

PRESS RELEASE

STPI
CREATIVE WORKSHOP & GALLERY

STPI PRESENTS

Jane Lee:

In Praise of Silence 寂靜在說話

Curated by Tan Siuli

29 July —

3 September 2023



Jane Lee, *be - still*, 2023, Airbrushed cel vinyl paint stenciled on crushed clear quartz, on cement coated paper casting,
14.5 x 15 x 6 cm; 15 x 15 x 11.5 cm © Jane Lee / STPI. Photo courtesy of the artist and STPI – Creative Workshop & Gallery, Singapore

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STPI Creative Workshop & Gallery is pleased to present *In Praise of Silence* 寂靜在說話, a solo exhibition by Singaporean artist Jane Lee, curated by Tan Siuli. Running from 29 July to 3 September 2023, the exhibition showcases a measured, monochromatic new series that explores light and shadow, black and white, *yin* and *yang*, as fundamental principles that shape our understanding of the world around us.

Moving from the playful colours of her previous STPI showcase *Freely, Freely* in 2016, Lee demonstrates a markedly different conceptual approach in her latest residency at STPI, influenced by Eastern philosophy and a thoughtful retreat to austerity in form and expression. The new dimensions in her artistic practice are a testament to the spirit of trust and collaboration between the artist and STPI's workshop team. These works reveal deep expertise and innovation to exceed material boundaries and known papermaking techniques.

The exhibition's title *In Praise of Silence* 寂靜在說話 draws inspiration from Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's seminal essay, *In Praise of Shadows*, which posits the existence of shadows as an accent for beauty, while touchpoints in the exhibition nod to the *Dao De Jing* (also known as *The Book of the Way*), an ancient Chinese treatise on wisdom by philosopher Laozi. This new cycle of her practice is clearly embodied in the profound minimalism and intense focus on the idea of the absolute, bringing to fore a primordial quality to her latest works.

This notion of rebirth, essence, and the absolute is given form through symbolic egg sculptures casted in STPI's paper room. In *1 to 2* and *2 to 3* (both 2023) the egg motif is featured in its cracked state, echoing the binary forces held within the contours of a circle — a void, the end of a single whole, but also the birth of new life and new energy. In *be - still* and *be - silence* (both 2023), these small, paper sculptures comprise two halves of an egg shell, the interiors of which have been inscribed with their titular mantras. The image and metaphor of cracking also finds its place in many spiritual teachings, where enlightenment is often achieved through a breakthrough of consciousness.

Exploring this thread, Lee incorporates crystals into her material field, supported by the expertise of the STPI Creative Workshop in finding innovative ways to creatively embed these semi-precious stones into handmade paper. Inlaid into the crevices of the cracked egg shells, their shine and lustre conjure images of galaxies and deep time. For the *om* series (2023), Lee worked with an assortment of minerals that included amethyst, lapis lazuli, jade, citrine, and more; she channelled her fascination with the intrinsic qualities of crystals, carefully applying them on STPI handmade paper in varying degrees of fineness to reveal their depths and textures. In doing so, the artist invites us to attune our sensitivities to their vibrational fields and transcendental energy.

STPI continues its innovative work as a leading art space in the region, championing Singapore and international artists by facilitating a global creative community through strong

networks. Jane Lee is widely acknowledged for her talent, excellence, and groundbreaking contributions to the contemporary art scene. With her innovative use of materials and captivating artistic vision, Lee has established herself as a leading figure in the local and international art community. This presentation coincides with Lee's institutional solo show *LILA: Unending Play*, running concurrently at the Singapore Art Museum from 18 May to 24 September 2023.

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About the Artist



Jane Lee is noted for her unconventional methods and approach towards process, materials and techniques, challenging the notion of what constitutes a painting. Through abstract pieces of incredible texture and heavy three-dimensionality, Lee re-examines the relationship between painting and contemporary art, blurring the line between the two and three-dimensional realms in their presentation within spaces. Questioning the history and traditions of Western painting practices, while looking for new aesthetics and visual languages to express her artistic concerns, Lee's work reflects the ethos of contemporary art situated within the age of transcultural globalisation.

Jane Lee has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and a Diploma in Fashion from LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore. Lee has participated in numerous art fairs and exhibitions across the globe. Notable exhibitions include *Lila: Unending Play* at Singapore Art Museum in 2023, *Red States*, a critically acclaimed solo exhibition at the Hong Kong Arts Centre in 2018; *Meld*, a solo Sundaram Tagore Gallery presentation at Art Basel in 2017; and *Freely, Freely* at the STPI in 2016, which followed her 2015 residency.

Lee's work *Raw Canvas* was showcased at the Singapore Biennale 2008, Collectors' Stage at the Singapore Art Museum in 2011 and in the Southeast Asia Platform, an exhibition of cutting-edge work from across the region at Art Stage Singapore in 2014. The following year, Lee's work was selected for Prudential Singapore Eye, one of the largest surveys of Singapore's contemporary art to date, held at the ArtScience Museum and *Medium at Large*, a year-long exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum, where her large-scale installation *Status*, 2009, was acquired for the museum's permanent collection. In 2015, Lee also participated in *Frontiers Reimagined*, a Collateral Event of the 56th Venice Biennale.

About the Curator



Tan Siuli is an independent curator with over a decade of experience encompassing the research, presentation and commissioning of contemporary art from Southeast Asia. Formerly Head of Collections and Senior Curator at the Singapore Art Museum, Tan has undertaken a spectrum of exhibition projects including two editions of the Singapore Biennale (2013 and 2016), inter-institutional traveling exhibitions, as well as mentoring and commissioning platforms such as the President's Young Talents exhibition series. She has also presented on contemporary art from Southeast Asia at platforms such as Frieze Academy London and Bloomberg's Brilliant Ideas series. Tan is currently Art Lead and Curator at multidisciplinary space Appetite, as well as Contributing Editor for ART SG.

About STPI

STPI Gallery fosters the exchange of ideas in contemporary art with its diverse exhibitions and public programme. The gallery hosts specially curated exhibitions of works produced in the STPI Creative Workshop and regularly participates in international art fairs. This enables it to nurture and sustain local and international interest in both its residency artists as well as the mediums of print and paper.

STPI is a creative workshop and contemporary art gallery based in Singapore. Established in 2002, STPI is committed to promoting artistic experimentation in the mediums of print and paper, making it one of the most cutting-edge destinations for contemporary art in Asia. STPI sits alongside National Gallery Singapore and the Singapore Art Museum as part of the national Visual Arts Cluster of leading institutions in the region.