

Over the Influence is proud to announce the Southeast Asian debut exhibition from acclaimed Israeli artist Ron Chen at the Bangkok gallery space. The paintings are all based on images taken in Thailand. Inspired by the Impressionists' painterly aesthetic, the title of the exhibition "Impression, Sunset" references Claude Monet's iconic painting "Impression, Sunrise", painted in 1874 and that subsequently spearheaded the Impressionist art movement. The exhibition is on view from 14 July to 27 August 2023.

This is the artist's first visit to Thailand, therefore the paintings are based on his idealized version of it, as seen in the media. Light is the recurring theme in the show, it is an inherent component in the artist's technique that he uses to make the works glowing effect. The paintings are made with a dabbing technique using oil paint and brushes. Starting with a pure white smooth surface of Gesso, the artist piles up light tones of paint and gradually layering darker tones on top of them, thereby creating an inner glow within each painting. The finished works have a dazzling effect that transcends the paintings from their earthly properties- that micro- movement of light dancing within the compositions, constantly streaming to the viewer's eyes, as if the light reflected is indeed alive and burning.

Ron Chen was raised in a secular-bourgeois town by religious Jewish parents. The dissonance between his parents' traditions and contemporary culture resulted in a conflicted identity. The works are injected with this

conflicted quality, of moving restlessly between the palpable environment of reality, and the spiritual, desired space of the image.

"The Image is a place, it is a mental experience rather than a two dimensional physical phenomenon.." says the artist.

Thailand is the perfect subject matter for "Impression, Sunset". Its identity as a tropical paradise is imprinted within the imaginations of international travelers. Social media only strengthens the country's mythological allure where pristine beaches and candy-coloured sunsets are the norm. Painting Images of this paradise allows the artist to embody the personality of an Instagram tourist who's traveling experience is retinal and therefore, immaterial. "This is Thailand for me, beautiful generic images of vacation, and the impressionistic act of grasping the nature of the digital image, is at the center of this show", he said

Unlike Monet who worked from nature to depict the changing qualities of light, such as reflections, shadows, and the play of light on surfaces, Ron Chen explores the steady light of the glowing screen, where movement is apparent in micro-waves of light constantly streaming to our eyes. Through the Southeast Asian landscape and its inhabitants the show pays homage to the Impressionist art movement's celebration of light, much like we celebrate light in our culture nowadays.

This body of works constitutes a kind of sheltering sphere, a zone for meditation and frustration from unfulfilled potential. Each painting is an invitation to sink into the image's space, to mentally walk through it, in and out, all the way from the upper layers towards the white gesso in the base, and back to the surface.