

HYPHENATED

[*hahy-fuh-ney-tid*]

An exhibition of contemporary art by Victorian-Asian artists living between cultural spaces

[RUSHDI ANWAR](#), [SOFI BASSEGGHI](#) AND EHSAN KHOSHNAME, ANDY BUTLER,
[RHETT D’COSTA](#), [TAMMY WONG HULBERT](#), [NIKKI LAM](#),
[EUGENIA LIM](#), [HOANG TRAN NGUYEN](#), SLIPPAGE, and [VIPOO SRIVILASA](#)

23 March – 21 April

Co-curated by Phuong Ngo and Tammy Wong Hulbert

RUSHDI ANWAR

Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement,

2013 – ongoing

Burnt wooden chairs, black pigment and charcoal

Dimensions variable

This work is an installation consisting of burnt chairs. They are installed as an interlocking pile. The chairs are not joined/fixed but placed on top of one another. Weight and gravity hold them up, forming a solid work that stands in the space.

Irhal (Expel), Hope and the Sorrow of Displacement meditates on displacement, a concept that affects millions of people around the globe who are forced to flee their homes because of political, social, environmental or economic factors.

Discarded objects (chairs) were utilised to explore notions of fragility, uncertainty and limitation that often accompany displacement. The artist has used these commonplace objects (chairs) as a metaphor for “home and place”. Domestic chairs are objects designed for comfort and relaxation, however he has manipulated and transformed the chairs into dysfunctional objects. The chairs have been burnt and deformed, that became a metaphor for the abandonment of “home and place”.

The chairs were burnt and transformed into something non-functional. The burnt chairs undermine the feeling of safety and home. This creates a sense of feeling of vulnerability and absence. It suggests a state of absence and presence and acts as a metaphor for the place and displacement.

BIOGRAPHY

Rushdi Anwar is a Melbourne-based artist originally from Kurdistan. He is working between Australia and Thailand. His installation, sculpture, painting, photo-painting, and video work often reflect on the socio-political issues of Kurdistan, Iraq and The Middle East. Which exploring these issues through an investigation of form, material vocabulary and processes of making. His works reference the social and political unrest that extend to generate discourse about the status of social equity. His work also have a broader message and talk to us of care, attention and even redemption through art.

He was educated in Kurdistan and Australia studying at the Institute of Kirkuk- Kurdistan, Enmore Design Centre / Sydney Institute- Sydney. He holds a Master of Fine Art (MFA) 2010 and a Doctorate of Philosophy Art (PhD) 2016, in the School of Art in RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia.

He has held solo and group exhibitions widely in Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, France, Japan, Kurdistan, Norway, Switzerland, Thailand, and United Arab Emirates.

Irhil

honeyed
ligaments
petrified
in exploding dark

who do you keep
in place after
the mourning that *follows*
follows
follows

baby teeth search
for a mouth
a new vocabulary
unfurls
from cracked
asphalt oil-spilled
cantation
prayers in mongrel
speak

what bounties
silenced
to numb the ache
of mother
tongues
you
exhale
exhale
ex-
a new
elsewhere
an orchard of
farewells

SOFI BASSEGGHI

Elusive Paradise

2018

Video, mixed media installation

Dimensions variable

Credits

Exhibition Design and Installation: Ehsan Khoshnami

Performance: Michka Mansour and Nina Seyedi

Sound Design: Ai Yamamoto

Through my practice I have been following and seeking narratives relating to Iranian women. I have been especially interested in narratives of rebellion, against family expectations together with the rebellion against social, cultural and religious pressures. This work explores the manner in which women have resisted the former through an exhibition of defiance manifested by their appearance.

These women are from my own generation. They represent a generation born after the Islamic Revolution and during the Iran/Iraq war. They discuss the contradiction of being caught between wanting to live a non-conservative contemporary lifestyle yet being burdened by the need to have to accommodate their family's traditional values. Failure in relationships and marriages are also on their conversational agenda. They also highlight how this generation is in a sexual limbo where women, unlike in previous generations, are now beginning to express their sexual desires. This is unmasked throughout the work by combining dreamlike imagery reminiscent of another era together with documentary footage.

Fabric features in my work to emphasize the contrasts and contradictions within Iranian society. Various clothing fabrics including the veil are used not only to conceal body parts but also as ethereal objects to tempt and reveal.

My work looks at the ways in which women have rebelled through their physical appearance and it observes both the positive and negative implications this has had on the female Iranian Identity. Michka and Nina share their experiences together with those of their acquaintances to paint a fragmented image of the contemporary woman where social pressures literally have distorted their natural appearance. As well, the myriad social pressures inflicted on women by both the same and opposite sexes have created multiplicities in their persona.

The video installation intends to illustrate the battle between traditional values, religious and superstitious belief systems in a fast-paced contemporary lifestyle by combining fact and fiction together with mythological and architectural elements informed by Persian culture.

This work was filmed in Iran and completed in Australia. It is also part of a larger body of work from my practice led PhD research at RMIT University.



BIOGRAPHY

Sofi Basseghi is an Australian/Iranian visual artist based in Melbourne. Her award winning films, photographs and video work have been extensively exhibited at acclaimed local and international venues and galleries including West Space, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art and the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome.

She completed a Masters of Fine Arts degree in 2007 at RMIT University and pursued further graduate studies in directing in 2011 at the VCA school of Film and Television. Basseghi is currently a PhD (Art) candidate at RMIT where her practice-based research uses photography, documentary and video art practices as tools to express narratives revealing an image of contemporary female Iranian rebellion.

Her work is predominantly based on real and fictitious stories born of experiences arising from the complexities of the cultural, religious and social climate people find themselves in where her desire to cross inflicted boundaries and question cultural and traditional mores is evident.

Ehsan Khoshnami completed a Master of Architecture at RMIT University with a previous background in fine arts and design. He is the co-founder and principle of arKED Architects based in Melbourne.

In his architectural practice he is particularly interested in the historical marriage of art, architecture, culture and community and how these are manifested in a technological contemporary architectural design.

He has and is currently working on cross-cultural art and architectural projects both in Australia and Iran. Khoshnami has also designed numerous exhibition Installation designs in collaboration with International visual artist Sofi Basseghi.

Seeking Heaven

And in the hollow of my ink-stained palms
swallows will make their nest.

'Reborn', Forugh Farrokhzad
translated from the Farsi by Sholeh Wolpé

This grass bed,
ringed by tussocks.
The snowmelt is receding.

Sweep of pebbles:
a broken wave,
milk-heavy breast.

A line of buried stones
punctuate the spine.
Dark mane, unbound.

Hands weighted
and open on emptied
sky-blue cloth, over full belly.

Press one ear to the ground—
storks cannot sing; can only clatter.

– *Eileen Chong*

ANDY BUTLER

Live to your potential – After Koons's Balloon Dog

2018

Video

with LOUISE MEUWISSEN

Self Portrait of the artist after Gauguin x Koons x Louis Vuitton

2018

Acrylic, varnish, metal on replica Louis Vuitton bag

Dimensions variable

Model Minority

In the West, a model minority is revered for their story of struggle, overcoming barriers, and integration and success under capitalism and colonial values. They're a little bit exotic, their accent is easy to understand, they may become a lawyer or a surgeon, they always know their place. They never gather in groups larger than three. Their singular success reminds us that no one is racist. A model minority is always a sidekick to the White hero.

Model Minority imagines the career of a 'diverse' contemporary artist who has assimilated in to the recognised White artistic cannon. The works reflect the practice of Jeff Koons, who holds the record for the highest selling artwork of a living artist (Balloon Dog, US\$58.4 Million in 2013), and Koons's recent collaboration with Louis Vuitton. Butler's work imagines replicating the financial and cultural success of White art-stars, while playing on the love of America and replicas of foreign luxury brands in a developing country like the Philippines. Through the aspirational consumption of status symbols, one can hope to reach their full potential.

Model Minority places the 'diverse' artist in the centre of the White art narrative and plays with the racial tensions that arise. It pays homage to one of the latest trends in luxury fashion and contemporary art – brown people.



BIOGRAPHY

Andy Butler (b. 1987) is a Filipino-Australian writer, artist and curator. Originally raised in Kalgoorlie and Perth, he is now based in Melbourne. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Literature and Philosophy with first class honours from the University of Melbourne.

Andy's writing has appeared in *Overland*, *Art+Australia* and *PEN Melbourne Quarterly*, and he has written catalogue essays for exhibitions at Chapter House Lane and First Site galleries. He has curated exhibitions at First Site gallery, and at BLINDSIDE, through their 2017 Emerging Curator Mentorship program. He is a participant in Footscray Community Arts Centre's Emerging Cultural Leaders program, was a participant in Arts Access Victoria's inaugural Activate program, has been awarded a Glenfern Fellowship by Writers Victoria and has performed at the Emerging Writers Festival. In 2018, he will undertake a residency at Police Point Shire Park on the Mornington Peninsula.

As an arts worker and educator, Andy has worked in audience engagement and public programming roles at ACMI and the NGV. He is the Festival Administrator for Melbourne Writers Festival, and has delivered arts workshops for adults and children. He has run philosophy workshops for primary school students from culturally diverse backgrounds, and workshops on respectful relationships and gendered violence for high school students in the western suburbs.

Dreamlines

Of Koons, of Vuitton. Of Gauguin's
women, the old unwavering gaze.
Of luxury disguised as the unattainable,
reflection of the bowerbird's eye,
ultramarine. Of myth, of money,
of memory: Billie's white gowns,
white shoes, her white gardenias
and white junk. Of the people
who use us. Of how steadily things
fail themselves, and how empty
of remorse, of the moment before
regret, our faces unrecognisable
as replicas. Of the man who stands
at the threshold of that life,
who looks in and wants nothing.

– *Mindy Gill*

RHETT D’COSTA

Becoming Differently

2018

Mixed media installation

Dimensions variable

Individual works in the installation:

Holding Hands 2018

The Ascension 2018

Letting things be what they are 2016

An Indian spice table/dodder vine/mistletoe/haustorium/the dead hair of a cultural geographer/unidentified bird nests/a collapsing form 2018

Entangled essay by Dr Lesley Instone 2018

Becoming Differently is an installation consisting of four discreet artworks and an essay, which is read as part of the installation by cultural geographer, Dr Lesley Instone. The four artworks include 2 large scaled framed photographs, an object which leans against a wall and an object placed against another wall.

Holding Hands is an image of two men dressed in Indian garments holding hands taken in the Victorian Goldfields National Park in central Victoria. The image as well as focusing on the centrally placed figures, also highlights a dry, fairly inhospitable Australian landscape consisting of indigenous eucalyptus trees with a hemiparasitic plant (mistletoe) hanging from its branches, and rampant introduced blackberry shrubbery.

The Ascension (2018) is a cropped image of a man wearing a black Indian garment (the same as in the *Holding Hands* photograph) ascending a staircase. The image draws attention to the gold leaf under soles of the slippers he is wearing. The photograph was taken in India.

The object leaning against a wall, titled *Letting things be what they are* (2016) is a eucalyptus branch with the haustorium attached (the haustorium is the connecting structure that grows around the parasitic plant which connects the mistletoe to the host). This entire form is covered in Swarovski crystals.

The fourth work in the installation is titled *An Indian spice table/dodder vine/mistletoe/haustorium/the dead hair of a cultural geographer/unidentified bird nests/a collapsing form* (2018). It consists of a traditional Indian spice table with a range of materials piled high on the table, which is set against the wall.

Finally the essay titled *Entangled* (2018), weaves together a narrative of sorts referencing and engaging the Australian landscape, the writer, the artist, aspects of the artworks and the inherent issues of difference, place, categorization, identity, cohabitation and belonging.





BIOGRAPHY

Born in Bombay, **Rhett D'Costa** migrated to Australia at an early age. His artistic practice draws on this hybrid background of British, Australian and Indian culture and is extended across photomedia, drawing, painting and installation processes. Rhett's artistic practice sits within the context of postcolonial theory, migration and contemporary art practice and is contextualized from within and outside of a Western trajectory. Rhett's most recent pan-disciplinary projects have centered on the 'right to belong' in the intersecting areas of migration, identity, nationalism and belonging.

In a career spanning almost thirty years in art practice and tertiary art education, Rhett has held numerous solo shows and contributed work to many group and curated exhibitions, both within Australia and overseas.

-8

city built of twigs,
twine, rexine,
old tape, colour
leached of colour, no
meaning but things
the mind receives
as dolour,
headwind, blown nest,
the small bird
broken like this line.

– *Jeet Thayil*

TAMMY WONG HULBERT

Transient Home City

2016-18

Mixed media installation

Dimensions variable

“To be away from home and to feel oneself everywhere at home”
(Baudelaire, 1863)

Transient Home City reimagines the city as a state of flux in relation to a migratory society. The concept for this project originated from an earlier socially engaged collaborative project with the Vicsege Asylum Seekers Social Health Group called *Belonging and the Transient Home* (2016) where collaboratively we investigated ideas of home, belonging and identity to build a project we presented to the broader community. By investigating these ideas through the project, we aimed to empower and take ownership of the groups new migrant status.

As the group was in the process of resettling, we decided to explore how we related to Australian society as migrants. The project was designed to unpack and express themes relating to the experiences of migrants and to counter the negative perceptions that are commonly expressed in mainstream media and society. Home in this project was expressed as transient, transformed suitcases becoming a metaphoric object representing home as mobile and thus relating the experiences of the group to the contemporary empowered experience of globalising cities.

For this exhibition, I wanted to expand on ideas relating to the urban flâneur, as expressed with the birth of the urban era by the poet Baudelaire. In the twenty-first century, our globalising cities are populated with communities of urban wanderers; our relationship to place is no longer fixed. Expanding on these transient homes, I wanted viewers to reconsider cities as sites of migratory cultural flux rather than fixed permanence and how we may belong in an urban social space of such diverse cultural characteristics. As a culturally diverse society, most of our urban populations regularly experience navigating through multiple cultural spaces.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Tammy Wong Hulbert (b. 1976) is an artist, curator and academic based in Melbourne, Australia. Born in Sydney to Cantonese Chinese parents, her art practice has a particular interest in the complicated, multi-layered and often fragmented space between cultures and is influenced by her families' intergenerational migratory connection to Australia since 1900. Her recent works have often involved a socially engaged practice working with various urban communities, in particular addressing issues of migration, belonging and the role art in encouraging an inclusive city. As a curator she has worked with a wide range of Australian and Chinese contemporary artists in Sydney, Melbourne, Beijing, Shanghai and Suzhou, China. In her curatorial projects she is interested in bridging the gap between Australia and the Asian region through the creation of public dialogue between these cultural spaces. In 2008-11 she completed her PhD at RMIT University, researching *The City as a Curated Space*, which offered an alternative, yet parallel model of exhibition practices suitable for the globalising urban age. She has taught art history and arts management in Melbourne and Hong Kong and is currently Lecturer of Curating Contemporary Art in the Masters of (Arts) Arts Management, School of Art at RMIT University, Melbourne.

A Letter to My Mother from Her Suitcase at the Start of Her Last Journey

Dearest,

I'm so sorry. After all we've shared, it has come to this: a short ride in the back of a long car to nowhere in particular, to the repetitious lawn lozenges of finality, eternity. Even as this was our always destination — everything else being detour/non sequitur/aside — I know we deserved better.

Remember that first trip? The airplane lifting us up and away from the Pasig, you watching the water lillies receding on the swill-heavy water, your face arrayed so joyously on the tarmac, waving, anticipating what was to come. I don't know why you cried as soon as we touched down. You could not have known it would be nothing like America. Who could have anticipated the dry stale air, the empty streets, the flat rows of Monier-tile houses with no one to talk to, the night free from street vendor's call, "balut, balut", nothing to pray to but the overhead fan in the night? We only knew it was sooner than Canada. Maybe we should have waited.

Let's be grateful together instead for visiting your sister (twice), the rich one, as resplendent as a golden salamander, basking in her radiated heat; the strange ferry journey to that dark, stunted island with its tacky antique stores and terrible coffee, with the man who paid for some things and not others; the electrical storm that came in as we went to the stacked, twinkling boxes of Hong Kong, in the knowledge we would not spend our Sundays in Little Manila, we would Imelda-cruise the shopping malls with our gluttonous credit card and superiority. I know you loved me as a watchmaker loves time, with reverence, holiness. I'm sorry we never saw Disneyland, that America was so disappointing: brown people and black people and yellow people all poor, willing to work for food, just like back home. Surprise.

I'm sorry we lay so dormant for so long, waiting for our Golden Ticket, our lucky ride, that next deal, our big break, the chasm that never came. In the long rain of our lives, we all wish for the clouds to part in glorious sunburst. Surely we were happy enough with the brief respite of light showers? Life has been much better than it could have been, even as it has still been disappointing. I did not mind. Did you?

I'm going to your daughter's, the child who hasn't yet forgotten you, despite her very best efforts. She says you linger like perfume. It's fine there, for now, I wish she wouldn't refer to me as baggage.

Travel lightly.

– *Eleanor Jackson*

NIKKI LAM

Falling Leaf Returns to Its Roots

2014

HD Video

Falling Leaf Returns to Its Roots 落葉歸根 is a Chinese analogy of life adapted to the becoming of, questionably, Australian. A response to Max Dupain's *Sunbaker* (1937), the work questions the enduring and absurd process of becoming through the lens of migration. The Chinese analogy is often used to describe a person who leaves home to experience life, who will always return by the end of their journey, in order to fulfil the circle of life, through death or reconnections with their family, their heritage and their roots. Through this process of returning, it is essential for one to let go of personal ventures in order to fulfil a collective, greater goal, one that is not only bounded by its cultural context, but the ecology of life, of nature, to *belong*.

Applying this analogy to the shifting grounds of Australia conjures a conflicting sense of un-belonging, where its history of dispossession continues to be the counterpoint to the concept of a, singular, Australian identity.

Still...what is left

2018

Two-channel video installation

Dimension variable

Still... what is left

I cannot remember
the stories, gestures, movements.
Every detail is re-appropriated.

Bow your head,
palms together.
Ashes on bowls of rice

I cannot remember

Arms open,
eyes closed;
Small steps forward
crouch over a paper bridge

In a white funeral hall
The bell rings
Flashes of light—
Resonance of the past.

It breaks away
It pauses,
retraces its steps
sees a double image

I cannot remember

What is left
still, I see
is what it oughts to be.

Credits

Sound Design: Supina Bytol and Beatrice Lewis

Cinematography: Scott Heinrich

This work is made with the support of Underbelly Arts and Footscray Community Arts Centre.



BIOGRAPHY

Nikki Lam is a visual artist and curator based in Melbourne, Australia. From video and installation, to writing and performance, Nikki's practice engages in the complexity of belonging through the exploration of self, memory and space. She is interested in exploring the translations of post-colonial identities and narratives in the hybrid world, often through the studies of rituals, language and their visual representations. Working primarily with the moving image, she is also passionate about the cross-sections of screen cultures, media arts and representations of narratives and histories.

Even Now

[for Mindy Gill]

Even now as you lie on your stomach,
reading of the mad king, desiring me, I want
to say all this happened a long time ago,
long ago this room, the call of kites
and crows, the food we share each morning,
unvarying and satisfying, I want to say
last night I dreamed my father refused
to die, he shuffled from room to room
forgetting why, so when you offer me your lips,
I want to say I love you even as I turn away,
even as I walk out of the house to the street
and a woman who bows to her phone, whose
bewilderment grows each time I speak.

– *Jeet Thayil*

EUGENIA LIM

Artificial Islands (Interior Archipelago II)

2018

Collaborative performance installation, sand, plastic

Dimensions variable

Artificial Islands (Interior Archipelago II) is a manufactured sovereign symbol – an unauthorised sand monument of Singapore’s national icon, the merlion. The merlion is a mythical creature with a lion’s head and the body of a fish. The symbol was designed by [Alec Fraser-Brunner](#) in 1964 for the [Singapore Tourism Board](#) (STB), which continues to protect the Merlion symbol. Approval must be received from STB before it can be used. No approval has been sought for its use here.

Tracing a line from the mythic (and mostly male) earthworks and conceptual artists of the ‘70s – from Robert Smithson to Bas Jan Ader – to the territorial claims, artificial geographies, free market economies and totalitarian landscapes of South East Asia, the South China Seas and Dubai, Lim’s ongoing body of work *Artificial Islands (Interior Archipelago)* explores the power dynamics and politics at play in making and marking space. What does it look like to represent a site, a self, a culture or a state?

Within the Anthropocene (the ‘Age of Man’), our current unofficial but widely accepted geological epoch, the border between nature and culture and the ‘authentic’ and ‘artificial’ is becoming increasingly unstable, even irrelevant. From Smithson’s Spiral Jetty to Dubai’s artificial islands, artists and powerbrokers mark and make territory to express selfhood and sovereignty.

Like the Merlion, Singapore is a self-made symbol: reinventing itself from a former occupied colony, into a beacon of neoliberal globalisation. While Singapore is an economic powerhouse and a global player, it has had been governed by the same ruling party, the People’s Action Party, since self-government in 1959. And, with its high income inequality, strong censorship and restrictions of press and civil liberty, it is a ‘flawed democracy’, if not an authoritarian city-state.

Who builds progress? And what is the social cost and value assigned to the labour associated with the construction of monuments and national symbols? *Artificial Islands (Interior Archipelago II)* is built by local workers remunerated at the average daily rate of a migrant-worker in the Singaporean construction industry* under the supervision of Eugenia Lim.

*SING\$600 per month or SING\$24 per day = AU\$22.85 per day

Credits

Thank you to workers Katie Page, Emma Woodhams-Bertozzi, Eugenie Thompson, Oxana Sitchuk and Annabelle Gautier; Lauren Crockett and Maxi Walker.

BIOGRAPHY

Eugenia Lim is a Melbourne-based artist of Chinese-Singaporean descent who works across video, performance and installation. In her work, Lim transforms into invented personas to travel across time and cultures to explore how stereotypes and national identities cut, divide and bond our globalised world. Lim has exhibited, performed or screened internationally at venues, festivals and fairs.

And on the eighth day

He teaches us how to mold cocks

from sand

steel

concrete

so the world might continue on

with enough semen to fill oceans

casinos

wombs

like everything soused

in salt

our hands

shrivel

– *Eunice Andrada*

HOANG TRAN NGUYEN

with DAVID NGUYEN

Making Crackers

2011

HD Video

3:33 min

Finale

2011

HD Video

2:22 min

Making Crackers and *Finale* are two video works selected from *Footscray By Night*, a community arts project inspired by karaoke culture and the Paris By Night gala series produced by the Vietnamese diaspora. Working with community artist David Nguyen and in partnership with communities with social and economic ties to Footscray's Little Saigon, these videos were originally presented and performed on the rooftop car-park of the shopping centre.

Ninetyninepointninefour

2012

Wood, bronze

900mm x 90mm x 35mm

A cricket bat carved from construction pine by the artist during primary school age.

Episode 11 Chapter 5

2012

Video

4:13min

A montage of head shots from an episode of the 1980's TV series *21 Jump Street*. The show starred Dustin Nguyen, a Vietnamese refugee migrant, who plays an undercover youth police officer, Harry Aoki, of supposed Japanese heritage. After hiring Nguyen the show's producers learned of his personal history and decided to incorporate this into the character's biography. The resulting episode tells of Harry's struggle to reveal his identity, clear his legal status and regain the trust of colleagues and the institution for which he works.

The audio is 'sound dust' from a reading of the script for the film *Mad Max* (1979). In this iconic film officer Max Rockatansky loses his family through outlaw violence, forcing him to question his profession and identity. Abandoning his badge Max seeks revenge through lawlessness.

BIOGRAPHY

Hoang Tran Nguyen (b. 1974) Vung Tau, Vietnam Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia. He was born in Vung Tau, Vietnam, 1974. As part of the Vietnamese post-war exodus his family left Vietnam as refugees and was resettled in Australia in 1982. Hoang grew up in Melbourne's northern suburbs and studied Industrial Design at RMIT (1998).

The Truths of Places

Now that the idea of West no longer frightens (or is all they can afford) they've come
To hollow out the truth of old sullen places, where once, under sour skies
Transients, indigents, migrants - all the piled up people - lived, refracting
Thin dry light against hopes for the children and memory. The tatters of home flutter

To hollow out the truth of old sullen places, where once, under sour skies
They worked hard with cracked hands, sang with unchecked spirit:
A thin dry light against hope. For the children and memory, the tatters of home flutter
Faint as a moth wing beat, bleak with the same futility.

They worked hard with cracked hands, sang with unchecked spirit, so
It's strange to watch the cranes erect the new apartments to the sky.
Faint as a moth wing beat, bleak with the same futility
They clean the songs the smells the wicked spirits of the past.

It's strange to watch the cranes erect the new apartments to the sky
Now that the idea of West no longer frightens (or is all they can afford) and they've come
To clean the songs the smells the wicked spirits of the past:
Transients, indigents, migrants - all the piled up people who lived, refracting.

– *Eleanor Jackson*

SLIPPAGE

Mooncake

2018 - ongoing

Celadon glazed porcelain and sand

Dimensions Variable

Consisting of 888 celadon glazed mooncakes cast from traditional hand carved moulds sourced from North Vietnam; *Mooncake* is an ongoing 10-part work examining the historic expansionism of China. Utilising the mooncake, a ubiquitous cultural item in Asia that has its origins in China, the work comments on shared cultural values while critiquing China's current position on and in the South China Sea. With each reiteration of the work a further 888 mooncakes will be added, expanding the work in direct response to the 'rise of China'.

The Cow's Tongue

2018

Gold plated bronze

Dimensions Variable

The Cow's Tongue is a work that directly responds to the vernacular language used throughout South East Asia to describe the Chinese 9 dash line. It explores how language is used to colloquially discuss issues of global significance, illustrating complex political ideas through 'simplistic' and graphic language; in this case the terminology used is in reference to the Chinese Communist Party's claims within the region. With China itself seen as the cow's head, 'The cow's tongue' is used to denote political, economic and geographic greed and hunger.

BIOGRAPHY

Slippage is a collaborative practice by Australian born Chinese Vietnamese contemporary artist Hwafern Quach and Phuong Ngo. Slippage, examines the cycles of history in conjunction with current geopolitical and economic issues through the lens of vernacular cultures, artefacts and language.

The Sea Will Change, Everything Will Follow

What should last, if not us? In our madness
we forget. Like a god you sit by the sea
as it recedes and the horizon tightens,
a gold wire. Your silence, another one
of your disappearances. How greedy
I have become, how quick to claim you,
as a child who believes that nothing
she loves could ever really die, no sense
of eternal, that kind of innocence. The dumb
pleasure in the ignorance of time, of hunger,
unappeased as the empty head of desire,
as the tongue that divides the sea. But who
am I to long for such things – the pull
of the moon, then darkness. Another
day's arrival, and only for us.

– *Mindy Gill*

VIPOO SRIVILASA

The Masks of Me

2018

Mixed media installation

Dimensions variable

A mask is an object normally worn on the face, typically for protection, disguise, performance, or entertainment. Masks have been used since antiquity for both ceremonial and practical purposes.

Living in two different cultures, I have become fascinated by cultural differences. The situation not only allows me to create work that blend the best of both cultures, but also teaches me about cultural appropriation and how to blend in or stand out.

For the Hyphenated exhibition, I created a group of small masks that celebrate cultural differences and diversity. Through shape, decoration, colour, material and facial expression, each mask reflects on my personal experience of living in two worlds.

BIOGRAPHY

A Thai born, Melbourne based artist, curator and arts activist, **Vipoo Srivilasa** works predominantly in ceramics but also produce works on paper and mixed media sculptures. Vipoo's works explore similarities between the cultures of his native home, Thailand and his adoptive home, Australia as well as exploring cultural shifts and migration experiences. His work is a playful mix of European historical figurative and Asian decorative art practices with a healthy dose of contemporary culture. Vipoo is known for his clever, quirky, zoomorphic figures, which blend the artist's playful spirit and social consciousness, just as they blend pop and folk culture. His work requires an intimacy in which the key elements of the drama are often found in unusual places within the forms themselves.

In addition to exhibiting his work, Vipoo has actively initiated and organised cultural exchange projects between national and international artists. His recent major project was Beyond Limitations, a cultural exchange between Australian and Korean ceramic artists through a mentoring camp. The project took place in 2015 at Gimhae Museum, Korea. Vipoo's work has been exhibited in major art institutes around the world and has been a recipient of many major awards.

A Thousand Blooms

Look here, children—
There, by your feet,
A tiny yellow flower!

‘Don’t Trample This Flower’, Bing Xin,
translated from the Chinese by Herbert Batt and Sheldon Zitner

Little ones, let’s put pencil to paper—
draw the backyard rooster, sketch your loyal dog:
one to announce daybreak, the other to watch all night.

Let’s shape their bodies with our hands.
Let’s gouge out cavities with our fingers.
We are a hundred lidless eyes.

You there, go out into the desert.
Come back when you’ve stopped weeping.
Who shall we drown in glass today?
Who will withstand the flames?

The blue-and-white vases are broken.
They made us walk across the shards.
Our cut feet are a thousand crimson blooms.
It’s certain death for flowers without roots.

– *Eileen Chong*