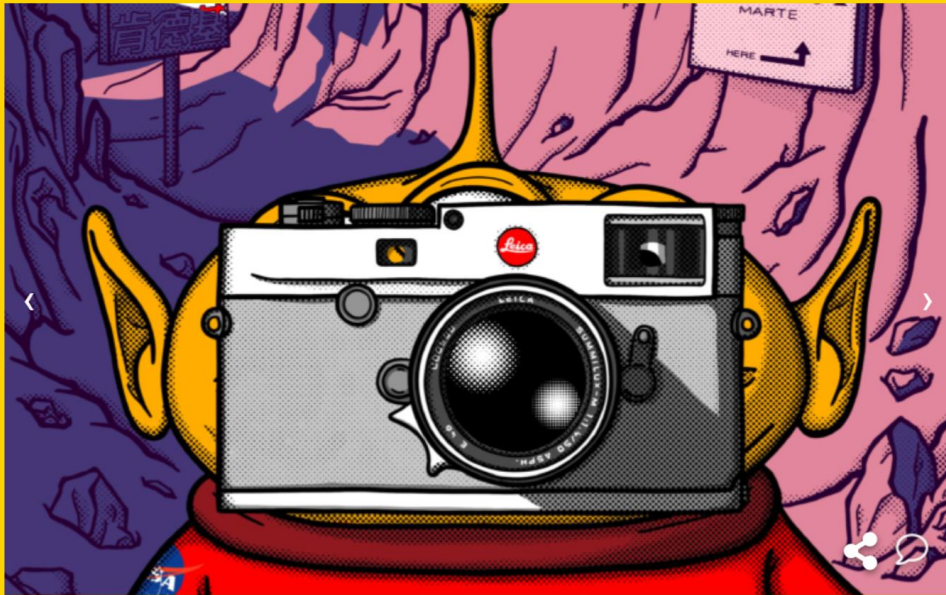


#DIGITAL ART #SCULPTURE



ERNEST CHANG: SPACE RICH

16 March - 4 June

Free

The Stallery

EVENT DESCRIPTION

The Stallery WCH is proud to present *Space Rich*, a solo exhibition by Ernest Chang featuring a brand-new collection of 14 works of silkscreen on Perspex and 4 sculptures, the latter of which are extension of previous artworks. The exhibition will be on view from 16 March to 4 June 2023.

In the same vein as 2021's *Bling Dynasty*, which explored contemporary (pre-pandemic) global consumerism by bringing together Chinese and Western culture and artistic styles in provocative visual hybrids, *Space Rich* will again entice viewers by its incorporation of recognizable figures and icons from pop culture and luxury brands in its compositions. Apart from *The Happy Donor*, which was commissioned by McCafé Hong Kong as part of the well-received group exhibition *SubXture* at the K11 Art Mall earlier in 2022, all works featured in *Space Rich* are created in 2021-2023 and have not been exhibited before.

This time, "earthly" icons are juxtaposed against the barren landscape of Mars, in a sort of visual contemplation of what deep space habitation would look like, and whether an "escape" from reality — into outer space or to virtual reality — is truly possible for those of us inhabiting a world dominated by consumerist urges and social media feeds. The Stallery invites viewers on a foray into Chang's imaginative visions of Mars and its futuristic inhabitants' footprint on it, which, as always in his practice, are at once provocative and playfully enticing.

In *Son of Man*, for instance, the central figure, recognizable as Morty from the popular cartoon series *Rick and Morty*, is facing the viewer in a frontal pose—but his face is almost completely obscured by an iPhone, a visual pun alluding to the apple obscuring the central figure's face in René Magritte's eponymous *Son of Man*. Even within the barren and rugged landscape of the red planet, the ultimate "escape" from earth's realities if there ever is one, this figure cannot seem to stop staring at his phone and continues to "escape" to virtual reality. At the same time, however, the recognizable icons of luxury hotel brands in the background tease viewers with the possibility that, even when humans succeed in colonizing Mars, there will be no escape from the forces of consumerist culture on earth, rendering the figure's reliance on social media and technology just a matter of a fact, even in outer space.

In *The Lovers II*, alluding again to an eponymous painting by Magritte, two figures from the comic series Fantastic Four kiss with their heads shrouded, while iPhones, the ubiquitous instruments connecting all of us to our virtual existence, float in space around them. Even when in intimate embrace, and with his eyes covered, the central figure continues to scroll on his phone. This again provokes viewers to contemplate the underlying motif of “escape”—is “escape” from the reality around us possible? Or does what we think of as “escape” ultimately become the “reality” that envelopes and even entraps us?

The *Happy Donor*, another visual allusion to a Magritte painting (*Decalcomania*), features not a central figure but only the silhouette of him. The silhouette, recognizable as the character of Ronald McDonald, serves as a window into a red, barren Mars colony marked by a McCafe establishment. Once more, viewers are challenged to think about what we take for granted as reality vs. the representation of reality in the virtual realm—do we rely on technology to make sense of our reality so much that we become hollow like the cut-out in the silhouette? Can we only take part in reality indirectly through another medium?

“In recent years, the effects of extreme wealth seem to catapult the mega-rich into outer space one after another in the name of space exploration. Is this the ultimate metaphor of how physically and mentally detached the ultra-wealthy are from the lives and realities of the majority of this planet? Are we truly exploring this new frontier, or are we actually exploiting this new frontier and condemning other worlds to our problems here on earth?”

ABOUT THE ARTIST / ORGANISER

Ernest Chang is a multidisciplinary artist born in the U.S. whose visual world and artistic practice are highly influenced by his red-green color-blindness, as well as by his bi-cultural and bilingual upbringing in Hong Kong. Ernest had studied photography briefly at the Ringling College of Art and Design in Florida and the Savannah College of Art and Design in Hong Kong before dropping out to pursue his art full-time at a young age. His practice today is the distillation of self-taught skills and a wide range of self-guided exploration and experimentation.

Details

Start:
16 March

End:
4 June

Admission:
Free

Event Category:
#Digital Art, #Sculpture

Organiser

The Stallery

Website:
www.thestallery.com



Venue

The Stallery

82A Stone Nullah Ln Wan Chai Hong Kong