

Sing To The Land Of My Heart (2015) – Cheong Kiet Cheng

INTRODUCTION BY ANDREW POK

“Imagine there’re no countries... Nothing to kill or die for and no religion too... Imagine no procession, I wonder if you can... Imagine all the people sharing all the world...” John Lennon’s Imagine perhaps offers a close reflection of Kiet Cheng’s body of work.

Kiet Cheng is interested in the coexistence space between humans, animal and nature. Her work explores the balance between her idyllic space and the reality of the world that are becoming more and more crowded.

Her earlier work departed from an imagined utopia where she considered no boundary between countries, no government, no power conflict, no religion, no money and no need to enforce any law. All beings live according to the law of the nature in this condition.

Kiet Cheng’s latest body of works (2013), include paintings, collage and sculptures, goes further to explore the law of the universe where all beings in this space go through the impermanent process of birth, aging, sickness and death. She uses images of human, animals, flowers and plants to convey love, beauty, and life and death. For Kiet Cheng, beauty is impermanent but what is decayed is not necessarily ugly. However, unavoidably, we all have to live and cope with the acceptance of transience and imperfection.

Kiet Cheng’s canvases embrace her sentiment and romantic feeling toward nature and her feelings are often catalysed or intensified by literature, poetry, music and theatrical drama. She uses various methods and combination of subjects to express her belief, hope and fear

that are comparable to the works of Romanticism artist Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) and Realism artist Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1875).

Imagine all physical things are impermanent and nothing coexist with the nature is forever. Eventually, all beings will become extinct, probably due to us exploiting our environment to such an extent, that we will not be able to survive in it any more. Kiet Cheng's body of work does not provide a solution for the problems. Instead, it offers a balance by imagining peaceful coexistence as the way of life, where no one predated upon nature, upon animal and upon one another. However, one may question that if all physical things are impermanent according to the law of nature including a utopia, where else can we find an idyllic place if it is not from imagination?