

Tang Contemporary Art presents:

Group show: In and Out - Urban Expressions Across Borders

Artists: Ben Eine, Benzilla, HIMBAD, JBROCK, Muklay, Ryol, Stefano Phen, The London Police

Curator: Michela Sena

Exhibition Dates: 9 December 2023 - 10 January 2024

Venue: Tang Contemporary Art Bangkok

Opening Reception: Saturday, 9 December at 4:00 PM

In a groundbreaking fusion of urban vibrancy and contemporary art, Tang Contemporary Art Bangkok unveils "In and Out – Urban expression across borders," a mesmerizing exhibition curated by Michela Sena. This exhibition serves as a testament to the evolving intersection of street art and the traditional gallery space, where the canvas serves as concrete walls to unveil the street's atmosphere across different continents. The show creates a dialogue that challenges preconceived notions of art and its place in society.

Walking into the exhibition space, visitors are immediately immersed in a kaleidoscope of colors, shapes, and narratives that adorn the walls. Sena's specific curatorial choice, with a selection of artists coming from different contexts, breathes life into the gallery, transforming it into a dynamic street where each piece tells a story of rebellion, expression, and urban resilience, a statement to her eye for diversity and innovation. From the intricate stencils of international sensation to the raw energy of local talents, the exhibition encapsulates the global pulse of street art. The curation orchestrates a visual symphony where each artist's voice harmonizes with the others, creating a narrative that transcends geographical and cultural borders; and through the juxtaposition of these diverse street art styles within the gallery space, viewers are invited to explore the evolution of urban expression and its growing legitimacy in the art world. Thus, the project not only captures the essence of street art's rebellious spirit but also elevates it to a level where it demands acknowledgment within the traditional gallery setting. This exhibition also challenges the transformative power of curation and the boundless potential of urban expression as a legitimate and influential art form. In the metropolitan heart of Bangkok, where the concrete jungle meets the ephemeral canvas of urban life, the exhibition "In and Out - Urban Expression across Borders" emerges as a dynamic dialogue between the streets and the gallery walls.

The result of the project is an eclectic group of artists, each contributing their unique voice to the larger narrative of urban expression.

Ben Eine, with his bold typography and vibrant colors, sets the tone for the exhibition. His larger-than-life letters leap off the canvas, demanding attention and transforming words into visual symphonies. The juxtaposition of chaos and control in Eine's work mirrors the dualities of urban existence - a cacophony of voices and a quest for order.

The London Police, with their iconic characters and meticulous line work, add a touch of whimsy to the exhibition. Their playful yet precise approach captures the essence of the streets, where humor becomes a tool for social commentary. The duo's work serves as a reminder that even in the grittiest corners of the urban landscape, there is room for joy and laughter.

Benzilla's meticulous attention to detail creates a bridge between fine art and street aesthetics. His new creation, presented within the gallery's pristine white walls, challenges the dichotomy between his dreamlike imagery and actual reality, inviting contemplation on the very essence of artistic freedom. His fantastic world delves into the surreal with a meticulous attention to detail, and just like in his murals, Benzilla is capable to create a fusion of fine art techniques with streets' raw energy.

Seemingly Ryol's cartoon-inspired street art, celebrates the boundless realm of imagination. The whimsical and fantastical nature of Japanese cartoons inspired aesthetic allows him to break free from conventional artistic constraints, to express his bold spirit of creativity and innovation. His celebration of imagination significantly contributes to the vibrant and eclectic nature of the street art scene both in Indonesia and internationally.

While Muklay's pieces, rich with cultural nuances, serve as a reminder of the interconnectedness of global communities. One of the artists representative of the youngest Indonesian generation, his work resonates with cultural nuance, bringing an international flair to the exhibition. His pieces serve as a visual passport, transporting viewers across borders and seamlessly blending diverse elements into a harmonious whole. The layers of meaning in Muklay's art encourage a deeper exploration of the interconnectedness of global cultures.

JBROCK, one of the most iconic street artists, with his first appearance in Asia, injects a sense of urgency into the exhibition with his imposing installation of works, one of the most famous series by the artist. The installation, as a statement for his production, includes seven of his iconic reflecting on the theme of identity, and the effect of urban culture on one's own perception, but at the same time it's a reflection on the opposite: the potential contribution an artist acts on the urban cultural pattern. His compositions with his bold use of color, pulse with the energy of the streets, reflecting the relentless pace of urban life. Each stroke seems to echo the heartbeat of the city, encapsulating the vitality and vibrancy of the metropolis.

Himbad's enigmatic characters and dreamlike scenarios, invite viewers into a realm where the fantastical meets the everyday. His pieces, pulsating with energy and a touch of whimsy, evoke a sense of wonder, challenging perceptions and inviting viewers to question the boundaries between reality and imagination; while Phen's mastery of painting and graphic aesthetic, and his keen eye for composition and color, brings his different touch to the ensemble. His art is a testament to the power of simplicity, conveying complex ideas with a visual graphic economy that demands attention. Phen's pieces urge viewers to challenge the status quo of "gallery art".

"In and Out - Urban Expression across Borders" aims to express a message that overcomes the conceptual limits of an art exhibition; it wants to be a celebration of the ever-evolving language of the streets. Each artist contributes a distinct chapter to the larger streets' narrative, weaving together a tapestry that transcends geographical boundaries and speaks to the universal language of creativity. As viewers traverse the gallery space, they are not merely observers but participants in a global conversation that unfolds within the fluid boundaries of urban expression.

About the Artists

Ben Eine

B. 1970, London, United Kingdom

Ben Eine is one of the most successful letterform artists in the world and is regarded as a pioneer in the exploration of contemporary typography art. Originally a graffiti writer, Eine started his career over 30 years ago, leaving his first tag all over London before developing his distinct typographic style.

Eine began painting huge, bright and colourful letters on shutters all over East London, creating beautiful forms executed with a relentless "graffiti mentality" – painting over sixty shutters in a couple of months. These imposing and engaging, yet unattributed, anonymously-painted letters stood out from the usual tags and dubs seen on the streets. They caught the public's attention and were seminal in the rise of street art's popularity.

Benzilla (Parinya Sirisinsuk)

B. 1984, Bangkok, Thailand

Parinya Sirisinsuk or better known as Benzilla, is a graduate of Fine and Applied Art from Bangkok University. The artist finds profound inspiration in the realms of Japanese and American Pop Culture, Street art, Sci-Fiction. Guided by the character "LOOOK," a 3 eyes alien that presents a concept of perspective of an outsider, Benzilla combines the techniques of craft painting, spray painting, and graphic art to craft a mesmerizing narrative.

Benzilla's work challenges boundaries, ignites contemplation, and humbly invites viewers to explore the intricate complexities of our world. Delve into the realm of curiosity and embark on an enlightening journey through the artistic.

HIMBAD

B. 1983, London, United Kingdom

Immersed in the vibrant hues of urban life, HIMBAD, a distinguished alumnus of Central Saint Martins in the UK, transforms ordinary cityscapes into extraordinary canvases, breaking the conventional boundaries between the pristine 'white box' of galleries and the pulsating open space of the streets. Every stroke tells a story, a narrative that unfolds beyond the confines of traditional art spaces.

Drawing on his study of Celtic, Greek, and Eastern mythology, HIMBAD infuses his works with a richness and depth that captivates and challenges. His art is a journey into the archetypal and the subconscious, creating not just visual treats but experiences that engage and provoke thought. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, HIMBAD's art serves as a voice for the often looked aspects of street culture. His creations are not just visually striking; they are a platform for expressing the narratives and experiences of those who find their voices echoed in the vivid colors and bold lines of his street art.

JBROCK

B. 1979, Rome, Italy

Currently working and residing in Rome, JBROCK has been part of the capital's underground graffiti scene since the early nineties. It is an endeavor he pursued alongside his artistic studies, which founds and characterizes his aesthetics and production. His works consistently reference graphic and pictorial traditions of the 20th century. Since 2003, he has exhibited in galleries and museums, but the streets remain his main imaginary reference and exhibition space.

Muklay

B. 1993, Indonesia

In his artistic works, Muklay employs a dynamic pop-art graphic style to express personal reflections and inner truths. The artist utilizes pop cultural signifiers in his artworks to convey his deepest thoughts and feelings, reflecting his journey and personal experiences growing up in an ever-changing world. His works often depict the vitality of modern youth culture and the anxieties associated with navigating a fast-paced environment.

Ryol

B. 1993, Banyuwangi, Indonesia

Yogyakarta based Artist, Laksamana Ryo (a.k.a Ryol) has been focusing his skills in visual art, especially pop culture visual art. Originally a musician-wannabe, Ryol turned his passion into a pop culture visual artist with his childhood background as the biggest influence. Thanks to the parents and Sunday's cartoon TV programs for being the 'early stage' that unconsciously had transformed him as an artist with freedom and responsibility during creating his works.

Ryol's evolution into a pop culture visual artist lets him know the vision and the biggest dream he has. Painting is his lifetime's job. He never wants to end it. And still has a big dream to become an artist who left a trace of history in his era.

Stefano Phén

B. 1982, Brindisi, Italy

Stefano "Phén" enrolled in the Art School of his hometown and later at the "Academy of Arts" at the age of 14. He started his involvement in the local Hip Hop movement and consecutively began his career as a graffiti writer in 1997.

Painting intensively all across Europe, Phén was constantly adding new styles and techniques to his portfolio. The artist's works have been published in numerous local and international magazines, and he has collaborated with famous TV channels and clothing brands such as ADIDAS and THE NORTH FACE. Over the past 20 years of working as an artist Stefano Phén has been developing and constantly improving his own art style that unites painting, graffiti and tattoos. His contemporary, fresh and aesthetically pleasing art pieces feature numerous elements of Hip Hop and Funk culture: boomboxes, street basketball, buildings, classic cars and vans get in the mix with vector graphics, sketching lines, fat cap flares, dripping fonts and impressionist brush strokes.

The London Police

The London Police, formed of Chaz Barrisson and Bob Gibson, is an art collective which started in 1998, when big English geezers headed to Amsterdam to help rejuvenate the streets of Holland's capital. They were part of a small group of artists at the end of the last century that helped pioneer a new street art movement. After a few years of mixing traveling and making art in the street TLP began to receive worldwide recognition for their contribution to the graffiti/street art movement. They were included in many of the books documenting the scene and invited for shows and live drawing performances all over the globe. 25 years on TLP have amassed more than 125 shows and events in over 40 countries and their street work continues to pop up everywhere they go. Since 2009 TLP has concentrated on more intense canvas work, on bigger solo shows and large-scale mural projects. TLP are Chaz Barrisson who draws the iconic 'LADS' characters and Bob Gibson whose tight portrait and architectural illustrations help marry the two styles to create an endearing, exciting fantasy world. The current duo has managed to form a partnership more cohesive than Han Solo and Chewbacca in Star Wars and is continuing to produce slick artwork that is tighter than a butler's cuff.

About Tang Contemporary Art

Since its founding in Bangkok in 1997, Tang Contemporary Art has opened 7 spaces in Beijing, Hong Kong, Bangkok and Seoul to promote the development of experimental art in different regions. In the past 20 years, Tang Contemporary Art has organized groundbreaking exhibitions in its gallery spaces, and also cooperated with important art institutions in China and abroad to accomplish outstanding art projects. The gallery strives to initiate dialogue between artists, curators, collectors and institutions working both locally and internationally. A roster of groundbreaking exhibitions has earned Tang Contemporary Art internationally renowned recognition, establishing its status as a pioneer of the contemporary art scene in Asia.

As one of China's most influential contemporary art platforms, Tang Contemporary Art maintains a high standard of exhibition programming. Tang Contemporary Art represents or collaborates with leading figures in international contemporary art, including Ai Weiwei, Huang Yongping, Shen Yuan, Zhu Jinshi, Chen Danqing, Liu Qinghe, Liu Xiaodong, Chen Shaoxiong, Wang Yuping, Shen Ling, Shen Liang, Wu Yi, Xia Xiaowan, He Duoling, Mao Xuhui, Wang Huangsheng, Yang Jiechang, Tan Ping, Wang Du, Yan Lei, Yue Minjun, Wang Jianwei, Yangjiang Group, Zheng Guogu, Lin Yilin, Sun Yuan&Peng Yu, Qin Ga, Wang Qingsong, Yin Zhaoyang, Feng Yan, Guo Wei, Chen Wenbo, Ling Jian, Qin Qi, Yang Yong, Peng Wei, He An, Zhao Zhao, Xu Qu, Chen Yujun, Chen Yufan, Xue Feng, Cai Lei, Li Qing, Wang Sishun, Xu Xiaoguo, Li Wei, Liu Yujia, Wu Wei, Yang Bodu, You Yong, Li Erpeng, Jade Ching-yuk Ng, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Adel Abdessemed, Niki de Saint Phalle, AES+F, Michael Zelehosk, Jonas Burgert, Christian Lemmerz, Michael Kvium, Sakarin Krue-On, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Natee Utarit, Kitti Narod, Gongkan, Entang Wiharso, Heri Dono, Nam June Paik, Park Seungmo, Jae Yong Kim, Diren Lee, Dinh Q. Lê, Rodel Tapaya, Jigger Cruz, Ayka Go, Raffy Napay, H.H.Lim, Etsu Egami, etc.

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