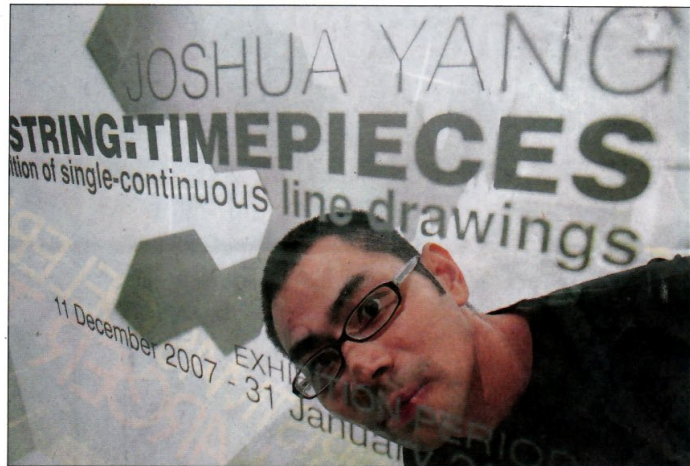


Artist Features: Joshua Yang (Singapore)
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ST PHOTO: ALAN LIM

WATCH THIS SPACE: Joshua Yang explores time, memory and experience in his exhibition.

Time after time

Multi-disciplinary artist Joshua Yang set a record for the longest continuous drawing with a marathon 26 hours. And then he drew some more

June Cheong
ARTS REPORTER

ARTIST Joshua Yang is suffering from sleep deprivation. Until Wednesday evening, the 33-year-old multi-disciplinary artist was drawing non-stop for 26 hours.

He set a record for the longest continuous drawing by a single artist in the Singapore Book Of Records when he drew for 26 hours straight on a series of linked, hexagon-shaped canvases. He continued drawing until yesterday evening at 8pm to reach his original goal of 48 hours.

He had wanted to enter the Singapore Book Of Records with his ambitious drawing marathon, but it was not fame that he was after. Rather it was to draw attention to the notion of the irreversible passage of time and to the children's charity Milk Fund.

He says: "The idea is to draw, sleep, eat and live in a space for 48 hours."

"The line I draw becomes a document of performance art. While drawing the line, I become more aware of the time that passes."

The art history teacher at NUS High School reveals that he can now draw non-stop for a few hours before being struck by cramps.

His continuous line drawings are now on exhibition in a showcase titled Superstring: Timepieces at Marina Mandarin Singapore where he was artist-in-residence from July onwards. The hotel will donate 10 per cent of the sales proceeds of his works to Milk Fund.

His drawings, a jumble of pencil on paper and ink on fabric, consist of a single, unbroken line woven into a mind-boggling myriad of shapes and figures. The former civil engineer was inspired by the snake game on mobile phones, whereby a digital snake grows longer by chasing and then consuming pellets, as well as the Super-

string Theory, which attempts to explain the workings of the universe in one theory, to create his continuous line drawings.

He says: "I left my phone at home one day a few years ago and I started doodling when I was bored. It started from there."

Those doodles grew into an articulated project when he realised that the drawings "took on a life of their own".

He was also encouraged by Dr Eugene Tan, director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts at Lasalle College of the Arts and curator of Superstring: Timepieces, to "push his practice further".

Dr Tan, 34, says: "I was drawn to Joshua's unique style and depth of concept, and felt that he has a lot of potential as an artist."

"Very often, young artists run the risk of getting lost during their developmental years. I felt that it was in my capacity as a curator to provide the guidance for his artistic growth."

For the exhibition, Yang explored the notions of time, memory and experience further in a series of technical drawings of watches and clocks, done from memory and in a single stroke without any breaks or intersections in the line.

He also started annotating his continuous line drawings with micro-narratives from his everyday life, leaving markers like CH for change of pen or PH for answering the phone when he broke off a line.

He says: "My drawings are almost like a diary. I can remember what I did on which day when I look at them."

His five-year-old daughter Matilda took his drawings for a new fun game and the pair created a series of drawings with opposing lines, his pencil carving sure and steady trails and hers leaving wobbly, looping curves.

Asked what goes through his mind when he concentrates on keeping his pen on the paper, he says: "I daydream and drift. It gets meditative."

"I'm still a very impatient person. When I see the canvas is incomplete or has an empty space, I just want to fill it up."

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> The exhibition Superstring: Timepieces is co-organised by Asian Art Options and Marina Mandarin Singapore and is held at the hotel, Level 5, until Jan 31. Yang's artworks can also be viewed online at www.asianartoptions.com

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