

*Review by Ben Austin | July, 2015*

Alisa Julia Lim A Po (born 1975) was born to be an artist and studied at the prestigious Academy of Visual Arts in Holland and then embarked on a career in advertising, but her true calling drew her back to making sublime semi-figurative pieces, which verge into abstraction. These heads are elemental outlines, non-expressive silhouettes, raw and textural. They are dark and brooding, reflecting upon solitude and the essential loneliness of the human condition.

Lim A Po uses traditional materials such as paper and canvas, but works primarily on metal, such as aluminium and copper, this surface creates the desired tactile quality required to create a patina, whereby the paint can be moved and scrapped away. There is a sense of oxidization, the browns turning into green, as the profiles change angles.

The heads are simultaneously connected and yet are individuals caught in their moment of reflection. Lim A Po explores this notion in her series entitled 'Social War', which deals with human love and all the complexities that surround it, of how we interact with each other, the tenderness as well as the conflicts. The work exudes the perplexing nature of the human condition, our collective desire to be loved and needed, yet at times our inability to communicate and express our true feelings.

Similar themes are explored in the 'Clones' series, whereby the urge to be an individual is at times surpassed by the need to conform and fit into society.

Lim A Po creates beautiful and bold work, art that deals with the multifaceted nature of society and our place within it. Her distinctive technique makes for layered work, at times thick and rich in texture and at others almost transparent. The use of acrylic on a smooth hydrophobic surface makes for an underlying tension between the paint and the surface. This dichotomy in application is reflected in the ideas and concept behind the work. The material is all, the application allows for these heads and outline to find their own presence, at times powerfully present, with a thickly worked up surface and others softer and more ethereal, virtually disappearing into the picture plane. We are in realm of the real, the unchangeable in contrast with the subconscious thoughts and the sense of otherness.

What we have with Lim A Po's work is a sublime representation of the existential; these stunning pieces resonate with a profound sense of humanity combined with distinctive technique, creating a visually stunning effect. There is a quite drama going on, the tranquillity belies the power and the impact of these remarkable pieces.