

Artist Statement

My artwork is as much about the role of woman as the place of art in modern society. I learnt to sew and knit as a little girl. Like many from less than modest families those days, we did piece work of sewing and embroidery to supplement the family income. It was laborious, and did not pay a living wage, but such early experience had tremendous influence on my art work.

When I was studying in art school, I was intrigued by "The Lacemaker" created in 1670 by Dutch painter Vermeer. Both Vermeer and lacemakers sold their works to the flourishing middle class in the Netherlands at the time. Why is Vermeer's work considered art and not that of the lacemaker? Generations of women have created wondrous pieces of art with lace. Automation of the Industrial Revolution resulted in ultimate loss of this art form. My conclusion was that whatever creative work a woman chooses to do in a patriarchal society, the job is domesticized, marginalized or exploited in terms of economic value.

Starting with simple floral patterns originating from factory-produced lace fabric, I use my brush and paint to reinvent the lost art of lacemaking on canvas. Each piece of work is searching for meaning through repetition and arrangement so as to communicate an idea. The background is deliberately flat and plain, in contrast to the intricate black or white lacy pattern which is textured with layer after layer of fine brush work. I find the intense concentration required from the tip of the paintbrush a most relaxing exercise. The repetitive nature of the work frees up my mind and opens up my imagination, adding impetus and inspiration to my next creation.

Artist Biography

Winnie Chan graduated from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Winnie previously worked as a Registered Nurse, serving in a number of hospitals both in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. As a female professional, she has developed a unique perspective towards the role of women in modern society, which she explores through her art.

Winnie's work has won awards from The Hong Kong Oil Painting Competition (2015/2012), Hong Kong Art Prize (2013), Eileen Chang Inaugural Painting Award (2010), and The Philippe Charriol Foundation 20th Anniversary Art Competition (2005).