



Joanna Tan Chen Yin, *Take my five loaves and two fishes*, 2014, mixed-media on paper, 600 x 840mm.

Take my five loaves and two fishes

Joanna Tan Chen Yin

Art does not come from thinking, but from responding. Corita Kent

Yearning for rest and to be recharged, I decided to treat myself to a two-week painting holiday in Italy this summer. I ended up in a charming cottage on a mountain in Tuscany with eight other artists from around the world who came to paint and make art.

This work came about from a series of marks randomly made with charcoal. The facilitator led the group through an exercise and we ended up making marks on each other's paper. The disorderly marks were to be the starting point of each artist's artwork.

I began making lines following the rhythm and flow of the scribbles and scratchings. It was as if my mind and body acted together, each having to listen and negotiate with the other while the image in front of me evolved. Some marks were given more emphasis while others were knocked back. The discomfort of not knowing the big picture is something that, as an artist, I am now familiar with. Like in life, I was asked only to respond to what is in front of me and take that next step. As I walked in faith, symbols started to form slowly turning chaos to some sort of order (see Figures 1 to 3). The meanings of those symbols were not all apparent at once. But when I became more conscious of them, they spoke of my being and my story. How wonderful is the creative process!



Figures 1 to 3.