

EPIPHANY

A Decade of OH
CHAI HOO's Creative
Journey

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June 14, 2025

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**June 16 -
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11am - 6pm (Sat)

一念回首。
胡財和

E-Published specially for
一念回首 **Epiphany | A Decade of OH CHAI HOO's Creative Journey**
Organised by iPRECATION

E-published, designed and edited by

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Front Cover Image: "Illusion", 太虛幻境, 2019, 230x330cm, Ink and Acrylic on Paper

Contents

04 - 21 /	Foreword by Helina Chan
22 - 115 /	Artworks
116 - 119 /	CV

Born in 1960 Singapore, Oh Chai Hoo's practice is deeply influenced by the natural world that surrounds him, his contemplations of mountainous forms and the natural formations of rocks, and the local landscape became a part of the subjects he dealt with within his paintings and ceramic sculptures. As he resides near Bukit Timah Hill, Oh often found himself in awe of the majestic sublimity of the mountains that formed the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. The lush greenery that thrives within Singapore's equatorial climate, became a profound source of introspection for the artist. By manipulating ink, pigments and water across the paper, Oh captures the natural beauty of the land, drawing attention to the textures and subtleties of Singapore's natural landscape. His work is a testament to his belief that identity should be a central element of one's practice; that art should be grounded in the rhythms and textures of his culture and surroundings.

From a young age, he displayed a passion for painting and took great pride in his creations. In the mid-1970s, while sketching, young Oh caught the attention of Goh Sing Hooi, a renowned watercolour master from Singapore's 'pioneer generation', who took him under his wing and brought him on numerous sketching sessions along the Singapore River. As Oh recalls, it was a formative period for learning and growth, as he was guided by teachers who still believed in the transformative power of art.

His fondness for painting never faltered and after completing his secondary education, he went on to enroll at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) in 1977. There, he honed his skills in the fundamentals of western academy-style painting, while also immersing himself in traditional Chinese ink painting under the tutelage of See Hiang To and Tan Tee Chie.

After graduating in 1982, Oh went on to become a full time artist, and became an active figure in the local arts scene. He joined several art groups, including the Singapore Sculpture Society and Nanyang Clay Group, and has showcased his works in various solo and group exhibitions across Singapore, Malaysia, China, United States, United Kingdom, Finland, Taiwan, Korea and Japan. Having been recognised for his artistic skill, he went on to receive prestigious awards, such as Siew-Tao Best Artwork Award

in 2013, Siew-Tao Achievement Award in 2009, Highly Commendable Award for Abstract Medium in the 18th UOB Painting Competition in 1999 and Distinction in Visual Art Creation at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 1992.

The 1980s and 1990s marked a pivotal turning point within Singapore's art scene, as artists began to transition from an era defined by the traditional Nanyang style of painting to a dynamic period of experimentation, characterised by the bold exploration of diverse media and technique. In this time of change, Oh emerged as a highly prolific artist who sought to constantly innovate his techniques to revitalise the style of his commissions, creating semi-abstract works with the use of rice paper, metallic foil, and sand with ink splashes. Having been commissioned by many, his works adorned hundreds of five-star hotel rooms and suites in Marina Square and similar projects began to pop up within the region.

Between 2002 and 2011, Oh withdrew from the art scene. Worn out by the demands of working on multiple commissioned projects, he stepped back from creating art to rest and recharge. The passing of his mother during this period cast a shadow over him, preventing him from emotionally and psychologically engaging with art. These struggles brought his creative practice to a halt, and he stopped producing works for a decade.

In 2015, Oh visited iPreciation with some of his works. I was captivated by a body of black and white ink prints which stood in stark contrast to the gold and coloured commissioned works that had defined his practice for the last 20 years. These artworks felt like hidden treasures — meditative, subtle monochromatic ink paintings. Intrigued as to why such wonderful paintings had not been shown, I asked Oh, who responded with characteristic candour: "no gallerists liked to show them, saying that no one would buy this kind of black and white works as they preferred bright colours". Undeterred, and as a fervent admirer of ink paintings, I encouraged Oh to explore the idea and expand the immense visual potential and I urged Oh to rekindle his connection with ink painting. Knowing his enduring fascination with the forms and textures of rocks, our conversation soon unfolded into an exploration of new

possibilities. Thus, the creation of ceramic rock sculptures, installations and ceramic seal carvings naturally became part of this exploration.

A decade in, Oh not only stepped back into the art scene with a revitalised spirit, but he also reconnected with a medium he regarded as the truest expression of his art — ink on rice paper. To him, ink is an honest expression of his artistic practice as each stroke, once made, is indelible, etched permanently onto the surface of the paper. Every brushstroke captured the intention of the artist, with each mark on the paper serving as an enduring reflection of Oh's presence as an artist. Similarly, his ceramic sculptures served as quiet reflections of his artistic practice, their sinuous forms and undulating surfaces embodying his sense of self as an artist.

In his 2016 comeback solo exhibition, *Lifetime of Change*, Oh unveiled a series of works exemplifying his return to ink on paper in his favorite colour scheme, black and white. At first glance, his works appear like monumentalised paintings of ordinary rock formations. Upon closer inspection, it is clear that Oh's works are far from ordinary. The linear strokes depicting rock folds are organic and almost photographically realistic, as though the ink itself was tracing the slow seismic shifts of tectonic plates overtime, leaving behind textured markings on the paper. The contours and outline of the mountainous forms in his work take shape through a unique technique Oh invented himself. Saturating his brush in ink, Oh then applies the saturated brush onto the rice paper, allowing the ink to pool in dark cloudy puddles. Taking a newspaper, he pressed it into the ink pool, and with a gentle yet steady hand, he lifts and pulls the ink across the paper in a rhythmic motion. His body sways in unison with his hand, crafting folds and undulations that echo the anthropomorphic rock formations found on Bukit Timah Hill. Alongside these ink paintings, Oh also showcased a series of ceramic rock sculptures, further expanding his exploration of form and texture. These hand-built ceramics reflect the same meditative attention to surface and textures that Oh emphasizes within his ink paintings, translating the flowing gestures of ink into the tactile language of clay. The undulating and asymmetric forms of his sculptures mirror the textural uniqueness of natural rock formations. Frozen in time, his ceramic rocks can be seen as metaphors for impermanence. Through both mediums, Oh

captures the silent transformation of rock formations, suspending their slow, seismic movement within the enduring imprints of ink and clay.

Moving into 2017, Oh took part in a group exhibition titled *When Space Dissolves into Luminosity; Where Flowers Bloom Amidst Rocks*. The exhibition showcased the diverse talent of 9 other young Singaporean artists; namely, Han Sai Por, Chng Seok Tin, Lim Soo Ngee, Chiew Sien Kuan, Lynn Lim, Terence Tan, Ng Siok Hoon, Chua Chon Hee and Yang Zhong Da. Seated against a backdrop of rapid change, the exhibition unfolds as a meditation on authenticity. Each artwork traces the determined journey of its artist, revealing how each artist attempts to hold on to their sense of self amidst the overwhelming noise of change. With the slip trailer, Oh gives life to his ceramic sculptures, transforming clay into living geology. The cracked surfaces and swelling textures of his sculptures become testaments to the slow, patient beauty of mineral formations as it is shaped over time. Oh's sculptures become emblematic of his deeper desire to explore and honour the enduring yet impermanent nature of rock formations, revealing a profound reverence for the silent transformations that occur within the natural world.

As time passed, Oh's artistic practice with ink evolved, as he strived to create larger ink paintings that are richer in narrative. While he still focused on the contours of mountainscapes in his 2018 solo exhibition *Gentle Breeze, Moving Heart*, elements of Zen philosophy ideals began to interweave itself into the visuals of his ink paintings. In Zen philosophy, the individual is called to let go of their worldly attachments, and meditate on mujo — the impermanence of everything. As Oh deeply resonated with the principles of Zen philosophy, he inscribed calligraphy with phrases taken from Zen philosophy onto the ink paintings, reintroducing the oriental literati tradition. This fusion of visual with the literary elements allowed his works to transcend beyond physical imagery, revealing the deeper philosophical narratives embedded within. His ceramic sculptures likewise, embody the concept of mujo.

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physical imagery, revealing the deeper philosophical narratives embedded within. His ceramic sculptures likewise, embody the concept of mujo. The porous textures, cracked surfaces and seemingly eroded forms evoke a sense of ephemerality, as if the ceramic sculpture itself is caught in a state of constant flux. In the tension between the enduring solidity of clay and the fleeting nature of its appearance, Oh captures the delicate balance between permanence and impermanence. Hence, through both ink and clay, Oh's works become quiet meditations on the ceaseless rhythms of change, capturing the fleeting beauty of impermanence.

In his 2020 solo exhibition, *Afar*, Oh moved on from his monochrome palette and displayed a series of ink and colour works, pairing verses by Cang Yang Jia Cuo, the Sixth Dalai Lama, with soft earthy tones. While his paintings still focused on depictions of rock formations, they also drew inspiration from buddhist thoughts, an eastern philosophy he had been familiar with from a young age. The rocks, with their weathered exteriors and undulating surfaces, became a representation of this ancient philosophical concept: that beauty lies in imperfection and impermanence. In addition, Oh created his works spontaneously, sometimes tearing a painting into pieces only to collage them together to form new imageries. The empty spaces, frayed edges and uneven textures caused by tearing and collaging invites viewers to complete the work through their dialogue with the artwork.

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These aspects of Oh's artistic practice echoes his beliefs from the *Book of Change* which states: "Nine at the top: the dragon will have cause to repent". In other words, to reach the peak is the start of the fall; when things become extreme, they alternate to the opposite. Oh's paintings articulate a similar wisdom: that it is the transience

and imperfections of life, that paradoxically, make it whole.

In 2021, Oh participated in another group exhibition called *Flower, Not*. In this exhibition, he showcased his work alongside the likes of Song Ling, Hua Jun, Wang Shaoqiang, Jiang Heng, Tan Seow Wei and Chui Pui-Chee. Drawing inspiration from a poem by the celebrated poet of the Tang dynasty, Bai Juyi, while simultaneously capturing the spirit of Magritte's *La Trahison des images*, the exhibition carries an undercurrent of subversion. Across many cultures and histories, flowers have long served as rich vessels for metaphor and meaning, their cycles of blossoming and decay embody the human fascination with transformation and impermanence.. These seven artists, drawing from their diverse cultural inheritances, socio-political experiences, and generational perspectives, sought to unsettle traditional readings of the flower motif. Together, they offered a reimagined visual vocabulary, reinvesting this ancient motif with new layers of contemporary complexity. Similarly, Oh's paintings resist literal representations of nature. Instead of depicting identifiable flowers or natural forms, he captured the visceral, energetic abstractions of elemental forces. Swirling masses of ink sweep across the paper, their rhythmic surges represent the unseen yet palpable movement of wind and water. His masterful play with tonality conveys a world in flux, evoking a sense of timelessness. By abstracting nature's forces rather than imitating its surfaces, Oh's works move beyond appearances and invite deeper introspection into the natural world.

Oh revealed his near two decade exploration of clay in his 2021 solo exhibition, *Marks on Earth*. In this exhibition, Oh displayed 120 ceramic seals that he had created from 2003 to 2021, tracing his intimate dialogue with the earthly material of clay. Traditionally carved out of soapstone, seals once served as an enduring symbol of authority and authentication, but in the modern world, their function has largely faded into obscurity. By using ceramic instead of the conventional materials that were used for seal carving, Oh re-imagines the ceramic seals as a representation of his memories, artistic practice and perspectives. The malleable and aleatoric qualities of

clay open up the process of seal carving to a world of possibilities. From de-airing, to modelling, drying, firing and glazing, each step demands his steady attention and through this slow and arduous process, a intimate and exclusive bond is forged between artist and artwork. Additionally, he thoughtfully paired 30 individual ceramic seal creations with a calligraphic work created in 2021. For this, Oh draws inspiration from the writings of local writer and journalist, Chow Yianping, selecting excerpts that he then reinterprets through calligraphy. Each text is subsequently matched to a ceramic seal that he believes resonates with its sentiment, forging an unexpected dialogue between touch, sight, and memory. The juxtaposition of two art forms, one visual and the other tactile, create a unique encounter between the artist, viewer and writer. Therefore, through acts of reinterpretation and recreation, Oh's ceramic seal works ultimately reveal the shared universality of human emotion, coalescing individual memory with collective feeling.

Oh went to participate in a group exhibition in 2022, titled *Whisper of the Stars*, bringing together 35 pieces of important recent works by 7 prominent contemporary artists from China and Singapore, namely Wang Dongling, Wang Jianan, Zhang Jian-Jun, Wang Tiande, Han Sai Por, Zhuang Shengtao and himself. Much like how the distant shimmer of the stars stands as testament to their enduring legacy in the night sky, each artwork radiates with the unique brilliance of its artist, illuminating their individual journeys of creativity and individuality. Thus, these groundbreaking works embody their tireless search for originality and creativity in their thinking process, contributing to the formation of a distinctive identity. Over the years, Oh has demonstrated a dedication to continuously evolving his visual language, notably through the exploration of dialogical and collaborative works. These paintings are a testament to this exploration: the compelling juxtaposition of ink and calligraphy coupled with the unique collage-like effect, invites the viewer into an intimate dialogue with the artwork. Sections are deliberately torn and pieced together, with writings scattered across the paper almost haphazardly. This spontaneous assemblage creates a dynamic interaction between text and image as it unfolds non-linearly across the picture plane. In doing so, Oh not only challenges traditional conventions

of ink painting but also invites the viewer to contemplate impermanence through acts of fragmentation and non-linearity.

Oh also delved into a specific interest in a little-known visual genre known as *Jinhuidui*. The term, *Jinhuidui*, which reached its height in late 19th and early 20th century China, portrays books, documents, rubbings, and paintings. As described by writer Zheng Yimei in the 1930s, the papers were purposefully arranged to resemble the scattered contents of an overturned wastepaper basket. Furthermore, the fragments of the paper were curled, yellowed, soiled, or burnt at the edges, evoking decay. Notably, *Jinhuidui* is also known colloquially as *bapo*. The genre carries an auspicious meaning, as the number eight (*ba*) symbolizing prosperity, while the word *po* (破, "broken") draws from the saying *bupo buli* (不破不立), meaning that renewal is impossible without destruction. *Bapo* paintings were believed to ward off misfortune as their visual motifs of burnt papers offered symbolic protection against fire when displayed at homes. Internal unrest, foreign pressures, and the desire for modernization amidst decline. Beyond paper, *Jinhuidui* motifs also appeared across a range of media and drew heavily on literati traditions of antiquarianism, assemblage, and epigraphy. Oh re-interprets this classical genre through hFrom an intellectual perspective, however, they reflected the struggles ongoing in China, its eyes with a contemporary lens, merging its traditional features with modern aesthetics. In his 2023 solo exhibition, titled *Timeless Present*, he used acrylic gouache to achieve a soft yet opaque finish, painted on ruled lines and blocked font to evoke the modernity of print, and incorporated collaged fragments with scorched edges to enhance the sense of spatial depth. The collaboration between painting and collage constructs an intricately layered composition that is simultaneously ancient and modern, inviting the viewer to look at the present and contemplate the past through a unique lens constructed by tradition.

In 2024, Oh participated in *Teko 壺說八道* (hu shuo ba dao), a group exhibition featuring recent ceramic works of him and 7 other Singaporean artists: Han Sai Por, Suriani Suratman, Chua Chon Hee, Ahmad ABu Bakar, Chor Mui Ling, Chua

Choon Lims, and Loy Yan Ling. The title Teko 壺說八道 (hu shuo ba dao) combines Malay with Chinese language, symbolising the diverse and harmonious nature of the exhibition. Teko is Malay for teapot, a utilitarian object familiar to everyday life. The phrase 壺說八道 (hu shuo ba dao) then offers a clever wordplay, substituting 壺 (vessel or teapot) for 胡 in the well-known saying 胡說八道, which means to speak nonsense. This substitution reinterprets the expression as teapot talk. Just like the creative wordplay in the title, the artists also attempt to embody their creativity through the ordinary vessel of the teapot, reconstructing the teapot as a vessel for artistic expression. In Oh's hands, the teapot is transformed into a symbol of nature itself, incorporating fluid, rugged, and organic textures that evoke the untamed beauty of the natural world. His works transcend the teapot's utilitarian roots, offering a poetic reflection on the elements of nature, echoing his exploration of mountainscapes and natural forms. Through these transformations, Oh invites viewers to uncover deeper resonances within everyday objects, blurring the line between the object and nature.

Later in 2024, Oh participated in a group exhibition titled *Echoes and Reverberations: The Interconnectedness of Being and Becoming*. This exhibition features over 30 artworks by Oh and 4 other artists: Milenko Prvacki, Chiew Sien Kuan, Boo Sze Yang, and Raymond Yap. Rooted from existential philosophy — specifically Jean Paul Sartre's notion of absurdism — where life is meaningless and that it is up to the individual to create their own meaning, the exhibition delves into the perpetual search for meaning. Furthermore, the artists draw from diverse sources of inspiration — including natural and man-made landscapes — inviting contemplation on memory, belonging and transformation. Across their works, the artists weave a dynamic tension between change and existence, their artistic process outlining the continuous search for meaning in a world that is constantly in flux. In Oh's works, he introduces an element of disruption to his traditionally serene depictions of rock formations. While earlier works focused on the ephemeral beauty of nature through flowing, organic forms, this new series contrasts the organic with the artificial. Jagged, geometric shapes disrupt the soft, continuous forms of the rockscapes, creating a vivid tension between the angular lines and natural fluidity. Yet, amidst this visual dissonance,

Oh masterfully unifies the sharp lines with the gentle curves. Hence, his paintings invite viewers to contemplate the complex, intertwined relationship between human intervention and the natural world, suggesting that beauty and meaning emerge through the dialectics of contrasts.

From the beginning, Oh's art draws its viewers into an intimate dialogue with nature that is as much about feeling as it is about form. Through his distinctive gestural brushwork and the raw, earthly tactility of his ceramic sculptures, installation and seals, he reimagines the natural world as a space of emotional resonance rather than faithful depiction. Yet, Oh's exploration did not stop there, extending beyond the visual and tactile. As his journey unfolded, Oh brought together Chinese script with image, weaving Chinese calligraphy into his works to open up a space for reflection and introspection. This space invites viewers to dwell upon both the natural world and Buddhist thought. Delving even deeper, he revisited *Jinhuidui*, a forgotten genre, tearing and reassembling his own paintings into layered collages, evoking modernity through the lens of tradition. Over the years, his art has never stood still; each exhibition of his revealing a different rhythm, a new breath. Through these ever-shifting forms, Oh's works become more than objects and paintings. They are living traces of his desires and the path he walks as an artist, marking out his creative journey through the ebb and flow of time.

胡財和於1960年出生於新加坡，其藝術創作深受周圍自然世界的熏陶。對山嶽形態的冥思、巖石自然構造的觀照，以及本土景觀的體悟，都成為他繪畫與陶塑作品中反復呈現的主題。因居所毗鄰武吉知馬山，財和常為這座構成自然保護區的山脈之氣魄所震撼。赤道氣候孕育的蔥郁草木，成為藝術家深沈內省的源泉。通過水墨、顏料與水分在紙面的交融滲透，他精準捕捉了這片土地的天然韻致，凸顯新加坡自然景觀中肌理與細節的美感。胡財和的作品印證了他堅守的創作理念——身份認同應是藝術實踐的核心要素，藝術創作必須根植於自身文化與生存環境的韻律與肌理之中。

財和自幼便展現出對繪畫的熱愛，併深深以自己的創作為傲。1970年代中期，少年財和在寫生時，受到新加坡“先驅一代”著名水彩大師吳承惠的賞識，併將他收入門下，時常帶他沿新加坡河畔進行寫生創作。胡財和回憶，那段歲月正是他學習與成長的關鍵期——在依然篤信藝術變革力量的師長引領下，他收獲了至關重要的啟蒙。

他對繪畫的熱愛始終未減，在完成中學學業後，於1977年考入南洋藝術學（NAFA）。在那裏，他潛心钻研西方學院派繪畫的基礎技法，同時師從施香沱和陳世集，沈浸於中國傳統水墨畫的研習之中。

1982年畢業後，財和正式成為全職藝術家，併活躍於新加坡藝術界。他先後加入新加坡雕塑協會、南洋陶藝協會等藝術團體，其作品曾在新加坡、馬來西亞、中國、美國、英國、芬蘭、臺灣地區、韓國及日本等地多次舉辦個展併參與群展。憑藉精湛的藝術造詣，他屢獲殊榮：2013年獲頒“嘯濤篆刻書畫會最佳作品獎”，2009年榮獲“嘯濤藝術成就獎”，1999年在第18屆大華銀行繪畫比賽中獲“抽象題材組高度評價獎”，1992年獲得南洋藝術學院“視覺藝術創作卓越獎”。

1980至90年代是新加坡藝術界的關鍵轉捩期——藝術家們逐漸從傳統南洋畫風中邁出，踏入一個以大膽嘗試多元媒介與技法為特徵的實驗階段。在此變革浪潮中，財和以其旺盛的創造力嶄露頭角。他不斷創新技藝，通過宣紙、金屬箔、砂粒與潑墨技法的融合運用，創作出半抽象風格的作品，為他的委托創作注入全新活力。其作品廣受委托方青睞，裝點了濱海廣場數百間五星級酒店客房，類似的藝術項目也隨之湧現。

2002至2011年間，胡財和曾暫別藝壇。因長期疲於應付多項委托創作，他選擇擱筆休整。期間其母親的離世的悲傷更令他深陷陰霾，在情感與心理上皆難以重拾藝術創作。重重暈境使他的藝術實踐陷入停滯，整十年間未有新作問世。

2015年，胡財和小型攜作品造訪誰先覺。一組黑白水墨拓印作品令我尤為震撼——這與他家過去二十年間以金箔彩繪為主的委托創作形成強烈反差。這些作品宛若秘藏的珍寶：充滿禪意的素墨繪畫，筆致精微。我不理解如此佳作為何從未展出，胡坦率而言：“沒有畫廊願意展出這些作品，都說黑白作品晦暗不好賣，而藏家偏愛鮮亮的色彩。”作為水墨藝術的虔誠愛好者，我力勸他重拾墨趣，深掘這種視覺語言的潛能。談及他對山石形質的長年癡迷，我們漸漸展開探討新的藝術可能性。自此，陶巖雕塑、裝置藝術與篆刻陶印，便自然融入了他的藝術探索軌跡。

經過十年沈澱後，財和不僅以煥然之姿重歸藝壇，更重新執起那承載藝術本真的媒介——宣紙水墨。於他而言，水墨是他藝術實踐中最誠實的錶達：每一筆墨痕落紙即成永恆，無法塗改。筆鋒起落間盡顯藝術家心跡，紙上的每一道痕跡，都是他藝術生涯的長存印記。他的陶藝雕塑亦默然訴說著他的藝術實踐，那些蜿蜒的形態與起伏的肌理，是其成為藝術家自我認知的物化寫照。

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2016年復出的首個展《物換星移》中，胡財和以其最青睞的黑白色調水墨作品宣告回歸。這些作品初看只是尋常山石的巨制化創作，但細觀則別有洞天——描繪巖層褶皺的線條既具有機生命力，又近乎地質攝影般的真實。墨跡仿佛在記錄闖塊運動的亙古變遷，於紙面留下時間的紋理。畫中山形輪廓的塑造，源自藝術家獨創的技法：飽蘸濃墨的毛筆在宣紙上暈染出雲團般的墨跡，再以報紙輕壓慢提，通過富有韻律的拖曳動作，使墨色隨身體擺動自然流淌，最終形成與武吉知馬山擬人化巖層相呼應的層疊與起伏。同期展出的陶巖雕塑繫列，延續了他對形態與肌理的探索。這些手塑陶作將水墨的流動姿態轉化為黏土的觸覺語言，其不對稱的起伏造型復現了天然巖層的獨特質地。如同凝固的時光碎片，這些陶巖成為無常的隱喻。財和通過這兩種媒介，將巖層靜默的演變過程，永恆定格於水墨與陶土之中。

2017年，財和參與群展《當空間消融為光·巖隙花開》。該展覽匯聚他與韓少芙、莊心珍、林序毅、趙善君、林麗雲、陳智華、吳淑芬、蔡春喜、楊忠達這九位新加坡藝術家的多元創作。在時代劇變的背景下，展覽如同一場關於藝術本真的沈思——每件作品都鐫刻著創作者堅守自我的軌跡，展現他們在變革洪流中持守藝術初心的努力。財和運用泥漿勾勒技法，賦予陶塑以地質生命。那些開裂的錶面與隆起的肌理，成為巖層在時光中緩慢成型的見證。胡的雕塑作品既是其對創作深層探求的縮影，也是對巖石恆久亦無常的本質的禮贊，探索併致敬自然界那些靜默發生的蛻變，展現對天地自然的敬畏之情。

隨著時間推移，財和的水墨實踐以更大的尺幅與更豐富的敘意不斷深化。在2018年個展《風動·心動》中，他雖仍以山形輪廓為創作主線，卻開始將禪宗哲思融入水墨視覺——禪宗主張摒棄塵世執念，靜觀”無常”真諦。深受觸動的胡將禪語以書法題於畫作，重啟東方文人”詩書畫一體”的傳統。這種視覺與文學的融合，使作品超越物象錶層，展露內蘊的哲學敘事。其陶塑同樣體現”無常”觀念：疏鬆的肌理、皸裂的錶面與看似風化的形態，共同營造轉瞬即逝之感，仿佛陶土本身正處在永恆的流變之中。當陶土的恆久物質性與錶象的脆弱性形成張力，便成就了恆久與無常的微妙平衡。至此，無論是水墨還是陶土，財和的作品皆成為對變化不息之韻律的靜默觀照，捕捉著無常的剎那之美。

在他2020年舉辦的個展《自己的遠方》中，胡財和突破單一墨色，以土褐色調呈現一繫列彩墨新作，併配以六世達賴倉央嘉措的詩句。畫作雖仍以巖層為主體，卻融貫了藝術家自幼濡染的佛學思想——那些風化斑駁的巖錶與起伏的輪廓，成為”殘缺即美，無常為真”這一古老哲思的視覺化身。創作過程中，他時而將畫作撕碎後重組拼貼，撕裂產生的留白、毛邊與不平整肌理，邀請觀者通過對話完成作品。這種藝術實踐暗合《周易》“上九：亢龍有悔”的智慧：登極恰是墜落的開端，物極必反。財和的畫作同樣詮釋著這種哲思：生命的殘缺與無常，反而成就其完整。

2021年，胡財和參與群展《花非花》。中國和峴港此次展覽中，他與宋陵、花俊、王紹強、江衡、陳曉薇、徐沛之等藝術家同臺呈現。展覽既汲取唐代詩人白居易的詩意精神，又呼應馬格利特《圖像的背叛》的哲思內核，暗含顛覆傳統認知的潛流。縱觀不同文明與歷史，花卉始終是隱喻的豐饒載體——其盛衰周期凝結著人類對轉變與無常的癡迷。七位藝術家立足多元文化傳承、社會經驗及代際視角，共同解構花卉母題的傳統解讀，以重構的視覺語匯為這一古老

意象注入當代複雜性。財和的創作同樣顛覆對自然的直白描繪。畫中不見具象的花卉形態，唯有元素力量的抽象爆發：墨團如旋風掠過紙面，以律動筆勢捕捉風水無形的能量流動。通過精妙的色調把控，他營造出一個恆變中的世界，喚起超越時間的感知。這種對自然本質而非錶相的抽象錶達，使作品超越視覺錶象，引嚮對自然運行法則的深層觀照。

2021年的個展《以陶之名》中，財和呈現了近二十年陶藝探索的成果。展覽陳列的120方陶印在2003-2021年間創作，記錄著藝術家與大地材料的對話。傳統印章多以青田石為載體，曾是權力與認證的象徵，卻在當代漸失其實用意義。胡以陶土代替石材，將陶印重構為記憶、藝術實踐與生命哲思的載體。陶土的可塑性與偶然性，為篆刻工藝開啟了全新可能——從練泥、塑形、陰幹到燒制施釉，每道工序都需凝神以待，在這緩慢而艱辛的勞作中，藝術家與作品締結了獨一無二的連接。展覽更精心搭配30組陶印與書法的對話：胡財和摘取本地作家周雁冰的文字選段，以2021年新創書法作品進行視覺轉譯，再為每幅書法遴選情感共鳴的陶印。當觸覺（陶印）、視覺（書法）與記憶三重維度相互叩擊，藝術家、觀眾與作家之間形成了奇妙的際會。通過這種再創造，陶印作品最終揭示了人類情感的普遍共鳴——一個體記憶與集體情愫在此交融共生。

作家周雁冰的文字選段，以2021年新創書法作品進行視覺轉譯，再為每幅書法遴選情感共鳴的陶印。當觸覺（陶印）、視覺（書法）與記憶三重維度相互叩擊，藝術家、觀眾與作家之間形成了奇妙的際會。通過這種再創造，陶印作品最終揭示了人類情感的普遍共鳴——一個體記憶與集體情愫在此交融共生。

2022年，胡財和參與群展《星星細雨》，與王冬齡、王迦南、張建君、王天德、韓少英、莊聲濤等中新兩國七位國際重要當代藝術家共同呈現35件近年力

作。正如亙古星辰以其微光見證宇宙永恆，每件作品都閃耀著藝術家獨特的創造力光輝，照亮他們各自的藝術探索之路。這些突破性創作凝聚著他們對原創性的不懈追求，最終熔鑄成鮮明的個人風格。胡多年來致力於視覺語言的持續進步，尤其通過對話性、協作性創作進行探索。展出的作品正是這種探索的見證：水墨與書法的併置碰撞，結合獨特的拼貼效果，邀觀眾深入作品內部的深度對話。刻意撕裂重組的紙本上，文字如星散落，這種即興組合在畫面中形成非線性的圖文互動。由此，藝術家不僅挑戰了傳統水墨的成規，更通過碎片化與非線性的錶達，引導觀者沈思無常的真諦。

財和也深入探索了——”錦灰堆”。這一盛行於中國19世紀末至20世紀初的藝術形式，以書籍、文書、拓片與畫作的殘片為錶現對象。如作家鄭逸梅在1930年代所述，這些紙本被刻意佈置成翻倒字紙箋的散落狀，紙緣卷曲泛黃、汙漬斑駁或呈焦灼痕跡，透露出腐朽之美。錦灰堆又名”八破”，其中”八”諧音”發”寓意吉祥，”破”則源自”不破不立”的哲言——唯有破除舊物方能新生。傳統八破圖被認為具有辟火鎮宅之效，其燒灼的紙本圖像象徵性地抵禦火災。從思想史維度看，錦灰堆實則映射了近代中國在內外交關中求新求變的掙紮。這種形式不僅限於紙本，更廣泛融入文人金石學、集古與考據傳統。胡以當代視角重新詮釋這一古典體裁，在其2023年的個展《今夕何夕》中，運用丙烯水粉營造朦朧而不失厚重的質感，通過印刷網格線與區塊字體喚起現代性，拼貼燒灼邊緣的殘片以增強空間縱深感。繪畫與拼貼的協作，構建出古今交織的多層畫面結構，邀請觀眾透過傳統建構的獨特透鏡，審視當下與往昔。

2024年，財和參與群展《Teko壺說八道》，與韓少英、蘇裏亞妮·蘇拉特曼、蔡春喜、艾哈邁德·阿佈·巴卡爾、曹美玲、蔡春玲、黎燕玲這七位新加坡藝術家共同呈現最新陶藝創作。展覽標題融合馬來文與華文，”Teko”在馬來文

中意為茶壺——這日常器物，與華文成語”胡說八道”通過諧音置換（以”壺”代”胡”），被巧妙重構為”壺器之語”。正如標題的文字遊戲，藝術家們以茶壺這一尋常器皿為載體，重構其作為藝術錶達的容器。在胡財和手中，茶壺被轉化為自然本身的象徵：流動的釉色、粗糲的肌理與有機的形態，喚起著野性自然之美。這些作品超越了茶壺的實用本源，成為對自然元素的詩性觀照，延續了其對山嶽形態的一貫探索。

通過這種轉化，藝術家邀請觀者在日常器物中發現深層共鳴，模糊物性與自然之間的界限。

2024年末，胡財和參展群展《回響與共振：存在與變遷的交織》。該展覽匯聚了其與米連柯·帕瓦奇、趙善君、巫思遠、葉寶添共五位藝術家的30余件作品，以讓-保羅·薩特的存在主義哲學中”荒誕”概念為根基——當生命本無意義，個體需自行創造價值，深入探討人類對意義的永恆追尋。藝術家們從自然與人文景觀中汲取靈感，引發對記憶、歸屬與蛻變的沈思。作品間交織著變遷與存在的動態張力，以藝術實踐勾勒這個流變世界中持續的意義探索。胡在此次創作中，為其一貫靜謐的巖層描繪註入破壞性元素。相較於早期通過流動有機形態錶現自然無常之美的作品，新繫列以鋒利幾何形態割裂山石的柔潤輪廓，在剛硬線條與自然流勢間制造鮮明沖突。然而，在這視覺悖論中，藝術家卻將銳角與弧線渾然相融。這些畫作邀請觀眾思索人與自然幹預的復雜共生關繫，暗示美與意義正誕生於對立統一的辯證之中。

胡財和的藝術創作，自伊始便將觀眾引入一場與自然的對話中——這場對話關乎形式，更直指心緒。通過獨具錶現力的寫意筆觸，以及陶塑、裝置與印璽中粗糲質樸的質感，他將自然重構為情感共鳴的場域，而非單一寫實的描繪。然而，他的探索并未止步於視覺與觸覺的維度。隨著創作歷程的展開，他將漢字

書寫與圖像併置，以書法為作品開辟沈思之境，邀人同時體悟自然造化與佛學哲思。更深一步，他重探”錦灰堆”這一湮沒的體裁，通過撕裂與重組畫作形成的層疊拼貼，借傳統之鏡反映現代性。多年來，其藝術從未停滯，每次展覽皆呈現不同的呼吸節律。在這些流轉的形式中，胡財和的作品早已超越物與畫的範疇。它們已成為藝術家心之所嚮的鮮活印記，在時光浮沈間標刻出創造的軌跡。

清晨六點半

6.30am

2016

150x68cm

Ink on Paper



Nodding Stone

2016

150x68cm

Ink on Paper



Traces of Wind

2016

150x68cm

Ink on Paper



Light and Shadow

2016

150x68cm

Ink on Paper



Real Illusion

2016

150x68cm

Ink on Paper



Luminous Lake

2016

150x68cm

Ink on Paper



Void Bridge

2016

192x96cm

Ink on Paper



On Track

2016

192x96cm

Ink on Paper



絢
光

Brilliant

2016

192x96cm

Ink on Paper





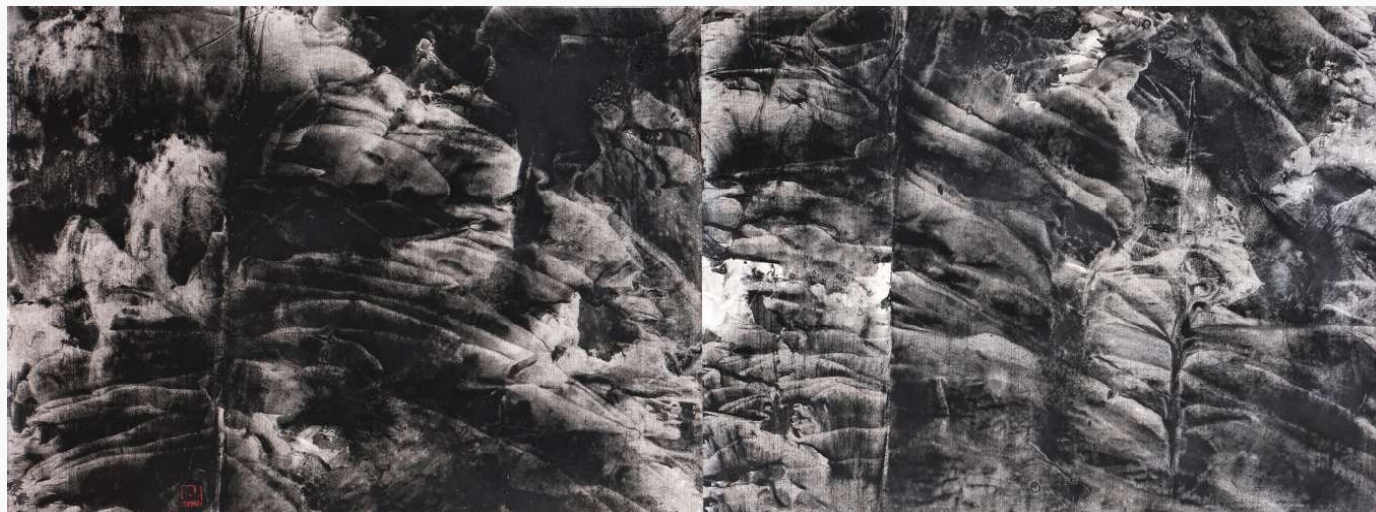
森

Forest

2016

75x137cm

Ink on Paper





峰
迴
路
转

Silent Night Dance
2018
40x150cm
Ink on Paper

Mountains and Dreams

2018

68x150cm

Ink on Paper





覺
醒

Awakening

2018

68x150cm

Ink on Paper

Mountainscape

2018

68x150cm

Ink on Paper





Poetry of Tou Tuo - Peaks
頭陀詩意 - 萬峰



Poetry of Tou Tuo - Lone Journey
頭陀詩意 - 獨行



Poetry of Tou Tuo - Glow
頭陀詩意 - 螢光



Cool Breeze
涼風



Swift Stream
山澗



Waterfall
飛瀑



Ascend
登古原



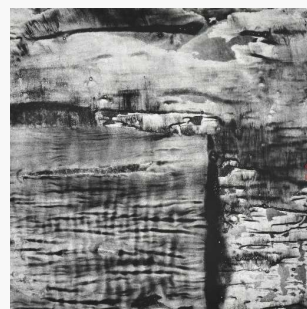
Encounter
相遇



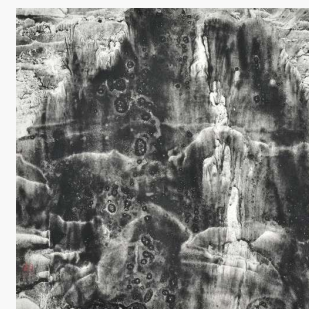
Solitaire
蕭然



Valley
虛壑



Reflection of the Heart
映心



Stone Buddha
石佛

2018
34x34cm
56x56cm (Framed)
Ink on Paper

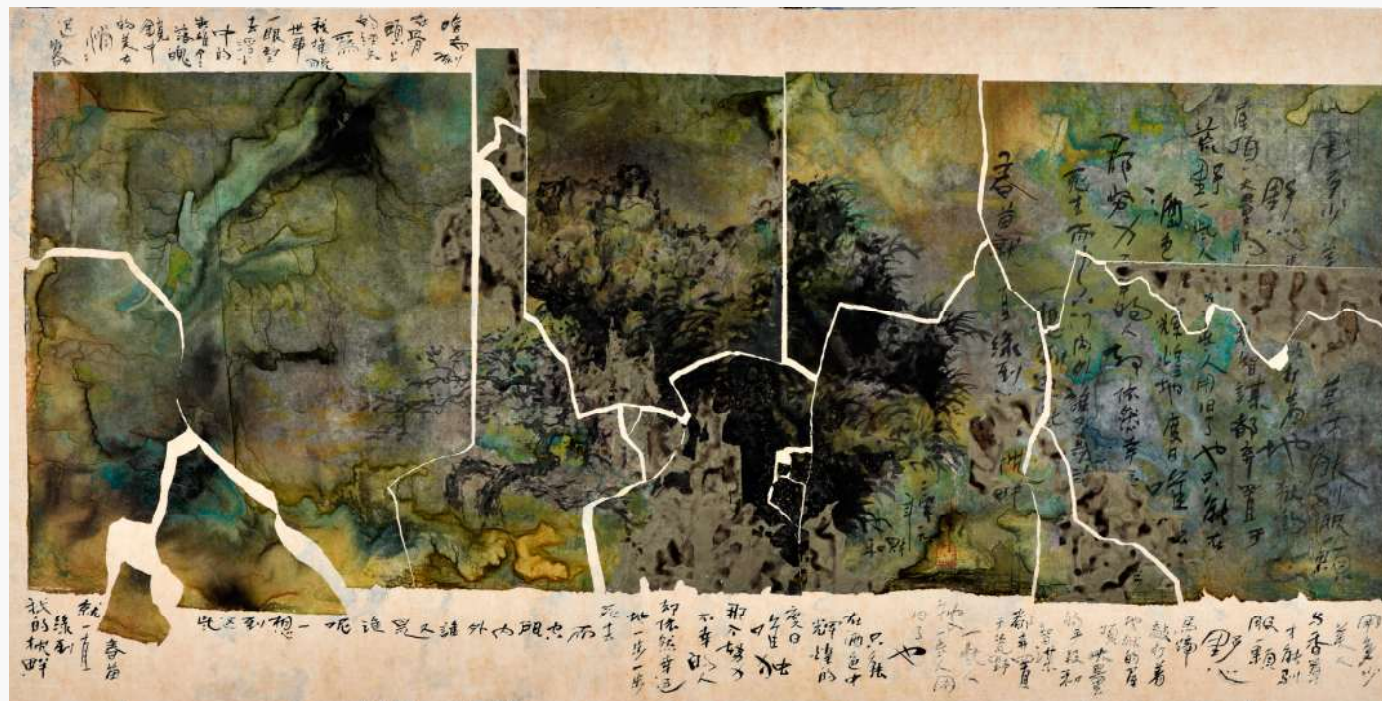


Meaning

2019

138x69cm

Ink and Acrylic on Paper



Wilderness Murmur

2019

69x138cm

Ink and Acrylic on Paper



Sea of Coloured Glaze

2019

110x230cm

Ink and Acrylic on Paper



Sand Dust
沙塵



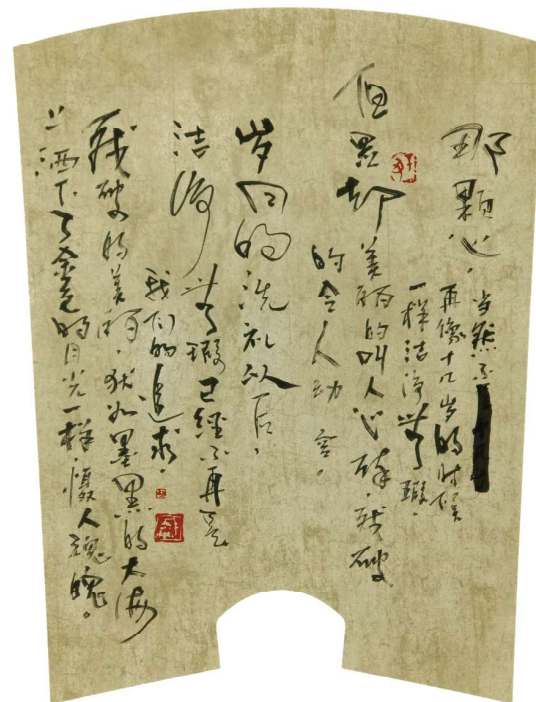
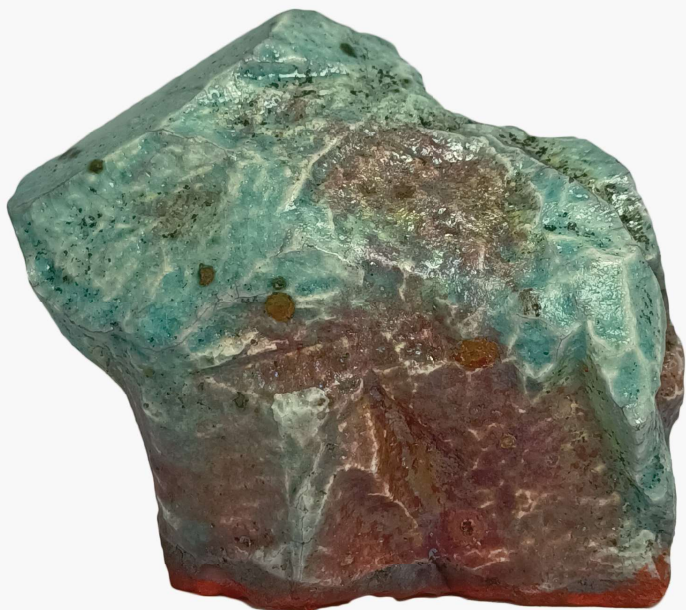
Between
方圓之間



**The Ethereal Shadow of
Loneliness**
飄渺孤鴻影



Stone Bridge
石橋橫天過



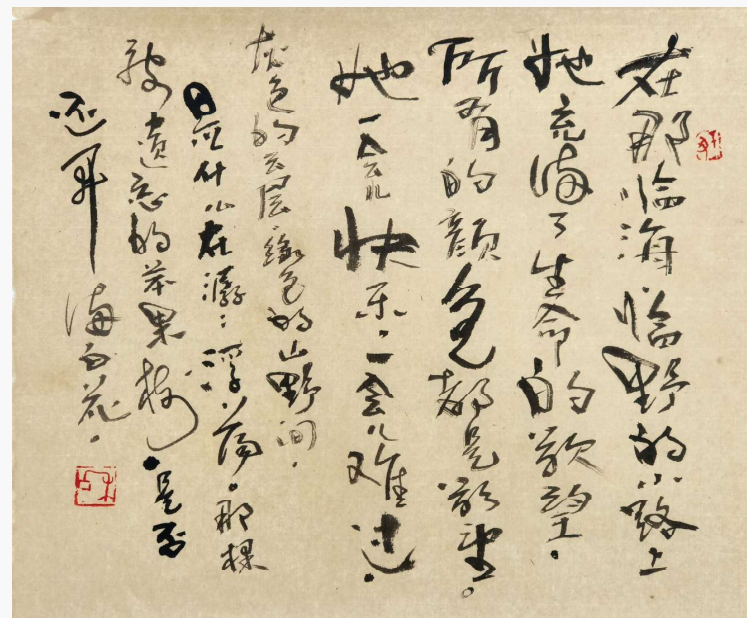
Shattered Beauty

2021

6x7.5x3cm (Ceramic Seal)

49.5x45cm (Calligraphy)

Ceramic, Ink on Paper



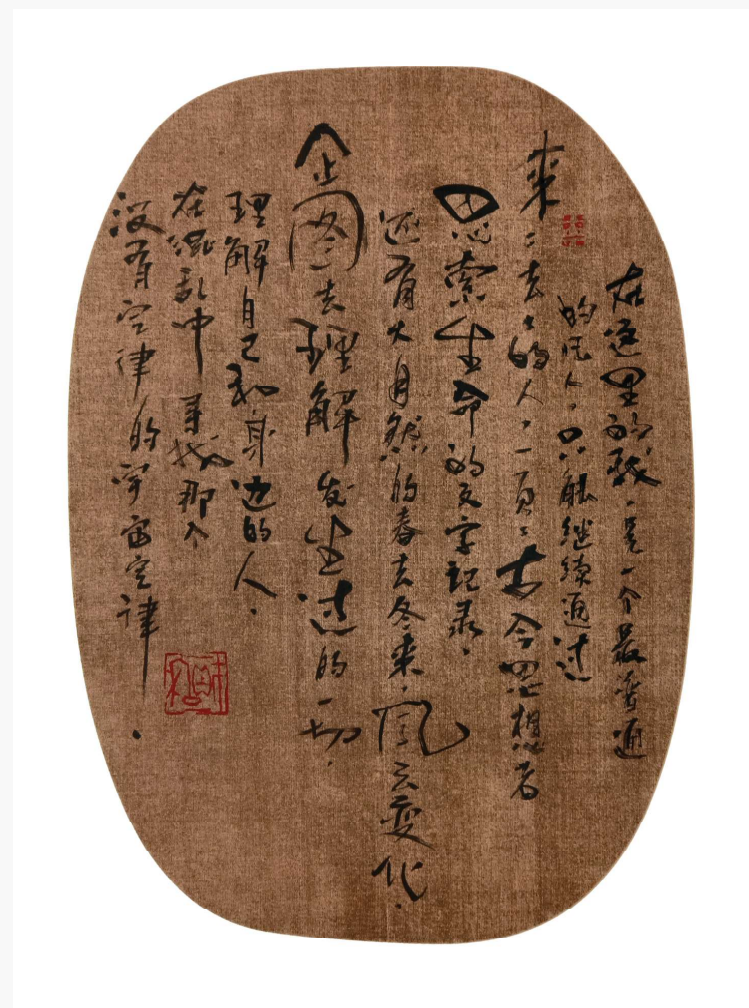
Desire of Life

2021

6.5x4.5x3.5cm (Ceramic Seal)

38x46cm (Calligraphy)

Ceramic, Ink on Paper



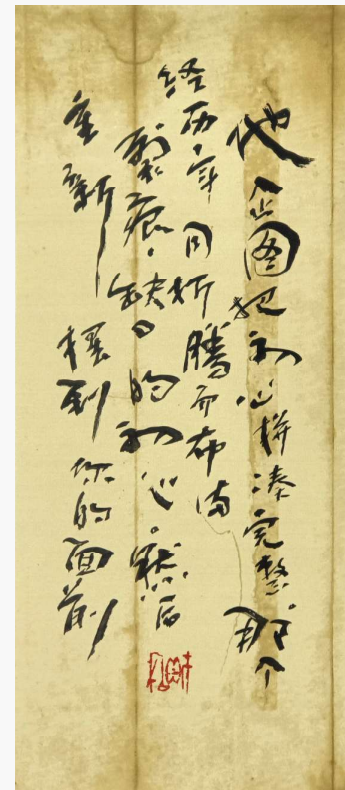
The Changes

2021

6.5x5x5cm (Ceramic Seal)

46.5x34cm (Calligraphy)

Ceramic, Ink on Paper



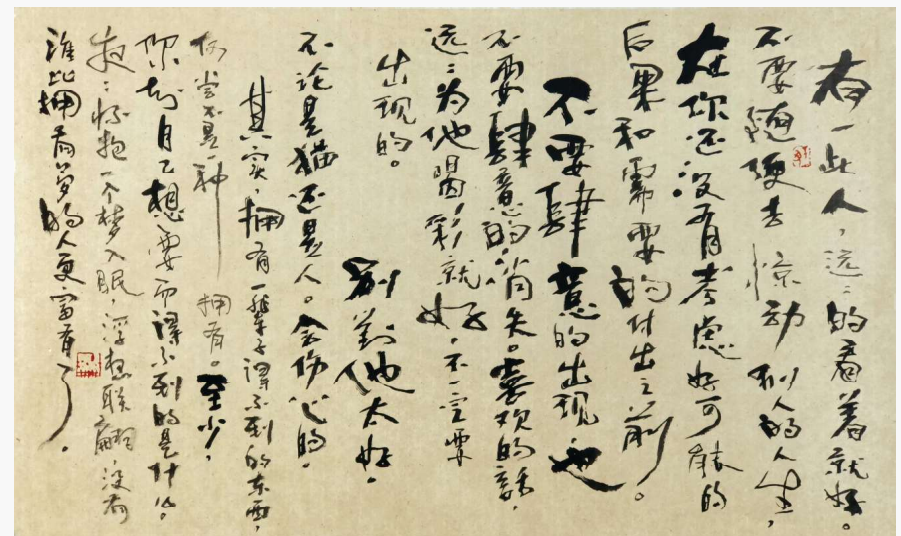
Patchwork of the Heart

2021

12x5x4.5cm (Ceramic Seal)

48x20cm (Calligraphy)

Ceramic, Ink on Paper



Imagination

2021

11.5x6x3.5cm (Ceramic Seal)

46.5x77cm (Calligraphy)

Ceramic, Ink on Paper



A Shot of Clear Light

2022

50x68cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



My Way

2022

50x68cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



A Sad Ballad

2022

50x68cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



Past, Present and Future Lives

2022

50x68cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



The Definition of Happiness

2022

50x68cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



The Flavours of Time

2022

50x68cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



The Long and Short of it

2022

50x150cm

Mixed Media on Rice Paper



Han Bamboo Slips

2022

50x150cm

Mixed Media on Rice Paper

Chaos

2022

50x150cm

Mixed Media on Rice Paper





Fragrant Courtyard

2022

31.5x67cm

Mixed Media on Rice Paper

滿
庭
芳



Eastern Slope (Su Dongpo)

2022

31.5x67cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper

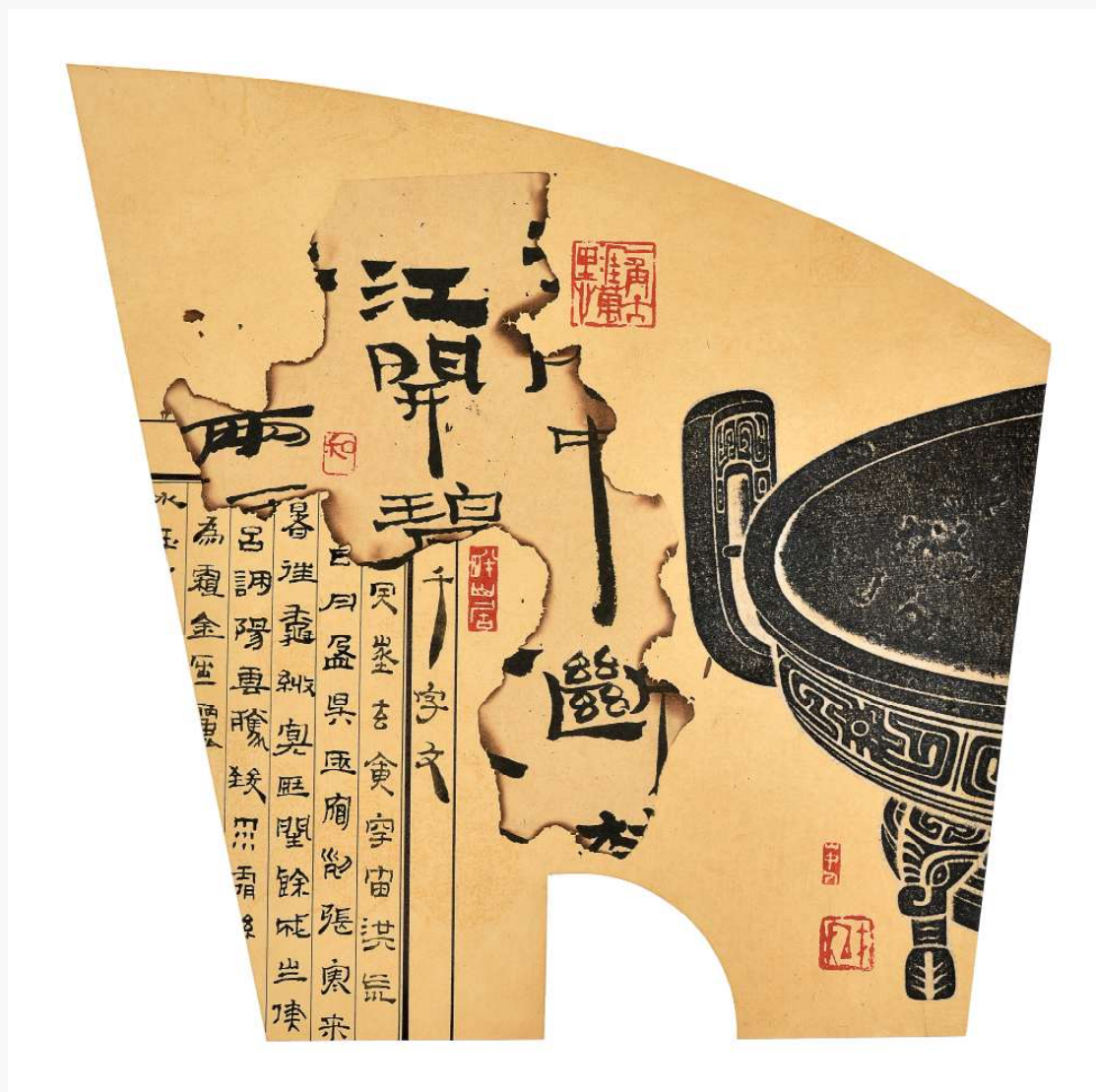


Horns Echoing Over Barracks

2022

35x35cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



When the Cold Arrives, the Heat Goes Away

2022

35x35cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



Anthology of Ancient Texts

2022

33x33cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



Time

2022

34x34cm

Collage and Mixed Media on Rice Paper



The Name of The Rose

2022

25x40cm

Mixed Media on Rice Paper

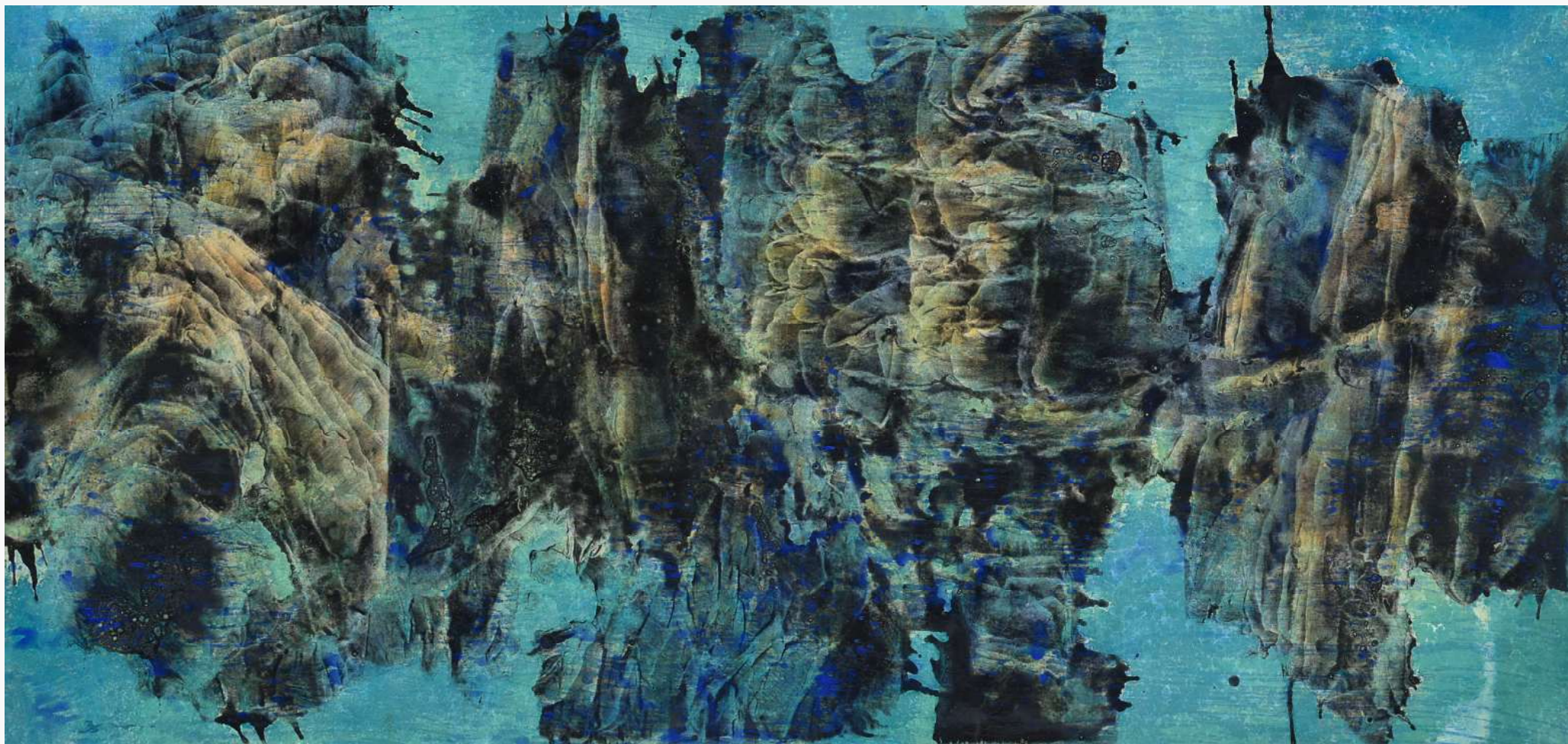


In an Instant

2022

22x42.5cm

Mixed Media on Rice Paper



Fleeting Time

2019

110x230cm

Ink and Acrylic on Paper

似
水
流
年

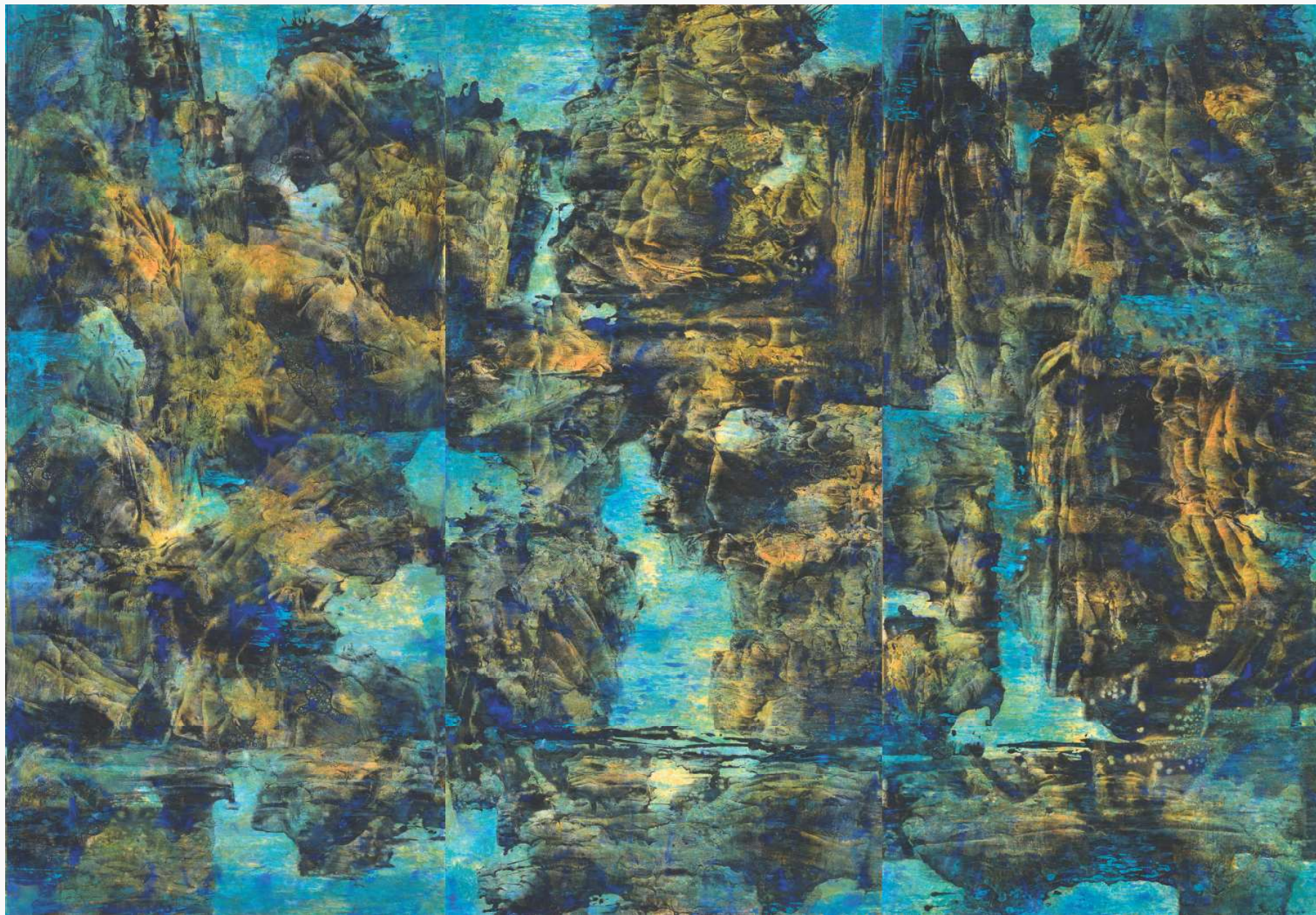
Sentimental Sea

2019

230x220cm

Ink and Acrylic on Paper





Illusion

2019

230x330cm

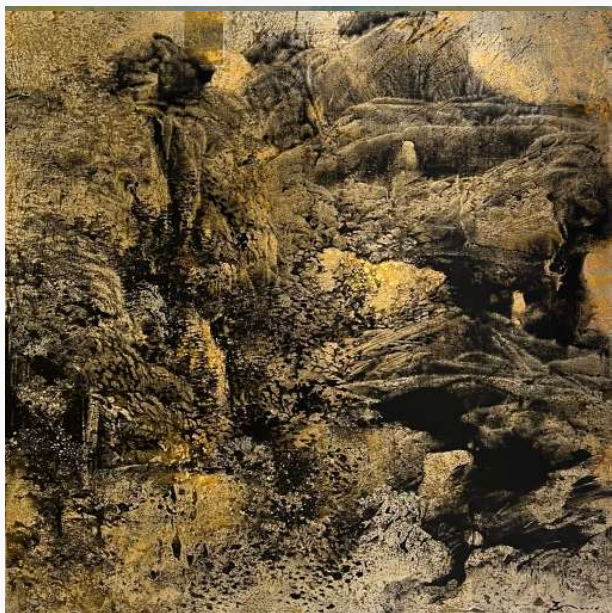
Ink and Acrylic on Paper



First Sight
初晴



Glimpse of Eternity
窥探



Into the Unknown
林深不知处



Realms of the Ethereal
境的层次



走過

Path of Memories

2024

9.5x35x22.5cm

Stoneware Clay with Ash Glaze



超載

Beyond Capacity

2024

31.5x30x16cm

Stoneware Clay with Ash Glaze



海市蜃樓

Mirage

2018

Left: 35(H)x26(L)x20(W)cm

Right: 41(H)x27(L)x24(W)cm

Ceramic and Mahogany Base



浮現

Emerge

2018

19(H)x41(L)x26(W)cm

Stone Seals with LED, Acrylic and Ceramic Base



Oh Chai Hoo (b.1960, Singapore)

Education

1982 | Graduated from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2023 | Timeless Present, iPreciation, Singapore **2021** | Marks on Earth - An Exhibition of Ceramic Seals by Oh Chai Hoo, iPreciation, Singapore **2020** | Afar, iPreciation, Singapore **2019** | Gentle Breeze, Moving Heart, iPreciation, Singapore **2016** | Lifetime of Change, iPreciation, Singapore **2014** | Tropical Zen Garden, Esplanade, Singapore **2013** | Silent Conversation, Utterly Art, Singapore **2006** | Xin Deng – Light of the heart, Art Folio, Singapore **2004** | Xin Ji – Impressions From the Heart, Artfolio, Singapore **2003** | Mu – Wood, Galleri Stockhard, Finland **2001** | Ru Shi – As it is..., Artfolio SPACE, Singapore **2000** | Eastern Grandeur, American Club, Singapore **1999** | Nonentity existence, Artfolio Gallery, Singapore **1998** | Yi Qi Yi Hui – Solo Reiterate, Artfolio SPACE, Singapore

Selected Group Exhibitions

2024 | Teko, iPreciation, Singapore / Art SG, Singapore **2023** | Art SG, Singapore **2022** | Whisper of Stars, iPreciation, Singapore **2021** | Flower, Not, iPreciation, Singapore **2020** | Siaw-Tao's 50th Anniversary Exhibition, Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre, Singapore **2019** | iPreciation 20th Anniversary: Reverie Collection

– 25 Years of Art Collecting Journey, iPreciation, Singapore / Siaw-Tao's 49th Anniversary Exhibition, Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre, Singapore 2017 | Virtuoso In Ink, Art Agenda S.E.A, Chan + Hori Contemporary, Singapore / When Space Dissolves Into Luminosity; Where Flowers Bloom Amidst Rocks, iPreciation, Singapore / Art New York Art Fair 2017, New York, NY, USA / Impressions – Seal Carving Exhibition by Siaw-Tao, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 2016 | Portable Art Week, iPreciation, Singapore / A Thousand Cups & Maybe More, The Art Space, Singapore 2015 | These Sacred Things, (Visual Art Space), Esplanade, Singapore 2014 | We do! We do art!, One East Artspace, Singapore / Nothing in Common, Utterly Art, Singapore / Inkpression, Hakaren Art Gallery, Singapore / Ceramic group show, Scent of time, Singapore 2013 | Season's Interpretation – 2-men show, One East Asia, Singapore 2012 | Song of Nature (with Chua Chon Hee), Utterly Art, Singapore / Ink (mo), Jendela Visual Art Space, Esplanade, Singapore / PREVUE #01, Art Projects Gallery, Singapore 2011 | Siaw-Tao Annual Art Exhibition, Singapore, Modern Creative Calligraphy Exhibition, Singapore / Singapore Sculpture Society 10th Anniversary Exhibition, Singapore 2010 | Siaw - Tao 40th Anniversary Art Exhibition, Singapore 2009 | Jia – Home, Artfolio, Singapore 2006 | Summer Soiree, Artfolio, Singapore / First, The American Club, Singapore / Sculpture Society (Singapore) Exhibition, Esplanade, Singapore 2005 | Modern Calligraphy Exhibition (Travelling Exhibition), China 2004 | Wan – Bowl, National Library, Singapore / The Sixth Face, MICA Building, Singapore / Tapestry, The American Club, Singapore 2003 | Modern Calligraphy Exhibition (Travelling Exhibition), China / GAM Art Exhibition (Ceramic), Toyota City Art Museum, Nagoya, Japan 2002 | Seal Carving Exhibition,

Singapore / Tao Ren Wu Yu – Clay Speaks, 1st Asian Ceramic Exhibition, Nanyang Clay Group, Singapore 2000 | San, Exhibition by Singaporean Artists, King's Road Gallery, London, UK 1999 | V'Spartio (Travelling Exhibition) at Asian and Pacific VSA Festival in Osaka '99, Osaka, Japan / Creative Calligraphy Exhibition '99, Singapore 1996 | Siaw-Tao Art Exhibition, Shantou, China 1994 | Singapore Artist Speak Volume 2 Exhibition, Singapore 1993 | Siaw-Tao Art Exhibition, Shanghai, Hangzhou, China 1991 | The Grand Discovery Art Exhibition, Singapore / International Watercolour Exhibition, Korea and Taiwan 1989 | Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts Lecturer Art Exhibition, Singapore 1987 | IBM Art Award Exhibition, Singapore / National Museum Centenary Art Exhibition, Singapore / Tan Tze Chor Award Exhibition, Singapore 1986 | Not The Singapore River Art Exhibition, Port of Singapore Authority, Artist Encouragement Scheme, Arbor Fine Art, Singapore / Chong Boon Painting of the Year Exhibition, Singapore / Shell Discovery Art Exhibition, Singapore / Tan Tze Chor Award Exhibition, Singapore 1981 | Two-Man Show, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore

Awards

2013 | Siaw-Tao Best Artwork Award, Singapore 2009 | Siaw-Tao Achievement Award, Singapore 1999 | Highly Commendable Award, Abstract Medium 18th UOB Painting Competition, Singapore 1992 | Distinction in Visual Art Creation, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Alumni Association, Singapore

Permanent Collections

Istana Art Collection