

In Passing

It is in the very nature of humans to perpetuate existence; to thrive and flourish for as long as time and circumstances can possibly allow. As a species, we have prevailed in the complex evolutionary web of life, mastered to a large extent the forces of nature that threaten our survival, and developed knowledge and technologies to ensure this longevity further. Being conscious of our presence comes with the aspiration to go beyond mere existence—the impulse to make a distinct mark or carve a unique path amid countless others that have walked the earth. Society has molded us to desire recognition, value and accumulate achievements, chase success, or desire popularity. The pressure to be relevant or significant lingers constantly in a highly competitive world, shaping our notions of satisfaction, fulfillment, or happiness. For many, this recognition serves as a barometer for a meaningful existence, and perhaps a means to prolong their presence through memory once they cease to exist. For others, it becomes a source of anxiety and insecurity as they try to get ahead of others as if in a race or accomplish more.

This exhibition confronts such burden and attempts to liberate our thoughts from the preoccupation with establishing an indelible presence. Yeo Kaa's works have mostly dealt with the inner demons that torment individuals, at times navigating the dark and macabre, imagined in a bright and colorful fantasy world that disguises their sinister themes or suggests irony. Titled *Don't Worry About Me! I'm Just Passing By!*, the exhibition reminds us of the basic reality of life's transience and the inevitability of passage to oblivion. Though rendered in the artist's signature candy-colored palette, we see the vividness of the images fading and blurring, as if they are fleeting impressions gradually disappearing before our eyes. Most of the images portray crowds on a train ride, capturing the ephemeral sights and encounters we experience in the daily commute as a fitting metaphor for names, places, and events that would all be eventually forgotten through the course of time, even the remarkable ones. Some pieces reference the ubiquitous ads and billboards rapidly streaming in our vision while on a speeding train as well as in other public places, yet quickly fade in our memory as soon as we get past them. These musings offer a comforting thought to ease our worries while navigating this temporary journey. Though this momentary gift is precious, any attempt to cast a lasting and permanent imprint is in the end futile and bound to fail.

— N.M Marquez