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Installation view of **YEUNG TONG LUNG's** (from left to right) *Sai Wan Estate No.2*, 2016, oil on canvas, diptych, 153 × 391 × 3.5 cm; and *Tong Shui Road Tram Terminus*, 2016, oil on canvas, diptych, 201.5 × 101.5 × 5 cm and 201.5 × 148.5 × 5 cm, at "Daily Practice," Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong, 2021. All images courtesy the artist and Blindspot Gallery.

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YEUNG TONG LUNG: "DAILY PRACTICE"

WEB REVIEW BY PAMELA WONG
BLINDSPOT GALLERY

HONG KONG

There's a sense of freedom when looking at Hong Kong artist Yeung Tong Lung's paintings—a freedom in exploring the visual space, imageries, and narratives in his paintings, without much concern for grand terminologies. Yeung has spent four decades painting the surroundings and happenings encountered in his life, without deliberate choice of subjects. The artist's solo exhibition "Daily Practice," a collaboration between Hong Kong's cultural space ACO and Blindspot Gallery, displayed his most recent large-scale oil canvases as well as sketches of the local cityscape.

A significant portion of the exhibition was dedicated to Yeung's signature paintings, which capture scenes of mundane life with mesmerizing perspectives and narratives. In these paintings, the artist appears to be a free spirit, wandering across the space and observing the events from all angles. *Porcelain Dog* (2020), for example, is a two-meter-tall, one-and-a-half-meter-wide canvas that details random episodes in a furniture store. Among the discount banners suspended from the ceiling and the cluttered furniture spread out across the shop, a woman sitting on a scarlet armchair in the foreground looks directly at the viewer and gestures behind her, introducing the scene. A gay couple in the middle ground is kissing behind her. Further away, an office lady is putting on her heels in front of a mirror. The perspective appears to be distorted, as the heights of these figures are disproportionate. The assemblage of these characters proposes an infinite number of narratives that the painting could possibly contain. The titular porcelain dog is hidden behind the armchair and reflected in a mirror—a recurring motif in Yeung's paintings. The experience of looking at the artist's amusing, playful works reminds me of the children's book series *I Spy*, filled with picture riddles for the viewers to solve.



YEUNG TONG LUNG, *Porcelain Dog*, 2020, oil on canvas, 199 × 161 × 4 cm.

Installed across a back wall was *Sketchbook*, a series of untitled oil sketches produced between 2008 and 2021 that mostly depict plants thriving in the middle of an urban jungle. Some paintings feature greenery flourishing in a flowerbed next to a main road, highlighting their toughness, whereas some portray tree branches intersecting in front of a window, a familiar view during quarantine. Yeung's skillful, realistic use of colors is elaborated in this series. In one work, Yeung subtly differentiates two shades of green: the vibrant, natural color of the leaves in the foreground, and the dull green used for the plastic sheet covering the construction site in the background. In another painting, Yeung portrays a Hong Kong "uncle" taking a nap on a bench, enjoying a brief moment of relaxation next to a bush. Yeung's daily encounters with nature take place against the overwhelming bustle of city life, illustrating the co-existence of the artificial and the natural.



Installation view of YEUNG TONG LUNG's *Sketchbook*, 2008–21, oil on canvas, set of 33 panels, dimensions variable, at "Daily Practice," Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong, 2021.

One work that stood out in the exhibition was *Have a Smoke* (2020), a canvas overlapping two scenes. The lower half illustrates the rooftop of a nursing home, where a domestic helper lights a cigarette for an old man in a wheelchair while holding her already lit one in her other hand. Following the trail of smoke rising from her fingers, my eyes were drawn to the flying doves in the upper



YEUNG TONG LUNG, *Have a Smoke*, 2020, oil on canvas, 201 × 157.5 × 4 cm.

half of the canvas. While Yeung's figures appear to be lost in their thoughts and private encounters, their experiences feel deeply relatable to local viewers familiar with the settings. I was touched by this contrast between the bored, confined figures and the freely flying birds, before the intricate highways and viaducts in the mid-distance and the tram on the road far below pulled me back to the reality of urban life. Through juxtaposing mundane observations with moments of reverie, Yeung presents a way for viewers to reconnect with their feelings and their surroundings.

Pamela Wong is ArtAsiaPacific's assistant editor.

Yeung Tong Lung's "Daily Practice" is on view at Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong, until March 6, 2021.

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