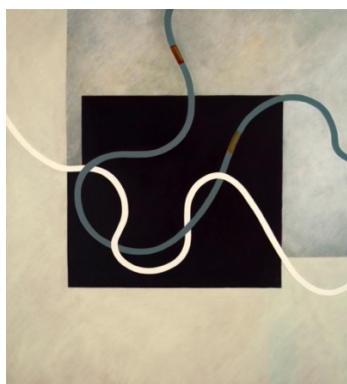


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University Art Gallery, Sonoma State University
This Side of Blue: The Art of Mimi Chen Ting
September 7 - December 10, 2023



The University Art Gallery at Sonoma State University is pleased to present ***This Side of Blue: The Art of Mimi Chen Ting***, which will be on view September 7 - December 10, 2023. Guest curated by Holly Shen, the exhibition is a watershed event: it is the most comprehensive survey of Mimi Chen Ting's five-decade career, it marks the first posthumous exhibition after her passing last year, and offers an in-depth assessment of Ting's extraordinary life and work. This exhibition is organized in collaboration with The Estate of Mimi Chen Ting and Artist Estate Studio, LLC, and supported in part by Louis Stern Fine Arts, Los Angeles. A fully illustrated catalogue with essay by Holly Shen accompanies this exhibition.

Mimi Chen Ting (1946-2022) was a painter, printmaker, and performance artist whose life and career offer a view into the Bay Area art scene during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. A Chinese American artist who immigrated to California in 1965, Ting often interwove Eastern and Western aesthetics in her work. Ting can be understood alongside Bay Area artists such as Carlos Villa, Bernice Bing, or Ruth Asawa, as one of the Bay Area's Asian American and Pacific Islander creatives who have explored questions of personal identity and Asian diaspora, from the 1970s forward to today.

Born in Shanghai in 1946 to the concubine of an aspiring businessman, Ting spent much of her childhood in Hong Kong after her family fled communist takeover in China. She immigrated to the Bay Area in 1965 to attend San Francisco Women's College (now USF), eventually transferring to San Jose State University where she received a B.A. in studio art in 1969, followed by an M.A. in painting in 1976. Ting lived and worked in San Jose for the early part of her career, where she married and raised two children, and taught at institutions including San Jose State University, San Jose City College, and the University of California Berkeley Extension. She later moved to Sausalito, and additionally worked in Taos, New Mexico for part of each year after establishing a small studio there.

This Side of Blue centers on Ting's paintings, presenting the artist's exploration of themes of womanhood, immigration, and the relationship between environment and belonging. The exhibition highlights critical shifts in her engagement with a matrix of connected genres and influences, including figurative paintings, abstracted landscapes inspired by the Bay Area and Taos, entirely abstract works, and a rooted inspiration and engagement with movement—from ballet to Butoh to modern dance and performance art.

“From the enclosed courtyard of her family's compound in Shanghai, where she spent her childhood surrounded by the labyrinthine alleyways of the Old City, to a one-room abode atop a mesa in the high desert of New Mexico,” writes guest curator Holly Shen, “Mimi Chen Ting always had an uncanny discernment of the very real and theoretical boundaries that defined her being in the world, and a proclivity for testing them.”

Ting's figurative canvases often feature a lone figure entangled in a slightly surreal setting. *Sleeping Woman*, 1996, presents a female figure with closed eyes, suspended from a rope within a flat, illusory space. “I ask questions and share stories,” Ting explained in 2002. “Along the way, discoveries and resonance abound. This is a solitary journey where one simply cannot become lost, and where each step promises an adventure.” Ting's landscape canvases like the large triptych *Silicon Landscape* (1984), features bright colors and hard-edged geometries to depict the Bay Area's rolling hills. Ting brought her interest in flat space, bright color, cords and ropes to her abstract paintings as well. A series titled *Tangles and Ties* (2006-2009) is about the many dances in life. Here Ting laid down on canvases pictorial road maps of the tangles and ties of her past experiences, dreams and imaginations.

“I was searching for the source of me,” Ting said in 1991.

This Side of Blue: The Art of Mimi Chen Ting is guest curated for the University Art Gallery by Holly Shen, a writer, curator and cultural producer based in San Jose. Shen is a director for the U.S. office of Lord Cultural Resources, a global consulting practice serving the cultural sector, and she has held senior leadership and program roles at San Jose Museum of Art and Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Programming

- Opening Reception - Thursday, September 7, 4:00-6:00 pm

The opening reception is free and open to the public and the SSU campus community. Visitors driving to the SSU campus must purchase an \$8 parking pass from any automated parking kiosk.

General Information

Press Contact: Jennifer Bethke, Director, bethke@sonoma.edu (707) 774-5624

Location: University Art Gallery, Art Building, SSU, 1801 E. Cotati Ave, Rohnert Park, CA

Hours: Tuesdays - Fridays 11:00-4:00 / Weekends 12:00-4:00

Admission: Free

Parking: \$8 pass in any lot on campus

Telephone: (707) 664-2295

Website: <http://artgallery.sonoma.edu/>

Email: artgallery@sonoma.edu

Images, left to right:

Mimi Chen Ting, *Sleeping Woman*, 1996, acrylic on canvas, 48 x 44 in, © 2023 Estate of Mimi Chen Ting / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Mimi Chen Ting, *Tangles and Ties 9*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 54 x 50 in, © 2023 Estate of Mimi Chen Ting / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

These and additional high-resolution images available upon request.

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