

TAI SAN SCHIERENBERG

MIXED BLESSINGS

49 TUNG STREET
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HONG KONG

23 October - 21 November 2026
Private View: Thursday 22 October, 6-8pm

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Flowers Gallery Hong Kong is pleased to present *Mixed Blessings*, an exhibition of new paintings by London-based Tai Shan Schierenberg. Marking the artist's first solo presentation in Asia, the body of work expands Schierenberg's ongoing exploration of the convergence of identity, memory, and cultural inheritance. Born in England to a Malaysian-Chinese mother and German father, Schierenberg grew up between Malaysia, the Black Forest, and London. These influences emerge in landscapes and portraits painted in rich, accumulated layers of colour and gesture, through which Schierenberg considers what it means to belong.

Several paintings are rooted in autobiographical narratives. For Schierenberg, *The Swimming Lesson* (2026) is "a return to the theme of being 'saved', as it were, from my vibrant but simple life in Malaysia with my doting grandparents and brought back to a civilised and cold grey London by my parents, especially by a white father whom I didn't know. In this imaginary scene, I'm being taught by my father how to 'swim/live' when I already know how to."



In *One Man Two Masters* (2023), Schierenberg revisits his childhood visits to pray at the Perak Tong cave temples in Malaysia alongside his later exposure to Christian rituals, negotiating the competing yet complementary traditions that informed his upbringing. Borrowing its title from the eighteenth-century Italian comedy *The Servant of Two Masters*, the work expresses what Schierenberg describes as "my feeble attempts to serve both belief systems in my daily life - nonattachment and awareness, or love and forgiveness - whilst being overwhelmed by the great artistic beauty in both traditions." *Yellow Tree* (2026) returns to the Black Forest, where a solitary larch tree recalls the artist's experience growing up in 1970s rural Germany: "...we were definitely the only Chinese or brown people in the area. We attended the local school, and though everyone was extremely welcoming and friendly, I always felt an overwhelming sense of otherness. On a recent trip back, I spotted this lone larch tree (the only pine tree to seasonally lose its needles amongst the evergreen mass of the forest) on a walk and thought the scene summed up my old feelings of alienation perfectly."

Tai Shan Schierenberg, *The Swimming Lesson*, 2026, Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 cm

Schierenberg also engages with the history of art and the meeting points between visual languages. In *A Chinese Scene in an English Garden* (2026), imagery associated with classical Chinese art is translated into a distinctly British setting. Inspired by an early morning walk on London's Hampstead Heath, the work juxtaposes symbols that carry similar meanings across the two cultures. In Chinese tradition, cranes are associated with longevity and wisdom; here, Schierenberg substitutes the heron, a bird connected in English folklore with patience and nobility. By drawing together references that might initially seem incompatible, the painting suggests that apparent distinctions often conceal deeper connections.

Titian (2026) and *Memling* (2026) enter into dialogue with artists whom Schierenberg admires. Inspired by Titian's Portrait of *Gerolamo Barbarigo* (c.1510) and the psychological presence of the portraits of *Hans Memling* (c.1430-94), these works consider Schierenberg's relationship to a broader history of painting. Of *Titian* (2026), Schierenberg says: "I wanted to paint a version of myself, not as accomplished as a painter as Titian, nor as confident as the original sitter, taking my place in the art historical tradition, to see how I fit in." Deeply informed by the Western canon, Schierenberg acknowledges a history in which Asian artists and subjects have often been absent. Placing himself and his contemporaries within that lineage, the works are at once homages, enquiries, and subtle acts of revision.

Moving between the lived and the envisioned, Schierenberg embraces the contradictions and affinities that emerge across cultures and histories, both personal and collective.

About Tai Shan Schierenberg (b. 1962)

Tai Shan Schierenberg studied at St Martin's School of Art, London, from 1981-1985, continuing at the Slade School of Art through 1985-1987. In 1989, Schierenberg won the prestigious Portrait Award at London's National Portrait Gallery, and he was then commissioned by the NPG to paint the British barrister and author Sir John Mortimer (1923-2003). Further portrait commissions include a 1997 double portrait of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and a 2009 portrait of the English theoretical physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking (1942-2018). Within the National Portrait Gallery's collection are Schierenberg's portraits of the British politician and former Secretary General of NATO Lord Carrington (1919-2018), British businessman and politician Lord Sainsbury (1927-2022) and Irish poet and playwright Seamus Heaney (1939-2013).

Since 2013, Schierenberg has appeared regularly as a judge on Sky Arts 'Landscape Artist of the Year' and 'Portrait Artist of the Year.' He has also been involved in further art television programmes including BBC2's 'Oil on Canvas' and 'Titan'. Schierenberg 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.

Tai Shan Schierenberg's work is in public collections including the National Portrait Gallery, London; Tate, London; Cambridge University; Merton College, Oxford; The Royal Society, London; The Naughton Gallery at Queen's University, Belfast; BBC England; Chatsworth House, Derbyshire; The Ruth Borchard Collection, London; and Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.

Exhibition Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday
from 12pm - 6pm

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Tai Shan Schierenberg, *Yellow Tree*, 2026, Oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm



Tai Shan Schierenberg, *Titan (Self portrait in quilted sleeve)*, 2026, Oil on board, 29 x 29 cm