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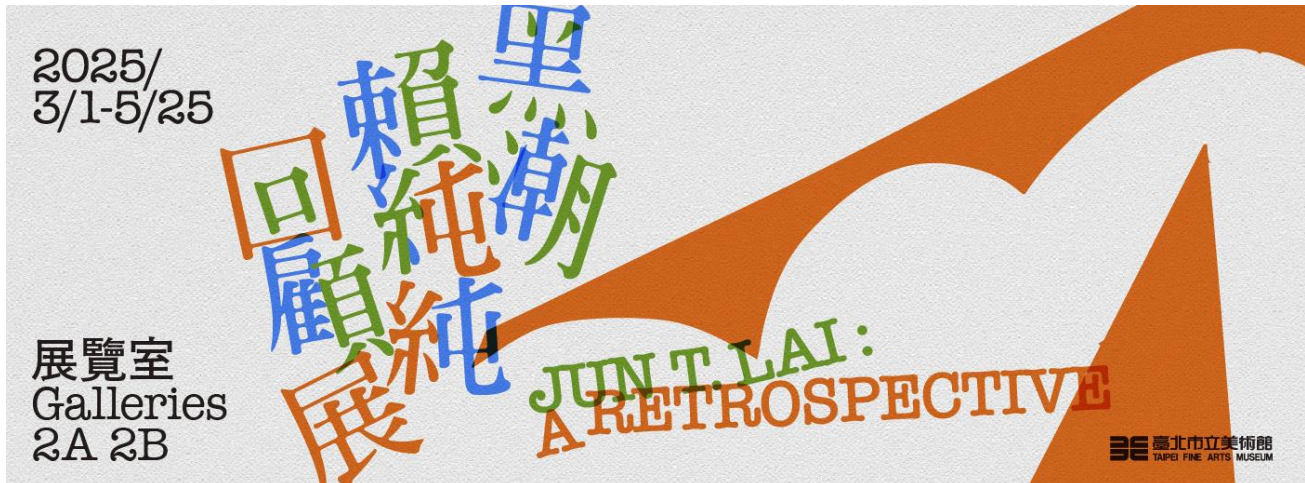


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***Jun T. Lai: A Retrospective***  
***Five Decades of Exploration, Inspiring Life's Existence and Transformation***

**March 1 to May 25, 2025**  
**Venue: Galleries 2A & 2B, Taipei Fine Arts Museum**

*Existence and change embody the essence of life and nature. "Change" represents the infinite continuation of "existence," and existence, in its physical form, is infinite change. — Jun T. Lai*

*Jun T. Lai: A Retrospective* opens on March 1st and continues until May 25th at the galleries 2A & 2B of the Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM). The exhibition showcases Lai's artistic journey through a diverse array of works spanning various periods in her career, including mixed-media paintings, three-dimensional sculptures, spatial installations, and related archives and documents, offering a comprehensive review of her aesthetic style that reflects the spiritual facets of contemporary art.

Jun T. Lai (1953–) was born in Taipei. After completing her graduation piece, *Sunset of Yangming Mountain* (1975), she was mentored by her advisor, Chi-Chun Liao, regarding the work and discovered that color could serve as a primary means of expression. Later, she pursued studies in Japan, laying the groundwork for her future spatial works. In the 1980s, she earned accolades in prestigious art competitions, including the *Contemporary Art Trends R.O.C.* (1986) and the *Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition* (1987) held by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. In 1986, she also founded the Studio of Contemporary Art (SOCA) to promote avant-garde art, which was not simply a

harbinger of “alternative spaces” in Taiwan but also a significant influence on multiple artists who valued practical expression. Starting in the 2000s, Lai began engaging extensively in public art and founded the Taiwan Women’s Art Association. After 2007, she relocated her life and creative focus to Dulan in Taitung, aiming to inspire more artistic creativity along the eastern coast.

In her early works, Lai extended oil paint to the edges of the canvas and incorporated woodblock printing techniques with mixed media, such as wood and paper. Subsequently, she used transparent materials that allowed for the simultaneous expression of abstract structures and vibrant colors, emphasizing light and three-dimensionality. As time progressed, her focus shifted distinctly from two-dimensional concepts to envisioning three-dimensional space, exploring notions of existence and transformation through changes in objects, materials, colors, and forms, while revealing her unique, vibrant, and liberating inner spirit.

This retrospective, curated by Ching-Wen Chang, draws inspiration from the concept of the Kuroshio Current, also known as the Black Current, highlighting the artist’s evolution into a unique style that utilizes “black” alongside a variety of colors since the 1980s. It also embodies the pure yet profound, changing yet constant qualities present in Jun T. Lai’s art. The exhibition explores Lai’s artistic journey from the 1980s to the present through four themes: **“Being and Transformation,” “True Emptiness and Wondrous Presence,” “The Ocean and Arcadia,”** and **“Community Participation.”** These themes trace her development from her exploration of the spirit and concept of minimalism to a quest for personal subjectivity, and from her association of oceanic aesthetics with humanistic contexts to the social dimensions of public art. In a multifaceted way, the exhibition reflects the artist’s deep journey into culture, identity, and life.

### **Upholding Artistic Originality and Developing a Personal Style**

The theme “Being and Transformation” features Lai’s early paintings, capturing her artistic evolution from her mentorship with Chi-Chun Liao to her studies in Japan and New York, along with her journey that ultimately led to the creation of the *Being and Transformation* series in the 1980s, in which she began to define her unique style. Significantly influenced by Richard Lin, her art during this period delved into the concepts of space and existence in both form and concept. A representative piece from this time, *Neither Coming Nor Going* (1986), is an installation consisting of eight acrylic panels cut from a circular whole, featuring red, green, yellow, and black colors. By moving away from the permanence of sculpture, Lai achieves the transformation of space. Furthermore, the exhibition showcases her piece *Psalm*—an honorable mention winner at the *Contemporary Art Trends R.O.C.* in 1986—specifically reconfigured for display in different gallery rooms, echoing the imagery of the Black Current. This new setup offers a unique visual experience, unlike previous displays. As visitors navigate the exhibition, they also engage with the dialectics of the singular and the multitude, as well as the tangible and the infinite.

“True Emptiness and Wondrous Presence” showcases Lai’s paintings and installations inspired by Eastern aesthetics and natural materials from the early 1990s. During this period, she utilized collage techniques to create paintings. *Rite of Nature* (1989) combines the Chinese scroll format without being confined to traditional structures. Her three-dimensional pieces often delve into the material language, seeking connections between the self and the land. *Heart Vessel* (1997) merged sculpture and performance to convey the Buddhist doctrine – “form is emptiness, emptiness is form,” discussed in the *Heart Sutra*. The Buddha statues in blue, red, yellow, white, and black represent the five elements and directions that make up space, not only illustrating a narrative brimming with spatial tension but also hinting at social observation and personal self-introspection.

### **Exploring the Life-affecting Source through Refining Color and Art**

“The Ocean and Arcadia” encompasses three gallery rooms showcasing Lai’s works from 2000 to the present, marking her vibrant return to color. Her distinct use of pigments during this period reflects her personal awakening as a woman and her deeper yearning for and connection to nature after relocating to Dulan. The Pacific Ocean, with its pure and boundless essence, showed her the existence and change in the cosmos. One notable example is the *Shiny Love* series, which comprises numerous paintings created by splashing and dripping colored epoxy onto mirrored surfaces, blending light, moisture, color, and material appearances into abstract images, demonstrating rich, vivid textures. Additionally, large sculptures like *Bloom Paradise* (2019) continue the use of bright, luminous primary colors, employing the intuitive and expressive qualities inherent in color to convey confidence in women’s awakening and pay tribute to nature in the form of blooming flowers.

In this exhibition, Lai will present two new pieces: *Kuroshio* and *Dark Current, Flowing Light: Infinite Possibilities at the Edge* (both 2025). The former features heart-shaped acrylic sculptures that echo her ongoing series since 1995, in which she utilizes the transparency of the material to refract mesmerizing light and mimic gentle waves. The latter combines acrylic, driftwood, steel sculptures, and mirrored surfaces with light sources to produce multilayered reflections amid spatial textures. This piece also mirrors her day-to-day experiences of the changing landscape in Dulan, where she lives in the embrace of mountains with the Pacific Ocean unfolding before her. As if all borders have dissolved, the piece implies a more unrestricted and fluid site of natural consciousness.

### **Opening Oneself to Explore the Possibility of Art as a Public Practice**

“Community Participation,” accompanied by a timeline, highlights Lai’s creative archives and documents spanning various periods, with a particular focus on SOCA. As a prominent example of an “alternative space” in the 1990s, SOCA’s founding members and students emerged as key figures in the art scene, significantly influencing Taiwan’s avant-garde community and fostering international connections. After 2000, Lai broadened her vision through public art competitions in different regions, enabling her to not only explore new media and challenges in her work but also to strengthen her bond with the land. During this period, she established the Taiwan Women’s Art Association as part of her diverse effort to promote social engagement—art is both Lai’s lifelong practice and her enduring pursuit to express herself while actively participating in society.

The question, “What’s Ahead?” has shaped Lai’s early works and remains a central theme throughout her artistic career. Her art has consistently pushed boundaries, fearlessly exploring how the world interacts with one’s inner realm and translating it into tangible forms. For further details about the exhibition and related activities, please visit the official website ([www.tfam.museum](http://www.tfam.museum)) or follow TFAM [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) page.

## **Attachment**

### **About Jun T. Lai**

Jun T. Lai was born in Taipei in 1953. In 1974 she graduated from the Fine Arts Department of Chinese Culture College (today's Chinese Culture University), and in 1978 she earned a master's degree from Tama Art University in Japan. She has taken part in artist exchange programs in such countries as the United States, France and Switzerland, and she is the founder of both SOCA (Studio of Contemporary Art) and the Taiwan Women's Art Association. She has worked in a variety of art forms and styles, including new-media painting, sculpture, installation, conceptual performance art, and public art.

Through her art she attempts to achieve a creative milieu for life. Her minimalist concepts, her pursuit of personal autonomy, her public art that addresses social issues, and her grounding the maritime aesthetics of an island nation within the context of humanism all reflect her aesthetic faith in the pursuit of free spirit. Since 2000, she has adopted “Wonderland” as the central theme of her art, with such sub-themes as Youth, Islands and the Ocean, building a cultural context in which to define personal and Taiwanese identity.

Jun T. Lai has won the first prize at Taipei Fine Arts Museum’s Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition and the Award of Excellence at TFAM’s Contemporary Art Trends R.O.C. in 1986, as well as the Wu San-Lien Award for Art. Her works have been acquired by many art museums and institutions in Taiwan and abroad.

### **About the Curator**

Ching-Wen Chang is an artist and curator and currently an assistant professor in the Department of Arts and Design, National Tsing Hua University. She is also a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) and member of its Electoral and Membership Committee (2023-2025). Her academic field is Taiwanese art history, and in recent years, she has centered on “Taiwanese-ness” in contemporary art and the emergence of local theories, exploring how the Taiwanese experience expresses its special characteristics in art production, with a particular focus on the relationship between art and society since the 1980s.

She served as chief editor of Artist magazine from 2004 to 2010, and her art reviews are periodically published in such journals as Artist and Modern Art. Recently, she has curated such exhibitions as “In the Moment: Six Artists from Taiwan” (2024); “ReGenerating Tomorrow: Sustainability, Environment, and Imagination” (2023); and “Cosmos Comsol” (2022).