



齊亮書廊  
BLINK GALLERY

定光琴  
MEDIHA  
TING

Contemporary artist

# MEDIHA TING



The sundry dimensions manifested in Medih Ting's paintings embody a relentless negotiation between cultural perceptions and one's subconscious. Hidden in gentle human forms and chimerical landscapes are complex identity politics with a grounding in Islamic, Buddhist, and Catholic philosophies that coalesce through the artist's hands. Ting was born in Belgium, grew up in Hong Kong, and received her education in both the U.S. and the U.K. Her fusion of Chinese ink and Western painting techniques occupy figurative and abstract compositions, limning a subliminal nod to globalization.

Ting's works confront social issues and personal memories belonging to her diasporic reality; such externalization transfigures the painted surface to a multicultural macrocosm that evolves through reactions, reflections, and reformations. Ting's earlier works demonstrate an unintentional synchronicity with the nostalgia and angst propelled by the seismic shifts in sociopolitical landscapes of the last millennium. Reconciling with her own life's peripatetic pursuits, Ting reincarnates personal artifacts whilst simultaneously employing impasto in building out haunting anthropoid silhouettes. The anonymous figures in liminal urban voids serve as synecdoches for a communal dichotomized sentiment towards conditions of globalization. An inherently Freudian consideration of desire and guilt is prominent in Ting's introspection of the contemporary milieu, where changes of forward progress are lived as contested phenomena.

Upon completing her education in the U.K., Ting's return to Hong Kong in 2012 inspired an expanded oeuvre seen in the emergence of textual elements in Chinese ink juxtaposed with saturated hues reminiscent of the second generation of Abstract Expressionism. In the paintings, the physicality of ink and acrylic joins in unison, each medium gestured with abandon, channeling the daring spontaneity in Chi and the Western avant-garde. Swaths of colors bleed into the canvas akin to the soak-stains of Helen Frankenthaler— in these atmospheric color fields, black brushstrokes form staccatos of breath in the solemn manner of calligraphic techniques that had once inspired Abstract Expressionists' material experimentations.

Ting's recent series, 'Ray of Light,' encompasses growing bodies of works that further explores the paradoxical psychological states through a nuanced play of textual elements. Texts incorporated as a painting motif are as historical as it is radical— an otherwise lucid subject is recontextualized with an ambiguity that pays homage and irreverence to Eastern and Western art history. From ancient Chinese calligraphic masters to the subversive innovations of Xu Bing, or media as the Big Brother of the neoliberal West to the cutting rebellion of Lorraine O'Grady, Ting acknowledges this art historical lineage as she engages with texts as a part of her formal techniques.

The source of Ting's texts vacillates between media clippings and ancestral letters, where the questioning of objectivity and subjectivity rings aloud. Can messages in the media be as subjective as a person's narrative? Can an individual's experience transcend an objective collective consciousness? This existential limbo is enhanced by spectatorial encounters with gradients of interchanging colors or stark shifts within a monochrome. Abstracted shapes are formed via modules of inked texts and clouds of tinted smoke, the words remain incomprehensible. In this absence of literal interpretations, there exists a strong call for meaning-making that tasks the viewers to complete; through which, recognizing one's inculcated methods of interpretation. The canvases become palimpsests of subconsciousness and sociocultural perceptions.

# 蝶戀花

## My Butterfly 2024

《蝶戀花》主題是探索疫情後所產生的不同影響、社會問題、文化 認知和潛意識的領域等。

畫中的蝴蝶代表了人們的內心世界和潛意識。靈感來自她對心理學中潛意識元素的研究，並通過中國水墨和西方繪畫技法的融合創造出一種具象和抽象的組合。這種探索影響了她的藝術表達。系列作品中抽象畫面內隱約可見的窗框，再加上幾何圖案；這些圖案代表著人類經歷、文化和社會構建、包括個人和社會層面。《蝶戀花》旨在作為一個裝置藝術品來觀賞。它作為一個媒介，用於探討與最近的全球大流行病相關的社會問題和個人記憶。通過將這些經歷和觀察外化，畫成了充滿活力的多元文化窗戶，邀請觀眾參與一場反思的旅程。在大流行病期間，人們的家彷彿變成了監獄，窗框就像監獄的欄杆。畫家以抽象的畫面融入窗框、幾何圖形、相片移印與蝴蝶，作為反映不同社會結構、社會階級、宗教、歷史；及人們對外面世界自由快樂幸福的渴望。通過他的藝術作品，揭示了人類心靈的複雜性和各種社會議題的探索。

Mediha Ting negotiates the realms of cultural perceptions and the subconscious in her painting series titled "My Butterfly." Inspiration for this series came while Mediha was waiting for her shoulder surgery in front of the operation room. The series investigates the different impacts arising from the worldwide pandemic and incorporates broader social issues in Hong Kong. The butterflies symbolizes the subconscious and psychological states of different people. The fusion of Chinese ink and Western painting techniques creates a kind of figurative and abstract composition. she became interested in reinvesting Freudian's subconscious exploration, continued exploring Freudian Desire and Guilt, Life instincts and Death instincts as well as Erikson's psychosocial theory in this series. This exploration influences her artistic expression and manifests in the abstract window frame geometric patterns present in the series. These patterns represent the structured and constructed elements of the human experience, reflecting both the personal and societal levels.

"My Butterfly" is intended to be viewed as an installation. It serves as a powerful conduit for addressing social issues and personal memories tied to recent global pandemic. Through the externalization of these experiences, the painted surface transforms into vibrant multicultural windows, inviting viewers to engage in a journey of reactions, reflections, and social reformations. During the pandemic our home became our prison and the window frames became like prison bars. Using window frames as a reference of social structures, social hierarchy, religious and reflective different social fabric. Through her artwork, she sheds light on the complexities of the human psyche and the social issues faced by the people in her community.



My Butterfly - Ripples 漣漪

Acrylic and Chinese ink on canvas  
96 x 70 cm (2024)

# My Butterfly: A Multicultural Exploration of Identity and Transformation

Three radiant paintings adjoin into one kaleidoscopic view fenced behind solid cutouts. In Mediha Ting's latest opus, "My Butterfly: A Multicultural Exploration of Identity and Transformation," canvases are remodeled into an installation that echoes the structural semblance of an arched window. Each panel is an Abstract Expressionist painting that has been consolidated into one single installation, seamlessly combining Ting's two modes of operandi and expanding the artist's survey of cultural perceptions and the enigmatic recesses of the subconscious.

Two sturdy rectangular forms anchor the base, crowned by a semi-circle, all adorned with meticulously crafted black paper stencils reminiscent of window bars. Beneath this visual symphony, the canvas breathes with gestural acrylic strokes akin to Ting's 2019 series, "Shine Through the Darkness," where the artist reverently explored the ethereal interplay of light amid profound obscurity, emblematic of an odyssey emerging from the depths of darkness. Aligning with this ethos, "My Butterfly" intricately weaves Chinese ink and a vivid composition reminiscent of Abstract Expressionism, melding divergent artistic traditions. Ting's dynamic strokes bear the fervent spontaneity of "Chi," converging with the avant-garde essence, summoning forth atmospheric realms where solemn black brushstrokes echo the gravitas of calligraphic techniques that once nourished the Abstract Expressionist flame.



My Butterfly - Purple Mist 紫霞

Acrylic and Chinese ink on canvas  
96 x 70 cm (2024)



## My Butterfly - Light Flares 眩光

Acrylic and Chinese ink on canvas  
96 x 70 cm (2024)

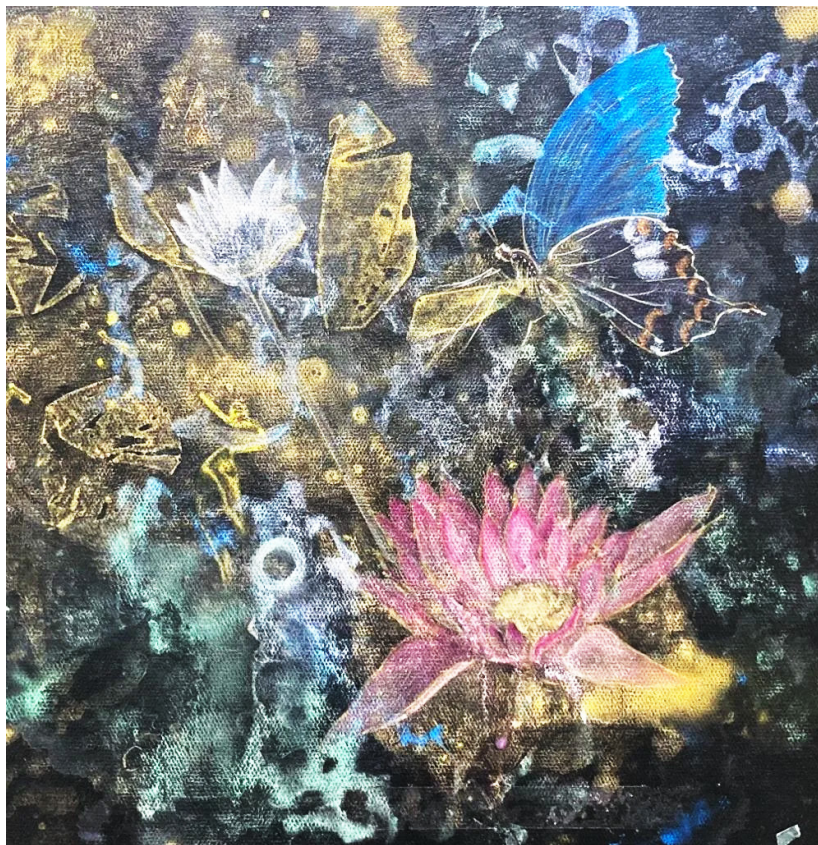
The assemblage of individual canvases into an installation serves as a tableau vivant of Ting's adeptness in utilizing installation as an artistic medium, juxtaposing the macrocosm of history with the microcosm of personal narratives—a parallel to Ting's 2022 series, "Dialogue through Time with Giuseppe Castiglione," a thirteen-piece set probing intricate facets of multiculturalism in Chinese sociopolitical history under the context of Globalization. Through expansive installations, Ting extends an invitation beckoning voyagers to navigate and ponder the subconscious of an individual's existence in the interwoven global tableau.

Preserving attributes belonging to two critical series in Ting's oeuvre, "My Butterfly" brings forth pictorial representation beyond pigment and strokes and now metamorphoses into three multicultural windows. During the global pandemic, the home transformed into an allegorical prison, and the window frames echoed the bars of confinement. Leveraging these frames as potent symbols of societal structures, hierarchical orders, religious paradigms, and diverse social fabrics, each painting encapsulates a person and a butterfly, embodying their subconscious realms. "My Butterfly" unfurls as Ting's continued conduit delving into Freudian constructs such as desire, guilt, life instincts, death instincts, and expands such inquiry with each canvas serving as a visual ode to the manifold stages of human development as delineated by Erik Erikson.

An evocative reflection of Erikson's eight stages, each stroke, each motif, represents the nascent trust forming between the self and the world, juxtaposed against the looming shadows of doubt and apprehension. The canvases brim with vibrant hues intermingled with stark, somber tones, revealing how Ting masterfully captures the tension between self-assertion and the fear of social censure. Emerging as a thematic crescendo are Ting's deft strokes forming patterns of decorative window bars. Here, the series becomes an artistic testament to the dichotomy between creative initiative and the shadows of self-reproach. In reconciling the weightiness left behind by the global pandemic, Ting encapsulates Erikson's contemplation of an individual's burgeoning sense of purpose and the moral quandaries entwined within, creating a series that divulges spirits of a marked time.

# 與朗世寧超時空對畫

Dialogue Through Time  
with Giuseppe  
Castiglione  
2023



Egyptian blue  
swallowtail butterfly

Acrylic on Canvas  
33 x 33 cm (2023)

2022年的某個偶然，定光琴在家翻閱一本她爺爺收藏的故宮收藏版畫冊一郎世寧的《仙萼長春》。畫中栩栩如生的精美花鳥除展現了郎世寧在中國傳統工筆畫的功底，也處處可見西方素描的痕跡。多年在國外生活的她，似乎找到與中華文化連接的切入點，激起了創作的動機。光琴以毛筆沾壓克力顏料，仔細臨摹畫冊裡的花卉枝葉，在點線白描過程中，彷彿進入冥想，跨越時空，走進大師的精氣神中，潛移默化。她以金色線條勾勒出花卉形體於墨綠色畫布上，猶如一幀幀黑白照片，映入內心。畫布上朦朧的金色，有著解構下的金色花卉，一朵朵呈現在大小不一的獨立小品上，各自綻放，也相互呼應。在大面積的展示牆面上，這些小品被重新排列，形成新氣象，訴說各自情懷。角落上鮮豔的彩蝶，振翅欲飛，為再次綻放的美麗，注入新契機。

## Dialogue Through Time with Giuseppe Castiglione 2023

Tendrils materialize in gold paint against the darkness of a virescent canvas; there is no escape from the tenderness of an organic life recorded by the hands of an artist, where time emerges as an evocative yet porous entity that mirrors the delight often reserved for dream states. In Mediha Ting's "Dialogue through Time with Giuseppe Castiglione," the artist employs her distinct take on the subconscious mind through a thirteen-piece set depicting water lilies and butterflies. Inspired by Giuseppe Castiglione's catalogue "Forever Springing Celestial Calyx," this series honors the artist's personal lineage and a cultural one.

Through fine and atmospheric golden strokes, every rendering becomes successive degrees of homage and extension to the fusion of Gongbi and Renaissance techniques commenced by the imperial court of Qing emperors. Behind these luminous strokes lies Ting's sagacious restoration of the first encounter of Chinese and Western painting techniques that Emperor Kang Xi sought in 1705 and awaited ten years until Castiglione arrived at the Forbidden City. Employing the uniquely contemporary medium, acrylic on canvas, Ting modernizes Castiglione's innovation in Realism achieved through fusing the Western concave and convex method with the intricate contour lining affiliated with Gongbi. Such a previously unprecedented synthesis of the two modalities was espoused throughout Kang Xi and Emperor Yong Zheng's reigns, where Castiglione's mastery so awarded his portraiture and flower paintings as better than any other in the eyes of Emperor Qian Long. As archived in "Forever Springing Celestial Calyx," the technique resulted in sublime portrayals of foliage, flowers, and frolicking butterflies—an artistic leap facilitated by China's natal globalization.



### Magnolia Elegant

Acrylic on Canvas  
50 x 26 cm (2022)

The thirteen canvases of “Dialogue through Time with Giuseppe Castiglione” are all but one completed in the style of Baimiao, a monochromatic drawing style that is as much the understructure of Gongbi paintings as it is an art form of its own. Instead of multicolored depictions of flowers following Castiglione’s Realism, Ting constructed liminal states via subtle gradations of golden lusters. Forgoing variegated illustrations, these meticulous floral renderings explore the in-between quality of tones—fusing Baimiao and Grisaille, a fundamental technique in oil painting that parallels Baimiao’s role in Gongbi. In this stylistic departure, the series graduated from Castiglione’s invention in Realism and joined Ting’s oeuvre in limning the human subconscious in today’s globalized milieu.

Resembling Globalization’s diasporic attribute, Ting’s artistic breakthrough was anchored in personal history. From paying tribute to “Forever Springing Celestial Calyx” to centering on rhythmic linear motifs found in arabesques—the art form associated with Renaissance and Islamic tradition—Ting offers an intrinsic insight into her mixed cultures identity that progressed in Western and Eastern upbringings. Creating the series nearly thirty years into her painting career, Ting stepped away from her acclaimed prowess in colors as she surveyed and built on Giuseppe Castiglione’s innovation from the last imperial dynasty of Chinese history.



## Yellow Roses

Acrylic on Canvas  
50 x 26 cm (2022)





## Yellow Roses with Bleeding Heart

Acrylic on Canvas  
45 x 26 cm (2023)

# Lotus with Butterfly

Acrylic on Canvas  
26 x 26 cm (2022)



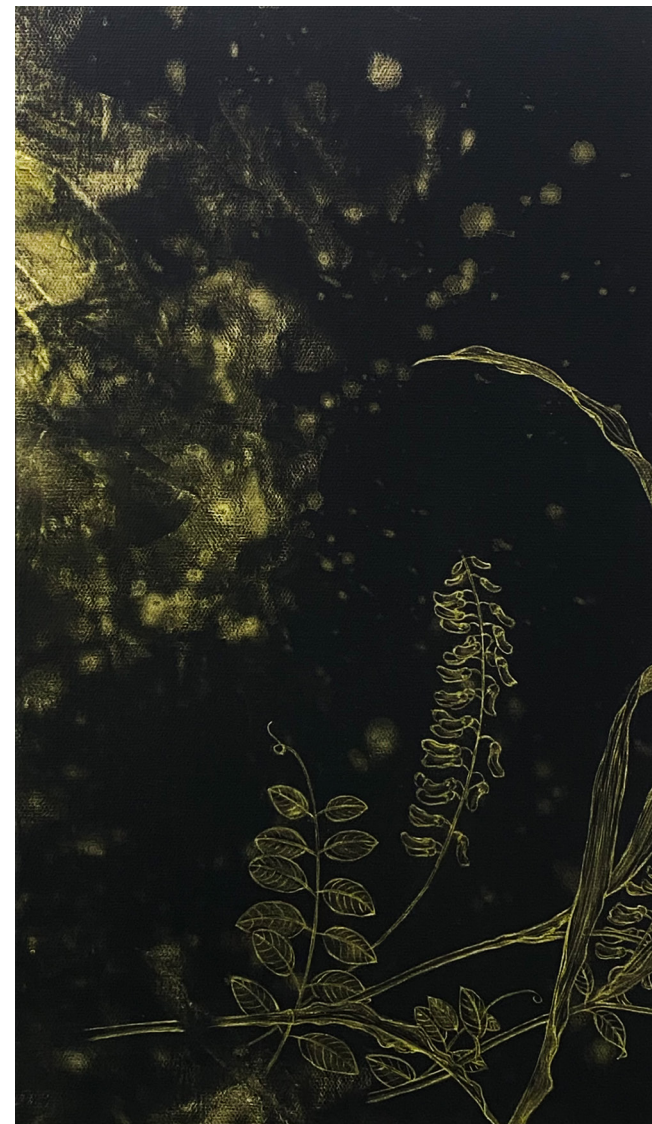


Poppy  
Remembrance

Acrylic on Canvas  
60 x 26 cm (2022)

## Bean Flower

Acrylic on Canvas  
45 x 26 cm (2022)



# 曙光乍現系列

## Shine Through the Darkness Series 2019

The "Shine through the Darkness" series stands as one of Mediha Ting's recent ventures into mixed media artistry, deftly interweaving Acrylic, Chinese ink, and color spreading techniques to yield a distinctive aesthetic equilibrium between the figurative and the abstract. Within the artistic tableau, the portrayal of light amidst darkness emerges as a poignant motif, symbolizing a transcendental emergence from profound obscurity. In the series, Ting deftly employs Islamic geometric patterns, an homage to her cultural and religious heritage, infusing the canvas with nuanced references that signify the enduring struggle between humanity and adversarial forces— both external and internal. Central to her thematic exploration is a profound belief in the resilience of faith, positing that within its sanctity lies the potential to navigate the labyrinthine passages of darkness, ultimately unveiling pathways to illumination and inner serenity.



### Dawn

Ink and mixed medium on paper  
96 cm x 180 cm (2020)

The genesis of this painting series finds its roots in the profound influence of two essays authored by Ting's grandfather—an exploration delving into eschatological themes, portraying the cataclysmic denouement of the world and the relentless struggle between humanity and malevolence. Concurrently, these artworks encapsulate echoes of societal upheavals embroiling Hong Kong during the genesis of their creation. Within "Shine through the Darkness" is a series of Ting's latest Chinese Contemporary Ink paintings that navigates through the tapestry of Hong Kong's past, present, and the uncharted territories of its future. Washes of colors seem to almost permeate the placid paper underneath with an intangible strength comparable to that of memories'. Lightweight, pervasive, and ever-present, the soft watercolors perforate across the horizon like units of subconsciousness coalescing as a city's collective consciousness. The artist perceives the past three pandemic-laden years and social convulsions as an inflection point, an axial juncture reshaping the city's narrative fabric. Within the prismatic hues lies Ting's pictorial exploration to grasp and encapsulate a transformative epoch in Hong Kong's annals, tracing this odyssey through redolent coastlines and cityscapes.

In "Shine through the Darkness," Ting recounts her internal world inhumed in sociopolitical externalities through converging Western and Eastern approaches of the subconscious mind, as seen in Surrealism and I Ching, as well as composes Chinese Contemporary Ink paintings with the use of photography in molding abstracted landscapes. Engaging the venerable tradition of Chinese Ink painting, Ting abstracts these captured moments further, interweaving fragments from eras bygone, the palpable present, and the ephemeral figments of an imagined tomorrow. This effervescent process finds resonance in the enigmatic dance of surrealist automatic drawing, an artistic kinship reminiscent of the techniques adored by luminaries like Salvador Dalí or Joan Miró. In her painterly discourse, Ting endeavors to capture dichotomies—the interplay of beauty and horror, hope nestled within despair, and the poignant dialectic of familiarity and estrangement. Emerging from a fusion, Ting's techniques produce a synergy harmonizing conscious and subconscious, entwined in traditional aesthetics of Chinese painting and photographic abstractions.

On the one hand, Ting's approach resonates profoundly with principles espoused by I Ching, the ancient Chinese divinatory text revered for its philosophical depth and symbolic richness, embodying the dynamic interplay of opposites—Yin and Yang, the mutable nature of existence, and the cyclical rhythms governing life's ebbs and flows. Ting channels these concepts into her artistry, employing fragmented layers of contrasting colors to symbolize the duality and fluidity inherent in existence, akin to the shifting hexagrams and interplay of lines in I Ching. On the other hand, Ting's methodology also mirrors contemporary master Gerhard Richter's in her deliberate utilization of photography as a starting point for paintings. She too engages with photographs, using them as a foundation to reimagine and reconstruct landscapes through her drawings and subsequent painting techniques. Her process of fragmenting, abstracting, and recontextualizing photographic imagery echoes Richter's transformative approach, where the captured moments undergo an emotive and conceptual metamorphosis. The convergence lies not only in the technical aspects of the West and the East but in a shared philosophy—an endeavor to transcend the literal representation of photographic reality into a realm where the essence of a moment is captured and reinvigorated through artistic interpretation.



## Emerging Light

Ink and mixed medium on paper  
96 cm x 180 cm (2019)

Embarking on the pictorial odyssey of Hong Kong's sociopolitical climacteric through Ting's lens, the inaugural piece of the series, "West Kowloon Waterfront," holds a deeply personal resonance—an intimate vista visible from her sanctum, the window of her abode. A decade since her return from London to Hong Kong, this cityscape has served as a silent witness, a sanctuary amidst the tumult—a constant, unwavering beacon of solace. Transcending the mere act of replication, Ting reconfigures and recontextualizes photographic imageries of the skyline, infusing it with emotive depth and ambiguity that underscore the departure from literal representation toward an inner abstraction. This analogous process of translating photographs into emotionally charged, fragmented landscapes stands as an emblem of Ting's affinity for exploring the intersection of visual media, a continued pursuit of infusing the static capture of a moment with the dynamic essence of lived experience.



## Darkness to Light

Acrylic and chinese  
ink on canvas  
183 x 123 cm each (2020)

# Shine Through the Darkness

Acrylic on Canvas  
183 x 123 cm each (2020)





## Pivotal Moment

Mixed Media on Paper  
73 x 140 cm (2021)



# Pivotal Moment

Washes of colors seem to almost permeate the placid paper underneath with an intangible strength comparable to that of memories'. Lightweight, pervasive, and ever-present, the soft watercolors perforate across the horizon like units of subconsciousness coalescing as a city's collective consciousness. "Pivotal Moment," Ting's latest series of Chinese Contemporary Ink paintings, is an artistic voyage that navigates through the tapestry of Hong Kong's past, present, and the uncharted territories of its future. Ting perceives the past three pandemic-laden years and social convulsions as an inflection point, an axial juncture reshaping the city's narrative fabric. Within the prismatic hues lies Mediha Ting's pictorial exploration to grasp and encapsulate a transformative epoch in Hong Kong's annals, tracing this odyssey through redolent coastlines and cityscapes.

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