



THE SECOND DANCE SONG

NEW CONTEMPORARIES

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS SINGAPORE

The Second Dance Song

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*Lately I gazed into your eyes, O Life: I saw gold glittering in
your eyes of night – my heart stood still with delight:
I saw a golden bark glittering upon dark waters, a submerging,
surging, re-emerging golden tossing bark!
At my feet, my dancing-mad feet, you threw a glance, a
laughing, questioning, melting tossing glance:
Twice only did you raise your castanets in your little hands-
then my feet were already tossing in a mad dance.*

- Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra¹

The Second Dance Song is a presentation of new works created with a selected group of artists, initiated through a discussion of a few starting points that in one way or another they respond or relate to. In this, it was deliberate that the approach would set up or enable the continuation of a series of other processes of art making. The incorporation of the production of the work in the development of the exhibition creates an opportunity to work with the artists at the point of realisation rather than simply presentation. The proximity to the creative process is part of an attempt at the re-spatialization of the autonomy of the role of the artist within the schema of production, to bring the process of the exhibition into the production of the work; it is at the same instance a reflection on the process of mapping of distances between artist and artwork that define contemporary art practice within the exhibition framework. In spite of the apparent fluidity of process, the initial ideas discussed have

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led to a situation where the works converge with a certain degree of coherence, not from the framework or theme, rather from the individual contributions and decisions of these artists towards the production of the exhibition, for which I am quite obliged. Effectively, the exhibition is as Justin Hoffman describes, the kind of 'exhibition projects that begin with a void of art'².

The title of the exhibition connotes process and historicism, and the production of the exhibition together with the artists was simultaneously a progression of deconstruction of the title. The problem of historicism, associated with the modernist discourse of Clement Greenberg, is the 'monomania that considers eclecticism (that is any attempt to exit this purist narrative) a cardinal sin'³. Yet, the problem of eclecticism as identified by Nicolas Bourriaud is not so much the fear of the banalisation that eclecticism seems to imply from a Greenberg-ian standpoint, rather it is a call for activity, the sloughing off of passivity to 'reactivate forms by inhabiting them'⁴. From the view of historicism, the perspective then shifts from a teleological assertion to the more lateral sensibility of process and of the relationships that define accompaniment rather than collinearity. This accompaniment, of artwork to artist and artist to exhibition, is denoted by the idea of the exhibition as a creation of a song, a dance song for that matter, thus introducing the concept of choreography in art production.

Choreography as the composition of dance is an act of notation and generation. The notation on its own is a device to structure, with the potential for the generation of activity, such as in the interpretation, that is not entirely bound by its score. In art practice, the act of choreography is related to the act of production, generation and critique. The idea of the song also lends itself to the stimulation of other senses within art production, a sensitisation towards the capacity to be immersed beyond the visual, to create multiple dimensions within the exhibition without an attempt to categorise these explorations in terms of material presented. Dance is a social activity, and in dance history it often is seen as a reflection of a society's sense of itself, socially, politically and creatively. The

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annexation of it being the second as opposed to being its own is firstly a reflection of the idea of 'post-production' characterised by Nicolas Bourriaud of 'working with objects that are already in circulation on the cultural market, which is to say, objects already *informed* by objects'⁵. Secondly, in Renaissance dance, observing that notation systems for dance were documented during the Renaissance for the purpose of creating manuals for the transmission of these techniques, where dances are paired with each other, the second dance is an improvised performance often sampling from the first dance. As Bourriaud describes as a feature of contemporary practice, 'the tools most often used by artists today in order to produce these relational models are pre-existing works or formal structures, as if the world of cultural products and artworks constituted an autonomous strata that could provide tools of connection between individuals; as if the establishment of new forms of sociality and a true critique of contemporary forms of life involved a different attitude in relation to artistic patrimony, through the production of new relationships to culture in general and to the artwork in particular'.⁶ Through the production of the works presented, the artists create a network of relations that map not only ideas of their practice within the context of the exhibition, but also that of a broader culture and art practice, not with the intent of siting, rather of citing. Chong Li-Chuan's work of a shifted composition of Bach's collapses the second movements of two suites of contrasting styles. His sampled composition based on an intuitive weaving of the two, in the process of being submerged within scores, removes their difference to create another perspective and relationship of the composition referencing the composer. The relations produced in a postmodern appropriation are not intended however as a pastiche of borrowed context, rather it is intended to awaken a different response to the work.

In Bourriaud's *Postproduction*, the work is considered a generator of activities, each work in this sense is produced with the intention of eliciting certain responses. In the collaboration between self-described 'cross-generational' artists Khairuddin Hori and Ahmad Abu Bakar, the artists wrap around themselves a circle of ambiguity

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where the act of their collaboration becomes the focus of the work. Questioning the act of pairing as aesthetic rather than personal strategy, the artists' collaboration suggests an unsatisfactory artifice, but one in which they are quite happy to enjoy with relish, with their audience. In depicting themselves in shades of glam-rock, they mimic the stereotype of the legend and the superstar with an aplomb yet with self-deprecating humour that extends their exploration of the artist identity into the public sphere, where it might be resolved through audience response. Here, the identity of artist as creator is remodelled as initiator, albeit of their own identity and its uncertain boundaries of exchange and definition; the distance between artist and artwork is defined through the role the artist plays, and the distance between the artists and audience as tangible response beyond viewing. In the work by Ana Prvacki, the gallery is provided with the important yet often ignored gallery furniture upon which visitors are meant to contemplate their presence within the space. While the work exists as furniture that is intended to be physically acknowledged but visually omitted, it also functions as a node inviting audiences to view the gallery space as the boundaries of the work and as a layering of the particular experience across other gallery spaces, though not so as to condense them upon each other. Yet, these interrogations upon the complexities of the bearing of the artist's identity and work imposed by the boundaries of the gallery space are met with a touch of the whimsical, it is an open gesture that extends into an imaginary space that the artist then appears to fully occupy.

The saying attributed to Emma Goldman, 'If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution', was meant to refer to the otherwise serious and demanding cause as having a necessary dimension of light-hearted and celebratory expression. A dance is a physical activity where emotion is an intrinsic part of, either as expression, or party to its inadvertent disclosure. Indulgently, *The Second Dance Song* refers as well to the second of a trilogy of prose poems by Friedrich Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The poem as contrasted against its earlier sibling expresses an effervescence and intensity that is

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suggested as one of the starting points of the exhibition. It is of the transmutation of the chaos of life and a self-overcoming, and significantly the introduction of a fundamental response that does not require justification⁷. Chang Jinchao's work illustrates his perspective of an absurd situation, portraying a fantasy world of creatures and situations that seem to be at play, but which are uncanny as they appear removed from a rational sphere. These are creatures that are of their own narrative, absolved from having to be accountable to any real concerns or scenarios created by the artist, they exist though an awkward celebration of their coming to being in his hands. Here, the problem of the absurd, of the inability to reconcile irrationality, finds refuge in the belief that 'each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world'⁸.

Attendant to the presentation of a survey-like group exhibition is a need to analyse how these works may define the state of the practice of art. The exhibition emerges from a series (naturally this being the second) categorised as 'new contemporaries'. The desire for the contemporary, of presence before the zeitgeist, is essentially an elusive one. The contemporary practice of producing dialogue and social discourse takes reference from its location and setting, where meaningful commentary engages with context, upon which the work interposes. The exhibition model of the white cube separates works from a mundane context in a way accentuating their content. Of particular interest for the works presented in this exhibition however is the manner in which most of the works attempt to engage with the space in an antipodean site-specific way - in relation to the gallery context. The exhibition thus presents an interesting situation where the works attempt to establish the presentation mode of the exhibition, surveying the possibilities of collapsing the viewpoint of the exhibition with that of the artists involved. The artists are part of a process not merely of production but also that of change and critique. Within such a situation, the precondition of the gallery space is disrupted and with it the exhibition's premise of contemporaneity for its own sake. The viewpoints of the works

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presented are resultantly deeply material and highly permutable. It is as Bourriaud charges, it is necessary thus to experiment, 'to stop interpreting symptoms and try more suitable arrangements'⁹. In the midst of this, the audience is liable to find him or herself inadvertently defined within a specific role in the artwork's production.

In the work created by Shubigi Rao, questioning the role and position of the production of knowledge about art in relation to the artist's practice, she takes on the role of author and publisher, producing a book that is conferred a commodity value, but which will surprise its unsuspecting recipients. The problem of mandarin prose and the notion of critical value in this case courtesy of the artist is one that the beholder encounters in private, and where the artist unfortunately will not have the opportunity to witness firsthand. The purpose of the exhibition has been to create a dialectical space through references to the act of choreography, experimentation and circulation, and arguably this is the ascribed limit of the nature or readings of the exhibition of works assembled. Returning to what Bourriaud views as critical for attempts by artists to 'reactivate forms', it would also be of importance that our understanding of the spaces 'opened' is shadowed by its obverse. Frédéric Sarkozy's work presents a simple alphabet-teaching toy that appears as an attempt to correct an unrealistic child-like perception of the world. While the new vocabulary is rather a more dismal picture of existence, it is also a darkly humorous rebuff of teaching methodology.

Postproduction as an aesthetic framework is a challenge of quiescence in art practice. In a way it also functions as a means for critique, not only of the subject of its content but also of the structure it is set within. In Andre Tan's work, consumer advertising is referenced not as a critique but as a tool to recreate subconscious impressions. The capacity for recall is presumed in the success of appropriation, yet through his work, it is not the actual recall that comes under scrutiny, rather the recreated narrative and unconsciously filled-in absences that mark their significance. In his essay on criticism (or more accurately post-criticism), Gregory Ulmer presents the collage/montage as a device for criticism. He notes the characteristics

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of collage/montage of 'découpage (severing), preformed or extant messages or materials, assemblage (montage), discontinuity or heterogeneity'¹⁰ in a manner that is also reflected in Bourriaud's description that 'contemporary art thus presents itself as an alternative editing table that shakes up social forms, reorganises them, and inserts them into original scenarios. The artist deprograms in order to reprogram, suggesting that there are other possible uses for the techniques and tools of our disposal'¹¹. The Second Dance Song has been put together for perhaps that purpose, to suggest other uses for an exhibition.

In Jeannine Tang's essay, she analyses Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* and *Postproduction*, highlighting the complications of an over-sociability of postproduction as production framework. The fragility of the assumption of shared culture which underlies the sociability of postproduction however should not obscure the notion of 'use' that Bourriaud applies generously in his analysis, as a means of circumscribing the borders of recuperation of the artist's act of production in reproduction. As Jeannine notes, the authorial gesture remains in that the autonomy and control that the artist exerts on what is seemingly a mere appropriation lingers intact. She concludes that the use-value as 'active usage and interpretation' on the part of the artist, is perhaps what is particularly significant in the idea of postproduction - the identification and questioning of frictions as culture undergoes its own permutations.

The mapping of authorial contiguity of artist to the artwork in postproduction and in contemporary practice at times is reflected in the exhibition mode employed. The freedom the artist has in defining the work and the exhibition are often limited by curatorial and audience expectations. The capacity of the active and reactive function of postproduction while having been indirectly sought in the works produced for this exhibition was a means for the selected artists to produce the exhibition itself. The Second Dance Song is an attempt to realise the works created by the artists, and in a way also a resolve to rekindle the exhibition mode of production and the possibilities of production beyond outcome. The approach in

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this has been lead by the idea of the accompaniment rather than the mode of teleological causation. In its darker moments, it is a means for 'the artist to escape the posture of interpretation'¹², and in lighter ones it is a moment of play and experimentation. Resisting the proclivity for the meta-narrative, the exhibition form is less a structure as a rhythm, in that its purpose is to expose the use-value of the exhibition. The work of Chen Yi-Cheng disappears into the structure of the exhibition framework. As visual motif and vehicle of exhibition information, it resists an overarching configuration but exists in a dispersion of its multiples, meandering along the pathways of a publicity network. The exhibition thus functions less as a concatenation of works than a process redrawing a spatiality, not of the guarded coherence of the accounted representation, but that of the choreography of the unexpected turns of a second dance.

June Yap
Curator

- 1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, translated with introduction by R. J Hollingdale, Penguin Books, 1969, p.241
- 2 Justin Hoffman, *God is a Curator*, in *Men in Black: Handbook of Curatorial Practice*, ed. Christoph Tannert / Ute Tischler, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, 2003, p.105
- 3 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction*, Lukas & Sternberg, 2002, p.90
- 4 Nicolas Bourriaud, *ibid*, p.94
- 5 Nicolas Bourriaud, *ibid*, p.13
- 6 Nicolas Bourriaud, *ibid*, p.14
- 7 Friedrich Nietzsche, *ibid*, p.27
- 8 Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Penguin Books, 2005, p.119
- 9 Nicolas Bourriaud, *ibid*, p.82
- 10 Gregory L. Ulmer, *The Object of Post-Criticism*, in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, edited by Hal Foster, The New Press, 1998, p.84
- 11 Nicolas Bourriaud, *ibid*, p. 72
- 12 Nicolas Bourriaud, *ibid*, p.82

Remarks on the Use-Value of Postproduction

In typologizing art's relation to social changes, particularly the development of a global service economy and abstracted market systems, Nicolas Bourriaud posited the notion of postproduction, or the tertiary organisation of materials in film, television and video, as a means of describing and thinking through popular art practices that featured prominently in Bourriaud's curatorial work.

Postproduction (2001) comes on the tail of Bourriaud's earlier text, *Relational Aesthetics* (1998). Given the fiery reception of *Relational Aesthetics*, Bourriaud is understandably anxious to separate the two, although he admits that the former is a continuation of the latter. Both texts were written as reflective supports and posterior extensions of Bourriaud's curatorial practice, and describe a coterie of artists including Pierre Huyghe, Liam Gillick, Philippe Parreno and Rirkrit Tiravanija, from two different but interconnected vantage points.¹ Their practices were often collaborative, and investigated various shifts in the way art was produced, performed and thought through in the 1990s, coming after the institutional critique of the 70s and the cunning appropriations of the 80s.

Relational Aesthetics concerns itself with art's responses to urban and technological changes in a simultaneously networked and alienated social universe, by creating process-based human experiences, exhibition protocols and models of sociability and service, which Bourriaud's typology laces with utopian 'microutopic' possibilities.² These rhizomatic, contingent wills to sociability, exchange and encounter are at once propositions for human exchange, as well as models of decentralised power. The reception of *Relational Aesthetics* was on one hand celebratory, but also retroactively critical, the most notable riposte being Claire Bishop's essay on relational antagonism, which demanded a more antagonistic relation between participants rather

than a breezy sociability, if Bourriaud's claims for relational aesthetics fostering democracy were to hold. This was supplemented by Hal Foster's incisive review of Bourriaud's writings, questioning whether democracy really was available through the manipulation of a desultory form, arguing for art to register dissent in the democracies it pursued, and not drop the contradiction out of dialogue.³ One of the artists cited prominently in Bourriaud's and Bishop's texts, Liam Gillick, responded to Bishop's critique, underscoring his own problems with Bourriaud's curatorial model, the flaws in Bishop's argument – in particular her equation of discrete art practices with Bourriaud's shoehorning of various art practices into his typology – as well as the need to engage with Bourriaud's texts without a straw-man argument pitting a wholly acritical interpretation of Bourriaud against a vanguard position.⁴ Gillick is right, however Bourriaud's use of earlier avant-gardes in both *Postproduction* and *Relational Aesthetics* opens his texts to further critical discussion as begun by Bishop and Foster, particularly because Bourriaud's typologies veer towards a depoliticised formalism. However, certain discrete art practices suggest a more complex disengagement with such formalism, and may rescue the merits of *Postproduction* by reintroducing postproduction possibilities of ideological friction.⁵

Bourriaud locates postproduction practices as mirroring tertiary economic forms of production with implications for the forms of art and the role of artists, as 'there's no point in trying to hide behind a romantic or heroic notion of the artist. In [...] Post-Production, the idea is that art has definitively reached the tertiary sector – the service industry – and that art's current function is to deal with things that were created elsewhere, to recycle and duplicate culture.'⁶ Before considering *Postproduction's* relation to culture, it is worth considering just how it recycles and duplicates an artworld culture of reference and how distinct is it from previous twentieth-century mutations of art production processes. Bourriaud explains that although recycling and *detournement* are not in themselves innovations, today these 'elements and principles are reemerging as themes and are suddenly at the forefront, to the point of constituting

the 'engine' of new artistic practices' and this revisitation focuses on notions of creation, authorship and originality, through a 'problematics of the use of cultural artifacts.' Postproduction is distinct from quotation, allusion and citation, as it does not adhere to the top-down hierarchies of power implicit in such referential acts, preferring to domesticate sources through mutations of form and content. Throughout the twentieth century, misinterpretations of Duchamp's 1957 lecture on the role of the reception, 'The Creative Act', and Umberto Eco's *The Open Work*, have fruitfully misquoted Duchamp's and Eco's explication on the necessities of interpretation and influence, to justify the open formats, interactive and participatory forms of do-it-yourself artworks, Fluxus events, 1980s appropriation, conceptual instructions pieces, collaborative performance pieces, allographic-score proposals, relational forms and now postproduction DJ remixology. *Postproduction* elaborates a long history of open form and forms of explicit reference, however unlike the ironic position of reciprocal readymades or the territorial claims of appropriation, postproduction eschews such forms of control.

Instead, postproduction methods shift from appropriation and its assumption of ownership, towards a cultural sharing of collective forms and signs, playfully scripting the circulation of objects.⁷ A case in point would be Huyghe's *No Ghost Just a Shell* project, where Huyghe and Philippe Parreno bought a character, Annlee, from a Japanese agency specializing in the production of manga characters. Such characters were endowed with different narrative potentials, and buyers would pay more for more complex features and graphics. Huyghe and Parreno deliberately selected a secondary character, itself less informed and predetermined with personality - and distributed that character to a number of friends - namely the aforementioned circle of artists featured in *Postproduction* and *Relational Aesthetics* - who carried out various modifications and manipulations of the character. Annlee was inaugurated with a fireworks ignition of her form, a performative event of simultaneous creation and destruction; one apt response was Rirkrit Tiravanija's DIY manual for constructing one's own coffin, *DIY or How to Kill Yourself Anywhere in the*

World for Under \$399 (2002).

As an extreme simulacral experiment in simultaneously empty and continually refilled copyright chain-signification, the ownership of Annlee, like an exquisite corpse, was a slippery combination of numerous signatures. Bourriaud situates this in the advent of digital media, whereby the Benjaminian anxiety towards the copy is revisited in a more advanced form, as digitization, and works created through digitization, escape the problem of degradation that changes works recorded on analogue media, which Huyghe claims invalidates the practice of limited editions for his film works, although common practices of collection might suggest otherwise.⁸ If auratic restrictions on multiplicities are no longer of issue, ownership is problematized, and Annlee is symptomatic of Huyghe's interest in unfixing the monomaniacal territorialisation of origins. Rather than deploying yet another death of the author, Annlee, wrested from a single fictional space or narrative, multiplies the author as they collaborate to construct various narratives of Annlee's existence.

Bourriaud's gathering, borrowing and reprogramming on one hand negates the artist as primary producer, however this is inherently contradicted by the necessary authorization of signatures – and multiplying signatures doesn't really remove the authorial gesture, or challenge an artist's production just by consigning it to tertiary rather than primary modes of production. Furthermore, Bourriaud's user-friendly DJ motif ignores how remixes establish a DJ's fame and style and operate as a formal signature, which artists like DJ Spooky have considerable success with, as such, killing off the author yet again is perhaps redundant.⁹ Although *Postproduction* elaborates old questions of the artist's role and the primacy of the art object, the effect of digital media and globalisation on art, the extent to which postproduction trends have dramatically changed art practice and reception are perhaps overestimated, and the remaking or sequalisation of experiences don't immediately qualify a work of art as more interesting.¹⁰ If death is not necessarily an improvement, neither is abstraction, as Annlee's simulacral existence is threatened by potential criticisms of plurality and flux-happy irresolution that often attend

to postmodernism. Such attempts at multiplicitous abstraction do not dissolve or depict power structures, but may disguise them in a wash of fluid signification. Bourriaud's justification of his argument by the advent of service economies, immaterial labour as well as the abstraction of the market, is chronologically accurate. However, it is one thing to abstract the superficial operations of a transaction, it is another to assume the abstraction of the transaction or the dissipation of control, when in fact the controls of power structures are plausibly tightened due to dematerialised interfaces that permit them invisible passage.

As such, the merits of *Postproduction* are not the validation of formlessness for formalism's sake. Bourriaud grounds his argument in politically-charged twentieth-century Western European avant-gardes (Duchamp's readymade and reciprocal readymades, Surrealism, Debord and Situationism) and the traditional Left's stable of Marx and Althusser.¹¹ As Foster points out, the Situationists valued precise intervention and rigorous organisation above all things in their *détournement*, as opposed to Bourriaud's citation of these sources for freer inter-media and inter-cultural play, advocating contingency, mobility and Maussian gift-like distribution privileging the scenario as communal, the interface between art and everyday life as a seamless blending.¹² Furthermore, the operations of the avant-gardes cited by Bourriaud - including the 1970s political praxes of Daniel Buren, Dan Graham and Hans Haacke¹³ - were instrumental and rigorous in their critiques of institutions and corporate culture in the late 1960s and 1970s, and the radical origins of Surrealism and Dada were responses toward a nineteenth-century secularized art market. Bourriaud's deployment of these referents borrow their terms without their politics, instituting and professionalizing their post-conceptualism openness, a formalism-as-toolbox positioning of postproduction's avant-garde potential.

The merits of *Postproduction* as a theoretical conceit, lies in the question of use. 'Use' populates Bourriaud's text - When Screenplays Become Form, A User's Guide to the World, The Use of Forms, The Use of the Product ... the list continues. This alludes to Rosalind

Krauss' and Yves-Alain Bois' exhibition *Formless: A User's Guide*, based on Bataille's *informe* that escaped definition but avoided sublimation through endless pluralities but instead excavated the repressed through base materialism. Like Freudian fort-da play, the orchestration of departures and returns demonstrate not only pleasure itself, but trauma latent within pleasure principles, shown in the exhibition's aesthetic violence toward form, style, period, oeuvre and material. Bois and Krauss' original French subtitle, *mode d'emploi*, translates directly to 'instructions for use' foregrounding the operational power of the *informe*, downplayed in the more efficient 'user's guide.' The mechanism of the instruction, permits repetition and re-execution. As such, the reiterations of the instruction will always constitute some forms of difference and spaces for mutation, however these would not be possible without the operational structuring of the instruction itself.

The importance of the event in Huyghe's work is not the playing out of the event, but its fictive replay. Earlier on I have mentioned the fallacies of authorial death in the DJ-esque programming- Huyghe's replay is not easy remixology, but a contestation of how facts and knowledge may be represented, and how representation dictates and constitutes events. This is very much an issue of temporality, as Huyghe considers time as determined by events and occurrences, as well as locations - times of happenings and spaces, rather than chronologies of organised, domesticated time.¹⁴ Huyghe's projects have included an attempt to free time, invitations to friends to create celebration days, against the manufactured celebrations of the calendar, or more intriguingly, works that wrestle with the problems of temporal regimes and property. These include Huyghe's retelling of the copyright suit against Walt Disney over Snow White's voice, narrated by a now middle-aged woman who sang the part and did not receive royalties for the cartoon's reissue; as well as *The Third Memory*, where Huyghe found the bank robber whose heist was the source of the film *Dog Day Afternoon*, and pitted the cinematic narrative against the robber's voiceover, in a film that cut to alternate between and juxtapose both. Huyghe seeks times outside of established symbolic regimes, questioning

how one may retroactively own an event, a life, or the narratives that comprise and narrate a life.

Huyghe cites the war on terror as an imagistic instance of this, commonly understood as a war of spectacle, criticised by Coco Fusco and Julian Stallabrass to be a war existing entirely through images, fuelled by terror exceeding spectacle's production of indigestible images to colonize reality.¹⁵ Huyghe 'doubles' images, according to George Baker - what is significant is the *dédoublement* privileging of image over fact - as such, Huyghe *structures reality*.¹⁶ However, Huyghe's self-positioning against the war on terrorism's marshalling of images should not be mistaken for a political programme. Emulating the form of a potential object of critique, does not produce critique itself - if anything, it renders such criticism vulnerable to its own critique. Secondly, in a recent Q&A, Huyghe was asked what his work's relation to negativity and class distinctions was, and whether his practice addressed such approaches, particularly in *Streamside Day Follicles*, which stages an encounter between Bambi and a small town, as well as an invented celebration with both actors and residents of a small, homogenous American small-town community in New York, filmed through a series of sentimental tropes. Huyghe was genuinely baffled by the question - and had no answer to give. Huyghe's work occupies a strange place between Bourriaud's and DJ Spooky's postproductive attitudes, and Foster/Bishop's vanguard registers. Huyghe's highly aesthetic constructions register doubt, and raises subtle questions towards sentiment, affect and a staging of small-town American life. Considering this piece in a post- 9/11 United States that justifies a war on terror through images, and champions the preservation of a nuclear image of an American families, Huyghe's work is a significant marker. This interest in various realities and types derives from his fascination with mathematical topological structures and their principle of equivalence that is maintained, like a rubber band, through various deformations, producing both 'a friction and a transformation.'¹⁷

The use-value of *Postproduction* is significant when not merely user-friendly in recycling or duplicating culture, but in active usage

and interpretation even as art reflects on and through culture, operationally navigating the friction implicit between sources and repetitions, facts and fictions, the found and the made. In *Utama: Every Name in History is I* (2003), Ho Tzu Nyen staged numerous 'founding' myths of Singapore, including Sir Stamford Raffles, Parameswara, Admiral Cheng Ho, Christopher Columbus and Alexander the Great amongst others. Before entering a screening of *Utama* one would first proceed through a gallery of paintings of the film's protagonists.¹⁸ Each painting was a palimpsest of historical and digital painterly fictions, the backgrounds abstracted from Rembrandt portraits, overlain with digitally-created portraits of the protagonists and printed on canvas, finally retouched with actual oil paint and gloss. The intra-referentiality of *Utama* cast each moment of Singapore's founding myth as a readymade founding. By introducing doubt into painting's traditional mimetic and symbolic regimes of representation, and by screenwriting and performing historical narratives, a formal questioning of the fictivity of our historical found narratives was presented, accounting for the possible frictions between various historical and mythic subjectivities that Singapore has been or has not been represented with. Perhaps the most central implication of *Postproduction*, it is the fact that culture continually undergoes postproduction, and that the familiar narrative is one to be questioned, doubted, and contested as an act, rather than just an attitude.¹⁹

Jeannine Tang

Remarks on the Use-Value of Postproduction

- 1 Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Postproduction*. pp.14-15
- 2 Bourriaud, Nicolas, transl Simon Pleasance & Fronza Wood. *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Le Presse du Reel, 2002
- 3 See Foster, Hal. *London Review of Books*. 'Arty Party' Online edition, retrieved 20 October 2005
- 4 See *October* 110. MIT Press, 2004 for Claire Bishop's article. Also see *October* 115. MIT Press, 2006. Gillick, Liam. 'Letters and Responses' p.96
- 5 Note Bourriaud's retroactive awareness of the fallacies of his argument *Artforum International*. April 2001. Simpson, Bennett. 'Public Relations (Nicolas Bourriaud).'
- 6 Ibid
- 7 Bourriaud, Nicolas, transl Jeanine Herman. *Postproduction*. New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002. p.9
- 8 Nevertheless, Marian Goodman gallery sells Huyghe's videos – now at six figures apiece – in limited editions. Also, although Annlee was slated for legal destruction in 2002 following her exhibition at SF MoMA, her posthumous afterlife includes video and poster form at Tate Modern's Huyghe solo exhibition (July – September 2006), "<http://www.sfmoma.org/press/pressroom.asp?arch=y&id=110&do=ev ent>", retrieved 09 July 2006
- 9 *Postproduction*, pp.17-20 & 35-40. Also see DJ Spooky's highly performative theoretical text on DJing as a rhizomatic system of creative flows. Miller, Paul D. *Rhythm Science*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005
- 10 *Postproduction*, p.86
- 11 *Postproduction*, pp.46 & 74
- 12 *Postproduction*, pp.35-37
- 13 *Postproduction*, pp.70-73
- 14 Obrist, Hans Ulrich. *Interviews, Volume I*. Milan: Charta, 2003. pp.467-471
- 15 One instance of such arguments is Julian Stallabrass' 'Spectacle and Terror', *New Left Review* Issue 37, January-February 2006. Retrieved 8 July 2006. <http://www.newleftreview.net/NLR27106.shtml>
- 16 Huyghe refers to his approach as an "additif to reality." See *October*. Issue 110. MIT Press. Baker, George. 'Interview with Pierre Huyghe' p.84
- 17 Huyghe, *October*. Issue110, p.92
- 18 First shown at the Substation in 2002, subsequently at the Sao Paolo Biennale in 2004
- 19 *Postproduction* pp.46, 74, 82

Ahmad Abu Bakar & Khairuddin Hori

Ceramics artist, Ahmad Abu Bakar was born in Melaka, Malaysia in 1963. He began his training in 1989 at the LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore, and subsequently received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from University of Tasmania (1995) and Masters in Fine Art from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Australia (2001). Ahmad has since been residing and making works in Singapore and has exhibited locally and abroad in Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan and Australia. Recent local exhibitions he has participated in include The WAHANA project – IMAGINED LEGACIES at Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung Indonesia; The WAHANA, a collaboration between artists from Singapore and Philippines at Vargas Gallery, University of Philippines; 2005 Asia Ceramics Network in Korea; Form-ing: Materials and Processes at Sculpture Square (2005); and Tok Selampit Millenium and Sambal Belachan (2004) at the Esplanade.

Born in 1974 in Singapore, Khairuddin Hori (Khai) recently completed a Masters of Arts (Fine Art) at the LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts in 2005, he graduated with a Diploma in Fine Art (Sculpture) from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 1995. He has since explored and presented works and concepts through various mediums and across diverse disciplines such as theatre, painting, sculpture, installation and performance art. His multifarious practice has seen him in several incarnations, from Associate Director of Teater Ekamatra, a local Malay-language theatre company, creating and directing productions, to his appointment of Associate Artist (Visual Arts) by The Substation. He has also organised and curated several shows including Thai-Singapore collaborative project, One On Other in About Studio, Bangkok (2005).







In *The Second Dance Song*, Ahmad Abu Bakar and Khairuddin Hori continue a cross-generational collaboration started in 2005 where they presented an exhibition *Badang* at The Substation Gallery. The collaboration between the self-titled 'cross-generational' practices is less a means of having their practices coincide, than a means for a dialogue through the production of works together. Ahmad describes his generation as from the time of The Artists Village as it began in 1988 as a studio space along Lorong Gambas in Sembawang. The Artists Village, started by Tang Da Wu, was set up as alternative venue supporting experimental practices, which has led many artists to consider other critical ways of presenting and producing their works. Khairuddin on the other hand considers his generation as that from the period of The Substation. Founded in 1990 by Kuo Pao Kun, the venue is a space for a variety of practices such as theatre, dance, music and the visual arts, with an autonomous approach.

In the work *K & A*, the artists present the notion of themselves as the work, directing their own story of their presence together, playing upon the ambiguities of the mechanics behind the dynamic of two. In their first collaborated work, the exhibition became an exploration of their roles vis-à-vis one another, through the narrative of power in the Malay legend of *Badang*. *Badang* is the name of a slave who on capturing a beast is granted a wish, and whence has to consume the beast's vomit to attain the super-human strength he desires. He does and his great strength accords him fame and fortune.

In an apparently incommensurate relationship, submission to the relationship suggests other forms of negotiations and exchange, and raises the question of who leads and where the artistic direction is derived, and here the artists appear to be resisting being type-cast, albeit giving free reign to other personas their combination may produce. Given that each artist has their own distinctive practice apart from each other, as far as they would reveal, the process of their collaboration is a process of exchange and the development of

their relationship together, cemented through shared curiosities. Yet the question of a new practice between the two created through the collaboration, receives an enigmatic reply that any additional or new identities perceived is purely accidental. Appearing in this incarnation as Glam-rock personalities, the artists tease with 70s era influences where ambiguous sexuality, camp persona and teen appeal were the ticket to fame. Branding their collaboration with an oracular 'K & A', their self-conscious appropriation is portrayed in neon and make-up as a theatrical entrance, recalling The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu, parading in neo-glam style.

Previous pages:

K&A

Ahmad Abu Bakar & Khairuddin Hori

Neon and Digital Photoprint on PVC canvas

2006



Chang Jinchao

Born in 1980 in Liaoning province in China, Jinchao graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Visual Communication from Shenyang University. He subsequently moved to Singapore to complete a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Art, undertaking courses in jewellery design and then printmaking. While completing his studies in the techniques of design and print-making, he sought a style to define his practice, only to discover his interest and source of inspiration in theatre. Introducing the narrative into his works, his practice looks at alternatives to and ambiguity in narrative, its interstices and gaps. As a young artist, his works have been presented at exhibitions including Poskad Pameran at La Libreria Gallery, Utterly Art and at Miu Studio in Singapore.



The problem of the absurd is the inability to reconcile irrationality. As Albert Camus describes, 'the absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world'. Camus' conclusion is that of an absurd freedom, where 'the absurd man can only drain everything to the bitter end, and deplete himself. The absurd is his extreme tension which he maintains constantly by solitary effort, for he knows that in consciousness and in that day-to-day revolt he gives proof of his only truth which is defiance'. (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, Penguin Books, 2005, pp 26 & 53).

Jinchao's interest in the absurd within the visual is closely related to theatrical performance. Citing Samuel Beckett's (1906-1989) *Waiting for Godot* (1948) where the search for meaning of the play is mirrored in the content (or apparent lack thereof) of the play, his works are stagings of indeterminate narratives. Yet in spite of the non-appearance

of Godot, there is a sense of hopeless hope in the act of waiting and expectation. In the absence of a definitive interpretation of the play, its performance varies with the reading preferred; and in much the same way the work by Jinchao *A Few Roles Looking for A Writer* appears as a narrative, or at least the audience is compelled to seek a narrative that is neither denied nor acknowledged. There is a sense of uncertainty in the interactions or for that matter relationships involved of characters portrayed, caught in an act that alternates between child-like innocence of their comic and toy-like figures, the awkward knowing expressions upon their faces and the mute landscapes they occupy.

In the current expansion of contemporary art practice in China, Jinchao's work may also be read as an expression of the disengagement accompanying rapid change. While referencing theoretical texts, his work however present explorations of an inner and private world. Finely drawn, the characters populate a dream-scape, both an escape of present realities and in its own way an enclosed domain in itself, a maze or labyrinth that wraps around, circling back continuously. Their lack of dialogue and apparent narrative forces the viewer to imagine and project reason upon the work. In a way the creative act is also called into question. Yet it is in such a lucid moment, while deciphering the work to exhaustion, that the experience of sharing the same sphere as these unsettled figures resolves itself into another narrative and into another means of waiting, one that then can be savoured as an unexpected adventure of unspoken possibility.

Previous page:

An absurd life of panda

Chang Jinchao

Oil-based marker pen drawing on canvas

2006

Chen Yi-Cheng

Born in Taiwan in 1984, Yi-Cheng moved with his family to Thailand in 1993 where he studied art at the Ruamrudee International School. In 2002, Yi-Cheng headed for Singapore and enrolled in the Jewellery Design programme at LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts to pick up skills to help out with the family business. This was a period when the department operated under the Faculty of Fine Arts, and as a result, during the course of his programme, Yi-Cheng became enamoured of experimenting with different modes of expression instead of simply trying to create visually appealing and saleable works. Inspired by the vast range of available media and approaches, he chose to remain studying in the Fine Arts after a reorganisation of departments, where he would then be able to concentrate on issues and possibilities that bespeak his interests and perspectives. He recently completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts at the College.



The tourist industry has reduced cities to clichéd adjectives and specialized advertised experiences. However none reduces as much as the icon and iconic, the reference that is ultimately a collection of characteristics, the representation that sets itself upon and apart from the city it lays claim to. For an outsider, a foreigner or a visitor, the icon may be the first and last association of the experience of the city, its imprint, the extent and limits of its imagination that yet may contain almost no relationship to what it is intended to symbolize. These icons however, once discovered or developed, have the capacity for memetic replication. The holiday postcard is arguably a successful memetic tool, economically cheap, emotionally limited and an overt communication, it is a highly advantageous vehicle for



the icon to multiply.

Yi-Cheng's work explores the development and life of the icon, its brushes with reality and the separate life it appears to own. As a visitor to Singapore, this expands into his own discoveries of the significant (and insignificant) moments that make up his experience of the country. In his work *Provision of Image and Format on Invitations and Catalogues for Mass Circulation*, he captures the alternative dimensions of local icons, the wandering Styrofoam cup drifting lazily upon the icon of the Singapore River. The river that as a tourist icon usually appears in sweeping splendor with its supporting cast of godowns and bumboats, is reframed in his image where the river is a deep enigmatic jade green, impenetrable and less spectacular as it is curious. Yi-Cheng's work in the exhibition has been made functional as the invitation card and publicity material for the exhibition, yet with its image it introduces the notion of the recalibration of the exhibition brand, confounding the exhibition and its content with the desire to discover the iconic.

Previous page:

Provision of Image and Format on Invitations
and Catalogues for Mass Circulation

Chen Yi-Cheng

*Provision of image and format on invitations and
catalogues for mass circulation*

21 x 15cm for Invitations, 28 x 20 cm for Catalogues

2006

Chong Li-Chuan

Chong Li-Chuan (also known as Chuan) is a composer and sonic artist. Born in Singapore, 1975, Chuan received his formal education at Goldsmiths College, University of London, graduating with a Bachelor of Music degree in 1999 and a Master of Music (Composition) in 2000. Between 2001 and 2005, Chuan was a post-graduate researcher in electroacoustic composition at the Stanley Glasser Electronic Music Studios (EMS) in Goldsmiths College and worked under the joint supervision of Katharine Norman, Nye Parry, Michael Young and John Drever. As a practitioner, Chuan is involved in making acoustic composition, electroacoustic sound, installation artwork, free improvisation, 'live' electronics, and collaboration with artists from various disciplines such as dance, theatre, and video art. Recent solo performances include 'Live' in Koenji (Dec 2005), free improvisation on laptop computer in Tokyo, and *Shadow & Subterfuge* (Sep 2005) in Singapore. He has also collaborated in *Etmologies* (April 2006) with sound artist Ang Song Ming and visual artist Donna Ong, *False Securities 5: Alice in Wonderland* (Feb 2006) with sound artists Evan Tan and Zul Mahmud, and *4x4 Episodes of Singapore Art* (Sep/Oct 2005) with visual artist Ho Tzu Nyen.



On the notion of 'intelligibility', I (the artist) pondered on a passage from Judith Butler, in the introduction to her recent book *Undoing Gender* (Routledge, 2004, p.3):

'There are advantages to remaining less than intelligible, if intelligibility is understood as that which is produced as a consequence of recognition according to prevailing social norms. Indeed, if my options are loathsome, if I have no desire to be recognised within

a certain set of norms, then it follows that my sense of survival depends upon escaping the clutch of those norms by which recognition is conferred. It may well be that my sense of social belonging is impaired by the distance I take, but surely that estrangement is preferable to gaining a sense of intelligibility by virtue of norms that will only do me in from another direction.'

Judith Butler, recognised for her 'performative theory of gender', which may be understood within a broader argument for subjective performance where the performance creates simultaneously role and reality, describes the preference for escape to an alternative to the limits of intelligibility. In *B.A.C.H. amalgamate*, Chuan explores two works by Johann Sebastian Bach, two keyboard suites - his sixth English Suite (BWV811 in D minor, the Allemande) and first French Suite (BWV812 in D minor, the Courante) focusing on their second movements. In taking apart and putting together these suites he creates an 'amalgamation' that is both the suites at once, yet unrecognised as either. In the same way musical notation can be deconstructed into discrete signs, their intelligibility as the continuum of sounds that make up the suite may brought into question. The measure of the score (and the measure of the dance) performed then creates an intelligibility underscored by a slippage of intelligibility that is experienced not simply as a plurality of parts, as a glittering steam of a shifted and shattered universe, where each nuance made iridescent is also made whole; and where the artist in reflecting upon the limits of each note, in dividing and reassigning, performs an act of rejuvenation, prolonging each note indefinitely.

Facing page:

Probably began as a weekend hobby...

Chong Li-Chuan

Picture taken in April 2003, London



Frédéric Sarkozy in collaboration with Ryf

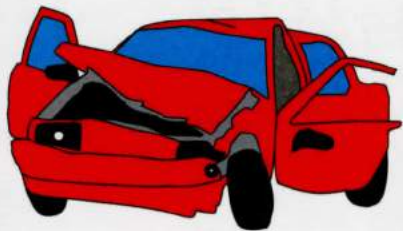
Born in 1980, Frédéric Sarkozy studied Installation Art at L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'art de Cergy-Paris, in France, where he obtained the National Diploma of Fine Arts (D.N.A.P.) with commendation of the jury. He received a Bachelor of Art Degree (First Class) in Interactive Art at LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts in Singapore. His interest in media arts and technology is focused on the interactions and relationships that can be developed across disciplines and knowledges. He has exhibited his work in France, including at the Carrousel du Louvre of Paris and he has also researched at the Mixed Reality Lab in Singapore developing augmented reality projects in collaboration with the lab's engineers.

Ryf (Mohd Arif), born in 1980, graduated with diplomas in Electronic Engineering and Interactive Media however his interest has always been in the arts. His works have since been a hybrid of arts and electronics. He has participated with an interactive artwork at the Singapore Science Centre in 2006 for GNOME exhibition and at local institutes and galleries. He has also collaborated with local artists to create works infused with electronics. He set up a mural company, 'Wall-people' catering for corporate and personal design, and is currently pursuing a degree in Media Arts.



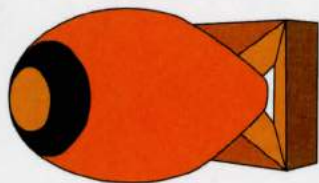
The process of learning is a complexity of knowledge and experience, its purpose being the assimilation not merely of thought but ways of thinking, creating both pathways as well as limits to what is learnt. Employing children's toys and reprogramming them, Frédéric's work subverts the content of the colourfully constructed and apparently

Aa



accident

Bb



bomb

Cc



coma

benign education imparted. The restructured learning toy *English's Finest* is a basic alphabet familiarisation toy, usually using sound and illustration to symbolically tie elements of reading with the careful cultivation of an assumed child-like reality. As each letter is pressed, a voice spells the word, and a sound illustrating the image of the object symbolised is also played. This multi-sensory experience is imagined to be educational yet fun.

However, with the refurbishment, the work confronts the imaginary child with a different world, one where chaos and violence rule. The artist describes the modified toy as being more honest, that the idea of unrealistic optimism is probably not the existence that children experience (nor is it their customary manner in approaching toys) and suggesting the innocence of the original format of the toy perhaps shields someone other than the child. Childhood innocence is also associated with a certain powerlessness. Through turning the learning toy on its head, the work creates a situation where a child learns not only the power of creation of knowledge but also that of destruction. Edutainment is a lucrative business as well as the idea of child-like innocence. The work's interactive mode puts the audience in the role of a child, encouraging the idea of play, and at a level the appreciation of the work and half the entertainment is the audience's reaction. Affording one with the conspiratorial pleasure of conjuring chaos and destruction without consequence, the work calls into question the viewer's sense of morality through the selection of which scenarios one finds oneself choosing to learn.

Previous page:

English's Finest

Frédéric Sarkozy with Ryf

Electronic Alphabet Toy

2006

Ana Prvacki

Born in Serbia in 1976, Ana Prvacki studied Fine Arts at the Pratt Institute in New York before turning to Architecture completing a Masters programme with Bernard Cache in at the El Nuevo Proyectar Cibernetico y Ecologico, Universitat Internationalde Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain in 2001. She recently completed a Masters of Fine Arts at LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts. Working and living in Singapore she has exhibited works recently at the Luxe Gallery, New York and at ARCO – Cityscapes in Madrid in 2005, Pantagruel Syndrome at the T-Torinotriennale tremusei, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, GAM Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Torino and the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy in 2005, and Presterium@Milmilks developed by Spanish advertising firm S.C.P.F, Barcelona, Spain in 2002.



Describing her works as a study of ‘contortion, collapsibility and modes of idea production’, Ana produces a series of ideas that are presented in catalogues and realized in exhibitions. Employing an ‘open-ended methodology informed by seemingly counterintuitive methods -the juxtaposition of art history and marketing or advertising and Zen or yoga and product design or urban planning and toy/kindergarten design, the ideological and aesthetic tensions and the conflicts created in these collisions offer in turn new sources of ideas and conceptual inspiration’.

Expanding the range of her unexpected and inspired production line, Ana creates *The Great Incorporal Couch*, a reflection upon the gallery and museum setting and the attendant activity of analysis

and reflection. Congruent with the conjunction of unpredictable ideas, the work combines the sensuality of relaxation with meditative analysis. Taking on the problem of the white cube gallery and the intrusion of the gallery seat that neither provides comfort nor harmonizes with its surrounding, the work is functional disappearance into the gallery floor, mimicking and camouflaged, yet made for lounging – an activity usually not encouraged while viewing artworks. The demands of looking at art can now be experienced in comfort.

Recalling the essential design furniture and the chairs portrayed in art and as object, Ana's formulation of the work can be experienced in multiple ways as its audience engages with the politics of power within the gallery. The authority of the viewer is renewed, and the interaction of the viewer and viewed is reconciled and invigorated. The integration of herself as artist, with that of the audience creates a conversational nexus, where the experience of the work and the work envelope one another, contorting artist and audience upon each other. Printed with the brand used for her semi-fictional production company, Ananatural Productions, The Great Incorporeal Couch is also product, marketable and branded, mobile landscape and consumable ocular vehicle.

Facing page:
The Great Incorporeal Couch
Ana Prvacki
Fabric detail
2006



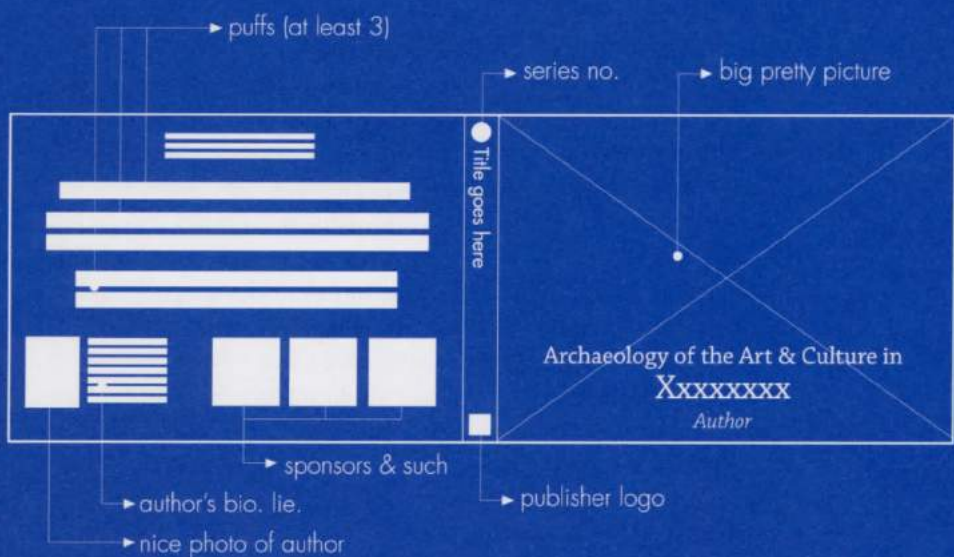
Shubigi Rao

Shubigi was born in Bombay sometime in the last century, but fled for the hills within six months of her birth. Unfortunately, since her family fled with her, she has been fleeing ever since. Thus, short of breath and fleet of foot, long of words and big of boot, Shubigi wound her way to Singapore, and proceeded to get an education all over again. Now, caught in the undertow of The Art Scene, she leads a thrilling life battling murky market forces, and fending off the powers of logic and reasoning and the promptings of sensible behaviour. Never one to shirk from impossible tasks, Shubigi's latest venture involves using an economy of words in her daily articulation. While daunting this may seem, knowing her as we do, struggling against the voluminous volume of her verbiage, we believe she will prevail, and will learn to use fewer words, and commas, to lend grace, sensibility, humility, and good ole human decency to her formidable repertoire of useless skills.



For Shubigi Rao, her works provide her with a range of roles that she fashions further into works. In an earlier work *Bastardising Biography* she considers herself as biographer and curator of her own works, creating / curating a record of her own personal thoughts that form her artistic practice. Quoting herself:

'The shaping of perception by the visual is inevitable; for example, we tend to judge people by the titles of the books on their shelves, and this judgement by possession, language and implied ownership of knowledge is all implicit in the *image* of the book



title itself...by allowing the placements of the titles in relation to each other to become more than the 'visual' of the individual title, we identify the collection with the character of the collector'.

- from my (the artist) dissertation, 'There is Nothing Natural about the Museum of Natural History'.

The assumption of the objectivity of the role of curator, biographer, archaeologist, archivist and historian is set against the assumed subjective role of artist. For Shubigi, her part as investigator however is framed by the 'artist project' and she seeks a more critical role for herself and her work. Through a simulation of these authoritative roles, her work then is viewed through the frameworks of knowledge subtly modified to reveal its gaps and prerogative.

No cover, no colour is a project that attempts to deconstruct the usually neglected exchange between art knowledge and art. The creation of books about knowledge of art is cast as archaeology, rather than a history, not simply a recording of but a means to unearth. The unearthing of course finally belongs to the reader, as the excitement of books is not merely in its purchase but the anticipation of the text within. Buried within the gallery's bookstore, the work blends in with a variety of other texts all claiming knowledge. As with the other books it takes company with, Shubigi's books are available for sale, creating a private moment for the buyer where artwork and Art Discourse confront one other.

Previous page:

No cover, no colour

Shubigi Rao

Content, hand-stitched (Limited Edition)

2006

Andre Tan

Born in 1978, Andre Tan is a BFA (Hons) graduate from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University. He is a recent graduate from the Masters in Fine Art programme at the LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore. Andre is the recipient of the Studentship Scheme (2005) in LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, and also received the Georgette Chen Arts Scholarship (1999). He was an artist in residence at the Gallery Hotel (2003 Singapore), and is the founder of multi-disciplinary art collective, *cult de vision*. His recent exhibitions include *Made 2 Order* at The Arts House in 2006, and commissions at the New Majestic Hotel.



Andre's work is often viewed in relation to the sensibilities of Pop Art, of utilising text and reproduced images from pop culture, in the commercial style of advertising and mass communication. While Andre's deliberation upon Pop Art's obsession with the everyday and its critique of popular culture is seen in his selection of content for his work, his focus is less the concerns of commercialism per se as its effects and the reflective process engendered. *If you love something, let it go free. If it doesn't come back, hunt it down and kill it* is an installation of text that the artist has come across in magazines of fashion and culture. These mass-produced, quickly read and as rapidly disposed publications are intended to entertain, amuse and to superficially occupy, yet their messages are hardly innocuous. The influence of being constantly met with a barrage of attitudes, concerns and questions upon one's personality and lifestyle is undoubtedly pervasive and persuasive, and except for the seduction of the accompanying visuals, most would not willingly subject one's

self to such confrontational examination.

With bite-sized phrases such as 'It was me all the time' and 'We are safe here', the work extracts the message from its visual support in a way that unbalances its emphasis and weight, leading to other unexpected readings. Andre's interest in these texts however is in their deconstruction, to explore the absurdity of the human condition that is exposed by these texts found in magazines. The question that he explores in his work is thus not an attempt to decipher hidden messaging in fashionable fare but at the level in which these messages then become a part of our consciousness, remixed into our own thoughts and percolated through our experiences. At the same instance in sampling these messages, he reproduces, severs them from their glossy moorings and repeats them in his own interpretive process as if to test their limitations, and in that the limitations of the lengths consumers would go to stretch and remake their own realities in response to the enterprise of attention redirection. The sincerity found within these sleek and slippery productions is genuine, albeit momentary, and it is the gratification of instant solutions and realities that define his work less as simply interpretive as a way of urging audiences to refashion their affair with the texts that condition their surroundings.

Facing page:

If you love something, let it go free.

If it doesn't come back, hunt it down
and kill it

Andre Tan

Installation — printed paper with tape

2006

**FROCK
AND
ROLL.**

**I
SPY
WITH
MY
LITTLE EYE.**

**VIRGINITY
ISEVERSO
GOODFOR
THECOMPL
EXION.**

**I FORGOT
WHAT I
WAS
GOING TO
SAY.**

**BE
CAREFUL
WITH
WHAT YOU
SAY.**

**SMILE
ONCE IN A
WHILE OR
AT LEAST
PRETEND.**

**MAYBE,
MAYBE
NOT.**

**WE
ARE
SAFE
HERE**

Acknowledgements

The Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore would like to thank the nine artists who have with their enthusiasm made the exhibition possible: Ahmad Abu Bakar, Khairuddin Hori, Chang Jinchao, Chen Yi-Cheng, Chong Li-Chuan, Frédéric Sarkozy, Ana Prvacki, Shubigi Rao and Andre Tan. It has been a pleasure working with them in presenting and developing these works.



We are also grateful to our kind sponsors RJ Paper, Octopus Printers and Madeira Asia for their support towards the artworks presented in the exhibition.





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