



*Interwoven
Terrains*
Yau Bee Ling

Wei-LingGallery

Interwoven Terrains

Yau Bee Ling

25 September - 3 November 2019



Revitalized Hope (2018) | Oil paint, acrylic-based medium and fine sand on canvas; 153cm x 214cm



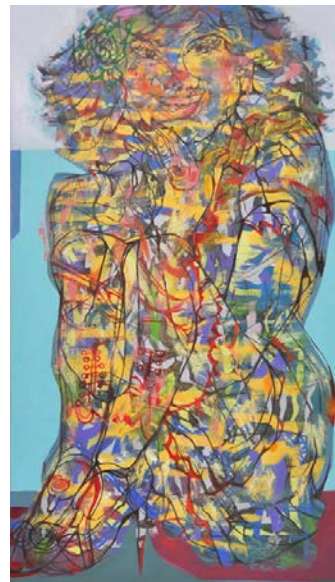
Limitless Meadow (2018) | Oil paint, acrylic-based medium and fine sand on canvas; 153cm x 214cm

Finding Peace in the Unknown: Yau Bee Ling's *Interwoven Terrains*

'*Interwoven Terrains*' (2019) is the fourth solo exhibition in Yau Bee Ling's 25-year career as an artist. In those twenty-five years, Yau's style and subject matter



Home Dinner (*Family Series*)
(1997)



Reflection (*The Women*)
(2013)

have continuously evolved. Early in her career, Yau's '*Family Series*' (1995-1999) depicted intimate family portraits. In this early work, the figures gathered around dinner tables, have oversized heads. The features painted with almost childlike simplicity and proportions rather than a realist style hint at the abstraction that would come into play in Yau's later work.

Visually, the new work that makes up '*Interwoven Terrains*' marks a departure in the artist's visual style. Though she does not see her work as separate from each other. Each series is an evolution from her previous visual language. While abstraction featured in Yau's previous series such as '*Portraits of Paradox*' (2008), '*The Women*' (2013) and '*By Hands*' (2016), a figurative element was always present. In '*Portraits of Paradox*', outlines give shape, distorted though they may be, to faces filled with riotous shapes and colours on canvas. A semblance of order is imposed on the portraits that stretch across the canvases.

While in '*By Hands*', the recurring motif of hands is repeated throughout



Immortalised Ruler
(*Portrait of Paradox*) (2008)



The Sisters (*The Women*) (2013)



Click (*By Hands*) (2016)

the series. In some they a large outline of clasped hands foregrounds the canvas, while in others grasping hands are overlaid over each other in the background of the work. At times the hands, so layered on top of each other, bring to mind jaws as in *Reach Out II* (2016) or blur into abstraction as they do in *Click* (2016). Yet hints of the original form remain even in these more abstract works from the series.

In '*Interwoven Terrains*', Yau abandons the clear figurative outlines of her previous work and moves more firmly into abstraction. Yet to Yau, figuration is still present: "abstraction is a form for the artist as well." Like all Yau's works, '*Interwoven Terrains*' is deeply personal and

reflects a personal journey. Over the last ten years, Yau acted as caretaker for her father who suffered various chronic illness. This experience, and her maturation led her to an acceptance of the unknown. "Living with the unknown is part of the knowing," Yau says, "...I have come to a stage where there's something you can't symbolically tell." This acceptance of chaos and the release of symbolism have resulted in a body of work that embraces both abstraction and nature. Thus, the abstraction came naturally as a reflection of this epiphany rather than a conscious decision by the artist.

Yau also pointed out that there is still figuration in the abstract. Contemplating the bright and energetic canvases, shapes from the natural world slowly emerge. When first seeing the canvases, even without the benefit of the painting titles,

Yau's ability to capture the essence of nature is striking. In *Emerging* (2019), lines of tree trunks appear in the orange blaze of paint, while in *New Blossom* (2019) the suggestion of flowers is distinct. Standing closely to the canvases, the deeply textured layers of paint give the viewer a sense of topography. At close range, the canvases are transformed into whole worlds unto themselves. Each one, reflecting Yau's deep respect for nature and her view of nature as sacred. Nature is uplifted in the work.

Yau's shift to nature and away from portraits and still lifes is in part a reflection of the loneliness of being a long-term caretaker. She went through a phase of feeling negatively towards human beings. "Everyone feels that way sometimes, right?" she ruminates. The natural world and its wonders, a tree's ability to stand upright every day in one spot became an entry point for Yau into a spiritual journey to meet herself. A goal she believes is vital to every artist and human being, "Once we meet ourselves, we will know what ails us, and we will know what is our purpose. Otherwise we will continue to live in a material life." That journey into spirituality, away from materialism, is also key to the works' abstraction. "The value of the world gets sieved off," she says.

In contrast to her earlier work, *'By Hands'*, Yau's colour palette in *'Interwoven Terrains'* remains bright throughout. Bright and lighter blues feature in several paintings, while four canvases in the series use orange as the central colour. Lush greens also repeat in the series. The lightness and movement of these canvases stand sharply in contrast to the work's emotional genesis. After all, Yau began this work after losing a beloved sister and her father. As Yau explains, "I had two family members pass away. I started to have this idea about where are they going. You can't paint the unknown place."

'Interwoven Terrains' is Yau's attempt to understand and imagine where her loved ones have passed on to. Yet, Yau is adamant that she does not want to amplify sadness with her work. In this respect, the work is highly successful. Hopefulness echoes clearly throughout the series with its use of bright colour. A sense of

movement and growth leaps forward from *Contemplating Garden* (2019). While *Glorious Contemplation (Green Lake)* (2019) arrests the gaze with its use of an optimistic bright blue under warm pinks and yellow. With this work, Yau suggests that the unknown plane is not to be feared. "I found the great element of joy even in pain," she says.

Many of the works in the series are also diptychs. The use of diptychs represents another layer of the artist's healing process. The line dividing the paintings might be read as a marker of a before and after of the seismic events in the artist's life. While the division of the canvas acts on one hand as a divider, it can also be read as a seam. The paintings are only complete with both halves, much like Yau's discovery of joy within pain.

Fittingly, Yau ended the series with *Converging* (2019). Unlike the preceding paintings, *Converging* does not have a dominant colour. It is also the only canvas to use hints of black that appear at the corners of the canvas. However, the hints of darkness at the edges work to emphasise the brightness of the canvas as a whole. Here, green, blue, daubs of orange and yellow come together and draw the eye to the centre of the work. Narratively, it feels satisfying as the last work in the series. A sense of closure or wholeness appears despite the lack of a unifying colour. Contradictorily, a sense of visual order is achieved despite the lack of a clear figure or order to the paint. Ending with this painting, fittingly titled, gives the viewer a clear sense that Yau has accomplished the knowing through the unknown.

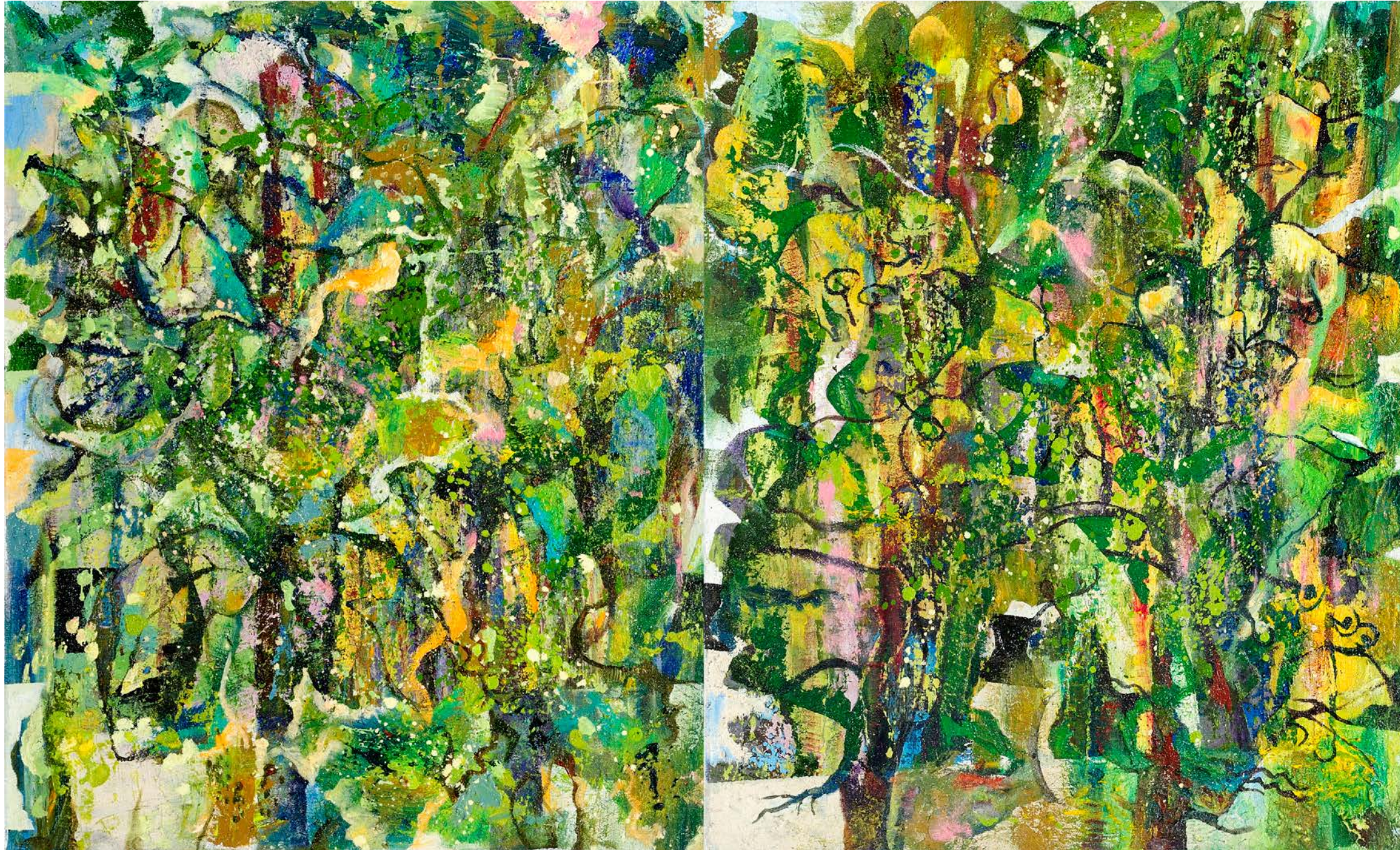
Deborah Augustin

Deborah is a writer born and raised in Malaysia. Her practice as a writer is influenced by a love for visual art.

September 2019

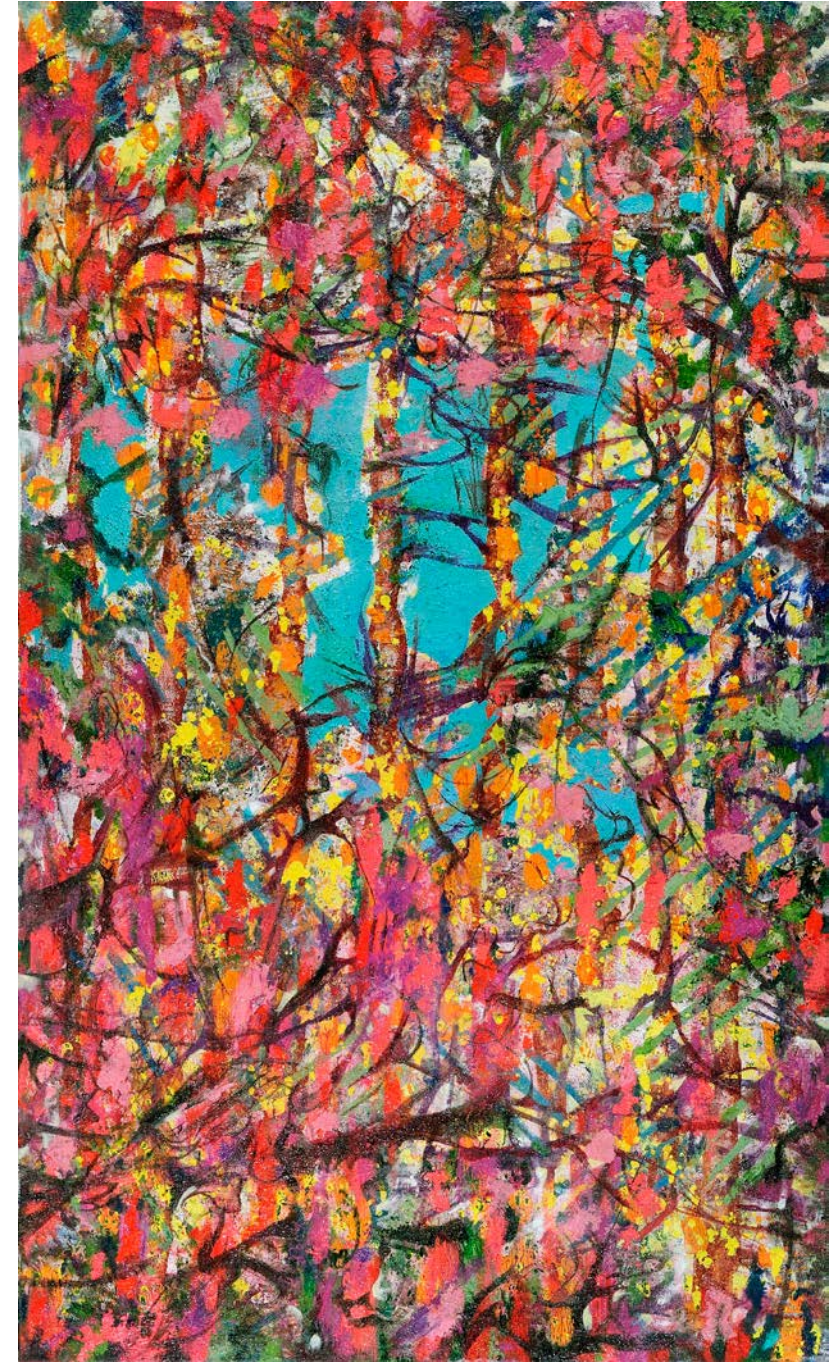


Flow of Radiance (2019)
Oil and sand medium on canvas
91.5cm x 152.5cm



Contemplating Garden (2019)
Oil and sand medium on canvas
60.5cm x 100cm (Diptych)

Glorious Contemplation (Green Lake) (2019) | Oil and sand medium on canvas; 152.5cm x 91.5cm





Explicitly Immersive Light I & II (2019) | Oil and sand medium on canvas; 150cm x 174cm (Diptych)



New Blossom (2019) | Oil and sand medium on canvas; 152cm x 183cm (Diptych)



Alive, and Moving (2019) | Oil and sand medium on canvas; 183cm x 152.5cm (Diptych)



Harness of Joy (2019)
Oil and sand medium on canvas
152.5cm x 213.5cm



Converging (2019)
Oil and sand medium on canvas
102cm x 140cm



Living Pond (2019) | Oil and sand medium on canvas; 153cm x 152cm (Diptych)



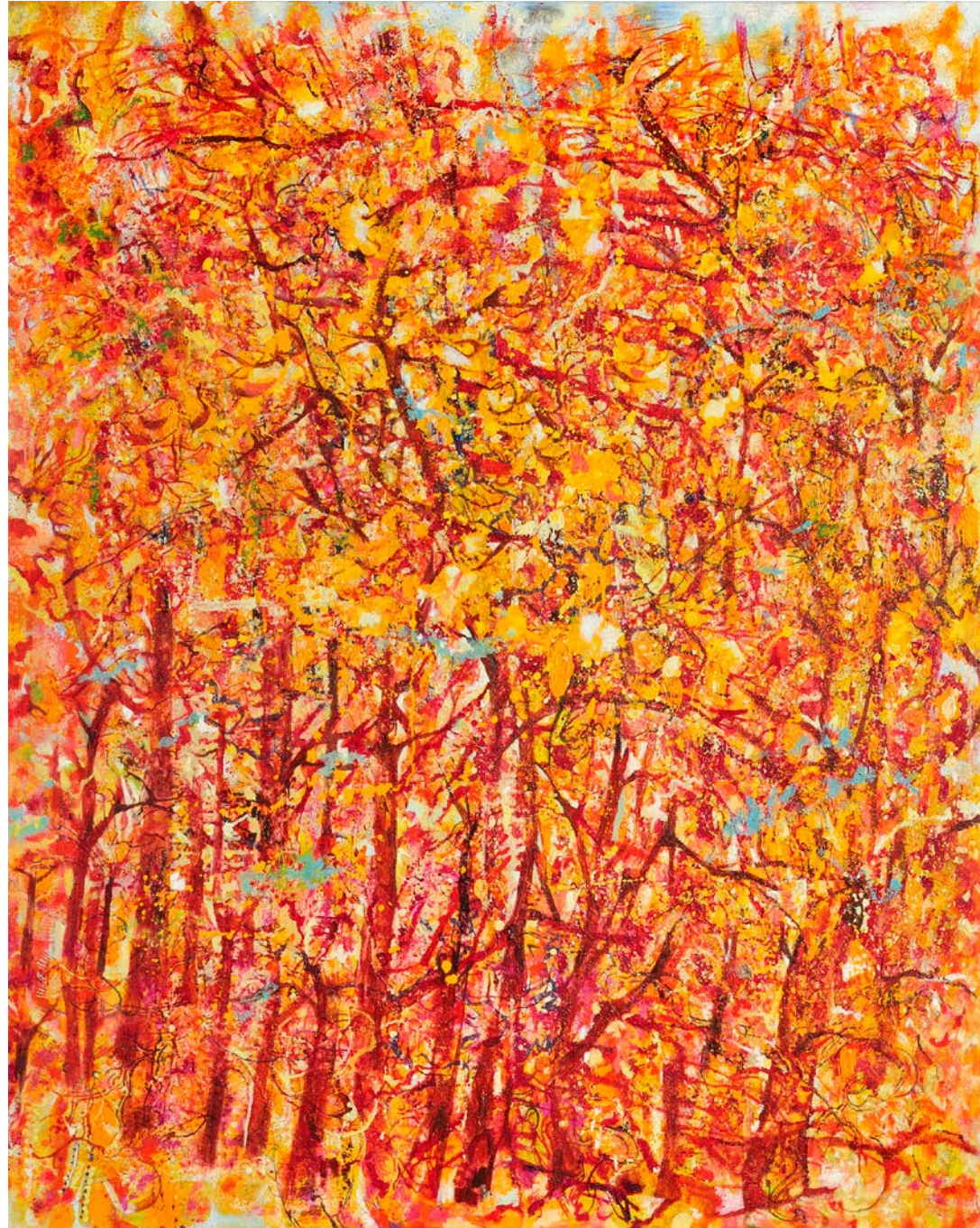
Contemplating Liberty (2019) | Oil and sand medium on canvas; 184cm x 152.5cm (Diptych)



Awaiting in Serenity (2019)
Oil and sand medium on canvas
152.5cm x 244cm (Diptych)



Underneath (2019)
Oil and sand medium on canvas
91.5cm x 152.5cm



Emerging (2019) | Oil and sand medium on canvas; 152cm x 122cm

Yau Bee Ling (B.1972)

Yau Bee Ling's earlier work came from a period of her life that was immensely personal and meaningful. Through her work, she observes the complex roles of contemporary women in the present-day society. Bee Ling explores the broad gambit of human experiences through the autobiographical themes of family and tradition, set against the familiar motifs of home, food and precious heirlooms. Bee Ling comes from a traditional Chinese family that holds dearly the traditional culture values. Perpetuated by the socio-economic-political realities of the modern Malaysia, issues of self and identity as a starting point dominate her aesthetic. For Bee Ling, her art has always been a form of therapy – a way for the artist to resolve the external and accept the internal.

Bee Ling's practice has consistently been an extension of her life's journey, mimicking the twists and turns of her emotional state of mind as she is confronted by the vagaries and challenges of a life lived. '*Interwoven Terrains*', held at Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur in 2019, can be viewed in some ways as a turning point, a critical shift in her life - as she emerges from 'rock bottom' for a gasp of air. These works are cathartic - a renewal. They have served to purify and heal her.

Her older series, '*Portraits of Paradox*' (2008), possesses both a sophisticated sense of design and an exciting play space, which are hallmarks of credible painting, preserved since her early works. In this series, Bee Ling completely superimposed different subjects across the picture plane while addressing personal as well as universal narratives. With these portraits, she lets things happen in the course of personal associations; as a repository of thoughts and feelings her paintings symbolize a human ethic, concern and consciousness rarely encountered in modern life.



Born in Klang, Yau Bee Ling graduated with a full scholarship from the Malaysian Institute of Art in Fine Arts in 1995. She has exhibited extensively in exhibitions across Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Singapore. She represented Malaysia at the 9th Asian Art Biennale in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and at the 2nd Fukuoka Triennale, Japan, where her pieces eventually became part of the Museum's permanent collection. Her works are part of numerous Malaysian and international collections. She is also the recipient of the 2016 Kuandu Residency Program of Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts (KdMoFA), Taipei, Taiwan.

**EDUCATION**

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

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

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

2019 Art Jakarta, JCC Senayan, 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
 Through Our Eyes: Malaysian Women Artist Invitational Exhibition, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 1998 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
Hijas 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



To accompany the exhibition entitled '*Interwoven Terrains*' by Yau Bee Ling
from 25 September - 3 November 2019

Wei-Ling Contemporary

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COVER | *Converging* (2019) - Close up

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