

All you could hear
Sinta Tantra

Curved organic shapes and golden celestial orbs appear floating in deep expanses of blue hues. Sinta Tantra's practice explores the transformative potential of colour and form both in terms of physical and psychological spaces – her works invite us to connect more deeply within ourselves and our environment. *All you could hear*, her solo exhibition at Richard Koh Gallery, takes the Balinese festival of Nyepi – a day of silence and meditation – as its starting point. The title comes from a letter Tantra's father wrote to her on the evening of Nyepi, in which he wrote: 'The whole island is so dark, beautiful and quiet ...no street lights... all you can hear are crickets.' Drawing on this vivid image of home, Tantra explores the meditative qualities of making and viewing and our relationship with nature and the universe.

All of the paintings in the exhibition follow a vertical format, an orientation typically used in traditional Chinese scrolls and paintings. As Tantra notes, 'Western and Eastern traditions have different ways of viewing, not only in terms of how we read text and images, but also in relation to our concept of time. The Balinese calendar, for instance, revolves around the lunar rather than solar cycle. After death we are reborn again, reincarnated.' Circles form a recurring motif in Tantra's work, creating a focal point and playing on the symbolism used in meditation practices, but they can also be seen as cosmic – planets or even solar systems, the emergence of the moon in a midnight sky or its slow fading at the first break of dawn. By contrast, the undulating shapes and organic forms in *Shadow Movement*, *Canang Sari*, and *Golden Celeste* appear more earthy and tropical – abstracted flowers or perhaps the shadow movements of dancing bodies.

While most of the canvases here are painted with layers of Prussian blue to create a dark velvety ground, smaller works such as *A Forgotten Kiss* and *To Meditate is to Dream* use gold as a background – a delicate and time-consuming process that requires the application of gold first before the paint. In these pieces, the reflective light of the gold darkens the blue to the point that the shapes appear like bottomless chasms or tunnels through the canvas. We also see paintings with and without borders of raw linen. Where expanses of blue fill the edges of the frame, we feel lost in the colour, untethered from the space. The bordered paintings, however, offer a more controlled, though no less meditative, experience – we understand and are reminded that we are interacting with an image.

The temporal transformation of colour and form is central to all of the works on display: they are activated by the changing daylight to continually offer fresh perspectives and atmospheres. In this way, Tantra encourages us to consider how the passage of time and our cultural and physical positioning affects how we interpret images and space. *All you could hear* is an invitation to pause and enter into a state of deep calm and contemplation.