

Press Release

The Lie of the Land

Lavender Chang | Ong Si Hui | Grace Tan | Wyn-Lyn Tan | Zen Teh | Ian Woo



Lavender CHANG, (L) *A Dissection Of..... #2*; (R) *A Dissection Of..... #12*, 2013-2017, Fine art archival print, Edition of 3 + 2 Artist's Proof, H50 x W50 cm (each)

Exhibition Period

06 August – 17 September 2022

Opening Reception

Saturday, 06 August 2022, 3 – 5pm

About the Exhibition

FOST Gallery is pleased to present the second edition of *The Lie of the Land*, a group edition of six Singaporean artists, in conjunction with Singapore's National Day.

The premise of the exhibition has not changed: to understand the features and characteristics of a place or the current state of affairs, we often need to, both literally and metaphorically, conduct investigations, surveys leading to the eventual assessments. The exhibition is a review of what makes up this country: its history, its peoples, its natural and constructed landscapes, its values, its nuances. The title is also a double entendre: with different lenses and the passage of time, perspectives on said place often blur or shift.

Ong Si Hui's text sculpture in marble *Boats Against the Current*, borrows from the closing sentence of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* — 'So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past'. This work was conceptualised to reflect upon the condition of limitations: small broken pieces of stones were hand carved and the 21 fragmented negative spaces linked up to reveal the phrase. It is especially poignant for a city state with absolutely no natural resources to speak of except for its population descended from immigrants; its early independence as brittle and fragile as marble.

Living in Singapore since she was a teenager and now a naturalised Singapore citizen, Taiwan-born Lavender Chang only realised the deep-seated dualities in her own identity in adulthood. This has led her to explore the complex issue of identity in her practice, like her series *A Dissection Of.....*. A simple question was posed to friends "What's your favourite hawker dish?". Chang then photographed each cooked ingredient from the respective dishes, separated like specimens. With each telling in the form of a handwritten text by the interviewee under the images, Chang's own questions are vicariously answered by others and in doing so, foster a deeper sense of belonging to her adopted country.

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Core to Grace Tan's practice is an interest in principles of architecture, and the methods and material applied in construction. Her metal sculptures from the *Particulate Studies* series were in part inspired by the shapes and interlocking pattern of breakwater armour units to protect against erosion along Japanese shorelines (an issue also facing Singapore). The works adopt this process of transforming the cuboid into slender forms. Points were connected to obtain lines which suggested planes such that mass can further be imagined. Shown alongside are the companion sets of prints (each a different perspectival view) of their schematic drawings. The structures are not constructed as solid forms. The artist chose industrial fin and splice plates, held together by nuts and bolts, to create a frame and layers the plates to thicken this structure. The entire design and construction process reflect Tan's interest in how objects or particulates designate the 'line', itself having length but no breadth. [Adapted from *Discrete Encoding*, exhibition essay by Khim Ong]

Zen Teh and Wyn-lyn Tan's collaboration on brass sheets draw on their combined practices of photography (Teh) and painting (Tan) in transfer prints of unmanicured secondary forest in the Jurong West industrial estate, amidst the imagined painterly mountainous forms corroded into the surface of the metal sheets. In another part of the gallery, Teh's photographic images of the same secondary forest are mounted onto slim, sharply angled metal sheets, mirroring the light refractions when it was first shown at another site. Devoid of that context, the works seem to take on a function of an arrowslit in castle architecture, revealing only glimpses of what lies beyond the enclosed space.

A national flag is one of the strongest symbols of any country and is often used in a public show of support or defiance. In Singapore, the display of the flag and the use of its design elements are heavily regulated. Whilst not directly commenting on these concerns, Ian Woo's abstract painting *Two Flags* nevertheless hints at forms of flags on a pole but does not make clear what country they represent or if there are indeed two flags. Perhaps such ambiguity or dualities are always present when examining the issue of identity.

About the Artists

Lavender CHANG's (b. 1983; Taiwan) focus lies in conceptual photography. Chang's work is a reflection of the sensitivity towards the subtle nuances surrounding her. She hopes to focus on these experiences, to create a canvas allowing further contemplation and letting the passage of time to leave behind traces of her mortality.

Her solo exhibitions include *Diverse Oneness*, commissioned by Alliance Française de Singapour for its 70th anniversary and *Floating Rays of a Wanderer*, Art Porters Gallery, Singapore (both 2019), *I Am a Seed Though A Different One From You*, The Arts House, Singapore, *The Movingly Minute Scale of a Restricted Life*, Societe Generale, Alliance Française de Singapour, Singapore (2016).

Selected group shows include the 10th anniversary exhibition of ION Arts' Young Talent Programme, *REUNITE 2019*, ION Art Gallery, Singapore, *Ecopsychology*, Objectifs – Centre for Photography and Film, Singapore (2019), *In Praise of Shadows*, ADM Gallery, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (2017), *The Singapore Art Show*, Artspace @ Helutrans, Singapore (2016), *Sensorium 360°*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore (2014), *Kuala Lumpur International Photo Awards*, Malaysia (2011), and *International Orange Photo Festival*, China (2010).

In 2011, she was the recipient of the Gold award at *The Crowbar Awards*, Singapore, and was the winner of the *Noise Singapore Prize*. Chang was one of the winners of the 2012/2013 Affordable Art Fair's *Young Talent Programme*. In 2013, she held her winner's solo show in ION Art Gallery, Singapore. In 2015, she won the *6th France+ Singapore Photographic Art Awards*. In 2016, her collaboration with &Larry won the President Design Award's *Design of the year*. In 2018, her

cinematography work for John Clang's debut feature film, *Their Remaining Journey*, premiered at the 2018 International Film Festival Rotterdam and garnered a nomination for the festival's *Bright Future Award*. It is also the opening film for the National Gallery Singapore's *Painting with Light: Festival of International Films on Art*. In 2020, *A Love Unknown* is selected by the International Film Festival Rotterdam for its Bright Future Main Programme and Asian premiere at the 12th DMZ International Documentary Film Festival, on Singular Screens by Singapore International Festival of Arts, curated by Asian Film Archive in 2021.

Chang lives and works in Singapore.

ONG Si Hui (b. 1993; Singapore) is a visual artist based in Singapore. She is a trained sculptor from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore, and a recent graduate from LASALLE College of the Arts.

Working extensively in stones, she explores the spirit of the medium through slow and meticulous hand carving processes. The geometric forms and text-oriented works are often manifestations of her stream of consciousness.

Recent solo exhibitions include *To Stay Tender*, Comma Space, Singapore (2021), and *LUCKY show*, an experimental solo-collective presentation at Lucky Plaza, Singapore (2018). Selected group participations include *Intent*, Incline, I_S_L_A_N_D_S, Singapore (2020), *Session #9: Ong Si Hui + Racy Lim*, Peninsular, Singapore (2020), *The Fabric of Sympathy*, Brother Joseph McNally Gallery, LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore (2020), and *ONLY CONNECT OSAKA*, ONLY CONNECT, Creative Centre Osaka, Japan (2019).

Grace TAN (b. 1979, Johor Bahru, Malaysia) began her practice in 2003 under the *kwodrent* series. Influenced by geometry, her works are distinguished by an intrinsic tactile nuance that heightens the matter and form. Tan's new body of works presents various systems of arrangement, exploring the intrinsic relationship between the displayed objects and the display structures.

Tan has been commissioned by the Singapore Art Museum, The Esplanade and the Land Transport Authority of Singapore. She has also represented Singapore at Singapore Biennale 2013, Fukutake House/Setouchi Triennale 2013 (in collaboration with The Substation), Aichi World Expo 2005, Venice Architecture Biennale 2008, London Design Week 2006 and State of Design Melbourne 2008-2010. In 2012, Tan was awarded the distinguished President's Design Award for *Building as a Body* and in 2013, she was conferred the Young Artist Award and nominated for the President's Young Talents Award.

Tan lives and works in Singapore.

Wyn-Lyn TAN's (b. 1974, Singapore) artistic practice is grounded in painting, and is driven by a visual language shaped through rhythm and intuition. Trained in traditional Chinese ink painting and Western painting, her work has developed a contemporary visual vocabulary that often straddles between East and West. She considers the journey and an immersive experience of a place as a medium, and much of her work has been based on travels to unfamiliar and distant landscapes in the Northern

Hemisphere, in a desire to chase the ephemeral. Her affinity with the North ties in with her Chinese sensibilities, as she finds a resonance in the vastness seen in the North, with the elusive concept of emptiness in Chinese landscape paintings. She is also interested in the nature of spaces, both metaphysical and physical, and their evocative power. In recent years, her explorations of form, space, light and perception have led to works that question the dichotomy between the two- and three-dimensional.

Her abstract paintings, while contemporary in style, seek inspiration from traditional *shanshui hua* (山水画) landscape paintings. Her paintings hover between nature and abstraction, occasionally slipping into the reminiscence of a Chinese landscape. Beginning with a sum of random mark-making, she works towards a place where things no longer feel arbitrary and the work takes over. What begins as a first mark can eventually be obliterated and washed over with a journey of marks that suggest a constant dialogue between artist and canvas. An extensive use of water in her painting process, also often result in works that recall the alchemy of ink on rice paper.

Wyn-Lyn has been the recipient of the Kunstnerstipend scholarship (2017) and Statens utstillingsstipend grant (2017), the National Arts Council (NAC) Capability Development Grant (2013), NAC Arts Professional Development Grant in Visual Arts (2011) and Emerging Artist Grant (2003). She has been awarded artist residencies with Herhusid Artist Residency, Iceland (2013), and Fiskars Artist Residency, Finland (2007). In 2011, she was one of two Singaporeans to ever take up the The Arctic Circle Residency. Her works can be found in the permanent collection of the Singapore Art Museum, and have been exhibited in Singapore, New York, Norway, Finland, Iceland, and China, including the Inside-Out Art Museum, Beijing.

Zen TEH (b. 1988; Singapore) is an artist and educator interested in the interdisciplinary studies of nature and human behavior. Her art practice spans across photography, sculpture and installation art. Teh initiated numerous collaborative projects with artists, art professionals and scientists over the years: *A Familiar Forest* is a long term ongoing collaboration with environmental biologist, Dr. Ching Jianhong from DUKE-NUS that has been exhibited at the ArtScience Museum (2015) and Lee Wee Nam Library, NTU (2021-2022). Her residency at Selasar Sunaryo Art Space (2019) involved collaboration and research with geologist Rinaldi Ikhrum from Padjadjaran University on the impact of rapid urban development on Bandung, Indonesia.

Teh has been consistently showcased in numerous group and solo exhibitions in Singapore and the region, including National Museum of Singapore, Singapore Art Museum, and ArtScience Museum, Thailand, Indonesia, Korea, Taiwan and China and invited as a guest speaker at regional and international environmental conferences such as UNESCO-UNITWIN 2021, ASEAN Powershift 2015 and Hanoi Innovation Week 2016 on Sustainability. Her works have been acquired by the Singapore Art Museum and numerous private collections in Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Singapore.

In 2021, Teh was conferred the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council, Singapore's highest accolade for artists under the age of 35.

Ian WOO (b. 1967, Singapore) is an artist influenced by forms of modernism, perceptual abstraction and the sound structures of music improvisation. His paintings, painted objects and drawings are characterised by a sense of gravitational and representational change. Each work often bears signs in which the function of image is seen as a diagrammatic guide towards consciousness. His use of frames, axis and invisible grids as starting points to build upon his work has led to the development of his 'compartments and systems' approach to understanding a painted space as activated time.

Woo's work is in the collection of major collection of major institutions such as ABN AMRO, Singapore Art Museum, The Istana Singapore, National Gallery Singapore, Suzhou Center, UBS and the Mint Museum of Craft & Design, USA. His paintings are featured in the publication *Art Cities of the Future: 21st Century Avant-Gardes*, a publication by Phaidon in 2013. Since 2016, he has been part of *Impermanent Durations: On Painting and Time*, an artist collaborative with Beth Harland, David Thomas and Laura Lisbon.

Selected Images



ONG Si Hui
Boats against the current
2020
Marble
H5 x W210 x D10 cm



Grace TAN
PARTICULATE 1-7
2019
CNC machined aluminium with stainless steel fasteners
Approx. H30 x W30 x D30 cm



Wyn-Lyn TAN and Zen TEH
Panoramic Fragments X
2022
Corrosives, photographic image print and acrylic on brass
H30 x W170 cm



Ian WOO
Two Flags
2011
Acrylic on linen
H200 x W180 x D4.5 cm

NB: More images can be furnished upon request.

Location	FOST Gallery 1 Lock Road #01-02, Gillman Barracks Singapore 108932
MRT	Labrador Park
Bus	Opposite Alexandra Point: 51, 57, 61, 93, 97, 97e, 100, 166, 175, 963 or 963e
Gallery Hours	Tue–Sat: 11am–7pm Sun/Mon/Pub Hol: Open by appointment
Admission	Free
Visitor Registration	www.fostgallery.as.me/schedule.php
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