

PRESS RELEASE

# SHERMAN SAM

17 NOVEMBER — 17 DECEMBER 2016

OPENING RECEPTION

WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER, 6 — 8 PM

PRESS PREVIEW IN PRESENCE OF THE ARTIST: WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER, 5 PM

Annka Kultys Gallery is pleased to present *TOGETHER WE'RE HEAVY* an exhibition of seventeen recently completed drawings and paintings by Sherman Sam. This marks the gallery's first exhibition with the artist, and the artist's first solo presentation in London.

For the past two decades, Sam has become known for abstract oil paintings and drawings that avoid facile explanations or recognisable visual associations. Instead, Sam uses colour, surface, light and intuition to create a textured abstract visual reality, "free from ideology". There is no specificity, no place, no person. The work opposes typically Western notions of narrative structure altogether. At the same time, Sam takes his titles from song lyrics — *Just a perfect day*, *Disco Heaven*, *Only move to the beat* — however, this is just a testament to the artist's playful nature. The titles trick the viewer into searching for a correlation between lyric and painting that does not exist, but this unreturned quest, when abandoned, leaves room for meditation. The work exists solely on its strength as art, allowing for a more liberated experience.

The exhibition takes its title from the 2004 album *TOGETHER WE'RE HEAVY* by Polyphonic Spree. The musical references, though not directly related to the series of paintings and drawings, function as found objects. While the paintings are silent, the music brings a verbal and cultural history that pertains more to what Sam was listening to in a particular moment — when Lou Reed died, for example. The resulting compositions are not unlike musical scores. Much like the ambient sounds of Polyphonic Spree, the works, in themselves, are polyphonic, echoing beyond the frame. Each particular mark on a drawing is attached to a motion, which seems to extend well past the page. For Sam, the process is organic, and could be related to the Japanese philosophy Wabi-Sabi, with its embrace of transience and imperfections. A drawing starts as a piece of paper folded in his bag or pocket, producing an irregular shape, layered with graphite and coloured pencil. The paintings are characteristically handmade objects, roughly painted and asymmetric, with angular lines and varying textures, yet they are balanced by curves and soft colours that fade into the harsher greens and browns. The outcome is refreshingly incomplete, creating an overwhelming sense of calm.

ANNKA KULTYS GALLERY

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**Sherman Sam** was born in Singapore in 1966. He has studied at Parson-in-Paris, Paris, and the Otis Art Institute of the Parsons School of Design, Los Angeles, and earned his BFA at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1991 and a Master of Letters in History of Art from the University of Oxford in 1997.

Sherman Sam is nominated for the 2017 Sovereign Asian Art Prize in Hong Kong — Asia's most esteemed contemporary art prize. His work was featured at Annka Kultys Gallery's 2015 group show *DESIRE OF THE OTHER*, along with Theaster Gates, Oscar Murillo and Danh Vo. In 2016, his first solo show, *TOGETHER WE'RE HEAVY*, is Annka Kultys Gallery's second exhibition with the artist, and the artist's first solo presentation in London.

Sam's work has been exhibited internationally, with solo shows at: Some Walls, Oakland; Rubicon Gallery, Dublin; The Suburban, Chicago; Centro de Arte S Joao da Madeira, S Joao da Madeira, Portugal; and the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford.

He has also participated in several group exhibitions at: Annka Kultys Gallery, London; Feature, Inc., New York; Janet Kurnatowski Gallery, Brooklyn; The Drawing Room, London; Sue Scott Gallery, New York; Kunsthalle Centro Cultural Andratx, Majorca; and Model Arts and Niland Gallery, Sligo, Ireland.

**For all press enquires and to RSVP to the 16 November press preview, please contact us** at +44 (0) 20 3302 6070 [press@annkakultys.com](mailto:press@annkakultys.com)

**Opening Hours:** Wednesday through Saturday, 12 — 6pm

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