

Melissa Tan

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Melissa Tan

Space rocks and elongated time

Melissa Tan's intricate and obsessive patterned paper-cut outs are laboriously layered and graphically echo topological maps saturated with cryptic information. Simultaneously macro and micro, they visually allude to colliding alien tectonic plates and magnified internal structures of precious stones.

Inspired by the formation of crystals, Noriko Ambe's *Linear-Actions Cutting Project* and Tacita Dean's multifaceted practice, the drawings are documentations of the processes involved with developing crystal clusters. The layering of paper mimics compressions and the burn mark-making technique is conjured by the intense heat built-up from the procedural pressures that are essential components for the formation of valuable minerals. Though inspired by rough and intense processes, the works appear ephemeral and delicate.

And the Darkest Hour is Just Before Dawn (2014) is a continuation from the first series titled *The Secret Lives of Rocks* (2012) which was exhibited during *The Singapore Show: Future Proof* at Singapore Museum, progressing from earthly gravels into meteorites and asteroids-rocks from space. Tan asserts that the darkest hour of the night is midnight and just before dawn is the best period to watch heavenly meteor showers. Furthermore, the title references the proverb "*It is always darkest just before the Day dawneth*", alluding to the possibility of hope even in the worst situations, a recurring theme in her practice. Thus with time, everything heals and patience will bring potentials and possibilities.



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The works in the series reference time or the passage of time through the usage of arduous labor, the repetitive process of removing and adding patterns and shapes and her interest with ancient rocks, either terrestrial or extra-terrestrial.

Process is important and the forms serve like evidential skeletal frames that are drenched with genetic information of the procedures and physical developments that have occurred during the act of construction. With a lengthened timescale, Tan allows spaces for accidents to occur, in which she likens managing them as incorporating the undesirable events to become parts of the intrinsic structures of the works.

Time is also evident in her sculptural sound pieces in which it is a crucial component in music. Constructed during her residency in Paris, Tan's music players convert her patterned cut outs of musical scores into placating tunes. Inspired by the urban environment of Paris and the roughness of the city's pavements, she documented rocks found at different Parisian metro stations she visited. Each music score is a cutout derived from different individual rocks, thus the sound generated is the 'frequency' of that specific stone. The music players, demanding physical activation by the audience through the spinning of a small handle explore sonic material as a medium in art. She attempts to translate her graphic documentations into sound frequencies therefore converting the essence of a humble pebble into the ephemeral state of sound and time.

Thus Tan, manipulates paper, a mundane material in which its surface is adaptable to record information, into elaborate strangely-formed constructions inspired by organic growth patterns. The sculptural qualities of her drawings open new possibilities of paper becoming more than just a storage space for information but also able to generate meaning physically.

-Haffendi Anuar

2014

Melissa Tan



Title: *D/1884 01*
Year: 2014
Medium: Acrylic paint on watercolour paper
Size: 106 x 84 x 3.5 cm

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Title: *C/1843 D1*
Year: 2014
Medium: Acrylic paint on watercolour paper
Size: 100 x 80 x 3.5 cm

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Title: *IP/Halley*
Year: 2014
Medium: Acrylic paint on watercolour paper
Size: 106 x 104 x 3.5 cm

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Title: *192 Nausikaa*
Year: 2014
Medium: Acrylic paint on watercolour paper
Size: 88 x 83 x 2.7 cm

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Title: *21 Lutetia*
Year: 2014
Medium: Acrylic paint on watercolour paper
Size: 91 x 99 x 3.5 cm

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Title: *99942 Apophis*
Year: 2014
Medium: Acrylic paint on watercolour paper
Size: 117 x 108 x 3.8 cm

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Title: *D/1894 F1*
Year: 2014
Medium: Acrylic paint on watercolour paper
Size: 98.2 x 70 x 2 cm

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Title: *C/1948 D1*
Year: 2014
Medium: Acrylic paint on watercolour paper
Size: 82.5 x 74 x 3.5 cm

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Title: *at the edge of the universe window*
Year: 2014
Medium: Acrylic paint on watercolour paper
Size: 218 x 136.5 x 5 cm

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Melissa graduated from Lasalle College of The Arts, Singapore, with a BA(Hons) in Fine Arts. She is interested in themes of transience and beauty of the ephemeral. Her current project revolves around Landscapes and the process of formation. She has since participated in group exhibitions at *Richard Koh Fine Art* and *The Singapore Show: Future Proof*, Singapore Art Museum at 8Q and exhibited in group shows in France and London. Recently she had taken part in the Dena Foundation Artist Residency Program in Paris.

Education

- 2011 Lasalle BA Degree With Second Class Honours (1st Division) Fine Arts
- 2006 Singapore Chinese Girls School, GCE 'O' levels

Solo Exhibition

- 2014 *And the Darkest Hour is Just Before Dawn*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Singapore

Group Exhibitions

- 2013 *Primavera 2, CNEAI, Chatou, Ile des impressionnistes*, Paris
Strarta Art Fair, Saatchi Gallery, London
Looking for Time, The Private Museum, Singapore
Discovering New Endeavors, Richard Koh Fine Art, Singapore
- 2012 *Looking for space*, 71 Sultan Gate, Singapore
Expression, Dahlia Gallery, Singapore
Okto Channel: Watch This Space Season 2, Singapore
The Singapore Show: Future Proof, Singapore Art Museum at 8Q, Singapore
- 2011 *SPORE Art Salon 8*, Singapore
Kartestudio, at Orchard Central, "Human Activities" By Roshni Rao, Melissa Tan and Jodi Tan, Singapore
National Geographic, at VivoCity "Chaos.Peace.love. This is Harmony" By i-AM 2011,
Project Xingmu, Valerie Yang, Melissa Tan and Peenut Lee, Singapore
- 2010 *Lasalle College of the Arts, "Edgeworthia Gardneri"*, Singapore
Artist assistant (Andreas Schlegel), Interactive mural, Youth Olympic Village, NTU, Singapore
Lasalle College of the Arts, "Kariyaworks", Singapore
Artist assistant (Alfred Patrick Storey), Singapore, "Untitled film", Film festival
- 2009 *Lasalle College of the Arts, "Tape it up"*, Singapore
Lasalle College of the Arts, "Almost Accidental", Singapore
Artist assistant (Betty Susiarjo), "Someday we will know", Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore
- 2008 *Fujitstu "New Year New Hopes"*, Singapore



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Lasalle College of the Arts, "Man-made this", Singapore

Residency Program

2013 *National Art Council and Dena Foundation Artist Residency program (Paris, France)*