



CLOSING THE DISTANCE



**Bundoora
Homestead**

CLOSING THE DISTANCE

KEVIN CHIN
PEI PEI HE
PIA JOHNSON
LINDY LEE
OWEN LEONG
EUGENIA LIM
CHUN-YU LIU
JASON PHU
CYRUS TANG
GUAN WEI
SHEN WEI
LOUISE ZHANG

CURATED BY
SOPHIA CAI



Owen LEONG
Force Field (amygdala) 2016
Plaster, gilded brass | 43.5 x 45 x 31.5cm
Image courtesy the artist and Arterreal Gallery, Sydney

FOREWORD

ELLA HINKLEY, GALLERY MANAGER

Closing the Distance provides a timely insight into our multicultural community. While stories of mass migration continue to capture the world's attention, this exhibition provides a glimpse into the role migration has played in the diverse and multifaceted story of our nation and reminds us how the movement of people, ideas and language continue to shape Australian society and culture. Far from a homogenising tale, *Closing the Distance* reminds us of the personal stories – of leaving and arriving, of trauma and joy, of making decisions and having them made for you – that make up the broader social and political narratives about our relationship to place.

The City of Darebin is home to people from over 153 countries. About one third of our community were born overseas and nearly half of us have parents who were both born overseas. Among these families, friends and neighbours, Chinese diaspora figures prominently. These figures give this exhibition significant local resonance, the

concepts and stories within the art works are reflections of local stories that are personal and current.

Kevin Chin, Pei Pei He, Pia Johnson, Owen Leong, Lindy Lee, Eugenia Lim, Chun-yu Liu (Taiwan/UK), Jason Phu, Cyrus Tang, Guan Wei, Shen Wei (China/USA) and Louise Zhang have provided a range of personal and thoughtful articulations of this shared background. Their works reveal and celebrate a diversity of approaches to grappling with identity and capture the complexities of cultural heritage across geography and generations.

Thank you to the Gordon Darling Foundation and Barry Plant, Bundoora for their generous support of this exhibition. Thank you also to the artists, their galleries and the collections that have lent work to this exhibition.

Finally, thank you to Sophia Cai, whose ambition and enthusiasm has resulted in a considerable exhibition that embraces and celebrates authenticity and diversity of voice.



Jason PHU
The flies come over time to shower 2015
 Ink on Chinese paper | 20 x 20 cm
 Image courtesy the artist
 Photograph: Document Photography

INTRODUCTION

SOPHIA CAI

It seems insurmountable to curate an exhibition based on the vast experience of more than 45 million people.¹ The Chinese diaspora is as vast as it is diverse, encompassing different ethnicities, dialects, languages, and also generations, living across all stretches of the world.

The motivation for *Closing the Distance* is both an attempt to address and explore some of these questions, while also humbly acknowledging the impossibility of this task. The exhibition considers and celebrates the experiences of Chinese diaspora artists, whilst also questioning what this Chinese identity might mean. Chinese culture is one of the world's oldest, yet to consider it homogenous and unchanging is to miss the complexities and diversities of its people.

As an emerging curator, I feel an affinity for the sentiments of artist William Yang who stated that he was 'born again Chinese.'² *Closing the Distance* was an exhibition that began when I finally turned to my own cultural identity and heritage, after years of studying and focusing on a Eurocentric art historical discourse. Rather than a mere exercise in self-actualisation, this exhibition afforded me an opportunity to connect to artists whose works had shaped my understanding and appreciation of

the power of contemporary art to communicate deeply felt experiences and narratives. It became an exercise in community building and appreciation.

Closing the Distance brings together twelve Australian and international artists, both emerging and established, to present a diverse and multi-faceted response to the question posed by the exhibition: How does one experience and connect with cultural histories and identities while not directly living in that place? Ideas of liminality, mobility, distance and closeness are all strongly felt.

This focus on migration stories and diaspora is a timely topic within Australia and across the world in a time of increasing globalisation. We are living in a time of political and social questioning, with global events and incidents demonstrating the negative repercussions of what isolation and close-mindedness may do. Cultural differences have been vilified rather than celebrated; ethnic groups and identities targeted and excluded. Amidst this arguably pessimistic mood, the role of art as a tool of conversation and dialogue is more important than ever.

¹ Hong Liu and Els van Dongen, "The Chinese Diaspora," in *Oxford Bibliographies: Chinese Studies*, ed. Tim Wright, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

² Ella Rubeli, "Love and Death: William Yang Photography Exhibition." *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 February 2016, <http://www.smh.com.au/national/cliq/love-and-death-william-yang-photography-exhibition-20160211-gmrehw.html>

THE POSSIBILITY OF CONVERSATIONS

MIKALA TAI

There is a shifting underfoot. Alignments that were once solid, immovable and impenetrable are proving to be transitory. Their influence has waned and, in their place, possibilities abound. In Australia these shifts monopolise our media with columns, tweets and feeds fuelled by debates that seek to make sense of an era where certainty is uncertain. Our headlines are dominated by the immediate question of our alignment with the United States - an alignment that has been staunchly observed since World War II - but appears now to be unsteady and ripe for renegotiation while, on page four and five, the question of humanity's ability to toil the land with no consequence is proving to be a debate of scientific and moral proportions. There is a great sense of anxiety as we collectively seek to redefine and shift our seemingly solid pillars of society. But amid this anxiety are the seeds of possibility. With transition and change comes opportunity and, if you are looking for it, this new era of uncertainty harbours a new era of possibilities.

In ancient Greece philosophers were, as William Barrett noted, "seers, poets, almost shamans - as well as the first thinkers."ⁱ The role of the philosopher was to ponder the existence of humanity and the cosmos; they injected into society questions of morality, of discovery and their ruminations helped us collectively and methodically decipher our experience of the world into discernable patterns. But, with the passing of time, the philosopher has become a historical figure. They no longer appear as society's chorus, or as our moral compass, and even theoretical jumps have become solely the domain of the sciences. But artists have remained. Throughout time, and despite political shifts, artists have remained a galvanised people. It is the artists that have created, sometimes from within society but often towards its fringes, socio-political rumblings that mimic that of the early philosophers. Artists remain critical, they remain hopeful and their work prophesies our future possibilities. Sometimes what we glimpse through their work is utopian and at other times the hard reflection of the mirror is as shocking as it is powerful.

In times of uncertainty and change the voice of the artist becomes untethered from the heart of society. Governments, fearing artistic ruminations may be at

odds with their policies, distance themselves from artistic practice. But, in this act of untethering, artists find fervour. Today we find ourselves in a moment mired by the post-truth politician; politicians that have fuelled global anxiety about migration, diverse communities and global networks to the point where the possibility of new communities has been cast as a cause for alarm. Their rhetoric is as dangerous as it is authoritative. What we need is a foil to their narrative and, with the elimination of the philosopher, artists have emerged as their successors.

Across the breadth of artistic practice - from poetry to dance - our artistic communities continue their rigorous elucidation of society. They press for accountability. In 2015 Okwei Enwezor's curatorial presentation at the Arsene de la Biennale de Venise, *All the World's Futures*, demanded engagement with an exhibition that was at times overwhelmingly bleak. It riled against complacency and presented a collection of works that examined the construct of power when many of our institutions indulge in investigations of materiality. It was bold, it was difficult and it made the art world's most glittering event accountable to the societies that enable it. While *Closing the Distance* may be a world away from the spectacle of Venice, emerging curator Sophia Cai harnesses the criticality of the artist's voice to make a clear statement on migration and difference.

With the delineation of borders and the constructs of us-them, majority-minority and centre-periphery proving to be political tools of division, Cai has gathered a suite of artists that refuse the constraints of such binaries. These artists, all of Chinese descent, present a reality where borders are not determiners. They carve out futures informed by cultural connections and are buoyed by the experience of globalism. They are not curtailed or contained but rather emboldened by possibilities of intersections and new communities. When faced with a culture of anxiety the collective spirit of an exhibition such as *Closing the Distance* is the foil to society's socio-political divisions.

While there is impudent talk of the construction of walls and the need for barriers *Closing the Distance* presents a series of artists who argue for the need for culture exchange, for growing links and for greater

understandings between communities. The works are diverse in nature, seemingly unconnected, but placed together Cai builds a persuasive argument to counteract that of division. These artists acknowledge their histories - they examine heritage, experience and cultural understandings as not remnants of the past but anchor points of the future. In *Mother tongue* Owen Leong shrouds himself in a lattice of the *huangqi* - the woody root of the astragalus plant - a medicinal herb essential to the practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine. The performative nature of the photograph reveals the invisibility of the cloak of cultural heritage, where family connections and inherited values remain the base of your being. His mother's healing medicinal soups may not be part of his everyday but they inform his engagement with the everyday. In a similar vein, Pei Pei He's series of works depict the streetscapes of Melbourne framed in the tradition of the Chinese scroll. Her lived experience inspires the content but her perspective remains indebted to her cultural heritage. These works, and several others in *Closing the Distance*, propose an understanding of migration patterns that refuse to see differences as a point of departure but rather see them as the beginning of a conversation.

Embedded within the wider rhetoric of division and isolationism is the underlying reality that conversations are not occurring. Discourses are occurring in closed circles - loops within loops of reaffirming oratory sound bites are performed for like minds. We consume our media and news from our socio-politically affiliated sources, our social feeds are filled with our peers and our everyday remains removed from that of 'the others'. The space for intersection and disagreement is

becoming increasingly smaller. Chun-yu Liu's work *A complete story: between the strait* directly ruptures the viewer's understanding and assessment of the migrant Chinese experience. Through the frank medium of the interview, personal stories are brought to the forefront with unexpected anecdotes and observations that are pause for reframing and reassessment. Complementing this work is that of Pia Johnson who

contributes deeply personal works for this exhibition. Johnson's work is new but familiar; the collection of family photographs is of unknown faces but presented in a distinctly Australian milieu. Her grandmother's mementos don't reveal difference but rather reveal a benign familiarity. This could be your grandmother's collection, or mine; familial pride is universal. The anxiety of difference is revealed to be a construct and the viewer is witness to the slippage between the Australian story and the migrant Chinese-Australian story. As the difference between the two collapses we are met by a bigger conversation about Australianess - for if the difference we perceive is revealed to actually be a similarity, then the shifting underfoot should bring us closer rather than further apart.

Under the guidance of Cai these artists encourage us to begin more urgent conversations about difference. We may feel that talk is futile, we may feel that these conversations have been had before, but we are reminded here that it is conversations that ensure that the constructs of difference are little more than constructs. Our artists-philosophers challenge us to seek out interceptions, to revel in debates and to allow conversations to ease our anxiety. Their predictions of possibilities could be ours if only we seize the opportunity.

Mikala Tai is a curator, writer and academic and Director of 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney.

ⁱ William Barrett, *Irrational Man: a study in existential philosophy*, Anchor Books, New York, 1958, p. 5.

WORKS



Guan WEI
A Mysterious Land, No.10 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 130 x 162 (3 x panels)
Image courtesy the artist and ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne
Collection of Banyule City Council

KEVIN CHIN



Sheltered 2016
Oil on canvas | 97 x 142 cm
Image courtesy the artist and THIS IS NO FANTASY + dianne tanzer gallery, Melbourne



Pilgrimage 2016
Oil on canvas | 132 x 198 cm
Image courtesy the artist and THIS IS NO FANTASY + dianne tanzer gallery, Melbourne

PEI PEI HE



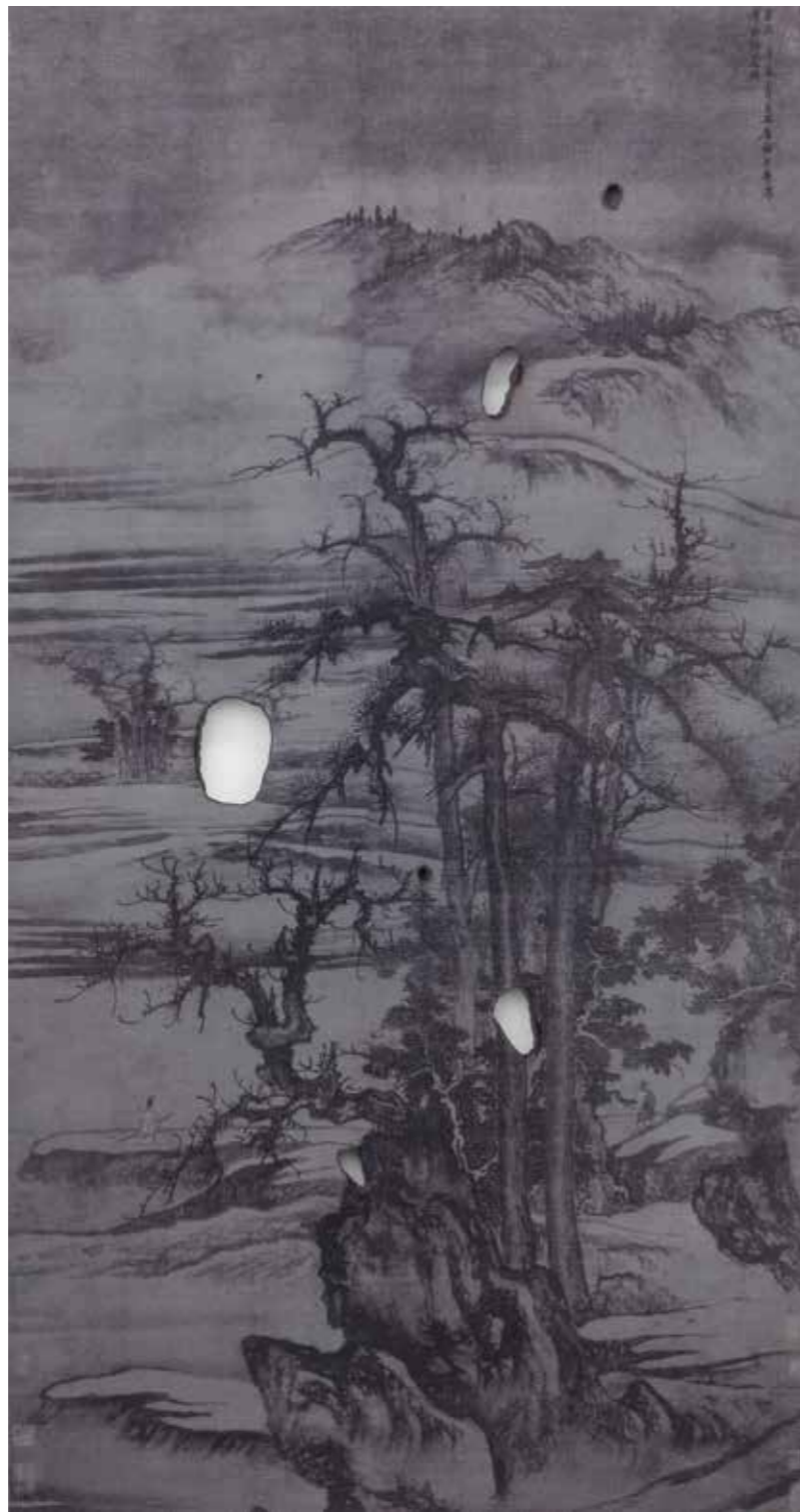
In the Crowd 2016
Charcoal on paper | 43cm x 142cm
Image courtesy the artist

PIA JOHNSON



From the series: *Por Por's House* 2014
Archival pigment inkjet print installation, various dimensions (details)
Images courtesy the artist

LINDY LEE



No Dust to Seal the Distance 2015
Black mild steel and fire | 175 x 93 cm
Image courtesy of the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
Photograph: Andrew Curtis

The Tower of Silent Watching 2015
Black mild steel and fire | 198 x 98 cm
Image courtesy of the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
Photograph: Andrew Curtis



OWEN LEONG



Invisible Light 2016
Archival pigment print on cotton paper | 120 x 120cm
Image courtesy the artist and Arterreal Gallery, Sydney



Mothertongue 2016
Archival pigment print on cotton paper | 120 x 120cm
Image courtesy the artist and Arterreal Gallery, Sydney

EUGENIA LIM

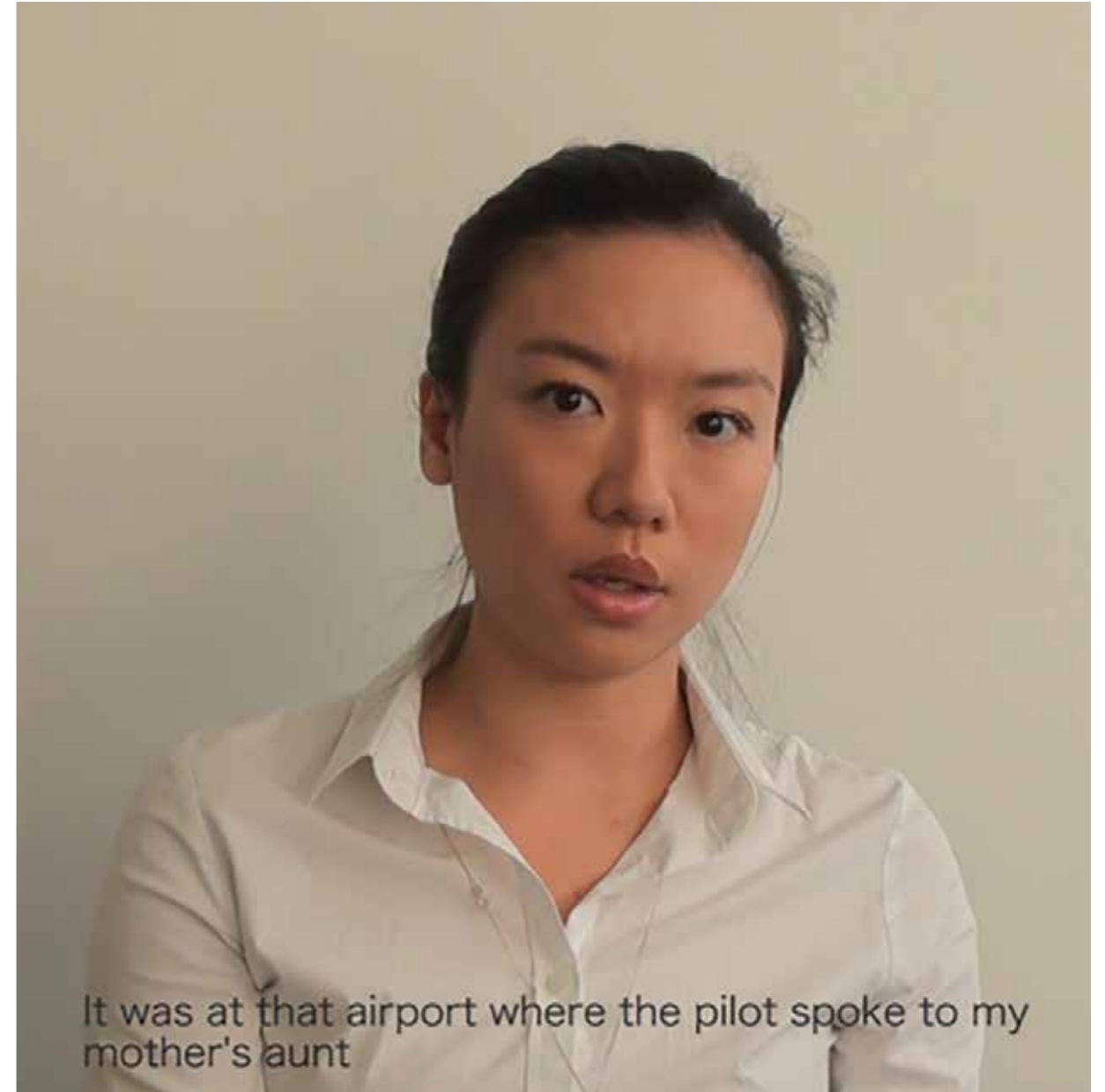
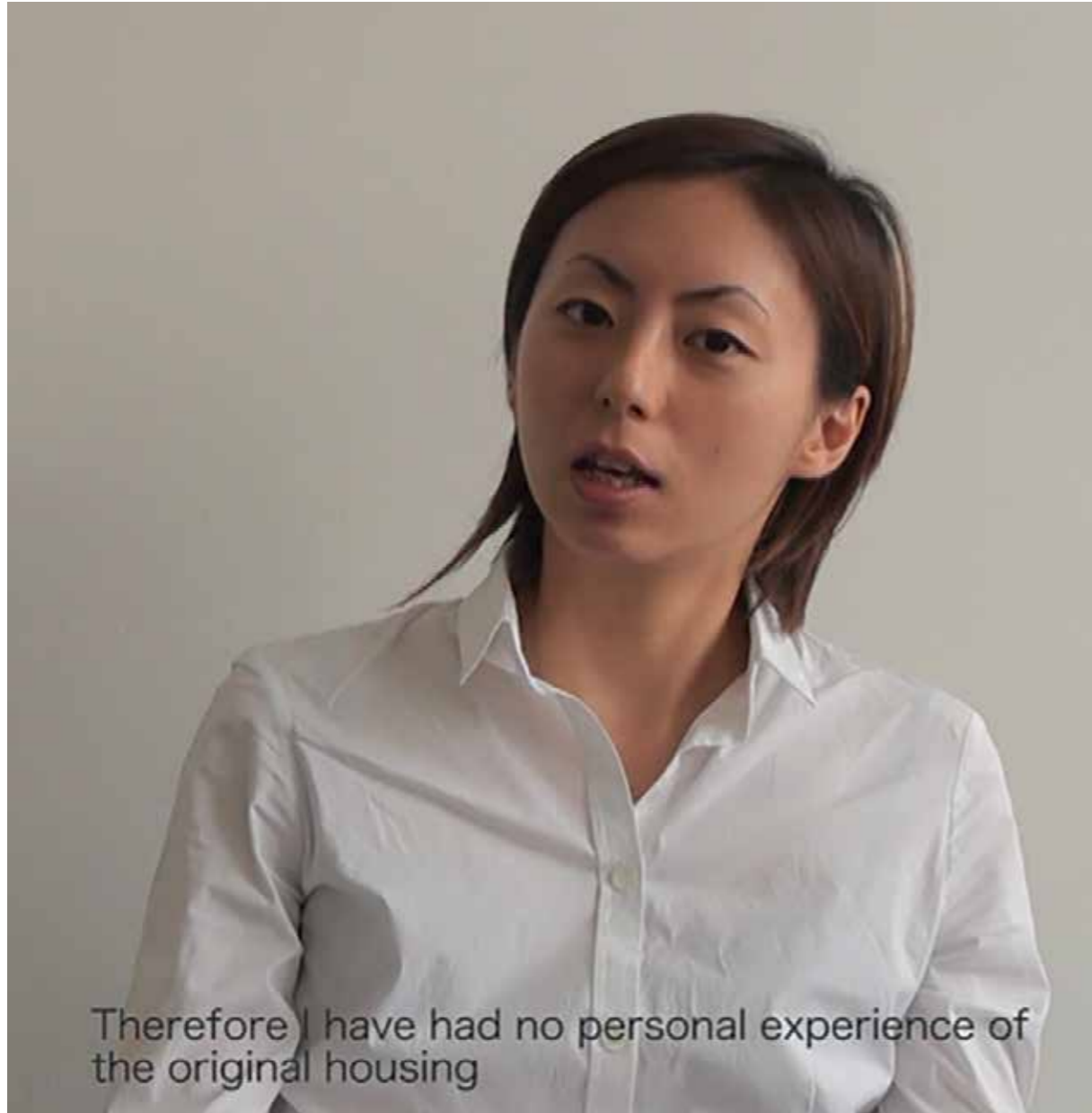


NIMBYism 2014
Digital print and screenprint onto trilobal flag | 200 x 320cm
Image courtesy the artist
Photograph: Zan Wimberley

Shelter I, II & III 2015
Documentation from durational performance at Grey Gardens Projects 2015
dimensions variable
Images courtesy the artist
Photograph: Zan Wimberley



CHUN-YU LIU



A complete story: between the strait (video still) 2014
Video | 12:46"
Image courtesy the artist

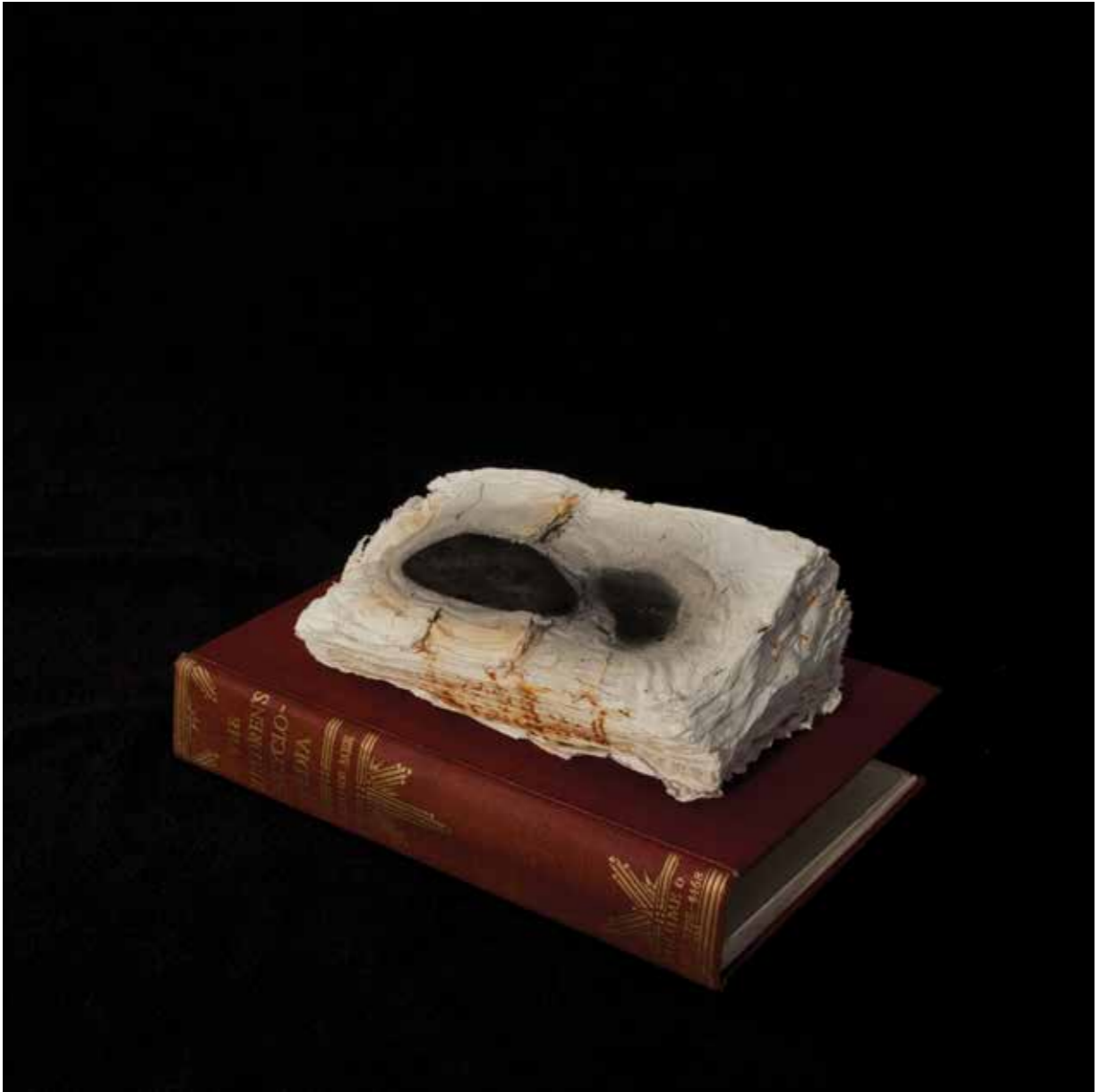
JASON PHU

three men walk into a pub
one man punches another and
kills him. he is sad. so he
glasses himself in the
face & bleeds to death
the third man walks into the
toilet, slips on a urinal cake
by accident and breaks his
spine.



ive been drinking in this city for 10 years now, i thought id have a great big bunch of stories, but all i can tell you is that, i got drunk (details) 2016
Acrylic on paper | 20 x 256cm
Image courtesy the artist
Photograph: Document Photography

CYRUS TANG



Encyclopaedia Vol 6 2016
Cremated book ashes, book cover and acrylic case | 21 x 21 x 29cm
Image courtesy the artist and ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne



4740.00 s 2016
Archival giclee print | 90 x 90cm \ 1/5 editions
Image courtesy the artist and ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne

GUAN WEI



Land of the Dreaming No. 4 2014
Ceramic | 41 x 30 cm
Image courtesy the artist and ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne

SHEN WEI



FL. (video still) 2014
Three channel video | 2:40' loop
Image courtesy the artist and Flowers Gallery, London/New York

LOUISE ZHANG



Phantom Underground 2015

Acrylic, oil, glitter and resin on canvas | 152 x 91cm
Image courtesy the artist and Arterreal Gallery, Sydney
Photograph: Docqment

Somewhere that you think is good but it's actually evil and then you die 2016

Acrylic, oil, plastic, glass on canvas | 180 x 120cm
Image courtesy the artist and Arterreal Gallery, Sydney
Photograph: Docqment



ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

KEVIN CHIN

Born 1980, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Arrived Australia, 1982
Lives and works in Melbourne

Kevin Chin's paintings assemble fragments from across continents to investigate postnationalism and the cultural flows associated with globalisation. The inaugural winner of the Bayside Acquisitive Art Prize 2015, Kevin Chin has received an Australia Council ArtStart Grant and was also a finalist in the Arthur Guy Memorial Prize and the Keith and Elisabeth Murdoch Travelling Fellowship. He was awarded an Australia Council New Work Grant towards the 2015 solo exhibition *Stillness Between Us (This Is No Fantasy)* and the e-book, *Original Yellow*. Supported by an Ian Potter Cultural Trust Grant, in 2014 he undertook residencies at Youkobo Art Space (Toyko) and Studio Kura (Fukuoka) resulting in the solo exhibition, *Out of Ground*, at Art Stage Singapore. He has been awarded the City of Yarra Arts Development Grant 2012 and City of Melbourne Arts Projects Grant, 2010. His work is held in the collections of Artbank, Bayside Council and LUMA.

Kevin Chin is represented by THIS IS NO FANTASY + dianne tanzer gallery, Melbourne.

PEI PEI HE

Born 1954, Shanghai, China
Arrived Australia, 1987
Lives and works in Melbourne

Pei Pei He holds a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) from VCA. She is fascinated by the rhythm and movement of city life and the spirituality of human beings in the crowded urban space. Her recent paintings form a meditation upon Melbourne's urban landscape, transferring the hectic pace of contemporary life into an intimate study of crowd dynamics. Pei Pei He's unique painting style is a blend of Eastern and Western elements. Her calligraphic brushstrokes bring a sense of quietude to mind, at the same time pulsing with the energy and rhythm of life. She has been involved in an array of prestigious art prizes and exhibitions including Paul Guest Prize 2016, 2014, 2012, Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize 2015, 2011, the Sulman Prize 2013, John Lesley Prize 2012, Dobell Prize 2011 and Wynne Prize 2009. Pei Pei He's works have been collected and displayed in private and public space, including City of Melbourne and Artbank.

PIA JOHNSON

Born 1983, Melbourne
Lives and works in Melbourne

Pia Johnson's work engages with the social and personal aspects of understanding cultural identity, seeking to bring to the front ideas around belonging and otherness. These concerns have stemmed from her mixed cultural background of Chinese and Italian-Australian descent. Her work is collected in private and public collections including the National Gallery of Victoria. Johnson has exhibited throughout Australia and internationally. Solo exhibitions include *The Widening Gyre*, Stockroom Gallery, 2016 and *In a dim light...* Edmund Pearce Gallery, 2014. Group exhibitions include *Love, Loss and Intimacy* at NGV International, 2010; *Maggie Diaz Photography Prize for Women*, 2015; *27° South to 19° North: Australian Photography*, The Museum of the City of Cuernavaca, Mexico, 2015; *Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Award*, 2014; *Camera Work: Contemporary Portraiture* Blackbox Gallery USA, 2013; *China Obsura and Asia Now* at Melbourne International Fine Art, 2010. Johnson is a PhD candidate (Fine Arts) at RMIT University.

LINDY LEE

Born 1954, Brisbane
Lives and works in Sydney

Lindy Lee's practice explores her Chinese roots through the philosophies of Taoism and Buddhism. With a practice spanning over three decades, Lindy Lee enjoys widespread international recognition. Solo exhibitions include *Birth and Death*, Artspace, Sydney, 2003; *Narrow Road to the Interior*, Atrium Space, MITA, Australian High Commission, Singapore, 2003; and *No Up, No Down, I am the Ten Thousand Things*, Project Space, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1995. Selected group exhibitions include *Marking Time*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2012; *Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal*, Montréal, Canada, 2005; and *Sight Seeing*, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Downtown Gallery, Beijing, 2004. Lee's work is included in collections including Art Gallery of SA, Art Gallery of NSW, and the National Gallery of Australia. She has a PhD in Fine Art from the University of NSW.

Lindy Lee is represented by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne.

OWEN LEONG

Born 1979, Sydney

Lives and works in Sydney

Owen Leong explores the transmission of culture and the body as a physical site of exchange. In recent work, he has engaged more deeply with his heritage, turning towards Chinese medicine to explore the poetics of healing. Leong's has held solo exhibitions at Arterial Gallery and 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney. His work has been exhibited in major group exhibitions at Today Art Museum, Beijing; Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai; and OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shenzhen. In 2015, Leong received the Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award. He has held residencies at Artspace, Sydney; Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris; and Tokyo Wonder Site, Japan. Leong's work is held in collections including Bendigo Art Gallery and Murray Art Museum Albury. He holds a Master of Fine Arts by research at College of Fine Arts, University of NSW.

Owen Leong is represented by Arterial Gallery, Sydney.

EUGENIA LIM

Born 1981, Melbourne

Lives and works in Melbourne

Eugenia Lim is an Australian artist who works across video, performance and installation. Interested in how nationalism and stereotypes are formed, Lim invents personas to explore the tensions of an individual within society – the alienation and belonging in a globalised world. Lim finds inspiration in sites, objects and architectures that are both 'contemporary' and 'out of time', embodied and virtual: model homes, suburban sprawl, CCTV, online chat rooms, fake food, historical parks and the Australian landscape. Counterpoint to these sites, Lim has performed the identities of Japanese hikikomori; a Bowie-eyed rock star; the cannibal Issei Sagawa; a suburban beautician; Miranda from Picnic at Hanging Rock and currently, a gold Mao-suited 'Ambassador'. This dialogue between place and performance reflects the push-pull between Australian and Asian, the mono and the multi-cultural. Lim's work has been exhibited, performed and screened locally and internationally at venues, festivals and fairs that include: Tate Modern, GOMA, ACMI, HUN Gallery NY, Next Wave, FACT Liverpool, 24HR Art (Darwin), EXiS (Seoul), Substation (Singapore), Schoolhouse Studios, Experimenta, Sydney Contemporary, Melbourne Festival, ACAF (Shanghai), TINA, Dark MOFO, Bus Projects, West Space and MPavilion. She has been artist-in-residence with the Experimental Television Centre NY, 4A Beijing Studio, Bundanon Trust and the Robin Boyd Foundation. Her work is held in a number of private and public collections internationally.

CHUN-YU LIU

Born 1985, Taipei, Taiwan

Lives and works in London, UK

Chun-yu Liu is a visual artist working with video investigating oral history and lived experience of the Chinese diaspora. Her practice is informed by her reading of Cultural Studies, personal Taiwanese background and exploration of the audiovisual medium. Liu has exhibited her work and spoken at conferences internationally. Her moving image work has been screened at Goethe Institut Lisbon, ICA London, Minsheng Art Museum Beijing, Ray Art Center Shanghai, Milton Keynes Gallery UK, and Taipei Int'l Video Art Exhibition. She was a finalist to Neo:artprize in 2015 and shortlisted for Bloomberg New Contemporaries in 2015 and 2016, in the UK, and was a recipient of the Junior Scholar Travel Grant from American Association of Chinese Studies in 2016. Liu holds an MFA in Fine Art from Wimbledon College of Arts, University of the Arts London. Originally she was trained as an abstract painter.

JASON PHU

Born 1989, Sydney

Lives and works in Sydney

Jason Phu studied at COFA (Sydney) graduating with honours in 2011 and NSCAD (Nova Scotia), and has also done residencies at CAFA (Beijing), DAC Studio (Chongqing), CAP Studio (Chiang Mai) and Organhaus (Chongqing). Jason has had numerous solo exhibitions across Australia including at Nicholas Projects (Melbourne), CCAS Gorman Arts Centre (Canberra), Alaska Projects William St (Sydney) and Ray Hughes Gallery (Sydney) where he was formerly represented. He won the Sulman Prize and received a Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship in 2015 which has allowed him to base his practise in China and Australia.

CYRUS TANG

Born 1969, Hong Kong
Arrived Australia, 2003
Lives and works in Melbourne

Cyrus Tang holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) from the VCA, Melbourne University and a Master of Fine Arts (Research) at Monash University. She works with ephemeral materials including clay, water, ash, steam, animal bones, and human hair to demonstrate the paradox of reconstructing ephemeral mental images and sensations in permanent materials. Tang has participated in a number of residency programmes including the Helsinki International Artist Program 2013, The National Art Studio in South Korea in 2012, Cite International de Arts, Paris in 2009 and The Banff Centre, Canada in 2008. Her works have been shown in Australia and internationally including Helsinki, South Korea, Singapore, Japan, France, Shanghai and Sweden. She is the recipient of the Highly Commended Award of Sunshine Coast Art Prize 2016, Asia Link 2012, Skills and Arts Development 2011 and New Work (Emerging) Grant 2009 of Australian Council for the Arts, George Mora Foundation Fellowship 2008, Theodor Urback Encouragement Award 2004, and The National Gallery of Victoria-Trustee Award 2003.

Cyrus Tang is represented by Arc One Gallery, Melbourne.

GUAN WEI

Born 1957, Beijing, China
Arrived Australia, 1989
Lives and works in Sydney and Beijing

Guan Wei's subjects are the product of his rich cultural repertory of symbols and an informed socio-political awareness and art-historical knowledge. Guan Wei has held 50 solo exhibitions, including Salvation, ARC ONE Gallery, 2016; Spellbound, Guan Wei 2011 at He Xiang Ning OCT Contemporary Art Centre Shenzhen; Cloud in the sky, Water in the bottle, Shumu Art Space, Beijing 2010; Other Histories: Guan Wei's Fable for a Contemporary World at Powerhouse Museum, Sydney 2006; Looking for home, Earllu Gallery, Singapore in 2000; and Nesting, or Art of Idleness Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1999. He has won many awards, including the 2015 Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery; 2002 Sulman Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales; and was selected for the prestigious 2009 Clemenger Contemporary Art Award, National Gallery of Victoria. He has undertaken residencies at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, 1992; Canberra School of Art, Australian National University, 1993; Greene St New York Studio (Australia Council), 2003; and in 2007 he was the artist in residence at Cite International des Arts, Paris. Guan Wei's works feature in the collections of numerous important institutions both in Australia and abroad.

Guan Wei is represented by Arc One Gallery, Melbourne.

SHEN WEI

Born 1977, Shanghai, China
Lives and works in New York City and Shanghai, China

Shen Wei's work has been exhibited at venues including the Museum of the City of New York, Philadelphia Museum of Art, La Triennale di Milano and the Power Station of Art in Shanghai. His work has been featured in The New Yorker, The Guardian, Aperture, ARTnews, American Photo, and Wall Street Journal. Wei's work is in collections including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Photography and the Carnegie Museum of Art. Wei is a recipient of the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Arts Residency, the Asian Cultural Council Arts & Religion Fellowship, the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Arts Grant. He holds an MFA in photography from the School of Visual Arts, New York and a BFA in photography from Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Shen Wei is represented by Flowers Gallery, London/ New York.

LOUISE ZHANG

Born 1991, Sydney
Lives and works in Sydney

Louise Zhang's practice spans painting, sculpture and installation. Preoccupied with the notion of 'the blob', Zhang has created a world in which the blob can also be seen as both an entity and a source of creation, a compound that is ready to be intervened with and modelled. A fascination with unknown potential and the promise of impending transformation is consistent throughout Zhang's practice. Zhang has recently completed a Masters of Fine Arts by research at COFA. Since 2012, Zhang has exhibited with a number of galleries including Galleryeight, Sydney; I.C.A.A., Sydney; KUDOS Gallery, Sydney; and Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane. She is currently undertaking a residency at Institute of Provocation, Beijing followed by Organhaus in Chongqing. Louise's work can be found in numerous private collections both nationally and internationally.

Louise Zhang is represented by Arterreal Gallery, Sydney.

SOPHIA CAI

Born 1989, China

Arrived Australia, 1998

Lives and works in Melbourne

Sophia Cai is a Melbourne-based emerging curator, writer and art historian with a particular interest in contemporary Asian Art as well as craft-based practices. She completed a Masters with Distinction in History of Art from the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London in 2014, supported by a Friends of the Courtauld Scholarship and previously graduated from the Australian National University with a First-Class Honours degree in Art History and Curatorship, receiving the Janet Wilkie Art History Honours Prize for her final thesis.

ENGAGE | WORKSHOPS + EVENTS

Exhibition Launch with guest speaker Mikala Tai, Director of 4A
Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney

Saturday 11 February | 2.00-4.00pm

Artists' / Curator's Talk

Saturday 18 March | 2.00-3.00pm | Free event

Contemporary art in the age of globalisation | Forum

Saturday 18 March | 3.15-4.30pm | Free event

Invisible Cities | Performance - Eugenia Lim

Saturday 18 March | 12.00-5.00pm | Free event

Photography Workshop for Kids - Pia Johnson

Wednesday 5 April | 2.00-4.00pm | \$15



Pei Pei HE
Eastern to Western Perspective 2016
Pencil on rice-paper on scroll | 19 x 500 cm
Image courtesy the artist

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition would not have been possible without the support of many people and organisations.

The curator, Sophia Cai, would like to thank Claire Watson, Ella Hinkley, Bundoora Homestead Art Centre and all the staff and volunteers for supporting this exhibition from day one.

Thanks to all the twelve artists and their galleries and lenders including Arterreal Gallery, ARC ONE Gallery, Sutton Gallery, THIS IS NO FANTASY + dianne tanzer gallery, Flowers Gallery and the City of Banyule. Particular thanks to artists Eugenia Lim for her performance piece and Pia Johnson for re-imagining her work as a new installation.

Special thanks to Dr Mikala Tai at the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art for her insightful essay and opening remarks, Dr. Claire Roberts for her support, and all of our distinguished speakers for sharing their insights at the forum. The curator would also like to thank Malcolm King for his unwavering support and editorial eye.

Last but not least, big thanks to our exhibition sponsors Barry Plant, and also the Gordon Darling Foundation for making this catalogue possible.

The views expressed in this catalogue are those of the writers and artists and not necessarily those of Darebin City Council. All images of artworks remain copyright of the artists.

CLOSING THE DISTANCE
11 February – 30 April 2017
Curated by Sophia Cai

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