

HONG KONG

Mimi Chen Ting
at Art Beatus

How to express one's experiences in life, as well as those of others around one, on canvas is a constant challenge for any artist. Whether or not one is working in the figurative or the abstract, the problems of relating experience and controlling its expression so that the viewer is touched by it requires that the artist is a keen observer. This means possessing a close understanding not only of one's external world and relationships but also one's interior world and how both collide to become as one within the painting. Mimi Chen Ting clearly understands these things and has put them to good use.

There is both a subtle energy and a deep sense of longing in the recent acrylic works that make up her compact exhibition

entitled *Tangles and Ties*. The energy of a good many of her abstract works resides in her flowing, intersecting lines that remind one of the lyrical qualities found within the last works of Willem de Kooning. The energy of Chen Ting's figurative painting, from a decade ago, is suggested by the lugubrious movement of the body in space and the almost pastel quality of her colors.

At first glance, the lines appear to be random, as if the artist is playing with the long thin forms of the line, trying to work out just how they should play across the surface of the painting until they trail off the edges of the picture plane. But as one continues to look at the rhythm that the artist has created, one realizes that there is nothing random here, that the artist has in fact taken control of the lines as she has with her emotions.

The control is seemingly effortless but the thickness of her line and the colors that she employs in her *Tangles and*

Ties series (2006), for example, emphasizes a studied and careful geometry. Lines and space meet harmoniously within the mostly monochrome backgrounds. Such backgrounds also help to emphasize space and suggest the kind of emptiness that one feels in a time of emotional turmoil.

In Chen Ting's recent *Confetto* series (2008), the line has given way to blocks and layers of bright color. In the layering there is a sense of organic forms moving together in search of unity, yet never quite achieving it. Still there is a sense of pleasure, even joy, in such work. The empty space that was defined by the line in *Tangles and Ties* is now filled with the energy of activity, and a feeling that passion has won over sadness.

Ian Findlay

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Above left: Mimi Chen Ting, *Confetto IV*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 63.5 x 63.5 cm. **Above right:** Mimi Chen Ting, *Tangles and Ties*, 2006, acrylic on canvas, 137 x 122 cm. Images: Courtesy of the Artist and Art Beatus.