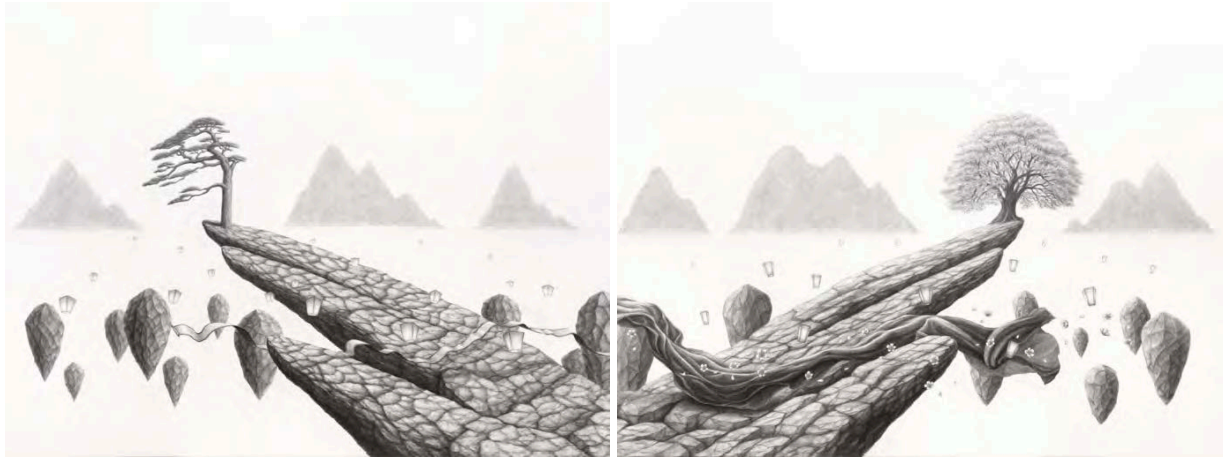


Henry Lee

B. 1981, Singapore



Ephemeral Spring

2022

Charcoal, Pencil and Acrylic on Canvas

H 76.2 cm x 101.4 cm



Sakura (Prunus subg. Cerasus)

The blooming of the sakura or cherry blossom tree in Japan is celebrated through hanami, the traditional custom of flower-viewing. Sakura blossoms symbolise spring, renewal and ephemerality – a reminder of the philosophy of mono no aware, the poignant awareness and acceptance of the inevitable passing of things. In Shinto, sakura are thought to house kami (sacred spirits), and is the symbol of Konohanasakuya-hime, the blossom princess and goddess of Mount Fuji and all volcanoes. The sakura and Huangshan pine are associated with transience and endurance respectively. Conceived as a diptych, with the sakura on the left, these two works pay homage to the traditional ink landscape paintings that often provide the basis for landscaped gardens in Japanese and Chinese culture, tranquil retreats and oases for contemplation through harmony with nature. Set against artificial mountains in the horizon, rock outcrops in the shape of hands reflect human design, moulding and manipulation of the natural landscape, and a deep and fundamental desire to harmonise and find balance with nature.