

“Shifting Intimacies”

Featuring works by Arella Ho, Crispin Tan, Terri Teo and Quek Jia Qi

Exhibition Date: 9 June 2018, 5pm-10pm

Venue: RAW, 48 Niven Road S(228396)

In a city full of people, how do we turn strangers into meaningful encounters? **Shifting Intimacies** aims to navigate the ambiguities of relationships through the exploration of human intimacies. It is the unexpected eye contact over the haze of warm soup; the accidental graze of skin against skin in a cold room. What turns a stranger into a friend or a lover?

Seeking to articulate the longing for another and the bridging of lonely souls, the exhibition features works of Arella Ho, Crispin Tan, Terri Teo and Quek Jia Qi. This curation of works contains photographs, cinemagraphs and mixed-media installations made by the artists within the past two years.

In *Heartstrings*, Arella Ho delicately stitches black strings into white cloth in a confessional word embroidery that unweaves the process of a break-up. Love is universal; heartbreak inevitable. Some strings drape low, heavy under the weight of her honest musings, others hang freely like tracks of tears staining the surface of the fabric. The fragility of the material belie the gravity of the subject matter: we were once lovers; how did we end up as strangers? As Arella opines, “when I had nothing to say to you, I felt better, but I knew it was the end.” A print publication is paired with the work and the viewer is encouraged to take a seat by the window to experience the full extent of tugged heartstrings.

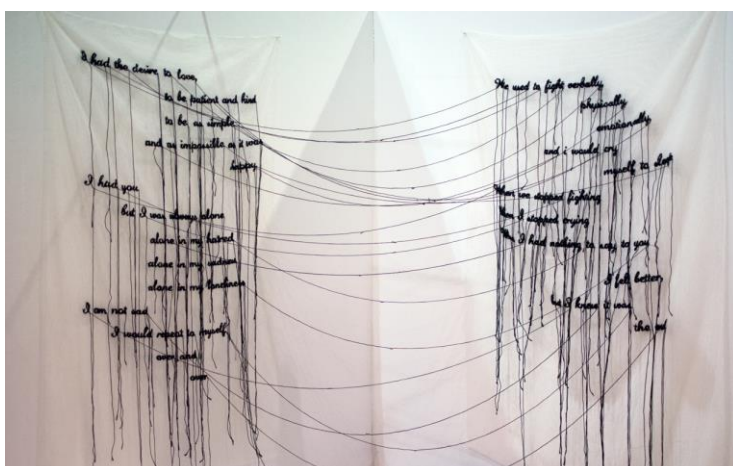
In the same vein of departures and people walking parallel paths, Crispin Tan’s *Insomniac: Jurong Fishery Port* examines the separate lives led by nocturnal fishmongers through the lens of a Pentax Spotmatic with Kodak Portra 400 film. His series of photographs centre around the men and women who labour under the moonlight even as the rest of the world snooze under blankets in the wee hours between 12.30am and 5.30am. The green tint of his photographs gives our city an other-worldly beauty; beyond our skyscrapers and ubiquitous HDBs, a hidden universe exists for a group of people who ring the tills for a citizenry that sleeps. It brings to fore a space overlooked by many. The stillness of his work is broken only by the accompanying cinemagraphs. There, individual characters go about their night ad infinitum as the clock ticks on and on.

In the meantime, Terri Teo’s *In the Mood for [fill in the blank]* is devoid of people and yet manages to convey a similar sense of presence. White cables from a famous

Lover's Bridge in Taiwan fan out across the vast sky. Red lanterns decorate the entire length of an alley. Subtle changes in the colours of the paired photographs create an almost imperceptible visual shift that transforms the experience of "looking". In a photograph of a noodle stall, the different hues of blues felt evocative of our technicolour urban landscape and could transform an ordinary back alley into one fraught with silent lonesomeness. To other viewers however, the change in colours may create an entirely different effect. These results highlight the importance of colour composition and post-processing in nudging out the nuances of intimate moments in life that are personal for each viewer.

The final installation piece is Quek Jia Qi's *Untitled (lost and maybe not always found)*. It is a thoughtful attempt that bridges the artist and participant; the artist and viewer; the participant and the viewer; and conjoins disparate individuals in the universal act of apologizing. From the execution stage to the presentation stage of the work, a raw honesty permeates. Secrets and matters close to the heart are passed on from stranger to stranger. The participant shares the trust with the artist and the artist entrusts her knowledge of their affairs to the audience in the form of "found wallets". These wallets are scattered across the room and viewers can only be roped into the sharing through the conscious and deliberate choice - a commitment of sorts - of picking up a wallet and scanning the QR code on a created receipt. It is no easy task to be emotionally frank to ourselves or others. Through experiencing this work, we can only hope to feel a little less alone in our regrets and perhaps, even feel a little better at the end.

Arella Ho



Heartstrings

2017

Embroidery on Cloth and Print

Publication

Variable Dimensions

Artist Statement:

Heartstrings is a self documentation mixed media installation of the artist's deepest thoughts and feelings during a period of her life. Using source material from the artist's personal written excerpts and notes, she explores the pain, loss and intimacy of love and life.

Artist Biography:

Arella Ho (b. 1993, Singapore), graduated from Nanyang Technological University, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communication with honours in 2017. She currently lives and works in Sydney, Australia. She can be found at cargocollective.com/arellaho and arellaho@hotmail.com.

Crispin Tan



Insomniac: Jurong Fishery Port

2017

Laser Ink on Art Card/Photopaper

Variable Dimensions

Artist Statement:

In a bid to make my weekends more exciting during my stint in National Service (NS), I ventured out to Jurong Fishery Port after learning of its existence. ~~Jurong Fishery Port is...a port...in Jurong.~~ It operates from 2am to 6am for the catch to be unloaded. While everybody else was sleeping at 3am in the morning, the place was charged with energy from scrambling mongers.

I was completely mesmerised by how the site was like a little world of its own— machines and forklifts whirring away, uncles and aunties screaming back and forth at one another, uncles and aunties screaming at you to get out of the way lest be drowned in heaps of raw fish.

But when i thought about it—i realised how lonely the work was. The workers had one another but their families didn't have them. The port operates daily (except Mondays) in the wee hours from 2am to 6am in the morning—contrary to conventional working hours.

Insomniac: Jurong Fishery Port is a collection of photographs that attempts to capture the busy loneliness and collective isolation of the mongers.

Artist Biography:

~~Crispin Tan uses photography as an excuse to talk to pretty girls.~~

Crispin Tan (b. 1997, Singapore), is an avid and passionate photographer. He dabbles in both film and digital mediums, but will always regard film as closest to his heart. In his spare time, Crispin also enjoys writing and filming short videos and stories, drawing inspiration from filmmakers such as Christopher Nolan and Wes Anderson. Beyond camera work, Crispin enjoys experimenting in the world of post-processing, often exploring Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Premiere Pro to figure out new ways to capture and tell stories from a refreshing and personal point-of-view. He can be found at <https://krispinkreme.exposure.co/>, on Instagram @krispinkreme and krispinkreme@gmail.com.

Terri Teo



***In the Mood for
[fill in the
blank]***
2017-2018
Laser Ink on Art
Card/Photopaper
Variable
Dimensions

Artist Statement:

Synopsis

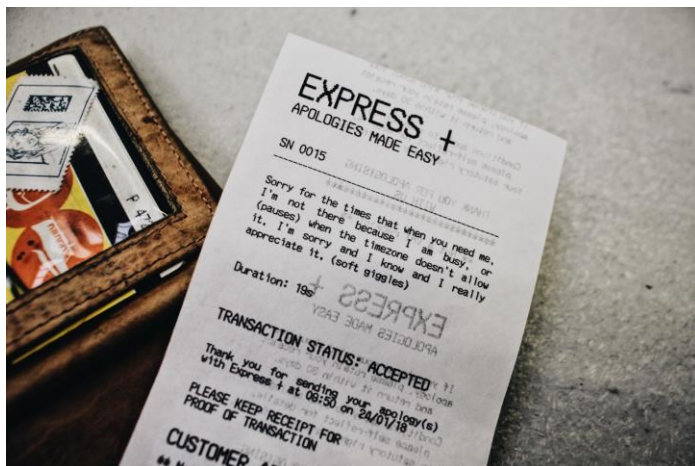
How do you feel? But why?

In the Mood for [fill in the blank] features a series of photographs edited two ways to examine colour composition in photography and film-making when creating mood. This project aims to underscore the often-overlooked but pervasive role of post-processing and the colourist in photography and film-making in emphasising an idea or emotion. Ultimately, the series asks the viewer to consider how the manipulation of colours construct the environment and the subjects' interaction with it.

Artist Biography:

When not stuck between pages of a book or in the past with music circa your-parents-would-know-this-song, **Terri Teo** (b. 1996, Singapore), is an avid photographer shooting primarily in digital. She is inspired by the cinematic style and looks to replicate that in her photos as if they were stills from a film. She can be found on Instagram @terri.teo and at terriateo@gmail.com.

Quek Jia Qi



Untitled (lost and maybe not always found)

2018

Interactive Installation. Found wallets, artist receipts, QR code scanning device & headphones set
Variable Dimensions

Artist Statement:

“I’m sorry” exists as an unusual state of being - at times demanded as a social obligation, other times, a normative dilution, readily disposable. Yet, it takes courage, pride and vulnerability to express a difficult apology.

“Is there someone in mind you have always wanted to apologise to?”

As a confessional social experiment, participants who responded to the artist’s public call were asked to record their apology - simulating how they would have done so in reality. With a pact of trust, they then engage in an intimate conversation with the

artist to reflect upon their experience.

“I found myself drawn to stories of individuals, especially the ones that were movingly expressed. Narratives have a universal and metaphorical dimension - the emotional immediacy of a story can connect to different aspects of imaginary realities and at the same time isolate them - as private individuals - from their immediate social context.

From the genuine hesitations, awkward pauses, shivering voices to the dramatic outburst of tears, there is a raw authenticity present in the human voice that a machine can never translate. By the end of each experiment, I would ask the participant how they felt and if the experience has brought value to them. We realised it made a difference when we are intentional and specific about the apology. Some were inspired to have the courage to deliver the apology to the actual person. Some found it therapeutic. Some treated the experiment as an opportunity for self-reflection, while others treated it as a practice to phrase their apology. Depending on circumstances, not all apologies could be delivered. Some gave up because they have drifted in their relationships, while others were simply waiting for the right time to do so. Some simply didn't find the need to communicate it. It was a difficult conversation to hold, but it also revealed that a simple act of kneeling in humble grief can lead us to courageously engage with our lives.”

Examining the possibilities and conditions of human emotions, the artist constructed a fictional apology service: framing the voice recordings into appropriated till receipts - as proof of transaction wrung dry of all emotions, pathologically honest and poignant - with individual QR codes that link to the respective audio recordings. Weaving together narratives from families, siblings, ex-lovers, couples, friends, to acquaintances, they form a part of an interactive installation that transcends the personal to provide a monument to the participants involved. Viewers are invited to uncover the receipts inside the autobiographical wallets on the ground, in order to access the apology transcript and audio recording with the set of headphones and QR code scanner provided.

“The most personal of items are meant to create an experiential set of questions when offered to us like this, that are resonant even when we know it is art.”

Opening up ideas of promises and regrets, love and heartache, truth and discomfort, trust and intimacy, grief and anxiety, **Untitled (lost and maybe not always found)** seeks to honour and sustain a shared consciousness shaped by common experiences of life, love and unresolved emotional conflicts. Simultaneously

emotional and detached, the interactive installation seeks to provide an intimate experience for viewers to contemplate on all that may be lost, and found, in the most personal of items, stories and exchange.

“It’s a very intrusive act, but also a very human tendency to want to know of affairs of others even if one is seemingly completely detached from those involved. We are both intruding and navigating a set of moral questions. How a stranger has more access to truth, or more specifically to the authentic feelings of the apologist; while the person the apology is addressed to may never hear or receive an apology if it never comes to light.”

****All transcripts remain anonymous and have been granted permission for public display.**

<https://www.quekjiqi.com/untitled-lost-and-maybe-not-always-found.html>

Artist Biography:

Quek Jia Qi (b. 1996, Singapore), is a socially-engaged artist, who believes in art’s capacity for introspection, connection and community engagement. She works across multiple disciplines, with social practice at its core - deeply intertwined in participation, conversations, critical pedagogy and public practice. Her interventions aim to break social barriers and create opportunities to contemplate on the sensory, emotional and ethical effects of our everyday encounters.

Based in London and Singapore, Jia Qi has exhibited public installations and worked with communities to activate public experiments. In 2017, she led **Shifting Concretes**, a public workshop series co-hosted with The Substation as part of the 2017 Discipline the City programme, which culminated in a public art social intervention, "Shifting Concretes: Can we 'Lepak' better at Orchard Road?" held at Orchard Road, to reimagine the urban spaces we live in. Expanding on experimental collaborative practices, her recent projects include organising interdisciplinary symposium, **Conversations in Singapore History 2018** and **And Everything in Between**. Jia Qi’s works have also been shown in international venues such as the Institute of Contemporary Arts (Singapore), Capitol Piazza (Singapore), WHITECONCEPTS Gallery (Berlin), Black & White Building (London), and 5th Base Gallery (London). In 2017, she is the winner of the first Social Art Award (2nd Place) for her social interventionist art, and selected international artist to exhibit and attend the award ceremony in Germany by The Institute for Art and Innovation e.V.. The work is also published in the award book: **The Social Art Award 2017 –**

Invigorating the Rise of Social Art, and shared in **Conversations in Singapore History 2018** at King's College London. She is also the illustrator of **The Little Things**, children's book about kindness published in collaboration with Wu Jiezheng and Tampines Kindness Movement - available at National Library Board of Singapore.

Currently, the artist pursues Fine Art and History of Art at Goldsmiths, University of London.

www.quekjiaqi.com

Credits

Curator: Bernice Seow and Ryan Wong

Design: Clara Lim

Venue Sponsor: **law.**

Sign up for our mailing list at
artnvoid@gmail.com

Instagram: @artnvoid

About the Curators:

Ryan is an undergraduate in the Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore. **Bernice** is a recent graduate of the Psychology Department, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and will be starting her M.A. in Museum Studies and Curatorial Practices at the School of Art, Design and Media, NTU in July. They have a keen interest in the arts and this will be their first curatorial project.

"We hope to eventually start a regular curating programme to hone our skills, explore thought-scapes, meet new people and provide opportunities for artists who are just starting out like we are."