

# rodolphe janssen

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## **Alvin Ong** **Polyphony**

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*Rhythm comes from the pairings of hard and soft, light and heavy, balance and imbalance, the punctuation and combination of different tones.*

– Haruki Murakami, Absolutely on Music

rodolphe janssen is pleased to present Polyphony, an Alvin Ong solo exhibition curated by Kami Gahiga. The artist's style combines multiple overlaid visual vocabularies which endow his paintings a rhythmic quality. Colour, shape, texture, and form but also instruments, notation, and scale, are considered as sites of enquiry. Taking the polyphonic and contrapuntal expressive qualities of Johann Sebastian Bach's "The Art of Fugue" (published posthumously in 1751) as point of departure, Polyphony showcases fifteen paintings developed throughout the second half of 2022 in London and Ong's art residency at Eton College. The exhibition addresses the diversity of layers, references, and influences that inform Ong's paintings – including classical music, traditional Malay folktales, and technology blended with art history ranging from Old Masters to contemporary art. Through the diversity of its themes and intersecting driving forces, Polyphony unveils authentic humanistic traits : carnal whims, voyeurism, alienation, and the human desire for connection. Alvin Ong's paintings possess a universality and distinct worldview that ignite one's inner world and deepest impulses.

Kami Gahiga

### **About the artist:**

Alvin Ong (b.1988) lives and works between London, UK and Singapore. He is a graduate of the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford, UK (2016) and received an MFA from the Royal College of Art, London, UK (2018). He has exhibited at SAM, Singapore (2007, 2012, 2013), NAFA, Singapore (2007), Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore (2010), Peranakan Museum, Singapore (2015), Northampton Contemporary, Northampton, UK (2017), and the National Portrait Gallery, London, UK (2018). This year, he was nominated for the 2022 Sovereign Asian Art Prize, named finalist of the prestigious Hopper Prize in 2019, and the winner of the Chadwell Award in 2018. At the age of 16, he became the youngest winner of the UOB Painting of the Year Award, Singapore (2005). His paintings are collected by the ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the Ingram Collection, UK, and the Victoria & Albert Museum (Print Collection), London, UK.

### **About the curator:**

Kami Gahiga is a London-based art curator, private art advisor (The Baer Faxt Art Advisory), and writer. Gahiga is the author of several publications and regularly contributes to contemporary art talks and panels. She has been invited as guest lecturer at Sotheby's Institute of Art and Christie's Education in London, UK. Gahiga holds a First Distinction Master's degree from Sotheby's Institute of Art in London, UK.