INTER—MISSION PRESENTS

SIM LIM SQUARE ART RESIDENCY

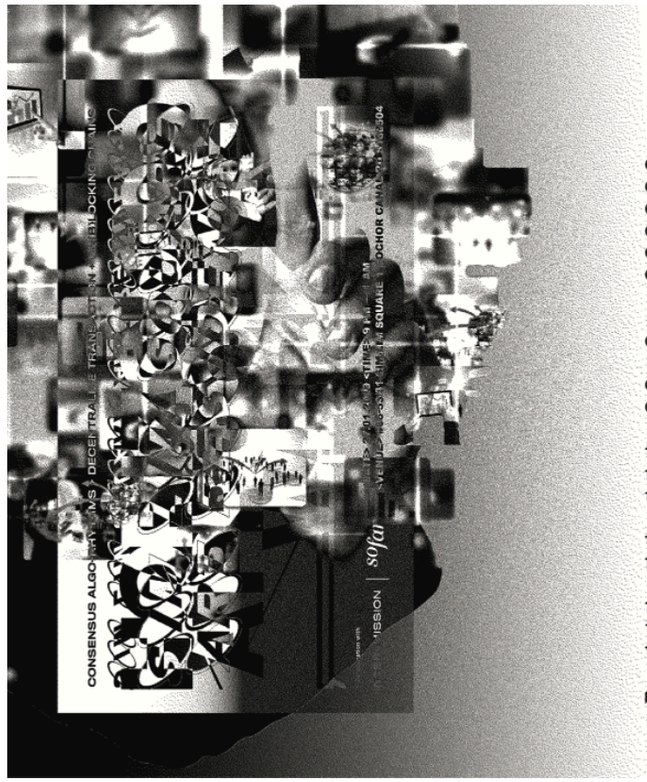
Set against Singapore's rapid adoption of digital technologies, the 3-week residency held in Singapore's 'tech' mecca aims to code and recode perspectives surrounding art, technology and space. The residency programme includes open studios, guided tours, panel sessions, artist talks and presentation of works by the artists.

Part of

SAW SINGAPOREARTWEEK

Supported by

NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL SINGAPORE



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FOREWORD BY INTER–MISSION

Facing the imminent threat of en-bloc, coupled with dwindling sales and a notorious reputation with tourists, timber-turned-electronics hub Sim Lim Square is a melding of national and transnational labour and affects, visible and invisible networks, trendy and obsolete goods; all etched in the Singaporean subconscious.

INTER–MISSION explored the disused units at the top floor one day, Sim Lim Square being a fond site where we frequent to acquire equipment between teaching. We were naturally drawn to a unit that was framed by a triumphant "crown" of photography brand signages, left behind by it's former occupant, Chinese owned photography business, Orient Photo. This "crown", a totemic reminder of the complicated geopolitical networks, labour and production gone into optics and digital imaging industry, will later be joined by Currency's porous spatial design for the unit: densely attached decals a homage to the constellation of corporations, companies, services, apps and devices that occupy the digital imagination, acting as a "skin" for the ebbs and flows of what would be an art residency – and this proposal has been accepted and supported by National Arts Council commissioned for the annual Singapore Art Week 2019.

After locating the landlord and arranging for a recce, we entered this ghostly shell to encounter the whirl of bitcoin mining machines, their warmth a strong reminder of the environmental implications of an encrypted promise. In many ways, the space outlined themes the artists and invited panellists unpacked throughout the course of the residency. We uncovered the layers of history, politics, capital and ecology of the strata mall, its associated subcultures of gamification, piracy, transgression, proxy, a winding labyrinth of first and second generation tenants, fluctuating to the rhythm of emergent trends. The haphazardly curated of shops and merchandise with countless turnovers of

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shopkeepers and shop assistants.

It was urgent that we held a 3-week residency in this 'tech' mecca, with aims to code and recode perspectives surrounding art, technology and space. We selected the two foreign artists Eom Jeongwon and Ko Tzu-An from our existing networks, while we ran an Open Call for local artists, with the aim to deepen our understanding of the ecology of media art practitioners. Many of them we met at the shop unit, shared their artistic vision and personal impressions of the site. The unit buzzed with potential. Out of the many, we selected Wei Xin Chong and Johann Yamin.

The four artists dived into the site, and began a series of workshops with invited guests: artists Andreas Schlegel and Debbie Ding, art collective soft/WALL/studs, a virtual takeover by musician W.Y. Huang (from New York) and academic Dr Liew Kai Khiun, each sharing and offering a facet to chip at the complexity of the site, while engaging with the community. These workshops culminated at our panel session entitled 'Lost Tech', moderated by so-far, where the guests shared their individual practice, research and engagement with the artists and community. These engagements are captured in this publication.

True to our hopes, curious visitors lingered outside our unit, shop owners came by for extended chats and audiophile store Zeppelin even reached out to us, offering free coffee and support for audio equipment. Committed journalists also approached us to cover the story, hungry for a fresh perspective of the mall, amidst the buzz, we invited readers to experience the mall for all its' complexities. Many of the staff and executives of National Arts Council and Singapore Art Week attended our programmed events. And impromptu school tours arranged by teachers and artists who are teaching as well. Through residency artist-led tours, the narrative of their experience of mall were momentarily revisited.

INTER-MISSION
GITZO
ZEISS
THE RESIDENCY
JOHANN YAMIN
EVENTS
EVENTS

T3
NOKIA
sonique
music download
audio controls
playlist editor
info about
setup options
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ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQ.mp3
LPUPL MUSIC - 9I
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navigation console
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track progress
WINyaMP3
ATC Let Me Come (3:2)
-1:30
ants – It's Cra-Zay [Radio 00:31
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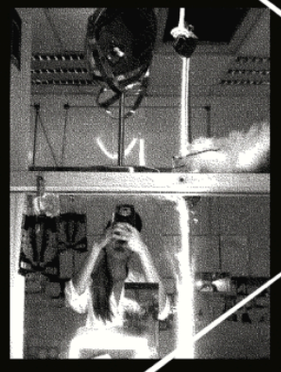
-15:07
LED ZEPPELIN - MOB
Lady Peace - D
02:40
04:04

GELLED *GHOSTS*



WEIXIN CHONG

Unknown room, white blinds and white walls.

You wake up thinking of screens.
You pull the laptop over and begin to type at a half-finished Google document:

Tentative title of proposed work:

GHOST BODY SHANZHAI/
ALTER/AFTER-LIFES ...

if you could transmit yourself into alternative realities, i mean crunch crispy numbers, be as simple and malleable as a bunch of 1s and 0s, reconfigure whatever it is that you are.

why would you be, this?

if this will never be enough, what about a fantasy of afterlife/s? Be a kimzua version of yourself, be the kidney shaped pool in someone's luxury paper home. Or do you not have enough horcrux, with all the soft copy digital layers of you; old current and new online containers and CCTV footage ghosts, Skype sessions and Username/ Sign ins.

The physical self, or the physical copy, is no longer a lone corpus; it is surrounded by its derivatives and versions in a cloud of soft digital selves.

Sim Lim Square is an environment that exemplifies this with its screens, fish tanks, tangled electronic accessories...Tools of technology flaunt their unquestionable validity as objects of utility, even when their usefulness is arguable.!

This glass-upon-metal-upon-glass cube of a mall offers almost everything that can be imagined in the realm of electronic utility. This overabundance, dizzying reflections of things reflecting things, ensconces you. These display schemes bewilder, they are entangling, saturated with color and conglomerated, like vine-dense leafy undergrowth.

If you touch the slick surfaces they retain the smudge; or else fine dust comes off onto your fingertips. Don't crack your screen or you'll snag your skin on the grooves, the damaged LCD pooling in pixels in the wake of your touch.

In the space selected by Inter-mission, glass walls create an open-view, fish-tank replete with large mirrored surfaces and reflective shelving.

... Something could grow here peripheral yet interfacing, using an organic accruement of elements, and the motif of watching screens as its means of form. This creeping and time based accumulation in the display shelves/ windows might be deposited by a ghost body of facilitators who will bring different components into the space over the period of residency, growing the work in display into its final form.

Edit.
Save and Share with INTER_MISSION.
You notice that you have not detailed a working plan.
ghhjadksjchk
The residency duration will be highly scheduled and intense.
You stop and consider,
continue typing...

Working plan per week for:
GHOST BODY SHANZHAI/ALTER/AFTER-LIFES...

Ingredients of the work: (physical)

1. Vinyl sticker, prints, paper objects/assemblages, screens and selfie/ portrait lights, mirrors, coloured vinyl/ plastics.
2. Video calls, recreations of objects/images, accumulative growth.
3. Live stream/ online connection with g(host) bodies as portals and avatars, that develops in parallel with the Intermission space.

Nothing ever goes according to plan, remember. Don't forget to make a back-up of the back-up plan. And maybe walk away from it all and drink ice kopi on Level 2 if anything jams.

PROCESS

WEEK 1

4. Live streaming into sim lim through host body collaborator (s). First host body Jovan Tng to meet other artists and residency team. (Jovan in Sim Lim on the 8th, 10th and 11th for first week.)
5. Hunting in Sim Lim as g(host) body, searching for installation elements with/as g(host) body, bringing parts into project space.
6. Sourcing elements and streaming/feedback system for the setup?

Most things aren't worth being on CCTV. Just remember almost no-one bothers to put on a good show for the security cameras.

WEEK 2

1. Continuing development of frame elements: creating and configuring new parts to be added to the display.
2. Liasing with ghost body collaborator, communicating with and organising parallel/simultaneous actions . (Overlap period begins till end of residency week 3).
3. Continued offerings of new objects, components.
4. Testing and setting up any feedback systems/ screen systems.
5.

WEEK 3

6. Adjustment and addition of content and elements, accumulations.
7. Collecting images and recordings of the display space in interaction
8. Presentation and engagement with audiences

You need to talk to Jo again about being the ghost body. You are using the now basic common-use technology of online video-call to approximate your physical presence and agency.

There was a time when one had to arrange Skype dates; there were also dinosaurs.

Dial-up seems so far away but your mind remembers its high-pitched whine. Old Microsoft desktops.

Phone screen, camera in Sim Lim Square Art Residency space.

Jo has moved into the space and is interacting with your fellow artists, carrying the phone screen with your face around. You see what the phone camera sees, with a bit of blurring and occasional lag.

You go for a hunt around Sim Lim Square.

The phone screen shows a moving blur of fluorescent lights and tiled surfaces.

You inhale by memory the thick staleness of air-conditioning and old fried oil. You direct Jo's pathway unsteadily, the internet stops and starts, as if jerking the reins of a horse. Jo notices things and pushes the phone camera towards them, they fall into and out of view. You yell back and forth over the interference of background noise.

Jo points and gestures towards far-off shops and pixelated signboards.

Right or Left? Left?
This lag is creating an appropriate chaos.
How can it feel so nauseous just to stare
at the phone? There is so much liquid in
the human brain.

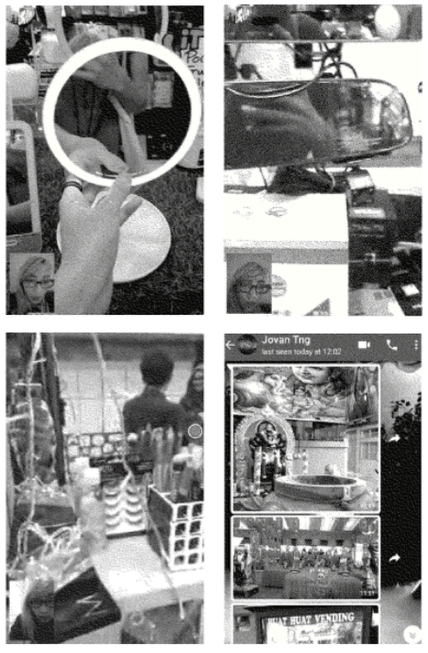
You gesture back, changing Left to Right, adjusting for mirrored view.

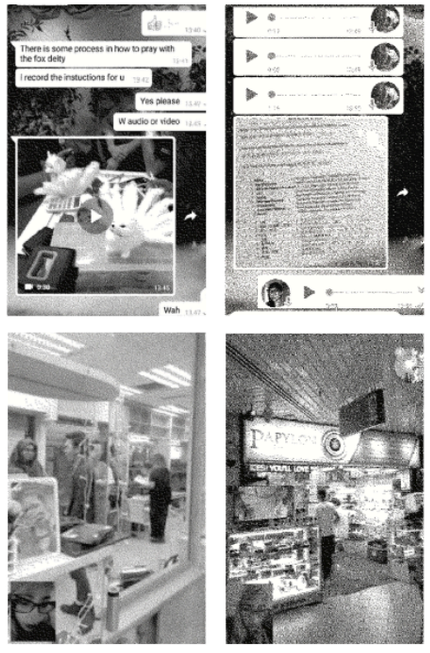
At the end of each walk/hunting session, items gathered are brought back to the space where Jo arranges them and sends photo documentation. In this way the experiment proceeds...

Almost nothing goes according to plan.

There is almost nothing left of interest in the idea of Future, a Not-Now so blindingly emblazoned with imagined advancement that it threatens the current labouring of breath, the heaving of physical ribcages and the small aches in the fingers. Everything lies in this translation, from touch to the pretence of a tactile real. The meaning of the gesture lies in how much it brushes aside.

In a Google search history you might see the proof of a soul.





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