Press Release (for immediate release)

Portals, Loopholes and other Transgressions
Heman CHONG

Exhibition Period: 28 October – 29 December 2016

Events

Opening Reception
Thursday, 27 October 2016, 7 – 9 pm

Artist Talk
Saturday, 03 December 2016, 3 – 4 pm

About the Exhibition

Portals, Loopholes and Other Transgressions is Heman Chong’s second solo exhibition at FOST Gallery, and follows up on many of this conceptual and formal concerns found in his first show Of Indeterminate Time or Occurrence in 2014. His work is located at the intersection between image, performance, situations and writing. He is interested in interrogating the functions of producing narratives in our everyday lives.

Upon entering the gallery, the viewer will encounter four large scale paintings that define the basis for an entire room. These works can be seen as portals into other dimensions, other ways of seeing. The material and size of these paintings are all exactly the same. The paintings have been worked on and reworked for three years, producing a visual quality that is completely opaque, with many hidden layers underneath other hidden layers. They express a certain pace within Chong’s work, one that is closer to writing fiction. These four paintings point to a new direction in Chong’s practice, involving a different sense of scale, dexterity, perception and engagement with the idea of painting. In a recent feature article about Chong in Art in America (June–July 2016), the artist and writer Travis Jeppensen observes that “Heman Chong is an artist for whom fiction writing plays a vital role. Or else he is a fiction writer for whom art-making plays a vital role. I don’t think Chong would debate either characterization.”

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On numerous occasions, Chong has defined painting as akin to learning a language, like an encounter that requires one to learn by rote and repetition, along with ample time and failure. This is evident since the first painting series that he began in 2009, Cover (Versions) where Chong culled titles of novels and the corresponding author names, producing objects that resemble book covers. His signature 61 by 46 cm paintings are often arranged in a kaleidoscopic grid, forming a landscape of distant and unexpected associations. Things That Remained Unwritten, a series that began in 2013 joins this spectrum of ideas as a way of charting things unspoken, forgotten and unheard narratives that are lost over the course of time.

In addition, three new visual and linguistic experiments from the artist can be found in this exhibition. The first, NO or ON is a sculpture which comes with a simple instruction: “You can show the work as ‘NO’ or ‘ON’; it’s completely up to you.” It oscillates between complete optimism or absolute despair. The second, Bad News! is a series of exclamations; a continuous sense of shock from disappointment. Statements like ‘No Way’, ‘Bye Bye’, ‘Oh God’, ‘Oh Man’, ‘Why Now’, ‘The End’, are lined up, waiting to be read. The third, Duration! is a series of painted numbers; precise minutes from a day, dislocated from the other minutes, floating away in our world.

Press Images

Heman CHONG, No Way #1, 2016, Acrylic on canvas, H61 x W46 x D3.5 cm
About the Artist
Heman CHONG (b. 1977, Singapore) has recently held a trilogy of interconnected solo exhibitions at Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai (Ifs, Ands or Buts, 2016), South London Gallery (An Arm, A Leg and Other Stories, 2015), and Art Sonje Center in Seoul (Never, A Dull Moment, 2015).

His work has been included in various biennales and group exhibition such as 20th Sydney Biennale (Carriageworks, 2016), 1st Yinchuan Biennale (Museum of Contemporary Art Yichuan, 2016), Take Me I’m Yours (Monnaie de Paris and New Museum New York, 2015-16), expo zero (Tate Modern, 2015), The Great Ephemeral (New Museum, 2015), Time of Others (The National Museum of Osaka, Singapore Art Museum and Gallery of Modern Art Brisbane, 2015-16).

Chong is an artist based in Singapore.

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Location
FOST Gallery
1 Lock Road
#01-02, Gillman Barracks
Singapore 108932

MRT
Labrador Park

Bus
Opposite Alexandra Point: 51, 57, 61, 93, 97, 97e, 100, 166, 175, 963 or 963e

Gallery Hours
Tue–Sat: 11am–7pm
Sun: 11am-6pm
Mon/Pub Hol: Open by appointment

Admission
Free

Enquiries
Call 6694 3080 or e-mail info@fostgallery.com