

Wong Keen



Biography

- Born in 1942 in Singapore
- Graduated from The Art Students League, New York, USA in 1965
- Studied in Saint Martin's School of Art, London, UK under the Edward G. McDowell Travelling Scholarship between 1965-1966
- Graduated from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 1962
- Art Instructor at Fair Lawn Adult School Swarthmore, New Jersey, USA, in 1966
- Art Director at Police Athlete Leagues, New York, USA, in 1967

Wong Keen grew up in a Chinese literati environment and was an acclaimed teenage painter in the early Singapore art scene before leaving at 19 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 center in the world.

Having spent over 50 years in America, Wong Keen's 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 toward form and colour. From series to series, whether venturing anew or revisiting familiar techniques and imagery, his 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. 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.

Awards

1963 Ford Foundation Grant, Art Students League, New York
1965 Edward G. McDowell Travelling Scholarship, Art Students League, New York
1967 Consul General of Japan Award, The Sumi-E Society

Solo Exhibitions from 2000 to Present

2000 William Whipple Gallery, Southwest State University, Minnesota
2007 A Singapore Abstract Expressionist, Singapore Art Museum
2007 Expressions by Wong Keen, Galerie Belvedere, Singapore
2012 Picture Writing: Sensuous Abstractions, artcommune gallery, Singapore
2013 Keen Variations: The Different Sides of Wong Keen's Art, artcommune gallery, Singapore
2013 A Tribute to an Artist: Masterpieces of Wong Keen, Artspace @ Helutrans, Singapore
2014 Second Nature, Paintings by Wong Keen, artcommune gallery, Singapore
2015 Lotus Transformations: Paintings by Wong Keen, artcommune gallery, Singapore
2015 Wong Keen, The Substation Gallery, Singapore
2016 Wong Keen: The Orbits of Colour, artcommune gallery, Singapore
2017 Wong Keen: A Creative Life Unfurled, ION Art Gallery, Singapore
2018 Flesh on Loop: Wong Keen's Solo Exhibition, artcommune gallery, Singapore
2018 Lyrical Flesh, The Culture Story, Singapore
2018 Wong Keen: Flesh Matters, Artspace @ Helutrans, Singapore

Group Exhibitions from 2000 to Present

2000 Letters from the Artists, William Whipple Gallery, Southwest State University, Minnesota
2001 Moon Eclipse: Williamsburg Lunar Base Gallery, New York
2002 Williamsburg Art & Historical Center, New York
2003 The Pioneers 4, Singapore
2006 People of the Mind, William Whipple Gallery, Southwest State University, Minnesota
2009 Exploring the Boundary, Singapore & Malaysia
2010 Galeri Seri Lukis Modern Dai Ichi
2010 The 6th National Artists Travelling, Phattalung, Thailand
2011 Ink Expressions, Singapore
2011 Exchange 2011, Singapore-China Art Showcase
2011 The 2nd Art Exhibition of International Visual Artist, Association of Thailand
2011 International Famous Artists' Paintings Exhibition
2011 Grand Masters of Art Exhibition, ION Art Gallery, Singapore
2012 Artist in Residency in Gallerie URS Meile 2012, Beijing, China
2012 Contemporary Chinese Ceramic Paintings Exhibition, The National Art Museum of China
2014 Chinese Artists in Southeast Asia, Christie's Private Selling Exhibition, Hong Kong
2016 The 15th (Japan) International Calligraphy and Painting Exchange Exhibition,
Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Japan
2017 Singapore Artists in the States: Wong Keen, Goh Beng Kwan, Zhuang Sheng Tao and Choy Weng
Yang, artcommune gallery, Singapore
2017 Black & White: Boo Sze Yang, Ben Loong, Tang Da Wu, Benny Teo, Wong Keen, Zhuang Sheng
Tao, artcommune gallery, Singapore