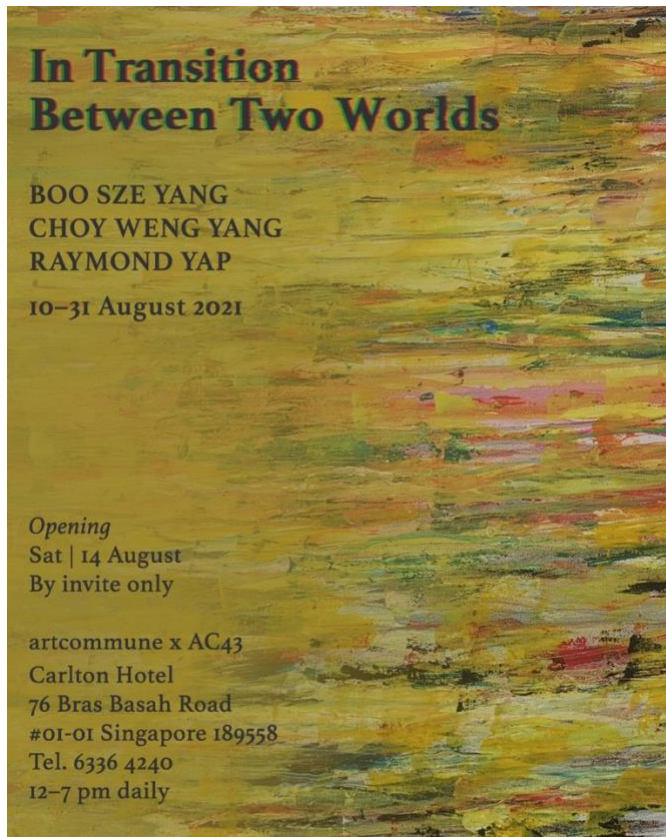


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 03 AUGUST 2021



All forms of art are abstract. Painting is the act of putting paint onto the surface of a canvas. Sometimes the marks may come together to summon a recognisable image, or the passages of colours may evoke an emotional response in the viewer. The content of any work, be it a performance, installation, video or sculpture, may be representational or not, but the act of presenting it in its differing form is, in essence, an act of abstraction. Abstraction in painting challenges viewers to review conventional perception and expand the horizons beyond the norms of representation. Armenian-American painter Arshile Gorky (1904-1948) said, “Abstraction allows man to see with his mind what he cannot see physically with his eyes.” Regardless of the twists and turns in global art trends, painting is an art form that never ceases to be relevant and continues to play a key role amongst the contemporary art community.

In Transition: Between Two Worlds features three artists of different generations known for working between modes of abstraction and figuration in painting, each with a unique visual vocabulary and aesthetic that well reflects the zeitgeist of contemporary life. The showcase, which features around 20 paintings, is on view at artcommune gallery from 10 to 31 August 2021.

Colour is a point of investigation for Choy Weng Yang and his paintings are characterised by several distinct phases of transition through impressionism, abstraction, colour interaction and abstract impressionism.¹ Boo Sze Yang's approach to paintings is distinctive in its loose, gestural technique and use of a restrained palette to create images that evoke moments of memories that reside in the in-between zone of the real and the utopia. Raymond Yap's work entails a reimagining of the environment, exploring the relationship of time and space, and how these elements excavate each other through lines, movement, and colour.

For these artists, the process of painting is intuitive and accidental in many ways. It is a journey without a destination; the artist delves deep into the unconscious, making discoveries by getting lost and allowing the process to dictate the outcome. Each painting is an encounter with the unforeseeable and a multitude of possibilities where imagination is the only horizon.

Choy Weng Yang (b. 1936, Singapore—) is an artist, curator, art writer and art educator. As one of Singapore's prominent second-generation artists, Choy's work embodies a distinctive style of abstract expressionism and exploration of colours. He was part of the pioneering team at the National Museum Art Gallery in the 1970s, first as Head of Exhibition and Design and later as Curator of Art.²



Choy studied painting at the Hornsey College of Art in London on a Ministry of Education scholarship and graduated in 1962 with a National Diploma of Art. In the following year, he enrolled in the University of London Institute of Education and received his post-graduate Art Teachers Certificate.³ In 1973, Choy was awarded a UNESCO Fellowship for the Creative Arts and toured USA extensively. He surveyed and researched the permanent art collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Art

Institute of Chicago, and the Los Angeles County Museum. He also experimented with environmental abstract sculpture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Advance Visual Studies under the mentorship of Professor Gyorgy Kepes. He also visited the studio of Josef Albers, a renowned German artist from the Bauhaus noted for his theories on colour interactions.⁴

¹ <https://www.esplanade.com/offstage/arts/choy-weng-yang>

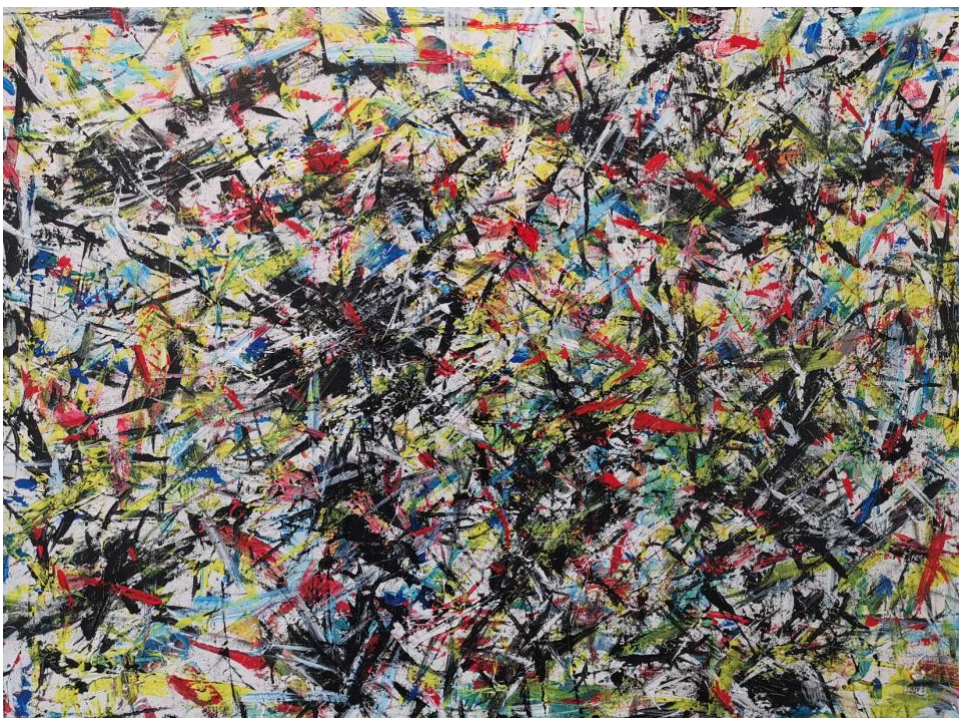
² https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2020-04-30_171809.html

³ Teo, H. M. (Interviewer). (2018, August 19). *Oral history project: Choy Weng Yang. 1. Student days, early career as teacher and UNESCO fellowship* [Transcript]. Retrieved 2019, December 23 from Oral History Project website: <https://oralhistoryproject.sg/Choy-Weng-Yang-Top>

⁴ <https://www.esplanade.com/offstage/arts/choy-weng-yang>

In 1978, Choy was appointed the Curator of Art at the National Museum of Singapore where he contributed to the design of the National Museum Art Gallery and graphic designs for the art exhibitions. He remained in this position until 1985 when he retired to devote himself to his painting practice. In 1979, he toured India on the invitation of the government of India, and was invited by the government of France in 1985 for an extensive cultural tour of France. While in France, Choy visited the studio of notable Chinese artist Zao Wou-Ki, who was known for his abstract paintings. He also studied the modern art collection at the Pompidou Centre and the Maeght Art Collection at the Maeght Foundation in the south of France.⁵ He viewed Monet's monumental Water-Lilies Paintings. Inspired by what he had seen and what he had studied since the '60s, Choy was moved to employ the visual language of Western art in its quest for modernism. In consequence, universal elements built the mental framework for his art. As a result, he was described as an avant-garde artist, alongside those in his generation who worked with similar concepts in abstract art, especially those who had gone abroad to study in a Western institution of art and returned to Singapore.⁶

Colour was a point of investigation for Choy. His early works were arrangements of bands of colour to evoke the enigmatic visual qualities of colour interactions. Perpetually evolving, Choy's works are characterised by a number of distinct phases of transition through Impressionism, Abstraction, Colour Interaction and Abstract Impressionism. Choy finds inspiration in the works of Monet, Cezanne, Mondrian and Albers.⁷



Choy Weng Yang, *Abstract I*, 2021, Acrylic on canvas, 78 x 102 cm

⁵ <https://www.esplanade.com/offstage/arts/choy-weng-yang>

⁶ <https://www.esplanade.com/offstage/arts/choy-weng-yang>

⁷ <https://www.esplanade.com/offstage/arts/choy-weng-yang>



Choy Weng Yang, *Atmospheric Boat Quay*, 2021, Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 90 cm

Boo Sze Yang (b.1965, Singapore). Boo's paintings deal with a broad range of subject matters, from mundane domestic objects to images of car and airplane crash-scenes, derelict interiors of cathedrals and unpeopled chambers of shopping malls. Boo treats banal objects, modern architectural interiors and destructive scenes as metaphors for the human condition, transforming these into a symbol of contemporary life through his loose, gestural technique and use of a restrained palette to emphasise the materiality of paint. His recent series of paintings conjure a natural world gradually dissected and displaced by urban development. The monochromatic handling of linear structures resembling scaffoldings, partitions and platforms are created through the delicate process of pulling and pushing wet paints across the canvas using a squeegee. These imageries do not evoke

real moments of memories but refers to a special, in-between zone of the real space and the utopia; a baffling place where reality and fantasy coexist.



Boo Sze Yang graduated from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) in 1991. He completed his Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art at the University of Reading, UK in 1995 and received his Master's in Arts Degree from Chelsea College of Art & Design, the University of the Arts London in 2004.

Boo has held 17 solo exhibitions, including *The Mirage*, AC43 Gallery, Singapore (2018); *Boo Sze Yang: The Father*, iPRECATION, Singapore (2014); *Boo Sze Yang: AIR at Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts*, Taipei, Taiwan (2012); *Sanctuary*, Art at St Francis, Melbourne, Australia (2012); *The New Cathedral*, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts Galleries, Singapore (2012); *Sanctuary*, Red Mill Gallery, Vermont, USA (2011); *Boom*, Utterly Art, Singapore (2009); *House of God*, Utterly Art, Singapore (2007); *Silence of the Canines*, Utterly Art, Singapore (2006); and *In-between*, Zandari, Seoul, South Korea (2005). He exhibited in group

exhibitions such as *Motionless Boundary*, Da Xin Art Museum, Tainan, Taiwan (2018); *Painters*, Nakata Museum Onomichi, Hiroshima, Japan (2018); *Art Stage Singapore (2015 & 2016)*, 100 Painters of Tomorrow, Beers Contemporary, London (2014); *The Realm in the Mirror, the Vision Out of Image*, an Exhibition of Singapore Contemporary Art, Suzhou Jinji Lake Art Museum, Suzhou, China (2013); *The 2012-13 Sovereign Asian Art Prize*, Hong Kong (2013); *the 26th Asian International Art Exhibition (AIAE)*, Hangaram Art Museum, South Korea (2011); *Exchange China-Singapore Art Showcase*, Yingu Art Mansion, Beijing, China (2010).

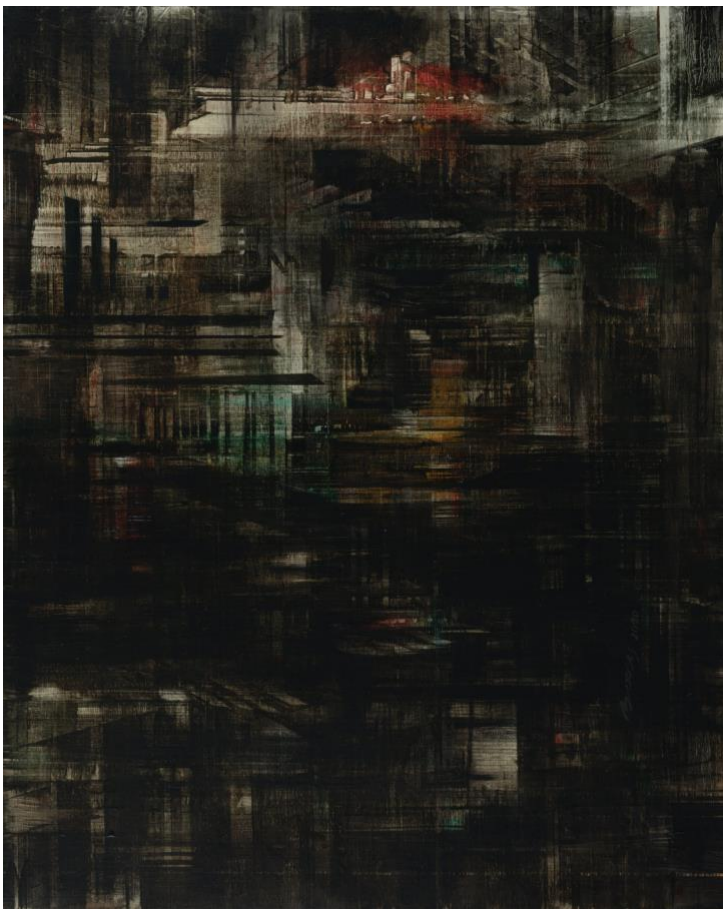
He is a recipient for the Asian Artist Fellowship Award 2010/2011 sponsored by Freeman Foundation for residency at the Vermont Studio Center in USA, and the Distinguished Alumni Medal 2017 from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore. In 2003, he was awarded the Juror's Choice for the Philip Morris Singapore-ASEAN Art Award and in 2009, the Platinum Award, UOB Painting of the Year Competition. He is featured in the publication *100 Painters of Tomorrow* published by Thames & Hudson in 2014.

His works are in the collections of the National Gallery, Singapore, the Singapore Istana Art Collection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore, United Overseas Bank, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Simmons

Simmons Contemporary Art Collection, Urban Redevelopment Authority Singapore and Yingu Art Mansion in Beijing.



Boo Sze Yang, *Still Waters Run Deep #1*, 2020, Oil on linen, 80 x 300 cm (triptych)



Boo Sze Yang, *The Edge of Shadows #9*, 2020, Oil on linen, 100 x 80 cm

Raymond Yap (b.1966, Malaysia) completed his postgraduate studies from the Royal Academy Schools in 2001. His practice in arts has been recognised by the Selina Cheneviere Fellowship (Major Award in Painting) from the Royal Academy Schools in 2001, Fenton Art Trust Prize & David Murray Travel Scholarship in 2000, and the Drawing Prize (Highly Commended) from the Wimbledon College of Art in 1998.

Raymond's journey towards the arts started in 1994. Since then he has had several solo exhibitions under his belt, namely *141 Paintings* at 1961 Projects, 2021, *Raymond Yap: Giant Steps* at 1961 Projects, Singapore in 2019, at Sangkring Art Space, Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2010; The Jendela, Esplanade, Singapore in 2009; Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2005; and The Agency Contemporary, London in 2003 and 2002.



In 2018 he participated in *80x80cm*, a fund-raising exhibition as part of the Visual Arts Programme at Esplanade Tunnel in 2017; *The Calm Before the Storm*, Element Art Space, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 2017; *Abstraction in Three Mediums*, Element Art Space, Raffles Hotel, Singapore 2016; *Do you believe in Angels?* curated by Tony Godfrey at MO Space, Philippines which subsequently toured to Equator Arts Project, Singapore 2014; *Nothing in Common*, ION Art Gallery, Singapore 2014; ASEAN vision, National Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand 2014.

He curated *New Order*, a NAFA Fine Art Programme staff exhibition in 2018, and *Eyes to Think* at Sangkring Art Space, Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2010. His most recent artist-in-residences were at the Light & Space Contemporary, Philippines in December 2013, and at Sangkring Art Project in 2010.

He was invited to be one of the Speakers at Silpakorn University Bangkok's QS Totally Art Summit on the theme *Disruptive Innovation in Art and Design*

Education at the Grand Ballroom, Millennium Hilton Bangkok, Thailand. In 2017, he was invited to attend a workshop titled *A Study of Royal Initiative Projects Concerning Community and Environment for Visual Arts Creation "Fine Arts for Community Development and Environment Conservation"* by ASEAN Artists to Commemorate King Bhumibol Adulyadej' at Krabi, Thailand. Organized by Silpakorn University Bangkok. In 2014, he was invited to participate ASEAN Contemporary Painting Project on occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Department of Painting, Faculty of Painting Sculpture and Graphic Arts, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Currently a full-time lecturer at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, he diligently uses his spare time to create experimental work. His multi-layered approach to creating a push and pull between positive and negative space, and reflecting positive and negative compositions seek to expand the visual vocabulary and to draw emphasis on the interchangeability of languages in art. He continually questions the surface and spatial relations via drawing and painting mediums, immersing them until they become a single element.



Raymond Yap, *Freeflow*, 2021, Acrylic on canvas, 102 x 76 cm



Raymond Yap, *Mirror*, 2021, Acrylic on canvas, 102 x 76 cm

Exhibition Period: 10 – 31 August 2021

Time: 12 – 7 pm (daily)

Venue: artcommune gallery (Address below)

Contact Information

artcommune gallery

76 Bras Basah Road

#01-01 Carlton Hotel

Singapore 189558

T: +65 63364240 **M:** +65 97479046

For media enquiries or high-resolution image requests, please contact:

Ms. Valerie Anne Lim

M: +65 98205731

Email: valerie@artcommune.com.sg