

Jon Chan

Concrete Movements, 2020

This painting by Jon Chan is a meditation on the movement of time. On closer observation, the landscape appears to be composed of a series of overlapping photographic images of a pond and urban streets. Look at the shadows and colours of the pond—can you discern whether the images depict the pond on different days, or at different times? Similarly, can you tell the time of day from the street images?

Concrete Movements juxtaposes nature's essential element, water, and modern civilisation's essential element, concrete. In this work, both exist at the same time but in different places, although both environments are still and empty.

How will these places look tomorrow? Next week? Next year? Do you get a sense of time passing or is it indiscernible here?

Change may be more obvious in nature, however concrete streets are also subject to wear and tear. Streets display new cracks and chips as the sun bakes them, water flows over them, and traffic and pedestrians move over them. The subsequent care and repair of these streets leave their own marks of change. One way or another, time marks its passing, however subtle.

All these images depict moments in time and places in Singapore. Many were taken during Singapore's Circuit Breaker period — an inflection point from where we can meditate on the past and future.

While we contemplate the properties of concrete as hard and unyielding, and water as adaptable and form-shifting, it is interesting to note that this work composed of photographic images has been realised in the classical medium of oil on canvas. It is a still life work of life standing still.