

Within Ink,
Beyond Form

筆墨之間・形色之外

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筆墨之間.形色之外 **Within Ink, Beyond Form-12 Years Journey of Tay Bak Chiang**

October 04, 2025

Private Preview - By Invitation Only
2pm - 5pm (Sat)

October 06 - 24 October, 2025

Open to Public
9am - 6pm (Mon - Fri)
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Front Cover Image: Beauty Mark 美人痣, 2024, 100x100cm, Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas

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筆墨之間.形色之外 **Within Ink, Beyond Form** presents twelve years of artistic exploration by Singaporean artist Tay Bak Chiang. Born in 1973, Bak Chiang's practice is rooted in his close observation of nature in Singapore and Southeast Asia — from blooming lotuses and sunbirds to palm groves and weathered stones. Graduated from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 1995 and furthered his studies at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou in 1997, His works reinterpret traditional Chinese ink painting in a modern context.

Over the past twelve years, Tay Bak Chiang has undertaken a journey that intertwines nature, memory, and being, while redefining the boundaries of technique, composition, and medium. This retrospective brings together the artist's most significant bodies of work, tracing the evolution of his artistic practices. From the enduring stillness of the Stone series, to the meditative absence of the Guqin series, and the sensory reflections of the Local Food series, the exhibition offers a lens into Bak Chiang's continued exploration of form, feeling, and cultural memory in different phases of his life.

In the Stone series, Bak Chiang draws upon a quiet encounter in Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, rendering the stones not merely as natural forms but as embodiments of endurance and quiet transcendence. Bak Chiang's 2013

exhibition **The Story of the Stone** further presents stones as metaphors for existence itself — silent and enduring, yet subtly marked by the passage of time. Bak Chiang transcends the literati tradition of “viewing stones” by animating them with personality and memory, as though each form has weathered its own passage of seasons. Rooted in the aesthetics of Chinese ink painting, Bak Chiang's practice has undergone a quiet but significant transformation. Since his 2014 exhibition **Cleavages Fractures Fold**, he has gradually departed from the absorbent delicacy of rice paper, adopting powdered pigments on canvas as his primary medium. This shift is not merely material but conceptual — a rethinking of the relationship between medium, gesture, and surface. Where rice paper absorbs ink, allowing it to bloom and bleed with fluid spontaneity, canvas resists. It holds pigment at the surface, enabling a slow accumulation of colour, texture, and density. In embracing this resistance, Bak Chiang cultivates a new visual language that is grounded in the ethos of ink but articulated through materially different means. The resulting works retain the contemplative sensibility of ink painting, yet their presence is sculptural, tactile, and quietly deliberate.

From stones, Bak Chiang's inquiry turns toward sound and resonance — not only in the acoustic sense, but in the meditative space between form and absence. Since 2015,

the guqin (classical Chinese zither) has become a central motif in his practice, functioning as both subject and symbol. Rendered through ambiguous perspectives, with hollowed bodies and only the faintest suggestions of strings, the instrument is less a literal object than an evocation — a trace of cultural memory shaped by temporal distance, geographic displacement, and the erosion of tradition. Such engagement with absence and incompleteness extends into his 2018 exhibition **The Fisherman and the Woodcutter**, where Bak Chiang continues to embrace asymmetry, fracture, and restraint. Through minimalist strokes, he invites viewers into a contemplative space that acknowledges impermanence and the imbalance of life.

In recent years, Bak Chiang's practice has opened further into the fragments of lived experience. The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic marked a profound turning point in Bak Chiang's practice. With Singapore's familiar rhythms disrupted, Bak Chiang turned inward by reflecting on the fragile connections between self, sustenance, and society. This contemplation crystallised in **Flavours of Life (2022)**, where local street food and hawker culture became the central motifs. Through bold colours and simplified forms, Bak Chiang capturing the collective disorientation and quiet resilience of life during the pandemic. Following this thematic divergence, Bak Chiang returns to his stone series in **Fragments of Life (2024)**, with renewed focus

on the complexities of human experience. The body of works are drawn from affective memory of the artist, mostly fragmentary impressions from everyday life. As Bak Chiang reflects, "life is composed of many unspeakable fragments." This sensibility finds expression in his paintings, where the stone becomes a fractured form — textured, abstracted, and layered with shifting meaning. Compared to his earlier works, the stones in Bak Chiang's new pieces pulse with a newfound sensuousness. Their softened edges, luminous pigments, and tactile surfaces evoke a sense of intimacy. In "Beauty Mark", the tiny mole punctuates the luminous surface like a secret carried beneath the skin. It transforms the stone from a distant symbol of endurance into an intimate body, vulnerable and alive, where sensibility, desire, and touch converge. "Blue Planet" carries a deeply sentimental undertone. Inspired by the view of Earth from space, it evokes the image of a fragile oasis adrift in the vast darkness, quietly reminding us of both the vulnerability of life and our longing for connection.

《筆墨之間．形色之外》呈現新加坡藝術家鄭木彰十二年來的藝術探索旅程。生於1973年，鄭木彰的創作深根於對新加坡及東南亞自然生態的細膩觀察——從蓮花綻放與太陽鳥掠影，到椰林婆娑與風蝕石塊，他以獨特方式將自然之美化為畫中意境。1995年畢業於新加坡南洋美術學院，1997年前往中國杭州中國美術學院深造，鄭木彰的作品將中國傳統水墨精神轉化為當代表達，在傳統與當代之間架起一道橋梁。

在過去十二年間，鄭木彰走出了一條融合自然、記憶與生命感知的藝術之路，也不斷挑戰技法、構圖與媒材的邊界。本次小回顧展匯聚了藝術家最具代表性的系列作品，從《石頭》系列的凝重靜謐、《古琴》系列的虛實對話，到《食物》系列的味覺映像，展覽呈現其藝術語言的發展軌跡與對文化的持續思索。

在《石》系列中，鄭木彰回溯他在武吉知馬自然保護區的一次靜默邂逅，將石頭不僅作為自然物描繪，更賦予其堅韌與超然的精神象徵。2013年個展《石頭記》中，石頭成為對生命存在的隱喻——沉默而恆久，卻悄然記錄著時光流轉。他超越了文人賞石的傳統，使石頭具備個性與記憶，彷彿每一塊都歷經四季更迭，擁有其獨特的生命軌跡。

鄭木彰的水墨實踐在美學根基不變的前提下，經歷了一次內斂卻深刻的轉型。自2014年《斧劈皴》展覽起，他逐漸從宣紙的吸墨輕盈，轉向以畫布與礦物粉顏料為主的創作方式。這不僅是媒材的轉變，更是觀念上的革新——關於媒介、筆觸與畫面之間關係的重新思考。宣紙吸墨，墨跡游走自然滲化；畫布則抗拒吸收，使顏料浮於表面，色層得以緩慢累積。在這份「抗拒」中，他發展出一種新的視覺語言，既植根於水墨精神，又以質感與厚度展開具雕塑感與冥想性的表現。

從石頭出發，鄭木彰的創作視角進一步延展至對聲音與共鳴的探索——不僅是聽覺意義上的聲音，更是形式與空缺之間的冥想空間。自2015年起，「古琴」這一中國傳統樂器成為他作品中的重要意象，既是描繪對象，也是一種文化象徵。在他的畫中，古琴往往以空洞琴身與若隱若現的琴弦呈現。在模糊的構圖中，古琴成為一種喚起記憶的輪廓，而非具象之物。它既是時間流逝、地理遷移與傳統稀釋的結果，也是一種文化缺席的痕跡。

這種對留白與不完整性的持續關注，在2018年《漁樵問答》展覽中進一步體現。他以極簡筆觸描繪不對稱與斷裂，以克制的形式邀請觀者進入一個承認無常與失衡的沉思之境。

近年來，鄭木彰的創作更深入生活的碎片性經驗。新冠疫情的爆發成為其創作的重要轉折點。在熟悉的社會節奏被打亂之際，他轉向內在，反思自我、食物與社會之間的脆弱關聯。這一思考在2022年的《五味雜陳》中結晶，本地街頭小吃與小販文化成為畫中主角。透過鮮明色彩與簡化形體，他捕捉了疫情中集體的迷失與堅韌。

在經歷這段主題轉向後，鄭木彰於2024年再度回歸《石》系列，在《生活碎片》展覽中呼應人類情感的複雜性。這一系列作品多取材自藝術家的情感記憶，來自日常生活中支離破碎的印象。正如他所言：「人生是由許多無法言說的片段構成。」這種感知在他的繪畫中獲得具象體現：石頭成為破碎的形態——質感多變、形體抽象、意涵游移。與早期作品相比，新作中的石塊脈動著更為強烈的感官氣息。柔和的邊緣、發光的顏料與可觸的肌理，共同喚起一種親密感。正如《美人痣》所呈現，一顆細小的痣點綴於石頭表面，宛如藏於皮膚之下的祕密，將石頭由遙遠的堅毅象徵轉化為充滿感性、欲望與觸感的身體。《藍色星球》則充滿濃烈的情感色彩，靈感來自太空中俯瞰地球的視角——那是一顆漂浮於浩瀚黑暗中的脆弱綠洲，靜靜提醒我們生命的渺小與對連結的渴望。



Unsheathe

出鞘

2012

49x180cm

Pigments and Chinese Ink on Paper



Silent No More

不再沉默

2011

123x180cm

Pigments and Chinese Colours on Paper

Second to None

无二

2012

140x140cm

Pigments and Chinese Ink on Canvas



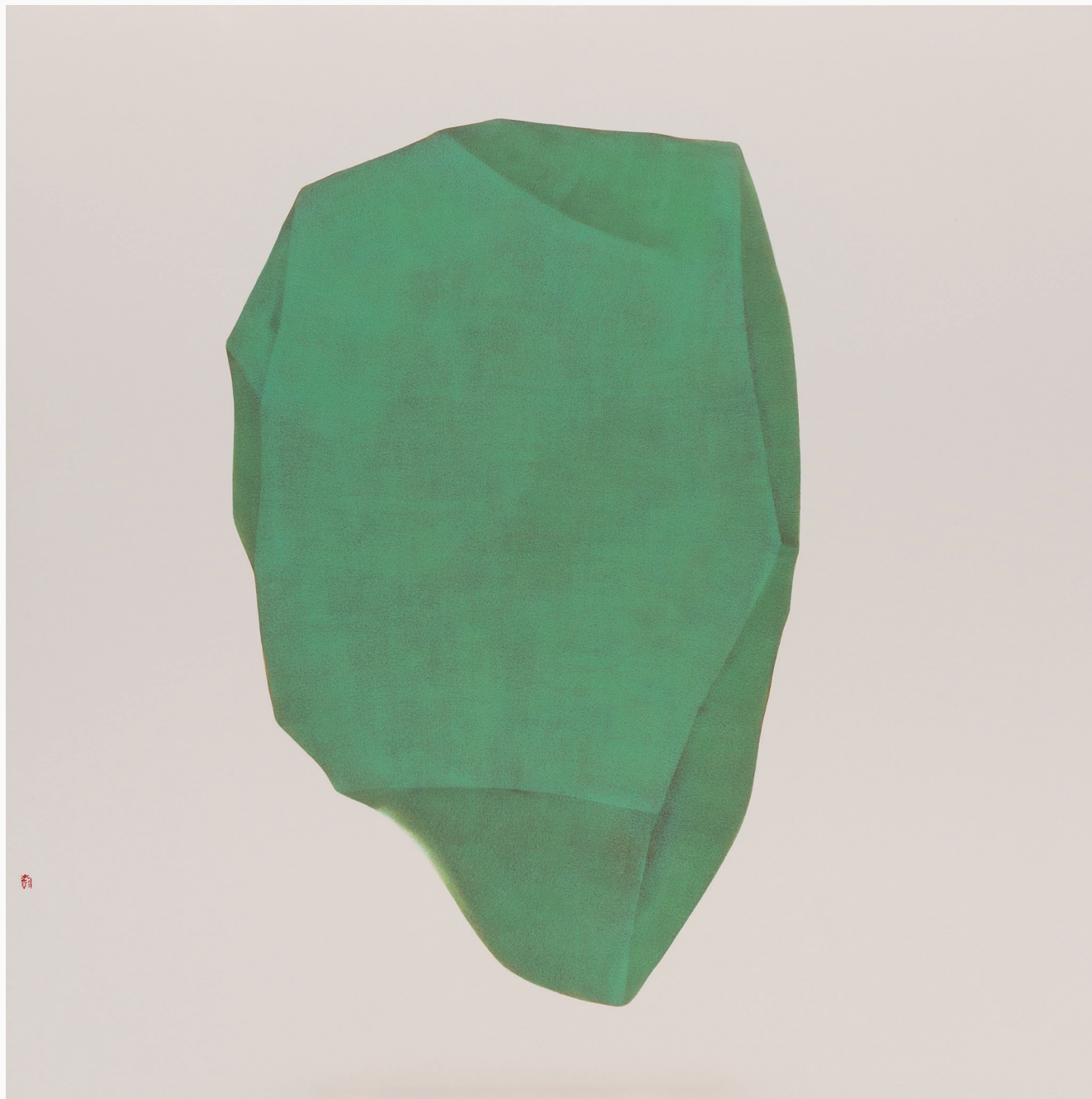
Cats Eye

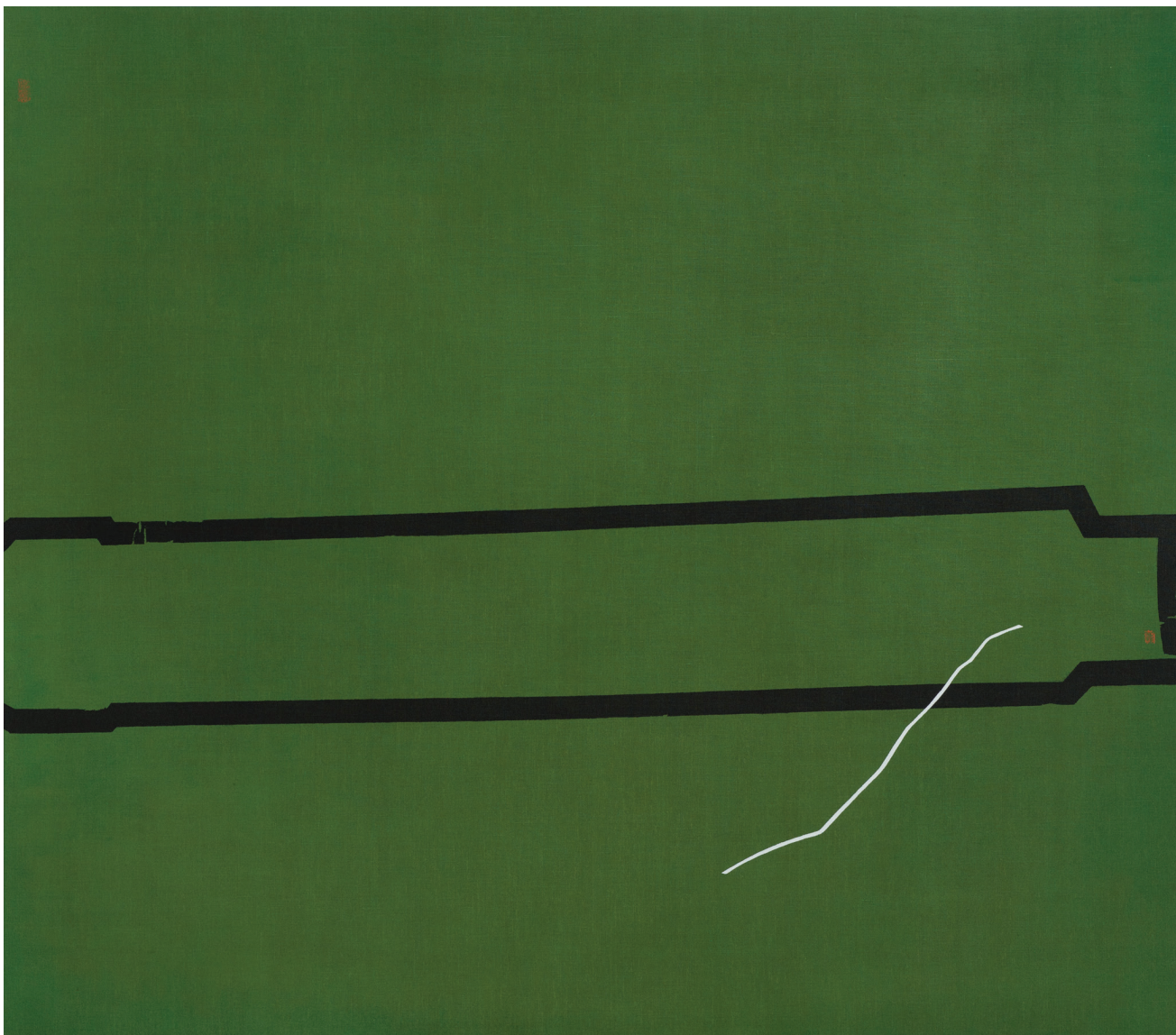
猫眼

2014

140x140cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas





Guqin Series Green Silk

古琴系列之绿绮

2015

140x160cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



Guqin Series Sonorous

古琴系列之号钟

2015

140x140cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



Mending the Sky

补天

2015

100x100cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



Under Wraps

藏机

2015

100x100cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas

Escape
金蝉脱壳

2016

100x100cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



Awakening

古刹闻禅

2016

160x140cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



Originally There Was Nothing...

本来无一物,何处惹尘埃

2015

100x100cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



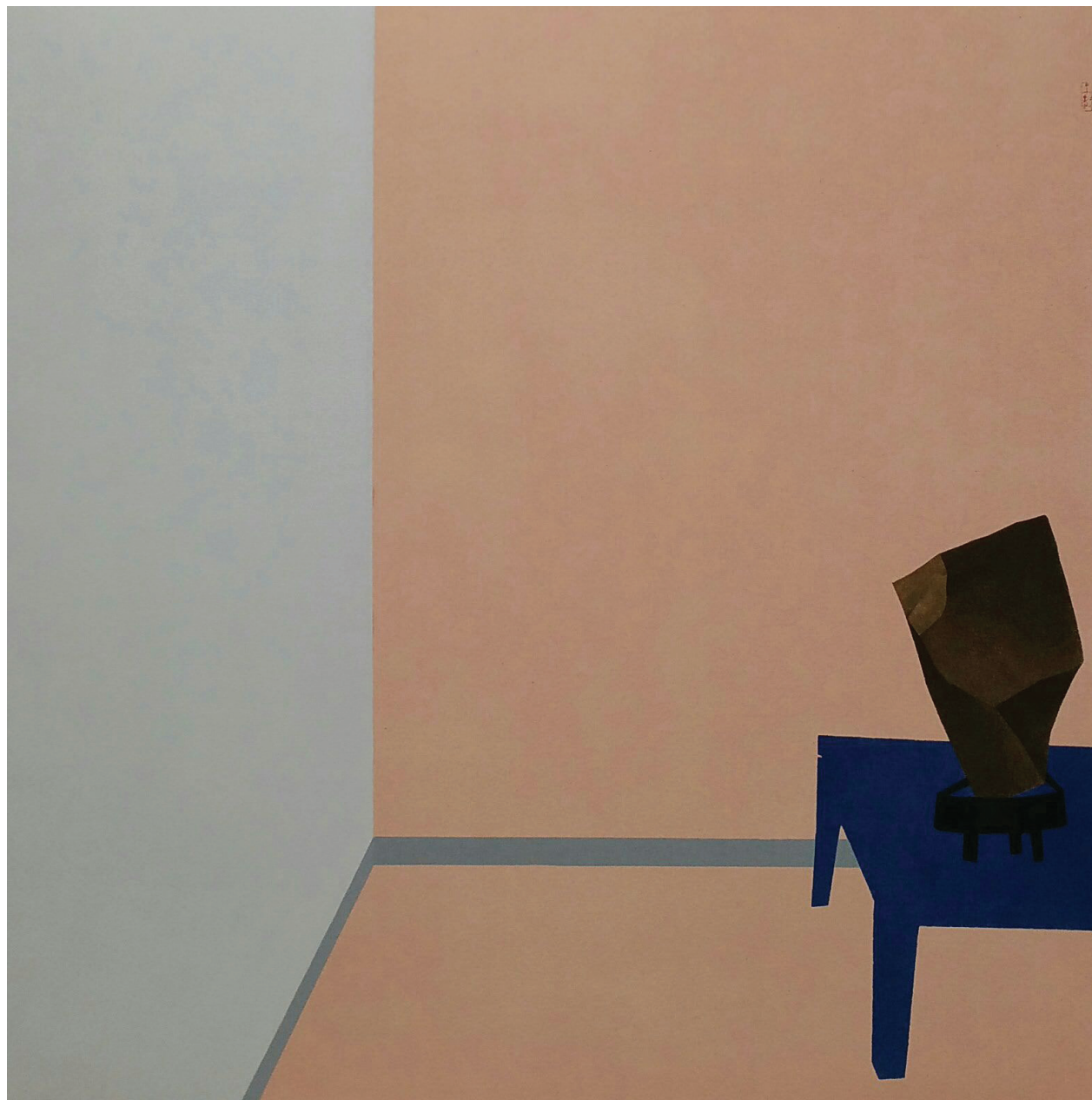
Room With A View

室雅何须大

2015

100x100cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas





Overtones

弦外之音

2016

100x100cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



Stringless Qin

无弦琴

2015

140x140cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



After the Feast

盛宴过后

2015

140x140cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas

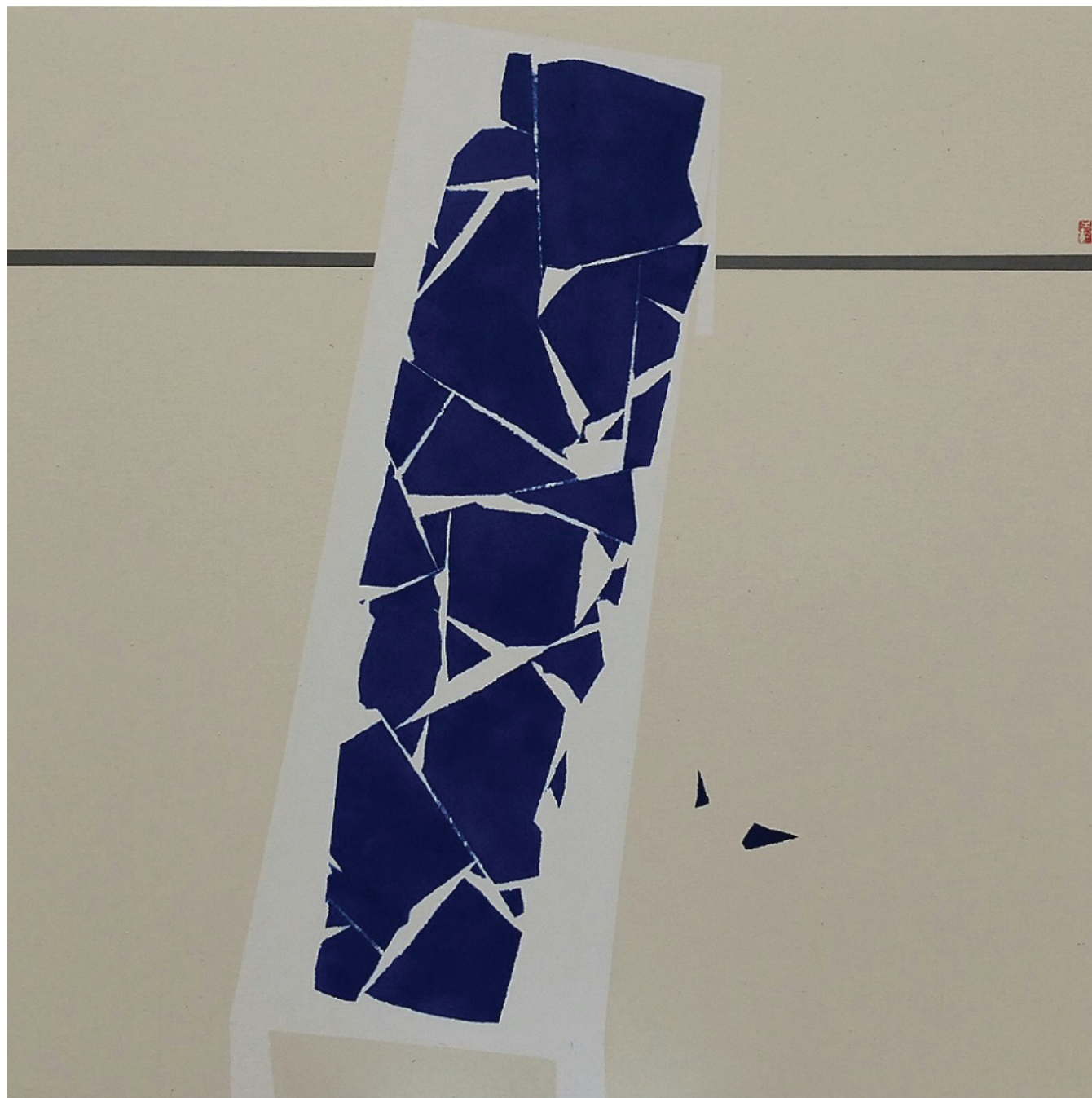
Shards

碎片

2016

70x70cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



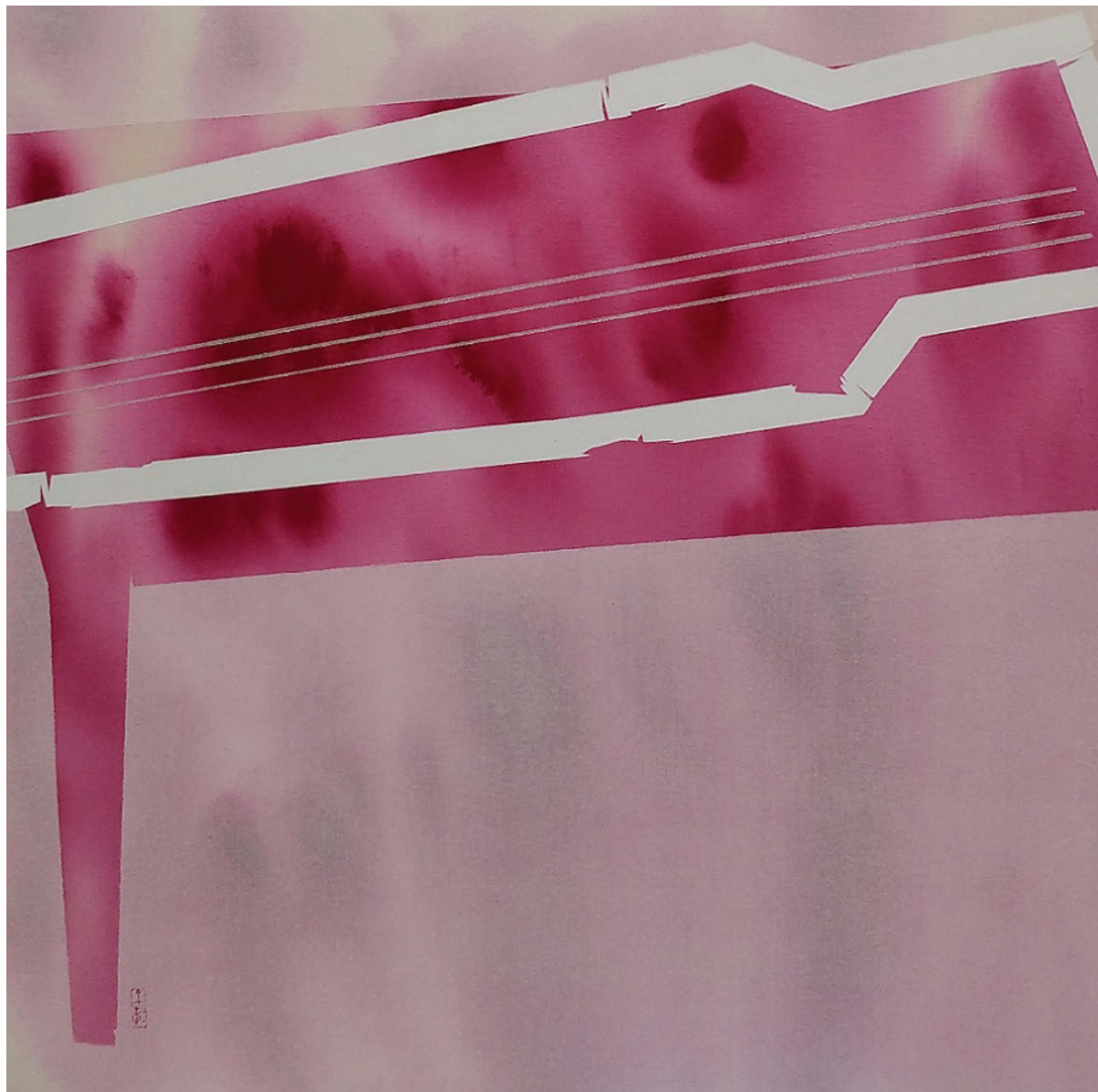
Three Strings

三弦

2016

70x70cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



Heartstrings

心弦

2016

90x90cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas



The Tiger Roars
虎嘯
2017
160x140cm
Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas





**The Conversation Between Fisherman
and a Woodcutter**

漁樵問答

2018

140x140cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas

Shennong Shi 神農

Music Left by the Saint
大聖遺音
2018
180x140cm
Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas
Lingji Style 靈機式





The Derelict Qin

破琴一張

2018

180x180cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas

Lingji Style 靈機式



Clouds Over the Xiaoxiang

潇湘水雲

2018

140x140cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas

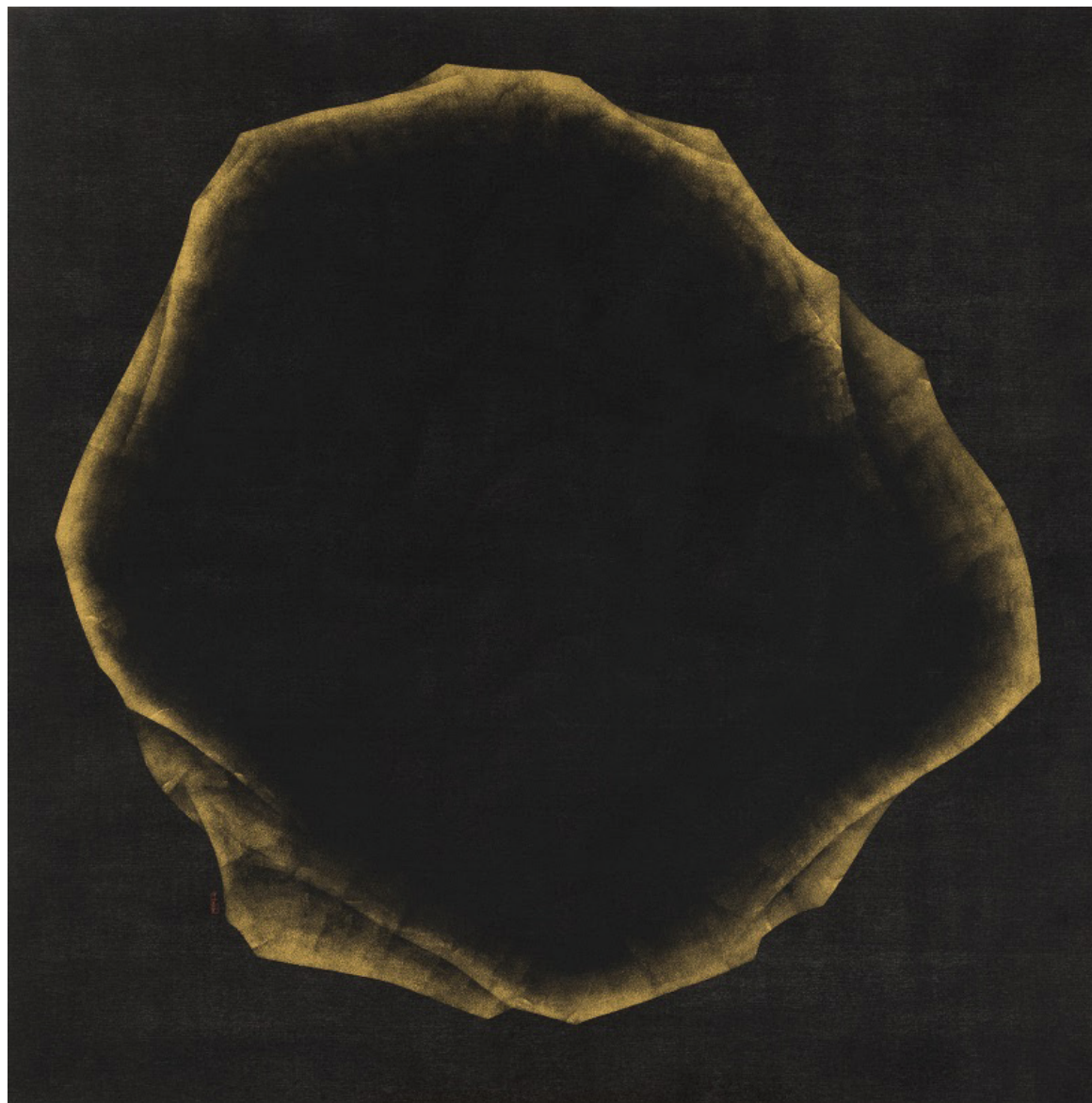
A Faraway Time

遠古

2019

140x140cm

Pigments and Acrylic on Canvas





From a Distance
 何謂遠方
 2022
 69x69cm
 Ink and Colour on Paper



Food for Thought
 精神糧食
 2022
 69x69cm
 Ink and Colour on Paper



Breakfast

早餐

2022

28x139cm

Ink and Colour on Paper



Three Meals a Day

一日為三餐

2022

34x139cm

Ink and Colour on Paper



Steaming Hot

熱騰騰

2022

139x23cm

Ink and Colour on Paper



Takeaway Bliss

打包亦是一種幸福

2022

139x23cm

Ink and Colour on Paper



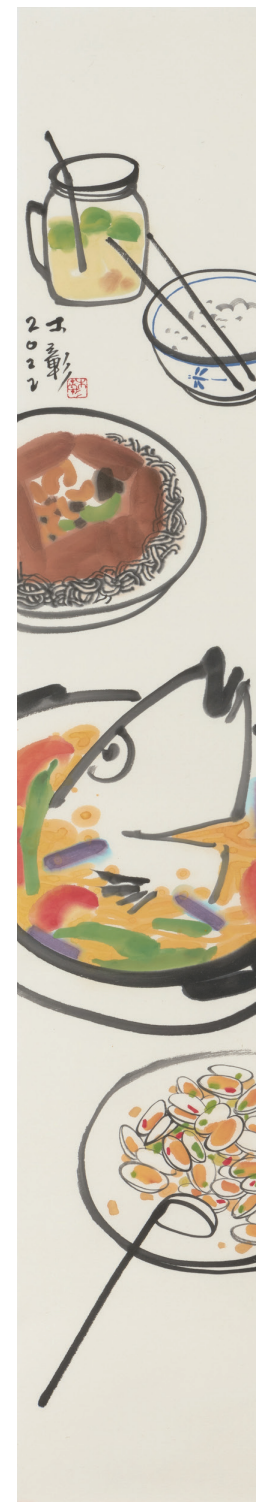
Abundance

年年有鱼

2022

139x23cm

Ink and Colour on Paper



Fish Head Curry

咖喱鱼头

2022

139x23cm

Ink and Colour on Paper

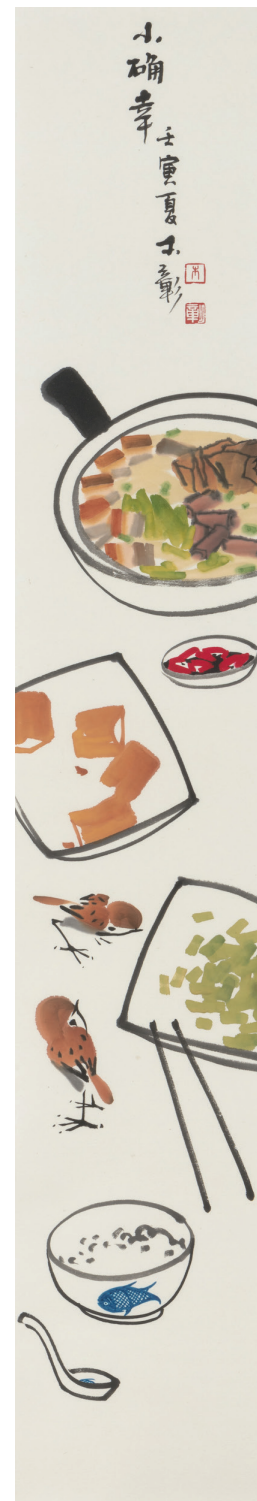
A Little Happiness

小確幸

2022

139x23cm

Ink and Colour on Paper





Oodles of Joy

無麵不歡

2022

34x139cm

Ink and Colour on Paper



Buffet of Consequences

人間烟火

2022

34x139cm

Ink and Colour on Paper



Beauty Mark

美人痣

2024

100x100cm

Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas

Flutter

怦然心動

2024

100x100cm

Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas



First Love

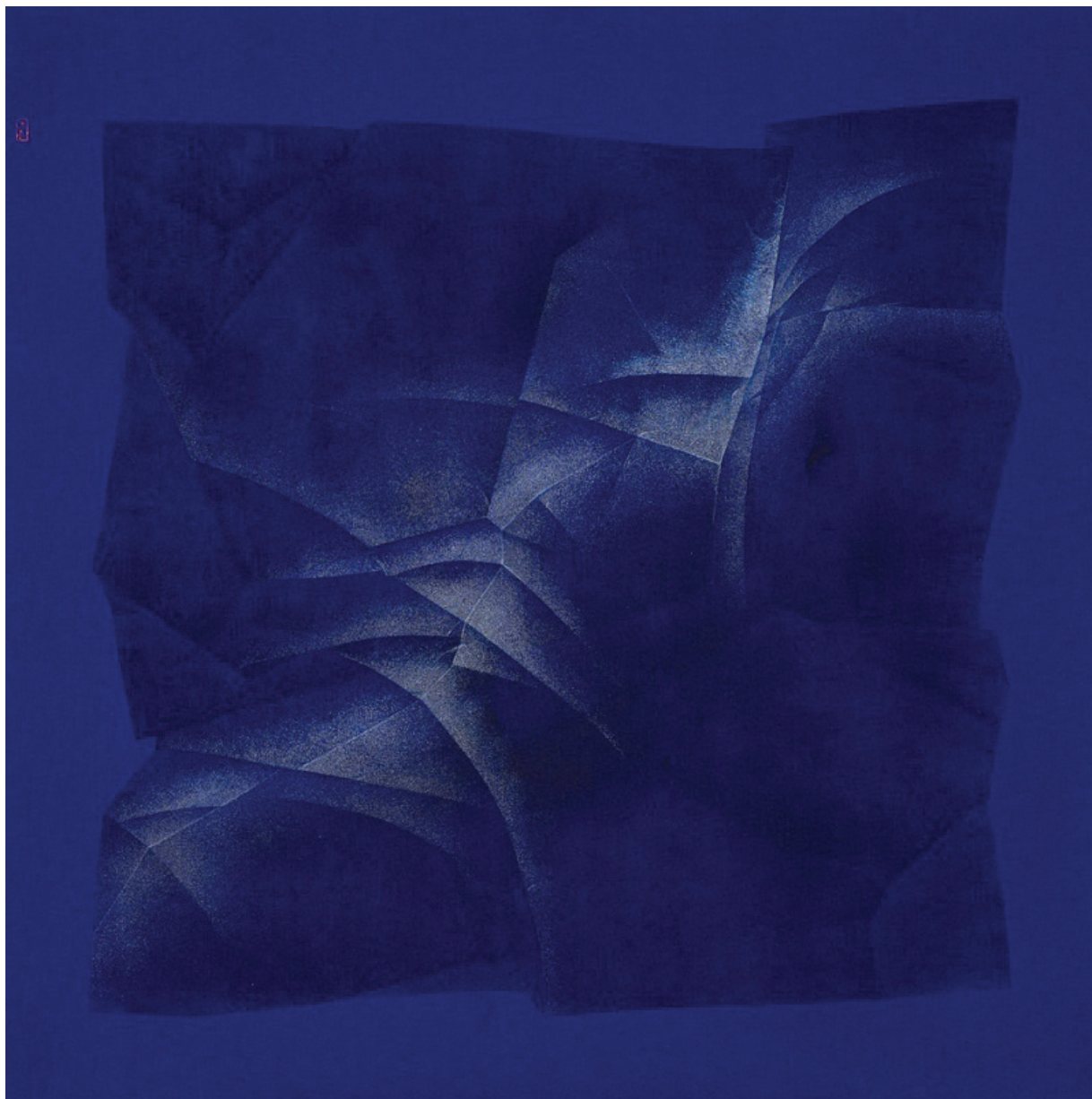
初戀

2024

100x100cm

Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas





Silent Longing

思念無聲

2024

100x100cm

Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas



From Now On, Flowers for Myself

從此鮮花贈自己

2024

140x140cm

Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas



Century of Change

百年變局

2024

150x140cm

Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas



**Nibble Like a Silkworm,
Swallow Like a Whale**

蠶食鯨吞

2024

170x170cm

Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas



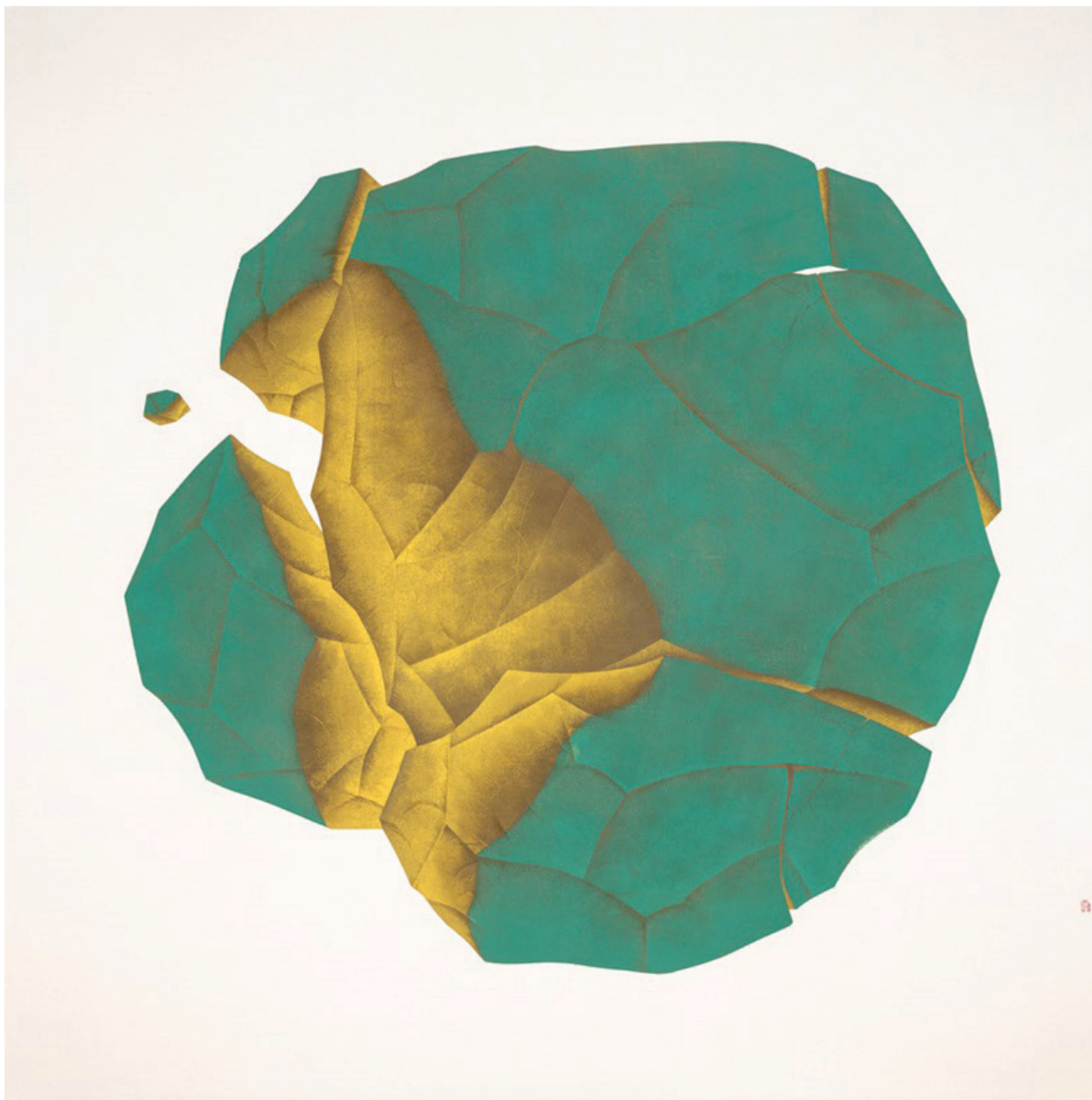
Blue Planet

藍色星球

2024

170x170cm

Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas



Breakthrough and Rebirth

破壳重生

2024

160x160cm

Acrylic and Pigments on Canvas



Tay Bak Chiang (b.1973, Singapore)

Education

- 1998 | Graduated from China Academy of Fine Art, People's Republic of China
 1995 | Diploma in Fine Art, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2024 | 《生活的碎片》 Fragments of Life, iPreciation, Singapore
 2022 | 《五味雜陳》 Flavours of Life, iPreciation, Singapore
 2018 | 《漁樵問答》 The Fisherman and the Woodcutter, iPreciation, Singapore / 《積石成山》 From Stone to Mountains, Cube Gallery, London, UK
 2016 | 《隔帘看月·隔水看花》 From A Distance, iPreciation, Art Basel Hong Kong / 《回鸣, 艺典空间》 Revisit, Yidian Space, Beijing, China
 2015 | 《青花·朱印》 BlueWhite Vermilion, Chan Hampe Galleries, Singapore / 《俠之大者》 The Chivalrous Hero, Serindia Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
 2014 | 《頑石》 Sentience, Chan Hampe Galleries, Singapore / 《石頭記》 The Story of the Stone, Art Projects Gallery, Singapore / 《斧劈皴》 Cleavages Fractures Fold, iPreciation, Singapore
 2013 | 《劍氣》 The Breath of A Blade, Jendela, Esplanade — Theatres on the Bay, Singapore
 2012 | 《且聽風吟》 Hear the Wind Sing, Art Projects Gallery, Hong Kong
 2011 | 《天工》 Ingenuity, Chan Hampe Galleries, Singapore
 2010 | 《呼吸之間》 Between Breaths, Artfolio Gallery, Singapore
 2003 | 《法自畫生》 Fa Zi Hua Sheng, Plum Blossoms Gallery, Singapore

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2024 | Art SG 2024, Singapore
 2023 | The Good, the Bad & the Ugly Show, 7879 Gallery, Singapore / 《嘿，篆刻还可这样玩！》 Carving Possibilities, de Suantio Gallery, SMU, Singapore
 2019 | 《台北当代艺术博览会》 Taipei Dangdai, Taiwan
 2018 | 《喚風》 Beckoning of the Breeze, Visual Arts Centre, Singapore / 《岩石裂縫》 In the Cleft of the Rock, Pontone Gallery, Taichung, Taiwan / 《磊》 Moving Mountains, Artsembly, The Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay, Singapore
 2017-2018 | Art New York, USA
 2017 | 《墨意》 Ink and Mind, NAFA Galleries, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore / Singapore - Japan Ink Painting Exchange Exhibition, Visual Arts Centre, Singapore / 《印·象——嘯濤篆刻展》 Impressions, Oriental Art & Cultural Center,

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia / 80by80, Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay, Singapore / Edinburgh Art Fair, Scotland, UK / Art Miami, USA

2016-2017 | 《迷你迷你小品展》Ini Mini Mini Mo, Visual Arts Centre, Singapore

2016 | Art Stage, Singapore

2015 | Art Paris, France / Art Silicon Valley, iPreciation, Singapore / Portable Art Week, iPreciation, Singapore/ Southeast Asian Abstraction: A New Dialogue, Sotheby's, Singapore

2014-2015 | Art Taipei, Taiwan

2014 | Art Southampton Art Fair, New York, USA / 20/21 International Art Fair, London, UK / Affordable Art Fair, Battersea, London, UK / Inkpression, Hakaren Art Gallery, Singapore

2013-2014 | Affordable Art Fair, Hong Kong

2013 | Cascadence - Singapore Redux, iPreciation, Singapore / A Thing of Two About the Bed, FOST Gallery, Singapore / Made in Singapore - Three Quarters of a Century, NAFA Galleries, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore

2012 | Cityscapes Unbound, OCBC Centre, Singapore / Crisis of Monumentality, Chan Hampe Galleries, Singapore / 《诗琴画艺》 Poetic Charm, Esplanade Recital Studio, Singapore / 《墨》 Mò, Jendela, Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay, Singapore

2011-2014 | Affordable Art Fair, Singapore

2011 | Asia Top Gallery Hotel Art Fair, Grand Hyatt Seoul, Korea, National Museum of Gwang-Ju, Korea / Art for the Heart - Perpetual Spirit, in support of Mercy Relief, Helutrans, Singapore

2010 | Live Our Dreams Community Paintings, The Arts House, Singapore / Celebrating Asian Art, Artfolio Gallery, Singapore / Space + Imagination, Korea Singapore Contemporary Art Exchange Exhibition, Jeollanamdo Okgwa Art Museum, Korea / Now and Next - Modern Arts of Korea, Japan, Singapore, National Museum of Gwang-Ju, Korea

2009 | Nanyang - 70 Years After, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts Gallery, Singapore / Nanyang in Paris, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts Gallery, Singapore

2005 | Singapore Art Fair, Suntec City Convention Hall, Singapore / Singapore Art Show, Singapore Management University, Singapore

2004 | Siaw-Tao Chinese Seal-Carving Calligraphy and Painting Society Exhibition, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia / SingArt - A Brush with Lion - Public Art Exhibition, Singapore / Internationale Cite des Arts, Paris, France

2003-2009 | International Chinese Ink Painting Exhibition, Tokyo, Japan

2003 | International Chinese Ink Painting Exhibition, Hangzhou, China / Singapore Creative Calligraphy and Painting Exhibition, Chengdu and Shanghai, China

2002-2012 | Teochew Art Exhibition, Ngee Ann Cultural Centre, Singapore

2002 | Urban Artists 2002, MICA Building Atrium, Singapore

2001 | Ten Contemporary Singapore Artists Joint Exhibition, MICA Building Atrium, Singapore / Nokia Singapore Art, Singapore

2000 | AD2000 Kaohsiung 14th International Art Interchange Exhibition, Taiwan

1999 | Nokia Singapore Art, Singapore

1997-2000 | NAFA Alumni Association Art Exhibition, Singapore / Singapore Art Society Annual Art Exhibition, Singapore

1995-2017 | Siaw-Tao Chinese Seal-Carving Calligraphy and Painting Society Annual Exhibition, Singapore

Talk

2017 | An Evening with Singaporean Painter Tay Bak Chiang, presented by the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations in New York and Asia Society, 9 March

Awards

2003 | First Prize (Traditional Chinese Medium Category), 22nd UOB Painting of the Year Competition, Singapore

2002 | First Prize (Traditional Chinese Medium Category), 22nd UOB Painting of the Year Competition, Singapore

2000 | First Prize, Traditional Chinese Medium 19th UOB Painting of the Year Competition, Singapore

1999 | First Prize, Singapore Turf Club Art Competition / Distinction Award, Chinese Painting Category, Dr Tan Sze Chor Art Award, Singapore

1995 | 16th Shell Discovery Art Award, Singapore

Selected Permanent Collections

The Istana, Singapore | Mandarin Oriental, Singapore | Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore | Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations, New York | Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore | National Arts Council, Singapore | National Gallery Singapore, Singapore | OCBC Bank, Singapore | Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore | Shangri-La Hotel at The Shard, London, UK | Simmons & Simmons Contemporary Art Collection, Singapore | Singapore Turf Club, Singapore | SingTel, Singapore | SC Global Developments, Singapore | Swiss Re, Singapore | United Overseas Bank, Singapore