



CONTENTS

MESSAGES

- 7 President of the Republic of Singapore
9 Chair, Singapore Art Museum
10 Director, Curatorial, Programmes and Publications, Singapore Art Museum

CURATOR STATEMENT

- 13 Andrea Fam, Curator, President's Young Talents 2018

THE ARTISTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S YOUNG TALENTS 2018

YANYUN CHEN

- 19 The Still Observer
by David Chan
24 Making Spaces
by Andrea Fam
27 *The scars that write us*
33 Artist Statement
34 Past Works
37 Artist's and Mentor's Biographies

WEIXIN QUEK CHONG

- 41 Exchanges with Weixin
by Grace Tan
56 Material Means
by Andrea Fam
59 *sft crsh ctrl*
65 Artist Statement
66 Past Works
69 Artist's and Mentor's Biographies

DEBBIE DING

- 73 The 'Ding-iness' of Things:
The Growth of Debbie Ding
by Zaki Razak
84 'Tanah Goreng'
by Andrea Fam
87 *Soil Works*
92 Artist Statement
94 Past Works
97 Artist's and Mentor's Biographies

HILMI JOHANDI

- 101 Immersion, Fragmentation,
and the Insidious Spectacle:
Interview with Hilmi Johandi
by Roger Nelson
110 The 'Void' of History
by Andrea Fam
113 *An Exposition*
119 Artist Statement
120 Past Works
123 Artist's and Mentor's Biographies

ZARINA MUHAMMAD

- 127 A Geo-Cosmo-Mytho-Hydra:
Interview with Zarina Muhammad
by Jason Wee
136 Encryptions in Liminal Spaces
by Andrea Fam
139 *Pragmatic Prayers for
the Kala at the Threshold*
144 Artist Statement
146 Past Works
149 Artist's and Mentor's Biographies
150 Credits and Acknowledgements
152 About President's
Young Talents 2018
153 About Singapore Art Museum

MESSAGE

DIRECTOR OF CURATORIAL, PROGRAMMES AND PUBLICATIONS

It is our seventh edition of President's Young Talents (PYT) at the Singapore Art Museum (SAM). We are delighted to be presenting the artworks and practices of these fine artists: Yanyun Chen, Weixin Quek Chong, Debbie Ding, Hilmi Johandi and Zarina Muhammad.

PYT began in 2001, with a curatorial committee comprising Ahmad Mashadi, Lindy Poh and Salleh Japar who brought to the fore with the first exhibition ten equally exceptional artists – Abdul Rashid Abdul Gapur, Ernest Chan, Hong Sekchern, Noni Kaur, Khiew Huey Chian, Lim Kok Boon, December Pang, Benjamin Puah, Ian Woo and Ye Shufang. Our artists in 2018 are now part of this cohort that has since included many more outstanding artists. Looking across the generations of artists whose practices register upon this platform, one would observe changes and developments in aesthetic approaches, interests and visual vocabularies. These variations of style, method, concerns and responses are crucial to our understanding of contemporary aesthetic expression as expositions on the nature of the world around us and our conceptions of it. We commend and thank our artists for their valuable insights.

But the success of a platform such as President's Young Talents is not achieved solely by its artists. Straightforward a task as it may appear, this responsibility of bringing to attention critical contemporary practices is also not taken lightly. Even back in 2001, the curatorial committee surfaced their reservations on this "challenging curatorial undertaking" of selecting from amongst artists who had achieved much in their bodies of work, and who may have been acknowledged already through exhibitions, awards and other forms of recognition. To arrive at the final selection and in reflecting the art community from which these young talents emerge, the committees of PYT have, generally, included members who are not from the museum's curatorial team – engaging other curators and experienced

artists to help shape its showcase. This act of engagement, facilitated by the museum, further engenders dialogue and consideration on the status and condition of local art development. Furthermore, since 2009, this function has gone beyond one of selection, to the mentoring of young artists in the presentation and commissioning of new artworks. For their roles in providing guidance and consultation in the 2018 edition, we are grateful to our generous and committed artist-mentors David Chan, Roger Nelson, Grace Tan, Jason Wee and Zaki Razak.

The patronage of the President for such a programme speaks volumes. It underscores the necessity of supporting our young artists and putting into context their practices, a role that SAM plays as our contemporary art museum. It is fitting that PYT 2018 is the final exhibition at SAM's premises before our spaces are refurbished, expressing thus the museum's central concern and ambit – the historicisation, presentation and mediation of contemporary expression and aesthetic, both in our time and over time.

We wish to extend our gratitude to Singapore's highest office for its support, to the members of our judging panel for their encouraging responses to the efforts of the artists, and to our audiences and publics whom we hope will be inspired by the artworks and will support these artists as they continue on their artistic journeys.

At the inaugural PYT, then-Chairman of the National Heritage Board, Lim Chee Onn, was to note in his foreword, PYT's greater aspirations – not merely an exhibition marking the art of the present and for local audiences, PYT in 2001 was the beginning of a series that would help artists "gain a footing in the international scene." It is from this initial ambition that we draw encouragement today, both for these young artists and for a museum as it embarks on a journey of renewal, confident in knowing that the future holds much promise.

DR JUNE YAP

Director of Curatorial, Programmes and Publications

ARTISTS

YANYUN CHEN

WEIXIN QUEK CHONG

DEBBIE DING

HILMI JOHANDI

ZARINA MUHAMMAD

MENTORS

DAVID CHAN

GRACE TAN

ZAKI RAZAK

ROGER NELSON

JASON WEE

ANDREA FAM

Curator, President's Young Talents 2018



EXCHANGES WITH WEIXIN

GRACE TAN

We began our dialogue in mid-April when Weixin started working on her President's Young Talents (PYT) commission. Our first meeting was at her parents' house in Bukit Batok because she did not have a studio and was working from their place. She was leaving for Europe at the end of the month, and it was rather unsettling because she would be working remotely and possibly in transit for the following months. However, it was this condition of movement and impermanence that I feel has shaped her work the way it currently is.

It also inevitably laid down the way we communicated as mentor and mentee over the months. Our conversations were disparate fragments of various subjects, times and places, and yet these parts captured and revealed facets of Weixin's practice – allowing me to see her work beyond the immediate surface. But strangely enough, it is this very 'surface', a recurring element in many of Weixin's past and present works, that functions as a continuous, interfacing medium that is ever-changing and morphing.

One of Weixin's challenges during her artwork development was how to not formulate her work prematurely so that there was space and time for the various components to breathe and grow before coming together. In *sft crsh ctrl*, the aspects of the physical gallery space – the opening, floor, walls and ceiling – form a self-containing cosmos for the work to be manifested and realised. And it is through the act of seeing and contemplating these physical elements that the viewer composes his/her image and constructs his/her own meaning of the work.

This compilation of excerpts from the exchanges between Weixin and me was taken from a recorded face-to-face conversation and our WhatsApp chat messages, verbatim. The dialogue is not presented in chronological order.

PART I: CONSTRUCTED SURFACE



WEIXIN:
Installation research: p

GRACE:
beautiful draped marble surfaces
just something that came to my mind looking at your work and installation

u know how marble is a stone, a structure, an environment
it's never been a surface. human made it a surface. a screen

hmm....
i like the resonance between the marble grains and the fold lines
the image and the structure

WEIXIN:

...the space and tradition of women themselves. It is in the terms of their own discourse the theories were born of, supposing that between the 'higher' and 'lower' forms of painting there existed a fundamental opposition of value. The war against the 'hard logic' of the ideology they inherited with Megalography took on a life of its own. It was the exceptional event and individual, myriad personal and achievement, and raises existence to the level of the gods. Against that, what we have been calling 'rhapsody' is the truth of human life in those things which guarantee the endowment of daily routine and the anonymous, the ordinary. In the same opposition which, in the creative, is projected as the marks of tragedy and comedy, the two approaches are complementary and interrelated, equally strong and subtle, and between them, by imagination, they were able to give scene structure and intelligibility to the shifting mass of human experience that lies between their extremes. It was acceptable that, in painting, the opposition between them led into the division of the sexes in the scenes which produced still life: the opposition seemed naturally to divide the construction of gender with men leading to the monumental, and women rhapsodic, less for as long as the history and the discourse of painting, concerned in working with the rhapsodic, the domestic, intimate space of still life could be represented as it appeared to men: driving, alert, not also relaxed? And for as long as painting's male form would be constructed by men, the space in which they were obliged to lead their lives would be taken from them and imagined through the values of the greater masculine body from the outside and re-fashioned it into the logic of another point of view so still life would be the space of women from the outside and imposed on the tradition of another world.

I see this very much in contrast and relation with the idea of Rhapsography vs Megalography as described by Norman Bryson in his analysis of still life tradition

In a Greco-Roman tradition, the arts display the opposing views of a monumental perspective vs an interior one, with the interior and domestic of still lifes representing a perspective of life that was constructed as 'less', or 'weaker' than the exalted version displayed in work that sought to

be monumental. This power struggle echoes so many parallel others in what it reflects of societal choice of priority and value. Who to pay attention to, who to give value to, who to allow space, to allow time

Apart from the 'hard logic' of a Greco-roman thought heritage, the *suiseki* concept demonstrates one of many rounder ways of seeing and possibilities of a perception that expands or includes rather than dominate and discriminate

In a visible way, this train of thoughts is also behind my relationship with enlarging the micro/shrinking the macro in my images and works. I have always felt scale to be a deliberate act, and large scale to especially be an act of dominance. What it represents, the ability and resource to display the taking of significant space to which others must adjust their presence, is a very simple and direct allusion to the having of some kind of power, at least in that instance. This is why I like to take up space with imagery drawn from smaller or minuscule sources, I like this relationship to be turned around and to take up larger space in a soft way

WEIXIN:

Also with very high res scans, I'm forced to spend a long time with the scanner in order to harvest minutiae in the image and that makes me pay attention in a very different way

GRACE:
ah yes!!!
thanks!!

**PART 2:
A SLIME THAT DOESN'T SET**

GRACE:
please share with me your thoughts on "suiseki", what is it to you?

WEIXIN:

Dear Grace

My interest in them begins with how they represent a practice of extending one's imaginative perception, and the acknowledgement of value in this

GRACE:
would you be able to elaborate on this?

WEIXIN:

I think it comes from the function of the scholar's rock and what it symbolises – the idea that spending regular time to practice looking at the possible landscape or world that could be seen in the rock, is an idea about practicing and giving space to this imaginative contemplation. The microcosm of the rock also serves as a springboard for developing a depth of perception in approaching other things, it is about building a way of seeing that goes past the initial glance or the initial evaluation of what a thing is

GRACE:

dear Xin

now that your works/objects are nearing completion and you have been to the gallery to check on the space and lighting, I would like to know your thoughts on... "enlarging the micro/shrinking the macro in my images and works". From what I observed, this process of enlarging/shrinking [is] not simply scaling them up or down. You actually stretch, fold, twist, swirl, stitch, cut, overlay and etc... you are distorting the works/images as you scale them up/down. And this process is dynamic! It's elastic, allowing you (to) spring and stretch back and forth in all directions and in whatever ways. It's like a slime that doesn't set!

WEIXIN:

Yayy I like this 'like a slime that doesn't set!' :P

I think, when I use scanners to magnify things, I'm trying to see what I normally won't and can't. I believe it will yield something, that it will reveal its other life in a way, which holds elements of visual richness and interest. In a way the scanner then becomes my prosthesis in order to enable this seeing, this amplification of the silent or the subdued. Something that is not really even considered or looked at, in some cases like particles of trash or peripheral fragments

So the transformation isn't really one that happens to the subjects but one that happens to the viewers, or the view

As for shrinking, I think I used to do more of that earlier in my art-making, which I began always with a desire to miniaturise or shrink down things, myself

But now I know this desire was a response to the antagonism that a female-seen body learns to internalise and normalise around its existence, where minimising itself and catering to others needs is its only approved stance in society

This expectation also branches out under any other categories under dominance, like class and race for example. All these things are ultimately related to classifications based on the visual presentation of our identity, stripping back as far as the point to which an individual is unable to transcend, or code-switch, through any effort

After years of mulling over my observations and questioning my validity in the same way I was taught to as an entity under dominance, I'm more interested now in what is assumed to be small, and in preconceived expectations of shrinking

This is also relates to 'fit' and 'unfit' materials or entities. Monologues of dominance always function on the assumed and expected suppression of other voices as 'unfit', the way classicism operates in the history of art objects that are allowed to tap into the aura or 'mystique' of the valuable. They are seen as worthy, as inherently superior in material and medium and cultural worth - a narrative that is directly drawn from their history as accoutrements that validated and created the societal illusion of an elite class. I like to see them as accessories in this way, props that created the delusion of justified, inherent superiority

What is a fit subject, what are fit materials and what are worthy methods..... At heart it's all about fashion, what framework of acceptance or validity a work/individual is able to pass into through wearing the right 'signs' and accessories of being

So I guess it's all about what I'm choosing to deem worthy of viewing, and how that can't really be rationalised in any sufficiently justifying way. There's no way I can argue that any of this is worth your attention or your viewing, it is up to you

Maybe this is also an impulse behind the huge creativity under oppression, the way so much creative contribution and influence is drawn from communities that are seen as bodies of less validity, of less fit-ness by their society.

WEIXIN:

Obviously, it is harvested from them but doesn't necessarily result in their voice becoming valued, merely the co-option of their stylistic stance by the privileged and more 'valid'. It's because this creativity is often one of the few arenas in which the 'inferior' body can construct or articulate its worth. Simply because its bounds are less confinable, less inscribed due to the 'uselessness' and un-containability of artistic fields

For example, the way aesthetics or creative n visual identities of the indigenous are often used as a shorthand for postcolonial national identities to articulate their uniqueness and 'authenticity', but are too often inherently discrepant with the actual perceived worth and validity of indigenous entities, languages, and individuals themselves

It's about gatekeeping and who gets to deserve to have a voice or be heard

And who doesn't

GRACE:

what are your thoughts now before you enter the gallery space. would you be able to explain why this "soft way" is so important to you/your work? i suspect some people may passed off this relationship as a dichotomy between masculinity/femininity but i believe it's not. there is something quite masculine, quite hard and edgy in your "soft" ways. they are not feminine at all but something more complex and deep.
Tell me more

WEIXIN:

I'm really glad that you sensed that...it's true that there is almost a kind of tussle between contrasting elements/opposing ways. It does have to do with what attitudes/styles of existing have been classified under 'masc' or 'femme' and the values given to a particular portrayal of this dichotomy by society. But as I believe these are socially-led performances/posturings we put on in order to interface ourselves in the world, I am more interested in finding ways to overcome this constructed dichotomy, in myself maybe most of all.

I want softness to contain strength and to be a force capable of overwhelming, dissolving and eroding the hold/spell/delusion of an aggression based, dominance-based value system

**PART 3:
FASHION IS FOR VAIN SUPERFICIAL PEOPLE****GRACE:**

This occurrence or reoccurrence of skins, of surfaces, of screenshots... And your background in print-making, photography... You painting, your make-up... the scanning. Because when you scan, there is also the surface of the glass, that whole contact... All this whole notion of skin and surface and of course, the interface, they keep coming...

WEIXIN:

Yeah I'm sure they are all related.

GRACE:

And (they) seem to translate across different mediums, different scenarios, different things but yet they are all talking about the same thing. Like what you are doing now... Like your jade suit. It's a skin, right? It's an armour, a protection... How did you delve into this whole exploring of all these weird industrial materials?

WEIXIN:

I dunno... I've always gone by being interested in a material or an industrial process first. I've always been inspired by that. I think that's why I chose print making. I wanted the most technical thing that the school had to offer. I wanted to work with some specialised medium that required tools and understanding. And also I think it is also because I love books. I love publishing. And I love costuming books. Books and clothes. Since I was really, really young, I have been very sensitive to them.

WEIXIN:

And a lot of my aesthetic vocabularies built up from there. From published matter, and from costuming or seeing books with diagrams or history of clothing inside them. Those were some of the stuff that I really relied on.

GRACE:

You can pinpoint this but do you know why or what attracted you? And it is not a very shallow attraction and I believe it is very deep.

WEIXIN:

I think I pushed it quite deep because I felt that it was important to me... When I was growing up... We rarely ever watched TV... So I was getting most of my images and creative concepts from books and they were often really, really old books from my parents' collection.

And there was this book that I think probably affected me forever because it was this like huge old book called "History of World Cultures and Costumes" where it gave like chronologically, just these like technical line drawings...

My mum's side of the family has had a deep love for books... some of her grand aunts were like school teachers and they passed on a lot of treasures. Of course a lot of them were like very colonial era, British writing about South East Asia sort of books. But a lot of pictures, drawings, natural history diagrams; this very anthropological lens. And those fashions books. That fashion encyclopedia was so interesting because it, tried to cover many different civilisations from ancient Mesopotamian, and they would describe every article of clothing and the knowledge they knew about it.

And I was like obsessed over that book and drew from all the parts of it. From all these different cultures, and so it gave me an interesting way of looking at fashion. But at the same time, fashion in my family was not considered. It was not a thing. And when we grew older, it was too related with female sexuality and so it was very restricted.

... the most titillating image that I ever saw was like a diagram of ancient Egyptian costumes. Everything was in those technical drawings. Everything was there.... And all these were not even like photos or anything. Just like black and white lines, technical line drawings. But maybe it also had a strangely equalising effect because they just technically describe. They didn't write in a literary manner. They just technically describe everyone, and every kind of people, and kind of time, of different classes were all described there. And so I had this very chronological view of how humans creatively presented themselves. And therefore it always gave me this awareness that fashion was one of the many interfaces of civilisations and they express the philosophical beliefs and societal structures of that time.

GRACE:

And interestingly it is very bottom up...

WEIXIN:

It's true... Before the concept of artist, artisans always came from like the working class and they make stuff. The rich people bought them.

GRACE:

And that whole gradual organic improvisation and alteration to suit changing needs or changing situations or scenarios. I think it happens so gradually that people actually don't realise. This whole situation is a bit like a mobius strip. It is a single surface where there is no inside, there is no outside. It is this weird loop.

WEIXIN:

Or it is also this Ouroboros. It is a snake that eats itself. And now when you look at Instagram, fashion watchdog accounts like "Diet Prada". They are calling out like the referencing, the derivative in like high profile pieces. And then a lot of times, it eats itself because you find that in the end, this high fashion article that is being ripped off by someone in an Asian country is also itself an idea ripped off from Asian cultures. And for example in political terms in contemporary fine art now, street

cultures are such a big thing. Street culture inspires so much of high fashion and high creative culture. And also everything that is posh is trying to appropriate street cultures but in a funny way. And of course like the ridiculous part of it, that is also the humorous part. Some people would think the clever part is how you sell a hoodie, the same looking hoodie at a prohibitive price point. And then you think that it is very witty. And some people think it is. And some people just don't care. Because that hoodie is taken from their life which is a life that is considerably more hardship of those who buy the \$9000 hoodie. And there is still this continual appropriation.

GRACE:

There is.. And if you look at it deeper, it is sinister and it is actually very dark.

WEIXIN:

It is quite sinister and dark. But it is also something very true about human nature. More true than whatever philosophical idea you say you subscribe to. More true than there is the way you dress yourself. So in a funny way people are always saying fashion are for vain superficial people... But in a sense when you look at how they dress, they show you *so much more about their actual ideology than anything.*

PART 4: PROSTHESIS

WEIXIN:

My silk test print of a snakeskin came back and I'll show it to you later :)

It's really soft



GRACE:
oooh nice

WEIXIN:



GRACE:

tell me more about these material explorations

WEIXIN:

They're resin tests for some of the object series ;)

It's a really strange material that turns solid very fast so you can catch the gestures of it flowing and dripping



GRACE:

the drapes/folds of this latex skin is so tactile I can almost see a large draped sculpture made entirely of this!

Haptic

WEIXIN:

They're beautiful Grace and so stretchy and can be polished too

GRACE:

"suiseki slip"

"suiseki softfall"

both "slip" and "softfall" are intrinsically associated to textile/clothing/
the tactile/drapery/skin/layer. i notice many of your works touch on
these topics

WEIXIN:

I've always been drawn to the layer, especially as a skin. Skins are the
surfaces that dress us, also the interface we choose to put on, as well
as that which we had no choice of, something intrinsically part of our
physicality and visuality

There is also this conversation with surface and its association with
superficiality

The surface represents as well as hides and yet is seen as a shallow thing

I'm attracted to the dual connotations of both the frivolous and the
inherent which are given to 'skins', even as they make up the interface
with which we are read by society

I love textiles and things that relate to dressing or the potential of it,
because of this. Skin is the largest organ we have and through it we
expose ourselves and are exposed to everything that is outside the unit
of (our) being, the way we are coded and code through our appearance
and presentation of ourselves functions similarly in a social sense, both
protecting and exposing

This duality has always interested me and been behind my long-standing
fascination with fashion history and developments

GRACE:

The use of make up... on flowers... These flowers look odd... because for
you, they have been taken from nature.

WEIXIN:

No. My work is very unnatural.... It is about the natural becoming unnatural.

GRACE:

The use of coloured lights... There is this wash... This skin or this layer
of something processed on the source that is being cut from its natural
habitat and where it is supposed to be.

WEIXIN:

That's true. I feel like sometimes you can choose to look at it in a more
direct way and just see them as direct metaphor. Like, "This represents
the natural tropical body...". You can see that if you want but I am always
quite worried that it would be seen as just that. Because that is just part of
its underlying context but it is not all. And I think what is all is doing this
installation and having to work with describing it when I purposely tried to
make it very, very abstract. It has helped me a lot. It helped me to realise the
general thing is more an atmosphere. It is more this abstract atmosphere.

GRACE:

What is this atmosphere?

WEIXIN:

I guess it is a sense of precarity and prosthesis. Because like any
kind of fashion and in fact everything about art. You know art comes
from artifice. You know everything that we human creativity does is a
manipulation or an embellishment on what is given already. And this is
so related to the fact that like any kind of fashion or work of decoration
of skin is basically a prosthesis. It is stuff that you can change on top of
stuff you can't change. The stuff that you can't change is what you are
born into. Or what you are born as.

MATERIAL MEANS

REFLECTIONS ON WEIXIN QUEK CHONG,
AND HER RELATIONSHIP WITH GRACE TAN

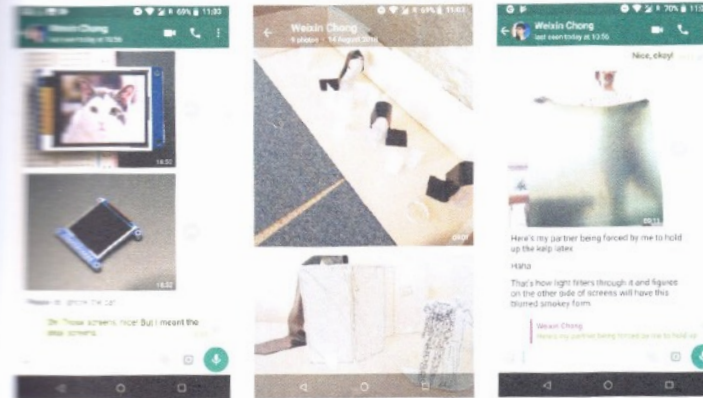
BY ANDREA FAM



The SAM team's first meeting with Weixin and Grace. Photo: Andrea Fam, image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum

In her President's Young Talents (PYT) commission *sft crsh ctrl*, Weixin Quek Chong applies a post-Internet aesthetic to her installation. A relatively new concept to the Singapore landscape, post-Internet art generally considers the Internet's effect on aesthetics, culture and society. *sft crsh ctrl* destabilises the already challenging (to some) reading of contemporary art by suggesting audiences confront the omnipresence of the Internet in their lives and lived experiences.

Weixin and her mentor Grace Tan are artists who work with the material quality of cloth, and the distinctive characters of materials in their practices; Weixin engages with the fluid nature of rubber latex, and qualities of printing techniques in her works whilst a high degree of meticulousness and delicacy is required in Grace's installations with powdered pigments. They both also adopt tactile and intuitive approaches with regard to notions of space and proximity – literally and metaphorically.



Left: Screen-grabbed conversations around the components to be included in *sft crsh ctrl*. Photos: Andrea Fam; images courtesy of Singapore Art Museum



Clockwise from left: Work-in-progress image of one of Weixin's printed fabrics; Grace and Weixin assessing the single-board computer included in *sft crsh ctrl*. Photos: Andrea Fam; images courtesy of Singapore Art Museum. Grace in the gallery during light-testing. Image courtesy of the Artist



WEIXIN QUEK CHONG

sft crsh ctrl
2018

Silk twill, latex, wood, silicone, PVC,
vinyl, faux fur, paper, screens, aluminium, and
stainless steel with video and sound
Dimensions variable
Collection of the Artist
Singapore Art Museum commission



What is the contingency plan? This line of enquiry is an alternative strategy formed in speculation of an event that has not occurred: *in the event of 'x', 'y' can be considered....* Shaped by the concept of the contingency plan, *sft crsh ctrl* by Weixin Quek Chong invites visitors to encounter a series of curious materials and range of objects that seem to evade straightforward understanding.

Inside the space of *sft crsh ctrl*, a softness and delicacy in colour and texture appears to bathe over the visitor; an assortment of pinks – from dusty rose to magenta – overlay silk, paper, latex, faux fur and other materials, suggesting a feeling of interiority and domesticity. Visitors will find themselves navigating through an assemblage of unusual tactile and sensorial articles, such as flesh-toned latex folding screens that reveal as much as they conceal. Other items include lengths of draped silk that carry the magnified minute details of scanned images of trapped dust,



snakeskin and liquid silicon; whilst another set of objects are a series of compact single-board computer touch screens on which a series of looped videos feature the action of crumbling.

sft crsh ctrl thus unfolds, unfurls, suspends and drapes in ways that challenge conventional understanding and expectation of materials. Its components signal a sense of precarity, tensions of resistance and notions of non-occurrence.

It is an installation of 'surfaces' as developed and explored through material form and transformation, and guides the visitor towards sensations underlined by uncertainty, persuading a disengagement from the instinct to rationalise.

ANDREA FAM





WEIXIN QUEK CHONG ARTIST STATEMENT

In *sft crsh ctrl*, the gallery forms a space in which textures and sounds play out in diffused disorientation. With reference to short forms of keyboard control as well as onomatopoeia, the title alludes to a contingency plan as well as digital mediation of the senses. ASMR, a textural sound-based stimulation mainly sought after to relieve stress, is sampled in the sound that runs through the space. Translucent, layered latex sheeting stretches and drapes to comprise the major element of three screen-like fixtures partitioning the room, and is echoed by other 'skins' within – a fragmentary armour that recalls a Han dynasty jade immortality suit, the silk-printed details of a snake's shed, faux fur and the gestures of disembodied hands that caress what they consume. The spectre of a silicone spill and the fresh wilt of slightly crushed petals form two of the three large prints on silk that billow down from the ceiling, while in a corner crouches an image containing screenshots of an iPhone being thrown into lava. Across this spectrum of objects, coloured light tints and highlights the varying heights of elements in the space. There are underlying hints of unease alongside tactile pleasure and an atmospheric, precarious co-existence that unites them.

PAST WORKS

Beige Dreams series

2017

Installation with stretch mesh, photographs on aluminium (set of 5) and text

Dimensions variable

Collection of the Artist



Details; Images courtesy of the Artist

There is a soothing and a screaming for Beige; words making flesh; the hunger of decay is never sated. Why is there almost nothing to be found of Yva Lero? 'Peau d'ébène' came out in 1979... I want to read it but it is in French. Bandages come in a strange colour. We want to transcend the choice of foundation ... This is the shade of the season; there is only one season under this sun.¹

Commissioned by the NTU Centre of Contemporary Art, *Beige Dreams* is a photographic series made in counterpoint to the lush density of the tropical environment. In this work, make-up is applied to flowering plants in order to bring out their flesh-like qualities; it both piques and jars.

WEIXIN QUEK CHONG

¹ Text featured in the installation



Installation views; images courtesy of the Artist



WEIXIN QUEK CHONG

GRACE TAN

ARTIST

WEIXIN QUEK CHONG

Weixin Quek Chong (b. 1988, Singapore) is a visual artist whose practice explores materiality, the afterlife of images, and the relationships between the digital, organic and aesthetic. The effects and methods of manipulating images across materials are core to her practice.

She received her MFA from the Royal College of Art in London with a specialisation in printmaking, and was a recipient of the NAC Overseas Arts Scholarship (Postgraduate) (2012) and the Tan Ean Kiam Postgraduate Scholarship. Previously an artist-in-residence at the NTU Centre of Contemporary Art in Singapore, her works have been exhibited in Carrara, Istanbul, London, Paris, Santiago, Seoul, Taipei, Vienna and Yogyakarta. She lives and works in Singapore, Spain and the UK.

MENTOR

GRACE TAN

Grace Tan (b. 1979, Malaysia) is a multidisciplinary artist whose works often blur the lines between design and art. Stemming from her fashion design background, her practice began as an exploration of wearable structures based on the study of rectangles and construction methods for the 'kwodrent' series. It has since evolved into sculptural objects, site-specific installations and large-scale public art commissions.

Tan holds an MAFA from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. She has exhibited within Singapore and internationally, including at the Singapore Biennale (2013), Setouchi Triennale (2013), President's Young Talents (2013) and London Design Week (2006). She was a recipient of the President's Design Award in 2012 and the Young Artist Award in 2013. Most recently, she presented her solo exhibition 'Materials & Methods' at POLA Museum Annex, Tokyo (2018) and 'A Common Thread: Archiving a Practice' at FOST Gallery, Singapore (2018). She lives and works in Singapore.

PRESIDENT'S YOUNG TALENTS 2018

The President's Young Talents exhibition and awards series is Singapore's premier mentoring and commissioning programme. Inaugurated by the Singapore Art Museum in 2001, it recognises young Singaporean artists whose practices chart new dimensions in contemporary art. President's Young Talents 2018 is the seventh edition of the series, and features new commissions from Yanyun Chen, Weixin Quek Chong, Debbie Ding, Hilmi Johandi and Zarina Muhammad. This catalogue features a dedicated section for each of the five finalists: it includes interviews or essays by the artists' mentors and the curator's reflections on each artist's working process illustrated with behind-the-scenes photographs, as well as curatorial information and artists' statements on the new commissions and past works, offering a comprehensive overview of, and insight into, the practices of Singapore's most exciting and visionary young artists.

sam
singaporeartmuseum
CONTEMPORARY ART IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

