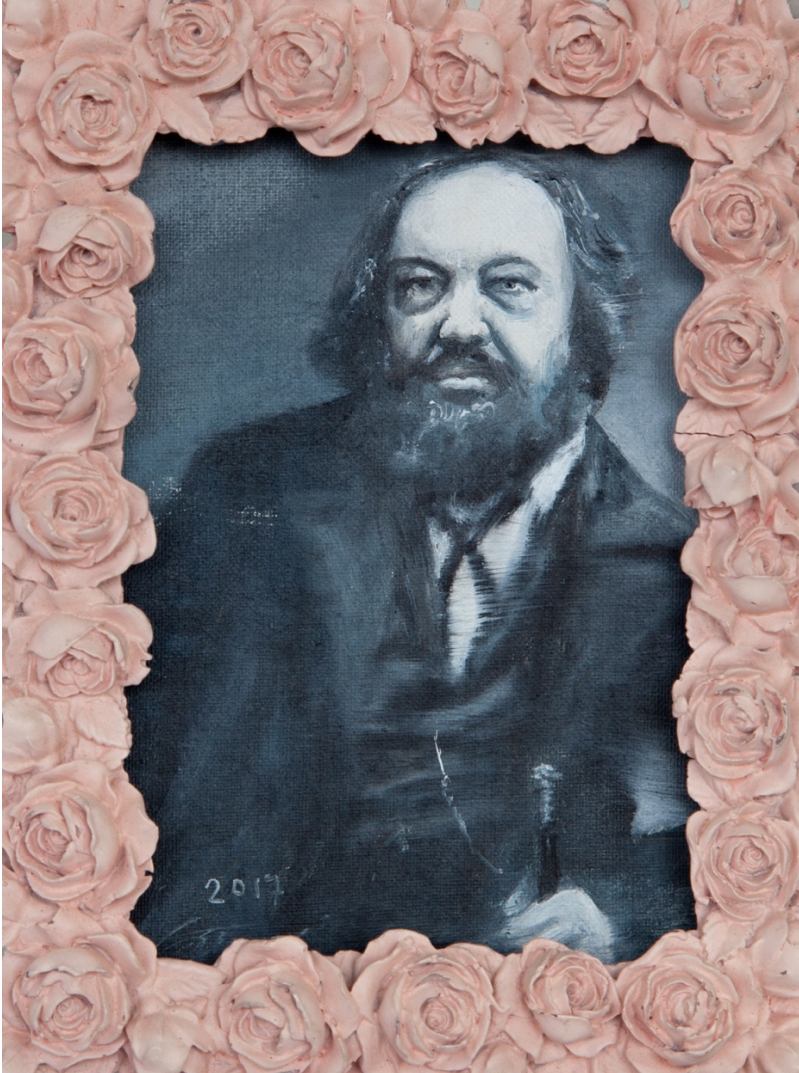


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KONSTANTIN BESSMERTNY, HALLY CHENG: *Cabinet of Curiosities*



6 June 2019 - 20 July 2019

PREVIEW: Thursday, 6 June, 2019, 2-6 PM

OPENING RECPTION: Thursday, 6 June, 2019, 6-8 PM

A Concept Gallery Hong Kong presents *Cabinet of Curiosities*, joint exhibition of Konstantin Bessmertny and Halley Cheng. The two artists will create and present rare, eclectic and esoteric objects in contemporary setting with three-dimensional models and watercolor drawings. Exhibition will be from 6 June to 20 July. The opening reception will be held on 6 June, starting from 6pm. All are welcome to join.

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The Cabinet of Curiosities or the Wunderkammer is widely regarded as the precursor of museum, displaying a widely variety of objects such as antiques, natural historical collections, technological inventions and exotic objects in a room. In addition to appreciating the delicate objects, the curiosity of the collector and the creative perspective of the arranger are highlighted, posing a scintillating gambit to curators. Inspired by the idea of this particular fashion of displaying object, this exhibition emphasis the curating aspect of artist and highlight their attentions. Both Konstantinand Halley Cheng are skilled in different art mediums. Their flexible techniques allow them to “collect” curious things from the artistic eyes without the limitations of period, time, structure and styles.

With seven years of traditional art training, Konstantin has unparalleled skills in multiple art mediums. His renowned creations of greedy, dummy, fearful and lazy human figures resemble the figures in the works of early Renaissance painter Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450 – 1516). Not satisfied with the two-dimensional world, he creates 3D doll miniature dollhouses that contain tens of downsized artworks. They often even come with magnifying glasses and mini price list. It is easy to be overwhelmed by the delicacy and caught off-guard by the artist’s cunning sense of humor. The artworks by Konstantin Bessmertny resembles the “Artificialia” aspect of the cabinet of curiosities which groups the objects created or modified by human. By exhibiting antiques from foreign culture, the “curator” creates alienation effect through emphasizing the cultural differences. Since moving to Macao in 1993, his new life experiences in Macao brought him stimulation and inspirations. In fact, he is constantly vexed by the absurdity of life. Traditional Chinese culture has made a great impression on him – activities like tea drinking, Cantonese dim sum, the depraved habits of gamblers, Lingnan architecture, charismatic churches, diversified cultures, the blending of races. He continued to adopt the strategy of free association to transform the imbalance into artworks. The Chinese culture and the Western culture rendezvous, arousing more space for open interpretations and making it easier for viewers to comprehend the essence of the works.

Halley Cheng is the representative of “Scientifica”, which brings together scientific instruments. His creative style has been constantly changing. From the images of traditional Chinese paintings in his debut artworks to the subsequent installations, watercolors and acrylic paint. He is constantly changing, focusing on a wide range of topics, good at using appropriated images as the main artistic techniques. His images expression has never been hindered by the limitations of the mediums. The appropriation of images resembles the act of collecting various treasures by the owner of the Cabinet of Curiosities. Cheng uses art tools as a method of collecting images. This series is called *Cabinet of Curiosities*, which includes subject matters such as astrology, biology, Buddhist philosophy, political theory and photography.

In addition to showing the horizontal breadth of the artist's curiosity, it also contains the inspiration of Chinese philosophy. In Chinese philosophy, the body has always been in an extremely important position and all philosophical ideas and moral spirits need to be practiced and practiced in daily life. This is "Kung Fu." The scope of contemporary knowledge is boundless, from the infinite macroscopic universe to the undivided God particles. Halley Cheng felt that it was necessary to think about how people set up their lives in this predecessor and was influenced by Chinese traditional Taoist thoughts. "Heaven, Earth, and I were produced together, and all things and I are one." (*Zhuangzi: Inner Chapter: The Adjustment of Controversies*) Contrasting the infinite knowledge, human lives seem insignificant. Cheng's *Cabinet of Curiosities* series are juxtaposed with different scales of images, disrupting our grasp of the dimensions to express a knowledge world that is impacting human intuition both macroscopically and microscopically.

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

**Konstantin Bessmertny** was born in 1964 in Blagoveschensk, in the former USSR. Now based in Macau and Hong Kong, Bessmertny is one of the most distinguished artists working in Asia today. His technical mastery, achieved after nine years of studying fine art in the grand academies of Soviet Union, combined with his detailed knowledge on wide range of subjects – including literature, music, history and politics- lend his work exceptional intelligence and credibility.

**Halley Cheng** was born in 1986. Cheng received his bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2008 and four years later obtained his master's degree in Visual Arts, Studio and Extended Media from the Hong Kong Baptist University. During his professional career, Cheng has had his works exhibited internationally in group shows and art fairs including Art15 London (2015), Art Basel Hong Kong (2013), Art Asia Miami (2011), Fine Art Asia (2010, 2011 & 2012) and Art HK (2008 & 2009). His works have won numerous awards including the Hong Kong Young Artist 2012 Grand Prize. His works have been collected by important collectors such as The Philippe Charriol Foundation and Bank of China and held auction records from Sotheby's.

Image : Courtesy of Konstantin Bessmertny

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