

Tang Contemporary Art presents:

Strength Exercise : Yeo Kaa Solo Exhibition

Artist: Yeo Kaa

Curator: Michela Sena

Exhibition Dates: 08 June - 09 July 2023

Venue: Tang Contemporary Art Bangkok

Opening Reception: Thursday, 08 June at 4:00 PM

Yeo Kaa is an artist who has made a name for picturing the disturbing and unpleasant in a strikingly contrasting aesthetics of pastels and doll-like figurations. In this seemingly naïve, jovial, and brightly colored world, she has portrayed the macabre and violent, confronted social taboos, and dealt with pain, anguish, and distress. Whether it is the twisted irony, nonchalance, or irreverence of such a take on the unsettling realities of life that make her art arresting, she has nonetheless emerged as a distinct voice among artists of her generation.

In her recent works, however, the artist has significantly deviated from ruminations about the darker side of human nature and society to more uplifting intimations drawn from recent experiences and realizations. This shift, though partly arising from her personal journey during the pandemic, perhaps reflects our collective change in outlook as we reconnect with the outside world after a prolonged period of distancing and isolation from social encounters. As the gradual recovery progresses, we ease our way into normalizing our lives guided by a renewed sense of optimism that naturally surfaces from overcoming the toughest of times.

This exhibition presents the artist's spirited stance as she emerges out of the bubble. The pieces speak of gathering and cultivating strength – recognizing both its internal and external sources – and embedding cues on how to transcend trying moments filled with self-doubt, anxiety, or distress. Now, her candy-flavored palette and figures complement the temperament her canvases evoke, more attuned with its cheerfulness and youthful energy. A few titles refer to dispositions – peace, happiness, determination, freedom – perhaps describing states the artist now gladly finds herself in and thus worthy of being celebrated. To those who extended understanding and remained patient at her lowest, she dedicates a sweet embrace in one work as a token of gratitude. Others are straightforward declarations about taking charge and steering the course of one's destiny, a direct expression of her newfound conviction and forward-looking frame of mind. These works deliver empowering messages that she hopes to be contagious, which the title suggests as a kind of training or routine that forges us to become strong-willed and triumphant in the end.

Text by N.M. Marquez

About the Artist

A perfect dichotomy of colour and torment, Yeo Kaa's renown candy-coloured characters are deceptively stuck in violent states of reality. The stylised figuration in her works invokes animation and fictional characters from children's books, a fantasy world that exists only in dreams and imagination. Her practice functions as a personal journal where the artist shares her struggles and anxieties, which aims to connect with audiences through its entanglements with contemporary life, current events, and the broader human experience.

Yeo Kaa (b. 1989) studied Advertising at the College of the Holy Spirit Manila, and has won the University of Santo Tomas On-the-Spot Painting Competition and Special Prize of the Metrobank Art and Design Excellence in 2010. She has mounted sixteen solo shows to date in Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea, France and Germany. In 2017, she was an artist-in-residence at Sarang Art Space in Yogyakarta, Indonesia and Arteles Creative Center in Haukijärvi, Finland and in 2018 completed a residency in Berlin, Germany.

Tang Contemporary Art

Since its founding in Bangkok in 1997, Tang Contemporary Art has opened 7 spaces in Beijing, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Seoul to promote the development of experimental art in different regions. In the past 20 years, Tang Contemporary Art has organized groundbreaking exhibitions in its gallery spaces, and also cooperated with important art institutions in China and abroad to accomplish outstanding art projects. The gallery strives to initiate dialogue between artists, curators, collectors and institutions working both locally and internationally. A roster of groundbreaking exhibitions has earned Tang Contemporary Art internationally renowned recognition, establishing its status as a pioneer of the contemporary art scene in Asia.

As one of China's most influential contemporary art platforms, Tang Contemporary Art maintains a high standard of exhibition programming. Tang Contemporary Art represents or collaborates with leading figures in international contemporary art, including Ai Weiwei, Huang Yongping, Shen Yuan, Zhu Jinshi, Chen Danqing, Liu Qinghe, Liu Xiaodong, Chen Shaoxiong, Wang Yuping, Shen Ling, Shen Liang, Wu Yi, Xia Xiaowan, He Duoling, Mao Xuhui, Wang Huangsheng, Yang Jiechang, Tan Ping, Wang Du, Yan Lei, Yue Minjun, Wang Jianwei, Yangjiang Group, Zheng Guogu, Lin Yilin, Sun Yuan&Peng Yu, Qin Ga, Wang Qingsong, Yin Zhaoyang, Feng Yan, Guo Wei, Chen Wenbo, Ling Jian, Qin Qi, Yang Yong, Peng Wei, He An, Zhao Zhao, Xu Qu, Chen Yujun, Chen Yufan, Xue Feng, Cai Lei, Li Qing, Wang Sishun, Xu Xiaoguo, Lí Wei, Liu Yujia, Wu Wei, Yang Bodu, You Yong, Li Erpeng, Jade Ching-yuk Ng, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Adel Abdessemed, Niki de Saint Phalle, AES+F, Michael Zelehosk, Jonas Burgert, Christian Lemmerz, Michael Kvium, Sakarin Krue-On, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Natee Utarit, Kitti Narod, Gongkan, Entang Wiharso, Heri Dono, Nam June Paik, Park Seungmo, Jae Yong Kim, Diren Lee, Dinh Q. Lê, Rodel Tapaya, Jigger Cruz, Ayka Go, Raffy Napay, H.H.Lim, Etsu Egami, etc.

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