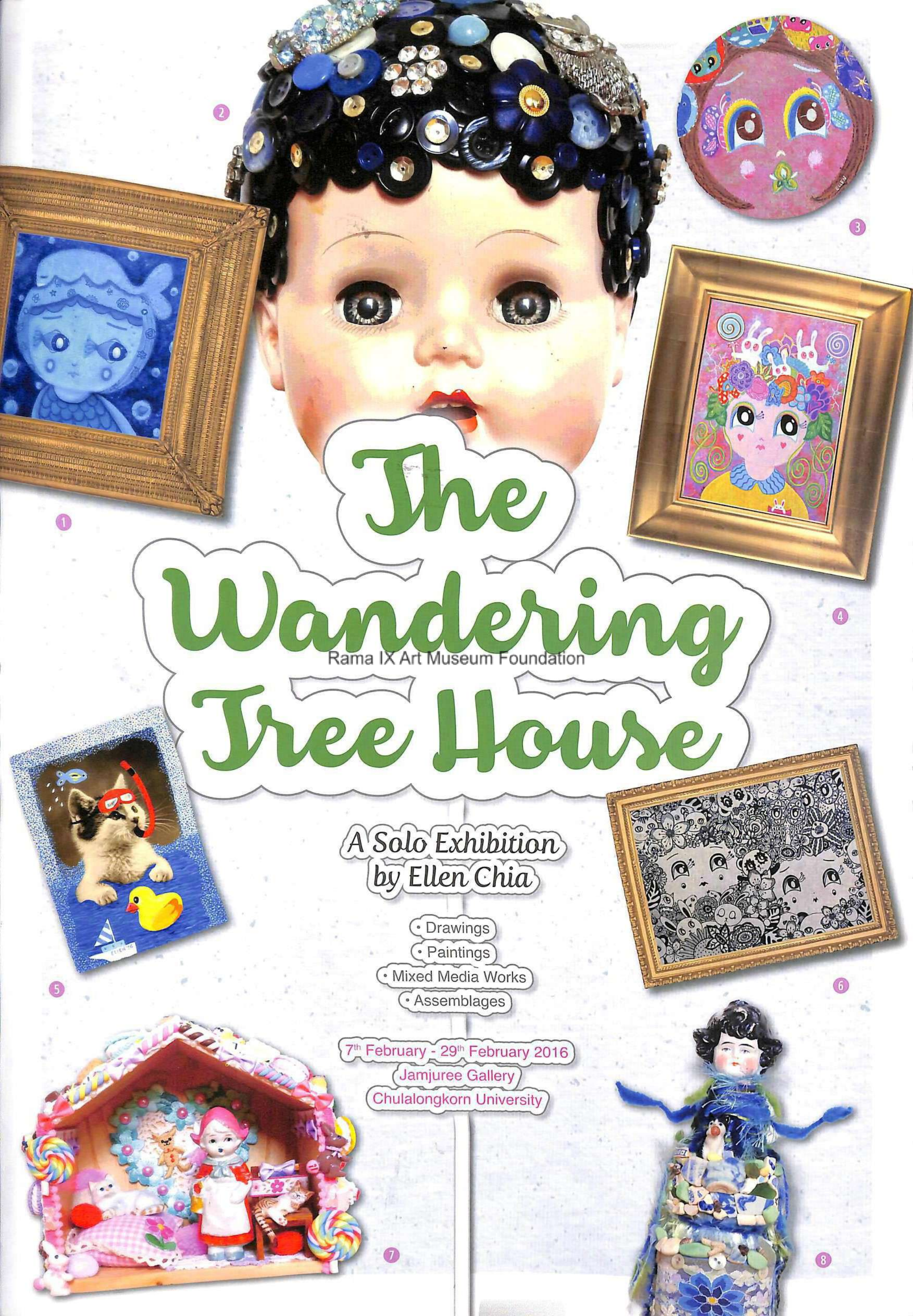




# The Wandering Tree House

Rama IX Art Museum Foundation

A Solo Exhibition  
by Ellen Chia

- Drawings
- Paintings
- Mixed Media Works
- Assemblages

7<sup>th</sup> February - 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Jamjuree Gallery  
Chulalongkorn University



# The Wandering Tree House

*Once upon a time*, there lived a girl who called herself **The Wandering Tree House**. **The Wandering Tree House** possessed a curious streak and loved asking many questions about life, society and how humans can co-exist in harmony with nature. She walked alone for long hours in the woods, in little towns and sometimes along the seashores, hoping to learn more as she wandered. Those long daily solitary walks proved to be more than what she could hoped for. As she walked, she met and saw



what she thought to be interesting people living lives according to their own definitions of success and good life. These people defied the mainstream society's limiting views of what a successful or good life should consists of and carve out their own definitions instead, navigating through life with their inner compasses. Although these people worked in different vocations and had different personalities, they shared some common traits. Traits such as a deep respectful love for nature, rich creative imagination and a desire to give back to the community.

As she probed more about their lives, she found out that before they embraced what they were currently, they all went through a similar "rebirth" experience, an **awakening** of the mind's consciousness to who he/she is and what he/she wants out of life, no longer bound by society's sometimes cruel and cold measuring yardsticks. They reclaimed their minds and were able to be independent again, both in spirit and in mind.



**The Wandering Tree House** viewed every encounter with these unique individuals as sacred and special, she wants to cherish them in her heart as inspirational reminders. Hence she sat down and created a collection of mixed media artworks, 3-D altered art assemblages (using old dolls, vintage objects and ephemera) paintings and drawings. She hoped that by doing so, she would nurture the hope within that someday she and many others could muster the **courage** to follow the footsteps of these people and live the lives they imagined, off the beaten tracks but soul-enriching nevertheless.



## Ellen Chia

a.k.a **The Wandering Tree House** is a free-spirited translator of the pictures in the head and sentiments of the heart, giving them physical art forms that they may continue on their journey and wanderings in the world. In this collection of works, Ellen incorporated many vintage dolls into her artworks, each doll or character is a symbolic representation of the encounters she had mentioned previously, Ellen has a special fondness for old dolls and here's why: Those dolls were mass produced in factories and assembly lines, created from moulds so that every doll looked the same for easy quality control, efficient production and quick profits. Ellen sees some parallels of doll factories and the workings of our society at large. Mass produced "goods" (meaning people in this regard) and monocultures serving a higher agenda played out by different forces, leaving little space for independent thinking, true **individualism** and **freedom**. These old doll heads served as some consciousness awakening devices, awakening us to seek our own definition and direction of success and happiness, not somebody else's and not the world's.

These dolls have passed through the passage of time, most look scarred, jaded and full of imperfections. Their imperfections are also the very reason why Ellen is keen to engage the dolls to communicate her thoughts to the audience. By altering the doll's existing forms and appearances, she hopes to convey the message that we as individuals need not succumb to our mass-produced **Rama IX Art Museum Foundation** despite our past and imperfections. It is a journey that we can all take to **reclaim** independent ground for our minds, to live out our true identities.

Ellen shows her playful and quirky side in this collection of altered antique photographs and vintage postcards. The past is being recreated with new stories and characters. As with much in life, we cannot erase the unpleasant past and failures but we can certainly use these experiences as stepping stones or launching pads for life's next phase. If only we dare to imagine new possibilities for ourselves. Drawing often leads Ellen into a quiet meditative place in the mind, it is in moments like these she experiences a deep longing to morph into a flower, a fish, a bird, the waves and the clouds. She hopes to invite the viewers to share some of her little whimsical joys as she reflects on nature's gifts and wonders. Choosing to capture some of her fleeting thoughts on canvases instead of paper, Ellen went on to create paintings of child-like naive style, her desire to behold the world through the eyes of a child, defender of the soul against the weary dreary weights of the complex adult world.

A full-time pursuer of the creative expressions of life and art, Ellen exchanged her corporate heels for paintbrushes in 2007 and embarked on a journey as a self-taught artist. Though the journey is a relentless tester of her heart's resolve, she is pleasantly surprised to discover that she is not as faint-hearted as she thought she would be in those trying circumstances. Discouraged yes but hope triumphs and pushes one on. She will continue to create art from her being as long as her heart remains strong and unwavering. Ellen currently lives in Thailand with her husband and two dogs, a homebody with a penchant for solitude, books and a wandering mind.





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## No Leaders, Please

invent yourself and then reinvent yourself,  
don't swim in the same slough.  
invent yourself and then reinvent yourself and  
stay out of the clutches of mediocrity.

invent yourself and then reinvent yourself,  
change your tone and shape so often that they can never categorize you.

reinvigorate yourself and accept what is

but only on the terms that you have invented and reinvented.

be self-taught.

and reinvent your way because you must;  
it is your life and its history and the present belong only to you.

Charles Bukowski



30

- 1 A Perilous Voyage
- 2 AstroNaomi the Stargazer
- 3 Facing My Dreams
- 4 Defender Of The Sweet Soul
- 5 The Snorkel Intern
- 6 We Get Along Well Together
- 7 Anouk's Sweet Refuge

- 8 Cathy - Yarn Lady By The Lagoon
- 9 Pablo the Beekeeper
- 10 Dawn the Dog Sanctuary Volunteer
- 11 Glacie the Krill Scientist
- 12 Rosemary the Rose Connoisseur
- 13 Cattleya's Craft Studio

- 14 Laguna the Beachcomber
- 15 Bernie the Ornithologist
- 16 Kinuko the Kimono Apprentice
- 17 The Waves Brought Me To You
- 18 Autumn's Eternal Spring
- 19 Just A Hug Away
- 20 Wings Needed For Soul

- 21 I'd Rather Be With You
- 22 Midnight Rendezvous
- 23 We Began As Water Babies
- 24 The Wild Foragers
- 25 Solitude Companionship
- 26 You Make Life Bearable
- 27 While You Are Sleeping
- 28 When I Grow Up, I Want to Be Like Alice

- 29 Always A Baby In Your Eyes
- 30 Rochelle's Sea Curiosities