

Wong Keen *FLESH MATTERS*

12 July – 22 July 2018

Singapore, 14 June 2018 – The Culture Story and artcommune gallery are pleased to announce the upcoming solo exhibition by **Wong Keen**, titled '*Flesh Matters*'. This is the first major exhibition by Wong devoted exclusively to showcase one singular series, titled 'Flesh series', which started in 2012 during an artist residency in Caochangdi, Beijing. Over the last six years, Wong radically transformed his style, combining the painterliness of his earlier work with a fresh use of nudes, beiges and fleshy tones and sinuous lines that took these canvases into new and unexpected territories.



Wong Keen in his studio

FLESH MATTERS at Artspace@Helutrans will present over 25 new paintings and 15 works on paper and collages, illustrating Wong's compelling mastery and virtuosity as a painter. The series is considered one of the most accomplished in Wong's painted oeuvre over fifty years. The accompanying exhibition catalogue includes full-colour illustrations and an essay contributed by Ms. Lee Chor Lin, former Director of the National Museum and the CEO of Arts House Limited.

The works on exhibit chart the latest development in Wong's artistic career. Having spent over fifty years in America, his outstanding oeuvre, which encompasses oil, acrylic, ink and mixed media works, is a powerful embodiment of Chinese ink wash aesthetics and Western inventive approach towards form and colour. This dynamic approach has continued to characterise his dramatisation of flesh in form and philosophy over the last few years. His stylised images of the nude, the butcher shop and the burger across different pictorial styles and mediums reflect his commitment to continuously evolve and push the boundaries. This inventive spirit certainly sets him apart from his Singaporean contemporaries.

The largest work in *Flesh Matters* is a mural-sized acrylic painting titled, 'The Aftermath'. Measuring 305 by 610 cm, its scintillating display of bold colours and narrative symbols devised through the form and atmosphere of flesh reflects the theme of warfare among other recurring threads in the series. Acts of violence and destruction are always suggested rather than depicted, and the result is an arresting image that bespeaks a complex chain of relations and an unutterable horror, rather than a point-blank picture of carnage.

Ning Chong, co-founder of The Culture Story adds, "As organisers we are thrilled to have the opportunity to work closely with Wong Keen and bring this concept to fruition. As art collectors, it has been deeply rewarding and fulfilling to spend intimate moments in his studio, studying his works, watching him paint. We are collectors of his work and will continue to support him, because we are inspired by Wong's boundless energy and self-driven determination to create dynamic pictures and larger and larger paintings, even moving out of his comfort zone to make installation. At seventy-six years, we find his commitment to painting and thirst to keep pushing boundaries to create new images incredibly refreshing."

Media Preview

Media preview and tour, with artist present, will be held on **Wednesday 11th July 2018 at 4.00PM.**

Official Exhibition Opening

Official opening with artist present will be held on **Saturday 14th July 2018 from 12PM – 4.00PM.**

Exhibition Information

Exhibition Dates: 12 July – 22 July 2018

Time: 12pm – 7pm (except 14 July, it will close at 4pm)

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

Contact Information

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Enclosed Attachments

Annex A: Biography of Wong Keen

Annex B: Background of Organisers: The Culture Story and artcommune gallery

Annex C: Preview of Artworks

ANNEX A – Biography of Wong Keen



Born in Singapore in 1942, Wong Keen's prodigious talent in painting was evident in childhood. As a young boy, he learnt drawing and painting under pioneer artists Liu Kang and Chen Wen Hsi (who were also his family friends and teachers at Chinese High School). Wong Keen held his first solo exhibition at the then National Library of Singapore at age 19 and moved to America after being accepted by the prestigious Art Students League of New York. When Wong Keen departed in 1961, he was the first Singaporean to pursue art studies in New York and the first Asian and Singaporean to have won the Edward G. McDowell Travelling Scholarship (1965) in the history of Art Students League.

Having lived and worked in America for over fifty years, Wong Keen's artistic style is an embodiment of cross-cultural confluences: inspired by the elegance and expressiveness of Chinese ink painting and calligraphy, as well as Abstract Expressionism. In 2007, the Singapore Art Museum celebrated his masterful repertoire with a solo exhibition. In addition to private patronage from around the world, his works are also collected by the Singapore Art Museum, The National Museum of China, Resorts World Sentosa and The Fullerton Hotel.

ANNEX B – Background of Organisers

THE CULTURE STORY

Based in Singapore, The Culture Story aspires to redefine the art salon for the 21st century, a place where curious patrons, connoisseurs and enthusiasts can discover, discuss and collect new artists and their works. Founded in June 2017, The Culture Story is founded by Ning Chong and her father Mr. Chong Huai Seng to share their passion for art, promote art appreciation and connoisseurship.

www.theculturestory.co



Founded in 2009 by Mr. Ho Sou Ping, artcommune gallery specialises in Singapore's Modern visual art and represents the finest and most important artists in the country's visual art canon, from revered pioneer masters Cheong Soo Pieng and Chen Wen Hsi, to leading second-generation painters of varying styles including Lim Tze Peng, Ong Kim Seng, Tan Choh Tee and Wong Keen. As purveyors of the modern aesthetic painting tradition, the gallery's corporate philosophy as a social enterprise springs from a need to fill the gaps in a still-developing arts ecosystem in Singapore. artcommune seeks to enhance the level of cultural literacy in Singapore by enabling itself as a trusted source for art education, acquisition and investment consultancy services amongst a growing base of local and foreign art lovers and collectors. The gallery is also equally committed to providing a supportive platform for emerging artists.

www.artcommune.com.sg

ANNEX C – Highlights of “Flesh Matters”



Three Stories
2017
Acrylic on Canvas
176 x 106 cm



Camouflage
2018
Oil on Canvas
215 x 305 cm



The Butcher's Wife
2015
Acrylic on Canvas
121 x 161 cm



The Meat Stall
2018
Acrylic on Canvas
215 x 305 cm



Fairprice
2015
Acrylic on Canvas
160 x 122 cm



Isolation
2017
Acrylic on Paper
64 x 55.5 cm



For Sale
2017
Acrylic on paper
65.5 x 56 cm (unframed)



Chicken or Duck
2017
Acrylic on paper
148 x 111 cm (unframed)



*A Way To Cut Meat – Walking
With A Closed Door*
2015
Mixed media (Collage)
84 x 74 cm (unframed)

- THANK YOU -