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EXHIBITIONS OF 2020

EXHIBITIONS OF 2020 BY CHLOE CHU, OPHELIA LAI, HG MASTERS FROM ALMANAC 2021

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Installation view of **HƯƠNG NGÔ**'s *Up Against The*, 2017, invisible ink on sulphite pulp paper, bottle of iodine, nine prints, dimensions variable, at "Lost From View," at The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, Ho Chi Minh City, 2020. Courtesy The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre.

HƯƠNG NGÔ: Lost From View

The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, Ho Chi Minh City

Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai is hailed as a communist hero in modern-day Vietnam, but little is known about the young revolutionary of the 1930s beyond her propagandized mythos. In "Lost from View," multidisciplinary artist Hương Ngô re-examined her legacy. Gesturing to the deliberate sidelining of women in historical narratives, Ngô copied a letter by Minh Khai in invisible ink, presenting the pages with a bottle of the iodine solution needed to render the text visible but not permitting its use. The show also included a blown-up pamphlet from 1940 by female members of the Indochina Anti-Imperialist United Front, and vintage Western book covers of exoticized Asian beauties, situating Minh Khai's story within a wider study of 20th-century depictions of Vietnamese women. **OL**

Tishan Hsu: Liquid Circuit

Sculpture Center, New York

Deemed too bizarre to sell in the 1980s, Tishan Hsu's sculptures, wall reliefs, and drawings evoking biomorphic machines and medical apparatus were given an extensive survey first at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles followed by the Sculpture Center in New York. Using industrial materials like alkyd and urethane, Hsu's tiled, curving structures, such as *Vertical Ooze* (1987), conflate the sleek lines of modernist interior design with cybernetic grids that reference the computing revolution. In *Cell* (1987), skin lesions open to reveal metal grilles, while the orifices and eyes in the iPad-shaped *Portrait* (1982) evince with stunning prescience how electronic gadgets have become an extension of the human body in the 21st century. **OL**



Installation view of **TISHAN HSU**'s *Liquid Circuit*, 1987, acrylic, vinyl cement compound, alkyd, oil, aluminum on wood, 229 x 363 x 23 cm, at "Liquid Circuit," Sculpture Center, New York, 2020. Photo by Kyle Knodell. Courtesy Sculpture Center.



FARID RASULOV, *Yuxuların Yuxusu (Dream of Dreams)*, 2020, still from video installation: 16 min 22 sec. Courtesy the artist and Yarat Contemporary Art Space, Baku.

Farid Rasulov: Qurban Olum

Yarat Contemporary Art Space, Baku

Is it possible to buy one's way into heaven? Probably not, but that doesn't stop people from trying, as Farid Rasulov conveys in his oddly satirical exhibition "Qurban Olum." Centered on the Islamic festival of sacrifice, during which millions of animals are killed annually, Rasulov's film *Yuxuların Yuxusu (Dream of Dreams)* (2020) visualizes two outlandish scenarios: two surgeons in ceremonial hats fill a sheep's abdomen with jewelry, which later pours out of the disemboweled carcass to the amazement of three office workers. At Yarat Contemporary Art Space, the film was accompanied by an installation of the absurd operating theater and

candy-colored paintings of people enthralled by the ritual slaughter, illustrating the grotesquerie of a festival that, for the artist, has become a competitive display of secular excess. **OL**

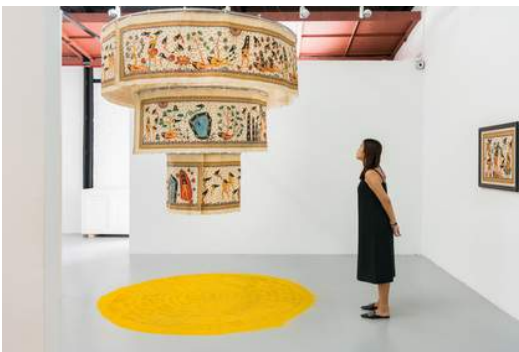


Installation view of **LEE MINGWEI**'s *Guernica in Sand*, 2006/20, mixed-media interactive installation, sand, wooden island, lighting, 11 × 23 m, at "禮 Li, Gifts and Rituals," Gropius Bau, Berlin, 2020. Photo by Laura Florio. Courtesy the artist and Gropius Bau.

Lee Mingwei: 禮 Li, Gifts and Rituals

Gropius Bau, Berlin

Referencing the Chinese concept of *li*—variously defined as “courtesy,” “gift,” or “ceremony”—Lee Mingwei’s retrospective at Gropius Bau demonstrated the universal importance of respect, reciprocity, and intimacy through installations and performances from the past three decades. Restaged projects included Lee’s poetic *Guernica in Sand* (2006/20), a monumental recreation of Pablo Picasso’s anti-war painting designed to be swept away, and *Sonic Blossom* (2013/20), in which gallerygoers are treated to an impromptu performance by an opera singer. The show included new adaptations, such as an offshoot of *The Letter-Writing Project* (1998/20) titled *Letter to Oneself* (2020), featuring notes sourced via an open call that express the contributors’ pandemic-era hopes and fears. Lee’s practice poignantly invokes gratitude and grace in a time of tragic uncertainty. **OL**



Installation view of **CITRA SASMITA**'s *Ode to the Sun*, 2020, acrylic on traditional *Kamasan* canvas, top scroll: 60 × 650 cm, middle scroll: 60 × 450 cm, bottom scroll: 60 × 300 cm, at "Ode to the Sun," Yeo Workshop, Singapore, 2020. Courtesy the artist and Yeo Workshop.

Citra Sasmita: Ode to the Sun

Yeo Workshop, Singapore

Visitors to Citra Sasmita’s exhibition were enveloped in an earthy turmeric aroma. The artist had laid a circular stratum of the spice on the floor and scrawled into it verses from an epic Javanese *kakawin* poem, which was blurred as wafts of air dispersed the golden powder. In the surrounding traditional Balinese *Kamasan*-style paintings, Sasmita further effaces the *kakawin*'s portrayals of females as desired sexual objects or domestic tools. Instead, she depicts women as rulers of their own universes: trees grow from their wombs and flames cover their loins, symbolizing their might as creators and destroyers, while disfigured creatures with raven locks toy with stereotypes of forceful women as frightening. Unabashedly reckoning with the male-centrism of Indonesian culture, Sasmita foregrounds the powers that all women possess. **CC**

Timur Si-Qin: Take Me, I Love You

Von Ammon Co., Washington, DC

Timur Si-Qin transformed Von Ammon Co. gallery into a prayer hall for New Peace—his model for a spirituality that recognizes the oneness of all matter and the connective patterns that undergird them. Playing to our evolved attraction to luminance, Si-Qin combines tropes from sleek street advertisements and the ethereal designs of hallowed spaces, casting the doctrine of New Peace in an alluring light. Intricate emblems of intertwined animals, plants, and minerals were etched into LED-lit acrylic panels that recall temple plaques; nearby was a glowing billboard promoting a sunset over a Navajo plateau. “Take Me, I Love You” was a captivating vision for how we might reprogram the division and destruction of nature encoded in the Western spiritualities that dominate societies. **CC**



Installation view of **TIMUR SI-QIN's** *Tse'Bi'Ndazisgaili Sunset*, 2020, dye sublimation print on polyester, acrylic, aluminum, LED light, 183 × 467 × 3.5 cm, at “Take Me, I Love You,” Von Ammon Co., Washington, DC, 2020. Courtesy the artist and Von Ammon Co.



VVZELA KOOK, *Columbus of Horticulture*, 2019, single-channel video with 3D printed objects, glass dome, acrylic board, tea tree seeds: 5 min 15 sec, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist.

Garden of Six Seasons

Para Site, Hong Kong

“Garden of Six Seasons” brought together maps and depictions of the world by more than 50 artists who span Indigenous and traditional cultures as well as the high-tech, postcolonial world. Mary Dhapalany’s woven pandanus mat of four interconnected circular shapes, for instance, was paired with Liu Kuo-Sung’s 1973 painting of the atmosphere inspired by “The Blue Marble” image of the Earth taken by Apollo 17. Representations of paradise were woven into tapestries from Central Asia to Morocco, while Liang Hao’s scroll painting *Fire and Water* (2013–14) portrays the epic battle of *kan* and *li* from the *I-Ching*. Vvzela Kook’s animated video installation *Columbus of Horticulture* (2019) looked at the human impact of colonialism on ecology as it followed a plant hunter through a vivid land of exotic plants. **HGM**

Pacita Abad: Life in the Margins

Spike Island, Bristol

A survey of the Filipina-American artist Pacita Abad, “Life in the Margins” featured 20 of her large-scale quilted paintings (*trapunto*) and works on fabric made between 1983 and 2002, showcasing Abad’s twin interests in abstraction and social realism. *The Sky is Falling, the Sky is Falling* (1998), a vibrant, abstract composition incorporating beads and buttons, was created after Abad, living in Jakarta, witnessed the chaotic and violent fall of the Suharto regime. By contrast, her realist *Immigrant Experience* of the early 1990s depicts many immigrants like herself, including Korean shopkeepers at work and a Cambodian refugee standing next to the White House. The series culminates in *L.A. Liberty* (1992), in which she renders the Statue of Liberty as a woman of color in a vibrant patchwork robe, a new icon for our times. **HGM**



PACITA ABAD, *The Sky is Falling, the Sky is Falling*, 1998, oil, plastic buttons and beads, painted cloth on stitched and padded canvas, 300 × 270 cm. Photo by Pioneer Studios, Manila. Courtesy the Pacita Abad Art Estate.



PRABHAKAR PACHPUTE, *The Relic of Our Time*, 2020, watercolor and acrylic paint on canvas, 213.4 × 487.7 cm. Courtesy the artist and Experimenter, Kolkata.

Prabhakar Pachpute: Beneath the Palpable

Experimenter, Kolkata

As rural communities of the global south face environmental and economic catastrophe, farmers in the Indian state of Maharashtra have gained attention for their long-distance protest marches. Prabhakar Pachpute has been channeling their fighting spirit into his drawings, paintings, and sculptures of post-industrial landscapes and hybrid human-machines that are rising up in protest. In “Beneath the Palpable,” the massive painting *The Relic of Our Time* (2020) depicts a vulture lordling over a barren valley despoiled by factories, while *A march against the lie (LA)* (2020) features a mountaintop monument of a raised fist. Mirroring the zombie-mutant figures often seen in Pachpute’s murals, and straddling the line between animal and machines with human limbs, monstrous-looking sculptures emerge from the earth in anger and defiance. **HGM**

Taloi Havini: Reclamation

Artspace, Sydney

Taloi Havini’s projects explore the history of her birthplace, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, and the legacy of the Australia-owned Panguna copper mine, which was active in the 1970s and ’80s and whose impacts on the region led to a decade-long civil war that forced her family to flee. The gallery’s entrance was covered with a colonial-era map and photographic wallpaper of bright blue rushing water, depicting the result of copper leaching into polluted rivers. Havini explores the state of the mine and neighboring communities in the immersive, four-channel video and sound work *Habitat* (2018–19), which combines archival footage of Bougainville with contemporary documentation. The installation *Reclamation* (2020) comprises an earthen floor and standing, lashed cane structures—a type of collective drawing—created by Havini’s matrilineal clan. **HGM**



Installation view of TALOI HAVINI’s *Reclamation*, 2020, cane, vine, steel, varnish, dimensions variable, at “Reclamation,” Artspace, Sydney, 2020. Photo by Zan Wimerley. Courtesy Artspace.



Installation view of ASAKO IWAMA’s *Pinocchio*, 2020, resin, glass, plaster, photopolymer, copper tube, linen fiber, PVC tube, dimensions variable, at “Things Entangling,” Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (MOT), 2020. Photo by Kenji Takahashi. Courtesy MOT.

Things Entangling

Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

During World War II, the Japanese army experimented with developing aviation fuel using pine roots. Intrigued by this, Asako Iwama created *Pinocchio* (2020)—comprising resin blocks, distillation apparatus, and archival materials about European and Japanese pine industries—for “Things Entangling” at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo. Produced in collaboration with Kadist, the exhibition materialized “fleeting affinities” between objects, cultures, and eras through works by 12 international artists. Exemplifying the show’s archival bent, Tom Nicholson’s crates of mosaics imagined the repatriation of an artifact looted by Australian soldiers in Gaza in 1917. Hikaru Fujii’s *The Anatomy Classroom* (2020) presents objects salvaged from a museum in the Fukushima nuclear contamination zone. Poised between excavation

and speculation, the show projected a future in which the lost may be found. **OL**

Wang Tuo: Standing at the Crossroads

White Space Beijing, Online

Presented online in a virtual 3D model of White Space Beijing, “Standing at the Crossroads” collated five of Wang Tuo’s films from the past two years. Conveying multiple, often anachronic, storylines through carefully paced tableaux, still images, and animations, the works strike at the core of emotional and psychological disturbances. The warped worldviews of Wang’s protagonists lead them to destruction, as with the haunted scholar in *Distorting Words* (2019) who feels that “all roads ultimately lead to a single dead end” and fulfils his own prophecy by committing suicide. Self-perpetuating patterns reappear in *Spiral* (2018), wherein Wang studies desire as a force that simultaneously propels and is fueled by obsession, revenge, and hysteria. A masterful storyteller, Wang reveals the alienation and “chaos of reality.” **CC**



WANG TUO, *Distorting Words*, 2019, still from three-channel, 4k video with color and sound: 24 min 38 sec. Courtesy the artist and White Space Beijing.

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