

FIRST LIGHT

Exhibition dates: 8 September – 26 September 2020

Featuring artists: Genevieve Chua, André Hemer, Tara Kasenda, Seung Yul Oh, Ani O'Neill

FIRST LIGHT features five artists from the Asia Pacific region exploring the formal qualities of light, shadow and colour. Through the use of pastel colours that reference skyscapes, André Hemer and Tara Kasenda both investigate light within their respective ephemeral painting practices, as well as through moving image. Genevieve Chua's monochromatic works draw attention to the forms of her irregularly stretched canvases, using visual disruptions and echoes of shade and silhouette. Seung Yul Oh's series of five new canvases offer a quiet moment of balance and counterpoint, while Ani O'Neill's whimsical colour field crochet is an exploration of chroma through the craft-based practice informed by her Cook Islands heritage.

The exhibition is presented in collaboration with Starkwhite Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand and STPI – Creative Workshop & Gallery, Singapore.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS AND THEIR WORKS



Genevieve Chua, *Swivel #12*; *Edge Control #34*, *Surfacing*, 2017; 2020, Damar wood and stainless steel bracket; acrylic on linen, 74 x 32 x 13.5 cm; 60 x 42 x 4.5 cm

Genevieve Chua (b. 1984, Singapore) is a painter who works primarily with abstraction. Chua's practice unfurls and reveals the painter's process through diagram, palimpsest, syntax, and the glitch. While notions of nature and wilderness persist across several works, the form taken by her exhibitions – image, text or object – is disrupted through painting. Her ongoing series 'Edge Control' is shown in Australia for the first time in this group exhibition. Within this series, Chua employs a hard-edge monochromatic language of silhouette and shadow that links the unique shape and content of each painting. Chua has exhibited extensively across Asia including: Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (Japan); Museum MACAN (Indonesia); Singapore Art Museum, Kumho Museum of Art (South Korea). Recent solo exhibitions include *Twofold*, STPI – Creative Workshop & Gallery (Singapore); *Closed During Opening Hours*, LASALLE's Institute of Contemporary Arts (Singapore); *Vestigial and Halves*, Project 7 1/2 (South Korea). She is the winner of the 2020 IMPART Award and was conferred the Young Artist Award in 2012 by the National Arts Council (Singapore).

Based in Vienna, **André Hemer** (b. 1981, New Zealand) works within the expanded field of painting; his studies into light and colour merge traditional sensibilities with a contemporary digital approach. Central to his practice is an exploration of what it means to create paintings during a time in history in which the experience of an object is being continuously torn between states of physical and digital materiality. Recently, Hemer has also been exploring the formal qualities of naturalistic elements, such as flower petals. In his latest series of works, he has incorporated images of dried bellflowers, as a more explicit link to the tradition of landscapes. Hemer is currently one of the most exciting artists of his generation and has been featured on the cover of Thames and Hudson's publication and project *100 Painters of Tomorrow* and picked as The Guardian newspaper's top 10 "Stars of Tomorrow". In 2016, he was awarded the prestigious New Zealand Art Foundation New Generation Award and the Wallace Arts Trust New Paramount Award with a six-month residency in ISCP, New York (USA). He has exhibited at Pataka Art + Museum (New Zealand), Total Museum of Contemporary Art (Korea), Guangzhou Art Centre (China), and is in the collections of Taiwan Museum of Art; Te Manawa Museum (New Zealand), Christchurch Art Gallery (New Zealand), and University of Canterbury (New Zealand), amongst others.



André Hemer, *These days (June 4, 17:38–46 CEST)*, 2020, acrylic and pigment on canvas (diptych), 55 x 40 cm (each)

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Through obscurity and soft pastel hues that tie her work together, **Tara Kasenda** (b. 1990, Indonesia) emphasises the issue of identity, perception, and memory. The dream-like quality of her work simultaneously evokes the feeling of ambiguity, paradox, and comfort. Research is the foundation of Kasenda's work. She collects data, observes, and investigates the history, theories and studies on colour in correlation to her subject. Her soft colour palette offers thresholds of beauty and chaos, the defined and undefined, reality and dream, old and new – that drifts the spectator into a contemplative sphere. Based in Paris, Kasenda exhibits her works regularly in South East Asia and Europe. Earlier this year, she presented works at the Bastille Design Center (France) and Milieu Space (Indonesia). In 2019, Kasenda was recognised as Forbes Indonesia's '30 under 30'.



Tara Kasenda, *Sous Les Cumulus Humilis*, 2019, two channel video wall projection, dimensions variable, unique

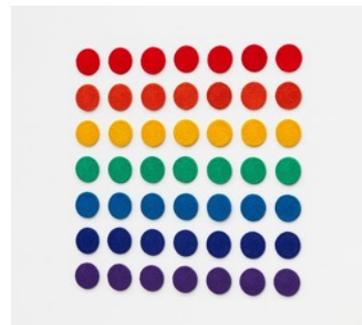


Seung Yul Oh, *Lean* series, 2020, acrylic on linen, 30 x 25 cm (each)

Seung Yul Oh (b. 1981, South Korea) works seamlessly across various media including painting, sculpture, and public art commissions in ways that are both light-hearted and serious. His practice is often concerned with air, with spaces and voids, and how audiences mediate with what lies between. Oh's painting is a formal and minimalist practice, which the artist has described as 'musical' and offering moments of balance and counterpoint. Like his sculptural installations, his ongoing 'Lean' series seeks to orchestrate relationships between objects in space. Beginning with three colours to form borders along the left, right, and bottom of the canvas Oh selects one border colour and paints a diagonal line across the work's surface. What develops is a careful and improvised composition of vectors – very thin lines just touching as they

lean and balance precariously upon others, dividing or opening up space. Seeing each line as contributing a distinct presence or impact, Oh's choreography of fragile relationships across the painting's surface creates both an architectural and social space. Oh was the second recipient of the Harriet Friedlander Residency which, with support from the Arts Foundation, allowed him to undertake an artist residency in New York in 2011. His work is held in the collections of the National Gallery of Victoria (Australia), Auckland Art Gallery (New Zealand), New Dowse Museum (New Zealand) and Museum of New Zealand - Te Papa Tongarewa (New Zealand).

Ani O'Neill's (b. 1971, New Zealand) practice spans installation, object making and performance both as a solo practice and in collaboration. Using wool, fabric, florist ribbon, and items from clearance stores and op shops, she makes objects using Cook Islands handcraft skills to communicate its cultural values and teachings of her grandmother and her heritage. Using a contemporary vernacular, O'Neill's work is anchored within traditional arts and crafts techniques and materials. Her witty, colourful, yet provocative practice has explored issues including: Post-Colonialism, gender, identity, the art-craft divide, and tourism's commodification of Pacific culture; drawing directly from her experience as someone of Pasifika heritage living in an urban New Zealand setting. O'Neill has exhibited extensively across the Pacific, as well as the United Kingdom, Australia, Poland, Brazil, Singapore, Los Angeles, New York, Paris and Lithuania. She has participated in the Auckland Triennial (New Zealand), the Asia-Pacific Art Triennial (Australia) and the Biennale of Sydney (Australia). Her work is held in the collections of the Auckland Art Gallery (New Zealand), Museum of New Zealand Te papa Tongarewa (New Zealand) and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery/Len Lye Centre (New Zealand). O'Neill is a member of the Pacific Sisters collective and has held many prestigious residencies including the Rita Angus Artist in Residence, Wellington (New Zealand) in 1997 and Artist in Residence APEXART, New York (USA) in 2003.



Ani O'Neill, *There's no place like home*, 1998, acrylic and wool, dimensions variable

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