

Ocula

Art Basel Hong Kong Artist Highlights: Contemporary Focus

By Stephanie Bailey, May 26, 2022.



Tsherin Sherpa, *UFO (Unidentified Fettering Organization) No. 2*, (2016). Acrylic, ink, and gold pen on cotton. 108 x 140 cm. Courtesy Rossi & Rossi.

Tsherin Sherpa at Rossi & Rossi

With the first Nepal Pavilion at the Venice Biennale currently showcasing the work of Tsherin Sherpa, Rossi & Rossi's booth celebrates the practice of an artist who is bringing thangka painting into the 21st century with thrilling results.

Sherpa was born in Kathmandu in 1968; he is the son of Master Urgen Dorje Sherpa, a renowned thangka artist from Ngyalam, Tibet, whom he trained under from the age of 12. What followed was a more eclectic path. Sherpa studied computer science and Mandarin in Taiwan for a year, before returning to Nepal to focus on Buddhist philosophy while collaborating on paintings with his father.

Then, in 1998, Sherpa moved to California, where his spectrum of influences widened, infusing thangka-inspired works with a kind of sharp, pop aesthetic that re-animates tradition not only for new generations, but new worlds.

Among the works in Hong Kong are two from 2016, in which the rich and detailed landscapes of thangka have been maximalised and compressed at the same time, as if a whole universe has been squeezed and contained by the red and blue cords that bind them.