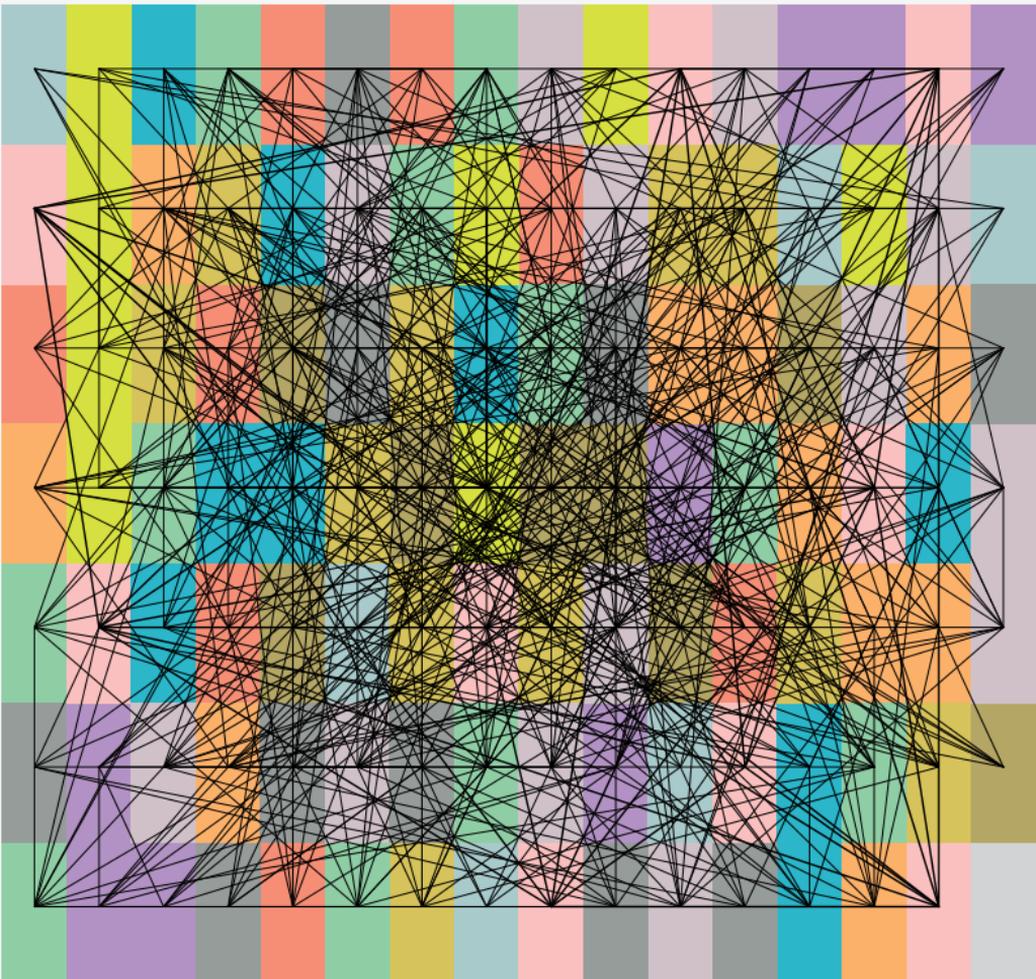


MAP Office

*Atlas of Asia
Art Archive*



Bani Abidi

Karachi



“By venturing into the street and performing everyday tasks in public, Abidi’s non-Muslim subjects reclaim a time and a place where their status as equal citizens in metropolitan Karachi is not contested.” Hammad Nasar [I01a]

Karachi at dusk, deserted streets smothered in a thick silence. No sign of the once vibrant city actively dreaming to build an ‘imagined community’ after the Partition. Nor of the political violence that is repeatedly shaking Pakistan’s largest city. In the six photographs, motionless figures are frozen while performing banal activities in the middle of the public space. A standard street lamp illuminates everyday tasks – the reading of newspapers, ironing, the application of make-up, the cleaning of shoes – in a perfect orchestration of the daily routine. 7:45 pm, this anticipated time challenges the blasphemous law put in place by the current repressive regime. Non-Muslim Christian, Parsi, and Hindu communities – religious minorities – are on stage to advocate for their differences and their right to co-exist amongst other citizens. In the current political system of Pakistan where the male Muslim population usually monopolises the public domain, one wonders, ‘where is everyone else in the city?’ This is Karachi at 7:45 pm during the month of Ramadan.

those of predicted time

“Pakistan’s inability to guarantee equal rights for all its citizens, regardless of religion, arguably a failure of political vision, is presented as a problem of perception.”
Murtaza Vali [I01b]

Ravi Agarwal

*Yamuna
River*



“I visited and revisited the river several times a week, walking along the banks for long distances. I realised how imperceptibly the healing current of the river had soaked into the interstices of my environmental work and my fragmented urban existence, drawing me to itself morning and evening. Despite the river being black with sewage, I never saw it as dirty. Rather, it seemed timeless, beyond life and death, beyond all judgements, beyond all claims, beyond all contamination. This river flowed in my veins, immersing me in some undefined space where, amid the waters’ murmur, all I could do was be still and sense the wings of the first wagtail I saw on the river-bank thirty years ago beating once again through my awareness...” Ravi Agarwal [A01a]

those outlined by universal values

“The nature of the risks involved in ecology fundamentally precludes a market condition.... For the first time in human history the act of a single social or political agent can alter or even alter or even interrupt the entire global historical process... we cannot predict the consequences of our acts.” Slavoj Zizek [A01b]

Yamuna River is an in-between territory, both ephemeral and permanent. The city of Delhi has evolved along its water and riverbank for centuries. The river flows like time but remains part of a familiar environment. Its eternal value is nevertheless threatened and the cycle needs to be reconsidered. A new ecology, bellowing for rebirth will eventually emerge from the dirty water. The immersion of the artist’s wrapped body represents the position of an individual facing the uncertain and the corrupted politics involved in plans to clean the riverbank, dislocating the thousands of shantytown-dwellers.

Ai Weiwei

*World
Wide
Web*



The territory of the www. [World Wide Web] is immeasurable and uncontrollable. A rectangular window in our computer opens infinite opportunities to be connected with other networks of interconnected systems everywhere. Censorship cannot deploy its barricade in this Wild West. Therefore, mastering the medium and its message is a powerful tool to convey information and share many forms of criticism. The daily maintenance of a blog, opening an infrastructure that develops over the internet; collected comments, observations, and documentation can be seen as a work in progress or simple fragments of one's life. Day after day, month after month for several years, the artist's blog has provided a significant picture of a society at a given moment. Operating like an instant Polaroid of contemporary China, the collection of blog entries now serves as an active 'Social Sculpture' in which the observer of recent transitory years will forever find a source of inspiration for the reinterpretation of history.

unlimited

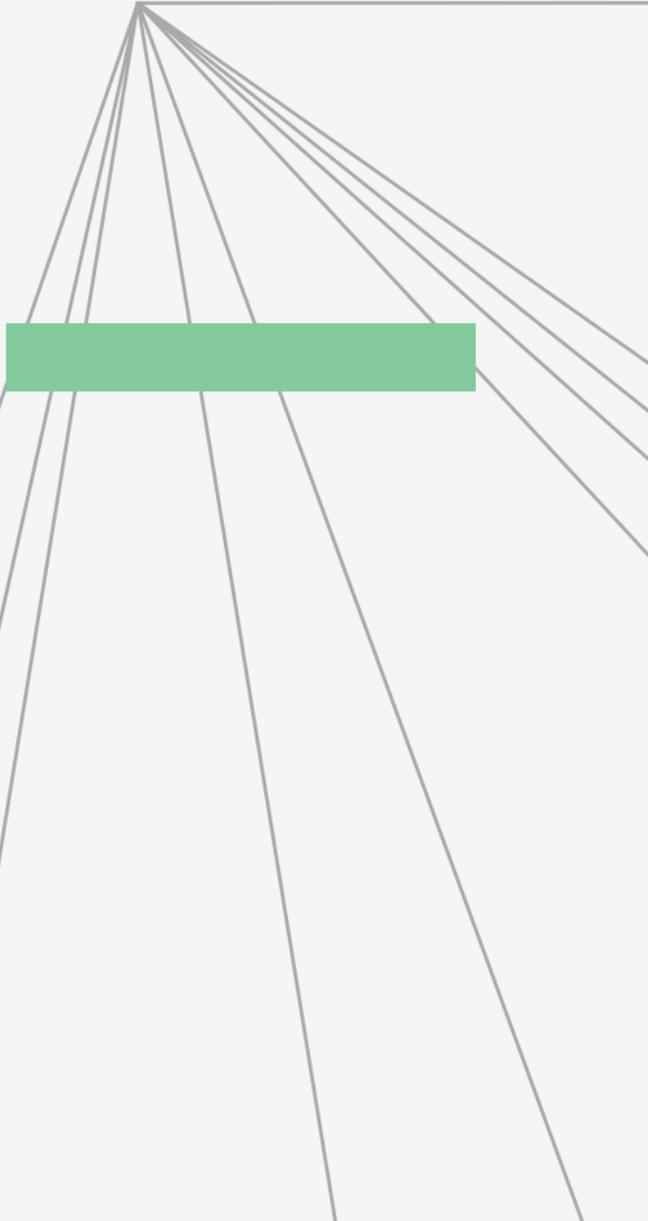
"In the last several years, microblogs and social-media sites have become ubiquitous platforms for the exchange of information and ideas. This unique opportunity for expression has never before existed in China. Platforms such as Weibo have become the main force for people to question authority and share information, to demonstrate their will and political demands. New forms of technology are uncontrollable and pose an everyday baptism by fire for the authorities in China."

Ai Weiwei

[F01a]

Jananne Al-Ani

Middle East



“Frequently depicted as a desert, an exotic place with no history and no population, the Middle Eastern landscape has become familiar to westerners as the blank backdrop to military action.” Jananne Al-Ani [D01a]

The Middle East viewed from a drone. Familiar images of unpopulated fragments of colourless territory generated by military technology are propagated on TV. Aerial images of the desert broadcast during the Gulf War make physical a pixelated land with no living creatures. Those mythic images, like the many layers of an archaeological site, have shaped our memories of this part of the world. Using the same visual tools, Shadow Site surveys man-made traces in the Iraqi desert, where the familiar appears and disappears along the image, mapping those charged landscapes from aerial dimension to horizontal development.

reminiscent ones

“Through the portrayal of the population, the culture and, crucially, the landscape of the Middle East, [the news reportage] revealed that the nineteenth-century Orientalist stereotype of the Arab and the desert remained firmly embedded in Western consciousness. The site of the war was shown to be a desert, a place with no history and no population – an empty space, a blank canvas.” Jananne Al-Ani [D01b]

“Historically, representations of the Middle Eastern landscape, from William Holman Hunt’s 1854 painting The Scapegoat to media images from the 1991 Desert Storm campaign have depicted the region as uninhabited and without sign of civilisation.” Sharmini Pereira [D01c]

Tarek
Al-Ghoussein

*Arabian
Gulf*



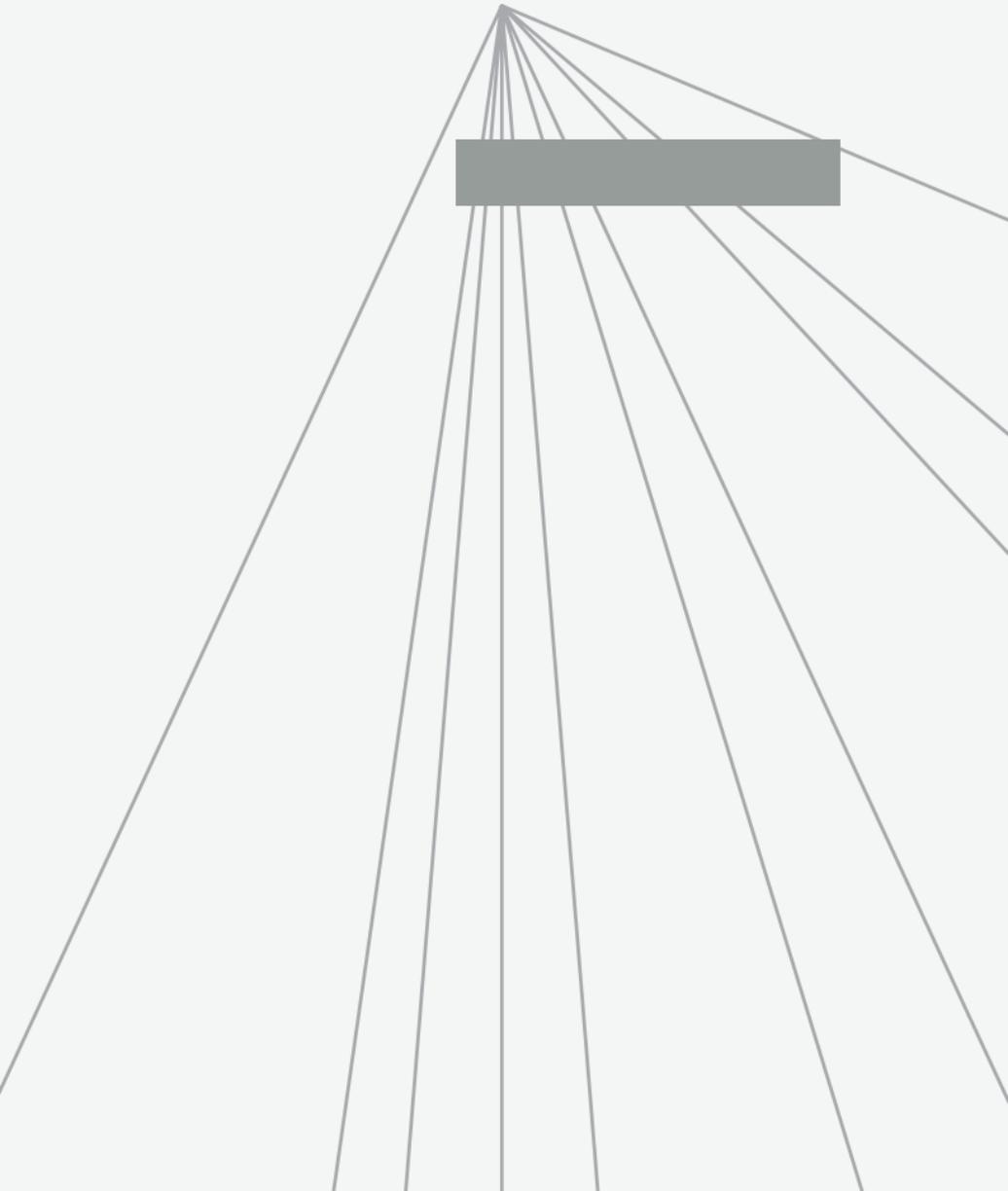
“Going home for many awakens nostalgic feelings and fond memories of childhood. But for the Palestinian, the identity of home is often highly contested. Many Palestinians who have lived within the region or who have ties to the area often feel displaced as they struggle with notions of national identity and strive to retain their heritage.” Seth Thompson [L01a]

Much of one's identity is related to the characteristics of the specific territory that he/she calls homeland. This simple correlation is particularly obvious when one's identity is displaced or inaccessible. Travelling in the Arabian Gulf, this Palestinian-born Kuwaiti artist constructs his personality in a series of photographic self-portraits wearing a traditional Kaffiyed. Referring to the lost land, each image is taken on the site of a newly built wall or obstacle in the desert. The series of immaterial borders recalls the status of the Occupied Territories and is strengthened by the symbolic scarf. Transposed into a language, the choreographed landscapes epitomise the impossible destination and the (mis-)perception of 'terrorist' displacement in the quest for freedom.

“The police asked me what was I doing, who was I, why was I wearing the Palestinian scarf, why that particular scarf – not the red scarf or the other type of black scarf? And it just made me realize how charged that scarf was. And how much, even in the Middle East, it has become almost a symbol of terrorism. I guess that just made me realize it's not just a symbol in the West, it's become a symbol in the Middle East as well.” Tarek Al-Ghoussein [L01b]

Isabel and Alfredo
Aquilizan

*Another
Country*



“The Aquilizans display the contents of their family’s balikbayan (homecoming boxes), rectangular cardboard containers specifically constructed to maximize airport luggage restrictions, in stacks placed randomly around the gallery. Balikbayan are used by Filipinos returning home from abroad. The Project Be-longing series employs the balikbayan as a motif to engage with the emotional and physical meaning of coexisting between countries” Zoe Butt [B01a]

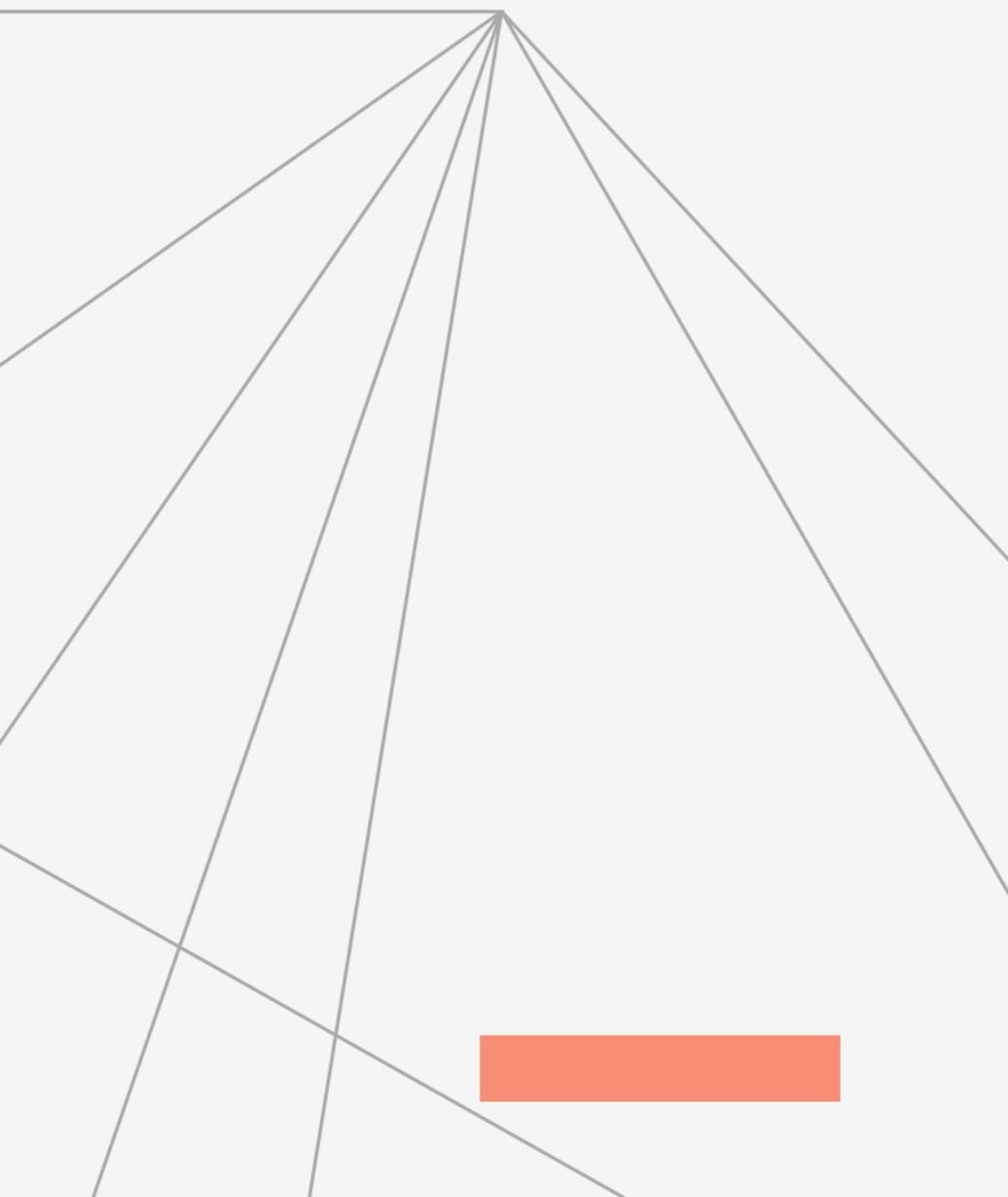
“There is subsequently an uncertainty inherent in the work and even an anxiety, as the treasured belongings of a family are adrift in transit. The absence of actual containers emphasises the fragility of this displacement, yet the tight and systematic organisation of the contents reflects a staunch will to survive.”
Nicholas Thompson [B01b]

nomadic ones

The personal relocation of the Filipino community outside its original country suggests a re-organisation of the referent that structures family life. Boxes of domestic objects are stacked methodically to comfort and offer an environment of security and happiness. *Another country* exists in the accumulation of familiar and cherished objects displayed to the public in an exhibition format. Clothes, books, kitchen tools, and toys are arranged with the same compact rational organisation as when in transit. While producing the new ground for the family through the collection of everyday objects, this ‘other country’ appears to be a new home, another dwelling in which one can begin constructing one’s own life.

Yochai Avrahami

West Bank



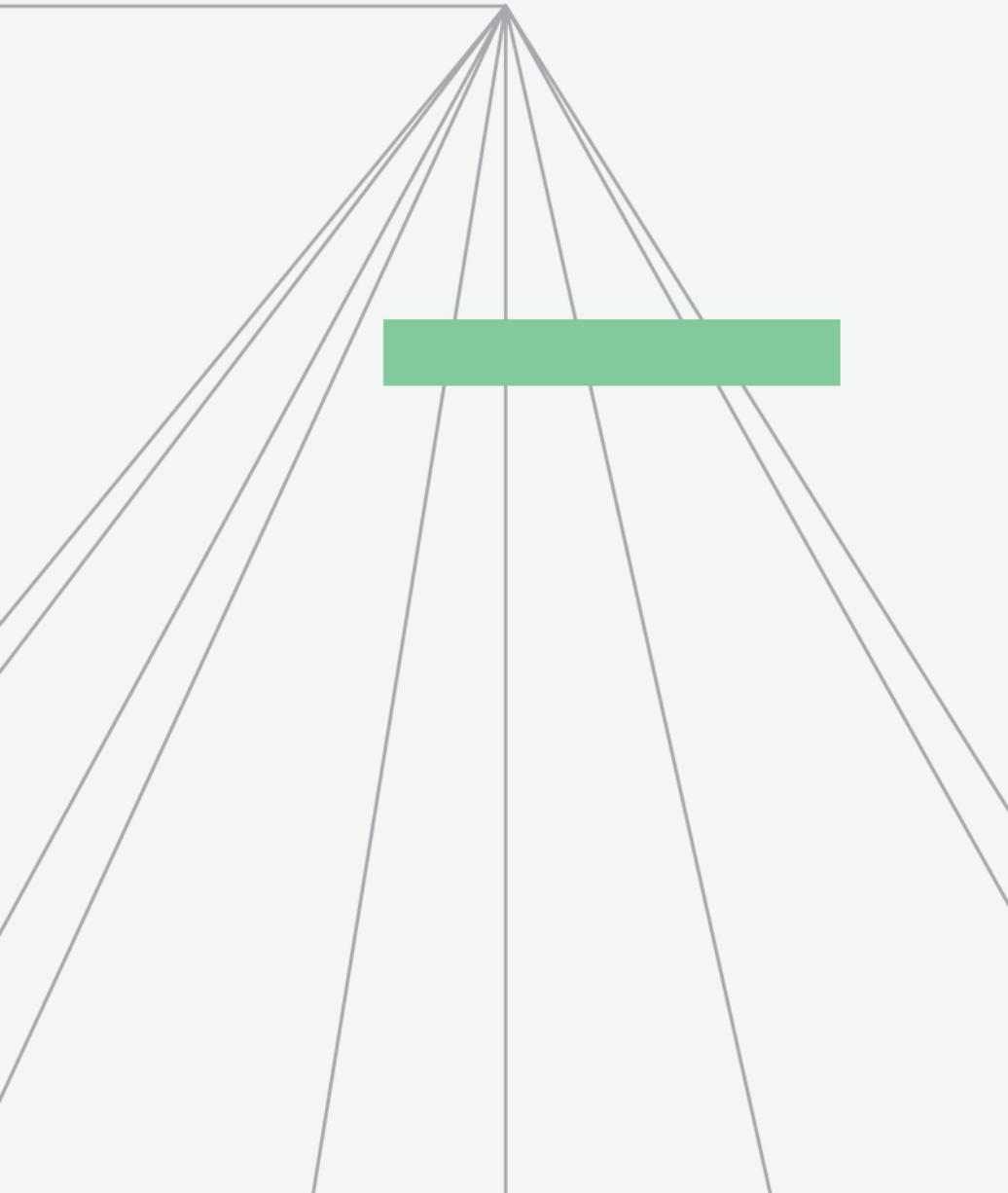
“Israel’s ‘barrier’, ‘wall’, or ‘separation fence’ across the West Bank is the latest architectural expression of a twenty-year old political strategy.” Eyal Weizman [L02a]

The zone between Jerusalem and Ramallah is an unstable archipelago made of a complex infrastructure of walls, tunnels, and bridges. It is also one of the most violently disputed territories in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Neighbouring the checkpoint of Ramallah, the deserted Atarot/Qalandia Airport is now the playground of strange creatures, construction materials, abandoned vehicles, and sheep bones. Beyond its limits, a refugee camp, a little piece of land imprisoned by other walls, is symptomatic of the segregation implemented in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Abandoned detritus shaped by years of war resembles pre-historic fossils populating the no-man’s land. Moving images from a remote-controlled camera move freely on the ground with no fear of military restriction. Physical communication is replaced by another type of intrusion, reinforcing the isolation and interdependence of both sites. Raising dust, those ephemeral devices are not only the subject of curiosity but suggest a new archaeology of hope and life in territories of conflict and control.

“The appearance of this no man’s land resembles a kaleidoscope that contains an endless avalanche of objects and landscape elements, creating the effect of an abstract vision: the landscape is strewn with objects pertaining to times of war and calm, and to various forms of neglect, desertion, control, restriction and intrusion.” Nicholas Thompson [L02b]

Seung Woo Back

Pyongyang



“The city of Pyongyang appeared to be an expanded set of The Truman Show, the movie.”
Seung Woo Back [D02a]

A close inspection of tourist images taken during a North Korea trip in Pyongyang can reveal the real face of the citizen living in the capital. Behind the figurants performing happiness for the tourists, smaller figures in the background are following another path. *Blow Up* is a technique of observation that changes the scale of looking at an image or a scene. Bringing attention to the smallest hidden details, it distorts a simple documentary into a complex fiction. The isolation of the country and the inability to freely explore its reality are replaced by the well-orchestrated decorum of an unrealistic world. Beyond the mass spectacle, emptiness is filled here with images of propaganda and slogans deviating from their original intention to question the true face of communism.

reminiscent ones

“The photographs Seung Woo Back took in the appointed sites with the camera aimed at limited scenery failed to capture the reality of this unrealistic city. He could only portray what the North Koreans wanted him to portray: images of high-rise buildings, well-planned roads and numerous vehicles, well-trained performances on a large stage. However, the act of enlarging parts of the film exposed their features in a more concrete and realistic manner. Faces of the people who appear in Blow Up are surprisingly dark and expressionless, propaganda phrases like ‘We are Happy’ and ‘Revolutionary Spirit of Baekdu’ can be found engraved in modern buildings...”
Hye Young Shin [D02b]

Nadiah Bamadhaj

*Faroe
Islands*



“Postcolonial departures are perceived as a continued colonization in different form, and – in this case – different spaces.”

Nadiah Bamadhaj

[C01a]

“The project introduces elements of Malaysian and Indonesian architecture and literature into the Faroese landscape. My selection of architecture and literature is based on how in an attempt to embark from the elements of European colonization of the previous centuries; it inadvertently mirrors the grandeur and the social and symbolic alienation of those colonial structures. Ironically, this renders it both incongruous to its surroundings and a form of colonization in its own right.” Nadiah Bamadhaj

[C01b]

those defined by an epic journey

Part of the British Isles situated in the heart of the Gulf Stream in the North Atlantic, the Faroe Islands are the territory of alien constructions. Derived from vernacular Malaysian and Indonesian architecture, hybrid structures are found in the littoral zone. Inverting a traditional colonial understanding, the Faroe Islands landscape forces questions about the Western imagination and oriental typology. Colonial symbols travel here to emulate a retroactive memory of a specific journey taking shape in the land of British Malaysia. The new territory stands alone in its tentativeness to imagine a political and national history of Nordic colonialism; it is perhaps a new homeland for an unspoiled human geography.

Subhankar Banerjee

Arctic



“One summer evening in the refuge I sat meditating on a nameless hilltop, looking out at the braided Kongakut River valley and the mountains of the Brooks Range beyond, and found amidst its startling beauty a glimpse of hope and faith in the future of humanity. No matter how industrialized our nation gets, no matter how our resource needs change, I believe we will have the moral courage to keep places like the Arctic Refuge free of development so that future citizens of the world will continue to have the opportunity to meet nature in its wildest form. During my time in the Arctic I learned much about nature from my Native friends, the Gwich’in Athabascan Indians and the Inupiat Eskimos.”

Subhankar Banerjee

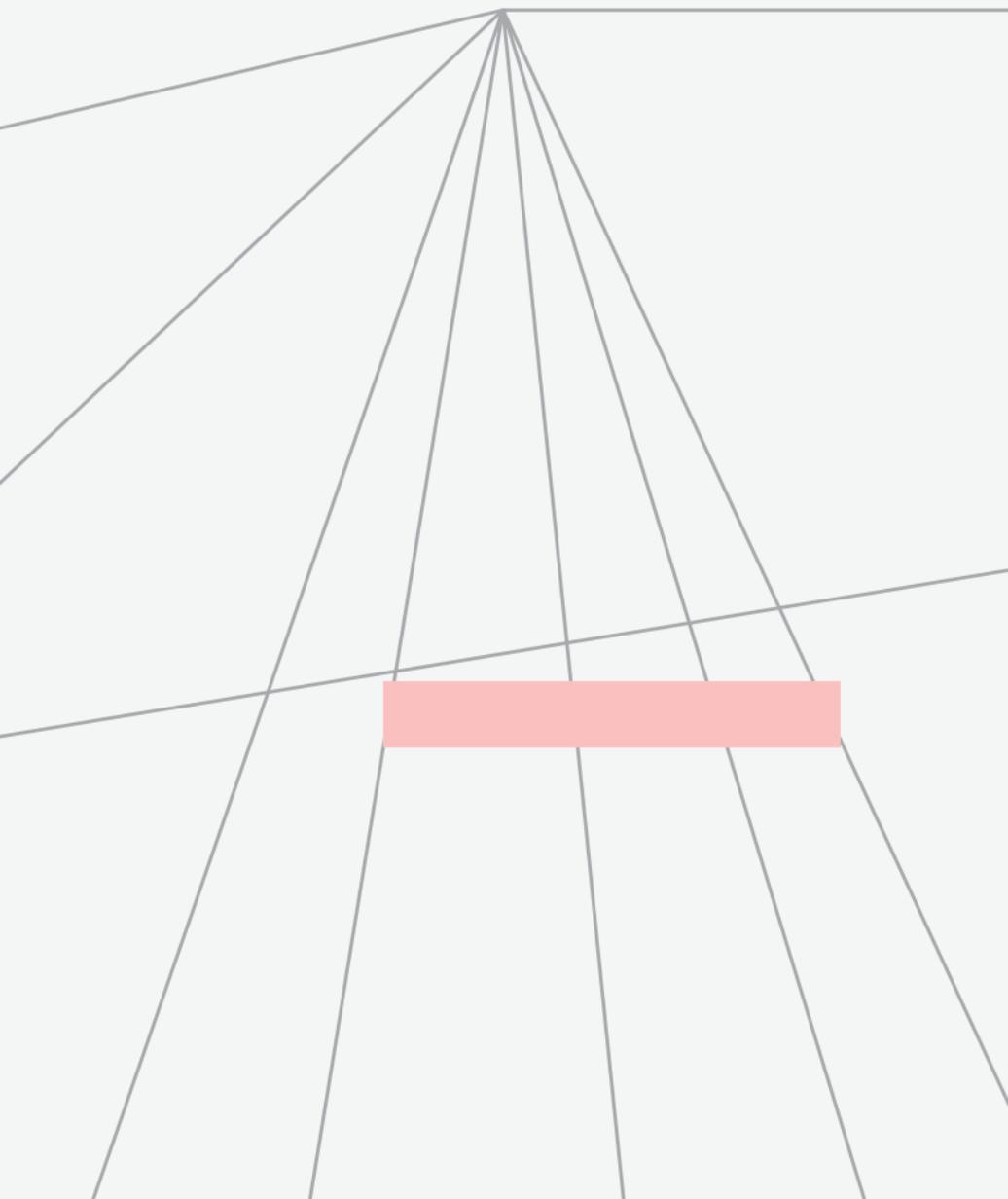
[A02a]

those outlined by universal values

The Arctic region spreads from a 66°33’44” latitude circle to the centre of the North Pole. Most of the contemporary and future human conflicts of the globalised world are/will be concentrated in this relatively small territory. Climate change, underground resources, and human rights are the keys to environmental, economic, and social issues inscribed in the future of this pristine land. The conservation of biodiversity, the defence of indigenous communities, and the control of land use are directing its protection. Teshekpuk Lake Wetlands, Utukok River Uplands, Kasegaluk Lagoon, Beaufort and Chukchi seas, Yukon province of Canada, and Sakha Republic of Siberia are all poetic names that foretell the multiple locations in which future battles of resistance will be fought for a still fragile sustainable development.

Yael Bartana

*Andromeda's
Rock*



“I don’t like patriotism or nationalism, and that the flag is next to Jaffa – a largely Arab area near Tel Aviv – makes it a sensitive issue for me.” Yael Bartana [H01a]

“Bartana does not deny history. Neither does she ignore it, but instead selectively finds more possibilities – by changing meanings and confusing symbols, by using the images and by activating representational systems. She subjects the inherited propaganda apparatuses to a politicisation in such a way that the aestheticisation of politics goes through a process of politicisation.” Joshua Simon [H01b]

Andromeda’s Rock faces Jaffa’s Harbour near the coast in the Mediterranean Sea. Not a sacred island, but a claimed territory hoisting an Israeli flag, it receives an unusual amount of light. A man rows towards the rock and as his small boat finally reaches its destination, he replaces the flag with a young olive tree, a symbol of peace for Jews and Palestinians. The metaphor of substituting one symbol for another, one monument for another, results in the Zionist ideology being abolished and the overcoming of propaganda. Un-claiming the rock, the nationalist flag is temporarily swapped by another belief in a possible reconciliation.

other heterotopias

“More often than not, flags formulate an implicit call to arms; they convoke people belonging to a nation, political party or team. Their objective is to signal and conquer, establishing a dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion.” Volker Pantenburg [H01c]

Guy Ben-Ner

*Berkeley
Island*



"I do see Israel as a political island."

Guy Ben-Ner

[C02a]

Robinson Island can exist anywhere, including such unlikely places as a domestic kitchen in Berkeley. A small pile of sand topped with one palm tree exists next to the gas stove, opening a new geopolitics of the household. Family life revolves around the island, ignoring the solitary existence of the artist's mise-en-scene of his voluntary castaway. The everyday narrative proposes another interpretation of Defoe's story, inverting the island from an exterior dimension towards an interior perspective. Roughly the size of a leaning body, this Crusoe Island resembles other territories isolated from their adjacent surroundings and always dreaming of their neighbours.

those defined by an epic journey

"A recurring theme in Ben-Ner's early videos is the tedium and isolation experienced by a stay-at-home parent. Ben-Ner's first narrative video, Berkeley's Island, based on Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, depicts the solitary life of a castaway. Set in the family kitchen, it opens with a scene of the artist lying on his back in a bathing suit on a meter-wide pile of sand from which a lone palm tree grows, with a steering wheel across his bare, sunburned chest." HG Masters

[C02b]

"One of Robinson Crusoe's themes is the idea of building something out of nothing. But there's never nothing – you always destroy something when you make something else, whether it's the original Robinson Crusoe idea or the State of Israel or the tree that you take apart to build furniture." Guy Ben-Ner

[C02c]

Cai Guo Qiang

Iwaki



“In the Meiji period, Japan went through over a hundred years of modernization, which all came through western science, theories, and ideas. So, they felt like modern Japan was a product of western thought and influence. At this time, when I was going to Iwaki, there was a wave of new science coming out of San Francisco. The Japanese were quite excited by this. They thought that this was the time of the Pan Pacific, that a new age had come. So, there was a lot of excitement that got generated during this time. They felt that, here, Japan could truly have some kind of contribution to the world. That it was no longer a discussion of western culture or eastern culture, but that we could arise above these discussions; it would be a global community.” Cai Guo Qiang [J01a]

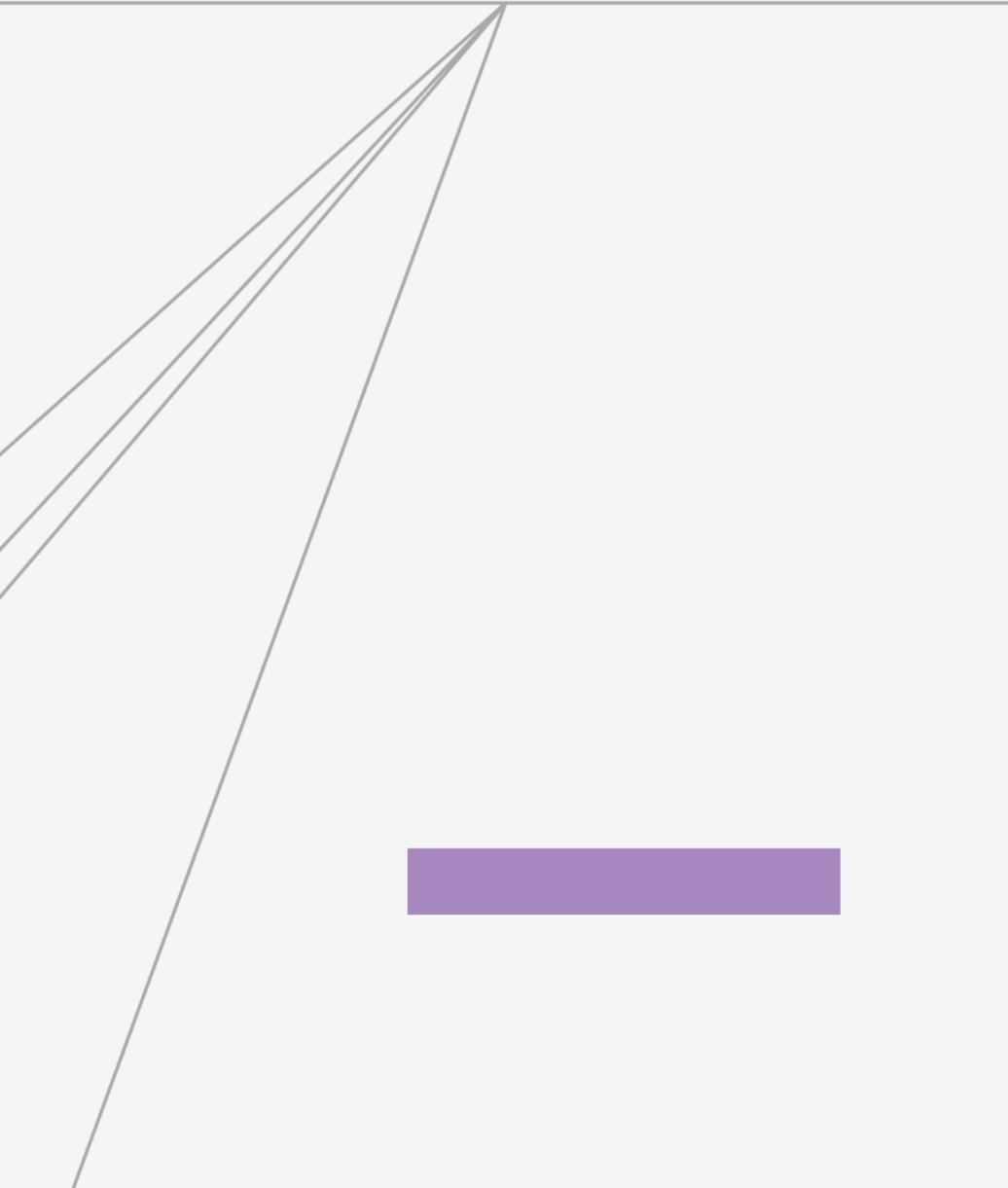
The North Pacific Ocean corridor is populated by vessels linking one side to the other. The connection between Dehua (Quanzhou) and San Francisco Bay defines a maritime Silk Road, sketching the outline of a Pan-Pacific territory. On the journey between them, Iwaki’s beach in Fukushima Prefecture is the last point before the grand journey. Globalised before its time, the new contours of the latest Japanese modernisation are still fragile. Five kilometres of gunpowder explosions from the village into the sea illuminates a new horizon line. It exists with the help of the thousand boats of the local community, as many dotted points for the development of a constant dialogue towards the establishment of a universal message.

economic ones

It only needs one single explosion for a ghost boat full of white porcelain to move from the coastline and begin to haunt the ocean.

CAMP

Somaliland



“Somaliland, Puntland and other nearby lands are ‘markets’. What is happening here is common, ancient, has a complex history that passes through colonialism and globalisation, and continues to be commonly known as ‘trade’.” CAMP [J02a]

Maps are the primary instruments used to navigate oceans as well as the main managing charts for business. New maps for new routes are essential documents for establishing new trade. Sharjah’s port is split into mini territories related to its region. One of them, a Somali semi-state, is the theatre of operation for a new trade route between India and Somalia. Constructed in Salaya, Gujarat, wooden ships are fully loaded in Sharjah with commodities and goods of all kind to constitute a share of a new global economy of lead pirates.

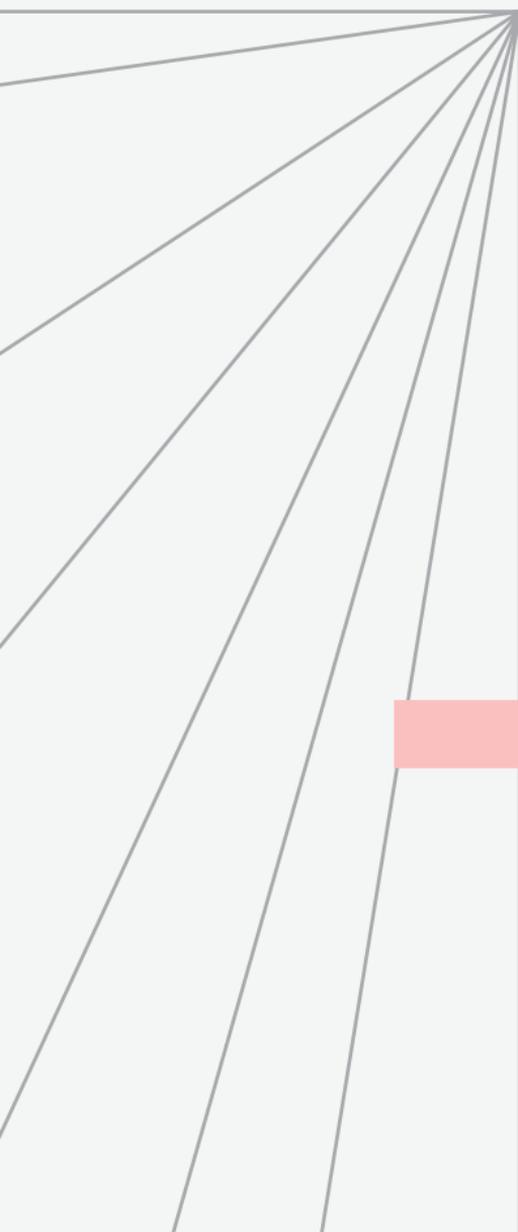
“It means that we are able to speak of parasites and pirates, with affection. It means that the fundamental unit is not mass, it is momentum. Velocity, not speed, Africa, not geography, the lines, not just the quantities. Not up or down, but sideways. This does not mean that we just replace one abstraction with another. It means that when boats going to Somalia carry dentist’s chairs and steel and used clothes and cars, and those coming back carry charcoal, or frankincense, and often nothing at all, we can sense the change in perspective, and perhaps change our own. The boats may remain the same, but everything changes, smells different, stacks up in a different way, is differently valued. Everything changes, but not to its inverse.” CAMP [J02b]

economic ones

The way out is not the opposite of the way in, it is another arrow.” CAMP [J02c]

Cao Fei

RMB City



“It’s a city that is a condensed incarnation of contemporary Chinese cities with most of their characteristics; a series of new Chinese fantasy realms that are highly self-contradictory, inter-permeative, pan-political, extremely entertaining, and laden with irony and suspicion.” Cao Fei [H02a]

The castaway on a desert island has no choice but to reconstruct his or her new life. The chance for a Second Life often ends in the reestablishment of a territory populated by previous demons. The virtual island where *RMB City* is located, within the infinity of the 3D online world, proceeds from this logic. The fantasy of its contour is re-enacted in a paroxysm of Chinese pre-Olympic urbanisation. Iconic architecture is connected by a massive infrastructure that recreates a meta-China ruled by massive capitalism. *RMB City*, a lost dream or utopia, is populated by avatars as cyber citizens and led by an interchangeable mayor and its emblematic flying creator, China Tracy. Avatars are motivated by visiting, documenting, staging, and partying until they reach a sense of accomplishment. From that moment, the phantasmagoria of the island begins to make the ghosts come alive and that limbo transforms them into permanent zombies of another life in another space.

other heterotopias

“Moving from planning and marketing stages both on – and offline, to real-life funded construction within Second Life itself, RMB City became the operative site for Cao Fei’s exploration of real estate and urban planning in early 21st century China, as well as utopian and dystopian fantasy and an engagement with the new networked publics for art.” Hans Ulrich Obrist [H02b]

Chen Chieh-jen

*Empire's
Borders*



“The visa interview system is a strategy by which strong countries discipline the peoples of weaker countries, and a technique by which ‘empire’ governs the people of the world.” Chen Chieh-jen [J03a]

The perfect definition of a space of exclusion would be a territory bound by closed borders. Another one would be the bureaucratic version of the same border. The land surveyor looks for an entry-point to escape the border’s administrative system. The discriminatory Kafkaesque bureaucracy as a structure of power is based on interviews, forms, visas, rights, appearance, origin, footprint, and visual sensitivity. Voices of ‘Yes, sir! No, sir!’ are heard. The Empire’s border is well secured behind fences and security gates. One wonders if it can be reached beyond the line-up. One wonders if it really exists. But if the border can be viewed and experienced, what about the Empire?

“For a long time the army remained part of US-Taiwan Cold War secrecy activities, trained and supported by the Western Enterprises Inc., the paramilitary arm of the CIA and Taiwanese intelligence. Empire’s Borders II in part reflects these real events that took place during numerous struggles and protests that have formed a long and protracted part of Taiwan’s hardships and struggles, both under Japanese colonial rule: the result of China readily ceding to Japan the island at the end of the Sino-Japanese War, and the political goals and rights of Taiwan’s growing marginalized population subsequently formed many of the continuing struggles and protests for social justice.” Pamela Kember [J03b]

economic ones

“Truth be told, Taiwan’s current post-authoritarian economic rise is built on dualities like these.” Du Qingchun [J03c]

Chen Shaoxiong
Gimhongsok
Tsuyoshi Ozawa

Xijing



“Xijing – the capital of the West – exists upon a fictive geopolitical axis created in correspondence to the real cities of Beijing (capital of the North), Nanjing (capital of the South) and Dongjing/Tokyo (capital of the East). Conceived since its inception as progressive exploration in five open-ended chapters, the Xijing project departs from the literary exercises of fictional geography and imaginative mapping, to voyage instead through the ‘enactment’ of a symbolic territory where the connections between spatiality and identity are continuous with its collective production.” Beatrice Leanza [H03a]

Xijing literally means the capital of the West. A fictional territory located in the Northern part of Asia is constructed through the exploration of mythology and fairy tales. A heterotopia far beyond nation and nationalism, Xijing is articulated around the combination of multiple regional identities. Three different cultures united by a common storytelling trait are not deprived of a great sense of humour. Absurdity is king in Xijing, from the nationalistic symbol of the flag to its military might of weapons as well as the organisation of Olympic games. Their friendship remains a key to its fundamental value.

other heterotopias

“Xijing is a place that very well could, even should, logically exist, and yet does not. Indeed, the name has been used at various points throughout history to describe cities now known by other toponyms.”
Philip Tinari [H03b]

Chen Zhen

Village Without Frontiers



A village within the city and a house on top of a chair raise issues about interrelationships and differences between topos (place) and locus (location). The idea of a village is defined by the reality of a community as a form of social organisation. Each house around the world possesses the same ability to shelter and protect the domestic. Based on this premise, the idea of a global village does not reside only in the proximity of possible contact between communities, but also in the possibility of imagining ‘a village without frontiers’, a proposal calling for tolerance and common understanding among different cultures.

those outlined by universal values

“The project has its own total visual poetics but it also raises various more complex issues: equality, community, tolerance and mutual understanding, coexistence, a dialogue without frontiers.

The process of realization requires time and in-depth research in relation to daily life, and establishes a dialogue through my personal experience, ‘transexperience’ in different cultures, ideologies and social contexts in a world characterized by globalization. The use of candles (in China the candle is a symbol of the life of an individual) to produce houses on children’s chair has a particular significance: constructing a village without frontiers. It is up to us to begin, but our hopes are always projected towards the next generation. The use of candles (in China the candle is a symbol of the life of an individual) to produce houses on children’s chair has a particular significance: constructing a village without frontiers. It is up to us to begin, but our hopes are always projected towards the next generation.” Chen Zhen [A03a]

Tiffany Chung

*Ho Chi
Minh City*



“Since Vietnam’s economy began its move toward a market system in 1986, it has become one of the fastest growing in the world. The dramatic effects of economic development, urbanisation and consumer culture on Vietnam – and other countries in Asia – are a central concern in my work.” Tiffani Chung [G01a]

From the surface, all Asian metropolises have a lot in common, beginning with the compulsive use of media devices, LED screens, and lights transforming the skyline into a luminescent body. At street level, lifestyle and youth culture also tend to contaminate each other with only a few details deriving from a city’s original culture. Cities are expanding organisms and their residents are the particles of larger systems connected via the Internet, satellites, and cables. Assimilating biology and environment becomes another way to understand urban systems. The city is a living organism in need of merging urban planning (structure) and society. The floating city made of Asian vernacular architecture layered together is inspired by nature. It proposes a new sustainable way of living for an ecologically precarious future.

those that have constructed fictions

“An expanse of lichen represents the fallacious promise that indiscriminately advancing towards a global standard of living will automatically result in improved quality of life. [...] Fungal spores are parasites, encroaching upon and living off other organisms. Expanding cities demonstrate similar behavior by swallowing up suburbs and the surrounding land and thus destroying established social structures.” Tiffani Chung [G01b]

Shahab Fotouhi

Teheran



We commonly feel forlorn imagining a territory under massive clouds whose atmospheric pressure sucks energy like a vacuum inhaling dust, ready to explode at any moment. Lightning and its loud acoustic effect consign the viewer into a short moment of unconsciousness and then fear. The first droplets on a face brought by wind mark the second stage. Afterwards, like the final act, heavy rain, a louder thunderstorm, and violent gusts together project a frenzied conclusion. A rainbow may be seen later, when the sun dares to appear. The possible detention of nuclear power in Iran refers to this specific state of mind through artistic expression in giant red paint with a white dot mushroom lifted in the air.

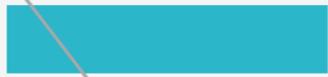
“It further explores approaches for us to destabilise presumably fixed viewpoints and weave an open history that ‘sees’ knowledge re-circulating, re-interpreting or re-applying.”
 Natascha Sadr Haghghian, Ashkan Sepahvand
 [E01a]

personal kingdom

“In June 2009, just prior to the now infamous Iranian presidential election, Shahab Fotouhi returned to Teheran to undertake an exhibition. Rather than working with object display, Fotouhi turned the exhibition space into a campaign headquarters for the opposition candidate, Mir-Hossein Mousavi. Not only does this action blur the relationship between art’s passivity and political action, it also makes a very real comment on the politics of consent in Iran.”
 Natasha Conland
 [E01b]

Ryuro Fukuda

*Infinite
Islands*



“Staring at an island floating in a blue lagoon will reveal resort pools scattered about. Fukuda uses the medium of photography as a tool to retouch and intervene with his own photographs, in an effort to manipulate reality and the imaginary world to challenge our perceptions.”

Fumio Nanjo

[F02a]

“Infinite Islands depicts an imaginary, paradise-like view of pools of water on an island in the middle of an ocean. A closer look at the image shows that the island is surrounded by craggy cliffs, making it seem as if access to it is very difficult. If you could get there however, this is an idyllic place where anyone would want to spend some time.”

Fumio Nanjo

[F02b]

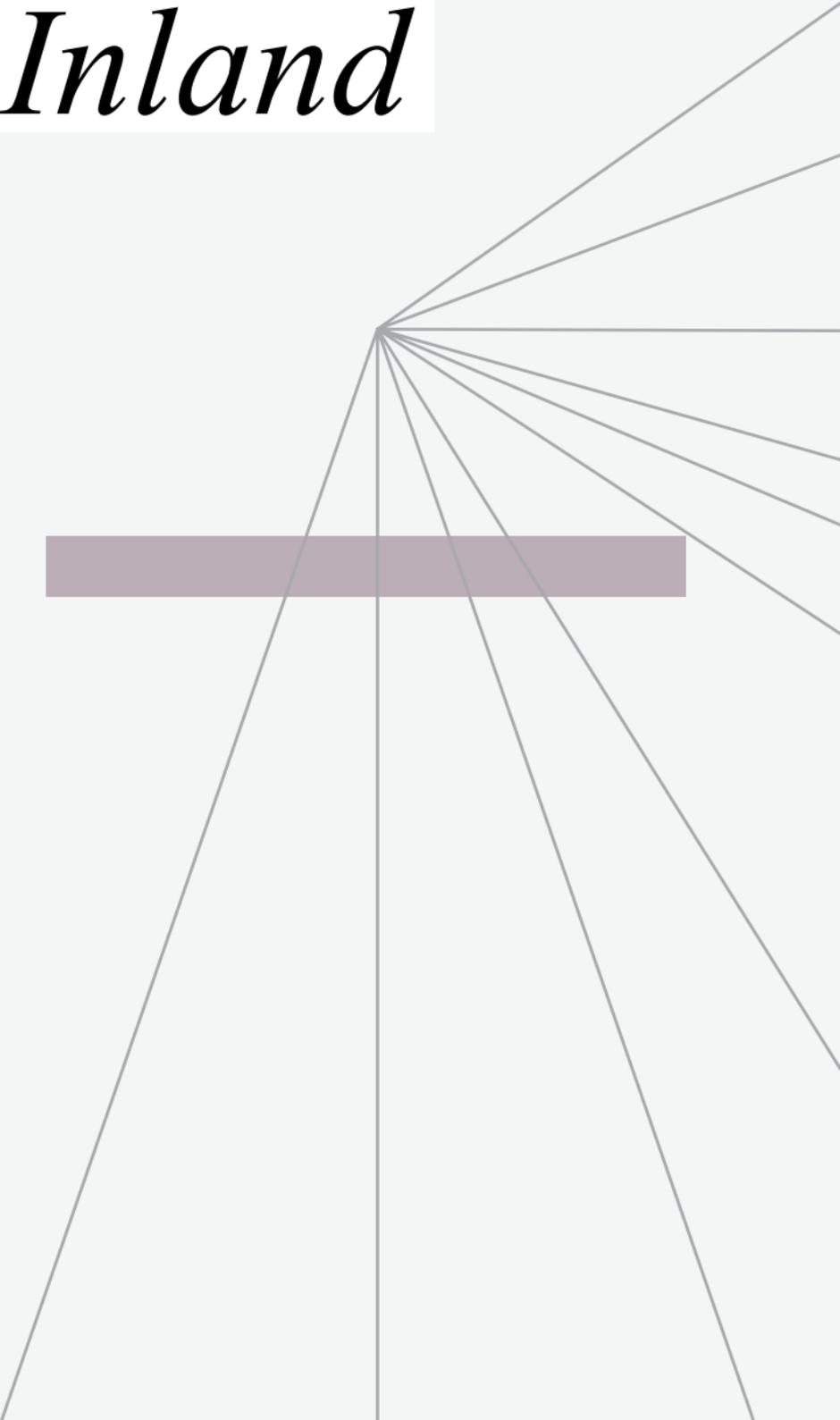
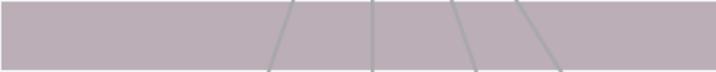
Water is in water. Water can be contained in numerous ways. An ocean is a gigantic swimming pool, a thousand miles long and wide. Some islands are surrounded by this vast immensity. Other islands contain enough water to sustain themselves. Voyagers can easily pass within a few miles of an atoll and never see it, its land only a few feet above the sea.

unlimited

What is the difference between land and liquid? Flying above the seas and oceans, one counts an infinite number of small islands that are impossible to locate or name. They appear and disappear like once-in-a-lifetime fantasies. Beginning with real documentation, Infinite Islands explores the beauty of the global environment. Appropriating those islands, it transforms them into fantastic laboratories for the manipulation of geology and geography.

Simryn Gill

Inland



“... subjecting found objects, books, local materials and sites – each of which carry specific meanings and histories – to a range of processes including photographing, collecting, erasing, casting, tearing, arranging, stitching, rubbing, wrapping and engraving.”

Russell Storer

[C03a]

Each territory carries its own specificities, each journey its own route, and each traveller his/her own eyes. This alchemy of surveying makes each experience unique. Photography, found objects, encounters, and collections of any kind are the materialisation of a voyage. In Western Australia's outback, homes are stages where collected images are converted into texts, objects are transformed into stories, people into narrators. The journey is magical and imposes its own logic on each encounter.

those defined by an epic journey

“Can I see what a collective ‘inside’ defined by nation might look like?” Simryn Gill [C03b]

“Seeking an understanding of the politics of place informs her most recent work, Inland. This series has a filial relationship with Dalam, and A small town at the turn of the century in its nod towards an anthropological survey. Inland confounds what is normally expected from photographs of Australia's interior and eschews decorous landscapes, vast horizons or smiling rugged people, for modest interiors of homes. Indeed there are no people present, only the houses they inhabit as evidence of their subjectivity.” Naomi Cass [C03c]

Guan Wei

Dow Island



“The work pays close attention to human destiny. Environmental damage, conflict, large numbers of immigrants and refugees around the world, breaches of human rights, and religious intolerance are all issues contributing to a state of crisis and misery.” David Williams [D03a]

“The islands are a figment of the artist’s imagination. Set in a great sea of an infinite variety of blues, Guan Wei’s little amoebic, fragile figures are ever present on the canvas and are on a seemingly impossible journey. They inhabit the three main islands – Calamity in the West, Trepidation and Aspiration in the East. On Calamity, there is fear and in great anxiety, people appear to have taken to small boats in a desperate attempt to find a better place. Perhaps they have been spooked by the submarine lurking menacingly offshore to the west. On Trepidation the figures huddle and gesture towards the unknown and on Aspiration, as they emerge from the water and strike land, there is an anticipation of a sense of naïve optimism and hope for the future.” David Williams [D03b]

reminiscent ones

Blowing winds are unpredictable and can capsize a boat, depositing its wreckage ashore. Beginning a long sea journey driven by anxiety requires a mixture of both courage and desperation. Dreaming of a better future, or a better land, how many sailors have ventured out to sea in small vessels, handing their fates to the goddess Fortuna? This great aspiration may have left strong memories for the fortunate who succeeded in their expeditions. Never to be forgotten... The possibility of a better life is the strongest force leading men to begin all over again, elsewhere.

Zarina Hashmi

World



The pleasure in constructing atlases is infinite. At first, one has endless possibilities to negotiate in the geography and the position of borders. A personal atlas of the world includes one's individual interpretation and experience. The first cartographer sailed the ocean to understand the position of territories, locating mountains and rivers, and drawing the coastline. This ingenious practice is not required to outline borders. Their positions remain arbitrary and can be easily erased, shifted, swept, and replaced at will. This inclination for personal mapping operates as a prophecy with the borders of a personal atlas that one day could correspond to the experience of crossing them.

those outlined by universal values

"I thought it would be a good idea to look at all the borders I had crossed. I was thinking of not just borders on a map but also the barriers one crosses in life-where you come from, the risks you take in life in crossing over to do new things. I started with the border that has most affected my life-the border between India and Pakistan. I decided to make an atlas from existing maps and draw the borders that I have crossed from country to country... There is the American continent with Mexico, Canada, and the United States. Then, there's Europe, there's the Middle East from Turkey to Saudi Arabia, and there's Africa-the only country I have visited there is Morocco, so you find it on my map. " Zarina Hashmi [A04a]

"Hashmi has taken the leap from a personal journey into the realm of shared journeys – addressing the dilemma of people and cities across the world from Delhi to Sarajevo to Baghdad to New York." Geeti Sen [A04b]

Mona Hatoum

Nablus



*“Where is the road to the road?
And where are we, the marching on the
footpath of the present tense, where are we?
Our talk a predicate and a subject before the
sea, and the elusive foam of speech the dots
on the letters, wishing for the present tense a
foothold on the pavement.”*

Mahmoud Darwish

[L03a]

The fascination with a map made of soap lies in the fact that territorial borders could shift and dissolve slowly with time and usage. A fluctuating map, an ever-changing land made out of Nablus olive oil soap pieces fleetingly reminds one of retroactive geometry. Soon it disappears.

“Present Tense is an installation piece of a grid composed of 2,400 blocks of olive oil soap from the town Nablus, north of Jerusalem. The surface of soaps are embedded with tiny red glass beads that trace the boundaries of the disjointed areas or cantons carved out of historic Palestine by the Oslo Agreement (1993) as the future Palestinian state. The transient nature of soap holds the promise of dissolving the inequitable borders and contrasts with the centuries old ancient tradition of soap-making preserved by Palestinians. Hatoum often employs puns in her titles and this piece is no exception. Her use of the term ‘tense’ relates to perpetual tension due to unresolved status of Palestinians. This state of affairs is also referenced through her choice to eliminate the word ‘perfect’ out of the grammatical term ‘present perfect tense’.”

Salwa Mikdadi

[L03b]

Ho Tzu Nyen

Singapore



“Although government-sanctioned accounts of Singapore’s history tend to emphasize its British colonial past and its ‘founding’ in 1819 by Sir Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles, there are few reliable sources that document the country’s precolonial founder. One story can be traced to the mid-14th century.

A Sumatran prince named Sang Nila Utama arrived on the shores of an island, where he spotted a strange beast. Utama’s aide, Demang Lebar Daun, informed him that the beast must be a lion (the source of his conviction, however, is unclear). Utama thus decided to name the island Singapura – singa meaning lion and pura meaning city.” Darryl Wee [C04a]

“[...] How cats – big and small, wild and domesticated, imagined and real – have been enigmatically woven into the history of Singapore.” Ho Tzu Nyen [C04b]

those defined by an epic journey

“Singapore, a land founded twice, found and lost and found again.” Ho Tzu Nyen [C04c]

History is a narrative that we define and redefine, again and again, according to political intentions and social and cultural variations. Contrary to myth, history fluctuates in a conflicting appropriation of tangible traces and recognised facts. History also cheats reality in order to produce an eternal legend of historical figures. That is, until the day that the flow of energy shifts and one story is replaced by another to become history recorded with new historical facts. The history of colonialism is definitely one to be written again.

Hong Hao

World



“The man from Borges’ story ultimately endeavors to lose the book among the thousands of books in the library depots, but this personal ‘encyclopedia’ of Hong Hao’s is too bizarre and too amusing to lose.”

Yuting Chou

[E02a]

An upside-down, mirrored, or inverted map of the world proposes a new perspective; a new way to look at the globe, a new political and physical world is charted to shift the known sphere into new arrangements. Land and sea are inverted, borders change positions, names and legends become arbitrary, topographies are replaced, and the center of gravity is shifted. Those maps exist in our mind and it only takes one drawing to bring them to life. A reorganisation of the geo- and body-politics of knowledge begins from here, a diachronic perception of the too familiar and of the too easily accepted.

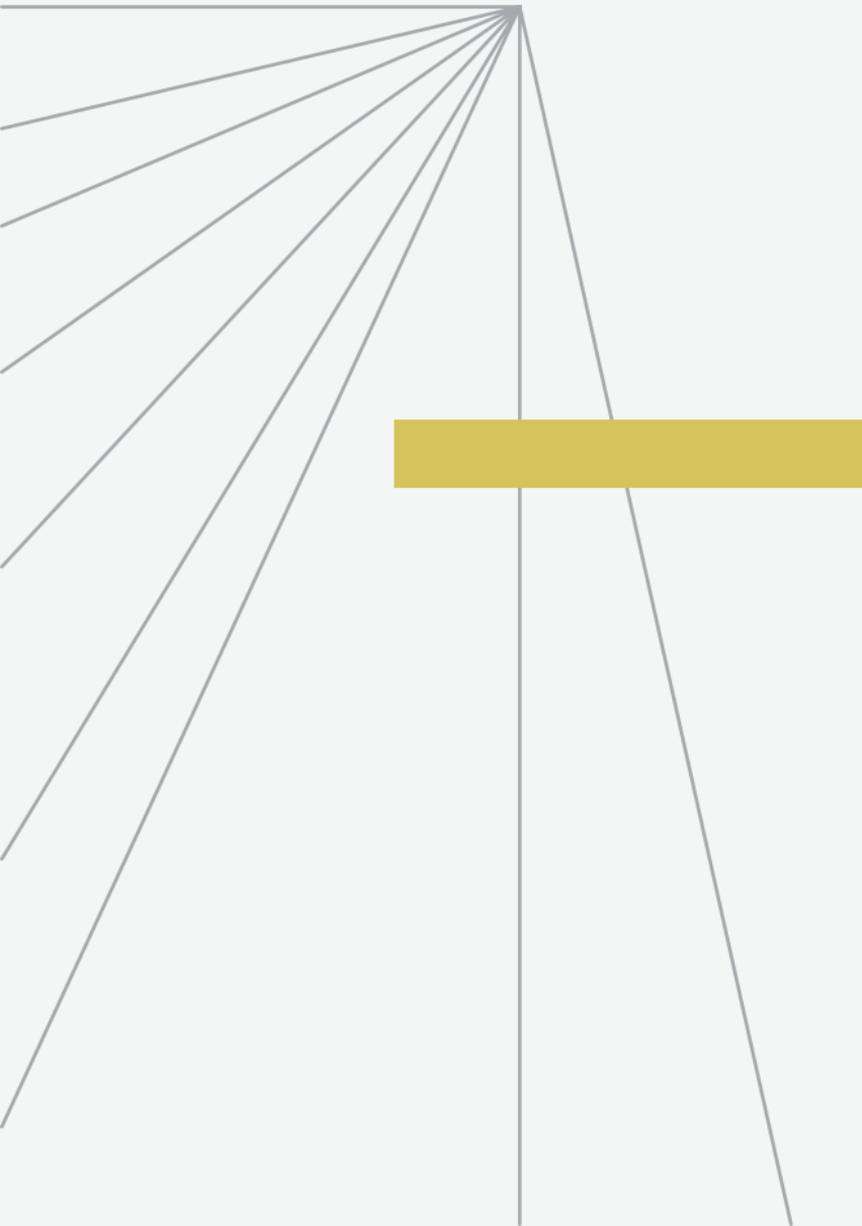
personal kingdom

“This theme occupies almost one quarter of my work. So far I have completed seven different world maps. I have long been interested in maps, especially historical maps, because they are capable of inspiring ideas on what we take as common knowledge. They are almost the most direct and the most economical way to know the world. The Division of Nuclear Arms, my first creation of this kind, exposes the threat to human existence by laying bare a military secret. The contours in the map are arbitrarily manipulated to make it look ‘absurd’ as a map from ancient times.” Hong Hao

[E02b]

Khaled Hourani

Ramallah



“Picasso goes everywhere. Whats is so exceptional to bring him in Ramallah. The occupation is exceptional, not the exhibition of a Picasso.” Khaled Hourani [E03a]

In a time when the art world is becoming increasingly exclusive, remote territories are completely disengaged from cultural production and exhibition. In Palestine, Ramallah is one of those places without much access to international cultural events. Therefore, when it receives for the first time the visit of *Buste de Femme*, a modern painting by Pablo Picasso, the singular painting and the process of travelling becomes the exhibition itself. The issue here is not the irony of the painting depicting an uncovered women’s head in a Muslim country, but more the organisation involved in bringing such a treasure through all the gates and security systems of Israel first, and then the West Bank. How might one insure the masterpiece for its safety? Can we guarantee its security? How does one cross military checkpoints with this unique piece of merchandise?

personal kingdom

“It took two years of preparations and discussions to get from Khaled Hourani’s wonderful idea of bringing a painting of Picasso to Ramallah to the final transport operation that took less than two days. Lot’s of time was spent waiting. We can wait a bit more until one or two states will become a reality, not speculating if any of this solutions is a good one by the way. We can wait until the Arab Spring becomes a Summer, Autumn and Winter and will blow to the West – a place that desperately needs some seasons too. We are, after this project, not too concerned about time, as the dust needs to settle to know what it has achieved or forgot to raise.” Els Roelandt [E03b]

Huang Yong Ping

Globe



“I am not quoting these classifications here out of a passion for library science, as Borges did, or to make an impossible, Foucaultian philosophical reflection on otherness. Nor is it because I am Chinese, but rather because I am familiar with the order of upsetting classification: the animal belonging to the emperor is also the emperor of animals.” Huang Yong Ping [I02a]

A globe flattened and sliced like an apple’s skin loses its three dimensionality. A map of predictions addresses time as a new way to travel in the near future. A membrane stimulated by 431 labeled needles – like copper wire – absorbs 46 years of predicted calamities.

“A compelling list of predicted disasters is plotted out chronologically on four fold-out maps of the world. The maps are rendered in a strange spiral formation resembling an unbroken apple peel and join together like puzzle pieces. Based on Die Wämezeitmaschine in der Ökonomie 1979 by Joseph Beuys, Travel Guide for also borrows imagery from ancient Chinese almanacs, which often attempted to provide uncertain travelers a means to navigate a complex and fearsome cosmology. Specifically, Huang Yong Ping references the Shan Hai Jing (Classic of Mountains and Seas, Sengai-kyo, Japanese), a bestiary from the Chinese Warring States Period, 475-221 B.C.E. Also includes quotes from Future Century by Li Yu, 1993.” Huang Yong Ping [I02b]

those of predicted time

The globe is left naked and the predictions serve as a new skin for producing a new cosmology of the world. Time is the new order of things; it is a taxonomy of things to come, beyond uncertainty and anxiety.

Ichi Ikeda

Ryukyu Arc



Water is the earth's biggest territory. It is also an essential source of life and its access is a basic human right. Water can be interpreted as a new language with which to promote universal values for the planet. Global awareness of the issue is at the centre of a series of projects beginning in Taiwan and reaching different parts of the world.

"We the Peoples are to realize why Water, which is so full of life to us, is our medium for moving the borders, in everyday customs, histories, various cultures and so forth, simplifying to a profound exchange between human being and human being."

Ichi Ikeda

[A05a]

those outlined by universal values

"The Arcing Ark 1997 was developed as a joint-project between two sites with different cultural backgrounds, hoping to create new connection for the future through water. Kaseda and Taipei locate on the opposite sides, north and south between the islands called Ryukyu Arc. Arcing Ark is named with great hopes; the islands, stretching in an arcing row geographically, will create the time-network for the future earth." Mihoko Ikeda

[A05b]

The coast of Taiwan and Japan are linked by a dotted line made of small islands. Partly coral reef, partly volcanic, the Ryukyu Islands define a boundary between the East China Sea (West) and the Philippine Sea (East). If geographic lines on the sea are invisible lines to be crossed, territorial water is well over the radar and a major geopolitical issue for the region's future.

Runa Islam

Faro



How far is Faro? The voyage from a continent to an island is special. In realising this transitory passage between one condition to another, the ship or ferry becomes a special place. Floating cities or simple cabins, they allow passengers to experience a disconnected moment of time. This is an essential component in the journey: the need for a changing materiality – from continental to oceanic – in order to reach a destination. Moving on water creates an atypical feeling, as the slow motion of the boat and the anxiety of the impending arrival compete with the pleasure in being at the mercy of the sea. The boat is a stage for a life drama rehearsal. This uncertainty exists until the last moment when on the horizon the land or island appears.

those defined by an epic journey

“The island holds a particular place in the history of cinema: Roberto Rossellini’s Stromboli, terra di Dio (1950) was filmed there. The first of five collaborations between Rossellini and actress Ingrid Bergman, led to an extra-marital affair that undermined the film’s commercial success in America and kept the pioneer of Italian neo-realism out of Hollywood.” Marc Lanctot [C05a]

“It was during her explanatory trip to Faro, that Islam was stuck by the everyday drama of the ferry she took from the mainland: ‘The ship seemed like an open stage. An abstracted, moving platform upon which small dramas and exchanges took place. Between the elements and the people and the vessel itself’.” Kirse Junge-Stevnsborg [C05b]

Mella Jaarsma

Yogyakarta



Can an artwork replace the loss of your home and all its belongings? Is it solely the role of NGOs to intervene in the reconstruction and recovery of disaster zones? Tsunamis, earthquakes, and typhoons are very frequent in Asia. They are tragedies that deeply affect the population, the ecology, and the economy of a region.

“This work between costumes/shelter/tents/ flags, are made out of digital photographs of the earthquake rubble or spots with left over of former households. Everything was destroyed except some concrete constructions, a few cupboards still standing here and there, etc. With everything destroyed how do we build again? Do we replace the old or do we want to improve? Do we have the ability to improve? I made these shelters out of digital prints of the empty land near my house in southern Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Houses use to stand on this land but they were completely destroyed by the earthquake in May 2006. The shelters are actually satirical comments about the ironic relationship among NGO’s and the community they are trying to ‘save’. These organizations would come and take over areas where common people used to live before the disaster. Different NGOs divided by religion, country and vision, would make their claim over these areas for recovery projects. They place their flags, fence up their land and start their field work and write proposal with their specific NGO jargon.” Mella Jaarsma [I03a]

those of predicted time

One could argue that natural disasters are endemic within their specific logic but can be alleviated by cultural empathy.

Emily Jacir

*Occupied
Territories*



“For visual artists working in Palestine, questions of how to represent the reality of a situation that is by its design tightly controlled and closely monitored by the occupying military forces and civilians – whether it is the division of the land, or the movement of people, vital resources, material goods, money or images – is much more complicated. Simply and cursorily outlined here, the vast infrastructure of restriction – often ‘temporary’ in name and justified for ‘security’ purposes – renders routine activities in the Occupied Territories extremely difficult, when not impossible, for Palestinian residents, artists among them. Records of daily life are not simply mundane, but serve as highly charged testimonies of the occupation’s far-reaching impact on civilians.” HG Masters [L04a]

Everyday routes, like going from home to work, can take on various characteristics depending where one lives. To commute, some are jammed in trains; others spend hours in their cars with their favorite music; many simply walk across their neighbourhoods. For others, the journey can become the subject of documentation. With the complicated infrastructure in the Occupied Territories, Israel has created an archipelago of islands, each with a specific set of checkpoints and border devices. Crossing Surda, starts with learning the A, B, and C dividing zones that guarantee the division of the Palestinians within their territories.

“The restriction of movement peaked at 763 points of closure in the West Bank alone, consisting of military checkpoints, partial military checkpoints, earth mounds, earth walls, trenches, roadblocks and gates.”
Palestinian Monitor [L04b]

Michael Joo

Alaska



The extremities of the world are often mistaken for leftover landscapes, considered only for their mining resources. Then, margins are usually a place of unlimited tension. Alaska, for instance, at the extreme northern part of the North American continent, is populated by Inuits, Mongolian Asians originating from Eastern Eurasia. A region oscillating between the East and the West, Alaska is a bridge to nowhere. Following an oil pipeline, one eventually reaches its end and can reconstruct the world from a new perspective.

those outlined by universal values

“Located at an extreme end of the North American continent, Alaska is officially an American territory but has long been the habitat of Mongolian Asians (sometimes also referred to as Eastern Eurasians) and a borderland that has been historically and ethnically interpenetrated.”

Tae Hyunsuno

[A06a]

“I am interested in our attempts to control the physical environment and quantify human existence, and their relation to Western notions of God and nature. Presented at the billboard scale of advertising, the work asks questions about agency: Where do we (as represented by the smallest amounts of caloric energy) stand in relation to geologic history and fact (in the form of the fossil fuel traveling through the Alaskan pipeline)? And are we moving towards or away from the source or destiny implied by the roadway of this constructed image?”

Micheal Joo

[A06b]

Yeondoo Jung

Jeju Island



“The whole film is being made by me as an artist creating the scenery by hand. At the last minute it becomes an illusionary pictorial view. The entire process will be witnessed by the audience, everything is made one-by-one by hand.” Yeondoo Jung [E04a]

“In Handmade Memories – Jeju Island (2008), a woman talks about a promise made by her boyfriend, ‘to take me to Jeju Island to ride camels and take pictures.’ [...] As this story unfolds, the screen on the right begins with an image of an empty stage, which is completely transformed into a tropical beach in a single, highly orchestrated take. Two trucks loaded with sand back slowly into the frame, dumping their full payloads. As they exit, a hydraulic excavator spreads the sand evenly across the floor. A swarm of workers with shovels enter the scene, bringing with them a plastic blue pond and fake palm trees. Two stagehands descend from the rafters on ropes, dropping leaves onto the ersatz beach. A worker leads a live camel into the scene.”

Michael Connor

[E04b]

personal kingdom

During the peak months for marriage in spring and autumn, planes bound for Jeju Island are fully packed with newly married couples. Every half hour, flights leave most major Korean cities to reach the island of fantasies. Among them, Loveland is a theme park dedicated to sex exhibits, large phallus statues, stone labias, and an exhibition on the ‘masturbation cycle’ for the future health of the new couple. Jeju itself is a giant theme park developed with hundreds of love hotels ready to satisfy any phantasm. For honeymooners and shutterbugs, Jeju Island is a true paradise.

Reena Saini Kallat

Kashmir



“Stories recounted by feminist writers about these search and recovery operations for abducted women both from India and Pakistan after Independence make for chilling reading. Veena Das observes that the recovered women were not seen as citizens with equal rights but were seen as ‘sexual and reproductive beings’ who had to be returned to their rightful territory to save the ‘national honour’. As Das observes: ‘In the fantasy of men, the inscription of nationalist slogans on the bodies of women (Victory to India, Long Live Pakistan) or proclaiming possessions of their bodies (This thing, this loot – ye maal – is ours), would create a future memory by which men of the other community would never be able to forget that the woman as territory had already been claimed and occupied by other men. The bodies of the women were surfaces on which texts were to be written and read – icons of the new nations’.” Nancy Adajania [L05a]

The imbrication of body and territory is never so intricate as when the flesh inscribes the contour of territorial struggles. Kashmiri women experienced this relationship during the early days of the India/Pakistan Partition and the resulting definition of a new border. Raped, violated, and finally stamped, their bodies served as a way to mark and control the land. Deeply inscribed in the skin of victims, the limits of bestiality can never be erased and will always be claimed. Their growing scars mark the frontier between civilisation and savagery and the immemorial mutilation for the sake of a still – unsolved territorial partition.

Amar Kanwar

Orissa



“I have been filming the resistance of local communities in Orissa to the industrial interventions taking place, since 1999. It is hard to understand the meaning and scale of destruction there. Over a period of time, I began to feel that we were not looking anymore, the process of seeing, interpreting and understanding had become too fast, too seamless and too automatic. Strangely this seemed to slow and numb the mind. I felt that I had to learn to begin to look again.” Amar Kanwar [K01a]

Territory can be the cause of war, war against people and their own land. In contrast to the spectacular wars fought via media spectacle, territorial wars can last a long time with limited visibility. Battlegrounds do not expose one militarised army against another. The latest war technologies are not applied either. In Orissa, the local population fights against capitalist industry and more specifically against a steel plant complex, a bauxite mining and alumina plant, and other polluting and inequitable industries and institutions. In another approach, war takes the form of forceful resistance in order for a population to defend its right to the land, to the memory of its inheritance.

“The Scene of Crime was filmed in the proposed project areas of the POSCO steel plant complex in district Jagatsinghpur, of the bauxite mining and alumina plant of Vedanta Alumina, Sterlite Industries in the Niyamgiri hills, of the Vedanta University and resort complex of the Sterlite Industries in district Puri and of Tata Steel & other companies in the Kalinga Nagar Industrial Area, district Jajpur, Orissa.”
Amar Kanwar [K01b]

loaded landscapes

Junhonn Kao

*Floating
Island*



“Bubble (1) (2)

Sanzhi-Nantou- Pacific (1999-2000)

(1) Building a white globular construct (hallow, 3 m in diameter, containing facilities for living and creating).

Living and creating inside the globe for six months.

(2) Bringing the globe to the sea. Projecting video recordings of the lives and the creating activities inside the globe during Part I on the surface of the globe while having the globe floating freely on the sea.”

Jun-honn Kao

[B02a]

nomadic ones

The territorial contour of a sphere is somehow infinite while its inner section is well outlined. Living in a sphere or a bubble is unusual as it allows the possibility of constructing a limited world in a same way that it works for an island. Inhabiting a floating island-bubble is similar; one is able to live in a cocoon without having to come out. While the globe freely floats on the sea, the outer membrane supports the projection of a daily life recorded inside the bubble, collapsing the relationship between an infinite exterior and a limited interior.

Gülsün
Karamustafa

Orient



To be well-behaved and have good manners is the basis of politeness; what is legal and illegal depends very much on the time and place of a culture. In that sense, etiquette is a diplomatic strength as it forces a dialogue of mutual understanding and acceptance of difference between one society and another. The banquet table is a territory for geopolitical codes of etiquette and tolerance.

“Over time Karamustafa’s works have addressed and questioned various tropes of the so-called Orient. By appropriating the work of Eugène Delacroix, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, and other nineteenth-century orientalists, Karamustafa allows for a complex reading of the expressions of male desire, whether that of the French maestro or the Turkish Sultan. Fragmenting-Fragments (1999), a mosaic-like display of Oriental women’s body parts (breasts, hands, feet, hair), emphasizes the sensual and the sexual as well as the marketable and inter-changeable qualities of those objectified bodies.” Aimee Chang [E05a]

personal kingdom

“The book that Gülsün Karamustafa came across in a second hand book store in Istanbul this year is yet another transferral of such codifications. It is an adaptation of the French book Pour Bien Connaitre Les Usage Mondaine that was originally printed in Paris in 1910 by Pierre Lafitte et Cie. Hence the book is somehow trapped in time and in an Oriental enigma. It attempts to apply the rules of the west in tone and imagery; yet is literarily, and for the eyes of non-Arabic readers visually composed within the history of the Ottoman Empire and the east.” November Paynter [E05b]

Tatsuo Kawaguchi

Cosmos



Cosmos is not only a synonym for universe; it also refers to a system of order, a spacio-temporal taxonomy of the visible. The starry firmament is filled with light which is largely produced by a plethora of planets. For the common person, this fascinating spectacle is difficult to grasp beyond the simple attraction of its visual magnetism. Besides the striking image of tiny sparkles illuminating the deep dark infinite, the tragedy of a star's birth and death is played out every night. The cosmos is a map in which one can learn about the year each star's light was emitted. It also shows the calculated distance of each star in light years. Constellations are defined by groups of stars connected through lines-of-sight in permanent rotation around the earth's axis. Cosmos-Cygnus and Cosmos-Lira are two atlases of the universe from the perspective of one star.

“The year each star's light was emitted is inscribed on photographs of the night sky, calculated from the distance of each starts in the light year.” Chiharu Tsukamoto [F03a]

unlimited

“Kawaguchi's Cosmos series presents photographs of various constellations – Cygnus, Hercules, etc. – and adds dates to each star, signifying how long the light has been traveling across space to reach us. The great variety in the dates reminds us that the constellations only make sense when seen from our particular vantage point in cosmic time and space.”
Marius Gomblich [F03b]

Naiza Khan

*Manora
Island*



With 14,000 inhabitants, Manora Island has a long history of occupation and possesses a rich cultural and religious past. Many sites – a Hindu temple, a Sufi shrine, a church – are reminders of the diverse religious heritage of the territory with its social fabric escaping the discrimination of mainland Pakistan. Islands are laboratories for building new societies but also for preserving old ones. This particular one will rapidly be erased as most of the population was encouraged to leave it, vacating public spaces and buildings and leading to an undeniable collapse.

“Manora thus serves as one metaphor for the wrenching transformations in much of the region, where globalized development has yet to begin, but whose rhetoric of technological progress and promise of newness threatens to erase existing sociality. Nevertheless, as modern development remains a real need for most peoples of the region, so the artist’s intervention is not a call for nostalgia, but one for reflection and concern for subaltern lifeworlds caught within structures of inequality.” Iftikhar Dadi [D04a]

reminiscent ones

“The narratives that are at play in this context are immense, and I am imposing my own personal subjectivity to reclaim this space; a space that is at the brink of erasure. I also realised that landscape could be used in a metaphorical way. Aesthetically, my process is being driven by content that is continuously in flux. So each time I return from Manora, I ask myself, ‘How do I reclaim this space and what is my position in all this?’ I am neither a journalist, politician nor property developer, but an artist who is witnessing certain changes in small and large proportions. My decisions are measured by the immensity of what I find and my anxiety of aestheticizing the misery out there.” Naiza Khan [D04b]

Kim Sooja

2727 km



“A Bottari (bundle in Korean) is the most flexible container in which we carry the minimized valuable things and its use is universal through history.” Kim Sooja [B03a]

“In November 1997, rejoining the nomadic life of contemporary artists, the better to in order to better reinforce it (but also enlarging the field of action of her work and its semantic purview), Kim Sooja decided to take her bundles on the road. She spent eleven days going around towns and other places in Korea that help specific memories of her. This means that her bundles were loaded with new content; the memory of her past history and travels. In the filmed performance she is seen from behind, hieratic and impassive, sitting above firmly-attached Bottari in a truck driving through ever-changing scenery.” Julian Zugazagoitia [B03b]

nomadic ones

Learning is a journey across the field of knowledge. Geography and epistemology on the road as territories on the move are amongst the best training. How to survey a land? The surveyor needs to walk and experience the field, moving from one point to another collecting information, travelling 2,727 kilometers in 11 days, going around to gather memories and histories of the field. The artist’s nomadic life on the road is the best way for her to accumulate evidence of her own traces of existence: travelling across her own image reflected in the mirror of the experience.

Koo Jeong-A

OuSSS



“To attempt to give a precise definition of Ousss would surely be like building a labyrinth from which I might never escape. The Land of Ousss seems to echo an installation mounted in 1999 on the floor of the Agnes b. gallery in Paris-child-like, fragile landscape, complete with house, hillocks, and lake..., a world apart comprising scattered elements sampled from various works by the artist.” Philippe Vergne [G02a]

The land of *Ousss* is another space. Text and language, concept and object, feeling and absence, *Ousss* is everything and anything situated around the artist’s production. *Ousss* does not belong to Rose but they share the same quality of a mysterious interiority. *Ousss* is everywhere and nowhere.

*“Appa beko castle city country crystal
dongshendowon
Dongghwabo dooya empire everhouse foggy
forest greentea
Hanulla hojeassi holihula house kimbo lake lessi
Merry mt. mts. Night ocean of ousss ousssaya
Park pass piano pluto river road secret sini
Snowysunny tangtari the tomorrow town ulbo
Ulludo umma via view village valley wish.”*
Koo Jeong-A [G02b]

those that have constructed fictions

“Koo Jeong-A is paradoxical, too, in the way that her powerful subjectivity and mysterious interiority are revealed only in a maze, or through a Land of Ousss. In this land invented by the artist, a land we never reach, there is a ‘secret passage between the world outside and inside, but one that never yields up its secret.’ That is where Koo Jeong-A takes shelter, where she is both exposed and protected.”
Christine Macel [G02c]

Lam Tung-pang

*Hong Kong
Island*



“Hong Kong, on the southern coast of China and now beyond its colonial past of 100 years, has again become a passive site of transition and mash-up, shifting interstitially from a marginalized Colonial-British-Hong Kong-Chinese multiplicity, to a new marginalized Post-colonial-Hong Kong-Chinese multiplicity, yet towards one direction that seems more controlled and unified with China.”

Abby Chen

[G03a]

A landscape with no perspective could be small, composed of fragmented elements from various origins. It could also be infinite. Who has not dreamt in front of a miniature model representing an ideal garden populated by tiny figures? The attraction of the complex island is embraced from one viewpoint. Perceiving details here and there, projecting oneself into the scene, becoming multiple, experiencing different times, colliding with different epochs... The viewer becomes the master of the synchronisation of one scene after another, with the possibility of building a new ecosystem based on one's personal memory and interpretations. Hong Kong Island is small, yet it is a jungle for those willing to play with/ in its endless density.

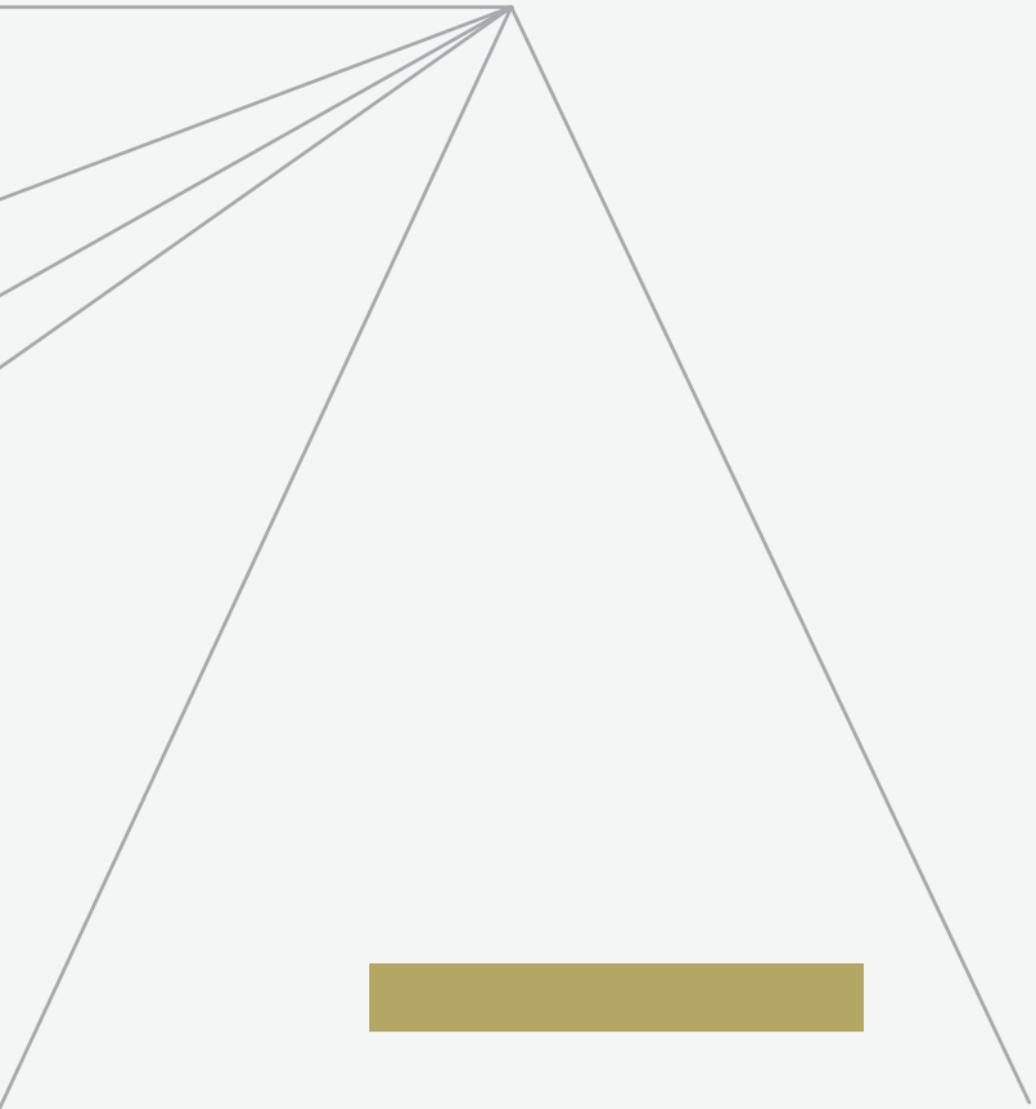
those that have constructed fictions

“In 2007 when it has been 10 years from 1997, I felt that Hong Kong is somewhat lost. What I mean by lost is that they argue if they want to become China or not. Or argue that Hong Kong is small and it is not even an important city. What I know is that Hong Kong has a lot of things they should've done and I don't know if I should say they wasted those 10 years, but there has been a lot of argument over this situation.” Lam Tung-pang

[G03b]

An-My Lê

29 Palms



29 Palms is one of those generic location names visible everywhere in the American West. Mountains, desert, gated communities, palm trees, and swimming pools are the unfinished extension of Los Angeles. The staging artificial nature is a perfect setting in which to unfold a variety of occupational scenarios: resort, golf, retirement center, prison, or military base. The fascinating aspect of the latter is that it transforms the Mojave Desert into a war-torn theatre of permanent violence. In 29 Palms Marine Corps base, the military is rehearsing a well-orchestrated fictional battle. The representation of a continuous conflict is performed across the boldness of such a landscape. No doubt the battle could take place in a Hollywood ‘cowboys and indians’ type of scenario, not to mention the Middle East.

“Like the forests of Virginia and the Studios of Hollywood (just 150 miles away), 29 Palms is a place where fictions are performed. On the base, marines both rehearse their own roles and play the parts of their adversaries: they are occasionally asked to dress up and act as Iraqi police and civilians, and linguists wearing traditional Iraqi clothing are sometimes brought in to create a ruckus in Arabic. The military housing is tagged with mock anti-American graffiti and fake villages are built of particleboard, their facades like the sets of old western movies. Lê feels that the presence of her camera also feeds the artifice – quite often she thinks it inspires the men to pose themselves to resemble what a ‘Marine’ looks like.” Karen Irvine [K02a]

loaded landscapes

Dinh Q. Lê

*Christmas
Island*



“When I saw the footage of the boat wreck off Christmas Island in 2010. I also hope that the work will enable the audience in Australia to remember that we are all immigrants. Somewhere along the way we have consciously or unconsciously erased our past as immigrants – through the need to forget in order to begin anew or to forge a new country or to assimilate into one. Only in remembering their origin can Australian empathize with the plights of the recent boat refugees.” Dinh Q. Lê [C06a]

A boat is a mobile territory on a quest for land or an island on which to land. If everything went as planned, the ship full of Iraqi and Iranian families in search of asylum on Christmas Island, an Australian external territory, would have reached the safety of land. Yet, to avoid the border patrol, the crew decided to brave the stormy seas, which resulted in the ship’s wreckage on a sharp cliff.

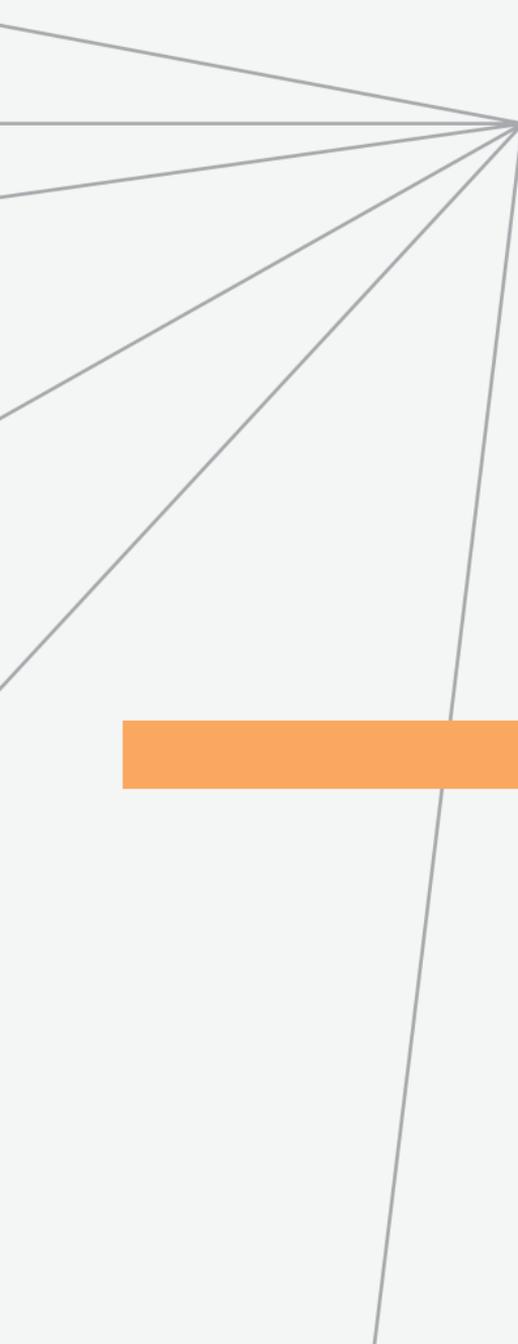
those defined by an epic journey

The story of those refugees ended in a collective tragedy witnessed by helpless islanders. From Vietnam to Cuba, Fuerteventura, Lampedusa, Manus Island, is there a sea without boat people refugees? Is there any ocean without this kind of tragedy? This is the collective memory of a world still in search of a global sanctuary. What if the oceans were transformed into one giant island?

“It is fitting that the ship in Erasure is but a mere illusion, for it refers to the influence of human imagination in scientific discovery, a crucial factor in colonial expansion: by rationalizing their imagined ‘understanding’ of the Indigenous inhabitants, colonials could systemize and control.” Zoe Butt [C06b]

Lee Bul

Utopia



“Lee Bul’s disparate and complex works probe timeless human tendencies: our lurking fear of the natural world, out-sized ambition and the abuse of power. The artist’s sculptures embody gruesome and surreal forms while addressing a host of hot button topics including the role of women in society, the promise of technology and, recently, the legacy of modernism as embodied in architecture.” HG Masters [G04a]

Mon grand récit...¹ is a territory located between memory and the promise of a great future. Twisted highways scrape two islands made of a skyscraper mountain and the *Monument to the Third International*. Fragments of trash collide in an entropically generated landscape – a place for multiple points of view and interpretation. From the landslide of a melting ground of icy material, a monument inclines towards its imminent fatal collapse. Another Babylonian tower in construction anticipates its own destruction. While the grid structure holds the ephemeral constructions, the accumulation process opens the possibilities of an unlimited number of new stories.

¹ *My big story...*

those that have constructed fictions

“I actually think this is an inherent condition of utopia to always give us the felling that it’s getting close. So human beings are always fated to dream of it and to plan it. And yet we’re also fated to be disappointed by the inevitable realization that it’s unreachable. Still we dream. I am fascinated by those failures, as well as the dreams that the dreamers knew could never materialize.” Lee Bul [G04b]

Lee Kit

*Johnny's
Apartment*



“Walking across the distance we find that the artist has constructed a small apartment for himself – or for Johnny – starting by laying down flooring over this small corner of the gallery to form a surface that measures perhaps 400 square feet amidst a space of at least 2000. Lee Kit has then filled in the apartment with readymade furniture, including a kitchenette, a bed, a table, some chairs, and a chest of drawers, all punctuated with paintings on cloth and cardboard of his own production. Generally matching a similar shade of sky blue, these painted objects act as shower curtain, folded sheets on an ironing board, bedsheets, tablecloths, dishrags, and even explicit paintings hung on the walls, bringing to fruition all of the possible uses the artist attempts to embed within the objects of his practice.” Robin Peckham [B04a]

nomadic ones

The first symptom of an occupation begins by laying out familiar and recognisable objects. In that sense, one can say that the recognition of the everyday defines a place called home. The soft cocooning of the commonplace, as opposed to the cold dimension of the white cube, operates by accumulation and repetition of ordinary gestures. The bed lies half a meter away from the shower, and the forest of clothes upon dishrags celebrates a talent of concentrated activities. When peeping at Johnny’s apartment, surfaces appear bleached and colours faded to pastel-like tones. No one can tell his age or who he is. It is the retroactive ideal home of the future haunted by a ghost who plays with humour and has a clear ability to wrap anything with a veil of childhood nostalgia. In other words, Johnny is a ghost.

Michael Lee

*Second-
Hand City*



“Melding science fiction with cultural studies, this series imagines the life cycles of architectural and urban systems. Of particular interest are those buildings and cities that are lost, in ways ranging from being demolished, destroyed, war-torn, collapsed and abandoned to the missing, unbuilt, fictional, haunted, mythological, forgotten and daydreamt.”

Michael Lee

[G05a]

Plan, elevation, section, fiction are the quadratic divisions of *Second Hand City*. Located between utopian architectural aspiration and the building density of a Southeast Asian city, the entropic construction offers a taste of *déjà-vu*. The diagrammatic figure plays on the tensions between individual and community and their multiple choices to inhabit the imagined metropolis. A dystopian nightmare of lost cities – half constructed, half demolished, and half abandoned – the city is collapsing under its own pressure. The possibly forgotten city is disappearing within its sub-structure where the foundations are melting to the point of no return. Stimulated by entropic forces, *Second Hand City* is drilling its own coffin.

those that have constructed fictions

“Accorded anthropomorphic status, the buildings have the freedom to dream and hope, but they also ‘inherit’ the characteristics, failing and idiosyncrasies of the men they have been named after. In so doing, they have become unintended and sometimes critical progeny and the work shifts swiftly between homage, critique and playful jibe.”

Joyce Toh

[G05b]

Li Yifan

Longwancun



Longwancun is an ordinary village located in Southwestern rural China. Here, villagers live their lives following the rhythm of the seasons. There, not much is happening. The stories of its inhabitants move along the daily routines of the village, and are chronicled in the village archive. The flow of their lives follows the structure of a traditional Chinese scroll: religion, politics, and life. Without feeling or emotion, time passes. One event after another, the intention is to document a fragment of ordinary life. Stories of villagers with no particular importance or consequence are documented methodically. Stories of average specimens of rural china enclose everything including their own possible disappearance.

those outlined by universal values

“Oddly universal religion and extremely ordinary beliefs; unchecked power and powerless society; people who know nothing but hardship as they work the land, leading austere existences, oblivious to the fact that their lives have meaning. This is Longwancun – a typical example of life in Southwestern rural China. The film flows with the changing of the season, following no specific storyline. There are no great joys, no great tragedies. Everything happens, yet nothing comes to a conclusion – it is simply the passing of time. Strictly speaking, this is an edited rural visual archive, the day-to-day account of an ordinary Southwestern village with no particular importance.” Li Yifan [A07a]

“Village Archive borrows the structure of the encyclopedic model of traditional Chinese scroll annals to divide the life of the inhabitants of Longwancun into three chapters – Religion, Politics, and Life – stringing them together with the solar terms of the lunar calendar.”

Liu Dianxia

[A07b]

Liu Xiaodong

*Three
Gorges*



“Three Gorges: Displaced Population is Liu Xiaodong’s most important work. In the history of Chinese oil paintings, this subject matter and sheer size of this piece is unparalleled. The complexity of the meaning as well as the layout of the painting force people to tremble with awe at its potency.

Three Gorges: Displaced Population exhibits an artist’s view of the world. This attitude derives from the unfortunate historical facts, forced migrants, relocated villages, as well as the barren, fragmented lives of the families, their lack of kindness or resentment, their personal stories, conflict of ideologies, and the irrefutable alterations to history surrounding the Three Gorges. Every blade of grass and every tree, every bird and beast, every brick and tile, all contribute to the most unforgettable painting in contemporary Chinese art history, presenting a national scar and an artists’ wordless standpoint.”

Ai Weiwei

[D05a]

reminiscent ones

From an individual’s perspective, mobility could be defined as the potential to move from one place to another as freely as possible. When it concerns the movement of an entire population, its cities and villages, the concept is transformed into a forced ‘relocation’, resulting then in life fragmentation, tension, and conflict. The pressure of the rising waters upstream in the Three Gorges Dam participated in this terrible dynamic. Along the riverbanks, forced migrants became the subject of this tragedy brushed by the artist. The multiple perspectives of the scene transposed onto the canvas echo a complex reality. Sadly, realism goes beyond insanity.

MAP Office

*Lau Fau
Shan*



“Oyster shells are thrown out after the flesh is removed, adding to acres of oyster fill, reclaiming land by accident - a collateral reclamation, that has reference, if you will, to waste, reuse, recycling and ownership.”

Norman Ford

[F04a]

How to reach China? Reclamation is a popular way to extend the limits of Hong Kong into the sea. Reclamation is an instrument used by the government and developers, but what happens when an individual entity begins its own reclamation project? A traditional oyster-farming village, Lau Fau Shan, has through the century stretched out its limits into Deep Bay towards Shenzhen. By throwing oyster shells in the water with the intention of re/claiming one square meter of land, Lau Fau Shan participates in this similar logic. A land of empty shells shining in the sun, a landscape of deliquescence where humidity reaches the climax of mugginess, the new square meter of territory is the perfect platform from which to observe Shenzhen's booming urbanisation. Therefore, this *Personal Island* proudly claims the unique position of Hong Kong within China.

unlimited

“MAP Office attempted to extend Hong Kong towards Shenzhen by building an ad hoc land bridge. The evidence of this quasi-utopian venture is offered more subtly as a straightforward record of this project: a mound of comparatively cleaned and whitened oyster shells sits atop a drying plain of embedded shells and oyster reefs, bordered in the distance by tidal mud flats, the wider waters of Shenzhen Bay, working boats, and the haze-ridden silhouette of mainland Chinese territory.”

Robin Peckham

[F04b]

David Medalla

Cebu



“When I was 9 years old my family went on holiday to Cebu, Philippines. We vacationed with my mother’s relatives, half of whom were farmers, while half were fishermen, in the coastal town of Dalaguete. While there I discovered a clay deposit in the barrio of Kalayan. I played with the clay and made shapes of different animals. One day I showed my clay ‘sculpture’ to an older cousin, I told him, ‘Wouldn’t it be fun if we can transform a small coral island off the shore of our barrio into a large sculpture shaped like a tortoise (one of my clay sculptures)? My cousin greeted my idea with great enthusiasm. In no time he mobilized all our able relatives who comprised practically the entire population of the town and who were equally enthusiastic with my idea. Together we cleaned the small coral island of weeds. Afterwards we shaped it into a large sculpture resembling my little clay tortoise. At high tide the entire coral island-sculpture disappeared in the foam. At night it glowed because of the phosphorescent polyps and fishes. This entire coral island-sculpture has since changed shapes many times. It is now overgrown with vegetation and palm trees. It belongs to all the people in the town.”

David Medalla

[F05a]

unlimited

Phosphorescent polyps and fish glowing at night echo the shining stars in the sky. Two parallel universes are bound by an infinite number of dots. Coral and shells materialise as pure ornaments free from pollution or invading flora. At high tide, the phosphorescence disappears under the foam of the sea moulding to its contours. In the shape of a giant tortoise, the island sculpture seizes the mind in a powerful but ambiguous way.

Erbossyn
Meldibekov

Pastan



“I think few people care where Tajikistan or Turkmenistan is. To them, Central Asia might as well be a meteorite that exploded out of Venus.” Erbossyn Meldibekov [E06a]

Our naked body is our first territory. Working as mutual interface, inflicting pain and suffering to one is equivalent to the subjecting of the other. Slapping, as a gesture of humiliation is one of these immediate treatments, both on a mental and physical level. *Pastan* is a direct analogy to the state of the relationship between the Central Asian countries and the former Soviet Union. The slap received by a naked body resembles the feeling of those populations, and its non-stop repetition transforms it into an absurd situation - the body that desires and the world that denies.

“Erbossyn Meldibekov is known for politically loaded works that appropriate simplistic views of Central Asia as a region defined solely by barren landscapes and violent histories.”
Irina Makarova [E06b]

personal kingdom

*“That period of protest against president Akayev was a time of optimism, and I was attempting to create protest art. But now, instead of violence and obscenity there is only laughter in my work. My rebuttal to the *Pastan* works is *Shu-Chu* (2009). Its title comes from the railway station in my hometown, where cannabis grows, and it means, ‘I joke.’ This is important, since the main quality of this herb is that it makes you laugh.”*
Erbossyn Meldibekov [E06c]

Almagul
Menlibayeva

Aral Sea



“Transoxiana Dreams addresses the social, economical and ecological situation of the locally called Aralkum generation, the peoples living in the vast region of the rapidly receding Aral Sea due to the radical irrigation policies of the Soviet Union in the 1960’s, between Soviet Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Southwestern Kazakhstan. Almagul Menlibayeva portrays the impact on the inhabitants of a formerly thriving area with tourism, beaches and fishing fleets, now living upon a constantly growing salt desert in a desolate landscape. Through the eyes of a fisherman’s daughter in a dreamlike mélange of documentary and fantasy, she depicts their struggle to survive in the 21st Century.” Almagul Menlibayeva [K03a]

Surreal creatures coming from the sea populate *Transoxiana*. When water evaporates, those mythical beings start to haunt the dry landscape in quest of a potential home. Fisherman without sea will meet them on the new land, wandering around in a mirror-like relationship. No contact, no conflict, just the trace of an ecological impact imposed on the population by a greedy irrigation system on the upper part of the river. Now the water is gone, but the anxiety of a desolate desert remains. Former beaches and ports have been erased by the desertification process. This is the otherworldly scenery around the Aral Sea.

Mariko Mori

Pureland



In *Pureland*, the landscape was shot at the Dead Sea. Yet the importance of the place is given by the occupation of it. Mixing Japanese traditional iconography with digital image techniques transports the calm sea and the blue clouds to an esoteric cosmos filled with universal values. Floating above water, the artist's avatar proposes an ideal beauty, a regeneration of her physical body taking her to Nirvana. Her luminous costume and props ensure an expected prosperity and happiness. Finalised to the last pixel, the image idealises a territory close to perfection. Rising from the water, the lifted corpse without a reflected shadow is a pure spirit re-enchanting this perfect moment when the aura is transfigured.

those outlined by universal values

“The non-place is also related to the idea of death, or rather of the beyond-death. From this arise the ideas of utopia as a hellish or heavenly non-place, specter of a ruin and a threat, or of a reward and a remuneration for existence. After death, the usual definitions fall apart; everything loses value and cannot be transformed into an element of exchange. It is a condition in which one is mirrored in a nowhere... once again, utopia.” Mariko Mori [A08a]

“Horyuji Temple, built at the beginning of the seventh century, was conceived by Prince Shotoku as an institution to protect and spread the new philosophy of Buddhism that had recently arrived from the Korean peninsula. In this context, I believe that Mori is using the traditions of a particular place, Japan, as path to the universal. Tradition as such is not her chief concern. Rather, she is trying to grasp the aspects of the universality that can be glimpsed in tradition.” Junichi Shioda [A08b]

Daido Moriyama

Hawai



“Daido Moriyama’s recent photographs of Hawaii cast a certain coldness over the tropical island. Rendered in his characteristic graininess and high-contrast tones, the series of black-and-white prints offers an uncanny, mixed portrait of the US state.” Ashley Rawlings [K04a]

The Hawaiian landscape is tilted. This rotation may be under the influence of the impressive mountain cliffs falling into the ocean. Palm trees, the horizon line, skyscrapers, and street scenes, the usual attributes of a tropical island, are viewed from the angle of an imminent drama. Parallel to the darkness of the black and grey asphalt, the modified horizon line indicates an extreme and violent contrast. In the background, a volcano overshadows a fragile cityscape while in the shop windows, strange creatures such as mermaids emerge from its ashes. Lost in the immensity of the Pacific, Hawaii’s forecast is uncertain.

“In Moriyama’s eyes, Hawaii is at once mundane and alienating. Almost generic shots of highway signs, urban panoramas and natural landscapes – many of which could be almost anywhere in the world – are punctuated by a handful of truly haunting images. In one, a child – anonymous and androgynous in silhouette – is on its knees, digging a hole in a beach, looking as though it has collapsed in pain. In another, a dozen people in hooded, white rain jackets are clustered together on an open, barren expanse of terrain, for no immediately discernible reason.” Ashley Rawlings [K04b]

loaded landscapes

Jun
Nguyen-Hatsushiba
Okinawa



War memorials often fail to carry the messages they are made for. Scattered around Okinawa Island, peace monuments trace invisible battle lines but also suggest decades of trauma under US military occupation. While most of the battles happened on land, one needs to remember that the surrounding water was also the background of operations. A new symbolic monument exists underwater, activated by an army of divers painting star flags and Hollywood star portraits surrounded by starfish, another interpretation of national symbols repeated ad infinitum.

“Of all the regions in Japan, the history of Okinawa is one of the most complex, with many unresolved social issues resulting from its relationship with the United States military as major strategic stronghold in the Pacific. Okinawa was the key military base for the United States during the Vietnam War and the fact that Okinawa was not restored to Japan until 1972, nearly twenty years after the end of World War II, is not unrelated to this.”

Kataoka Mami

[K05a]

“Whereas these early explorers faced superstition and cosmologies of the sea and the forest, Jun’s navigations and challenged by histories, politics, and known science. Jun’s mission is of reorganization – location, erasure, redrawing – which is essentially a cartographic process.”

Richard Streitmatter-Tran

[K05b]

loaded landscapes

Ni Haifeng

Elsewhere



“Ni Haifeng’s involvement with maps came after he had read a story by Jorge Luis Borges about the map of an empire. The map turned out to be not an accurate depiction of the actual empire’s territory. Amazingly enough, over time the empire shrunk until it coincided exactly with the size of the map itself. Ni interpreted the story as a future vision on the way representation increasingly takes the place of real things. The power of a simple aid like a geographical map should not be overestimated.” Roel Arkesteijn [J04a]

If the map is not the territory, the empire’s territory needs the map to exist and to be embraced. Cartography as a form of representation often replaces the territory itself by imposing its own narrative. In the complex systemic relationship between illustration and estate, truth is secondary and can only be reached by anticipation. From one route to another, trading empires often define territories and their related forms of representation. The long history of the colony paved the way for unfair commerce. The trade of primary resources, such as cotton, wood, silk, tea, porcelain, opium, and slaves charted new maritime routes between different continents. Islands, oceans, maps, and sailing boats are part of this representation, telling the story of those new territories. Painting fragments of the trading system, the artist’s body carries the history of his personal journey.

economic ones

“I regard exile as a voluntary escape from a fixed place and a process of becoming something new.” Ni Haifeng [J04b]

Rika Noguchi

*Yonaguni
Island*



“I sometimes think that I might be documenting the earth on a request by an extraterrestrial.”

Rika Noguchi

[D06a]

Part of the Ryuku Okinawa Island group, Yonaguni Island hides a mysterious monument. 30 meters deep under water, a collection of structures forms well-organised geometries with parallel lines, provoking the scientific world to question whether this is the ruin of an ancient Asia Pacific super-civilisation older than Egypt. Some believe that the formations are natural; others see them as a sign that an ancient society existed some 10,000 years ago. Man-made or not, the Yonaguni underwater ruins are an attraction for the experienced diver. Through the eye of the photographer, it appears as if giant blue-coloured sculptures landed on the Pacific sea floor.

reminiscent ones

“Archeologists have long believed that civilization as we define it – intelligent, tool-making, monument building, social humans – began about 5,000 years ago. But submerged beneath the waves near the Japanese island of Yonaguni is evidence that may well overturn that long-held theory. A small but persuasive number of scholars and scientists have long thought that “advanced” societies may have existed as long as 10,000 years ago. Their theories, however well reasoned and defended, have been hamstrung by a lack of evidence. But recent discoveries of man-made artifacts on the Pacific seafloor may well prove to be the smoking gun that will propel this alternative view of civilization to prominence.” Masaaki Kimura [D06b]

Ahmet Ogut

*Exploded
City*



“The structures may be in their inviolate form, but nevertheless, human models placed throughout the doomed buildings would impart a macabre note to the city. But the Exploded City is surprisingly not tragic, and while it could not be called vital, neither is it sepulchral. [...] Exploded City might then seem sophomoric, as the considerable debt to Calvino would indicate, had Ogut not made several wise decisions that speak to a maturity that bodes well for future work.” Patrick Ellis [G06a]

Cities are territorial fragments. They are constructed and destroyed in a cycle that concentrates many of the forces characterising human civilisation. This cycle of production and destruction is a means to escape the present and to project the future. As this will always refer to a collective dream-like perception of the present time, it is most likely that the city of tomorrow will resemble a repeated scenario. Its skyline will be very familiar. Public spaces, streets, and buildings will already have been experienced. The *Exploded City* will be the best futuristic impression with the sensation of always having been there, but at the same time, already having disappeared.

those that have constructed fictions

“It was a summer day when Marco Polo appeared before Kubilay Khan. The emperor, certain that the Venetian would be describing some unheard of city that morning, said: So, tell me. Marco Polo, in his voice still bearing the impressions of the city from his most recent travel, begins his narration: This city is from the future. It’s called The Exploded City.”

Ahmet Ogut

[G06b]

Yoko Ono

Sky



“When I was a child and evacuated during the war, there was not enough food or people, so the most wonderful thing was the sky. There was nothing beautiful other than the sky. Therefore, I was looking at the sky, just lying on Tatami with my hungry stomach. That was when I thought that the sky was really beautiful. I like the sky very much, and I’ve been living long – well, I would like to live a little bit longer – the reason I am able to live with light feelings is because I see the sky every day. Cloudy sky, rainy sky, lightening sky, anything will do. I think the sky is very fascinating and can say that ‘I am in love with the sky’.”

Yoko Ono

[H04a]

We all have a piece of sky. Blue, grey, or dark, it is always a territory around and above us. A part of the atmosphere visible from the earth, it is crossed by birds, airplanes, or kites that invite us to join them. *Sky TV* is a system that is able to transmit a little piece of sky, filmed in one location, to another part of the world.

“The statement, ‘Is there an art that can be a match for the beauty of the sky?’ seems to hold questions like ‘what is sky?’, ‘what is beauty?’, ‘what is art?’ for human beings.”

Kiyoshi Kusumi

[H04b]

other heterotopias

*“do it yourself
dance piece:
SWIM IN YOUR SLEEP
GO ON SWIMMING UNTIL YOU
FIND AN ISLAND”*

Yoko Ono

[H04c]

Joao Vasco Paiva

*Victoria
Harbour*



“A number of floating objects in the harbor of Hong Kong subject to wind, waves, and other factors causing them to bob and sway, sometimes gently but other times rather wildly, are recorded by a stationary camera.”

Robin Peckham

[F06a]

How to survey an unstable territory? What is the physical point for the compass to set its mark as reference? For centuries the Southern hemisphere was seldom sailed due to a lack of maps and resulting navigation challenges. The elementary logic of kinetics has revealed that any floating object placed in a liquid context will follow the swing and position perpendicularly to the water's surface. This means that the only logical option to keep the object straight is to move it in the same rhythm as that of the original movement of the water. Following portolan charts, it becomes possible to identify fixed positions in the sea and link them together to establish nautical distances.

unlimited

“The long back wall of the space, facing the entrance, is saturated with a single-channel video depicting a navigation marker floating in Victoria Harbour, anchored precisely in the center of the projection. Rather than bouncing wildly in place, however, the rectilinear frame follows the motion of the object at the center; the geometric projection thus pivoting across the wall – the result of algorithmic editing techniques.” Robin Peckham

[F06b]

Pak Sheung Chuen

Malaysia



Seeing is a form of being. Blind people are also travelling. They experience territory and landscape from another perspective. Besides sight, other senses are far more sensitive to the environment. The imaginations of the blind construct sets of images that imprint in their memories as a way to transcribe the information surrounding them: the heat of sun on the skin, the smell of freshly watered grass, birds flying overhead, the imam's voice calling for prayer from the mosque. Malaysia is portrayed through a series of pictures carefully imagined with a particular attention to detail, including very precise forms, colors, patterns, materialities, and odors. They describe the experience of blind travel to viewers, fragment after fragment commenting on aesthetics, composition, and artistic value... seeing is not a form of viewing; seeing is a form of thinking.

those defined by an epic journey

"I remember the sun burning my skin, but cannot really believe I have physically been to this place. My mother is my personal white stick. (blind guide). Only the sky looked the same as I saw inside my eyes. I had the feeling of being in a car because my body was shaking from the movement. I tried hard to imagine, I remember the tour guide said both sides are lined with palm trees, I thought it was a green hill." Pak Sheung Chuen [C07a]

"So, now we were blind in the dark room and we took pictures with flash of the pictures of Malaysia for our own 'future' eyes as well. In a humorous and thoughtful ways, Pak defies aspects of physicality and spirituality, thus enables new ways of reinterpreting unwritten codes and complexities that exist within contemporary societies." Selina Ting [C07b]

Park Chan-kyong

*Mount
Gyeryong*



“I once had an accidental encounter with Mount Gyeryong and an indescribable shock came over me. The light of the full moon allowed the mountain, covered in snow, to reveal itself in its full glory even in the middle of the night. Unlike other large mountains in South Korea, which one can rarely see fully because they are usually hidden by neighboring peaks, Mount Gyeryong is a so-called protrusion-in-the-field type of mountain whose overall shape is quite visible even from a distance.” Park Chan-Kyong [D07a]

“For Park, one may say, South Korea is a particularly intriguing subject not simply because it is his homeland, the reality he knows best, but also because it is a phantasmagorical site, where anachro-nistic throwbacks and futuristic projections together improbably constitute the logic of operation. There, atavistic narratives materialize like inconsolable ghosts, bursting the seams of the shiny surface of the everyday.” Doryun Chong [D07b]

reminiscent ones

Certain territories are sometimes more intense and loaded than others. Mountains belong to this category as they embed the force and spirit of their initial formation, still visible in their height. Mountains are a location for finding deeper meaning in human life; they are often sacred, full of superstitious beliefs from various religions. In Korea, the Gyeryong region is referred to in the prophetic writings of Gyeogamyunok and Jeonggamnok as the site of a new regional capital after the end of the Choseon dynasty. Shaped by mythological and religious stories, Mount Gyeryong is the quintessence of an ideal landscape.

PH studio

*Haizuka
Dam*



“We heard that a forest of about 200 ha would be submerged and 3 to 400,000 trees would be cut down due to the construction of the dam. Following the news, we thought about moving the forest, and thus this project began. We planned to build a 60-meter raft-like ship using the trees to be cut down, and move it to the top of the mountain.” PH Studio [H05a]

A boat is a moving territory floating around the vast liquid regions. A boat resting on the land becomes a monument waiting for spiritual forces to take it back to its original context. Near Hiroshima, the Haizuka Dam area possesses such a boat waiting to be embraced by the water. The planned flood, submerging the entire valley, will gradually move the boat to the top of a mountain, where it will remain after the water is gone. Made of trees from the original forest, the boat is the only remaining sign of the former condition of the land. The top of the valley’s forest will be saved, dominating the new landscape thanks to the unexpected presence of the boat; sitting on a throne at the highest point, it will wait for another force to take it away.

other heterotopias

*“Story to Build a Ship 2006 – on the mountain
If we manage to land the ship successfully, it
will be left on top of the mountain that rises
like a peninsula on the lake.”*
PH Studio [H05b]

Sudsiri Pui-Ock

Chiang Mai



“The farmer represents the notion of repetition in the life of farmers, as despite the change of seasons, farmers in Thailand keep on working on their land. There is no ‘start’ or ‘finish’. It’s all about continuation.”

Sudsiri Pui-Ock

[F07a]

Some territories have no limits. They are plateaus that never end, smooth planes where time is suspended. The continuous movement of agricultural activity around a crop is timeless and reproduces itself again and again over time. The buffalo pulls the plough on the surface of a rice field. The sky is mirrored in the dormant water, accentuating this infinite dimension. Only the clouds, forming, growing, and passing, are reminders that there is an elsewhere. At regular intervals, a ripple breaks this sublime harmony, for a little while only, and the water goes back to this infinite reflective dimension.

unlimited

“Farmer’s life is synchronized and leaning on seasons

When rain comes, water comes.

The task is as big as the stretch of land.

Fields flooded with water reflects the sky – beautiful as hope.

Some times shallow water turns whirlpool that asking for more endure and patient.”

Sudsiri Pui-Ock

[F07b]

Qiu Zhijie

*Yangtze
River Bridge*



“It is a visit to a historical site as muse over the past, contemplating the past of industrialization and reflecting on human density.”

Qiu Zhijie

[L06a]

“The story recount one of the 2,000 suicides (another estimate 2,000 are unreported), which have taken place since the completion of the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge in 1968 – one year before the artist Qiu Zhijie was born.[...] Nine corresponds to the number of pylons that support the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge. The stability and solidity associated with gigantic bridges – their message of supremacy and authority – is thwarted by a construction that seems insecure and delicate. Each piece dangles from the wire like a chain of lanterns, gently swaying to and for with the circulating current in the space. The succession of these anti-monuments suggests conveyors of people, like ski gondolas, or products in a factory assembly line. We imagine the million people who travel on the bridge every day and reflect on those among them who do not make it across.”

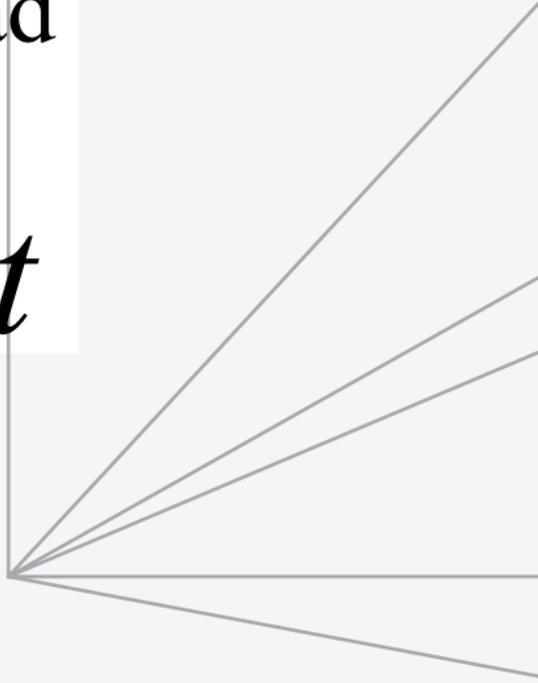
Valerie Smith

[L06b]

A bridge is a frontier between two sides of a span. The steel structure that began as the national pride of Chinese engineers during the 1960s turned out to become one of the most favored points in China from which to jump and commit suicide, the unfortunately infamous Nanjing Bridge. The distance between national pride and individual dystopia is here materialised within this fragmented territory suspended above the Yangtze River. A 6,772 metre long gap serves as a memory of China's complex society and history. Territories are sometimes difficult to understand, often requiring many attempts to fill in the gap between reality and reason.

Walid Raad

Beirut



Walking through the history of a specific territory engages visitors by activating multiple senses and understandings. From a series of narratives emerge facts and fictions that constitute these experiences and interactions. Adding one element after another, documentation and interpretation are achieved through the construction of a visual and performative atlas of a society in its complex sociologic, political, and psychological definitions. The capital of Lebanon, a historic space of repetitive wars and conflict, is mapped through its line of construction and destruction. One story after another, one bomb after another, the holes in the city constitute a triangulating network measuring the scale of extensive conflict.

“Raad’s archive does not contain artworks that present immediate images of what happened during the wars. Instead, they present stories and forms linked to what can be said, thought, and imagined about the wars. Some of The Atlas Group files are attributed to fictitious figures and others to historical ones thus raising additional questions about the concept of the witness made possible by the Lebanese wars. With The Atlas Group, the artist is not seeking political or historical truth but is instead paying close attention to political, social, economic as well as narrative, emotional and aesthetic facts. For example, the file of Dr Fadl Fakhouri, a renowned Lebanese historian, was included in The Atlas Group Archive in 1991 and contains 226 notebooks, two super-8 films, and photographs.” The Atlas Group Archive [K06a]

loaded landscapes

Raqs Media
Collective

*Waiting
Room*



“The figure of a person biding time in a waiting room helps us to imagine the predicament of people living in societies often considered to be inhabiting an antechamber to modernity. In such spaces, one waits to be called upon to step onto the stage of history. Most of the world lives in spaces that could be designated as ‘waiting rooms’, binding its time. These ‘waiting rooms’ exist in transmetropolitan cities, and the small enclaves that subsist in the shadow of the edifices of legality. There are waiting rooms in New York just as there are waiting rooms in New Delhi, and there are trapdoors and hidden passages connecting a waiting room in one space with a waiting room in another. Fantomas is a denizen of these spaces.”
 Raqs Media Collective [I04a]

Non-places exist next to the waiting room. Most globalised activity happens in territories that are in constant acceleration: airports, stations, corporate lobbies, commercial centers. Those generic places with no defining characteristics apart from the smoothness of the necessary zones of frozen temporality are the antechambers of anticipation of something, somewhere, about to happen. Detached from the active world, these uninhabited deserted islands constitute hope for a possible reconstruction, a new position. Waiting rooms are the places in which we live our everyday past, present, and future.

those of predicted time

“The Impostor in the Waiting Room is about the dreams of shadow existences in disguise, about waiting and biding.”
 Christine Peters [I04b]

Araya
Rasdjarmrearnsook
Two Planets



“No-one talks about Thai farmer’s values.”

Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook

[E07a]

Conflicting opposition and cultural shifts are a necessary approach for any educational construction. Dualism and dichotomy are essential for understanding the other. This optimism is derived from positivism – creating systems through differences. The magnetic field contains a well-defined movement from positive to negative poles and vice versa, emphasising the necessity of this duality. Here and elsewhere, the need to be different, to learn from each other, is the basis of one’s identity. European master paintings placed in the context of Thai villages and countryside are participants in this dualistic learning. The exportation of a monument is a natural dyad allowing another reading and interpretation of the artwork as well as a new perspective for the viewer.

personal kingdom

“In a number of short vignettes she fixes her camera on a group of Thai farmers who have been sat in front of canonical works of modern European painting like Millet, Van Gogh and Manet. My lifestyle is surrounded by two different things. One is art which is aimed to be forever, and others, as I moved from the city of Chiang Mai to its suburb, are lives, naturally born, pained and easily demised. I brought the two parts together, Thai farmer and modernist European art. Thai farmers come to works ‘or situations so different from their experience with such good will and good intent.”

Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook

[E07b]

Navin
Rawanchaikul

Navinland



“Researching his family, Navin traced his roots back to Gujranwala, a small town in The Punjab, from where his parents moved to Chiang Mai following the India-Pakistan partition of 1947. On a visit to the nearby border crossing of Wagah, he observed the two nations ‘protecting their borders’ through elaborate pageantry intended for tourists. Back in Fukuoka, he had to explain to his daughter, who was born to his Japanese wife, who she is. The encounter between Navin and his parental home, and then with his half Japanese daughter, highlighted the blurred boundaries of citizenship and nationhood. ”

Navin Rawanchaikul

[H06a]

Navinland is a nation, a borderless land where multi-nationalism is the common rule. It is a place for tolerance between people of Pakistani, Indian, Thai, and Japanese backgrounds, a nation where one feels welcome no matter what blood or origin he/she comes from, a land where all the diverse identities cohabit and share their common differences, and where no race or religion prevails or dominates another one. *Navinland* does not only exist in the imagination of the artist. Numbers of buildings, starting from a checkpoint, are already welcoming visitors who want to apply for a passport and become its residents.

other heterotopias

“People today talk about ethnicity and nationality. I’m trying to explore a new utopian art ideal called Navinland, which is a borderless community bringing people together.” Navin Rawanchaikul [H06b]

Jewyo Rhee

Han River



“I have lived near the Han river most of my life, so whenever I bickered with my parents or felt depressed, I found myself by the river. I feel like I grew up with the Han River, witnessed its development before and after.

I was sort of haven for me – the place for me to go when I ran away from home. I would even go and seat by the riverbank in the rain but then the river patrol would pull up and try to talk to me in case I was a potential teenage suicide. As you can see the Han River is a place with many melancholy memories. I can also remember the bulldozer arriving and wiping out the reed field when the development started.” Jewyo Rhii [E08a]

“With her subversive and constructive approach, producing tools or places to avoid physical discomforts and providing the audience participate in the project, Rhii’s humourous pieces often represent the need for comfort and warmth.” Hou Hanru [E08b]

personal kingdom

Staring at the water flowing in a river makes people nostalgic. Water is equivalent to both time passing inexorably and time that has already passed. At first, protected from the wind by the Han River, two lovers embrace each other. Along the river, they need a place to lie down and be protected from the cold winter wind. As the wind blows harder, they finally separate. Along the river, letting their feelings flow with the running water, the two lovers erect a small shelter; at last the construction is a love sanctuary for them to lie down along the Han River.

ruangrupa

Singapore



“In this project we create and recreate the fictional story about Singapore. We collect true and fictions stories from people we meet to reveal the people’s personal idea and imagination about their experiences, memories, event, space and history. We use found and used objects that contained by anonymous stories and memories from the several flea markets and second hand shop to inspire, and also illustrate these fictional stories.”
 ruangrupa [C08a]

“Apart from the many stories presented, they also touch on Anabell Chong. [...] ruangrupa on the other hand, reconstructed this narrative by creating a new character called Allabella Chong. Not very far away from the original, they also have included sexy items like skimpy bars and underwear and not to forget phallic looking objects in a special case dedicated for her.” rainbowartsproject [C08b]

those defined by an epic journey

Myths, legends, fictions, stories, histories... as many narratives as possible are required to define the contours of a territory. In the case of the Singaporean territory, one expects stories about pioneer Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles or the emblematic first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. But, rumors and urban legends are not focused only on such emblematic and political figures but also on such infamous characters as the legendary Grace Quek (aka Annabel Chong), the porn star actress famous for engaging in the world’s biggest gang bang with 251 sexual acts in 10 continuous hours. In this historical irony, the Messalina of the East continues to complicate the mythology about one of the most obedient territories.

T. Shanaathanan

Sri Lanka



“The Incomplete Thombu poses as a bureaucratic document file. Thombu was a term used by the Dutch to describe a public land registry, derived from the Greek tomos, from which the Latin word tome, or large book originates. The Incomplete Thombu covers the subject of Tamil displacement during the civil conflict in Sri Lanka between 1983 and 2009.”

T. Shanaathanan

[K07a]

The idea of a tortured landscape often emerges from zones of intensive conflict. The Northern Province of Sri Lanka is one such landscape. Twenty years of war between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan government has tormented the civilian population and forced thousands to migrate to another home. While displaced, war refugees tend to lose their identities, which are usually embedded within their lands. Being forced to move also implies a lost relationship between the landscape and its occupants. The Tamil word *thinai* is used to define a poetic landscape including time, place, season, flora, fauna, inhabitants, religious and social organisations. The separation of a territory from its population results in the deregulation of the ecology of life.

“The most inspiring part of this project was the chance to work with the civilians who have witnessed one of most cruel wars in the century. It gave me chance at least to partially fulfil the role of an artist living in a conflict zone.”

T. Shanaathanan

[K07b]

loaded landscapes

Varvara Shavrova

Borders



“Narvara Shavrova is both border crosser and more importantly border concever. That border is personal at first and then made public.[...] Her ability to perceive differences in a field otherwise monolithic and expansive plays an essential ethos in her double enterprises on border. Her sensibility to occupy double territories that are temporal and geological, political and poetic, to emulate versus immolate, to delineate and delaminate made her work rich both in media and dimension.” Sonia Mak [L07a]

“I asked the grumpy shop assistant about the content of that stand, to which she disgruntledly replied; ‘old flying charts of the world. Nearly out of print. Lots of sections missing’. ‘Is there a map of China among those?’, I asked, finding it difficult to conceal my excitement. ‘Yeah... Plenty of China-Russia border charts. From Cold War times, like.... Look the areas up here, in the paper directory, and then try matching the numbers wit the charts.’ Narvara Shavrova [L07b]

The line between Russia and China is the longest border existing in the world today. Travelling this line implies a linear displacement across a route defined by political circumstances. Mapping the physical and psychological characteristics of a border reveals the logic of its divisions, connections, porosity, and permeability along its various forms of occupation. The diverse circumstances of the border reflect the individual sensibility of the border crosser. The projected linear man-made monument is the horizontal expansion of limitation, producing a mirror effect on either side. The border is a parallel reflection of a unique territory.

Gulam
Mohammed Sheikh

*Mappa
Mundi*



“It is not narrative alone that engages me. My interest at that point in time and even in a different way now, is in exploring multiplicities and simultaneity. These preoccupy me because of my interest in incorporating quotations from different sources. I am equally interested in understanding how diverse narratives were portrayed simultaneously in Ajanta, or in Rajasthani or Pahadi paintings. The Ajanta caves have several stories on a single wall without distinguishing divides whereas in Rajasthani painting several events of a story are simultaneously narrated within a single ‘frame’, by which I mean a border.”

Gulam Mohammed Sheikh

[E09a]

“Medieval mappa-mundi spatialized belief system in the form of the map to emphasize their universality and encompassing nature. Sophisticated mappa mundi had the space and detail to illustrate Biblical Events, history, mythology, flora, fauna and exotic races or were encyclopedic. Sheikh uses this format as imagined and real spaces in which to locate contemporary concerns and consciousness.”

Seema Bawa

[E09b]

personal kingdom

A map as a representation of a specific territory reflects the characteristics of the cartographer at his/her own time. Making a map is a way to represent the world as we know or imagine it. *Mappa Mundi*, or the maps of the world, is a complete projection of the cartographer’s inspiration and aspirations. New organisations and new horizons of a personal universe are consigned to miniature representation. A round form, the fictional world is contained within the periphery of a circle, inside a new arrangement, a hypothetical figure inhabits a new visualisation of our world.

Shen Shaomin

Tiananmen



“To conduct a rethinking of Tiananmen, any implication of ridicule needs to be divested, and instead should consist of a conscientious and meticulous exploratory process. The public is able to freely enter Shen Shaomin’s design, and experience a new model monument from the inside. Rich in meaning, the interior of Tiananmen – including the multiple levels of facilities and spaces below ground – don’t actually exist, but rather are products of the imagination of both masses and the artists. Tiananmen is thus an ‘activated’ organism, which deconstructs a supreme political symbol through dispelling its mystery.” Wu Hung [G07a]

The underground is a mysterious territory, filled with all kinds of dreams and fantasies. Perforated like Swiss cheese, cities are built on an invisible network of wires, pipes, sewers, and transportation infrastructure, serving as the main organs feeding the city’s surface. Dark and wet, the underground is an ideal stage for detective stories or hidden bomb shelters. The surface of Tiananmen Square is well known, every day photographed by the thousand tourists visiting the center of the capital. But what about its underground?

those that have constructed fictions

From the existing tunnels crossing the main avenues, it is easy to imagine a secretive extension. With many levels, the square would then become the roof of a much larger-built organisation. A secret army, a bunker for the VIP politicians, a sophisticated command center, Tiananmen’s underground is the ultimate chamber of our paranoid civilisation.

Ranjani Shettar

Womb



The body is a territory of infinite complexity. A house is the body occupied by our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual selves. A *Thousand Room House* is an organic geometric structure suggesting this multifaceted intricacy between inside and outside, surface and volume, the biological and the biomorphic. Inspired by nature, this territory resembles the genitalia of the female body, a fertile womb. The cavity, an inhabited place sheltering the source of life and desire, is dedicated to a phenomenological form of occupation. Senses are here active in constructing the memory of the territory.

“Ranjani Shettar creates three-dimensional works that explore the confrontation of the urban and the organic, the metaphysical and the mundane. Employing a wide range of common, everyday materials such as wax, India ink, paper, resin, cotton, PVC pipes, plastic sheeting, and mud, Shettar constructs sculptural artifacts that speak obliquely to the effects of urbanization in newly high-tech Bangalore.” Douglas Fogle [G08a]

those that have constructed fictions

“By using a formal language that invokes the organic and a material language that suggests the industrial, she operates in a manner similar to that of Bangalore itself, where industrial urbanization is colliding with the once rural countryside. But above all else, Shettar’s work asks phenomenological questions about the way in which we inhabit particular spaces in our built environment.” Douglas Fogle [G08b]

Shimabuku

Ryugu



“Whenever I think of the term, ‘Southern Hemisphere’, my consciousness turns inside out, and I fly to my own Southern Hemisphere in a flash. It happens so fast it appears motionless.” Shimabuku [C09a]

“A mermaid measuring 165 metres in length was washed up on a beach in Fukuoka on the morning of April 1222. One hundred government officials arrived from the capital to inspect the body. They brought instruments both scientific and occult. ‘This mermaid is precisely 165 metres from the top of the head to the tip of the tail’, they exclaimed. Among the official was a fortune-teller. He pondered the significance of the mermaid for three days and three nights before announcing his conclusion: ‘a 165-metre mermaid is a sign that our nation will last forever.’” Shimabuku [C09b]

those defined by an epic journey

The legend of a giant mermaid measuring 165 metres from head to tail landing on the beach was the foundation myth for constructing the Sea Goddess Palace Temple. The story describes a mermaid trying to fly in the air, and crashing on the seashore. This was interpreted as a sign that the Japanese nation would live forever. An original death in exchange for eternity, together with the sacrificial symbolic, engaged the artist to let his project ride freely with the wind, from one island to another. The 13th century folktale is a point of departure for many narratives, as mythical stories are territories for infinite interpretation.

Taro Shinoda

Engawa



“Up in space where there’s no gravity, there’d be no need to make a trailer as big as this. Probably all you’d need is a taut piece of cloth, like a tarpaulin, for a ‘cosmic engawa’ on which to sit and view the Earth as your garden.”
Taro Shinoda [B05a]

The *engawa* usually refers to a wooden platform that is an extension of the traditional Japanese house into the garden. This terminology defines the place between architecture and nature, an outdoor space in which to enjoy the flow of natural energy and looking at the moon and stars.

nomadic ones

An *engawa*-trailer is the materialisation of this idea, dislocated in time and space. Its mobility allows the garden to be located anywhere and everywhere, making its ubiquity possible. The world turns around the mobile *engawa* where the ever-changing garden becomes a mental landscape viewed from a travelling lookout.

“With his engawa hitched to a 1987 Ford Ranger, the artist traveled to the Navajo Nation, up the Pacific coast past Big Sur, and east to Yosemite National Park. Taking his mobile engawa into the landscape of the American West, the artist considers how the existing landscape might direct man’s relationship to nature in the future.”
Eungie Joo [B05b]

Shahzia Sikander

*East India
Company*



“The Mughal darbar that provides the backdrop for the 2003 animation SpiNN is suggested again in the architectural structure at the outset of The Last Post. That pavilion, in combination with the repeating profile of a red-coated official of the British East India Company – who simultaneously references the mercantilist policies that led to the Opium Wars with China and the cultural authority claimed by the Company school of painting over colonial India – situates viewers in a historical place and perspective that is quickly subsumed by a much more open-ended narrative. Fantastical landscapes appear and fade, the frame taken over by a floating sea of dots or a vortex of disembodied forearms with hands clenched in fists.” Patricia Maloney [J05a]

Trading is usually part of a territorial definition. Forced and unfair trade has been commonly practiced over the last centuries, leading to the establishment of colonies. The British East India Company was one of the instruments for the British colonial empire to expand and dominate the rest of the world. Severely affecting the future of other existing countries/empires like India or China, the opium trade and subsequently the opium wars opened a new route for countless opportunities. Abuse, exploitation, corruption, domination, and monopoly were the result of this practice and are still today the subject of contemporary critical discourse.

economic ones

Slavs & Tatars

Caucacus



According to Greek mythology, the Caucasus Mountains are one of the pillars supporting the world. Prometheus was chained on a peak on these mountains to have his liver eaten daily after he illegally transmitted the secret of fire to humans. Located in Eurasia, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, the Caucasuses have shaped strong men over their long history. They are also one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse regions of the world. The variety of mountainous landscapes has given birth to a multiplicity of languages and identities. Both landscapes and languages strengthen differences among the ever-fighting populations: Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Dagestanis, Ingushetians, Chechens, and Ossetians have fought for no less than six different wars in the last 20 years.

those defined by an epic journey

“For the better part of the last five hundred years, the region has been caught at a crossroads between three Empires – Ottoman, Persian and Russian – not to mention the disproportionately influential outsiders (the British), and the insiders (the Caucasians themselves) if the rich term can be salvaged from its inherent racism. Once upon a time, of course, ‘Caucasian’ was used as a spuriously academic stand-in for whiteness.”

Slavs and Tatars

[C10a]

“Kidnapping Mountains is a playful and informative exploration of the muscular stories, wills, and defeat inhabiting the Caucasus region.

Slavs and Tatars

[C10b]

Yutaka Sone

*Hong Kong
Island*



“In the past, travellers attempted to chart and translate the experiences and perception of their surroundings within a coded system. Sone’s consideration, however, implies a turnabout to this motive. His traveller goes in search of the landscape that correlates to an impression he first gained from the map. He ‘checks’ this out, not from a scientific viewpoint but chiefly from a kind of disbelief. It is a well-known fact that maps invokes dreaming and fantasizing about distant places—about departure rather than arrival and that, paradoxically enough, they still hold a promise of the unknown and of the ever-more-difficult-to-find blank spots. The traveller attempts to construct harmony between the map and reality. This can be an aesthetic experience, not entirely unlike the experiencing of the sublime previously ascribed to landscape perception, inter-twined with the fiction of one’s own imagination and an interpretive feedback to the map.” Philippe Pirotte [G09a]

Making a sculpture out of a map proceeds from the same logic as tracing a map from a territory. The transposition requires movement from one dimension to another and is the subject of many interpretations and fantasies of the cartographer/sculptor. *Snow Leopard Hong Kong Island* is a miniature sculpture representing the ex-colony in the eye of the artist.

those that have constructed fictions

Hong Kong Island is represented in a specific time rather than a place; the white marble sculpture is deformed by additional archaeological layers, which are placed below the existing geography of the territory. The monument for a present moment oscillates between the ephemeral and the eternal aspects of a territorial dimension.

Song Dong

*Banshang
Lane*



“No 23 Banshang Lane, Xisi district, had originally been quite a nice courtyard house. But because of the insensitive nature of the residents, it had been wrecked beyond belief. There are so many people have haphazardly knocked together whatever they want; those long time residents from rear courtyard are always taking over some part of the front courtyard to build themselves coal shacks.”

Zhao Xiangyuan

[B06a]

“During that month (August 2005), an old timber structure attached to the Song residence in Banshang Lane was demolished and reconstructed in the gallery. When reconstructed, the skeleton of the demolished structure provided the installation with a visual center; around it numerous things filled the gallery space.” Wu Hung

[B06b]

nomadic ones

Memories function through the accumulation and classification of information, processed into a series of predetermined sets of codes activated by our senses. Objects of memory are the territory of the collector. How to collect? What to collect? In an obsessive methodology, the collector classifies every part of his collection into forms, functions, patterns, colours... until the display creates a landscape where he/she can abandon him/herself into contemplation. A compulsive fetishist, the collector is a constructor of infinite storage. Expanding the collection from the individual to the collective, he moves the original self-pleasure into a public cultural construction to recall or recollect knowledge of a society over a specific period of time.

Richard
Streitmatter-tran

Mekong



“Cambodia’s political valley between the evil to the east and the evil to the west is as predictable as the changing course of the Mekong River itself. It is in Phnom Penh every year that waters from as far north as Tibet flow south via the Mekong River, engorging the Tonlé Sap river basin and forcing the river to double back upon itself, reversing its flow. [...] It is a contradiction and wonder that the Mekong River simultaneously separates and connects, nourishes and destroys, informs and obfuscates, geographically demarking national borders while connecting peoples and economies through a life sustaining artery. The GMS (Greater Mekong Subregion including Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam) has historically been one of constant redistribution of land and people and thus culture.”

Richard Streitmatter-Tran

[C11a]

those defined by an epic journey

Fact and fiction are often two regions of our understanding that criss-cross each other, and sometimes overlap. Our beliefs are very much influenced by cultural legends and mythology as well as by geographical position and political dimension. It is true that territories like mountains, oceans, jungles, and rivers are more populated by strange creatures than by humans. The Mekong and the surrounding jungle region form one such territory. The relationship between a giant Mekong catfish and the first Vietnamese communications satellite builds a new mythology that blurs the borders between fact and fiction.

Do-Ho Suh

Seoul Home



‘A home is not a house.’ This famous statement by architectural critic Reyner Banham in 1965 suggested the possibility of inhabiting structures other than the most conventional ones. ‘The home is a suitcase’ suggests another level of abstracting the concept of home. Mobility, minimalism, transformability, ubiquity, and memory are the new characteristics used to define a domesticity on the move. As light as a cloth, a transparent fabric highlights the architectural features of Korean vernacular architectonics, a language folded and placed within baggage. Ready to be relocated and deployed, this architecture offers the possibility of a new home elsewhere, everywhere, and nowhere.

nomadic ones

“And I don’t really get homesick, but I’ve noticed that I have this longing for this particular space, and I want to recreate that space or bring that space wherever I go.”

Do-Ho Suh

[B07a]

“What should be permanent and private, becomes transient and public, packed away from exhibition to exhibition, each time registering its new location in the additive title: Seoul Home/ LA Home/ New York home. ‘Home’, is implied is everywhere and nowhere. [...] Much has been made in recent social and cultural criticism of the concept of nomadism and its theoretical partner deterritorialization as antidotes to the idea of the state, borders and territory which characterized the post-globalist era. The subject of this altered landscape is the figure of the nomad, who is incessantly and poetically mobile.”

Janet Kraynak

[B07b]

Fiona Tan

Gotland



“Should one investigate the stark, empty and windswept landscape of this generic Nordic island by trying to locate its particularity and affiliate it to some specific landscape that can be named and categorized? Or conversely, should one succumb to its poetic enigma and get swept up in the restless camera work that pushes its way through grassy knolls and spiky bushes, size-up wind-flattened pine trees, hugs the line of the water? There are no persons here to give us the clues we might need to situate inhabitants, language or cultural location. In Island the terrain shown seems to have no referents that operate within a recognizable signifying system. There are some physical markers – a lighthouse, some farm houses, some vegetation, windswept landscapes with bowed trees that end in the sea, an endless horizon stretching out in front of us – but these do not translate into a signifying system.” Irit Rogoff [D08a]

reminiscent ones

An island is a territory of origin, a geography committed to developing one’s imagination. Gotland, the place where *The Sacrifice* of Andrei Tarkovsky was shot, is a perfect setting for reflecting on the meaning of life, unfolding memories, defining identity and questioning the sense of place. All those reactions are happening within the fear of our time. Disconnected from the continent, the island imposes another temporality of the everyday, an ever-interrogative place from which to question contemporaneity.

Tan Pin Pin

Singapore



“Invisible City chronicles the ways people attempt to leave a mark before they and their histories disappear. From an avid amateur film director trying to preserve his decaying trove of Singa-pore footage to an intrepid Japanese journalist hunting down Singaporean war veterans, Tan Pin Pin draws out doubts, hopes and the ordinary moments of these protagonists who attempt immortality.” Pin Pin Tan [C12a]

Understanding the complexity of a city/territory is a difficult task, where one can lose him/herself within his/her own search and when the subject of this exploration can eventually also disappear. *Invisible City* challenges collective memories of Singapore where personal histories seem to be so fragile and uncertain. The chronicity of territorial ambiguity is viewed through the haze of hypothetical knowledge.

those defined by an epic journey

“As its name implies, this documentary is about a Singapore that remains invisible, pointing to national consciousness as a fragmented reality with critical bits ignored or demonised. Turning a sharp eye on the subject of memory, the film takes its audience to meet some engaging people struggling to leave a mark before they and their histories disappear: an aging film maker fighting valiantly against time and fading memory to catalogue his treasure trove of rare old footage of the island; an aggrieved student activist from the 1950s wanting to set the record straight for history; etc. In turn poignant, indignant and thought-provoking, the film invites debate about how the past can be remembered and history written, objectively, without fear or favour”

Pin Pin Tan

[C12b]

Yuk King Tan

Cook Island



Islands are at the same time fragile and unstable territories. Due to their small dimensions, they are more subject to political shifts. In the case of the Cook Islands, located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, restrictions on transferring the land are meant to preserve stability of the community. While this permanence is at risk, the island is experiencing China's economic hegemony, transforming an island's precarious permanence into a globalised continental dependency.

“Everybody talks about China but what is China and how does it work? China Works brings together a selection of videos that challenge our imagination of China and its celebrated work ethic. Often forgotten in today's global craze with its economic growth is that China consists not only of The People's Republic of China, but also Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and the millions of Overseas Chinese living around the world. China Works can only be small teaser in the amazingly complicated and contradictory life of modern Asia. It's astonishing pace and paradoxes make it impossible to define or even describe a singular identity or way of life, any presentation can only question and document small pieces of a larger equation. Yet it seems as if art, especially in contemporary Mainland China, is one of the few ways to critically explore this current state of affairs.” Tobias Berger [J06a]

economic ones

Koki Tanaka

Everyday



“The artist comes full circle with Everything is Everything to create a cohesive, multi-channel, multi-dimensional installation on the subject of the everyday. For this work, the artist and two assistants spent a total of eight days recording their interactions and interventions with mundane objects, including hangers, cups, towels, air-mattress, and toilet paper, found around Taipei.” Gabriel Ritter [I05a]

Everyday is everything and everything could be everyday. The territory of the everyday is ordinary and playful. In sets of domestic practices, each mundane object becomes a structure of interaction. Given the appropriation and re-appropriation of distorted consumer practices, interventions within the everyday are creative. Little tactics transform the routine into an event. Both experimental and investigative, each scene reinvents the context and the content. Tools are transformed into toys and routine into ritual. In the everyday, time matters; the instantaneous links one stage to another. Well recorded, one action after another engages with the familiar. Timeless, direct, and precise, the everyday is everyday.

those of predicted time

“Tanaka has embarked on a fundamental transformation of both time and space through his increasingly complicated modeling of the everyday world.” Gabriel Ritter [I05b]

Inga Svala
Thorsdottir

Borg



“It was in the snowy winter of 2004, as I was making my way through the moors and Borgarfjordur in western Iceland to survey the surroundings on the city I had been planning. I took many photographs, and as I got out of the snowmobile to take a picture of the entrance to Hitardalur, I met with a strange sight.”

Inga Svala Thorsdottir

[H07a]

Marking a territory often means taking possession of it. In ‘pissing the map’ in this sense, it becomes a part of the body; it becomes the body in the same way that Robinson Crusoe seeded his island by inserting his phallus into the soil. The territory is born from the body and the city of Borg is its result. It is from nowhere and everywhere, remaining within the reason of artistic interpretation. In Iceland, Borg is a new city/community which believes in natural resources and energy.

“Borg refuge, a meeting place provided for Borg – like a cloud ship that has landed from the ground – has been offering video recording of hunting scenes, treasure hunting, building projects and cutting the first turf – in other words comprehensive evidence of research lying somewhere between artist observation and essential cruelty.” Annelie Pohlen [H07b]

other heterotopias

“In 2003, in Borg-scale, An accurate cartography of the non-measurable the artist built in a drawing of the ‘typical brain of a Borg resident’ in such way that the cerebral convulsion looks like a map of energy paths for the future city within the overall picture of made up of maps, photographic documents and detailed drawings” Bettina Besler [H07c]

Rirkrit Tiravanija

*Bikini
Bottom*



“In the 129th episode of a cartoon series, the sea sponge Spongebob sees his hometown, a submarine city called Bikini Bottom, as it would appear in the future. When he asks his friends why everything is chrome, he is told that in the future everything is chrome.”

Rirkrit Tiravanija [F08a]

The anticipation of the future can lead to a recalibration of the everyday. The reflected image of reality would be perceived in an infinite reproduction of possible territories. From top to bottom, on both sides, a mirror-like chrome surface endlessly reproduces new narratives of the ordinary. This unlimited image of the quotidian is the place for a new artistic production to be repeated again and again.

“The Vienna exhibition includes what comes between the beginning and the end of a construction. Between these two moments, in this extension of time, a space is occupied. We can seize that time frame like we evaluate an opportunity. Opportunity is a way to deal with present.” Rirkrit Tiravanija [F08b]

unlimited

“Chrome is a great agent of time.”

“This exhibition is not a science-fiction exhibition. It’s not because everything is chrome that it’s future. Spongebob’s reciprocal affirmation is not true. It is not about the future or the past, it’s about the present. Everything is chrome says Spongebob: in the present is everything chrome. The future, like the past, is not sealed. It is surrounded by a haze of duration.” Rirkrit Tiravanija [F08c]

Shomei Tomatsu

*Kadena
Air Base*



“When I first went to Okinawa in 1969, I was naturally interested in the American bases and the towns around them. However, to be honest, when I saw the bases I experienced a complex mixture of abhorrence and reverence, and a certain fond of nostalgia.”

Shomei Tomatsu

[D09a]

Processes of colonisation change over time and context. While change happens under the influence of emerging empires, new expressions start to be used. Coca-colonisation, McDonaldisation, Americanisation, later globalisation, and more recently Chinafricanisation are among the terminologies that are populating our eco-geopolitical spheres. Americanisation from the 60s shaped young Asia Pacific populations with the development of a mass society – mass production, mass consumption, mass media – a new pattern for a traditional society left alone to reconstruct a memory of the present into nostalgic imagery.

reminiscent ones

No small part of the romance lay in the fact that Tomatsu had never been to America, and knew it not firsthand. Neither was his pilgrimage really to the bases, but rather to the encrustations of bars, bordellos, fast tailors' shops, discount travel agencies, and drug and liquor and gim-crack souvenir stores that formed around them, and through which Americans on leave would ramble, drink, haggle, hunt for women, and sometimes brawl.” Leo Rubinien [D09b]

“This is because Coca-cola is a symbol of the American civilization that stands for mass production, mass commodities, and mass communications. Americanization is now becoming the common pattern of the world.”

Shomei Tomatsu

[D09c]

Tsang Tsou Choi

Kowloon



“Tsang Tsou Choi – born Tsang Choi on November 12, 1921 in Liantang Village, Guangdong, China – only received two years of formal education. At 16 he moved to Hong Kong to live with an uncle, later receiving citizenship. He worked as a laborer at construction sites and garbage collection facilities until 1980, when his legs were crushed in a work accident. Thereafter, he walked only with the assistance of crutches. While visiting his hometown at age 35, he discovered records indicating an illustrious family history. His ancestor Zeng Guangzhen had been a senior official at the court of the Zhou dynasty, and possessed extensive land titles in Sau Mau Ping, in eastern Kowloon. Zeng Chaofeng, one generation removed from Zeng Guangzhen, was son-in-law to the Zhou emperor, and had lived for a time in Kowloon.” Sasha Zhao [E10a]

A mark left in a specific territory is a signature meant to identify the land as part of oneself. It is a sign of existence and eternity placed here and there consuming any surface.

personal kingdom

Kowloon is a playground for a king in his own kingdom strolling with crutches, restlessly marking and making a world that could have been but will never be.

In his song, The Graffiti Diaries, Chet Lam sings about a man who inhabits the collective memory of a generation of Hong Kong residents, the legendary Tsang Tsou Choi.”

Sasha Zhao

[E10b]

Vandy Rattana

*Kompong
Cham*



“I’m standing with my three cameras- two around my neck and one in my hand. It is 12:30pm and I am at a rubber plantation in Kompong Cham just east of Phnom Penh. The grass and other wild greenery have grown thickly over a pond spanning five meters by five meters. As I stand here contemplating this body of water, the voice of a young farmer suddenly calls out to me as he is preparing his lunch, ‘It is a bomb pond; it is getting smaller now.’ I begin to wonder what has happened here in the middle of this beautiful land, surrounded by pure serenity. From primary school to high school and even through university, the history of Cambodia has been put into silent mode for the next generation. Yet a silence created by a mighty sound is still a sound. It is a sound that has been muted... But, still, I do not understand why this sound exists. I do not know why its echo spins in my head and rushes through the veins of my body. Perhaps, I do not really enjoy the bird’s song in the early, glorious morning or perhaps I am not humble enough. And maybe I have not yet learned enough about forgiveness and still insist on the value of revenge. I do truly wish I could enjoy the bird’s song, to finally end this silent sound reverberating through me.” Vandy Rattana [K08a]

Issues of war and conflict are embedded in the Cambodian landscape. The remains of America’s secret 2,756,941-ton bombing campaign during the Vietnam War, bomb craters are now peacefully scattered in the rubber plantations, left unnoticed to the foreign eye but still very present in local residents’ memories. Still filled with toxic water, the silent ponds are a legacy that extends far beyond the battlefield and long past the duration of the original conflict.

Danh Vo

*Phu Quoc
Island*



“Phuc is a gravedigger at the catholic cemetery on the island of Phu Quoc. A sculpture of the Virgin Mary with Jesus making a pointing gesture once stood by the harbor. With the fall of South Vietnam, Christianity was forbidden under the new socialist government. The sculpture was demolished in fear the pointing gesture would encourage people to escape by boat. The catholic inhabitants of the island collected the broken pieces of the sculpture and hid them in their homes. When the catholic inhabitants were again permitted, the community attempted to reassemble the sculpture only to find the thigh-piece was missing. Many years later, after a replacement thigh-piece had been cast, Phuc discovered the missing element of the sculpture away in the house of his senile aunt.” Danh Vo [D10a]

“After the fall of Saigon, Vo’s family was brought to the island of Phu Quoc in 1975, fled in a boat his father built, and were eventually rescued by a Danish freighter.”

Vivian Rehberg

[D10b]

reminiscent ones

Phu Quoc Island is a point of arrival and departure. A personal history is embedded within a small piece of land, between two boats, two lives. This island has captured a very precise moment of time and it is not by chance that this memory affects those who come back to the island’s small catholic cemetery. Embedded in the earth, in an existing tree, the once forbidden religious shelter contains a life engraved in marble with beautiful words.

Yelena Vorobyeva
& Victor Vorobyev

Kazakhstan



The *Non-Silk Road* project is a new mapping of the southern province of Kazakhstan. Territories can be defined through economic routes as well as through non-economic ones. State symbols along the route include colour codes related to different political colours. From communist red, Kazakhstan has been repainted in blue after the republic gained independence. Blue, or *kok* in Kazakh, is the colour of the sky, a mix of blue and green, or the dream of an impossible ocean reconnecting the region to the marine ports/parts of the world.

“The state symbols that had been canonized by the Communists were now subject to total ‘de-sacralization’. As the main sign of all things Soviet, the color red was repressed and replaced by other privileged colors all over post-Soviet space. After the republic declared its independence, the Kazakh flag became blue. To be more precise, its color is what you call kok in the Kazakh language – kok means both blue and green. Kok also means ‘sky’, while koktem means ‘spring’ and kokteu means ‘becoming green’. Fraught with meaning and symbolizing many things – the ‘Eternal Blue Sky’ in Tengrianism, the nauryz pagan celebration of spring, the blue domes of the Islamic mosques, a dream of the inaccessible ocean’s vast expanse – the color blue was accepted by the majority and entered the mind of the people as the best, most ‘appropriate’ color. The people of Kazakhstan simply love the color blue.” Yelena Vorobyeva [J07a]

economic ones

Hong-kai Wang

Huwei



“Made in collaboration with Taisugar’s Huwei sugar plant in central Taiwan – one of only two such facilities remaining in Taiwan – this multichannel sound and video installation was produced with a group of retired workers and their spouses who returned to the factory to record a soundscape of the current employees at work.” Leslie J Ureña [J08a]

The extraction of sugar cane juice from the sugar cane plant started long ago in Southeast Asia. More recently, sugar was grown and processed by slaves, who developed a specific cultural landscape of music and dance. In Huwei, Taiwan, workers produced their own forms of music, new sounds recorded by the artist as new expressions of life amidst difficult conditions. Sounds from sugar lands extract sounds of the fabric of a new society.

“Hong-kai Wang is one of Taiwan’s few artists concerned with the politics of sound. She views ‘sound and listening’ as a kind of structure and a text for exhibiting relationships in society. She believes that ‘listening is political’. In her works, sound is a tool for conceptualization that, through the ‘organization of listening’, affords the listener new access to life and history, and an experience of the political spaces that exist therein. Her work is not merely concerned with sound, words, collecting, and listening, but also with ‘how to articulate, how to document, and how to listen’.” Amy Cheng [J08b]

economic ones

Wang Jian Wei

Elsewhere



“...Living Elsewhere documents the lives of four migrant farmers families who have settled in an abandoned building project in the suburbs of Chengdu, because they have no place to go; their villages have turned into ghosts towns, their land has been given to someone else.” Marianne Brouwer [B08a]

“It was in my experimentations with anthropological methodology, when I was trying to capture a certain ‘event’ in daily life, that I came up with what you could call a new method of secret perception. [...] Through the continuous, or discontinuous documentation of this process, I want to show the attitude of people coming to understand culture as they live out the realities of daily life.”

Wang Jianwei

[B08b]

nomadic ones

Living Elsewhere is living everywhere. Recording the territories of China’s displaced population is an anthropological research project on defining a new form of society. While this condition is increasing, a negotiation of the everyday can be found in the construction of new cultural artifacts. A shift in the relationship between the public and the private develops and blurs those relationships. An abandoned group of houses, as new shells for the definition of the elsewhere, is a common situation that tends to make people’s lives part of a ghostly scenery.

Go Watanabe

Borders



“Border and Sight is a series of pairs of photographs, two views of the same place on a border between countries (or a similar line dividing two neighboring regions) taken from both sides. The physical distance between the two views is not very great, but it is easy to imagine that Watanabe was forced to cover large distances in order to obtain them. On one occasion he photographed the line between the Protestant and Catholic regions of Northern Ireland and on another the border between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.”

Shin-Ichi Fukuoka

[L08a]

US-Mexico, 3,326 kilometres; Ireland-Northern Ireland, 360 kilometres; Switzerland-France, 573 kilometres; Hungary-Austria, 366 kilometres; Bosnia-Herzegovina-Croatia, 932 kilometres... What is the total length of territorial borders? How many kilometers of lines of division exist? A border is a territory which in its physical dimension embodies both the reason and the irrationality of its own existence. The partition is the simplest approach to marking and emphasising differences. A border highlights the concept of ‘same difference’. Because it cannot be embraced at the same time, the differentiation between one and another side can only exist through the eye of the camera.

“Through the drawing of a border, the state arises wherein some place has been divided, and it also becomes a place in which chaos is created through the repetition of joining and dividing. Man arbitrarily draws one line where there was originally nothing and the resultant moving landscape.” Go Watanabe [L08b]

Apichatpong
Weerasethakul

Nabua



“Nabua is a sleepy village within the province of Nakhon Panom in the Northeast of Thailand. This small village was one of the places the Thai army occupied from the 60s to the early 80s to curb the communist insurgents. The soldiers erected a base to administer the villagers’ daily activities. The locals were psychologically and physically abused on the grounds of withholding information. Women were raped. Some were murdered in their homes. In the morning of August 7, 1965, Nabua earned its reputation nationwide when the first gun battle between the farmer communists and the totalitarian government broke out in the rice field. [...] The story of Nabua undeniably has echoes of the current political turmoil in Thailand. Institutions involved in those events of the past, along with new ones, are the key players in the ongoing chaos. Just as in the past, they manipulate the public psyche instilling it with faith and fear.”

Apichatpong Weerasethakul

[D11a]

reminiscent ones

Nabua is a place of remembrance. A small village located in the Northeastern part of Thailand, it is repeatedly struck by lightning. Unfolding the memory of the place across the screen, ghosts emerge from a red background. In reminiscence of forgotten wars, the villagers and the soldiers engage in violent occupations. Fireworks at night embrace this rebellious spirit and transform phantoms into contemporary apparitions. Teens hang out and, unaware of the weight of their past, they just live in Nabua and the territory remembers it all.

Wong Hoy Cheong

Sulukule



“Sulukule was established during Byzantine times and is regarded to be the first sedentary Roma settlement in Europe. Very much like any suburban neighborhood, Sulukule is a space filled contradictions. Historically understood as a district for the ‘entertainment’ of tourists, it has been associated with the ‘social ills’ of drugs, prostitution and alchemy, but also as a space filled with artistic creativity and performance which lives up to the oft quoted liveliness of Roma neighborhoods across Europe.” Shabbir Hussain Mustafa [E11a]

A community without land, a culture that does not value attachment to a place, the Gypsies are a population living in a special territory. Reflecting a history made of happiness and tragedy, their stories have spanned continents via a road that has no end. Forming a diaspora, loosely linked by language and customs, Gypsies live life in a continuous present. An exception was Sulukule, the thousand-year old settlement in Istanbul. An immediate victim of cities’ gentrification process, it was completely demolished, forcing an established community to be back on the road.

personal kingdom

“When I was invited for the Istanbul Biennial, and found out that Istanbul has a sizeable Roma population, I thought I’d respond to this childhood fantasy. But the first time I visited the Roma community in Sulukule, a district in Istanbul, I was thrown into a meeting and discussion – it was with the Residents Association, NGOs, representatives from the UN, together with the Municipal Council who wanted to relocate the Roma, demolish their houses, and gentrify the district. I was thrown into a disturbing situation.” Wong Hoy Cheong

[E11b]

Haegue Yang

Sadong 30



“In Sadong 30, restarting time at the abandoned property began with reconnecting electricity to the site. In fact, the house had been Yang’s grandmother’s at the time of her death marked by a kind of tragedy that is not tolerated in Korean society, causing it to be locked away from discussion or attention for years. Yang chose to share the space by cleaning it, setting up a lookout for visitors to rest and have refreshments, planting a small garden, and introducing new sources of light – reanimating the location with the introduction of the charge of electricity” Eungie Joo [I06a]

Sadong 30 is an unplugged territory. Deprived from its life, the house is a source of sadness but also the occasion of reconstructed memories. Emotional grounds are the subject for experiencing the meaning of ‘home’ and for re-engaging with the community outside and inside. Filled with new electric light, *Sadong 30* is the occasion of an interior journey where one can abandon him/herself on the path of an imaginary territory.

“Time is neither lacking nor abundant. But, time surrounding this house has established its own time zone inside this place. That is really spooky but at the same time lovely, and very dirty and freaky but at the same time sympathetic.” Eungie Joo [I06b]

those of predicted time

“...Perhaps this house lived against time and development. No, perhaps it has been, alone, squandering time and development because it wants to live in a different time zone, or to store time.” Haegue Yang [I06c]

Yang Jiechang

Eurasia



“Eurasia is a notion that many politicians, thinkers, and artists have used. They mostly considered Eurasia as a geopolitical entity. For me, Eurasia is a reality related to my family. It is the land I experience everyday in my life: I am from Canton, China, my wife is German, our children are Eurasian. We live in Paris. At home we speak German, French, Chinese and English. Our way of life is open and mobile. We feel that the land Eurasia proposes a large scale of possibilities and a great potential to everyone living in it. Similarly, from a political, economic and cultural perspective, to use and to develop the idea of Eurasia is very promising, especially now, at a time when we are facing the irresistible and growing influence of American imperialism anew and when the clash of Eastern and Western cultures anew is being articulated on an ideological or religious level. Eurasia is a land and an idea that transcends religious positions, races and discrimination. Eurasia is a huge, beautiful and rich land full of history.” Yang Jiechang [H08a]

Eurasia is a territory of possibilities. Located somewhere between Europe and Asia, it imposes its optimistic blending of the world. Beyond the simple geographical polarisation, *Eurasia* goes somewhere other than the traditional oppositions based on origin, religion, and ideology.

other heterotopias

Eurasia is the future as it used to be our past, before borders and other territorial constraints. *Eurasia*'s contours are infinite and depend more on the good will of its population. The new perspectives it offers are vast, at the limits of our imaginations.

Yang Jun

Chinatown



“The intervention can be found in a ‘left-over’ place, surrounded by streets, a sculpture, a small building in a Chinese style using form elements, which are known through the prevalence of Asian restaurants in Europe.”

Jun Yang

[B09a]

The ordinary is a territory fabricated by education and cultural background. A specific context will impose its own logic on personal developments and will contribute to the definition of one’s identity. Memories and layers of accumulated experience shape the contours of the everyday in a well-routed static composition. Ignoring the evolution of the world, repetition of the banal or routine codifies our representation of this world.

nomadic ones

Chinatowns are static moments of China in foreign lands while the country of origin continues to change dynamically. A too-long exposure in the womb of the quotidian deforms the reality of an ever-changing world and culture. Chinatown is a frozen territory.

“Chinese restaurants were integral to Jun Yang’s development, as he grew up in the same building as the restaurant run by his parents in Vienna, always in sight of the signboard with the restaurant name, Tianjin, done in white Chinese characters in classic Songti script against a blue background – just like the way that was common in 1930s and ‘40s China – in a kind of distortion of time and space.”

Hu Fang

[B09b]

Yee I-Lann

Fluid World



The Sulu Sea is a territory surrounded by islands. The body of water is a fluid world located between the coasts of Malaysia and the Philippine. Populated by the Moken, this specific territory has been a theatre of world maritime history. Imposing their rules on the difficult sea, the Moro pirates have threatened trade and colonial aspirations. As a result, this instability still resonates in their memories, identities, religion, and borders. Sulu stories are magical legends filled with adventures bringing to life piracy, kidnappings, shipwrecks, opium, and ghosts. We laugh and tremble hearing their stories as they awaken the phantoms of our own fantasies.

those defined by an epic journey

“To decode [Yee’s] work one must come to terms with the fact that, for all Malaysians, the act of seeing is itself fraught with significance. As a result of four decades of government policies that ostensibly promote racial harmony while effectively perpetuating the British colonial strategy of divide and rule, to look at the world through Malaysian eyes is to see a world segregated, compartmentalized, and stratified by ethnicity and nationality. In Malaysia, the human image is arguably less inflected by considerations of gender and class than by those of racial identity... By using found photographs and illustrations and recontextualizing them, Yee multiplies the number of times that this phenomenon of the charged Malaysian gaze comes into play.”

Huzir Sulaiman [C13a]

Yeh Wei-Li

*Treasure
Hill*



One of the biggest threats to communities is the erasure of their memories in the destruction of their neighbourhoods. The essential mission of a museum is to collect and display visible artefacts for public viewing. From those two statements, the People's Museum focuses on collecting the community's artefacts and memories – the wastes of history promoted as antiquities. Renewal and revitalisation are therefore challenged by museography and the archival process. *Treasure Hill* has been marginalised and now disappears. Only its traces remain in the memories of its inhabitants as part of an artistic construction.

nomadic ones

“Situated on the outskirts of Taipei on a hillside by Keelung River, the neglected Treasure Hill area has largely been forgotten by the majority or Taipei residents. Once a military post, the hillside was illegally occupied by soldiers and their families who had lived there during the 60’s. These squatters built simple structures and houses, and were later joined by migrants from the countryside. During the 80s, as many as 200 households lived there. Due to the lack of planning, Treasure Hill was slum-like, crowded and disorderly. Several generations came and went, until merely a few dozen middle-lower class households remained and neighborhood was slated for demolition. But through concerted campaigning and the efforts of cultural and social activists, experts and scholars dating back to the 1980s, the area was preserved.” Amy Cheng [B10a]

Yuan Goang-ming

*Floating
Home*



“The lens moves repeatedly forward and backward, between the interior of the house and outdoor space, between Yuan’s own house and the neighboring house, between architectural space and nature, between organic life space and ruins, between mountains and ocean, as well as between brightness and darkness. Yuan Goang-ming seems to be building a virtual ‘passage’ of imagery. Through this passage, he attempts to connect between life and death in the universe, between the ‘can-be-seen’ and the ‘cannot-be-seen.’ Chia Chi Jason Wang [F09a]

The struggle for existence is a constant evaluation of the position one occupies. In this sense, it requires a form of consciousness to make the reality of being a topographical concern. Dynamic geographies are defined as the way we endlessly evaluate the world around us and continuously readjust to it. A boat afloat is subject to the ocean’s persistent pressure, moved by an endless series of violent waves and currents. Yet its fragile reality forces it to sink and float, in repetition, again and again.

unlimited

“They are also an articulation of the awakening of the self, together with its fears and sense of helplessness. Floating describes the loss of orientation and its fears; it is the experience of a young man at sea. Being adrift on the opens sea is quite another matter than being adrift on a river, as one is not moving in a given direction, but afloat directionless. This sense of loss that comes from facing the world alone is the anxiety buried in the heart of every pioneer.” Chang Tsong-zung [F09b]

Yuan Shun

Mindscape



“It is a six-meter square low-elevation rendering – almost sandcastle-like – of an outer space topography complete with mountains, valleys, craters and an ample sprinkling of ‘planetary’ dust. Yuan achieves great detail despite using simple materials such as sand and wood. At first glance the setting looks rugged and untouched, the artist giving the mountains rough, sharp edges and peaks, and sprinkling little rocks around their bases. Upon closer inspection, however, signs of human intervention appear in the form of small plastic cube- and dome-shaped structures erected on the surface, and paths and roads carved through the sand. The two types of structures form their own distinct settlements, but they cluster in a valley between the two primary ‘mountain ranges’. Offering no explanation, Yuan leaves viewers to determine the status of this landscape and who or what could have left these marks.” Henri Benaim [G10a]

A mental landscape is a territory located in the haze of our imagination. It is a conceptual region where the past and the future collide, an eternal geography composed of landscapes, cities, and complex architectures.

those that have constructed fictions

A mental landscape is ephemeral, meant one day to disappear. Its mountains will be erased, its buildings and bridges will collapse, its cities will be destroyed; it is a tabula rasa of what exists and an anticipation of a future coming through the haze.

Zheng Guogu

Empire



An empire is a territory defined by the level of authority of its ruler. A personal empire starts from the strength of one's imagination and materialises in a symbolic dimension. In a Chinese context, the simplest materialisation of this power often leads to the miniaturisation of a garden populated by obedient subjects. From the model to the real scale landscape, the level of imagination proportionally increases, as one still wants to rule, control, and test the limits of a visionary power.

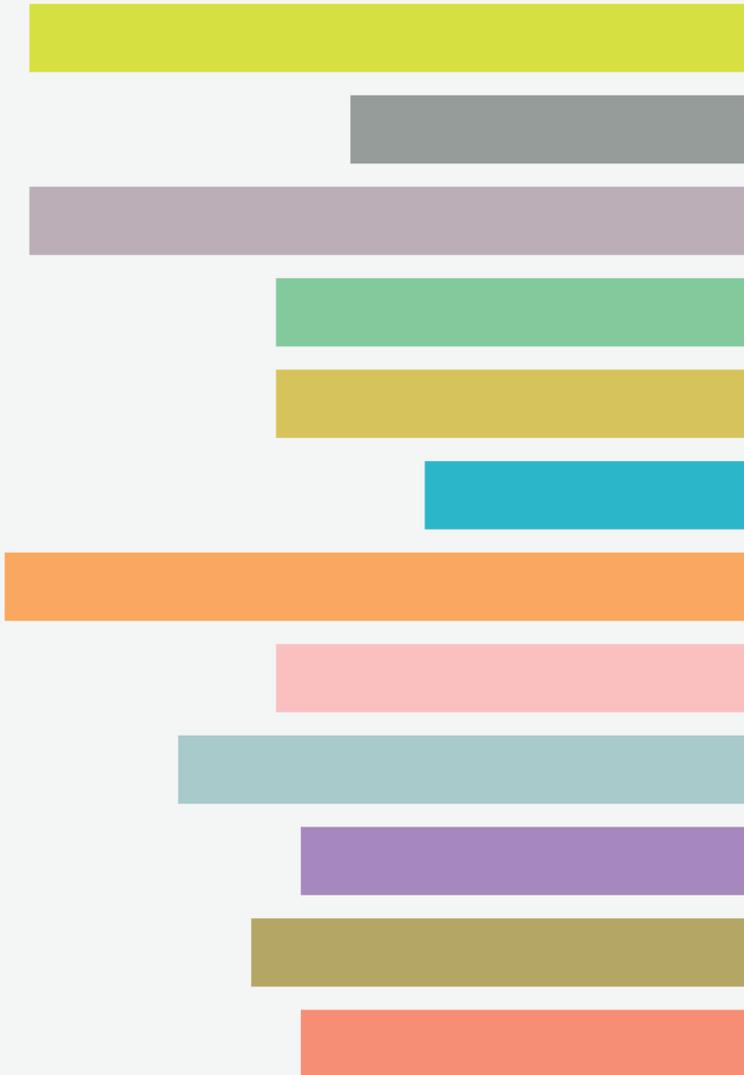
“Building my empire is a combination of my interest in games and the construction problems that I need to resolve. I still live in the world of game. It is totally free of pressure. If you endure playing the entire night, you go to bed and wake up quite rested. But it is far more difficult in reality. You have to face the pressure. You have to think how to raise the money, how to find the right people to create a structure, how to transport stones. The construction is in need on manpower and material. I have to decide where to put the 20-ton stones. In addition, when the officials from the city and province come, they'll say ‘what you do is illegal’ and give an order to you that you must go to their offices to complete the procedures tomorrow. But new things issues will always surface in the process of construction.” Zheng Guogu [H09a]

other heterotopias

“Jumping from the lightness of a virtual game to the heaviness of the construction industry, the artist models the land as if it is clay. Yet, his ability to construct equals his power to dig and move the earth, moving counter to the common flatness of property ready to be built in China.” Gutierrez + Portefaix [H09b]

MAP Office

*Atlas of Asia
Art Archive*



This classification of real and imaginary territories encountered in the Asia Art Archive establishes an Atlas in which one can begin to embrace the heterogeneous character of artistic production. In this list of 12 possible categories, geography goes beyond the conventional means of defining territories, usually constrained by national interests and geographic borders. These categories propose another taxonomy in which territories are defined by the nature of their creations and ambitions. Like the pieces of a puzzle, no territory could exist without those surrounding it. They form a network connected by the complex system of portolan, a navigational measure using triangulation.



those outlined by universal values

nomadic ones

those defined by an epic journey

reminiscent ones

personal kingdom

unlimited

those that have constructed fictions

other heterotopias

those of predicted time

economic ones

loaded landscapes

the frontier

MAP OFFICE is a multidisciplinary platform devised by Laurent Gutierrez (Casablanca, 1966) and Valérie Portefaix (Saint-Etienne, 1969). This duo of artists has been based in Hong Kong since 1996, working on physical and imaginary territories using varied means of expression including drawing, photographs, video, installations, performance and literary and theoretical texts. Their entire project forms a critique of spatio-temporal anomalies and documents how human beings subvert and appropriate space. Humour, games and fiction are also part of their approach, in the form of small publications providing a further format for disseminating their work. They teach at the School of Design, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

This project was conceived and developed during MAP Office's Residency at Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong, February/July 2012 - www.aaa.org.hk / www.map-office.com

