

artcommune gallery proudly presents

# Shifting Points: Watercolour Works by Tam Kwan Yuen

Exhibition Reading Material  
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*Inside Out*, 2014, Watercolour on paper, 56 x 76 cm

## About the Artist

Born on 9 March 1986, Kwan Yuen holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is a member of Singapore Watercolour Society, a Signature Member of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour (CSPWC) and a Signature Member of Pennsylvania Watercolour Society.

Since becoming a full-time artist in 2013, Kwan Yuen's paintings have been regularly selected for international juried shows. He was given the 'Third Place Award' in the 34th International Exhibition of Pennsylvania Watercolor Society and the 'Award of Distinction' in the 2014 Watermedia Showcase of the Missouri Watercolor Society. His paintings have also been featured in art publications such as the 17th Issue of the *Art of Watercolor Magazine* – an artist's magazine for watercolor artists around the world. His watercolours have been exhibited in the United States, Canada, Belgium, Greece, Hong Kong and Singapore.

## Shifting Points

"Painting, like any art, comprises a technique, a workmanlike handling of material, but the accuracy of a tone and the fictitious combination of effects depend entirely on the choice made by the artist."

Henri Matisse

*Shifting Points* is the second solo exhibition by young, emerging local talent, Tam Kwan Yuen. Advancing from his first solo exhibition *Moments in Spaces* in 2013, *Shifting Points* features over 30 watercolour works that delve into the varied dimensions of livedness and consumerism.

Deploying an intricate pictorial language steeped in transition browns and grays, several scenes encapsulate the spatial-temporal rhythm of urban city life with its ubiquitous neon signs, larger-than-life billboards, sleepless city streets and resplendent store interiors. In other instances, Kwan Yuen serves a juxtaposing slice of life by shifting the focus to neglected objects existing on the peripheral or countryside scenes suffused with natural sunlight and peaceful simplicity.

Despite the difficulty of manipulating a medium that relies heavily on the fluidity of water, Kwan Yuen's work reveals painstaking attention to mood and detail. In particular, his urban night scenes thrive on the unique combination of blacks and transition browns and grays, revealing at the same time, masterful juxtapositions that involve various tones of blue, red and yellow.



*Dazzle Me Singapore, 2014, 96 x 176 cm*



*Advertising Paradise, 2014, 56 x 38 cm*



*Next Stop Milan, 2014, 38 x 28 cm*

The theme of light is a striking and recurrent feature in Kwan Yuen's watercolour scenes. Light exists in varying forms and symbolises different ideas: the city lights in his urban night scenes both illuminate and entrap; they are a glorious reflection of modern comfort and convenience, and create at the same time an artificial environment where the day sees no closure and capitalist bombardments are plastered across fancifully lit-up store fronts, interiors and billboards.

In contrast, the light in *In Search of Freedom* signifies nature and liberation for the trapped bird; and in *Coming Home*, the sunlight relates to nature's bountiful warmth and a peaceful lifestyle at one with the natural landscape.



*In Search of Freedom*, 2014, 44 x 76 cm



*Coming Home*, 2014, 55 x 90 cm

The artist's treatment of the image *Short Circuit* also reflects an evident play of light and dark. The intense mixture of whites generates the strong presence of light and provides a compelling and effective juxtaposition against the browns and grays of rust and deterioration. In addition, the shadow to the left of the old electrical box captures his masterful execution of tonal shift and gradation. Though the image depicts a worn-out, peripheral object, Kwan Yuen gives life to it by creating exciting interactions between forms and colours.



*Short Circuit*, 2013, 66 x 44.5 cm

*Shifting Points* is Kwan Yuen's second solo exhibition since 2013. Displaying stronger and more confident techniques, the works on exhibit are the result of the endeavours and progress he has made in the last two years as a watercolourist. In addition to paintings that constitute a sophisticated and spirited reflection of our contemporary urban environment, his growing travel experiences have inspired enchanting scenes of overseas landscapes and a series of focused, contemplative attempts at objects that often go unnoticed.

## Biography of Artist

- 1986 Born in Hong Kong
- 1989 Moved to Singapore
- 2012 Graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Product Design from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore



## Exhibitions and Awards

### 2015

Second Solo Exhibition, *Shifting Points – Watercolour Works by Tam Kwan Yuen*, Artcommune Gallery, Singapore.

Pop-up restaurant collaboration project, Fringe Club, Central, Hong Kong

### 2014

Painting juried into 35th International Exhibition of Pennsylvania Watercolor Society (PWS), USA.

Paintings selected to exhibit in Watercolor International II 2014 in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Paintings selected to exhibit in Eau en Couleurs 2014, 2nd International Watercolor Biennial, Castle of Bourgogne, Belgium.

Painting juried into 34th International Exhibition of San Diego Watercolor Society (SDWS), USA.

Second Selection of Art of Watercolor's 1st World Watercolor Competition.

Painting juried into Society of Watercolor Artists (SWA) International Watermedia Showcase 2014, Texas, USA.

Painting juried into Watercolor Missouri International Exhibition 2014 (MoWS), USA.

Painting juried into 37th International Exhibition of Watercolor Art Society of Houston (WAS-H), USA.

### 2013

"Boldbrush Award", Boldbrush Painting Competition month of December 2013, organized by FASO.

Voted as top 15% in Boldbrush Painting Competition December 2013, organized by FASO.

Selected as Winner in Creative Quarterly Magazine Competition Fine Art Category, published in the Spring Issue of CQ.

First Selection of Art of Watercolor's 1st World Watercolor Competition.

Diversity & Transitions - Artcommune's Young Artists' Show, Artcommune Gallery, Singapore

Outstanding Watercolor Award, October 2013 Boldbrush Competition, organized by FASO, (includes full feature in Informed Collector).

Voted top 15% in Boldbrush Competition month of October 2013, organized by FASO.

Third Place Award, 34th Annual International Exhibition of Pennsylvania Watercolor Society (PWS), USA.

Painting juried into 33rd International Exhibition of San Diego Watercolor Society (SDWS), USA.

Painting juried into 36th Annual Exhibition of Watercolor Art Society of Houston (WAS-H), USA.

Joint Exhibition *Unity in Diversity*, National Library, Singapore.

First Solo Exhibition *Moments in Spaces – Watercolour Works by Tam Kwan Yuen*, Artcommune Gallery, Singapore.

44th Annual Singapore Watercolour Society Annual Exhibition, ARTrium@MICA Building,  
Singapore.

**2012**

Affordable Art Fair, F1 Pit Building.

Painting juried into "The Grand Harvest Show", Williamsburg Art and Historical Center, Brooklyn, New York, USA.

*Scenes, Seen*, Urban Sketchers Singapore, Galerie Utama.

*A Reflective Dialogue*, School of Art Design & Media, Old School @Mt Sophia