

»Amidst the threads, our names become.«, 2022
In collaboration with Eunice Pais and Anabel Poh
Commissioned by State of Fashion Biennale
3-channel installation, 4k, color/sound, 15:20 min (video 1),
7:38 min (video 2), 5:44 min (video 3), capulana, batik fabrics, steel

Amidst the threads, our names become. is a collaborative and multidisciplinary installation exploring fragmented narratives on textile, fashion, and material culture through a diasporic lens. The project aims to challenge Eurocentric narratives around displaced identities, cultural symbolisms, labor, and the space held for such stories to exist.

The work comprises a three-channel video installation, a room-filled metal structure, textiles, and photographs. The textiles used in the installation are traditional capulanas from Mozambique and batik from Singapore, made with the same wax resist dyeing technique which originated from Indonesia and travelled through Dutch Colonialism. By deconstructing these textiles, the fabrics turn to threads, blurring boundaries, becoming a form of decolonizing these textiles.

The videos explore three narratives of three protagonists: Rosa, a Mozambican-born residing in Portugal who weaves memories, symbols, and transformation in her narration; Anabel, a textile designer taking us on a journey of care, intricate labor and textile culture; and Phuong, a Vietnamese woman living in Germany who guides us through her story of opening her own fashion store, exemplifying dreams that come to fruition.

The work engages the plurality of existence and possibilities, challenging and questioning who holds the power to tell and curate memories, narratives, stories, and identities. By revealing the emotional, cultural, and feminist labor behind our garments, the project cultivates a meaningful relationship with the textiles around us, inviting the audience to engage and reflect.





»Amidst the threads, our names become.«, 2022
Installation view »Fashion as Encounters«, State of Fashion Biennale, Arnhem, 2022



[Video 1: viewing link](#)
[Video 2: viewing link](#)
[Video 3: viewing link](#)

»Relic for the Future«, 2023

Commissioned by Intermix Residency, Ministry of Culture KSA

Dimensions variable; curtains, bricks, silicone, clay powder, steel

Relic for the Future is a mixed-media installation marking the artist's reflections on traces of modernism and urbanization and their transformation of our perceptions of public and private spaces and dwellings.

The work draws inspiration from a comparative inspection of domestic architecture in Saudi Arabia and Vietnam during their modernisation periods.

The 1930's urban sprawl in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia visibly transformed city skylines, with a less noticeable impact on domestic spaces that retained the use of small windows, a testament to the traditional and cultural value for privacy. In the 1980's, Vietnam went through a similar economic growth in the aftermath of the war, resulting in a new construction and increased wealth, leading to the transfiguration of traditional ways of living.

At the heart of this installation is a fragmentation and reconfiguration of these private and public spaces, signified by doors and windows, to the form of an archeological relic. Two curved and separated walls reimagine and re-materialize such markers of entry and exit into silicone and textile surfaces. The interior of one wall reveals silicone molds, indicating common decorative elements on steel doors, evoking memories of the artist's childhood home in Vietnam. While the prints on the curtains of the other wall's interior, with their extravagant draping and layers, both disrupt and express the illusion of individual wealth and power.

The installation aims to challenge our perceptions of domestic spaces by drawing parallels across cultural, social and emotional post-modernist urban contexts and their fragile promises.





»Relic for the Future«, 2023
Installation view »Intermix Residency Open Studios«, Diriyah Biennale Foundation, Riyadh, 2023



»Palm I«, 2023
Installation view »Intermix Residency Open Studios«, Diriyah Biennale Foundation, Riyadh, 2023



»Palm I«, 2023
Installation view »Intermix Residency Open Studios«, Diriyah Biennale Foundation, Riyadh, 2023



»Bodies«, 2019/2020
198x55x55 cm; textile silicone, mesh fabric, eyelets, steel, digital print
 Installation view »Empathic Device«, Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin, 2022

The sculpture series *Bodies* consisting of steel, fabric and textile silicone, explores the social discrepancies arising from cyborgian future speculation. The silicone bodies were moulded from the human body and symbolises the cyborg assemblages shielding immaterial bodies. The work highlights the concealment of exploited bodies in the labor force which are being automated away by machines.



»Bodies II«, & »Bodies IV« 2019/2020
Installation view »Empathic Device«, Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin, 2022

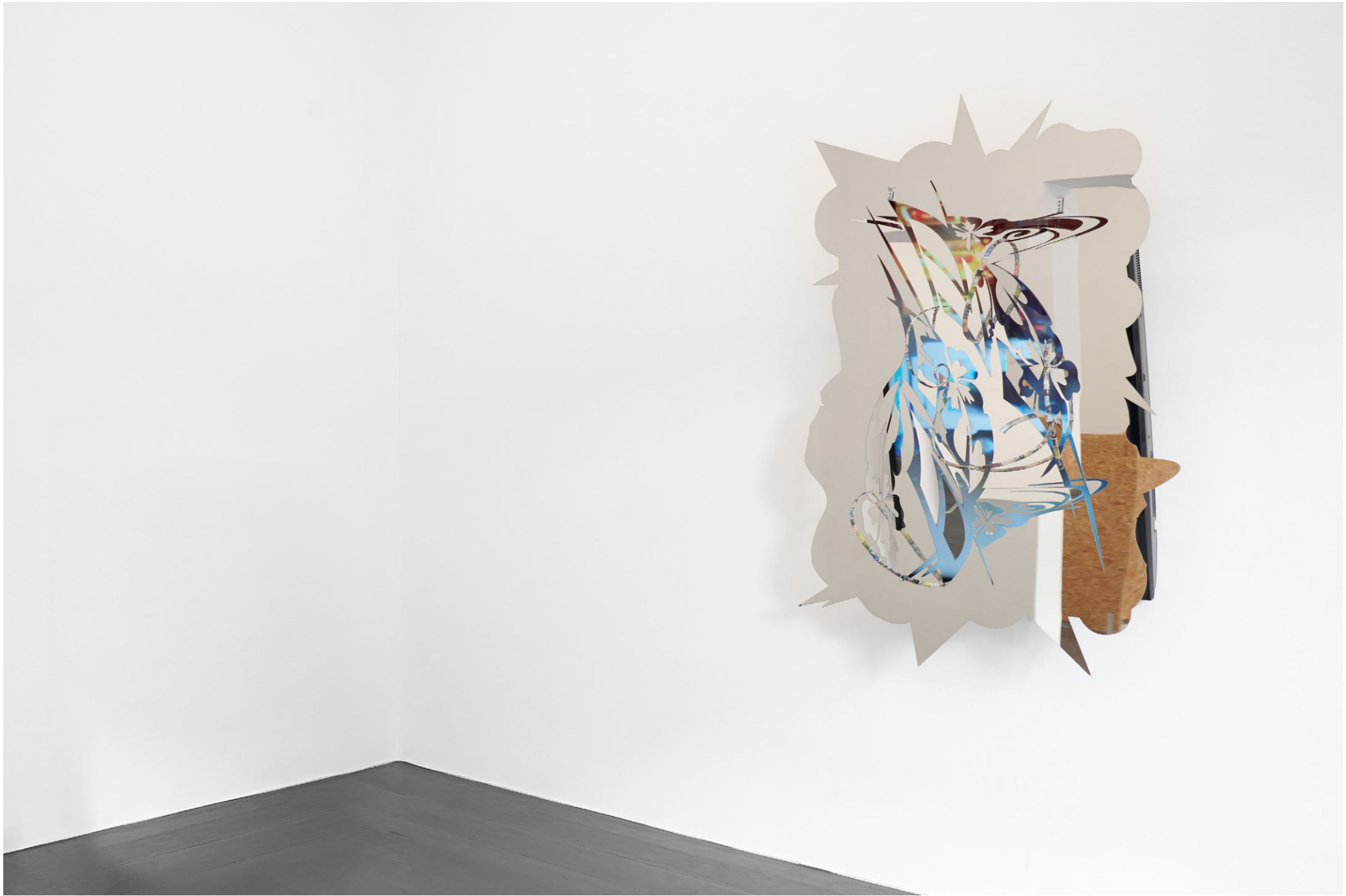
»I'd Blush if I Could«, 2020
123x147x40 cm, HD, color, 4:34 min (video 1), 5:33 min (video 2)
mirrored steel, screens, videos, digital prints, acrylic nails
Installation view »Empathic Device«, Gallerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin, 2022

The sculptural video installation *I'd Blush if I Could* explores the tensions involved in the post-human feminised cyborg: what 'labor' produces post-human technologies, and what discrepancies arise from cyborgian future speculation. In particular the focus is on the gendering and orientalizing of machines, from an Asian diasporic perspective.

In Donna Haraway's 1985 *A Cyborg Manifesto* she states 'The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centers structuring any possibility of historical transformation'. Nearly 30 years after her publication, this assemblage of the post-human subject is still intertwined in today's power disparity. Moreover, its 'multiglobal, intersubjective, institutional components' are intentionally hidden (Hilary Bergen, 2016).

The production of technology bears histories of women and migrant labour. This system of labour exploitation signifies the irony of today's society: the exploited bodies producing the new cyborg assemblage are the ones being rendered invisible in the final product, and ultimately these bodies are being automated away by machines.





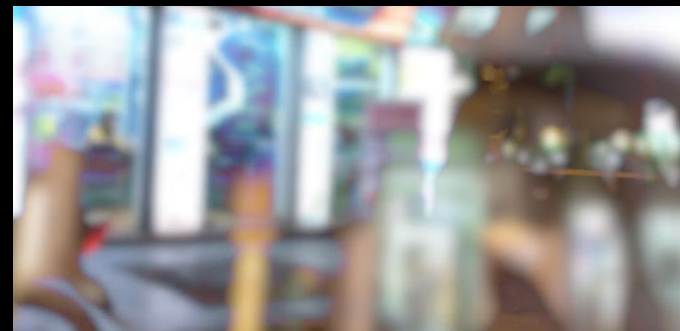
»I'd Blush if I Could«, 2020
Installation view »Empathic Device«, Gallerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin, 2022



»I'd Blush if I Could«, 2020, detail view



»I'd Blush if I Could«, 2020, detail view



»using one's feet has become an option of last resort«, 2019
'Speculative' fashion collection & wearables including eight looks,
3-channel video installation, sculptures
silicone, mesh fabrics, garments, textile hardener, eyelets, ropes, ceramics

Motorbike culture has become the symbol of contemporary Vietnam and marks Vietnam's capitalist transition since the mid-1980s. Focusing on discourses of consumerism, mobility, gender and class identity, the project examines the emerging female street style of motorcyclists in Vietnam, dubbed as 'Street Ninja'.

By deconstructing and assembling street ninjas' UV protective clothing into 'wearable sculptures,' the project proposes an emancipatory strategy: the 'Street Ninjas' become protagonists of their marks and reinterpret their discriminatory experiences. Moreover, the protagonists have an emancipatory potential in reconfiguring the meaning of mobility and women's experience by mixing boundaries of the female body with commodities (e.g. motorcycle, fashion). In this way, they appropriate (public) spaces while applying methods of 'feminist collectivity'.

The project consists of textile sculptures, which is an assemblage of 'wearables', and a video installation showing two projections of a feminist protagonist and a video about utopian Vietnam.





»using one's feet has become an option of last resort«, 2019, fashion collections/wearables
Editorial, look 1



»using one's feet has become an option of last resort«, 2019, fashion collections/wearables
Editorial, look 3



»using one's feet has become an option of last resort 2019
Installation view »We are in this together«, Universität der Künste Berlin, 2019





»**Wheeling City and River**«, 2018

2-channel video installation, HD, color, loop, 3:34 min (video 1), 50:15 min (video 2), motorbike, fabric, tarp, digital print

Installation view »**A Motorbike Sunbathes on a Patch of Plastic Turf**«, Human Resources, Los Angeles, 2018

Wheeling City and River is a multifaceted series of videos, installations, and sculptures that draw on the artist's Vietnamese heritage and family tales. The primary focus of this work is to explore the intricate interplay between consumerism, nostalgia, and the connections and disconnections that arise from it.

The project specifically examines the motorbike culture of Vietnam, viewed from both a local and Western perspective. The artist draws on personal experiences of childhood memories riding motorbikes in Vietnam and her mother's decision to sell her motorbike to move to Germany. The motorbike holds a symbolic meaning of freedom to locals, but for Western tourists, it is often viewed as a curious novelty, fetishized and overstocked.



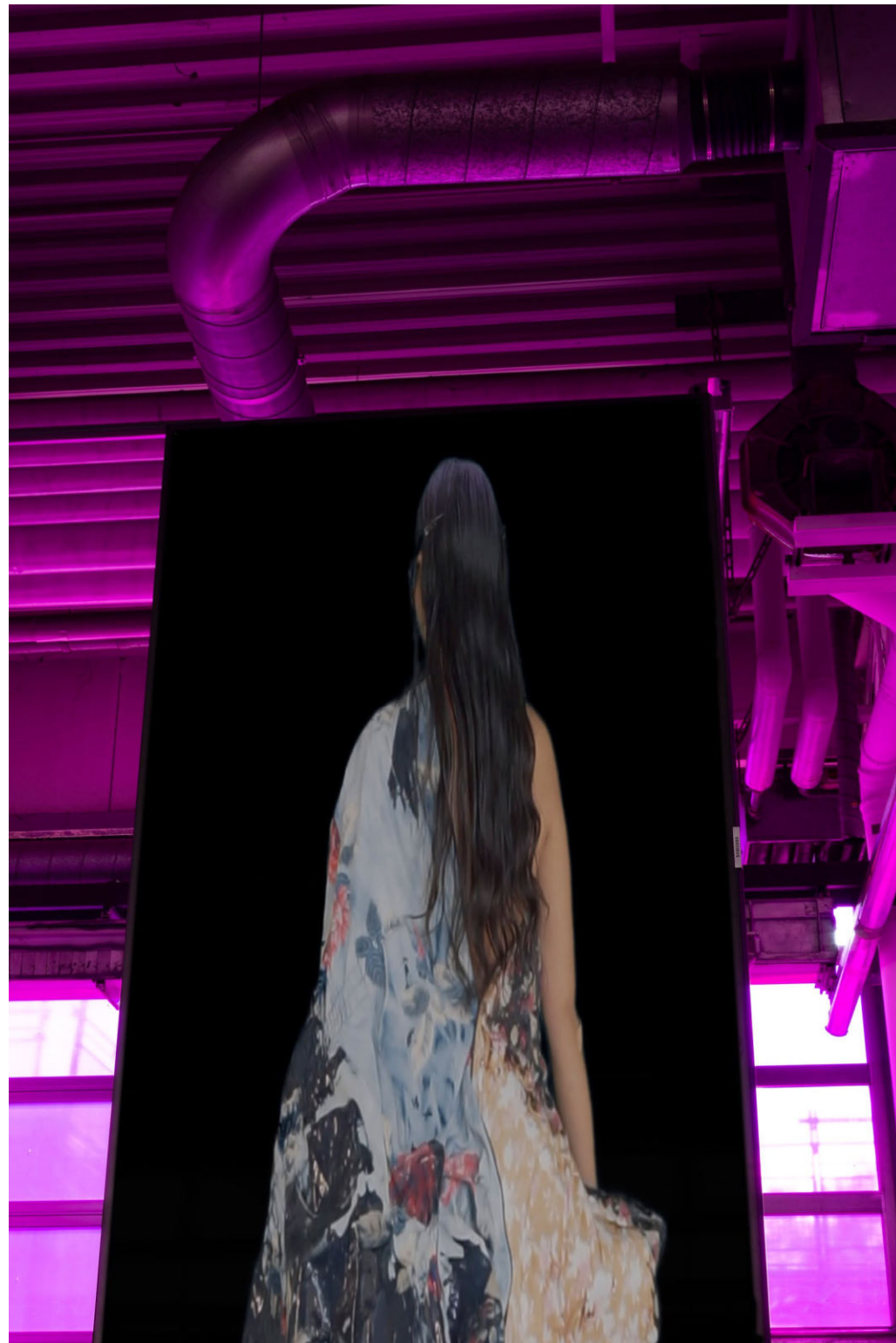
»Wheeling City and River«, 2018

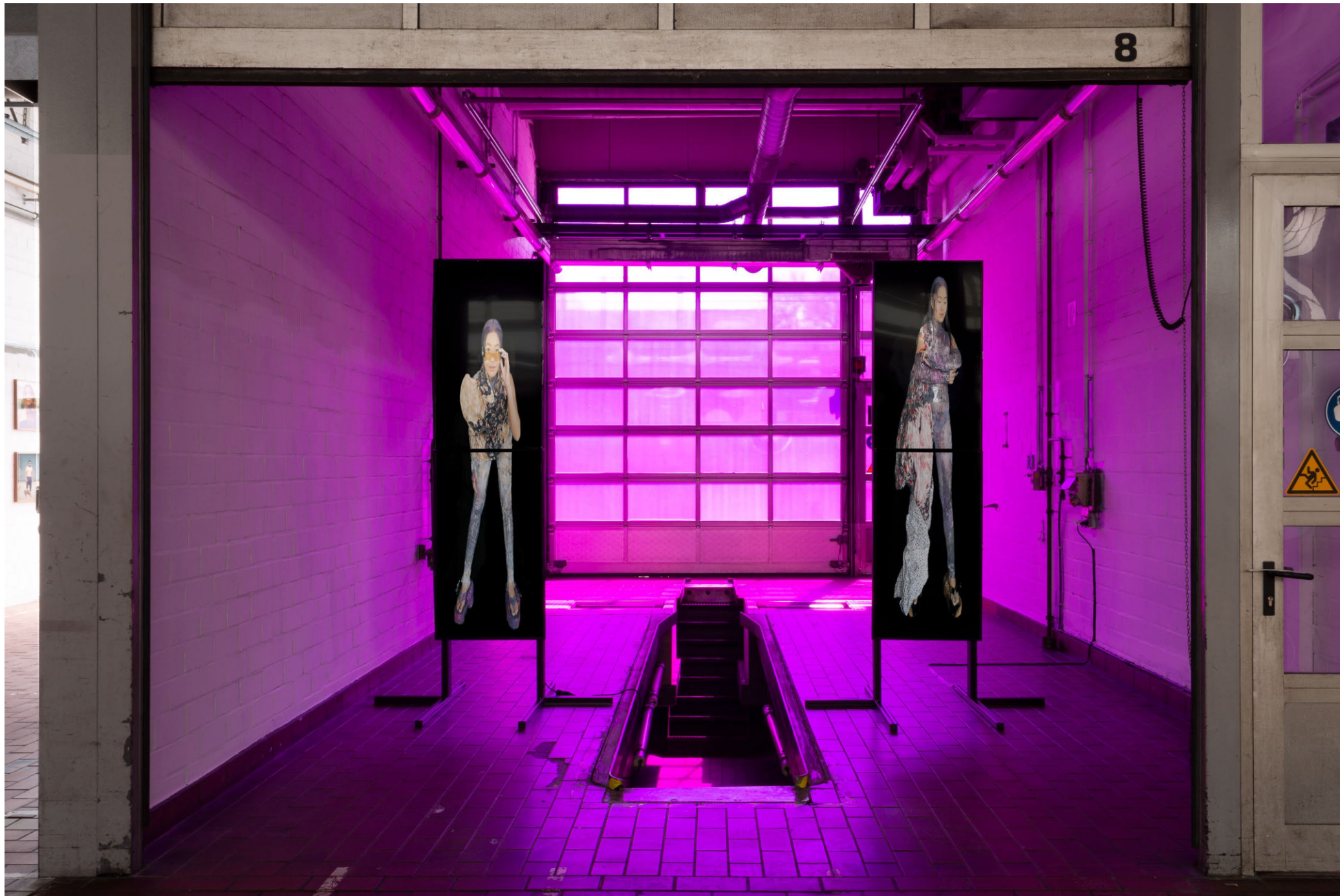
Installation view »A Motorbike Sunbathes on a Patch of Plastic Turf«, Human Resources, Los Angeles, 2018



»using one's feet has become an option of last resort II«, 2019/2023
2-channel video installation
Installation view **»Berlin Bishkek Artweeks«, Berlin, 2023**

Drawing upon my vivid recollections of riding motorbikes in Vietnam during my childhood, the video installation delves into the exploration of diasporic memories. It brings these memories to life through a protagonist depicted in the video with a speculative narrative. Motorbike culture has emerged as an emblem of contemporary Vietnam, symbolizing the country's transition towards capitalism since the mid-1980s. By delving into discourses surrounding consumerism, mobility, gender, and class identity, the work deconstructs Vietnam's motorbike sun-protective-garments, transforming it into "wearable sculptures." Through this transformative process, the project presents an empowering strategy: the protagonist reinterprets their past encounters with discrimination, offering a new perspective on their experiences.





»using one's feet has become an option of last resort II« 2019/2023
Installation view »Berlin Bishkek Artweeks«, Berlin, 2023

»using one's feet has become an option of last resort III« 2023
sun-protective garments, textile silicone, paper
Installation view **»Vida Pública«**, 4th Edition of Bienalsur
Centro de Arte UNLP, La Plata, 2024

Drawing upon the artist's vivid recollections of riding motorbikes in Vietnam during her childhood, the video installation delves into the exploration of diasporic memories. Motorbike culture has emerged as an emblem of contemporary Vietnam, symbolizing the country's transition towards capitalism since the mid-1980s. By delving into discourses surrounding consumerism, mobility, gender, and class identity, the work deconstructs Vietnam's motorbike sun-protective-garments, transforming it into "wearable sculptures."





»using one's feet has become an option of last resort III« 2023
Installation view »Vida Pública«, 4th Edition of Bienalsur, Centro de Arte UNLP, La Plata, 2023



»using one's feet has become an option of last resort III« 2023
Installation view »Vida Pública«, 4th Edition of Bienalsur, Centro de Arte UNLP, La Plata, 2023

»Riders' Arc«, 2024
140 x 185 x 75 cm; motorbike, sun-protective garments, textile silicone
Installation view »Fallen Angels«, Grotto, Berlin, 2024

In Tra My Nguyen's solo exhibition, *Fallen Angels* at GROTTO, vignettes of the artist's childhood in Vietnam are distorted into a hybrid narrative where traveling through the streets of Hanoi with relatives has become a catalyst for ideas of colourism, mobility and gender politics to arise. This concept takes inspiration from the female motorists culture in Vietnam, where women cover their entire bodies in garish colour clashing garments to protect their skin from the sun's harsh rays. Their generic floral patterns and easy-to-wear style moves quickly from design to vendors, relentlessly meeting the latest trends and exaggerating notions of mass-production. The garments engage both literally and metaphorically with notions of speed: skirts clip and wrap-around at the waist. Jackets zip all the way up to the head – fast, quick, and easy.

Using these garments as a starting point, Nguyen manipulates her materials to re-imagine the body, removing the clothing from its context and repurposing its function towards a new object. In *Riders' Arc* the emphasis shifts from the physical body to that of a vehicle, its ergonomic form producing certain curvatures: the seat becoming hips; its handles, arms outstretched and strong. Stretchy viscose is draped and collaged around the vehicle's body sealed at the seams with textile silicone, forming a protective layer that entombs the structural entity beneath.

Text by Brooke Wilson





»Riders' Arc«, 2024
Installation view »Fallen Angels«, Grotto, Berlin, 2024



Installation view »Fallen Angels«, Grotto, Berlin, 2024

»Bodies (The Lovers)«, 2024

74 x 150 x 11 cm; aluminium, mesh fabric, textile silicone, foam

Installation view »Fallen Angels«, Grotto, Berlin, 2024

In her textile-sculpture series *Bodies (The Lovers)*, Nguyen continues to expand on notions of preservation. Produced via methods of digitization and flat-bed scanning, the original Vietnamese motorcycle garments are distorted via technological alterations and methods of printing, to form new hybrid textiles. Sun-protective garments are collaged and altered through digital distortion, forming a glitch-like pattern. The material is then printed onto a lightweight mesh fabric, coated with textile silicone and wrapped around the female form to extend ideas of the digital and physical body. The works lay to rest within an aluminium tray frame suggestive of a museum's archive box, allowing a space for Nguyen's sculptural forms to be held and preserved, proposing a hollow outline of the body that once came to inform its shapes.

Text by Brooke Wilson





»Bodies (The Lovers)«, 2024
Installation view »Fallen Angels«, Grotto, Berlin, 2024



»Bodies (The Lovers)«, 2024
Installation view »Fallen Angels«, Grotto, Berlin, 2024

CV Tra My Nguyen

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Education

- 2019 University of the Arts Berlin, Fashion Design, MA
- 2017 Burg Giebichenstein University of Art & Design Halle, Fashion Design, BA

Residencies

- 2024 Rupert Residency, Vilnius (LT)
- 2023 *Intermix Residency*, Ministry of Culture, Riyadh (SA)
- 2020 *Incubator Collective*, Artist Residency, Dada Post, Berlin (DE)

Grants, Prizes & Programs

- 2024 *BPA// Berlin program for artists*, Grant & Mentorship Program
Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Travel Grant
- 2023 Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Atelier Stipend
Stiftung Kunstfonds, NEUSTARTplus Stipend
- 2022 Stiftung Kunstfonds Neustart Kultur Stipend
AfA - Artist for Artist Masterclass 5th Edition, Mentorship Program
- 2021 Akademie der Künste INITIAL Neustart Kultur Stipend

Solo & Duo Exhibitions

- 2024 *Fallen Angels*, Grotto, Berlin (DE), solo
- 2020 Positions Art Fair, Flughafen Tempelhof Berlin (DE), solo
- 2019 *A Motorbike Sunbathes on a Patch of Plastic Turf*, Human Resources, Los Angeles (USA), duo

Selected Group Shows

- 2024 INVERSION, BPA// Room, Berlin (DE)
Means of Production, Lunch Hour, New York City (USA)
- 2023 *Alter Ego*, Das Leben am Haverkamp, Den Haag (NL) - *upcoming*
Vida Pública, 4th Edition of BIENALSUR, Centro de Arte UNLP, La Plata (ARG)
Ghosting, M.1 Arthur Boskamp-Stiftung, Curation: Agnieszka Roguski, Hohenlockstedt (DE)
Berlin Bishkek Art Weeks, Berlin (DE)
Open Studios, Intermix Residency, Diriyah Biennale Foundation, Riyadh (KSA)
- 2022 *The Foliage VI*, Vincom Center for Contemporary Art, Hanoi (VN)
The Fairest Art Fair, Kühlhaus Berlin (DE)
State of Fashion Biennale, Arnhem (NL)
Emergency Gathering, ACUD Galerie, Berlin (DE)
Empathic Device, Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin (DE)
A rite to transform, Curation: The Fairest, HOTO, Berlin (DE)
- 2021 *Dress Code: Are You Playing Fashion?*, Bundeskunsthalle Bonn (DE)
LET EXPERIMENTS BECOME ATITUDE, The Fairest, Postbank Tower Berlin (DE)
SecRed Gallery, Curation: Lukas Feireiss, Torstr. Berlin (DE)
- 2020 *Body Occupation*, Dada Post, Berlin (DE),
The Virtual Salon, 8MM Bar Berlin (DE)
- 2019 *We are in this together*, Universität der Künste Berlin (DE)
In Actu. In Potentia., fffriedrich, Frankfurt (DE)
- 2018 Modelfotografie. Retrospektive einer Zusammenarbeit, Kunststiftung des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt (DE)

Projects & Performances

- 2023 Costume Design, *R.I.P.*, Hebbel am Hau Berlin, Kaserne Basel (DE)
- 2022 Scenography & Costume Design, *POSTHUMAN WOMBS*, soft power / Hebbel am Hau, Berlin (DE)
- 2021 Scenography & Costume Design, *Virtual Wombs*, Kaserne Basel (CH) / HAU Berlin (DE) / IDFA Amsterdam (NL)
- 2019 Performance, *In Actu. In Potentia.*, Städelschule, Frankfurt a.M. (DE)
- 2017 Performance, *XLoca*, Steinweg 5, Halle (Saale) (DE)

Lectures & Talks

- 2024 Panel Talk, Sustainable Residencies, Green Culture Festival, Goethe Institut, Potsdam
Performance Lecture, ARTICULATIONS, Rupert Residency, Arts Printing House, Vilnius
- 2023 Artist Talk *Notion of home*, BB Artweeks, Berlin
- 2022 Show Walkthrough Interview, The Here and There Collective
Guest Lecture, *JUXTAPOSITIONS*, University of the Arts Berlin
- 2021 Guest Lecture, *Nothing is Original. Challenging Notions of Artistic Autonomy*, University of the Arts Berlin
Panel Talk: *How political can fashion be?*, German Fashion Council

Selected Publications & Bibliography

- 2024 TAZ, *Eine Grotte im Hansaviertel*, Text: Beate Scheder
- 2023 TAZ, *Bleibende Verluste*, Text: Alexander Diehl
[Voo Visits, Interview: Marie Wez](#)
Intermix Residency Program Catalogue
- 2022 State of Fashion 'Fashion as Encounters' Exhibition Catalogue
VCCA 'The Foliage IV' Catalogue
[NXS 6th Issue, Phygital Fashioning](#)
- 2020 [Year Zero Magazine, Bad Blood, Sweat & Tears, Text: Max Migowski](#)
[Monopol, Nicht euer Moodboard, Text: Miriam Hinternes](#)
[Gross Magazine, Futuristic Funk: Tra My Nguyen recreates tradition by breaking the norms for a better future.](#)
Text: Ian Randolph
[TUSH Magazine, Multimediam, Text: Laura Dunkelmann](#)
- 2018 *Modedefotografie - Retrospektive einer Zusammenarbeit*, (Hg.) Thomas Greis, Hofmann Thomas, Ute Mahler, Heike Becker, Verlag: Burg Giebichenstein, Exhibition Catalogue