

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHOW CHUN FAI

398 West Street, New York, NY 10014

September 8, 2018 – November 17, 2018

Opening Reception with the artist: September 8, 5–8 PM



Chow Chun Fai, *Godfather II - Keep your friends close but your enemies closer*, 2018,
Acrylic on canvas, 53 1/8 x 78 3/4 inches (135 x 200 cm)
Courtesy of Chow Chun Fai and Eli Klein Gallery

New York, NY, August 28, 2018—[Eli Klein Gallery](#) is delighted to present an unprecedented solo exhibition for Hong Kong-based artist Chow Chun Fai, on view from September 8 through November 17, 2018. CHOW CHUN FAI will feature 19 works, on view for the first time, from Fai's "Painting on Movies" series. This show will be held in conjunction with Asia Contemporary Art Week.

Fai is one of the many artists influenced by the socio-political turmoil which transpired after the return of Hong Kong, a former British colony, to mainland China in 1997. As past chairman of Fotanian Artist Village in Fo Tan and a member of Factory Artists Concern Group, Fai is one of the few well-known artists in China who is actively engaged in politics.

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In the “Painting on Movies” series, Fai perfectly recreates scenes from notable international films and paints English translations as subtitles. Each piece has a unique Hong Kong viewpoint which reveals the continued dilemmas that Hong Kong people face in regard to their identity. Fai’s works exhibit the local culture of Hong Kong, and more specifically the heightened social tensions caused by the socio-political turmoil dating back to 1997.

This exhibition has been developing since 2016. Wishing to take advantage of New York’s highly diverse socio-political environment, Fai shipped all 19 pieces, many unfinished, to the gallery to continue his works. Since then, he has taken residency at the Gallery which has afforded him an unlimited amount of time to complete and draw inspiration for his upcoming exhibition. Fai incorporates enamel industrial paint to create many of these paintings, a technique used to paint old billboards in front of cinemas.

One of his captivating pieces, made with enamel industrial paint, “A Better Tomorrow: We were scolded when we were bad. When we turn to be good we are being tracked,” (2013), illustrates a scene exhibiting a fight between two members of the Mafia. However, one may view this scene as a symbol of the perceived tension between Hong Kong and the mainland. In a time of great economic progress and development, commercial interests have become a growing threat to art and culture. In 2012, Fai further exemplified his devotion to Hong Kong’s political and social environment by running, unsuccessfully, for the cultural post in the Hong Kong Legislative Council, hoping to protect the local arts and culture. In 2014, extensive political demonstrations protesting the nature of the control by the Chinese government shut down parts of central Hong Kong. Fai shows that the “Mafia” has no monopoly over corruption or surveillance. The situation in Hong Kong may well have worsened over time.

One of Fai’s most vibrant works, “Ashes of Time: It is written in the Buddhist Canon. The flag is still. The wind is calm. It is the heart of man that is in turmoil,” (2013), seeks to address the sufferings many individuals face when the pursuit of wealth and economic superiority becomes a country’s dominant goal. This image, inspired by the Zen Buddhist thought, illustrates the calm water as one’s mind, and the invisible wind as the cause of disturbance and turmoil. Fai’s masterpiece moves the audience to see how suffering endures when one seeks materialistic desires. Other brilliantly painted works that Eli Klein Gallery will be presenting are humorous and entertaining, including paintings of scenes from the 1989 Batman movie and the 1986 Transformers movie, the first cartoons that Fai has ever depicted.

A fully illustrated digital catalog with an essay by Richard Klein, who is the Bruce K. Gould Distinguished Professor of Law, Touro Law Center, accompanies this exhibition.

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About Chow Chun Fai

Born in Hong Kong in 1980, Chow Chun Fai graduated with BFA and MFA from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His recent solo exhibitions include, Everything comes with an expiry date, Klein Sun Gallery, New York, NY (2016); CHOW Chun Fai: I Have Nothing to Say, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong (2015); Cultural Rights-Artist Running An Election, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong (2013). Fai's work has recently been featured in institutional exhibitions including A Chinese Journey, Het Noordbrabants Museum, S-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands (2018); Evolving Images: Modern Hong Kong Printmaking, Sun Museum, Kowloon, Hong Kong (2017); Dialogue with Contemporary Japanese Art, China Cultural Centre, Tokyo, Japan; 60th Anniversary of Fine Arts DEpartment CUHK, Cattle Depot, Hong Kong; Chinese Whispers Recent Art from the Sigg und M+ Sigg Collections, Kunstmuseum Bern; Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland (2016); Venice Meeting Point, Collateral Event of 55th Venice Biennale, Arsenale, Venice, Italy (2015); The Past Continuing, Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong (2015); All Are Guests-Homecoming, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong (2015); Light and Shadows - Caravaggio • The Italian Baroque Master, Asia Society, Hong Kong (2015); Hong Kong Eye, Saatchi Gallery, London (2012); and All Are Guests, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool (2012).

About Eli Klein Gallery

Founded by Eli Klein in 2007, Eli Klein Gallery has an international reputation as one of the foremost galleries specializing in contemporary Chinese art and continues to advance the careers of its represented artists and hundreds of other Chinese artists with whom it has collaborated. During its formative years, it established a reputation for introducing to the West fresh, contemporary, and often challenging works by emerging Chinese talents. Now, as the leading dealer of Chinese contemporary art outside of China, Eli Klein actively promotes cross-cultural awareness and investment at the highest level amongst some of the world's most influential nations. The Gallery has been instrumental in the loan of artwork by Chinese artists to over 100 museum exhibitions throughout the world, has published 40 books/catalogues, and has organized more than 75 exhibitions for Chinese art at our prestigious venues in New York City.

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