

Cheong Kiet Cheng

*We Are Dreaming and  
Awake In the Air*


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22 June - 18 July 2021



Linger (2021) Close up



*"My mind was broadened and my life became much more colourful because of this trip"*

- Cheong Kiet Cheng

# *We Are Dreaming and Awake In the Air*

Cheong Kiet Cheng's fourth solo exhibition, *We Are Dreaming and Awake In the Air* influenced by her voyage, upbringing and everyday life, the show brings together new works that delve deeper into the creation of fictional creatures and narratives that continue to address the artist's reflections on womanhood and human relationship with nature.

Buddhist myths and beliefs have long been a source of inspiration for Cheong whose artistic practice is centred on spirituality and fiction. Practising drawing as a meditative practice since her stay in Japan for the 2019 UOB-Fukuoka Asian Art Museum Residency Programme, she continues to discover how other cultures connect with spirituality. Some of the paintings in the exhibition depict scenes in North India, where she travelled with her husband and visited two holy sites: Bodh Gaya and the Ganges river.



*Under the Buddha Tree* (2020) depicts imaginary creatures - animals, ghosts and humans - from different dimensions, gathered under the Bodhi Tree. Known as the 'tree of awakening', Kiet Chieng was fascinated by the way it unites and serves people of different genders, races, and origins.

*Under the Buddha Tree* (2020)

Upon returning to Malaysia, she focused on finding the right medium to express the tranquility and positivity that the trip left her with, resulting in her latest watercolour paintings. While her earlier works were painted in acrylic, the transparency of watercolour pigments allows her to eloquently translate the sense of peace. Yet, the medium doesn't fail to surprise her, as its fluidity creates stains and possibilities to be transformed into forms of mythical creatures.



*Yin and Yang* (2020)

In *Yin and Yang* (2020), the artist presents three characters to introduce the Chinese concept of dualism. Uniting the female sea spirit (Yin) and male mountain spirit (Yang) with the creator of the universe positioned in between, the painting conveys her hope for an equal world while illustrating our interdependence within the ecosystem.

Although Cheong's works are fantastical in nature, some of her characters correspond to her family members and self. In *Loving You* (2020), she harnesses self-portraiture, characterising herself as a crocodile-like figure next to her elder daughter. On the artist's crocodile head are multiple expressions that articulate her struggles of juggling between her personal emotions and keeping her daughter happy. This painting, as with all of her works, shows how her pictorial language is always indirectly related to her inquiries into philosophy, spirituality, womanhood and the environment.



*Loving You* (2020)

*We Are Dreaming and Awake in the Air* culminates in an explosion of colour, with an array of Cheong's watercolour paintings and intricate ink drawings that form a web of stories about her life.



**All that I have**  
Watercolor on canvas  
165cm x 119cm  
2020



All that I have (2020) Close up



**Birth by the tree**  
Ink on canvas  
57.5cm x 46.5cm  
2020





Birth by the tree (2020) Close up



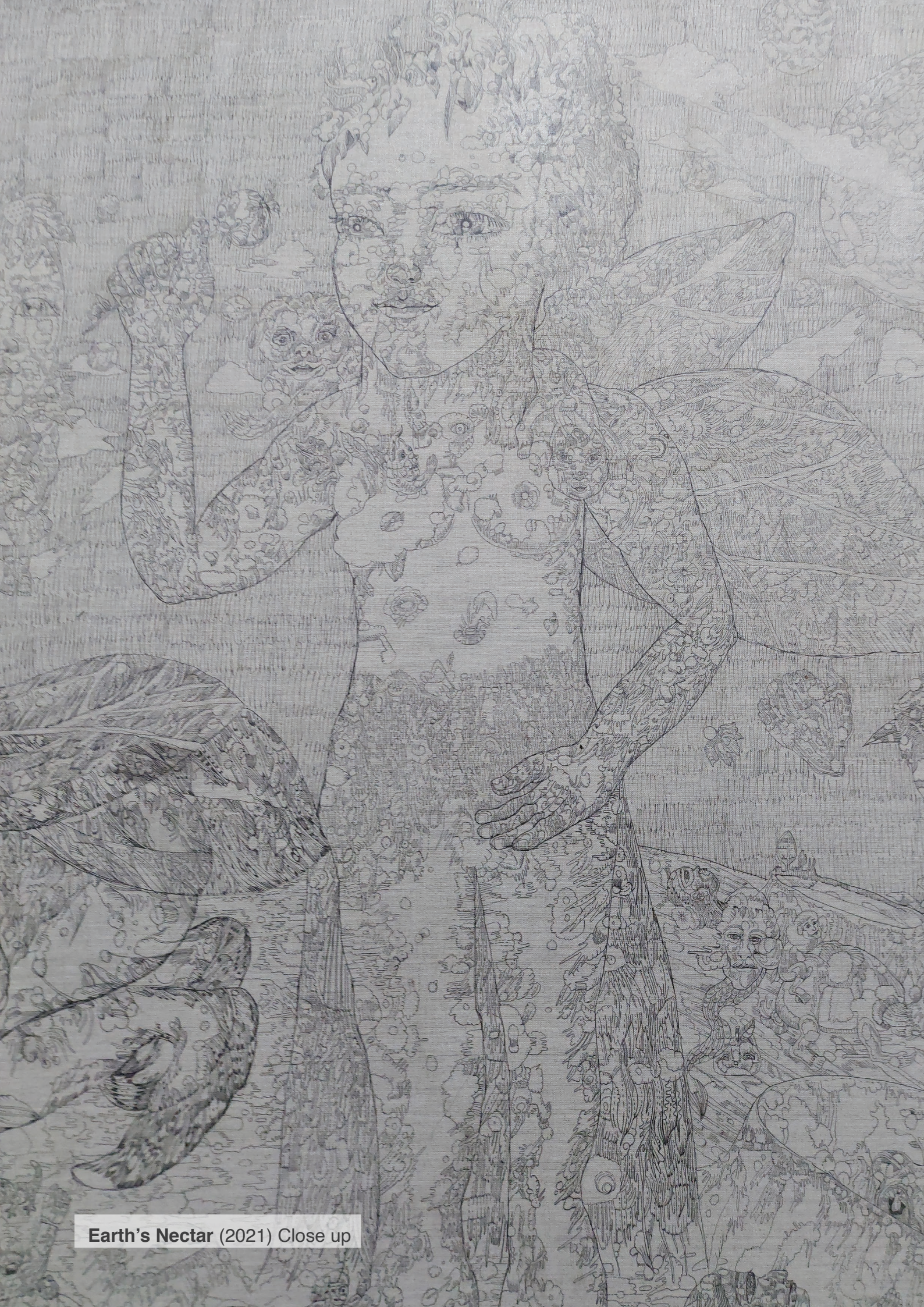
**Bring me to the end**  
Watercolor on canvas  
96.5cm x 87.5cm  
2020



Bring me to the end (2020) Close up



**Earth's Nectar**  
Ink on canvas  
165cm x 165cm  
2021



Earth's Nectar (2021) Close up



**Filled with you**  
Watercolor on canvas  
164.5cm x 134cm  
2020



Filled with you (2020) Close up



**Flowers in the Sea**  
Watercolor on canvas  
77cm x 96cm  
2021





Flowers in the Sea (2021) Close up



**Going to the Spring (I)**

Ink on canvas

46cm x 49cm

2020



Going to the Spring (I) (2021) Close up

Kiet



**Going to the Spring (II)**

Ink on canvas  
46cm x 58cm  
2021



Going to the Spring (II) (2021) Close up



**Going to the Spring (III)**

Ink on canvas  
46cm x 48.5cm  
2021



Going to the Spring (III) (2021) Close up



**Life Being**  
Ink on paper  
58cm x 48cm  
2020





Life Being (2020) Close up



**Linger**  
Watercolor on canvas  
155cm x 137cm  
2021



Linger (2021) Close up



**Loving You**  
Watercolor on canvas  
164.5cm x 119cm  
2020



Loving You (2020) Close up



**Migration to the Land of Peach Blossom**

Ink on canvas  
240cm x 290cm  
2021

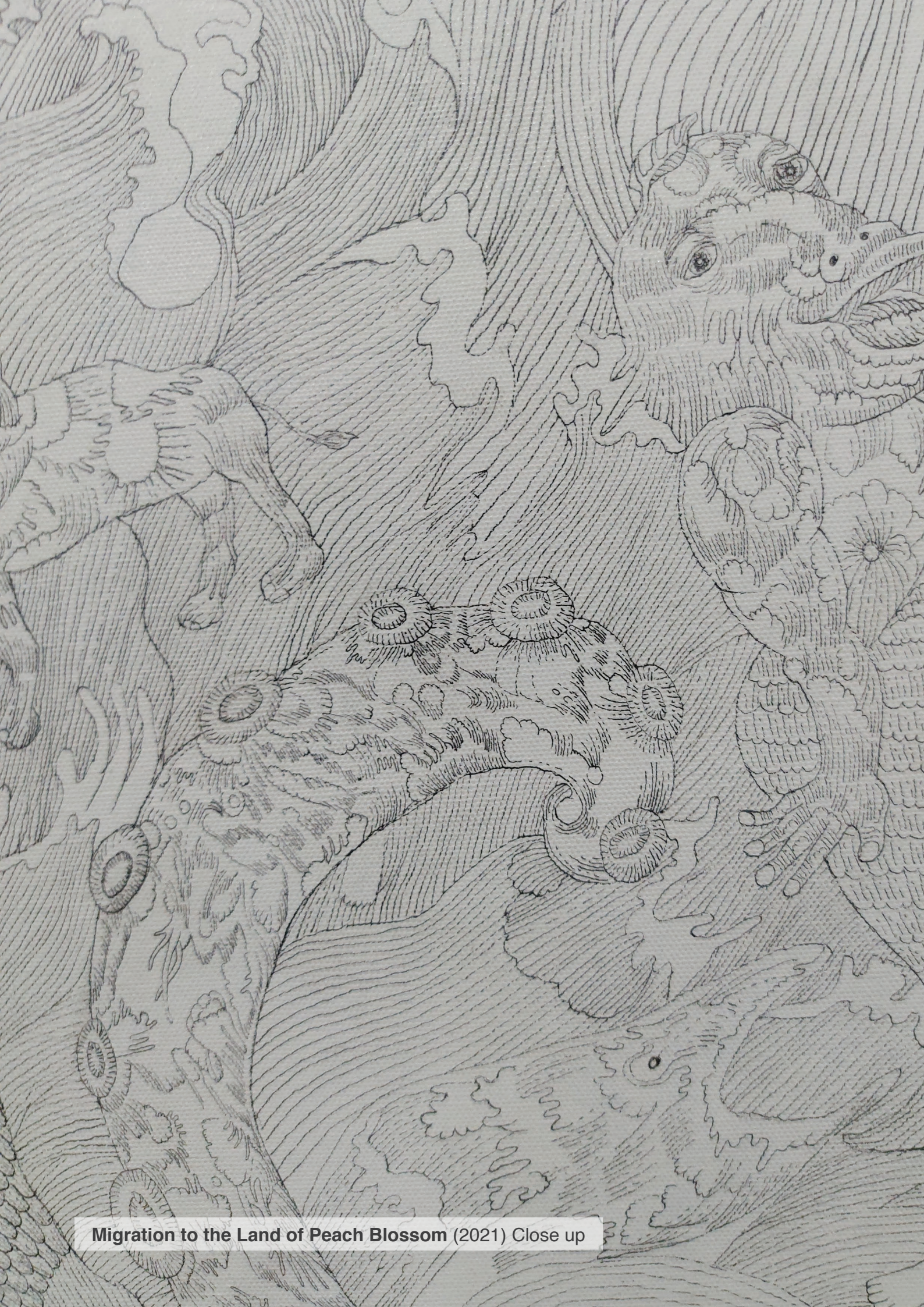


Migration to the Land of Peach Blossom (2021) Close up



Migration to the Land of Peach Blossom (2021) Close up





Migration to the Land of Peach Blossom (2021) Close up



**Nature Reflection**  
Watercolor on canvas  
46cm x 60cm  
2020



Nature Reflection (2020) Close up



**Riding**  
Ink on paper  
58cm x 48cm  
2020



Riding (2020) Close up



**The Wolves are waiting**  
Watercolor on canvas  
96cm x 87.5cm  
2020



The Wolves are waiting (2020) Close up



**Under the Buddha Tree**

Ink on canvas  
43cm x 48.5cm  
2020





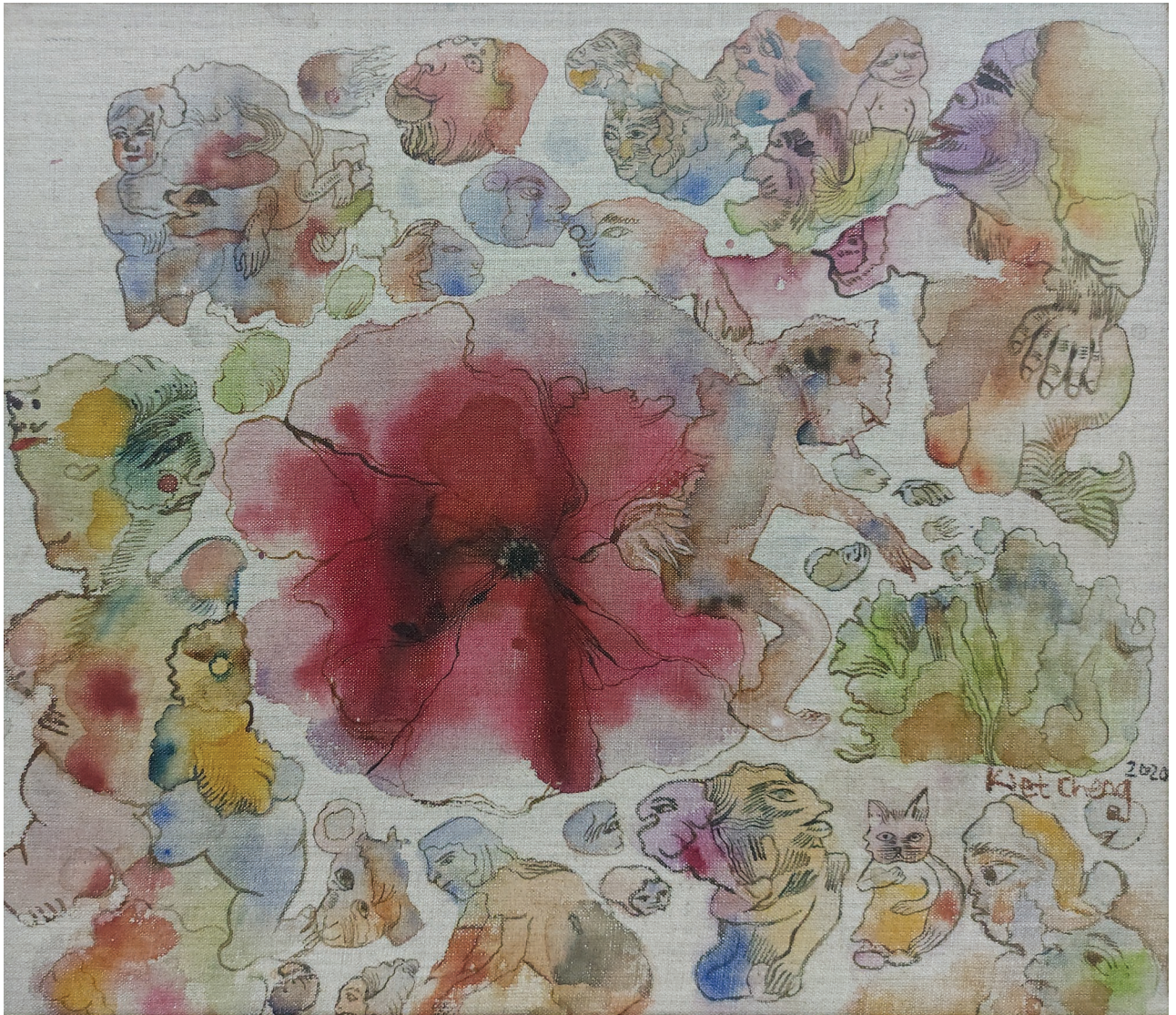
Under the Buddha Tree (2020) Close up



**Ying and Yang**  
Watercolor on canvas  
155cm x 196cm  
2020



Ying and Yang (2020) Close up



**Blossom time**  
Mixed media on canvas  
44cm x 59cm  
2021



Blossom time (2021) Close up



**Descendants of mountain**

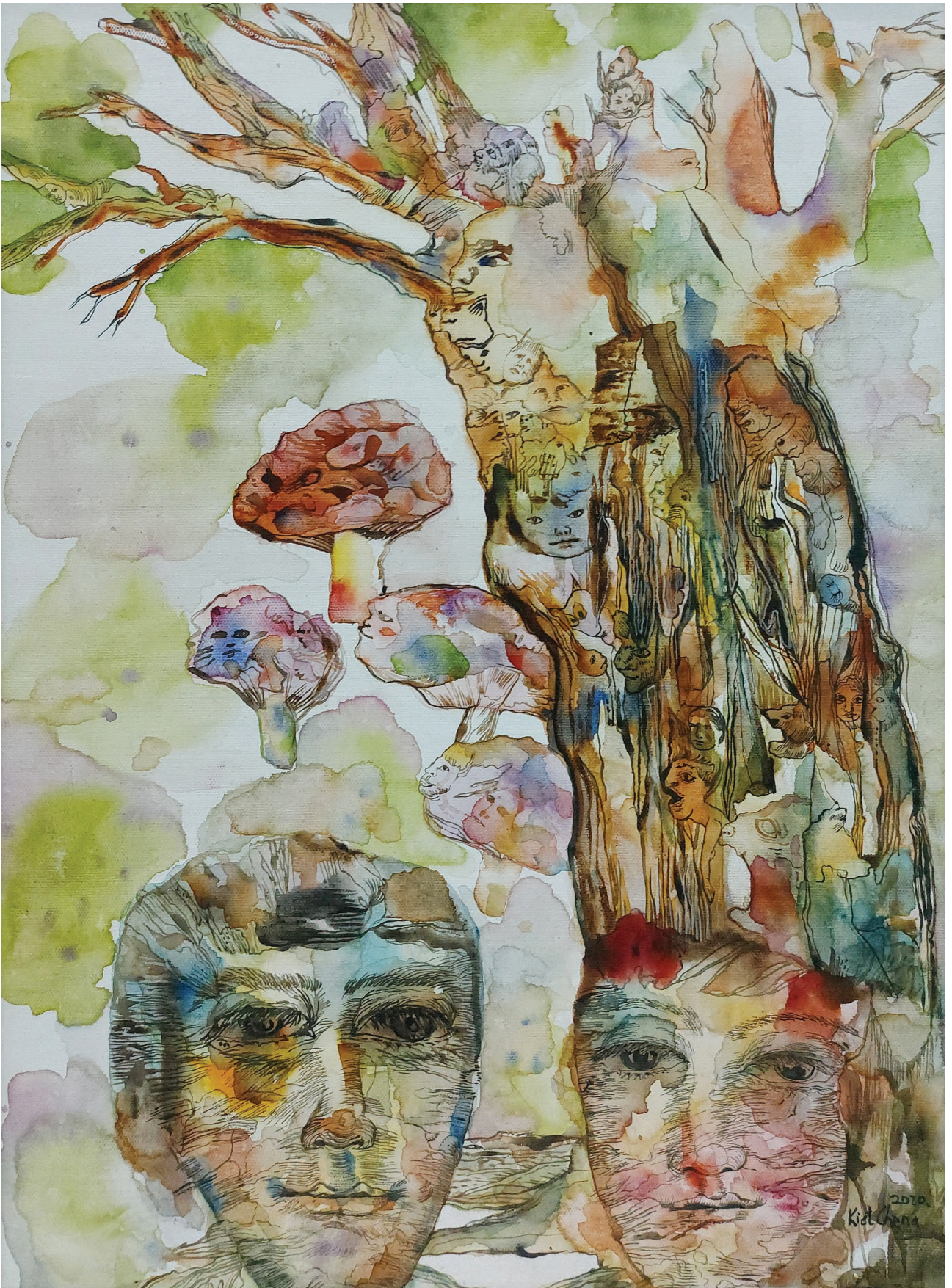
Ink on canvas

44cm x 53cm

2020



Descendants of mountain (2020) Close up



**Tree's whisper**  
Mixed media on canvas  
65cm x 48cm  
2020





Tree's whisper (2020) Close up



**Went into the orchard in spring**

Mixed media on canvas

54cm x 57cm

2021



Went into the orchard in spring (2021) Close up

## CHEONG KIET CHENG (B.1981)



Cheong Kiet Cheng's paintings have consistently highlighted the relationship between humans and nature. Although the situations she creates seem to convey over-riding feelings of beauty and love, the underlying elements of tension between the human and animal figures, emphasize that imperfection is unavoidable. Yet, one is still likely to find a tranquility within each of her works – an effect she achieves through a unique method of meditative, repetitive forms. As an artist, she is most interested in sharing positive energy through her work, rather than conforming to the conventional aesthetics in art.

Cheong Kiet Cheng is unrestricted by any particular medium, choosing instead to experiment with materials- from acrylic paints in earlier bodies of work to black ink in her latest series.-which allows her to evolve into new discoveries. The romantic quality of her work is a direct result of her own personal feelings towards nature, drawing much of her inspiration from philosophy, literature, poetry, music and theatrical drama.

She has won several major awards and prizes over the years, including the main prize at the 2018 UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia) competition; Creative M50 Awards in Shanghai, China (2016); Nanjing International Art Festival Competition in China (2015); Water Color Category at Tanjong Public Limited Company, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2006). Cheong Kiet Cheng was also the recipient of the esteemed UOB-Fukuoka Asian Art Museum's Artists Residency Programme in 2018, where she spent two months expanding on her practice in Japan.

## **EDUCATION**

- 2006 Diploma in Fine Art, Dasein Academy of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2002 Certificate in Journalism, Hang Xing Academy of Journalism, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Certificate in Basic Photography Course, PCP Art of Photography, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2003 Certificate in Drama Acting Course (Pin Stage)

## **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2021 We Are Dreaming and Awake In the Air, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2019 Dust and the Silence in the Sun, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2019 Life as a Stream of River, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan
- 2017 Between Two Hills - The Chorus of Life, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2015 Sing to the land of my heart, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2013 Jojo in the Wonderland, MAP – White Box, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
With Two Solo, Paradise of Gods by Hoo Kiew Hang

## **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2021 100 Pieces: Art for All, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2019 18@8 Turning Points, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Art Jakarta 2019, Jakarta Convention Center (JCC) Senayan, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2019 Singapore 2019 Art Event, Gillman Barracks
- 2018 Art Jakarta, The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Pacific Place, Indonesia  
Art Stage Singapore 2018, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore
- 2017 Through Rose-Tinted Glasses, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
The 101 Women Show, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Group Show Art Expo Matrade, A2 Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2016 Shanghai M50 Emerging Artist Exhibition 2016, Shanghai, China  
Malaysia Art Expo 2016, Matrade, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Intellectual, 3rd Nanjing International Art Festival, Baijia Lake Museum, Nanjing, China
- 2015 Nanjing International Art Festival 2015, China
- 2013 Young and New Part IV, HOM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Malaysian Philippines Contemporary Art Exhibition, Mutiara Gallery, Penang, Malaysia  
Measuring love, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2011 VAA – Visual Art Award, Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2010 ‘Self Conflict, Social Cohesion’, Malaysia Tourism Centre (MaTiC), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Malaysian Vietnamese Contemporary Art Exhibition, Mutiara Gallery, Penang, Malaysia  
Asia Art Link, Philippines
- 2009 Iskandar Malaysia Contemporary Art Show, Johor Bahru, Malaysia  
Global Warning-e11even, a2 Gallery, Penang, Malaysia  
Reborn group exhibition, a2 Gallery, Penang, Malaysia  
Art Expo group show, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 2008 Global Warming Group Exhibition, a2 Gallery, Penang, Malaysia  
No Big Size Group Exhibition, Findars Space, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2005 Upstart 05: The NOKIA Creative Arts Awards Exhibition, ARTrageously Ramsay  
Ong-The Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Pameran Terbuka Malaysia, National Art Visual Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2004 Upstart 04: The NOKIA Creative Arts Awards Exhibition, ARTrageously Ramsay  
Ong-The Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

### **ART RESIDENCIES**

- 2019 UOB-Fukuoka Asian Art Museum's Artists Residency Programme, Fukuoka, Japan
- 2012 Art-Residency in Sasaran Art Foundation, Selangor, Malaysia

### **AWARDS**

- 2018 2018 UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia) winner, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2016 Creative M50 Awards, Shanghai, China
- 2015 Nanjing International Art Festival Competition (Bronze Prize), China
- 2013 Finalist of Bakat Muda Sezaman, The Young Contemporaries '13, National Art  
Visual Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2011 Finalist of VAA – Visual Art Award, Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2006 2nd Prize, Water Color Category, Tanjong Public Limited Company, Malaysia
- 2005 Finalist Upstart 05: The NOKIA Creative Arts Awards Exhibition, ARTrageously  
Ramsay Ong-The Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2004 Finalist Upstart 04: The NOKIA Creative Arts Awards Exhibition, ARTrageously  
Ramsay Ong-The Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



**Wei-Ling** Gallery

Produced by Wei-Ling Gallery

To accompany the exhibition entitled 'We Are Dreaming and Awake In the Air' by Cheong Kiet Cheng

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Cover image: *Under the Buddha Tree* (2020) close up