

## **Mimi Chen Ting: The Sea Within Me**

### **September 16 – October 28, 2023**

Louis Stern Fine Arts is pleased to present *Mimi Chen Ting: The Sea Within Me*. The late-career abstract works of Chinese American artist Mimi Chen Ting (1946-2022) give material form to the accumulation of memories, images, and complexities which colored her life and experience. A painter, printmaker, and performance artist, Ting's high-spirited practice integrated a mosaic of Eastern and Western aesthetic influences, producing lyrical works which ardently transcribe the nuances of navigating womanhood, belonging, and personal identity.

Ting was born in Shanghai and raised in Hong Kong, where she was compelled into stillness by a mother who feared she had "too much fire" in her. Her study of ballet, in which she excelled, was suppressed for fear that she might become overly muscular. Memories of her grandmother's bound feet, the rich colors and reliquary forms of Buddhist temples, and the balance and flow of Chinese calligraphy would make a lasting impression. After immigrating to San Francisco in 1965, Ting forged a diverse artistic career in the Bay Area and in Taos, New Mexico, which spanned five decades. The spectacular vistas of the American Southwest reverberate in the artist's finely tuned, sometimes unexpected choices of palette and sweeping passages of flat, highly contrasted colors.

When the demands of parenting young children precluded sufficient time to paint, Ting returned to her study of dance through a vibrant performance practice which drew on various influences, including modern dance, Tai Chi, and Butoh. This connection to movement and the body would prove integral to her intuitive, fluid approach to composing the abstract works which would become her focus in the last two decades of her life. Ting allowed their sinuous curves to develop organically, in alternating layers of charcoal and paint, relying on instinct to guide which forms to abandon and which to nurture. Reduced to their most essential components, the paintings serve as extensions of the artist's internal world with all its concerns and complications, ebbing and flowing between competing passions and responsibilities. In the words of the artist, art is "the embodiment of everything, of being alive...life and art are the same to me."

Works by Mimi Chen Ting have been exhibited throughout the United States and internationally, including a career survey presented by University Art Gallery, Sonoma State University, on view from September 7 – December 10, 2023. She received a National Endowment for the Arts Grant in 2003 and the Agnes Martin Award for Abstract Painting and Drawing in 2012. Her work can be found in numerous private, corporate, and public collections, including the Annie Wong Art Foundation in Hong Kong and the Harwood Museum of Art, Taos.