

For immediate release

19 October 2009

Exhibition : Monochromatism
Venue : Mulan Gallery
No. 19 Tanglin Road
#02-33 Tanglin Shopping Centre
Singapore 247909
Date : 12 – 31 December 2009
Opening Reception: 11 December 2009

Graceful visual forms executed with meticulous and inventive style characterize the paintings of Teng Teng. Her subject has been centered on sea turtles for the last three years, depicting the environment in deep seas and the creatures in their troubled habitats. The artworks are explorations in brush strokes combined with improvised print techniques.

Tan Teng Teng, a young upcoming artist based in Johor, Malaysia will be presenting her recent as well as early works at a solo showcase at Mulan Gallery this December. The Malaysian artist completed her studies in fine arts at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) in 2007, graduating with a diploma in Chinese Ink Painting. Teng Teng received her training under some of the most illustrious artists including Chua Ek Kay and Tan Kian Por. In a very short period her works have already won her the NAFA Fine Art Award and one of her paintings was judged as a highly commended work at the UOB Painting of the Year Competition, traditional Chinese category in 2007. Teng Teng readily acknowledges her debt to her alma mater for the spirit of inventiveness and artistic synthesis that her instruction has inculcated and which she intends to keep alive in her artistic practice.

One of the works from the series 'The Survivor Syndrome Series' that was selected for the Singapore Art Show two years ago when Teng Teng was still a student at NAFA was conceived in a characteristically ingenious way. She first stumbled on Styrofoam boards that were about to be discarded in her school campus and brought them home. Then she began to execute her ink paintings on the smooth surface of these boards and then printed it onto rice paper using her hand. The results were intriguing and gave Teng Teng the flexibility of

combining the technique of rubbing paint that resembles the traditional method tuo pian (拓片) along with the fluency of Chinese calligraphy strokes. There is no set sequence of steps in the creation of the final work, processes are combined and the composition alone dictates the repetition and multiplication of the processes used. Teng Teng keeps her works minimalist, monochromatic so that the added meanings of colours can be avoided. Yet, the quality of the lines in Teng Teng's works is not of the austerity of traditional Chinese ink; instead they have the instinctive fluidity that is reminiscent of lyrical abstractionists of mid-twentieth century Europe. This expressiveness is perhaps the most distinguishing aspect about these artworks.

Her new series of works, the 'Eco-series,' extends the processes developed with the earlier series. This series is also a continuation of her interest in the subject of sea turtles. The textures on the bodies of these creatures had initially captivated Teng Teng, but it wasn't just their gestural beauty, the unfortunate circumstances that these sea creatures lived in moved her to create the artworks. The sea turtles, she found were subjected to deeply polluted sea waters and the resulting lesions or tumors often grew to grotesque proportions and obscured vision. Some of them were even blinded in both their eyes. The paintings of Teng Teng offer their side of the story as it were. In her works the artists attempts to imagine myself and express the "aversion and suffer to live in their polluted homeland," says the artist.

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