

Sky Rains Grain Kurt Chan Solo Exhibition

Opening: 10th March 2022, 4 – 7 p.m. (Thursday)
G/F, 248 Hollywood Road, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong



[Hong Kong, February 2022] Contemporary by Angela Li is proud to present *Sky Rains Grain*, a solo exhibition by the renowned Hong Kong artist Prof. Kurt Chan Yuk Keung. Chan is celebrated as a pioneering figure in the Hong Kong contemporary art scene since the 1990s, and taught at Department of Fine Art, the Chinese University of Hong Kong for 27 years. In his recent body of works, Chan fuses the ideologies in Chinese calligraphy with the style of cold abstraction to form a hybrid creative voice. He employs such creative process to draw upon the notion of “painting words” to deconstruct the structure of Chinese characters. The exhibition opening will be held on **Thursday, 10th March 2022 from 4 to 7 p.m.**, and will remain on view till 26th April 2022. The artist will be present at the opening.

“Painting words is an act of amending, re-writing a word within a same space repeatedly.” – Kurt Chan Yuk Keung

Derived from the Chinese classical allusion of Cangjie’s invention of Chinese characters, *Sky Rains Grain* is a tale that tells how the gods blessed human by raining grain on the earth, as they feared that people would fall into idleness after indulging in the smartness of wordplay. Fascinated by the Chinese language, Chan sought to use his paintings to explore how words could both be an art form and a tool for communication. By restructuring Chinese characters and experimenting the use of forms and colours, Chan manages to break through the classical notions of Yin and Yang, light and shadow, in both Eastern and Western painting practices. Simultaneously, he brings forth the spontaneity that lies in traditional Chinese calligraphy and modern art to a sublime in his process of “painting words”. As his act of word-painting weaves a complex, multilayered web of aesthetic and literary ideology, he endows his works with a metaphysical spirit of traversing between the visual and the metaphorical.

“When creating art installations, I focus more on the cultural significance and weight of the object. Much like the scaffolding of a building, I tend to use lighter structures to support their heavy counterparts. As in my calligraphy, it is a combination of dots and lines – so when I draw a word, I am also dealing with structural issues.” – Kurt Chan Yuk Keung

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To Chan, words and calligraphy are an edifice of structures and meanings. Through reconstructing the deconstructed characters, he leads his viewers on a captivating visual journey that banishes the boundaries set by words. Along with the floating, vividly coloured lines and strokes, he transcends his painted words beyond semiotic meaning.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Prof. Kurt Chan Yuk Keung was born in Hong Kong in 1959. He graduated from Department of Fine Arts, the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1983. Later, he obtained his MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, USA. Chan is regarded as a prominent figure in the Hong Kong contemporary art scene since the 1990s, with installation and mixed media art as his early artistic practices. He began his pedagogic career in Department of Fine Arts, The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1989. Having pioneered in teaching installation and mixed media art in systematically structured courses, he nurtured a generation of local art talents. His students also include pivotal figures in the Hong Kong contemporary art scene and educators from various tertiary education institutions. In 2016, Chan retired from his 27-year teaching career at CUHK and later became the Acting Director of Hong Kong Art School.

Chan participated in more than 80 exhibitions, including the *51st Venice Biennale* (2005) and the *3rd Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art* (1999). His creative process is mainly about redefining the textual relationship of found objects through their physicality, which instils his works with a poetic aura. In 2016, he began deploying painting as his major creative medium which is backboned by methodologies of Chinese calligraphy. He focuses on the calligraphic quality in painting and searches for a balance between the Western rational tradition and the Eastern expressionist tradition in his practice.

Chan's creative principle focuses on comparing Chinese and Western cultures, while exploring the restrictions of various artistic rhetoric and mediums. In his artistic practice, he tries to embrace the diversity in current times using simpler forms and to deploy his exquisite traditional training into the contemporary expressions.

Apart from creating and teaching, Chan has put his focus on public art since 2000, curating and participating in various large-scale public art projects. He is also one of the founders and editors-in-chief of the *Hong Kong Visual Arts Yearbook*.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Exhibition: *Sky Rains Grain*

Artist: Prof. Kurt Chan Yuk Keung

Preview: 10th March 2022, 4 – 7 p.m. (Thursday)

Duration: 10th March – 26th April 2022

Contemporary by Angela Li

Contemporary by Angela Li is dedicated to the promotion of contemporary and avant-garde artists from China, Hong Kong and worldwide. Since its establishment in 2008, the gallery has gained considerable attention and has become one of Hong Kong's top galleries for contemporary art.

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Opening Hours : Mon – Sat 10:00 am – 6:30 pm
Sun & Public Holidays Closed

