



## **Tobe KAN: Panacea**

25 September – 30 October, 2021

Opening: Saturday, 25 September 2021, 2 - 5 pm

Gallery EXIT is pleased to present “The Panacea”, a solo exhibition by Tobe Kan Kiu Sin. The exhibition runs from 25 September to 30 October, 2021. An opening will be held on Saturday, 25 September at 2-5pm.

This exhibition features a new series of plant paintings and three-dimensional works by Kan. Most of the large format works were completed in the artist’s studio under self-isolation during the most severe period of the epidemic, while the smaller works were made as a kind of remedy to calm the mind and restore health when the situation was relatively more stable, and around the time when the artist underwent a small operation. The word “panacea” originates from the Greek *Panakeia*, a goddess of universal remedy in Greek mythology, which also means a solution or remedy for all difficulties or diseases. When in states of stagnation and uncertainty, the artist believes more than ever in the ability of artistic creation to relieve stress and anxiety. But is art really a panacea?

Kan has been researching the imagery and significance of the colour blue in psychology, everyday life, popular culture and literature: *Blue masks*, *Three Colours: Blue* by Krzysztof Kieślowski, *Blue* by Derek Jarman, *Perfect Blue* by Satoshi Kon, *Blue Period* by Japanese manga artist Tsubasa Yamaguchi, inspired by Picasso, in which a character says, “If you see blue, no matter it is an apple or a rabbit, just paint it blue.”

From photographs taken of plants near her studio and in different temples, to found images of films or news reportages, Kan assembles into her paintings a certain languid state, hovering between reality and dream, such that the viewers find themselves lost amidst an illusory blue jungle. *A Dream* and 《Enraptured by this sight, he woke up》 pay tribute to the late artist Matthew Wong, who had himself made a series of blue paintings. In the process of creating these two works, as she was listening to the audiobook of Franz Kafka’s short story “A Dream” and upon hearing how the male protagonist strolled towards the graveyard and met an artist, Kan decided to name the two paintings after the title and the last sentence of the story respectively. She only found out later that Wong had also made a painting titled *A Dream*. Several other works are also named after Kafka’s works. By connecting the imaginations between the imagery of text and image and the viewers’ own experience, Kan attempts to draw the viewers into an illusion that is both ambiguous and absurd.

The artist has always been interested in religion and the idea of sacredness. Her *Awake* series, begun a few years ago, depicts plants in different temples. For Kan, “seeing” is the manifestation of observation and belief. *Blue Cathedral* is inspired by Raymond Carver’s short story of the same name. Kan is intrigued by the blind man in the story who teaches the male protagonist to draw the cathedral with his eyes closed. She is also deeply inspired by Derek Jarman’s posthumous *Blue*, filmed after the director had lost his sight to some illness and could only see blue in front of him. Painted all white and fitted with blue glass and a light source, the found old lantern resembles a blue cathedral, symbolising a kind of hope for self-redemption through artistic creation.

An extension of the artist's plants and lethargy series, 《Min》 and 《Mima》 portray characters. The two works draw from *Blissfully Yours* by Thai filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul, in which the male protagonist wanders into the forest on the border in search of pure happiness, and *Perfect Blue* by Satoshi Kon, whose heroine seems to be recovering from schizophrenia, respectively.

In addition, through a change of medium, the artist tries to blur the boundaries between the gallery space and the inside and outside of the picture frame. The 《Blue Plants》 series materialises the fiddle-leaf fig in *Awake 1*, giving the painted plants an illusory quality. In 《Ablution》 the texture of brushstrokes is manifested in the form of tapestry, thereby transforming the sense of ritual and touch in the original material. The works project the artist's own desire: To cover those cold body, at least with a piece of blue blanket.

The 《Blue Pill》 series is Kan's reflection on the concept of panacea. The idea of the blue pill originates in *The Matrix*, symbolising our desire to cling to the fictional reality we are accustomed to. Like the blue pill obscures the real nature of things, does the panacea create dependence on feelings of comfort and security? In 《Blue Pill 1》 the pills contain a dreamlike blue liquid, resembling the horseshoe crab blood used in vaccine and medicine tests, but is in fact the waste water after the artist washed her paint-stained hands. In a more playful version, 《Blue Pill 2》 has little blue-painted figurines in the pills. At first the artist thought those figurines inside the transparent capsules would evoke the isolated beings during the epidemic, instead she was reminded of lives lost to it.

Other works, such as the four small paintings close to the gallery entrance: *Hungry Face*, *Relative Hysteria*, *Whisky Time* and *Fridge Magic*, take their names from the original soundtrack of the French TV series "Les Revenants" by Scottish post-rock band Mogwai. "Les Revenants" means "ghosts", and the story tells of a small Alpine village, where a group of people, dead and forgotten, suddenly and mysteriously return one after the other. By painting plants in different temples, the artist wishes for a more complete farewell ritual for those who experience sudden separations in the real world.



## 簡喬倩《萬靈藥》

2021年9月25日至10月30日

開幕：9月25日（星期六），下午2時至5時

安全口畫廊呈獻簡喬倩個展《萬靈藥》，展期為2021年9月25日至10月30日。開幕將於9月25日星期六下午2時至5時舉行。

是次個展展出簡喬倩的一系列植物繪畫新作與立體作品。大篇幅作品大部份為藝術家於疫情最嚴峻之際、在自我隔離的情況下在工作室完成。小型畫作則是於疫情較為穩定，以及藝術家近期進行的小手術前後所創作，以作為安定心靈及休養生息的一道藥方。「萬靈藥」

（Panacea）一詞源於希臘神話中的治癒女神帕那刻亞（Panakeia），亦解作萬全之策。處於種種滯留及不明朗的狀態下，藝術家更相信藝術創作有著一種舒緩壓力和焦慮的效能。然而藝術真的是萬靈藥嗎？

簡喬倩一直專注鑽研藍色在心理學上和於日常生活、流行文化及文學作品中呈現的意象和寓意。從藍色口罩、到法國導演奇斯洛夫斯基（Krzysztof Kieślowski）的《藍色情挑》（Three Colours: Blue）、英國導演戴力·渣文（Derek Jarman）的《藍》（Blue）、日本導演今敏的《藍色恐懼》（Perfect Blue），又或是受到畫家畢卡索的「藍色時期」（Blue Period）啟發的日本漫畫家山口飛翔的同名漫畫中角色的一句話：「如果你看到的景象是藍色，不管是蘋果還是兔子，都畫成藍色就好。」

從工作室附近及寺院內所拍攝的植物照片、以及現成的電影或新聞圖像，簡喬倩把一種半睡半醒、遊離於現實及夢境時分的狀態呈現拼合成畫作，讓觀者有如迷失於錯覺中的藍色森林。當中兩幅作品《夢》與《他欣喜若狂，然後，他醒了》是藝術家為曾經亦創作過藍色系列畫作的已故藝術家王俊傑（Matthew Wong）構思的致敬之作。創作這兩幅作品期間，正當簡喬倩聽著作家卡夫卡（Franz Kafka）的短篇小說《夢》的有聲書之際，恰巧聽到故事主角漫漫步向墳場，並遇上一位藝術家，是故決定以其書名及書中最後的一句為兩幅畫作命名。然而簡喬倩後來發現，王俊傑居然也有一幅名為《A Dream》的畫作。此外，其他數件作品亦以卡夫卡的作品為題。簡喬倩嘗試把文字及畫中影象之間的想象、以及觀者的自身經驗聯繫，把觀者拉進曖昧荒誕的幻覺之中。

《明》與《未麻》則是兩幅描繪有人物的作品，作為藝術家的植物、休息與昏睡人物系列的延

續。作品分別取自泰國導演阿彼察邦·韋拉斯哈古 ( Apichatpong Weerasethakul ) 的《極樂森林》 ( Blissfully Yours ) · 戲中的男主角走到邊境森林以尋找單純的快樂；以及今敏的《藍色恐懼》內，疑似人格分裂而最後康復的女主角。

藝術家亦一如以往對宗教與神聖感等題材感興趣，如在數年前開展的《甦生》系列剛開始時所畫的是寺院內的植物。對簡喬倩而言，所謂「看見」就是把觀看與信念具現化。作品《Blue Cathedral》的創作靈感來自瑞蒙·卡佛 ( Raymond Carver ) 所寫的《大教堂》 ( Cathedral ) 。簡喬倩對故事中指導男主角閉目繪畫聖堂的盲人念念不忘。與此同時她亦為因病失明的導演戴力·渣文，在只能看到一片藍色的情況下執導的遺作《藍》深深啟發。藝術家把尋來的舊燈籠塗成全白色，配以藍色窗戶與燈光，看起來就像一座藍色聖堂，亦代表藝術創作作為自我教贖的一種期盼。

此外藝術家亦嘗試透過物料轉換，模糊畫廊空間及畫框內外的界線。《藍色植物》系列把《甦生 1》所畫的琴葉榕具現立體化，令所畫的植物疑幻疑真。《沐浴》則把畫作中的筆觸質感以針線掛毯的形式呈現，改變了畫中物料本身的儀式感與觸感。作品亦投射了藝術家自身的期盼：盡可能為身體冰冷的人，或至少蓋上一片藍色毛毯。

《藍色藥丸》系列則是簡喬倩對萬靈藥概念的反思。藍色藥丸的概念源自電影《22 世紀殺人網絡》 ( The Matrix ) 。電影中的藍色藥丸代表對習以為常的虛構現實的戀棧。藍色藥丸讓人看不清事物的真貌，萬靈藥是否一種對舒適安全感的盲目依賴？作品《藍色藥丸 1》中的藥丸中注滿夢幻的藍色液體，有如疫苗和新藥試劑中的藍色鸞血，卻是從藝術家作畫後清潔雙手的顏料而來。《藍色藥丸 2》則玩味地把小人塗成藍色並放進藥丸中。藝術家原本以為透明膠囊內的小人會看似是因疫情而隔離的眾生，最後卻令她想起因染疫而逝去的生命。

其他作品《Hungry Face》、《Relative Hysteria》、《Whisky Time》與《Fridge Magic》等靠近畫廊大門的四幅小型畫作以蘇格蘭後搖滾樂團 Mogwai 為法國電視劇《Les Revenants》配樂的原聲帶歌曲命名。法語中「Les Revenants」意指「鬼魂」，故事講述一個高山小鎮中，已死去並已被遺忘的居民有一天突然神秘地復活，並逐一歸來。藝術家藉由繪畫寺院中的植物，祈願在現實世界中經歷突如其來離散的人們，能有更完滿的告別儀式。