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“Artwork is a representation of our devotion to life.”
—Agnes Martin

I would like to thank:
My devoted mother,
whom I miss dearly.

The artists, Andy Yang, Ezzam Rahman, Justin Lee, Urich Lau, Yen Phang, Yeoh Wee Hwee, Yeo Shih Yun, Chihiro Kabata and Yuuri Kabata for putting their heart and soul into **DE:VOTED**.

Andy Yang’s performer Kara Inez for her amazing performance that gave everyone goosebumps in **UNSPOKEN**.

Ezzam Rahman’s nine outstanding performers, Shane Ng, Atiq Lukman, Ben Yap, Qamarul Asyraf, Aryan Arora, Alex Pan, Masuri Mazlan, Joshua Caleb and Salihin Saleh in **CAN’T YOU SEE THERE’S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME**.

Kamiliah Bahdar for her invaluable contribution to this publication.

NAC AND SAW team for believing in this project, in particular

Qiu Ling for her motivation, dedication and assistance.

Kabata sisters of Art Base Camp for their efforts in organising **DE:VOTED** in Tokyo and generously sponsoring the space.

Randy, Edwin and their team from Practice Theory for translating our vision so well into beautiful and meaningful designed collaterals.

Weilun and his team from ArtSpace @ HeluTrans for their professional support.

The interns—Jun, Keira, Austen and Xiaoting. The volunteers—Giang, Beatrice, Maria, Hong Yu, Hui Ping, Leo and Vivian who helped so enthusiastically throughout **DE:VOTED**.

The photographers Soak and Jing Wei, and the videographer Caleb Ming for their patience and commitment.

APB and Erdinger for their generosity; providing some very delicious beer on the opening night.

Design Practice Theory
Paper 135gsm Lenza Top Recycling
80gsm Lenza Top Recycling

Edition of 200

Published in conjunction with **DE:VOTED**
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INSTINC PRESENTS



**A LOVE LETTER TO DEVOTION AND INTIMACY
AN ODE TO TOGETHERNESS
AN HOMAGE TO THE CLAUSTROPHOBIA
OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM**

**7 DAYS
9 ARTISTS**

**9 BRAND-NEW
SITE SPECIFIC
WORKS.**



**13 — 19 JANUARY 2020
ARTSPACE @ HELUTRANS**

**18 JANUARY, 12 — 7PM
アートベースキャンプ, TOKYO**

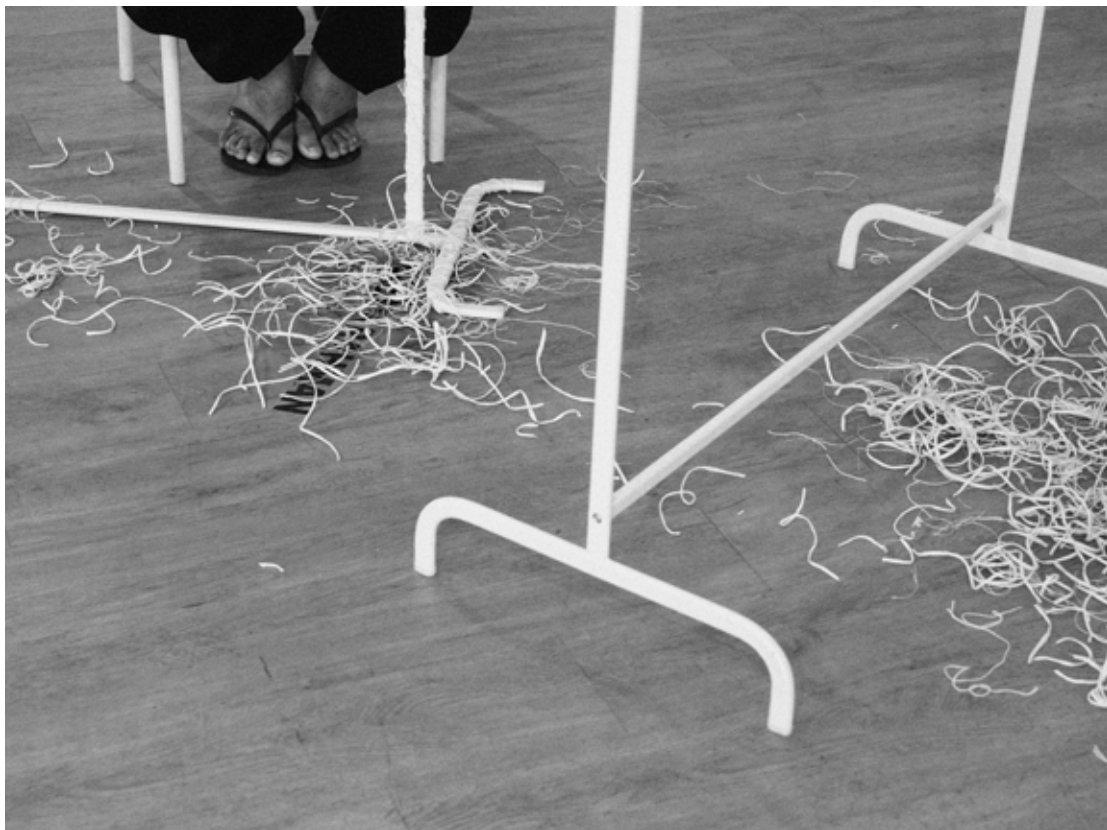
INSTINC PRESENTS

DEVOTED



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THIS EXHIBITION IS BEING RECORDED

It ended the way it started: with an empty white cube. On facebook were photos of the deinstallation. The first was an empty corner that provided no clue of what was there before. But succeeding photos, initially showing mere remnants then snippets of the actual process, provided glimpses to an exhibition as a temporal thing—a black trash bag filled with strips of mirror tapes sliced from Chihiro Kabata's paintings; dismantled PVC pipes from an installation by Yen Phang stacked at the building entrance; Urich Lau rolling the wires from his tentacle creature of mixers, cameras and microphones; Justin Lee holding a deflated campy cartoon sword; and Yuuri Kabata dismantling her frames and painted vinyl sheets. There is something inexplicable about the process by which an exhibition ceases to exist, especially when it inhabited not only almost fully but also organically the space it was in.

The exhibition was never static. At the tail end of the second day, I entered an exhibition that was two-part installation-in-progress and one-part artists studio. Yuuri was delicately bent over a table, dipping a brush into a tube of metallic grey paint and applying it on a vinyl sheet—dot by dot a constellation emerged. Behind her came the heavy arrhythmical sound of a staple gun as Chihiro purposefully layered and positioned strips of mirror tape on the second of three stretchers.

Elsewhere, an installation was either taking place or having a momentary pause. Yen's embryonic-like structure of plastic sheets and PVC pipes stood near the gallery entrance in slow steady development; Urich's workstation included a tv screen leaning against the wall and balancing haphazardly on a trolley while a base stand was on its way; and Ezzam Rahman's two clothes rack and Andy Yang's red mattress and forsaken bridal dress seemed crammed in and were waiting patiently next to Justin's homage to childhood toys and imagination. Despite a leaflet containing a rudimentary layout in which all the artists and their artworks were neatly mapped out in grids, in actual fact, the exhibition was a being that breathed—it gathered its composite parts as it inhaled and stretched across liberally as it exhaled. I returned on the fourth day to find

the red mattress and the clothes racks outside the designated rectangular cube, holding court instead in the extensive lobby area, while in the gallery Yeo Shih Yun's scrolls are now floating from the ceiling and Yeoh Wee Hwee's **IN-VISIBLE ROBE (2020)** hangs above on the central wall. The black vinyl letterings spelling the artists' names have been fixed on the floor near their respective artworks, marking some extent of certitude.

This period of stasis, however, was just an interlude. The opening party that night saw three artworks activated by performances—Justin's **WE ARE WHAT WE PRETEND TO BE (2020)**, Ezzam's **CAN'T YOU SEE THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME (2020)**, and Andy's **UNSPOKEN (2020)**—, which, like the exhibition, were porous as one performance seamlessly flowed into the other, with Andy and Urich providing and improvising sound throughout. I found on the fifth day—the day after the opening party—the wedding dress cut up, the white pants and t-shirts on the clothes racks a little creased, and bb pellets littered on the gallery floor.

The exhibition as this constant shifting terrain was highlighted that day in two activations. Chihiro and Yuuri, dressed in protective suits, moved through the dark exhibition space slowly, as though navigating an unfamiliar and wondrous yet potentially hostile environment, shining a torchlight first at one spot then another, changing the texture of the artworks as the light fell on it. After, Shih Yun set a blank scroll on the floor, and one by one, released 11 robots loose as ink trailed after them. Some rotated in circular motions, others became entangled and moved in unison. Yet, even as I watched these seemingly random actions, slowly a painting emerged from below, altered here and there by movements and interactions. I found in these two activations parallels to how the exhibition emerged and evolved over its seven days as it was shaped and reshaped by the collective energy of the nine artists making connections with and to each other.

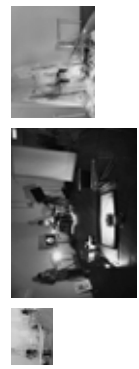
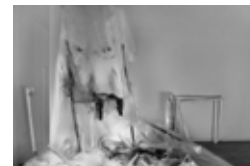
I walked in on the sixth day as Yen was leaving, his face looking rapturous. **LOVE IN COLD SWEATS (2020)** laid half-collapsed, plastic sheets soiled by charcoal crumpled into sinewy folds. He had earlier unearthed a performance, about which he wrote: "Had a breakthrough. Because of these guys, the **DE-VOTED** gang. Managed to find the performance that was hidden, with the help of Andy Yang's improvised sound. Truly, thank you guys, the time spent working with you led to this happening, and new lines of artistic inquiry for me."

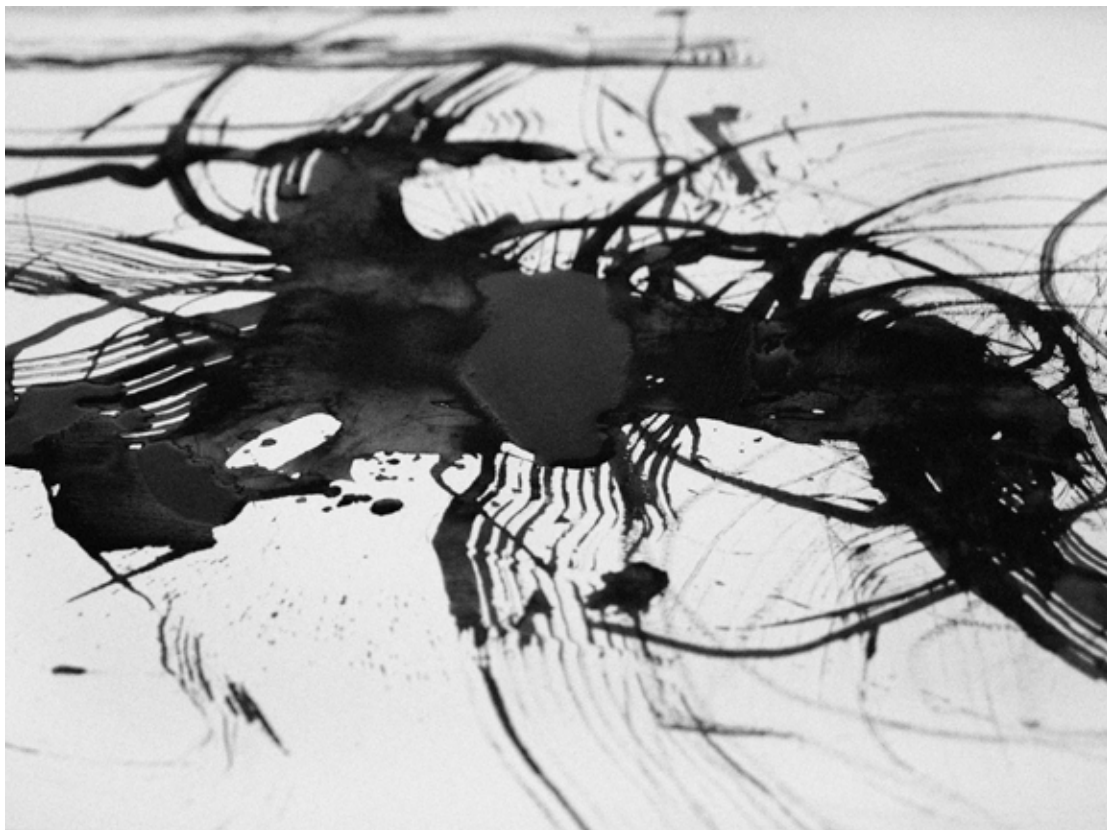
Kamiliah Bahdar
February 2020

Kamiliah Bahdar is an independent curator living and working in Singapore. Her first foray into curating was when she became a participant in Curating Lab 2012, a programme organised by NUS Museum to train young curators. Never forgetting her anthropology training, she has always looked at art through the lens of culture and society. Projects she has worked on include Nyanyi Sunyi: Songs of Solitude (2018, Gillman Barracks), State of Motion: Sejarah-ku (2018, Asian Film Archive), Merayakan Murni (2015–2016, Ketemu Projects), and OVERRIDE and Oversight: Where is the public? (2013–2014, Sculpture Square).

THIS EXHIBITION IS
BEING RECORDED

EXHIBITION ESSAY







1

UNSPOKEN

ANDY YANG

ANDY YANG



Andy Yang is a multi-disciplinary artist known for his abstract visual & sound experimentations. The explorations between visual art and music led him to the creation of works under musical stimuli with *The Observatory*. In *Anitya 1* (2011) that exposes the process of his art making in full cycle, from creation to destruction at the Earl Lu Gallery of the Institute of Contemporary Art Singapore. And again, for the latest ArtScience Late feature, *Ceremony* (2019) together with SAtheCollective, the artist celebrated the experiences of human childbirth through an energetic sound performance set against an elaborate visual art installation set.

Unspoken

The idea came from my ongoing observations about human relationships, and a curiosity about how it works and the journeys that relationships go through—the fragility and strengths each experience for all parties.

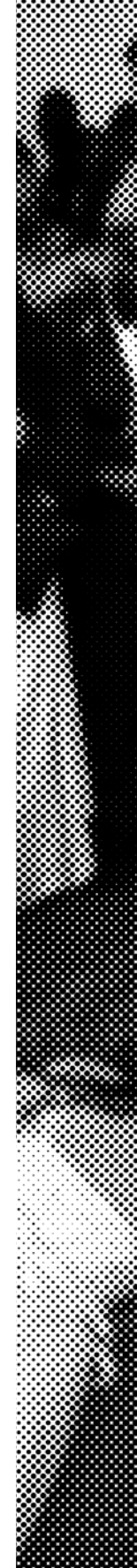
For **DEVOTED**, I decided to delve into the topic of marriage: the union between two souls with an equally complex set of personalities and emotions; the union of two people as partners in a personal relationship.

The journey begins at the entrance, akin to a bride walking into a church for a wedding—the beginning of a perilous journey laced with hints of joy in between.

The bride starts walking in and stops at various points to fall while dragging the distressed mattress like a burden—a love/hate relationship with it; dependent on each other very much, sharing precious moments but at times hostile towards each other; ignoring the audience or the environment like they are trapped in a world of their own.

After numerous falls that represent the trials of the relationship, losing almost all hope of carrying on, she contemplates suicide. She picks up a pair of scissors. Feeling confused and half-hearted about taking her life, she starts to cut up her bridal gown, a former symbol of pride and happiness that has become a burden. She hands pieces over to people around her as if seeking help from others to share her burdens. On the verge of ending it all, she stops.

Instead, she cuts the red cloth tied to the mattress, and reveals a wax heart—a representation of the union, a trophy. She holds the heart and looks at it before taking the plunge, and the journey continues.





2

THE WORLD CROSSES
OVER THE MIRROR

CHIIHIRO KABATA

CHIIHIRO KABATA

KABATA Chihiro, born in 1978, is a visual artist based in Tokyo, Japan. Working in drawings and sculptures that accumulate delicate lines into powerful visions, her works have been shown internationally in solo exhibitions and focus group exhibitions such as MOT annual (Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, 2011). She received her Master of Fine Art from Musashino Art University in 2004. Her work has been collected by The Ritz-Carlton Kyoto, Fairmont Jakarta, and others.

The World Crosses Over The Mirror

When something cannot be seen, that is when the imagination is stimulated the most. Not showing something, that is one way of creating an impression stronger than what can be seen.

In my paintings, I do not depict particular subjects. I make tens of thousands of lines in a painting, and yet I never actually depict anything.

I choose painting. Painting demands a lot of the viewer's imagination. What I am trying to achieve is a painting that catalyzes an imaginary leap to a place that transcends scale, a place that cannot normally be imagined.

—
In Japanese mythology, the mirror represents “the dwelling of God”.

In this artwork, the material I chose was mirror tape. Mirror tape reflects. The audience will see “the world itself” through the work. And in the audience's imagination, the real world is divided into two by this work. The audience is invited to a special place through their imagination.

—
In the ACTIVATION of the artwork, I made this even more pronounced. I cast light on the artwork, and it diffuses out into space, integrating with the audience and all the artworks of **DE:VOTED**, representing the illusion of this moment.

It is just light, but it looks beautiful and meaningful. It is a space where human imagination is taken out and scattered.

—
People put faith in something that should not be there through something. If the work “can see”, that is the power of human imagination.



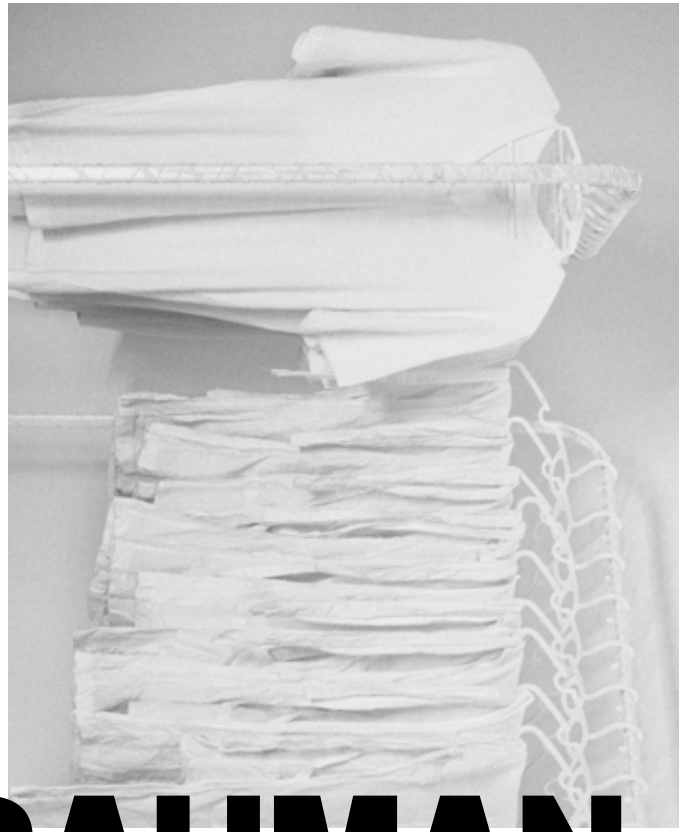


CAN'T YOU SEE THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME

EZZAM RAHMAN

3

EZZAM RAHMAN



Ezzam Rahman (b.1981) is a multi-disciplinary installation and performance artist based in Singapore. Ezzam was awarded a joint winner of the Grand Prize for the President's Young Talents 2015 and the People's Choice Award by the Singapore Art Museum. In 2016, Ezzam was awarded the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award by Yayasan Mendaki and the prestigious Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council, Singapore. In 2018, Ezzam was invited by Frieze Art Fair in London, to be part of Frieze Symposium in a panel discussion on, A Brief History of Performance in South East Asia.

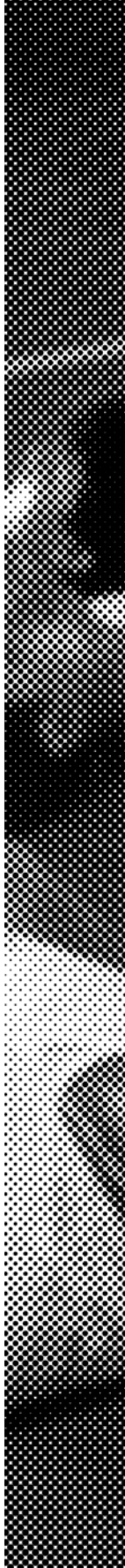
Can't You See There's Nothing Left For Me

CAN'T YOU SEE THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME is my second directorial performance art. It is inspired by the ever-toxic act of 'cancel culture', and revolves around the emotions of 'dealing with disappointments and despair'. How does one deal with untrue accusations and fabricated information?

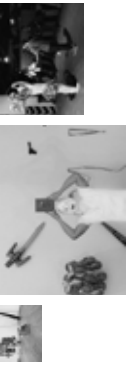
This durational performance presentation also speaks about the ideologies of 'relationships', of how we navigate our existence and state of being within society and live together within a community. One of the prominent actions in this performance presentation is the act of 'switching on and off' the portable LED light switch boxes worn by the performers during the performance. It is a metaphor for 'living with technology', of us living both in real life and our 'second personas' online in the Internet world.

The word **DE:VOTED** was a catalyst for me to address such issues, to question how does one live, communicate and interact with one another and build healthy relationships, but yet it is all seemingly fragile and brittle. In this performative presentation, the simple installation artwork was composed of two clothes racks containing white Thai fisherman's pants and cotton t-shirts, which were activated by nine individuals that performed on my behalf. The remnants were displayed as part of the exhibition and as evidence of the performance artwork.

CAN'T YOU SEE THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME was performed on 16 January 2020 at 8.30 pm.







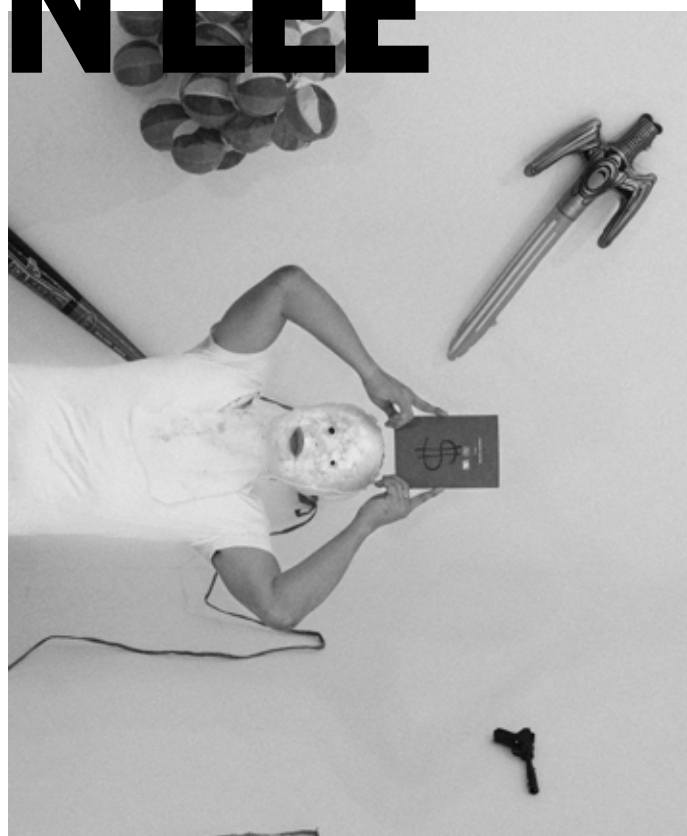
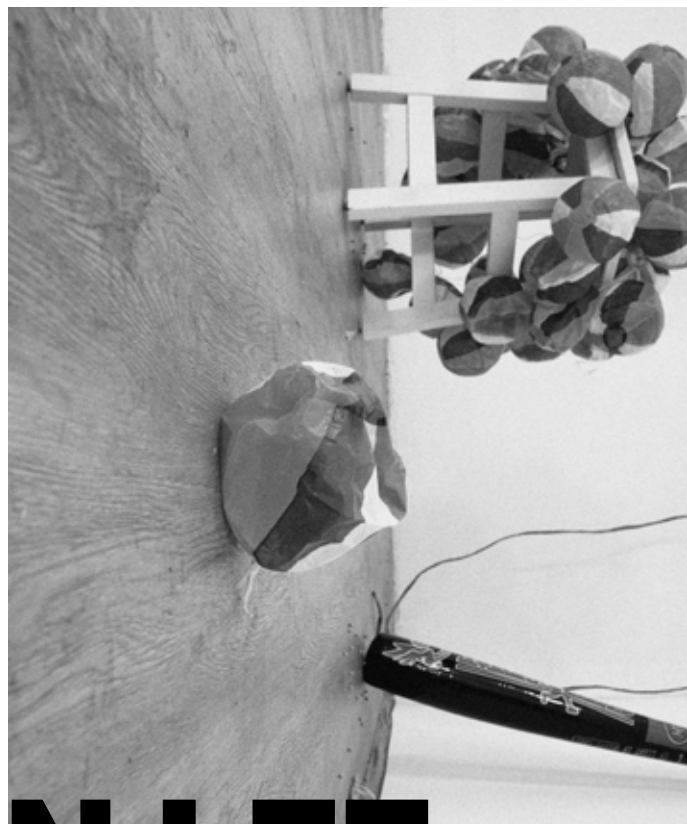
4

WE ARE WHAT WE
PRETEND TO BE

JUSTIN LEE



JUSTIN LEE



Justin Lee is a Singaporean visual artist and designer. He has participated in numerous artist-in-residence programmes in Japan (Fukuoka, Studio Kura-2012/14, Itoshima Art Farm-2014, and Tokyo Youkobo-2013). Over the years, he has participated in numerous exhibitions held in Singapore and internationally (2000-2002). Justin believes that art plays an important part in helping people to grow, and to see the different roles they play, facilitating awareness of themselves. His works also reflect on words and images from mass media like signages, billboards and consumer products which control our thoughts and expression.

We Are What We Pretend To Be

In everyday life, there is a need to be happy and there is a need to be lonely. Whenever I am lonely, I start to imagine and it gets me to everywhere. Imagination never sleeps, everywhere becomes real.

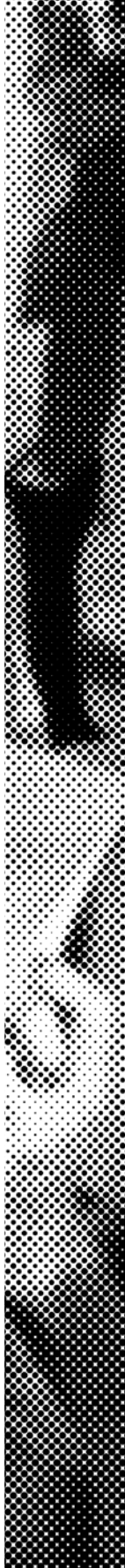
“We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be.”—Kurt Vonnegut, Mother Night

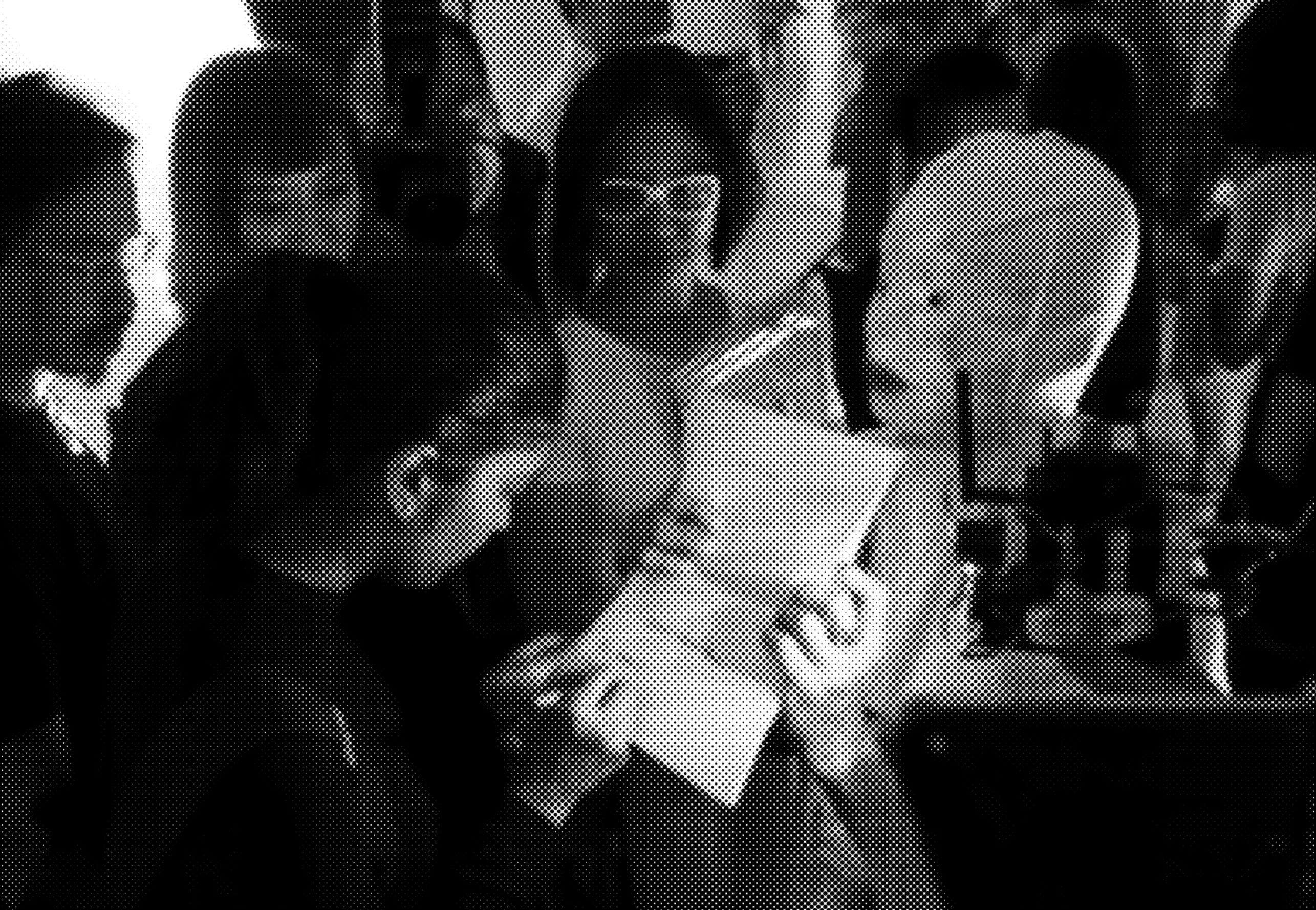
In my performance, I wanted to replay and reflect on what I had experienced during my childhood days, and share them with the audience. I remembered how I used my imagination to transform my playing materials like pillows and blankets into weapons and would be under the table play fighting with my siblings.

My work reflects on how to encourage and support imaginative play as when we were once children. Imaginative play is essentially when children role-play and act out various experiences that held some interest for them. In such play, they are experimenting with decision-making on how to behave and are also practicing their social skills. Children learn from experiences: from what happens around them, from what they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. To absorb such experiences and make sense of the world, it therefore needs to be exaggerated and engaged in imaginary play.

Play is a child’s way of engaging and making sense of the world, and as adults we can often underestimate the value of imaginative play. So let the child in you go out and play with what we pretend to be.

But be careful about what we pretend to be.



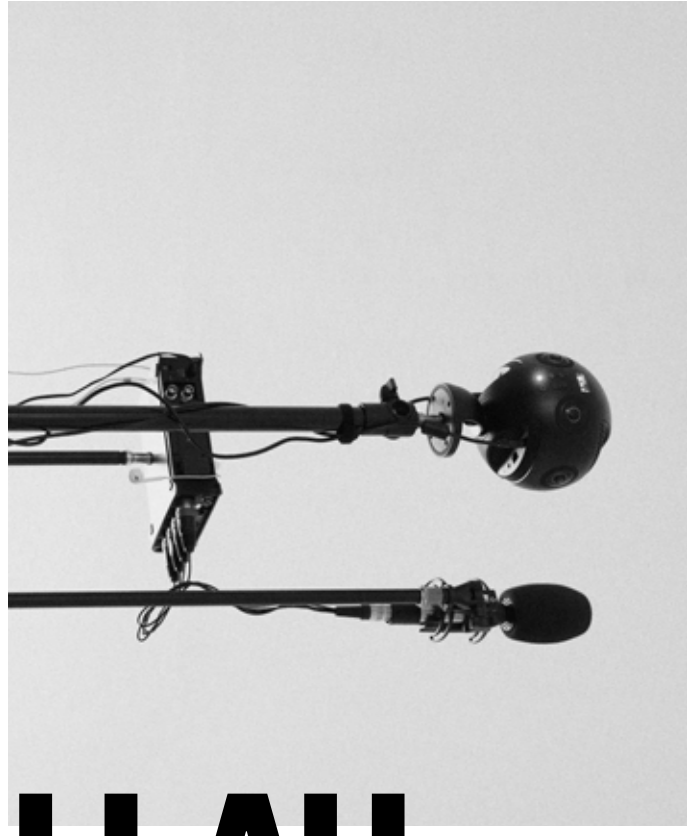


VIDEO CONFERENCE:
360 OBSERVATORIUM

URICH LAU

5

URICH LAU



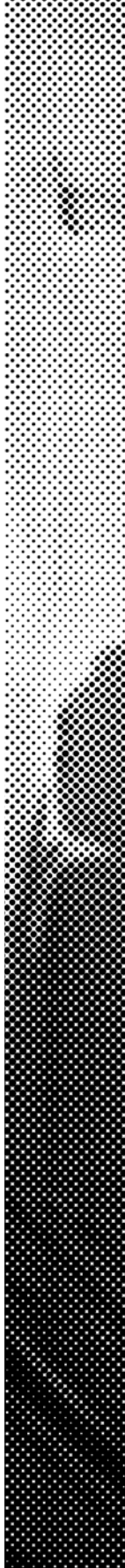
Urich Lau, born 1975, is a visual artist, independent curator and art educator based in Singapore. Working in video art and photography, he has presented works in Singapore and internationally. He graduated with a Master of Fine Art from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 2004 and is a lecturer at LASALLE College of the Arts, a founding member of the art collective INTER-MISSION, a member of The Artists Village and Instinctive (INSTINC Art Space).



Video Conference: 360 Observatorium

The work is a live recording in the gallery space, which is the venue for **DEVOTED**. From 13 to 19 January 2020, the camera captured the ongoings and happenings from the setting up and installation, until the tear down and de-installation of all the artists' works within the gallery. The recordings were played back to the audience coming to the gallery the next day, as in looking back to what had happened on the previous day. This action continued until the end of the event.

The audience and the artists become human subjects in the installation and the gallery. The audiovisual installation is a reflexive manner in the onset of relapsing into the epistemological yearning and redistributing the fascination of watching and being watched. There are TV screens, projections on the wall and the artist's cluttered workstation on public display, cameras on tripods and camera operators who are omnipresent to shoot anyone who has entered and anything that has happened in the gallery. A glance is too short but a gaze is too long, the installation lets the viewers linger and ponder on the state of electric eclecticism.





6

YEN PHANG

ADMIN PART 4:
LOVE IN COLD SWEATS

YEN PHANG



Yen Phang explores the evolving positions of biological systems through strategies of painting, installation, and performative gesture. He is a recipient of the Winston Oh Grant (2016), Winston Oh Travel Research Award (2016), and was awarded the Cliftons Art Prize (2015) and the UNSW Julius Stone Prize (2006). His work has been collected by the Singapore High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore, One Farrer Hotel & Spa, as well as British Airways for their Terminal 1 Lounge at Changi Airport, Singapore. He also facilitates test-bedding platforms for artists under the CB42 and Displacements banners.

Admin Part 4: Love In Cold Sweats

(For Nick)

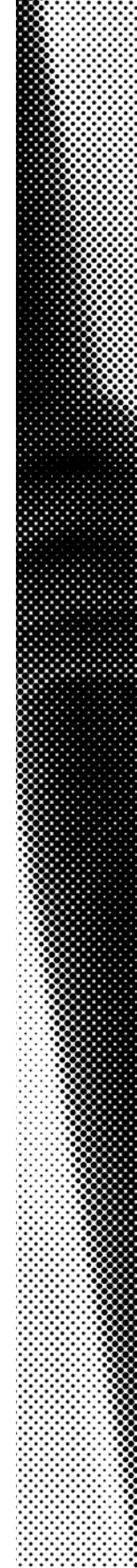
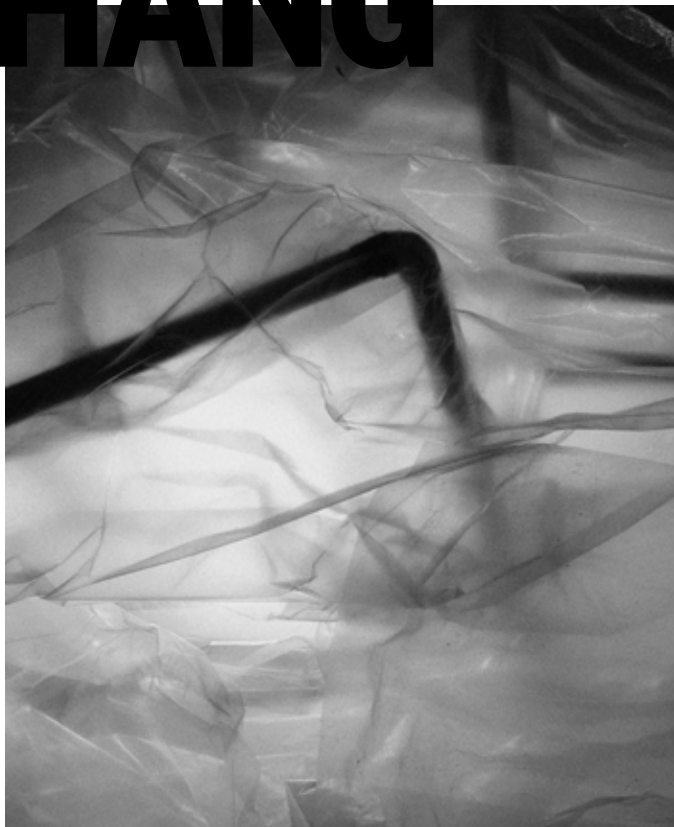
Within the gallery, there is a space, where plastic sheeting and PVC piping form a ruinous pile, a languid mess, creeping through the entryway, slouched against the corner. It is lit from the inside, suggesting something inaccessible, lacking in a focal point, still waiting to be activated, inhabited for a while.

The incompleteness of this space is jarring, not yet fully birthed, suspended within the existential stasis of destruction and formation. This space holds a nascent memory of a particular time, in between the renovations of my new home, and the hospitalisation stays during your cancer treatment. It is a recollection draped in denial and tentative decision-making. Such is the instability of memory, where the past lingers like a low-key fever dream. An anti-monument made of persistent plastic, with an inertness that never rises above reminders of the practical, and useful.

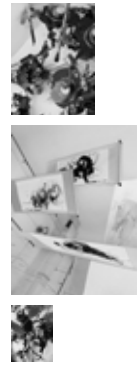
Yet, is it possible for materials to take on new meanings and symbolism? What happens when we pay attention to our relations with them? Does Thing precede signification, or does function define Object? Or, do Object and Meaning co-emerge to inform each other through reiterated interactions?

This installation, activated by a performance gesture, is a meditation on the body, on object, and tangibility of unrelenting memory. This is a space for the rubble of inaccurate recall in the face of loss and grief. It is a process for finding a new intimacy with object and use, perhaps a proxy for relishing in the sensorial nature of a particular time in the past recreated in the mind, from the construction dust in my flat to the stickiness of hand sanitiser, from the steely railing of your hospital bed, to the fragile definition of the bones in your hand under your skin.

LOVE IN COLD SWEATS is a paean to impermanence and the malleability of remembrance.





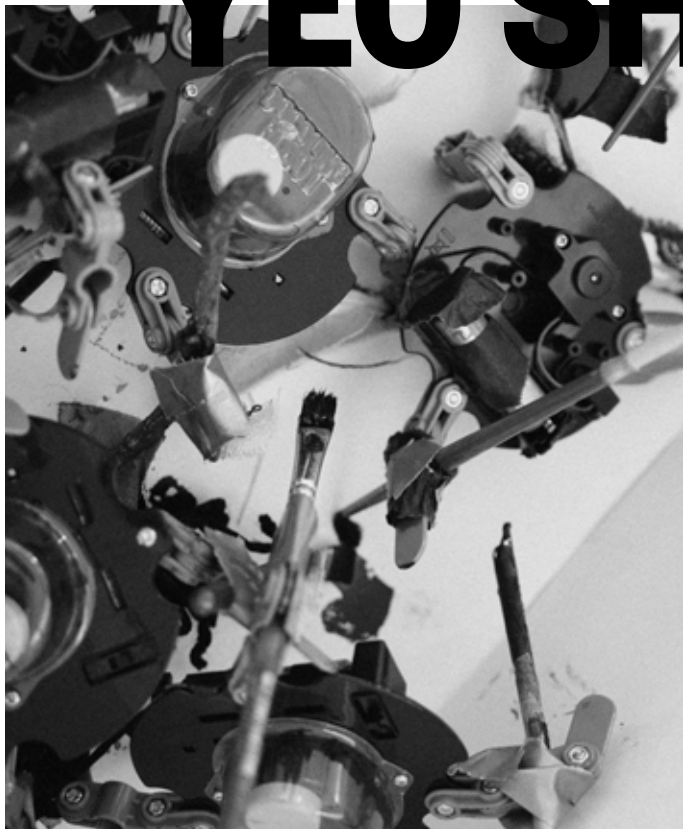


7

TILL DEATH DO US PART

YEO SHIH YUN

YEO SHIH YUN



Yeo Shih Yun graduated from National University of Singapore with a Bachelor degree in Business Administration. She joined LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts and completed a Diploma in Communication Design before pursuing a Post-Baccalaureate programme in painting at San Francisco Art Institute. Her experimentations of fusing the traditional form with contemporary mediums has garnered much acclaim, including a commission by the Singapore Art Museum, winning the Sovereign Asian Art Prize People's Choice Award in 2012.

Till Death Do Us Part

This work continues to explore the mystical aspects of the drawing process (accidental and impermanent manifestations). Change and transience are important in my creative process. I am fascinated with random occurrences, improvisation, and the liberating qualities of non-traditional tools such as toy robots. Using these inventive and playful tools to create eccentric forms or spontaneous arrangements without the constraints of limited visual vocabulary results in works of absolute freedom and honesty. My main goal in using these tools is to surrender authorial control, to release drawing from its enslavement to the artist's hand, and in some cases to outsmart my own will and intentions.

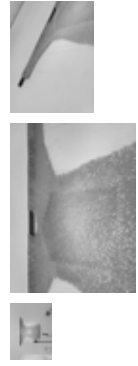
The title of this work **TILL DEATH DO US PART** is taken from wedding vows stating that the married couple intends to spend the remainder of their lives together and will be parted only by death. In this work, toy robots represent technology. We are so devoted to technology—we cannot bear to part with our mobile phones. The works are created by modified toy robots with drawing tools like sticks, Chinese and western brushes, strips of canvases and wool threads, and Chinese ink during the 'activation' sessions in this exhibition.

The hanging of the traditional Chinese scrolls is unconventional, floating in the air at various heights as opposed to neatly arranged in a straight line against white walls. The way that the scrolls are lit is deliberately against the gallery lighting convention: I have chosen to place LED fluorescent tubes on the floor to light the scrolls from below. A mobile phone with a video on a loop of the toy robots moving and painting completes the installation and reinforces the idea of human's obsession with technology: mobile phones.





8



IN:VISIBLE ROBE

YEOH WEE HWEE

YEOH WEE HWEE



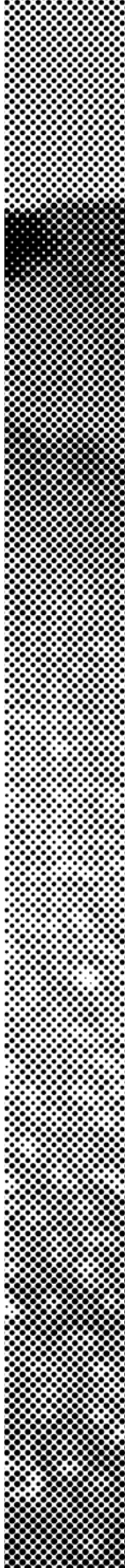
Yeoh Wee Hwee graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons-1st Class) Fine Art with Contemporary Writing from University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom, in 2006. After receiving her Art Bursary (Oversea) in 2007 from Singapore National Arts Council, she continued to pursue her masters degree in Fine Art from The Glasgow School of Art, United Kingdom, and graduated in 2009.

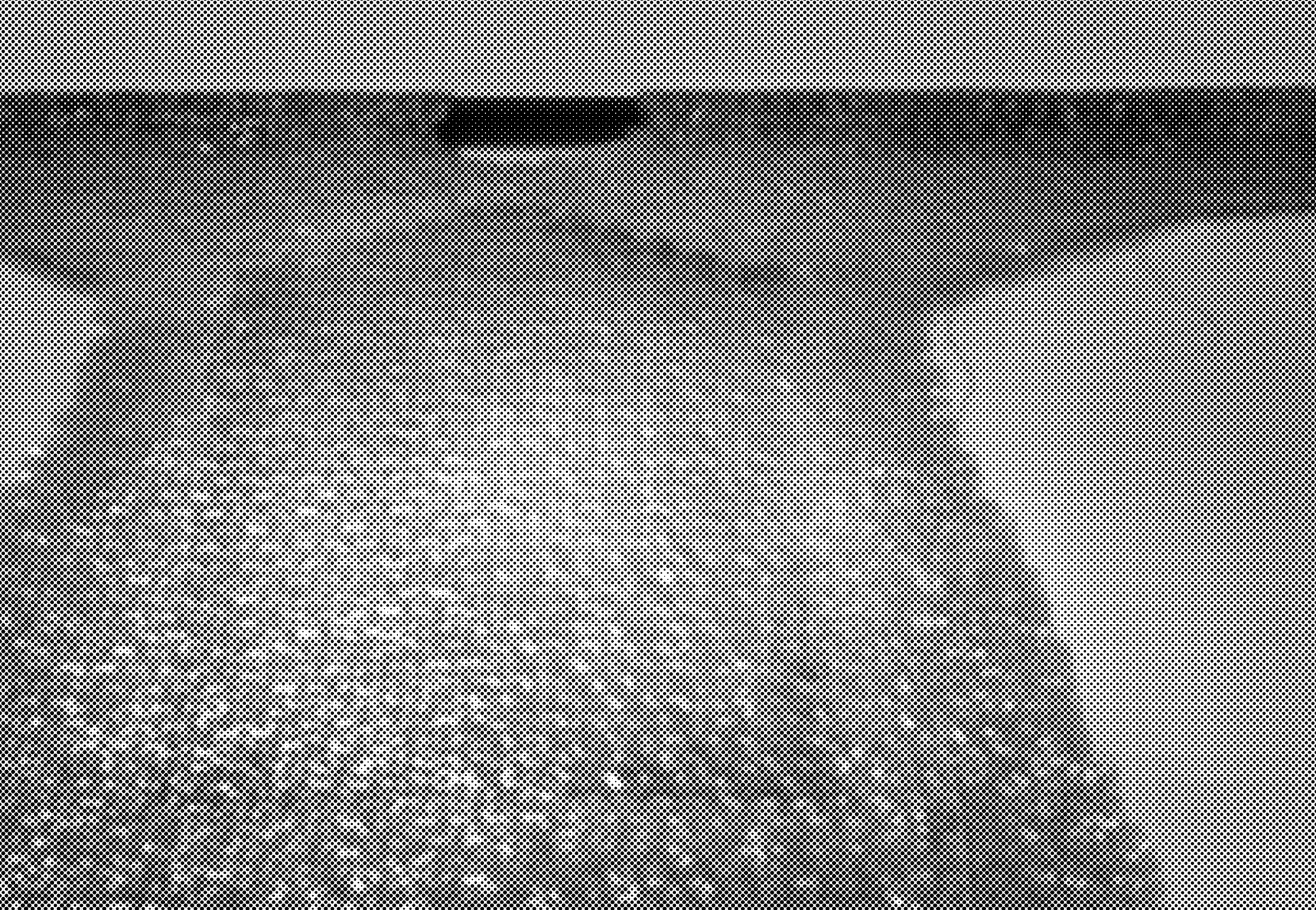
In:Visible Robe

The **IN:VISIBLE ROBE** is inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes*. The robe took the centre position of the central wall in the room, hung high so viewers had to look up. It glittered gloriously under a warm spotlight, looking pompous and precious.

The **IN:VISIBLE ROBE** is temporal: it is made solely from cellulose tape, comprised of more than eight thousand circles. Each circle is individually traced from our Singapore's one-dollar coin, then hand cut and weaved together by strings rolled from the tape. The robe looks somewhat like armour or the jade burial suit from ancient China.

The **IN:VISIBLE ROBE** reflects upon our beliefs, desires and wants in this temporal existence. We devote our time in weaving our own robe—the skin of who we are, who we want to be. All these beliefs and pursuits we deem important to safeguard and serve us well in this life: all these glistening hopes in gold, are they worthy of our devotion?



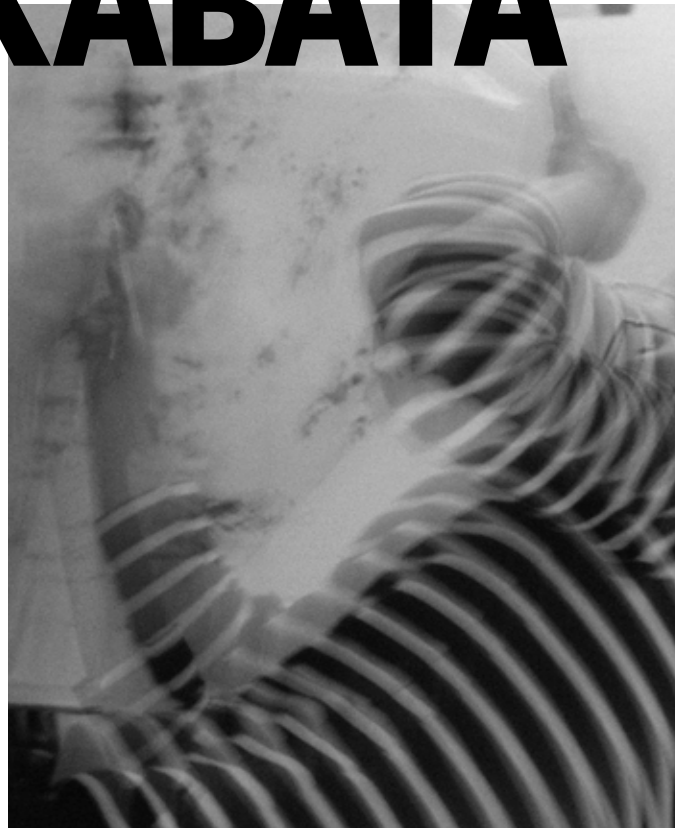


9

YUURI KABATA

EMERGENCE OF
FREE WILL

YUURI KABATA



KABATA Yuuri, born 1982, is a visual artist based in Japan. Working in painting art and installation, she has presented works in Japan and internationally. Her work has been collected by the Ritz Carlton Kyoto, and others. She is also the organizer of the Project Kabata and founder of the art space ART BASE CAMP in Tokyo in 2019.

Emergence of Free Will

Repetition creates differences and complexities. My artwork aims to build a system where simple repetition creates a difference, and difference creates newness.

Vinyl as a transparent material can be layered over a painting to be traced through simple repetition. Vinyl as a material is charged with static electricity, and it sometimes causes paint to flip when painting. These accidents create unintended differences. To hold the static electricity, the paint material contains stainless steel powder, and so, the superimposed picture works to hold electricity like a condenser. My activation performance is a layering action, in which light is used to show the structure as a shadow.

The artwork is set up in a venue where the artists' devoted energy is gathered, and the artwork will hold all these energies, the same as electricity.

