



Hong Kong & Visual Arts: A HKS SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE, ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

Saturday 12 December 2020 (9:45 am - 5:00 pm)

WELCOME: 9:50 am

Each speaker has 30 mins to do with as you please. Perhaps a 20-25 minute talk/presentation with a few minutes for discussion at the end is best.

PANEL A: Curation, Praxis and Art

(10:00 am - 1:00 pm)

Part 1

Time: 10:00 am - 10:30 am

Topic: Outsider

Speaker: David DERNIE

ABSTRACT

I arrived here two years ago, a stranger to Hong Kong, an architect – and spatial practitioner, working between architecture, installation, exhibition design and two-dimensional work in mixed media. The work I propose to present navigates my inquiries into this city, its landscapes and happenings, first from afar, then looking closer, from its edges and finally within real spaces in Tai Kok Tsui - with my students.

The work is in three sections that document these 'distances' of perception as much as a chronology of my time here. They are hesitant, abstracted from a deep understanding through barriers of culture and language, but nevertheless a response of a stranger to the city, its' life and its mutations:

First – from afar. These paintings and collages were prepared before I arrived in Hong Kong. They anticipate the cities landscape, in so far as I imagined it. They are works of various sizes in mixed media, and were exhibited in Cambridge (UK) in an exhibition called Heat (2018)

Second – from the edge: These are collages of paper. They respond to the problematics of the city during my first year. I had observed my students' expression of the what was happening in their city. I made work by recycling their posters once they were removed from the walls of the School.

Third – from within: This is current work, with students. We have taken a lease on 5 empty shops in a building shortly to be demolished in Tai Kok Tsui. The installations in these empty spaces engage with, and respond to the community in different ways, triggered by themes of such as disappearance, language, narrative, the spatiality of light and colour.

On the one hand the practice has opened ways into thinking about the city, its peculiar form, life and changes. At the same time, even as I got closer to knowing something, the moving closer in was also a moving further away. It remains the work of an outsider.

ABOUT DAVID DERNIE

David Dernie is an artist, academic and architect whose work focuses on the practice of collage, drawing and questions of materiality, colour and re-presentation in terms of relational and situated spatial practice. He has a deep interest in the natural environment and founded international network Latitudes in 2014, engaging future generations with the challenges of designing for climate change. A graduate of the University of Cambridge (UK) David was twice a Rome Scholar in Architecture subsequently elected a Fellow at Fitzwilliam College, University

of Cambridge. He is currently Chair and Director of the School of Architecture, CUHK. Over the years, he has lectured and published widely, and exhibited his drawings and paintings internationally. A theme that pervades recent collaborative work is the reciprocity between word and image, and includes the recent collage series Shipwreck with author Olivia Laing (2018).

Part 2

Time: 10:00 am - 10:30 am

Topic: Curating the Pandemic Distance: Contingency as a Mode

Speaker: Man Kit LAI

ABSTRACT

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic with travelling and gathering restrictions, exhibitions with international collaboration in Hong Kong have undergone experiments in curating from a distance across borders and time. Site-specific installations have to be delivered through virtual communication between artists based overseas and curators/curatorial units in Hong Kong. Performances on-site need to make constant adjustments in their interactive approaches, both physically and virtually, to align with the government's volatile grip on social contact. This presentation examines recent curatorial practices in Hong Kong during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly on site-specific installation and performance art, which coped with the contingencies of artist's (physical) absence and institutional restrictions. Two site-specific artworks— Shirley Tse's *Negotiated Differences* (2020) installed at M+ Pavilion and Eisa Jocson's *Zoo* (2020) performed at JC Contemporary, Tai Kwun— will serve as cases in point to illustrate how curatorial practices are commingled with contingencies as a way to overcome the authorial absence and institutional intervention at the installation phase and during the exhibition respectively. They shed light on the idea of contingent curatorial practices through approaches of agential collaboration and display reconfiguration, engendering a mode of curation that is fluid, collaborative and on the move. Despite the pandemic separation and strictures, this contingent mode of curation is capable of opening up more dialogues and further complicating the conceptual framework of artworks, decentralising the production of meaning from the authorial artist through a collaborative installing process, and reflecting the protean institutional intervention by an active reconfiguration of the display during the exhibition.

ABOUT MANKIT LAI

Mankit Lai is an MPhil candidate in art history at the University of Hong Kong. His research interests lie primarily in contemporary art with foci on identity politics, urbanization, social practices and gender issues. Curatorial practices, installations and photography are his major fields of inquiry. His current research investigates the shaping and reshaping of urban queer identities in the photography of Ren Hang. Before his MPhil, he worked in different art and cultural institutions, supporting in his curatorial capacities with exhibitions and research in M+, the Palace Museum and Asia Society Hong Kong. In 2018, he was awarded as a Laidlaw scholar to embark on a research project examining gender representations in Chinese propaganda art at the University of Leeds and the University of Hong Kong.

Part 3

Time:	11:00 am - 11:30 pm
Topic:	Curatorial Care: Investigating Hong Kong Community Cultural Development through Visual Arts Curating
Speaker:	Wilson YEUNG and David LUI

ABSTRACT

In the history of modern art, the notion of visual arts curating usually means the care of art objects and crafts. The role of the curator refers to the person responsible for the art collection and exhibition in an art gallery or museum. However, in the past decade, with the increase of contemporary art activities and social movements, the interrelationship between visual art and social behaviour and the impact of current global epidemic, result in the change in the concept of Hong Kong art curation. The idea of 'curatorial care' began to emerge. As the Caribbean political theorist and curator Anthony Boggs suggested, "we may grasp how different acts of humanization occur." Art curation has shifted from 'object-based' to 'people-oriented'. The role of curators can be seen as 'social facilitators' or 'cultural collaborators' and curating visual arts is no longer a passive activity, but an active action to establish contact with people and communities.

This presentation will examine Hong Kong's community cultural development in recent years through visual art curating. Taking the Centre for Community

Cultural Development (CCCD), a pioneer community arts organization in Hong Kong, as an example, this demonstration will discuss how CCCD's curators can use different forms of visual arts and curatorial approaches to collaborate with various professional creative practitioners to assist people with different cultural backgrounds and their ability to create visual art experiences.

ABOUT WILSON YEUNG

Wilson Yeung is an artist-curator, researcher, and creative producer. Wilson holds a Master's degree in art curating from the Department of Art History at the University of Sydney and a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) with distinction awarded by RMIT University. He is a collaborator of Independent Curators International, an alumnus of Shanghai Curators Lab at Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, Shanghai University, and an industry researcher at RMIT University's Contemporary Art and Social Transformation Research Group. Wilson is undertaking a PhD by practice in RMIT's School of Architecture and Urban Design, addressing collective curatorial practices. His texts have appeared on the OnCurating, Public Art Journal, Journal of Urban Culture Research, International Academic Forum Archive and Journal of Public Space. In 2020, Wilson was selected by Sydney's 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art and London's International Curators Forum to participate in the 4A Curators' Intensive.

ABOUT DAVID LUI

David Lui is a community cultural development worker, art administrator and theatre practitioner who possess a multi training background, ranging from social work, theatre, music, visual and touch art, and inclusive art, with over 10 years of frontline and management experience, 2000 hours of performing and workshop conducting experience. As a project manager of Centre for Community Cultural Development and a member of FM Theatre Power, David is overseeing various community art projects on different positions, which includes but is not limited to a coordinator, trainer, director, curator and performer. He is also a current research postgraduate student in City University of Hong Kong conducting research of arts empowerment.

Part 4

Time:	11:30 am - 12:00 pm
Topic:	Rethinking Localism: Prefiguration in Printhow's 點印社 Creative Practice
Speaker:	LIU Nga Ying

ABSTRACT

Prefiguration is understood as an embodiment of a utopian future at present in the study of social movement. Prefiguration as a practical principle in building and sustaining social relations seeks moral consistency of means and ends of political goals amid political actions. In view of the rise of nativist sentiment in social movements in recent years, collective identity building of the concept of 'Hong Konger' in different episodes of large-scale protest movements promotes solidarity and sustains movement energy, however, such nativist tendency also leads to the construction of a 'we–them' dichotomy that limits chances of expression made by those considered to be 'them'. This causes an oversight on the complexity of emerging subjectivity in protests, as oppression over 'them' is often arranged invisible to many. In this regard, this presentation focuses on the practice of a printmaking collective –Printhow 點印社— that participates and holds cultural events in different major pro-democratic demonstrations and other self-organized protests, by reinvigorating especially the experience of foreign domestic helpers 外籍家庭傭工 and calls into question visibility of foreign domestic helpers as 'them'.

Deviating from a bottom-up approach, Printhow's practice can be understood as a side-to-side, horizontally influential repertoire by experimenting with both mobilization and everyday activities as tactics. This presentation will discuss the political significance of Printhow's artistic productions and connectivity with the foreign domestic helpers, understands the prefigurative practice as articulation of the now marginalized concept of inclusive localism proposed by the left-inspired activists in Hong Kong who advocate to the heritage conservation movement. Taking Printhow as an example, this presentation aims to explore and discuss the potential of prefiguration against the narrowly interpreted discourse of 'localism' as an obstacle to real social change.

ABOUT LIU NGA YING

Liu Nga Ying obtained her BA and MPhil in visual studies at Lingnan University, Hong Kong and works as a researcher at Academy of Visual Arts at Hong Kong Baptist University. She is currently a Ph.D candidate in art history at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her research interests revolve around contemporary art in Hong Kong especially socially and politically related practices. Her dissertation studies art practices and cultural participation by artists and non-artists in protest campaigns and social movements in Hong Kong. She also researches on Hong Kong political cartoons. Before starting her PhD, she collaborated with Hong Kong Federation of the Blind in documentary production for the visually impaired community.

Part 5

Time:	12: 00 pm - 12: 30 pm
Topic:	Curating Social and Civil Engagement: an Artist-cum-Councillor Perspective
Speaker:	Wen YAU

ABSTRACT

This paper is an autoethnographic account of my involvement in shadowing, electioneering and assisting Clara Cheung, an artist-curator with whom I have been collaborating in various art and activist projects for more than a decade. Cheung won in the Happy Valley constituency of the District Council election in November 2019 among the 385 pro-democratic candidates winning 72.1% of the seats in total. There are a few artist-curators who are devoted to social practices and envisage to make social changes through art too. She is also co-founder of art organizations such as C&G Artpartment, Wooferten, and Art Together which have been actively doing socially engaged art in Hong Kong through exhibitions, education and performative practices since 2007.

In the paper, I focus on Cheung's notion of curating the "community" and turning Happy Valley into a "mobile community museum," in which she envisions to apply her expertise in art-making and event organization to engage the community. I also investigate how these ideas extend to the cause of building new social networks through civil engagement in the community which is mainly composed

of conservative mid-class elites and professionals mostly inert and unused to civic participation. By reflecting upon the challenges of Cheung taking such dual roles of artist-cum-councillor, I seek to explore the possibilities of social practices of art fostering civil society in Hong Kong, especially in the light of the people's continuous struggle for democracy and autonomy against the hard-line authoritarian suppression.

ABOUT WEN YAU

As a cross-media artist, researcher, curator and writer, Wen Yau has been concentrating on performance/live art and social practices in the last few years. Her works often grapple with cultural difference and intimacy in public space. Her work has been shown widely in Asia, Europe, Oceania as well as North, Latin and South Americas. She is also actively engaged in various creative and arts educational projects and curated several research-led exhibitions. In 2018, she completed her PhD thesis at the Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University, which is an autoethnography of performative practices in post-Handover Hong Kong art and activism. She contributes frequently to various periodicals in Hong Kong and Asia. In 2015-2016, she served as Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Performance Studies Department at the Northwestern University, USA. / url: wenyau.net (Photo credit: © HALLE 14, Leipzig | shrine productions, 2019)

PANEL B: Analysing the Artistic and the Political: Forms and Issues

(2:00 pm - 5:00 pm)

Each speaker has 30 mins to do with as you please. Perhaps a 20-25 minute talk/presentation with a few minutes for discussion at the end is best.

Part 1

Time:	2:00 pm - 2:30 pm
Topic:	From Amateur to Experimental: a Study of Ho Fan's Experimental Moving Image Art
Speaker:	Emilie CHOI Sin-yi

ABSTRACT

In studying the local art history of Hong Kong in the 1960s, the standard narrative fell into the frameworks of Western modernist and Chinese nationalist, which confined the fundamental readings and discourse of constructing Hong Kong art history. This tendency neglected the creation and circulation of the experimental moving image art by both individuals and art clusters starting from the mid-1960s. These experimental cinematic practices were framed as “amateur” in the public sphere. Until the 1970s, these creations were legitimated as the framework of “experimental film”, and through this trajectory of the change of cultural discourse, it revealed how the concept of experimental moving image art was constructed along the Cold War and colonial context of Hong Kong in the late 1960s.

This paper attempts to re-examine the discourse of Hong Kong art history in the late 1960s through the lens of the making and visual politics of experimental moving image art, and also the shaping by the interplay between Cold War and the colonial governmentality. One of the crucial example, Ho Fan, who is a local photographic artist in the post-war era, created experimental moving image works including “Exercise one” (1966) and “An ordinary people in a metropolitan” (1966) and transgressed between the sector of film and art. I shall discuss Ho Fan's experimental practices in the late 1960s as the key research subject of this paper, so as to investigate how experimental moving image art played a vital role in the mechanism of cultural production in such socio-political context.

ABOUT EMILIE CHOI SIN-YI

Choi Sin-yi (Emilie) obtained an MPhil degree in Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University, researching on the history of Hong Kong experimental practices of moving image art in the late 1960s. Her research interests include Asian and Hong Kong documentary, alternative cinema and moving image studies, image politics, media archaeology and digital culture. Emilie started her career as a journalist at Ming Pao Weekly and City Magazine. A firm believer in the creation of publics and knowledge-mapping via public discourse and engagement, she has participated in a wide range of roles, including as editor of Cinezen, a pan-Chinese film criticism online platform; member of the Floating Projects art collective; board member of Videotage, a leading Hong Kong-based institution promoting new media art; and curator of the “Hong Kong Retrospective Documentary Film Festival: From 80s to 1997” and “Docuthon” in 2017.

Part 2

Time:	2:30 pm - 3:00 pm
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Topic:	New Waves of Political Cartoons in the Anti-ELAB Protest
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Speaker:	Justin WONG Chiu Tat
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ABSTRACT

Cartoons and illustrations have played a tremendous role in the Anti-ELAB Protest in Hong Kong last year. Since the protest began in June 2019, thousands of works created by cartoonists and protesters were poured into the social media and the Lennon Walls across the city. Graphic images became one of the most popular channels for the protesters to publicize their beliefs. Like the symbol of yellow umbrella in the Umbrella Movement, a number of iconic works gradually became the totem of the whole movement. Internally, cartoons and illustrations were the common languages that helped to strengthen the bonding among the protesters. Various styles of graphic works were adopted in different scenarios to facilitate discussions and communications among protesters via social media. While they were important assets to mobilize their supporters, the therapeutic power in the works also became a huge emotional outlet for the protesters amid the stress and sadness across the city.

The vast number of works that emerged in the 2019 protest can be regarded as the continuation of a new political cartoon movement that can be traced back to

the Anti-National Education Movement in 2012. The leader-less style and the philosophy of “Be like Water” have allowed the general public to participate in the protest through technology. The mask of Guy Fawkes in the graphic novel V for Vendetta being replaced by LIHKG-Pig and Pepe the Frog as the most prominent icons of the protest suggested the birth of a new language of political cartoons in the city. This paper aims to outline the impact cartoons and illustrations have brought to the protest and how it will foster a radical development of the Hong Kong political cartoon movement, if not a revolution.

ABOUT JUSTIN WONG

Justin Wong Chiu Tat, comic writer, received his BA (Fine Arts) in Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1996 and his MA (Interactive Digital Media) in London. He began his career as comic writer and illustrator in 2006 and started to publish his political comic column Gei Gei Gaak Gaak in Ming Pao the year after. His publications include □Lonely Planet□and□Hello World□. He is now an Assistant Professor in the Academy of Visual Arts in Hong Kong Baptist University.

Part 3

Time: 3:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Topic: Artists Reconfigure the Neutral as a Response to Recent Volatilities in the Hong Kong Political Environment

Speaker: Yang YEUNG

ABSTRACT

As volatilities in the Hong Kong legal environment intensify, “neutrality” is increasingly invalidated as a political position. This paper employs a broader understanding of “the neutral” as Roland Barthes articulates it to examine two works by Hong Kong contemporary artists Wai Lau and Sharon Lee. Both works reconfigure neutrality that simultaneously engages with and questions the politics of recognition, while remaining as Barthes says, “sensitive to the struggles of angry forces” to enable “a horizon, a direction” that “baffles the paradigm”. “The neutral” in the works becomes a mode of access to the artists’ personal and social realities. In “I am invincible – false motion tracking” (2020), Wai Lau uses synthetic media technology to re-write the lines of characters of Chinese descent in Hollywood films.

She enacts moments during which they claim to be invincible. The motion tracking devices she wears are “false” in that they are dysfunctional. The work marks a sharp turn from Lau’s previous photographic practice. Its performativity embodies the power structures that cultural and political identities are subjected to during and beyond the 2019 pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong. Sharon Lee’s “The Crack of Dawn” (2020) is a series of photographic installations presented in a shop window in Yaumatei and at multiple newsstands along protest-frequented Nathan Road. The images depict the People’s Liberation Army building at the harbor front of Central, but are deliberately dark from over-exposure to resist instant recognition. They compel a mode of perceiving beyond immediate social contentions without erasing them.

ABOUT YANG YEUNG

Yang Yeung is a writer of art, an independent curator, and an educator. She founded the non-profit soundpocket HK in 2008 and is currently its Artistic Director. From 2015 to 2017, she conducted independent project A Walk with A3 to support the right of art to be in the streets. Yeung is a member of the international research network Institute for Public Art, the independent art critics collective Art Appraisal Club (HK), and the International Art Critics Association (HK). She is Co-founder of 1983. She is also Councillor on the board of Make A Difference, a regional platform that encourages social innovation and creative change-making for good. She was Asian Cultural Council Fellow in 2013-14. In 2019, she was art writer in residence with Contemporary Art Stavanger, Norway. She currently teaches classics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Part 4

Time:	3:30 pm - 4:00 pm
Topic:	Unveiling the sociopolitics behind the Samson Young’s recompositions of classical music
Speaker:	YU Yui Tim Timothy

ABSTRACT

Local artist and composer Samson Young has been a leading figure in cross-media installations related to sound art that does not conform to classical conventions, often unwrapping hidden ideologies and decontextualizing music

itself. Putting insights from the aspects of ethnomusicology and sound art in dialogue with the immanent sociopolitical climate of Hong Kong, this article will select two of Young's works: The 2019 Sigg Prize - "Muted Situations #22: Muted Tchaikovsky's 5th" and "Memorizing the Tristan chord" to explore the hidden sociopolitical connotations by decontextualizing the epochal Wagner's "Tristan chord" and Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony, with both of them are significantly important and well-known in the course of music history. Focusing on these two works, I analyze how "Muted Tchaikovsky's 5th" is able to unveil the muted "sonic-other" and how does this "sonic-other" relates to "Memorizing the Tristan chord", which reflects local culture and sociopolitical implications, and how these implications are made due to Hong Kong people's liminal identity crisis between a Chinese and a HongKonger.

ABOUT TIMOTHY YU

Timothy Yu Yui Tim is currently a music student and vocal major studying in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He first received vocal training from Isabel Gentile and Roberto Abbondanza, both renowned singers from Italy, and is currently studying under Hong Kong renowned soprano Yuki Ip Po Ching. Timothy has received the New Dragon Bay Scholarship in the 2017 vocal masterclass in Castel Viscardo, Italy, and has also been selected to study under renowned soprano Helen Donath in Mozarteum of Salzburg during the summer of 2018. He was awarded the Ms Babara Fei Vocal Solo Prize Champion and the Brother Cassian Memorial Trophy for the Art Song category in the 70th Hong Kong Schools Music Festival. He is also awarded the champion of the 2020 International Fringe Music Online Competition and the 2020 Hong Kong Music Talent Award. He has recently sang the role of "Mi" in the contemporary opera premiere—"The banquet at elBulli", a production by local choir Hong Kong Voices in January 2020. Timothy is also active in choral and chamber music, participating as a chorister in Hong Kong Voices and was recently a conductor of the Greeners' Sound. He is also a founder of the male ensemble Cantus12. He also enjoys researching on music and art, particularly developing an interest towards soundart installations.

Part 5

Time:	4:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Topic:	Why are There no Women? A Comparative Attempt on the Representation of Artists by their Sex in Hong Kong's Art Market
Speaker:	Peter Benz

ABSTRACT

A survey-based research project by the author from 2018 showed that on average more than 72% of graduating cohorts from Hong Kong's creative undergraduate programmes between 2001 and 2015 were female, a very high ratio by international standards. The same study also found that these high numbers of women at graduation didn't articulate in even remotely proportional female representation in respective professional contexts (exhibitions, awards etc.) where women never constitute more than max. 25% of the available quota.

To follow up on these findings and to possibly find some initial reasons for this situation, but also to compare Hong Kong's ecology with other international contexts the author subsequently scrutinised exhibition records from the three Art Basel venues in Basel, Miami and Hong Kong for the years 2015 to 2019 for data on their exhibiting artists. This survey resulted in a data set of roughly 22,000 exhibition instances by about 5,900 distinct artists including their respective information on sex, age, and country of origin.

Initial statistical analysis of the data shows that

- there is a definite correlation between the proportion of female artists and age group across all three Art Basel venues;
- representation of female artists varies greatly but consistently by geographical origins;
- compared to the other two Art Basel venues female representation is statistically significantly lower in Hong Kong.

In his presentation the author intends to share the statics as the basis for a discussion – if time allows – with the audience as for the potential reasons for these findings.

ABOUT PETER BENZ

Peter Benz is Associate Professor as well as Associate Director (Teaching and Learning) of the Academy of Visual Arts of Hong Kong Baptist University. As a result of his administrative duties, he's become increasingly involved with research into issues of economic livelihoods of creative practitioners, gender inclusivity in the creative ecologies, and social impact of creative practices which he explores through surveys, statistical analysis and mappings.

END: 5:00 pm