

AESTHETICS OF SILENCE

Arin Rungjang
Heather Dewey-Hagborg
H.H.Lim
Ivan Lam
Melati Suryodarmo
Rajinder Singh
Robert Schaberl
Roger Ballen

Soundless Worlds

Silence descends
on the city drone
thinks it a song
in need of punctuation,
gets drunk
in its hushed alleyways
drags and slips
on the elitist trappings
of the new museum
attracting
a new audience
- Rajinder Singh (*Trapping Silence* 2021)

The first time silence engulfed Wei-Ling Gallery was in 2017, when Ivan Lam setup his first performance piece *Curating Human Experiences 66:06:06*. For a month, the artwork became the experience it created. Visitors would arrive, curiously but hesitantly joining the artist in his quest to reach a meditative state of silence. Some would sit and leave abruptly, while others lingered. In this small circle, and between interactions and distractions, a dialogue was taking place, even though it was non-verbal. Much like Marina Abramovic's performance piece *The Artist is Present*, silent encounters possessed as much a transformative force as sounding encounters that echo long after their ending. If silence was an on-going act in Ivan's installation, then sound was an accidental interruption. Within the small universe created by the performance piece, silence and sound necessitated each other's existence. Each force interrupted the other, fading in and out of view. Yet, both forces were rooted in the need to be witnessed. In a way, at the heart of their necessary contradiction, sound and silence are deeply and intimately interdependent.

Now in 2021, Ivan's performance piece bears an uncanny resemblance to our daily life. Since the beginning of the pandemic, isolation has forced us into a new experiential reality, where non-action, silence, stillness, and absence have become primary forces in our daily lives. Those forces restructured our routines, as well as our vocabularies. Most importantly, they blended the boundaries between our physical and virtual identities. At once, we were witnessing the birth of a hybrid reality, while being deeply rooted in the physical pain of a world where even touch and closeness became threatening weapons to our survival. If our lives were

an on-going sound, the pandemic came as an interruption -- an absolute silence. Together, yet apart, we wondered what it meant to interrupt, to veil, to hide, and to silence. As lockdown locked us in place, it pushed us to generate new spaces of communion and new modes of interaction. In the midst of this new, overtly still reality, our desire oscillated between the need to be seen and the need to subvert and retreat to the theatrical world of the imagination and make-believe. In the exhibition *Aesthetics of Silence*, these sentiments are explored through the works of eight international artists that use a variety of different artistic languages and practices to highlight the power of the soundless world.

These sentiments are first echoed in the theatrical works of Roger Ballen, specifically his exhibited series *Roger the Rat*, where the artist uses a part-human, part-rat creature to invite us into a playful and theatrical depiction of what it means to live an isolated life outside of society. *Roger the Rat* works with the idea of a muted body that inhabits a soundless world. This means to be heard, the body needs to be seen, to be looked at, and to be followed. Such a body treats movement and action as a form of elaborate speech. Following this line of thought, Roger's soundless narrative unfolds through a series of awkward and sublime movements and actions that mirror the absurd and fantastical world of the human psyche.

Within this world, comedy and playfulness are used as forces to dispel anxieties rooted at the heart of the subject. Lauren Berlant writes that what we find "comedic is sensitive to changing contexts" (2017). Indeed, in another year, the story of *Roger the Rat*, might have been viewed as an amusing adventure. This year, however, it is a disturbing narrative that trips over the borders of the not funny. For we, as viewers, live a life that is not much different in rhythm than that of Roger the Rat. It's precisely in his soundless narrative that uses humor, comedy, clumsiness and awkwardness that Roger helps us to test and figure out the new rhythm of our distorted realities within the vulnerable and protected space of the imagination.

Soundless narratives are ever present in this exhibition. Rajinder Singh channeled the introspective time during lockdown into a poetry book titled *Trapping Silence* (2021), which explores his fraught relationship to isolation, the past, and the silence that has descended and swept

us unknowingly. Throughout the book and especially in his poem that bears the same title, *Trapping Silence*, Rajinder portrays silence as an entity -- a sort of invisible body that changes the fabric of the city. It lurks in space, adding weight, slipping in and out of conversations. But here, silence is depicted as an antithesis to life -- a kind of trap that keeps you in place, restrained and unable to participate. Singh wrestles with the notion of silence as a sanctuary or silence as a trap throughout his introspective writing. Sometimes he embraces the spiritual and emotional qualities it offers, while other times he sees himself disappearing from “life into silence,” as if hopelessly withdrawing himself from view. This tension comes and goes in waves, each time sweeping with it new audiences and releasing others back on shore. Perhaps, silence is a temporary and transformative journey that each one of us takes to understand the complexities of our place in this world.

Soundless narratives, however, are not only reserved to the realm of the imagination. In Melati Suryodarmo’s work *The Dusk*, we witness bodies in a suspended state of being, attempting to escape an impossible state of silence, yet failing to exit it. What Suryodarmo is reflecting upon is the effects of growing up in a culture of silence. If Joan Didion was right in her saying “we tell ourselves stories in order to live,” then silencing our narratives, whether personal or cultural, immobilizes our life force (Didion 2006). Suryodarmo’s practice is conceived of as a series of poetical actions, which combine a sequence of words and movements to create a layered and embodied narrative. Few minutes into Suryodarmo’s film, we witness several women in a state of suspension. Waiting, looking out, gazing in, and pacing around an empty house they are unable to exit:

Tired bodies

Disconnected bodies

Betrayed bodies

Bodies in waiting

Bodies

left motionless

Bodies rigid and stiff

Bodies disconnecting

The women in Suryodarmo's film are locked in place. Even in their potential, they are immobile. It is as if they are in a state of waitness, awaiting their own bodies to arrive. Towards the end of the film, a soft voice shatters the silence, spelling out a song that mobilizes the women. As the final scenes suggest, sound forces the body into movement away from the empty estate, both physically and mentally. Perhaps, the remedy to generational trauma, after all, begins in the act of storytelling.

The song that erupted was not necessarily redemptive, yet it was not an erasure either. What the song represented is the unlocking of narratives, the end to silence and a beginning to sound, and therefore a reclamation of agency. Another artist in the exhibition, H.H. Lim, looks at the practice of active remembering through performative storytelling. In *Home Song*, we witness again what it means to hold one's history in one's body -- to be marked by narrative at the cellular level. In the performance piece, Lim breaks out into a rhythmic song that expresses his longing for his homeland Malaysia as he sings it from Italy. Lim lightly uses a stick to tap on his body while singing, as if to jolt his body into a state of active remembering. Through this short performance, Lim holds his narrative, his history, and his homeland at the core of his body. It is only through the body that he can remember and express his longing across distance. While *Home Song* is filled with sound, his other work *I Miss You* is laden with silence. Using Chinese ink and a calligraphy brush, Lim delicately writes *I Miss You*, and awaits as it slowly fades. The two performative works appear to be in a dialogue with one another, showcasing how memory persists through sound and repetition, and dies in silence and forgetfulness. Meditating these two works is *somanywonderfulsecrets*, a neon sign that is initially difficult to decode as the words are pressed into each other. This sign enters into a sentimental dialogue with Lim's other exhibited works, except here it does not evoke a story, instead it holds together the feeling of mystery and oscillates between the desire to reveal and conceal secrets.

Further interrogating the phenomena of cultural silence is Arin Rungjang, who exhibits a 7-channel video work titled *Ravisara* (2019). Through these video works, Rungjang presents an intimate portrait of six women who have emigrated to Germany from different parts of Thailand. During his stay in Berlin in 2018, the artist devoted himself to the Thai community, collecting stories of migration, violence, discrimination, loss, and abuse of power. In his video installation, those stories are unraveled, as the women

appear on their own, sometimes with others in close-ups, and other times as a group of six, with limbs draped over each other's shoulders. In each configuration, the women utilize their bodies as a form of speech. The intimate atmosphere generated by their bodily presence presents a stark contrast to the harsh, systematic, and policy-oriented language used to describe migration. Here, performative gestures become a language that reflects the intense and physiological memory of migration. Through movement, Thai immigrant women rely on body memory to recall stories that reflect the arduous journey of finding a new, personal identity in new conditions that are influenced by postcolonial power structures and prescribed gender roles. This practice of active remembering through embodied memory functions as a tool to reconnect with the most intimate and visceral experiences of the self. In emphasising the role of body and gesture in storytelling, Rungjang reinvents documentary modes of representation by creating a silent space to position the personal and the embodied memory within the global discourse on migration.

And while every act of silence possesses a political dimension, Heather Dewey-Hagborg zooms in on the analytical silence of surveillance systems in her installation *How Do You See Me?* She interrogates the following question, how do machines see us? How does the silent gaze of surveillance systems record us, analyze us, and give virtual shape and form to our abstract data? In a world where we are constantly looked at, studied, and analyzed by cameras and algorithms, silence around and through these mechanical eyes is used as a tool to maintain power structures between governments and citizens. In the installation, Dewey-Hagborg utilized adversarial processes and algorithms designed to deceive machine learning systems into generating portraits that resemble the artist's face, although in reality that bear no resemblance to it or to any human face. Through this subversive and generative experiment, the artist highlights the silent discourse around security and the danger in handing control over to intelligence and automated systems that can easily distort and replicate our identities.

As *Aesthetics of Silence* demonstrates, perhaps the appeal of the non-verbal in art reflects our desire to reconnect with the pre-cultural parts of ourselves. Such are the atmospheric and meditative works of Robert Schabertl. His circular surfaces showcase a slow transition of colours through different angles, not necessarily reflecting a meaning, but inviting the viewer for a silent communion. Schabertl uses the universal symbol of

the circle to signify the natural cycle of life that oscillates between beginnings and endings. Although often, these seemingly opposite cycles are one and the same depending on one's perception. Schaberl's composition reflects this interplay as they shift in movement and intensity according to the position of the viewer in relation to the work. Light and movement play a primary role in these compositions, for only a person in motion can fully experience the meditative effect of his works. The intensity and movement of light continues to change the work, heightening the visual experience and unraveling new ways of seeing the work, while bringing into climax a solid state of tranquility.

Much like its beginnings, what concludes the exhibition is Ivan Lam's performance piece *Breathe* (2021), a series of video works made on TikTok depicting the artist breathing in and out. There is a comical aspect to Ivan's use of TikTok as a medium for artistic practice. If there is any window we collectively looked through during the past two years, it would be the windows of our phones. Simultaneously, the same device and apps that disconnected us from real life became the only tools to connect us once again. Perhaps, there is something in that contradiction that we should ponder as we breathe in and out with the artist.

Reference List:

Didion, Joan. 2006. *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live*. Knopf: New York City.

Berlant, Lauren, Ngai, Sianne. 2017. "Comedy has Issues" *Critical Inquiry* 43(1): 233-249.

Line Dalile

September 2021

Line Dalile is an independent writer, curator, and an art-based researcher at Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Belgium.

Arin-Rungjang

Ravisara

Seven-channel video installation

Dimensions variable

2019

Image courtesy of Arin-Rungjang

During his stay in Berlin in 2018, Rungjang developed this work with members of the city's Thai community, whom he got to know, interviewed, observed and accompanied. By learning more about the protagonists and their stories, he was keen to explore how memories can be expressed through performative gestures and physical presence. In his video installation, the women appear on their own, with others in close-ups, and also as a group of six, and in each configuration they express themselves without words. Rungjang uses text inserts – accounts of the women's experiences of migration, violence, discrimination, loss, and the abuse of power – as a contrast to the intimate atmosphere generated by their bodily presence. In the recorded conversations, the Thai immigrants vividly describe the difficulty of trying to find a new personal identity in conditions that are influenced by postcolonial power structures and prescribed gender roles.

This artwork was commissioned by Toronto Biennial of Art with support from DAAD and co-presented with Harbourfront Centre.





Installation view, 'Aesthetics of Silence' at Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

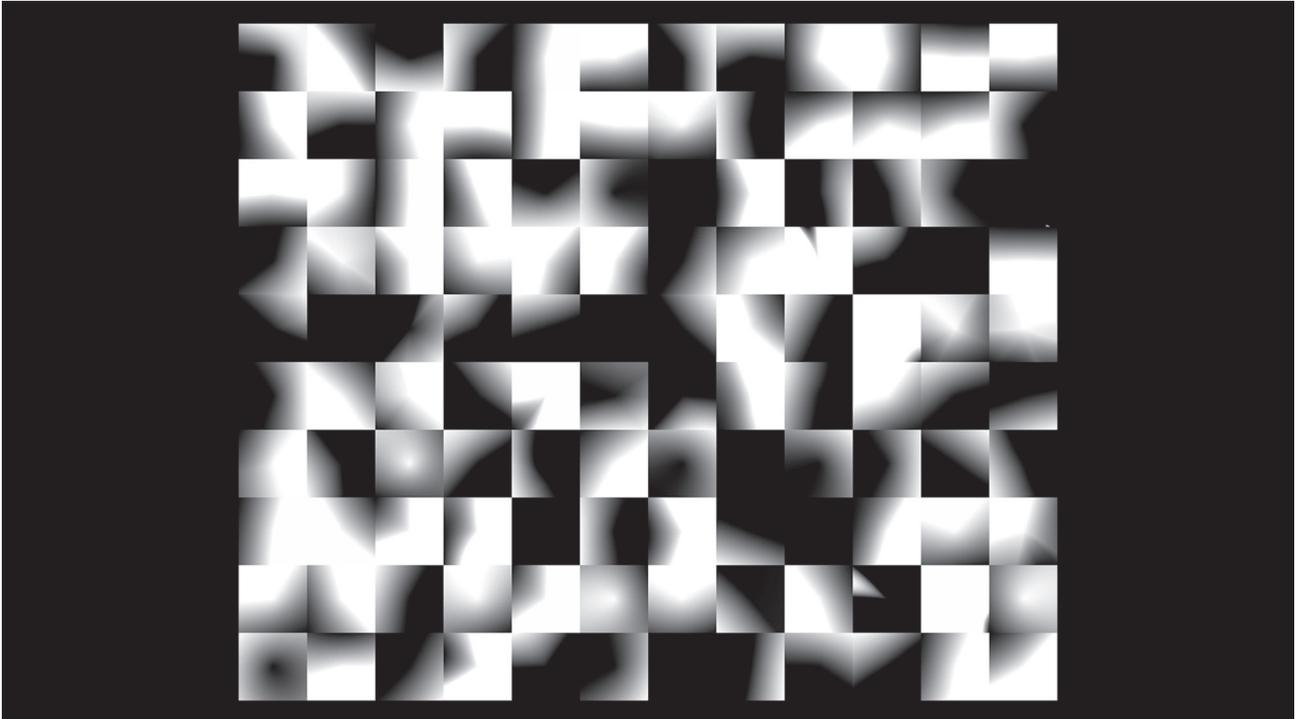
Heather Dewey-Hagborg

How do you see me?

Two-channel video

6:03 minutes

2020



In *How do you see me?*, the artist utilized adversarial processes, algorithms that are designed to deceive machine learning systems, to generate self portraits that are recognized as her face, although to the human eye, they look nothing like her.

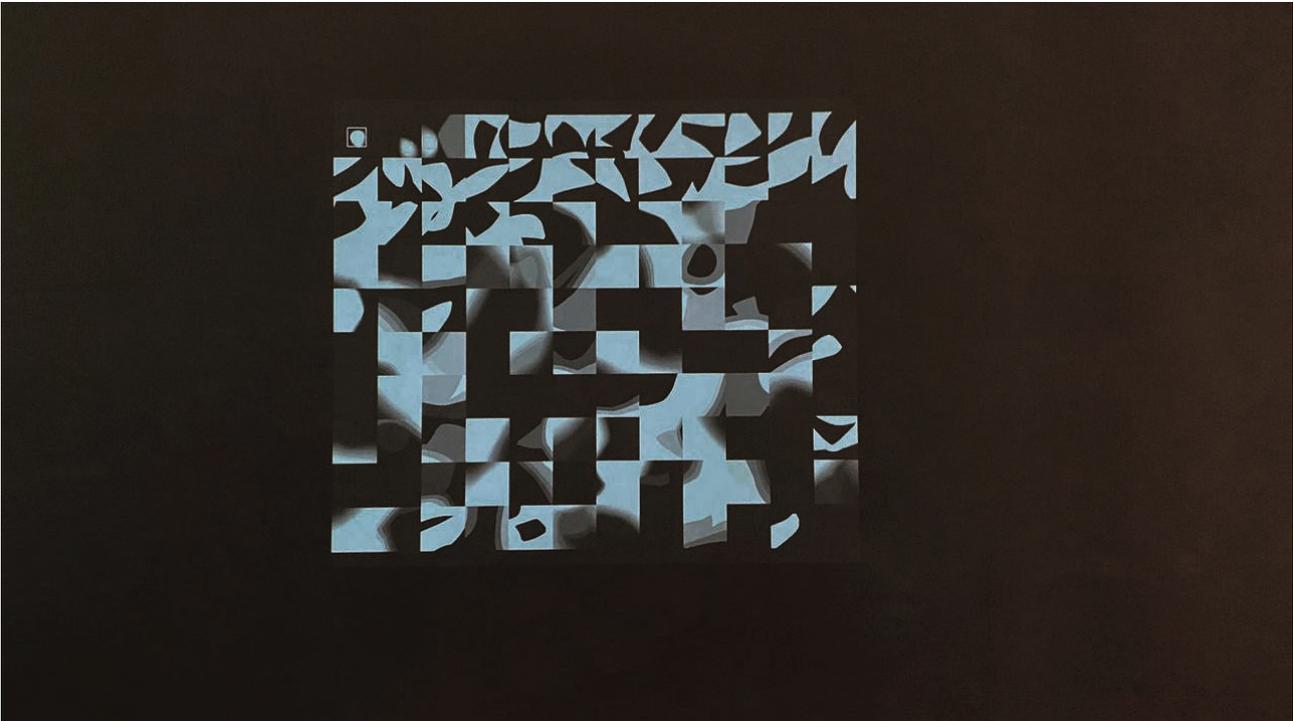
How do you see me? is an attempt to get closer to the other that is watching all the time. It is the artist's way of looking back and trying to learn how this alien intelligence is structured, internally.

Coming from a background in machine learning, Dewey-Hagborg developed custom software to produce a series of images that are detected as "faces" or are recognized as her. Starting from primitive curves and gradients, images are evolved to more strongly elicit the algorithmic detection and recognition response. We see the face reduced to a white circle,

laying bare the racial assumptions which underpin facial detection technologies. And we see strange gradients and curves, images which have seemingly no resemblance to faces, emerge as neighboring facial vectors to the artist's own.

The outcome of these experiments is a series of images which give us a window into how we are seen by the opaque technologies of artificial intelligence and facial recognition.

How Do You See Me? was originally commissioned by The Photographers' Gallery, supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.



Installation view, '*Aesthetics of Silence*' at Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

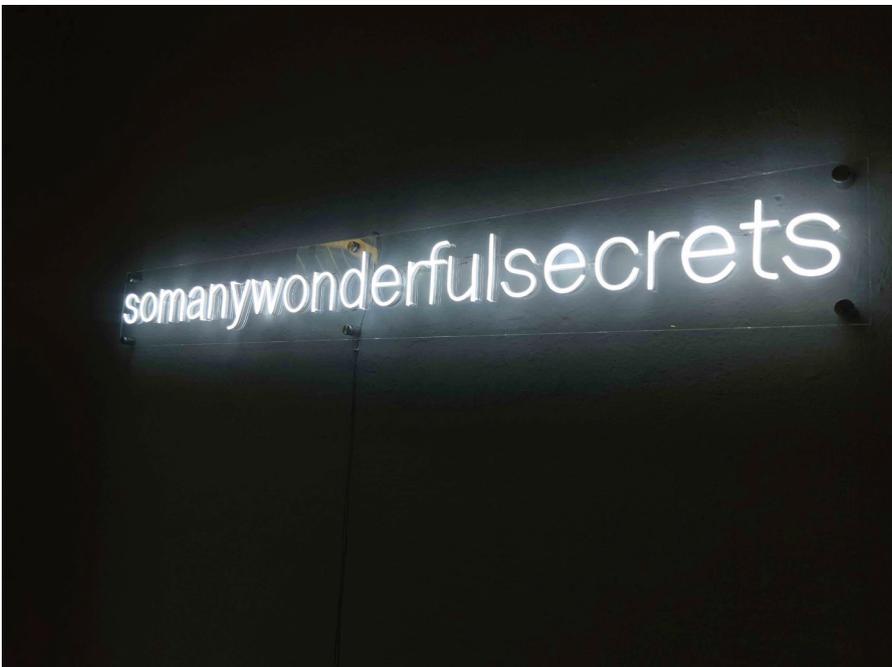
H.H. Lim

somanywonderfulsecrets

Neon light

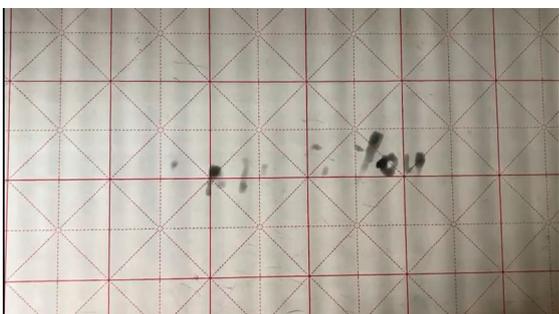
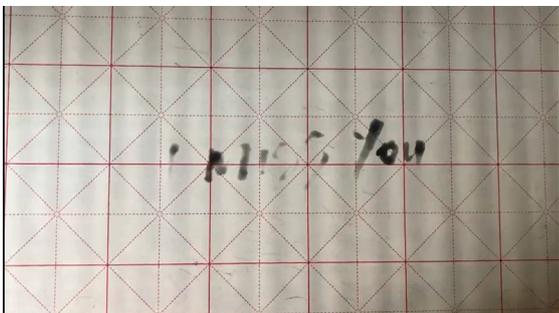
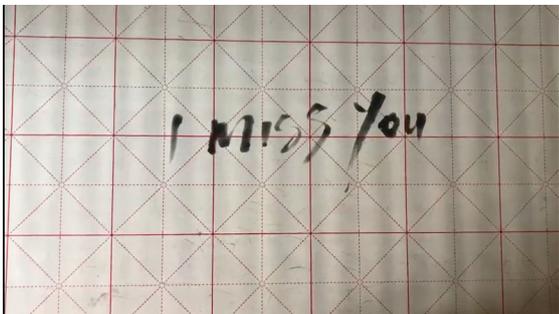
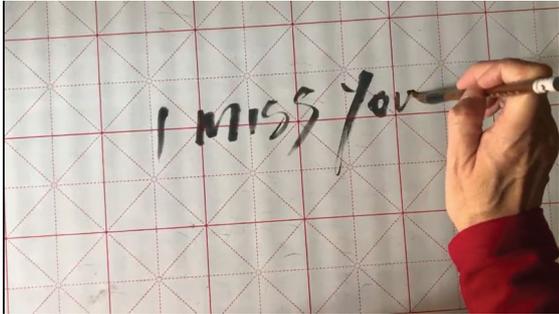
15cm x 150cm

2021



Through *somanywonderfulsecrets* H.H. Lim explores the idea of unspoken mysteries. He believes that the world keeps so many wonders that oftentimes we, as human beings, are unable to decode. As individuals, we have the right to keep secrets; unspoken feelings, words, and expressions.

I miss you
Single-channel video
2:01 minutes
2020



Home Song
Single-channel video
2:00 minutes
2020



Two single-channel videos *I Miss You* and *Home Song*, H.H. Lim reveals his personal feelings. In *I Miss You*, we see the artist painting a deeply personal message, "I Miss You" using Chinese ink. The other video work, *Home Song*, sees him singing a song about his longing for his homeland Malaysia, sung from Italy, where he currently resides. These two expressions of longing, revealed to the audience, are no longer secrets.

Ivan Lam

Breathe

Three-channel video installation

00:59 seconds

2020

Through three vertical videos created using Tik Tok, Ivan Lam presents an antithesis of the application, and the trends and lifestyle that revolve around it. In a world where we are always expected to constantly keep up with the rapid pace of the internet and contemporary culture, the artist invites his audience to instead, live the moment through the power of breathing. In these three videos, we see him sitting in his meditation position, eyes closed, breathing. The simple act of breathing can take us away from the future, and back to the centre of ourselves, and the center of our time - that is, the present. It is the 'now' that we should focus and be conscious of. *"As we scroll through our screens, time passes just like that. Suddenly, 5 hours of your life is gone and you will never get it back."*



Curating Human Experiences 66:06:06

Installation and performance

Dimensions variable

2018



Apart from 3 videos, Ivan Lam also presents the installation work *Curating Human Experiences 66:06:06*. Here, Ivan Lam takes on the complex art form that is performance art, suffusing his own inquiry with a specific intent around the nature of experience and perception. The first performance that he did with this set-up involved the artist sitting in a chair in Wei-Ling Gallery for a period of 66 hours, 6 minutes and 6 seconds (the proliferation of 6s is an allusion to the symbol of the devil, or if the number is inverted, 9999, a symbol in computer coding and once a source of apprehension with the advent of Y2K). Five other chairs encircle the artist's chair, and are open to visitors to the gallery who can choose to sit with him – although there will be no spoken interaction (at least from the artist); only the phenomenological experience of sitting near or next to someone, and the passing of time. For this exhibition, in relation to the video works, the artist himself will be leading a breathing exercise and performance - once again sitting on one of the chairs in silence, while the audience are invited to join him.

Melati Suryodarmo

The Dusk

Single-channel video

Edition of 5 + 2AP MS_3501

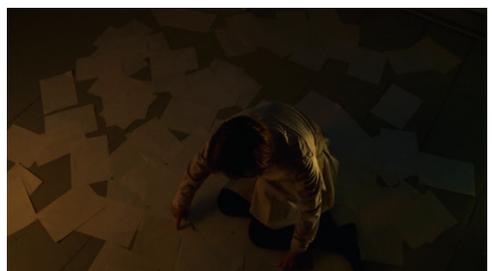
25 minutes 56 seconds

2010

Image courtesy of Melati Suryodarmo

“*The Dusk*” is a short film set in an empty estate in the northern part of Sweden. Architectural and personal isolation hang heavily throughout the film, which tangentially reflects upon Suryodarmo’s upbringing in a culture of silence. While silence is conventionally understood to be nothingness, empty or a void, “*The Dusk*” brings viewers through abstracted moments of silence and reveals their psychological pregnancy and the elements of trauma they could possess.

Recognizing the similarities between poetry and her performance works, Suryodarmo conceives of the movements in her performances as ‘poetical action.’ Both poets and artists bring sequences of words and actions together that provoke a multiplicity of interpretations on what is conveyed, as what they read or see is related to their unique positions. Working with actors trained with her poetical actions further transforms the subject. In this process, she continues to abstract the communication and allow her viewers to immerse their selves in the silence.





Installation view, *'Aesthetics of Silence'* at Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Rajinder Singh

Trapping Silence

Poems and texts

Dimensions variable

2021



During the lockdowns, Rajinder Singh channeled his introspective into poetry, giving birth to his first poetry book entitled *Trapping Silence* (2021). Raw and personal, his poems explore human's fragility in facing difficult times, dealing with isolation, and remembering the past; words that bear witness of a life.

"This book is about silence and my fraught relationship with it."

– Rajinder Singh

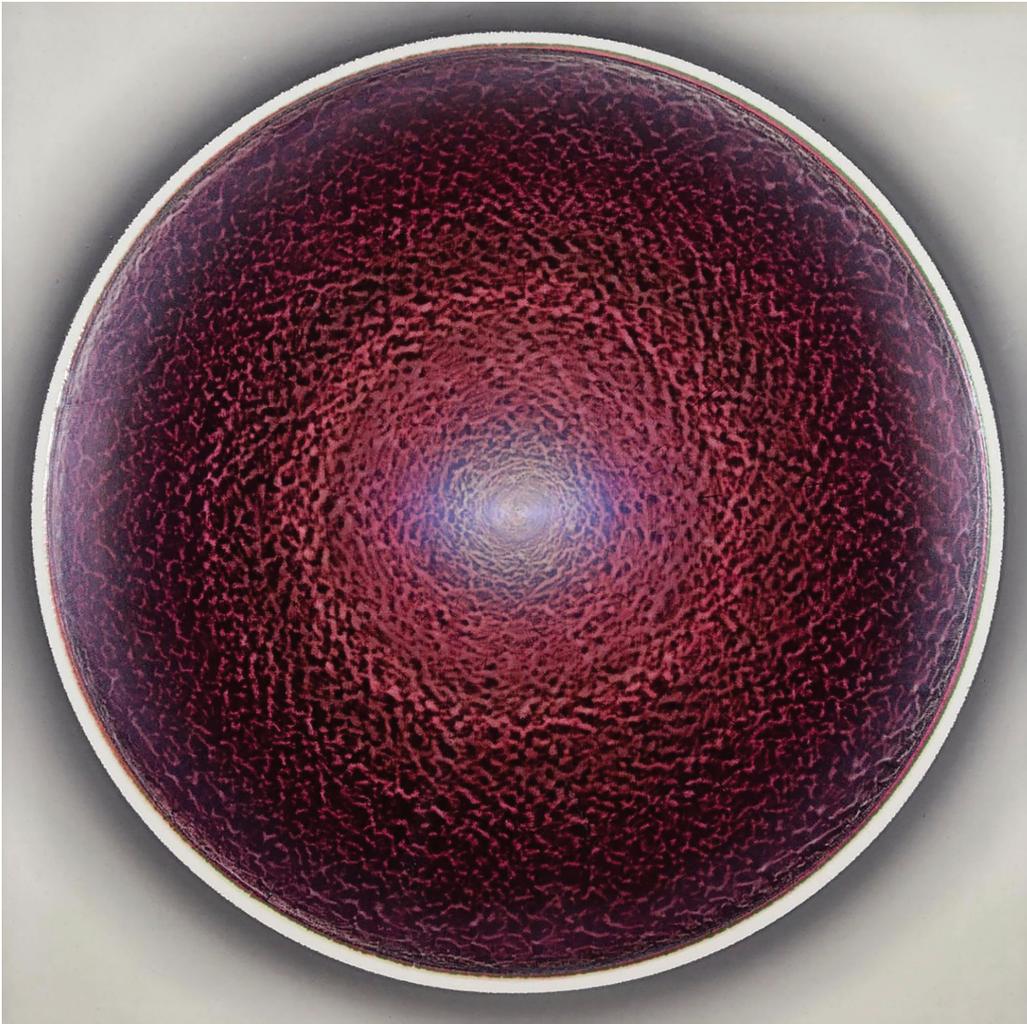
Robert Schaberl

ZF purple magenta-yellow (snake)

Acrylic on canvas

100cm x 100cm

2016



Schaberl offers compositions that reveal delicate layers of multi-colored pain. In his paintings, he uses 50–70 shades of different pigments that shift in the viewer's eye, according to their position in relation to the work. As Robert puts it, *"I see my paintings as objects in space, objects without a clear color-definition,"* he says. *"The colors I want to achieve are always undefinable, never just blue or red or yellow or green, but always unseizable."*

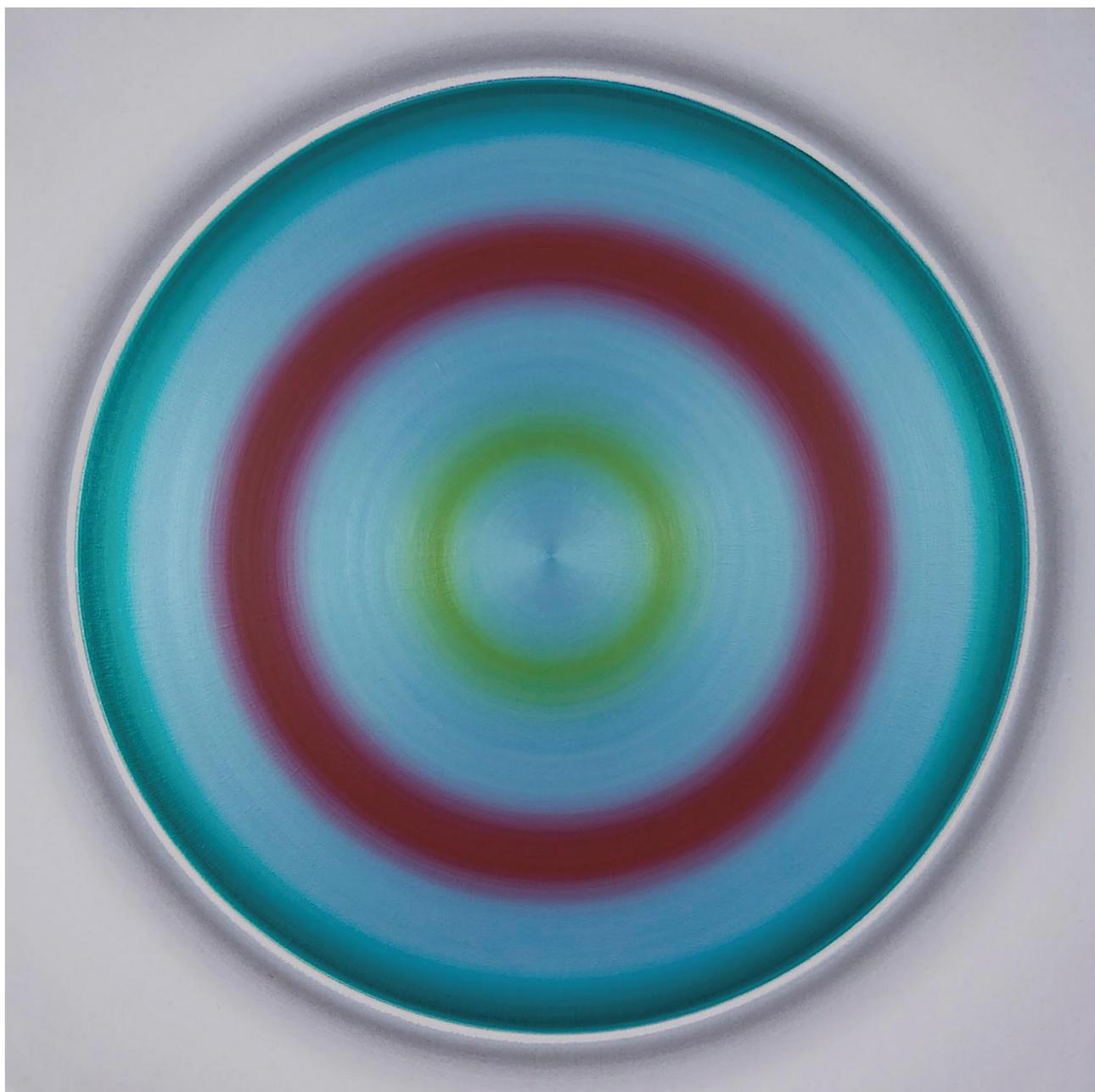
In these recent works of Schaberl, light plays a leading role. Only someone in motion can experience the meditative effect of the work, as the reflection of light reveals an entirely different world of colour when seen at different angles. Once the circular form initiates tension between colour and shape, light heightens the visual experience. It is as if we hear a symphony of light and colour that resonate within a solid tranquility. To Schaberl, it is only through the experience of the viewer that his work is truly realised.

ZF silver green dance with intense blue red and soft yellow

Acrylic on canvas

100cm x 100cm

2019

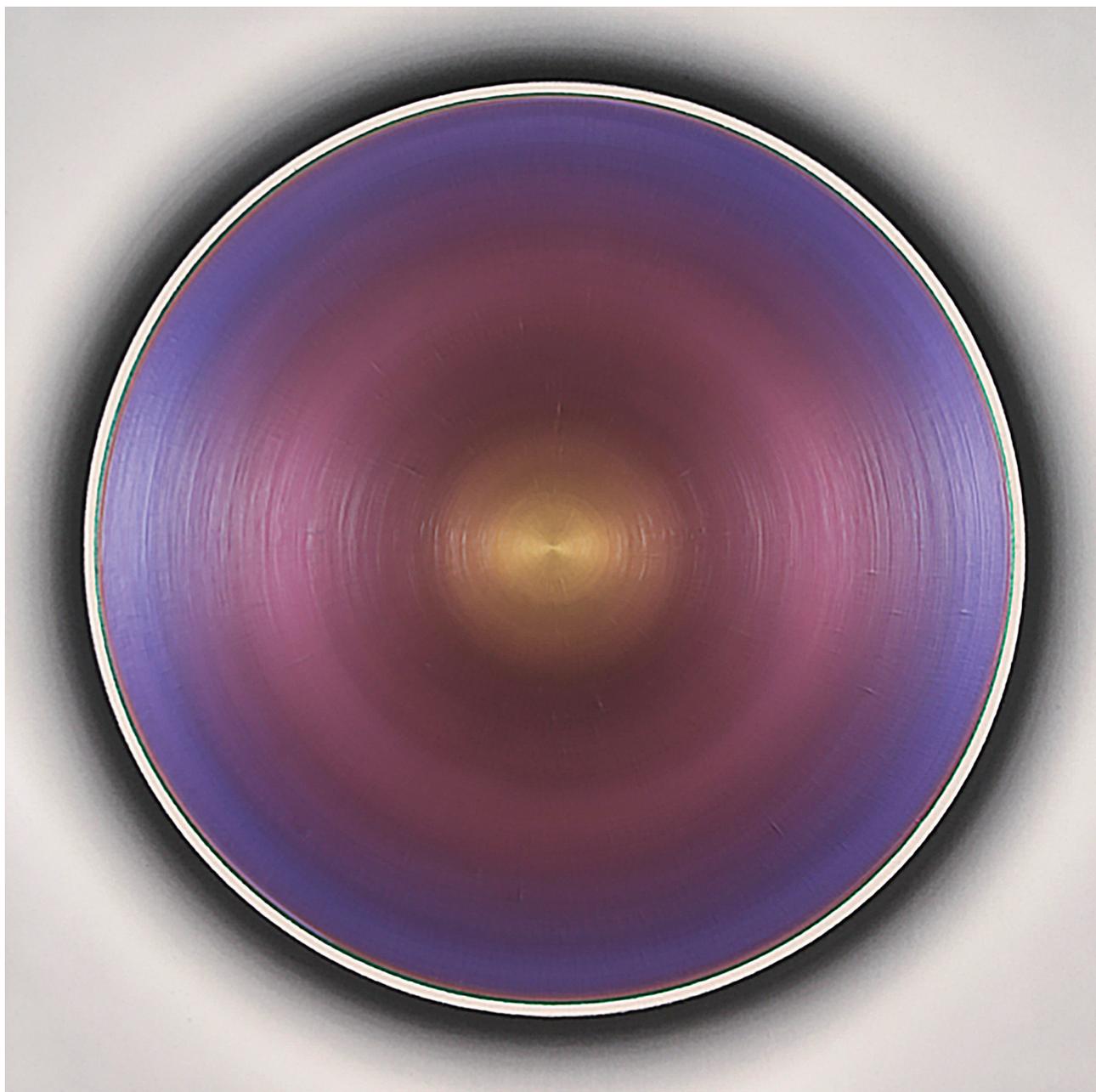


ZF soft blue dance with rose yellow and red

Acrylic on canvas

100cm x 100cm

2019

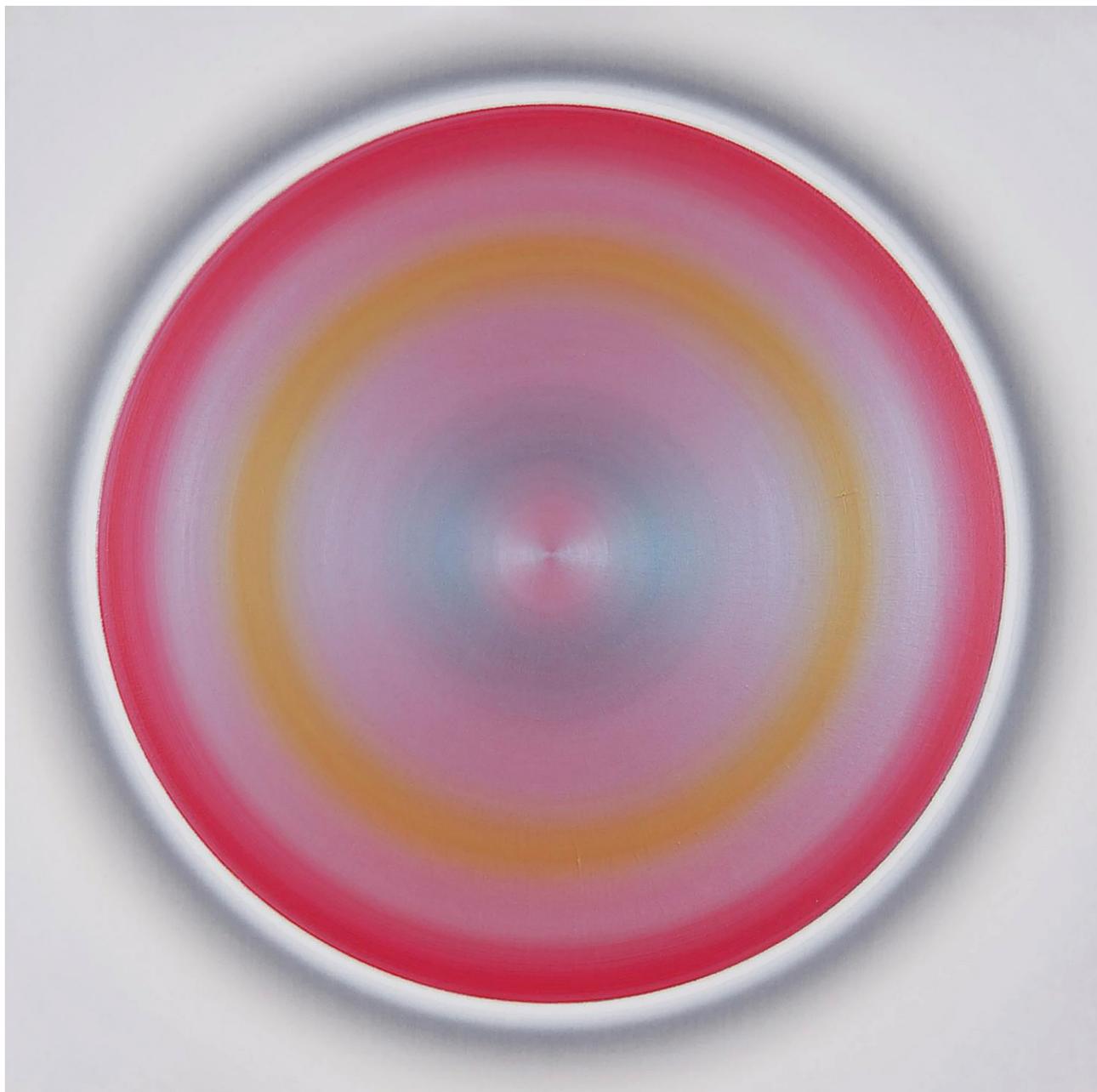


ZF blue purple-reddance with gold and umbra green

Acrylic on canvas

100cm x 100cm

2017-2018





Installation view, *'Aesthetics of Silence'* at Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Roger Ballen

Arousal

Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print

61cm x 86cm

2015



Throughout his career, Roger Ballen has pursued a singular artistic goal: to give expression to the human psyche and visually explore the hidden forces that shape who we are. In these photographs Ballen creates a persona, Roger the Rat. In this new series, Ballen unveils a selection of uncanny photographs and video works so completely different from his previous work, yet still possessing the unmistakable Ballenesque aesthetic. Produced in Johannesburg between 2015 and 2020, Ballen creates and documents a part-human, part-rat creature who lives an isolated life outside of mainstream society.

Typing

Edition 3 of 6 Archival Pigment Print

61cm x 43cm

2019



When the Music Stops

Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print

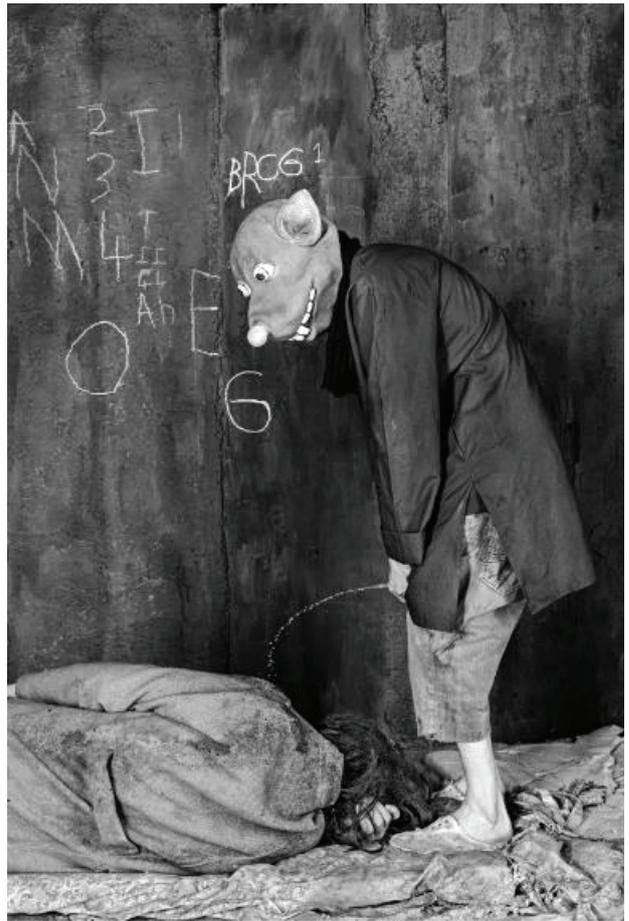
61cm x 43cm

2019



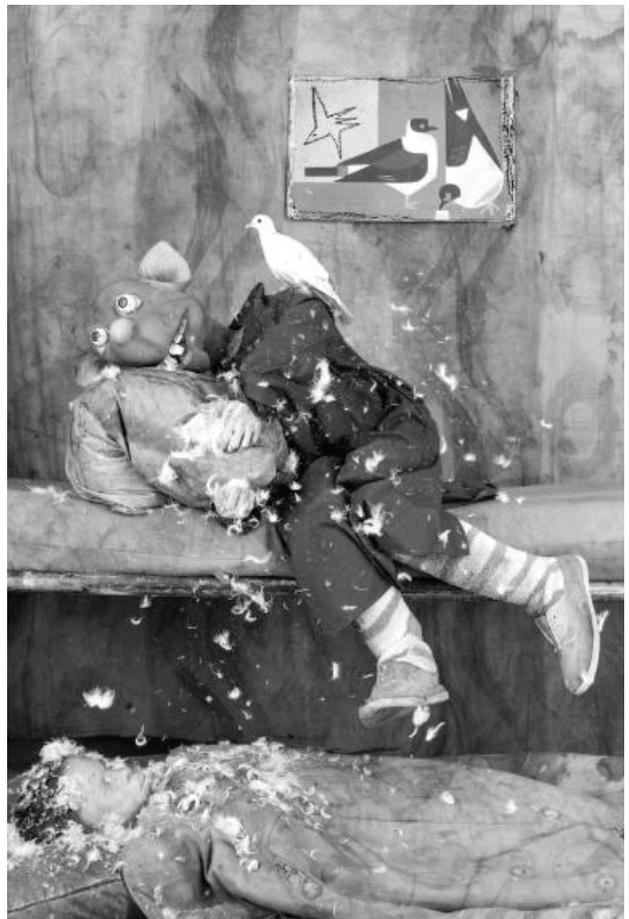
Peeing

Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print
61cm x 43cm
2020



Shedding Feathers

Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print
61cm x 43cm
2015



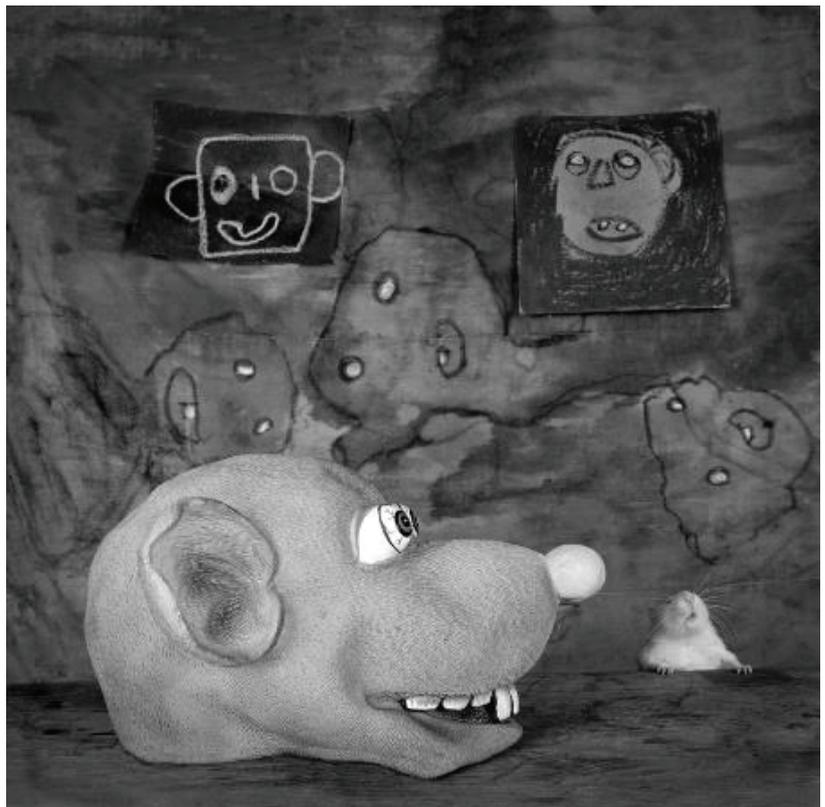
Sifting

Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print
61cm x 43cm
2015



The End

Edition 2 of 6 Archival
Pigment Print
61cm x 61cm
2015



Fishing

One-channel video installation

00:10 seconds

2021



Shooter

One-channel video installation

00:09 seconds

2021



Roger Ballen

Dancing

One-channel video installation

00:29 seconds

2021





Installation view, *'Aesthetics of Silence'* at Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



List of Artworks

Arin Rungjang

Ravisara (2019) (Commissioned by Toronto Biennial of Art with support from DAAD and co-presented with Harbourfront Centre) | Seven-channel video installation; Dimensions variable

Heather Dewey-Hagborg

How do you see me? (2020) | Two-channel video; 6:03 minutes

H.H.Lim

somanywonderfulsecrets (2021) | Neon light; 15cm x 150cm

I miss you (2020) | Single-channel video; 2:01 minutes

Home Song (2020) | Single-channel video; 2:00 minutes

Ivan Lam

Curating Human Experiences 66:06:06 (2018) | Installation and performance; Dimensions variable

Breathe (2020) | Three-channel video installation; 00:59 seconds (each)

Melati Suryodarmo

The Dusk (2010) | Single-channel video; Edition of 5 + 2AP MS_3501; 25 minutes 56 seconds

Rajinder Singh

Trapping Silence (2021) | Poems and texts; Dimensions variable

Robert Schaberl

ZF blue purple-reddance with gold and umbra green (2017-2018) | Acrylic on canvas; 100cm x 100cm

ZF purple magenta-yellow (snake) (2006) | Acrylic on canvas; 100cm x 100cm

ZF soft blue dance with rose yellow and red (2019) | Acrylic on canvas; 100cm x 100cm

ZF silver green dance with intense blue red and soft yellow (2019) | Acrylic on canvas; 100cm x 100cm

Roger Ballen

Arousal (2015) | Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print; 61cm x 86cm

Peeing (2020) | Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print; 61cm x 43cm

Shedding Feathers (2015) | Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print; 61cm x 43cm

Sifting (2015) | Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print; 61cm x 43cm

The End (2015) | Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print; 61cm x 61cm

Typing (2019) | Edition 3 of 6 Archival Pigment Print; 61cm x 43cm

When the Music Stops (2019) | Edition 2 of 6 Archival Pigment Print; 61cm x 43cm

Shooter (2021) | One-channel video installation; 00: 9 seconds

Dancing (2021) | One-channel video installation; 00:29 seconds

Fishing (2021) | One-channel video installation; 00:10 seconds

Artist Biographies

Arin Rungjang

B. 1975 in Bangkok, Thailand

Lives and works in Bangkok, Thailand

Arin Rungjang is a pioneer of installation art in Thailand whose practice is deeply intertwined with Southeast Asian histories, symbols and memories, and addresses ways that social, economic and political transformations affect individuals' lives. He is known for deftly revisiting historical material, overlapping major and minor narratives across multiple times, places, and languages. His interest lies in lesser-known aspects of Thai history and their intersection with the present in the sites and contexts of his practice. Objects, which can draw together distant events across time and space, are central to his investigations. He has a practice that spans different media and often involves video and site-specific installation. In his exploration of history and everyday life experiences he deftly dissects material and revisits master-narratives through the agency of the small event.

Recent exhibitions include Documenta 14 Athens/Kassel(2017), Mongkut - CAPC - Musée d'art contemporain(2015), Bordeaux, Satellite 8, Jeu de Paume, Paris (2015), Finalist Apb Foundation Signature Art Prize (2014), Golden Teardrop, representing Thailand at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013). He has participated in the 18th Biennale of Sydney (2012), the Bandung 'City Pavilion' at the Shanghai Biennale (2012), the Third Singapore Biennale at Old Kallang Airport (2011).

Heather Dewey-Hagborg

B. Philadelphia, United States

Lives and works in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Dr. Heather Dewey-Hagborg is an artist and biohacker who is interested in art as research and technological critique. Her controversial biopolitical art practice includes the project Stranger Visions in which she created portrait sculptures from analyses of genetic material (hair, cigarette butts, chewed up gum) collected in public places.

Heather has shown work internationally at events and venues including the World Economic Forum, the Daejeon Biennale, the Guangzhou Triennial, and the Shenzhen Urbanism and Architecture Biennale, Transmediale, the Walker Center for Contemporary Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and PS1 MOMA. Her work is held in public collections of the Centre Pompidou, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Wellcome Collection, the Exploratorium, and the New York Historical Society, among others, and has been widely discussed in the media, from the New York Times and the BBC to Art Forum and Wired.

Heather has a PhD in Electronic Arts from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Interactive Media at NYU Abu Dhabi, a Sundance Institute Interdisciplinary Program Art of Practice Fellow, an Artist-in-Residence at the Exploratorium, and is an affiliate of Data & Society.

She is also a co-founder and co-curator of REFRESH, an inclusive and politically engaged collaborative platform at the intersection of Art, Science, and Technology.

H.H. Lim

B. 1954 in Alor Star, Malaysia

Lives and works in Rome, Italy

H.H. Lim has lived in Rome since 1976, traveling and working between the Italian city and Penang island in Malaysia. In 1990 he founded Edicola Notte, one of the most dynamic art spaces in Rome. His work reflects his peripatetic life and cross-cultural blending between East and West, embracing a variety of genres and media, such as video, installation, painting and performance. Lim's practice exhibits conceptual tendencies, exploring the ephemeral and fluctuating nature of meaning in a playful and irreverent manner, often, in the process, weaving in elements of the subconscious, symbolism, memory and language. Works which have come to life in one form, frequently see another life when placed in conjunction with other works, rendering them with new, additional and frequently paradoxical meanings.

Lim has shown widely in an international arena. In 2019, he was one of four Malaysian artists to represent Malaysia at the country's first ever National Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia. In 2017, he did a number of solo and group exhibitions in Italy: '*CieloSereno*', Fondazione Filiberto Menna, Salerno; '*RE-EVOLUTION. The Place To Be*', MAXXI, Rome, '*PLEASE COME BACK. Il Mondo Come Prigione?*', MAXXI, Rome, '*FòcarArte*', Palazzo Baronale di Novoli, Novoli. In 2016, Lim participated in the Singapore Biennale, '*An Atlas of Mirrors*' at Singapore Art Museum.

Ivan Lam

B. 1975 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Lives and works in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Ivan Lam has earned a reputation as one of Malaysia's leading contemporary artists for his continuous ability to push the boundaries of his art practice. Unafraid to take risks and never content to lean on the familiar, he is constantly posing himself new challenges through experimentation with techniques and mediums, taking his art practice to the next level. In so doing he has evolved into an artist of critical acclaim who is answerable only to himself, consistently striving towards conceiving and actualizing new concepts and ideas.

He has exhibited widely in the local and international arena and has also garnered multiple awards in a career laden with solo and group exhibitions. He has also been recognized for his achievements and has been collected by reputed institutions in Malaysia, Europe and the USA. Ivan Lam was one of four Malaysian artists to represent Malaysia at the country's first ever National Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia in 2019. In 2017, he presented a performance work entitled '*Curating Human Experiences: Human Experience 66:06:06*' in Kuala Lumpur, and was the only artist from Malaysia invited to create a project for the Karachi Biennale in the same year. He was the first Malaysian artist commissioned by Louis Vuitton for their collection in 2014, and the first and only Malaysian artist selected to present a one-man project at the inaugural Art Basel Hong Kong in 2013.

In 2020, Ivan Lam launched 'The Ivan Lam Giveaway' an online platform where art is used as a tool to promote action.

Melati Suryodarmo

B. 1969, Solo, Indonesia

Lives and works between Gross Gleidingen, Germany and Solo, Indonesia

Melati Suryodarmo graduated from the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig, Germany under the tutelage of Marina Abramović and Anzu Furukawa with a Meisterschüler qualification in Performance Art. Her practice is informed by Butoh, dance and history, among others. Her work is the result of ongoing research in the movements of the body and its relationship to the self and the world. These are enshrined in photography, translated into choreographed dances, enacted in video or executed in live performances.

Suryodarmo has presented her work in various international festivals and exhibitions, including *Why Let The Chicken Run?*, Museum MACAN, Jakarta, Indonesia (2020); Bangkok Art Biennale 2020: *Escape Routes*, Bangkok, Thailand (2020); *Asia Society Triennial: We Do Not Dream Alone*, Asia Society Museum, New York, U.S.A. (2020); *Contemporary Worlds: Indonesia*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia (2019); *Arus Balik – From below the wind to above the wind and back again*, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore (2019); *Reenacting History: Collective Actions and Everyday Gestures*, National Museum of Contemporary Art Korea, Gwacheon, South Korea (2017); *SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now*, National Art Centre Tokyo & Mori Art Museum, Japan (2017); *Afterwork, Para Site*, Hong Kong (2016); 8th Asia Pacific Triennale, QAGOMA, Queensland, Australia (2015); 1st Asia Biennial & 5th Guangzhou Triennial, Guangzhou, China (2015).

Since 2007, Suryodarmo has been organizing an annual *Performance Art Laboratory and Undisclosed Territory*, a performance art festival, in Solo, Indonesia. In 2012, she founded “Studio Plesungan”, an art space for performance artists to use as a laboratory. In 2017, she served as Artistic Director for the JIWA: Jakarta Biennale 2017.

Rajinder Singh

B. 1964, Ipoh, Malaysia

Lives and works in London, United Kingdom

Rajinder Singh is an artist, mathematician and researcher who holds an enduring interest in South Asian magico-religious belief systems, and the shape and space that they deny us. In 1993, he obtained a PhD in Engineering & Mathematics at the Queen’s University Belfast (QUB), UK. In 2010, he achieved his Masters degree in Fine Arts from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore, and has been a full time artist ever since. His art practice is multifaceted, as he explores the variety of ways the human body unfolds at the intersections of the world of the otherworldly and the dynamics of global modernity.

In 2019, Rajinder launched his project ‘*Un-migrate-ing*’, at the Botanic Gardens in Dublin, Ireland. He also took part in the international group show ‘*Paralogical Machines: When Images Meet Us in Space and Time*’ curated by Dr. Kenneth Feinstein in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In 2018, he presented a special performance project called ‘*The Undiscovered Country - a reflection on mortality through performance art*’ at Art Stage Singapore. In 2017,

he conceived a project called *'Woundbloom'* and in 2016 he presented his solo exhibition *'Cage of Deliverance'* (2016). Other exhibitions include: *'Common Ground'*, Chan Hampe Gallery, Singapore (2015); *'The ceiling floats away with a sigh'*, Wei-Ling Gallery (2014); *'Muestra Colectiva de Verano'*, Isabel Anchorena Gallery, Buenos Aires (2014); *'Fold'*, ICA, Singapore (2012); *'MOLC'*, Chan Hampe Gallery (2012); *'Ya-ad'*, ICA, Singapore (2011); *'Ellaline'*, Stephanie Hoppen Gallery, London (2011). Rajinder was also represented in Bologna Fiere SH Contemporary at Shanghai Exhibition Centre, China in 2014 and London Art Fair in 2012.

Robert Schaberl

B. 1961, Feldbach, Austria

Lives and works in Vienna, Austria

Robert Schaberl's path has been continuous from the mostly black oil painting of the early 1990s and the colourful monochrome canvases of the Berlin years, over the flickering glazed colour solids built up of 60-70 layers of acrylic paint to the shimmering, rotating colour cosmos in the last couple of years created by using interference pigments. Schaberl calls these "central forms", since all these variations are consistent developments of the same visual idea he is occupied with and has been spurred on by from the very beginning of his career.

He experiments in his laboratory in Vienna and paints for the sake of painting. He uses Iriodin paint for his recent works, thereby prompting the viewer to move constantly in front of them, since in different lighting conditions, at a different position of the sun or the viewer entirely different tones reveal themselves, ranging from light blue, through green to rust. Robert Schaberl enables us to discover the painted space as an aggregate state that comes to life through the viewer during the process of visual perception. However, and this is what makes the viewing of Robert Schaberl works special and unique, only someone in motion can experience the full richness of the hidden worlds of color, the pulsating layers and the opening of space towards a colour tone.

Roger Ballen

B. 1950, New York, United States

Lives and works in South Africa

One of the most influential and important photographic artists of the 21st century, Roger Ballen's photographs span over forty years. His strange and extreme works confront the viewer and challenge them to come with him on a journey into their own minds as he explores the deeper recesses of his own. His contribution has not been limited to stills photography and Ballen has been the creator of a number of acclaimed and exhibited short films that dovetail with his photographic series. Roger Ballen has also published over 25 books internationally. His works are in more than 50 of the most important international museum collections.

In September 2017 Thames & Hudson published a large volume of the collected photography

with extended commentary by Ballen titled *Ballenesque Roger Ballen: A Retrospective*. In 2019, Halle Saint Pierre in Paris opened an exhibition titled *The World According to Roger Ballen*. Thames & Hudson published the book in French and English to accompany the show. His work took over the entire space for more than a year closing in January 2021. In October 2020, Hatje Cantz released *Roger the Rat* which was produced in Johannesburg between 2015 and 2020. Here, Ballen creates and documents a part-human, part-rat creature who lives an isolated life outside of mainstream society.

In 2022, Thames and Hudson will be releasing a second volume of *Ballenesque Roger Ballen: A Retrospective* in paperback.



Installation view, *'Aesthetics of Silence'* at Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Wei-Ling Gallery

Produced by Wei-Ling Gallery

To accompany the exhibition entitled '*Aesthetics of Silence*' from 11th August - 7th October 2021

Wei-Ling Contemporary

RT-01, 6th Floor, The Gardens Mall,
Mid Valley City, Linkaran Syed Putra,
59200 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

T: +603 2282 8323

E: weilingcontemporary@gmail.com

Wei-Ling Gallery

No. 8 Jalan Scott, Brickfields
50470 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

T: +603 2260 1106 F: +603 22601107

E: weilinggallery@gmail.com

W: www.weiling-gallery.com

PROJECT DIRECTOR | Lim Wei-Ling

DESIGNED BY | Lim Siew Boon

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