

**Mike HJ Chang**  
**Calendar of Dilation**  
**7 Nov 2020 – 9 Jan 2021**

Manifesting as a short survey of formalist inquiries into the relationality of time and how it could be embodied, perceived, and distorted, *Calendar of Dilation* is fixated around the narratives of fluidity and circularity—anchored to a central interest in the ocean as both a conceptual metaphor and an actual site where temporal negotiations could be witnessed unfolding very clearly.

A solo exhibition featuring new works by artist Mike HJ Chang, whose practice investigates and excavates the tensions between notions of order and chaos with a sense of wry humour, *Calendar of Dilation* is also a tacit reference to the ways that the passage of time has been warped perceptually by the ongoing framing context of the COVID-19 pandemic, through and within which we bear witness to real-time documentations of the disruptions it has wrought on the extant world order—where the flow of information, near instantaneous with the advent of fifth generation technology standard (5G) for broadband cellular networks, is no longer congruent with the flow of capital and labour. Naturally, this asynchrony has both material and immaterial impacts on how societies and communities may situate themselves, as groups and polities discover for themselves the entanglements and systems they are embedded in and complicit in the propagations of.

Partly inspired by Chang's experience during the Owner's Cabin residency programme, which pairs and sites artists on major sea-faring vessels as they transport their cargo, the works featured in *Calendar of Dilation* explore and position the ocean as a post-geographical entity on which systems of time and measurement have failed or otherwise trans-mutated, which provokes new possibilities with regards to how we can forge new relations to temporality situated within a conscious and deliberate constellation of cosmologies, and also as a fluid field of affects that directly impacts human physiology. Here, Chang toys with the different tonalities and modalities of the art object in both ontological and teleological registers—enlarging, shrinking, magnifying, degrading, raising, lowering, etc—and articulates the simple truth that ways of seeing all depends on the perspective of the viewer.

**Artist statement**

The works developed for *Calendar of Dilation* came about during a period of rumination that occurred intermittently over the past three years since I ended my two-week voyage aboard the oil tanker Cielo di Guangzhou as part of a residency. Fascinated by the ways that my sense of time and date have been eroded at sea, as cycles of days and nights coalesced into something akin to both a blur and a seemingly immutable monolith, I captured footages of the unending sea and the static interiors of the ship punctuated by the occasional movements of the seamen, a good fraction of which are incorporated in the filmic work *Seasick Sketches*, where I

sought ways to posit the understanding of time itself as a concept that necessarily roots itself within a manifold view of the world.

Following a period of stagnation as I find myself busied with other works and commitments, the preoccupation I had with time would not surface until COVID-19 went from what seemed to be a provincial health-scare in China to a full-blown plague, when lockdowns, quarantines, and curfew steadily disrupted and then halted the flow of life and movements. As a witness to measures where much of the world is now homebound mandatorily, I began to wonder more about the notion of interiority and how the experience of the passage of time can be dilated, protracted, and/or otherwise changed based on the human body itself. This inquiry naturally dove-tailed with my earlier intrigue with time at sea, and together, manifested as what you see in *Calendar of Dilation*.

### **About the Artist**

Mike HJ Chang is a Taiwanese-American artist and fine arts educator currently living and working in Singapore. He holds a BA from the University of California, Los Angeles, and an MFA from the California Institute of the Arts. Characterised by a dedication to craftsmanship and a sense of wry wit, Chang's works straddle the boundary between rigorous formalist inquiries in colour, composition, and material, and thematic explorations of the relationality between bodies, spaces, and time.

A regular fixture of Singapore's artistic landscape, Chang's oeuvre has been shown in and by prominent local spaces and institutions such as Sculpture Square, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, Jendela (Visual Arts Space), OH! Open House, Asian Film Archive, Peninsular, and galleries such as Chan Hampe Galleries, Chan + Hori Contemporary, and Yeo Workshop. Chang also runs Foxriver, an independent art space.

### **About the Curator**

Alfonse Chiu is a writer, artist, curator, and researcher working at the intersection of text, space, and moving image. His practice investigates the histories and representation of the built and natural environments in Southeast Asia, with a focus on colonial, political, and sensorial imaginaries, particularly through forms such as maps, graphic design, and archival documents. He currently heads SINDie, an editorial platform exploring Southeast Asian film culture(s), where he heads editorial direction, research, and special projects. He is also the founder of the Centre for Urban Mythologies, a research collective and platform interested in Southeast Asian urbanism, architecture, and eco-criticism.