

MEDIA RELEASE
15 Oct 2020, Singapore

INDIE ART IS NOT DEAD: LOCAL ONLINE ART EXHIBITION OF EXHIBITIONS

Better Late than Never, also known as “The Banana Show”, is an online exhibition exploring the different interpretations of art and related assumptions of standards. Featuring works by 30 artists and multiple narratives by ten curators, this project is an exhibition of exhibitions, taking advantage of the internet’s rhizomatic structure and lack of physical limitations. The project is an independent, self-funded, and ground-up initiative and was made possible by the generosity of voluntary contributors.



Launched on 15 Oct 2020, *Better Late than Never* is an exhibition seemingly about the banana, but is in actuality an exploration of different interpretations of art and related assumptions

about standards. It showcases works of different formats, styles, and concepts, that have been submitted through an open call for artworks that freely interpret the banana. The initiative attracted mostly Singaporean artists or artists based in Singapore, as well as submissions from overseas as well. Submissions ranged from digital images, to photographs of paintings, to audio recordings, to full-length zines.

The open call also invited parties interested in curating the artworks to sign up, and the ten curators range from the more experienced artist-curators to art students. Besides Liza (Lija) Markus who is based in Indonesia, the rest of the curators are based in Singapore. Throughout the collaboration duration, the curators wholly liaised online through various virtual platforms. Together, they developed the curatorial model to present multiple curatorial takes on the same group of artworks simultaneously. This approach logically follows from the premise about diverse interpretations of the works. In other words, there are multiple viewing rooms or exhibitions curated differently, and some artworks may be featured more than once. It is also possible because the project is based online.

Online art exhibitions

COVID has affected the dynamics of the internet for visual art presentation, as audiences are now more receptive and discerning about viewing content online. To view it positively, this might prove advantageous for independent projects, especially in space-scarce Singapore, where physical exhibitions incur high overheads in terms of rental. While website management and design costs could also be significant, they are lower barriers to overcome, however, as these motivated curators have done, by self-learning how to structure, develop, and design their viewing galleries.

While online viewing is no substitute for the physical viewing of visual arts, the reverse is true as well, especially for art designed to be viewed online. This project explores how the user experience of viewing art online might differ and focuses on the creative but accessible presentation of the artwork and curatorial narratives, rather than attempts to simulate a physical environment.

Independent art initiatives

This project relies on the generosity of voluntary contributors as it is self-funded by its initiators, and faces resource-constraints. While grants and sponsorships are appreciated and artists should be properly remunerated for their efforts, artists also often end up self-funding some of

their more independent projects, usually with income and resources derived from other work. On the other hand, these independent art initiatives enjoy and express greater creative and intellectual freedom, and are therefore typically more experimental, exploratory, and critical.

“Art must go on, regardless. While many of us have plans disrupted by COVID, artists and culture producers will keep looking for other opportunities to present our efforts with what limited resources we have. It is our responsibility to offer our community food for thought after all,” says Ms Lee Ju-Lyn, one of the project initiators and artist-curators, “The seed-funding for this project and the website came from my art sales as part of another online COVID-related initiative by the Post-Museum.” Coincidentally, the *Better Late than Never* curatorial team includes Ms Jennifer Teo, who is the co-founder of Post-Museum, a Singaporean independent cultural and social space which aims to encourage and support a thinking and pro-active community.

A space for online exhibitions

The initiators of *Better Late than Never* had also developed the website, wideopenspace.online, to host other online exhibitions and archive materials. It functions as a loose collective and is an effort to reduce overheads for fellow art independent initiatives, for which additional resources have to be invested to develop and maintain project websites. Interested collaborators may visit the website for more information.

wideopenspace.online/2020-bltm

wideopenspace.online

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ARTISTS

Almostasthma, Anonymous, Art R'eev, Asher Yeo, Barbarianflower, Benedict Lim, Celeste TJM, Finch S, In(ter)dependent Studies, Izzati Faisal, Jessie Lim, Joey.spl, Jun Wee, Kim Hyesu, Kozue Yamamoto, Lee Ju-Lyn, Liza (Lija) Markus, Lynx Ng, Marla Bendini, meekfreak, Mei, Muhammad Iwan Himawan, Oanh with Art, Ong Xiao Yun, Raihan Zainal, Saiful Abu Bakar, Sam, Simbaro, Stephanie Chia, and Yang Junwei

Artists bio, list of artworks and more details:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WUyvLgb1pdKLSIdaHlsXuJyENXN66_haEOzP2sxs_cbU/edit#gid=588541516

CURATORS

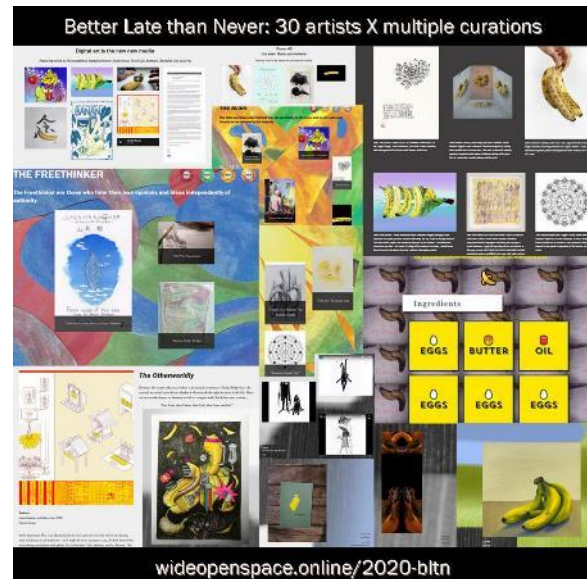
Akai Chew, artnvoid, @anathapindikadai, Isaac Benjamin, Jennifer Teo, Lee Ju-Lyn, Liza (Lija) Markus, Ratna, T. Shuxia, Stephanie Jaina Chia

Curators' bios: <https://wideopenspace.online/2020-bltm-curators>

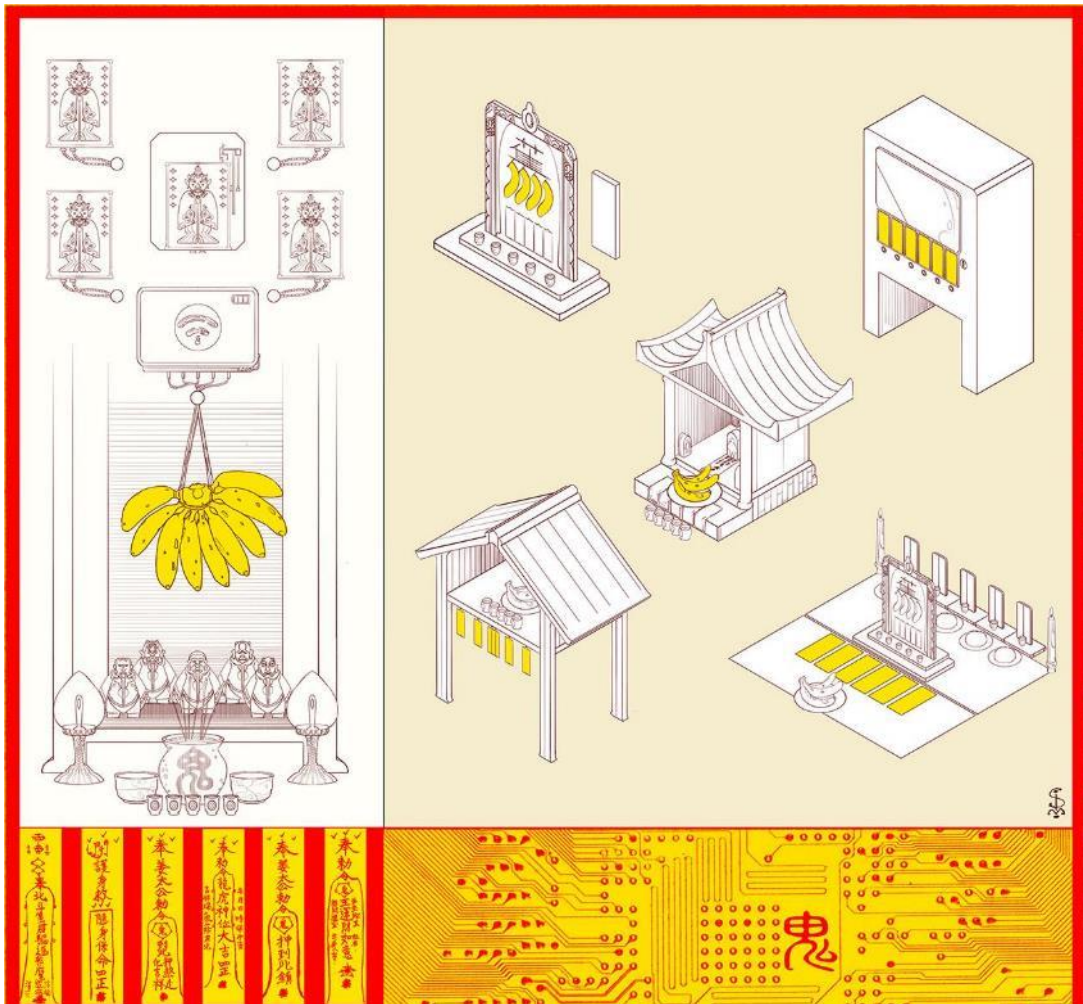
SUPPORTING IMAGES

High-resolutions of all images in this document can be obtained here:

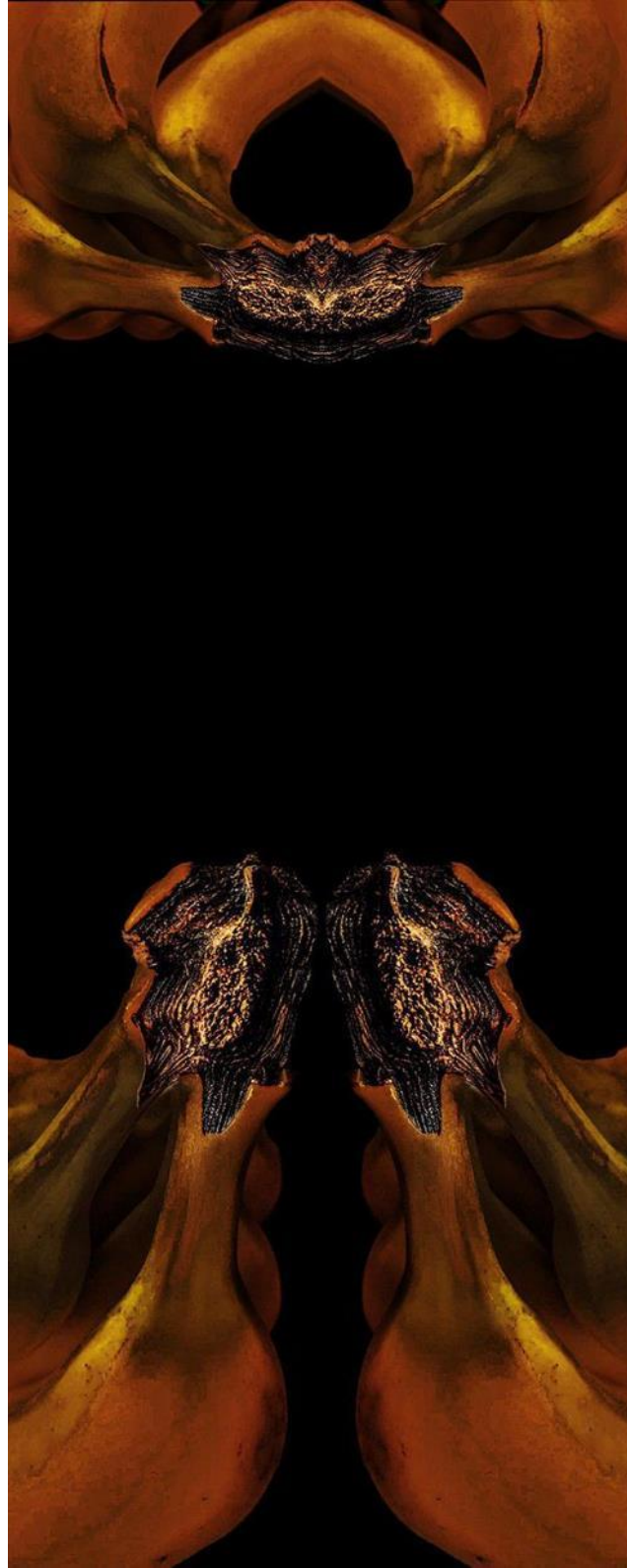
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UG7tLGFgifyNqRYDGkVXgvyYMUMcJ2w?usp=sharing>



Selected Artworks



Simbaro Isaac Benjamin, www.banana_spiritline.com



Izzati Faisal, *Ambivalence*



Stephanie Jaina Chia, *Guidelines I (4)*



Kim Hyesu, *Bananas*

Selected exhibition posters



Much ado about: "Better", "Late", "Than", "Never"

Curation by: Akai Chew, artnvoid, Anathapindika Dai, Isaac Benjamin, Jennifer Teo, Lee Ju-Lyn, Liza Markus, Ratna, Shuxia, Stephanie Jaina Chia

Time Flies Like An Arrow



Fruit Flies Like A Banana

Time Flies Like An Arrow, Fruit Flies Like A Banana

Curation by: Jennifer Teo



The Banana Show: Carnivalesque Universe

Curation by: T. Shuxia and Stephanie Chia

High-resolutions of all images in this document are here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UG7tLGFgifyNqRYDGkVXgvyYMUMcJ2w?usp=sharing>

Please visit:

wideopenspace.online/2020-bltm

wideopenspace.online