



Of Funniness and Seriousness

Presented by Pacific Club &

ART SEASONS

Of Funniness and Seriousness

“Of Funniness and Seriousness,” explores the nuanced interplay between humour and gravity within contemporary artistic practice. The curatorial premise centres on how artists deploy metaphorical and narrative strategies to oscillate between the comedic and the solemn, or to simultaneously inhabit both registers. Through a diverse range of works, the exhibition foregrounds how humour, irony, and satire coexist with critical reflection and social commentary, challenging traditional binaries of levity and seriousness.

The selected artworks collectively form a visual and conceptual narrative that interrogates the lived realities of our time. These include explorations of popular culture, particularly the pervasive influence of social media as well as the complexities of human behaviour and interpersonal dynamics in contemporary society. Several works engage directly with urgent socio-political concerns, including systemic injustice, identity politics, and environmental degradation, while others present more intimate or subversive critiques of institutionalised religion, cultural norms, and power structures.

Rather than imposing a didactic or prescriptive curatorial voice, these artworks are without a serious curatorial presence and also void of any critical judgements. The aim is not to direct interpretation but to facilitate a space in which viewers may encounter the works on their own terms, whether that engagement provokes laughter, introspection, discomfort, or delight. “Of Funniness and Seriousness,” is a pure visual journey, and experience for the viewers to enjoy, be it a humorous take or meditative thought to bring back.

Participating Artists:

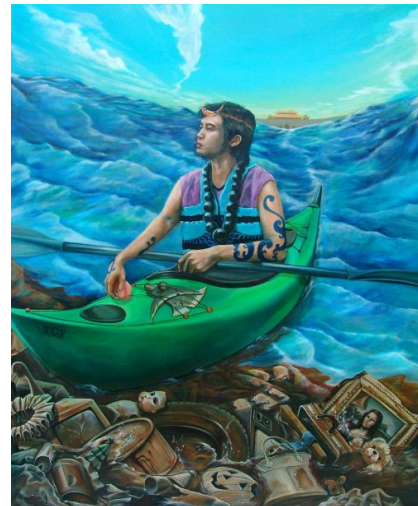
David Chan, Feng Zengjie, Kenny Low, Pan Yue and Zhang Peng.



David Chan (1979)
Modern Journeys – Cruising West
 2007
 Oil on Canvas
 180 x 145 cm
 SGD 50,000



David Chan (1979)
Modern Journeys – Tasting West
 2007
 Oil on Canvas
 180 x 145 cm
 SGD 50,000



David Chan (1979)
Modern Journeys

Modern Journey – David Chan (1979)

Modern Beliefs became an opportunity for me to consider the environment behind each story, rather than just make poignant statements like those in *Genetic Wonderland* of 2003.

The story of the Journey to the West or known in Chinese as Xi You Ji is a familiar mythical tale in Asian communities. Its origins were thought to have been inspired by the Hindu folk tales of Hanuman and Ramachandra, where Hanuman in the form of a monkey avatar protects his master fervently. In the oriental version, the Monkey King, Sun Wukong, along with two other disciples accompany a Tang dynasty priest, known as Tripitaka or Xuan Zang, on his journey to the West. In the story, Tripitaka's role was to acquire and return with scriptures from India.

In my view, Journey to the West is easily one of the most widely re-interpreted stories, spanning Chinese dramas to Western movies, eventually to games, animation and comics, etc. It has literally a fan base that spans the globe. Yet, if the characters existed now, how would they have gone about their daily routines?

Modern Journeys was basically a group of paintings depicting Tripitaka and his entourage in the modern era. Much of the world has had some kind of Western influence, be it in dressing, food, technology, language, judicatory, etc. As East and West merge and cross influence, I used Journey to the West as a literal pun to illustrate the crossing of cultures and the increasing pragmatism of our world. In this sequence of four paintings, each illustrates one aspect of Western influence.

David Chan (1979) is a celebrated Singaporean artist recognized for his technical skill in classical painting and sculpture. A graduate with First Class Honours in Fine Art from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, he debuted with his solo exhibition Genetic Wonderland in 2004 at just 25, garnering critical and public acclaim. That year, he also won the UOB Painting of the Year Award in the Representational Medium category.

Primarily working in oil on linen, David employs a realistic style, often featuring animals, humans, and hybrid forms. His works, initially whimsical, offer deeper insights into social issues like popular culture, ethics, and contemporary human behaviour, often through a lens of irony and humour rather than confrontation. In recent years, he has ventured into lifelike sculpture, further bridging the connection between viewer and artwork.

David has held ten solo exhibitions in Singapore and five internationally, showing his work across China, the United States, Taiwan, Indonesia, Korea, and Malaysia. His significant exhibitions include the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011 and the Singapore Biennale in 2016/2017, where he presented the large-scale installation The Great East Indiaman at the National Gallery Singapore. In addition to creating art, David teaches at the National Institute of Education and Nanyang Technological University. His works are part of collections in the Singapore Art Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Taipei, and private collections worldwide.

Feng ZengJie (1968)

Mao

2000

Oil on Canvas

150 x 150 cm

SGD 20,000

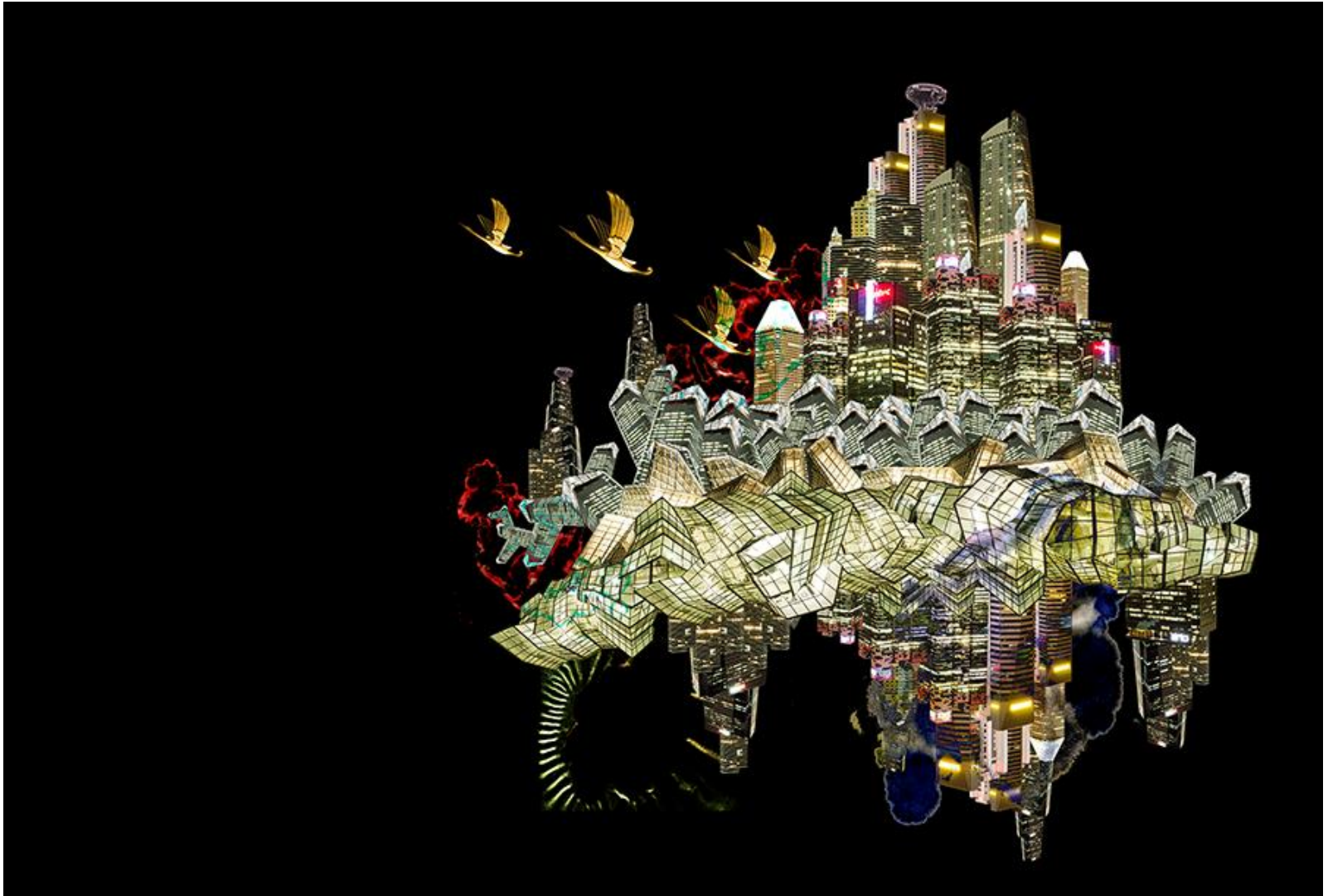




Feng Zengjie (1968). *Chinese Portrait L Series.* 2006. Oil on Canvas. 200 x 300 cm
SGD 30,000 (not displayed)

Worldwide recognised artist **Feng Zhengjie (1968)** has entered prestigious collections such as those of the Saatchi Gallery and of the Singapore Art Museum, amongst many others. He is mostly renowned for his large Warhol-style oil portraits, in a red and turquoise palette, of glamorous-looking women with sinuous red lips and vacant wandering eyes (his signature style). Painted through bright and kitsch colours his work explores issues of consumerism and alienation in our contemporary society and is “often discussed as capitalist critique, his empty eyed models posing as frivolous and vacant signifiers. Neither western nor Chinese in appearance, Feng’s femmes fatales are a super-hybrid of commercial beauty, a science fiction product of globalisation. Removing all distraction, he exposes the essence of temptation, magnifying the sex appeal of fantasy lifestyle and its gulf of intangibility.

This series of works Feng Zhengjie engages with the complexity of Chinese characters through vibrant and playful colours, employing an architectural and three dimensional perspective. He try to find a way to express his emotions, not to criticise or be provocative. Behind these images of women in his works can are not just emotion but also forms of criticism, provocation, introspection, a new understanding of the world.



Kenny Low (1986). *Metamorphosis of Temasek.* 2014. Print on William Turner Paper. 110 x 150 cm. Editions of 5. SGD 4,000.



Kenny Low (1986)

Angel

2014

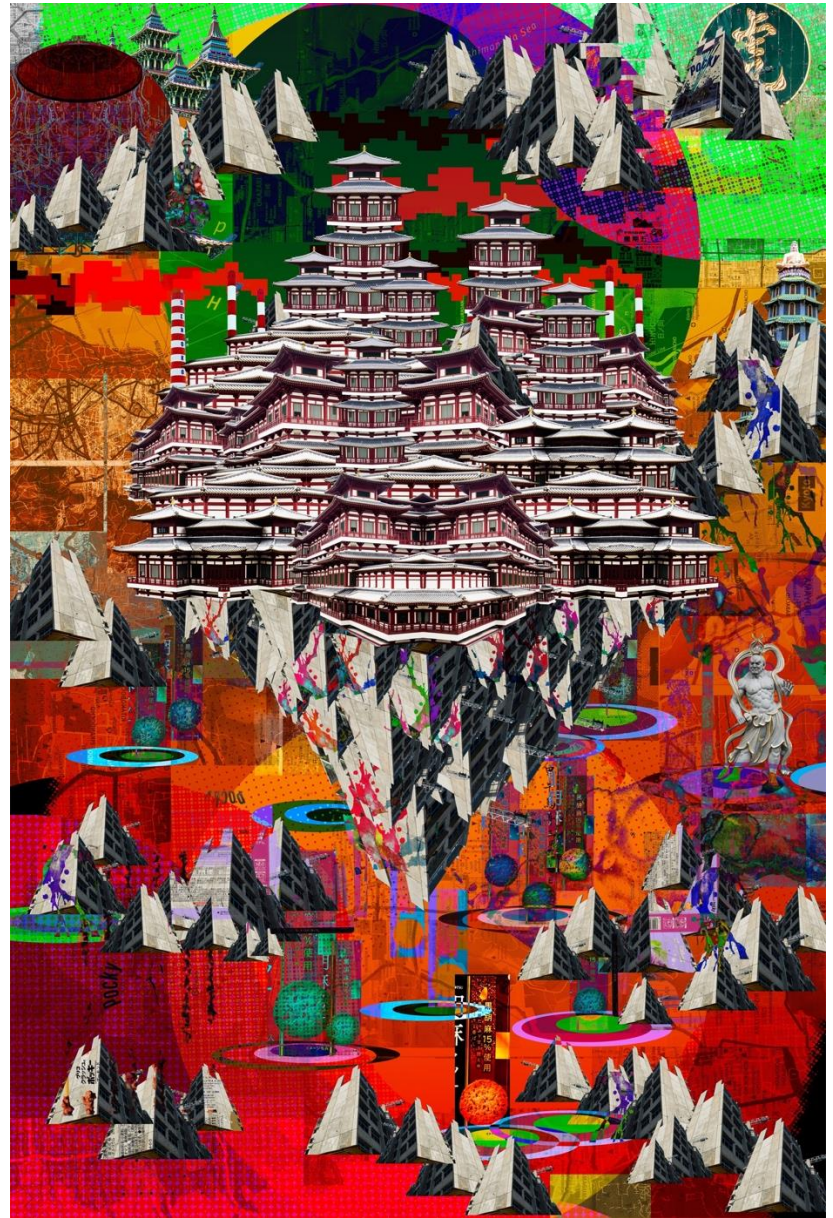
Print on William Turner Paper

150 x 100 cm

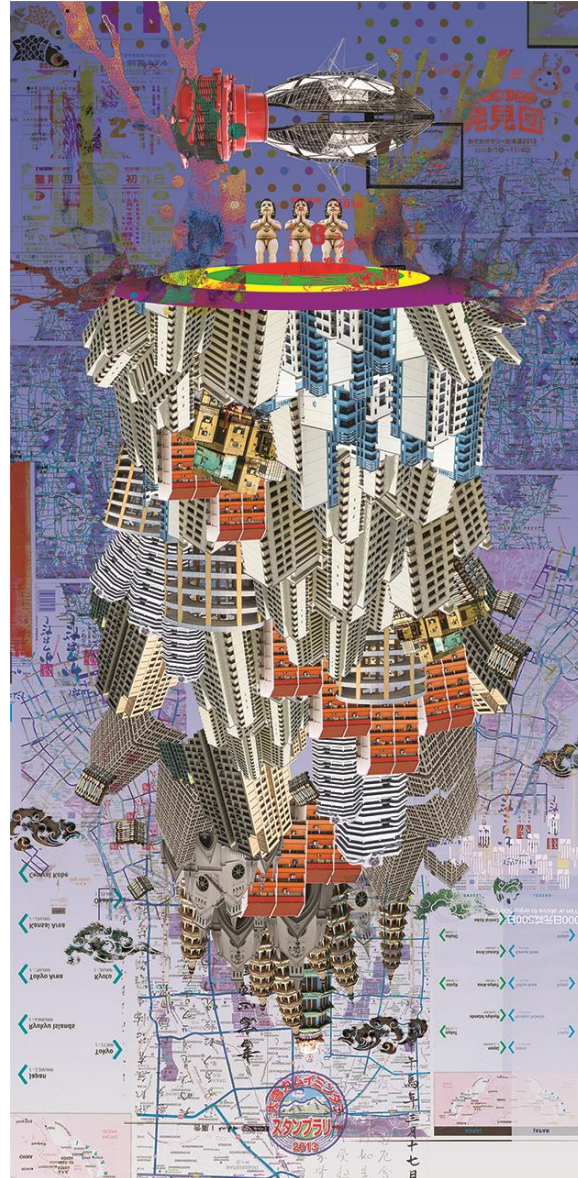
Editions of 5

SGD 4,000

Kenny Low (1986)
Utopia
2014
Print on William Turner Paper
150 x 100 cm
Editions of 5 & 1 AP
SGD 4,000 (not displayed)



Kenny Low (1986)
The Child of the Bomb
2014
Print on William Turner Paper
130 x 64 cm
Editions of 5
SGD 3,000



Kenny Low's (1986) *Metamorphosis of Temasek* narrate the pace of life in Singapore mirrors the relentless and unpredictable nature of mutation. This city-state perpetually seeks self-expression, yet its current identity has emerged as a composite mutation, a fusion of myriad cultural influences. Within the context of this artistic project, an imaginary journey unfolds, one where Singapore's identity is crafted under the singular influence of Japanese culture. Japan's contemporary cultural landscape, borne of both the atomic bomb's impact and the fertile imagination of its design community, has yielded a fresh synthesis of pop and Oriental elements. This endeavour holds the promise of furnishing Singapore with a more robust and distinct cultural identity.

Moreover, this artistic exploration delves into the realm of religion in Singapore, employing the symbolism of scattered religious edifices that punctuate the landscape. In a multi-racial society exposed to diverse faiths, questions emerge regarding potential shifts in monotheistic beliefs towards inadvertent polytheism. The artwork manifests as an expression of the harmonious coexistence of religious traditions within Singapore's compact urban landscape, seamlessly melding religious structures to birth new, hybrid forms. Kenny Low's foray into the mutation of religious architecture serves as a statement, underscoring his perception of Singapore as a unified religious entity. Kenny's works are part of collections in the Miami Art Museum and private collections worldwide.

Apology To The Masters is an irreverent take on the masterpieces of Western Art. Beijing artist Pan Yue combines his lifelong obsession with traditional opera, and his interest in photography to create this series that quotes, questions, reconstructs tradition that are semi-familiar to modern viewer. Paying homage to masterpieces of the Western Canon, Pan Yue challenges Euro-centricism and homogeneity, while concurrently attempting to instil elements of heterogeneity in order to emphasise the intergrowth of past culture, modern cultures and future cultures amongst different nations.

Pan Yue's photographs are reinterpreted through an Asian perspective and serve to highlight the impact of Western Art on traditional Chinese cultural ideologies, and contemporary Chinese Art. The grace and beauty of the nude female form in Pan Yue's photographs contrasts with the stock characters in traditional Chinese opera while the allusion to Western masterpieces emphasises the artist's experimentation with traditional aesthetics and harmony. Pan Yue has taken what is typical in the Western artist tradition (composition, subject matter) and incorporated these elements into his photographs but within a Chinese framework.



Pan Yue (1968)

Apology To An Anonymous Artist

2006

C Print on Paper

85 x 72 cm

Edition 5 of 10

SGD 5,000 (not displayed)



Pan Yue (1968). *Apology To Edouard Manet.* 2006. C-Print on Paper. 127 x 125 cm. Edition of 10.
SGD 5,000 (not displayed)



Pan Yue (1968). *Apology To Piero della Francesca.* 2006. C Print. 115 x 83 cm. Edition of 10
SGD 5,000.



Pan Yue (1968)
To Michelangelo Bounaroti
2008
C Print on Paper
140 x 120 cm
Edition 5 of 10
SGD 5,000 (not displayed)

Pan Yue's (1968) *Apology to the Masters* is an irreverent take on the masterpieces of Western Art. Beijing artist Pan Yue combines his lifelong obsession with traditional opera, and his interest in photography to create this series that quotes, questions, reconstructs tradition that are semi-familiar to modern viewer. Paying homage to masterpieces of the Western Canon, Pan Yue challenges Euro-centrism and homogeneity, while concurrently attempting to instil elements of heterogeneity in order to emphasise the intergrowth of past culture, modern cultures and future cultures amongst different nations.

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Zhang Peng (1981)

Gui Fei

2007

C-Print on Paper

154.5 x 120 cm

Edition of 8

SGD 5,000



Zhang Peng (1981). *Red No.2.* 2007. C-Print on Paper. 84 x 200 cm. Editions of 8
SGD 4,000.



Zhang Peng (1981)

Red No.6

2007

C-Print on Paper

150 x 152 cm

Edition of 8

SGD 4,000 (not displayed)

Zhang Peng's (1981) photographs look like stills from fantasy animation films; they are in fact documents of elaborate sets featuring little girls. Originally trained as a painter, Zhang approaches his compositions with a heightened sense of drama, using intense colours, theatrical props, and obscure angles of perspective to create a sense of artifice and illusion from reality. Zhang uses the medium of photography to subvert its archetypal associations of perfect representations and sentimental keepsakes. Portraits of children that would normally convey hope and aspiration, through Zhang's lens, transform to grotesque distortions and underlying themes of psychological pressure and alienation.

In *Gui Fei*, a child dressed as a traditional bride appears manufactured and doll-like, her identity moulded and objectified by parental and social expectation. As in many of Zhang's photos, her eyes have been manipulated to enhance her 'flawless' appearance, referencing the 'westernised' feminine ideals disseminated in Asian media, as well as the increasing trend in plastic surgery.

Zhang Peng's artworks are widely collected and can be found in the collection of many public institutions and private collections worldwide.

ART SEASONS is a contemporary art gallery in Singapore and Beijing that represents Asia and Southeast Asian contemporary artists. ART SEASONS is today a leading art gallery in Singapore and has made its presence felt in Singapore, the region and beyond.

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