

# ANNA ZORINA GALLERY

532 W 24 ST NYC NY 10011 TEL 212 243 2100

## RON CHEN

### *Anywhere but Now*

July 9 - August 21, 2026

Opening Reception: Thursday, July 9th, 6-8PM

Anna Zorina Gallery is pleased to present the Ron Chen solo exhibition, *Anywhere but Now*, featuring the artist's latest *Particle Paintings*. Aaron Levi Garvey contributed the exhibition text:

In recent years, our understanding of what comprises a lived experience has shifted and been redefined. We now often find ourselves able, and more so willing to participate in conversations, communities, and events around the world at all hours of the day through our devices. This unfettered access has made the individual lived experience far broader than anyone could have imagined only one generation ago. However, the abundance of tailor-made experiences raises important philosophical questions: does this limitless access really extend our presence or do we end up losing part of ourselves in the storm of information?

Ron Chen's recent works seek to untangle these experiences through painted snapshots of moments both lived and imagined. He creates a series of dreamlike spaces that shift between dissolution and resolution, depending on how far or close to them we place our bodies. These compositions mine not only his own sense of familiarity within immersive moments, but also to create ambiguous realities that resemble shared memories. What began as a deeply personal engagement with traditions and image sharing between family members has now expanded into broader meditations on memories of experiences, the desire for escapism and the pursuit to understand both our individual and shared time. *Anywhere but Now* examines our own impulses to inhabit another time and place while simultaneously being present for the moments that matter within our daily lives. The title of the exhibition underscores our desire to step beyond the relentless influx of constant digital connection coupled with the persistent belief that fulfillment exists elsewhere and beautifully illustrates through painting our conscious and subconscious desire to transcend beyond peripheral distractions. Chen's paintings meditate on the power of images to transcend our physical presence, lifting the weight of everyday reality and inviting viewers to lose themselves within the countless particles of paint that construct each scene.

While Chen is inspired by these singular and shared moments of our lives, he also seeks to understand and illustrate the balance between moments that are naturally serendipitous and those that are performative and fabricated. Many of his paintings depict characters caught in the act of performance, figures intent on creating a spectacle that commands the viewer's attention. Yet even in the absence of figures, the painted space itself performs on its own, emerging and dissolving before our eyes. By treating each composition as a choreographed stage set where light, figures, and atmosphere are meticulously orchestrated before the first mark is made Chen guides viewers into a space that feels both deeply recognizable and simultaneously unfamiliar. This continual interplay between emergence and disappearance dissolves distinctions between subject and object, rendering the painted surface inseparable from what it depicts. Working through countless daubs and accumulated layers of paint, Chen creates radiant surfaces that seem to flicker with

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an inner glow as if lit by candlelight, drawing the viewer's gaze inward and outward rather than simply across the canvas.

From daydreaming about future possibilities or reminiscing about the past, the artist masterfully builds an opaque middle ground for viewers to take a moment to reflect upon their own lived experiences and consider their personal musings of escape from distractions. His works ask viewers to consider their own participation and attunement within their lives, and question how much of what they are seeing, feeling and believing has been genuinely achieved, a performance of an alternate self, or if it has been fabricated for them. Rather than striving for realistic accuracy Chen embraces visual ambiguity through the buildup of his surfaces. His softly applied daubs and strokes reject photorealism in favor of a visual language that mirrors the fragmented nature time and our own sense of wanderlust. The resulting surfaces immerse viewers in painted vignettes that collapse microseconds of perception into sustained moments of contemplation, allowing for viewers visualize time through the act of painting. The gradual accumulation of paint mirrors the steady continuum of time and each mark registers as another fleeting moment inviting viewers to remain present and recognize the gravity of singular brief moments.

As in life itself, movement never truly ceases. If not through our bodies, then through our minds, we are constantly wandering between memory, imagination, and anticipation. That restless condition ultimately becomes the condition of Chen's paintings.

RON CHEN (b. 1990, Kfar Saba, Israel) earned his B.F.A. degree at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem, and his M.F.A. degree at The New York Studio School. Chen's works have been featured in solo and group shows in London, Miami, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Tel Aviv, including exhibitions at The Petach Tikva Museum, The Steinhardt Museum and the Rothschild Center. Artist's paintings are included in numerous collections worldwide including those of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, E.Sun Bank of Taiwan and the Tony Ressler collection in Los Angeles.

AARON LEVI GARVEY is a Jewish-American Curator and Historian specializing in Modern and Contemporary Arts and Culture and currently serves as Director of the Art Museum of West Virginia University and Curator-at- Large for the Hilliard Art Museum. His career includes senior curatorial roles at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art at Auburn University, The Andy Warhol Museum, and as Founding Chief Curator of The Hudson Eye and Long Road Projects Foundation. Throughout his career, Garvey has organized projects and curated nearly 100 solo and group exhibitions across the United States, including projects at the United Nations headquarters in New York City, Atlanta Contemporary, SCAD Museum of Art, the Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans, Alabama Contemporary, and STABLE in Washington, DC.

For further information, please contact Marie Nyquist at +1212-243-2100 or via email at [marie@annazorinagallery.com](mailto:marie@annazorinagallery.com)