

Gordon Cheung: New Territories

11 September to 15 November 2025

Venue: gdm (Galerie du Monde), 108 Ruttonjee Centre, 11 Duddell St, Central, Hong Kong

A lonesome baroque archway stands upright in an empty sea. A ship of the line sails towards it, flying a Union Jack. A cowboy rides a defiant bull, raising a fist above his head in triumph. A tulip blooms out of plastic. Weaving threads between these individual motifs, Gordon Cheung narrates a history that is hidden in the details. Like an archaeologist, he traces centuries of colonial cartographies and diasporic movement, bearing witness to civilizations obscured by the sands of time. Cheung seeks to understand what it means to be human, in civilizations with histories written by the victors.

gdm Hong Kong is pleased to present “**Gordon Cheung: New Territories**”, the artist’s debut solo exhibition at the gallery, featuring a retrospective of Gordon Cheung’s work, spanning across painting and sculpture. *New Territories* circumnavigates the historical and geographical passage of global capitalism from the Dutch Golden Age to the rise of China as a 21st Century superpower, questioning its lasting impact on our perceptions of identity, territory, and sense of belonging. Painting an intimate picture of both his ancestral lineage as well as the history of Hong Kong at large, Cheung’s practice sits against the backdrop of this city emerging from its colonial past, charting new possibilities into an uncertain future.

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Opening *New Territories* is a sculptural recreation of the Wing Hing Kat gates. Originally forming the entrance of the Kat Hing Wai walled village (Cheung’s mother’s ancestral village), the gates were forcibly dismantled during the Six-Day War (1899) fought between the British Empire and the major Punti clans of the New Territories in Hong Kong. The gates are constructed using Financial Times stock market lists, presenting a method of collage that has been an integral part of Cheung’s practice since 1995, and which pervades both his paintings and sculptural works. The lists are transformed through pixel sorting algorithms, exploring our contemporary digital environment, shaped by the light-speed transmission of capital. As artificial intelligence proliferates exponentially, Cheung harnesses these new technologies that are shaping our everyday lives to respond to our changing world order; his signature visual language attempts to understand how we comprehend the times we live in. Positioned at the entrance of the gallery, the gates are a glimpse into both the exhibition and Gordon Cheung’s practice at large.

Beyond the gates lies an oriental garden, brimming with vibrant paintings depicting civilizations past and present; scholar’s rocks hewn from porcelain, bronze and marble; geometric window silhouettes. At once familiar and uncanny, Cheung employs the metaphor of the landscape garden as a site of change. A pervading symbol throughout the artist’s practice, the garden emblemizes the forceful introduction of invasive flora and fauna by colonial sovereigns in the Far East, presented as a divine intervention to justify their colonial conquests. Cheung’s Still Life paintings are likewise writ with such influences, depicting Chinese dragon pots housing flowers from the Dutch Still Life tradition. Through this subversion, Cheung seeks to unveil what is already embedded in the genre. Dutch Golden Age Still Lifes appear innocuous, but reflect the dark history of colonial conquest, in its collection of fruit, flowers, and objects acquired forcibly through slavery carried out across Asia and Africa - and the desire to flaunt the wealth, power, and status accrued from it.

In Cheung’s landscape paintings, vibrant auroras, adapted from the Qianlong Emperor’s imperial album “40 Scenes of the Yuanmingyuan”, hover over modern Chinese cities like ghostly reminders of the past – or perhaps as harbingers of what is yet to come. The Yuanmingyuan was a complex of imperial palaces and gardens constructed throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries. Regarded as the pinnacle of Chinese artistic and cultural achievement, it was destroyed and pillaged by French and British troops during the

Second Opium War. While all that remains are ruins of European palaces that formed only one part of the entire garden, the Yuanmingyuan's memory persists in the consciousness of the Chinese people, and has become a focal point of modern Chinese nationalism. Cheung articulates on the memory of this lost cultural monument to create landscapes permeated by heavy reminders of loss — the impermanence of systems of power, and the eventuality of their decline.

From as early as 2011, Cheung has employed the symbol of the tulip, emblematic of the Dutch Still Life movement coinciding with the Dutch Golden Age. The Dutch Golden Age saw widespread economic and cultural prosperity in The Netherlands through its developments in overseas colonization, marking the birth of modern capitalism with the establishment of the first global multinational company – the Dutch East India Company. At the same time, the era recorded the first economic bubble, which emerged through the unregulated speculation over tulip bulbs, described as “Tulipmania”. By juxtaposing the tulip as a Romantic symbol conveying elegance and transient beauty with stock market lists, Cheung explores the contradiction at the heart of “Tulipmania”, in how something natural and ephemeral can become entangled in human constructs of perceived economic value and greed.

Dotted throughout the gallery space are “Scholar’s Rocks”, originating from Cheung’s 2022 residency at the porcelain capital of China, Jingdezhen. Coveted for their natural beauty and unique asymmetry, these natural forms are reproduced using man-made materials, reinterpreting the rocks’ ancient symbolism through a contemporary lens. First constructed using Financial Times stock listings, Cheung 3D-scans the sculptures through photogrammetry, simplifying the shapes into polygons. Working on the equivalence of the polygon to 3D space as the pixel is to 2D space, Cheung translates the digital landscape into the physical. Evincing ‘meditative focal points’ between nature and human civilization in the digital age, these sculptures underscore the tension between nature and the manufactured world, reflecting on how nature has been commodified and subsumed by capitalist interests.

Hung up against the walls, window lattices are arranged as if to suggest a ghost architecture beyond. The windows architecturally embody the complex history of China’s evolution towards authoritarian capitalism, evoking the ruins of homes demolished in China’s rapid urbanization. At the same time, they represent an in-between, transitional space, synonymous with the artist’s identity of being from two different cultures. The action of looking out of these window sculptures suggests the wistful recalling of the past, or even looking beyond — yet their positioning against the walls leads to a dead-end; an uncertain future.

In *New Territories*, Gordon Cheung tends to a perennial garden of tulips, sunflowers, and chrysanthemums. Planted over a grave of colonial history, he brings to the surface their lasting impact on identity formation, stemming from the artist’s own journey to explore the roots of his heritage. His signature visual language continually reinforces itself with new technological methods, speaking to a desire to learn, adapt, and make sense of our ever-evolving world. He brings to the fore an invested interrogation of global capitalism, asking the viewer to dig deeper into prevailing narratives – concealed, rewritten; even rediscovered, according to those in power. Having relocated to Hong Kong and Jingdezhen, this exhibition envisions not only new directions for Cheung’s practice, but also his ongoing endeavors into uncharted new territories

About the Artist – Gordon Cheung 張逸斌



Gordon Cheung (b. 1975, London, UK) pioneers an innovative approach to making art, seamlessly blending physical and digital media and techniques across painting, collage, sculpture, and moving image. His work explores the intersection of virtual and actual realities, reflecting on how these worlds converge to influence our perceptions. Cheung graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting from the Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London in 1998, and completed his Master's of Fine Art in 2001 at the Royal College of Art in London.

Circumnavigating the historical and geographical passage from the Dutch Golden Age to the rise of China as a 21st Century superpower, Cheung's practice critiques the underlying mechanisms of global capitalism, and its impact on our perception of identity, territory, and sense of belonging. These narratives are refracted through the prisms of culture, mythology, religion, and politics into dreamlike spaces of urban surreal worlds that are rooted in the artist's 'in-between' diasporic identity. His works engage with the existential question of what it means to be human in civilizations with histories written by victors.

His works can be found in key collections and museums, including at the British Museum (London), the Asian Art Museum (San Francisco), the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Washington D.C.), and the Museum of Modern Art (New York). He won the Jerwood Contemporary Painters Prize in 2008, and was the Knoxville Museum of Art's featured artist in 2022.

Artist website: www.gordoncheung.com

About the Gallery – gdm 燦樂

gdm is a Hong Kong-based art gallery founded by Fred Scholle in 1974. Originally opened as Galerie du Monde, gdm represents more than twenty artists, nurturing a diverse roster of artists at all stages of their creative practices with a global perspective. The gallery has been acclaimed for its ground-breaking work in championing artists of postwar and contemporary movements such as Hong Kong's Circle Art Group, and Taiwan's Fifth Moon.

gdm Projects launched in 2008 which transformed the gallery with a new emphasis on contemporary art and dedication to supporting emerging and underrepresented diaspora artists engaging with cultural identity and conceptual practices.

To celebrate 50 years (1974-2024), gdm opened a new space in Taipei in 2024. With its opening, gdm Taipei will launch "Siōng Tshinn," a special program that focuses on spotlighting emerging local talent, providing a



platform for young, unrepresented Taiwanese artists to showcase their works. Through “Siōng Tshinn,” gdm hopes to plant meaningful and lasting roots in the local art community.

Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10:00 – 19:00