

PART TWO

07 — 29
AUG — AUG

ONLY LOSERS

LEFT ALIVE (LOVE SONGS FOR THE END OF THE WORLD)



GEORGETTE GOH GERALDINE LIM JURIA TORAMAE MASURI MAZLAN
SAMUEL XUN SARAH ISABELLE TAN MARK CHUA & LAM LI SHUEN
VICTORIA HERTEL CURATED BY LOUIS HO

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Curated by:
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Exhibiting Artists:
Georgette Goh
Geraldine Lim
Juria Toramae
Samuel Xun
Sarah Isabelle Tan
Mark Chua and Lam Li Shuen
Masuri Mazlan
Victoria Hertel

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only losers left alive
(love songs for the end of the world)

only losers left alive (love songs for the end of the world) is a project with a central proposition: if our world were to come to a screeching halt tomorrow, what would we be left with?

No, the world is not likely to come to an end tomorrow, but sometimes it's fun to make art about that possibility.

This project is a curatorial experiment - in curating by mood. The aesthetics of the presentation are directed towards particular atmospherics.

The title is a riff off of Jim Jarmusch's *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013).

It is a response to the recent unravelling of so much of what we have come to take for granted.

Those atmospherics, and moods, are derived from cinematic models, specifically dystopian and post-apocalyptic science fiction films.

The tableaux in this project are populated by physical objects and imagic worlds and sonic suggestions

that evoke the surreal, supernumerary fragments of a universe ravaged by unknown forces, mourned through the dulcet strains of melancholy and loss.

It is an attempt at creating a specific sensorial and emotional world - a feeling, rather than a bit of logic.

If part one was focused on the human body and the technologies and objects that are oriented towards it, part two presents a vision of the post-human aftermath of the world's collapse.

Here are alien bodies, architectural ruins, flora run rampant, fauna mutated and metamorphic - a universe where human presence and agency has departed.

There are visual artists, but also digital moving-image makers, performers, environmental researchers, experimental musicians, floral artists and fashion designers.

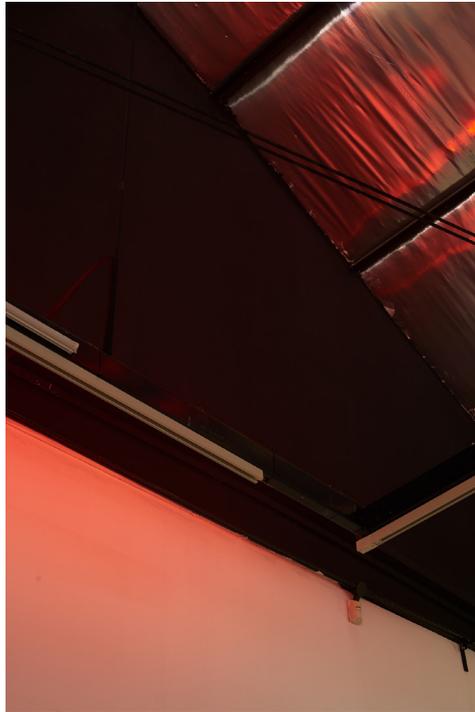
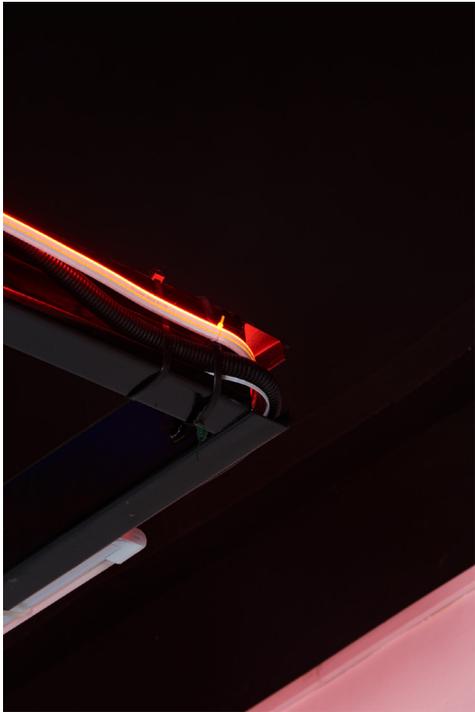
only losers left alive (love songs for the end of the world) is a show uncanny and unformed, and coming slightly undone.

Victoria Hertel

Short Circuit (2021)

Sumi ink and gum arabic on floor, and ceiling-based installation of LED flexible strip lights and ultrasonic sensors. Ceiling work engineered in collaboration with Christian Eviston-Putsch

Short Circuit is a fusion work consisting of a floor- and ceiling-based immersive installation. Drawing attention to the liminal architectural poles of ground and roof, the work highlights the presence and relational space in between. As visitors move through the gallery, the floor's glossy, speckled blackness and ceiling's responsive phantom glow begin to inter-reflect. Taking its aesthetic cues and title from Daft Punk's album "Discovery", the work translates the record's futuristic vision into an enmeshed play of the technologic and the primal, its material composition ranging from flexible LED strips to natural gum derived from acacia trees. With chemical reactions constituting a significant component of Hertel's painterly processes, the ink and gum arabic mixture applied to the floor was specifically selected to respond to the surface. The poured liquid is repelled, pooled or redirected as it organically moves over the floor, gradually delineating and visualizing an unearthly topography.



Samuel Xun

Bouquet of Disappointment (2021) (Right)

Metallic polyurethane vinyl, polyester stuffing, grosgrain straps

Part of designer and artist Samuel Xun's *Fembuoyant!* collection, this work attempts to work through his personal feelings about non-normative experience in Singapore. The amalgamation of soft sculpture and fashion-derived sensibilities is owed to Euro-American lineages of camp and kitsch, and its relation to formulations of queer identity. Inspired by a canon of camp films such as *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994), *Pink Flamingoes* (1972) and *Paris is Burning* (1990), and informed by the writings of Eng-Beng Lim and Audrey Yue, the piece deploys the aesthetics of camp and kitsch to suggest how non-heteronormative experience in Singapore may be coded in the visual register - through textures and colours, as well as titular and other visual cues. It has been crafted in modular fashion, leaving room for reinterpretation and recontextualisation. In this current iteration, the piece is suspended upside down and supplemented with a contrasting floor demarcation; it is to be interpreted openly, with its title serving as a direction for thought.



Cunt Be Bothered (2021) (Left)

Quilted and ruffled pieces, synthetic metallic lamé, synthetic tinsel knit, Swarovski crystal embellishments, polyester wadding

This abstractly-shaped piece is a visual representation of the artist's personal dating history. As a series of modular quilts, the pieces are strung together to form a sculptural tapestry of sorts, each representing a past encounter. The texture of the soft sculpture takes reference from films such as *Gentlemen Prefer Blonds* (1953) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939), in which hedonism is used as a coping mechanism for failure in romance. The quilts are individualistic in character, with the scale and extravagance of each drawing ironic parallels to the quality of the person they represent. Xun likens the curatorial proposition here - the end of the world - to the demise of a relationship or dating situation, which would prompt a period of questioning and self-doubt in him. As he puts it: "My reaction each time would be to dissect my dating history in the form of a wall-of-shame quilt, to say that these people, represented by each individual quilt, have wasted my time. I guess the choice of materials have always been a way to mask these insecurities with something campy and beautiful."

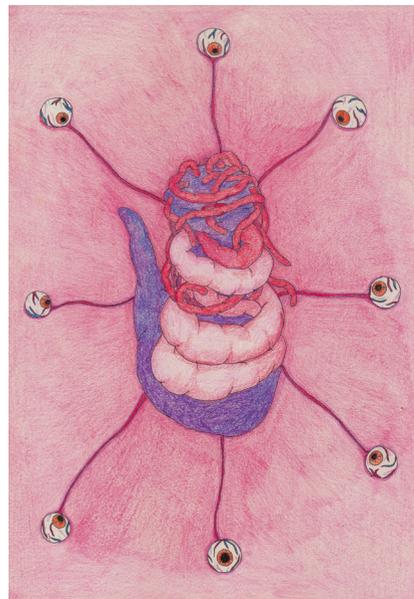


Geraldine Lim

I meet her at a place we always go to (a drawing journal) (2021)

Pen and colour pencil on paper (all)

Lim's series of drawings comprise a visual journal, an expression of the isolation, anxiety and depression she experiences. They fantasise an alternative world where the self is placed in various scenarios, from imagined intimacies to suffering to comforts, in episodic fashion inspired by science fiction narratives. The recurring character was birthed from references of the stages of the metamorphosis of a frog, embodying a sense of amorphousness - a kaleidoscope of shifting colours, limbs, protrusions, organs and wounds. Various shrubs, flowers and trees represent the tranquility that the natural environment provides for the artist. The characters in the work reflect on what it means to own a body, and - sometimes - the identifications of gender and queer-ness. According to the artist, "I was first inspired by the Ripley scroll, intrigued by the iconography and symbols used. I felt certain objects in my drawings also symbolise secret feelings and thoughts that I have but that I fail to be able to convey fully in words, so they're like a parallel universe to my existence."





Juria Toramae

Uncanny Lagoon (2021)

Single-channel colour video without sound

In an era of mass extinction and ecosystem collapse, amidst the emergence of interventionist conservation practices and genetic engineering technologies that might resuscitate extinct species, what does the future of life look like? How might humans, nature, and technology interact to produce new forms? Juria Toramae's *The Uncanny Lagoon* begins and ends with images of coral reefs, inspired by colonies of corals that regenerated in man-made lagoons formed off Singapore's offshore islands. It uses generative adversarial networks (GANs) - unsupervised machine learning algorithms trained to make realistic images - on the artist's personal documentation of marine species found in Southeast Asian waters and colonial taxonomic illustrations of the same species. What emerges are phantasmal metamorphic morphologies, ephemeral and hypnotic forms. The work explores the aesthetic and affective dimensions of a mutational sublime, in which the development of new forms of life are anticipated, appreciated, and even celebrated, as well as acknowledging our inescapable co-authorship with nonhuman organisms and technology, raising necessary questions about the limits of human agency and dominion, and the future to come.



Sarah Isabelle Tan

The Timeline: like the delayed rays of a star (2021)

Archival pigment prints (all), and single-channel colour video without sound in collaboration with Jeremiah Tang

A fundamental part of Tan's photography-based practice is a desire to possess what is always beyond reach. *The Timeline* is a body of work revolves around the melancholy associated with the ephemerality of physical objects. Originally created as camera-less photogram prints of organic floral matter - the specimens were located in the artist's neighbourhood - the work contemplates the 'lost object', a longing for an ultimately unobtainable thing. The original physical prints were left intentionally unfixed, therefore remaining transient as it continues changing and deteriorating for as long as it is exposed to light; like the organic matter that is its subject, the image itself is thus rendered temporally contingent. Re-represented as digitally scanned images, the work is an attempt to perceive and comprehend the fluidity and impermanence of tangible objects, only to result in a longing for what will always remain inaccessible.



Masuri Mazlan

Remember us—if at all—not as lost (2021)

Polyurethane, cheesecloth, polyvinyl acetate adhesive, fibreglass, plaster of Paris, cement, and acrylic resin paint

Masuri's installation is comprised of amorphous objects, simultaneously concealing and foregrounding bits and pieces of simulated architectural structures. They assume alien, bulbous forms, almost like parasitic wasps swarming around ruined structures. Fashioned from plaster, concrete and insulation foam, these sculptural hybrids materialize unexpected bumps and unusual shapes as distinct entities; the resulting blobs take on a life of their own, embodying a strange, inherent otherness. Here, the use of casts of ornate cornices is indicative of the values of the home, signifying domesticity and the sphere of women, while the building materials are derived from predominantly male-dominated occupations. By amalgamating them into a genderless blob - akin to a naked body stripped of its skin, a fleshy equivalent of the cadaver attempting to survive a devastated landscape - the installation attempts to arouse the observer's feeling of the uncanny, and to disturb the easy categorisation of gender, sexuality and their associated values.

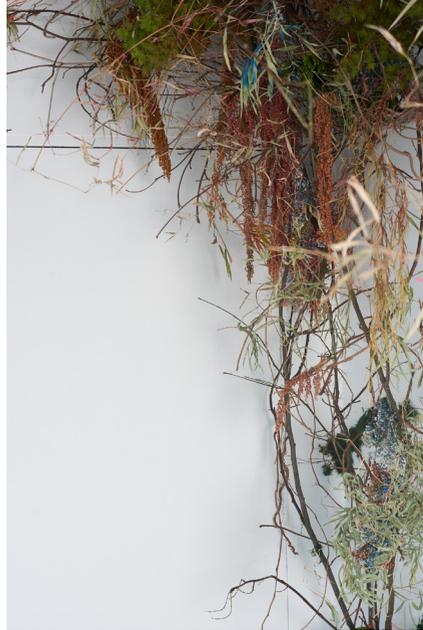




Georgette Goh

Kissing Doesn't Kill, Strange Natures (2021)
Mixed media installation of organic material

Georgette Goh is an artist who works primarily with floral and botanical designs. *Kissing Doesn't Kill, Strange Natures* is a site-specific installation that consists of preserved, artificial and foraged specimens, with the latter category of plants sourced locally; species of plants utilized include baby's breath, bamboo, palm and amaranthus, among others. The practice of foraging, for the artist, represents concerns about sustainability and the role of the natural environment in an increasingly urbanized Singapore, and a means of negotiating the systems of design and control that determine our urban fabric. Here, the botanical specimens - none of which are fresh, or alive - have been aestheticized artificially (e.g. with spray paint), a form of queer, unnatural life-in-death. The theoretical rubric of queer ecology is centered on the interruption of normative modes of biology and sexuality, and, in giving her botanical materials a queer-ed afterlife, Goh gestures at both autobiographical facts, as well as ecological ones. As she puts it: "With many different species presented together, there is diversity in collectivity. Things can be beautiful when they're together, in the same space, from the same soil."



Mark Chua and Lam Li Shuen

Never Seen the Roof (2021), *She's All I Want* (2021), *Gettin There* (2021)
Audio recordings mastered to reel-to-reel tape (all)

Never Seen The Roof is an upcoming concept album from filmmaking and sound duo, Mark Chua and Lam Li Shuen. It channels the concept of love, as a disruptive possibility, within fear and grief. Three songs are included in part one of *only losers left alive (love songs for the end of the world)*, functioning as a soundtrack to the exhibition itself. The loose narrative of the album is oriented around a fictive Jujon Street - an embodiment of the state of things today - and the odd inhabitants who graze slowly among its decaying environs. The tracks sound the moods of scenarios of reckless abandon, creaking hankerings, and the acceptance and rejection of what is to come. Here are songs about love: love in the grips of high anxiety, and love in pursuit of the hope of some measure of peace. The sonic textures are simple and raw, with vocals accompanying an instrumental soundscape of jangly guitars and a pensive piano, playing off bass and drums. The recordings were made in the artists' home.

