

## Press Release

# DISCRETE ENCODING

Bea Camacho, Donna Ong, Grace Tan, Savanhdary Vongpoothorn



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**Exhibition Period** 23 November – 29 December 2019

**Opening Reception** Saturday, 23 November 2019, 5-7 pm  
Curator & Artists' Walkthrough from 5.30 pm

**About the Exhibition** FOST Gallery is pleased to present *Discrete Encoding*, curated by Khim Ong, featuring works by Bea CAMACHO, Donna ONG, Grace TAN and Savanhdary VONGPOOTHORN.

Humans have pondered over questions of perception for as long as they are conscious of their ability to see and in attempting to make intelligible their visual experience. Thinkers have long argued ideas of perceptual experiences, the relation between appearance and reality, how we can possibly gain knowledge of the world as perceived through the senses (assuming certainty as a requisite of knowing), to the extent of throwing doubts on the existence of a physical, external world. It is the indeterminacy of the senses that problems of perception arise and continues to fascinate.

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How do we then capture visual impressions that are fleeting, subjective, contingent on the conditions at the moment of perceiving, and translate them into knowledge about the world and ourselves? Computer vision perhaps offers a way of understanding how visual perception works. Intended to automate the functions of the human visual system, computer vision is a scientific discipline that started in the late 1960s and is concerned with developing theoretical and algorithmic systems to obtain visual understanding through acquiring, processing and analysing visual data. Fields and shades of colour are analysed according to how they are organised, their scale-space, textual and through extraction of edges and lines. These encoded data replicate the visual field through which numerical, and other information can be obtained and serve as source information for further analyse and use, for instance, in related fields of artificial intelligence, information engineering, neurobiology, and so on. Such scientific model of acquiring data changes the way we comprehend the visual world, making them concrete, describable, and manipulatable.

But how then does visual perception translate into visual impression or experience? And how can artistic works apply scientific models of acquiring and analysing visual data (in other words “knowing” the world) to produce images and objects that attempt to capture the unintelligible part of experience? The exhibition, *Discrete Encoding*, brings together works that engages in a process of encoding visual information, in turn translating them into sensory data embedded in a system of cultural and linguistic signification. Here, systemic producing process and subjective reflection are co-presented in the final product of artistic imaginary.

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**About the Curator**

**Khim ONG** is an independent curator based in Singapore. Until recently, she was Deputy Director, Curatorial Programmes at NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore. At the Centre, she co-curated solo exhibitions of internationally acclaimed artists Tarek Atoui, Amar Kanwar, and Yang Fudong, as well as research exhibitions *Trees of Life – Knowledge in Material* (2018), *Ghosts and Spectres – Shadows of History* (2017), and *Incomplete Urbanism: Attempts of Critical Spatial Practice* (2016). Previously, Ong held curatorial positions at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, LASALLE and Osage Gallery, Hong Kong. She was also curator of the Southeast Asia Platform at Art Stage Singapore in 2015. Ong is also one of the curators for the upcoming Bangkok Art Biennale 2020.

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**About the Artists**

**Bea CAMACHO** (b. 1983, Philippines) is a visual artist who works in installation, performance, and video. She received her B.A. in Visual and Environmental Studies from Harvard University, where she was awarded the Albert Alcalay Prize for Outstanding Work in Studio Art and the David McCord Prize for Achievement in the Arts.

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She is a recipient of the Thirteen Artists Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines. She was also selected as an exhibiting artist for the 2006 Asian Contemporary Art Week in New York City, USA and for the 2009 International Women Artists Biennale in Incheon, Korea.

Her work has been exhibited in galleries internationally. She has also shown her work in institutions, including the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Philippines; National Museum of the Philippines, Philippines; Metropolitan Museum of Manila; Philippines; Museum of Contemporary Art and Design in Manila; Philippines; the Musee d'Art Moderne in St. Etienne, France; Kyoto Art Center, Japan; Hangaram Museum, Korea; Triennale di Milano Design Museum, Italy; Queens Museum of Art, New York, USA; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, USA; and the Tate Modern, UK

Bea Camacho lives and works in Shanghai, China.

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**Donna ONG** (b. 1978, Singapore) is an installation artist from Singapore, best known for her evocative and thought-provoking environments made from furniture, found objects and original artwork. She has exhibited at the inaugural Singapore Biennale (2007), Jakarta Biennale (2009), Kwandu Biennale (2008), 2- Moscow Biennale (2007), and the Moscow Biennale of Young Art (2014).

Her installations have appeared in museums and institutions worldwide, such as the Singapore Art Museum, National Museum of Singapore, Hara Museum (Japan) and the Djanogly Art Gallery in Nottingham University (UK). In 2009, she received the Singapore National Arts Council Young Artist Award. In the same year, she also won the People's Choice award for the President's Young Talent Competition. While pursuing her Bachelor's degrees in Fine Art and Architecture at Goldsmiths College (UK) and University College London (UCL) respectively, she was conferred several awards and prizes such as UCL's Singapore Undergraduate Scholarship, the Shell-NAC Undergraduate Scholarship and the Architectural Theory Prize. She recently completed a Masters degree in Fine Art at LASALLE College of the Arts (Singapore) where she graduated at the top of her cohort.

She has participated in several prestigious art residencies such as Arts Initiative Tokyo (Japan), Koganecho Bazaar (Yokohama, Japan), Singapore Tyler Print Institute (Singapore), Kunstlerhaus Bethanien (Berlin, Germany), and Krinzinger Projekte (Vienna, Austria). She had also presented a major work *My forest is not your garden* (2016-2018), in collaboration with Singapore-based artist Robert Zhao Renhui for the 9 Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (Australia).

Donna Ong lives and works in Singapore.

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**Grace TAN** (b. 1979, Malaysia) is an interdisciplinary artist whose works often blur the lines between design and art. Formally trained in fashion design, Tan began her art and design practice in 2003 under the kwodrent studio in which she presented a series of works based on the study of rectangles, materials, and construction methods. The series is defined and shaped by an intuitive and methodological working process where each piece of work is numbered and dated to form a chronological record of the series development.

In recent years, her works have evolved beyond wearable fabric pieces into complex site-specific installations and spatial constructs, while retaining the core method-based working process. 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.

Grace Tan lives and works in Singapore.

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**Savanhdy VONGPOOTHORN** (b. 1971, Laos) completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts at the University of Western Sydney and a Masters of Fine Arts at the University of New South Wales (COFA). She has undertaken numerous residencies, both in Australia and overseas, including India, Japan, Laos, Scotland, Singapore and Vietnam. In 2006, she was commissioned to create a major new work for *Zones of Contact*, the 15<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney.

Vongpoothorn was a finalist in the 2016 Sir John Sulman Prize and the 1998 Moët & Chandon Art Prize. Her work is included in important public collections, including National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Queensland Art Gallery/GOMA, Brisbane; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; the Australian National University Collection, Canberra and Artbank. Her works are also included in notable private and corporate collections including Macquarie Bank, Sydney; World Bank, New York; the Holmes à Court Collection, Perth; and the Allens Collection, Sydney.

Vongpoothorn's work has also interwoven Lao cultural references with Australian and other cultural influences; from Australian Aboriginal art to Scottish Tartans, to Indian miniatures, and now to Japanese Buddhism. Besides using motifs and symbols from Lao textiles, for example, she has applied a technique of perforation to some artworks in a direct reference to the act of weaving.

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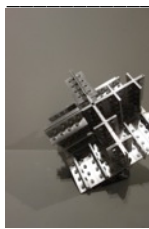
Spiritual references have also been important, especially the use of Lao words, texts and concepts from Theravada Buddhism, including Khathaa (Lao-Pali) protective incantations or spells. In her most recent works, she has woven and broken the Lao-Pali Sutra in such a way that the resulting imagery recalls arabesques.

For Vongpoothorn, such cultural references do not constitute a fixed tradition or an objectified sense of “culture”. Rather, they stem from her experience of growing up living and breathing in Lao cultural, familial, and religious worlds, both in Laos and Australia.

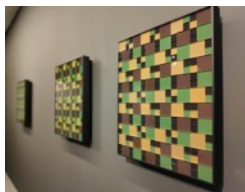
Savanhdary Vongpoothorn lives and works in Canberra, Australia

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### Selected Images



Artist Grace TAN  
 Title *PARTICULATE 1-1B*  
 Year 2019  
 Medium CNC machined aluminium with stainless steel fasteners  
 Dimensions Approx. H30 x W30 x D30 cm  
 Photo Credit The Artist and FOST Gallery



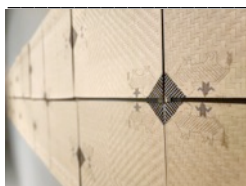
Artist Donna ONG  
 Title *Four Colours Make a Forest series*  
 Year 2017  
 Medium Screenprinted and laminated acrylic tiles  
 Dimensions H56.2 x W46.2 cm each  
 Photo Credit The Artist and FOST Gallery



Artist Bea CAMACHO  
 Title *Sartre, Jean-Paul, "The Imaginary" (New York Routledge, 2010) pp 128-129*  
 Year 2010  
 Medium Digital print on archival paper  
 Dimensions H14 x W21.6 cm (artwork)  
 H44.5 x W53.5 x D3.7 cm (frame)  
 Photo Credit The Artist and FOST Gallery

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NB: More images can be furnished upon request.



Artist Savanhdy VONGPOOTHORN  
Title *Rama was a Migrant (I)*  
Year 2015  
Medium Pigment and ink on woven mulberry paper  
Dimensions H78 x W474 cm  
Photo Credit The Artist and FOST Gallery

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**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

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**Gallery Hours** Tue–Sat: 11am–7pm  
Sun: 11am–6pm  
Mon/Pub Hol: Open by appointment

**Admission** Free

**Enquiries** Call 6694 3080 or e-mail [info@fostgallery.com](mailto:info@fostgallery.com)

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