

For Immediate Release: 20 June 2019

WONG KEEN | THEATRE OF ENIGMAS

28 June - 14 July 2019

artcommune is pleased to announce Wong Keen's new solo exhibition, *Theatre of Enigmas*, which opens on 28 June, Friday, 7pm (RSVP only). This exhibition opening is held in conjunction with the official opening of artcommune gallery's new space at Carlton Hotel, Singapore.

One of Singapore's leading painters, New York-trained artist Wong Keen has consistently captivated audience with his stylised and ever-evolving pictorial exploration which veers between the abstract and the figurative. From series to series, whether venturing anew or revisiting familiar techniques and imagery, Wong Keen's relentless pursuit of compositional innovation, together with the enigmatic quality of his language, has given rise to a unique body of work that defies traditions and categorisation.

Theatre of Enigmas features over 15 works completed in the period of 2015 to 2019, providing audience a quick survey of Wong Keen's wide-ranging themes and techniques across canvas, paper and mixed-media works. For instance, *Still a Burger* (an epic painting from the artist's acclaimed *Flesh Series*) draws us into a resplendent twisted nightmare where truncated nude bodies entice like sandwiched meat patties, alluding to the plight shared between flesh (beings) oppressed and consumed for commercial ends — from the cow on a butcher's table to the woman objectified for sex in a brothel. On the other hand, the recently-completed *Four Burgers* is a whimsical and surreal self-portrait where the artist's facial flesh echoes in likeness to the three hovering burgers conceived through bold gestural strokes. *The Breath of Desire*, with its ethereal display of superbly overlapped colours and spontaneous drips on rice paper, articulates the ventilating tensions between abstruseness and lucidity; strength and gentleness; will and surrender.

Wong Keen (b. 1942, Singapore) grew up in a Chinese literati environment and as a child studied drawing and painting under pioneer artists Liu Kang and Chen Wen Hsi. He was an acclaimed teenage painter in the early Singapore art scene before leaving Singapore in 1961 to study at the prestigious Art Students League of New York. He was the first Singaporean and among the earliest of Chinese artists to venture into the flourished post-war American art scene — then the most avant-garde art centre in the world.

During his fifty years or so in the US, Wong Keen registered a plethora of artistic movements and influences in the fast-paced American art scene. His outstanding oeuvre, which encompasses oil, ink, acrylic, and collage since the 1960s to the present, is a powerful embodiment of the elegant expressivity of Chinese ink wash aesthetics and the Western inventive approach towards form and colour. In 2007, the Singapore Art Museum celebrated Wong Keen's masterful repertoire with the solo exhibition, *Wong Keen: A Singapore Abstract Expressionist*. Wong Keen's work is held in a number of private and public collections, including the National Museum of China, Minnesota State University Art Museum, Albright Knox Art Gallery, New York, Singapore Art Museum, Resorts World Sentosa and the Fullerton Hotel.

Exhibition Period

Date: 28 June - 14 July 2019

Time: 12pm — 7pm daily

Venue: artcommune gallery (Pls refer to address below)

Contact Information

artcommune gallery

76 Bras Basah Road

#01-01 Carlton Hotel

Singapore 189558

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www.artcommune.com.sg**For media enquiries or high-resolution image requests, please contact:**

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Still a Burger, 2018, Oil on canvas, 215 x 305 cm



Four Burgers, 2019, Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm



The Breath of Desire, 2017, Acrylic on paper, 91 x 109 cm



Untitled, 2015, Mixed media (collage), 107 x 69.5 cm



artcommune
gallery

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In Repose, 2018, Mixed media (collage), 107 x 69.5 cm



Undulations, 2018, Mixed media (collage), 79 x 110 cm