

For immediate release

7 August 2009

**Exhibition : Lucky Plazas**  
**Venue : Mulan Gallery**  
**No. 19 Tanglin Road**  
**#02-33 Tanglin Shopping Centre**  
**Singapore 247909**  
**Date : 4 – 25 September 2009**

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**‘Lucky Plazas’**, a two-man show at Mulan Gallery, presents the works of noted comic illustrators and artists Sonny Liew and Koh Hong Teng, in a reflective mood, exploring aspects of their homeland, Singapore. While offering narratives that grapple with Singaporean issues that are both subtle and deep, both artists also present engaging visuals that proliferate with minute observations. The paintings of these artists are not just complementary in style but also subject matter. While the views of the unseen parts of Singapore in Hong Teng’s portrayals are both lingering and nostalgic, the crisp commentary on politics and politicians in Sonny Liew’s works are delightful, with the clever humour of classic political cartoons.

Having had extensive experience in comic book illustrations, Sonny and Hong Teng both exhibit a strong control over lines and an easy familiarity with the tropes of graphic art and novels more specifically. The paintings also testify to an uncommon rigor of draughtsmanship that allows the eye to be carried over swiftly into the imagery. The artworks hence appear suggestive, imbued as they are with analogic possibilities.

Hong Teng tellingly fills his canvases with broad areas of colour, along-with rich detail that at once dissimulates its own imagery. They do not exist, even as they appear real. Part of this effect is indebted to the forgotten landscape of Singapore, one that is both hidden from view in usual presentations of Singapore, and also constantly being erased to make way for something contemporary. Pictures reveal store-fronts of local shops, stacked with colourful sweets - a rare sight among burgeoning malls, old men gathered over a game of mahjong at a HDB hub and many such local vignettes. That these are rendered in interesting perspectives adds to the charm and poignancy of Hong Teng's paintings.

Sonny's work on the other hand comprises of a carefully rendered triptych showing a hawker center that is the unlikely scene of action for the stalwarts of the Singapore socio-political scene. The rest is there for the viewer to read, understand and interpret. Part of the series titled, "Erik Khoo is a Hotel Magnate," these paintings demand a keen knowledge of Singapore, both its political, economic environment and its social conditions. Stylistically, Sonny's work is closer to his comic book format with speech bubbles and attention to characterisation. It also shows a meticulous control of composition and attention to detail that is also evidenced in Hong Teng's work.

Following the group exhibition at Black Earth Art Museum in Nov 2008 which showed the works of four illustrators, this will be the second major showcase of the works of these artists, to be shown in Singapore- an event significant in itself and marking an important step in art curation in Singapore. As Patricia Liang, the Managing Director of Mulan Gallery puts it, "Both Hong Teng and Sonny Liew are gifted illustrators and these works are testament to the unique and rich possibilities that they have to offer the world of fine art."

**Biographies:**

**Koh Hong Teng** received his diploma in Graphic Design from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and went on to get his degree in Illustration at the London Institute. He subsequently worked as a graphic journalist for 'The New Paper' and as the art director at Patroids Creative Works. Hong Teng was accorded with the gold award at the Siggraph Asia Pacific Animation and Digital Art Competition in 2001. Having illustrated his first graphic novel '01321' in 1996, he is now fully immersed in graphic art and painting.

**Sonny Liew** completed his training in illustration at the Rhode Island School of Design and has worked on titles for various publishers of graphic novels and comics including DC Vertigo, Marvel, SLG and Disney. His well-known work 'Wonderland' paved the way for a prestigious Eisner nomination for the Best illustrator category in 2007. His other works include 'My Faith in Frankie' and 'Malinky Robot.' Sonny has also shown his paintings in various groups and solo shows since 2002.

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