

LIFESTYLE

Hong Kong artist Chivas Leung on using art to tell her life story

The works of the Hong Kong artist, who uses techniques including aquatint and dry-point are her attempt at filling in the gaps in her own life story.

by Michele Koh Morollo / JULY 12, 2023



For Hong Kong artist Chivas Leung, her paintings and illustrations are a means for her to preserve memories in the face of the irreversibility of life.

"My art is always based on a true story, with anecdotes adapted from real-life experiences. These stories contain secret clues to retrieving the missing pieces in my memory and commemorate all the experiences I've had," says the earnest, 29-year-old.

Leung says her ideas come from everyday life, with themes arising from her internal psychological states, precious memories, or some powerful emotion or mood she finds difficult to express or share with another human being.

"Unlike reality, there are no limitations to the imagination. I like to create images that make some of my wishes come true or that help me relive and find solace in moments from the past."

Related: [Artist Ali Yass paints his dreams of blood and strife at the Singapore Biennale](#)

Mediums as visual expression



SPONSORED HIGHLIGHTS



LIFESTYLE

Designing a timeless kitchen that balances function and s...

EDITOR'S PICKS

LIFESTYLE

Singapore skincare brands are going hyperlocal with products for tropical cli...

1

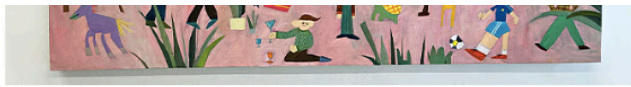
LIFESTYLE

Tee off with style at this luxurious Loire Valley golf club

2

LIFESTYLE

House Tour: Step into



Real Fantasy. (Photo: Chivas Leung)

Leung's latest series of paintings, *Real Fantasy*, which were on show until mid-May, were on display at Karen Weber Gallery in Hong Kong as part of a group exhibition titled *Triangles*.

This series was inspired by English musician Richards Sanderson's hit song *Reality*, which Leung listened to countless times as a child. However, it wasn't until recently that she began to understand the lyrics and how they relate to intimate relationships between people.

"Like many chance encounters, this series of paintings tells the story of two kindred souls who meet at a party and escape together, running away to start a new journey. However, the rest of the story, like the song, is open to interpretation, and perhaps in the end, everything is just a figment of one's imagination, a real fantasy," she explains.

Leung uses techniques such as aquatint, dry-point, etching, risograph (digital screen printing), and photography in her work. She also leans on a mixture of diverse mediums including canvas, woodblocks, paper, memo pads, colour pencils, pastels, oils, clay, corrugated cardboard, and masking tape, for her art pieces.

She feels that while all these mediums and techniques have their limitations, they also have their own unique characteristics that can enhance visual expression.

"Based on the theme that I want to express and the composition of the pictures, I consider how different materials can help me convey the appropriate atmosphere and emotions. This approach allows me to choose the appropriate medium for my work," she says.

Related: [ART SG looks to invigorate Singapore's art ecosystem](#)

“

“Unlike reality, there are no limitations to the imagination. I like to create images that make some of my wishes come true.”

CHIVAS LEUNG

Drifting into zines



DRIFT. (Photo: Chivas Leung)

Three series that she deems important in her career trajectory include her first self-published Risograph zine, *DRIFT*, her first solo exhibition of Mokuhanganga (Japanese woodblock print) art, Yan Kan San Po, and her first comic book, *NIGHT NIGHT*.

DRIFT, which was created during a time when Leung was suffering from insomnia, is about a person who can't dream and is searching for a dream on a sleepless night.

"The story was fragmented, and the illustrations were very sketchy, making it quite experimental for me," Leung explains. "It was also my first time using a Risograph to print a zine, but due to human errors, only about 40 copies were printed. Despite this, it

3

house, then, deep into an art gallery-inspired 3.5-storey detached house at Si...

4

LIFESTYLE
Hong Kong artist Chivas Leung on using art to tell her life story

5

LIFESTYLE
How French visual artist L'Atlas is changing the geometric art movement with ...

6

LIFESTYLE
Leica Q3 proves compact cameras aren't dead — if

sold out quickly and received a lot of love. This was a huge confidence booster for me, and it was how I began my journey of creating zines," she shares.

Yan Kan San Po, which features nine Mokuhanga pieces, is the largest series she's created to date. The pieces were her interpretation of scenes she saw during her night walks and the music she listened to during these peregrinations.

Last year, Leung published her first full-length comic book *NIGHT NIGHT*, which received special mention in the Young Adult category at the Bologna Ragazzi children's book awards in Bologna, Italy.

This book tells the story of a boy who loves to draw, a girl on roller skates, and a cat who go on a journey together searching for the most beautiful scenery in a small town where it is always night.

Related: [Auctioneers eye new record for Tintin artwork at sale](#)

Connecting with comics



Photo: Chivas Leung

Comics were a big part of Leung's life growing up. In high school, she recalls hanging out with friends at comic book stores after class and spending most of her summer vacations flipping through comic books. Unsurprisingly, creating comics has always been one of the items on her bucket list.

A few years after graduating from high school, Leung attended a comics masterclass at the Hong Kong Arts Centre. The instructor was an artist she revered: "I participated in hopes of getting some of his feedback."

After that masterclass, Leung started creating some short comics and printed them into zines to sell. "I was surprised by the number of readers who shared their thoughts with me. I felt that comics could convey messages more completely and directly than my other work and could help me connect with people more effectively," says Leung, who sees her art as a bridge that helps her connect with the world and other people.

"My work may resonate with some people and bring emotional comfort to others, but it may also mean nothing to some people. In any case, I believe that the greatest responsibility of artists is to live, reflect, and then create," she adds.

READ NEXT



[Art, memes, and a revolution: a conversation with Metakovan](#)



[Artful motion: kinetic art in Singapore](#)



[Artist Takashi Murakami: "To succeed, break your ego."](#)



TAGS: [ART](#) [CHIVAS LEUNG](#) [HONG KONG](#) [JUNE ISSUE 2023](#) [LIFESTYLE](#)

SHARE THIS ON



TRENDING