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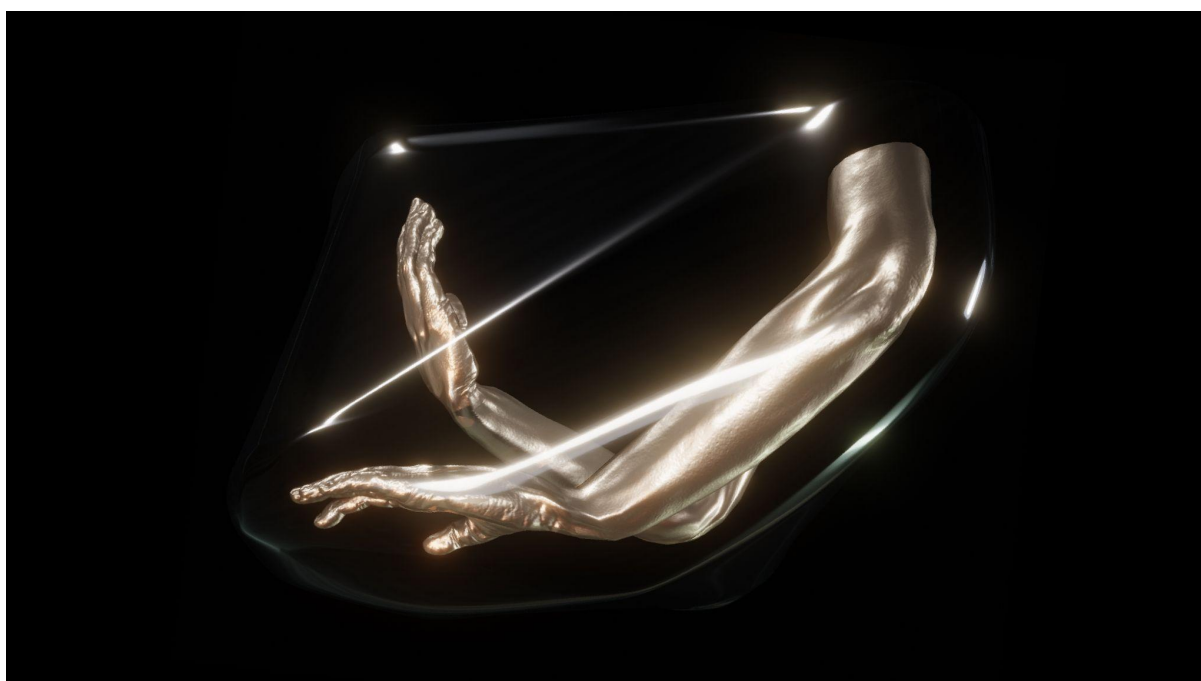
PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release – 10 May 2022

Forget Me, Forget Me Not
Priyageetha Dia

21 May - 26 June 2022

Opening day: Sat 21 May, 11 AM - 7PM (Artist is Present)



Priyageetha Dia, *we.remain.in.multiple.motions_Malaya*, 2022, Video Still. Image courtesy of the artist.

Yeoworkshop, is pleased to announce the solo exhibition of Priyageetha Dia. Curated by Anca Rujoiu, *Forget Me, Forget Me Not* is the artist's debut presentation at the gallery following the announcement of her representation at Yeoworkshop.

In *Forget Me, Forget Me Not*, Priyageetha Dia pursues a mindful encounter mediated by technology with colonial representations of labouring bodies. How does one attend to difficult imagery —visual and textual— that continue to dispossess colonial subjects of dignity and agency? Amid the sea of information and data prone to racialised terminology, what are the possibilities for an artistic engagement to eschew or hijack the perpetuation of violence? While the exhibition title calls to question *what* to remember and forget, it is concerned in equal manner with the *how* to do it. *Forget Me, Forget Me Not* is a plea for new forms and ethics of



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remembrance by an artist whose use of technology consciously dismisses its claims to neutrality and immateriality.

A booklet dated 1923 outlining the process of Indian labour migration to meet the demands for workforce in rubber plantations in Malaya, foregrounds the artist's research. Confronted with the blatant rhetorical performance of decent conditions of work, expectations of healthcare and education provisions by the official colonial authority in the description of what was otherwise an exploitative industry and British Empire's largest money making enterprise, the artist explores the possibility of a counter-narrative. The voices of the workers inflected by Malay and Tamil, traces of these labouring bodies, particularly women of the Indian diaspora permeate throughout the exhibition and fuse into a unified environment.

Computer-generated imagery (CGI) sits in a continuum with other materials, from screen printed works on latex, sublimation fabric prints to vinyl on walls and barren soil. The mechanisms of continuity are key to the artist's argument: corporate digitisation and commodification of colonial archives contribute to a legacy of control and dispossession; digital technologies persist in the exploitation of natural resources and labour while concurrently obscuring their physical presence. This is further attested by Dia's appropriation of stock images of Malayan rubber plantations that one can easily excavate from search engines. A hammock created out of such stock photography printed with white ink on off-white latex sheet and suspended across the gallery, becomes an archive of labouring bodies imprinted on rubber for eternity.

Echoing previous works by Priyageetha Dia (*Blood Sun*, 2022; *Long Live the New Fle\$h*, 2020), the animation created for this exhibition features a single-computer generated protagonist with female bodily attributes. While CGI is often deployed in mass entertainment for naturalistic depictions of characters and believable performances, Dia's protagonist never fully feels or aspires to be real. As viewers, we are constantly brought to acknowledge the protagonist's discernable materiality. Whether gently touching the water, caressing the land, or sensing the marks of incision on a rubber tree, the protagonist evokes, in the words of cultural theorist Laura U. Marks, an experience of haptic visuality. Marks defines this form of perception as a tactile mode of looking, a way in which the eyes use the organs of touch. The sense of haptic in the artist's animation is amplified by her relinquishment of a linear perspective and resistance to depth vision to which Western's modern traditions of representation are tied. Besides, the interactions between her protagonist and the environment enhance the haptic sensibility in the artist's work. Transferring the ritual drawing of kolam that traditionally marks the



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thresholds of homes or the margins of the streets onto the body, the artist continuously strives to dissolve the boundaries between body and environment. This spatial merging is amplified in the architecture of the exhibition where enlarged hands on the wall guide, embrace, or entrap the viewers inside.

When archives of colonial histories are filled with omissions, gaps, and prejudices, one has to acknowledge in the words of the writer Saidiya Hartnam, an impossibility. The impossibility to know what has not been told, recorded or experienced. The challenge, asserts Hartnam, is not to give voice to what remains untold, but rather to “imagine what cannot be verified”. Combining mass-production techniques such as screenprinting in the treatment of digitised archival photography, with the world-building and speculative capacities of CGI modelling, *Forget Me, Forget Me Not* posits that to resist forgetting, one needs to conjure new forms of telling. (Anca Rujoiu)

Public Programmes:

Exhibition Tour

Sat 21 May, 11-12PM

Get first-hand insights on the making of this exhibition with a guided tour from the artist on the opening day.

Workshop

Sat 4 June, 4-6PM

A workshop in reading and making with the artist and curator.

*Spaces are limited, registration required. Please email info@yeoworkshop.com to book your spot.



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Biographies

PRIYAGEETHA DIA (b. Singapore) graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts Singapore in 2017. Working at the intersections of moving image and installation, her research navigates into the complexities of identity politics of the Tamizh diasporic experience in Singapore and Southeast Asia. Her work has been included in several exhibitions, notably, *Attention Seeker* (2022) at LA Trobe Art Institute, Australia; *An Exercise of Meaning in a Glitch Season* (2020) at National Gallery Singapore and *2219: Future Imagines* (2019) at ArtScience Museum Singapore. She is currently a resident for the 9th cycle of the NTU CCA Residencies Programme (Singapore) from April to August 2022. She continues to live and work in Singapore.

ANCA RUJOIU (b. Bucharest) is a curator and editor who has been living and working in Singapore since 2013. She was co-curator of the Art Encounters Biennial in Timisoara in 2019. As curator of exhibitions and later head of publications (2013–18), she was a member of the founding team of the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore (NTU CCA) contributing to the institution's numerous exhibitions, public programs and publishing projects. She is a Ph.D. candidate at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, with research focused on institution building, artists' archives, and transnational imaginaries.

About the gallery

Yeo Workshop is a leading art gallery in Singapore that brings *Art, People and Ideas* together. It is at the forefront of cutting-edge contemporary art with its commitment to curating avant-garde, unique and insightful exhibitions and public art projects, online engagements such as video festivals, as well as producing gallery-based programmes such as talks, symposiums and guiding research.

Opening Hours:

Tue – Sat, 11am – 7pm

Closed Sundays & Mondays

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