

Yau Bee Ling

A Relentless Whirlwind- From Inside, Looking Out

10/08 – 30/09/2021

Wei-Ling Gallery, Brickfields

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A Relentless Whirlwind- From Inside, Looking Out

Wei-Ling Gallery is happy to present 'A Relentless Whirlwind- From Inside, Looking Out' a suite of 7 paintings by established Malaysian contemporary painter Yau Bee Ling. This series sees the artist unveiling her personal feelings and internal struggles during the pandemic through narratives presented within the work. While her previous series *Interwoven Terrains* delved into the idea of release and moving on, these new paintings see her confronting and facing up to the challenges and changes that the lockdown brought with it-amongst them relearning and readjusting to living in close proximity to her loved ones during the lockdowns, while at the same time learning to distance herself from those, outside her immediate circle.

At first glance, this body of work possesses an innate sense of freedom-they are rapturous, bountiful, insouciant, embodying a sense of delight while enriching the soul with the dance of life. As you confront the paintings, they each reveal to you varying conflicting expressions and emotions of Hope-Beauty that is born of struggle, Love that is born of Loss, and Joy that is born of Pain. For we are born of Love, yet through life we have to experience all forms of emotion in order to become truly formed.

Yau's works have become synonymous with multi-layered textures, deftly combining constructions of paint through, varying brushstroke applications and lines, which eventually present themselves as dynamic compositions that resonate with an immeasurable depth. As a painter, she has moved from an early figurative style, into a form of figurative abstraction that we see today, by slowly unlearning and opening up to a new form of expression. In recent years, she has found comfort in painting abstract landscapes that represent her emotional and mental state. A cathartic release of sorts, that has been influenced by her life story and the multiple interactions she has had as a woman; wife, mother, sister, daughter. Despite the absence of human form in *Interwoven Terrains*, in this series she felt the need to subtly reveal outlines of the figure, to reference the experiences and challenges she encountered over the past year, on a social-relationship level.

As an artist and educator, the artist had lived a healthy balance between her professional life outside of the household, and her personal life at home. Yet since early last year, like many of us, she had been forced to co-exist within the scope of her family and neighbours. As she stated, "*When people come close together (during the lockdown), oftentimes conflict cannot be avoided.*" It is generally within the confines of one's home that one feels comfortable enough to reveal their true selves, and it is this rawness of human behaviour that Yau Bee Ling captures and expresses through her new paintings. Ironically, in a time where we talk about being disconnected from physical interactions, Yau felt more connected to her family than ever before, as she discovered different sides of her children that she had never encountered before. Their fragility, distress, anxiety, way of thinking, and hopes for the future came to the surface -and through this period, she came to a better understanding of them as human beings. An important revelation to her as a mother.

This shift of feelings and redefinition of views that her children experienced also made her realise the importance of sitting alone to reflect on her own life.. In times when she had to be strong, to be there for her extended family, to support them through the trials and tribulations of life-illness, death, loss, disappointments- she found herself inadvertently being the figure that they leant on. Her continuous compassion and empathy towards others, earned her this role. Over this period, she began to realise that it was imperative for her to retain her sense of well-being and self worth, in order to continue giving and being an anchor to all those around her . And it was through the act of painting and making this series that Yau Bee Ling managed to regain her personal space and sense of being; with every touch of her brush on the canvas, she acknowledged all the emotions that had long been hidden away, avoided, and never recognised, which had been trapped deep inside her heart. This series can be described as a personal awakening -to regain her self-worth and to prioritise herself. The

authenticity of the soul can only come through, after we have released ourselves from all that holds us back. After all, how can one give support and be a pillar of strength, if one is crumbling away inside?

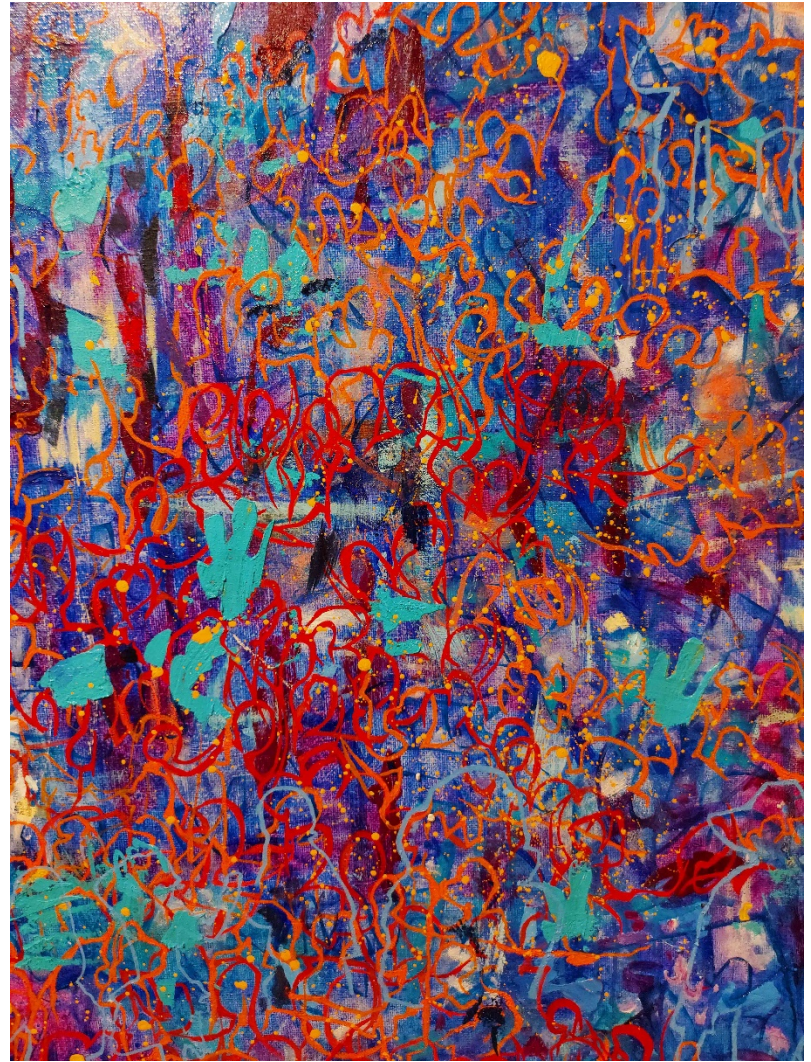
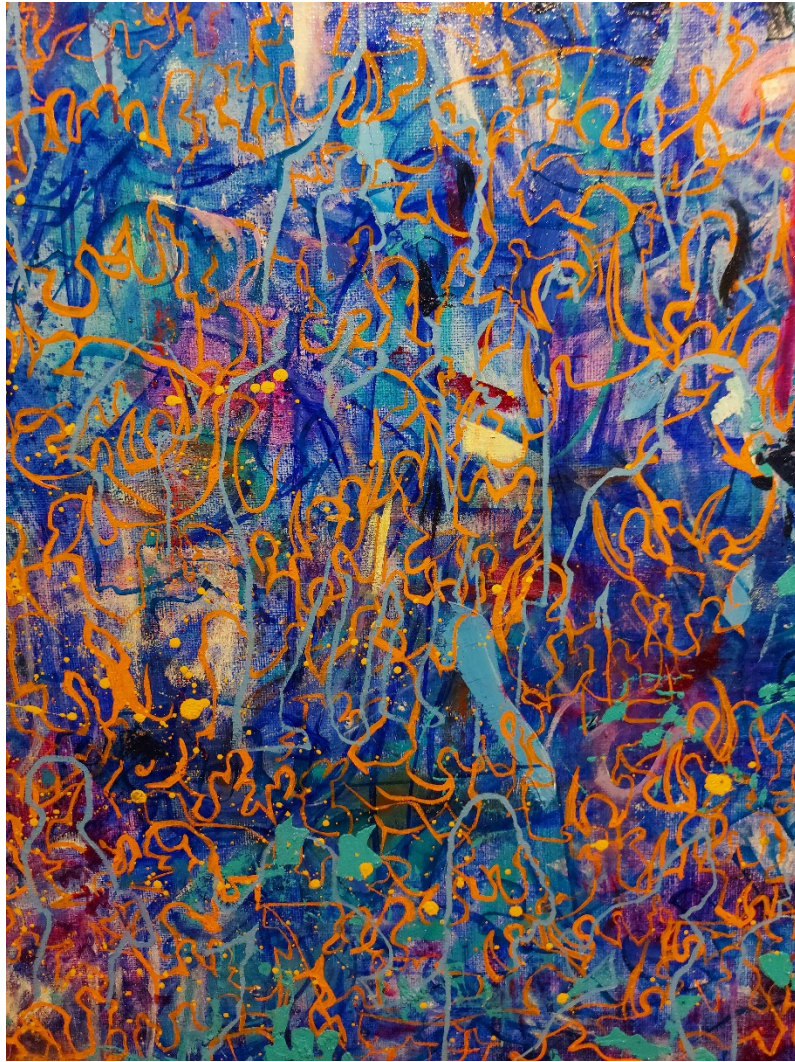
Through this period, Yau Bee Ling also witnessed a significant change in the way we connect as a community. As an artist who is observant of human behaviors, she noticed the fact that there is so much loss of authenticity when it comes to interacting through our screens. *“It feels like communicating with the unknown; as if they are anonymous.”* This anonymity is translated through the lines that form faceless human figures across some of the works in the series, such as *Convalescening* (2021), *Transcending Battles* (2021), and *Unfettered Turmoil* (2021). Although these intuitive lines can be seen similarly in her previous series such as *‘By Hands’* (2016) and *‘The Women’* (2013), this time, the lines serve only as outlines, offering no details, making it impossible to identify the subjects painted. *“When it comes to conversing online, so many of our senses are filtered, and there is no exchange of energies.”*

This idea of not knowing what lies behind the screen also emphasises the question of uncertainty. And in these uncertain times, she came to realise how strength is a crucial quality that we must seek to have. It is imperative. In fact, as she expressed, *“Only those who believe, and who choose to have strength, are the ones who will go forward.”*

Artwork 1



Shroud of dispersion (2021) | Oil paint on jute canvas; 152.5cm x 213cm



Close up view of *Shroud of dispersion* (2021)

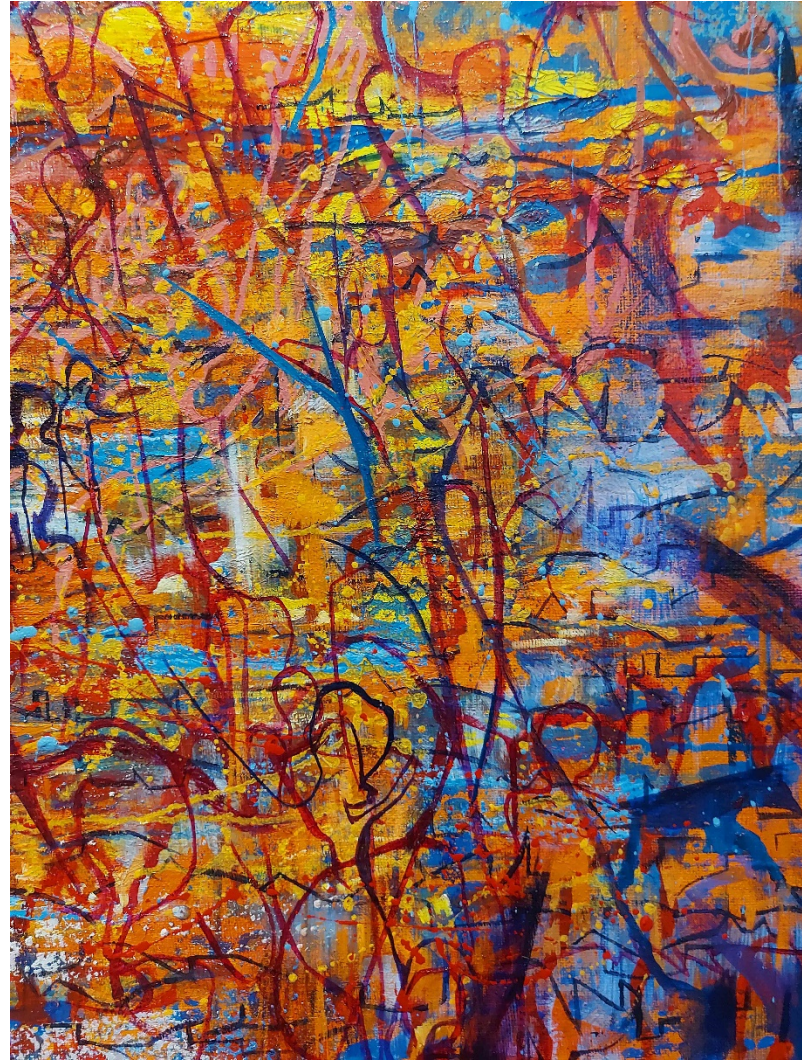


Installation view of *Shroud of dispersion* (2021)

Artwork 2



Unfettered turmoil (2021) | Oil paint on jute canvas; 122cm x 152.5cm



Close up view of *Unfettered turmoil* (2021)

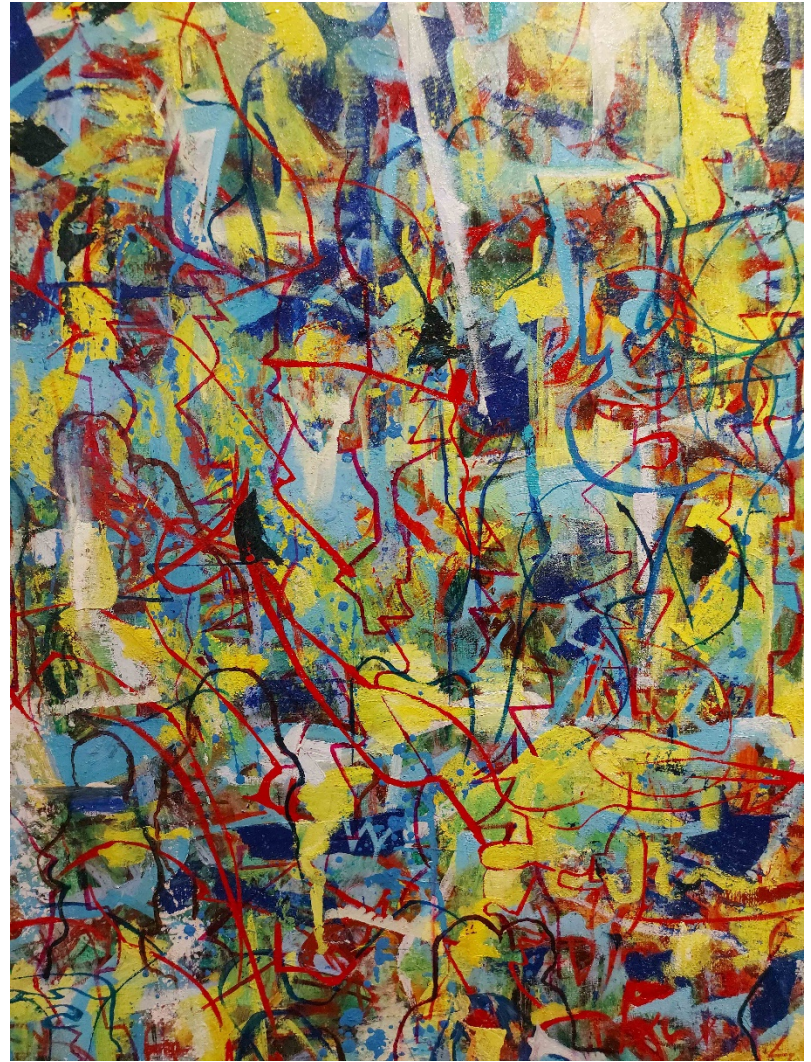


Installation view of *Unfettered turmoil* (2021)

Artwork 3



Thorns amidst the verdant bloom (2021) | Oil paint on jute canvas; 183cm x 152.5cm (Diptych)



Close up view of *Thorns amidst the verdant bloom* (2021)

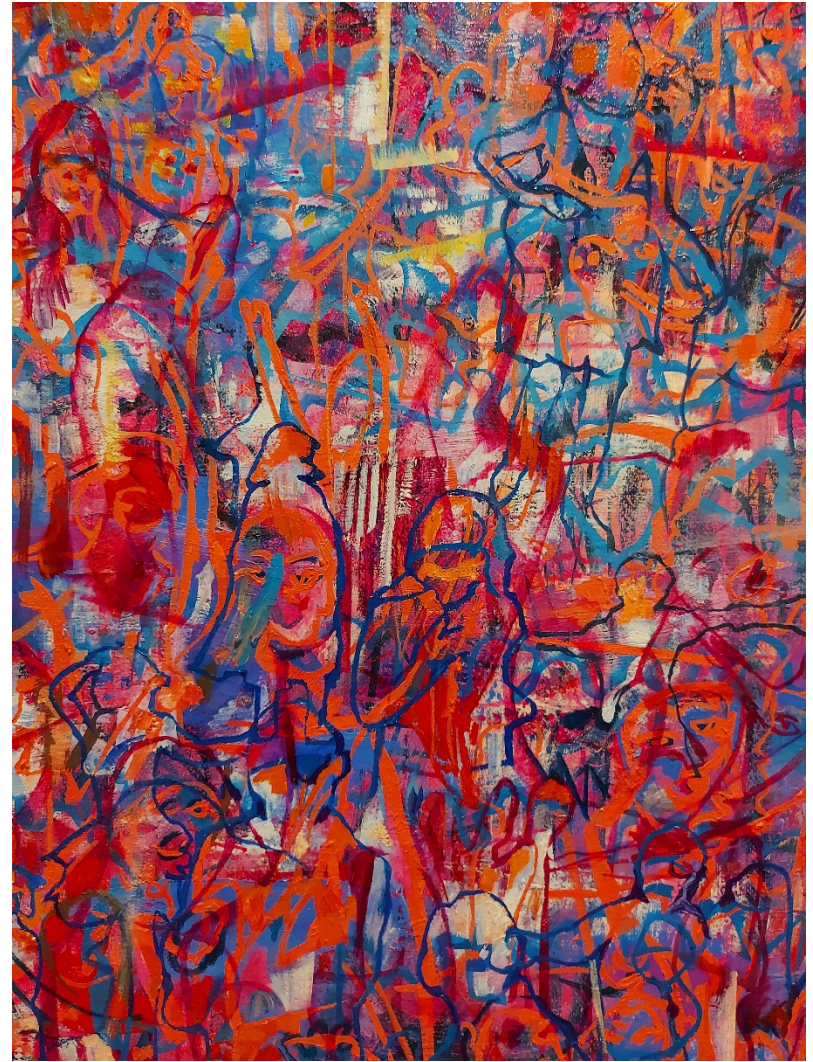


Installation view of *Thorns amidst the verdant bloom* (2021)

Artwork 4



Convalescing (2021) | Oil paint on jute canvas; 113cm x 152.5cm

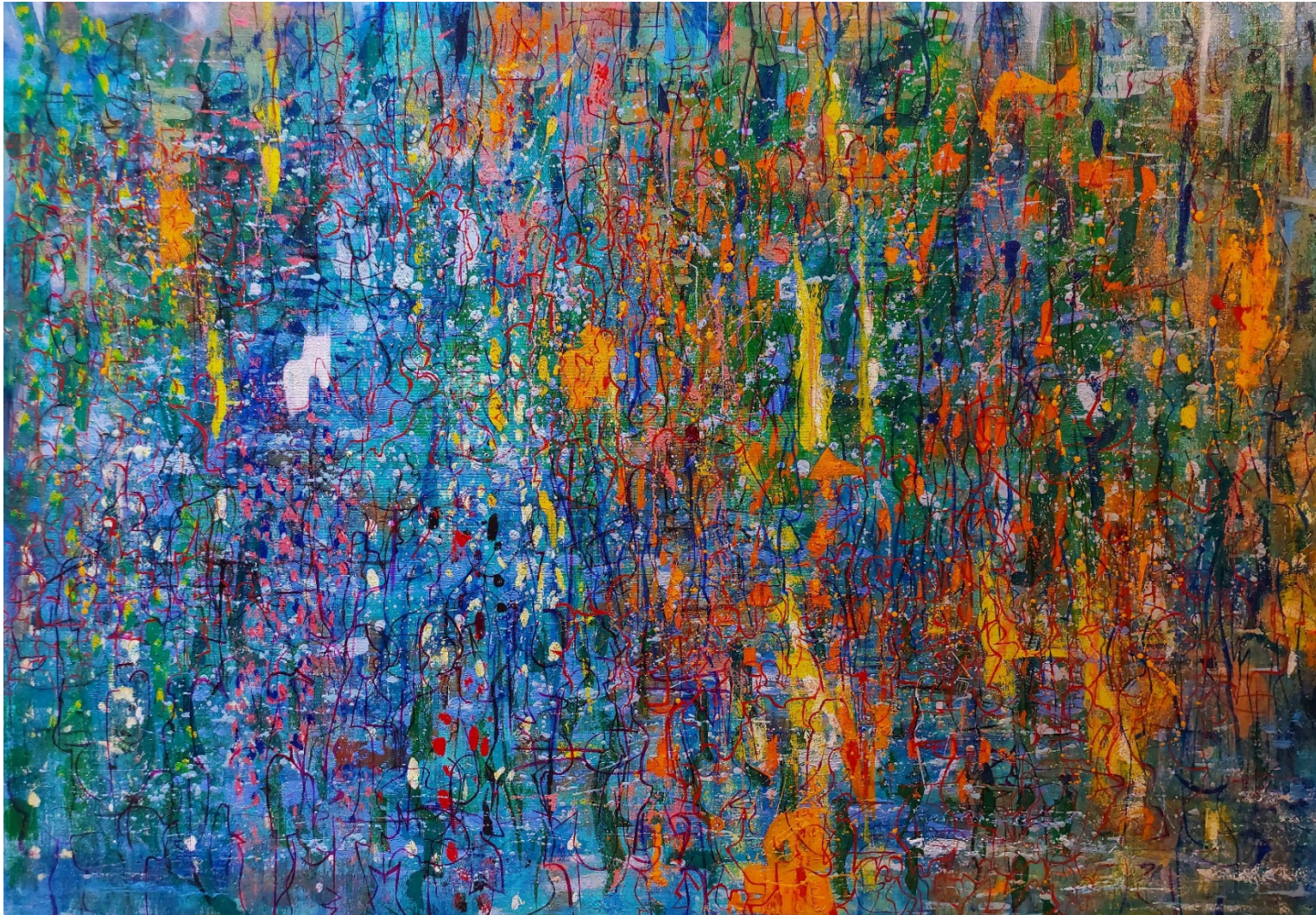


Close up view of *Convalescing* (2021)

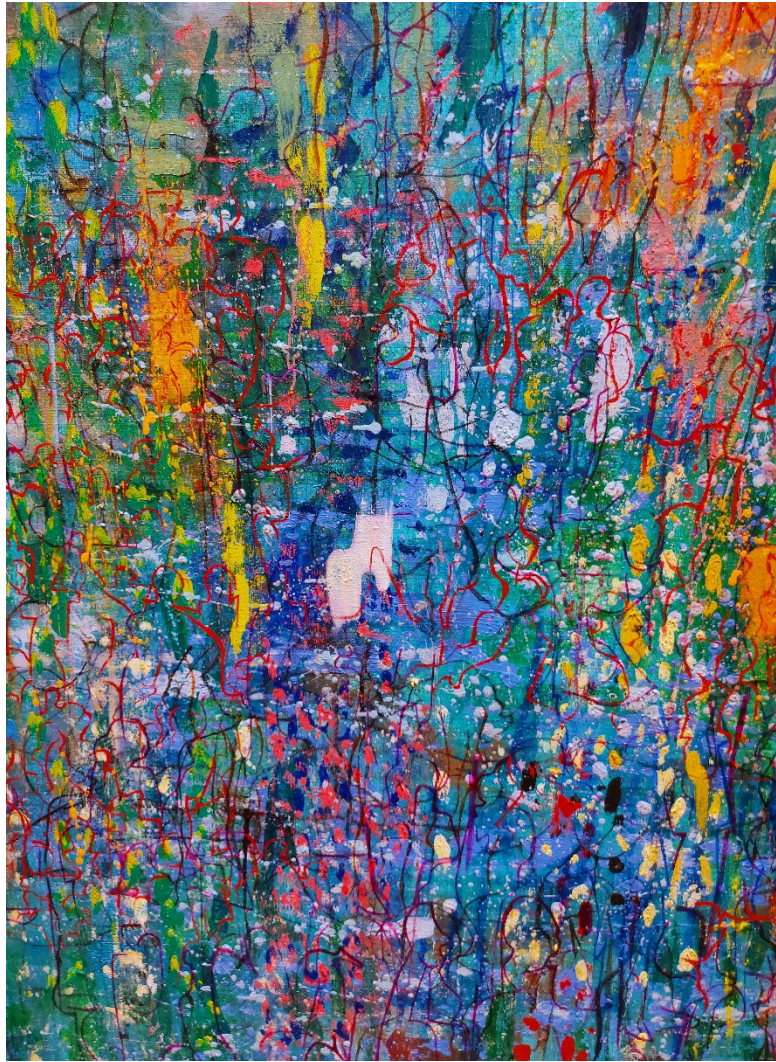


Installation view of *Convalescening* (2021)

Artwork 5



Seeking out the lost serenity (2021) | Oil paint on jute canvas; 152.5cm x 213cm



Close up view of *Seeking out the lost serenity* (2021)

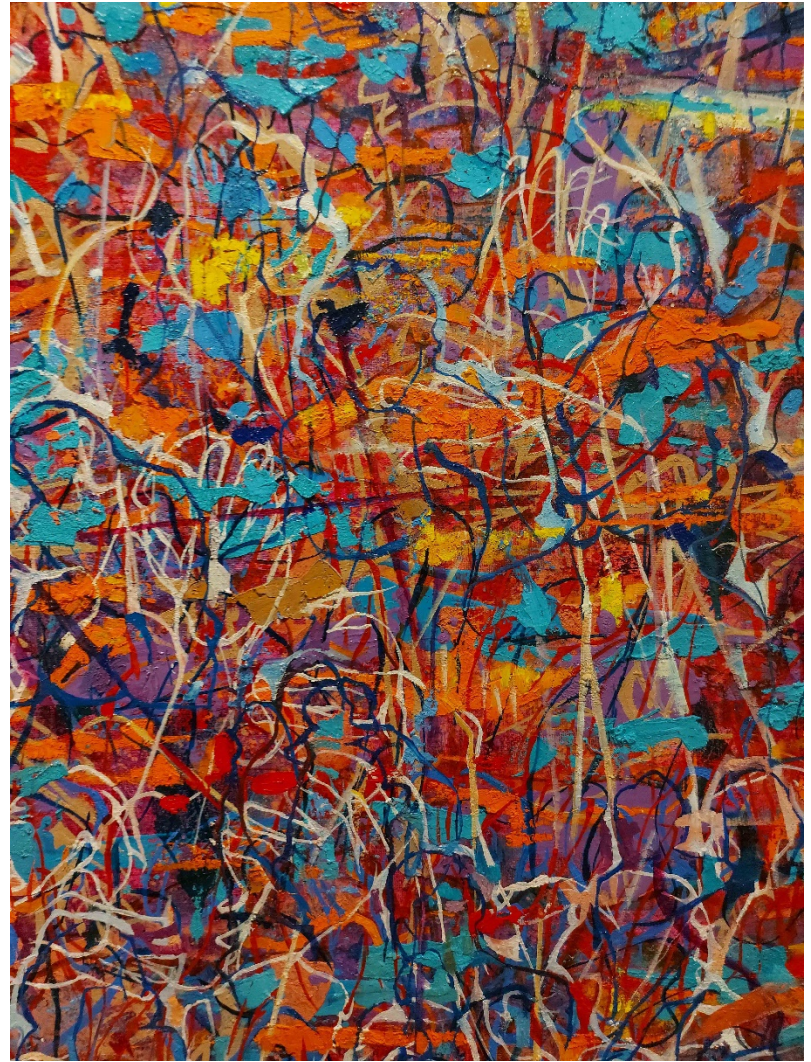


Installation view of *Seeking out the lost serenity* (2021)

Artwork 6



Transcending battles (2021) | Oil paint on jute canvas; 107cm x 182.8cm



Close up view of *Transcending battles* (2021)

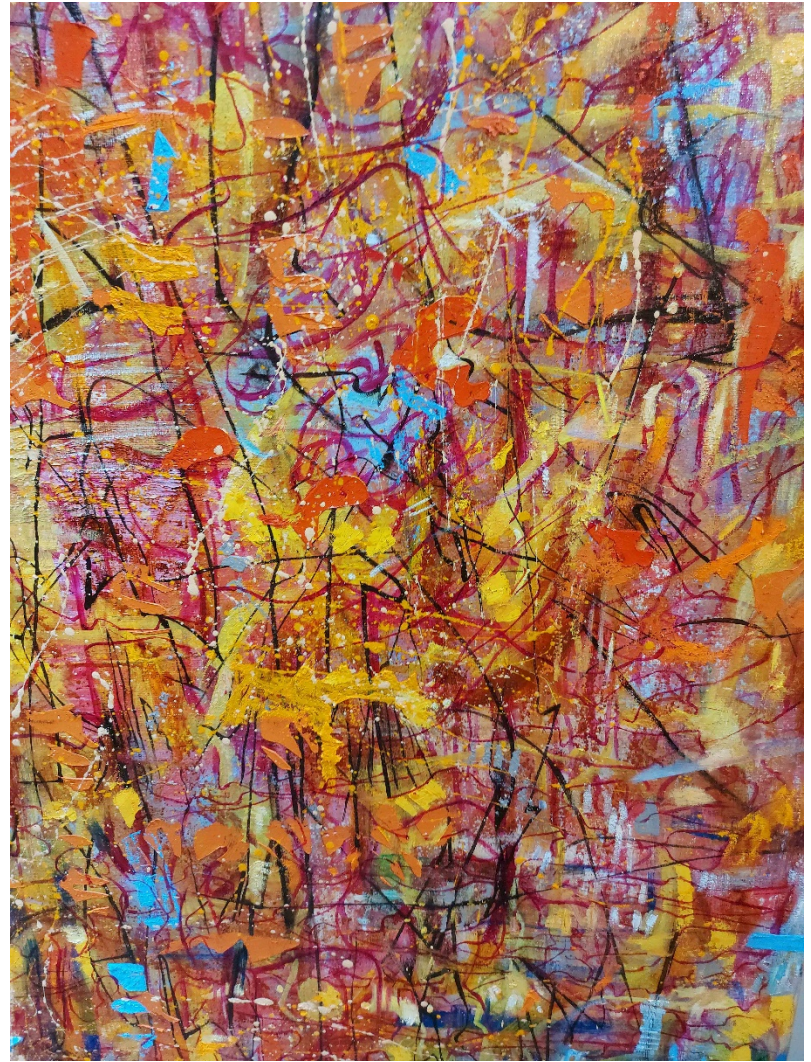
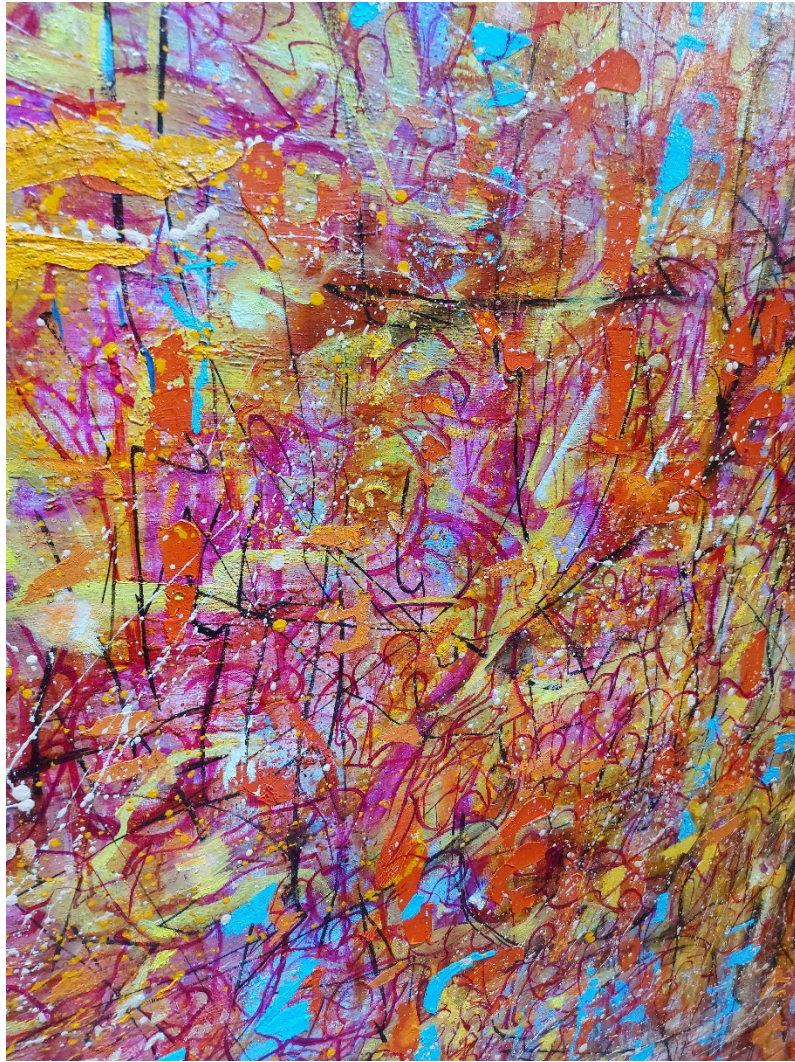


Installation view of *Transcending battles* (2021)

Artwork 7



Outpouring of Kindred (2021) | Oil paint on jute canvas; 152.5cm x 213cm



Close up view of *Outpouring of Kindred* (2021)



Installation view of *Outpouring of Kindred* (2021)

Overall view at Wei-Ling Gallery, Brickfields







YAU BEE LING (B. 1972)

Throughout her 25 year career, Malaysian painter Yau Bee Ling's work has consistently echoed her observations on the world and reflect autobiographical themes. Her works are deeply personal and profound in their symbolism, as she struggles to reconcile the broad gambit of human experiences and the complex roles of contemporary women in present-day society. Highly regarded as one of the country's foremost painters, her work pays homage to a life-lived.

Over the years, Yau Bee Ling has moved from one identity to another: from single woman to wife to mother. Each move, each curve in the winding road leading to where she is today is a journey of searching and looking for answers. Answers to the conflicts brought on by the transition from one phase of life to another: of being a woman, a wife and a mother. Answers to the conflicts brought on by the multiple responsibilities she carries. Despite the façade presented she struggles to understand who she is: a mother, a wife, an independent woman. Despite the serenity of motherhood and the meaningful ties within the family and the community her inner self lives a complicated tangles of ties and responsibilities within the family and the larger communities. It is a responsibility laden with hopes and fears: hopes for successes and later being able to celebrate those successes; and fears of the traps and failures that may lead to a meaningless existence.

For Yau Bee Ling, it is the moment that defines the person she is and will be. Introverted and thoughtful, her onwards journey takes her to her inner self. It leads her to ask the all important question: *"What is my inner self?" "Who am I?" "What am I here for?" "What purpose am I serving?" "What will I leave behind?"*

Through her works, she challenges and ponders the questions that inhabit her mind and soul. Each series of paintings are charged with their own distinctive energy, reflective of her state of mind, her emotional well-being and the way she perceives her place in the world at the time. Her works are therefore a cathartic process for her, as she struggles to reconcile the meaning of life, through the layering of and scraping back of paint, and colour, navigating her way through the twisting terrains of her paintings in the search for truth.

Bee Ling has exhibited extensively in exhibitions across China, Pakistan, Singapore, Bangladesh, Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia and represented Malaysia at the Asian Art Biennial in Dhaka, Bangladesh and at the Fukuoka Triennale. Her works are in the permanent collections of numerous private and public collections including Mulpha, Maxis Berhad and the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum.

YAU BEE LING (B. 1972)

EDUCATION

1995 Diploma in Fine Art (Major in Painting), School of Art & Design, Malaysian Institute of Art (MIA), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021 A Relentless Whirlwind- From Inside, Looking Out, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2019 Interwoven Terrains, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2016 By Hands, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2013 The Women, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2008 Portraits of Paradox, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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

2018 Teh Tarik with The Flag, curated by Wei-Ling Gallery, The National Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Art Jakarta, The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Pacific Place, Indonesia

2017 18@8 RIGHT HERE! RIGHT NOW!, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2016 Art Stage Jakarta 2016, Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia

Art Stage Singapore 2016, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

2015 18@8 Heirlooms, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The Space Between, curated by Anurendra Jegadeva & Rahel Joseph, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2014 The PEAK Group Show- Ho Mia, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2013 18@8 Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2012 18@8 KUL-SIN, ION Art, Singapore

18@8 KUL-SIN, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2010 Absolut 18@8, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2009 18@8 - 1 Malaysia : Beyond The Canvas, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2008 18@8: Vice & Virtue, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tukar Ganti: New Malaysian Paintings, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Singapore, HT Contemporary Space, Singapore

Semesta, La Galleria Pall Mall Art Gallery, London, UK

- Shifting Boundaries: WWF Art For Nature, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Malaysia
 China International Gallery Exposition (CIGE), China World Trade Centre, Beijing, China
 Out Of The Mould: The Age Of Reason, Malmö Art Museum, Malmö, Sweden
- 2007
 00:15 Superstar: WWF Art For Nature, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Malaysia
 Out Of The Mould: The Age Of Reason, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 18@8, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2006
 Rimbun Dahan Artist In Residence Show, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Malaysia
 Signed and Dated: 10th Anniversary Show, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 18@8: Kuala Lumpur – Karachi, Amin Gulgee Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan in collaboration with Wei-Ling Gallery
 Feed Me! An Exploration of Appetites: WWF Art For Nature, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Malaysia
- 2005
 Rooster Mania, Townhouse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Taman Sari: The Power of Dreaming And Identity: WWF Art For Nature, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Malaysia
 18@8: Contemporary Artists From Malaysia & Beyond, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Art ± 1,000, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Free Show, Reka Art Space, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
- 2004
 Soul of Asia: Fukuoka Asian Art Museum
 Collection, Hokkaido Museum of Contemporary Art, Hokkaido, Japan
 Fifteen, Darling Muse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Semangat: Artists For Theatre, Fund Raising Exhibition for Five Arts Centre, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Home Improvement (A Two-Person Show), Reka Art Space, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
 Art ± 1,000, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Paradise Lost / Paradise Found: WWF Art For Nature, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Malaysia
- 2003
 Art ± 1,000, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Games We Play: WWF Invitational Group Exhibition, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Malaysia
- 2002
 Imagined Workshop, 2nd Fukuoka Triennale 2002, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan
 Touch: WWF Invitational Group Exhibition, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Selangor
- 2001
 Voices from The Heart, World Woman's Day Invitational Show, East West Gallery of Fine, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Inhabitant (A Two-Person Show), Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2000
 Seasons Greetings, Southeast Asia Collection: Group Exhibition, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Love On Paper: Invitational Group Exhibition, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Nur Cahaya Nurmu, World Women's Week: Malaysian Women Artists Group Show, Aseana KLCC & Valentine Willie Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- Transformation: 6 Artists From Malaysia: Invitational Group Exhibition, Gallery Wan and Balai Seni Lukis Negara, Malaysia, and Singapore Sculpture Square, Singapore.
- 1999 9th Asian Art Biennial, Bangladesh: 99th Invitational International Group Exhibition, Department of Fine Arts, Bangladesh Shipakala Academy, Osmani Memorial Hall, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 1998 Through Our Eyes: Malaysian Women Artist Invitational Exhibition, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Around The Body: Invitational Group Exhibition, Sutra Dance Theatre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Alami Antara Langit Dan Bumi: Invitational Group Exhibition, Balai Seni Lukis Negara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 Aku 99: Potret Diri: Invitational Group Exhibition, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1997 Family, Home and Hope (A Two Person Show), Pelita Hati Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 PNB Artist-Artist Muda 1997: Selected Group Exhibition Permodalan Nasional Berhad Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1996 Pelita Hati Gallery of Art Collection: Invitational Group Show, Pelita Hati Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 New Voices: Diploma Group Exhibition, Malaysian Institute of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1995 Fresh Eyes: Selected Young Artists Group Exhibition, Pelita Hati Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

AWARDS

- 1995 Malaysian Institute of Art Full Scholarship Award (Fine Art Course)
- 2004-5 Artist-in-Residence, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Malaysia
- 2016 Kuandu Artist in Residence, Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei, Taiwan

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Permanent Collection
- Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei National University of The Arts, Taipei, Taiwan
- National Visual Art Gallery, Malaysia
- Galeri Petronas, Malaysia
- Hijjas Kasturi Association, Rimbun Dahan, Malaysia
- The Aliya and Farouk Khan Collection
- Dr Steve and Rosemary Wong
- Ng Sek San and Carolyn Lau
- Architron Design Consultants Sdn Bhd
- Wei-Ling Gallery, Malaysia
- KIAN Sdn Bhd, Malaysia
- Valentine Willie Fine Art, Malaysia

Veritas Design Group, Malaysia
Park Royal Hotel, Malaysia