

Edouard Malingue Gallery

馬凌畫廊

Sixth floor, 33 Des Voeux  
Road Central, Hong Kong

≡[edouardmalingue.com](http://edouardmalingue.com)

Kwan Sheung Chi

Blue is the New Black

Opening  
26 October 6 - 8 PM

Dates  
27 October - 30 November 2017

Contact  
+852 2810 0317  
[mail@edouardmalingue.com](mailto:mail@edouardmalingue.com)

Media Enquiries  
Rhody Chan  
[rhody@edouardmalingue.com](mailto:rhody@edouardmalingue.com)  
+852 2810 0319

All Other Enquiries  
Lorraine Malingue  
[Lorraine@edouardmalingue.com](mailto:Lorraine@edouardmalingue.com)  
+852 2810 0318

A thousand-metre sea of blue tape stretches across the entrance to the gallery: tensely pulled at one metre or so above the ground, the viewer is invited yet challenged to step in, actively marking their entrance as opposed to passive frequentation. This initial interaction sets the tone for Kwan Sheung Chi's (b. 1980, Hong Kong) first solo exhibition at Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong, 'Blue is the New Black', which spells out over a series of mixed media works how things are not fully what they seem. Playing on notions of viewership, surveillance, power, ignorance, vulnerability and brutality, the exhibition travels between the political and the personal, nodding to the frameworks that govern us and our involvement in each. Integrating at once political references, actions from contemporary social life and popular media, the viewer is prompted to reflect on our status quo and daily fictions.

Kwan Sheung Chi follows a conceptual practice rooted in criticism of assignments of value and modes of existence, employing simple props to articulate his reflections with pointed focus. Voiced from a position of observation, the viewer senses throughout a tension between meditation and intervention, a feeling that is heightened by a running sense of banality that pervades Kwan's propositions. Consider the new film 'Blue is the New Black', a double-channel work that shows two superimposed hanging screens, the first depicting a blue-tinted hand in continuous salute against the backdrop of a computer-generated blue sky. Silent, the repeated near robotic movement contrasts with the second screen that shows and echoes the hammering and destruction of three heads of David. The striking contrast between action, on the one hand violent and on the borderline banal, and tradition, points to the hand humanity plays in the world we see around us - from aggressive denials of the past, to blind nods regards the future.

Fielding commentary that's against-the-grain, Kwan heralds a non-assumptive yet determined voice that quietly digs at the systems of the society we're born into. The major work 'Above U' (2017), for example, which encompasses the viewer as they enter further through the gallery space, is an installation that rises from the floor and is composed of a hovering fluorescent light installation that spells the title of the work. As one peers, one innocently interacts with the work - an action that becomes clear when entering the middle of the space and finding a hole that leads onto a screen capturing our involvement. Nodding to acts of unsolicited surveillance, the work also alludes to theatricality, employing the vivid blue throughout that is used in cinematic backdrops. Moreover, our participation in the act of voyeurism is further called to question, especially in the age of social media where there's a tension yet volition to be followed and seen.

Stepping off the platform and entering the final stage of the exhibition, one further understands how at the core of Kwan's practice is the thematic of reality as seen and experienced by ordinary citizens. A manner of engaging this perspective is through the integration of references to popular culture. For example, one video presents a remake of the last scene of Jean-Luc Godard's 1965 'Pierrot le Fou', whilst a further installation spells 'Power, Corruption & Lies' in reference to the English rock band New Order's second album released in 1983. In so doing, Kwan directly addresses the impact of systems on society through the foil of other art forms, showing how artistic reactions of the past remain relevant relational mirrors of the present.

Ultimately, Kwan Sheung Chi creates works that voice histories that have been neglected or actualities we either do not want to see or are unable to confront. By employing a language that is honest and accessible, his works advocate criticality

and reflection. Subtle, yet sharp and alarming, it is up to the viewer what they take from each and what they decide to do next with the information provided.

Kwan Sheung Chi was born in 1980, Hong Kong and has held exhibitions at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2017); Mill6, Hong Kong (2016); ZKM, Karlsruhe (2015); Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul (2015); ParaSite, Hong Kong (2015, 2014); Witte de With, Rotterdam (2014); Kunsthalles Wien, Vienna (2014); Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2013); Hiroshima MOCA, Hiroshima (2013); amongst others. Kwan holds a B.A. degree in Fine Art from The Chinese University of Hong Kong and in 2000 was named the "King of Hong Kong New Artist". In 2002 the exhibition "Kwan Sheung-Chi Touring Series Exhibitions, Hong Kong" was held across 10 major exhibition venues in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Art Centre presented "A Retrospective of Kwan Sheung-Chi". Kwan is also a founding member of local art groups, Hong Kong Arts Discovery Channel (HKADC), hkPARTg (Political Art Group) and Woofer Ten. In 2009, Kwan was awarded the Starr Foundation Fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council to take part in an international residency programme in New York, USA. In 2012 Kwan received a commission from the West Kowloon Cultural District Association (WKCDA) and in 2013 was the winner of the inaugural Hugo Boss Art Prize.