

# BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



## Ze/Ro

Curated by Shirky Chan

13 July – 26 August 2021

Press Preview: 9 July 2021, 4 – 6pm

Opening Reception: 10 July 2021, 11am – 7pm (Artist Present, 5 – 7pm)

Ben Brown Fine Arts is delighted to announce our forthcoming exhibition *Ze/Ro* at the Hong Kong gallery, from July through August 2021. The exhibition is organised by Hong Kong-based curator Shirky Chan as part of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association's (HKAGA) Summer Programme. Fostering the local arts community with a focus on young talent, the HKAGA's Summer Programme actively builds a bridge between its member galleries, emerging artists, curators and writers within this vibrant city.

Chan has curated a contemplative and topical group show featuring the work of five artists: Au Hoi Lam, Chan Ka Kiu, Christy Chow, Jaffa Lam and Jess Lau. All of these artists are living and working in Hong Kong and each addresses notions of identity, gender, society and self, framed by social constructs and desired dissolutions of gender. Chan explains:

*Gender is a social construct. Culture and tradition are often used to shape the contents of gender stereotypes to prescribe regulatory social regimes. In this sense, the representation of female and male is still crucial in terms of how they are being projected by self and others in society. To enact gender neutrality and de-gendering in society, Oxford English Dictionary has officially adopted the new gender pronoun "Ze" instead of "He" and "She" to represent non-binary gender identities. As such, the powerful and divine word "Hero" is no longer the privilege of "He" in the world of linguistics and reality. Perhaps we can start calling it "Ze/Ro" from now on.*

*In this exhibition five artists, Au Hoi Lam, Chan Ka Kiu, Christy Chow, Jaffa Lam and Jess Lau, explore the nature of the female world where women empower themselves by embracing their creativity in the realms of body and mind. Cross-generational women in distinct identity roles transcend acts of self-awareness into rewarding outcomes, from which a sense of autonomy is recognised through one's individuality and multifaceted characteristics. Their works adapt the female's multisensory experience from body to mind: a life-giving bearer that embodies changes and endures beyond our imagination; whilst being the matrix for one to envision fantasies, emotional associations or even a learning process in life.*

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*Body is the intimate site for one to reclaim memories and emotions through movements and sensations. The artists in this exhibition also disclose their autonomy, fear, romance and tension in different stages, all of which are traces in life, or put simply, a lifelong contemplation. Evaluated against the cultural orientation of gender, they acknowledge and exercise the power of "Ze".*

We invite you to visit the Hong Kong gallery this summer to delve into the work of these talented and thoughtful artists whose work is reflective of Hong Kong's status as a cultural capital.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### **Au Hoi Lam (b. 1978, Hong Kong)**

Au Hoi Lam has been active in the Hong Kong art scene since the early 2000s. Her work focuses on drawing, painting and installation. Her minimal works embody hermetic symbols and codes, thereby intermittently revealing an undercurrent of paradoxes. The subjects of her metaphorical and autobiographical work come from the trivial but profound minute details of everyday life. Au regards works as a means of self-care, functioning as memorandum, keepsake, symbol, prayer and contemplation. Au lives and works in Hong Kong.

### **Chan Ka Kiu (b. 1995, Toronto, Canada)**

Chan Ka Kiu is a Hong Kong-based artist who graduated in 2021 from City University of Hong Kong, School of Creative Media (MFA). Chan's previous exhibitions include solo shows with Para Site, *Don't come so fast, darling* (Art Basel Hong Kong 2019), and various group shows including *Very Natural Actions* (Tai Kwun, Hong Kong, 2020) and *Tree Fall in the Woods and No One's There* (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2018). Chan lives and works in Hong Kong.

### **Christy Chow (b. 1983, Hong Kong)**

Christy Chow holds a Bachelor of Arts from The University of Hong Kong, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from RMIT University, Melbourne and a Master of Fine Arts from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston. She has a background in theatre stage management and cultural studies. Chow creates video installations and interactive sculptures that focus on themes of humanity, sustainability and social justice. Through her ongoing project "Laborland", a dystopian amusement park where labour and play converge, she acts as a facilitator of alternate experiences and economies that operate in a way that is antagonistic to capital. Chow lives and works in Hong Kong.

### **Jaffa Lam (b. 1973, Fujian, China)**

Jaffa Lam is a sculptor specializing in large-scale, site-specific sculptures and installations, which are primarily made using recycled materials. She is interested in nonverbal conversations and dialogues exploring issues related to local history, culture and current affairs. Her work explores the importance of public art and themes such as loss, the revival of traditional craftsmanship, and the life cycle of human beings and objects, capturing seemingly trivial human stories in the greater flow of history. Lam lives and works in Hong Kong.

### **Jess Lau (b. 1991, Hong Kong)**

Jess Lau gained her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Creative Media at the City University of Hong Kong in 2014. In the same year, she received the Silver Award and award for Best Local Work at the 20th ifva Festival (Interactive Media Category). Lau's work explores themes such as narrative fragments, body memory and focus on iterative manual processes and the aggregation of time. Her work involves a wide range of media, including videos, animation and installation, exploring the uniqueness and malleability of each medium. Lau was the selected artist of Tai Kwun Contemporary Artists' Studio Residency 2020. She is a member of the Floating Projects Collective, an experimental artist-run space in Hong Kong. Lau lives and works in Hong Kong.

# BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

## ABOUT SHIRKY CHAN

Shirky Chan is an independent curator and art columnist who received her Master of Art in Fine Art and Master of Art in Intercultural Studies from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, in 2015 and 2017 respectively. In 2013, Chan received her Bachelor of Fine Art in Painting with distinction from The Hong Kong Art School / RMIT University.

Chan was invited by The Hong Kong Institution of Education as their supporting and professional artist at the "Arts @ School" project in 2014. And being the part-time lecturer at Hong Kong Design Institute in 2020. Selected curating projects include fund raising exhibition presented by Lamborghini Hong Kong, Solo exhibition for Kurt Chan Yuk Keung and Ivy Ma at Touch Gallery. From 2017, she acted as the vice Chair, and is currently the Chairlady, of Hong Kong Art School Alumni Network which has over 450 members.

## GALLERY EVENTS

Panel discussion, featuring art critic Jeff Leung

Date: Saturday, 7 August 2021

Time: 4 – 5:30pm

Singing Bowl Performance, led by Poppy Fong

Date: Saturday, 21 August 2021

Time: 4 – 5:30pm

## FOR FURTHER PRESS INFORMATION AND ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

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