

ETSU EGAMI
Lifeline

OPERA GALLERY

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Lifeline

31 May – 21 June

OPERA GALLERY





FOREWORD

In our third edition of the invited artists series at Opera Gallery Geneva, we are excited to showcase the exceptional talent of Japanese artist Etsu Egami. This initiative empowers artists to curate their exhibitions, and Egami's exhibition, titled 'Lifeline', brings together eleven recent works that offer a unique perspective and showcase her distinct artistic style.

Etsu Egami's work introduces us to a world of fascinating ambiguity. Each viewer may discern something entirely different in the same painting – a landscape to one might appear as a portrait to another. This breadth of interpretation, often a challenge in representational art, serves as a deliberate and intriguing puzzle in Egami's work. Her canvases, rich with expansive brushstrokes, embody a deliberate exploration of the theme of miscommunication, delving into the essence of communication itself.

Egami's global experiences, from Asia to the United States and Europe, have brought her face-to-face with numerous communication barriers. These encounters have profoundly shaped her belief that languages are more often felt than explicitly articulated, which has fuelled her deep interest in the study of language and communication. Her paintings, reflecting the potential for misinterpretation, are a direct response to her personal experiences with mishearing and the challenges of translation. Her visual language captures the elusive nature of spoken words, where meaning is often just out of reach.

In exploring Etsu Egami's captivating artworks, we embark on a journey where perception deeply intertwines with the essence of communication. Her exploration of misinterpretation and the intricate dance of language across her paintings mirrors her personal journey across diverse cultures. The interplay of bold brushstrokes and vibrant colours captures not only the essence and movement of life but also symbolises the lifelines that both connect and divide us. Through her art, Egami invites us to reflect on the fluidity and complexity of human connections, resonating deeply with the thematic core of her exhibition, 'Lifeline'.

JORDAN LAHMI
Director
Opera Gallery Geneva



'LIFELINE'

BY ETSU EGAMI

Life involves both living and dying. Is the lifeline a combined path of life and death, or does it mark the division between them?

Considering the concepts of yin and yang, the lifeline acts as both a separator and a connector between these two forces. The ancient Chinese writer Cai Yong (133–192) noted that yin and yang emerge naturally and bring about the phenomena we observe.

When we compare Western and Eastern paintings with this idea in mind, it provokes a lot of thought. In Western art, the play

between light and shadow might be considered fundamental, while in Eastern art, it's the contour lines that hold the essence. Western artists, seeking clarity, often avoid using lines, whereas Eastern artists, embracing ambiguity, frequently use lines. By exploring these apparent contradictions through the concept of the lifeline, we start to understand more about human nature itself.

In terms of movement, the lifeline represents how information flows. From birth, as a baby leaves the mother's womb, the transmission of DNA changes gradually as a person grows. Life then becomes a record of this ongoing process. Philosopher Derrida discussed how language and any form of communication are historically built on a series of differences, which he termed "différance", referring to this dynamic movement.

My artwork started from experiences of miscommunication, and my current style developed from deeply relating to Derrida's ideas about "difference" and Cai Chong's concept of "nine forces".

Lines are crucial in my art. They are the underlying 'lifeline' – through physical movements, I aim to realistically portray human connection with subjects, allowing shapes to emerge from these interactions. In portraits, I strive to capture the life of the subject, their rhythm, breath, and life's journey, and to channel energy that looks forward to the future.

In essence, the lifeline both separates and connects us.

ARTWORKS



Life line – Can you hear the fetal movements?

2024

Oil on canvas

196,5 × 285,5 cm | 77.4 × 112.4 in



Life line – Can you hear the fetal movements?

2024

Oil on canvas

137 × 199,5 cm | 53.9 × 78.5 in

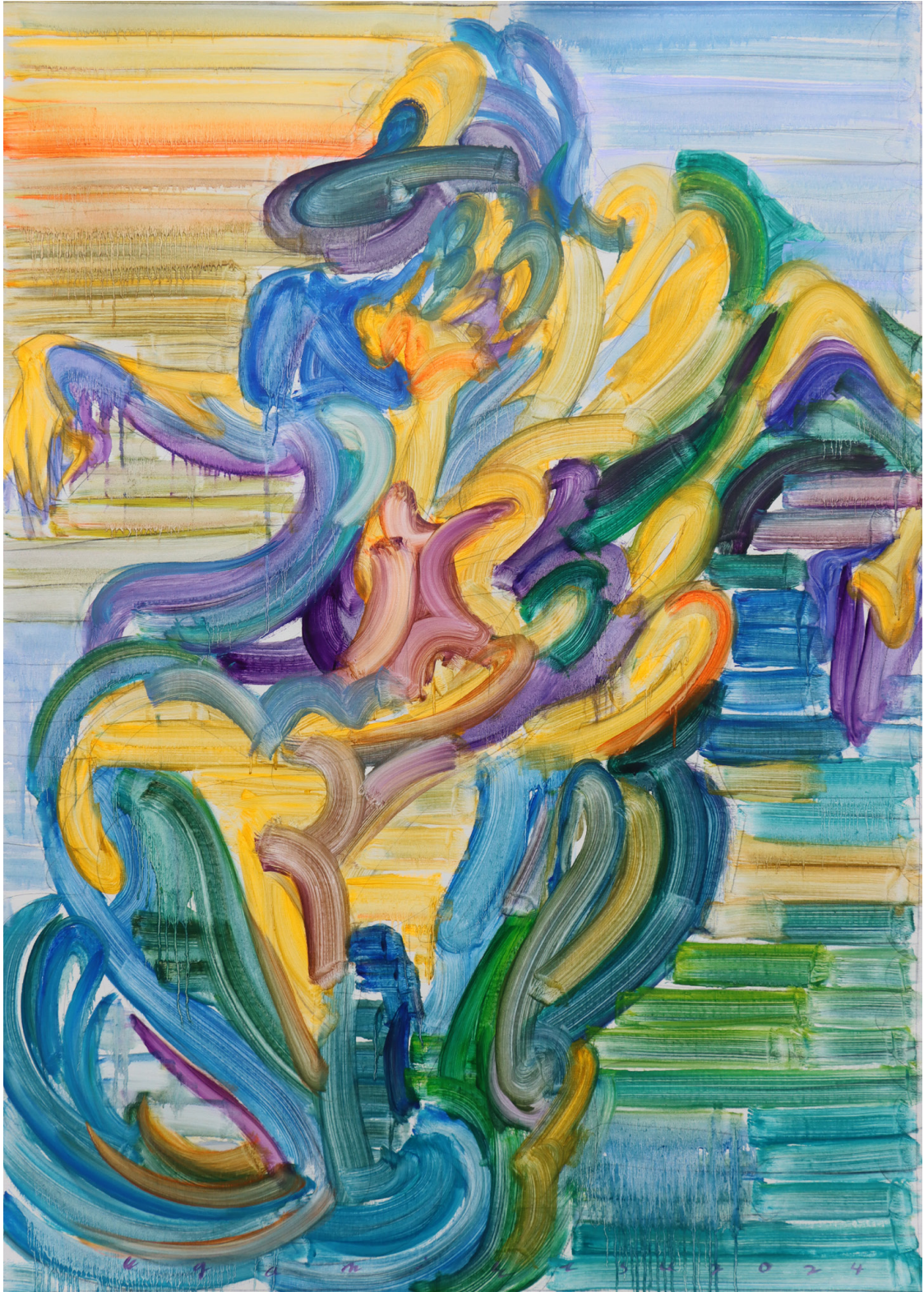


Social Distancing

2023

Oil on canvas

199,5 × 136,5 cm | 78.5 × 53.7 in



The Little Mermaid

2024

Oil on canvas

168 × 118 cm | 66.1 × 46.5 in



RAINBOW

2023

Oil on canvas

116 × 92 cm | 45.7 × 36.2 in



Lady Godiva

2024

Oil on canvas

91,5 x 115 cm | 36 x 45.3 in



RAINBOW

2023

Oil on canvas

108 × 77 cm | 42.5 × 30.3 in



The Little Mermaid

2024

Oil on canvas

79,5 × 62,5 cm | 31.3 × 24.6 in



RAINBOW

2024

Oil on canvas

79 × 63 cm | 31.1 × 24.8 in



RAINBOW

2024

Oil on canvas

68,5 x 49 cm | 27 x 19.3 in



RAINBOW

2023

Oil on canvas

68 × 48,5 cm | 26.8 × 19.1 in



ETSU EGAMI

1994 Born in Chiba, Japan

2024 Lives and works between Beijing, China and Japan

EDUCATION

2022 Tsinghua University,
Beijing, China, Post Doctorate

2022 Graduated from Central Academy of Fine Arts,
China, PHD

2017 Studied in Karlsruhe University of Art and Design,
Germany, Media Art

2016 Graduated from Central Academy of Fine Arts,
China, Bachelor of Fine Arts

SELECTED AWARDS

- 2024 Artist to watch, PRESTIGE HK, PRESTIGE Singapore
- 2023 10 Ultra Contemporary Artists of Asia and the Diaspora with Market Momentum, Artsy
Best artist, BBART, China
- 2022 1st AIR Art Project, Gunma Education and Cultural Agency, Japan
- 2021 Forbes Asia 30 UNDER 30, Forbes Magazine
Most 10 In-demand Artist, Artsy
- 2020 Outstanding artist dispatch to New York and Los Angeles, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan
Art collector's prize 2020 Masamichi Toyama prize, Arts Chiyoda 3331, Japan
CAF AWARD 2020 Finalist, Contemporary Art Promotion Foundation, Tokyo, Japan
Forbes China 30 UNDER 30, Forbes Magazine
- 2019 Sovereign Asian Art Award 2019, Sovereign Art foundation, Hong Kong
5th BaoZhen Great graduate works show, CAFA, Beijing
WAN YING YOUNG DREAMS 2019, Wan Ying Art Museum, Hebei
- 2018 16th Chiba city government Art and Culture new star prize, Chiba city government, Chiba, Japan
- 2017 Excellent works awards, China National Foundation
- 2016 Yi Lian Great Graduation works award, Yilian, Beijing, China
The 17th East International Art Exhibition, Minister of Foreign Affairs Award
Winner of the 12th "Open Studio Day" Award, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China
- 2014 Sketch outstanding awards, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China
Social activities awards, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China
- 2013 The outstanding creation awards, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China
The 14th East International Art Exhibition Chiba prefectural Museum of Art Director awards

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 'The Philosophers: ETSU EGAMI × JY', Whitestone Gallery, Hong Kong
'ETSU EGAMI SOLO SHOW', Whitestone Gallery, Singapore
'Oriental Mystery', HOW Art Museum, Shanghai, China
- 2022 'ETSU EGAMI, Obsession and Question', New Horizons of Modern Painting, Hiroshima Wood One Museum, Hiroshima, Japan
'Did you get it?', Hara Museum ARC, Gunma, Japan
'RAINBOW', Tang Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea
'Venus's code', A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France
- 2021 'Distanciation sociale', A2Z Art Gallery, Paris, France
'RAINBOW', Karuizawa New Art Gallery, Karuizawa, Japan
'Facebook', Chambers of Fine Art, New York, USA
'Star Time', Ginza SIX Tsutaya Atrium, Tokyo, Japan
'RAINBOW', Whitestone Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
'Ichigo Ichie', Whitestone Gallery H Queen's, Hong Kong
'In a Moment of Misunderstanding all the masks fall', Tang Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
- 2020 'Entrance Gallery Volume 1 Egami Etsu', Chiba City Museum of Art, Chiba, Japan
International talk at Chiba city museum of art (Japan),
'The shape of communication' with Julie Champion (assistant curator of Center de Pompidou), Chiba Shigeo (Art Critics), You Yang (Deputy director of UCCA), Etsu Egami
- 2019 'YOUR NAME?', Whitestone Gallery Ginza, Tokyo, Japan
- 2018 'Dialogue beyond 4000 years', Chiba City Museum of Art, Chiba, Japan
'Dialogue beyond 400 years', Playground London, London, UK
- 2017 'The Hidden Truth', Tokyo GINZA, Tokyo, Japan
'Into the light ...', βspace, Germany
- 2016 'God's voice, human's words?', DEHAIRI projects, Tokyo, Japan
'It is not a Mis-hearing game', de Sarthe gallery, Beijing, China
'Mis-hearing × Truth', Horizon Art Space, Beijing, China

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 'Miss Dior Exhibition – Stories of a Miss', Roppongi Museum, Tokyo, Japan
'Elevate to Object', SECCI, Milan, Italy
- 2023 1st Xinjiang Art Biennale, Xinjiang Art Museum, Urumqi, China
1st GUNMA AIR PROJECT, Modern Museum of Art, Gunma, Japan
'Return journey', ZhangJiaGang City Museum, Hebei
'Rabbit Project', Phillips New York, New York, USA
'Power of Painting', Xin Ze Art Museum, LangFang, China
- 2022 'Dialogue', Locarno Rivellino Chambers Fine Art, Locarno, Switzerland
'Broken Pinata', L21 Gallery, Palma, Spain
- 2021 Collection visit with Sam and Rachel Shikiar, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
'Hello Future, Where are we?', CAFA Museum, Beijing, China
Art Paris Art Fair, Grand Paris, Paris, France
Collection, Tomioka City Museum of Art, Tomioka Low Fever, Tang Contemporary Art, Hong Kong
'Hello Future, Where We Are?', FIAC, Beijing, China
- 2020 'VOCA 2020 - New perspective of painting', Ueno-Royal Museum, Tokyo, Japan
3331 Selected Art Fair, Arts Chiyoda 3331, Tokyo, Japan
CAF AWARD 2020 finalist, Contemporary Art Promotion Foundation, Tokyo, Japan
'Little Fables', Whitestone Gallery, Hong Kong
'Spring Session', Whitestone Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
'UNSCHEDULED', Taikwun Contemporary Museum, Hong Kong
Para Site Art Gala, Para Site, Hong Kong
- 2019 Sovereign Asian Art Prize finalist exhibition, Tai Kwun Contemporary, HQueen's, Hong Kong
CAFA Master Graduate exhibition, CAFA Museum, Beijing
'DESERT GARDEN', OTAFINEARTS, Shanghai, China
'8 ARTIST', A2Z Gallery, Hong Kong
'WANYING YOUNG DREAMS 2019', WANYING ART MUSEUM, Hebei
- Beijing Jin ShangYi Art Foundation
2nd New Painting Artist Exhibition, The Chinese Academy of Oil Painting Museum, Beijing, China
Opening Exhibition Museum collection, T.Maison Art Museum, Okinawa, Japan

- 2018 'A CITY TO WEAR 2.0 Paintings Beyond "Painting"', The Research House for Asian Art, Chicago, USA
The 2nd Beijing Media Art Biennial, CAFA Museum, Beijing, China
'Surpassing $r=a(1-\sin)$ ', Qimu space, Beijing, China
'Bio Art Archive Drawer – Absence of the Authority', HDK, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2017 'Grounding exhibition', UCCA, Beijing, China
'Legal Aliens', Yan Huang Art Museum, Beijing, China
- 2016 3rd CAFA Art Biennale 'Negotiating the space', CAFAM, Beijing, China
Fan Xin Ji Hua, Tree Art Museum, Beijing, China; Tian Jing Wen Hua Gu, Tian Jing, China; Japan-China Friendship Center Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan; Milal Art Museum, Seoul, South Korea
'Neither Here Nor there', Yuan Art Museum, Beijing, China
- 2015 The 3rd China International Forum for Art Installation, Today's Art Museum, Beijing, China

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Dior

HUAWEI, China

Kumagai Masatoshi Collection, Japan

Kawamura Yoshihisa Collection, Japan

KIRI CAPITAL

He Art Museum, Guangdong Province, China

Hiroshima Wood One Museum Of Art, Japan

Central Academy of Fine Art Museum, Beijing, China

Karuizawa New Art Museum, Japan

T.Maison Art Museum, Japan

Longlati Foundation, Shanghai, China

Tree Art Museum, Beijing, China

Yuan Art Museum, Beijing, China

Yi Lian Foundation, South Korea

Damei Museum, Beijing, China

Korea Suncheon City Art Center, South Korea

Galerie 99, Germany

Suncheon Cultural Foundation, South Korea

Yusaku Maezawa Collection, Japan

Moscow Garage Museum of Art, Russia

Toyama Masamichi Collection

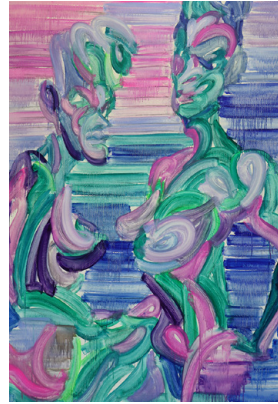
Nanjo Art Museum, Okinawa, Japan

Iris Museum of Art, China

Joo Hoyoung Collection

Mitsubishi Estate Co, Ltd, Japan

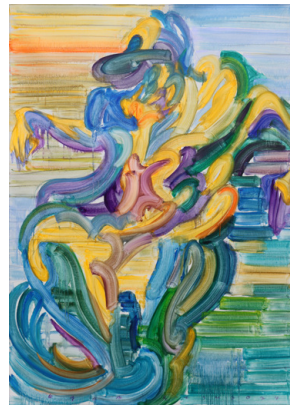
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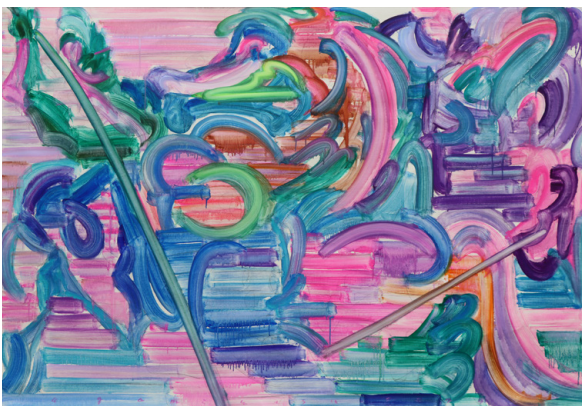
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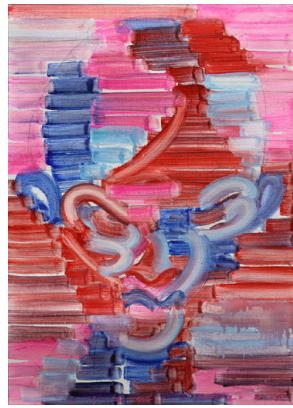
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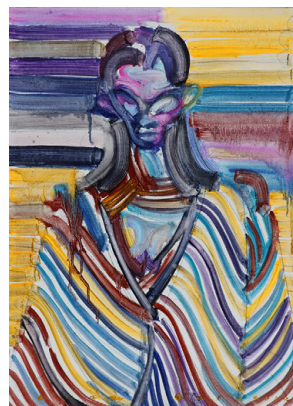
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Courtesy of the artist

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The Little Mermaid, 2024

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