further spectre of intimidation for the uninitiated, when there arises an insistence on purist ways of seeing Chinese ink paintings, and a requirement to adhere strictly to traditional, fundamental methods, techniques and approaches.² After all, ink paintings from the Tang, Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties developed out of specific historical and cultural contexts, which are far removed from our times.

Furthermore, Chinese ink painting did not end with the dynastic system in 1911. The debate of ‘new’ versus ‘old’ ink has particular pertinence in Mainland Chinese developments. It is a debate about culture and identity that goes as far back as the modernising movement of the Republican period, exemplified in the argument between Xu Beihong and Liu Haisu; and later phases of the arguments are a partly a response to the Cultural Revolution and its ensuing fallout, which intensified after the period of reform and liberalisation initiated by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s. Essentially this discourse surrounds the notion of “national art” (*guohua*): but for developments in ink painting outside of China, the ‘nationalistic’ considerations are almost certainly not as pertinent.

Within and beyond China, the argument in contemporary times appears to be between traditional styles and “contemporary” or “experimental” ink; but ‘contemporary’ does not mean that the audience naturally has easier access to the ideas expressed by the artists.

As a result, critics such as Elkins find that “those who wish to work

with the *guohua* tradition, developing ink painting ‘from within,’ are constrained to talk about ink, paper, brush marks, colophons, seals, and scroll formats. Those who wish to make ink painting more inclusive tend to make use of the largely Western vocabulary of medium, post-medium, multimedia, context, frame and performance.³ That is, if that vocabulary does stretch this range: the more common shorthand for contemporary expressions in ink appears to be ‘abstract art’. The problem with the usage of these terms from the Western art lexicon, as contemporary artist Zhang Yu points out, is firstly that “not all non-objective art is abstract art.”⁴

As a contemporary art form, Chinese ink painting finds itself marginalised, even in China; the standing it is given in art academies is also uncertain, where it is taught as a separate subject from Western oil and watercolour painting.⁵ It is perhaps as a reaction to the seemingly impenetrable world of Chinese ink, that the contemporary curator and art critic Zhijian Qian once pronounced that “the future of Chinese ink painting is doomed.”⁶ For Qian and Zhang, what is “doomed” about the future of Chinese ink painting is the insistence that it remains an elite tradition, without possibility of evolution, and without possibility of accommodating contemporary expressions.

Elaborating on this point, the contemporary artist Zhang Yu clarifies that

What people have been arguing about is simply ink as a painting genre, not ink as medium, without really exploring the concept of ink. In fact, ink and ink painting is not the same thing. Ink represents a culture, and is a medium, while ink painting is but an art genre. There are fundamental differences between the two.⁷

While distinct, the two are obviously related, and not necessarily mutually exclusive: for ink painting as a genre to remain relevant, the medium should be employed in a way that resonates with cultural currents relevantly. For that matter, tradition and modernity are not binary, mutually exclusive categories: much of that which is “now” is connected to developments from a longer stream of historical “past”. The discussion about Chinese ink paintings can, and perhaps should, transcend beyond the questions of “tradition and modernity”; East and West.

The NUS Museum’s collection of Chinese ink comprises classical paintings (and studies or copies of such), modern and contemporary

expressions from Singapore and Malaysia, and some pioneering works from new ink movements such as the One Art Group from 1970s' Hong Kong. The collection offers a possibly more objective and neutral demonstration of the different types of developments and evolution in the ink medium, away from arguments about the past versus the present. Placed alongside the permanent collection, this exhibition is therefore not one about the history of ink paintings pitting different movements against each other. This exhibition considers works in the ink medium, and the style of the works displayed include more traditional semblances alongside more current articulations. Nonetheless the connection of these paintings to a cultural context exists, whether or not this connection is explicit.

Six Principles

The first attempt at laying down principles for Chinese ink paintings was by Xie He, a chronicler and critic of Chinese paintings and calligraphy from the Southern Qi dynasty of 5th century China. In what may be considered the first concise treatise of Chinese art, Xie He proposes six principles of Chinese painting, generally translated as:

- I) Spirit Resonance (气韵生动)
- II) Bone Method (骨法用笔)
- III) Correspondence to the Object (应物象形)
- IV) Suitability to Type (随类赋彩)
- V) Division and Planning (经营位置)
- VI) Transmission by Copying (传移模写)

Afterwards, Jing Hao, from the Later Liang of the Five Dynasties Period (circa 907-960) developed his analysis of the Six Principles into the Six Essentials (or Conditions, 六要): Spirit 气、Resonance 韵、Thought 思、Scenery 景、Brush 笔、Ink 墨. (Interestingly, for the emphasis in his Essentials on the 'concept', Jing Hao was noted as a painter of the 'physical', specialising in mountain landscapes.) In comparison, Xie He's Six Principles pertain to more technical aspects, while Jing Hao's six tend to the conceptual and contemplative, seeking to "give import, human meaning"⁸ to paintings (in his case, predominantly landscapes.) The two views, the two sets of principles, need not be seen as mutually exclusive, indeed they are complementary: a competent painting requires competence in techniques; and yet, without quality in ideas and imagery, technical competence alone does not complete a work of art.

Guo Ruoxu, art historian from the Song Dynasty, stated in his six-volume Overview of Painting (《图画见闻志》): "Xie He's excellent Six Principles are perpetually immutable ("六法精论, 万古不移"). Taken together with Jing Hao's codes, the synthesis provided by both Xie He and Jing Hao allows for the evolution of ink works beyond the materials, techniques and philosophies of the period the principles were proposed, to be applied in our time, whether through current or traditional tools and implements, representing actual or imagined settings. The predominant subject matter in this exhibition is landscapes, reflecting the importance of the genre in the Chinese painting canon. (Landscapes, coincidentally, became very much associated with the influence of the scholar-literati painters around the 10th century.) The works presented here are organised broadly along the use of the different techniques of Xie He's principles, bearing in mind that none of the principles mutually exclude each other, and the works exhibited do not represent the values singularly (i.e. each work usually embodies most, if not all, of these principles in essence.) It is Jing Hao's conceptual categories that allow us to match artist with different techniques in the interesting ways they have conceptualised their works and how they have manifested the technical principles.

Opening with Yeo Shih Yun's *The Conversation* (2011), the exhibition reminds the viewer of the centrality of brush and ink (brush-bone) to the exposition. The video medium also makes an invitation to the viewer to approach these works from our contemporary standpoint.

Holding the idea of "brush-bone" as we enter the space, we encounter several new ways to consider the "brush". The brush is acknowledged to be the historical implement conveying ink to paper in East Asia. Yet as times change, so do materials and techniques, particularly as artists are exposed to global methods of artmaking.⁹ Thus Ho Chee Lick uses found objects as his 'brush' to make impressions on paper, to create the "resonance" of music in the four-movement *Symphony No. 3* (2008-2010); and Hong Sek Chern employs collage to bring in a three-dimensionality to her work, *Arrow* (2013). Yeo Shih Yun incorporates the brush in her production: yet rather than manipulating the brush to depict nature, nature takes the lead to move the brushes to make marks on paper; the printing screen is then used to create the final image on paper or textile.

In its original articulation, the principal of "suitability to type" literally calls for an "application of colour (赋彩) according to the type (随类)". Contained in this idea however is how the notion of "type (*lei*)" is defined: "one might define *lei*, as the structure of correspondences and correlations

among things within particular contexts or circumstances.” Therefore not only does the application of colour need to be appropriate to the subject matter, mountains (*shan*) and waters (*shui*) should ascend and fall according to their types; summer season and shaded trees correspond in their ‘type’, as does snow and bare mountains in winter.¹⁰ The paintings of Tan It Koon demonstrate this principle of ‘type’ holistically.

One can see then how the principle of “suitability of type” slips easily into the principle of “correspondence to the object”, and how when this “correspondence” is arrived at, it contributes to the effect of “spirit resonance” in the viewer. (The strength of this resonance possibly ebbs and falls with how well the ‘thought’ behind the painting finds a connection with the viewer.)

For example, In the ‘movements’ of Ho Chee Lick’s *Symphony*, ink impressions seek to bring the viewer’s mind to the effect of musical waves and sentiments. In another instance, Ling Yang Chang makes a play with the principle of “correspondence” in *Cityscape* (2015): the viewer senses echoes of the reverberations of the busy city: yet the composition of the image is apparently based on a traditional mountainscape. In Ling’s *Lotus Pond* (2014) and *Fishes in the Pond* (2015), the meeting of the “object” and the concept (“thought”) of abstraction allows for a contemporary twist in the presentation of a classical subject in Chinese ink painting: the subject matter is treated in a modernist method, yet evokes the imagery of what the title purports to represent.

In order to arrive at the previously discussed principles of “type” and “correspondence”, there is a certain dependence on the technical success of ‘mimesis’ to achieve a representation of the likeness of forms, hence the importance of the principle of “transmission by copying”. Typically, the principle of “transmission” is associated to the academic discipline of learning by emulation: Tan It Koon’s landscape paintings are exemplary demonstrations of this principle, going beyond mere mimesis of classical styles and paintings through his constructed landscape images. Indeed, for our artists to have overcome what might have remained mere imitation, here is where Jing Hao’s “thought” category elevates Xie He’s principle of “transmission” and allows our artists’ subjects to break out of convention and create representations in their own styles. In *Conversation with Trees #9* (2013), the principle of transmission takes a technical turn, where the artist transfers brush marks collected from trees via the screen printing method. In Hong Sek Chern’s *Walking in the City: Peninsula Plaza to Raffles City* (2012-2015), the transmission takes a conceptual turn, where

the lines of the city’s urban architecture are imaged, rearranged and then re-presented and conveyed to the viewer.

Finally, while the principle of “division and planning”—mountains must ascend, waters must descend; depth and distance implied by position and shades of the ink - finds itself applied in conventional standard in most of the landscape works; but new approaches of applying this principle in the composition and division of spaces in linear and mathematical concepts may be found in Hong Sek Chern’s cityscapes, Ling Yang Chang’s abstracted *Numerical Dots XVI* (2014) and Yeo Shih Yun’s printed inks.

This exhibition therefore invites the viewers to put aside the usual dichotomies and discourses surrounding Chinese ink, and to consider Chinese ink paintings in the new ways our artists present. In each of their works, the classical principles of Chinese painting, translated via contemporary ‘thought’, allows for different styles of Chinese ink paintings to be practiced today, whether they retain traditional forms or contemporary appearances. Contrary to the bleak prophecy of Zhang and Qian about the doomed future of Chinese ink, in viewing these works we see experimentations and ideas that propose ways forward for the Chinese ink medium, paintings that suggest to us new ways of representing the ‘synthesised’ Six Principles.

¹ Elkins, James. “A New Definition of Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting”, p.2. Unpublished paper, 2013. https://www.academia.edu/3344609/A_New_Definition_of_Chinese_Ink_Painting. Last retrieved 5 Feb 2015.

² “At one extreme, a work may only be considered an ink painting if it fulfills a series of technical requirements, usually including the use of ink, type of paper, brushwork (*bi*), and inclusion of landscape or other traditional subjects.” *Ibid.*, p.3

³ *Ibid.*, p.5.

⁴ Zhang Yu, from the transcript of *Modern Chinese Ink Painting: From a “Dooming” Future to its Extermination -- A Dialogue between Zhang Yu and Zhijian Qian*, 21. http://zhangyu.artron.net/news_detail_246181, Last retrieved 5 Feb 2015.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.20.

⁶ First pronounced in Qian, Zhijian “The Hypothetical Possibilities”. Unpublished paper on the occasion of the symposium “Towards the 21st Century: A Symposium on Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting” (5 June 1996), South China Normal University, Guangzhou. Cited in Zhang and Qian, *Modern Chinese Ink Painting*.

⁷ Zhang and Qian, *Modern Chinese Ink Painting* 9.

⁸ James Cahill, Notes to Lecture 6: “Five Dynasty Landscape Paintings: The Great Masters”, p.13.

⁹ “Rice paper is an inseparable part of Chinese cultural tradition, yet today it could be utilized by Chinese as well as by non-Chinese. Like oil painting which was originally an art genre from the West, is now well mastered by Chinese artists. Therefore what I try to emphasize is the fact that, in this era of globalization, many things have crossed the boundaries of culture, ethnicity, and ism.” Qian, *Modern Chinese Ink Painting*, 19.

¹⁰ Stanley Murashige, “Philosophy of Art”, in Antonio S. Cua (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, Routledge (2012), p. 515

XIE HE'S SIX PRINCIPLES

Spirit Resonance | 气韵生动

For the Chinese painter the act of creation lies in using this symbolic language to express an intuitive awareness of an inner life, the *ch'i-yun*, in all nature. Perfect technical command is valued in that it – ideally – frees the artist completely for the expression of this spiritual force which is apprehended in the contemplation of nature.

- Michael Sullivan, "The Traditional Trend in Contemporary Chinese Art", Reprinted from: *Oriental Art*, Winter, 1949-50

Perhaps the most important principle in the aesthetics of Chinese painting was *qiyun*, variously translated as "spirit consonance," "rhythmic vitality," "sympathetic responsiveness of the vital spirit," "vitality," and "harmonious manner." The life of things in a successful painting was called *qi* or *qiyun*. *Qiyun* appears in the first and most important of the Six Principles. *Qi* means "breath," "vapour," "spirit," or "vital force"; *yun* denotes "resonance," "rhyme," "harmony," or "consonance." *Qi* suggests something in motion, barely tangible, perceived and sensed in shifting relationships of form and appearance. *Yun* suggests a condition of harmony and confluence among these moving, changing relationships. Power lives in motion.

- Stanley Murashige, "Philosophy of Art", *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, Routledge, 2013

Brush-bone | 骨法用笔

Xie He's second principle concerns the handling of the brush: *gufa yongbi*, literally "bone method," "use the brush." The specific meaning of this principle remains open to interpretation, although generally it is thought to recommend some structural principle in the handling of the brush.

- Stanley Murashige, "Philosophy of Art"

Correspondence to the object | 应物象形

The expression *lei* (类), "likeness and semblance of kind," is an important concept in logical discourse. In art historical discourse, *lei* has often been taken to mean likeness of form and has thus been linked with the expression *xingsi*, which more clearly denotes likeness of appearance or form.

Claims that mimesis or formal likeness is relatively unimportant abound in the literature on painting. Although formal resemblance is never denied its proper place, it must satisfy the efficacy of *qi* and *qiyun*. *Qiyun* remains the painter's ideal, but it is difficult to achieve. Formal resemblance, on the other hand, is all too easy to achieve. The painter's fault lies in his or her inability to achieve the appropriate relationship between these two qualities.

- Stanley Murashige, "Philosophy of Art"

Suitability to Type | 随类赋彩

One might define *lei* as the structure of correspondences and correlations among things within particular contexts or circumstances. *Lei* thus identifies the specific relationships of form or structure by which interactions play themselves out in given situations: if nature is a rich complex of rhythmic exchange, then it plays itself out in the metamorphosis of the four seasons. Nature is *lei* with respect to the seasons; and the seasons are *lei* with respect to nature. Moreover, the seasons are *lei* with respect to each other, and within each season certain phenomena are *lei* with respect to that particular season as well as with respect to each other; snow and winter are *lei*; and heat and shady trees are *lei* with respect to summer. ... *Lei* in its particular mode defines and prescribes specific correspondences among artistic media, subject matter, motifs, combinations of motifs, use of colour, rhetoric of brush and ink, compositional relationships, format, figural types, etc.

- Stanley Murashige, "Philosophy of Art"

Division and planning | 经营位置

Mountains are *lei* with great height, ascending movement, and the solidity of rock; water is *lei* with descending motion, fluid intangibility, and is *lei* with descending motion, fluid intangibility and the growth of flora; mountains are *lei* with respect to water, hence the term *shanshui*, "mountains and water", for landscape. *Lei* may indeed connote a likeness of form and appearance, but this likeness is above all measured by the nature of the interaction and exchange and is only coincidentally iconic.

One might define *lei* as correspondences and correlations at work within an ever-changing, self-defining body of ritual, social, cultural or aesthetic conventions.

- Stanley Murashige, "Philosophy of Art"

Transmission through copying | 传移模写

A similar kind of balance is advocated by Jing Hao in the Five Dynasties period. Painting is not merely about *hua* (画), or "measuring". The painter [in Kiyohiko Munakata's translation]:

examines the objects and grasps their reality. He must grasp the outward appearance from the outward appearance of the object, and the inner reality from the inner reality of the object. He must not take the outward appearance and call it the inner reality. If you do not know this method of understanding truth, you may get lifelikeness but never achieve reality in painting.

Confusion results when one reads "inner reality" and "outward appearance" as a mutually exclusive duality, an absolute and insurmountable difference.

- Stanley Murashige, "Philosophy of Art"

DR TAN IT KOON (陈一军 博士)

Dr Tan It Koon's artistic journey began with his studies under first generation pioneering artists of Singapore, Liu Kang (刘抗) and Chen Wen Hsi (陈文希), at the Chinese High School (华侨中学; 1952-1956). He had continued to draw and exhibit while he received his post-doctoral professional training overseas and prepared for membership examinations of the College of Pathology (1966-1968). On his return to Singapore, he continued to study Chinese ink and colour brush painting with Chen Wen Hsi between 1969 and 1975. He also continued to study Chinese ink and colour paintings of birds and flowers with Chai Hwan Ching (蔡寰青). Dr Tan continued to pursue his passion for Chinese ink and colour brush painting (especially of the landscape genre, and calligraphy in different scripts), studying for 22 years with Wu Mo Lin (吴墨麟), a well-respected artist from Beijing.

Apart from his personal artistic pursuits, Dr Tan contributed much to Singapore's artistic development in the early years of nation building: not only did he actively exhibit in Singapore's National Day Art Exhibitions between 1971 and 1975, he subsequently also served as member of the National Day Art Exhibitions selection committee. From the late 1970s, he organised numerous exhibitions of Singaporean artists on various platforms. Dr Tan received a Cabinet Appointment at the National Theatre Trust (1982-1991), taking direct charge of cultural promotion and management, as well as chairing the Visual Art Committee to acquire art works for the "new" National Theatre (Kallang Theatre). In the 1980s and 1990s, Dr Tan also served as a member of various committees for the Singapore Cultural Foundation, the Singapore Festival of Arts, the National Arts Council and the Singapore Dance Theatre. He was a founding member and served as President of the Forum of Fine Art (a society for those who appreciate and collect paintings and other objects of art). From 1995 to 2013, He served as the President and Chairman of Exhibition Committee of the South East Asian Art Society.

Dr Tan is the honourable recipient of two National Day awards, a PPA Medal Award in 1979, in recognition of excellence in public administration for his work in health-care at the Ministry of Health and the Singapore General Hospital, and the Public Service Medal in 1988 for contributions to the community, especially in the development of the arts.

In addition to his passion for the visual and fine arts, Dr Tan is also an accomplished musician and pianist, contributing as much to the development of the musical scene in Singapore.



TWELVE ALBUM-LEAF PAINTINGS DEPICTING THE FOUR SEASONS
CHINESE INK AND COLOUR ON PAPER



BAMBOOS IN THE SNOW
CHINESE INK AND COLOUR ON PAPER
142 X 74CM



*FIRST SNOW AT THE ANCIENT
MOUNTAINOUS WOODEN WALKWAYS*
CHINESE INK AND COLOUR ON PAPER
134 X 65.5CM



CHINESE INK LANDSCAPE PAINTING (REFLECTING THE
SENTIMENTS OF SHI-TAO'S POEM)
CHINESE INK ON PAPER
144 X 74CM

DR HO CHEE LICK (何自力)

Born in Singapore in 1950, Dr Ho Chee Lick was a student of the Chinese High School in the 1960s, where he was taught by Chen Wen Hsi and Chen Chong Swee in both Western and Chinese arts. Later in the 1980s, he studied in the United States and obtained a PhD degree in linguistics from Kansas University. Since 1990, he has been teaching in the National University of Singapore, first in the Department of English Language and Literature, then in the Department of Chinese Studies.

From an early age, Dr Ho has been deeply involved with music and painting. Since the mid to late 1990s, he has also contributed passionately to poetry translation in Singapore and started to write as a *Lianhe Zaobao* columnist.

Dr Ho has had three major solo art exhibitions in Singapore: *Expressing Ubin* (Soobin Art Gallery, 1999), *Sequenza: Ho Chee Lick's New Ink Work* (Art Retreat Museum, 2011), and *Homage to the Faithful* (Central Public Library, 2015).

SYMPHONY NO. 3
2008-2010
CHINESE INK ON PAPER
225 X 95CM





LING YANG CHANG (林仰章)

Born in Singapore in 1963, Ling Yang Chang has been involved in many aspects of art-making over the last 20 years: artistic creations, group and solo exhibitions, workshops, public lectures and art teaching. As a graduate in Chinese Studies, Yang Chang finds a natural affinity for Chinese brush painting, with its close attention to the beauty of lines, poetical resonance and philosophical depth. In his medium, Yang Chang is a complete artist in the Chinese scholarly tradition; not only does he carve his own seals; he also appends his artistic creations with his own calligraphy. Moreover, the steely discipline required in establishing a solid brush and ink control technique has built a strong platform for Yang Chang's exploration into other artistic fields, namely contemporary Chinese art, and modern and abstract painting. Hence, Yang Chang's work is characterised by a delicate balance of Chinese and Western influences. Even in the free rein of Western abstract expression, the fine lines and tonal qualities of Chinese painting are never absent.

CITYSCAPE

2015

CHINESE INK AND COLOUR ON PAPER

180 X 145CM



FISHES IN THE POND
2015
CHINESE INK AND COLOUR ON PAPER
180 X 145CM



NUMERICAL DOTS XVI
2014
CHINESE INK AND COLOUR ON PAPER
90 X 96CM



LOTUS POND
2014
CHINESE INK AND COLOUR ON PAPER
90 X 96CM



PANORAMA OF MARINA BAY SOUTH
2014
CHINESE INK AND COLOUR ON PAPER

HONG SEK CHERN (洪雪珍)

Hong Sek Chern was born in 1967 in Singapore. She graduated from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 1995 with a Diploma in Fine Art and from Goldsmiths College, University of London in 1998 with an MA in Fine Art. Sek Chern is interested in exploring various themes within urban settings in her paintings. She likes to work with various painting media such as traditional Chinese ink, oil and acrylic so as to explore the painterly qualities that these mediums offer. Sek Chern has held seven solo exhibitions in Singapore and participated in group exhibitions held locally and overseas. In particular, she was selected to participate in the President Young Artist Show organised by the Singapore Art Museum in 2001 and represented Singapore at the 25th Sao Paulo Biennale in 2002. Sek Chern's interpretation of Singapore's urban landscape in Chinese ink has won her several awards in Singapore and she received the Young Artist Award from the National Arts Council in 1998.



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
2014
CHINESE INK ON PAPER
204 x 240CM



ARROW
2013
CHINESE INK, PIGMENT, ALUM, COLLAGE
ON PAPER
67 X 122CM

*WALKING IN THE CITY - PENINSULA PLAZA
AND RAFFLES CITY*
2012 - 2015
CHINESE INK ON PAPER
137.5 X 67.5CM





THE CONVERSATION

2011

DIGITAL VIDEO (COLOUR, SOUND)

10:47

SIZE VARIABLE

EDITION: 5

YEO SHIH YUN (姚诗韵)

Born in Singapore in 1976, Shih Yun is a full-time artist and director of INSTINC, an independent artist-run space. She received her Bachelor of Business Administration (Marketing) from the National University of Singapore, Diploma in Communications Design from LASALLE College of the Arts in 2001 and Post-Baccalaureate (Painting) from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2002.

Apart from paintings and drawings, Shih Yun works with diverse mediums including silk-screen, video and painting directly on 16mm films. Influenced by abstract expressionists, she is known for her strong energetic use of black ink and a passionate obsession with capturing the elusive moment that exists between chaos and order. Shih Yun has exhibited widely both locally and internationally. Her recent exhibitions include *Choreographed Collisions* (Galerie Steph, 2014); *Lyrical Abstraction* (Singapore Art Museum, 2012), *Rhythm Section* (Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2012) and *MO* (Esplanade Jendela Visual Arts Space, 2012). Collections of her work include the Four Seasons Hotel, Hangzhou at Westlake, China, Marina@Keppel Bay and arts patron, Mr Koh Seow Chuan. From 2005, she has actively participated in different international artist residency programmes including Munich, Fukuoka, Bergen and Belgium. In 2008, an artwork was created by Shih Yun to commemorate the opening of the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. Her recent awards include Sovereign Asian Art Prize People's Choice Award 2012, 26th UOB Painting of the Year Competition Singapore 2007, Certificate of Distinction and Highly Commended entry (Abstract category).



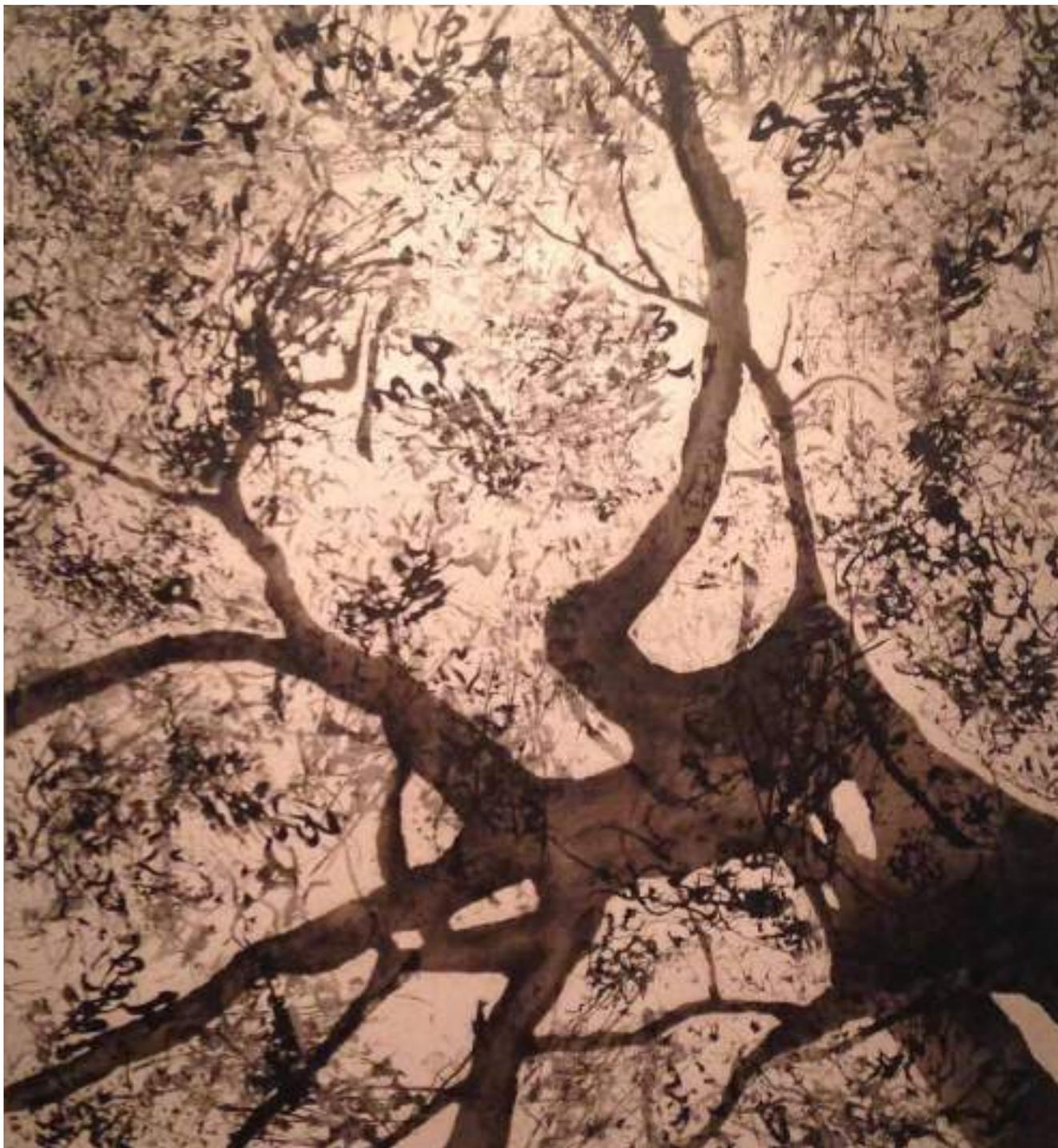
CONVERSATION WITH TREES #9
2013
SILKSCREEN AND INK ON PAPER
70 X 49CM



RAW #1
2014
SILKSCREEN AND INK ON GLASS
54 X 44CM



RAW #2
2014
SILKSCREEN AND INK ON GLASS
54 X 44CM



FREEDOM
2014
SILKSCREEN ON LINEN
165 X 148CM

NUS Museum is a comprehensive museum for teaching and research. It focuses on Asian regional art and culture, and seeks to create an enriching experience through its collections and exhibitions. The Museum has over 8,000 artefacts and artworks divided across four collections. The Lee Kong Chian Collection consists of a wide representation of Chinese materials from ancient to contemporary art; the South and Southeast Asian Collection holds a range of works from Indian classical sculptures to modern pieces; and the Ng Eng Teng Collection is a donation from the late Singapore sculptor and Cultural Medallion recipient of over 1,000 artworks. A fourth collection, the Straits Chinese Collection, is located at NUS Baba House at 157 Neil Road. NUS Museum is an institution of NUS Centre For the Arts.

NUS MUSEUM

NUS Centre For the Arts
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Opening Hours:
10am – 7.30pm (Tuesdays - Fridays)
10am – 6pm (Saturdays & Sundays)
Closed on Mondays & Public Holidays

