

PORTALS, STORIES, AND OTHER JOURNEYS



大館當代美術館 TAI KWUN CONTEMPORARY

GUIDEBOOK

EN

Portals, Stories, and Other Journeys

23.04—01.08.2021

Artists

Banu Cennetoğlu
Ha Bik Chuen
Kwan Sheung Chi
Lam Wing Sze
Raqs Media Collective
Walid Raad

Curator

Michelle Wong

With support from

Vivian Poon
Garfield Chow

Presented by

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ART
ARCHIVE
亞洲藝術文獻庫
20 YEARS ON

Exhibition Lead Research Sponsor


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Foreword

The Asia Art Archive Team

One of a handful of photographs that exists from Asia Art Archive's soft opening in 2003 features Ha himself. In the image, Ha Bik Chuen and Leung Siu Mei were enveloped in the archive's oversized red armchairs. From the somewhat grainy photo, it is hard to imagine how this unassuming gentleman, with the support of his partner, a camera, and unwavering enthusiasm, assembled the single most comprehensive archive documenting the history of Hong Kong art from the 1960s till 2009, the year of his death. Besides being a practising artist, Ha Bik Chuen (1925–2009) was known around town as the "uncle" who would document art exhibitions—over 2,500 exhibitions in a thirty-year period. Ha's archive dispels the common misconception that Hong Kong does not have an art history, and throws open the doors for the histories of Hong Kong art to be written in much greater depth.

Established in 2000, Asia Art Archive's mission is to contribute to a more generous art history through the collection, creation, and sharing of knowledge. The urgency of the work AAA does lies in the fact that these histories are not visible within what is usually understood as global art history. In the majority of classrooms in Asia and beyond, art from Asia is largely framed within a traditional history that situates itself comfortably in the past, or within a very recent history as part of the "global contemporary" within which art circulates. By making public the archives that individuals have entrusted to AAA, new research, scholarship, and education are possible. In 2013, AAA was invited by Ha's family to become temporary custodians of the archive, and began work on this deep trove of materials. In the next few years, AAA relocated Ha's archive to a dedicated project space in Fo Tan due to the deteriorating state of the original studio. In the time since, AAA has been able to process Ha's archive and share it with a much wider public through digitisation, public programming, residencies, and now through this exhibition.

Archives are as much about what they exclude as what they include, and Ha's archive of 600 boxes spanning fifty years, while seemingly comprehensive, has been assembled from a very personal viewpoint. Many questions arise around who is represented, and how, in Ha's archive. Which artists did he admire? Who did he aspire to be as an artist? What did it mean to be an artist in both colonial and post-Handover Hong Kong during the span of his lifetime? Why are so few women artists included? These are just some of the questions that have preoccupied AAA's artists-in-residence over



Ha Bik Chuen and Ha Leung Siu Mei reading at Asia Art Archive's first location in Sheung Wan, 2003. AAA moved to its current location on Hollywood Road in 2007. Ha documented the opening ceremony and kept the photos in his archive.

the last eight years—for AAA believes that the archive is not only a place for research and scholarship, but a creative space where new works and speculative ideas germinate. This exhibition emerged out of these interactions and conversations.

AAA wishes to thank Ha Bik Chuen and his family for generously sharing this incredible resource with the public. AAA would also like to thank Chinachem Group for supporting the research for this exhibition; The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, Hong Kong Arts Development Council, WYNG Foundation, S. H. Ho Foundation, C. K. and Kay Ho Foundation, and the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation for their generous support of the Ha Bik Chuen Archive Project over the years; the many artists, scholars, and curators who have activated the archive in ways beyond our imagination; the research team that has worked on Ha's archive over the past six years; the artists who created new projects specifically for this exhibition; and the team putting this show together.

AAA is grateful for Tai Kwun Contemporary's invitation to present this exhibition departing from Ha's archive. As an institution that embodies the convergence of heritage and the contemporary, Tai Kwun is an ideal partner with whom to realise this exhibition. This invitation has challenged us to articulate how we work with archives as well as artists, and what spatial forms this work can take. Throughout the curatorial process, the idea of archives as portals—gateways that lead us to places known and strange—has stuck with us. We hope this metaphor of the portal not only carries this exhibition, but also becomes a way for us to imagine what archives are, and what AAA as an institution is.

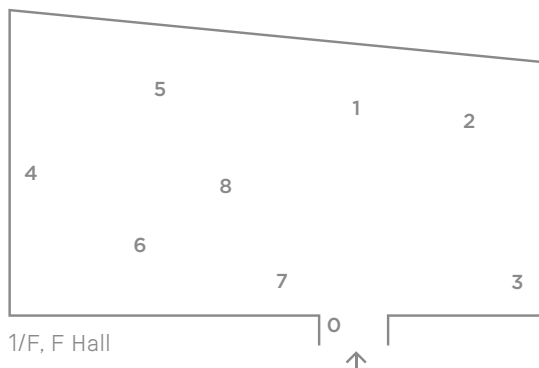
AAA hopes that this archive of the city's cultural, social, and political history can shine light on the incredible spirit and generosity embedded here. We warmly invite you to navigate your own journey through *Portals, Stories, and Other Journeys*, an exhibition that started with an archive located on the eight floor of a tong lau in To Kwa Wan, and has since unfolded across time and space into multiple forms.

Introduction

Portals, Stories, and Other Journeys stems from Asia Art Archive's research since 2014 into the personal archive of the late Hong Kong-based artist Ha Bik Chuen (1925–2009). A self-taught sculptor and printmaker, Ha left behind a vast personal archive—his “thinking studio.” He documented exhibitions that he attended from the 1960s till the 2000s, and kept records in the form of ephemera, negatives, contact sheets, and photo albums. He also collected printed matter like illustrated magazines, and created book collages from these publications. As an autodidact, Ha's library contained books on art and visual culture from far beyond the port city of Hong Kong. Ha's idiosyncratic ways of collecting, organising, and regrouping materials blur the boundaries between document and artwork.

This exhibition comprises ten “sets” that share what this archive can do—how it fuels practices of artists, and how it shapes and shifts our understanding of Hong Kong's history and art. Five of these sets present new commissions by artists Banu Cennetoğlu (Istanbul), Kwan Sheung Chi (Hong Kong), Lam Wing Sze (Hong Kong), Raqs Media Collective (New Delhi), and Walid Raad (Beirut/New York). Some of these artists began their engagement with Ha's archive in the past year in preparation for this exhibition, while others have had years of continuous conversation with AAA. Each artist brings their own stories relating to Ha's archive—they respond to various facets of his archival and art practice, as well as AAA's ongoing efforts to make the archive accessible. The remaining sets restage documents and historical objects in new contexts made possible by research into Ha's archive. These articulations construct more complex narratives about Hong Kong's art ecology of the last five decades, and reveal parts of Hong Kong's cultural worlds that are not always visible.

Each set is a carefully composed ensemble of images, objects, and stories, guiding us to explore our sense of scale, self, and history. These sets become portals leading visitors from one place to another, perhaps even more than one place at a time, defying rules of spatiality and temporality. They make way for (un)timely encounters across geographies, affects, and times. They juxtapose different kinds of knowledge created through artistic, scholarly, and curatorial ways of engaging the archive. Together, these sets catalyse a condition where artistic speculation and research inquiries of disparate contexts and sources collide.



- Set #0 Entrance
- Set #1 Untitled #79 | Walid Raad
- Set #2 A Restaurant in 1970s Hong Kong | Ha Bik Chuen
- Set #3 A Giant Flipbook
- Set #4 Thinking Studio | Lam Wing Sze
- Set #5 An Archivist's Table
- Set #6 Unledgered | Raqs Media Collective
- Set #7 Iron Horse—After Antonio Mak | Kwan Sheung Chi
- Set #8 A Shadow Play
- Set #9 bewitched, bewildered, bothered | Banu Cennetoğlu (online and at JC cube)



An image: Ha's original archive space in his studio and AAA's Fo Tan Project Space morph into and out of each other. This gesture is an invitation to enter this exhibition as a warp in time and space. In the gallery, speculations and interpretations of the archive appear as mini-theatrical sets. Temporally suspended in the exhibition space, we can experience them in totality as well as singularly. From 2016 till early 2021, Ha's archive had been relocated at a different physical space, its many boxes opened up, peered into, organised, and catalogued. The sets you see upon entering this portal are assembled from the archive's holdings, its stories, and many things in between.



A miniature collage landscape sits atop a table made from an art crate. The landscape comprises a selection of boxes and cut-outs of human figures that populate Ha's exhibition documentation. Ha is also there, photographed with his own works, and other artists and practitioners in the Hong Kong art scene. The boxes are stacked into different heights, becoming platforms on which the cut-out figures stand. Raad's work samples from the extensive photographic documentation that Ha created of himself and the art world around him. What emerges is an assemblage of Ha's roles within the art scene: as an artist, as a friend of artists, as a viewer of art—roles we may also inhabit.



Ha Bik Chuen at the 1977 *First Choice Exhibition*, Hong Kong.

From: Walid Raad
Sent: Monday, December 30, 2019 7:09 AM
To: Michelle Wong
Subject: Re: Easterling Book

Hey Michelle,

[...]

re. Ha and his portraits:

Making art and being an artist seem closely tied for Ha. And being an artist is also closely tied to the photographed and (possibly revered) figure of the (mostly-male and white) artist. And his notion of art is in part tied to its reproduction and display.

In other words, we don't have absolutely distinct categories of: Art; Artist; Display; Viewer; Reproduction. Here, they go together. One produces and is produced by the other categories. And it seems that Ha is trying to squeeze himself into all of this, to not only find his place in this chain, but to literally insert himself into it. I am also not sure whether he was conscious of and sensitive to this emerging chain. He was certainly documenting it and was a player in it. He seems a bit lost in it actually. And so I ask myself: was he doing all of this naively or sensitively? Am I reading him only as a symptom or an agent?

Why and how this chain came to be in HK is another matter. What paralleled it or preceded it or followed it is also another matter.

And in a way, that's why I think that something needs to be done with his portraits of artists/viewers/artworks/self-portrait (as artist, maker of art, and viewer of art).

My sense is also that Ha is no narcissist. He seems to me quite alienated from himself. He is also quite disembodied here, even as we see his body everywhere. But the body that emerges is a series of layers, distinct layers: artwork by Ha; Ha as artist; Ha as friend of artists; Ha as viewer of art; other artists as Ha (equally disembodied even as they have bodies). Maybe that's why collage suits him so well.

[...]

Best
W.

SET #2 ————— A RESTAURANT IN 1970S HONG KONG

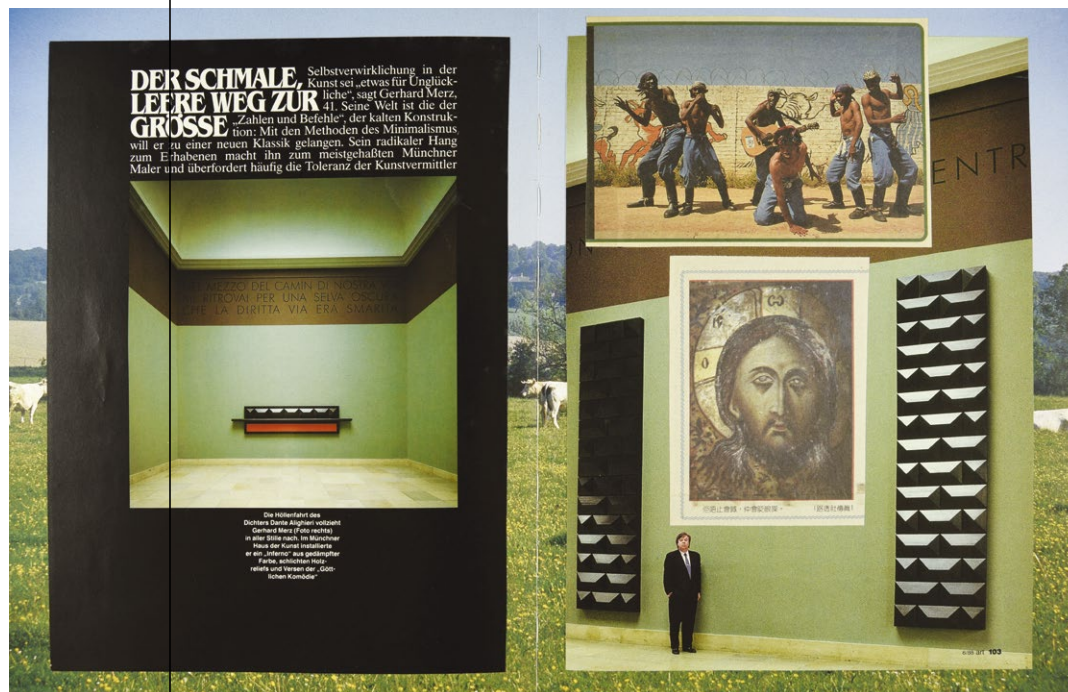
Construction (1967) was Ha's first artwork collected by the Hong Kong City Hall Museum and Art Gallery (now Hong Kong Museum of Art). While this work is treated as a sculpture in the museum, documents in the archive reveal that it was possibly a reference for a later ceiling decoration Ha created for a restaurant in Hong Kong. This work shows how Ha, at earlier moments of his career, navigated the realms of commerce and interior design during the nascent years of the city's art scene. Here, up on the ceiling, it becomes as it was intended. We are in a scene out of a restaurant in 1970s Hong Kong, now demolished, address unknown.



A restaurant in 1970s Hong Kong, with ceiling pieces by Ha Bik Chuen. This photo was found in a Kodak box titled "Restaurant Decoration" in Ha's archive.

FLIPBOOK

Printed matter circulated widely around Hong Kong, a central clearinghouse for publications from across Asia and the rest of the world. Not surprisingly, publications of all kinds thronged Ha's thinking studio. Ha cut and pasted images from all his sources onto each other, including interior design books. Ha's collage practice, previously unknown, was one of the most surprising discoveries while working on his archive. Ha juxtaposed images from disparate cultures, materiality, and time periods, placing canonical art forms adjacent to circulating visual culture, often ignoring the conventions of perspective. Ha's collage practice lasted from 1958 till the end of his life in 2009, but he did not show them publicly. Artist Walid Raad found the first collage books in 2014, and since then, the tally has gone up to over 300. This set presents a selection of Ha's collage books, allowing visitors to experience the space across a page on a human scale. Seating for this area resembles the furniture that appeared in Ha's collages. This gesture extends the unlikely compositions within Ha's collage books into the exhibition space itself.



Page spread from *Country Interiors*.

Modern Art, large format, handbound, hardback volume featuring cut-outs and collected pages from various sources, dated 1974, 1975, 1976, and 1977 by Ha Bik Chuen.

Geijutsu-Shincho 1985, medium format, magazine featuring collages of ephemera materials such as magazine cut-outs and newspaper clippings, undated, circa 1980s.

Country Interiors, large format, hardback book featuring collages of ephemeral materials such as magazine cut-outs and newspaper clippings, dated 2002 by Ha Bik Chuen.

Curiosa: Celebrity Relics, Historical Fossils, and Other Metamorphic Rubbish, medium format, hardback book featuring collages of ephemeral materials such as magazine cut-outs and newspaper clippings, dated 2004 by Ha Bik Chuen.

Catalogue of Characters, medium format, hardback book featuring collages of ephemeral materials such as magazine cut-outs and newspaper clippings, undated, circa 1980s.

Ink Revelations, large format, hardback book featuring collages of ephemeral materials such as magazine cut-outs and newspaper clippings, dated 2009 by Ha Bik Chuen.



Still from Lam Wing Sze's *Thinking Studio*. Courtesy of Lam Wing Sze.

Lam Wing Sze creates an installation that entangles her own photographic video practice with Ha's. Intrigued by technological shifts in the contemporary world, Lam's work explores how the sites Ha frequented to hone his photography skills have changed over time. Lam revisits the places Ha photographed, retracing Ha's steps across his now-vacant thinking studio, parks, and shorelines. She re-photographs objects he used to form other images, such as leaves and winged seeds, and his photographic equipment. Lam animates Ha's manuscripts and drawings; she also remixes them with her photographs, video footage, and Ha's own experimental photography. These visual narratives meditate on the meaning of temporarily inhabiting another artist's practices that are distant yet familiar to one's own.

From Fo Tan to To Kwa Wan; from stasis to fluidity; between emulation and creating something new...I search for Ha Bik Chuen's traces of life through his everyday photographs, manuscripts, personal objects, and magazine cut-outs. I explore his ways and habits of seeing, and trails of creative processes.

Between Ha's images and texts, I fill out these gaps of memory with moving images and sound, imagine his internal worlds, and piece together a visual diary of self-exploration.

—Lam Wing Sze

Ha Bik Chuen was a prolific photographer of events, exhibitions, places, people, and things. From 1981 to 1998, he documented over 2,500 exhibitions and events in Hong Kong and elsewhere, creating over 3,500 hand-annotated contact sheets that functioned as an index of his photo-documentation. Since 2014, AAA has been researching this collection of material and building on research conducted by others, surfacing previously unknown stories and amplifying others.

A selection: four albums of Ha's studio and an architecture model, photos and publications of eight exhibitions related to Hong Kong's art and history, a screen showing Ha's manuscripts being scanned, a touch screen holding over 3,500 contact sheets one can zoom in and out of, a list of books Ha collected, and a pile of books archivists consulted in order to navigate this sea of information. This selection is gathered on an archivist's table, a study space where inquiries are continuously posed.

Artists activate archives in ways that archivists cannot (and may even deliberately resist against). Artists create new narratives from existing ones, growing tangents out of chance encounters, and complicating the calculations and order of things. But it is in this destabilising of what is known that new experiences can be created and shared. This table presents a selection of archival materials that anchor and open up some of the artist interventions in this exhibition. More of the archive has been digested and transformed by artists into parts of the surrounding sets.

Contact Sheets

Over 3,500 contact sheets developed and hand annotated by Ha Bik Chuen from 1981 to 1998.

Manuscripts and Drawings

Ha Bik Chuen's sketch book, circa 1960s–70s.

Paper collage by Ha Bik Chuen, 1975.

Ha Bik Chuen's manuscript, 9 August 1976.

"From Creating Art to Photography," manuscript, 1981.

Ha Bik Chuen's manuscripts, 8 June 1985.

Ephemera

Exhibition brochure of the *2nd Hong Kong International Salon of Paintings*, organised by the Hong Kong Modern Literature and Art Association, held at the Exhibition Gallery, High Block, Hong Kong City Hall, 1962.

Exhibition brochure of *Music & Fine Arts in Hong Kong 1967*, held at the Concert Hall, High Block, Hong Kong City Hall, 1967.

Exhibition brochure of a Circle Art Group show, held at Hong Kong City Hall Museum and Art Gallery, 1968.

Exhibition brochure of *HK ART*, held at Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Philippines, 1982.

Exhibition Documentation

Detail from contact sheet documenting *Out of Context*, held at 15 Kennedy Road, Hong Kong, 1987.

Photo documentation album of *Contemporary Hong Kong Art*, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Philippines, 1982.

Photo documentation album of *City Vibrance: Recent Works in Western Media by Hong Kong Artists*, held at the Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1992.

Photo documentation of *Being Minorities—Contemporary Asian Art*, held at the Hong Kong Arts Centre, 1997.

Photo documentation of *Hong Kong Reincarnated: New Lo Ting Archeological Find*, held at the Hong Kong Arts Centre, 1998.

Documentation of Ha Bik Chuen's Studio

Visit to Ha Bik Chuen's Studio 82, photo album, 1982.

Wucius Wong and Pat Hui's Visit to Bik Chuen's Studio 1983, photo album, 1983.

Chan Man Hung Visiting Ha Bik Chuen's Studio, (Showing Special Weapons) 86, photo album, 1986.

Photo album of Ha's studio compiled by Asia Art Archive, 2014.



The AAA team at Ha Bik Chuen's studio in To Kwa Wan, 2013.

In 2016, when Raqs Media Collective first visited Ha's studio in To Kwa Wan, they were struck by the excess of ready-mades that filled the space to the brim: boxes, draft objects, shelves, Tyvek coverings, haphazardly stacked together. This intimacy has stayed with them years after; ferments, warps, breathes. Here, Raqs introduces a composite creature as an embodiment of that feeling of awkward intimacy. An LED panel at the back of the creature emanates primary colour fields that are strewn across the thinking studio. The sofa is an awkward but inviting existence, its skin stitched with Tyvek. A table fan murmurs; we hear it if we sit and accept the creature's embrace. This creature embodies the feeling of haphazard awkwardness, aliveness, dreaminess, and cosiness as remembered by Raqs.



Akhilesh, Shamsheer, and Aarushi producing *Unledgered* at Raqs Studio. February 2021, Delhi. Courtesy of Raqs Media Collective.

The words "life" and "time" both carry incomprehensible magnitudes. They conjure a richness of the sediment of billions of acts, as well as intensities of unknowability. In a sense, "life-time" gives us a scale to comprehend the otherwise unreachable extent of its constituent words. This is when biography interlaces history: it gives us routes to decipher, to make intelligible, the life of another and the imprint it leaves on collective soil.

Archives stage a streamlining of the messiness of living into patterns of understanding. They open materials to differing occupancies. The tense ruse that classifies the faintness and hardness of a life's imprints also makes an archive a space that is unsettled and broken.

The mismatch—of the useful with the residual, the throwaway with the precious, the shelf with that which is secured and arranged, the drawers with their holdings, and of the dust which gathers marks and stains—haunts the archivist. The artist revels in this mismatch, and the resultant spectrum of voice, noise, contamination, value, failure, indecision, hesitation, and expression. It is in the indeterminate relay of materials and marks, cuts and collages, arrangements and un-ledgering, that a passage of time and life draws more life towards itself.

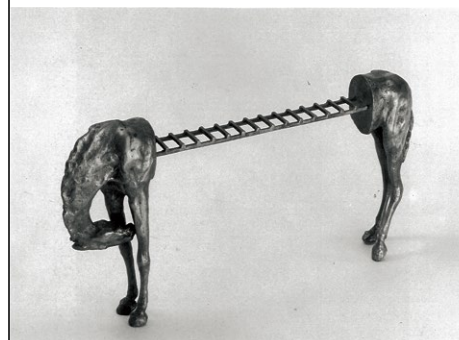
Lifetimes and archives are in wait of revolts of intimacy that disorder the time of the living.

—Raqs Media Collective

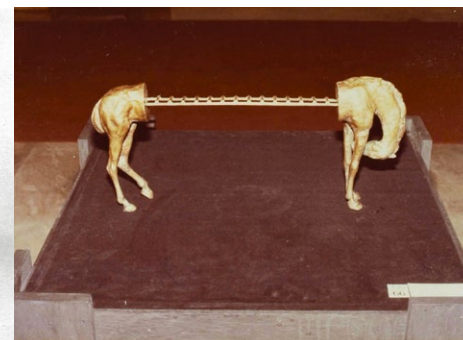
Kwan Sheung Chi was commissioned to create a work for the exhibition *Looking for Antonio Mak* in 2008, and became interested in *Horse with Ladder*, a bronze work by the late Hong Kong artist (1951–94) that had been lost. At that time, Ha's archive was not accessible to the public. Kwan therefore did not have access to the first photographs of *Horse with Ladder* taken in 1982, when it was shown in Manila in a little-known but large-scale exhibition of Hong Kong art. As a metaphor for his obstructed search, Kwan created a digital collage, replacing the ladder with a barricade as the horse's torso, titling it *Iron Horse*. Now, Kwan has seen the 1982 images in Ha's archive (see more in Set #5); as an annotation to this meandering story of Hong Kong art, Kwan casts *Iron Horse* in bronze. *Horse with Ladder* remains lost to this day.



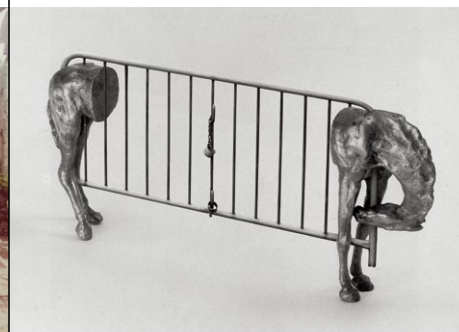
Michael Wong Cheung and Antonio Mak re-enacting *Horse with Ladder* at a heritage gallery in Quezon City, 1982.



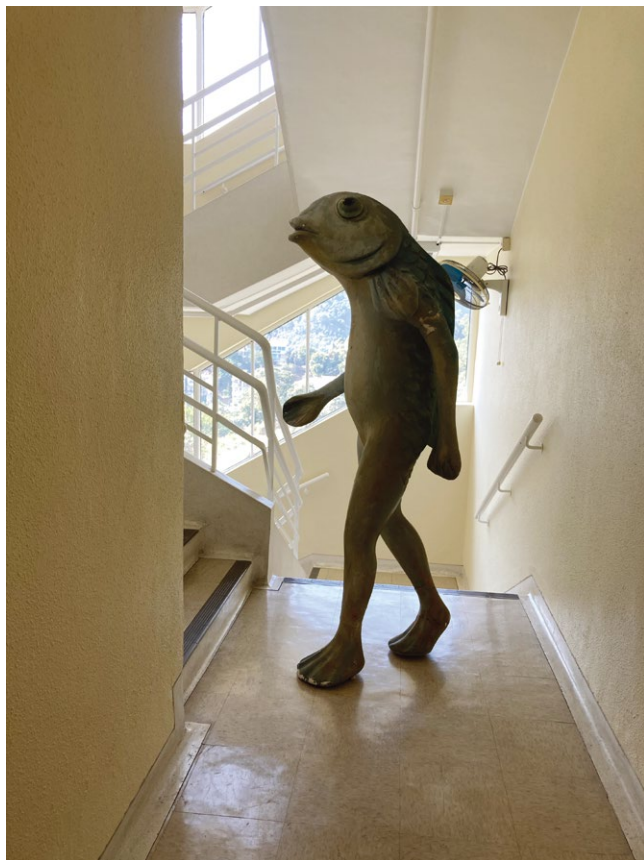
Antonio Mak, *Horse with Ladder*, 1982, bronze, photographer unidentified. Courtesy of Susan Fong.



Antonio Mak, *Horse with Ladder*, 1982, bronze, at the exhibition *Hong Kong Art* in the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, 1982.



Kwan Sheung Chi, *Iron Horse—After Antonio Mak*, 2008, digital photo collage, in *Looking for Antonio Mak*, Hong Kong Museum of Art, 2008. Courtesy of Kwan Sheung Chi.



Lo Ting on a university campus in Hong Kong.

A SHADOW PLAY

Among the 2,500 odd exhibitions that Ha documented was a series from 1997–8, through which Hong Kong-based artist and curator Oscar Ho introduced Lo Ting, a humanoid mer-creature that was supposed to be the ancestor of Hong Kong's people and lived with resilience both on land and in water. In a moment of transition with the Handover, Ho deliberately presented Lo Ting as a kind of discovery from an archaeological dig, leaving open its status as art or reality, a muddling of fact and fiction. It remains a departure point for artists and researchers to reflect on Hong Kong's colonial histories, contemporary conditions, and alternative futures. Stage designer Keung Chi Ming first crafted Lo Ting's physical form. Now, Lo Ting reemerges in fibreglass, stands behind a screen, and greets visitors with its shadow.

"Lo Ting was a species, half-human, half-fish, indigenous to Hong Kong and somewhat other-worldly looking. In the past, they populated the area around Tai Hai Shan, which was also called Tai Yu Shan, or Big Fish Mountain—one of the old Cantonese names for Lantau Island. According to *New Sayings on Guangdong*, the 17th-century publication by scholar Qu Dajun, 'Lo Ting were usually found in areas between Tai Yu Shan and Wanshan Archipelago. They were hermaphrodites with an appearance resembling humans; their hair was a burnt yellow and short, eyes were yellow also, skin a dark, yellowish complexion, and donning a tail of over an inch. Afraid of humans, they always dove into the water on seeing people. Sometimes they would float and be carried along by the waves and people would chase them because they looked so weird.'"

Excerpt from "The History of Lo Ting," by Oscar Ho, in *Driving Lantau: Whisper of an Island*.

The images projected on the screen of this set are adapted from the book cover of *Driving Lantau*, courtesy of Lo Yin Shan.

A three-day public programme and publication that explore the politics of posthumous archives. Taking AAA's temporary custodianship of the late Ha Bik Chuen's personal archive as a starting point, this programme brings together artists and thinkers to discuss the challenges and inadequacies of archives to recover and represent what is "lost." Developed as part of an ongoing dialogue with AAA's Public Programmes Lead Özge Ersoy, the talks, the film screenings, and the publication together investigate art's contested claims and repeated attempts to recover the lost, to remember the forgotten, to resurrect the dead, or to speak for the silent.

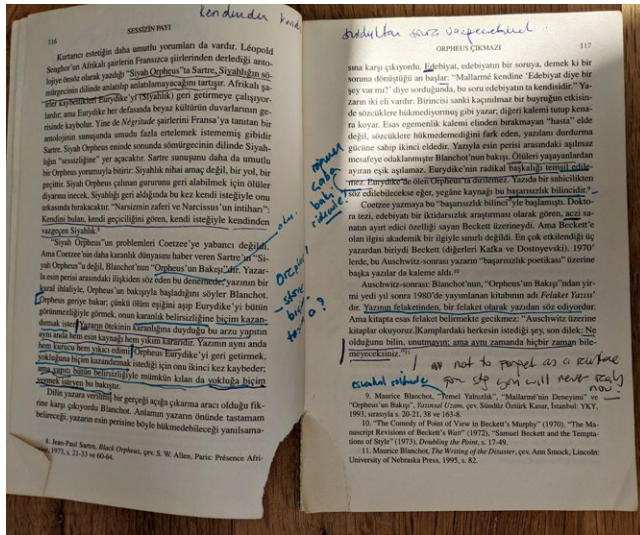


Photo by Banu Cennetoğlu.

Talk

In Conversation: Banu Cennetoğlu, Michelle Wong, and Özge Ersoy

Tuesday, 15 June 2021
8–9:30pm HKT, Zoom

The first session of the series presents a conversation about the methods, potentials, and impossibilities of working with posthumous archives. We ask: is it possible to speak on behalf of the silent ones without occluding their agency? What is erased by the politics of representation? In this conversation, Cennetoğlu focuses on *Gurbet's Diary: I Engraved My Heart into the Mountains* (2016–17), a work she developed for documenta 14, and discusses artistic strategies to work on the diary of a Kurdish journalist and fighter who was killed in 1997. Michelle Wong explores her intellectual and personal journey with the late artist Ha Bik Chuen's archive and the new portals that it has opened.

Free and open to the public.
Register here:



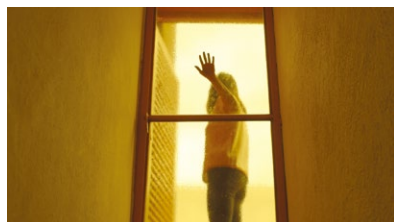
Banu Cennetoğlu, *Gurbet's Diary* (27.07.1995–08.10.1997), 2016–17. Installation view, documenta 14, Gennadius Library, Athens, 2017. Photo by Freddie Faulkenberry.

Screening and Talk

The Proposal, with Jill Magid

Wednesday, 16 June 2021
Screening: 7–8:30pm HKT
Talk: 8:30–9:30pm HKT
JC Cube, Tai Kwun, and Zoom

The second session presents Jill Magid's documentary, titled *The Proposal* (2018, 83 min), followed by a conversation with the artist. In the film, Magid grapples with the contested legacy of the renowned Mexican architect Luis Barragán (1902–88), whose professional archive—including the rights to his name and his work—was made inaccessible when acquired by the chairman of a Swiss corporation as an engagement gift for his wife. *The Proposal* follows Magid as she develops a truly unorthodox project exploring the nature of artistic legacy and who controls it. Ultimately, Magid creates a startling proposition in the form of an artwork that forces the viewer into reckoning with how an artist's story is told, and who is permitted to do the telling.



The Proposal, 2018, film still.
Courtesy of Jill Magid.

The following conversation with Jill Magid will focus on the ethical questions posed in her film that arise around the legal restrictions of access to an artist's legacy due to the corporate ownership of their work. It looks at the ways this film investigate artistic legacy, ownership, national heritage, and repatriation.

Free and open to the public.
Register here:



Screening and Talk

Narcissister Organ Player, with Paul B. Preciado

Thursday, 17 June 2021
Screening: 7–8:30pm HKT
Talk: 8:30–9:30pm HKT
JC Cube, Tai Kwun, and Zoom

The last session of the series features the screening of *Narcissister Organ Player* (2017, 92 min), followed by a conversation with philosopher and curator Paul B. Preciado. The film is a hybrid of performance, documentary, and memoir based on Narcissister, an artist who challenges notions of race, sexuality, and body image. Narcissister's film draws on her family history—with familial roots that are Moroccan, Jewish, and African American—and reflects on the personal impact of her mother's illness and death on her practice. In her performances, the artist wears a trademark vintage mask, obscuring her identity. Offering an autobiography through the film, Narcissister asks: how can the body become a living archive of the dying or the deceased?

The following conversation with Paul B. Preciado responds to the film and draws on his writings at the intersection of social identities, gender codes, and “body archives.”

Free and open to the public.
Register here:



Publication

bewitched, bewildered, bothered | Orpheus' Dilemma

Available on AAA website

This publication features the English translation of “Orpheus' Dilemma,” a chapter in the book *The Share of the Silent* (2015) by the literary critic Nurdan Gürbilek, which is a foundational reference for Banu Cennetoğlu's artistic contribution to *Portals, Stories, and Other Journeys*. Translated by Victoria Holbrook, the chapter draws on the tension between Orpheus' belief and doubt to recover his wife Eurydike, and literature's desire and repeated attempts to speak on behalf of the silent or the lost. In the text, Gürbilek weaves references and stories related to philosophers such as Maurice Blanchot and Marc Nichanian, as well as authors such as J. M. Coetzee, Jean Améry, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, and Bilge Karasu. She asks: what does literature compensate for? How does the author question their authority to give voice to the dead?



Narcissister Organ Player, 2017, film still.
Courtesy of Narcissister.

Artists

Banu Cennetoğlu is an artist based in Istanbul. Her practice incorporates methods of collecting and archiving and enquires into the politics of the production, classification, and distribution of knowledge. Her most recent work, *Made in Fall* . . . (2018), is a 127-hour-long film comprising a chronological and unedited archive of all the digital images she has amassed since 2006. Cennetoğlu is also a facilitator for *The List*, an ongoing collaboration with UNITED for Intercultural Action, a human rights NGO based in Europe. *The List* traces information relating to the deaths of more than 40,000 people who have lost their lives within or at the borders of Europe due to state policies since 1993. Cennetoğlu partners with institutional collaborators to make this list visible through public display structures such as billboards, street posters, and newspaper supplements. Cennetoğlu is the founder of BAS, an Istanbul-based, artist-run space dedicated to artists' books and printed matter. She participated in Asia Art Archive's Residency Programme in 2019.

Ha Bik Chuen (1925–2009) was a Hong Kong-based artist who made prints, sculptures, collage books, and was also a prolific photographer. He publicly showed prints and sculptures, but kept most of his photographs and all his collage books private. Born in Guangdong in 1925, he moved to Hong Kong via Macau in 1957. After closing his family-run paper flower factory in the 1960s, Ha became an artist and an active participant of the Hong Kong art scene. An artist who did not receive any academic training, Ha's curiosity for art led him to collect printed matter and to document exhibitions through photography. With his passing, Ha left behind a vast archive containing not only visual materials that form a crucial part of Hong Kong's cultural history, but also photographs he took of over 2,500 exhibitions that he attended in and out of Hong Kong. These materials are key to the ongoing writing of Hong Kong's art history.

Kwan Sheung Chi is a multidisciplinary artist practising in Hong Kong. Kwan's practice is a continuous reflection and critique on the relationships between individuals and apparatuses of capital and power. His works span a variety of mediums, including moving image, installation, and performance. Some of his works explore the idea of obstruction, such as *Water Barrier (Maotai: Water, 1:999)* (2013), where visitors participated in the performance of pushing over a barrier filled with Maotai spirit and water. *Take away an "Iron Horse" barrier from the entrance (designated protest zone) of the Central Government Offices* (2012) found Kwan wrapping a barrier with adhesive tape as an attempt to replicate and transport the object. In 2008, Kwan created *Ask the Hong Kong Museum of Art to borrow "Iron Horse" barriers: I want to collect all of the "Iron Horse" barriers in Hong Kong here*, which in turn became the genesis of his work in this exhibition.

Lam Wing Sze is a video artist based in Hong Kong who also works in museum education. Lam's image narratives are often composed of scenes and situations she encounters by chance, but also those that she both anticipates and manipulates. With her recent work *Walking Practice* (2019), Lam fixes her view from above on an individual walking along a circular round. As the individual moves counter-clockwise, Lam's camera moves clockwise. As a result, the individual moves continuously, but remains on the same spot on the screen. Her role as an image-maker is to create a situation that gives the audience a viewing experience, opens up a conversation with that which was captured, and generates new meaning. Lam looks at scenery in the city and inverts daily observations into moving images that depict the perception and reflection of seeing. This exhibition is the first collaboration between Lam and AAA.

Raqs Media Collective (Monica Narula, Jeebesh Bagchi, and Shuddhabrata Sengupta) is an artist collective, based in New Delhi, whose diverse practice spans objects, lexica, films, publications, gatherings, curation, and lecture performances. Raqs also has a long-term practice of collaborating with arts and media practitioners, as well as architects, theatre directors, urbanists, scholars, and other public intellectuals. Some of these projects include Sarai, which began in 2000 as an inter-disciplinary group focusing on media, technology, urban life, and the public domain, at a time when such issues were hardly on the horizon in India. Raqs Media Collective was AAA's first international artist-in-residence in 2009. In 2016, Raqs included Ha Bik Chuen's archive in *Why Not Ask Again*, the 11th Shanghai Biennale of which they were the Chief Curators. As Artistic Directors for the recently concluded Yokohama Triennale 2020, *Afterglow*, they developed sources around toxicity, care, and the luminosity of friendship with artists and publics.

Walid Raad is an _____ and an _____ (_____, _____). Raad's works to date include _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____. Raad's recent works include _____ and _____. Raad's works have been shown at _____ (_____, _____). The _____ Biennale (_____, _____), The _____ (_____, _____), The Museum _____ (_____, _____), _____ (_____, _____), and numerous other museums and venues in _____, _____, and _____. His books include _____, _____, _____, and _____. Walid Raad is also a member of _____ (_____, www._____.org). Raad currently lives and works in _____. (_____, _____). Raad was an artist-in-residence at Asia _____ in 2014, where _____ Ha's _____. Raad is also a _____ to *15 Invitations*, _____'s 15th _____.

bewitched, bewildered, bothered Participants

Banu Cennetoğlu—see page 28.

Jill Magid is an artist, writer, and filmmaker based in New York. Her performance-based practice interrogates structures of power on an intimate level, exploring the emotional, philosophical, and legal tensions that exist between institutions and individual agency. Magid has had numerous solo exhibitions at institutions around the world, including The Renaissance Society, Chicago (forthcoming); Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; Tate Modern, London; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Berkeley Museum of Art, California; Tate Liverpool; and the Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam, among others.

Michelle Wong is a researcher and writer based in Hong Kong. She is currently a PhD student in art history at the University of Hong Kong. From 2012–20 she was a researcher at AAA, with a focus on Hong Kong art history and histories of exchange and circulation through exhibitions and periodicals. Her writing has been published in *Ambitious Alignments: New Histories of Southeast Asian Art, 1945–1990* (2018), the journal *Southeast of Now* (2019), *Oncurating*, and *Ocula Magazine*. She is the curator of *Portals, Stories, and Other Journeys*.

Narcissister is a Brooklyn-based artist and performer. Masked and merkin-ed, she works the intersection of dance, art, and activism in a range of media including live performance, film, video, collage, and sculpture. She presents work worldwide at festivals, nightclubs, museums, and galleries. She won “Best Use of a Sex Toy” at Good Vibrations Erotic Film Festival, a Bessie nomination for the theatrical performance “Organ Player,” and Creative Capital and United States Artists Awards. Interested in troubling the popular entertainment and experimental art divide, she appeared on *America’s Got Talent*. Her first feature film *Narcissister Organ Player* premiered at Sundance 2018. Her activist short film *Narcissister Breast Work* premiered at Sundance 2020.

Nurdan Gürbilek is a literary critic based in Istanbul. In her work, she analyses significant tropes in modern Turkish literature, authors’ preoccupation with originality, as well as literature’s relationship with victimhood, woundedness, and exclusion. She is the author of *Living in a Shop Window* (1992), *Shifting Shadow* (1995), *Homework* (1999), *Bad Boy Turk* (2001), *Orient Lost* (2004), *The Language of the Wronged* (2008), *The Share of the Silent* (2015), and *The Second Life* (2020), among others. A selection of her essays on literature is translated to English in *The New Cultural Climate in Turkey: Living in a Shop Window* (Zed, 2010).

Özge Ersoy is Public Programmes Lead at AAA. She is also Research and Programming Associate of the 13th Gwangju Biennale (2021). Prior to joining the Asia Art Archive team, she was running collectorspace, a nonprofit initiative in Istanbul. Her writings have been included in books, including *Curating Under Pressure* (Routledge, 2020) and *The Constituent Museum* (Valiz and L’Internationale, 2018).

Paul B. Preciado is a philosopher and curator based in Paris. He is the author of *Counter-Sexual Manifesto* (Columbia University Press, 2000), *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs and Biopolitics* (The Feminist Press, 2008), and *Pornotopia* (Zone Books, 2014) for which he was awarded the Sade Prize in France, and *An Apartment on Uranus* (Fitzcarraldo and semiotext(e), 2020). His latest book is *Can the monster speak?*, forthcoming by Fitzcarraldo and semiotext(e) in 2021. From 2014 to 2017, he was Curator of Public Programs of documenta 14 in Kassel and Athens.

Epilogue

Journeys are experiences of going through portals, traveling from one place to another or multiple places, meandering through fragments of documents, narratives, and images. Worlds open up within worlds through pages, boxes. Stories lose their beginnings, middles, and ends. What creatures are telling stories to whom, where, and when? Who are the narrators, listeners, readers, and protagonists?

Learning and Experience

Join our learning and experience programmes, designed for visitors of different backgrounds and needs. We hope to explore possibilities in the dialogue between art and visitors.

Hi! & Seek

2/F, JC Contemporary
Hi! & Seek is a space of dialogue and exploration. We are delighted to share with you the stories behind the exhibitions and the artworks. Send us your insights and ideas, or questions and thoughts for the curator(s)/artist(s).
This edition is co-presented by Tai Kwun Contemporary, CUMT4007 Museum Studies class, BA Programme in Cultural Management, Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Dr Vivian Ting.

Tai Kwun Contemporary
Weekend Guided Tour

Every Sat & Sun
2 May–1 Aug 2021
2pm Cantonese
3pm English
JC Contemporary
Come spend your afternoon at Tai Kwun Contemporary!
Learn about the art in our exhibitions by joining a tour with one of our friendly, professional docents.

Please visit www.taikwun.hk for more information.

Tai Kwun Contemporary
Family Day

9 May, 23 May, 6 Jun,
20 Jun, 11 Jul, 18 Jul, 8 Aug,
15 Aug, 22 Aug 2021
11am–1pm
3–5pm
JC Contemporary
Tickets: \$80 per time slot
Family Pair (one adult with one child)
Join our gallery activities and family workshops!
Each parent/guardian can bring one child (5+ years) to spend the day with us and learn about art.

Teacher's Morning and
Teacher's Workshop

22 May 2021, 10am–4:30pm
5 Jun 2021, 10am–12:30pm
These programmes constitute a knowledge-sharing and communication platform for teachers/educators, delving into the latest exhibitions, artist workshops, and pedagogical discussions.
Co-organised by AAA's Learning & Participation Team and Tai Kwun Contemporary's Education & Public Programming Team.
Facilitators:
Jeff Leung Chin Fung
Lam Wing Sze

Portals, Stories, and Other Journeys

Asia Art Archive

Exhibition Steering Committee

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John Tain
Susanna Chung

Exhibition Team

Garfield Chow
Michelle Wong (Curator)
Vivian Poon (Exhibition Manager)

Public Programmes,
Learning & Participation

Carol Choi
Özge Ersoy
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Collections

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Development

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Digital

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Tai Kwun Contemporary

Tobias Berger (Head of Arts)

Exhibition Team

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Jill Angel Chun (Assistant Curator)
Jessie Mak (Senior Registrar and
Operations Manager)
Pauline Chao (Assistant Registrar)

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Mark Chung (Lead Technician)
Hill Li (Assistant Lead Technician)
Chan Eddy Wing Leung,
Chan Man Chun, Cheung Tsz Hin,
Elvis Yip Kin Bon, Herman Lau,
Kong Chun Hei, Li San Kit,
Lok Man Chung,
Lonely Lau Siu Chung,
Luk Chun Wang, Tom Chung Man
(Technicians)
Fung Tsun Yin Jasper,
Ho Tsz Yeung (Audio-Visual Support)

Gallery and Docent Team

Jasmine Cheung (Art Education
Associate and Gallery Supervisor)
Kobe Ko (Art Education and Gallery
Coordinator)
Kylie Tung (Gallery Operation
Coordinator)
The entire docent team

Exhibition Support

Architect

SKY YUTAKA

Exhibition Builder

Excel Trade

Graphic Design

MAJO

Translator

Wing Chan

Video Production

NOTRICH MEDIA

Artwork Fabrication

Watt Studio
yucolab

Exhibition Graphics Production

Fully Advertising

All images courtesy of the Ha Bik Chuen
Family and Asia Art Archive unless
otherwise specified.

www.aaa.org.hk
www.taikwun.hk

Special Thanks

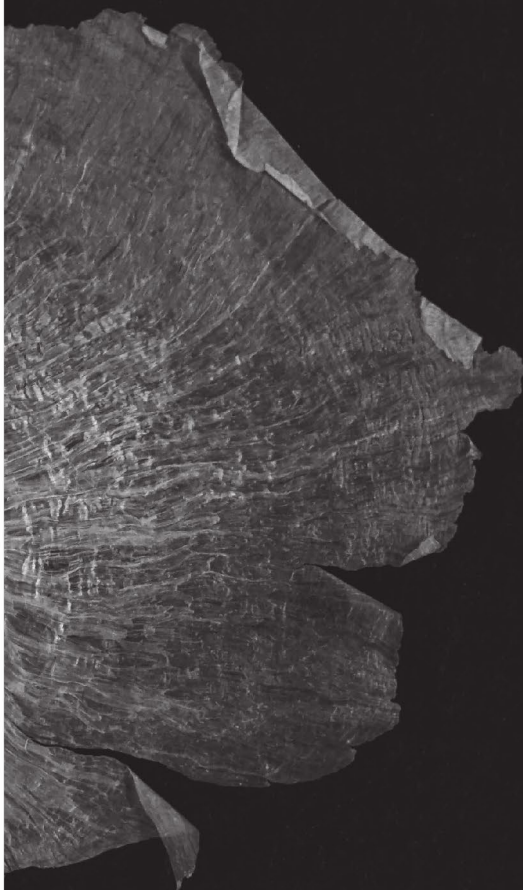
The Ha Family; all participating artists: Chow Yiu Fai, Sophy Wong, PageNEXT; Samantha Kwok, Alexandra Seno, Chu Hoi Ding, Ethan Lo, Jane Cheung; Hong Kong Museum of Art: Mok Kar Wing, Maria (Museum Director), Yu Chiu, Leona (Curator, Modern and Hong Kong Art), Woo Cyn Man, Cynthia (Assistant Curator I, Modern Art), Choy Wai Kwan, Virginia (Assistant Curator II, Modern Art), Lai Yip Kai, Albert (Assistant Curator I, Conservation, Modern and Hong Kong Art), Ho Yee Man, Martina (Assistant Curator II, Conservation, Modern Art); Wong Siu Pong, Mike Mak Chi Kwan; Ng Tsz Kwan, Studio Raqs: Aarushi Surana, Shamsher Ali, Akhilesh Kumar; Fanson Lam, Master Liu; Elvis Yip Kin Bon, Jenny Choi, Kelvin Wong, Ant Ngai Wing Lam, Chan Wai Lap, Oscar Ho, Lo Yin Shan, Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong; Esen Karol, Gurbetelli Ersöz, Jill Magid, Paul B. Preciado, Narcissister, Nurdan Gürbilek, Victoria Holbrook; Fat Gor; Max Tsoi; Vennes Cheng; Jerome Reyes; Lantian Xie; Shveta Sarda; Hammad Nasar; Ingrid Chu; Alan Chan, Fiona Sit, Hazel Wong, James Fu, Janice Wong, Ka Chun Leung, Ka Chun Wong, Leung Po Shan Anthony, Mickey Lee, Timothy Yeung, and Chan Yi Kwan



大館當代美術館
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CENTRE FOR HERITAGE & ARTS

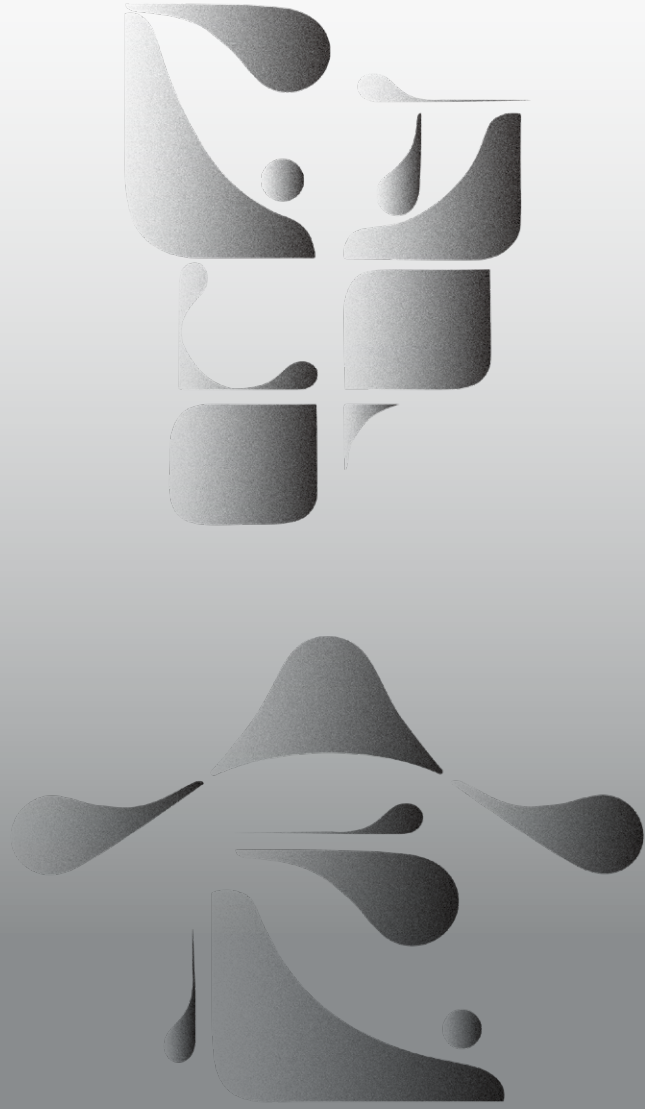
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香港賽馬會
The Hong Kong Jockey Club

CONCERT & SHARING AND SPECIAL DISPLAY

CONNECTIVE MEMORIES



Connective Memories is the result of lyricist, scholar, and educator Chow Yiu Fai's residency at Asia Art Archive in 2018–19. Chow, in collaboration with singer-songwriter Sophy Wong and a group of young art lovers from Hong Kong, presents a concert and sharing session, as well as a special display at Tai Kwun. This project, consisting of artworks, songs, and music videos, is inspired by possible "connections" within the interpersonal relationships of the Ha Bik Chuen Archive. These works explore multiple themes—secrecy, curiosity, understanding, faith, destiny, biography—ultimately inviting viewers and listeners to make their own connections, and to invoke their own memories.

"Collect. Connect. I was intrigued by the correspondence between these two words when I started my Asia Art Archive residency. A linguistic response, triggered by my experience as a creative writer. It led me to ask who I could connect to collections. As a university educator, I thought of young people; as a music industry professional, I thought of songwriters, producers, MV creators—so we connected and co-created six works, songs, and visualisations. I call these layers of connection and co-creation *Connective Memories*. They explore how materials can follow different logics, lead different lives, tell different stories; how materials can be ours to connect with."

—Chow Yiu Fai

Connective Memories is the result of Chow Yiu Fai's residency at Asia Art Archive in 2018–19, sponsored by The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation. The music production project is sponsored by the S. H. Ho Foundation Limited and C. K. and Kay Ho Foundation.



大館當代美術館
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Everywhere, 2021, music video cover image. Director: Lin Chan.

Faith, 2021, music video cover image. Director: Mo Shun Yu.

Searching, 2021, music video cover image. Director: fmlik.

Window, 2021, music video cover image. Animation by Skene Milne.

Hence, me, 2021, music video cover image. Director: Lamdee.

Yours Secretly, 2021, music video cover image. Director: Kitty Yeung.

CONCERT & SHARING SESSION

Friday, 30 April 2021, 7:30–9pm HKT
JC Cube, Tai Kwun

This concert and sharing session is a live premiere of six original songs co-created by Sophy Wong and Chow Yiu Fai, inspired by six works surrounding the Ha Bik Chuen Archive from PageNEXT members. Against a backdrop of music and musical visualisations, they will talk about their experience at the residency project, the stories and themes they developed with the archive materials, and what “connection” means to them.

“To me, music has always been an art; an art of expression and connection. It is true when people say ‘when words fail, music speaks.’ Creating music has been my way to connect to everything in life; it is the only and most freeing way to translate pieces of my feelings through the space between each music note. To connect one note to another; to connect words to rhythm and melodies; to connect my soul and emotions to yours; to connect all of us, just as this project and these six songs do.”

—Sophy Wong

The *Concert & Sharing Session* is a special project co-presented by Asia Art Archive Learning & Participation programme and Art After Hours by Tai Kwun Contemporary.

11 May to 20 June 2021

Artists' Book Library and Hi! & Seek, Tai Kwun Contemporary

How can we connect and develop a personal relationship with the materials from an archive? Viewers are offered glimpses at how lyricist Chow Yiu Fai and songwriter Sophy Wong work together to transform visual materials produced by six PageNEXT members (Apple & Pine, Desmond Chan, Brian Cheng, Jane Choi, Nicole Pang Hiu Ying, and Cherry Tung Cheuk Yan) into songs. While Chow shares his lyric manuscripts and writing notes, Wong's demos demonstrate how a song comes into being. The display also presents archival materials of six PageNEXT member's creative processes. They created various works—including modified and handmade books, paintings, video, animation, and digital images—based on their intimate encounters with materials from the Ha Bik Chuen Archive. Six music videos that stem from their collaboration will also be displayed.

The *Special Display* is presented by Asia Art Archive Learning & Participation programme, in collaboration with Hi! & Seek, a Tai Kwun Learning & Experience programme.

AAA Learning & Participation programme is supported by the S. H. Ho Foundation Limited and C. K. and Kay Ho Foundation.

SPECIAL DISPLAY

Bios

Chow Yiu Fai was born in Hong Kong, and received his PhD from the Amsterdam School of Communication Research, University of Amsterdam. Currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing of Hong Kong Baptist University, Chow is also an award-winning writer. He released his first lyrics in 1989. He has since penned more than a thousand lyrical works for a diversity of pop artists in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China. Lately, Chow has been involved in prose writing, and multimedia and visual art projects. His current research projects cover gender politics and creative practices.

Sophy Wong was born and raised in Hong Kong, and is an independent singer-songwriter and producer. She has released three albums, including *Sophrology* (2016), *QUARTER* (2017), and *HARSH* (2019), receiving critical acclaim. Wong was nominated for the Renaissance Award, as well as Best Singer-Songwriter and Best Alternative Pop Album in the Taiwan Golden Indie Award. She has opened for Moonchild (US), Rhodes (UK), and others. With roots ranging from local Cantopop to alt-R&B and electronica, Sophy is a singular sound amongst a new generation of cross-genre artists in Asian music contemporaries.

PageNEXT is AAA's youth initiative established in 2011, running on the principles of by, for, and with young people.

Apple & Pine sees life as a slow farewell. In response to all forms of farewell in life, Apple & Pine creates. She loves black cats, new moons, and the rings of Saturn.

Brian Cheng is now an overage member of PageNEXT, owing much to the learning opportunities over the years.

Cherry Tung Cheuk Yan is an artist. Her paintings are inspired by Zhuangzi and nature. She graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She also writes graphic novels and designs craft products.

Desmond Chan graduated from Hong Kong Baptist University and the University of Hong Kong. He was Yiu Fai's student in a Chinese lyrics writing and gender course, and wouldn't have minded not graduating. He has participated in AAA's activities since 2014, and subsequently became a PageNEXT member.

Jane Choi is a question mark, not yet answered. She loves art.

Nicole Pang Hiu Ying graduated from Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Communication Design programme. She is a graphic designer, hula dancer, and also films and edits videos.

Asia Art Archive Learning & Participation

Established in 2009, Asia Art Archive Learning & Participation team has been shaping art and education in Hong Kong by offering programmes and online resources for teachers' professional development. It strives to address the regional lack of contemporary art materials in education, and has been working closely with teachers and artists to explore the role and possibility of art in twenty-first century education.

Tai Kwun Contemporary Education and Public Programmes

Tai Kwun Contemporary is dedicated to offering the best arts experiences to Hong Kong, bringing people and art together by designing a wide range of formal and informal programmes for various audiences to experience contemporary art and culture in different ways. We redefine art learning and experience through dialogues, creative expression, and active engagement between art, artists, partners, and audiences, exploring the role that contemporary art and art institutions can play in society.

Art After Hours

Art After Hours is an evening presented by Tai Kwun Contemporary where we will introduce new music, film, lecture, and performance formats. We welcome all visitors to experience contemporary art in Hong Kong live. Furthering our commitment to expanding our "art family," we will invite artists, writers, public intellectuals, and curators to engage in talks, performances, and screenings.

Connective Memories is produced by Susanna Chung with support from Carol Choi, Samantha Kwok, the Tai Kwun Contemporary team, and the Asia Art Archive team.

Special Thanks

Mrs Ha, Alexander Ha Cheuk Hung, Alan Chan, Alexandra Seno, Calvin Woo, Chan Sze Long, Chia Sue Ann, Chuong-Dài Võ, Clara Tung, and Kate Ip