

Nothing Personal

A solo exhibition by Liew Kwai Fei

May 21st 2022 – June 13th 2022

Gallery Hours: Friday to Sunday, 12pm – 7pm

Nothing Personal is a collaboration between Rissim Contemporary and The Back Room presenting the 11th solo exhibition by Malaysian artist Liew Kwai Fei. The exhibition features a selection of paintings from the artist's *Gesture. Abstraction. Painting.* ("GAP") series, started in 2019, in which he explores the performance element in painting.

These works can best be understood through the metaphor of the stage. Imagine each of these paintings as a separate stage play, with the canvas serving as the stage and the artist as the director. The cast for this production consists of the basic elements of a painting: its forms, colours, and such. These "actors", like their stage counterparts, are vessels for the intentions of their artist-director, but they each have a personality of their own that provides interesting resistance to the artist's will. They play out varied ideas of what constitutes gesture, abstraction, and painting. And just as how a play can leave different impressions on the same audience once the curtains come down, the paintings will leave different impressions on each viewer, who comes with their own unique subjectivity.

The stage metaphor helps viewers to understand the act of painting in a new light, i.e. as an aesthetic performance rather than as a sentimental gesture. As such, the exhibition's title, "Nothing Personal", serves as a tongue-in-cheek remark that challenges the interpretation of art as a reflection of the artist's personal life or emotional state, and the romanticisation of the artist as a tortured genius. The works demonstrate Fei's playful and relentless questioning of the medium of painting, and the different ways that it can be utilised as a mode of creative expression.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Liew Kwai Fei 廖贵辉 (b. 1979, Kuantan, Pahang) is recognised today as among the most exciting new generation of contemporary painters in Malaysia. Spanning over a decade, his practice explores the hybridity of the painting medium and its capacity to communicate ideas spanning class, race, and language to the humbling experience of the unspeakable when we encounter art. Including *Nothing Personal*, Liew has had eleven solo exhibitions to date, the most recent of which were: *In Order to Play* (2021), *Fish In Pure Water* (2020), and *From M to M* (2019), all at The Back Room, Kuala Lumpur. He has also participated in numerous group showcases, including the ILHAM Contemporary Forum, ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur (2017) and ArtStage Singapore 2016. His works are in the collections of the National Art Gallery Malaysia and the Singapore Art Museum.

Rissim Contemporary is a contemporary art gallery located in Kuala Lumpur, with a focus on exhibiting new and emerging Malaysian artists. Established in 2019, the gallery strives to not only introduce new names to the Malaysian art scene but nurture a new audience of young collectors.

Rissim Contemporary is located at:

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