

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 5 MAY 2017**

## **Singapore Artists in the States: Wong Keen, Goh Beng Kwan, Zhuang Sheng Tao and Choy Weng Yang**

artcommune is pleased to present *Singapore Artists in the States: Wong Keen, Goh Beng Kwan, Zhuang Sheng Tao and Choy Weng Yang*. Featuring over 20 artworks in different media, the exhibition highlights the influence of New York art movements in shaping the distinct practice and stylistic expression of these 4 second-generation Singapore artists.

In earlier times when Singapore was still striving for global connections, overseas art trainings and experiences consisted of less straightforward routes for most local artists.

When Wong Keen (b.1942) at 19 departed on a freighter for his art education at the Art Students League of New York in 1961, he was the first Singaporean and among the earliest of Chinese artists to venture into the flourished New York art scene - then the most important art centre of the world. Having lived over 50 years in the States, his artistic language, which extends across paper, canvas and collage and mixed media, reflects the cross-cultural confluence of his Chinese ink heritage and the New York School tradition (Abstract Expressionism and Colour Field painting).

A year after Wong Keen settled in, he applied for 3 other Singapore artists to join him at the Art Students League. Among them was Goh Beng Kwan (b. 1937), who developed his practice in the direction of abstraction and collage during his time in New York. After his return to Singapore in late 1960s, he was among the pioneering batch of local artists who established a forte in incorporating found and used objects into localised collage expressions.

Zhuang Sheng Tao (b. 1944) was schooled in Chinese ink painting and calligraphy, and his education at Nanyang University (now National University of Singapore) in Chinese studies strengthened his knowledge in Chinese cultural and aesthetic traditions. In 1988, he moved to Seattle for 3 years to further his art training, during which he was profoundly inspired by Abstract Expressionism and its new dimension of expressive potential in modernising Chinese ink painting.

Choy Weng Yang (b.1930) - an artist, teacher, writer and critic - trained at the Hornsey College of Art in early 1960s and sat as the Curator of Art at the National Museum of Singapore from 1978 - 85). His first survey of American art scene was in 1973 after being granted the Unesco fellowship to research into contemporary American art. This interest was continued when he made a second journey across different parts of the States in the 1980s. These trips enabled him great insights into the succession of art movements that drove the progress of American art scene, exerting a lasting impact on his knowledge and use of Colour in painting.

In conjunction with the exhibition, artcommune will host an Artists' Forum to discuss how the New York scene transformed the respective artistic identity and practice of these four artists. The forum will be attended by artists Wong Keen and Choy Weng Yang, who will share on their interesting experiences and how they developed their practices against the backdrop of the powerful New York art culture. This event is free admission to all but registration is required.

**Exhibition Period: 19 – 31 May 2017**

**Time: 12 – 7 pm (daily)**

**Venue: artcommune gallery (address below)**

**Artists' Forum:**

**20 May 2017, Saturday, 2.30 – 3.30 pm**

**Admission is free**

**Contact Information:**

artcommune gallery

231 Bain Street

Bras Basah Complex

#03-39 Singapore 180231

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[www.artcommune.com.sg](http://www.artcommune.com.sg)

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**Here are the images to some of the exhibits:**



Wong Keen, *Lotus XX*, 1999, Acrylic on paper, 133 x 265 cm



Wong Keen, *Lady with Black Stocking I*, 1966, Oil on paper, 36 x 46 cm



Wong Keen, *Lady with Black Stocking II*, 1966, Oil on paper, 36 x 46 cm



Wong Keen, *Two Paintings*, 2013, Acrylic on canvas, 105 x 179 cm



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Goh Beng Kwan, *From me, with love*, 1973-74, Collage on paper, 100 x 75 cm



Goh Beng Kwan, *Hillview*, 1985, Collage on canvas, 119 x 89 cm



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Zhuang Sheng Tao, *Untitled*, Undated, Chinese ink on paper, 56 x 78 cm



Zhuang Sheng Tao, *Untitled*, Undated, Chinese ink on paper, 36 x 88 cm



Choy Weng Yang, *Nude Drawing*, 2005, Charcoal and pastel on paper, 80 x 65 cm



Choy Weng Yang, *Boat Quay: Enchanting Atmosphere*, 2017, Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 126 cm