




Tang Tze Lye

**It's Been a While,  
and I'm Finally  
Here...**

Wei-LingGallery

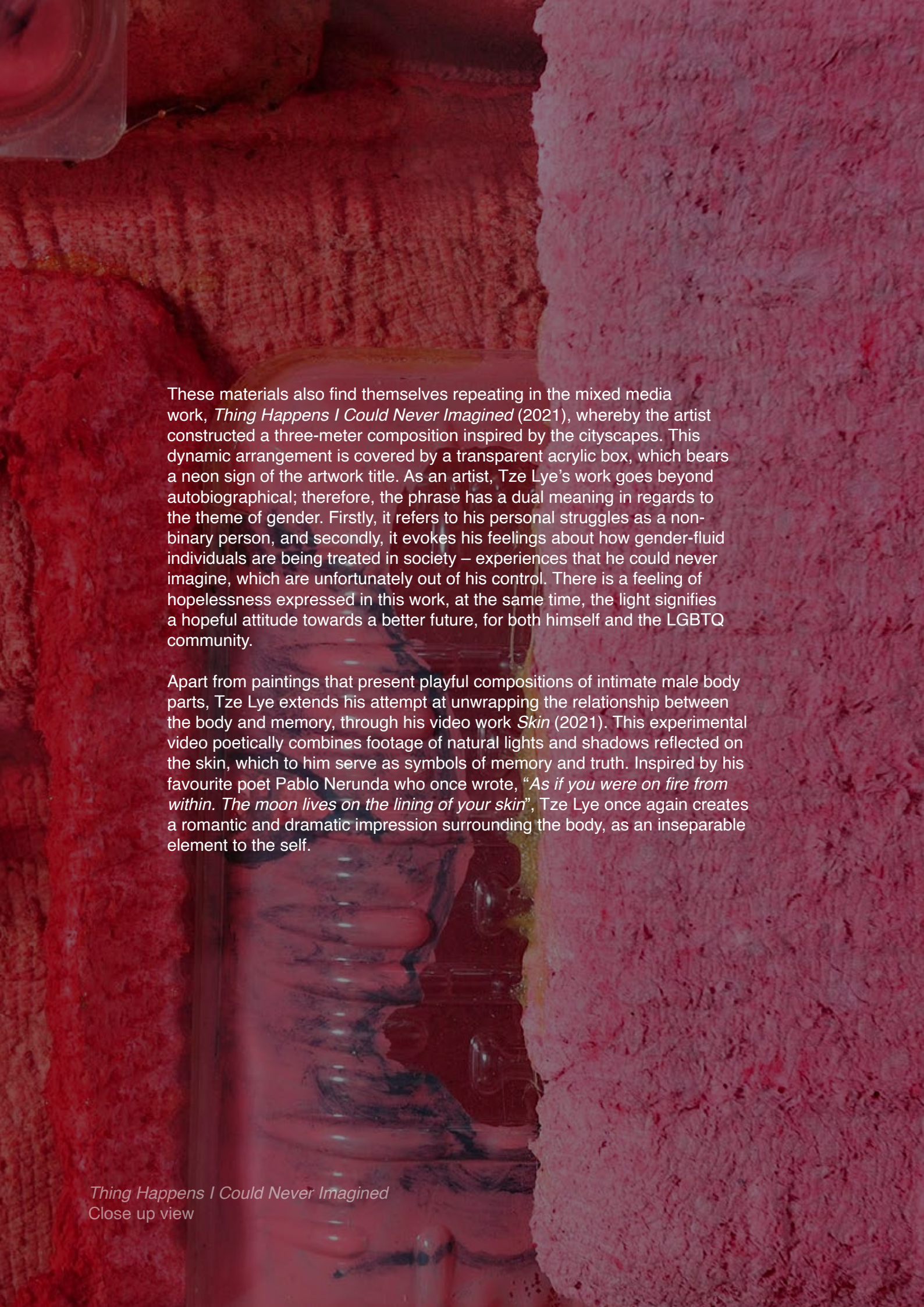


**Tang Tze Lye**  
**It's Been a While, and I'm Finally Here...**  
**20 January - 26 February 2022**

Wei-Ling Gallery is pleased to present Tang Tze Lye's first solo exhibition with the gallery, '*It's Been a While, and I'm Finally Here...*'. Tang Tze Lye was one of two artists who were selected to participate in the first edition of the WLG Incubator Young Artists Mentorship Program in 2020. The WLG Incubator is an initiative by Wei-Ling Galleries that was launched as a platform to highlight and collaborate on projects with emerging Malaysian artists. It is dedicated to help artists create a sustainable art practice, which allows them to develop their confidence towards making art that is authentic, experimental and progressive. Through this Incubator, the gallery hopes to discover and nurture artists and projects, which are critical towards shaping the voice of the next generation.

This new series is a culmination of Tze Lye's experimentations surrounding the themes that he has always been drawn to: the body, queer identities, and beauty. The main artworks, taking form as a combination between painting and sculptures, once again express one's journey of finding his true identity. Pink is a colour that predominates this series, as it not only represents femininity, but also serves as a sign of birth and power, which the artist uses to challenge conventional views surrounding gender. The series also sees the artist placing himself out of his comfort zone as a painter, by adopting ready-made materials such as tissue rolls made into a paper pulp mixture, as well as plastic containers, inspired by the mundanity of life under the lockdown. To the artist, there is something poetic behind transforming these everyday objects into sculptures, as it mirrors the repetition and meditative processes that mark his practice and life.

Multiple plastic containers are combined together, and enveloped by paper pulp before being painted over, with lines that suggest facial features such as the eyes, the nose and the mouth. Inspired by primitive masks, these faces look abstract, symbolising the beauty that lies within imperfection, as well as the natural metamorphosis of our facial features. Instead of a mask, *I am not alone III* (2021) transforms the same materials into a clock, emphasizing his slow process of art-making; starting from conceptualising the work, continuously arranging the containers, to experimenting with the colour pigments. The clock is somehow his attempt of materializing, and reclaiming the time spent on the making of these objects, which are deeply personal to him.



These materials also find themselves repeating in the mixed media work, *Thing Happens I Could Never Imagined* (2021), whereby the artist constructed a three-meter composition inspired by the cityscapes. This dynamic arrangement is covered by a transparent acrylic box, which bears a neon sign of the artwork title. As an artist, Tze Lye's work goes beyond autobiographical; therefore, the phrase has a dual meaning in regards to the theme of gender. Firstly, it refers to his personal struggles as a non-binary person, and secondly, it evokes his feelings about how gender-fluid individuals are being treated in society – experiences that he could never imagine, which are unfortunately out of his control. There is a feeling of hopelessness expressed in this work, at the same time, the light signifies a hopeful attitude towards a better future, for both himself and the LGBTQ community.

Apart from paintings that present playful compositions of intimate male body parts, Tze Lye extends his attempt at unwrapping the relationship between the body and memory, through his video work *Skin* (2021). This experimental video poetically combines footage of natural lights and shadows reflected on the skin, which to him serve as symbols of memory and truth. Inspired by his favourite poet Pablo Neruda who once wrote, "*As if you were on fire from within. The moon lives on the lining of your skin*", Tze Lye once again creates a romantic and dramatic impression surrounding the body, as an inseparable element to the self.

*Thing Happens I Could Never Imagined*  
Close up view



*Refreshing I*  
Gouache, pencil, vermillion red pigment, mural paint on paper  
109.22cm x 127cm  
2021

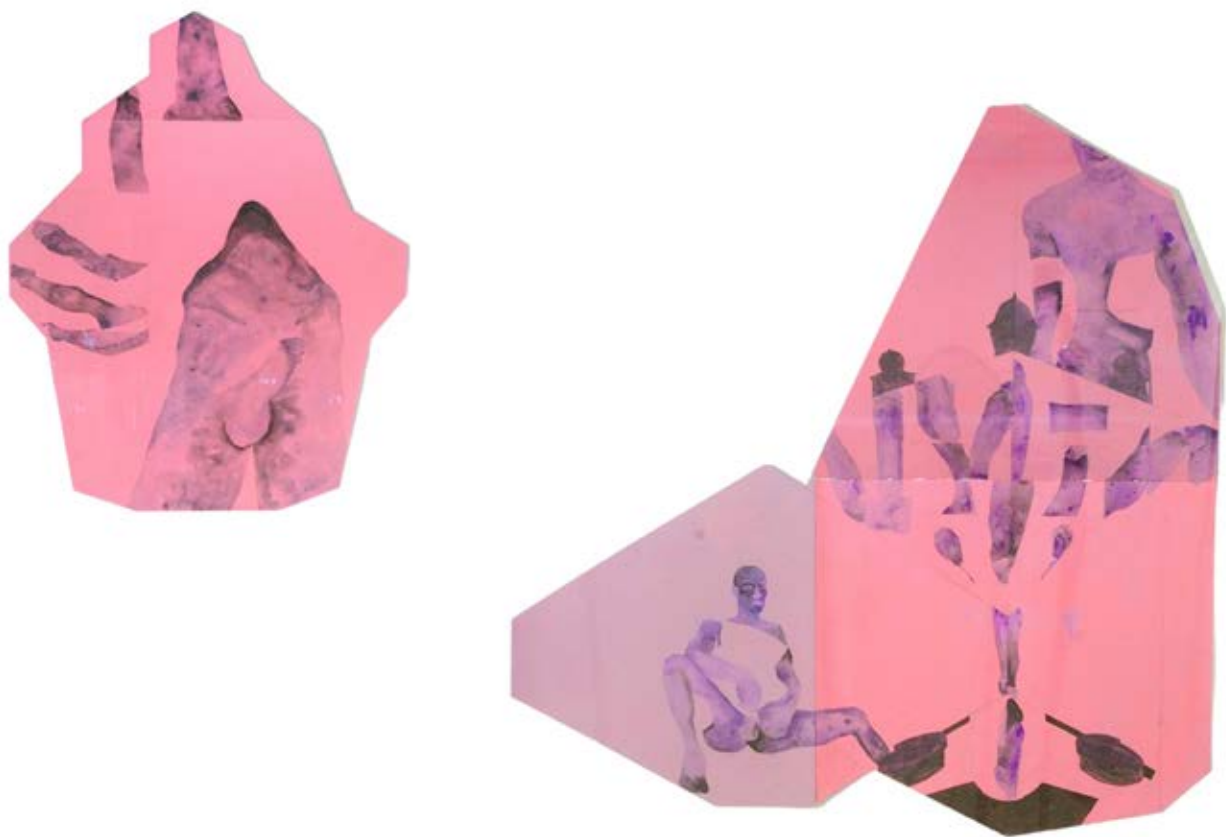


*Refreshing II*

Gouache, pencil, vermillion red pigment, mural paint on paper

81.28cm x 78.74cm, 93.98cm x 104.14cm

2021



*Refreshing III*

Gouache, pencil, vermillion red pigment, mural paint on paper

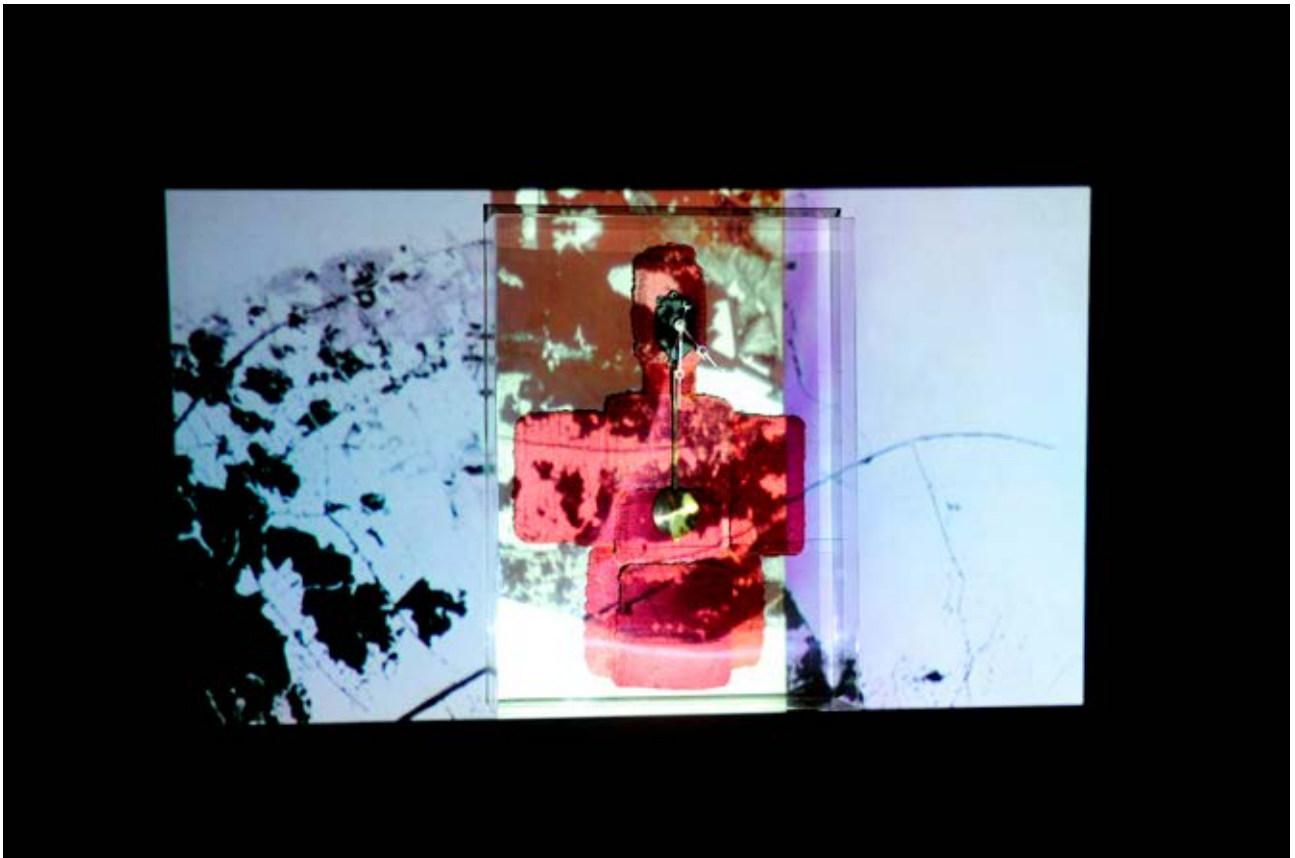
76.2cm x 60.96cm, 109.22cm x 127cm (Diptych)

2021



*Skin*

Tissues pulp (machier), gouche, pencil,  
vermillion red pigment, mural paint  
58cm x 43cm  
2021



*Skin with One-channel video projection*  
1 minute 13 seconds  
2021



*I am not alone I*

Tissues pulp (machier), gouache, pencil, vermillion red pigment, mural paint

39.37cm x 29.21cm

2021





*I am not alone II*

Tissues pulp (machier), gouache, pencil, vermillion red pigment, mural paint  
40.64cm x 38.1cm  
2021



*I am not alone III*

Tissues pulp (machier), gouche, pencil, vermillion red pigment, clock pendulum, mural paint  
35.56cm x 30.48cm  
2021



*I am not alone IV*

Tissues pulp (machier), gouche, pencil, vermillion red pigment, clock pendulum, mural paint

27cm x 27.5cm

2021

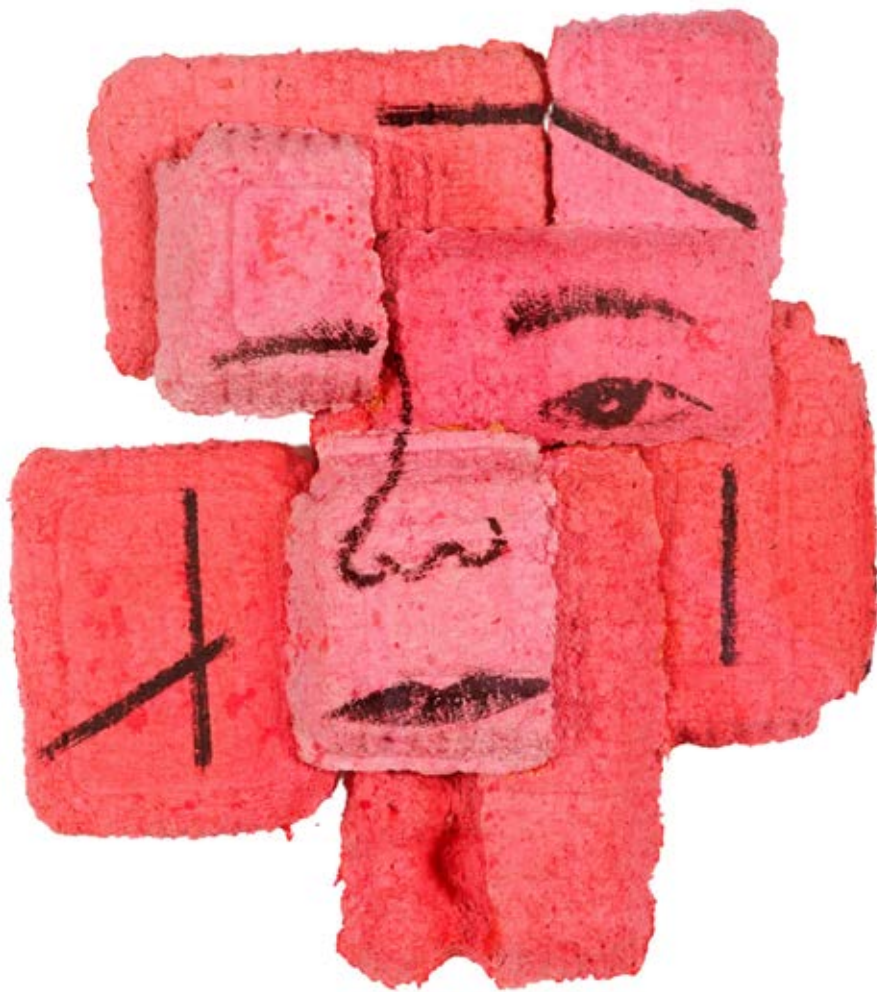


*I am not alone V*

Tissues pulp (machier), gouche, pencil, vermillion red pigment, mural paint

37cm x 33.5cm

2021



*I am not alone VI*

Tissues pulp (machier), gouche, pencil, vermillion red pigment, mural paint

34.5cm x 31.5cm

2021



*I am alone*

Tissues pulp (machier), gouche, pencil, vermillion red pigment, mural paint

Various size, 20 pieces

2021



*Golden patience to wait*

Plastic packages with painted mural paint, vermillion red pigment, a sack of garlic peels in plastic  
88.9cm x 38.1cm x 43.18cm  
2021



*Golden patience to wait*  
Close up view





*Thing Happens I Could Never Imagined*

Tissues pulp (machier), mural paint, light installation, plastic packages with painted mural, Styrofoam

87.2cm x 304.8cm x 15.24cm (Diptych)

2021



*Thing Happens I Could Never Imagined*  
Close up view

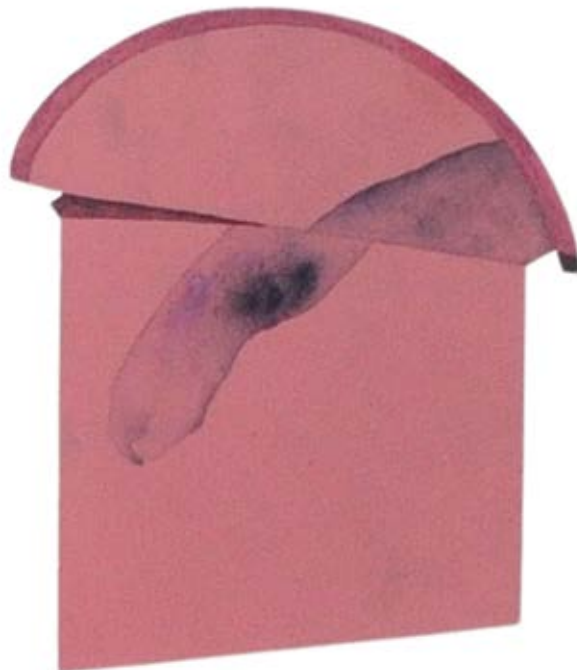


*Thing Happens I Could Never Imagined*  
Installation view



*Untitled I*

Vermillion red pigment, pencil, mural paint on 300gsm paper  
24.5cm x 11.5cm  
2021



*Untitled II*

Vermillion red pigment, pencil, mural paint on 300gsm paper  
19cm x 16cm  
2021



Installation view at Wei-Ling Gallery, Brickfields



Installation view at Wei-Ling Gallery, Brickfields



## TANG TZE LYE (B.1989)

Tang Tze Lye obtained his Bachelor's degree in painting from the MSU Baroda Fine Art University, India (2014-2015) and his Master's degree in Studio-Based Practice, from USM, Penang (2018-2021). Tze Lye's interdisciplinary practice focuses on the body as a vehicle to narrate stories surrounding gender, queer identities, and beauty. The bodies in his paintings and sculptures represent his personal, perpetual struggle of trying to understand his true identity, expressed through a combination of bright and pastel colours, as well as the tonality of blue and chromatic pink, to represent something gendered in nature.

Touching the subject of queer, his work challenges our belief of what the body of the 'normal' and the 'abnormal' should be. His bold provocative works also shed light on the idea of loving one's own body, while bringing up the issue of 'body-shaming', a form of bullying that exists yet is often disregarded in our society. The figures in his paintings are painted from the point of view and style of queer art, emphasizing intimacy and fantasy, and suggesting the normalisation of taboos surrounding the body and gender.

In his research and exploration on queer art, the artist also pushes his own boundaries as a visual artist, as he delves into performance

art – writing, costume-designing, and staging his own piece, as a way to initiate a conversation with the audience. He evokes his ideas through a combination of narration, poetry, and dance. As the artist mentioned, his multiple approach in art-making leans on a quote by Confucius: *"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand"*. In order to fully understand something, one must go beyond visualising it; one must also be it.

Tang Tze Lye has participated in various group exhibitions and competitions internationally. He is finalist for Bakat Muda Sezaman competition, held by the National Visual Arts Gallery of Malaysia, both in 2016 and 2021. In 2020, he was one of two artists selected to participate in the WLG Young Artists Mentorship Program.

His most recent solo exhibition, *'It's Been a While, and I'm Finally Here...'* is held at Wei-Ling Gallery, Brickfields. The series presents a culmination of Tze Lye's experimentations surrounding the themes that he has always been drawn to: the body, queer identities, and beauty. The main artworks, taking form as a combination between painting and sculptures, once again express one's journey of finding his true identity.

## **EDUCATION**

- 2018-2021 Master's degree in Studio-Based Practice, USM Penang
- 2014-2015 Bachelor's degree in painting, MSU Baroda Fine Art University (INDIA)
- 2008-2009 Diploma in Fine Arts, Sunway University College

## **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2022 It's Been a While, and I'm Finally Here..., Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- 2020 Wet Dreams, Zoo, Atria Mall Gallery, Kuala Lumpur

## **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2021 Bakat Muda Sezaman, 263 Maison Kuala Lumpur
- 2021 100 Pieces- Art For All, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- 2020 WLG Incubator Young Artists Show 2020, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur
- 2019 Transit 2x2, HOM ART TRANS Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- 2019 Kecik-Kecik Art Exhibition, Hin Bus Depot Gallery, Penang
- 2019 Millennials, Artemis Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- 2019 100 Art Show Down, China House Gallery, Penang
- 2019 Malaysia Emerging Artist Awards (MEAA) exhibition, Publika White Box Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- 2018 Spotlight Exhibition, Ecoworld Art Gallery, Penang
- 2018 Art Salon 2018, Artesque, Kuala Lumpur
- 2016 Bakat Muda Sezaman, Balai Seni Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- 2010 New Kids on Block, 360 Gallery, Kuala Lumpur

## **WORKSHOPS**

- 2015 Contemporary Art Workshop (Lalit Kala Camp), India
- 2014 Miniature Painting Workshop (Bengali miniature), India
- 2014 Ceramic Pottery Workshop (Contemporary), India
- 2012 Etching Workshop, India
- 2010 ASEAN Youth Camp Workshop, Vietnam

## **COMPETITIONS AND AWARDS**

- 2021 Finalist, Bakat Muda Sezaman, Kuala Lumpur
- 2019 Finalist, SPOTLIGHT, Penang
- 2019 Finalist, Malaysia Emerging Artist Awards (MEAA), Kuala Lumpur
- 2018 Finalist, SPOTLIGHT, Penang
- 2016 Finalist, Bakat Muda Sezaman, Kuala Lumpur
- 2015 First place, Mood Indigo Fashion Design, Mumbai
- 2009 Second Runner Up, Nando's Art Competition, Kuala Lumpur





**Wei-Ling** Gallery

Produced by Wei-Ling Gallery

**Wei-Ling Gallery & Wei-Ling Contemporary**

No. 8 Jalan Scott, Brickfields

50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

T: +603 2260 1106 F: +603 22601107

E: [info@weiling-gallery.com](mailto:info@weiling-gallery.com)

W: [www.weiling-gallery.com](http://www.weiling-gallery.com)

PROJECT DIRECTOR | Lim Wei-Ling

DESIGNED BY | Lim Siew Boon

COVER IMAGE | *Thing Happens I Could Never Imagined* (2021) Close up view

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