



CHEN WEI MENG (B.1965)

(Based in Selangor, Malaysia)

Having grown up in Dungun, Terengganu Chen Wei Meng's muse is the landscape. This obsession is reflected deeply in the hyper-realistic paintings that he painstakingly creates.

The works are meditative in their execution as he strives to transcend merely a depiction of the landscape, but endeavours to capture a spirituality and soul that far supersedes humanity, and within this, an all-encompassing energy and power. It is in this space that he finds comfort and inspiration. His journey and investigations have seen him spending months travelling - living and sleeping in a car, in order to be as close as possible to what moves him.

Having spent his childhood on the East Coast small town of Dungun in the state of Terengganu, the spectacle of the ocean was a daily performance to Chen Wei Meng. He would depict the surreal, evocative delineations of cloudbursts and deluges in the landscape, so as to illustrate the weather and season. As he said, the landscape is like "a friend" that he has found again. The wide lens effect that he applies to his paintings brings the bare foreground close to the viewer, while opening a panorama where stories would develop.

Wei Meng enthuses, *"I lean towards a more instructed method of studying landscapes. I want to look at the physical forms of the land itself and by focusing on this aspect, I observe exquisite contours and arrangements, and the results are thrilling! I can see how these geographical elements can be adapted onto a canvas. I can see the processes involved; of how a knowledge of geology augments my landscapes in the artistic sense."*

His 'Sekinchan: Land of Fertility' (2016) series saw him revisiting the same place over and over again, as each visit presented him with a different nuance of the same paddy fields, as they morphed through the different seasons of harvest. Each painting is a form of 'imprisonment', as the image draws its audience tenderly in; while all the while, conceivable existences become impenetrable barriers; and there is no way of leaving.

As time has evolved, so to has his practice which has seen him leave behind colour and move into a monochromatic palette which serves to help him. In his quest for a satisfactory representation of the forms he was seeking, trying to express, in the purest way, the elusive contours which he felt had always existed in his work. Chasing this abstract concept of 'flow', he began his experiments first with acrylic, then charcoal, before finding his preference for Chinese ink on Xuan paper.

'Musang's Words' (2020) is therefore a celebration of this very idea, a meditative and dedicated exploration into his perpetual quest for 'flow'. The approach is reminiscent of the emotive gestures and mark-making seen in abstract expressionism, where it is the movement of the line which inspires emotion.



This idea of 'flow' which Chen has long felt in the landscapes in much of his previous work, can most aptly be described as lines and shapes which seem to have a "vivid and rhythmic" quality in its contours, something which forms a "mysterious shape" that Chen cannot quite put into words. Instead, he expresses his findings by pushing the limitations of the landscape in its abstraction, into an almost pure representation of said 'flow'; distilling the forms and shapes of Gua Musang mountain into a raw, symbolic state, and allowing the push and pull of its lines to guide his hand.

While it may be instinctive to draw a comparison to more traditional forms of Chinese landscape painting, a closer look immediately reveals the vast difference between the two; where one is figurative, Chen's works are instead gestural and abstracted, and his choice in material is a more formal rather than historical decision.



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SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 SMS to Song, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2020 Musang's Words, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2016 Sekinchan: Land of Fertility, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2014 20 days in Northwest China (part 1), Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2012 Silent Monsoon, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2009 Two three six, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2008 Within 30 km, Reka Art Space, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 18@8 pLAy, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2023 CIMB ARTOBER – ART & SOUL, MITEC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2022 A Paradigm Shift - Reflecting on Twenty Years of The Malaysian Art Scene, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
WLG IGNITE, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Art Expo Malaysia 2022, GMBB, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2021 100 Pieces: Art for All, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
SEA Focus Curated: hyper-horizon, Tanjong Pagar Distripark, Singapore
2018 Patriots: By Malaysians for Malaysians, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tanah Air, Art Expo Malaysia 2018 - Project Room, MATRADE Exhibition and Convention Centre (MECC), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2017 Sotheby's Auction (Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Paintings), 3rd April 2017, Hong Kong Convention Centre, Hong Kong
2016 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
2012 18@8: KUL-SIN, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
18@8: KUL-SIN, Ion Art, Singapore
Timeless, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2011 What's Your Porn? Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Malaysian Rice-Plates Project, KL Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2010 Heartland, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2006 Asia Pacific Ocean International Art Exhibition, Mu Gung Hwa Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
1st Art Exhibition, Mu Gung Hwa Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2005 Ulek Rasa (Exhibition of Terengganu Artists), National Art Gallery,



- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2004 Seoul International Star Exhibition, Gyeonhuigung Annex Building of Seoul Museum of Art, Korea
Second Annual Reka Free Show 2004, Reka Art Space, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2001 Malaysian Open Show 2001, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
'Manusia, The Human Being' Exhibition, NN Gallery, Kuala Lumpur (Charity Exhibition in Aid of the International Movement for a Just World)
- 2000 Buncho National Water Colour Award 2000, S.I.T Klang
Philip Morris Malaysia Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1999 Aspiration Work 2000 Exhibition, Hotel Helang, Pulau Langkawi, Malaysia
- 1991 Figurative & Drawing Exhibition, Westminster Institute, London

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

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