



No. 10 (MISTY SHADOW) 2005
oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm



No. 4 (GREY UNDER) 2004
oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm



Born 1975, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Currently residing in Singapore.



No. 2 (RED) 2004
oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm

Front Cover: No. 5 (2) (WARM GREY) 2004
oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm each

Exhibition dates: 16 August – 2 September 2006

VALENTINE
WILLIE
fine ART

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Southeast Asian Paintings & Works of Art

EDUCATION

1999 – 2000 Master of Fine Art (Painting)
Rajah Mahrana Institute of Technology (RMIT)
LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore

1995 – 1997 Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art (Painting) with Distinction
Rajah Mahrana Institute of Technology (RMIT)
LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore

1993 – 1996 Diploma in Fine Art (Painting) with Distinction
LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore

SOLD EXHIBITIONS

2006 Indulge – Paintings by Eric Chan
Gajah Gallery, Singapore

2005 From Here To After – Paintings by Eric Chan
The Third Line, Dubai, UAE

2004 Devoted – Paintings by Eric Chan
Tikus Jakarta, Indonesia

2003 Five Objects – Paintings by Eric Chan
Tikus Singapore, Singapore

2002 Our Sight – Paintings by Eric Chan
Dark Modern Art, Hong Kong

New paintings by Eric Chan
Valentine Willie Fine Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2001 In Between Ratio – New Works by Eric Chan
The Substation Gallery, Singapore

ERIC CHAN – Solo Exhibition
Valentine Willie Fine Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (24 May till 8 June 2001)
The Gallery – Seremban Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (3 July till 27 July 2001)

2000 Flowering – Paintings by Eric Chan
Art Forum Gallery, Singapore

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2005 TOWARD BEAUTY'S END
Belford Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales, Australia

EMERGING ARTISTS EXHIBITION
Spear Collection, Melbourne, Australia

2004 TOWARD BEAUTY'S END
Queensland University Art Museum, Brisbane, Australia
(Exhibition travelled throughout Australia till end 2005)

PAINTINGS BY ERIC CHAN
National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2003 MALINDO
Tikus Jakarta, Indonesia

2002 ASEAN ART AWARDS 2002
Philip Morris Group of Companies
Bali International Convention Centre, Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia

Singapore Art Awards 2002/2003
Philip Morris Group of Companies
The Gallery @ Paragon, Singapore

Painted: Recent works by contemporary Southeast Asian painters
Valentine Willie Fine Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2001 ASEAN ART EXPO – Singapore
Eart La Gallery, Singapore

RMIT Master of Fine Art Graduate Show (Singapore)
LASALLE-SIA Gallery, Singapore

STRATA 2000 – RMIT Master of Fine Art Graduate Show
SPAR Collection, Melbourne, Australia

2000 Inaugural Boundaries – Looking at New Model Communities
Marian Perle Theatre Festival 2000 (Visual Arts Exhibition)
Marian Perle Community Building, Singapore

2000 PRAISE – LASALLE School of Fine Art Faculty Show
Eart La Gallery, Singapore

1998 SIBBODS – LASALLE School of Fine Art Faculty Show
Eart La Gallery, Singapore

A Refusal To Be Aware Of All Options: Looking Into Contemporary Painting
The Substation Gallery, Singapore

WISAL – 5 Installation 5 Artist
LASALLE Gallery, Singapore

ART RESIDENCIES

2005 Young Artist Programme (Photomontage Residency)
Singapore Open Post Institute (OPPI), Singapore



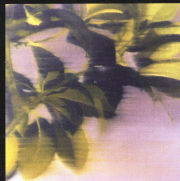
nightfalls.
paintings by eric chan.



NO. 6 PINK BLUE, 2004
oil on canvas
130 x 130 cm



NO. 12 CRUEL LOVE, GREY, 2006
oil on canvas
diptich: 100 x 100 cm each



NO. 5 WARM LINGER, 2004
oil on canvas
130 x 130 cm

After Lane's Relay
Loo Weig Choy



Let's talk about titles—such as the name of an exhibition called *Forward Beauty's End*, a title I like very much. My own headline attempts to emulate it; indeed, the purpose of this text is to respond to, or, rather, to entangle the "pretext"—as the curator Iher Holmický put it—signalled by the phrase "toward beauty's end". These paintings by Eric Chan were first shown in that exhibition in 2005 at the Queensland University Museum. Four new works have been added, and together they form a new body of work, called *Relays*.

It's arguable that in no other series of paintings has Eric expressed as much ambition and concentration. This series focusses on the same subject—close-ups of vegetation, at twilight time. The leaves and branches are recognisable as such and, as pictures, they are enticing. Scale has a lot to do with this. But I would also contend that the subject matter is arbitrary, as the imagery functions to provide occasions for Eric to improvise in composition, colour, temperature and tone. For example, in Eric's diptychs—which, like all the paintings, despite their smooth surfaces, invite careful scrutiny—one can notice how a subtle shift in tone can make so much difference, how a surface can appear cold, but only as contrast to its slightly warmer neighbor. Or how new pictures, more warmed their weather, prompt the viewer to speculate on the many decisions, variations and pleasures of composition—why is this edge of leaf in that corner of the canvas more sharply presented than that one, or why is this area darker? Such contrasts may be arbitrary, but they are all decided, and crafted, with conviction.

Eric's paintings offer provocative responses to the questions alluded to by the premise of *Forward Beauty's End*. Although the responses, as one

might expect, suggest more questions. Iher Holmický has said as much in his curatorial catalogue essay: Eric's botanical imagery is a "ruesse towards an end" (but I would add an "is" to that end—ends). The question remains, what "ends"? I'm afraid the answer eludes me here.

My title also borrows from a passage in *Why do women write more letters than they post?*, a book by Dorien Leader which brushes psychoanalytic theory against the grain of generalisations on heterosexuality. Leader writes: "we find a clue [to the question, why do women write more letters than they post?]] in an odd phrase of Lacan's. A woman's love, he says, aims at the 'universal man'. Now, by definition, this will be situated beyond the real male partner. Now, then, can one send something to him, and is it even necessary that he knows that something is being sent? ... The continuity of love is preserved so long as the letter does not reply. ... [The letter] is written to someone beyond the real man, yet it uses him as a relay, in exactly the way that a real man may be used in a sexual relation as a relay for a woman to get somewhere else, to a different space."

This is where my use of the word "relay" comes from: as a means to get to a different space or as a way to preserve a continuity—if that's what Leader is saying. But my interest in the word also comes from Holmický's curatorial text—when he talks about how Jax'obin Tawzaki "does not tell us where beauty resides, as if a conclusive end... In the spirit of his comment, the exhibition considers painting as a relay signal.... Moreover, Holmický writes: "This and is also the eye and hand in transit, and plays into the dynamics of viewing exhibitions—the eye passes over paintings in the typical gallery walkabout. *How then to arrest attention?*" (the emphases are mine).

So what do I mean by "tether love's relay"? What is at stake is both a movement and an arriving of movement; or rather, this arriving does not end as end to the transmission, instead it is precisely this that propels the transmission. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me try to explain a word at a time, and in this order: Why "tether"? With "beauty's end", it seems related to more "tethered" it, yet? For all the doubts to which we have subjected "beauty" throughout history, and Holmický gives us a short catalogue—it is almost as if "beauty" is as impossible as "thought" itself; this Doubter, when he doubts, he cannot doubt that he is in that thinking. For all our doubts, for all our changing demands upon beauty—that it be classical, or modern, or black, sacred or profane—we are still compelled to that something we cannot define, but in its place we name "beauty". Although this is not quite my point, that beauty is undefinable. The psychoanalyst/philosopher Jacques Lacan makes the distinction between "love" and "desire", while the latter is connected to its object—the object of desire, an object of heavy—the former is connected to that difficult philosophical category, "being" (I suppose the phrase "to be in love", is one way of tentatively approaching what I'm suggesting). But let us not get too bogged down in philosophy. Let's keep moving forward. If "beauty" takes us toward it, then what of "love"—why come after it?

In trying to answer that question, I will dodge it, and address that other question—what of "love"? Because to address this other question is to understand why it could only be "after" love rather than "toward" it. The "end" is an object. "A means towards an end"—doesn't that describe the complex workings of an unconscious? Which does not make itself apparent in its "means"—that is, we can read symptoms, but we cannot, unless we undergo a psychoanalysis, recognise the object of our unconscious desire (and if psychoanalysis is correct, then all our desires are unconscious). But with *being*, what is at stake is not the object, the end, but endless-multiplication. To be is not to be singular, but, in our raw structure, we are an infinite set of multiplicities. Then how does something to us—it arrives. In the event of love—since love, like all, happens—love arrests our being in an incommensurable way, but we continue. The "relay"—is that that somehow renew an event that has already passed? And perhaps it rhymes too easily, but is not the reverse of relay, delay? Isn't there always too much delay in waiting for the relay—always the risk that the transition will not go well? And what does it mean to look again and again, and to try to look, after love's relay, with eyes that use almost for the first time, again?

Notes:

1. Iher Holmický, Curator's introduction, *Forward Beauty's End* exhibition catalogue, University of Queensland, University Art Museum, Brisbane: University of Queensland, 2005.

2. Dorien Leader, *Why do women write more letters than they post?* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988): 141–142.

3. Loo Weig Choy is an art critic and artistic co-director of The Substation arts centre in Singapore.



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