

RUBEN PANG

True Solarization



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"Chance is an important part of creation. I embrace processes which accommodate spontaneity, accidents and conflict. I recognize that all artists are multidimensional, and that we will go through phases where we work in distilled, capillarie ways and other times rhizomatic. I am drawn to the extremes of the spectrums within painting, to use the medium to its strengths and take it to places it doesn't want to go, be it abstract or figurative.

Painting is the mirror and agent of metamorphosis. To me, any resonance beneath the surface of a painting that is developed over a series of choices is naturally autobiographical. I also believe that the artist's psyche is always ahead of the consciousness and that my most honest paintings aren't afraid to show my vulnerabilities alongside my strengths. The anxiety this results in is what I tap into to synthesize into potency and use to overcome the inertia of the blank surface.

I am driven by that which is always slightly out of reach. Everything that I've painted has always been fueled by an ironic mix of a great feeling of technical inadequacy and a certainty that I have the will to power through with what I have at my disposal.

What has become most poignant to me recently is the need to lose self-created barriers between introversion and extroversion, self-consciousness and self-awareness, fast and slow thinking. I paint what I walk into within my life, and believe that no subject matter should be taboo if there is a genuine fascination for it. I subscribe to the metaphor of harmony and dissonance; harmony aspires to the divine but could be authoritarian, while dissonance can be unnerving while it celebrates the grit of humanity. Underneath these dualities, art is always optimistic by opposing adamant logic; that one can behold the universe by going within."

~ Ruben Pang

The background is an abstract composition of dark, swirling colors. It features a central, bright, circular area that appears to be a light source or a focal point, surrounded by deep blues, purples, and blacks. The overall effect is ethereal and atmospheric, with a sense of depth and movement. The text "True Solarization" is written in a white, cursive font, positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image.

True Solarization

True Solarization

by Lorenzo Belli

"We do not know where the great light was born, whether from the outside or from the inside, and when it has disappeared, we say: it was interior, yet it was not interior.

There is no need to ask where it appeared, because there is no point of origin here; it does not start from one place to go to another but appears and does not appear. Therefore, we must not chase it, but wait quietly until it reveals itself, as the eye waits for the sun to rise, which rises to the horizon and offers itself to our eyes to be contemplated."

Plotinus, Enneade V 5,8 (On Beauty)

Sigmund Freud defines artistic talent as flexibility of removal because according to his thesis the unconscious is more easily accessible for the artist and therefore can proceed in this dimension between the conscious and the unconscious to intercept his artistic intuitions. The creative act becomes a pendular movement between conscious and unconscious impulses, while serving as a gradual process of raising one's consciousness.

Everything is based on the idea of a creative chaos as the true origin of artistic creation. Pang's works are often containers of this chaos where we find an entropic force, the fundamental law of nature on which the ecosystem and therefore life depends. Entropy was used by Rudolph Clausius in 1850, in the second law of thermodynamics, to indicate the correlation between physical state transition and energy production.

"What is counterintuitive about painting, is that you are choosing to suspend movement, to arrest chaos, to defy gravity, to levitate. When you lift a brush away from a painting, where you decide to stop blending, when you decide to leave passages to dry, is where the attention and focus needs to be, even more so than the application, gesture, or movement. Paint being moved around, for me, is experienced through the skin and muscles, but choosing when to stop, is done with the eyes and a conversation with the heart."

Clausius verified that at each change of state, with the consequent production or dispersion of energy, there is an increasing disorder in the structure of matter. According to this theory, the same word entropy was then applied in other fields, from mathematical theory of probability to information theory, psycholinguistics, and quantum physics.



The writer Thomas Pynchon gives us his definition of entropic disorder correlated with communication, coming to theorize a progressive loss of meaning of words because it is emptied of substance by excessively focusing on concept. It can reasonably be said art potentially loses its own sense if it progressively overworked and emptied.

In this land between chaos and potential opportunities, Pang creates his own universe and reminds us: *"You can create a world, but you can't shape everything."*

The communicative emotion that he transmits to us through his paintings reflect the structures of language in unlikely associations. Similarly, we use slang/expressions in everyday communication that oppose grammatical rules, within painting, elements of disorder lubricate the transition from information into messages. Pang approaches his painting, specifically in his relationship with color, assigning them personalities and associations on top of their technical qualities, with whimsically misaligned elements to strengthen a reception of potential passages the composition can embark on.

"I tend not to think of colors in terms of their harmony or combinations that are known to create a certain effect. My experience of color is that each tint, shade, tone, and hue have a personal antecedent. In End of School for instance, I thought of flooding the atmosphere with the colors that correspond to the scent, packing and scenes associated with a menthol cigarette: the 1990s, nostalgia, benign teenage delinquency. It was meant to simulate the "haze" of looking back in time. Every color is a memory, an aspiration, an attitude. And I prefer to think of the forms and colors of a painting as a collection of attitudes."

According to the well-known art critic Greenberg, theorist of American modernism, the form of a work of art would be the state in which it leaves the norms and conventions of the artistic medium. For Greenberg, the artist seems to work against the resistance of his own medium and under his pressure and it is therefore assumed that, consciously, he dominates its conventions.

The artist produces images, forms, narrations but starting from the deconstruction

of his experience, of his past, of what disturbs him, of outdated tragedies and hidden fears, casting the shadow of a memory that seems to come from nowhere.

"Showing up and being honest with yourself leads to a dialogue between previous scenarios in a painting—it is a dialogue between your experience with the material, the flux and volatility of oils and pigments, and the desire to have the fruits of opposing ideals; to keep the happy accident while realizing a vision, to be direct in intention, yet moved and deceived by illusions, to find a limit, effortlessly."

The nature of the painting game is that as new things develop, other things yield. At times, I feel an "opening" in a developing picture, a magnetism towards something mysterious, refractory, or suspended. If I put aside my initial ambitions for the composition, I am convinced that the painting is painting itself."

During this process of deconstruction and construction of his works, Pang does not set limits, and through a stream of consciousness, he creates layers of paint, modifies the pre-existing ones, and redefines their contours spontaneously.

Evidently, for Pang, the painting frame, its outline, is a *limes*, a border that separates two lands and the tangible sign (often identified with a stone) that defines what is inside and outside. Limiting is an act of definition, it is an act of border creation between lived reality and its representation, in a nutshell, it is the most archaic manifestation of individual control and of the creation of identity.

In this reading, control and identity therefore seem to correspond as if they were an obsessive response to the question: who are we?

"Do you hunt ideas down or seed them? Do you need to shape every form or allow things to develop without meddling? Is there space in the painting for anything other than yourself?"

We often have the impression that to better see the outside world and consequently our life, we must move away from everyday life, from reality.



According to Foucault, the hermeneutical approach towards a work of art is characterized by the search for what has not been said, for what is hidden from the evidence of the sign and which would constitute the ultimate truth of the work of art. Pang, on the other hand, promotes research that is based on the creative moment and analyzes its relationships: the relationship between the author and the work, the relationship between the author and the environment and the relationship between the author, the work and his time.

"We are fortunate now, to have immediate access to the expanse of art history, and in a sense, we are always time-traveling. I find it comforting that the lessons and contributions of artists who lived centuries apart, for instance, Bruegel, Rubens and David Reed, are intimately present and accessible simultaneously."

"A question that painters are asked often is 'How do you know when a painting is done?'. You recognize something that you've never seen before, not through its image, but by how far you are displaced internally—depersonalization is my compass."

Depersonalization in this context refers to the detachment and letting go of the initial intentions or ambitions for the artwork, by oscillating his focus between a vision in his mind's eye and the physical situation of paint's volatility, recognizing that the nature of painting is unprecise in translating thought, but presents several opportunities for what he considers magic.

Relationship between artist and environment: "Skywriters and Prism are two paintings of the same dimensions made with similar materials but with a drastically different result. In Skywriters, I painted in a very small space, almost seated at a desk all the time—I wanted to give the effect as if it were painted by a gnome, as if the frame of 60 x 75 cm was further than the horizon. It was also the first painting done after moving from Singapore to Sardinia, and it was done as a kind of initiation, "breaking in" and trying to find my footing in a new space. Prism was realized as a counterpoint to larger paintings of 220 x 150 cm, in the context of a larger studio that I had set-up, over the months. To reinforce the contrasts in approach from other works, I only used a large brush throughout the process and refrained from delineating any shape or figures within a single mo-



vement. I approached it as if I were allergic to the marks that could give away a human touch or personality.”

Pang’s approach to artistic creation is like a stream of consciousness, something that the artist is unable to stem but which is composed on the substrate as a trace of his experience.

The generating intuition, the creative act, the personal content, the psychological and human implications are the basis of his artistic poetics: man is at the center of his universe; his system of relations between the single components of a work is always sought because this structuralism is indicative of the research that pervades his poetics. Structuralism is a methodology that has established itself since the early twentieth century in various sciences, based on the assumption that each object of study constitutes a structure, that is, it constitutes an organic and global whole whose elements have no autonomous functional value but assume it within distinctive relations of each element with respect to the others of the whole.

The structural interest that outlines the conformation of a work in compositions such as *Familial Ties*, *Solace and Individuality* and *End of School*, abandons geometric lines and constructions to open up to Classical planes and compositions. This material structuralism is also witnessed in Michelangelo’s work, *The Last Judgment*. However, Pang moves towards the direction of the eighteenth-century painter Alessandro Magnasco, where there is a sign of ambiguity in his compositions and forms, giving us the impression of an animation that starts from within.

We find in many of Pang’s works a dialectic of opposites, a dialectic understood within the pictorial corpus in the making, with the colors and stratifications of architecture that guides us in this sense of an absence-presence.

“In the painting world, I get to insist that flesh becomes sky, earth can be inhaled. In *Prism*, for instance, I would like to create a sense of pressurized atmosphere, flesh and soil form a throat or a door. In *End of School*, liquid

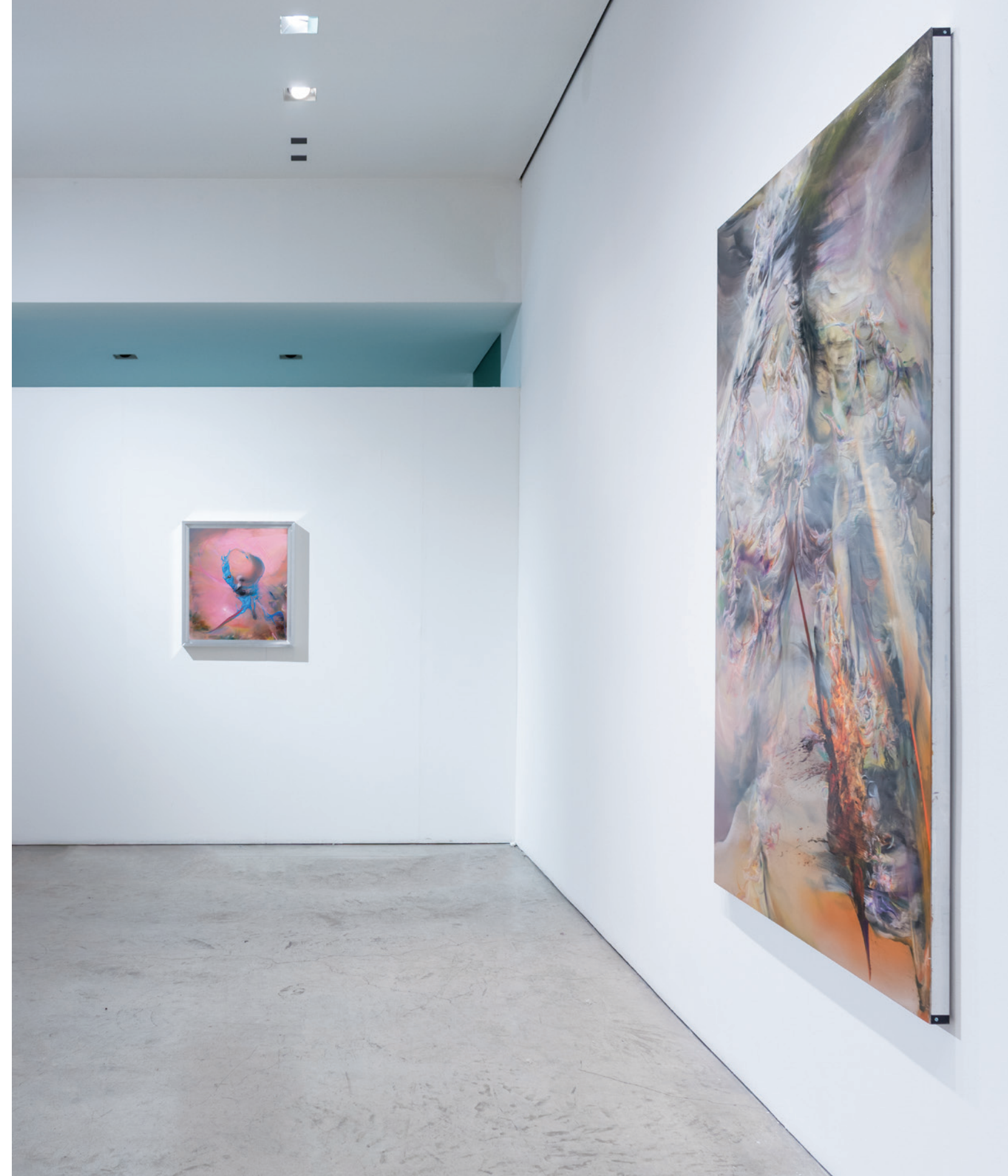
walls encompass a glacial anthropomorphic tree seeded from fire and children. In *Familial Ties* and *History of Defensive Gardens* respectively, a head in the former and a torso in the latter, becomes a portal. In *Choleric*, and in *Ionosphere*, what is usually regarded as the background of a painting becomes the protagonist of the scene. Here the play in composition is informed by music—jazz drums. The emphasis on the upbeat in jazz is transposed into the composition of painting: let space be the start of the show, let absence be the fulcrum.”

In Pang’s paintings it may seem that there is an indetermination of the forms, but his language serves to delineate of the conflict of a lived experience. It appears external and superior forces act to outline his subjects in the flux of painterly events.

We see a parallelism in the film *L’Eclisse* by Antonioni, the story of an unlikely love between two protagonists who live in a world without moral or psychological determination, where everything is independent of individual will or any logic of cause and effect. This allegory is a critique of our society. Pang’s paintings share a common denominator of being pervaded by a vital force engulfed by the reality that surrounds it, as if magical currents bind human subjects to the objects that surround them. It does so as a gesture of provocation, not an end in itself, but as a gesture of stimulation towards a new level of cognitive reasoning of reality, as found in the work of the Dada artists who altered the order and physical size of words.

As Whitehead states in *Adventures of Ideas*: “There is in every period a general form of the form of thought: and like the air we breathe that form is so translucent, so pervasive and so evidently necessary, that, with only an effort extreme we manage to become aware of it.”

Thus, Pang’s vision reflects a combination of painterly traditions, remote cultural influences, scholastic attitude, and technical needs and is at the same time, the daughter of an era, of a general feeling that brings the viewer of the work, like a theatrical performance, towards “consciously growing self-suggestions”.



Similarly, the repertoire of epic literature also aims to identify the viewer with the characters represented. Greek tragedy is based on the contrast between the character and the actions of the hero, between his moral greatness and his senseless, often self-destructive deeds. This contrast does not develop to a real conflict because the hero, an unconscious victim of his own fate, transgresses the divine order only when it is already in progress.

Pang in his narration causes the hero to stop a moment before his annihilation, before the spiritual mystical fire envelops him; as in *Lunar Snow*, which is the successor to *End of School*, where he crosses the boundaries of narration to head towards new horizons via simplification and emptying, a distillation of the chromatic chart to include only that which is necessary.

In a mannerist thought of the relationship between man and environment, Pang's varying works are united (and dominated) by ambiguity—the ambiguity of human existence and the double nature of man.

Essay by Lorenzo Belli

Quotes by Ruben Pang

Choleric, 2020
Oil and alkyd on aluminium composite panel
180 × 120 cm



History of Defensive Gardens, 2020
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
200 × 137 cm





Heart, 2020
Oil, alkyd and acrylic on aluminum composite panel
200 × 137 cm

Fulcrum, 2020-2021
Oil, alkyd on aluminum composite panel
180 × 120 cm







Familial Ties and Proximity Effect, 2020
Oil, alkyd, acrylic and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
200 × 121 cm

Solace and Individuality, 2020
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
200 × 121 cm





The End of School, 2020
Oil, alkyd, acrylic and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
200 × 121 cm



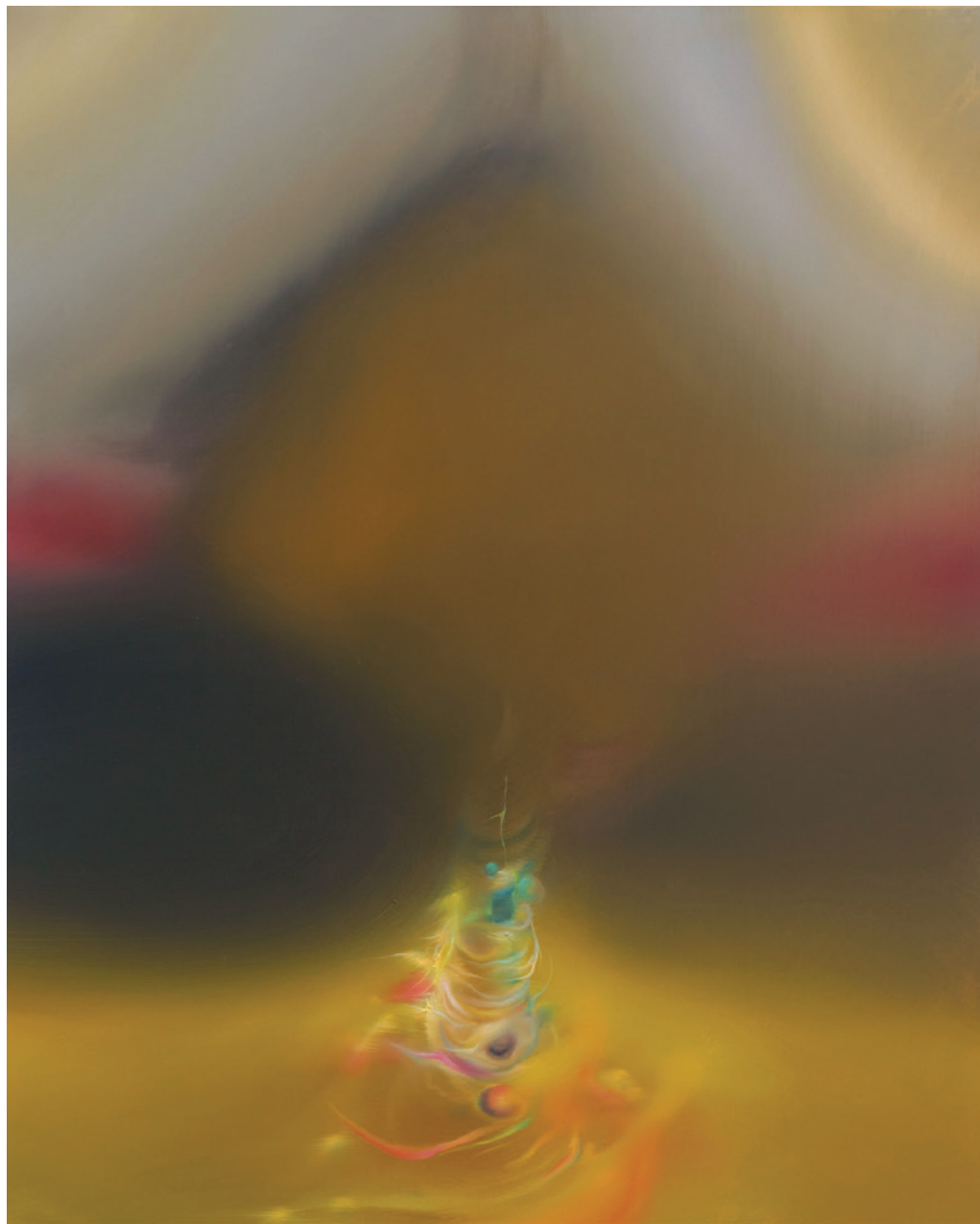
Pulsar, 2020-2021
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminium composite panel
220 x 150 cm



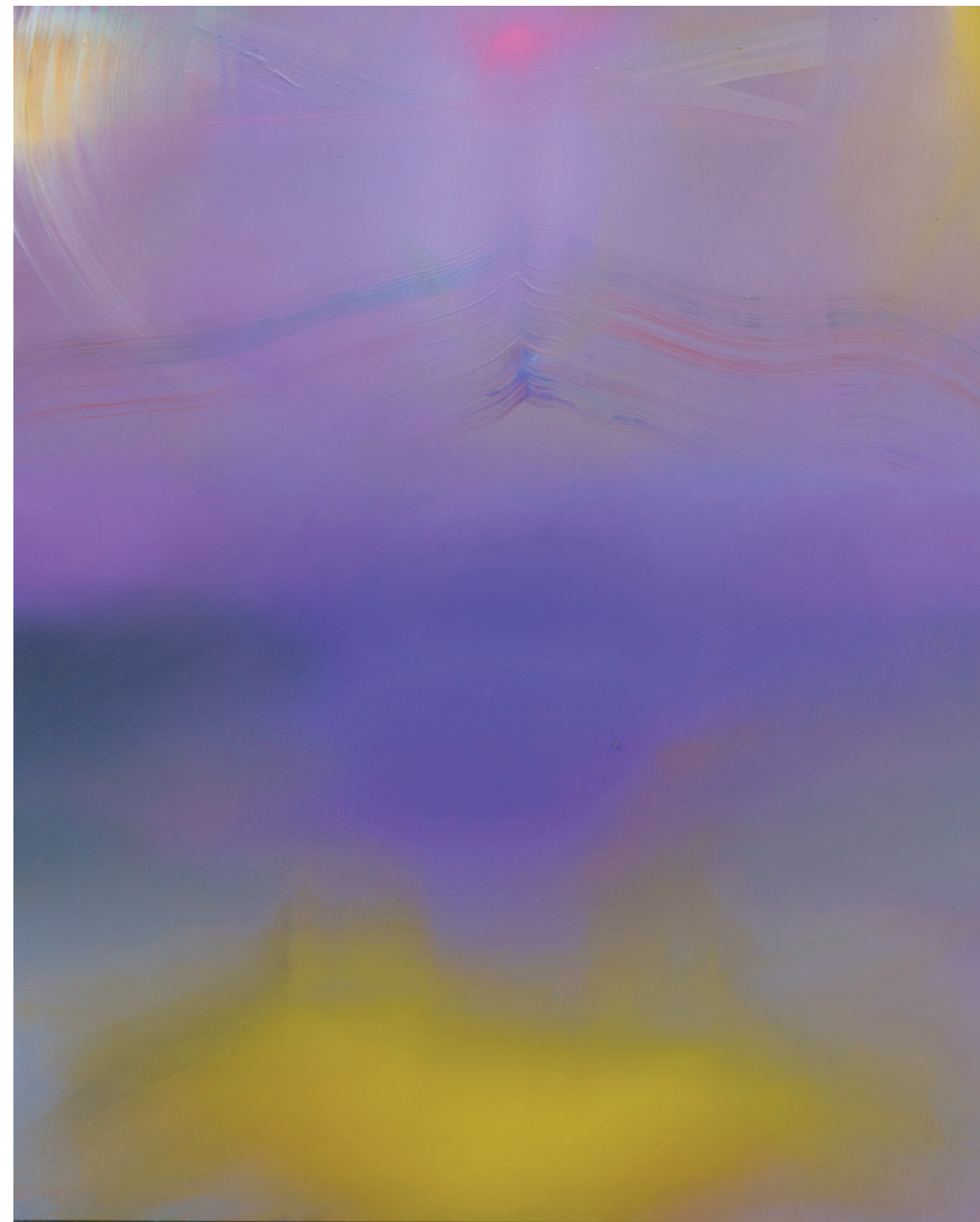


Sheath of flexors, 2020-2021
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminium composite panel
220 × 150 cm





Ionosphere 2020-2021,
Oil, alkyd and neutral varnish on aluminium composite panel
75 × 60 cm



Wingspan, 2020-2021
Oil, alkyd and neutral varnish on aluminium composite panel
75 × 60 cm





Night Vision, 2020-2021
Oil, alkyd and neutral varnish on aluminium composite panel
73 × 63 cm



Prism, 2020-2021
Oil and alkyd on aluminium panel
73 × 63 cm



Lunar Snow 2020-2021
Oil, alkyd and neutral varnish on aluminium composite panel
75 × 60 cm



Sugar verses, 2020-2021
Oil and alkyd on aluminium composite panel
75 × 60 cm



Skywriters, 2020-2021
Oil, alkyd and neutral varnish on aluminium panel
73 × 63 cm

Sculptures



Pitch of a Femur, 2020
Ceramic
40 × 34 × 25 cm



Master of Slurs, 2020
Ceramic
35,5 × 36 × 23 cm



The Hazard Star, 2020
Ceramic
32,5 × 36 × 25 cm

Sutures and Infinite Laughter

Primo Marella Gallery
Milan

31st May - 26th July, 2019

Sutures and Infinite Laughter: an introduction

by Ruben Pang

These paintings attempt to articulate things that cannot be said, but never begin with the intention of becoming statements. Instead, they begin with stutters and stammers; my partner who has a relative who overcame stuttering said that the ears of loved ones were the reason he speaks fluently today. Painting is a game and a conduit, like music, that allows me to progressively unravel (and to listen to) that which I keep from myself.

I engage in compulsions and ask questions that arouse enthusiasm. Recently, I'm starting to scratch the surface of advice that was given to me 10 years ago: "always remember you are nothing." Whenever I can manage the emotional ebbs and flows of it (art is inadvertently melodramatic), I've treated composition in music and art as a game where you win, or you learn. For every day one leaves the studio victorious after applying a new effect, technique or resolution to a composition, there is the potential shock of its impotency as it is revisited later. This could be attributed to technical issues, where paint cures to a dull, matte surface, or psychological, where I've become punch drunk due to the tunnel vision of obsession. The most disheartening feeling for an artist or musician is to learn that you cannot trust your own eyes or ears. Yet, it is precisely such through reduction, where the "I" becomes small, I think, is the price of freedom in this open-ended game.

I also hope to exploit the natural translucency of oils to record both effortless moments and where I'm grasping at straws. Presently, my honest ideal is of a painting that acknowledges the artist's aspirations, reaches too far, and finds its equilibrium as it contradicts itself, especially if it is read from any particular angle. I paint from the perspective of a student of the artists and musicians that I admire and remind myself, against my disposition, to be open—easier now that I've experienced my tastes change over the years; some artists and musicians that I dismissed as a teenager are now my idols.

Music informs some of my sensibilities in paint, both in technique and philosophy. Recording engineer Steve Albini's account of guitarist Jimmy Page during a critical listening session details Page's ability to detect a foul note amidst a section of an orchestra, yet also knows when not to pick at the details, saying "they'll get the idea". Similarly, in illustrating phrasing as a guitarist, Duane Denison uses the metaphor of speech, one doesn't carefully pronounce each and every word. Apart from the many technical parallels that painting and music share, an essential principle that I've learned the hard way, twice, through both mediums, is to favor raw edits and scaffolding over perfectionism, with the intention of constructing the purview of a composition.

My ambition for the arc of these of paintings and sculptures is a collection of memories, fantasies, and dreams, warped and reformed. In order to will, to seed dreams, it is necessary to flex against nature. In painting dreams, we concede to the laws of physics but are gifted unknown rewards. In the spirit of humor, I intended for these fluids to transmit both epic existential queries as much as minor griefs and primordial inflammations.

Decreation: Critical Notes on Ruben Pang's Sutures and Infinite Laughter

by Adam Staley Groves

I.

In March 2018, I composed poems for Ruben Pang's Halogen Lung, an exhibition of paintings held in Lugano. I wrote one poem for each painting. Unbeknownst to me Ruben inscribed each poem on the back of their corresponding image. From that point forward I have accused Ruben of having a sense of humor.

Prior to Lugano, I accepted Ruben's invitation to work on painting and music in his "Tuas studio." At the time I was completing a lengthy study of the American poet Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) whose high regard for painting was on my mind. Yet it wasn't until I sat down to prepare this text that I had time to reexamine Stevens's prose "Relations Between Poetry and Painting". There writes Stevens

"I suppose ... it would be possible to study poetry by studying painting or that one could become a painter after one had become a poet, not to speak of carrying on in both métiers at once, with the economy of genius"

Only by an "economy of genius" could one take-up painting and poetry simultaneously. Stevens's example was William Blake (1757-1827). In Blake's paintings there are convincing parallels to Pang's images. Setting aside an analysis, I wish to emphasize what it means, at least to me, when a painter inscribes poems on the back of his paintings. It evokes what Stevens considered

"The poetry of humanity ... to be found everywhere ... a universal poetry ... reflected in everything."

Despite the fact that arts are differentiated by technical skill and industry, it is painting and poetry which resemble each other most. Thus, a universal poetry regards an elusive form which binds them together. The painter's use of poetry is a strong move. If we know in order to be a good artist, a painter must study painting, we also know a good writer must read. What is often not found is a painter who engenders his technē by an economy of genius. For Ruben Pang this is exemplified by his simultaneous practice of painting, recording and production of music, and sculpture. If Pang's recent exhibition in Singapore, The Instrument Possessed (2019) revealed traits of such an economy, the works collected for Sutures and Infinite Laughter marks an arrival.

This artist, whose works for the current exhibition I have watched come into existence, whose growth I have had the ple-

asure to experience, offers something vital and necessary. Ruben Pang's instinctive regard for poetry offers a critique in terms of the industry in which he works but equally in regard to our troubled times.

II.

To make the case, I refer back to the opening paragraphs of "Relations Between Poetry and Painting." There Stevens reminds us it was French poet and critic, Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) who established a fundamental rethinking of painting and poetry.

Furthermore, it was Baudelaire's critical prose that renovated the concept of critic and criticism in terms of "modernity." It begins with his Salon de 1846 when the young poet declares critics should not be impartial, dispassionate, or apolitical. Criticism should be "amusing" and "the account of a picture may well be a sonnet or elegy". Art criticism should be poetry.

Humor is not entirely synonymous with amusing. A painter who selects poetry to have his painting's back, literally and figuratively, could be considered funny or foolish. The thing is, I am not sure either Ruben or myself understood what it meant to compose verse as an account of his images. Moreover, I wonder if we understood what it meant when a painter's hand inscribes a poet's verse in this way. That is my first point which is particular to the exhibition's title Sutures of Infinite Laughter.

To my second point: Pang has potentially improved Baudelaire's concept of poetry as art criticism. I refer to Baudelaire's critical prose of the early 1860's "Richard Wagner and Tannerhäuser in Paris" which lauds the force and power of music while serving rebuke to an overly dry, institutional criticism. Says Baudelaire

"To find a critic turning into a poet would be an entirely new event in the history of the arts, a reversal of all the physical laws, a monstrosity; on the other hand, all great poets naturally and fatally become critics."

In other words, poets who become critics are superior to critics who had never been poets. Baudelaire's claim reads in stride with Stevens's maxim "poets are born, not made." And Stevens, like Baudelaire, was skeptical about industries which form around the arts, including academia. Both view poetry as a general, universal sensibility which facilitates the simultaneous practice of disciplined arts. It is the hallmark of a great artist.

III.

Sooner or later an artist must deal with criticism. They may come to understand criticism as a consequence of their drive, desire, revelations, and existential crises. Indeed, it concerns the commerce surrounding their works. For Baudelaire to become a critic meant to face what is not only natural, but fatal. One shall inevitably face

"a spiritual crisis ... when they feel the need to reason about their art, to discover the obscure laws in virtue of which they have created, and extract from this study a set of precepts whose divine aim is infallibility in poetic creation."

When it comes to poetry there is a logic, albeit arcane. Because it is so, poetry protects creative precepts from a paradoxical desire for a final, if not total resolution. Poetry protects the destruction of art from ourselves and others by circumventing the reduction of formative strength to nothingness.

In other words when Ruben critically situates his art by a poet's verse, he uses a reasoning which is not his own. This weirdly improves Baudelaire's poet forced to reason about him or herself. Ruben's act evokes a maxim known to high theory: Poetry guards the work by ensuring precepts remain unresolved. The act guards against internal, spiritual crises brought by an external, critical apparatus.

Internal and external criticism comes on the painter's terms which are contrary to finality or total resolution. If this artist thwarts an institutional machinery the act also concerns, whether he is conscious of it or not, a relationship with his creations. It means to fight "spiritual enemies" both internal and external, thus the work pushes back the destruction of meaning-making art facilitates. This is why Ruben Pang is a critic whose stance seems to improve Baudelaire's. That is the first of two points.

The second point concerns contemporary meaninglessness. Our life is increasingly characterized by technical automation or a constant, invasive augmentation of personal and planetary creativity. Technicity has renovated common sense, just as modernity was characterized by technologies which brought about industrialization, urbanization, and the fragmentation of the family along with long held communal values.

A contemporary illustration would be 'death-by-selfie'. Specifically, the recent spate of hikers who accidentally fall to death when taking their pictures against a vast chasm, mountain summit, or waterfall. Death comes by a desire to reflect

our image into a world machinery. This desire is excited by a machinery which seemingly masters creative drive. Users of social media constantly actualize creative force into a content. This desire is not only creatively metabolic. To belong to the world-image means a full definition, if not mortal resolution. Death means we cede the ability to make and form. There will be no more selfies to take, only the desiccated content of a former life.

We abide by common sense but rarely question it. Historically, art has been thought to rupture common sense. We sense and feel its form, the force of a deeper appeal, and carry this strength with us. Yet death-by-selfie illustrates common sense has been transformed. Common sense seems tuned more to defining if not resolving our lives. If it is by and for technological sense that we increasingly live shall art be able to rupture its claim? The challenge in terms of how I assess Ruben Pang's work is not only in regard to pristine technique, mastery, and strong study. This painter resolves his work, without doubt. But his use of poetry critiques this technological claim on common sense. Precisely because it is contrary to his innate disposition of resolving his works, the development of an economy of genius, and artistic mastery.

Thus, I am compelled to ask what, if any responsibility would this painter-critic, have? For one, Ruben's work is not compatible with Baudelaire's modernité. Pang's images concern an inner life of the mind, not the vacuous subtleties of an urban life a painting would otherwise document.

Conversely, the pressure of the exterior world, its ever increasing and amplifying force, may have situated his gaze entirely inward. Thus, a fleeting or ephemeral scene is left to us, and this painter documents the flames of his dreams.

Yet I think it appropriate to claim Pang's works exemplar of poetic-painting. This accords to Baudelaire's later prose "The Painter of Modern Life" specifically "Mnemonic Art" where he remarks of "barbarism" or "an inevitable, synthetic, childlike barbarousness ... which comes from a need to see things broadly and to consider them above all in their total effect." Baudelaire remarks of fatal assumption assigned to painters and poets, one which is also reflected by Stevens. Yet Pang's images are not demanding of the imagination.

They are not draining for trained or untrained eyes. They resist contemporary realism and hyper self-awareness. Pang's lines are delicate and swift, they respect abstraction by celebrating the rush of imaginative flight with precision. Often, I have watched him against these giant surfaces, as if diving into a liquid. Sometimes his hands are smashed into the surface, other times as if an eyelash, swift, soft. If missing features of the world 'out there,' this work is not a translation of external life. You are not tasked to see abstract batik, naked breasts, or cultural litter. One ventures to tour the mind.

IV.

By a final critical note Ruben Pang's work utilizes "decreation". In other words, decreation is a strategic feature of Pang's critique and the work's aesthetic qualities. In "Relations Between Poetry and Painting," Stevens briefly remarks of Simone Weil's concept

"She says decreation is making pass from the created to the uncreated, but that destruction is making pass from the created to nothingness."

By poetry, Pang's work decreates itself, warding off destruction. Poetry concerns a form which all technically disciplined arts spawn. The final form of all the arts is this undefinable form. And because poetry is the least technical of arts it resists final conceptualization, as Hegel discovered, to his dismay. It has no definition, which is something of a definition. We know of it, yet cannot capture it. For Stevens this portends, without doubt, the faculty of imagination. In other words, the form of poetry guards human technē, it does not fully exhibit it, which is why imagination has the force and appeal that it does.

Conversely an economy of genius runs a serious if not fatal risk for an artist who lives. This risk is particular to decreation, says Stevens

"Modern reality is a reality of decreation, in which our revelations are not the revelations of belief, but the precious portents of our own powers. The greatest truth we could hope to discover, in whatever field we discovered it, is that ... truth is the final resolution of everything. Poets and painters alike ... make that assumption."

If the artist or poet does not give regard to his or her absolute tendencies, this assumption can be fatal. If this artist guards himself from destruction by decreative tactics, they need check their rapacious insistence on resolution. That is itself something of a truth. Yet infinity is a concept, not a reality. The artist must decreate themselves in order to ethically practice their great potency.

Pang's work stands against the junk of cultural milieu typically heaped on the artist. It comes to this: the artist presents and that is it. By the work's creative engine, we nourish our mental vitality. Persons seek to possess such work in order to nourish their lives. Yet artists, like the rest of us, face a world driving backward into nationalism and ethnocentrism, a world lurching closer to governance by automation. Artists, like the rest of us, face the same claim on our imaginative faculty. And it shall be the poet within him or her, that will critique irrationalities of the day.

V. Sutures and Infinite Laughter: Poems

or--The encounter,
it seems for
translation of
some,
inner tongue of taste.
All tongue,
no mouth.



Viper Learns Articulation, 2017 - 2018
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
215 x 125 cm each (left and right panels), 215 x 137 cm (middle panel)

The fern
Coils and throws
Spores

The breathy soil is
Home to a large snail
Marbling in muscular spasms
The snail intones

Upon it, like a lamp, it's poison to
the touch
gives the scene:
Horses of summer
Decorate the ear, for storms

Bow's tether
Plays up the pond's treble
Irides of applause, draws forms.

The eye is not the concept of
Infinity.

In its glimmer,
Tremor.
Detune the applause.

Where to fish?



The Pond, 2018 - 2019
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
220 x 150 cm

Private Collection

Having found its domain
A sight to see
Was seeming
Was better.

Was it long?
Between here and here

Along with me.

How many tears missed
Misted and
Ejected from the eye flower trumpet?

The lion's loin tremors with earth
An earth lifts itself into its whorld

The eye is, the lens of
The idea
The bow throws it.

The lion paw
Tenderizes clods beneath it
Sleeps it seems, in dust.



To Straighten a Comet's Tail, 2018 – 2019
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
220 x 150 cm

Private Collection

No I earns
Wisdom.
Eyes are full of experiences
The self never earned.
Experience is the urn of figures,
And a sun's labor.

Traffic is similar to the eye,
Streets gain insight, welcomes travelers.

None earns wisdom, its given.
A tooth is gravel
Wise rock
We use to grind organic life,
To grow our brains,
We use our hands to feed,
The brain is the hand, The hand lays itself on thinking.

The root ends when
Wisdom blooms into
Venated experience

See: variegation



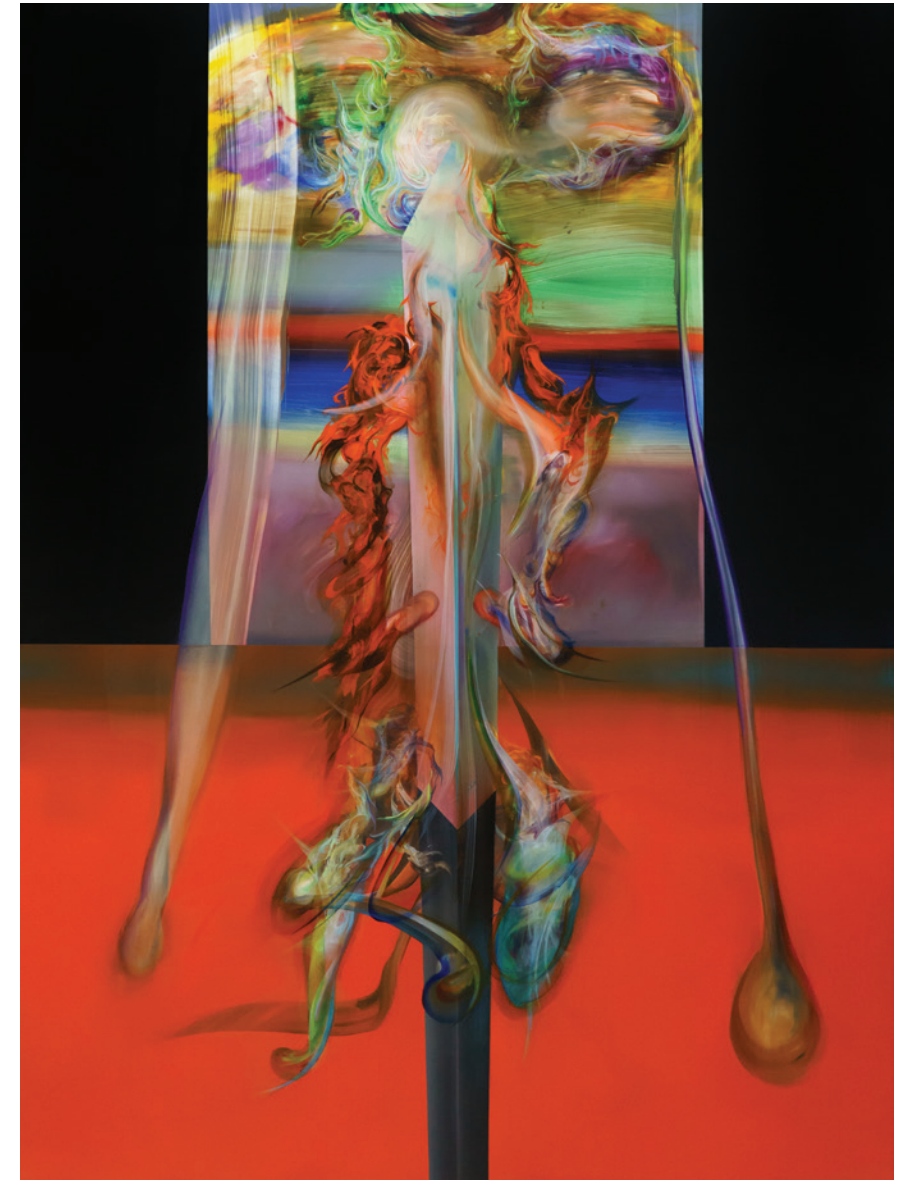
Roots of Honest Dreams, 2018 - 2019
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
154 x 114 cm



Applause, 2018 - 2019
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
154 x 114 cm

The moon caught
These irides
Which,
Cut holes in
The flute of,
The sun beam.

Caught them.
And in the instant
Shattered moon clapped,
Back together.



No Legato, 2018 - 2019
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
154 x 114 cm

Private Collection

the mirror waved,
a swimming pool,
cracks up sunlight.

the mirror captures no thing
has no memory
simply a writer
of the eye

It is time to wash
The empty space
Out of
Your bones.

Time to collect
The iral holes of the moon's porous clapture.

One trumpet
Its great brass
Beaded with
Thought stitches
To interior experience
Draws dimension

Forgotten we are food?
No worries
I will carry your
Eventual skull

Like this night which licks up
Into ears
A tremor from
The backside of my cells
This eventide cultivation



Permanent Humor, 2018 - 2019
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
77.8 x 61 cm

Private Collection

Time denies this hinge.
 Lend it, then enter.
 He stands with tails of prairie grass

The sun, heaved up,
 By its own loining arc.
 Blue scatters.
 Reigns,
 These empty seeds.



For Every Gain, a Loss, 2018
 Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on wood panel
 50 x 40 cm



Viscous Harmony, 2018
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on wood panel
50 x 40 cm

Element tames these
Acrid blooms.

In the
Furrows,
Calibration ticks.

Moon lumber legs,
Tuned lumbar.



Propellant, 2018
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on wood panel
50 x 40 cm

Private Collection

Earth is an elevator
Out of the world.
The world seems
A seed, like a
Moon's iris,
Out of socket
Eye or egg?
What gestates?
The limbs in this field, or brambles?

Lion loin trembles.

Here we drink the broth of
Mercury.
From the wall's stomach.

Here the lion sleeps
In his savannah
As brambled limbs
Calling, Thoe with a
Damp trumpet or
Mouths she
Presses a force into
Loins spilt from pallor sun

The monkey's eyes flower.



A Place Without Vagaries, 2018
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on wood panel
50 x 40 cm

Private Collection

The trees of warland
Drank blood.

Out of
Tree bark
An eye peeks

By it sees the moon which
Smashes and recollects empty seeds.
The tree tremors, as a lover's loin.

Trees
Bathed in the wars which have never come.
Live by unearning sun and
The cartoon of the world.

The lion is no where
Thor is drinking coffee

He works for skywire security, he met

Harold Bluetooth who
Ate a thunder
Thor breathes

At the table, there are no lions.
Just pupa amassing
And washing itself
In computer color white, drained organ flesh, pale

driving through the architecture of the eye
Through the moon's earth drilled holes
This passage, irides



Coniferous Defense Strategies, 2018
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on wood panel
40 x 33 cm

Private Collection

The day carries
Its own funeral
That's what
Gives the gain brilliance
Of night tide

A summer full of moving horses
Some rhythm drums them.

Composed of a chord which
Detunes itself



Cartilage of Siren Songs, 2018
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on wood panel
40 x 33 cm

in the fold of this grip

A world flu

Churns in it

In the hold of this loom

Arachne wipes her face

With a lung cloth

Hurls song into song, with each wipe

The great folding into inside

But not prayers and do not

Don't ask the giant

Who unfolds his eye as

ranunculi

Who charms with the soft purse

Of his eye grip



Receptive Organs of a Stinger, 2018
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on wood panel
40 x 33 cm

the computer white wash means
less than a sky which is mute and cold
before it is
dream fire
at the last band of atmosphere.

I was alone when
She fell outside of
That small boat

The transom gripped

Crow leads bear
To the body.



Pharmakos , 2018 - 2019
Oil, alkyd and synthetic varnish on aluminum composite panel
77.8 x 61 cm

Private Collection

Sculptures



Nerves for Infinite Returns, 2018 - 2019
Ceramic
41 x 26 x 35 cm



Phantom Throat, 2018 - 2019
Ceramic
42 x 28 x 33 cm

Sutures and Infinite Laughter: FAAQ (Frequently Artist Asked Questions)

From a conversation between Vincenzo Gangone and Ruben Pang

VG: It is the fourth occasion in which you show your works with us at the gallery. The first two ones were group shows (2012 and 2014), where you were confronted with some established colleagues and you welcomed the challenge. Three years ahead of your first solo (Zwitterion, 2016), what does this exhibition mean for you now?

RP: Personally, looking at this body of work will remind me of a few things.

Discipline and attitude. It is an active choice, to show up as your best self, choosing how you want to conduct yourself within the studio. My rule is that I will not sigh in the studio. I believe that is a kind of behavioral conditioning and will reinforce how I end up responding to stress when I'm in the studio. I believe that if you show up with the right mindset, the paintings will paint themselves and the music will materialize; you're just watering the plants.

Bending time. The luxury of having a studio is that one shortens the time between thinking about something and conceiving it. This paintings and music realized here often demonstrate the result of having a space where ideas do not remain solely ideas but get to be materialized and tested out immediately. At the same time, in a few paintings, I made the choice to slow down, to study its effect on a work. The triptych Viper Learns to Articulate was conceived in December 2017 and finished in 2019. It is a record of time spent in good company. In 2016, my friend and mentor, Gilles Massot asked me to actively fall in love with things and people; to seek out the company and counsel of people I admire, to find muses, and to be enchanted by music. In other words: to be vulnerable. The people who have spent time in my studio inspire me. They share certain qualities: their enthusiasm is infectious, they have a wicked sense of humor and laugh hard-the decay of the reverb of their laughter is the most common sound in the studio.

Vulnerability. To ask someone you admire and respect, perhaps a stranger: "Hey, we've written these songs, we think you're an awesome drummer, would you come and record them with us?" To show a body of work to a critic or fellow artist that you admire: "Please give me your brutally honest opinion, what would you change, what disturbs you, what is working?" We are lucky to have someone care enough to pay some attention to our work. To sit with your bandmate and take in a riff that you cannot make sense of and try to believe in it despite your instincts telling you to make him/her change it to your tastes. And experience a reciprocal empathy towards the ideas you put forward. The reward is being witness to magic-paintings that you've never seen before but recognize, and musical passages that seem to appear out of nowhere — a mix of automatism, chance and intuition. The experiences I've shared with these artists and musicians lead me to choose openness and vulnerability in my relationships over doing everything my way alone.

VG: There are so many feelings underlying your works but what immediately leaps out from these few things is a cautious energy guiding your practice. So, in the end, what Sutures and Infinite Laughter exactly is?

RP: I'm currently observing my own manic drive required to achieve technical benchmarks. A significant part of me believes in mastering technique and I am familiar with the sacrifices needed to reach each new criterion I've set for myself. At the same time, technique doesn't paint the whole picture.

Seeking to "tie up the loose ends" requires an equal amount of humor and hysteria

to balance side effects of such a disposition. I hope that this body of work can make the melodrama that artists and musicians share, a bit more relatable to the viewer.

Sutures and Infinite Laughter is also gratitude: I wake up thankful for the life that I have. I have a supportive family that has sacrificed their living space for my art practice since my formative years. My family has chosen to be a part of my artistic life yet know when to give me space. They are emotionally supportive and are the bedrock from which everything else can be built upon. I am also thankful for the difficulties; they remind you that you are nothing and to recognize and come to terms with the many things that are not in your control.

Eventually, this show is the tangible result of the work of the people who make the raw materials that I need, of those agents who oversee the logistics and administration of handling my art. I am grateful for the space and the opportunity to live off my art and remind myself that none of this can be taken for-granted, that we are not entitled to have anything at our disposal forever.

VG: When you talk about art, you make references to music. Actually, the title of the show, likewise many artworks, sounds like songs titles. I know you play some instruments, too. Nevertheless, these two worlds have apparently not collided yet. Could you elaborate a little bit more about the relationship between art and music?

RP: There are techniques and sensibilities that can be translated across both processes. For instance, when you apply an effect, automate or process a sound, often, you're not trying to make the character of such effect apparent. In painting, there are blends and glazes that you apply to strengthen the overall composition, sit things down or unify the composition and you don't want the viewer to notice such marks sticking out. The difference is that in music production, this is a given for any track. While in painting you could negate subtlety entirely, depending on your taste. In music production, an accurate neutral recording of what happened in the studio is often an advantageous starting point, that you could start stylizing from. It is often challenging enough to reach this point. The simultaneous experience of creating, recording, monitoring and analyzing music and art is a grounding exercise. It makes me attentive, to things that I would have never noticed, for instance, how a room colors the sound of a record, or how our perception of a neutral light to display or reproduce art changes over time. I've learned some profound philosophical lessons on perception from instruction manuals and technical difficulties. It has made me look past the notions of representational, figurative or abstract, and recognize the limitations of such terminology. In my inner dialogue, these words have become indications of stylistic trends and are no longer binary or antithetical. What this means for me is a new kind of empathy. I find it harder to use any descriptive term flippantly and I spend more time looking and listening without giving rise to my opinion or judgement.



Zwitterion

Primo Marella Gallery

25th November 2016 - 24th January, 2017



L'insurrection du sable

by Jeremy Fernando

Sand.
He sands. One might even say that without the sand, without sanding, there is nothing he can say. *C'est-à-dire, sans le sable, il n'y a pas de peintre qui s'appelle Ruben Pang.* Where, all that he paints, all that he says, all that he says through his painting, could be said to be sandy; not just — because it is — coated with sand, but that it is standing on sand.

On foundations that shift
 that slide
 that move

Or, more than that: without sand, not only is there no painter whom we can call, who we can name, Ruben Pang, there is no painting itself. Not in general — that would be silly — but no painting of the one, from the one, that we anoint Ruben Pang, no painting that we can invoke as a painting of Ruben Pang.

Where perhaps, what is Rubenesque about Ruben Pang might be nothing other than sand itself.

And here, we should try not to forget that foundation is precisely what allows us to apply cosmetics — which is to say, it is what we build not just our camouflage upon, but always also our *cosmos*; that is to say, *beauty itself*.

And what else is beauty than the whole, the round: where what gives the starkness of Ruben's paintings, what gives the painting's — what gives his — severity, its roundedness is what rises from the alkyd, what resurrects from the touch between the alkyd and aluminum, perhaps even the canvas, whilst mingling in the oil and varnish.

Bearing in mind that to touch requires two; even if one touches oneself (*je me touche*), even if it is between one and one's self, between *I* and *me*.

Thus, always a space between;
whilst trying never to forget that one cannot see space — for, it is precisely what lies between the things one can see. And thus, one quite possibly cannot speak of it, if one can even posit it as it.

And even if one takes a position on space, attempts to respond to it, space itself might well be telling — be showing us — lies; might well *be made in a Hollywood basement*.

*And it's so hard to talk
about paintings, because to
be honest, there's very little
to talk about. I think it
would be adding
unnecessarily into
something ...
I'd risk stating the obvious ... I
personally refrain from
trying to translate it into
words ...*

— Ruben Pang

And, where perhaps attempting to speak about spaces is always already a speaking into a space, into space itself: a launching of sound into a *nothing* — an in-between things, so even if not a thing onto itself, always already *with things* — which echoes, scatters, spreads. Where all one can do is to attempt to tune oneself, adjust one's receptors, to traces of this invisible speech.

Which is not to say that nothing is left behind: for, sound can draw itself, can make a note (*une remarque*) for us, leave a mark to be seen, quite possibly for one to bear witness to;

particularly in sand.

And to speak of sand is to speak of dust;
but not just what is dusted off, removed —
for, the moment it moves, it always also brings with it the possibility of settling; and even as it moves, it might well be about to settle, where each movement is potentially the one just before it settles. Like cinders;
remainders of a flame; reminders that something was once alight,
that there once was light.

Thus, it is also to speak of what cannot be spoken of. Of what is — at least potentially is — not there.

Or, at best, it is an attempt to speak of a trace; to speak of seeing what either cannot be seen, or is seen only because it lets itself be glimpsed. In either case, it might be impossible to know if what is seen precedes the seeing, awaiting the possibility of being seen — keeping in mind that potentiality always also brings with it the impotentiality of the potentiality-not-to-be — or if it is only appears at the moment of being seen, after the fact of the seeing, as it were.

Where perhaps what is left, what remains — the shadows left by one's hands (*les mains*), that are quite possibly also on one's hands — is the dust of the painting, the painting that is dust.

For, to sand, sand down,

is both to take away and attempt to affix — to allow to fix itself, even as it is always also prefixed by the possibility of detachment. Not just a removal, but a falling over by itself.

Thus, always also a question of what returns,
comes back at us, rises, surges (*insurgere*);
even as one is attempting to sweep one's hands
paintbrush
and paper



Valium Sky, 2016
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminum composite panel,
60 x 75 cm

Private Collection



The Insecurity Guard, 2016
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminum composite panel,
166 x 122 cm
Private Collection

Not that one would be able to differentiate,
at least with any certitude, exactly what is being
swept aside, at any given moment.

For, we should try never to forget Hélène Cixous' reminder that the sweeper, « *la balayeur passe le balai entre le vivant et le mourant. La vie essuie la mort, le balai longe le bord de la fin, en flairant le ras du sol, il est maigre et raide, c'est tout ce qui reste d'un flexible massif de genêt* ».

Keeping in mind that both *living* and *dying*
are not phases;
for, even as life and death are terms, might
be nouns, they are names for the unknown,
the unknowable; names naming nothing
except for the fact that they are naming.
So, even as we might be attempting to fill it
with meaning, with signification, perhaps
though a little force-feeding — for, *gorging*
is never gentle — it remains ahead of us,
or perhaps behind us, like a shadow; never
quite within our grasp, prehension,
certainly comprehension, always perhaps
leaving us in, mayhaps even filling us with,
apprehension.

Which might well be why
it holds our attention;
which might well be why
Ruben Pang's paintings
call out to us, grabs us, call
us to attention.
For, as Martin Heidegger
never lets us forget, *anxiety*
is the very condition of
thought, of thinking, itself.

Which is not to say that everything is swept away:
for, even as it may be, might well become, dust in the wind, we should attempt to
hold on to the reminder, the hopeful promise, that my dear friend Adel
Abdessemed posits when he says, « *les balayeuses sont les derniers peintres du monde* ».

Painters that paint at the very moment that they *sniff the ground*;
at the very moment they pass their brooms *between living and dying*,
where life wipes death, brushes the edge of the end.

Where in looking, attempting to look, attend to Ruben Pang, one has the feeling that
he is *cradling me bravely*: for, he knows all too well the lesson that Jean-Luc Nan-
cy leaves us with; that « language is radically improper when faced with painting ...
Painting doesn't speak. There's a silence where painting's concerned, an *absolute*
muteness ».

And where all one might be doing — where what I might be doing; might have no choice but to do — is to be speaking over the painting as one is attempting to let it speak: in a *role reversal*, as it were. But where — if one is attempting to maintain a space for the painting to speak — what is speaking is not a sound, but a sound that doesn't speak, a silence of *absolute muteness*.

And where perhaps all that can be heard
— where all one can attempt to attend, tune in, to —

is the sweeping of the broom
the brush
the reed

The sounds of what perhaps touches — even makes — the painting; of which the painting is what, all that, remains. Where all that is heard is the sound of the absent, perhaps even *the sound of absence* itself.

And here, one should try to bear in mind that even if one is — I am — running the risk of speaking for the painting, am risking the possibly ruining the painting whilst attempting to respond to it, the very attempt at responding is an opening of the possibility of a relationality with it. And each time one opens oneself to the potentialities of a relation, of a response, of responding, one is also opening oneself to the possibilities — and all the dangers — of being touched by eros.

Where one might end up being *tied to a kitchen chair, in a broken throne whilst (s) he cuts your hair ...*

But, at the same time, it is perhaps only in this manner — by opening oneself to the whispers of something beyond — that one might catch a glimpse of a speech that might be speaking

— *in the voice of the painting* —

certainly not that of Ruben Pang:
for, even as it might have been his hands that were,
his touch that is, involved in the painting,
in painting the paintings, he is silent.

And where, as Yves Klein might say,
the painting is only the witness who saw what happened.

Which is not to say that Ruben Pang has naught to do with this: far from it. For, even if one posits that the painting might not have anything to do with the one who paints, it is still the hands of Ruben Pang who make the mark, who remark;

who first make the stains.

Keeping in mind that to paint (peint) and to write (piesiu) might not just be related, but could well be indistinguishable: hence Socrates' suspicion of, his warning against, chirography, marks made by the hand (kheiros). For, what represents (darstellung) quite possibly also speaks for (vertretung), speaks over, speaks in the voice of another —

I can't sleep
'till I devour
you

— Marilyn Manson

prosopopoeia.

And thus, quite possibly consumes the other.

Thus, one can perhaps either see — catch a glimpse of — Ruben Pang or the painting; where the painting bears witness to the marks made by, left behind by, him, or where Ruben Pang testifies to the possibility of making, of leaving behind, such marks. But that looking at one entails a blindness to the other; where the existence of each is a reminder that the other remains veiled from one; where both Ruben Pang and his paintings are memoirs of our blindness to the other; where the other is always only, and always already, a matter of faith.

Where both Ruben Pang and the painting are both the limit and the condition of each other.

Where (n)either the painting (n)or Ruben Pang can exist with nor without each other — at least not in the moment of being seen.

And where, the only reason one can speak of both at the same time, in the same space, is that one is doing nothing other than attempting to read the *absolute muteness* of the painting alongside the *silence* of Ruben Pang, attempting to listen to the *echoes between two silences*.

Where, responding to — even writing on — the paintings, to Ruben Pang, is nothing other than an attempt to attend to the *silent language of Ruben Pang* resounding with the *absolute muteness of the paintings*; attempting to listen to the cacophony that is a *language of painting itself*;

and where what rises
— insurrects in being left behind —
is nothing other than

a painted language.

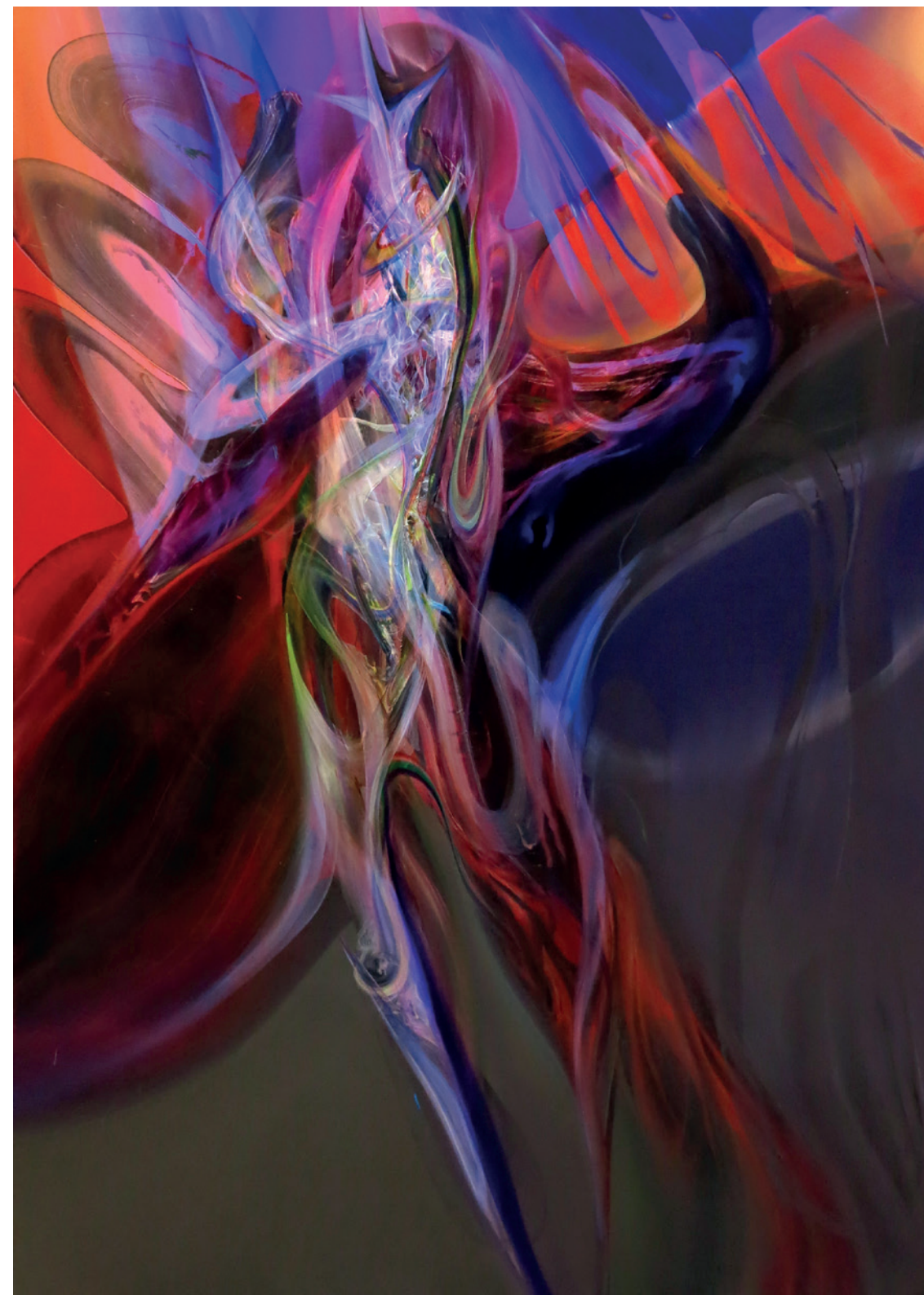


Light and Divine Winds, 2016
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminum panel,
267 x 150 cm

Private Collection

Pink Eye Athletics, 2016
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminum composite panel,
166 x 122 cm

Private Collection



Gorging will never be gentle

by Chen Junni

Preface

Georges Didi-Huberman's challenge to the writing of art was to step away from the stultifying ways of looking at art as an "object of recovery" — an object with a prefigured past. His was a thesis that can be read as one that advocated stepping away from the pastness of the work, and instead called for the study of the artwork's place in the present moment, examining the unfolding of the image and the poetics of its viewing. And in so doing, the rallying cry that Didi-Huberman makes is to call for one to step away from the positivistic notions of art, and instead to broaden the borders of what can be considered knowledge about art, within the discourse surrounding art itself. Knowledge about art — and what is taken to be "true" about art — often involves looking back through the sands of time, sifting through the grains in order to find a so-called "satisfactory" or "reliable" explanation of what the artwork is. In this sense, art history — as an institutionalised, systematised, discipline of knowledge production — is what is being criticised by Didi-Huberman and the other scholars who share his thoughts. Art history tends to reconstruct a certain moment of the past, and to use that reconstruction to attribute meaning to the art itself. Through this lens, art is a window into an imagination of the past. But what then, of art as a contemporary object? What then of art as a *present* object, and what impact does it have on current socio-cultural landscapes, current political structures, current lives?

Didi-Huberman is revealing the Rorschach test-like nature of painting: that it, in effect, can be anything you want it to be. Art is not a noun; more often than not it is a verb — an action that takes place between object and visitor, and (as Slavoj Žižek allegedly once said) exists in the gap between the frame and its viewer.

In some ways, contemporary artists are freed from the systems that historicise, and in turn make their works historical.

Contemporary artists do not have the canon of art history behind them, and instead depend on a system of cultural production, where galleries, institutions, media, auction houses and artists themselves struggle to attribute meaning and value to their work. If anything, to historicise any contemporary artist's work would be in pure bad taste: it would have meant putting the work in the dustbin before the age was ripe for doing so. For historicising is akin to burying, murdering — it declares, once and for all, the irrelevance of the subject to the current moment. Historicising bears the mark of having to transport the reader of the history back to previous moments to remind them why the subject, once more, deserves merit of thought. Contemporary art has no choice but to depend on the language of the poetic to help make sense of itself, to break out of the impasse that the rigidity and inflexibility of art history brings.

The Gwangju Biennale of 2016 asked the fundamental question: *What does art do?* What, indeed, does art do — and what can it keep doing? What should it keep doing? But more often than not these questions are not extended to the practice of painting, painting having largely been relegated to the domain of the historical (or, even worse: that of interior design). Amidst the 21st century fascination with installations, digital media, and other such creative works, it can get difficult to find a language that brings painting into the fold. To demand of a simple canvas-and-paint work, *what can you do for me, for my life, for now?* requires a re-interrogation of the form and processes that surround the simple application of paint to canvas. Wherein lies the power of a painting to act in the present, in the now, and perhaps in the future, forevermore? These are the questions that are asked, and remain asked, when looking at a contemporary painter's work: and these are questions that will continue to be asked, in this and many other iterations — all in time, and in good time at that.

No Vacancy, 2016
Oil, alkyd and retouching varnish on composite panel,
220 x 150 cm

Private Collection

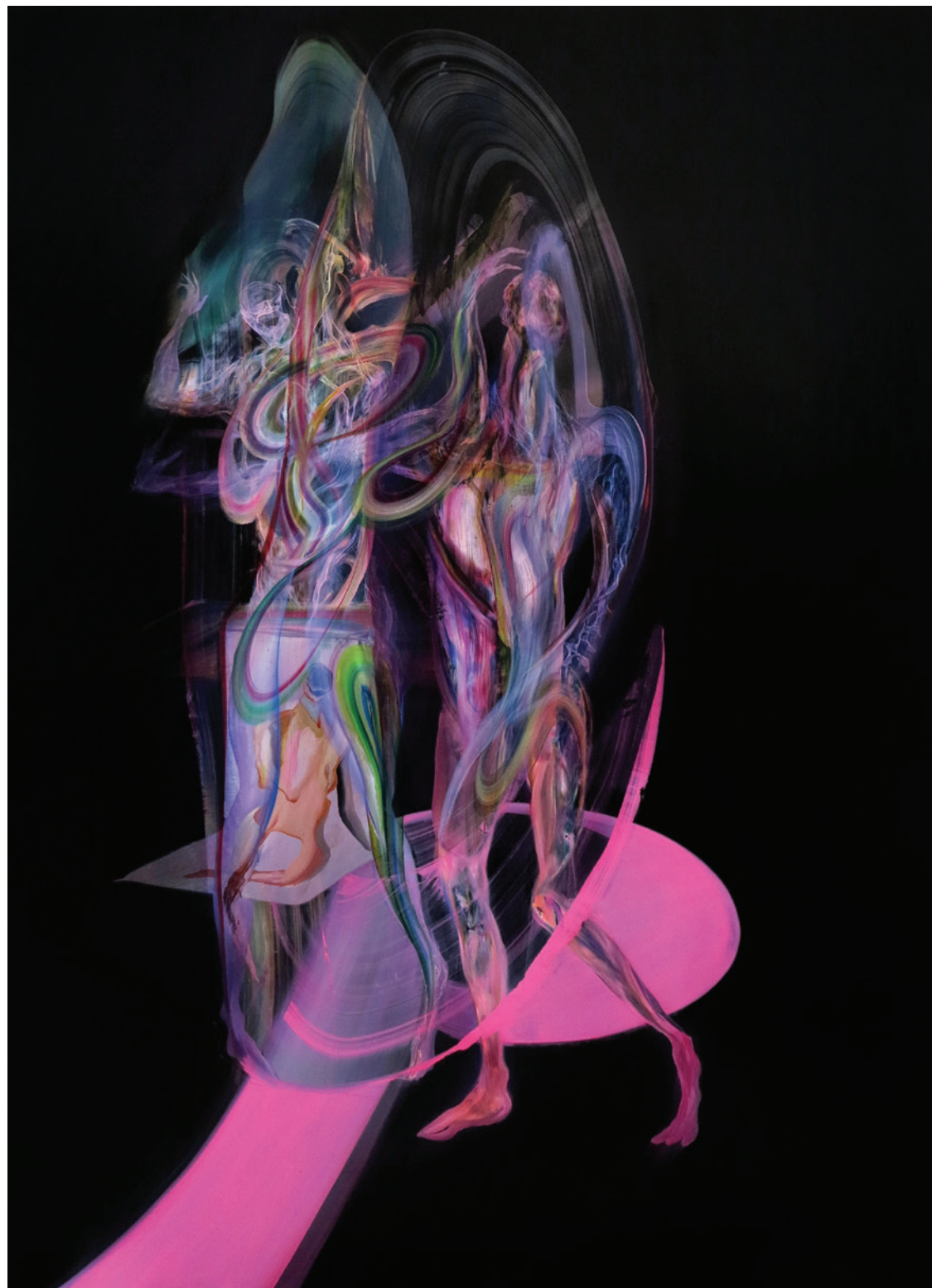




Our Greatest Weapon is a Mongoloid Cobra, 2016
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminum,
267 x 150 cm

Private Collection





Eromenos -- Role Reversal, 2016
Oil, alkyd and retouching varnish on aluminium composite panel,
166 x 122 cm

Private Collection

Gorging will never be gentle

Images are discomfiting; they are so, since they are set apart from us. They are made distinct, strange, and separate—as Jean-Luc Nancy noted, one “cannot touch it: not because one does not have the right to do so, nor because one lacks the means, but rather because the distinctive line or trait separates something that is no longer of the order of touch; not exactly an untouchable, then, but rather an impalpable.” (2005, p 2). Art will always be separated by the viewer from the gap that must take place in the act of viewing; and it is simultaneously within the formation of this gap that we necessarily declare our incomprehension of the artwork and our elevation of the artwork as the object which escapes all touch, and in doing so, escapes all tangibility. Without this declaration art ceases; it stops, art does not function as art any longer.

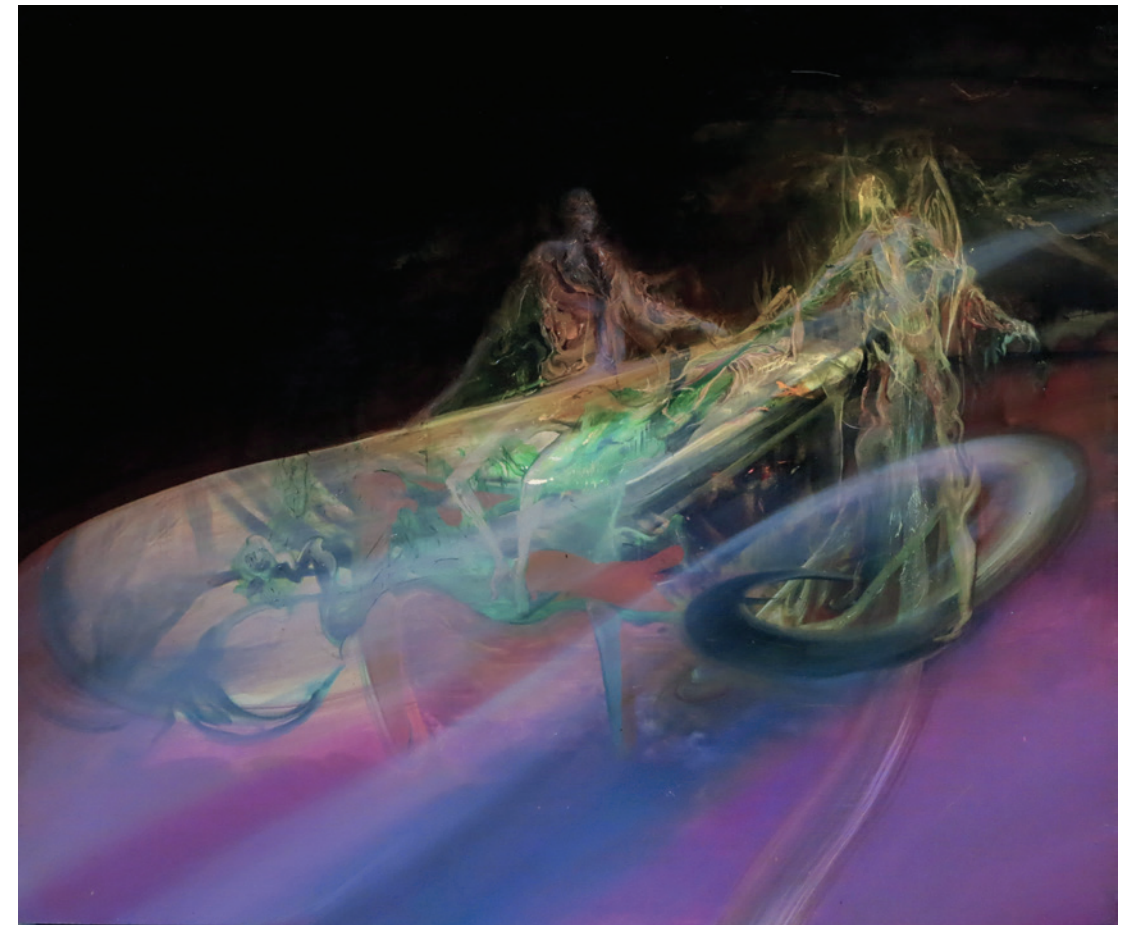
Perhaps it is appropriate that the first encounter with the images that Ruben has left behind will be an utter lack of intimacy with the figures that stare out at us from across the gap. In some ways these figures confront us with their own coldness, their own unreality: they have no facial features; legs may be sharpened to points, or heads denoted by swirls of coloured paint. These figures come into being through the interweaving, interconnected strands of neon, darting in and out of one another to create the form itself, often poised in the centre of the composition. These are figures without flesh and bone; these are figures fragmented into light and colour, the material bulk of the body translated into the immaterial swirls and ethereal wisps. There is a weightlessness to the human body: it is a figure made dynamic, energetic, but at the same time, made contained within the very form of the human—if we are, even, to recognise the figure as human.

I venture to suggest that this will be an uncomfortable show for one to see; surrounded on all sides by human figures that silently watch their watchers from out of their unseeing eyes.

The scholar Boris Groys once wrote that “Artworks seem to be genuinely sick and helpless—the spectator has to be led to the artwork, as hospital workers might take a visitor to see a bedridden patient.” (2008, p 53) Groys was, perhaps, thinking about the inability of art to be able to present itself—that art, essentially, always needs the power of another agent to help it be seen by the viewer. Groys suggests that artworks appear sick; not least because of the spectacle and the sterility surrounding its own display. Yet, one cannot forget that art has its own recourse to power and strength. Once presented (with all the help of gallerists, curators, and even artists themselves), art ceases to become that sick man, and instead becomes the consummate, perpetual actor.

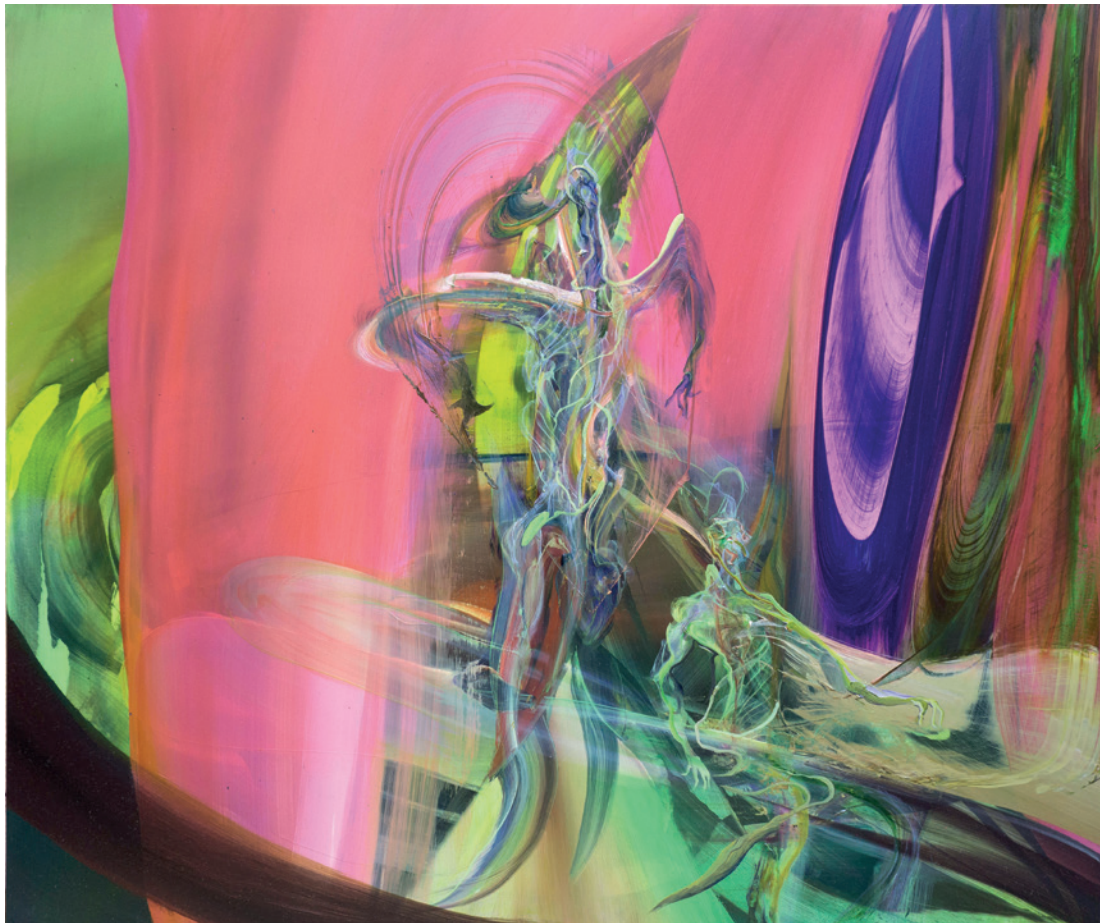
The image unveils itself through the simultaneous act of performance and performativity, achieved by the virtue of its own display. It straddles the duality between entertainment, and constant enactment, forced to repeat the act of its own staging over and over and over again. In some ways the painted image is the ultimate parasite; it draws upon the strength of the artist, the gallerist, and the curator and all other agents involved in its creation, display, and positioning, taking on a life of its own. Insofar as the curator—the carer of the work—takes on the role of the hospital worker, the painting is the miraculous patient that, at the point of its viewing, kills the very presence of the curator, gallerist, and artist; the gap that turns the work that is viewed into art—that untouchable, sacred, thing—can only take place between image and viewer. To borrow the words of Roland Barthes, it is the author (or in this case, the artist) that is now dead. In his or her wake the painting is left with a conceivable form and visual language, and it is with these that the viewer enters into—whatever passes between the painted image and its viewer is between them and them alone.

What passes between the painted image and viewer? Nothing, except for the act of gorging: consumption—wild, untamed, and at times reviling. The work lends itself to such violence precisely because it is withdrawn; it is distant, it is untouchable and hence incomprehensible. We chase the combusted human forms that are presented to us, examining the strokes of neon light streaked across the light of the aluminium board, wanting it to give up all its secrets to us—deconstructing its performance, scrutinising the blistered, tortured skin of the human figures. The frustration of the viewers will never be satisfied; the viewer seeks to satisfy his curiosity from the very act of viewing, but will never realise that it is the very act of viewing the work that the distinction between him/her and the work becomes activated, re-activated.



Guardians of the Inner Salts, 2016
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminum composite panel,
60 x 75 cm

Private Collection



The Light of Adoration is Torture, 2016
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminum composite panel,
60 x 75 cm

Private Collection

To touch requires space—and with the act of touching comes the realisation of the distance one has to traverse and the distinctions between the viewer and the image. And hence—the painting as the ultimate object that escapes all our ministrations to denude it, strip it bare, despite all our efforts to touch. The work that will never be understood any better than by its own presentation. The mask of the painting will never slip; neither will it divest itself of its costume—a painting will lie, “exposed, but for what it is, with a force that is dense and tight, not relaxed, reserved, not readily given” (Nancy, 2005, p 3, emphasis in original). We will, it seems, never get under the skin of a painting, but try, and try harder we will....

And in turn, the painting gorges us, and gorges into our world. The weightlessness of the human figures could be another metaphor for the ripping open of insides, the spilling out of guts—the bursts of light could be nothing more than the combustion of from the outside in. There is no skin for any of the figures, nor is there any need for skin. Disruption, rupture, is the name of the game. The top surface is blistered, rippling, vibrating. In an awful parallel the images themselves disrupt the smooth, white, pale skin of the gallery walls, forcing open rifts in the space with the sharp contrast of neon very light and colour within the works themselves, blistering the surfaces of our own reality.

One must never forget that the viewer comes under assault as much as he or she conducts his or her own on the body of the painting; art is not without its own recourse to power within the staging of its own performance. For the violence of the image’s representations are within the lyricism of poesis: poesis being, as Richard Elridge put it, the “name for any activity of making, as opposed to theoria (observing, theorizing), or praxis (acting, doing) ... it specifically means the making of any imitative representation (mimesis), no matter whether in prose or verse of painting or music.” (1997, p 7). Poesis is violent, not least because it envisions and articulates a calling to imagine “ways of cultural life not yet in being.” (Elridge, 1997, p 8), renting into the previous orders of the world with the force of its own imagination. To remake the human body into fragments, divorcing it from the heaviness of materiality, and instead distorting, mangling, combusting them into a myriad of different coloured lights—is to make a new representation of the human body, birthing into being a new articulation of the body with its own power to disrupt previous orders and schematics of thinking about it. Painting makes these new articulations reality—and in this way, makes our current efforts to order reality futile; it was not without reason that Hegel remarks that “it [reality] would surely laugh our little ruse to scorn, if it were not with us, in and for itself, all along, and of its own volition.” (1977, p 47).

Neon paint references the often artificial nature of neon and fluorescent lighting, a visual reference that calls into mind the noisy, chaotic, and frenetic years of the late 1940s and 50s of particular American cities, such as Chicago, Las Vegas, and New York. For neon had been the “dramatic metaphor underlining the struggle for survival in the urban jungle” (Ribbat, 2013, p 56) before the downturn in its popularity, an identifier of thousands of aspirations fighting to be fulfilled in the harsh landscape of the concrete coldness of sprawling cities. In short, neon came to articulate a wrestling, a grappling, a fight for attention, clawing for recognition. Neon is the visual symbol of an environment filled with constant stimulus and aggression, fuelling the boom of bright light, the soon-to-be ubiquitous flicker of the television screen and the denial of the natural for the privileging of the synthetic. Neon underlines a fundamental hunger, an ache, a call towards itself as a selfish, self-centred display of performance and spectacle.

Gorging—a frantic feeding from both viewer and painting, both struggling to devour one another from across the gap. The satiation that will never be fulfilled; a gorging that is absolute lunacy, irrationality; continuous and unrelenting—gorging is never gentle, because it cannot be, it can never be. Gorging does not operate according to the principles of the ordered reality; it rents and tears apart, in turns frustrating and fascinating. If it was said that art may exist in a gap, it is not an empty gap—it is a gap filled with a particular kind of violence that somehow manages to remain silent, in the stillness of the painted figure, eyes watching...

Gorging will never be gentle.

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Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *The Rustle of Language*. California: U of California, 1986. 49-56. Print.

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Hegel, Georg. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977. Print.

Groys, Boris. *Art Power*. Cambridge, USA: MIT, 2008. Print.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Ground of the Image*. New York: Fordham UP, 2005. Print.

Ribbat, Christopher. *Flickering Light: A History of Neon*. London: Reaktion, 2013. Print.



Storm Drain Nymph Offerings, 2016
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminum composite panel,
60 x 75 cm

Private Collection



*Rest in power
Hyacinth girl-skinned
The smiling assassin*

Something that I do in this body of work is to truly try to also trust in this notion of providence, I'm doing my best to be as sensitive to my instincts as possible, and to believe in continuity, so I reach out intellectually with feelers, I trust my moods and my tastes and I question everything.[...] So I believe in my subconscious, I trust that if I have the urge for a certain kind of stimulation, theres a reason behind it. And I take the paintings as close to the subconscious as I can, in this way the painting process is always a journey, you wont find an entirely deliberate or detached painting, they're all severe relationships, they must have passion and conflict not only as a subject matter but in the very process of which it was executed, I will ensure that nothing is easy and the nuances in the final work will not be sleight of hand confidence or finesse, it needs to be a miracle, to me at least.

12 August 2016
From Ruben Pang's personal diary

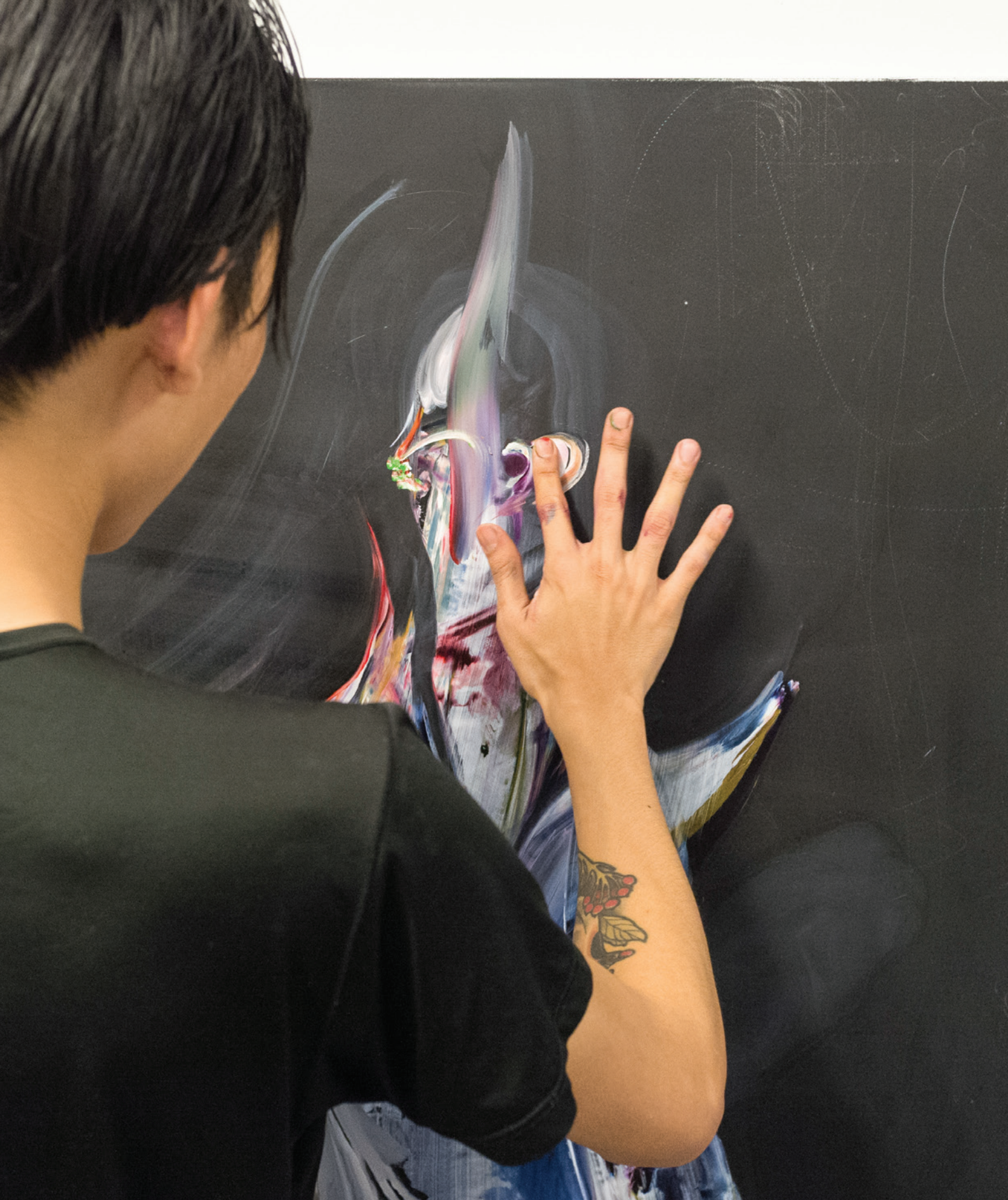
Hyacinth Girl-Skinned, 2016
Oil, alkyd and dammar varnish on aluminum panel,
267 x 150 cm

Private Collection

Cradle Me Bravely, 2016
Oil, alkyd and retouching varnish on aluminum composite panel,
166 x 122 cm

Private Collection





Early works

Intravenous Picture Show

by Jennifer Anne Champion

Picture this. A child turns to his parents and says, "I want to go see a movie." Let us pretend Mother and Father are not too busy this weekend and they take the boy to a picture show. The family sit in relative silence as giant mutated lizards battle the machine architecture of the city. Fantastic monster trucks throw bodies onto a Los Angeles boulevard. A slow-motion shot of a shattering Japanese tea house. A sedately toppling London Eye. Hong Kong traffic passing in wide-angle hyper-lapse. A close-up of a boy, much like the child watching this movie, held by his robot mother in high-definition tenderness.

The child sitting safely in his theatre seat absorbs images so rapidly occurring: Of culture, geography, iconography, relationships, accents... The child sees and learns nothing factual. But under the skin is everything mixing and talking to itself.

Ruben Pang's latest body of work, titled 'Intravenous Picture Show', is the product of an imagination overstimulated in the 21st Century. Like the child we have earlier pictured – or any contemporary viewer growing up in a violently mediated culture – Pang's own imagination is in overdrive with characters here fleshed out on aluminum sheets in florid acrylic, oil and alkyd.

Pang (b. 1990) states, "I am obsessed with the malfunctioning mind and the brilliant mind. I don't necessarily believe that genius must bring with it some sort of disability, although historically and statistically that's the case. But transposing this correlation makes good compositions, good paintings... I can't go into detail the steps I take in putting my mind into certain places, but I like this form of rewiring."

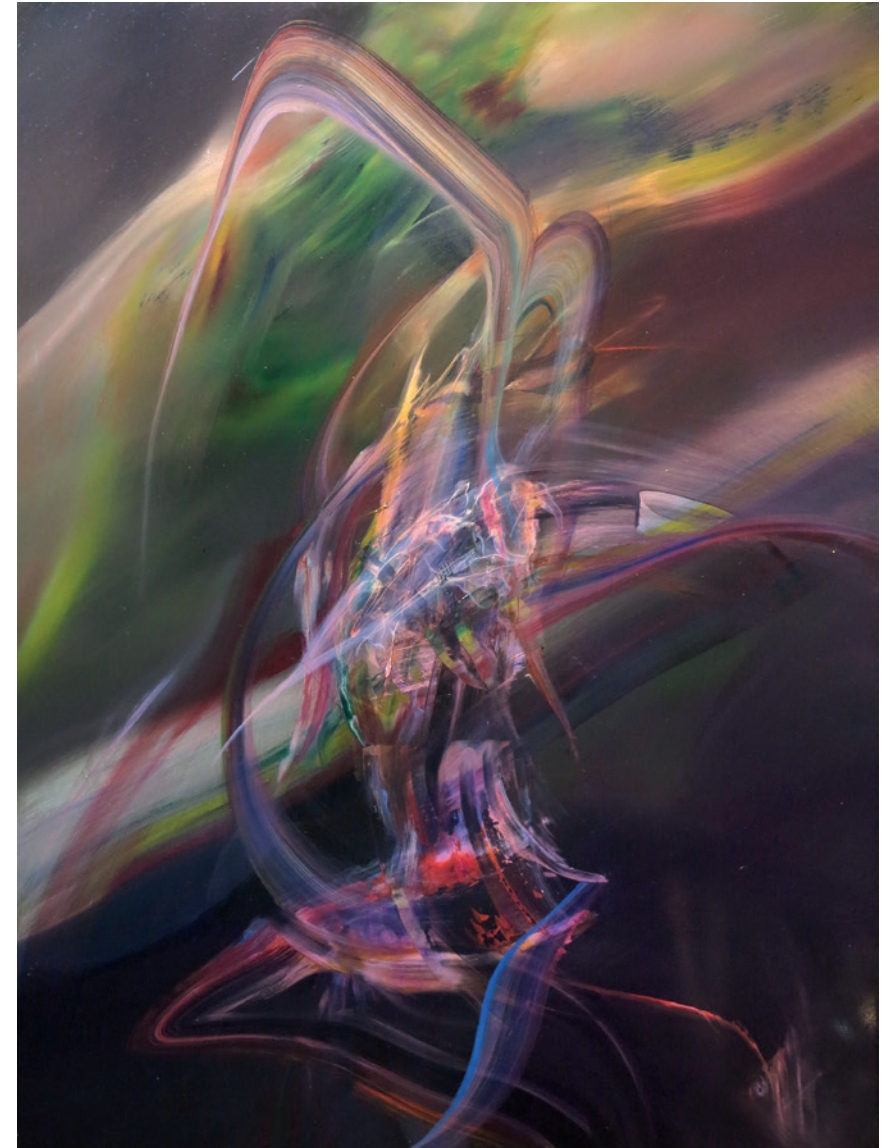
This statement from Pang does not imply that his work is made in a hallucinogenic state of mind, but rather that the function of memory is altered in the modern age through the onslaught of visual stimuli, which can produce a certain trauma. It is this altered function of memory which serves well enough for the purposes of his art.

For Pang, contemporary memory and imagination is drenched with instantaneous and easily accessible information to the point of amnesia. This thunderstorm of media implies we no longer remember information in detail. Instead, we recall disjunct snippets – mostly emotive – that such stimuli impress on us. Pang attributes this way of memory in part to our modern reliance on technology. He quips, "You don't have to remember how to get [to a place]. You just have to remember the street name. And a machine tells us the million ways to get there."

Indeed, one could say the speed and efficiency with which we work and live comes at the price of a lower capacity for detail and perhaps a sense of instability. However, rather than drawing attention to this lower capacity as a weakness, in this series Pang attempts to exploit the subconscious drift between still images retained in our consciousness.

Pang remarks, "These [paintings] are moments before something good or bad is going to happen but taken out of context. A beautiful glitch. A micro-expression. It's not just fascinating but right. An apt way of painting. We are no longer making impressions but frames... without subtitles."

Of instantaneous access and overflowing feeds of information, Pang further notes, "It is harder to sift through what is common and what is popular. You are attracted to things you have affinity with and ownership is drawn... I am looking for stimulation."



Field Day, 2015
Oil, alkyd and retouching varnish on aluminum composite panel,
75 x 60 cm

Private Collection



We Are An Effective Team, 2015
Oil, alkyd and retouching varnish on aluminum composite panel,
122 x 90 cm

Private Collection

The craving for stimulation then is a symptom of a contemporary world digitally enhanced and overwrought with exaggerated light, colour, and unexplained affinities. This craving lies at the heart of the art presented in this series, which can be further broken down into three movements.

First Movement: Muscle Memory and Action

The first movement consists of smaller paintings (60 X 70 cm) are made at a dimension Pang believes to be fortuitous. Pang notes wryly that these paintings are the same size as his bathroom mirror and thus the perfect dimensions for portraiture and reflective introspection. Of these works in particular, Pang says his process is akin to a coping mechanism against the amnesia earlier mentioned. In the act of painting, he attempts to transform brush strokes into muscle memory. Each piece becomes a reiteration of a struggle between composition and colour;.

Pang remarks, "It's almost like you're carving someone's head. It's almost [either] violent or healing. Because the strokes you use to carve the skin off a fruit or to cut into flesh are almost the same movement as tracing the contour of someone's jaw or stroking someone's hair in consolation. I'm fascinated with the dual-aspect of neurosis. The sane and insane. The pleasurable and painful."

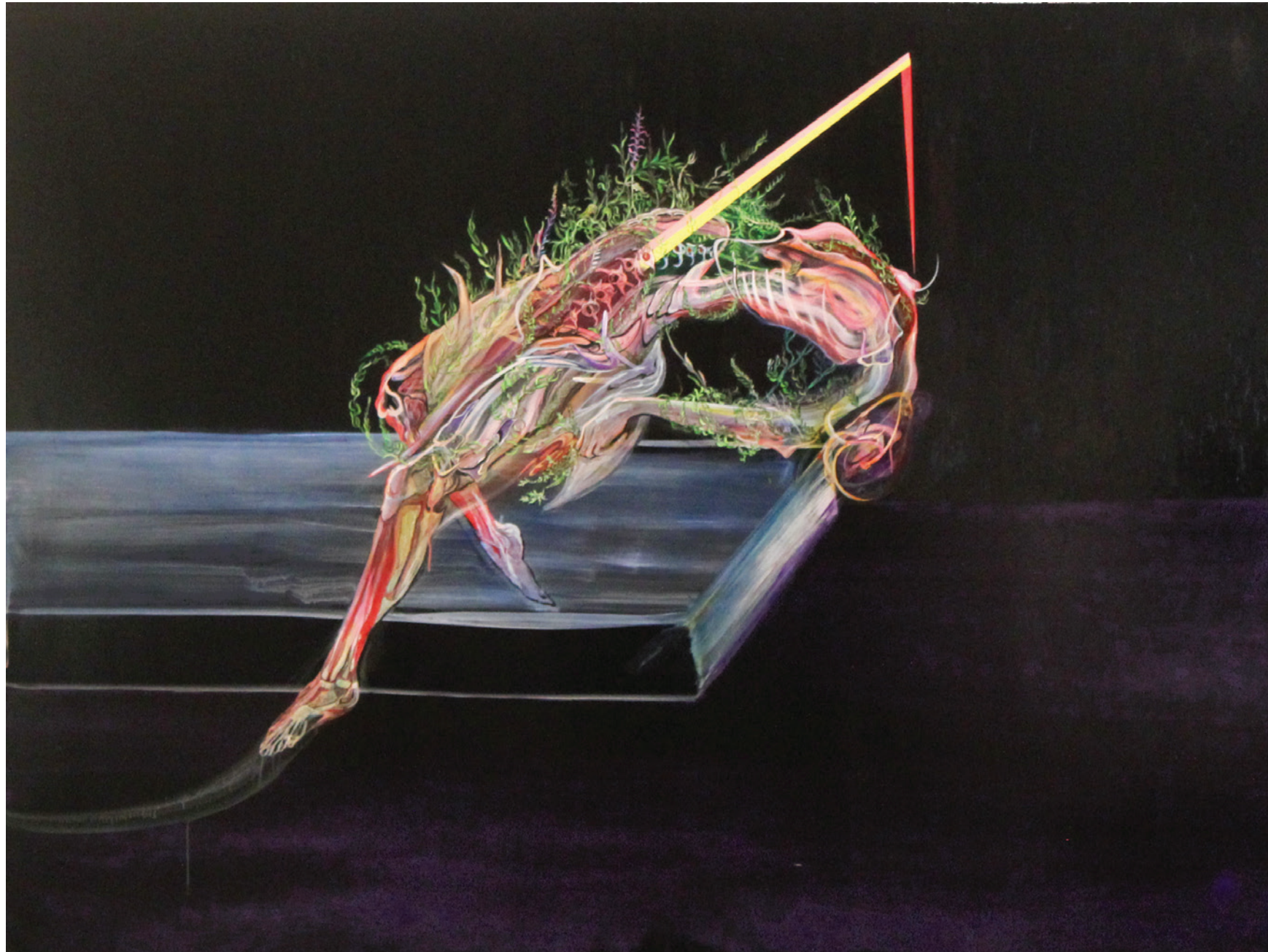
Through experience, Pang has found this mirror dimension to be a good platform to increase his mastery of the oil medium, particularly in illusions of transparency and subtle changes in facial expression. Drastic changes in composition can be made with relative ease due to the small size of this dimension. Paintings within this movement include Sunspots, Termite and Violet Invasion.

Second Movement: Cross-hairs and Extremities in Hyperlapse

The second movement contains slightly larger paintings that grow from forms Pang sees as the most stable and potent in terms of composition within portraiture – that of the crucifixion and three-quarter head and torso. The crucifixion along with its related subject matter, of angels and the myth of Icarus falling, are not utilized symbolically by the artist as much as for their firmness as frames on which to apply paint in the most volatile way possible.

Pang states, "In terms of composition, when viewed from the front, there is a symmetry in these symbols that also supports the structure of the painting. Painting crucifixion forms are like painting the back view of a cross-hair, drawing attention to the gravity at the centre of the frame. Simultaneously, it is also the only [iconographic] figure which seems to reach out to the extremities of the painting. I like the tension in a figure which occupies so little area but commands so much presence."

The Sermon is chronologically the first painting made in this second movement. It depicts an abstract figure held up by a central pillar, the hands giving weight and grounding the figure to a sky both fluid and out of place. Pang explains, "It is an accumulation of the techniques honed in the smaller paintings in the sense that I have used these strokes before. This is me painting at my most comfortable in terms of technique. The torso has been hacked and slashed, yet [the figure] shows you as much surface of itself as possible. It is a dignified figure."



Ophelia, 2014
Oil, alkyd, acrylic and retouching varnish on aluminum composite panel,
150 x 200 cm

Private Collection

The Sermon is very much informed by Pang's observation of contemporary visual effects and digital art, with its layered aesthetic as well as Pang's own guiding principles towards painting technique. It also an example of Pang's enigmatic style of painting figures that have lost or severed limbs – a subject analogous to his opinion of contemporary viewership in increasingly digital formats. Pang comments, "[I]f you pause a movie while it's buffering, you can see two completely different scenes superimposed onto one another. That becomes an almost natural way to remember things, layered and compiled in this way."

While Pang will not deny the religious connotations associated with such subject matter and admits their potency does contribute to the effectiveness of his paintings, he maintains that his use of them is more compositional. Nevertheless the effect is provocative in *The Sermon*, *Flight Suit*, *Scott's Wings* and most startlingly in *Undertow*, a painting belonging to the third movement, which is Pang's most visually audacious interpretation of the Icarusian myth.

Third Movement: High-Definition Tenderness

In the third movement, Pang begins to explore the interactions between multiple figures for the first time in his work. Paintings in this movement include *Undertow*, *My Fat Baby*, and *Faith Healer*. These paintings can be seen as telepathic conversations between characters, between characters and their backgrounds, and between painting and viewer. The role of light is important in this movement; setting the mood and tone of these conversations.

Pang comments, "It's like the sky is volatile. Ominous maybe, apocalyptic? But more dreamlike. Mysterious. It's not serene but a kind of calm still reaches out to you. It's definitely the kind of light I see in my dreams – saturated, exaggerated – but almost believable. Believable because it supports the narrative in the dream. You know you're in the real world when bad shit happens in good weather. Like a shootout on a beautiful day. In my paintings, the environment and the subject/characters are interdependent. Almost to the point where they will defy physics to merge into each other, to communicate. They have stories to tell each other."

Perhaps the most provocative of these vignettes is *Undertow*; a deeply psychological painting which features a figure in a helmet 'assisted' by an angelic figure, both dwarfed by a larger seated figure who looms over them. Of *Undertow* Pang explains, "[This] was painted while listening to a series of audio lectures given by Professors Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen Marie Higgins on the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. I was particularly interested in Nietzschean thoughts on the hidden aspects within acts of kindness or altruism. For Nietzsche, acts of kindness are not necessarily altruistic as they may stem from a subconscious drive to feel superior to another person. This painting reflects that in such a situation our inner angels are diminished, even though they still assist in carrying out these tasks."

Here again we must acknowledge Pang's self-awareness as both artist and modern consumer of media – audio lectures and computer gaming while waiting for layers of paint to dry. We should also

acknowledge his uninhibited approach to volatile image-making. Pang is unafraid of tension in the relationships between his subjects. There is a refreshing honesty in painting characters in moments prior to the definitive topple into a terrain of 'good' or 'bad'. It is hard to say in *Undertow* which figure is more sinister; the angel or the looming, self-serving Ego.

I want to go see a movie

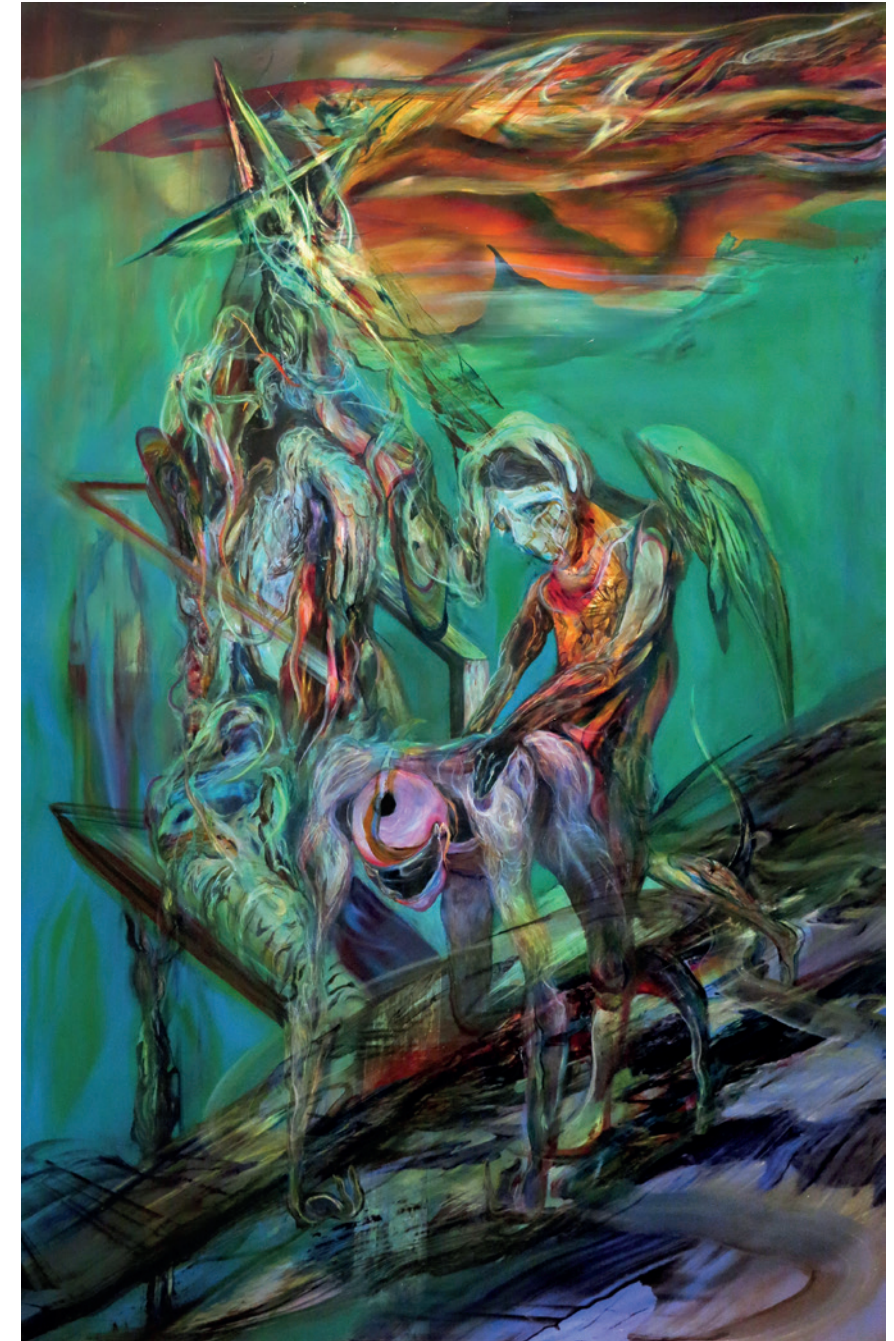
The paintings in the second and third movement further herald a new direction in Pang's work – that of clearer figurative subject matter – as if detail has been suddenly glimpsed in a murky buffer stream. Of particular note are the paintings *My Fat Baby* and *Faith Healer*.

The clearer figurations are Pang's way of rounding of his experience of painting in Italy. The entire series was made on residency in Desenzano del Garda. Pang attributes this new direction to his exposure to Renaissance and Flemish art. In studying these two periods, he has sought the expressive and bold strokes characterised by Italian painters of the Renaissance and the meticulous, jewel-like surfaces found in Flemish work. Pang furthermore finds affinity with their philosophy of painting as an intense act of faith.

Of his own practice of faith in his working method, Pang notes, "I have to acknowledge that the way I paint is governed by a fanatical set of rules for what a painting must be. Every stroke must contribute to the final picture. Nothing can be allowed to be superfluous. And you must show [each brushstroke] will contribute by painting it in a way which is transparent. If I do the background layer, it is never erased. Its ghost must show under what covers it."

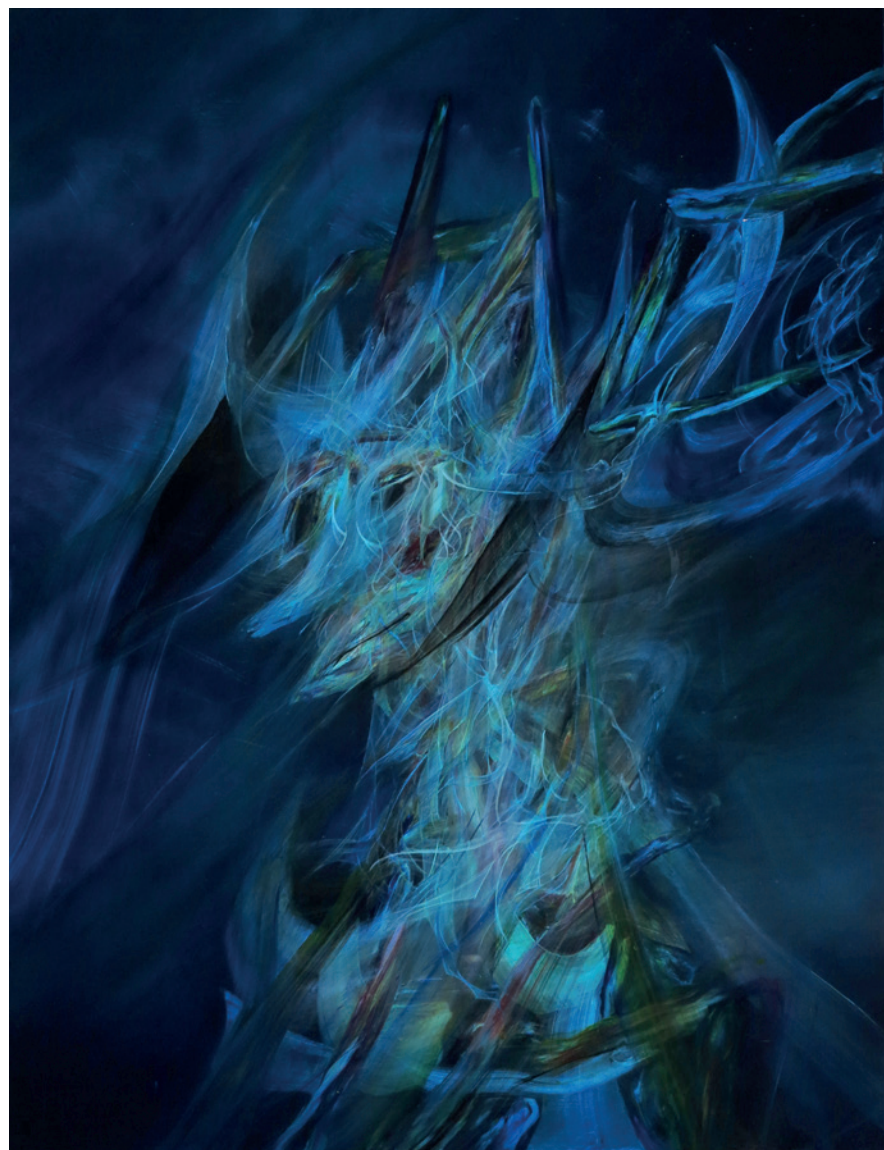
Pang's subject matter is also treated by a rigorous set of rules. Although dream-like, delusional or of a superstitious quality, Pang strives to make figures sit in chaotic environments. Of his subjects Pang says, "The characters must be perfectly comfortable in whatever absurd situation they are in. Only their skin is uncomfortable. They aren't self-conscious either. They might be deformed or ugly or injured but they stand with a sort of dignity, almost as if showing off their scars."

One could say Pang's picture show takes place within, spilling out onto his canvas – a series produced through intravenous feeling. It is after all, directly produced from reflection on the modern condition of plugging into and consuming media. Yet, the paintings in this series do not suggest passive viewership but rather invite the viewer to consider an active imagination in riot of the feeding drip. Pang's goal is awaken a creative process within an otherwise bleak view of our consumption patterns. In his own way, this is a form of healing.



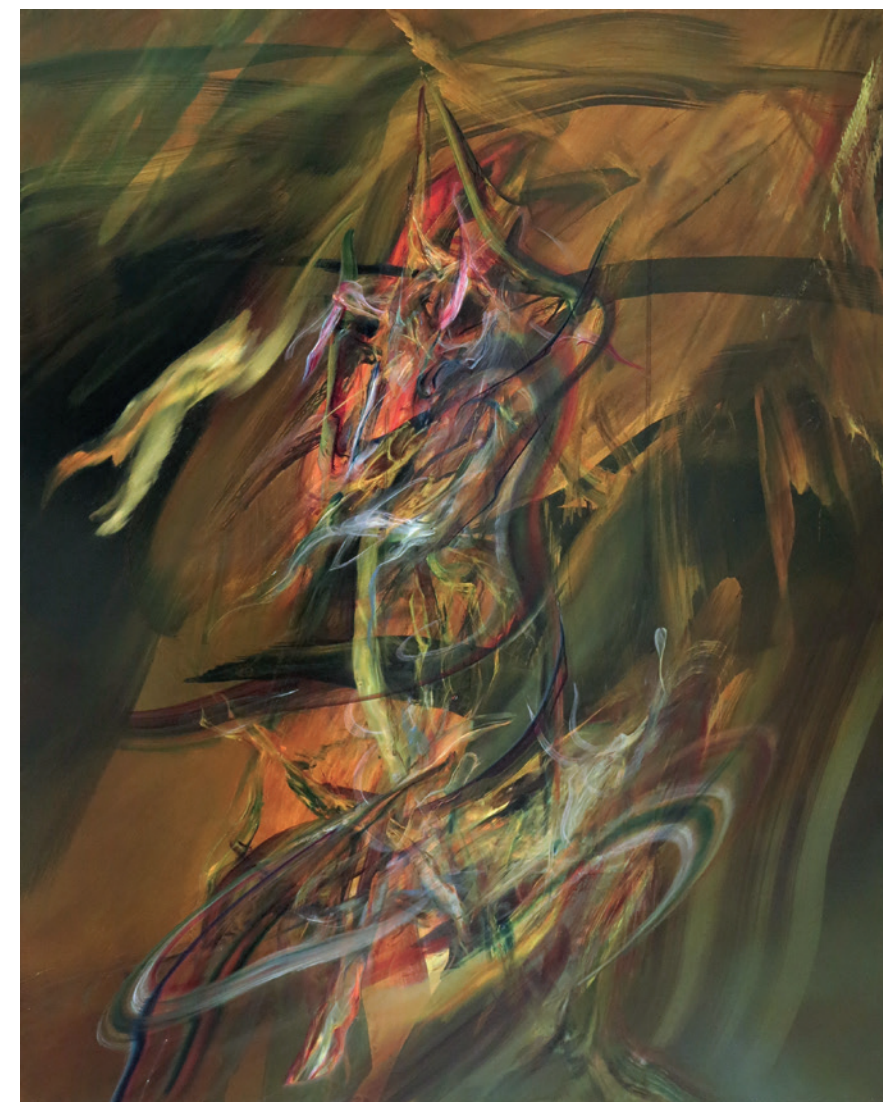
Undertow, 2014
Oil and alkyd on aluminum composite panel,
145 x 94 cm

Private Collection



Wendigo, 2014
Acrylic and retouching varnish on aluminum composite panel,
75 x 60 cm

Private Collection



Termite, 2014
Oil and alkyd on aluminum composite panel,
75 x 60 cm

Private Collection



[...]

*but the truth is, I have to make them more honest, closer to my heart, deeper,
sinner, thinner, darker*

*dragging on the futile is my only way through the marsh and I take no time to
hold my breath as the air is damp and the water is murky but inside my path
is crystal clear, I see beyond time and ahead of myself and trust is something
that no one will give me but myself.*

*We are not auerbach or bacon or brown, we are not dali or whistler or sickert.
We will fail in glory.*

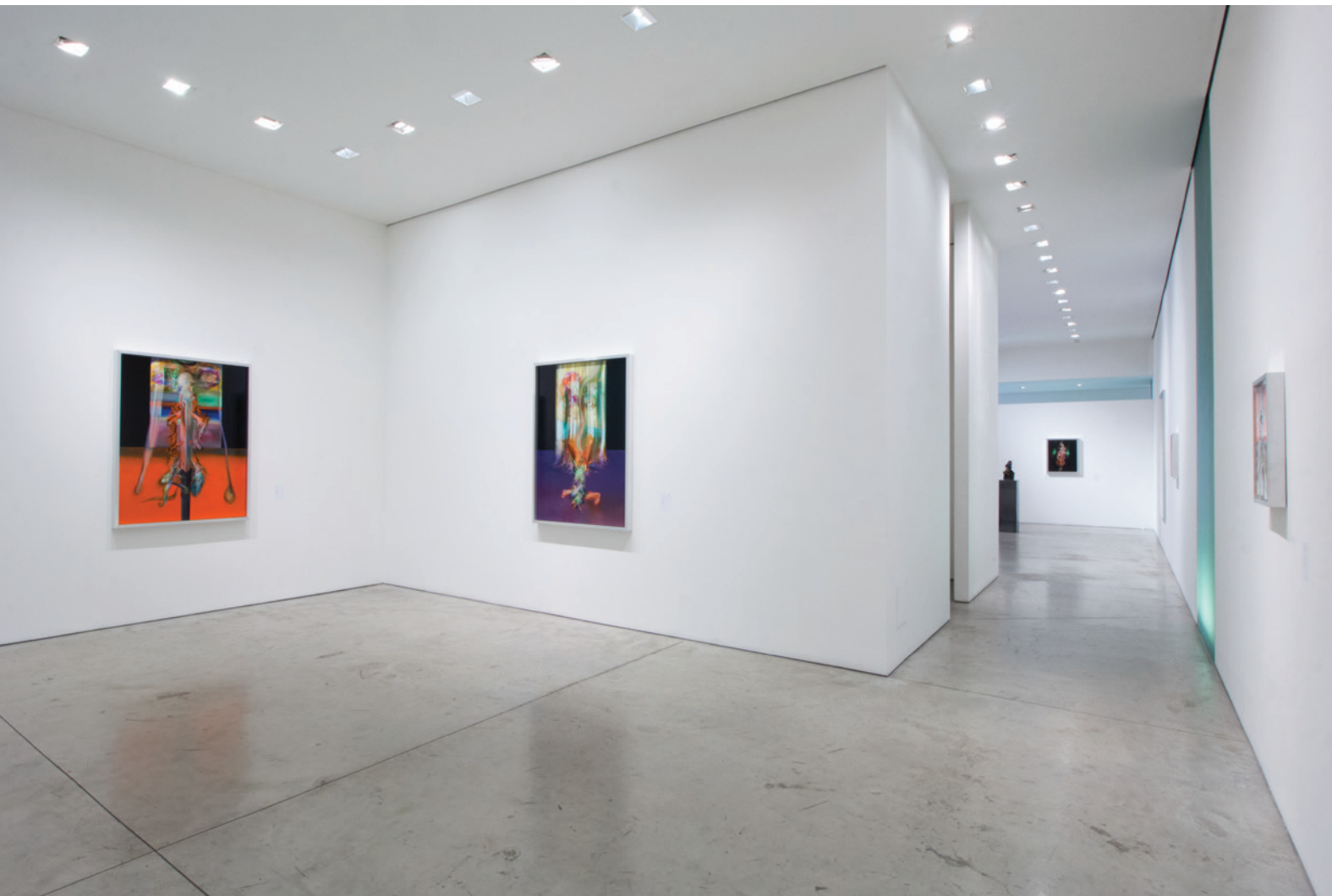
*I am absolutely my own and purely unique, we must listen to what the paint
wants us to do
and pray and nurture and flower and grow.*

*Go fast, go deep, go inside, be free, play, celebrate, love the nausea, encoura-
ge the hunger*

everyday my heart beats, my eyes open, what more can I ask for?

21 January 2016
From Ruben Pang's personal diary







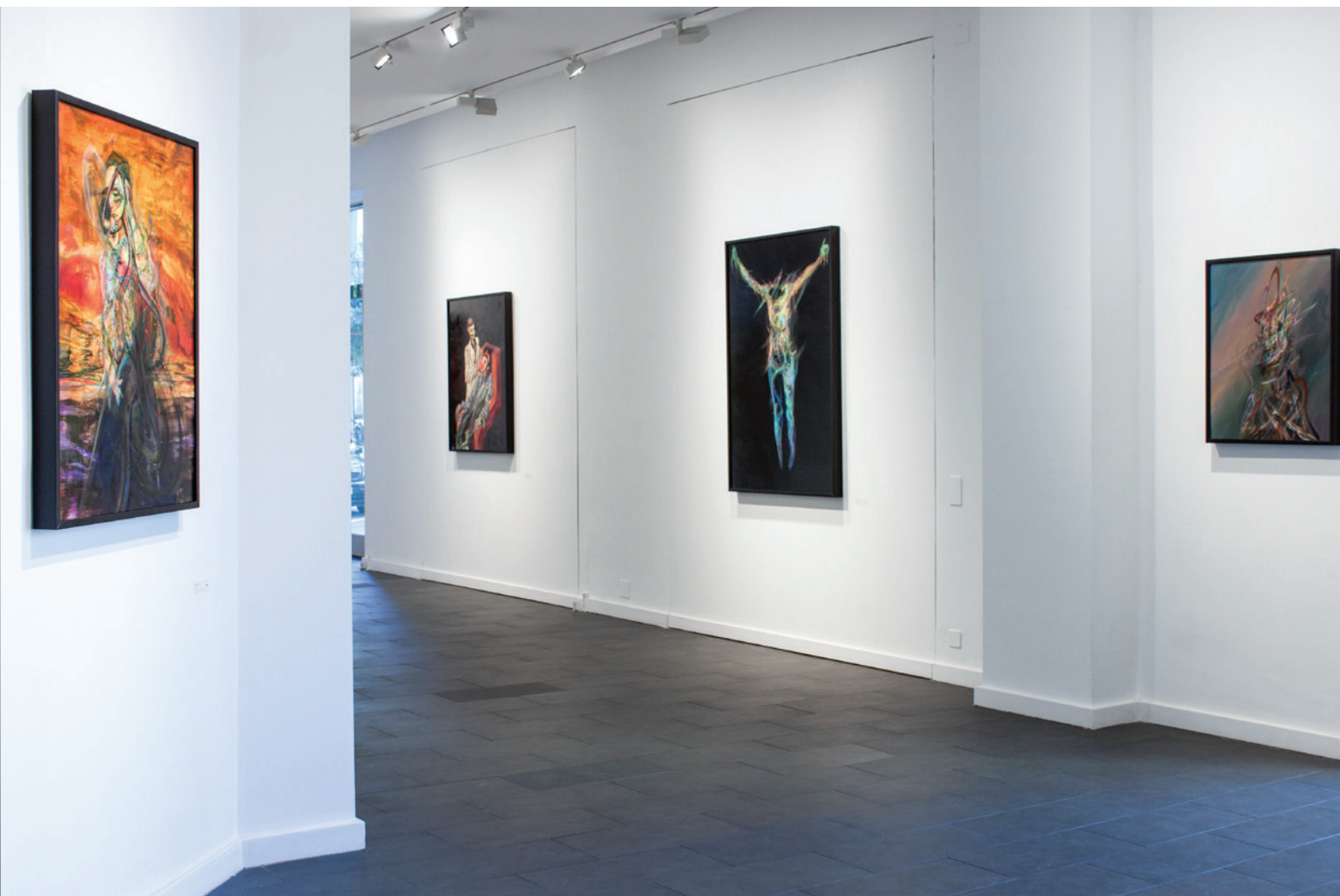




Zwitterion
2016, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy





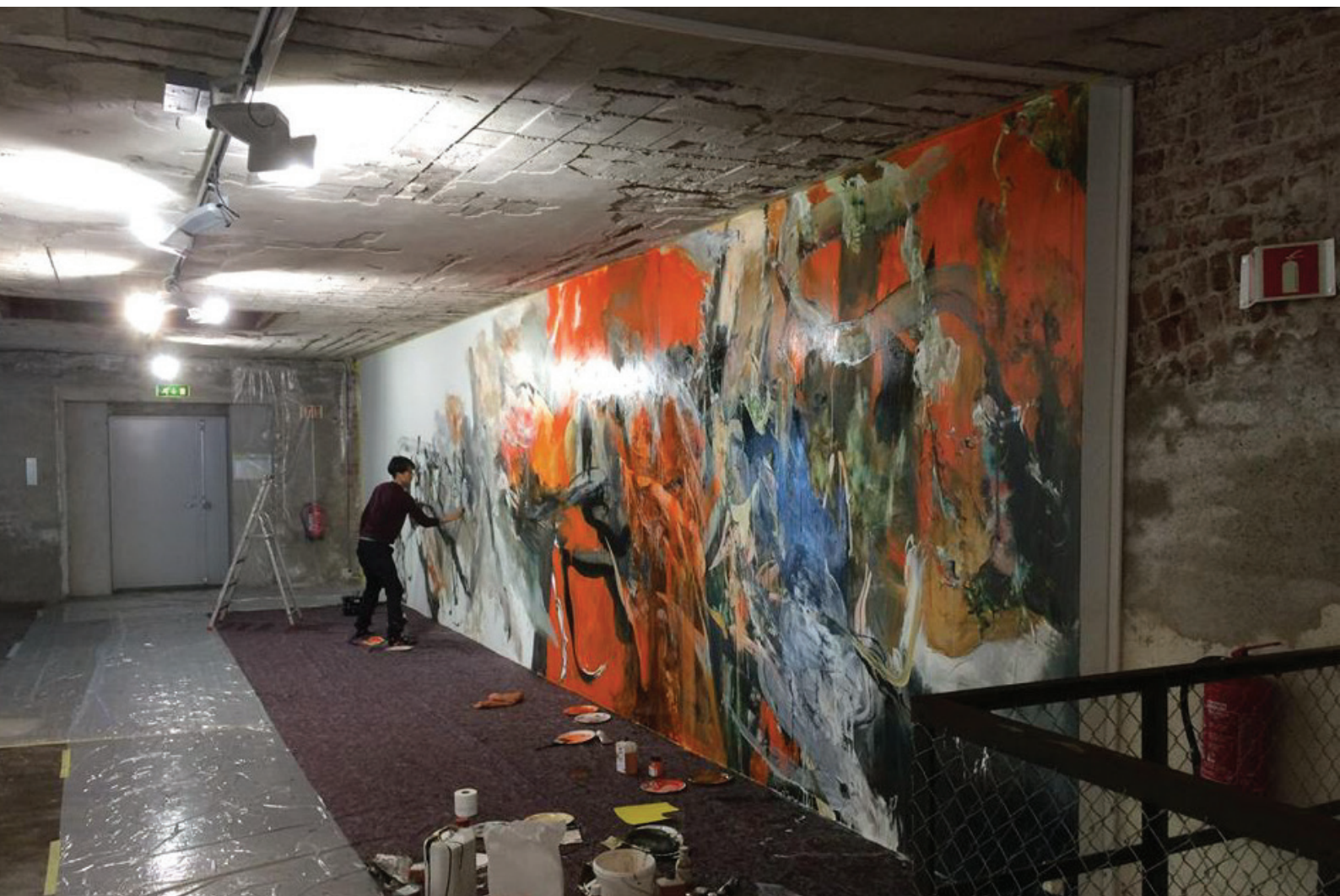






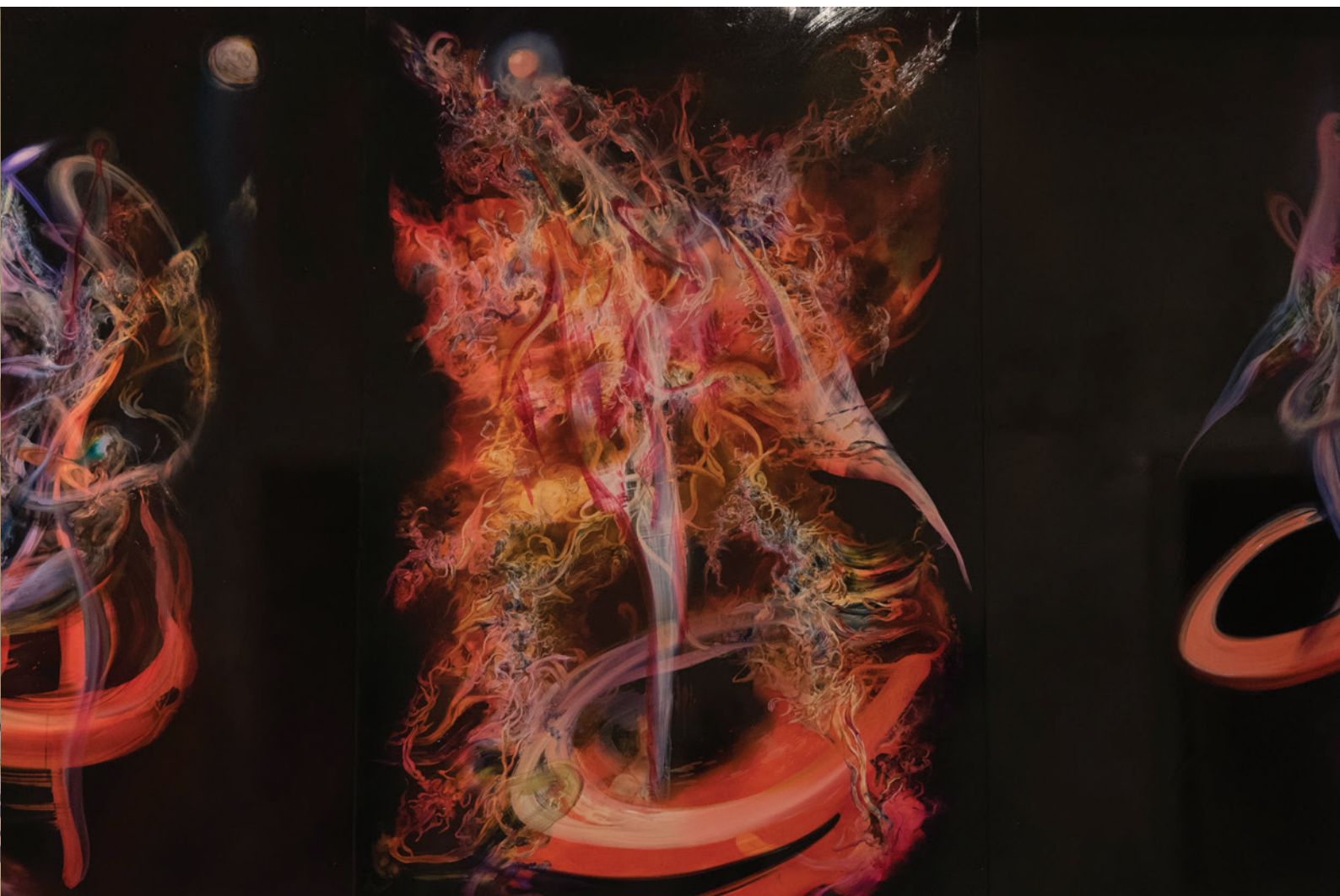


Contemporary Chaos
2018, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen, Norway



La Meccanica delle Meraviglie
2018, MO.CA Centro per le nuove culture, Brescia, Italy







Deep S.E.A.
2012, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy



Biography

Ruben's artistic focuses on automatism, the neurosis and drama of the human condition. Beginning with painting, Pang's practice has also led him to explore the dynamism and spontaneous response sculpture and the sensitivities and collaborative spirit of music production and performance.

Often, Pang resists binaries in genres such as 'abstraction' and 'figuration' and simultaneously enjoys the stability of established formats such as the finitude of the edges of a painting and a perfectly varnished surface. Working without a preconceived image of the final composition, his approach allows the imagery to surface spontaneously; a "visual syncopation, like searching for a melody in white noise". Pang insists that the creative process being an adventure, with a narrative arc and conflict. He believes that the residual object distilled from a creative journey, is more than a memory, in the sense that it is a record that can inspire new experiences.

Using a combination of oils, alkyds and acrylics he paints, scratches and erases his paintings using brushes, hands, palette knives and sandpaper, revealing layers of color that reflect projections of his psyche. Pang prefers aluminum panels as its rigidity reflects and captures the nuances of each moment and gesture in a way which canvas cannot. Its durability allows greater freedom to transform the image as it develops.

International exhibitions Pang has exhibited in include Contemporary Chaos, Vestfossen Kenstlaboratorium, Norway, Meccaniche della Meraviglia, MO.CA Centro per le nuove culture in Brescia, Italy (2018) and The Figure in Process: De Kooning to Kapoor, Paul Allen Brain Institute in Seattle, United States (2015).

The Singapore Art Museum acquired his paintings "Fear of Lying" and "Type O Civilization" in 2020 and 2018. Pang received the Georgette Chen Arts Scholarship (2009 – 2010) and the Winston Oh Travelogue Award (2010).



CV

Born 1990 Singapore.
Lives and works between Singapore and Sardinia

EDUCATION

2010
Lasalle College of the Arts, Diploma Fine Arts

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021, True Solarization, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy
2020, Pre-Heaven, Chan + Hori Contemporary, Singapore
2019, Sutures and Infinite Laughter, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy
2018, Halogen Lung, Primae Noctis Art Gallery, Lugano, Switzerland
2017, Swallow Shadow, Chan + Hori Contemporary, Singapore
2017, The Glass Eye Opens, Noosa Regional Gallery, Queensland, Australia
2017, A Totem for Your Genuine Internals, Chan Hampe Galleries, Singapore
2016, Zwitterion, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy
2015, Transfiguration, START and the Tiroche DeLeon Collection, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
2015, Solo presentation, Bazaar Art Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia
2015, Ataraxy, Chan Hampe Galleries, Singapore
2014, Intravenous Picture Show, Primae Noctis Art Gallery, Lugano, Switzerland
2014, Selected Portraits, Art Stage, Singapore
2013, New Energetics: Inverting the Process, Chan Hampe Galleries, Singapore
2013, Aetheric Portraiture, Primae Noctis Art Gallery, Lugano, Switzerland
2011, Angels, Chan Hampe Galleries, Singapore

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021, The Body as a Dream: A Singapore Art Story, Art Agenda, S.E.A., Singapore
2020, Closer than they Appear, Yavuz Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2019, SEA – New Generation, Tang Contemporary Art, Bangkok, Thailand
2019, Reformations, Painting in Post 2000 Singapore Art, ADM Gallery, School of Art, Design, Media, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
2018, La Meccanica della Meraviglie, MO.CA Centro per le nuove culture, Brescia, Italy
2018, Contemporary Choas, Vestfossen Kenstlaboratorium, Vestfossen, Norway
2017, Supernatural, Yogja Art Lab, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
2016, Petrichor, Shophouse 5, Singapore
2015, The Figure in Process, From De Kooning to Kapoor, Paul Allen Brain Institute, Seattle, United States
2015, Common Ground, Chan Hampe Galleries, Singapore
2015, Rendez-vous, Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore
2014, Modern Love, Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore
2014, Bright Spores, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy
2012, Deep SEA, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy
2012, The Singapore Show: Future Proof, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
2011, Sovereign Asian Art Prize Exhibition, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore, The Rotunda, Hong Kong
2010, Take-Aways, Sambanci University, Istanbul, Turkey
2010, Sovereign Asian Art Prize Exhibition, Helutrans Arts Space, Tanjong Pagar Distripark, Singapore
2010, Is that a Temple?, Evil Empire, Singapore
2010, Winston Oh Travelogue Award Exhibition, Praxis Space, Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore
2010, Strobe like a Butterfly, The Substation Theater, Singapore
2009, Art Buffet, Singapore Art Show, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

2008, The Artificial Landscape, Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore

2008, Such a Lovely Place, Such a Lovely Face, Project Space, Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore

PRIZES AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

2015, START International Artist Residency Program, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel

2014, Stelvia Artist in Residence, Residency Program in Desenzano del Garda, Italy and Lugano, Switzerland

2011, Sovereign Asia Art Prize Finalist for Across the Universe, Singapore and Hong Kong

2010, Sovereign Asian Art Prize Finalist for First Born, Singapore

2010, LaSalle Award for Academic Excellence, Singapore

2010, Full venue sponsorship by Substation for Strobe like a Butterfly, Singapore

2010, Winston Oh Travelogue Award 2009 Georgette Chen Arts Scholarship, Singapore

2008, Creative Community Singapore Ideas @ Work, Singapore

2008, Youth Festival Arts and Craft Exhibition Gold Award, Singapore

COLLECTIONS

Tiroche DeLeon Collection

Singapore Art Museum



Ruben Pang - *True Solarization*

Project by:
Primo Giovanni Marella

Essay by Lorenzo Belli for True Solarization
Essay by Adam Staley Groves for Sutures and Infinite Laughter
Interview by Vincenzo Gangone for Sutures and Infinite Laughter
Essay by Jeremy Fernando for Zwitterion

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Greta Belintende

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