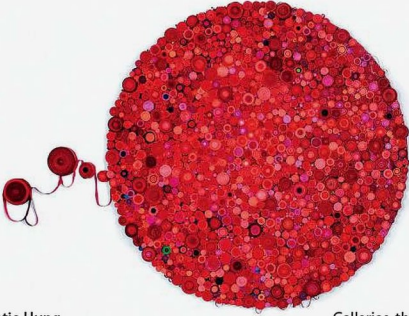




Category: 香港藝術中心 Hong Kong Arts Centre
18 May, 2018
The Standard, Hong Kong
Section: Circulation: 222413 Page: 4
Printed Size: 369cm² Region: HK ASR: HK\$41864.83
Item ID: 3101156

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Radical lady in red

■ Clockwise from main: *The Story of Canvas #1a* has a variable length, depending on exhibition space; artist Jane Lee; *Pond Series* and *Stack Up 2*.

Katie Hung

Hanging linked rolls of red canvas on stark white walls makes for a spectacular and amazing vision in the exhibition *Jane Lee: Red States*.

And that is what Singaporean artist Jane Lee wants in breaking conventional perspectives of how a painting should look, while exploring the possibilities of painting with daily tools in forms of presentation that are hard to imagine.

Having paint on canvas doesn't, of course, necessarily make it a painting, and Lee is quick to point that out. "Actually, they are in between two- and three-dimensional, and even cross over into installation, site-specific works," she said.

The Story of Canvas, rolls of canvas spread with red acrylic paint, cut into strips and linked to each other, is an example. The 13-meter-long work takes up almost the whole exhibit wall of Pao

Galleries, the split-level gallery at Hong Kong Arts Centre in Wan Chai.

"Can I make the painting interact with how people walk, with their rhythm and movement? How can my work, canvas and paint travel in and out the building?" Lee recalled of the questions challenging her in conceiving the site-specific idea for her first solo exhibition in Hong Kong.

Leading viewers down to the lower floor are *Stack Up 1* and *Stack Up 2*. They are located at the platform in between the staircases, and her imagination exceeds the shapes of the canvases.

The canvas is cut into small squares and stacked together. Viewers are encouraged to look at the side and not just the front of the paintings.

The idea for an all-red show came from *The Story of Canvas*. "Why don't I make a show that is all in red? Simple. Neat. Not many pieces of work but leaving an impression," she said of the

impetus. Like most artists, the nonconformist started with classical painting many years ago. But she later found there were too many rules.

"I think I have a little bit of a rebel in me," said Lee. "I dropped everything I learned, went back to zero again, and started to find my own language.

"What should I be afraid of? I want to do it. In the art of making, you can't go so wrong. The worst is just that you throw a painting away."

To her, art should touch the heart.

"I want my art to be cheerful and to lighten people's mood. When the artist is happy during the process, being playful, people can feel your energy, your mood, when they see your work."

Jane Lee: Red States is on display until June 10.

