



Over the Influence presents

Lucien Smith Secret Garden

Exhibition dates: 20 May – 19 June 2021



Artist's Roof Garden, New York, 2015

Over the Influence HK is excited to present Lucien Smith's first solo show with the gallery, as well as his debut show in Hong Kong! Titled *Secret Garden* the exhibition is a collection of brand new paintings inspired by flora and fauna seed packets. The show will be on view at OTI HK from 20 May to 19 June 2021.

The *Secret Garden* paintings began as watercolors in 2012. Lucien Smith created the series as a Memento mori. Prior to embarking on this collection, he did not know that seed packets purchased at hardware stores had a shelf life of only one to two years. If they were not planted within this timeframe they would lie fallow for eternity. Something about this triggered his memory about Jeff Koon's collective body of works known as *The New*, and his promise of eternal freshness from repurposed vacuum cleaners. With *Secret Garden* Lucien Smith is more interested in the natural world's inherent obsolescence, than in consumer household appliances.

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Initially the artist intended to have the seed packet paintings as a follow up to his *Rain Paintings* exhibition in Los Angeles, California. He liked the connective tissues found between flowers and plants that required rain to survive and wanted to continue with this theme. The artist soon changed subject matters, finding inspiration in other creative projects such as guitar and scrap metal sculptures, as well as pie, tumbleweed, and camouflage paintings. However, he always knew that one day he would return to seed packets for inspiration.

It is interesting to observe how artists will let their works gestate. A good example is Richard Prince who first created his hippy drawings back in 1999. However it was not until his *High Times* exhibition 20 some years later that those works were shown in public. It should be mentioned that Richard Prince was one of the first individuals who acquired Lucien Smith's seed packet watercolor paintings back in 2012- their mentor-protégé relationship goes a long way back.

The 20 new works in the *Secret Garden* exhibition alludes to Andy Warhol's silkscreen paintings of car crashes and celebrities. However the present works in Hong Kong are much quieter and more contemplative than Warhol's glamorous portraits. There are also hidden innuendos scattered throughout the seed packet paintings, such as the words "cabbage" and "salvia" reference money and drugs. On his old pickup truck Lucien Smith has a bumper sticker that reads "Nature is my Church" - great advice that perfectly sums up the *Secret Garden* exhibition too!

Location
1/F, 159 Hollywood Road
Central, Hong Kong

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