

TAI SHAN SCHIERENBERG

MIXED EMOTIONS

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15th May - 22nd June 2024
Private View Tuesday 14th May 6-8pm

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Flowers Gallery is pleased to present "Mixed Emotions," a solo exhibition by NPG Portrait Prize winner Tai Shan Schierenberg, opening on 15 May 2024. This exhibition marks a profound exploration of Schierenberg's German and Chinese Malaysian heritage, offering a series of self-portraits and landscapes that navigate the intricacies of identity and belonging.

Through a collection of works that blend real and imagined memories, "Mixed Emotions" invites viewers into Schierenberg's reflective world. The exhibition's lush and dreamlike landscapes and introspective portraits, depicted in both vibrant and muted hues, serve as a canvas for the artist's meditations on heritage, memory, and the search for a sense of place.

Key pieces, such as 'One Man, Two Masters,' embody the thematic heart of the show by contrasting the Buddhist temple in the Perak Tong Caves, where Schierenberg prayed as a child in Malaysia, with the Chartres Cathedral in France. Schierenberg marries the iconography of Eastern and Western divine architecture to narrate stories of cultural convergence and personal discovery.

In 'Gweilo - Ghost', Schierenberg paints a ghost-like boy sitting contemplatively on a fallen tree trunk, in a tropical landscape of lush green fronds, and pastel blue waters. The title of the painting draws from the Cantonese word "gweilo" (鬼佬), historically used to refer to Western foreigners, literally meaning "ghost man". Schierenberg reclaims the term, channelling it into a reflective depiction of his own childhood in Malaysia. This thoughtful reappropriation serves as a meditation on his personal identity within the tapestry of cross-cultural narratives.



One Man, Two Masters,
2023,
oil on canvas, 180 x 120 cm

Artist, Tai Schierenberg said: *"In this exhibition I've gone back to childhood memories of myself negotiating different landscapes; places that I learned to love and that were profoundly formative but in which I always felt alien. I am half German and half Chinese Malaysian, I was born in England but travelled and lived in many different places as a child. I've always felt a sense of not quite belonging anywhere which has become more pronounced as I've got older and have lost both parents; it is also an issue which is very much in the zeitgeist of course. I thought this racial and cultural confusion could be fertile ground, and as I've struggled to conjure in paint these reconstructed memories, collaged from my photo archives, found images and vague recollections, it's not clear answers that have been forthcoming but a deeper understanding of the complexities of identity, habitat and belonging, and some interesting images I hope."*

For more information and images please contact Leighanne Murray: leighanne@atelierpublicrelations.com and Kasimiira Kontio: kasimiira@atelierpublicrelations.com



Captions from left: Negotiating Habitats, 2023-24, oil on canvas, 170 x 150 cm; Exile, 2022, oil on canvas, 120 x 80 cm

ABOUT TAI SHAN SCHIERENBERG

Born in England in 1962, Tai Shan Schierenberg lives and works in London. He graduated from the Slade School of Fine Art in 1987. In 1989, he won first prize in the National Portrait Gallery's John Player Portrait Award and was subsequently commissioned to paint Sir John Mortimer for the gallery. Further works by Schierenberg are held in the museum's collection. Notable commissions include a portrait of Professor Stephen Hawking, in The Royal Society collection; a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II; a portrait of the Duke of Edinburgh; and a portrait of Nobel Prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney, which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. He served as Artist in Residence at West Bromwich Albion Football Club from 2017 to 2018, as part of the Channel 4 documentary strand 'Artist in Residence,' which won the Grierson Award for Best Arts Documentary in 2019. Schierenberg also regularly appears as a judge on the Sky Arts series *Landscape Artist of the Year* and *Portrait Artist of the Year*.



Gweilo - Ghost, 2024, oil on canvas, 150 x 120 cm

NOTES TO EDITORS

Opening Hours: Monday - Saturday 11am - 6pm or by appointment.

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