Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UP IN THE AIR: Artist Thomas Powell Confronts Haze and History in Penang Solo Exhibition



UP IN THE AIR
Solo Exhibition by Thomas Powell
17th Oct - 6th Dec 2026
Cultprint
35, Lebuh Melayu, George Town,
10300, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

GEORGE TOWN, PENANG — Thomas Powell announces his latest solo exhibition at Cultprint, *Up In The Air*. Responding directly to Malaysia's recurring haze and forecasts of a strong El Niño, Powell examines a shared anxiety: that the current state of our climate, politics, and economy is entirely up in the air.

For Powell, the familiarity of the smoke is the central point of inquiry- not as mere bad luck, but as the visible consequence of upstream decisions driven by unchanging systems.

Up In The Air interrogates shortsighted thinking, asking whether intelligence means becoming more responsive to what we already know rather than chasing endless growth. Despite unprecedented access to knowledge, energy, and technology, global systems remain bound to competition and greed.



"I'm not predicting collapse," Powell says. "I'm wondering whether a period of unusual weather is a useful reminder to become a little more prepared, a little less wasteful, and a little more connected to the systems that keep us comfortable."

He is also clear about what history shows. Civilisations have gone through strikingly similar cycles of environmental stress, economic strain, political failure and loss of legitimacy, and many did not survive them. Yet those same cycles produced the world we now hold dear and often take for granted. "It's a teetering sweet spot where we could go either way," he says. "We can roll out the things that create a meaningful and sustainable future, or copy those that have gone before."



Through a series of original works and mixed-media installations, the exhibition follows Powell's own search for meaning, mapping patterns across planes and perspectives. From the air, amidst blue skies, man-made objects loaded with cultural, social and political meaning float untethered amongst clouds. Their absurd juxtapositions move between childlike wonder and violent opulence. As we progress through the space, these patterns take physical form in an immersive installation.

Nothing in the exhibition claims to know which way things will go. Everything is still up in the air.

To mark the opening, Cultprint is hosting the following programmes:

Exhibition Walkthrough by Thomas Powell: 2pm and 4pm, 17 October (RSVP link)

Opening Party: 8pm, 17th October

Address: Cultprint, 35 Lebuh Melayu, George Town, Penang

Follow along for updates:
Website: Cultprint.co
Socials: @Cultprint

For media inquiries, interviews, or additional information, please contact:Winona Law via weknownowpr@gmail.com or +6010 460 2194

About Thomas Powell:
Thomas Powell is a British artist based in Penang whose practice is an attempt to hold a mirror up to ourselves- to explore and make sense of the strange moment we are living through. His work examines how we arrived here, what we are doing to the world around us, and what it means to be human within systems that increasingly seem beyond our control.

Working across painting, printmaking, sculpture, found materials, and digital imagery, Powell draws from history, science, philosophy, literature, and the experiences of those trying to piece together the larger picture of who we are.

The process of making is central to his practice. "I often become immersed in the production of work while listening to books and ideas that gradually feed into, reshape, and refine the ongoing narrative. " Rather than illustrating a fixed argument, research, intuition, and material experimentation evolve alongside one another, allowing meaning to emerge through the act of making itself.

"I want the work to be visually compelling, but also to create a moment of reflection- to question the stories we are told, recognise the patterns we repeat, and perhaps distinguish charismatic lies from boring truths and common sense."

www.thomaspowellartist.com
@thomaspowellartist

About Cultprint:
Cultprint, an independent gallery in George Town, Penang is dedicated to making contemporary art accessible through limited edition prints and curated exhibitions. Partnering with leading and emerging artists worldwide, Cultprint provides a platform where creativity meets community, bridging the gap between collectors and artists.

Photo Assets: [link]