

hanart
TZ Gallery
漢 雅 軒

文字寫生 陳育強 / 克里斯蒂安 · 施瓦茲瓦爾德 To Paint the Written World Christian Schwarzwald / Kurt Chan

藝術家出席開幕
Artist Reception

8 July 2023 SAT 2-6pm

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展覽至
Exhibition runs
till 2/9/2023

Kurt Chan, Contemplation, 2023 [Detail], Acrylic on Canvas, 51 x 61 cm (Image courtesy of the artist and Hanart TZ Gallery)

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17-21 Kung Yip Street,
Kwai Chung, Hong Kong

Exhibition Period: 8 July to 2 September 2023

Hanart TZ Gallery is pleased to present "To Paint the Written World", duo exhibition of Christian Schwarzwald and Kurt Chan, opening on 8 July 2023 (Saturday), 2-6 pm.

To Paint the Written World

'Word' is the carnal flesh of 'Idea'; and like any carnal existence, it begets ideas of its own.

'Word' is the idea of things, events, desires—of all that exists and that is yet non-existing; it puts everything in place, and a World appears. Human ideas arise out of word realities. It is all wonderfully delirious, and wonderfully delicious.

The paintings of Christian Schwarzwald and Kurt Chan take the flesh of the word, its visual aspect, as the subject of their playful imagination. They are both interested in how the written word evokes particular realities; and how, as a graphic form, it inadvertently spills over into channels of unintended meanings and visions. With the two artists coming together in one exhibition, their separate languages allow us to see with multiple pairs of eyes.

Christian Schwarzwald is interested in the writing of words as an act of drawing which, as a system of gestural practice, draws forth specific realties. He has produced many 'sets' of gestural technique, each of which, like an alphabetic language, develops a schematic vocabulary that may be used to compose 'essays'. The advantage of the alphabetic language is its relation to the human voice; any number of words may be created with a limited set of phonetic signs, and the artist hints at this feature in his freely arranged sets of serial paintings, even though his interest is to explore the non-vocal dimension of the 'alphabet'. In this exhibition we see how the artist's 'alphabets' might be turned into graphic icons like the *GROW* series, or how they may appear to coax ideographic words out of unidentifiable 'objects' like the *MONONO* drawings. Reversing the process of 'writing' on the blank sheet, the artist has also developed a special technique by applying a vacuum cleaner to the 'un-formed' colour surface of painted monochromes. By wiping across the surface with gestural strokes that hoover up colour

pigment to create blank lines on the canvas, he reveals, like the dawn of Creation, hidden forms beneath.



Christian Schwarzwald, POLYGRAPH, 2021 [Installation view], Kunsthaus, Potsdam, Germany, 2021 (Image courtesy of the artist)

Kurt Chan approaches the written word from the perspective of Chinese ideographs, an angle very different from that of Christian Schwarzwald. Each written form of a Chinese ideographic character is already laden with pictorial reference, and each has a visual existence that we may peruse as we might look upon a 'landscape'. And 'landscape' is the kind of visuality Kurt Chan aligns his word-paintings with; there is a vista in his abstraction, and a play of articulated shapes among contrasting distances. Like traditional 'mountain-water' painting, Kurt Chan invites viewers for a stroll in his 'word-scape' to explore the world opened up by an individual word or a word-phrase. Of course we are always aware it is Kurt Chan's own stroll that we are following, and there is no danger even as we fall through an unexpected rabbit hole into a wonderland.

Kurt Chan's refreshing investigation into the calligraphic word, and the path down which he leads his viewers, are bold and personal, but not shockingly iconoclastic, because traditionally the written word has always been an embodied figure. The consanguine collusion between the Chinese word form and the history of calligraphy is apparent when we look at the standardisation of the written word. Standardisation developed historically with the idiosyncratic styles of master calligraphers, and the famous copy-book of Wang Xizhi (303-361) is but one towering stylistic figure among many. With the

quizzical eye of contemporary art, Kurt Chan stares into the space of historical word forms, and finds a chorus of chromatic arguments within.

Chang Tsong-Zung
22 June 2023



Kurt Chan, Everything, 2023, Acrylic on Canvas, 101 x 230 cm (Image courtesy of the artist and Hanart TZ Gallery)