

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10 SEPTEMBER 2018

Ink Expressions II: Traditions and Contestations

A Selection of Ink Artists Including:

Chen Chong Swee / Chen Wen Hsi / Ho Chee Lick / Oh Chai Hoo / Tang Da Wu / Wong Keen / Zhuang Sheng Tao

artcommune gallery is pleased to present *Ink Expressions II: Traditions and Contestations*, an exhibition that examines the practice of the ink medium from multiple directions. By drawing from a large pool of representative but varied Singaporean ink artists, this exhibition provides four conceptual frameworks around which the ink medium can be understood in the Singaporean context, illuminating ways in which ink practitioners grapple with the cultural baggage of the medium whilst working with an eye on the contemporary world. The artists featured include but are not limited to: Chen Chong Swee, Chen Wen Hsi, Fan Chang Tien, Ho Chee Lick, Oh Chai Hoo, Tang Da Wu, Wong Keen and Zhuang Sheng Tao.

Sinophone Expressions utilises a neologism coined by the academic Shih Shu-mei to problematize the Chineseness of the ink medium. This section will show how the traditions of literati paintings and calligraphy were practiced among the early Chinese community to define, determine, and discipline cultural Chineseness, and how the differentiation of ‘Sinophone art’ from ‘Chinese art’ allows modern audiences to gain a clearer understanding of the community that practices it.

An Inherited Tradition examines the roots of literary and aesthetic representations of the *Nanyang*, showing how China-born Singaporean artists localised their traditions with metamorphosed presentations of landscape and flower-and-bird literati paintings. This section deepens our understanding of the traditional Chinese paintings that were synthesised into the *Nanyang* school of art.

In the Face of the ‘Modern’ both presents and problematises the products of what has been imagined as an ‘East-West’ cultural synthesis – showing how Singaporean artists, who are keenly aware of the Sinitic cultural burdens of the ink medium, sought to resolve it with contemporaneous ideas of modernism and post-modernism.

The Question of Bimo is centred on Wu Guanzhong’s infamous declaration that “*bimo* counts for nothing”. *Bimo* – the expression of brush on paper – has been identified by Wu as an invented *sine qua non* in ink painting, one that distracts the practitioner from other components of painting. This section explores how ink artists transfigure or re-affirm *bimo*’s centrality in the ink medium.

Ink Expressions II: Traditions and Contestations will be accompanied by a **talk by young historian and curator, Tan Yong Jun**, who currently holds a B.A. Hons. (Cantab) in History from the University of Cambridge. **The talk will be held on Sunday, 23 September 2018, 2 - 3pm. Admission is free but registration is required.**

Exhibition Period

Date: 22 September – 7 October 2018

Time: 12pm – 7pm daily

Venue: Artspace @ Helutrans, 39 Keppel Road, Singapore 089065

Talk by Curator Tan Yong Jun

Date: 23 September 2018 (Sunday)

Time: 2 - 3pm

Contact Information

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Here are the images to some of the artworks on exhibit:



Zhuang Sheng Tao, *Brownness 3*, 1998, Ink and colour on paper, 98 x 67 cm



Zhuang Sheng Tao, *Bian Shun Chuan*, 1995, Ink on paper, 50 x 51 cm



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Zhuang Sheng Tao, *Fragmentaries 1*, 2015, Chinese ink on Korean paper, 56 x 78 cm



Tang Da Wu, *Untitled*, Ink on paper, 104 x 70 cm



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Tang Da Wu, *Untitled*, Chinese ink and colour on paper, 109 x 79 cm



Tan Oe Pang, *Zhong Kui*, Chinese ink and colour on paper, 139 x 35 cm



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Fan Chang Tien, *Peony and Mynah*, Chinese ink and colour on paper, 140 x 70 cm



Chen Chong Swee, *Landscape with a Lion*, Chinese ink and colour on paper, 101.5 x 46 cm



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Wong Keen, *Formation Series XXIX*, 1999, Acrylic on rice paper, 61 x 83 cm



Wong Keen, *Chicks*, c. 1980s, Ink on paper, 50 x 38 cm