

BANGKOK
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GALLERY

TEARS I'VE NEVER CRIED

DHANUT
TUNG
SUWAN

17.08–
14.09.2024



© 2024 Dhanut Tungsuwan, 'MORNING TELEVISION', Oil on canvas, 180 × 160 × 4 cm.
Courtesy of the Artist and BANGKOK CITYCITY GALLERY.

Tears I've Never Cried, a solo exhibition by Dhanut Tungsuwan, presenting new large-scale paintings. Employing found images reminiscent of personal experiences, he creates paintings that are rich in narrative ambiguity and emotional depth, inviting audiences to find their own connections to the scenes and their own personal experiences at his second solo exhibition at the gallery.

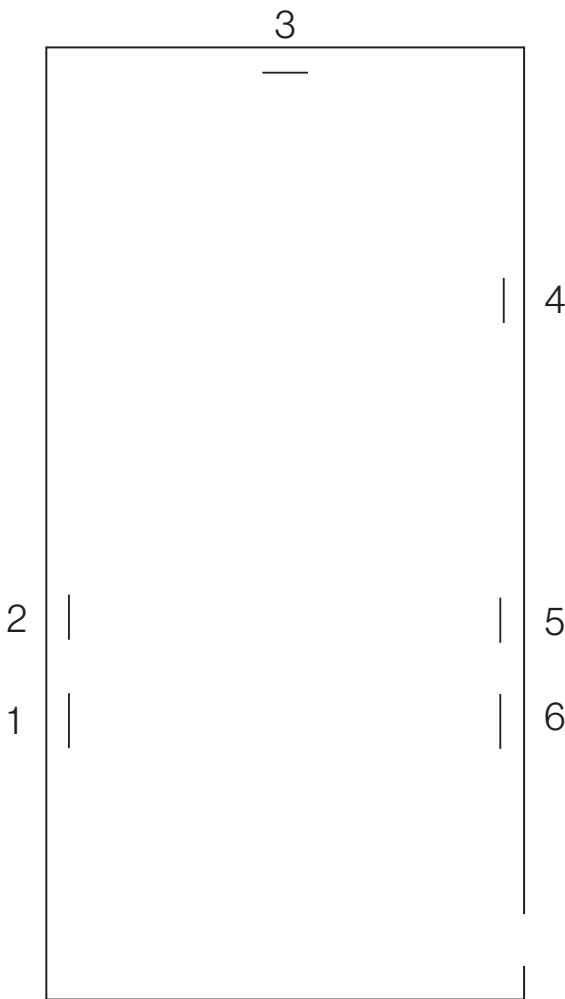
As a digital native with a keen interest in film, Tungsuwan's work delves into the assimilation of diverse visual elements, employing found images often sourced from YouTube or Hollywood films that serve as catalysts for the recollection of memories. Solitude emerges as a central theme in Tungsuwan's work, depicted not as loneliness but as a state of reflective isolation—a “good lonely”, in the artist's own words. This solitude is closely tied to themes of growing up and coming of age, with paintings serving as a means of processing ideas and emotions. Nostalgia permeates the work, as Tungsuwan captures the essence of time and memory. In this manner, these scenes, recontextualised as a medium for the exploration of feelings and memories take on an ambiguous nature. Together with their amorphous narratives, they allow viewers to project their own interpretations and emotions onto the scenes, leading to the paintings being intimately autobiographical whilst remaining universally relatable.

The assimilation of found images into his paintings also mirrors the way digital media shapes our perception of reality. Yet, in seeking to remove the constraints of time from his work, his removal of logos and other markers of present-day reality results in the images being exonerated from their temporal contexts. This timeless quality embodies Tungsuwan's ongoing exploration on the function and significance of painting in an age where technology has rendered image-making cold and efficient, emphasizing the painted medium's unique value proposition — capturing the essence of memory and emotion.

The painterly tools — editing, removing, enhancing — he utilizes to achieve his desired effects also parallels the increasingly digitized contemporary context, employing a vocabulary commonplace in the realm of photo and film editing. By diverging from traditional Western painting competencies and its associated historical burdens, Tungsuwan's process becomes unexpectedly subversive. While he aims for his paintings to look Southeast Asian (but not overtly so), the inescapable post-colonial undercurrents of his practice bears the mark of an artist navigating the delicate balance of cultural representation.

Tears I've Never Cried stands as a testament to Tungsuwan's innovative approach to painting, blending personal memories with found images to create works that are both evocative and enigmatic. Through his exploration of solitude, nostalgia, and timelessness, his paintings reflect potential futures he did not experience, embodying a sense of yearning for unfulfilled desires. This interplay of identity and aspiration is subtly woven into the fabric of his paintings, inviting viewers to explore their own sense of self and possibility.

MAIN GALLERY



- 1 *MORNING TELEVISION* (2024)
Oil on canvas; teak frame
180 × 160 × 4 cm; 183 × 163 × 5.5 cm

Dhanut remembers the slow weekends as a child. The television seemed to be such a huge window for his imagination to peer out of. Watching documentaries about animals as well as cartoons. This painting remembers the care free times where the mind is allowed to ponder the randomness of life and its mysteries.

- 2 *WAITING GAME* (2024)
Oil on canvas; teak frame
160 × 180 × 4 cm; 163 × 183 × 5.5 cm

What is he waiting for?
Why is he waiting?
These are the questions that one might ponder when looking at this image. The painting depicts a man in a waiting room. Still wearing his coat. Brightly lit by headlights of a car that has just turned in.

- 3 *MISTY* (2024)
Oil on canvas; teak frame
180 × 200 × 4 cm; 183 × 203 × 5.5 cm

Inspired from another core childhood memory from growing up in the countryside of England, Dhanut recalls heavy foggy mornings of Englands winters. The painting depicts two characters walking into the fog. Prepared with coats and camping gear, but walking into the vast unknown grassy landscape.

- 4 *THE BURNING SHED* (2024)
Oil on canvas; teak frame
120 × 160 × 4 cm; 123 × 163 × 5.5 cm

The artist remembers his time as a child in the country side of England, where he spent a lot of time building secret bases in the form of sheds from found bits of wood with his friends. Using acorns as currency to trade furniture among the different bases that him and his friends have built. The painting depicts a group of boys looking out at a burning shed in front of a misty sky. Dhanut reflects upon his childhood and growing out of the childish innocence and imagination.

- 5 *UNDERPASS* (2024)
Oil on canvas; teak frame
160 × 120 × 4 cm; 163 × 123 × 5.5 cm

With the vast number of highways in the densely populated city of Bangkok, this depicted scene of an underpass is one that is very common. The phone booth illuminates the scene as well as the car that is driving by. The phone booth once so important in the modern life has since become obsolete.

- 6 *WIN BIG PRIZE* (2024)
Oil on canvas; teak frame
120 × 160 × 4 cm; 123 × 163 × 5.5 cm

This painting depicts a child trying their luck at the claw machine. Dhanut reminisces spending time at arcades with his sister in his youth. Remembering the allure of sounds, lights and toys locked up in these machines. The machine represents child-like, carefree, hopes and dreams. The chances of winning ‘prizes’ that ultimately translates to a fleeting sense of accomplishment and happiness.

Dhanut Tungsuwan

Born in 1994 in Bangkok, TH

Lives and works in Bangkok and London

Dhanut Tungsuwan's artistic journey is deeply influenced by his love for science-fiction films, which imbue his work with a distinctive atmosphere and a sense of escapade. This passion for sci-fi manifests in his anecdotal paintings, which often evoke submerged memories and blend the familiar with the fantastical. Heavily informed by his experiences in an era characterized by information overload, he skilfully integrates sources from a saturated media landscape into his art, resulting in a juxtaposition of images that traverse both time and space. His paintings are known for their ability to recall sunken memories, creating a montage of visual elements that are both nostalgic and otherworldly. Through his paintings, Tungsuwan explores the unique value proposition of the painted medium in an age dominated by digital image-making, emphasizing the timeless quality and emotional depth that painting can convey.

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