



Today's Special

Yeoh Choo Kuan



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A digital catalogue for "Today's Special", a solo exhibition by Yeoh Choo Kuan at Richard Koh Fine Art, Blk 47 Malan Road, #01-26 Gillman Barracks, Singapore 109444

from 30 October - 22 November 2020.

Today's Special

by

Yeoh Choo Kuan

Introduction

by Christiaan Haridas

In *Today's Special*, Yeoh Choo Kuan presents works completed within the years of 2016 – 2020. The works culminate as Yeoh's artistic contextualization of the current media phenomenon in the United States, closely tied to the current presidency of Donald Trump and his legacy in the reality TV show "The Apprentice". The exhibition tracks how Yeoh's practice has transitioned over the years from exploring abstract paintings to his recent board works. By extension, it also represents Yeoh's perspective on the gradual mental degradation of power. Yeoh alludes to notions of violence, resentment, chaos and absurdity through his pursuit of providing a visceral experience of power dynamics.

The 2017 paintings are an important series in Yeoh's practice as it marks a major shift towards gestural abstraction with highly textured strokes. Self-coined by the artist as "Fleshing Abstraction" – a synthesis of disintegration set in contrast as the tensions and forces are weighted on the oil surfaces. A sense of nonchalance is presented in the artistic process and echoes the titles of the works, while its base line of "You're Fired" in different permutations steep in disrespect. Akin to the chopping board series, the surface of the paintings has received similar treatments of mark-marking. Viewers are confronted by a purposeful but violent landscape.

The chopping board is a persistent iconography in Yeoh's shaped board series and serve as an entry point for his fascination of its duality; not only as a conduit of disgust, but also pleasure. Yeoh likens the painting surface to sleek and cleaned chopping boards with traces of permanent knife marks caused by blunt force and exertion. The act of scarring on the linen surfaces further serve as a cathartic experience for Yeoh, expelling frustration, and to a certain extent; social anxiety.

The first iteration of the shaped board series manifested in 2016 and eventually finalized in 2020 in Yeoh's unique satirical style. The works are unabashedly hung on butt plugs, framing the year of the pandemic, along with the anxiety of 'political theatre' in the United States.

The second iteration takes a nuanced turn in terms of artistic expression. Completed in 2020, the works are not materialized as oil paintings but represent intentions via the act of destroying. The shaped board works are marred by a barrage of cut marks – more so compared to the first iteration – which, seen at close range, alludes to a chaotic lacework. However, from a distance, the silhouette of the work hints at a sense of deterioration, in which traces of lost material are clearly visible.

As the next presidential election looms in the United States, *Today's Special* serves as a reminder of the artist's experience in the past 4 years and also fair warning to what's on the coming menu.



You've Been Served I

2016-2020
Oil on custom PE board and stainless steel
110 x 75 cm



You've Been Served II

2016-2020
Oil on custom PE board and stainless steel
110 x 75 cm



You've Been Served III

2016-2020
Oil on custom PE board and stainless steel
110 x 75 cm



Hard Target

2016-2020
Oil on custom PE board and stainless steel
120 x 75 cm



Fruitillita

2016-2020
Oil on custom PE board and stainless steel
75 x 60 cm



The Last Happy Meal

2016-2020
Oil on custom PE board and stainless steel
110 x 75 cm



You're Fired

It felt like forever with the scars left on colors, but once again it bleeds fresh. New cuts crossed over scabs, left with the traces of incisive and tentative gestures. Their painful ordeal, presumably an entertainment for the viewer, culminates with the line. "You're fired," uttered the dominant. The correlations between consuming reality TV and the human belief/behaviors are dramatically realistic. This body of abstract work is a manifestation from the reality shows (Season 1).



You're Fired

2017
Oil on linen
270 x 180 cm
Set of 9 panels

King crap course

2020
Custom PE board and stainless steel
45 x 30 cm



Hard Stomach

2020
Custom PE board and stainless steel
42 x 31 cm



Wealth snack

2020
Custom PE board and stainless steel
38 x 20 cm



Butcher's recommendation

2020
Custom PE board and stainless steel
50 x 16 cm



Midnight craving

2020
Custom PE board and stainless steel
51 x 23 cm



Cut cold

2020
Custom PE board and stainless steel
50 x 12 cm



From farm to arse

2020
Custom PE board and stainless steel
40 x 26 cm



Do it your way

2020
Custom PE board and stainless steel
40 x 20 cm



Thristale

2020
Custom PE board and stainless steel
36 x 26 cm



Biography



Yeoh Choo Kuan (b. 1988, Malaysia) lives and works in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. His work is an exploration of the possibilities through mark-marking. He has explored a variety of themes including domesticity, sexuality, the human body, as well as death and the subconscious. His early autobiographical works illustrate the purging of unrest and hidden emotions left by traumatic experiences through mark-making on painted imageries. His approach had since shifted toward gestural abstraction with highly textured strokes, which is referred to as his self-coined “Fleshing Abstraction” – a synthesis of disintegration set in contrast as the tension and forces are weighted on the oil surfaces.

Informed by distinctive visual languages accumulated over the course, he is currently drawing inspiration from nature to discover the potential of landscaping and pictorial means. Solo exhibitions include: *Streaming Mountain* (2019), Richard Koh Fine Art Singapore; *Lights In* (2018), Tang Contemporary Art, Bangkok; *Live Leak* (2017), Richard Koh Fine Art Malaysia; *Private Sentiment* (2012), House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Education

2010 Diploma in Fine Arts, Dasein Academy of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Solo Exhibitions

2020 *Today's Special*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Gillman Barracks, Singapore

A Day and Forever, Art Basel Online Viewing Room, Richard Koh Fine Art, Hong Kong

2019 *Streaming Mountain*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Gillman Barracks, Singapore

Streaming Mountain, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2018 *Lights In*, Tang Contemporary Art, Bangkok

2017 *Live Leak*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2014 *In the Flesh*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2012 *Private Sentiment*, House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Group Exhibitions

2020 *In Our Own Frame*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2019 Art Expo Malaysia, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Public Artwork, Gillman Barracks, Singapore

2018 VOLTA 14, Basel, Switzerland

Art Central 2018, Richard Koh Fine Art, Hong Kong

The Modalities of Abstraction: Srihadi Soedarsono & Yeoh Choo Kuan, Art Agenda, S.E.A., ART STAGE Singapore 2018, Singapore

The Horizon is Just an Illusion: New Thoughts on Landscape, Our Artprojects, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2017 *The Artling Pop-up*, Artspace @ Helutrans, Singapore

THE UNREAL DEAL - Six Decades of Malaysian Abstract Art, Bank Negara Museum and Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

VOLTA 13, Richard Koh Fine Art, Basel, Switzerland

Art Central 2017, Richard Koh Fine Art, Hong Kong

Art Stage Singapore 2017, Singapore

2016 *Malaysian Art, A Special Preview*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Malaysian Art, A New Perspective, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Art Central Hong Kong 2016, Hong Kong

Art Stage Singapore 2016, Singapore

2015 China International Gallery Exposition (CIGE) 2015, Beijing, China

Synthesis, The Art Centre, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

I am Ten, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Art Central Hong Kong 2015, Hong Kong

Art Stage Singapore 2015, Singapore

Malaysian Art, A New Perspective, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Malaysia Art, A New Perspective, Richard Koh Fine Art, Singapore

2014 Art Taipei 2014, Taipei, Taiwan

Southeast Asian Pavilion, KIAF/14, Seoul, Korea

Arts Kuala Lumpur - Melbourne, Space@Collins Street Melbourne, Australia

Configuration, G13 Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

MEAA, White Box, Publika, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2013 *50/50 (two man show with artist Zelin Seah)*, TAKSU, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

SAGER III (touring exhibition in 3 countries), HOM Gallery (Malaysia), Perahu Art Connection (Indonesia), Orange Gallery (Philippines)

Frame of Mind II, Orange Gallery, Bacolod City, Philippines

No Random Nonsense, Boston Gallery, Quezon City, Philippines

X Individuals- The Explorations, Art Accent Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Figuration Trajectory, G13 Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Up, Group Exhibition, TAKSU, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Locals Only, TAKSU, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2012 *Young & NEW Part IV*, House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

A Meter Diameter, House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2011 MEAA, Soka Gakkai Cultural Building, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The Malaysian Rice Plate Project, KL Convention Center, Suria KLCC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

INSPIRATION OF TOMORROW, Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2010 *NOW!*, Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Breakthrough, Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Residencies

2017 Red Gate Residency, Beijing, China

2015 Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia

Founded in 2005, with spaces in Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Singapore, Richard Koh Fine Art is committed to the promotion of Southeast Asian contemporary art on regional and international platforms. Centred around a core belief in developing an artist's career, the gallery looks to identify understated, albeit promising practices, and providing it opportunities to flourish. Through its regular exhibition cycles, print & digital publications and cross-border gallery collaborations, Richard Koh Fine Art engages the art community with the aim of developing regional and intercultural dialogue.



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