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# A Thousand Kisses Deep: Song Kun

Head to the UCCA for a beautiful painterly exhibition with distinct emo overtones

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By Clare Pennington

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Song Kun is an accomplished painter and increasingly important artistic voice. She has had solo exhibitions at the Hammer Museum and Walter Maciel Gallery in the US, as well as plenty in China. Her sensual paintings of punks, skimpily clad girls, jewels and bones – heavy-metal references to death and beauty – have made an art of adolescent angst. But her latest UCCA show leaves us feeling that she's overdone it this time – even if that's the point.

The luminescent, pinky-blue canvases, displayed in dim light on pitch-black walls, are full-blown

emo. Iridescent jellyfish make ghostly reference to breasts and wombs as they seem to float across their canvases. A girl, face-down (of course) on a bed, is doll-like, her legs and rib-cage manipulated to look robotic. Ah! Dystopian cyber punk – *Ghost in the Shell's* makers would be proud.

Whether to fall into Song's dreamy inner world or stand haughtily apart is a problem. One admires the portraits' sensitive brush strokes. In one painting, an old man kneels as if he's in a traditional Chinese portrait, strumming his dombra like an electric guitar. It combines formal portraiture with modern poster imagery – and it's no accident that the crossover between tradition and change is represented through music.

The display case is too much, though. The clear glass dildo, wine-red nipples, handcuffs and pictures on a bed of black velvet are just crass. So are the impossibly high plastic heels and pearl necklaces, next to a circle of bones, and the film that tells you how it all came together. The self-indulgence is so brazen, it's tiresome.

And then there's the silvery painting of a fish, red rubies falling from a slit cut deep into its belly. A scarlet glow of blood and rubies seeps from the open wound. Could it be yet another reference to the precious jewel all women cradle between their thighs? Please.

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