

# THE DICHOTOMY OF OPPOSITES

IVAN LAM WAI HOE

KUL/MAL B.1975

C A T T O

MADE IN THE YEAR

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FOUR

MEDIUM USED

COLOR MARKERS &

COLOR PENCILS

ON CANVAS ON BOARD

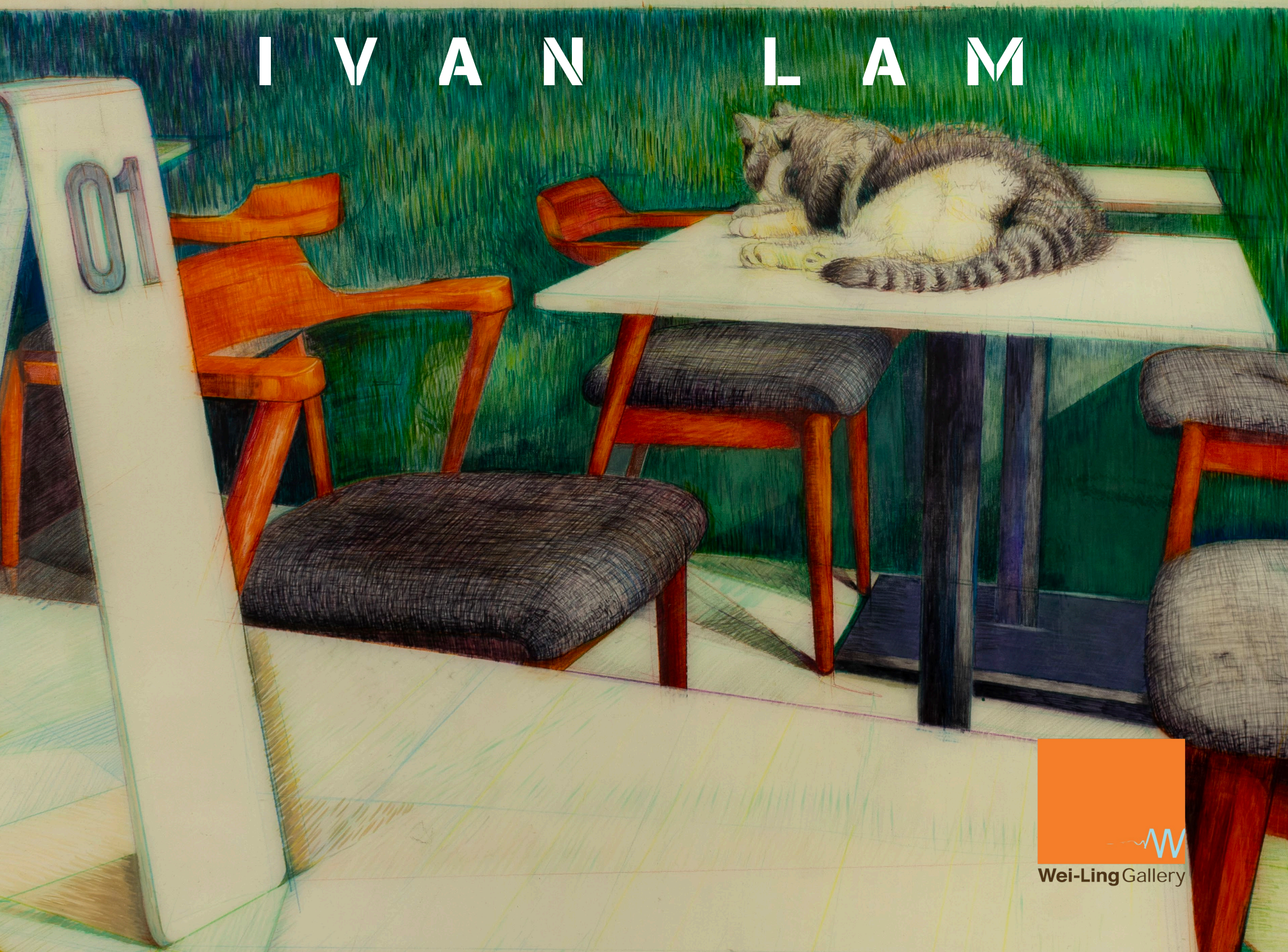
SIZE

SEVENTY FIVE INCHES

BY

FIFTY FOUR INCHES

I V A N L A M



**THE DICHOTOMY OF OPPOSITES**  
**I V A N L A M**

**18 FEB - 29 MAR 2025**



Known for his innovative use of materials and introspective approach to human complexity, Lam's latest body of work reflects the inherent contradictions of existence, where doubt and certainty, chaos and control, and impulsivity and deliberation coexist.

In *'The Dichotomy of Opposites'*, Ivan Lam examines the push and pull of the human experience. This series reflects the tension between the chaos of uncertainty and the clarity of conviction, presenting two contrasting bodies of work that navigate the spectrum between spontaneous expression and methodical precision, engaging the visual, auditory, and sensory realms.

Within the main space of Wei-Ling Gallery, Ivan Lam presents works which are rooted in certainty. Meticulous and labour-intensive, they depict intimate subjects of comfort, such as a pair of worn shoes, a serene cat café he frequented with his children, and the indulgent simplicity of cake after coffee. These pieces, rendered with precision, paradoxically reveal moments of doubt as Lam questions his ability to complete them, allowing uncertainty to infiltrate spaces of supposed assurance.

In contrast, the works immersed in doubt, featured at Wei-Ling Contemporary, are characterised by the immediacy and unpredictability of spray paint. Lam layers repetitive stencils of mantras, phrases imbued with hesitation and second-guessing, until the original text dissolves into abstract patterns. These obsessive repetitions mirror the loops of overthinking, where clarity is muddled in the overwhelming swirl of thoughts.

"What fascinates me most is the way these opposing states influence each other. When working through doubt, I often find focus. Conversely, in moments of supposed certainty, I encounter doubt," Lam explains. "This paradox reveals that opposites are not separate entities but intertwined forces that shape and challenge each other."

*'The Dichotomy of Opposites'* draws viewers into the in-between spaces where black and white merge, and the boundaries between chaos and control, doubt and certainty, begin to dissolve. Lam prompts us to consider the contradictions that shape our lives, inviting a personal connection to these shared human experiences.

Ivan Lam is one of Malaysia's most prominent contemporary artists, renowned for his ability to push boundaries and redefine artistic mediums. His works have been exhibited internationally, and he continues to present deeply personal yet universally relatable narratives.



IVAN LAM WAI HOE  
KUL/M.A L B. 1975

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**Catto**

Color markers and color pencils on canvas on board

190cm x 137cm

2024

This piece is about a place I visit often with my kids, a quiet, cozy cat café that brings me peace. I wanted to capture that warmth and comfort, but the process of rendering it in such detail made me question if I could really do it justice. It's strange how something so familiar and happy can also bring moments of doubt in the act of creating.

IVAN LAM WAI HOE

KUL/MALB.1975

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Close-up of 'Catto' (2025)



### 990

Color markers and color pencils on canvas on board

190cm x 117cm

2024

These old new balance shoes are personal to me, worn down over the years but still reliable. Painting them became a meditative process—slow and methodical—but also filled with unexpected moments of uncertainty. The very act of trying to capture their essence made me question my ability, even though they're such a simple, comforting subject. It's a piece about the quiet strength of the familiar and the fragility of feeling certain.



FOUR SIX INCHES

BY

SEVENTY FIVE INCHES

SIZE

ON CANYAS ON BOARD

ACRYLIC MARKERS &

COLOR PENCILS &

COLOR MARKERS &

MEDIUM USED

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FOUR

MADE IN THE YEAR

0 6 6

KW/MAL E 1975

HO I W A H I V A N L A M W A H H O E

Close-up of '990' (2025)



### *Hanako*

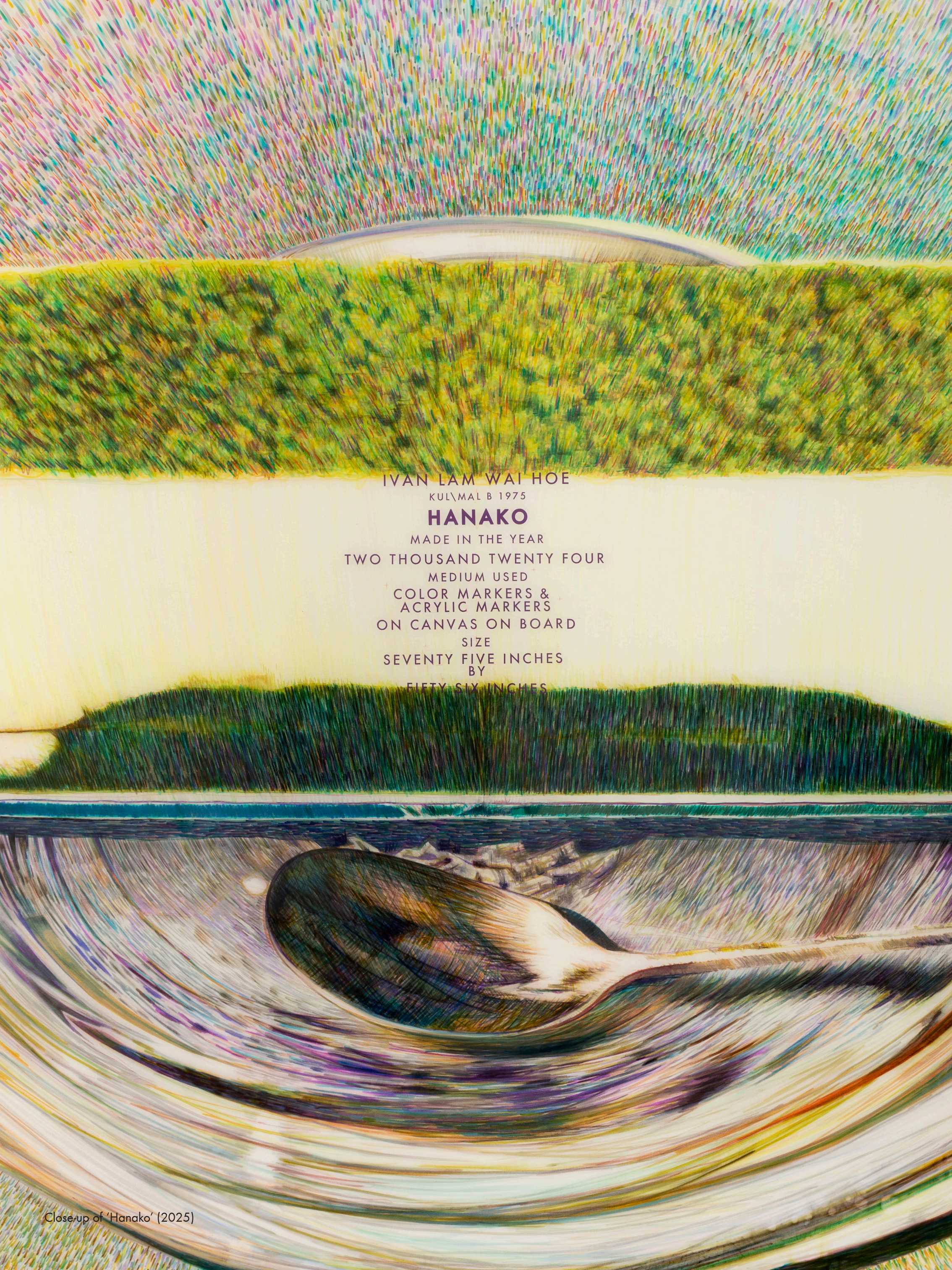
Color markers, acrylic markers and color pencils on canvas on board

190cm x 142cm

2024

This work is about the indulgence of a slice of matcha cake, a small ritual I enjoy after coffee. The process of painting it was deliberate and time-consuming, mirroring the care I associate with these moments of joy. Yet, as I worked, doubt crept in—whether I could capture that fleeting sense of satisfaction.





IVAN LAM WAI HOE

KULMAL B 1975

**HANAKO**

MADE IN THE YEAR  
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MEDIUM USED  
COLOR MARKERS &  
ACRYLIC MARKERS  
ON CANVAS ON BOARD

SIZE  
SEVENTY FIVE INCHES  
BY  
FIFTY SIX INCHES



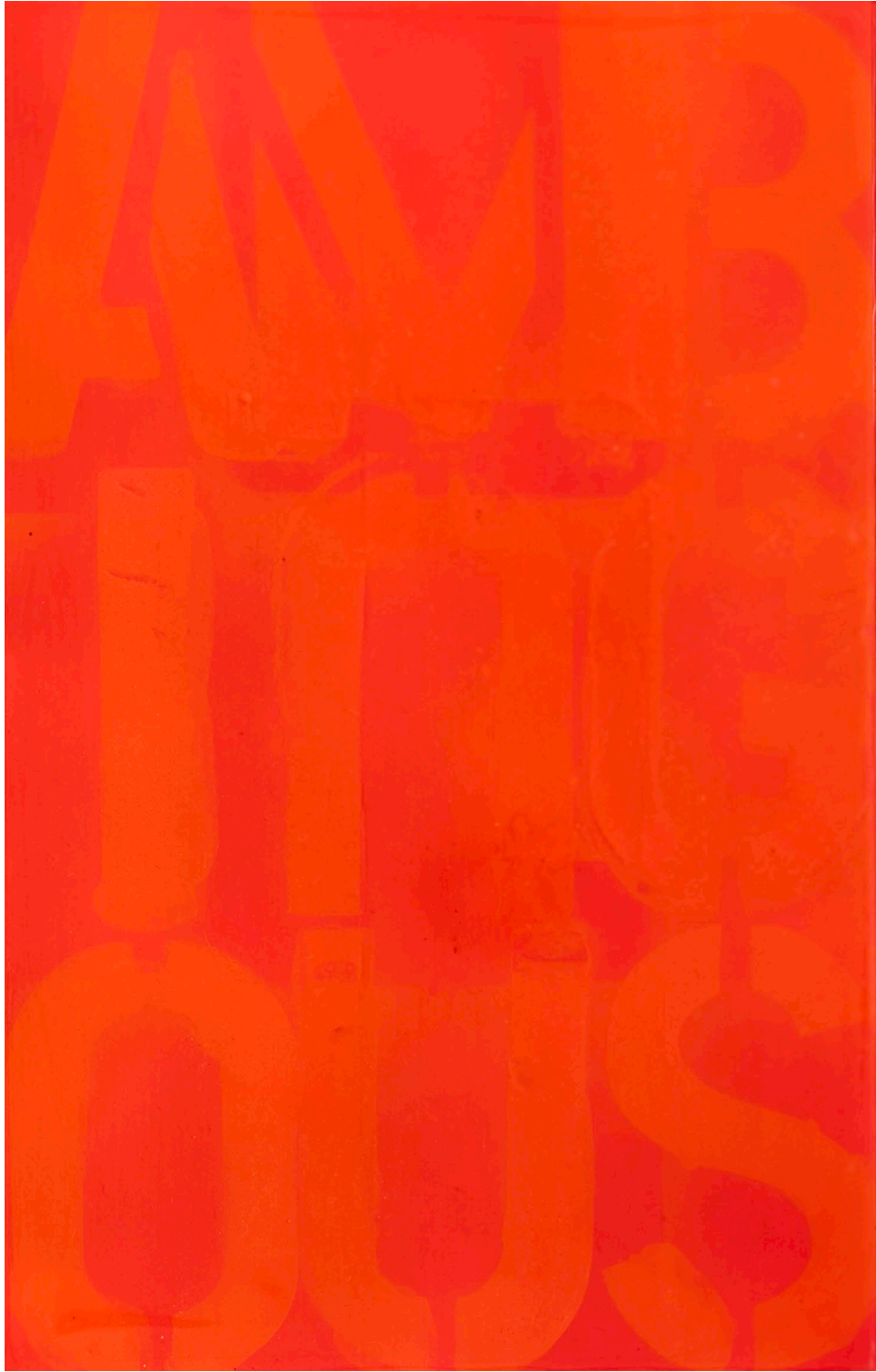
Installation view of 'Catto', '990', and 'Hanako' at Wei-Ling Gallery

The smaller stencil works – **AMBIGUOUS, DOUBTFULL, HESITANCE, DOUBTFULL, QUESTIONS** and **CACOPHONY** are more intimate but no less chaotic. I repeated these words obsessively, letting the layers build until they almost disappeared into patterns. They're about how single moments of doubt can ripple out, becoming something bigger and harder to define.



**HESITANCE**

Aerosol spray paint on plywood. Resin coated.  
25cm x 16cm  
2025

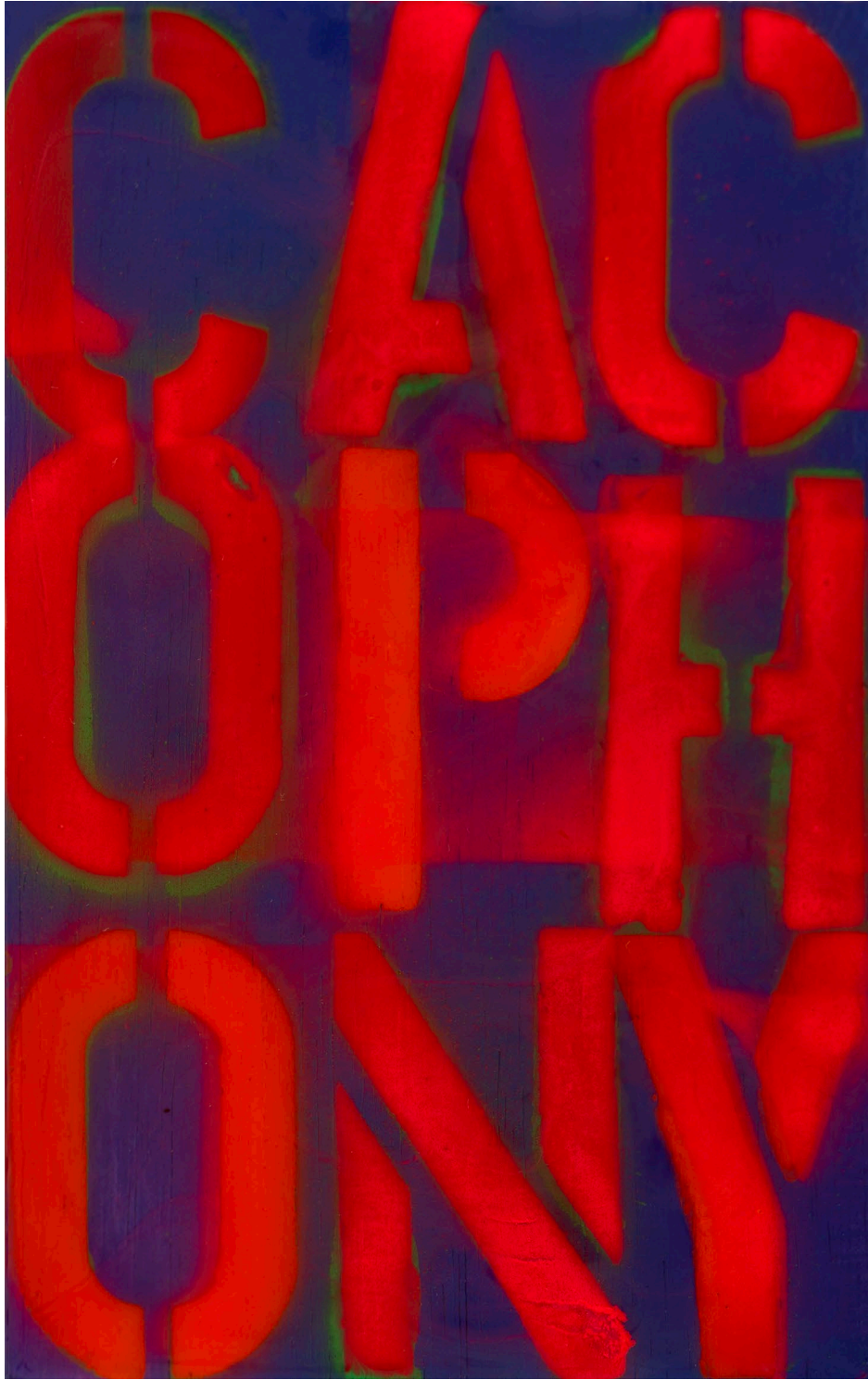


**AMBIGUOUS**

Aerosol spray paint on plywood. Resin coated.

25cm x 16cm

2025



**CACOPHONY**

Aerosol spray paint on plywood. Resin coated.

25cm x 16cm

2025

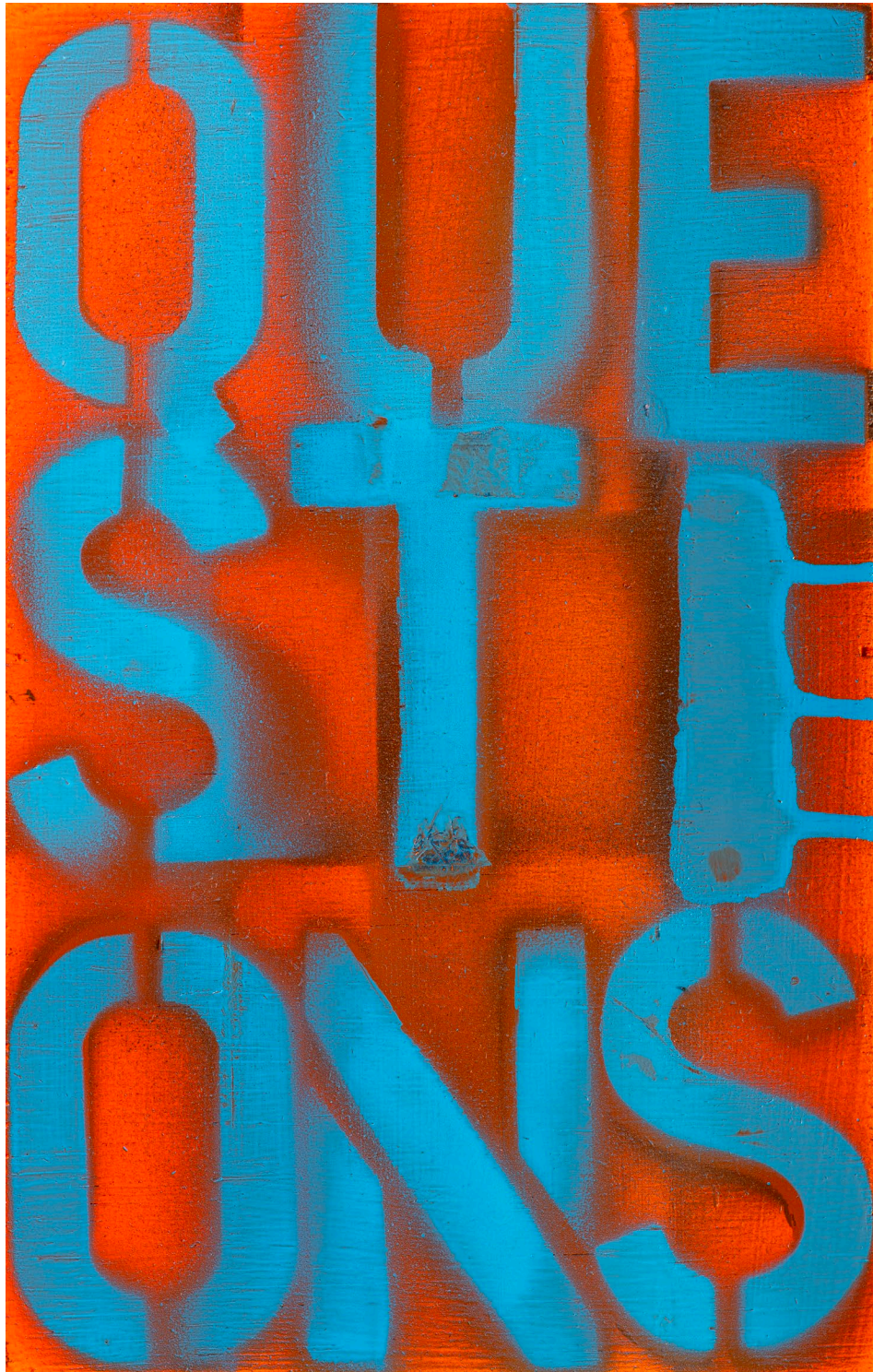


**DOUBTFULL**

Aerosol spray paint on plywood. Resin coated.

25cm x 16cm

2025



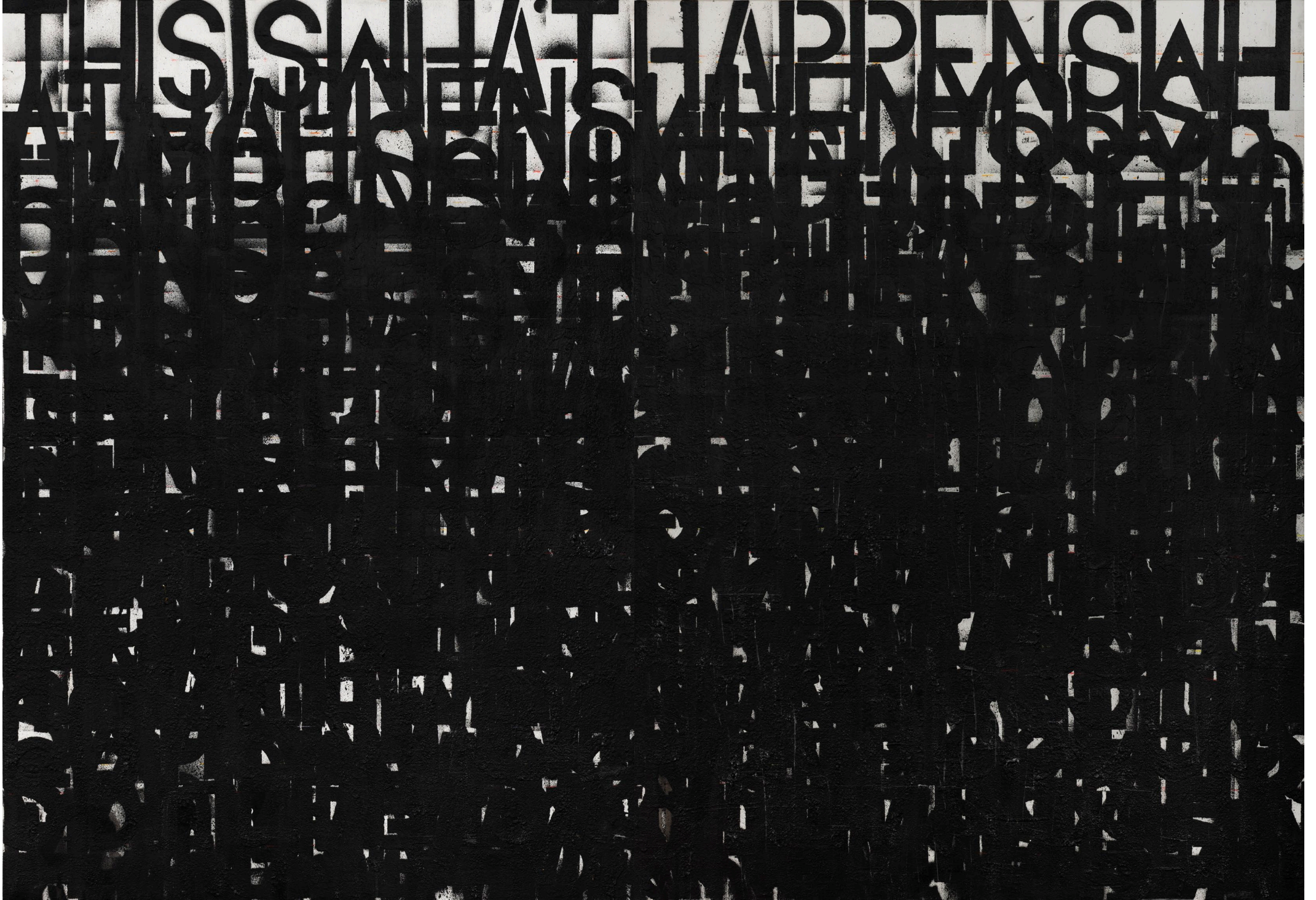
**QUESTIONS**

Aerosol spray paint on plywood. Resin coated.

25cm x 16cm

2025





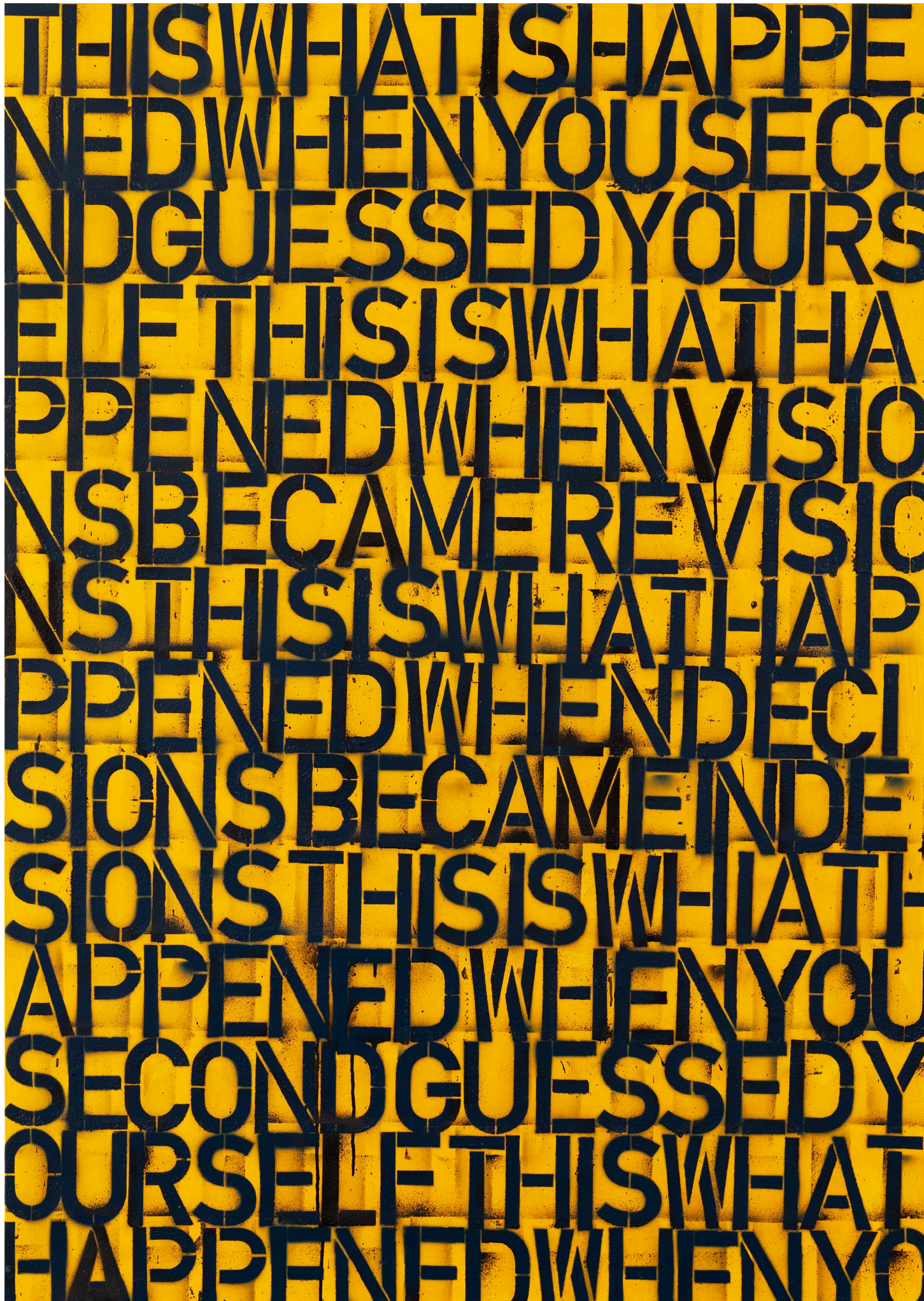
***Indecisions***

Water coating spray medium on canvas on board  
122cm x 180cm (Diptych)  
2025

This piece started with mantras, layered over and over in black and white spray paint, until the words lost all meaning. It's messy and chaotic, reflecting the mental loops of second-guessing yourself. I deliberately chose spray paint of waterproofing—a medium I can't fully control—to let the uncertainty become part of the process.



Close-up of the left panel of 'Indecisions' (2025)



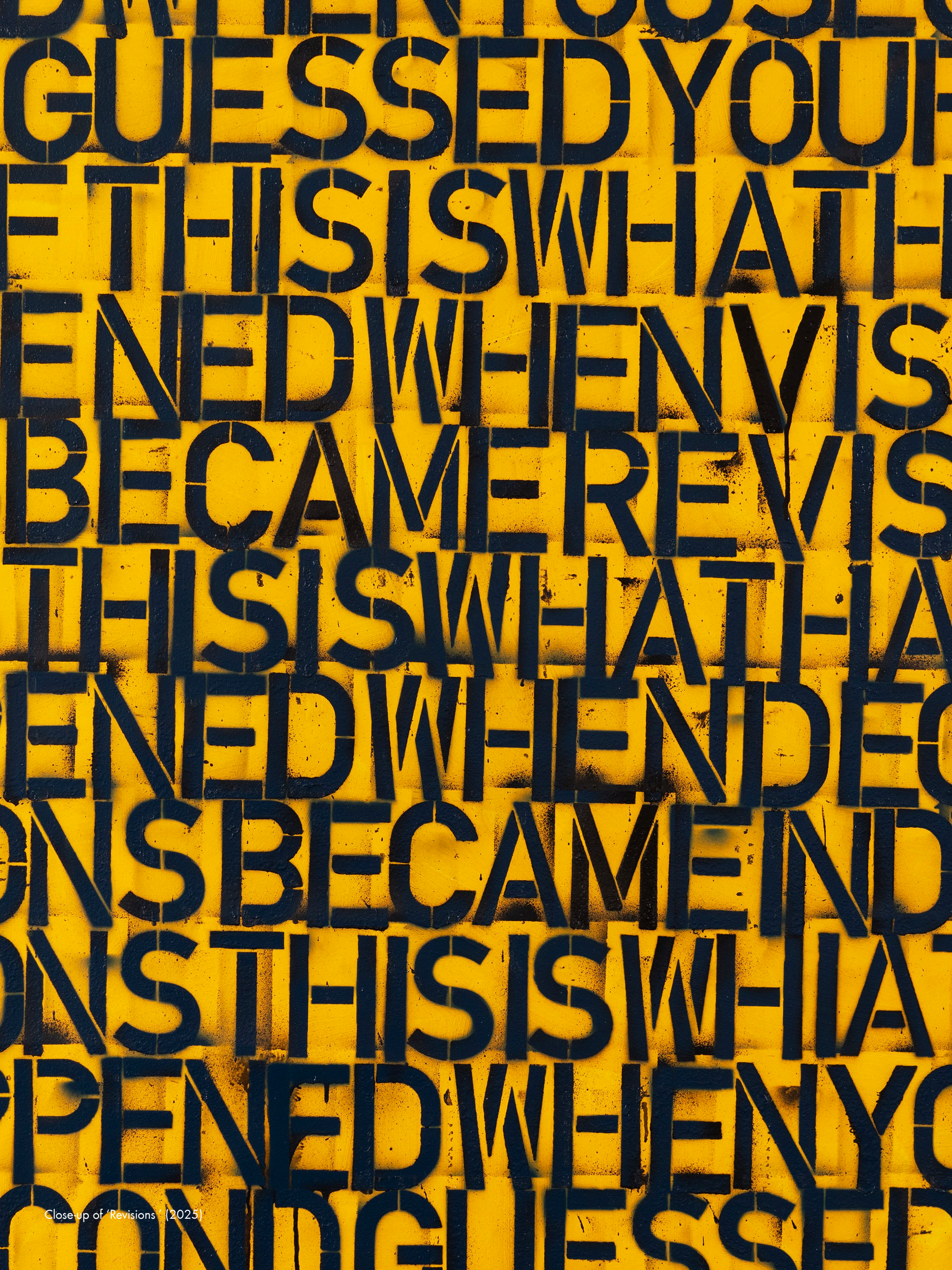
### Revisions

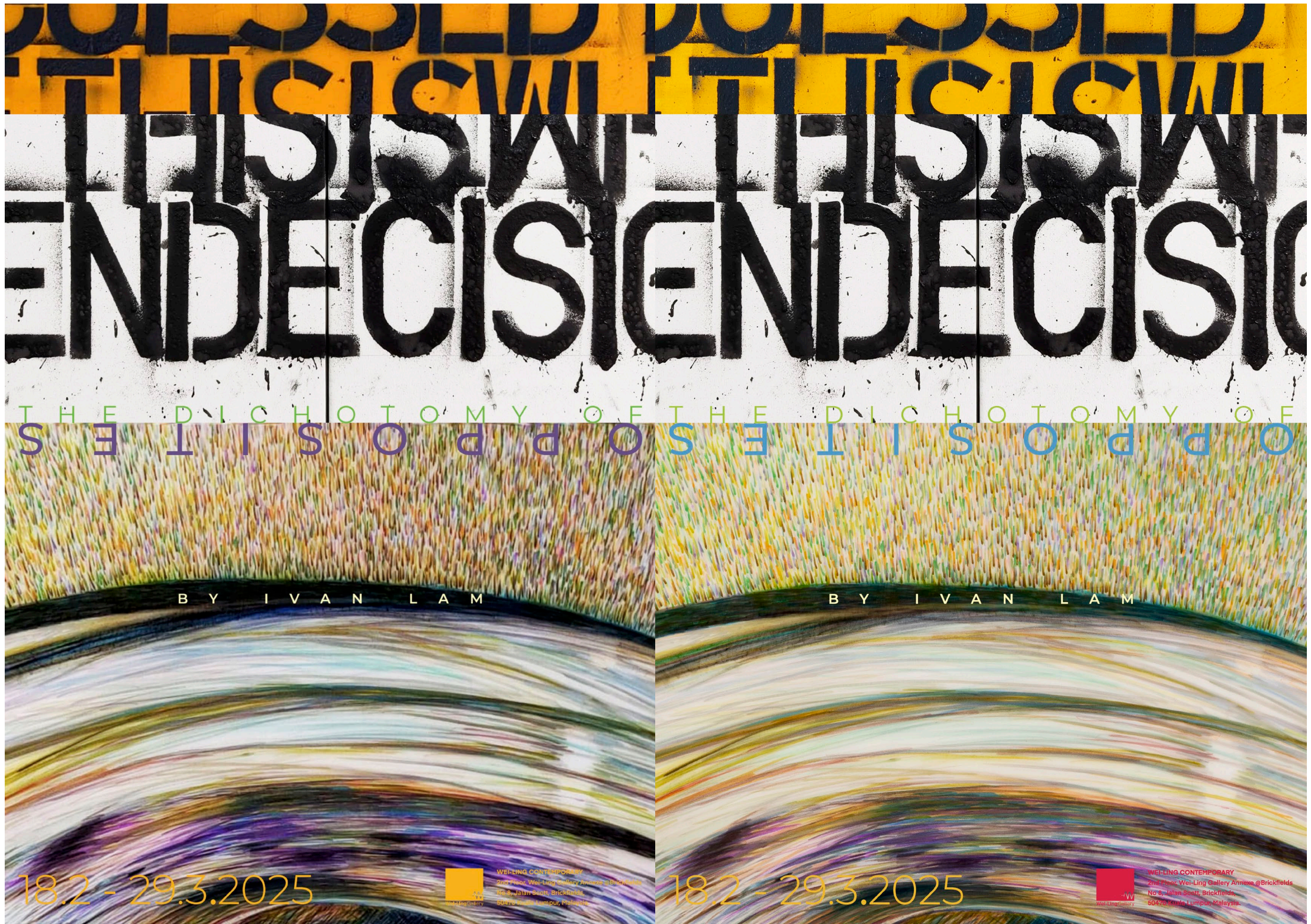
Water coating spray medium and aerosol spray paint on canvas on board

173cm x 122cm

2025

The yellow stenciled piece feels like a contradiction—vibrant and optimistic, but the repetition of the mantras builds into something unresolved. The letters blur into abstraction, and the clarity of the words gets lost. It's about the tension between hope and doubt, how they're always intertwined.





*The Dichotomy of Opposites*  
 Archival print  
 118.9cm x 84.1cm (each)  
 118.9cm x 168.2cm (Diptych)  
 2025



Installation view at Wei-Ling Contemporary



### **Ivan Lam (B. 1975)**

Born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he is still lives and works. Ivan Lam graduated from the Maine College of Art USA with a Bachelors in Fine Art Painting in 1998. Starting off as a printmaker, he used silkscreen as a means to create works that dealt with colour fields and reflected international issues. In 2005, Ivan was regarded as the country's most relevant contemporary printmaker, having mastered the silkscreen with the back-breaking CMYK series (consisting only of 10 pieces). At this juncture, Ivan made the bold move of shifting his focus from printing to painting.

Ivan Lam's art career spans over 23 years, making significant contributions to contemporary Malaysian art through innovative practices in printmaking and contemporary painting. His use of resin adds a hyper-realistic layer to his works, exploring themes of duality, tension, and contradictions, while engaging with popular culture, current affairs, art history, and autobiography. The continuation of his artistic journey includes pivotal series like 'After All These Years...', 'Panorama', and 'Together Alone', which demonstrated his exploration of new mediums, techniques, and large-scale works. Meanwhile, his exhibitions such as 'Machines' and 'The Zero Hero', addressed themes like multicultural coexistence and identity.

The conceptual turn in his practice tackled deeper questions about authorship and the nature of art, exemplified by works like 'Compendium of Malaysian Art (COMA)' and 'The Death of a Nation / The Birth of a Nation', which critiqued consumerism and Malaysia's racial divisions. His 'FAUX' series and works like 'Nine Paintings of Bouquets' and 'Stone' examined truth, imitation, and impermanence. Lam's performance pieces, such as '66:06:06' and 'U-Turn', invited viewers to reflect on the passage of time and political inaction.

In his later works, like 'THE SOIL ON WHICH I BLEED' and 'Aesthetics of Silence', Lam engaged with the pandemic, political tensions, and the importance of presence in a digital age. His 2022 'Catharsis' series reflected deeply on physical pain, while 'Blind Side' (2023) focused on creating inclusive art for the visually impaired. He explored cultural dialogue between Malaysia and Singapore, reinforcing the theme of progress and unity in Southeast Asia with his work 'Merdeka Project - In(ter)dependence'. Throughout his career, Lam has continuously evolved, pushing boundaries and questioning the role of the artist in society.

Lam has exhibited extensively both locally and internationally, receiving multiple awards throughout his career, which includes numerous solo and group exhibitions. His achievements have been recognized by esteemed institutions across Malaysia, Europe, and the USA. His career milestones include a 2015 retrospective, Ivan Lam: TWENTY, showcasing 20 years of his artistic journey at Wei-Ling Contemporary. In 2013, he became the first Malaysian artist featured at Art Basel Hong Kong with COMA - Compendium of Malaysian Art. He is also the only Malaysian artist commissioned by Louis Vuitton for their collection. Lam debuted at Volta New York in 2016 and was invited to the Karachi Biennale in 2017. In 2019, he represented Malaysia at its first National Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale with 'One Inch' (2019), a work exploring dualities and layered meanings.

**EDUCATION**

- 2006 University of East London, UK, MA in International Contemporary Art and Design Practice (Final Semester, Graduating Jan 2007)  
Professors: Hedley Roberts, Dr. Daniela Leva
- 1998 Maine College of Art, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting (Full Honours)  
Professors: Johnnie Ross, Honor Mack, Peter Sucheki, George Larou
- 1994 Lim Kok Wing Institute of Technology, Graphic Design Certificate

**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2025 The Dichotomy of Opposites, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2023 Blind Side, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2022 catharsis, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2021 THE SOIL ON WHICH I BLEED, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2020 small works + drawings, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2019 FAUX, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2018 Hymen, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2017 Curating Human Experiences 66:06:06, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
You said you'll never leave, Karachi Biennale 2017, Narayan Jagannath Vaidya, Karachi, Pakistan  
Vanity Project X, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
For those who don't believe, no proof is possible. 56/200, Art Stage Singapore 2017, Southeast Asia Forum – Net Present Value: Art, Capital, Futures, Marina Bay Sands Exhibition Centre, Singapore
- 2016 Cutting the lines that bind, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
VOLTA NEW YORK 2016, The Pier 90, New York, USA
- 2014 IVAN LAM: TWENTY, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2013 Day Zero Night Hero, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Art Basel Hong Kong 2013, Hong Kong Convention Centre, Hong Kong
- 2012 MACHINES, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2011 Together Alone, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Art Stage Singapore 2011, Marina Bay Sands Exhibition Centre, Singapore
- 2009 Panorama, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2007 Ivan Lam: After all these years....Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2004 Plosive, Taksu Gallery, Singapore
- 2004 Plosive, Taksu Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2002 911, Taksu Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1999 Bright side night light, Gallery Wan, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1998 Ins and Outs, Crank, Portland, ME, USA  
MECA Senior Thesis Show, Institute of Contemporary Art, Portland ME, USA  
Exit Removals, Artworks Gallery, Portland ME, USA



**SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2025 S.E.A. FOCUS 2025, Tanjong Pagar Distripark, Singapore
- 2024 18@8 pLAy, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2023 Merdeka Project - In(ter)dependence & A Tapestry of Us, Henderson Industrial Park, Singapore  
White Space: Lines at the Door, NAFA, Singapore  
HansaeYes24 Foundation International Culture Exchange Exhibition "Embrace Malaysia, Insa Art Center, Seoul, Korea
- 2022 A Paradigm Shift - Reflecting on Twenty Years of The Malaysian Art Scene, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2021 The Field Beyond, Lim Hak Tai Gallery @ NAFA Campus 1, Singapore "Aesthetics of Silence", Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
100 Pieces: Art for All, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2019 18@8 Turning Points, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Holding Up a Mirror, Malaysia Pavilion, Palazzo Malipiero, 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia
- 2018 Teh Tarik with The Flag, curated by Wei-Ling Gallery, in association with The National Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Seen, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2017 18@8 RIGHT HERE! RIGHT NOW!, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2016 The Past Is Never Where You Think You Left It, curated by Gowri Balasegaran, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Art Stage Singapore 2016, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore
- 2015 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  
Timeless, Group Exhibition, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Directional Forces, Artoll, Bedburg-hau, Germany
- 2011 18@8 Save The Planet, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2008 18@8 Vice and Virtue, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Christie's SEA Art Auction, Hong Kong  
CIGE (China International Gallery Exposition) China World Trade Center, Beijing, China  
Force of Nature, Pace, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
- 2007 Filtered, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
The Force of Nature, Darling Muse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2006 Larasati Art Auction, Singapore  
"18@8", KUALA LUMPUR-KARACHI, AMIN GULGEE GALLERY, KARACHI, PAKISTAN (in collaboration with Wei-Ling Gallery)  
Au Naturel, Darling Muse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
3 Young Contemporaries (1997-2006), Valentine Willie Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Nasi Campur 2006, Taksu Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2005 "18@8", Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Identifying Landscape, Darling Muse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2004 Philip Morris Asean Art Awards 2004, National Art Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand  
10th Anniversary, Taksu Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
Footsteps, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
ArtFair Singapore, Singapore
- 2003 Taksu Singapore Opening, Singapore  
Taksu Jakarta Opening, Jakarta, Indonesia

- 2002 ArtFair Singapore, Singapore  
 2000 <1000, Valentine Willie Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Transformations, Sculpture Square, Singapore  
 Untitled, Galeri Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia  
 Arus: Flow (Australia-Malaysia Electronic Art, Joint Show), National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 1999 Philip Morris 99, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Aku: 99 Portret Diri, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 1998 Sequence 11, Timed Based Art, Imaging Center, Portland, Maine, USA  
 1997 Maine Art Auction, Selected for Live Auction, Portland, Maine, USA  
 Artworks, Portland ME, USA

### **AWARDS**

- 2006 Group Exhibit, Sovereign Art Prize (Top 10 Finalists), Hong Kong  
 2003 Group Exhibit (Grand Prize Winner), Philip Morris 2003, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 2001 Group Exhibit (Honourable Mention), Phillip Morris 2001, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 1999 One person Exhibit, Bright Sight Night Lights, Galeriwan, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 1996 Merit Scholarship Exhibit, 1st Place, MECA, Portland, ME, USA

### **SELECTED COLLECTIONS**

Artoll, Germany  
 Catlin Re Collection, Switzerland  
 Crank Design Consultant, Maine, USA  
 Galeri Petronas, Malaysia  
 HSBC, Malaysia  
 Louis Vuitton  
 Merrill Lynch, Maine, USA  
 National Art Gallery, Malaysia  
 The Aliya & Farouk Khan Collection, Malaysia  
 Private Collectors

To accompany the exhibition entitled '*The Dichotomy of Opposites*' by Ivan Lam  
from 18 February 2025 to 29 March 2025

Gallery Information

Operating Hours: 10 AM – 6 PM (Tuesday to Friday),

Operating Hours: 10 AM – 5 PM (Saturday)

Closed: Sundays, Mondays, and Public Holidays

Image Courtesy : Wei-Ling Gallery & Ivan Lam  
Artwork images photographed by Kamarudin Diran

Project Director : Lim Wei-Ling  
Designed by : Prissie Ong

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

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