

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1.5

15 Years of Eli Klein Gallery

398 West Street, New York, NY 10014
September 28, 2022 – December 17, 2022
Opening Reception: September 28, 6–8 PM

Curated by Janet Fong

Artists:

Chan Yuk Keung
Fei Jun
Shen Shaomin
Angela Yuen

Chow Chun Fai
Hu Yinping
Shen Zhenglin

Fang Lijun
Li Hongbo
Sun Yuan & Peng Yu

Eli Klein Gallery is privileged to present “1.5,” a group exhibition celebrating the Gallery’s 15-year journey in contemporary Asian art. Established in 2007, Eli Klein Gallery has held hundreds of exhibitions, organized numerous museum collaborations, and developed into its uniquely solid position in representing art from the East. While the “1” serves as a summary of the achievements and track record, the “.5” offers an impetus forward as we deeply believe that our program will continue to strengthen.

Corresponding to “1.5,” the curator of the exhibition Janet Fong has invited 10 groups of artists to provide one and a half pieces of art each, adding up to a total of 15 works. This format intentionally leaves some blank spaces, allowing uncertainties and voids in concepts to be treated as contents. At the same time, it signifies that we are using the one and half pieces of art, which are already completed, to connect the present with the past, and permit for future impact.

With a painting and a sketch derived from the movie *V for Vendetta*, Chow Chun Fai expresses his nostalgia for his time spent in 2018 as an artist-in-residence at the gallery. The film’s protagonist states that “symbols are given power by people,” which not only serves as a reminder of the cultural values of a free New York City, but also contains a message for the artist himself and for the future.

Hu Yingping’s *What did the masters come to the east for* consists of two pieces of work: *Fountain* by Marcel Duchamp and *Composition in Red, Blue, and Yellow* by Piet Mondrian. Classic works by Duchamp and Mondrian drew inspiration from everyday life, and Hu Yingping invited aunties from her rural hometown to reinterpret and create, with knitting needles and yarn, their own versions of these historical pieces. Thanks to the ingenuity and creativity of these

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aunties, seemingly inaccessible masterpieces that take a prominent position in art history have been transformed into 1.5 pieces of playful artwork.

Fang Lijun uses two different forms of media oil-painting and ink-painting to interpret the differences between “one” and “half.” Oil-painting reveals Fang’s signature artistic approach, and ink-painting serves as a testimony to his relentless pursuit of change and breakthrough.

One of Li Hongbo’s two paper sculptures is displayed in its entirety. However, half of the other work has been stretched to the ground, causing only a portion of this work to be visible to the audience. These sculptures featured in the exhibition mark a deliberate return to Hongbo’s previous collaborations with Eli Klein Gallery, a creative partnership with a history of more than ten years.

Shen Shaomin’s *Distance* consists of two oil paintings reflecting on Maurizio Cattelan’s banana installation. They appear to be two independent pieces of artwork, while in fact they are both incomplete halves which are only completed when put together. Shen Shaomin has marked out lines on the wall to connect these two pieces. Within a distance of 12 centimeters, Shaomin hopes to evoke reflections on the commercial market, and on the relationship between art and value.

Kurt Chan Yuk Keung presents a pair of paintings under the titles of *The Solid One* and *The Melting Half*, with the former measuring half the height of the latter. Both works explore the “ones” or “halves” involved in the image of imaginary landscapes in pre-human times.

Juxtaposed with its prototype, *Samantha*, Shen Zhenglin’s *Samantha1/2* is an interactive painting whose process and completion will be determined by the audience. The viewers are invited to pick a ring of their preference and fill that ring with a single random color, or with mixed colors. These interactions between the artist and the audience during the creative process symbolizes new connections and the uncertainties which exist between time and space.

Fei Jun’s *Journal of Emotions* is an AI-generated, digital-image journal documenting the artist’s emotions. In a daily life where virtual experiences intertwine with the reality, our emotions are often affected by people and events around us, whether it’s in the physical world or the virtual one. Created through Human-AI collaboration, *Journal of Emotions* is an original piece of digital art featuring an interplay of subjectivity and objectivity. The piece includes a series of AI-generated digital images and randomly shaped, actual 3D sculptures - called “emotion blind boxes” - which build a seamless link between the real world and the virtual world, opening up a vast space for imagination.

Angela Yuen’s *Urban Dove Fanciers* elicits discussion about cities and freedom, initiated by the artist and portraying the relationship between dove fanciers and their birds. A cage installation titled *Free as an Urban Dove?* works as the “0.5,” questioning the subordinate relationships

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between the birds and their owners. Maybe this relationship is equally applicable in treating our relationship with the society which cages us and gives us orders.

And finally, the ground-breaking artist duo Sun Yuan & Peng Yu presents two installations, one in a seemingly stable format and the other in constant motion, echoing the post-pandemic socio-political systems around the world. In “Hey Brother”, an American flag was sewed intertwined between two shovels, creating a precarious stability. In “No Matter Who You Are”, an experimental installation, acting as the “0.5,” consists of a moving plastic hand afloat of colored water, with its source of movement hidden underneath and invisible. With their continuous fascination in mechanics and potential energy, Sun Yuan & Peng Yu suggest the ways in which our societies are reminiscent of the functionality of machines, with its core logic sometimes apparent and sometimes concealed.

About Janet Fong:

Janet Fong is currently a Guest Curator of Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMoA) in 2019-2022 and a Research Assistant Professor (Curating) in Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University (2020-present). She worked with different organizations for 23 years including CAFA Art Museum (Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing), Osage (Art Foundation and Gallery), University Museum and Art Gallery (University of Hong Kong) and Hong Kong Maritime Museum and 1a space. Janet was also the curatorial consultant for Galerie Du Monde (2009-2017, HK), Eli Klein Gallery (2012-2017, New York), Weme Contemporary (2016-2018, Kuala Lumpur). Janet has curated numerous exhibitions with research since 2005 including ‘CITYA – Virtual and Physical exhibitions in Hong Kong, Rome, Tallinn, Beijing, Macao and San Francisco’ (2021), “Two-year Research Art and Archival Exhibition: New Horizon – Ways of Seeing Hong Kong Art in 80s and 90s”, HKMoA (2021-2022); **F.N.S.X. @ History of the Future**, Cloud Art Museum, Shenzhen (2022); “Closer to the Beautiful World- Art exhibition”, Klein Sun for Asia Contemporary Art Week, New York (2017); “Fernando Botero - Botero in China: The Art of Fernando Botero”, National Museum of China, Beijing and China Art Museum, Shanghai (2015-2016); I was once there, Solo exhibition of Lam Tung Pang, Klein Sun, New York (2016); the First Shenzhen Biennale 2018 in Luohu Art Museum, Shenzhen.

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