

MANE

REMAINS

SOLO EXHIBITION

THEO JAKARTA 2026

THEO

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In MANE's paintings, reality is never reproduced as it was. Figures, objects, and spaces may originate in actual experience, but their scale and relationships shift within the picture plane, while images from different moments in time converge into a single scene. This process of reconstruction is closely connected to the artist's understanding of memory.

Memory is not an accurate record of the past. With time, certain elements disappear while others become amplified; experiences and images belonging to different moments merge. MANE employs this structure of memory as a fundamental principle in constructing his paintings.

Children, animals, toys, books, and everyday objects recur throughout his work. Rather than functioning as narrative devices that describe particular events, they form a personal visual vocabulary accumulated over time. At the same time, these images intersect naturally with the visual language of popular culture—comics, animation, and character imagery.

Since the twentieth century, the imagery of popular culture has ceased to exist outside the territory of fine art. If Pop Art brought advertising, commodities, comics, and mass-media imagery into the field of art, for later generations these forms of visual culture had already become part of the environment in which they grew up and through which personal memory was constructed.

MANE's practice can be understood within this transformed visual landscape.

In his paintings, character-like figures cannot be separated from personal memory. Places once experienced and spaces imagined, private objects and images familiar through popular culture occupy the same pictorial space. The distinction between reality and fiction consequently becomes less significant. Memory itself already exists as a hybrid of lived experience and accumulated imagery.

This approach bears a certain relationship to Surrealism and its disruption of rational reality through dreams and the unconscious. MANE's scenes, however, are less an immediate expression of the unconscious than a reassembly of images encountered, consumed, and remembered over time.

While *Neverland Syndrome*, presented at THEO Seoul in 2024, examined childhood imagery and psychological states that persist into adulthood, this exhibition shifts toward the more structural question of memory itself.

In works such as *3 PM*, *A Walk*, *Summer Gift*, *End Summer*, *Bath Time*, *Hug Me*, and *Secret*, MANE turns not to extraordinary events but to fragments of ordinary life. Yet these scenes do not reconstruct a specific past. Individual memories are dismantled and combined with other images, producing scenes that may never have existed in reality.

Childhood, therefore, functions in MANE's paintings less as a subject than as a point of departure for the production of images.

Personal memory merges with popular imagery; lived experience overlaps with imagination; objects from the past acquire new forms from the perspective of the present. MANE does not attempt to determine whether a memory is true, nor does he seek to restore the past. Instead, his paintings examine how memory changes over time and how it continually reorganizes itself into new images.

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What remains is not the past itself. Events disappear and contexts become indistinct. What persists are fragments—an image, a form, a color, a sense of scale. MANE collects and rearranges these fragments. And somewhere between memory and image, another scene emerges—one that may never have existed before.

The Days We Kept

We never remember childhood exactly as it was.

In memory, rooms become larger than they really were. Books once seemed taller than us, and a toy we held in our arms may remain more vivid than the people or places that surrounded it. The sequence of events disappears, while certain sensations—the light of an afternoon, the air at the end of summer, the sound of someone's voice—remain with surprising clarity.

MANE's paintings begin with this very nature of memory.

The artist draws upon characters and objects from his own life, yet he does not reproduce the past as it actually happened. Fragments belonging to different moments and places are rearranged within a single composition, creating scenes that feel strangely familiar while never having existed in reality. As MANE himself suggests, memory can be ambiguous, much like a dream.

Throughout art history, dreams and memory have provided ways of moving beyond the boundaries of visible reality. Surrealism turned toward dreams and the unconscious to disrupt the logic of the everyday, while Pop Art and the generations that followed brought the objects and images of popular culture into the language of art.

MANE's paintings occupy a space somewhere between these histories.

Children, toys, animals, books, and forms reminiscent of familiar characters populate his canvases. Yet they function as more than nostalgic symbols. Their proportions shift, different moments overlap, and the boundary between reality and imagination begins to dissolve. Images associated with popular culture merge with personal memory, transforming ordinary objects into vessels of emotion.

If MANE's 2024 solo exhibition at THEO Seoul, Neverland Syndrome, looked toward the childhood world that persists within adulthood, *The Days We Kept* begins from a slightly more distant place.

Rather than longing to return to childhood, the exhibition considers what remains after time has passed.

An afternoon in 3 PM, a walk in A Walk, the changing season of Summer Gift and End Summer, the everyday intimacy of Bath Time, and the private emotions suggested by Hug Me and Secret—none of these describe extraordinary events.

Perhaps that is precisely why they matter.

What we eventually miss is often not the great event, but the ordinary moment we never thought we needed to remember.

The child appearing throughout MANE's paintings therefore becomes less a portrait of a particular individual than a reflection of ourselves within memory. Beginning with the artist's personal experiences, each painting leaves enough space for another person's memories to enter. We may not know exactly what happened in these scenes, but somehow we recognize their emotions.

Memory does not simply preserve the past. With time, parts disappear, others become exaggerated, and unrelated moments begin to connect, forming stories that never existed in quite the same way.

Perhaps remembering is itself an act of continually redrawing the past.

The Days We Kept is not an exhibition about days that are gone.

It is about the days that, despite having passed, continue to live within us.

Childhood does not disappear.

It is continually remade in memory.