

Photo by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders.



RICHARD KOH

Born in Malaysia, Richard Koh is one of the leading gallerists in Southeast Asia with a broad range of experience and knowledge in the contemporary art markets. Established in 2005, Koh founded Richard Koh Fine Art (RKFA), starting its first gallery space in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. RKFA now operates multiple gallery spaces in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, and is regarded as a pioneer for introducing contemporary art to Malaysia and the region.

Prior to his gallery work, Koh began collecting in the 1980s. Incredibly private and personal, his collection predominantly reflects his interests, experiences and ruminations of life and art. Known for his taste and insight, Koh also contributed to many of the region’s important private and public collections. Through his gallery, he directs an ongoing programme of exhibitions, promoting contemporary art from his adventurous roster of Asian and Southeast Asian artists to local, regional and international audiences.

Front cover: Natee Utarit, *Jerry’s Painting* (details), oil on canvas 160 x 140 cm, 2002

Of Dreams and Contemplation

Selections from the
Collection of RICHARD KOH

Preface

In conjunction with Singapore Art Week 2019, we are proud to present *Of Dreams and Contemplation: Selections from the Collection of Richard Koh*. The exhibition features contemporary artworks of various mediums from the private collection of gallerist, Richard Koh of Richard Koh Fine Art (RKFA).

United for the first time, these 33 carefully-selected artworks form the inaugural showcase of Richard Koh's collection spanning more than two decades across the globe. *Of Dreams and Contemplation* explores Richard's journey in the world of art and life, in public and private spaces.

After the success of our exhibition, *Optimism is Ridiculous: The Altarpieces* by Natee Utarit, which we co-presented with RKFA during Singapore Art Week 2018, we are pleased to have the opportunity to work with Richard again on this meaningful project. This is indeed a rare treat for the arts community and the wider audience to peek into Richard's collection and find out more about his collecting visions, interests and insights.

It is very apt to start the year with *Of Dreams and Contemplation*, an exhibition as part of The Private Museum's Collector Platform. Started in 2010, The Private Museum was established with the objectives of providing a space for art collectors to showcase their collections in a curated display. Over the years, we featured many distinct private collections from different collectors; we are very glad to finally present, perhaps the first of its kind in Southeast Asia, the private collection of a veteran gallerist.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Guest-of-Honour, Kwok Kian Chow, our supporting partners, the museum's patrons and staff, in making this exhibition a success and for celebrating this joyous occasion with us as we journey into yet another exciting year ahead.

Last but not least, our deepest gratitude to Richard for sharing with us his very private contemplations, without which this exhibition would not have been possible.

Daniel Teo
Founding Director
The Private Museum

Foreword

The Institute of Public Character (IPC)-registered Private Museum may sound like a misnomer, but it perhaps interestingly refuses the pretence that Art could be purely “public” (or “non-commercial,” if you will), making it an apt venue for Richard Koh’s collection *Of Dreams and Contemplations*. In the essay by Patricia Chen, she reflects on what it means to explore the “personal interests” of someone better known as an art trader—or if the exhibition’s “private” character inevitably hampers its “public” orientation. Taking another approach, I ask what *Of Dreams and Contemplations* tells us about how the public-private dichotomy—with roots in the Greek polis—came to be so integral to global art in the first place, despite the latter’s vaster multicultural history.

In his seminal paper *The Question of Individualism in Chinese Art*, Max Loehr (1961) wrote about the question of authorial intention in a much older context, noting that the alignment between “public” art discourse and “private” personality reached an aesthetic apex in the Song Dynasty. Earlier in the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Minhuang had already valorised the works of Li Sixun and Wu Daozi as epitomizing two ends of the broadest spectrum of “detailed” (gongbi) and “sketchy” (wenren) painting styles, demonstrating how the interpretation of “personality” both privatised but also looped back into wider public discursive structures. Themes of “public” and “private” have always existed in art, but have not necessarily taken the antagonistic relationship we assume of them in recent times.

How does this relate to a “private” collection with a “public” orientation? Just as each artwork expresses a private personality that also loops back into a public aesthetic, collectors too have a private personality that nonetheless interfaces with a public network of relationships, including the artists of collected works. The Private Museum’s founder, Daniel Teo, spoke of artists as “highly individual people,” with friendship being a necessary foundation for a collector to access exceptional works. Artists do not just want to be remunerated for their prized works, but to have these works shared with the largest audience within the complex private-public nexus. At the same time, to ignore matters of transaction is to ignore the substantial resources that go into the production, maintenance, curation, and exhibition of artworks, as if the art world should be curiously divorced from all other worldly activities—something the public Private Museum certainly seems to poke fun at.

If anything, the austere notion that “public” art could and should be divorced from “private” lives produced the public museums in Europe some two centuries ago, meant to cultivate an elite class detached enough from their “private” lives to be able to devote themselves solely to “public” matters. The museum regarded the art market as a separate and even debased sphere of cultural activity, due to its inability to dissociate from private interests and urgencies.

The Private Museum suggests there can be value in acknowledging that even “public” art is always already “private.” Any collection necessarily reflects the inter-subjectivities between artists and collectors in terms of dynamic labours, relationships, and tastes. Its public orientation need not efface the private particularities that form its backbone. Richard Koh is a collector and gallerist who owns the prominent Richard Koh Fine Art gallery in Kuala Lumpur. How does his collection reflect his private personality that nonetheless also loops back into a public aesthetic? For instance, he certainly has a proclivity for minimalist and monochromatic works, but even works with such characteristics cut across space, time, and cultures to tell us something about how they have coalesced and diverged throughout history—in a manner not dissimilar to evolving notions of the “public” and “private” in art.

Kwok Kian Chow
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Of Dreams and Contemplation

Selections from the collection of Richard Koh

Text by Patricia Chen

Around April last year, I received a call from Richard Koh asking if I would be interested to have a look at his collection with a view to develop a conversation with him for a show of his personal collection at a public venue, The Private Museum in Singapore. I promptly took up the invitation, not only because of my on-going research interest in viewing and discussing collections of art, but because access to personal collections of gallerists does not happen often.

My interest was piqued because I imagined, in a gallerist, we are looking at a person whose professional life revolves around looking at art, one who is a familiar fixture at art fairs and artists' studios, a tastemaker who always has his finger on the pulse. And indeed, in the last ten years or so, I have met Richard at various art fairs in Asia, from New Delhi to Hong Kong to Bangkok. He is one of the most active and gutsy members of the Southeast Asian gallery scene, an art world maverick. I am also curious because much of the art we see circulating in the art world is built on representations, and gallerists are a part of that system; they thrive on the publicness of that structure. I wanted to see if and how access to that vista, of the latest and the best, translates and distils into what gets collected on a personal level. The invitation to exhibit in The Private Museum, I understand, stems from interests along similar veins.

Of Dreams and Contemplation – Selections from the collection of Richard Koh brings together thirty-three artworks that Richard Koh has curated as he intends for them to be seen together for the first time in public. In putting them together, Richard has not set out with specific curatorial aims. To him, this selection, culled from his collection of about two hundred works and assembled according to similarities in “moods”, is nothing more than an attempt to provide glimpses into his personal interests in art.

But what does it mean to curate items from the collection of a gallerist, whose public persona is entrenched in the trading of art, at a venue that is developing as a platform to facilitate critical discourse on art? In this instance, the intention is for Richard to switch roles by setting aside his commercial interests, retreat into the personal realm and present works in a reasonably coherent manner to facilitate conversations in a public setting. Therefore what does it mean to curate personal interests? Why curate them at all? While the duality of perspectives present in an gallerist-collector can be fascinating, the associations are not without issues. One might be compelled to ask: How clearly can distinctions and positions between the public and the private be made? These are valid questions, and as difficult and complex these matters may be, the artworks may provide some answers. I return to this matter towards the end of this text.

The collection on show consists of thirty-one paintings and two sculptures by artists from diverse geographical origins, including Thailand, Malaysia, Mexico, Japan, Italy, the Philippines and South Korea, and a large number from China. They fall mainly into two categories: monochromatic and landscape paintings. At the outset, these appear as visual and conceptual opposites and make strange bedfellows. Modern monochromatic paintings are non-representational, abstract, and driven by experimentations in material, forms and processes. Landscape paintings are representational, figurative and mostly narrative-driven. In placing together, Richard induces viewers to make that connection.

The works in the main room appear as a group of mostly figurative pictures portraying nature in duotones; pictures of bodies of water seem to feature quite prominently. But it is not just nature per se, but human's contemplation of it.

Nature is not just restful and contemplative as pictured in He Jian's Listen – a rendition of two empty deck chairs overlooking an expanse of water in motion. Nature is also vast and lonely in Jia Aili's solitary figure drifting in the open sea in *Untitled* and as fierce and insurmountable as huge waves in Yang Jiechang's *White Waves – Golden Glow*.

The depiction of landscape in oil by Liu Wei and Zhou Chunya along with calligraphic works by Huang Rui and Yang Jiechang seem to affirm interests not just in nature but also in Chinese aesthetics. Richard explains that as a Malaysian Chinese growing up in Kuala Lumpur, he has always been reminded that he is more Chinese than he is Malaysian. His interest in Chinese aesthetics stems from this life-long quest for rootedness and connections with his Chinese heritage.

Just when we think that this is a conversation on Chinese aesthetics on nature, *Untitled (SK-DV) from the Series Camouflage* by Puerto Rican artist Angel Otero thrusts us into different encounters of the natural – this time, by treating landscape as mere surface undergoing construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. Otero did this by flaying scrapes of green, black and brown on glass and reapplying them back onto the canvas. It is a process-based painting of nature.

In the adjacent room, another stream of process-based conversation is on-going – this time, amidst works that are imageless. From a distance, we see flat patches of mostly homogeneous black and white rectangles of varying sizes. Some are single-coloured, others are textured, striped, draped in fabric and rendered in geometric shapes. The wall looks like a life-sized mood board where different “swatches” of surfaces, colours and textures are assembled. Considering Richard was a fashion and interior designer for many years before he became a gallerist, this arrangement may not come as a surprise. Visually captivating as it may be, it runs the risk of viewing the collection as a purely graphic experience on first approach.

But on close inspection, these “swatches” open into different universes of monochromes¹. By this, I am not referring to just the colour palette but to art movements and artistic experimentations that trace their roots to Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square*² in 1915. Accounts of the monochrome as a pictorial ideology or as symbolising world views and as embodying existential situations in Europe and America are well documented³.

Here, Richard gathers a group of works in shades of black and white that, on the surface, seems to be loosely connected in colour, produced from practices that differ

in values, methodologies and contexts.

Paolo Cotani’s *Benda* (1976), for example, was made with stretched elastic bands painted over with black. Gianfranco Zappettini’s *Tele Sovrapposte n.183* (1975), a white painting with a greyish undertone, was made by covering layers of white paint with industrial paint rollers over 2B graphite. Both artists were members of the *Pittura Analitica*⁴ group, one of the most significant Italian art movements of the post-war period. They aimed to find a new language in painting by stretching the materiality of the medium through the layering of paint *over* added objects.

Chung Sang-Hwa’s *Untitled* (2013) on the other hand, belies a labour-intensive process, requiring viewers to investigate what is *under* that whiteness. The artist adds glue, water and kaolin clay, layer by layer, just to strip them off; their gaps are then filled with white acrylic paint before the process is repeated. Chung’s practice is often associated with the Korean *Dansaekhwa*⁵ movement.

These monochrome paintings set the stage for voices of contemporary artists who have also appropriated the monochrome as a visual device to join the conversation. Together, they prompt new questions: Can there still be purity in the abstract form if materials themselves have localised meanings and histories⁶? What if paint is replaced by environment dust⁷? What if cashmere takes the place of the canvas⁸? How can a painting be an object⁹? And they go on.

These questions make for interesting visual and conceptual provocations. By this arrangement, Richard reframes contexts for discussions according to his engagement with these works and proposes new readings, with colour as the entry point. His relationship with the works is not based on laborious theories, though he seems to be aware of them, but on their forms, processes and transcendental properties. He does so intuitively. He alludes to the lure of black as a colour of “beauty” and “possibilities”. He signals philosophical questions they provoke in relation to life, to the way they are made, and to the integrity of the work. In the life of an artwork, contexts do change and transition with each presentation. Here is no exception. In a private collection, the narrative that glues everything together is privately determined in the mind of the collector. Given Richard’s rather modest intentions, there is sufficient breath and coherence in the selection to help viewers register his personal interests.

On exiting the exhibition space, Natee Utarit’s *Jerry’s Painting*, a cryptic picture of a monochromatic painting, forces reconciliation. The work was completed in 2002, when Utarit was exploring how to make a painting into an object. To Richard, this painting is about “nothingness” and it is positioned such that one enters and exits by it. Therein lies the heart of this presentation.

If landscape paintings symbolise his way of reckoning with order and structures of the outer world and of life, then monochrome paintings are kinds of mindscapes. They house his ruminations.

Here, I return to the question of the extent of commercial influence I raised earlier. In my view, this does not appear to be a collection that directs our gaze at a gallerist’s worldliness or augments the appeal of a commercial entity. On the contrary, the element of other-worldliness features prominently and consistently. In instances where works of his stable of artists are present, they fall within broad thematic categories he sets and add to the dialogue he intends. In my conversations with him,

he is also quick to downplay conversations about the gallery, unless he is responding to questions I ask. Hence, in my view, commercial associations, if any, have not been detectable.

I began by articulating expectations of engaging with a certain vista. *Of Dreams and Contemplation* does not indulge that way. Instead, Richard beckons us to join him at He Jian’s *Listen*, to stop and sit a while, to ponder, to search deeper, and...listen.

It is still a vista, just one that we must work hard at figuring out for ourselves.

End Notes

¹ For a quick introduction to monochrome paintings, see Art Term (undated). *Monochrome*. Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/m/monochrome>. Accessed Nov 22, 2018.

² On Monochromes, Kazimir Malevich famously said “Colour and texture in paintings are ends in themselves. They are the essence of paintings but this essence has always been destroyed by the subject”. See a brief online introduction on the history of the monochromes before and after Malevich in Frank, P. *Your Definitive Guide to Reading Paintings*. Huffpost. Available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/24/monochrome-paintings_n_5614130.html. Accessed Nov 22, 2018.

For a quick introduction to Kazimir Malevich’s Black Square see List (undated). *Five Ways to Look at Malevich’s Black Square - Discover why Malevich’s Black Square is such a big deal*. Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/kazimir-malevich-1561/five-ways-look-malevichs-black-square>. Accessed Nov 22, 2018.

³ It was a discourse that saw the likes of Ad Reinhardt, Robert Ryman, and Robert Rauschenberg participating in the fifties, which later impacted developments in Minimalism and Conceptual art in America during the sixties and seventies. Similar such tendencies of “paring works down to their most essential elements” were also observed in different parts of Europe, East and South Asia, though they were borne out of different socio-political contexts and motivations. By negating the image and “reducing” the canvas to absolutes of black and white, some of the artists hoped to pursue the purity of form and expose the very material properties of colour, form and texture as well as artistic processes; others wish to communicate a certain spiritual purity, leading viewers to ponder upon transcendental values.

On how different artistic practices were connected to the monochrome painting movement, see Cohen, A (2018). *What Makes a Monochrome Painting Good*. Artsy. Available at: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-monochrome-painting-good>. Accessed Nov 22, 2018. For a brief introduction on the monochrome, also see Groom, A. (2012). *There’s Nothing to See Here: Erasing the Monochrome*. e-flux. Journal #37. Available at: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/37/61233/there-s-nothing-to-see-here-erasing-the-monochrome/>. Accessed Nov 22, 2018. ↩

⁴ See Feierabend, V.W. and Meneguzzo, M. (2016). *Pittura Analitica*. Silvana Editoriale & Mazzoleni: Milan & London. For some image references of the show at Mazzoleni London see, Mazzoleni London (2016), *Pittura Analitica*. 1970s. Available at: http://mazzoleniart.com/elenco_espositori/pittura-analitica-yesterday/. Accessed Nov 22, 2018.

⁵ Artists associated with the Korean Dansaekhwa movement call their works “methods” rather than paintings or artworks as they bear the artist’s unique techniques and processes. Their practices have connections with Eastern philosophies. For more information on the movement, see Kee, J. (2013). *Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekhwa and the Urgency of Method*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press or Art Term (undated). *Dansaekhwa: The Korean Monochrome Movement*. Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/d/danseakhwa-korean-monochrome-movement>. Accessed Nov 22, 2018.

For a quick introduction on Chung Sang Hwa, see Lee, D. (2016), *Chung Sang Hwa*. ArtAsiaPacific. Available at: <http://www.artasiapacific.com/Magazine/WebExclusives/ChungSangHwa>. Accessed Nov 22, 2018.

⁶ See Sopheap Pich, *Untitled (Red Square Wall Relief)*, 2012, Mixed media, 100 x 100 x 6 cm.

⁷ See Zhang Zhenyu, *Dust 150315*, 2015, Dust on canvas, 200 x 200 cm.

⁸ See Shao Yinong & Muchen, *East Wind West Wind – 9932*, 2010, Mirror frame, cashmere, 94 x 124 x 11 cm.

⁹ See Natee Utarit, *Jerry’s Painting*, 2002, Oil on canvas, 160 x 140 cm and *This is a Painting*, 1997, Bronze, 49.5 x 34.5 x 2.5 cm.

Patricia Chen



Patricia Chen is a writer with a camera and she points it at a subject close to her heart : the visual arts. Her series of independent films on leading art collections and collectors, Uli Sigg : China’s Art Missionary and The 24-Hour Art Practice, have been screened internationally – in France, The Netherlands, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Singapore. As a writer, Patricia has penned columns on Southeast Asian art and contributed to *ArtAsiaPacific*, *Financial Times*, *The Art Newspaper* and *Flash Art*. The second edition of *Uli Sigg in Conversation with Patricia Chen: Collecting Chinese Contemporary Art* is in the pipeline.

Richard Koh and Patricia Chen in Conversation

PC So Richard Koh, we are here to talk about your collection at The Private Museum. Can you provide some background as to how this exhibition came about?

RK Well, we were organising the Natee Utarit show at the beginning of 2018, and Aaron Teo from The Private Museum asked if I would be interested to exhibit my collection – as a gallerist who collects.

PC I understand this is the first time the works have come together in this fashion.

RK I have never seen them all together before. The works were scattered in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Bangkok, in my offices and my sister's house. The combined display was a reveal for me.

PC What are the aims for this show?

RK Actually, there was no aim; nothing. It never crossed my mind. I thought it would be interesting to show it to the public at some point. After looking at it, I realised that all the works that I hung were of a certain mood. So that was how it ended up like this.

PC You have chosen a collection of mainly two-dimensional works to exhibit here – especially the monochromatic paintings. I have to say this is actually a surprise to me. Because the works I see you present as a gallerist in art fairs and exhibitions are often colourful, expressionist rather than figurative. Can you help me reconcile the difference between what you choose to present in your work as a gallerist and what you choose to collect?

RK What I choose to collect is for me. What I show in the gallery, has got nothing to do with me - it has everything to do with artists.

Also, I don't really show a lot of figurative works and many collectors have complained and asked me why my shows are always so dark.

PC I have never related "darkness" to what you show and promote - works from artists you have shown like Natee Utarit, Nadiah Bamadhaj and Justin Lim tend to be figurative.

RK Yes, they are but they are also dark in terms of the narrative.

PC But works by Hasanul Isyraf Idris, Anne Samat and Yeoh Choo Kuan are not dark at all.

Hasanul's works are colourful but then again, the narrative of the works is all about decay and destruction. Choo Kuan's works are about his inner struggle, the rips and scratching, almost violent. So is Anne's, behind the colour façade, it's always about her inner struggles.

RK Thank you for helping to bridge this.

PC I see that there are a few "giants" of the monochrome painting movement in Europe and Korea in the sixties and seventies. When you acquired Gianfranco Zappettini and Paolo Cotani, proponents of Pittura Analitica and Chung Sang-Hwa, an artist whose practice was loosely associated with Dansaekhwa, what was it that connected you to these works?

RK Developments in Analytical Painting in Europe and Dansaekhwa in Korea happened around the same period. For me, it was interesting because these artists were from different parts of the world but were having the same ideas. I also like the thought processes behind these works – the simple repetition of the process worked. Visually, as the saying goes, less is more.

PC So it was Minimalism you were after ?

RK No it was (and still is) monochromatic paintings. Minimalism was about "less is more", it can be any colour; whereas monochromatic paintings are more process-driven, resulting in less colours. The colours are subtler, I like the latter.

PC And you didn't stop there, you added other artists into this conversation – contemporary artists whose artistic practices had little to do with the ideals of modern monochrome painting, but who appropriated it as a visual device. What were you trying to achieve?

RK There wasn't any thought of achieving anything. The works just resonated with me and I am not collecting a certain movement, or any movement for that matter. They were just the right works for my own story.

PC There are many works in black in this show.

RK I see a lot of beauty in black. It is mysterious and fascinating. For me, black gives me infinitely more possibilities; my mind wonders.

This selection illustrates how I approach and look at life. I think it might be difficult for some people to read, but that is how art works for me.

PC Let's look at a work in black. Can you talk about *East Wind West Wind* by Chinese artists Shao Yinong and Muchen?



Shao Yinong & Muchen
East Wind West Wind - 9932
2010
Mirror frame, cashmere
94 x 124 x 11 cm
Collection of Richard Koh

RK For me, this is a really beautiful work. It reminds me of my days in the fashion industry – how a piece of luxurious fabric can cover all the flaws of the human body to create an “illusion”.

This work was very beautifully fabricated. It was made from an antique frame and covered in flock cashmere. It screams luxury. We have no hint of what lies under it or the condition of the frame is as it is “dressed” in cashmere and it is black. So the beauty is covered in luxurious darkness.

It reminds me that beneath this darkness, there may be beauty and worthiness, or even ugliness that we do not wish to confront. In everything that we look at, there is always a positive and a negative. I can look at it as a beautiful black work, but at the end of the day, there is also the possibility of an underlying darkness. An important reminder.

PC What about this other work, *You are the Only One #2*, by Gao Weigang, which is also of a frame, but completely painted over in white. You mentioned that you bought this because it was a contrast with the work by Shao Yinong and Muchen?



Gao Weigang
You are the Only One #2
2016
Mixed media
89 x 120 cm
Collection of Richard Koh

RK When I saw it, I was immediately reminded of Shao Yinong and Muchen's black work. It was painted on an old frame but in white. When we look at black, we only see black. With white, you'll always see something, it is always more obvious. And in this case, it is the little pebble on the canvas.

But is what you are seeing real? Is it a reflection? So again, it is that kind of a conversation for me: Is what you are looking at actually what it's supposed to be? It triggers the same thoughts for me like the work, *East Wind West Wind*.

Nothing these days is what it seems. Whether in white or black, it reminds me that we cannot really judge anything at face value.

PC So, to you, it is about what we see, and in turn, perceive, and projected as a reminder of the human condition. How important is it to you that the context of the two artworks may be very different even though the approach of painting over an old frame may be very similar?

RK It is important; I would want to know. But on the first approach, I do not really look at what the artist's intention is because I would not know until I read the text or speak to the artist. I might have the same reading of the artwork, and that becomes even more interesting for me. Not knowing an artist's intentions can also allow me to look at the work from a different angle. But I would need to be able to relate to the work in my own way. It needs to be relevant to me.

PC Yes, but different contexts are embedded in contemporary works; artists intend for the works to say something. What are your thoughts on how these contexts relate to your personal readings of the works?

RK I think the context of a work is very subjective. Because, sometimes, the context can be conceived by curators or writers on behalf of the artist. They may not come from the artist.

PC Has that been your experience?

RK I have encountered this with many regional artists. Curators and writers do that because some artists find it hard to articulate their works. Sometimes, there is really no meaning in the works. Sometimes, artists don't even understand what they are doing – as long as the market absorbs them, they continue to produce.

PC You feel that contexts in works are very often made up, and that there are other people who are involved in articulating this on behalf of the artist and therefore you do not wish to put too much weight on it?

RK Exactly. There's so much marketing machinery going around works that buyers never really know if what they are hearing are the true intentions of the artist.

PC But artists do produce work because they have somethings to say, it is not always for the market. It is also interesting you coin it “marketing machinery”. Do you do that for artists you represent?

RK No we don't. We just try as much as possible to place the works with collectors who love them and wish to really understand where the artist is coming from. For me, the most important thing is that the works connect with them.

Natee Utarit
Jerry's Painting
2002
Oil on canvas
160 x 140 cm
Collection of Richard Koh



PC Let's revisit this topic later. I see that you have chosen this work as a cover image. Can you talk about *Jerry's White Painting* by Natee Utarit?

RK In essence, it is a picture of a white picture. It is interesting to me because it reminds me of nothingness. We all started from nothing. It is almost like a story with a clean slate. It is blank, you start from nothing. You do not know how it would end up.

I want the cover of the catalogue to show nothingness, so as to signal to viewers to not expect anything.

PC I see that there is a group of works in your collection that is thematically different from the monochromes. It revolves around landscapes. Would you like to talk about them? Why choose He Jian's *Listen* as a back cover picture for the catalogue?



He Jian
Listen
2009
Chinese ink and colour on rice paper
145 x 188 cm
Collection of Richard Koh

RK This painting sits in my living room in Kuala Lumpur. He Jian's *Listen* is a picture of two empty deck chairs looking out to the sea. One is sitting down, contemplating what has gone or what is to come. It is not one chair but two. Maybe it is about how I look at what I have done and having a good laugh over it with someone? For me, it is also about being able to share the journey. That is why it is on the back cover.

I do have a lot of pictures like this, some are just single figures in the middle of nowhere. It speaks of the way I like to keep my private life, private and my public life, public. There is no overlapping.

PC And most of these single figures located in nature.

RK I think it is because I'm constantly moving around, always traveling. It is not only because I am in the art business, it was so even in the early days. I guess that is the subconscious part of me, constantly looking at things that relate to nature. And I do go to far-flung places all the time, alone. Maybe it is solitude that I subconsciously crave or the need to escape from the craziness of today's world.

PC So you are drawn to works with landscapes and solitude because they are contemplative.

RK In a way, but I have different readings. Let's take *White Wave, Golden Glow* by Yang Jiechang example. When most people see something like this, they will say this is a big wave; it is actually a tsunami wave.

Yang Jiechang
White Wave - Golden Glow
2017
Ink and mineral colours on silk mounted on canvas
185 x 282 cm
Collection of Richard Koh



Nobody wants a picture of a turbulent sea, but when I look at it, I see the power behind it and what natural forces can do. I find this work really powerful.

I have likened it to obstacles that I've faced along the years – it gives me encouragement, that despite all obstacles and upheavals, there is still intrinsic energy to continue...because nature does not stop. I have always looked at difficulties as challenges, not obstacles.

Also, in today's world, we are bombarded with visuals non-stop, many of these images are just in-your-face, requiring little contemplation. Some are even doctored.

Nature has never failed to show me that the little things in life are important.

PC In contemplative works involving natural landscapes, you are reminded to keep on walking in the face of difficulties and challenges.

Lao Tongli
The Desire of Libido Above the Horizon No.02
2014
Color on silk scroll
89 x 141 cm
Collection of Richard Koh



RK Yes, take Lao Tongli's *The Desire of Libido Above the Horizon No. 02* for example. At first glance, it looks like a depiction of dense vegetation with interlocking branches. On careful inspection, the interlocking branches look like human veins.

It has a very interesting backstory. When Lao was working on it, his father was very sick with cancer. The artist started obsessively painting blood veins. During that time, he was hoping that as he worked, the cancer would be "absorbed" into the painting and his father would not have to die.

The work that I first saw was really huge, and it took him more than a year to complete. Thankfully, his father survived the ordeal.

People might find it morbid to own a work with a backstory like that. To me, there was nothing morbid about it, nothing about death; it's just veins! What stayed with me was how this young man could turn this depressing situation into something so beautiful.

PC Art can bring about a positive injection of courage and strength. We have talked about how works that are monochromatic and contemplative in nature can be open to different readings about life for you. We have also looked at works that are centred around solitude, and how power found in nature can harness strength in the wake of adversities.

I also see a group of works that are more Chinese in aesthetics and composition. Can we talk about Lin Tianmiao's *Seeing Shadow, No. C-12*?



Lin Tianmiao
Seeing Shadow No C-12
2006
Acrylic on embroidery canvas
241 x 78 cm
Collection of Richard Koh

RK As a person of Chinese descent coming from Malaysia, you are always reminded that you are Chinese, that you are not Malaysian. My mother is Singaporean, and I spent half my life here. People think that I am Singaporean, but I am not. My father is Peranakan and can hardly speak any Chinese dialect. He was so westernised that my first language was English.

Growing up, I was always trying to understand the landscape, the environment around me. It's almost like searching for my roots.

PC So in your wandering, you feel that art allows you to have a kind of connection with your Chinese heritage?

RK I think we all need some form of anchor. I guess it's that question of self-discovery. And we need some form of grounding.

PC You are showing thirty-three works by artists from Thailand, Malaysia, Mexico, Japan, Italy, the Philippines, and South Korea, with the majority from various parts of China. They are primarily paintings, with two sculptures. I understand that you have personally made the selection. How did you decide what to show?

RK Yes. I selected these works because they are more "me". The selection here is a bit less colourful than the rest of the collection; it's the kind of works I enjoy looking at. It's more of my way of thinking, my approach and my way of looking at things. They induce questions, questions for me to answer to; questions relating to me and dialogues about my surroundings. This may sound monk-like or zen-like, but it really is not. I try to approach everything in a more simplistic manner. This is the way I look at my life, through art. Art acts as a reminder.

PC You have a specific way of seeing, it is a very introspective collection. Can you share more about your education and your early career?

RK I did my 'O' Levels. I didn't sit for my 'A' Levels as I went into fashion when

I was sixteen. I later entered fashion school in London and went into interior design before I ventured into art.

PC So what is quality in art to you? Say, take a contemporary painting. What is good art?

RK For me, it has to be well executed. Good art, bad art, it doesn't matter. I like beautiful things, they don't have to be visually appealing, just well-made. The methodology of making must be there. It does not have to be a brand name. Good or bad, it just needs to be well done. That's important to me.

PC This has to do with your training in fashion?

RK Because I made things myself.

PC That's right, so you look at all the details.

RK Yes, if you had bought one of my outfits before, you could wear it inside out! It was very well made.

So, for a painting, the canvas and the stretcher must be well made. But when it comes to the visual, it is very subjective. As long as there is something to be said, there is really no good or bad art. There is a place for everything. A painting can be really badly executed, but if you don't even know the artist and his background, it is very difficult to make a value judgement.

Yes, so you can have a collection of wonderfully bad art, and it can still be a good collection because it is consistent, because the collector did it intentionally. So who are we to judge? Just because you stay in a good-class bungalow doesn't mean you have good taste. Just as if you stay in a HDB doesn't mean you have poor taste. Because one really cannot tell until one knows the intention. Moreover, what is deemed good taste now could be seen as crass later. You never know.

PC One's background does affect his or her way of seeing.

RK I don't think it affects the way I look at art, it affects the way I approach it. Seeing is visual, situations and approaches are totally different until one understands the back story. Until then, it is only the visual dimension that is exposed and most people stop at that.

PC No, it is not just visuals. Maybe I should say it affects the way you read art. Do you always acquire works you fully understand?

RK Not all the time, because sometimes there would be some things about the work that would only reveal itself later. Sometimes you just don't have the time to understand it fully but you know there is something you can relate to.

PC **And artists whom you choose to represent need not meet the criteria of you having personal affinity with the work?**

RK Yes, because they are two separate things.

PC **And it does not mean that those artworks that are not collected by you are any less.**

RK And it does not mean that those that are in my collection are any better.

PC **You have managed to keep both worlds very separate. But do you not think that some consistency in taste and decisions would be unavoidable?**

RK Yes, in a way. From my point of view, as a gallerist, you cannot be choosing an artist based on your taste because your taste may not be for everyone. As a gallerist, you have to base it on many other factors besides just sheer talent, like work ethics and the professionalism of the artist. The sense of aesthetics that guide the choices I make on artworks that enter my own collection is very subjective. Rightly so, it is for my eyes only.

So they are very different matters. Collecting is also a very private endeavour. And there are many good artists that I really like and admire. But if their works do not connect with me, it would be difficult for me to acquire them, though I may choose to work with the artists.

Having said that, I do own some works of the artists I represent.

PC **Earlier you mentioned that good art is one that is well-made. How relevant is that in contemporary art where the emphasis is on the idea and not on the object.**

RK For me, the most important thing is the story. What is it that the artist is trying to say? Then the works must have a certain quality to it – the finishing. I know in contemporary art nowadays, you don't look at the quality. The material might fall apart. For me, even if the material is supposed to disintegrate, it needs to be of a certain quality. To disappear, to disintegrate, there must still be a certain quality.

A lot of installations are made from materials the artist can easily lay his or her hands on. A sculpture that is poorly soldered or chiselled is very difficult for me to accept because I'm very old-school. To go to that point, the material need to be perfect first. It needs to be properly constructed and deconstructed. The artist cannot just take the easy way out. There must be a process, I am very traditional in that sense.

PC **What do you mean by 'constructed and deconstructed'?**

RK So let's say for example, an artist wants to make a distressed looking painting. Most people would just paint the distress straight onto the canvas. For me, it

has to be painted well first, before you distress it. You need to know the rules first before you can break it.

The integrity of the work is important. It just shows whether you understand where it came from, because nowadays, anybody can be an artist. You look at the amount of abstract work coming out these days. Excuse me? They are just splashes of colours. Some artists are just after the final visual outcome. Their process will show if they understand the foundation of the practice or not.

PC **Since we are talking about artists and their practices, let us return to our earlier discussion on contexts. Has your experience in collecting artworks translate into actual help to artists you represent commercially? For example, have they come to you to say "I don't actually know how to title the work and you sell the way you wish"?**

RK I do not usually work with artists like these. I like to work with artists with strong convictions in what they do and say.

PC **And if the artist does not articulate his or her intentions, you prefer to leave it unsaid?**

RK Yes, because he can always do a "question and answer" later. Collectors can always meet the artist to understand more.

My stand is, no matter how weak or brief the artist's statement, it is more honest to show what the artist is saying and what he or she really means than to introduce a "translator" to craft a glossy and polished narrative.

If you look at our shows, we are one of very few galleries that seldom work with curators.

PC **Any particular reason for that?**

RK Because many curators do not commit enough time and effort to understand the works enough to be able to write knowledgeably. I can understand that research and writing takes time and the remuneration may not be proportionate to the effort. So many of the curators rely on the artist's basic statement and contort it to whatever they want. I'm not saying that all of them are like that, but generally so.

PC **I find it very interesting to learn of your distrust in the way the art world operates and see how it affects the way you choose works for your personal collection.**

RK The word 'distrust' is a little bit too strong. I think it is more about understanding how hype and herd mentality are involved in the marketing of everything, including artworks. If you have a meal with me, you will realise that I do not touch the chilli or the soya sauce. I like to experience what the chef has intended for me to taste. I do not wish to read too much into what was not originally there.

PC Your understanding of the inner working of the art world does affect the way you engage with artworks. So do you think a gallerist can be a good collector? Is there a conflict?

RK There is always some form of conflict.

As a gallerist, you have access to many works. But many a time, commercial considerations come into play and makes it more difficult to collect.

PC Why?

RK Because paying rent and staff costs have to come first.

PC What if there were a piece you really love and a collector client loves that piece too?

RK If the work is in the gallery's inventory, then collector comes first.

PC Do you consider yourself a collector?

RK No. I consider myself to be someone who buys things.

PC So, do you see this as a collection of things? What are the artworks to you?

RK They are like picture boards, of me. The artworks are basically puzzle pieces of my journey.

PC You travel all the time. You see a lot of art, at art fairs and museums. Why do you feel you need to acquire it?

RK It's just like a jigsaw puzzle, a form of self-discovery. You want to complete the puzzle.

Furthermore, I think it's not about owning the art. I think we can never really own anything. We can only have them for a while. And during that period when we have it with us, we can have dialogues with the work. There will be a time, where we have to let it all go. We cannot have it forever. Because there will be a point when the story has to end, physically and mentally. And the only thing we can have is the memory.

But what happens after the puzzle is done? For me, the question at the end of the day is whether I have lived properly, and if I have done my part. Everyone has a little role to play. It is not about how important you are, how rich you are, or how insignificant or poor you are. The question to myself is, have I understood that? The big problem with life is most people do not understand what being alive is about. They get distracted and go off track. I would like my answer to be a yes when I reach that point. That is the meaning of what art is to me.

PC What would you want viewers to walk away with after seeing the collection?

RK About how one must look a little deeper when looking at things and about making room for different perspectives when viewing. By choosing works that are monochromatic, I also want viewers to see how art can trigger thought processes and not take visual representations too literally.

PC Would you say all your experiences in different professions, in different parts of the world have influenced the way you collect art?

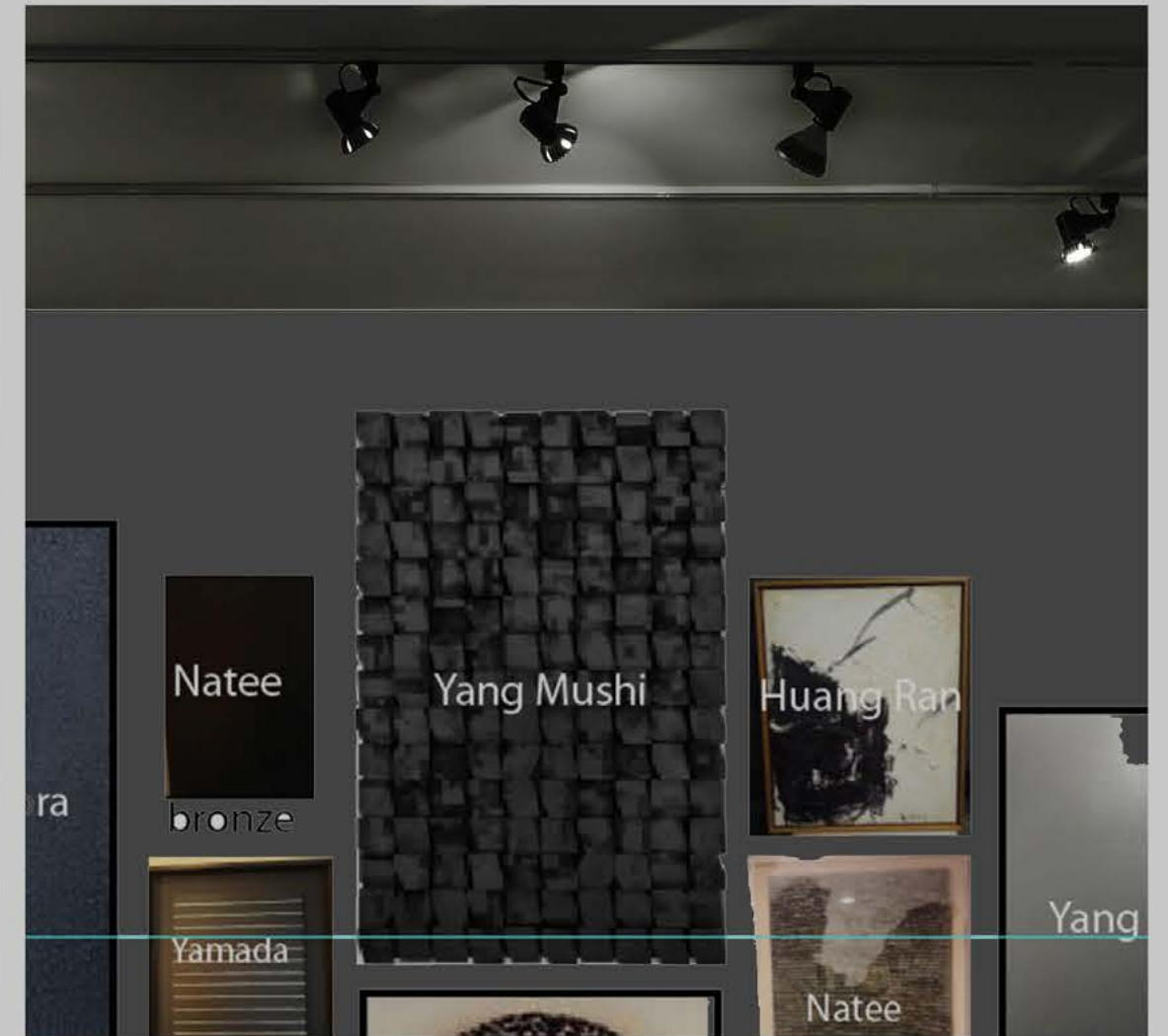
RK Of course it has. It has increased my appreciation for art from many different perspectives. Sometimes, when you buy a painting, you approach it with a certain mind-set. And 10 years later, you might still have the same mind-set, or maybe you have experienced a little bit more and learnt a little bit more and therefore think differently. And it's so interesting to look at it again every time, and have a totally different reading. So that's the beauty of art in that sense. Art to me signifies the prospect of endless interpretations.

PC So in art you find a way of ordering, or understanding the flux of activities around you.

RK Yes, and to also find reality in chaos.

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Of Dreams and
Contemplation

Jerry's painting

Jerry's painting is a work I feel quite proud of. It was included among the "Reason" paintings in my "Reason and Monster" project from 2002. When I look at it now, more than 15 years later, I still really like it. To me, it seems to reflect something important about what I think and who I am in a very clear and lucid manner.

I still remember that back when I was working on the "Monster" paintings, I would spend 18 hours a day in a space that was built originally as a garage, which I had converted into a studio. Painting in there was like working in a chemical plant. All around me was nothing but paint and the overpowering smell of chemicals. My mother got so worried about my health, that she told me to stop working on the paintings. Besides, she didn't understand why anyone would want to buy a painting that had been covered over with a thick layer of paint.

Not long after, I started work on the paintings I called "Reason." These were modeled after monochrome drawings that I'd done and set up against the walls. My mother didn't have such a problem with these. These were simple, more eye-pleasing works and certainly more interesting than those crazy things I'd been working on before.

I gave the name "*Jerry's painting*" to a number of the pictures in this series. Jerry referred to the mouse in the old Tom & Jerry cartoons that I'd loved as a kid.

The name just popped into my head one night while I was moving a painting I'd just finished over against the wall. I had the impression that the picture was three-dimensional and could penetrate through the wall.

That's not to say that because of the light or where I was standing at the time, I actually saw it happen. But the experience really made me think about various assumptions I had about paintings as objects. So the next few pictures I worked on expanded on that idea of how paintings can trick people, even the painters themselves, into believing they're three-dimensional objects. It was like those Tom & Jerry cartoons

where Jerry escapes the clutches of Tom the Cat by drawing a picture and jumping right into it.

I showed the finished paintings in Bangkok. Some people really liked the title, but the paintings themselves were given a rather tepid reception. One common complaint was that there was not enough complexity or depth of artistic feeling.

Richard saw the paintings some time later, after I'd moved into a new studio the following year. It doesn't surprise me that he liked them and understood them from the first moment he saw them. After all, back then Richard was already well known for collecting art that bucked current trends. He admired works by artists that most other people tended to ignore.

I was glad that my paintings appealed to him.

And that reminds me of one of the more unusual works in my own personal collection – one that has a similar kind of connection with *Jerry's painting*.

It's an experimental bronze sculpture piece that I'd made from a mold based on one of my own abstract paintings sometime around 1998. When it was finished, most of the people who saw it just shook their heads. They didn't like it and had little interest in my plan to exhibit it. So I wrapped it up and stored it away in my studio, where it stayed for several years until Richard just happened to spot it.

Again, his reaction was one of immediate appreciation. And it was right at that moment that I had a clear understanding of Richard's character and taste as an art collector.

That bronze sculpture that I'd made from one of my paintings was what first sparked my interest in the idea of paintings as objects, a theme that I would explore in numerous series of works in the years that followed, one of which was *Jerry's painting*.

Natee Utarit
Artist, Bangkok
2018

Natee Utarit

Jerry's Painting, 2002
Oil on canvas
160 x 140 cm



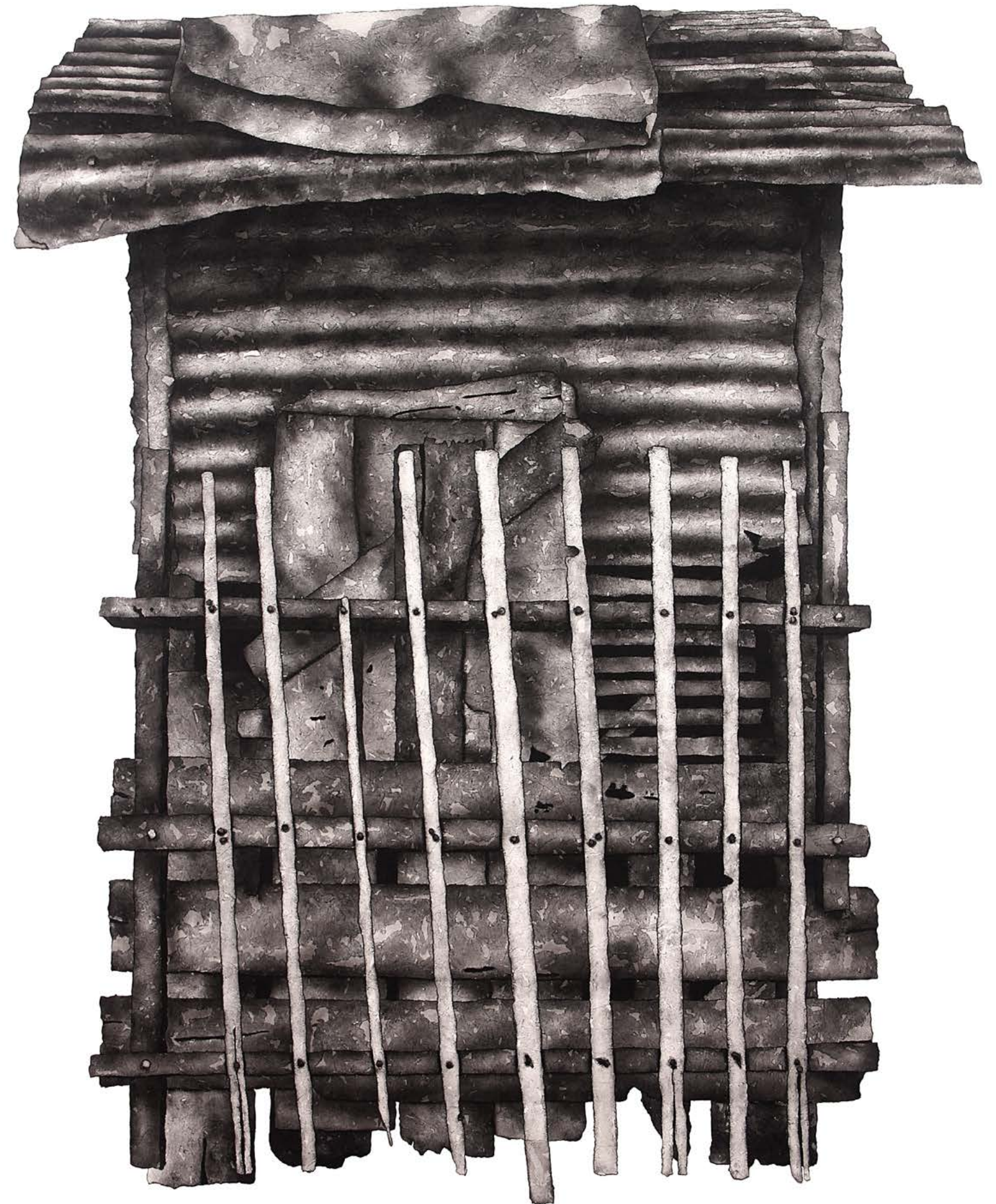
Warung Bensin Siege (2014) and *Kindling Siege* (2014) are two works that my drawing period of 2014 to 2017. Both works are a direct response to makeshift shacks that house small businesses and the poor of the city. I have For me there was an intrinsic beauty in an otherwise unattractive physical and added them to his collection. He understood the reasons for my making Interesting to me also is that Richard Koh is a private person, and the work

marked the beginning of my exploration into architectural structures in my physical environment in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, which is covered with worked these drawings to represent a state of siege against its environment. object. I was touched when Richard Koh shared my feelings about this work the series from the beginning and appreciated the beauty in these objects. in their enclosed quality reflects that sense of privacy of its collector.

Nadiah Bamadhaj
Artist, Yogyakarta
2018

Nadiah Bamadhaj

The Kindling Siege, 2014
Charcoal on paper collage
142 x 116 cm



Gao Weigang

You are the Only One #2, 2016
Mixed media
89 x 120 cm



There are so many things about this artwork that still draw me to it since cashmere covering it. The intense blackness of the cashmere projects a to hide the haunting darkness that exist within the beautiful exterior.....

the day I bought it, from the shape of the antique frame to the flocked black certain aura of beauty and calmness almost spiritual but yet it never fails ... an important reminder.

Richard Koh
Kuala Lumpur
2015

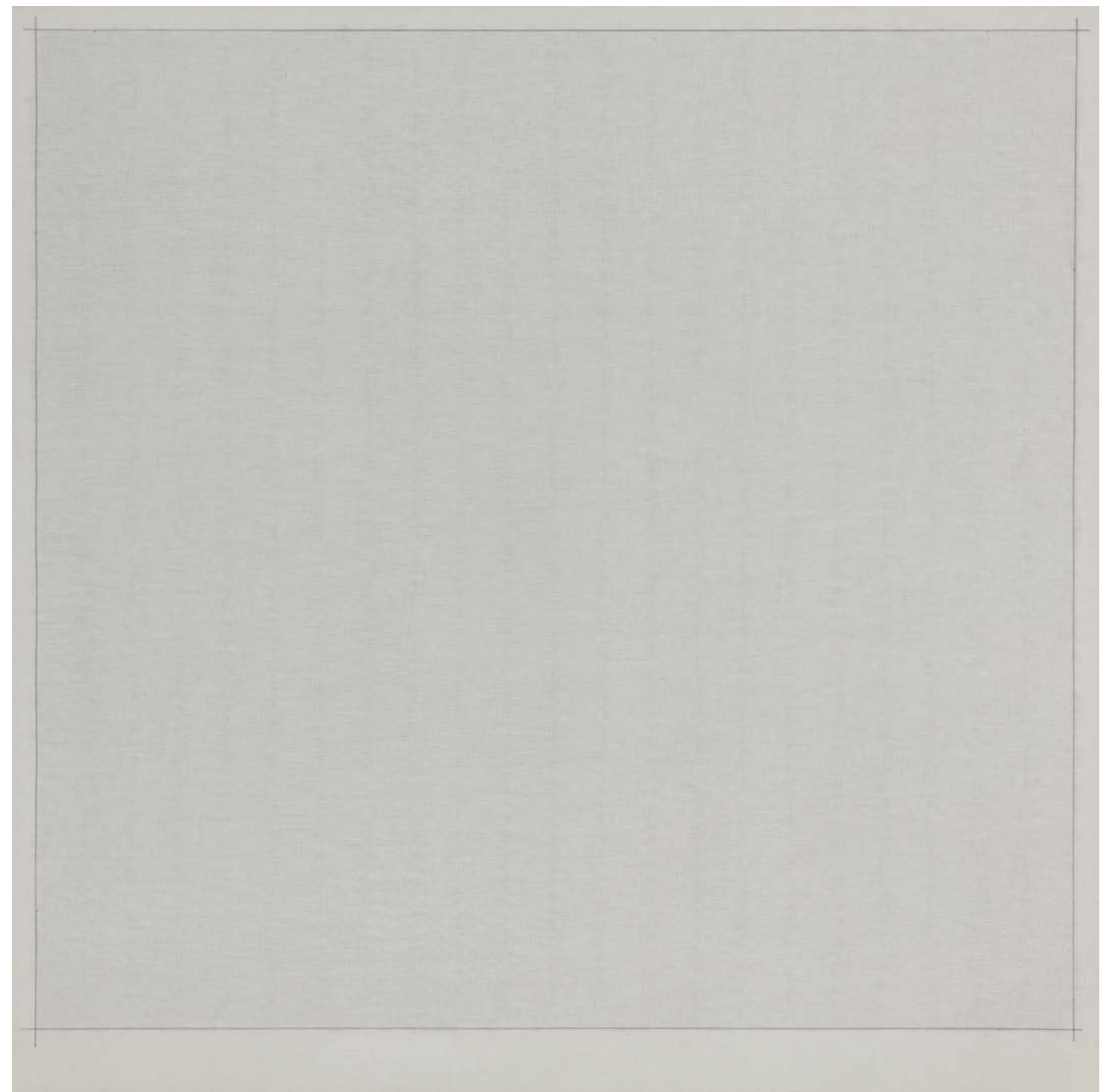
Shao Yinong & Muchen

East Wind West Wind - 9932, 2010
Mirror frame, cashmere
94 x 124 x 11 cm



Gianfranco Zappettini

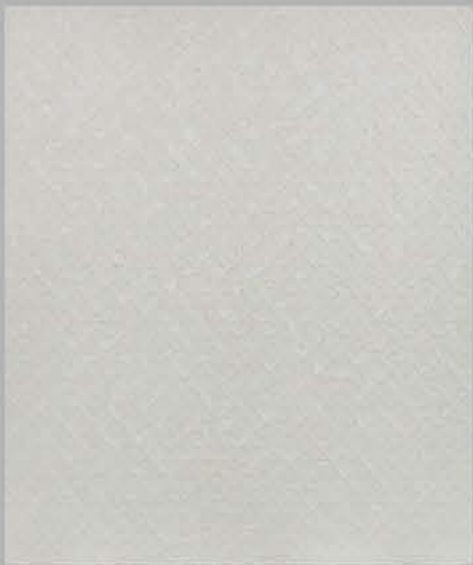
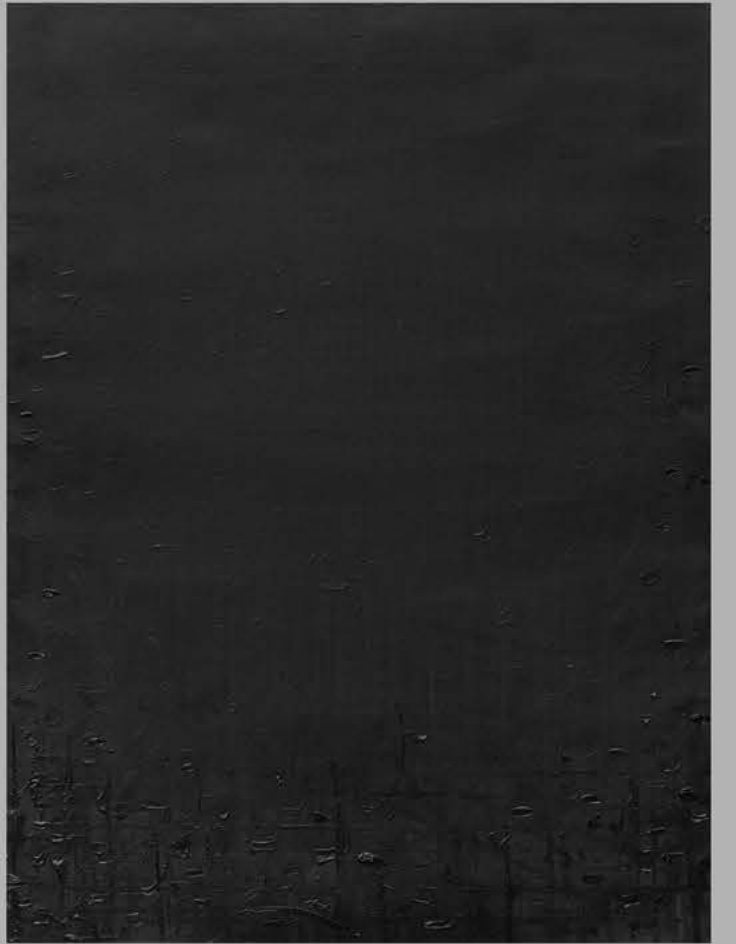
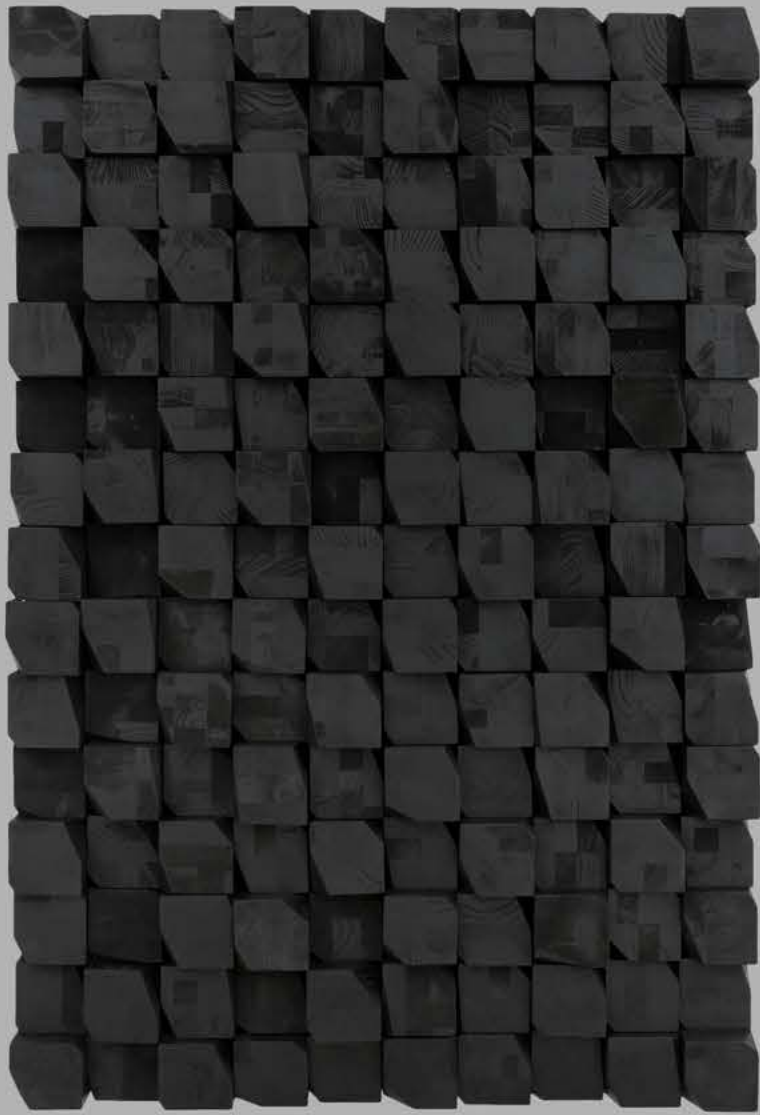
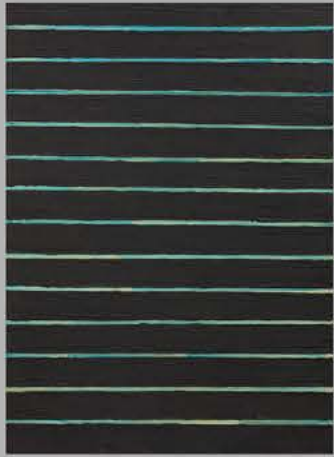
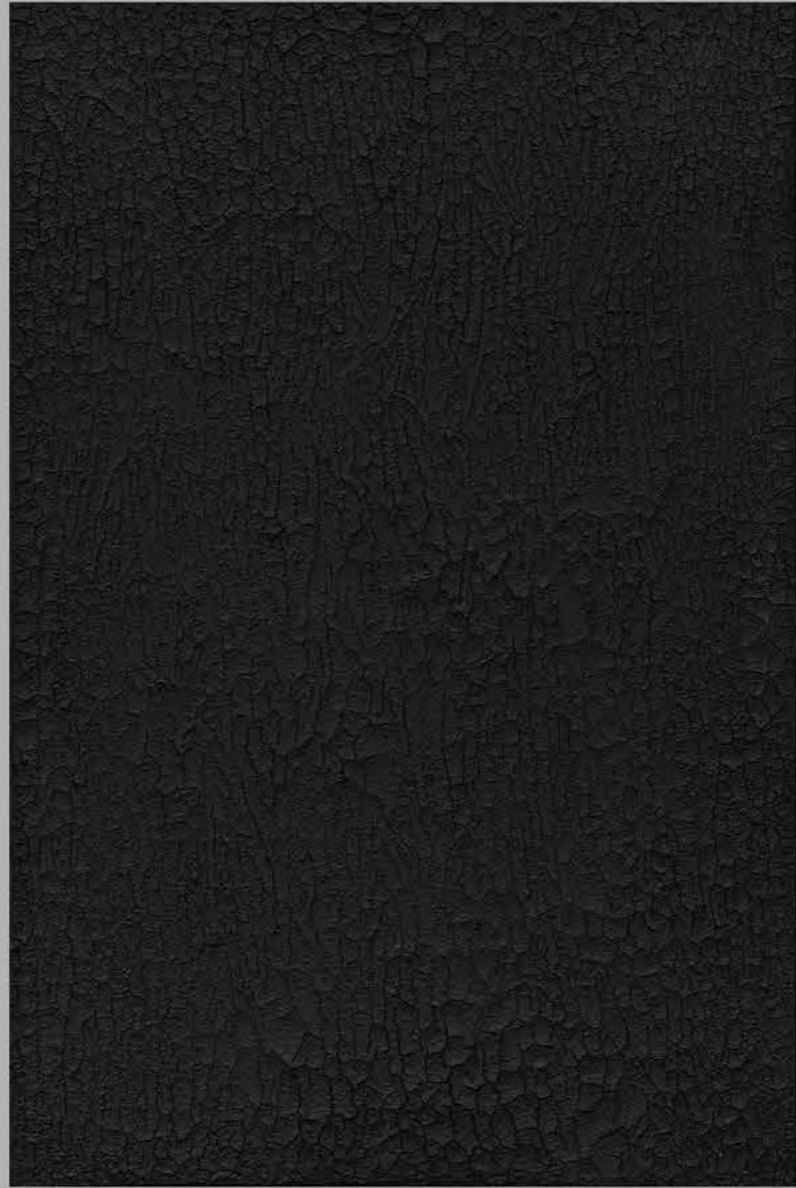
Tele Sovrapposte n. 183, 1975
2B graphite on canvas
80 x 80 cm



Zhang Zhenyu

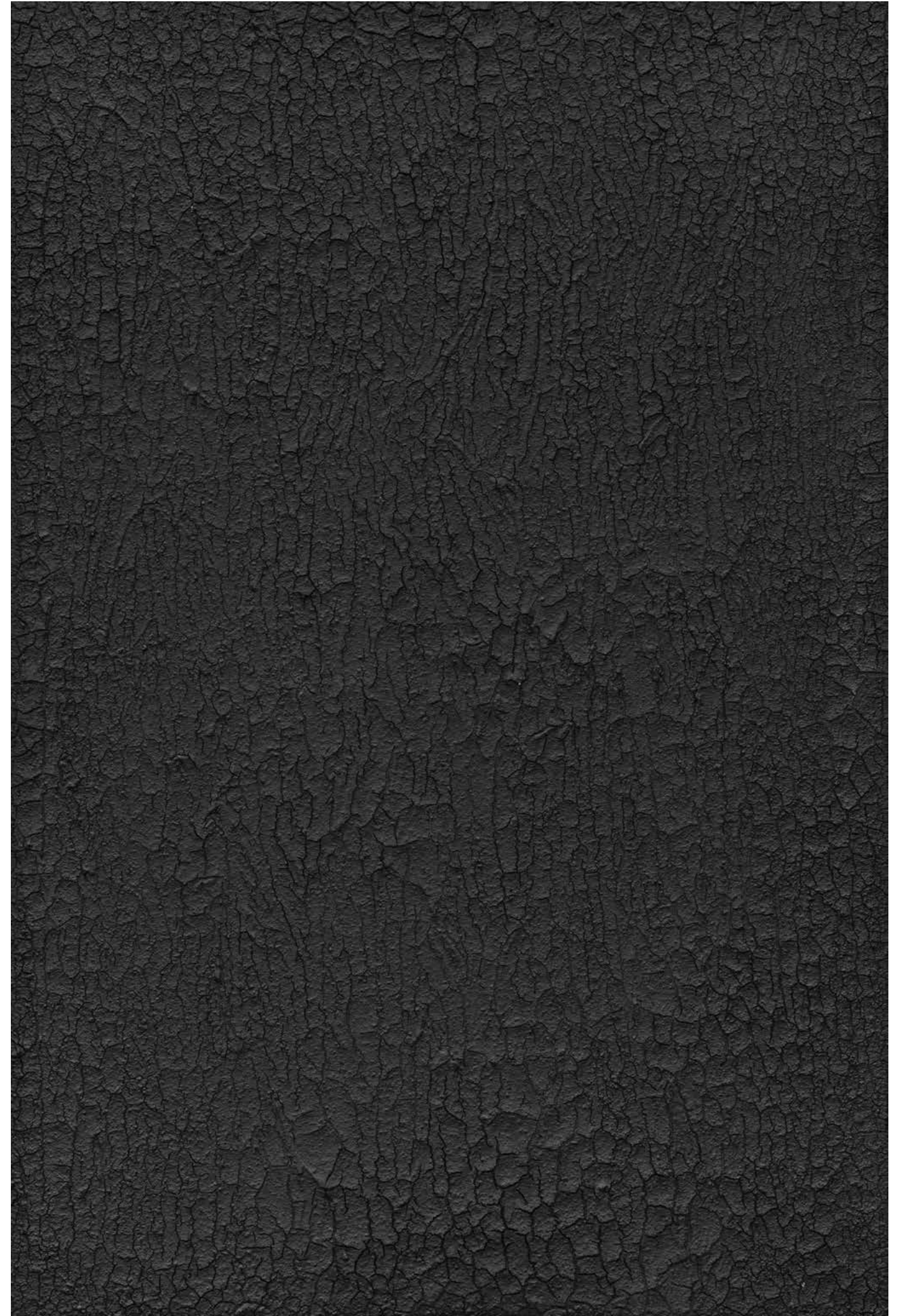
Dust 150315, 2015
Dust on canvas
200 x 200 cm





Beatriz Zamora

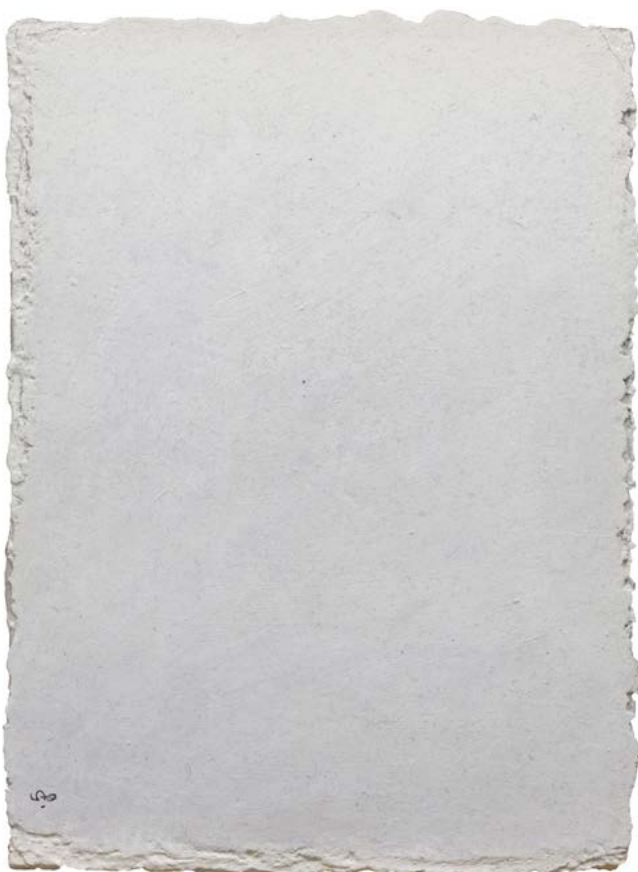
El Negro #48, 1978
Mixed media
152 x 102 cm



Paolo Cotani

Benda, 1976
Bandages and acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 x 3 cm





Lao Lianben

Cloud Painting, 2005
Acrylic on canvas
34 x 27 cm

Natee Utarit

This is a Painting, 1997
Bronze
49.5 x 34.5 x 2.5 cm



Richard has come a long way from his previous incarnations - fashion designer, incredibly private, and one wonders what he has been patiently collecting world of collecting and what makes Richard so interesting. As Richard is art, few realise that he is actually a tour de force on the international art kind and compassionate and the art world is better for it.

interior designer and now gallerist. All this time he has been an art collector, as he exercises his exquisite taste. This show gives us a glimpse into his positioned as one of the leading dealers in contemporary Southeast Asian scene. He is discerning, brave, quirky and astute and above all Richard is

Dr Andreas Teoh
Collector
2018



Masaaki Yamada

Work, 1964
Oil on canvas
62 x 50 cm

Chung Sang-hwa

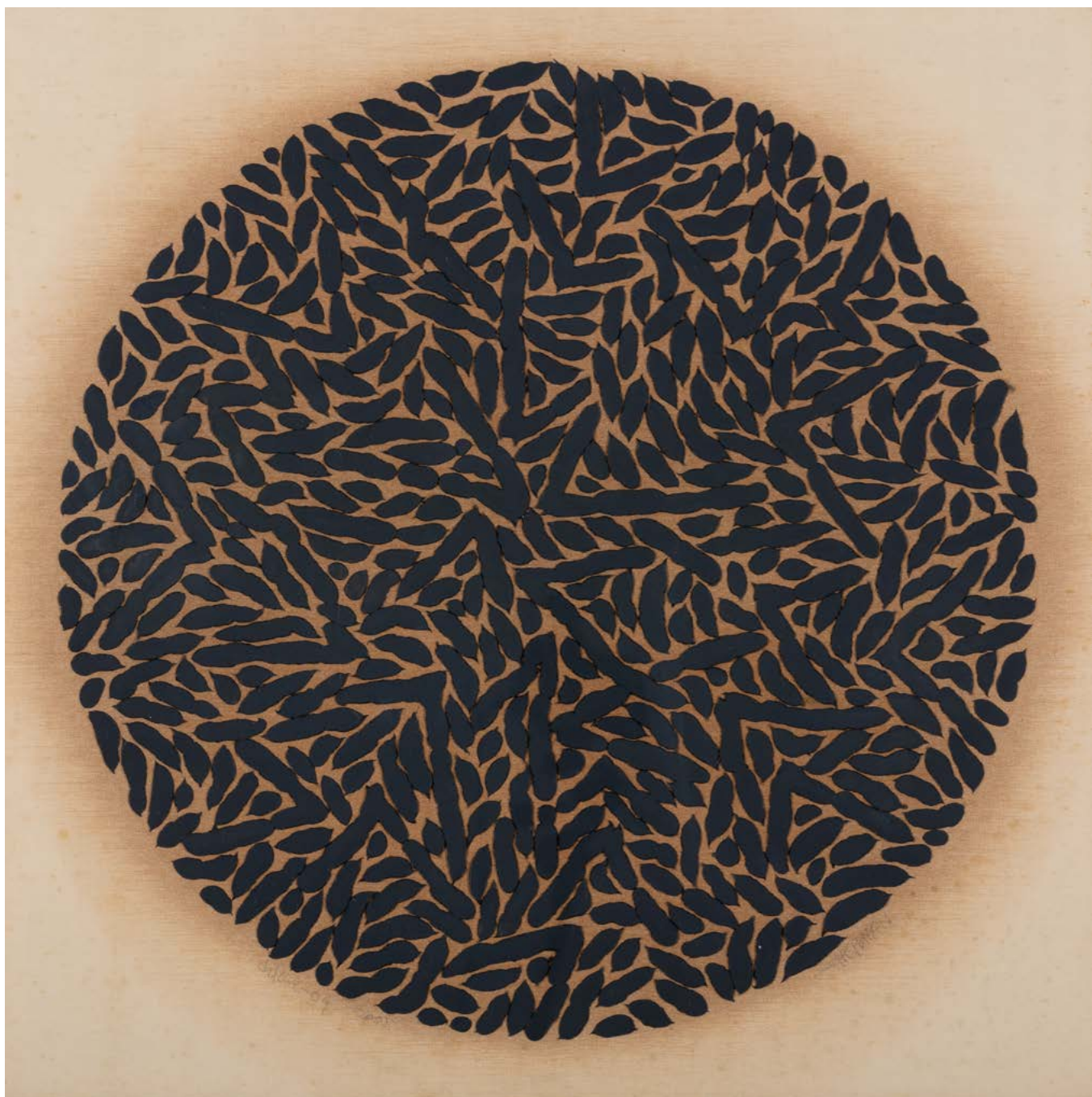
Untitled, 2013
Oil on canvas
76 x 63.5 cm



Yang Mushi

Sharpening Cube No.2, 2016
Wood, Black spray lacquer
150.5 x 101 x 15 cm





Shen Fan

Shan Shui C-09, 2005
Oil on canvas
96 x 96 cm

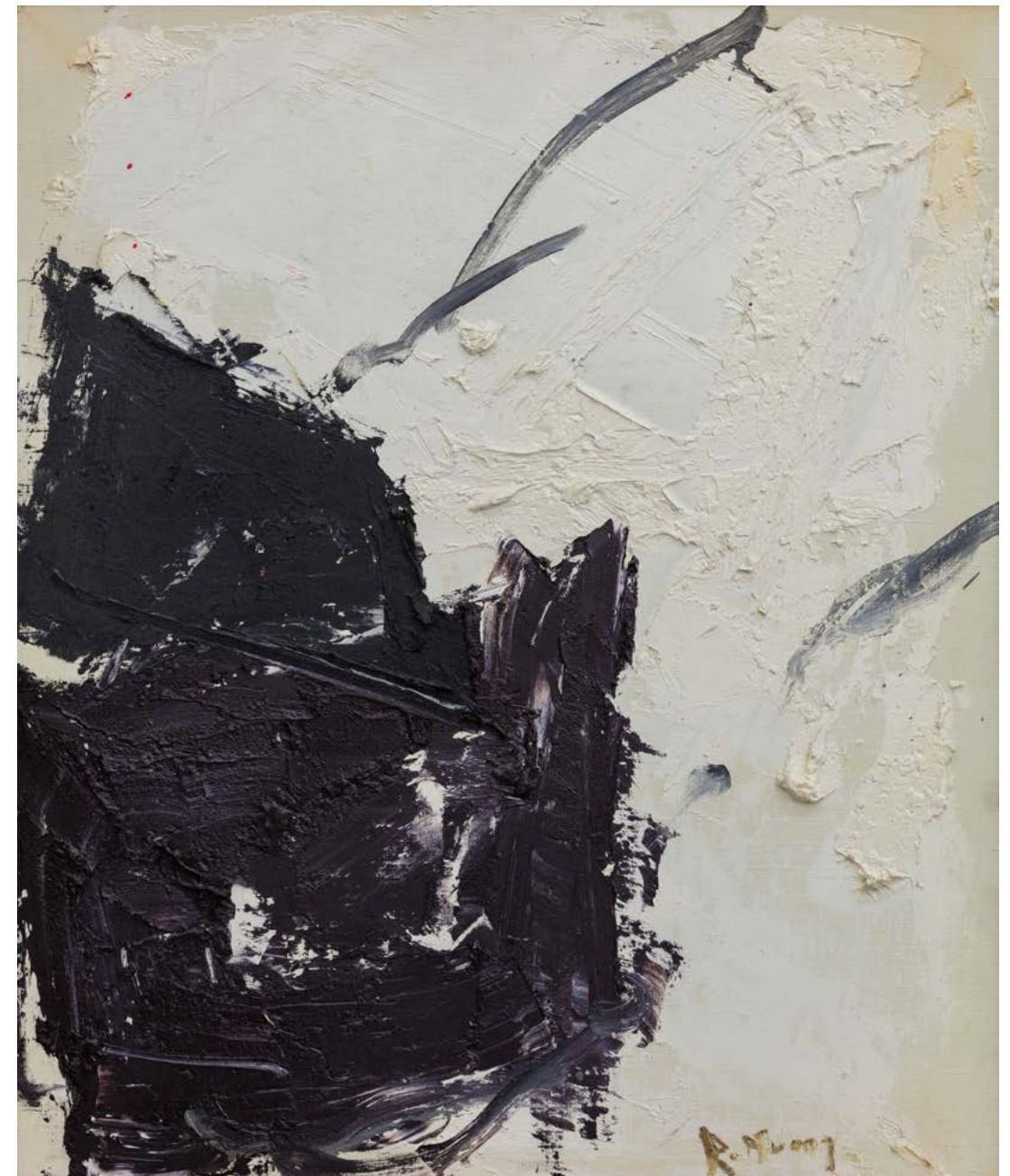
One of my favourite anecdotes to recount about Richard is that of a day we artists he worked with. I remember being impressed with his aesthetic the side of a busy road, its engine aflame. I was shocked, but, without so to Malaysia.” It’s come to stand as the defining impression I have of him: and always to be counted on for a good, hard dose of reality. Richard Koh’s

spent in Kuala Lumpur together, a number of years ago now, visiting several choices. En route to an artist’s studio, we spotted an abandoned car by much as batting an eyelid, he intoned with his trademark grin: “Welcome possessed of a discerning eye and an impish humour, completely unfazed an art world original.

Louis Ho
Curator, Singapore Art Museum
Singapore
2018

Huang Rui

Purple No.8, 1991
Oil on canvas
72.5 x 61 cm



Natee Utarit

Internal Landscape, 1998
Oil and collage on canvas
80 x 60 cm



Xu Zhen

Under Heaven 03028ac0144, 2014
Oil on canvas, aluminium
45 x 60 x 12 cm



As a gallerist based in Southeast Asia, one of the things that never fails to surprise me is Richard Koh's attraction to unusual work by new artists, and by standards. Singapore and for that matter a lot of the region is still relatively still make up the bulk of private collecting. So I was very startled years ago burning and agglomerating bits of paper etc to form delicate sculptures that when Richard told me he was thinking of working with her, I applauded him take to these works. Amazingly he managed to cajole and educate (though I am not sure in what proportions) his collectors to start taking a risk on this and wall pieces inspired by rock formations at the fairs. The work was hardly artists, I realized that most of what he favoured was left of centre, slightly was difficult for many collectors initially the subject matter did not look Thai drawings were too scary and dark etc. And recently in the last two years time he has managed to educate collectors on how to see and appreciate because of it.

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Boon Hui Tan
Director, Asia Society Museum
Vice President, Global Arts & Cultural Programs
New York
2018



Wang Keping

Eternal Smile, 2011
Iron

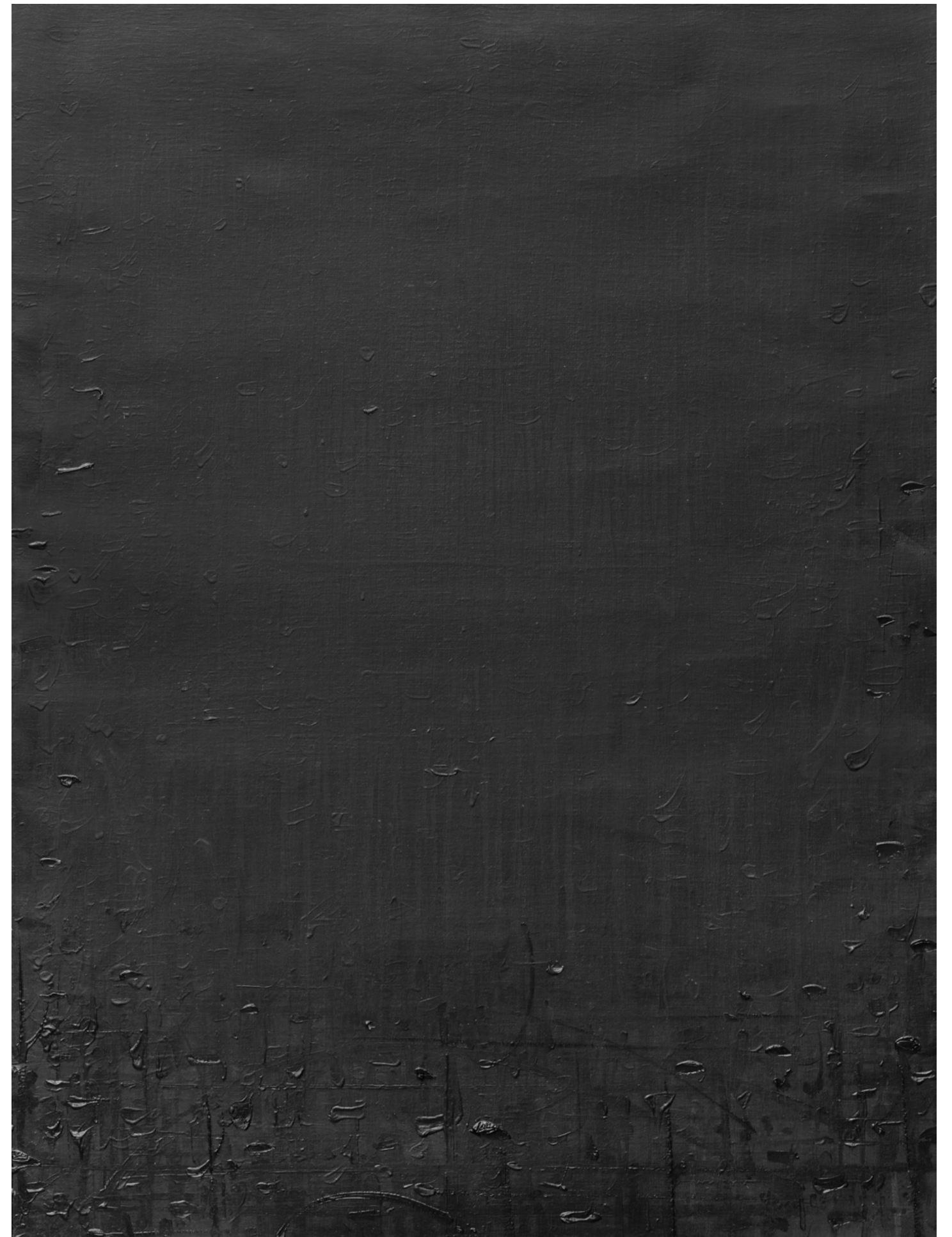
40 x 50 x 15 cm , editon of 1000

Yang Liming

2007no14b120x90cm, 2007-2008

Oil on canvas

120 x 90 cm



Yang Jiechang

Drawing 1, 2014
Ink and acrylic on canvas
40 x 60 cm



Lin Tianmiao

Seeing Shadow No C-12, 2006
Acrylic on embroidery canvas
241 x 78 cm



There are two kinds of visitor I enjoyed the most in the studio. The ones who drop by with a few cans of beer and the ones who came for intellectual exchange. Both fulfilled my thirst to drink and the tremendous thirst to know. Richard certainly is the latter one, who has the capability to challenge my view on my own works, and to break down old ideas to allow new ideas to grow in different directions. This painting, entitled “The Twilight Flight”, in both aesthetically and in literally sense, as I was in the verge of giving up this work without knowing how to continue anymore, yet in a flight from discarded destiny, “saved” by Richard from one of his studio visits. He reconnected and straightened up the relation between me and the painting, in a trice I knew perfectly what to do next on the canvas. Making art is a mysterious mind activity that sometimes even an artist couldn’t figure out entirely the reasoning behind the subconscious act. I am glad to have Richard as a friend who has been willing to provide critical critique as my self-reflection.

“The Twilight Flight” was painted not too long after I met Richard, who opened up the possibilities when I wasn’t sure if I was able to go on at the beginning of my art journey, for more to discover and for the adventures ahead.

Yeoh Choo Kuan
Artist, Kuala Lumpur
2018

Yeoh Choo Kuan

The Twilight Flight, 2017
Oil on canvas
158 x 130 cm



He Jian

Listen, 2009

Chinese ink and colour on rice paper

145 x 188 cm

When I get away from these blatant and crowded societies, the water is my relief, washing my exhaustion away. Perhaps the most praise should be the communication between people and water, because water is full of wisdom.

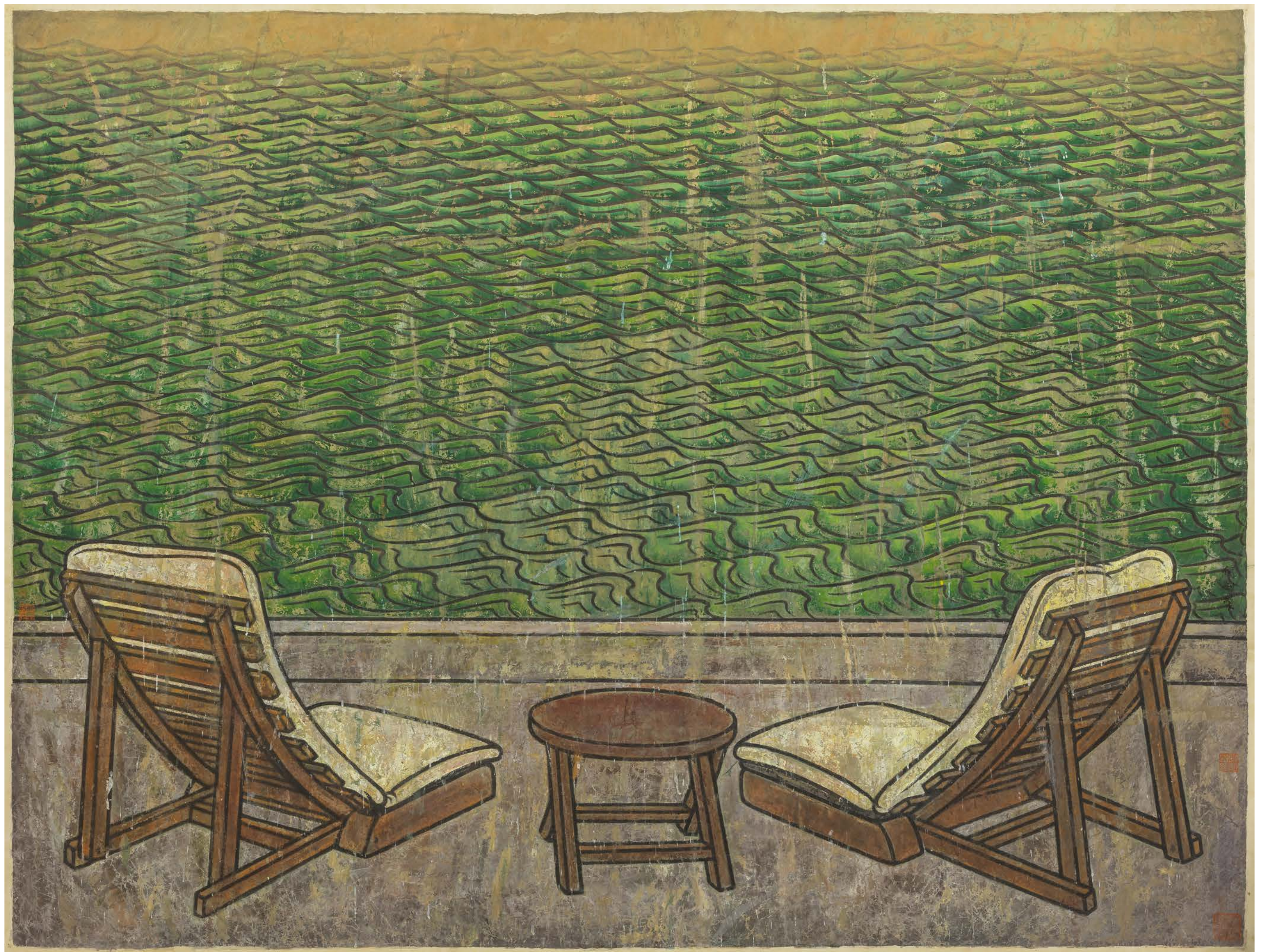
Water is like one of the greatest philosophers. Facing the water, your will becomes freer, it's the supreme state of life.

Lao Zi said: "The highest goodness is like water".

Confucius said: "The wise is like water".

Water is like kind of noble character, this kind of character spreads forever, and it will benefit all things without fighting for fame and fortune. Water is a kind of faith!

He Jian
Artist, Chongqing
2009



Jia Aili

Untitled, 2009
Oil on canvas
36 x 49 cm



Zhu Xinyu

The Silence of Container (Study), 2009
Oil on board
48 x 63 cm



Kedsuda Loogthong

River and My Mother, 2011
Oil and embroidery on canvas
40 x 80 cm each, diptych



Angel Otero

Untitled (SK-DV) from the Series Camouflage, 2011
Oil paint, oil paint skins on canvas
131.8 x 100.4 x 8.9 cm



Yang Jiechang

White Wave - Golden Glow, 2017
Ink and mineral colours on silk mounted on canvas
185 x 282 cm

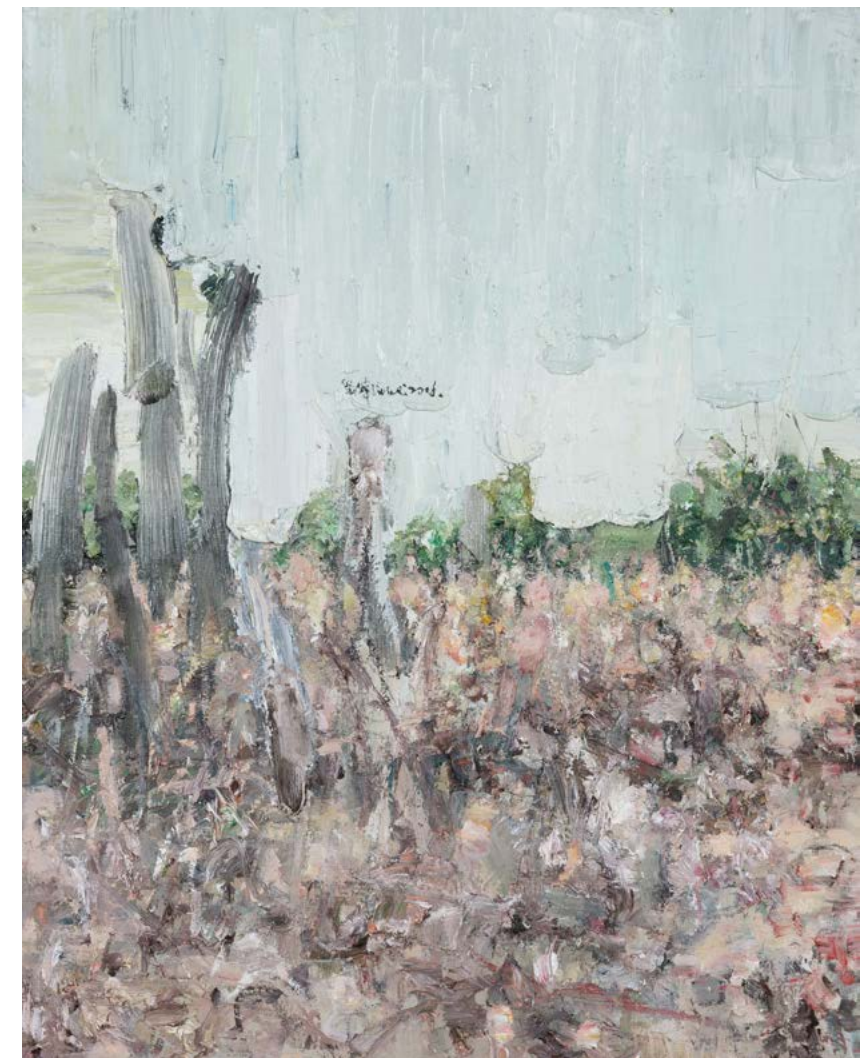
Yang Jiechang’s “White Wave-Golden Glow” is part of a small series of meticulous colour paintings depicting waves. The origin of this series of works was a public command for the official conference room of The BRICS Conference 2017. BRICS 2017 was held in Xiamen, this provincial costal city in Fujian Province known for its violent typhoons. Yang’s painting is inspired by this geographical characteristic of the city, showing the turbulent surface of the ocean just before a typhoon. The image of the huge wave speaks of power but also of the disturbance of an initial equilibrium. The disequilibrium has to be compensated by a restoring force to keep the ocean rolling. Yang Jiechang’s image of the ocean just before the storm, therefore, is a metaphor for the state power.

Martina Koppel
Curator, Paris
2017



Liu Wei

Untitled, 2006
Oil on canvas
65.5 x 55.5 cm



Zhou Chunya

Chinese Landscape, 1994
Oil on canvas
100 x 80 cm



Lao Tongli

The Desire of Libido Above The Horizon No.02, 2014

Color on silk scroll

89 x 141 cm

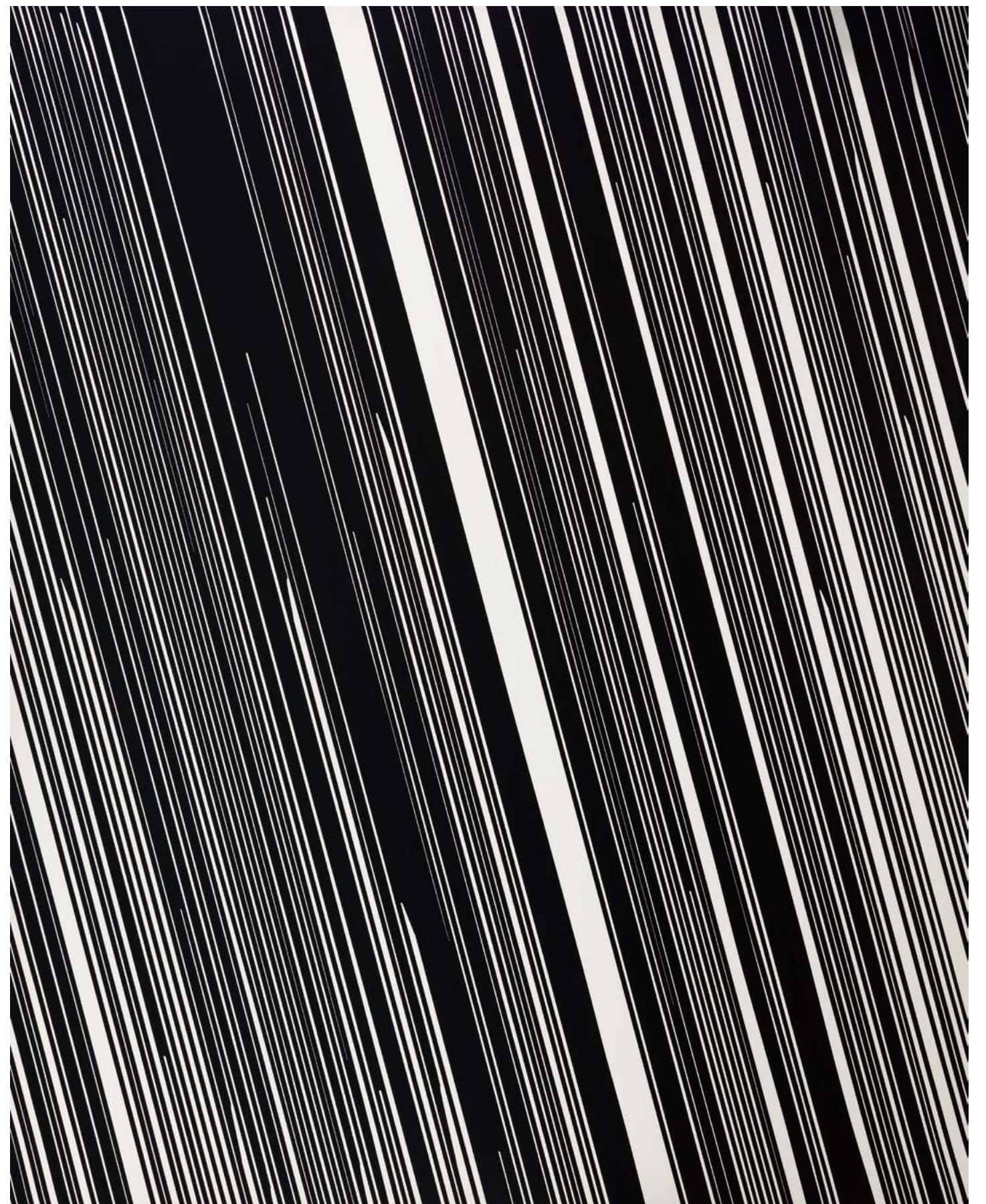
The formation of the tree and blood vessel, shared common similarities, are expressed in a form of life. The relationship between them and their symbolic meaning represent an exposition of life, as well as hope and aspiration towards the endless cycle of life. I symbolised and fused them together to create a 'field of life' - that overlaps, tangles, touches, links, extends, expands, and continues to grow upward, downward, and in all directions - as the construction of the "ideal trees" from my experience. At the same time, this is also referred to our current world view and the imbalance relationship in the natural world and its survival.

Lao Tongli
Artist, Guangzhou
2014



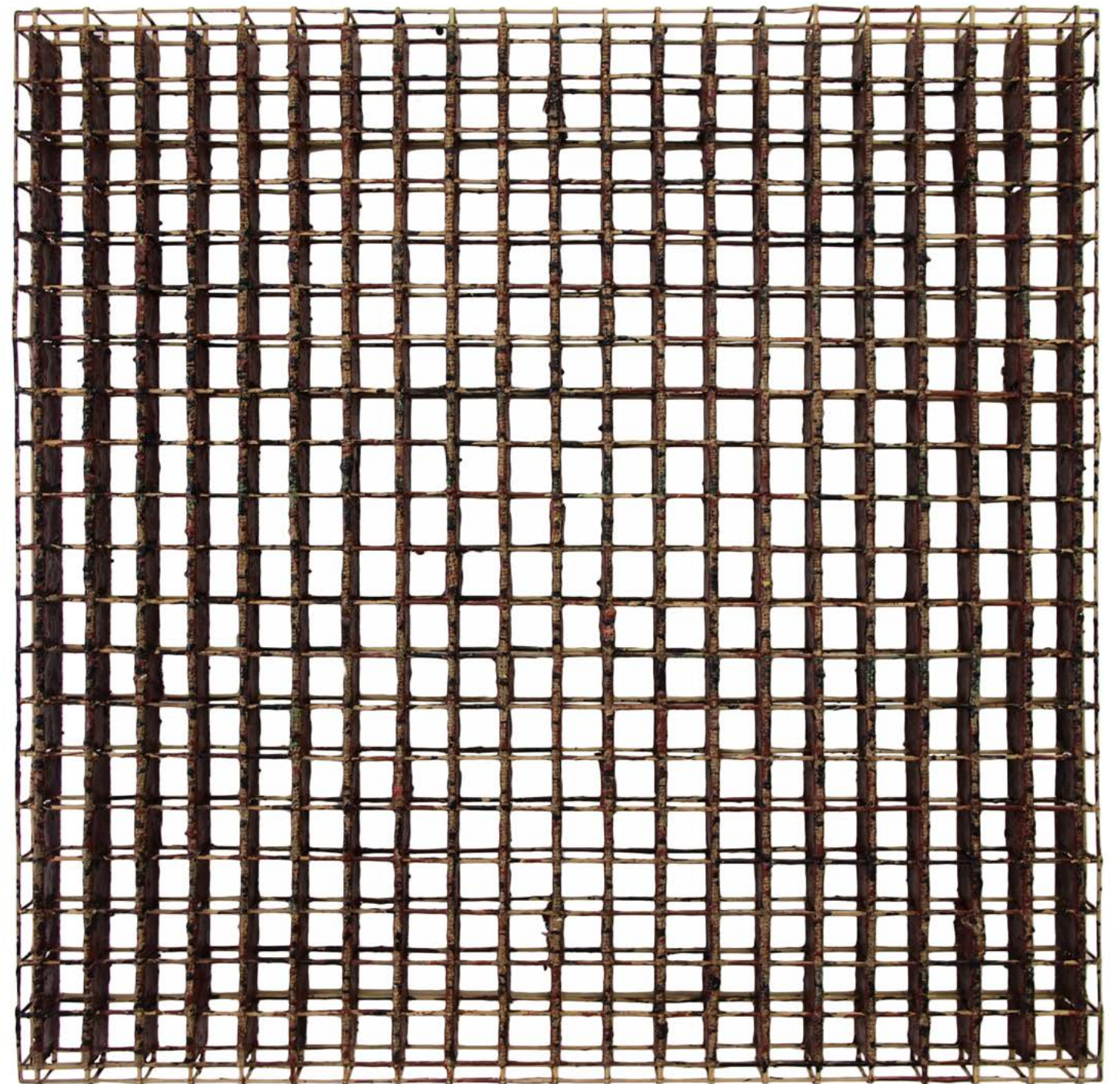
Kohei Nawa

Direction #37, 2012
Paint on canvas
250 x 200 cm



Sopheap Pich

Untitled (Red Square Wall Relief), 2012
Mixed media
100 x 100 x 6 cm



What I like in Richard's approach is his way of looking at artists' works, he based on prices. I see in him the figure of a gallerist that is open to put his what I have observed through our collaborations, he gives great importance the peace necessary for them to do their work at its best. This attitude is

considers them for the actual value he sees in them, rather than judging them bets on an artist based on the quality of the art and without hesitation. From to the artists' growth and well-being, and at the same time tries to create much rarer than one might think, and I deeply appreciate it.

Demetrio Paparoni
Curator / Writer, Milan
2018



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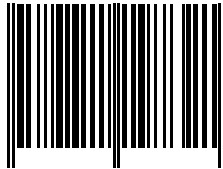
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