

# Kiang Malingue 2025 Frieze Seoul | A30

馬凌畫廊  
kiangmalingue.com

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(Artist) Tseng Chien-Ying

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(Location)  
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Kiang Malingue presents at Frieze Seoul a selection of recent works on paper by Taiwanese artist Tseng Chien-Ying. Drawn from several celebrated series, the paintings are the latest development of the artist's deepened exploration of recurrent themes and subjects over the last decade, demonstrating his ability to astutely reflect contemporary life by transforming classical artistic techniques.

Tseng's ink brush and gouache paintings are known for examining and splicing highly personal subjects and religious motifs. His works are often informed by the iconography of Buddhist art to imbue his characters with solemn, dignified, and meditative expressions, in an array of psychedelic colours to create a strange, disharmonious atmosphere. Tseng's figures occupy the compositions by discovering an eerily spiritual dimension of contemporary life, revealing ambiguous emotions through their faces, eyes, expressions, hands, feet, and, most prominently, skins. The two folding screen works in this exhibition, *Aphrodisiac* (2025) and *Lunar Visage* (2025), are both inspired by the Buddhist figures of Hanshan and Shide, a pair of Zen Buddhist monk-poets of the Tang Dynasty who came to be known as the "Two Immortals of Harmony", symbolizing a perfectly harmonious friendship. In paintings by the late 13th-century Chinese painter Yan Hui, the 19th-century Japanese painter Hashimoto Gahō, or other artists who deal with the profound artistic tradition, the two monks are depicted as inseparable, wearing mischievous and eccentric smiles. Instead of portraying them as a couple of identical figures as his predecessors did, however, Tseng's paintings emphasize the differences between the two in their intimate relationship—In *Aphrodisiac*, Hanshan is depicted as an elderly man with white hair and a red face, while Shide is portrayed as a calm, tender figure; in *Lunar Visage*, one face is superimposed over another to form a quasi-yin yang shape, gesturing towards the erotic elements within their friendship.

*Oracle* (2025) and *Magenta* (2025) exemplify the artist's long-term exploration of the relationship between lines and colors: shifts of colours organically adhere to gestures and contours, creating textural intensions while hinting at the symbolist mechanisms at work. Tseng often depicts smoke and clouds in his art; the dense smoke in *Oracle* not only suggests a heightened sense of light and dark in the air, but also defines a flowing texture distinct from that of the young man's creased skin and hair. Works such as *Jackpot* (2025), *Camo* (2025), and *Hard Candy* (2024) appropriate the compositional logic of advertisement posters—close-ups of young faces against commercial products—while replacing the products with peculiar, highly symbolic objects. In *Camo*, the orchid mantis, a kind of master mimic, mirrors as an erotic image of the orchid; the baroque pearl earring in the picture also subtly correspond to the work's title—this piece of jewellery is a camouflage as well, an exceptional oddity, because it appears deceptively as a three-dimensional object, as if it is a product of moriage technique.

In *Caramel* (2024) and *Glaze* (2024), Tseng makes remarkable use of moriage to saturate the painted surfaces with three-dimensional body ornamentation. The meticulously crafted earrings and piercings, which have a metallic or mineral-like texture, fuses exterior and interior, adding

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an exoskeletal layer to the folds of the characters' skin. Lastly, evocative of da Vinci's masterpiece *Lady with an Ermine*, Tseng's *Blushbite* (2025) traces the marks of a scar: the scratches on the young man's chest suggests the complex dynamics of a romantic relationship. As shallow voids, they serve the artist's long-standing interest in treating paintings as poetry, echoing classical paintings that scatter various narrative fragments within their compositions.

(About Tseng Chien-Ying)

Tseng Chien-Ying (b. 1987, Nantou, Taiwan) is an artist based in Taipei. He received his MFA in Fine Arts from Taipei National University of the Arts in 2013. Working primarily with ink, gouache, and ceramic sculpture, Tseng draws upon traditional East Asian materials and aesthetics to articulate contemporary conditions of embodiment, spirituality, and socio-cultural tension.

Tseng's recent solo exhibitions include: "Regarding the Mediocrity of Others", Longlati Foundation, Shanghai (2025); "Skin Depth", Each Modern, Taipei (2022); "Cacotopias", Red Gold Fine Art, Taipei (2020); "The Daydream of Delusions", Red Gold Fine Art, Taipei (2017). Recent group exhibitions include: "Too Loud a Solitude: A Century of Pathfinding for Eastern Gouache Painting in Taiwan", Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei (2024); "Here, Where, There?", Almine Rech, Shanghai (2024); "Subzoology: 2020 Taiwan Biennial", National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung (2020); "SPECTROSYNTHESIS II", Bangkok Art and Culture Centre & Sunpride Foundation, Bangkok (2019); "Memories Interwoven and Overlapped: Post-Martial Law Era Ink Painting in Taiwan", National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung (2016). Tseng was selected for the MIT New Artists Project by Taiwan's Ministry of Culture (2015), and received a fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council (2017).