

Apertures

A Group Exhibition by *Mike HJ Chang, Merryn Trevethan, Xue Mu, Filippo Sciascia*
Dates: 24 June – 3 September 2017

Contemporary archaeology maintains that modern artefacts and objects have information that can support anthropological inquiries into habits and phenomena of modern society. In this vein, contemporary art thus forms an archive of the contemporary experience, with its inherent diversity underscoring the multitude of experiences in the state of increasing globalisation and technologisation in the world today.

The artworks in this exhibition are indices of the contemporary experience, highlighting the lenses of perception that currently filter the everyday experience of individuals. Collectively, the works conceive a narrative of light and luminance as that which informs and structures our sense of perception and experiences of the world. As apertures into each artist's universe, the artworks acquaint us with the artist's practice in the studio – the place where new worlds are born.

Mike HJ Chang deals with perception and inadequacy in his drawings and sculptures. Thinking about optical mechanisms and configurations such as camera obscura and Plato's cave, he explores notions of sight, light, and dimensions. Chang's works in the exhibition explore the intersection of the experienced world and the internal mechanisms of the mind, driven by a fascination with the imaginative possibilities of non-Euclidean geometry. The spherical sculptures are representations of heads or small worlds, each evoking a particular way of perception to explore how the internal mechanisms of the mind illuminate the individual experience. Chang's playful drawings, in which images from the everyday are defamiliarised are evocative of new dimensions of reality. Using heads and the artist studio as metaphors and sites of mediation, Chang examines the limitation of human faculty, and also the woe and bliss that come with it.

Filippo Sciascia's work engages image and art historical references in both Eastern and Western cultures that persists in our mediated experience is put at the forefront to question modern perception. Sciascia references light as a fundamental artistic device in his works across painting and sculpture. The works in this show reference images from documentary films today as well as art historical figures such as Louise Bourgeois are represented, the uncanny similarity in "Timor" an Indonesian tribal sculpture from Flores to Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger (O.K.R. 1911). He references a universal inquiry into light that is the essence of all religions and cultures. Lux Lumina is a concept that focuses on the re-depiction of the photographic image on canvas, placing emphasis on light as a visual element in photography and video. Reconsidering illumination, Sciascia's works delve into the notion of light that aids visual perception, yet proves to obscure and distort vision. Through the development of new methods within the studio, Sciascia mixes archaeological objects and contemporary art subjects to create new symbols in the exploration of the problematic of reality and representation.

Merryn Trevethan cleverly utilises lines and swatches of colour to create perceptions of light and depth in her abstractions of cityscapes that capture the essence of urban city life across geographical boundaries. Her paintings are spatially ambiguous, where a convergence of urban cues highlights the limitation of visual perception. Uncertainty of perception and complexity of vision are ideas that consistently materialise from Trevethan's observation of urban landscapes, drawing parallels to the dizzying pace of the globalised economy. Snaking their way around walls, her tape murals confront viewers with transforming spaces and redefining how depth is perceived.

Xue Mu's drawings are a mainstay of her studio practice, where the fundamental act of drawing is constantly returned to in her digestion and distillation of a media and information-saturated world. Her large-scale Black Diamond drawings reference the transformation of value, from the simple charcoal to a beautiful object of high value, and represent the transformation of worldviews. In her dynamic drawings exist a snapshot of a present past – through the containment of movements, representative of an abstraction of thought. As such, Mu's lyrical mark-making gives the impression of a mind racing through our globalised world, in a bid to keep up with its ever-increasing speed of development.

Artist Biographies

Mike HJ Chang (b. 1982, Taiwan) is a Taiwanese-American artist and educator of fine arts who lives and works in Singapore. He received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Los Angeles, and his Master of Fine Arts from the California Institute of the Arts. His portfolio has gone on public display in prominent art spaces in Singapore such as Gillman Barracks, Goodman Art Centre, Port Tumasik, Post-Museum, Sculpture Square, and galleries such as the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, The Substation, Chan Hampe Galleries, and Yeo Workshop since 2011. Autobiographical information always serves as the basis for narrative exploration in Chang's work. He idiosyncratically combines architecture, furniture, and text to focus on the notion of transient identity in a space where the public and the private intersect. Collectively though, his work examines the interplay and relationship between 'The Clean', which is a quiet, orderly state, and 'The Generic', which is an empty state that is devoid of ego and memory.

Filippo Sciascia (b. 1972, Italy) is an Italian artist based in Bali, Indonesia. He studied art at the Institute of Art, Nordio, Trieste and Fine Arts Academy, Florence, in Italy. He has had solo exhibitions in various venues in Italy, USA and Southeast Asia such as Sarang I, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2016); National Archaeological Museum of Naples, Italy (2013), Museum Castel Dell' Ovo, Naples (2012); Langgeng Art Foundation, Yogyakarta (2011); National University of Singapore Museum (2010); Spazio Obraz, Milan (2010); Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur (2009). Over many years, Sciascia has explored the pictorial tensions between painting and imaging technology of the new era, challenging the art of painting as a practice. Choosing photographic imagery to re-depict on canvas, Sciascia captures the transitional process from one medium to another in an amalgamation of pixels, lines and forms. The emphasis on the process in his work rather than on the object demands a profound understanding of the character and history of each media. Sciascia demonstrates this knowledge through his consistent and loyal struggle with the challenges of representation and reality.

Merryn Trevethan (b. 1976, Australia) is an Australian artist based in Singapore. She completed her Masters of Fine Art (by Research) at Monash University, Melbourne in 2005, and since then has exhibited widely in Australia and internationally. In 2015 and 2016, Trevethan was commissioned to create large-scale mural artworks for the new Facebook Headquarters in Singapore. She held a solo exhibition in Singapore at the Australian High Commission in 2016. She recently had a solo exhibition in Melbourne, *Provable Falsehoods* at Fox Galleries. Trevethan's practice focuses on our relationship to living in increasingly globalised cities, constantly in a state of flux. Her observations of the cityscape tease out the uncertainty of perception and the complexity of vision. She works across a range of disciplines including public art, wall works, painting, drawing, sculptural forms and artists books, all linked by her use of highly saturated colour. Trevethan employs these disciplines in combination to create spatially ambiguous works that remind of the turbulent nature and limitations of visual perception; acting as a parallel to the economic, accelerated world of instantaneous transactions in which we often experience a mental and emotional disorientation.

Xue Mu (b. 1979, China) is a Visual Artist based in Amsterdam and Nanjing. She is an alumna at de Rijksakademie Voor Beeldende Kunsten (2011-2012), Gerrit Rietveld Academie (2009) and Dutch Art Institute (2006). Between 2013 and 2015 her projects were presented in art institutions at de Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, de Appel Arts Centre, He Xiangning Art Museum Shenzhen and AMNUA Nanjing. Bypassing the conventional perception of value imposed by the modern world, Mu's often abstract artworks are the result of a process of reflection that associates today's existence. Through an almost synesthetic approach, Mu visualises the paradoxical co-existences between insignificance and value, to dispute the physical understanding of reality and its moral conventions. While facing the intensified ideological confusion and identity struggle at present time of globalisation, critical social events inspire Mu as a catalyst rather than a subject – they accelerate the revelation of the intertwined relationships between the stories surface (the image) and its concealed cause (the dynamical truth).

Gallery Map

List of Works

Mike HJ Chang

1 *Flathead in a Cave*
2017
Watercolour and ink on paper
45.7 x 59.3 cm

2 *Smoke*
2017
Watercolour and ink on paper
40.8 x 43.9 cm

3 *The Retrograde*
2017
Watercolour and ink on paper
59.6 x 52.5 cm

4 *Firework (mold)*
2017
Silicon rubber, wood
21 x 28 x 2 cm

(From back to front)

5 *Black Star*
2016
Paper pulp, plaster
35 x 42 x 35 cm

6 *Spike Head*
2016
Plasticine, plaster
45 x 45 x 45 cm

7 *Three Apertures*
2016
Twine, bamboo, glue
33 x 24 x 24 cm

8 *Three Rings*
2016
Plaster, paper mache, photographs
30 x 30 x 30 cm

9 *Plato's Cave*
2016
Paper clay, plaster, paint
38 x 32 x 32 cm

Merryn Trevethan

10 *Imagined Order #2*
2017
Acrylic on acrylic
54 x 23 x 34 cm

11 *Slow Motion Collapse...*
2017
Acrylic and washi tape on acrylic panels
92 x 61 cm, 5 panels

Filippo Sciascia

(From left to right)

12 *Lux Lumina*
2017
Oil on canvas, mounted on wood
75.5 x 50 cm

13 *Timor*
2017
Terracotta
22 x 19 x 18 cm

14 *After Louise Bourgeois*
2017
Oil on canvas, mounted on wood
50 x 38 cm

15 *Araldica*
2015
Oil on wood
100 x 74.4 cm

16 *Lux Lumina*
2017
Oil on canvas, mounted on wood
50 x 32.5 cm

17 *Araldica*
2014
Photo applied on stone
18 x 10 x 4.5 cm

18 *Araldica*
2016
Wood, cement and shells
215 x 30 x 5

19 *Araldica*
2017
Cement and rubber
44 x 23 x 9 cm

20 *Lux Lumina*
2016
Oil on canvas
190 x 230 cm

21 *Araldica*
2017
Wood, cement and mirrors
10 x 17 x 7.5 cm

Xue Mu

22 *Black Diamond_Star Racing*
2016
Charcoal on paper
176 x 193cm

23 *A_C_N Circle Plate*
2014
Archival cotton print
152 x 123 cm
Edition of 3

