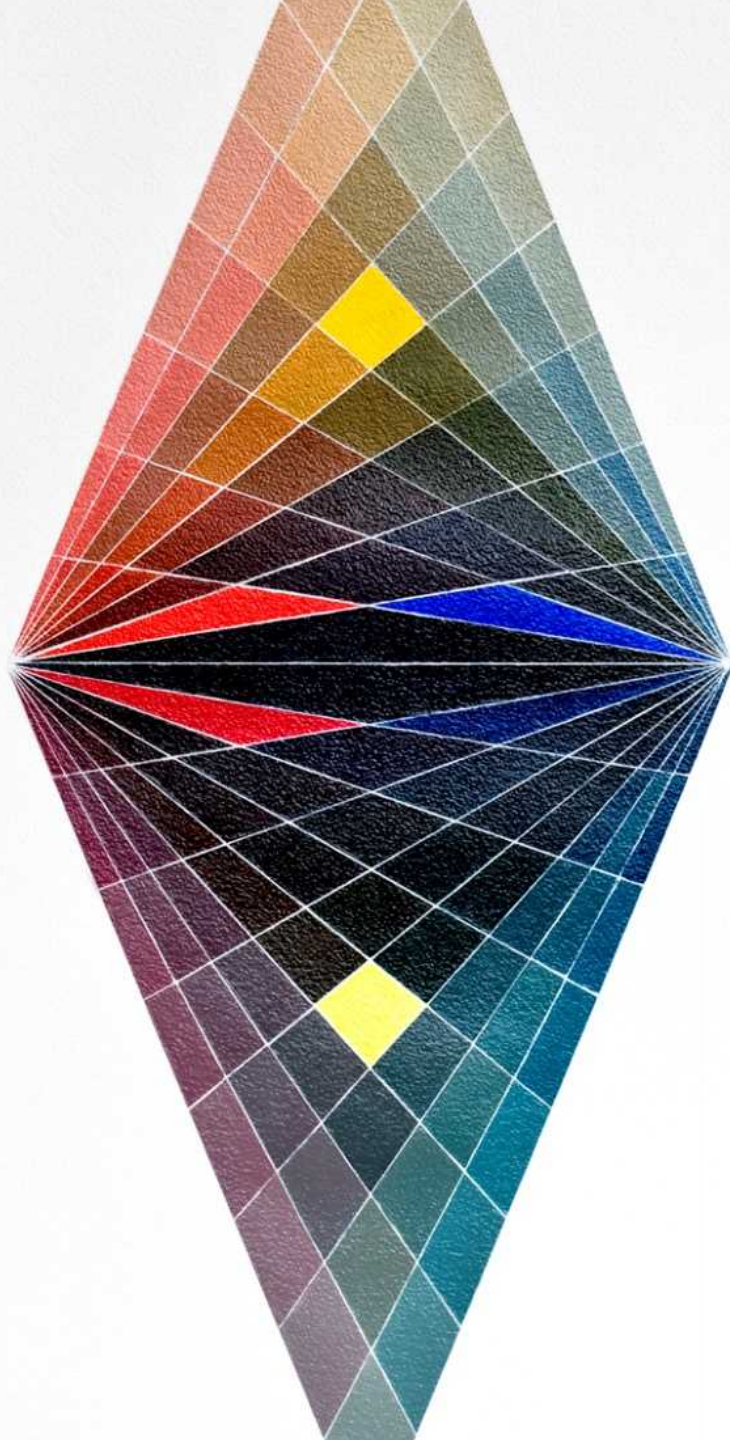




THE GREY GAP

DAVID CHAN

ART SEASONS



THE GREY GAP started with David's experiment with colour charts and their analogy to human physiology and psychology. It started in the series "Bias Colours" where he created a tri-hued colour chart to meld the missing lexicon of skin colours. The series illustrated how all skin tones could be derived by mixing different temperatures of primary colours and then applied to different narratives to illustrate how all humans, regardless of skin colour, are inevitably linked, from human existence to their life experiences. Here, David works with binaries of anti-capitalist, anti-materialist, comparing capitalism/materialist equal to economic and social ills. How emotions in the current state of the world are filled with uncertainties brought about by technological disruptions, climate change, social inequality, and political injustice. Good and evil, predator and victim, anti-west position, East versus West. New phenomenal, liked to rise of social media and fake news that explores into contradiction nature of human existence while striving to be moralistic but doing otherwise - caught between the vice of deficiency and excess, or being virtuous. This series is an arduous journey, like a cyclical life with many difficult gaps, too many colours muddled together, and back to grey again.

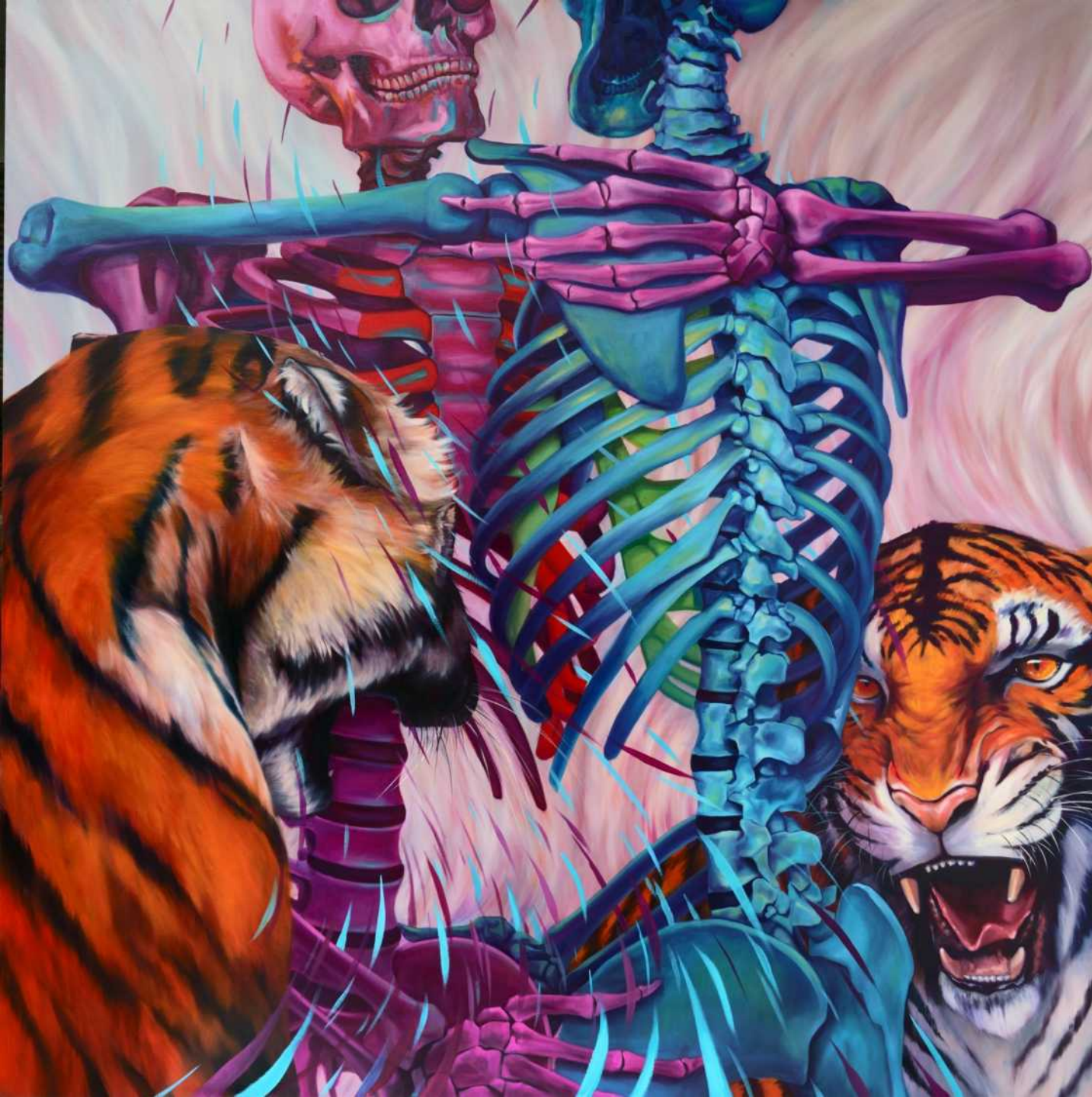
Hunters and Gathers

2021

Oil on Linen

180 x 180 cm





When The Dust Settles

2021

Oil on Linen

180 x 180 cm



“Rulers, Statesmen, Nations, are wont to be emphatically commended to the teaching which experience offers in history. But what experience and history teach is this - **that people and governments never have learned anything from history**, or acted on principles deduced from it. Each period is involved in such peculiar circumstances, exhibits a condition of things so strictly idiosyncratic, that its conduct must be regulated by considerations connected with itself, and itself alone.”

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1837)
The Philosophy of History (Sibree, J. Trans., 2004)



The Grand History, 2022, Oil on Linen, 160 x 280 cm



In “The Grand History”, David paints a great battlefield heavily juxtaposed with the orgy of humans and animals that covers the whole canvas. It is visually intensive that the work's composition gives the sense of the characters overflowing out of the canvas, living out their reality. Politicians and soldiers are wrestling at its grandeur and war machines signifying the current geopolitics order being played out. Lions and zebras, preys and predators, are fighting for survival and protection, completing the circle of life. Nevertheless, in this chaotic scene of history, the systematic and rhythmic positioning of each player, humans, and animals conjured with David’s clever use of colours, showed his supreme control and mastery visionary at work. This work reflects on this book, *The March of Folly* by Barbara W. Tuchman, published in 1984 about one of the most compelling paradoxes of history: the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their interests, from the Trojan Horse to Protestant reformation. Like many human psychological paradoxes, the freedom to self-destruct is probably one of the oddest characteristics we possess. Look around, and one will see this play out worldwide: the right to refuse aid, the right to deny logic, and the right to destroy peace. Although one might argue that we are living through the most prosperous time, with advances in technology, medicine, and science, we seem to have left part of our humanity behind. Even if some of these actions seemed counterintuitive actions that do not make sense, this is not a new phenomenon; we have been here before. The truth is that history is constantly repeating, be it the tragedies from conflicts or the triumphs from inventions; our unpredictable nature is ironically very predictable if there is anything that we have learned from the past.



Crowning, 2020, Oil on Linen, 160 x 200 cm



Chart of Changes
2020
Oil on Archers Paper
105 x 75 cm



Chart of Posterity
2020
Oil on Archers Paper
105 x 75 cm



“Chart of Changes” is probably David’s overarching concept work of this series as he experiments with colour charts coupling to the analogy of human physiology and psychology. This painting is also likened to the Ying Yang symbol. Ying Yang is a philosophical concept of dualism in ancient Chinese philosophy that dates back from the 3rd BCE or even earlier. The principle of Ying Yang is that all things exist as inseparable and contradictory opposites, female-male, dark-light, old-young. It is the fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy, medicine, and culture. Ying Yang’s philosophy has permeated many aspects of Chinese lives. Nevertheless, Ying Yang philosophy does not pertain to Chinese belief but has similar application in the Western realm of philosophy and culture. Jane Austen’s novel *Sense and Sensibility*, published in 1811, tells the story of the impoverished Dashwood family, focusing on the sisters Elinor and Marianne. Elinor is personifying good sense, common sense, and Marianne being sensibility and emotionality. The two girls are very colourful yet different, as Elinor uses good sense in choosing a man worthy of her love. However, Marianne is ruled by sensibility and suffers a broken heart. The moral lesson of the novel is that it is prudent to behave sensibly, but it is reckless or even dangerous to give up oneself to the excess of sensibility, the need for balance. Here, David’s distribution of the two slices in the painting is balanced and represents the counter-balance between right and wrong, good and evil, lucky and unlucky, sense and sensibility. Over the years, the Ying Yang symbol has become a meme for many products. The semiotics of the symbol range from the exotic to the mystical, secular, and religious. In I Ching’s *Book of Changes*, good or evil, light or dark, healthy or sickness will have to coexist in order for the world to be at equilibrium.

Primal Calm

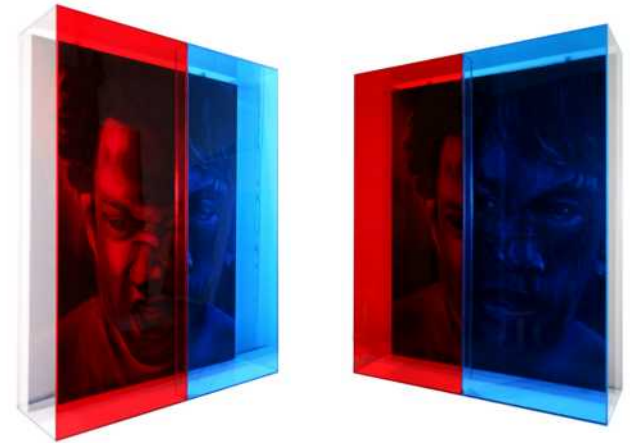
2021

Oil on Linen with
Acrylic Box

86 x 70.5 x 20 cm







Civilised Rage

2021

Oil on Linen with
Acrylic Box

86 x 70.5 x 20 cm

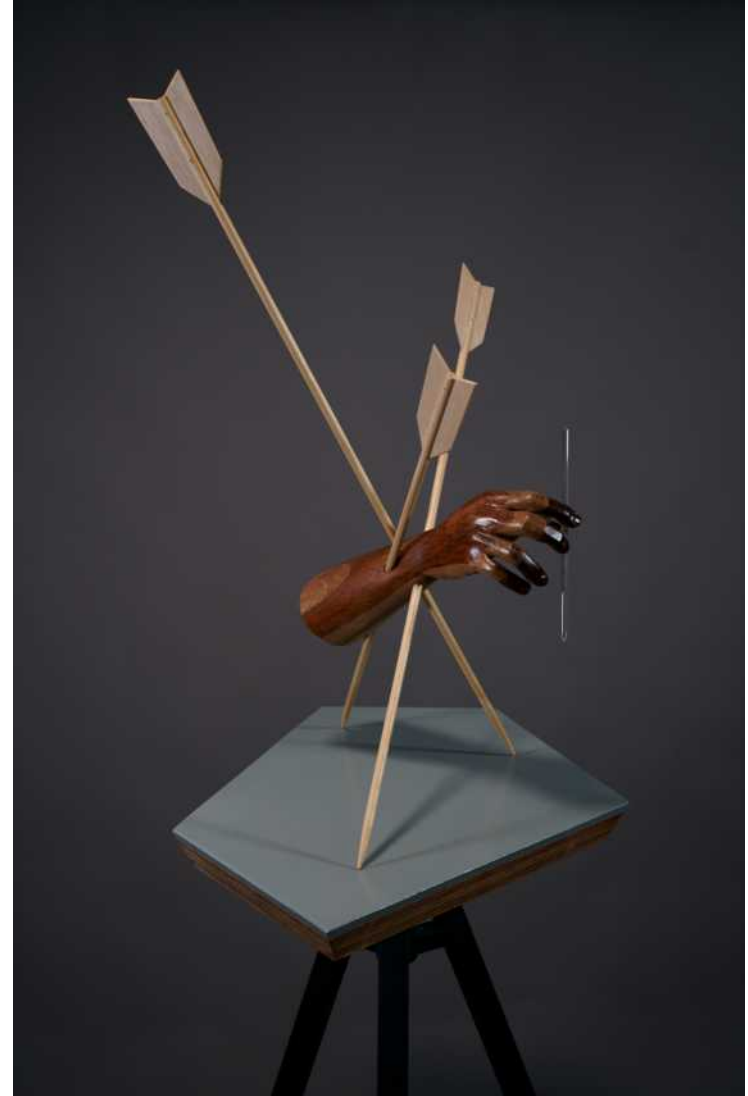


Precisely Natural

2021

Various Wood

75 x 54 x 46 cm



Precisely Civilized

2021

Various Wood

75 x 50 x 40 cm



"Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. **Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.** In the first stage of life the mind is frivolous and easily distracted; it misses progress by failing in consecutiveness and persistence."

George Santayana (1905)

The Life of Reason: The Phases of Human Progress (2005 edition)



Politically Entertaining, 2017, Oil on Linen, 120 x 240 cm (Diptych)



Fully Protected

2020

Oil on Linen

85 x 47 cm

DAVID CHAN paints in a realistic style, yet hints of the surrealistic connotation come into play in his subjects such as animals, humans/human hybrids against his vivid or monolithic background. At first glance, the audacious works seem comical or bewildering. However, upon closer observation, the initial impression gives way to the artist's reality and his take on social issues such as popular culture and genetic engineering, and human behaviour in our current times. In that, it is always not easy to unpack the story behind each of David's works. It is like taking a lateral journey with David, the improbable storyteller himself.

One has to dip deep into David's realm of reality and imagination to understand his visual language and its iconographical interpretations of the story to be able to fathom the realistic rendition of his work. In David's early works, such as his "A Divine Comedy" and "Modern Beliefs" series, his works would be more fun, witty, and to some extent, whimsical. He used his in-depth knowledge of ethics of genetics to explore the anecdotes of human and societal relations, often humorous and comical, but with satire, serious undertone. David's visuals took a darker tone in his series of works in "Hybrid Society", exploring the hybridisation and oxymoron of humanity and society. David sought to rationalise the truth in the society of hybrids; the dichotomy of truths and lies, good and evil, strong and weak in humanity and societal relations, giving penetrating insights, often satirised and dramatic. David's body of work is not just comprised of two-dimensional works; he is very skilled and commendable in the school of sculpture. His obsession with perfection and detail showed vividly in his majestic pair of deeply imaginative and visually impactful sculptures, "Chimerative and Centauree". David's hybrid take of these mythological creatures embodied the theme and ideology with literary and biblical complexities altogether, showing how ancient masculinist and femininity theories can be discoursed and re-interpreted in today's contemporary urban environment.

"The Grey Gap" is a collection of David's random thoughts and ramblings. An exploration into the edges and gaps of his realization and fascinations, a look at the seeds that have unravelled, and his search for rationality and equilibrium in his works in comprehending human existence and nature. David is a true storyteller, sitting on the fence, watching the world.