

信任&迷惑 trust & confusion
五月至十二月逐步發生 Evolving from
May to December 2021: Tarek Atoui,
Celeste Burlina, Alice Chauchat,
Mette Edvardsen, Claudia Fernández,
Felix Gonzalez-Torres, 許思樂
Serene Hui, Ricky Jay, 北井一夫
Kazuo Kitai, Nile Koetting,
Lina Lapelytė, Nicholas Mangan,
毛利悠子 Yuko Mohri, 潘岱靜
Pan Daijing, Liliana Porter,
Sean Raspet, Algirdas Šeškus,



trust & confusion

trust & confusion is about the conversation of certainty and chance; the transformative power of bodies, intangibles, and ephemeral encounters; music and magic; and the luck of being alive, with all the concerns that come with it, be they human or not. Evolving, accumulating, the exhibition unfolds over several episodes, on site and online, from now to the end of the year.

trust & confusion turns the white cube space into a fluctuating environment that hosts activities and sensations; it transforms this space in favour of movements, interactions, and deep listening for ears and bodies. A new relationship of you and I, along with new associations and experiences, shares this temporality. There are several visible performances taking place as you enter, and several invisible ones, mostly new works from an intergenerational, international, and cosmopolitan group of artists.

First sketching out the contours of the exhibition in 2019, we imagined creating a ground for our community—polarised and exhausted by the turmoil of that year—to come together and rest. A new communal intimacy was called for: quieter, more playful, body-centred, and tactile, safe from abuse and diminishment, a healing space. A constellation of five works of art exploring the individual and collective body through conversations, games, gatherings, and imagination was conceived.

Suddenly, as if out of nowhere, the pandemic swept in and everything was re-adapted for a situation even more solitary and vulnerable. Next came the epiphany that what had ensued was not just a global crisis; life itself has changed, numbingly quickly—like watching time-acceleration videos depicting 6 billion years of evolution in 6 minutes. Life was made a subject of rules more numerous and ever-changing than most of us can remember, while our daily environment threw up new protocols through which most of us will keep navigating. Our adaptability has continued evolving since. Indeed, this project has entailed constant reactions, multiple modifications, untold scenarios—which a vast multitude of people have similarly faced in their own fields, expecting the advent of a transition, a rupture. We trust in a more embracing world to come, as we trust in that alignment of chance, intentions, and effort in the striving for the better.

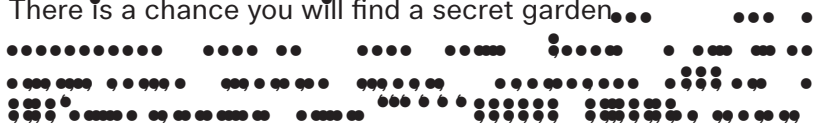
However confused we may at times feel, we trust that we will arrive at a safer place. This feeling keeps us very much alive. No point in speaking of either certainty or absolute chance, as the surface that a dice falls onto is never perfectly smooth or straight, nor is the dice itself. In our case, “trust” and “confusion” have joined the journey as companions rather than as opposites: like sweet and sour in taste, like inhaling and exhaling, like dance movements, like fleeting, impermanent conditions. At this point of the journey we do not know if the last episode of the project will take place as conceived; much will depend on changing fortunes as well as the thrust of the present episode, as its feedback may manifest in future.

The transformative power of everyday practices remains at the centre of what we can do together at this stage, and for that matter at any moment of life: looking with the artists, collecting, repurposing, betting, recasting, playing, wondering, and realising. Our conversations with artists immersed in their studios in different corners of the world have generated tools for us to understand the surroundings, the non-binary realities, as the more pertinent truths lying in ambivalence and complexity.

The exhibition is an invitation to observe how things emerge in relation to each other—sounds, gestures, smells, identities—and to be a part of it, being surprised and giving attention to your inner landscape while a spectacle is taking place around you. An invitation to a most sentimental belief: to trust that the hands and arms you decide to fall into will hold and sustain you.

As you move along, there is a chance that you might be caught by the sounds of birds and humans conversing, two or three life retrospectives of previously unpublished photographic works, a short splash of dance, a person’s posture reminiscent of a public sculpture in Hong Kong, melodies sung by a chorus of tone-deaf singers, a sound sculpture morphing into a theatre prop, a molecule striking a new olfactory possibility, an open rehearsal in public, foam mattresses transmitting the sound of one’s favorite radio, a tree so obsessively protected that it is nowhere to be seen, a visual letter speaking of virtual existence and climate change, among others.

There is a chance you will find a secret garden...



Observing nature’s cycles and the importance of rituals, which anchor our beings and ancestries, the exhibition space is devised in the alignment of day and night, with a brief sunset room in between. Whereas artworks would grow and evolve in the day room, a solo or duo presentation would debut in the night room for each episode. Changes would take place after each full moon, when the tides are the deepest and the forest the noisiest. Some artists’ contributions will remain for months but in fresh configurations; others will appear in changing roles throughout time. As tribute to the bare human voice as a most vibrant and direct form of communication, a weekly release of voices by artists, writers, poets, and choreographers is made available on www.trusting.hk, where you also find the calendar of the moon to guide you through the coming episodes.

Xue Tan and Raimundas Malašauskas



Tarek Atoui

Whisperers (2021)

By way of electroacoustic composition and instrument engineering, the work of Tarek Atoui (b. 1980, Lebanon; lives in Paris) is propelled by the sounds the world makes and by how sounds make different worlds in return. A fervent inventor of new modes of listening, Atoui sets out environments in which original instruments and multifaceted arrangements actively question the ways one perceives, feels, and thinks about sound.

Inspired by his experience shuffling vinyl while roaming record shops, *Whisperers* brings together a series of listening devices that function through translation. Atoui invites the visitor to plug their own music devices into the players and see, feel, and hear them transmitted through assemblages of materials that include copper, cloth, wood, iron, and polyurethane. Every single device calls up a different kind of translation and for another form of interaction: a set of foam mattresses envelops listeners in sound as they rest on such synthetic support; a piece of cloth slowly brushes a cymbal; a piano string transports sound waves from the cymbal to the headphone; a hi-hat pedal can be struck. By prompting visitors to bring familiar songs, Atoui generates a situation where these tracks can be heard afresh and in a different way, thus opening up a space for discovery and surprise while undoing what is known. Like vinyl records, reel tapes, or cassettes, these newly made sound transmitters have over- and underheard layers of noises, hisses, and hums that are induced by their imperfections and materialities. In so doing, Atoui reveals that sounding and meaning are always a cooperation between human and more-than-human bodies.

New commission by Tai Kwun Contemporary

Can writing be an indication of something to come? The following texts were composed with the thoughts, ideas, and forms hovering in the flickering expanse of networks, between glitch and flow, constraint and excitement, confinement and reverie, the waking and dozing of time zones. The writing records stories from home or encounters had on the way to the studio; at times, it registers a mediated voice breaching the restricted airflow of a distant hotel room.

More than concocting stable forms, this writing lingers with the circumstances of its emergence. It spans the moment when most of the artist contributions were still in the midst of becoming: flying and suspended mid-air, welded in Chinese workshops, pencilled on notebook paper, or sampled and splintered in direct messages. And yet through such assorted mediation, unexpected possibilities opened up of being there and being with. Snapshots, text messages, and telecommunications all taking part in the shattered sense-making which conditions sustained conversations. At this point, when a work becomes where the artist is not, a new language forms and turns into a way of holding things together, reaching out, and collaborating; a fervent embrace between the not-readily-here and the not-yet-there.

Mette Edvardsen ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
Time has fallen asleep in the
afternoon sunshine (2010–ongoing)

For more than a decade now, *Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine*, a project initiated by the choreographer Mette Edvardsen (b. 1970, Norway; lives in Oslo), continues to gather a group of people who have decided to learn a book of their choice by heart. Together, they form a collection of “living books”, to be consulted by visitors—or “readers”, if you like. Upon request, the “living book” guides the reader to a comfortable place within Tai Kwun Contemporary and recites the book to the reader from memory. In this intimate one-on-one encounter, literature is passed on in its most rudimentary but equally disarming form—via the voice and the ear, without a material support.

The title *Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine* directly quotes a line in Ray Bradbury's science fiction novel *Fahrenheit 451*, with its dystopian world where the possession of books is forbidden; as books are systematically burned by the powers that be, the only way to preserve them is learning them by heart. Given that memory and forgetting are bound to each other, the "living books" must keep on practising to keep their memory alive. Only then, by submitting to this studious practice, can this embodied form of literature keep flourishing as a humble and wondrous act of shared listening, imagining, and world-making. As such, the project proposes a dedicated and slow-paced practice to a life often driven by efficiency, functionality, and speed.

Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine currently hosts more than 100 “living books” in 20 different languages. As the project travels to museums, libraries, theatres, and other spaces across the globe, its collection proceeds to grow over time. On the occasion of *trust & confusion* four new books are added to the collection, including: *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde, *If This Is a Man* by Primo Levi, *Dubliners* by James Joyce and *A Woman Like Me* by Xi Xi.

Courtesy of the artist

Claudia Fernández
Constellation (2015)

The Mexican artist Claudia Fernández (b. 1965; lives in Mérida) is a fervent collector who examines the processes of assimilation and the migration of forms, with particular attention to the artisanal and to craftsmanship. By scrutinising the histories of everyday Mexican objects, her propositions lay bare the intricate narratives that give shape to such objects and how these very objects come to express a worldview of their own. Here, *Constellation* presents a collection of approximately 50 lanterns made of pleated and hand-painted paper, which Fernández has been amassing for many years. As part of the traditional festivities during the Christmas season, the lanterns, originally associated with the Chinese lantern, entered Mexico by way of trade and migration. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the import of this new visual language occurred as part of a much wider exchange of goods, including fabrics, porcelain, and spices, through the trans-Pacific galleon route between Manila (the Philippines) and Acapulco (Mexico), at the time both under Spanish rule.

By way of assimilation, the Chinese calligraphy on the lanterns was pared away over time, and their cultural function repurposed. The collection presented in *Constellation* is of a much later date; the earliest of these lanterns date back to the 1950s and 1970s. The work is a testament to the slow disappearance of the craft of handmade lanterns in Mexico and, in parallel, of the custom of street festivities with chanting and pleasure spilling out onto heavily decorated streets. Here, they have travelled back to the continent that sparked their existence and subtly invoke the many hands they were touched by as well as the myriad voices, hope, and collective joy they have witnessed. Gathered in a contemplative fashion, they mesmerisingly approximate the true meaning of “constellation” — “a collection of stars”.

During the first six weeks of *trust & confusion*, the lanterns float above the performers of *Still in Hong Kong* by Scarlet Yu and Xavier Le Roy; when the performance ends, *Constellation* theatrically descends to the visitor's body level.

Courtesy of the artist

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

“Untitled” (North) (1993)

By using ordinary materials including candies, mirrors, clocks, or stacks of paper, the Cuban-American conceptual artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957–1996), like no other, embraced fragility, transformation, and the passing of time as fundamental forces of life and work like no other. Moving between sculpture, installation, video, and photography, his works are known for their touching meditations on love, friendship, and loss. González-Torres’s metaphorical propositions are deeply rooted in the effects of the raging AIDS pandemic during the 1980s and 1990s, as the works also speak of his intimate relationship with his partner Ross Laycock. Haunted by his partner’s death in 1991, he continued to produce work from a place of personal and collective mourning, until González-Torres died at the age of 39, also of AIDS-related complications. As such, his works offer a poetic account, weaving together personal life and the reality of the AIDS pandemic.

“Untitled” (North) is a larger work from Gonzalez-Torres’s light strings series. Consisting of 12 strings and hung from the ceiling during the first episode of *trust & confusion*, “Untitled” (North) suggests an image that one associates with festivities, collective joy, and the vibrancy of life. As a counter-image, the work slowly starts to invoke the fragility of life and its impending end, as some of the delicate bulbs gradually burn out at unforeseen moments over the duration of the exhibition.

By extending the possibility of replacing the broken bulbs, Gonzalez-Torres puts forward a sign of hope and regeneration, too. As he was keen to entrust the open-ended transformation of his work to its owners and installers, here, “Untitled” (North) will periodically be re-installed in different configurations throughout the duration of *trust & confusion*. In this way, Gonzalez-Torres invites us stirringly—however confusingly—to trust the unknown.

Marilouise Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York © Felix Gonzalez-Torres, courtesy of the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation

Serene Hui

Rehearsal for Disaster— The Explosion, Rehearsal for Disaster—The Siren (2021)

Interested in undoing the binaries that structure life, the artist Serene Hui (b. 1992, Hong Kong; lives in The Hague) proposes *Rehearsal for Disaster—The Explosion*, a participatory live action, and *Rehearsal for Disaster—The Siren*, a live performance; both are rooted in her long-standing research on individual and collective mourning. The two works are activated on the first Saturday of every month. In *Rehearsal for Disaster—The Explosion*, a docent keeps on inflating balloons—one of the most symbolic elements of a party or celebration—until they pop. Upon request, the visitor receives a balloon with a question printed on top and is asked to carry it with them throughout the duration of their visit. On returning the balloon, a shared moment of poking takes place and a surprise reveals itself. Memories of celebratory moments blend in with small punctual explosions ricocheting through the space. Evocative of the sound of fireworks and blasts heard in protests, the piece conjures up an eerie atmosphere that hovers between celebrating in safety, latent memories of upheaval, and questions literally carried through the space.

Performed once at noon, *Rehearsal for Disaster—The Siren*, inspired by the monthly tests of a siren that purportedly drills the Dutch populace in the event of imminent peril, stages a vocalist who embodies the sound of a siren. By mimicking this wailing sound, Hui seeks to undo the boundaries drawn between human and machine, and raises questions about the embodiment and internalisation of instruments of control and danger. Whether far or near, the siren’s voice pervades the space and triggers personal relations with danger and war, memory and the future. More than questioning whether an art institution could be considered a safe place or a temporary shelter, Hui suggests that the learning by heart of the siren’s music is a prefigurative and restorative way to prepare oneself for another crisis to come.

New commissions by Tai Kwun Contemporary

Ricky Jay

Decaying Dice (date unknown)

Throughout the history of humanity, dice have been entrusted with the capacity to tell fortune, decide on a game's course, serve as the protagonist of gambling, and make life-changing decisions. If there is no way or desire to decide, the dice will show the way. As part of *trust & confusion*, two sets of dice are presented from the collection of the American magician Ricky Jay (1946–2018, United States). A professional trickster, Jay appeared in many guises—from a show host on Broadway in New York, to a star in a TV series like HBO's *Deadwood* and Hollywood films such as *Magnolia*, or as a professional consultant for special effects—all under one motto: that magic is the oldest form of art. The cinematographer Caleb Deschanel remembers his work thus: "His magic is like great storytelling that brings life and reality to the level of myth. You don't feel it's a trick well done. You feel he is operating on another level that goes to the core of human instinct."

Jay's collection encompasses thousands of dice, many of them in the midst of decomposition. Often weighted, or adapted for cheating, these cellulose nitrate dice are also subject to their own fate. Because of their material nature, these game-changers now show advanced stages of transformation themselves, as they slowly disappear in the light of day or crack and crumble into another form of life. Ricky Jay's dice, here integrated into the architecture of the space, become *trust & confusion*'s talismans of sorts as they incite the continuous reshuffling of the exhibition—an indeterminate journey within a finite set of possibilities under the auspices of some items of "rotten luck".

Courtesy of the Ricky Jay Collection

Kazuo Kitai

Pictures from My Cabinet of Memories (1960s–now)

The Japanese photographer Kazuo Kitai (b. 1944, China; lives in Tokyo) has been compiling an extraordinary collection of photographs that chronicle the transformations in Japanese society since the 1960s. Over six decades, Kitai helped give voice to those unheard amidst post-war political struggles and those so often unseen. In *trust & confusion*, Kitai's works are presented as a two-screen projection, bringing together his memoir along with published and unpublished photographs since the beginning of his career.

Starting in the 1960s, his first photographic endeavours took shape with blurry, rebellious snapshots recounting the student protest against the entry of American nuclear submarines; as such, they are a testament to the anti-establishment movements of the time. A remarkable continuation was witnessed in his more solemn photographs documenting the Sanrizuka Struggle by farmers who opposed the construction of the Narita airport in the early 1970s. Unlike his peers in the Japanese photography world—most of whom worked around the subjects of metropolitan and urban life in Japan—Kitai opted to capture the spirit of a slowly disappearing rural life.

In view of his personal life trajectory in China, his birthplace, Kitai visited Beijing in the 1970s and 1990s and Anshan during the 2010s, shooting with the contemplative dimensions of a wide-angle lens. The photographs shed light on his relationship with the country and his attempt to retrieve what he calls "a lost childhood experience".

Later, delving into the concern of what constitutes a home, Kitai for five years documented the development of Funabashi district and its inhabitants in the 1980s. This commuter town's run-of-the-mill public housing complexes served as temporary homes for young families before they moved to stand-alone houses, and this in-between state of life was put into photographic form by Kitai. The recent photographs in the retrospective highlight Kitai's walking body leading the way: images from up close, shot on daily walks, detailed as never before, and out on the open road.

New commission by Tai Kwun Contemporary





Lina Lapelytė *Study of Slope* (2021)

Hidden away inside Celeste Burlina's *The Liminoid* one can find *Study of Slope* (2021), an installation by Lina Lapelytė (b. 1984, Lithuania; lives in Vilnius and London), artist, composer, and recipient of the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 2019. Exploring the transformative powers of song, *Study of Slope* offers an environment that recalibrates the senses, both auditorily and spatially. In collaboration with a newly assembled group of tone-deaf people and the architect Mantas Petraitis (of Implant Architecture), Lapelytė presents a musical work that challenges the authoritative understanding of tonality and musicality in the Western musical tradition.

Being insensitive to musical pitch differences often thwarts joyful participation in musical activities; such voices are silenced, removed, or simply undone on their own. Generously opening up an unlikely musical spectrum, Lapelytė questions such stringent and exclusionary principles by putting non-conforming tone-deaf ears and voices on centre stage. The songs, based on the writings of Sean Ashton, Monika Kalinauskaitė, and the artist's own, and accompanied by the saxophone, harp, and violin with John Butcher, Rhodri Davies, Angharad Davies, actively unmute an oft-unheard range of musicality—a rare feat by a traditionally trained composer. Resonating with such self-reflexive questions, the floor of *Study of Slope* is tilted, with a level bench thus aslant, while the visitor sits at an incline. Shoes with equally skewed soles playfully suggest an evening out on the tilted plane and draw attention to orthopedics as a tool and discipline to straighten the body. Teasing the listener with this disorienting intervention, Lapelytė's spatial configuration accommodates a sensitivity for the atypical and a discovery of pleasure and comfort in the unbalanced. Listening, posture, and orientation are accentuated as mutually responsive principles that can temporarily suspend the straight, level, and upright organisation of the world. *Study of Slope* accordingly invites the visitor to throw off the narrow understanding of what constitutes (musical) reality, redirecting stern present-day principles to a renewed understanding of pleasure, beauty, and freedom within the non-conventional.

New commission by Tai Kwun Contemporary

Nicholas Mangan

Limits to Growth—Part 3 (*Letter to Rai*) (2020), *Lasting Impressions* (2021)

Nicholas Mangan (b. 1979, Australia; lives in Melbourne) explores the relationships between technology, artistic production, and ecology, as well as their geopolitical implications. Mangan's film series *Limits to Growth* started off in 2015 with an investigation into the exchange of economic value without physical transaction by way of cryptocurrency. Departing from a personal exchange with the curator Raimundas Malašauskas and propelled by homophonic associations, the third part of the series, *Limits to Growth—Part 3 (Letter to Rai)*, takes the spectator on a dazzling journey that intertwines narratives of contemporary forms of resource extraction and value production with the historical backdrop of the century-old use of rai stones, or stone money, on the Yap Islands in Micronesia. Mangan probes the paradox of virtual currency drawing so heavily on the Earth's resources and tries to understand how these vast complexes of data, value, and extraction can inform an artistic practice.

Lasting Impressions, a constellation of dental cast made up of a mixture of crushed coral and other compounds, follows up on this concern with systemic ecocide. As the Great Barrier Reef transforms from one of the largest living organisms to one of the largest dying organisms on Earth due to global warming, Mangan interrogates the literal and metaphorical relations between the human mouth, consumption, and destruction. Sharing calcium as their main substance, the damage to both coral and teeth are caused by sugar; sugar causes cavities in tooth enamel and induces coral bleaching in the Coral Sea. Insofar as Australian sugar production yields damaging run-offs, Petrified and displayed in a polystyrene box like seafood, the coral dental moulds are deafeningly silent as they echo the political inertia that turns a blind eye on a catastrophe of human making.

New commissions by Tai Kwun Contemporary

Yuko Mohri

Decomposition, Copula (2021)

The artist Yuko Mohri (b. 1980, Japan; lives in Tokyo) shapes complex systems held together by intangible energies such as sound, light, or gravity. Her sonic sculpture *Decomposition* uses a constellation of apples—for Mohri, the most iconic type of fruit—as its audio source. Tapping into the fluctuating resistance caused by the water in the apple, Mohri sets up a composition generated by the apples, which is translated by a synthesiser into an unstable harmony. Winking at the history of still-life painting, Mohri suggests a sounding image that questions the relation between stillness and liveness, and reveals that what might seem to be without life is actually full of it. As the apples dry over time, the apples' resistance to transmissibility grows, and consequently the pitch of the composition rises. Starting with a set of three apples, Mohri creates an open-ended sculpture as she leaves open the playful possibility that the curators replace them with other pieces of fruit, not knowing how a grape or banana might add to the harmony. Responding moreover to the inability to travel during a pandemic, Mohri's configuration is easily made with locally sourced materials. Unintentionally, the apple turns out to be an imported product in Hong Kong—disclosing yet another system of travel, as objects continue to travel when human bodies cannot.

The interconnectedness of things is further explored in *Copula*, of which the first element is now installed and which will be completed throughout the next episodes of *trust & confusion*. The first intervention is made up of the motor of the installation, the system's beating heart, as it were; the installation grows over time and becomes a complex web of moving parts and interrelated flows of energy.

New commissions by Tai Kwun Contemporary

Pan Daijing *One Hundred Nine Minus* (2021)

The artist and composer Pan Daijing (b. 1991, China; lives in Berlin) welcomes visitors to *trust & confusion* with a work at the spiral staircase leading up to the gallery. A composition consisting of two opera voices—a soprano and a countertenor processed and textured by a Revox tape recorder—lures the listener on a sonic journey based on the act of voicing. For Pan, the act of voicing today has an existential allure as it can reveal a deeply personal dimension of life in an age of damage, loss, and longing. Countering the sense of collective solitude, Pan's composition seeks proximity with the listener and proposes a profoundly intimate form of shelter: voices guide, accompany, and incline towards the listener. As responsiveness is one of Pan's fundamental poetic principles, her practice always embraces the architecture it is hosted by. Exploring the spiral staircase's movement, sound becomes more audible when ascending the stairs as the heartbeat quickens, and eases off when leaving the space and descending the staircase, slowly departing from the experience of the exhibition. For Pan, architecture and sound blend into a sonic environment for visitors to inhabit. As such, the listening experience unfolds in an entanglement with the body's movement and navigation, offering multiple angles for observation and inward travel.

Strongly informed by the practice of improvisation at all stages of artistic creation, Pan's singers employ operatic vocal techniques that enter here in dialogue with her expanded techniques of vocalisation and narration. Tapping into these technical tools allows Pan to broaden musical awareness and recognition into an unknown territory of sonic experiences. Based on a repertoire of words underpinning the creative process, the composition drives the listener away from logical understanding towards a sensate rendition of reality, as words are stripped from their layers of meaning. A vocal beacon, *One Hundred Nine Minus* guides the voice, the ear, and the heart into fervent oscillation.

Unfolding throughout the duration of *trust & confusion*, Pan's project transforms and extends into other spaces and durations. As part one of the contribution for *trust & confusion*, the finale of the project is an opera performance scheduled in the fall.

New commission by Tai Kwun Contemporary

Liliana Porter *Untitled (triangle)* (1973)

Since the 1960s, the artist Liliana Porter (b. 1941, Argentina; lives in New York) has been conjuring a tentacular body of work that keeps on appearing in many guises. Experimenting with print-making's materiality and processes, Porter, as cofounder of the New York Graphic Workshop (1964–70), redefined the medium and set in motion pertinent and conceptual questions about what constitutes a carrier, a form, and its reproduction. *Untitled (triangle)* shows three hands: two of Liliana Porter's herself, intertwined with one of Luis Camnitzer's, the conceptual artist and her husband then. The hands each have two lines that meet at an edge drawn on them; when hands and lines connect, the figure of a triangle is formed. The picture captures the moment when the hands meet and the triangle forms. As the hands part, the triangle disappears too, its pieces lingering around on moving hands, transforming from a closed to an open figure.

Untitled (triangle) is part of a more extensive series of works in which Porter negotiates the relation between lived and captured time, and between the movement suggested by the body and the stillness indicated by the line. The series moreover explores the genre of the self-portrait: by offering her hands to the viewer she also questions why a portrait of the self is presupposed mostly to be pictured as a face. Almost 50 years after its production, the picture takes on a different meaning. At a time when touch is undermined and fundamentals of care have both accelerated and faltered, the photograph proposes a touching imaginary horizon. Here, the equilateral triangle, borne by many hands, suggests that unifying, supporting, and interweaving are much-needed principles in building worlds.

Courtesy of the artist

phenethyldioxanone overlay
(E12:E16) (2020–2021)

in collaboration with Shengping Zheng

The artist Sean Raspet (b. 1981, United States; lives in Detroit) considers molecules to be his primary medium and constructs artificial flavours and fragrance molecules that materialise in visible and invisible forms of installations. Challenging the conventional processes of scent-making, he is also a co-founder of nonfood, an artificial algae-based food company that provides green and sustainable meals.

Unsettling the image-based perception of art and filling the space in an invisible manner, Raspet exhibits two molecules newly developed with Shengping Zheng, associate professor of chemistry at Hunter College, New York City. The work comes into being on an atomic level: oxygen atoms are removed or added, hydrogen becomes a game-changer, carbon chains are formed—call it sculpture or architecture on the invisible plane. Although stemming from a complex, technical, and minute procedure of alterations, the fragrance creates a direct, unmediated experience. As chemistry renders the world through formulas, a smell also holds qualities of transferral and the potential to activate a memory: of a place, a situation, a former lover. As such, the work proposes an invigorating interrogation of the traditional dichotomies between the rational and the sensorial.

Raspet is driven by the unknown and by the search for smells not easily recognisable or without a direct referential quality. Unlike what one would expect from a fragrance, the works's source materials are derivatives of petro-chemical byproducts and bulky industrial materials, usually deployed for applications in the production of paint, plastics, and pharmaceuticals. More than expanding the senses, Raspet challenges preconceptions of the olfactory and the often-inadequate language systems that are used to describe it—how does one describe an unknown smell without using clichés? The answer to that question reveals the unexpected beauty of synthetic construction. Just like the discovery of artificial vanilla in wood pulp or coal tar, one might stumble upon it by chance.

Algirdas Šeškus
Mid-October Retrospective (2021)

That the artist Algirdas Šeškus (b. 1945, Lithuania; lives in Vilnius) would spend almost a decade (1975–1985) of his life taking pictures could be considered a matter of chance. What started as a few images in an application for a cameraman's job at the Soviet Lithuanian television station ended up becoming a photographic practice spanning over 15,000 photographs. Šeškus's work is characterised by a kaleidoscopic and improvisational approach, with the search of the eventful in the trivial: scenes of pleasure, love, and loneliness meet pictures of abstract encounters, empty snowy streets, a fallen tree trunk, or an opened tin of canned fish—as equals. His untethered and often bleary documentary style captured modes of being and doing that escaped the official portrayals of Soviet life, in contrast to the more programmatic and theatrical genres of most of his contemporaries, thus revealing a generally unacknowledged dimension of life. In 1985 he would abandon photography as “things didn't appear to him anymore.” He would leave photography untouched until 2010.

Presented as two sets of flickering images projected side by side, *Mid-October Retrospective* brings together a handpicked sequence of 500 previously unpublished photographs, compiled and edited in collaboration with the Lithuanian artist Elena Narbutaitė for *trust & confusion*. This digitised selection offers a journey through ten years of diaristic photography, moving between Vilnius, Moscow, and the Lithuanian coastal town Nida, and following unrelated and anonymous figures caught amid their day-to-day activities. Šeškus's attention was drawn to their gazes, often turned outwards and beyond the picture plane, hinting at life continuing beyond the image—and suggesting a state of wonder, full of imagination and wanderlust. Whereas Šeškus's oeuvre is more readily known for the performative dimension of human activity, *Mid-October Retrospective* contrasts the human body with sections of abandoned cityscapes, open fields, and muddy roads.

Courtesy of the artist

Sriwhana Spong
Instrument H (Monster Chicken)
 (2021)

The artist Sriwhana Spong (b. 1979, New Zealand; lives in London), of Indonesian and Pākehā descent, works with everyday materials and offers installations that encompass sculptural, musical, and performative dimensions that inspire moments of gathering, listening, and transformation. Her new sculpture *Instrument H (Monster Chicken)* is made of approximately 50 bronze casts of chicken bones and twigs that Spong collected during the past year between her house and her artist studio. As a trace of her daily route past two 24-hour fried chicken shops, the chicken bones became a testament to one of the few possible trajectories during months of pandemic-induced lockdowns. Connected with cable ties and strings, the bones are simultaneously singular and plural; they form a vocabulary, a spine, a map of something bigger than a chicken. Like many of Spong's works, *Instrument H (Monster Chicken)* ties together a contemporary reflection on ecology with the long-lived persistence of cultural practices and embodied knowledge.

The sculpture refers to the chicken as the vertebrate animal that outnumbers any other on this planet today, with over 23 billion; the production and consumption of chicken thus place tremendous pressure on global ecologies. On the other hand, the sculpture could be seen as an extension of chicken bone divination, an ancient practice still in use. Found in cultures worldwide, bone-reading, or osteomancy, entrusts the bones with the power to reveal the future and recount the past. As such, the chicken bones could be considered a compass, a tool that shows the way. Activating the sculpture as an instrument, the bronze bones are dragged through the space daily, as their tinkling sounds merge with the sonic waves emitted by other objects in the exhibition; a future-telling.

New commission by Tai Kwun Contemporary

Trevor Yeung ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
Learning to be a tree lover
(Protection) ● Sunset 24/7 ●
Night Mushroom Colon (Tai Kwun)
(2021)

Exploring forms for the in-between, the artist Trevor Yeung (b. 1988, China; lives in Hong Kong) operates on the interstices of ecology, horticulture, and artificial habitats. Occupying the transitional space that leads from the Day Room into the Night Room, Yeung's three works evoke contemplation about protection, control, and simulation of safety.

Just as day shifts into night at the idyllic juncture of sundown, *Sunset 24/7* simulates such transitional light spectrums in the aquarium's hyper-controlled setting. Though uninhabited by fish, the work poses questions about the identification processes between fish and their owners, prompting a reflection of who is actually in the tank (fish or human?) and thus under control and protection. Following from this, the passage between the Day Room and the Night Room is obstructed by *Learning to be a tree lover (Protection)*, which emerges as a stainless steel structure with a mirror finishing, both guiding and inhibiting the visitor's movement. The impeding structure refers to the cages used to protect *Aquillaria sinensis*, also known as the Incense Tree, a medicinal tree and source of agarwood. Long threatened by illegal felling, the tree, according to popular lore, also gave rise to the name of Hong Kong, literally "incense harbour".

Ports and their luminous appearances are frequently beacons and homes, too. Inspired by the experience of loneliness and adaptation to new surroundings when travelling, *Night Mushroom Colon (Tai Kwun)* presents a growing ensemble of night lamps and plug adaptors, the latter of which Yeung collected over several years of travels. The night lamp, a typical simulation of safety and comfort for those with feelings of unease, leads a life of its own as it grows into an exaggerated heap of artificial mushrooms—an overgrowth of night lamps expressing a heightened longing for safe space.

New commissions by Tai Kwun Contemporary

Scarlet Yu and Xavier Le Roy ●●●●

Still in Hong Kong (2021)

After more than a year of global slowdown and restricted mobility, the artists and choreographers Scarlet Yu (b. 1978, Hong Kong; lives in Berlin) and Xavier Le Roy (b. 1963, France; lives in Berlin) examine the notion of stillness in *Still in Hong Kong*, a performative proposition developed in collaboration with 22 performers who currently reside in Hong Kong. The word “still” holds multiple meanings as it refers not only to something “motionless” but also “quiet” or “calm”, as well as “up to this time”, “nevertheless”, or a “frozen excerpt of a moving image”.

Taking up this multiplicity, a performer addresses the visitor to engage in an encounter, and shares a personal collection of “stills” that are made of actions, postures, stories, and extended into conversations. The collection of “stills”, created in dialogue with Yu and Le Roy, are embodiments of a series of individual and collective memories, experiences, and relations of and with Hong Kong. Within the context of the exhibition, Yu and Le Roy bind their understanding of stillness with a twisted meaning of sculpture. In doing so, they question sculpture’s alleged properties: What materials are they made of or composed with? What remains of them when they have been removed or destroyed? How does their presence linger? How do they traverse both the public and the private? In an engaging exchange of showing, telling, and conversing, the body is revealed as a permeable vessel and a generator of physical and mental images and imaginations that travel both in time and space. Inspired and driven by the conflation of trust and confusion, Yu and Le Roy set out a choreographic situation which questions the traditional divides between object and subject, the organic and the synthetic, movement and stillness, performer and spectator/visitor. In this alluring exchange, the performer and visitor transform uncanny moments into precious encounters.

New commission by Tai Kwun Contemporary



Tai Kwun 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

Located on Tai Kwun Contemporary's second floor, 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 curators/artists. This iteration of Hi! & Seek 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

Come spend your afternoon at Tai Kwun Contemporary! Learn about the art in the exhibitions by joining a tour with one of our friendly, professional docents.

- ... Saturdays and Sundays from 2 May to December
- ... Cantonese 3 pm | English 4 pm
- ... Tai Kwun Contemporary

... Family Day

Join our Family Day at Tai Kwun Contemporary for gallery activities and family workshops! Each parent/guardian can bring one child (5+ years) to spend the day with us and learn about art.

- ... 9 & 23 May, 6 & 20 Jun, 11 & 18 Jul, 8, 22 & 29 Aug 2021
- ... 11 am–1 pm | 3 pm–5 pm
- ... Venue: Tai Kwun Contemporary
- ... Tickets: \$80 per time slot | Family Pair (one adult with one child)

... Teacher's Morning and Teacher's Workshop

The Teacher's Morning and Teacher's Workshop constitute a knowledge-sharing and communication platform for teachers/educators, delving into the latest exhibitions, artist workshops, and pedagogical discussions. This iteration of Teacher's Morning and Teacher's Workshop is co-organised by Asia Art Archive's Learning & Participation Team and Tai Kwun Contemporary's Education & Public Programming Team.

- ... 22 May 2021, 10 am–4:30 pm, 5 Jun 2021, 10 am–12:30 pm
- ... Venue: Laundry Steps,
- ... JC Contemporary & A Hall Studio 2 & 3
- ... Artists: Jeff Leung Chin Fung, Lam Wing Sze

trust & confusion

- ... Curators: Xue Tan, Raimundas Malašauskas
- ... Associate Curator: Tom Engels
- ... Assistant Curators: Louiza Ho, Erin Li

- ... Head of Art: Tobias Berger

- ... Graphic Design: Julie Peeters
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... Performers: Susan Andersson, Marah Arcilla, Eglė Agnė Benkunskytė, Amy Chan, Chan Wai Lok, Brian Cheng, Jacky It It Cheung, Rhyn Cheung, Sylvie Cox, Max Michael Dahlqvist Fuchs, Marie Galley, Inti Guerrero, Mía Karlberg, Steve Katona, Tadas Kavaliauskas, Jariius King, Ivanhoe Lam, Elffe Law Ching Sum, Alysha Lee, Mickey Lee, Leung Ho Nga Livy, Leung Tin-chak, Carman Li Ka Man, Sudhee Liao, Gunilla Linton, David Liu, Nancy Luk, Trista Ma Ka Yue, Eva Nordqvist, Ming Pak, Jethro Pfoquinto, Jovilė Pragiūtė, Rose-Marie Q Schönherr, Alexandra Vusir, Rebecca Wong Pik Kei, Connie Y, Yang Hao, Harriet Yeung, Gfa Yu, Boning Yuen Hau Wing, Ida Griffiths Zee

... Education and Public Programmes: Veronica Wong, Louiza Ho, David Chan, with the Artists' Book Library, Ingrid Pui Yee Chu

... Gallery Team: Jasmine Cheung, Kobe Ko, Kylie Tung, the entire docent team

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Photo credits:

Ricky Jay, *Decaying Dice*, date unknown, Courtesy of the Ricky Jay Collection, Algirdas Šeškus, *Mid-October Retrospective*, 2021, Courtesy of the artist, Pan Daljing, *Dead Time Blue*, performance view, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin 2020, Courtesy of the artist, © Tamiko Nishimura, *The Miko Dancer—Konohanano Sakuya Hime*, 1979–1981

The exhibition and its contents do not reflect the views or opinions of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust or Tai Kwun.



Sriwhana Spong, 楊沛鏗 Trevor Yeung,
余美華 Scarlet Yu and Xavier Le Roy.
七月之後 Joining from July ●
Maria Hassabi, Jamila Johnson-Small,
西村多美子 Tamiko Nishimura,
Moe Satt, Tino Sehgal. 策展人
Curators ● 譚雪 Xue Tan and Raimundas
Malašauskas, 副策展人 Associate
Curator Tom Engels, 助理策展人
Assistant Curators 何苑瑜 Louiza Ho
and 李伊寧 Erin Li...●●●



大館當代美術館
TAI KWUN CONTEMPORARY



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CENTRE FOR HERITAGE & ARTS

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