

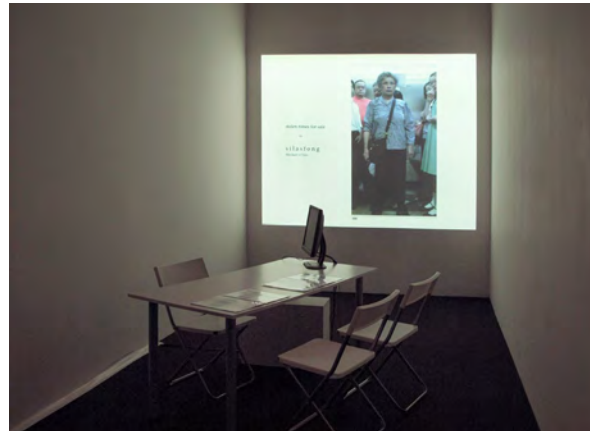
**SILAS FONG**

**ARTISTIC RESEARCH PORTFOLIO**

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# *Stolen Times for Sale* | 2008 - 2010 | Video installation, performance | 4'06"

Documentation Video  
[https://youtu.be/h\\_\\_efRtXJRg](https://youtu.be/h__efRtXJRg)  
 Full Video  
<https://youtu.be/a97uKTXNfOc>



Pirated DVD Packaging

The artist steals time from strangers through pressing the buttons of the elevators during the rush hour. The stolen times are recorded as video and are being exhibited in gallery and museum. Visitors can purchase with money and take away these times. They are extracted into a DVD from the performer. According to the duration, number of people involved, their approximate age, appearance and response, prices for stolen times are different. The video sequences once sold are replaced by "SOLD - XX SECONDS FOR \$XXX", and are being shown together with the unsold ones.



*Upon the Escalator* | 2009 | Single channel video | 13' 50"

Part 1  
<https://youtu.be/p9EJ4ZWVTrM>  
Part 2  
[https://youtu.be/r5Z8\\_jJ-2v8](https://youtu.be/r5Z8_jJ-2v8)



In the space with high pedestrian flow in the city, there is full of delicate communication between people. Artist reconstructs the relationship upon the escalators and the story of people by 3 video channels abreast.

Different numbers of people, movements, and ups and downs are strewn at random through time and space. Strangers that never met are arranged to stare at and pass by each other in the overlapping space. This highlights the artist and audience, staying aloof but being in the story at the same time.

With a dramatic arrangement, the artist shows his imagination of the cityscape and reflection on interpersonal relationship in the public. In the space with high pedestrian flow in the city, there is full of delicate communication between people. Artist reconstructs the relationship upon the escalators and the story of people by 3 video channels abreast.

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*Flat D* | 2015 | Durational Room Installation  
300 cm x 220 cm x 250 cm | 10 minutes  
Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong

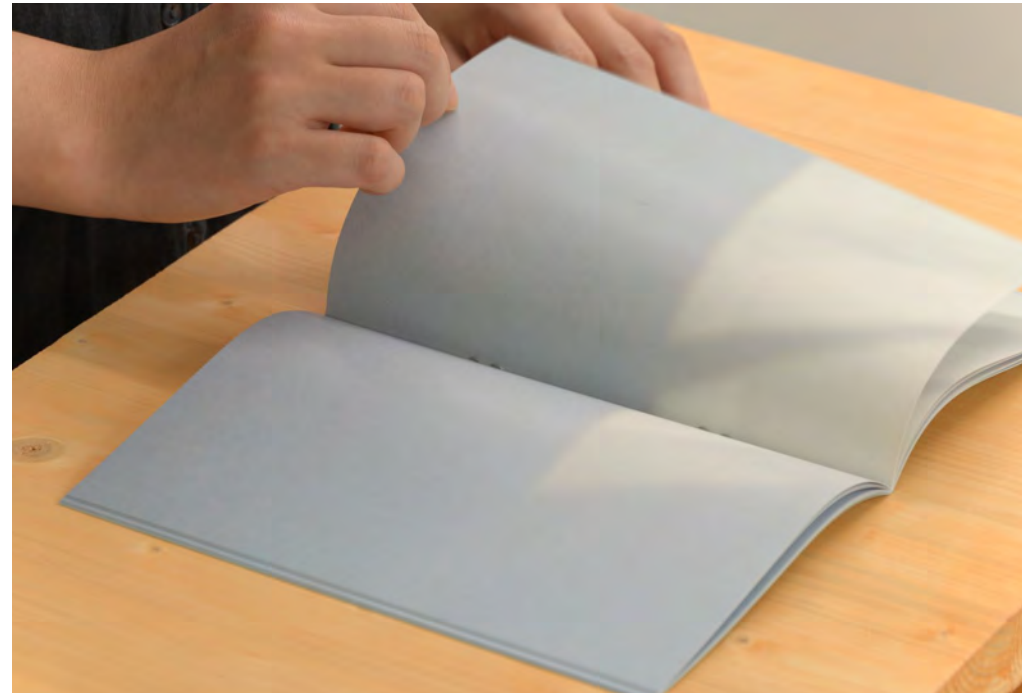
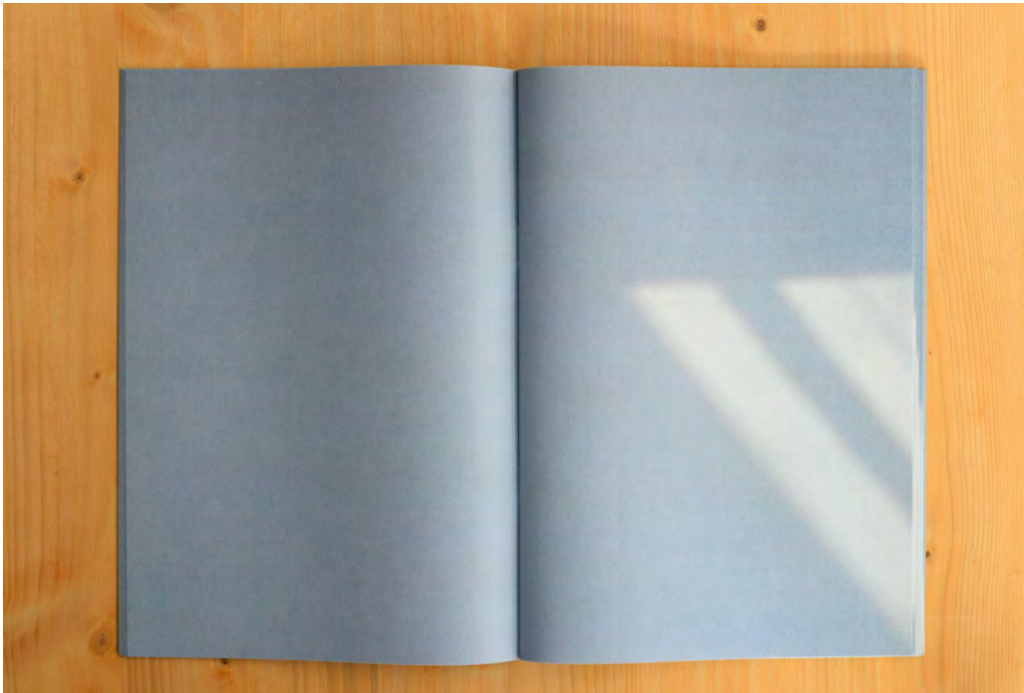
Demonstration Video  
<https://youtu.be/vB48reXShus>



In front of a door, there is a person sitting on a chair. When you get close, this person greets you and asks if you want to enter. However, you are only allowed to enter individually, without your mobile phone, camera, electronic devices and books, etc. After you enter, the door would be locked, and it would only be unlock after 10 minutes. You would sign an agreement to confirm your decision at your own risk. Inquiries about what is behind the door would not be answered. Every visitor is only allowed to enter the door once for the whole exhibition period.

*Afternoons* | 2015 | Digital print on Neobond® synthetic fibre papers | 20 books in A5 format

Video Documentation  
<https://youtu.be/chGusBhj3HE>



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〈Afternoons〉 was installed with a projected image photographed at the place where the work was made.

*Work Report for Museum Ludwig | 2014 | Photo & Text |*  
*Lambda print on aluminium dibond | 156 cm x 38 cm (Two in a set)*

Full Text of the work  
<http://silasfong.com/news/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Full-Text.pdf>



In April 2014, I managed to get a part-time job. It was to work as a performer in Museum Ludwig. I had to dress formal and look decent. On the opening day, the artist guided three of us, the 'name announcers', by himself. We had to stand at an exact position at the exhibition entrance. We had to ask every visitor for their names and then announce them really loudly into the exhibition space. The job was in shift-based. Each shift lasted for 4 hours. I worked 4 shifts a week.

I thought 30 minutes passed, but when I look at my 40-year-old mechanical watch, the minute hand just turned by 30 degrees. In order to kill boredom, I counted how many spotlights are there on the ceiling; how large the space is by counting the number of tiles. I tried different strategies of taking breaks, every 5 minutes for 30 minutes or every 10 minutes per hour, to make things feel faster. I watched the daylight change on the wall. I imagine how the weather changed outside, and how the tourists took photos of Dom.



2014-06-22  
13:00

Dusk comes without any greeting. I remember when I was in primary school. It often rained heavily around 5pm, just before I left school. The lights at the staircase were about the same like this. I was a boy scout, so sometimes I helped to keep things in order when the school kids leave. Now I really can't explain why I did all these. I was so obedient and fond of teamwork, Boy scout, prefect... Now I detest police and security. Even I have to be a part of them, I would only want to be an undercover. I like to be sneaky. This girl has two tattoos on her arm. But it is too far to know what they are. Oh, gone? Anna, Soklikov, they are Slavic. Two aged men visit the exhibition on Sunday. Mother and three daughters – Calra, Antonia, Angelika and... I forgot. Oh Theresa Teresa? This man is called Bürgler. Why does schnitzel come to my mind? If I go to Ulsan in Korea, how would I communicate with the people?

*There is No Time* | 2016 | Solo Exhibition at Hong-ti Art Center

300 cm x 450 cm, 120 cm x 80 cm | Print on Banner, Poster, Stone, Table | 2016



Time is always not enough, but it is only true when we have things to do. Artist residency is an experience of time travel. Once you step into another culture, far away from your own. Suddenly you realize that you have to learn from the very beginning, from the basic understanding of daily life. It recalls memories of childhood, of youth and of future. Nothing is necessary to be done. Just stay in the studio, which is very spacious compared to that I had in Hong Kong, allows a lot of solitary thought to fill up until your back feel painful with the chair. The spacetime is open. 'Time is an illusion.'



Shadow on the Window | 123 cm x 80 cm, 15 minutes  
| TimelapseVideo on LED TV | 2016



Installation View | Hong-ti Art Center, Busan | 2016

## *In-Attention* | 2017

Bed, Colour Print, Digital Projection on Wall, Digital Videos on TVs,  
Stool, Film Negatives, LED Light Panel, Microscope | Gallery Exit, Hong Kong

Focus Test

[https://youtu.be/\\_YxVJqEwKo](https://youtu.be/_YxVJqEwKo)

Screen Time

<https://youtu.be/qh1G2Yxitz0>



Silas FONG is interested in our struggle to remain calm and focused in an urban environment flooded with information. He often explores this problem with the help of found objects drawn from the world of technology. The video “Focus Test”, for example, consists of a series of tests charts for cameras. Their geometrical patterns, designed to determine the focusing ability of optical lenses, are equally challenging to the human eye. FONG’s fascination with test patterns is also evident in “Nozzle Check/Head Alignment”, a printout whose original purpose was to verify the proper function of a printer. Its fragile array of colour fields and lines is a constant reminder of how little it takes to become misadjusted, for both machines and humans.

– Ashley Chan



*Grain Focus*, 2017, LED light panel, glass, film negatives, 10x base magnifier, 100x microscope, 50 cm x 77 cm x 13 cm



*Photo Projection*, 2017, digital projection on wall, dimension variable

## *Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening* | 2018 | Videotage, Hong Kong

At the entrance, visitor picks up one of the catalogues and misses out the two others which look seemingly identical. In fact, each catalogue contains a different text that guides the visitor to an alternative experience of the same exhibition.

Installation Documentation  
<https://youtu.be/C4tVlnhK1eA>  
Catalogue  
[https://issuu.com/verlagfong/docs/stopping\\_by\\_woods\\_on\\_a\\_snowy\\_evenin/14](https://issuu.com/verlagfong/docs/stopping_by_woods_on_a_snowy_evenin/14)



Visitor participates in the exhibition according to the instructions on the Exhibition Guide.



‘Through slow-moving videos, images, and objects that are oft missed, Fong creates an encounter with the everyday in a controlled environment to allow the visitor to be with the urban in a different way. Many of the images are personal to Fong, and he brings in three textual perspectives (including this one) to obscure this narrative of his memories, opening them up to be shared. Bringing in media art theory into more traditional image-making practices, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* employs a light touch in a grand gesture toward a place where we can choose to be still.’

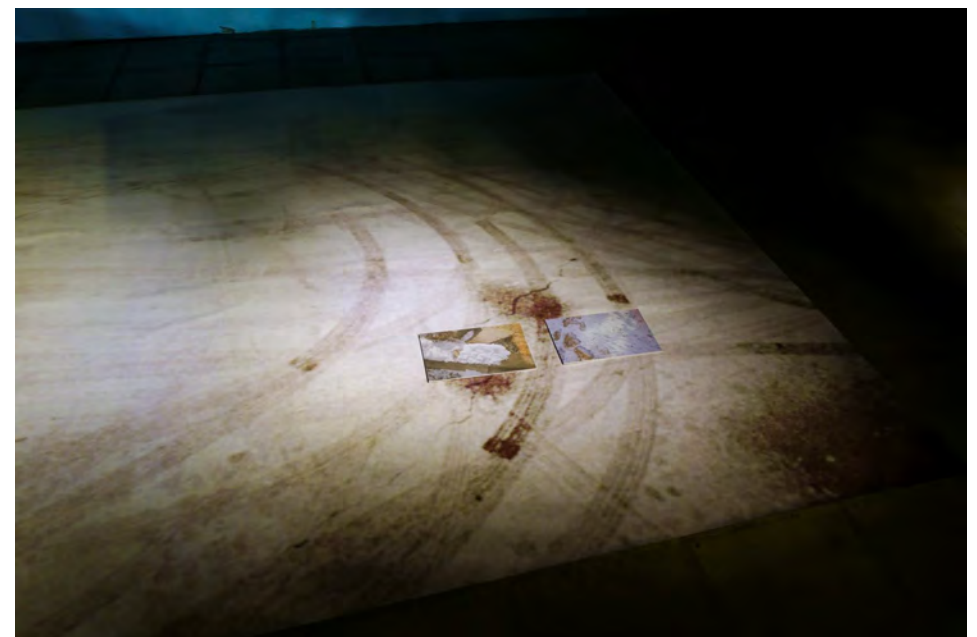
– Excerpt from Hera Chan’s text, *The Freedom To Be Still*



Mixed media tucked in You Come Too, 21.1 cm x 14.5 cm x 1.8 cm, 2018



Digital photo projection on screen; Video on TV, HDV, colour, 16 minutes, 2018

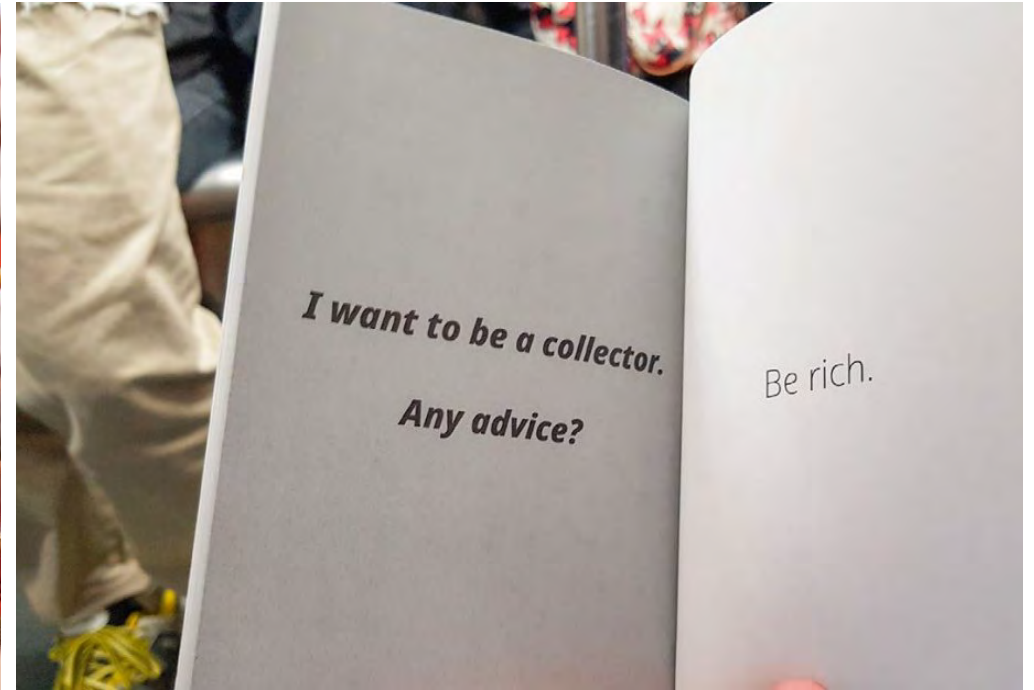


Digital printed vinyl on plexiglass, 30 cm x 20 cm, 2018

*Small Talk: Sample Conversations for Your Perfect Date and Successful Meeting* | 2018

Artist's book | 18 cm x 12 cm, 100 pages | Duddell's (Restaurant), Hong Kong

Book Preview  
<https://rb.gy/lqjawv>



Small Talk is a handy coffee-table book that everyone, specifically the art professionals, can flip through while having a drink and chatting with their peers. Instead of beautiful and colourful pictures, this book collects pre-written dialogues offering for the readers to act out when they run out of words in various artistic occasions.

*Enjoy Your Meal!* | 2018 | Clothing, Dummy, Plastic Food Model  
Duddell's (Restaurant), Hong Kong



In 1959, Mark Rothko accepted a commission from Four Seasons restaurant in New York City. “I hope to paint something that will ruin the appetite of every son of a bitch who ever eats in that room”. Sounds dramatic enough, but he failed and returned the money because he found that ‘people can stand anything these days’. I was curious about what I could do in a high-end restaurant, while contributing to the context of this exhibition.

*Enjoy Your Meal!* is a scene recreated to depict the McRefugee phenomenon and the problem of extreme shortage in affordable housing situation in Hong Kong.

*Ulsan One Minute* | 2018 | LED Display Panel, Metal Stand

250 cm x 100 cm x 20 cm | 12th Taehwa River International Eco Art Festival, Ulsan



Ulsan One Minute is an athletic competition. On contrary to a typical sports game, one does not win by being the fastest, the highest nor the strongest. The slowest wins. This simple game asks anyone being in Ulsan to count faithfully one minute in their mind without looking at any clock. The counted duration is measured by a timer – a stopwatch, a smartphone or a digital watch. The measured duration should be accurate to two decimal places. The data of each participant are collected and ranked from the slowest to the fastest before the start of the festival. It would be made up to maximum 1440 personal minutes thus a different length of a day. A public clock is installed in the Taehwa River Park and presents these personal times and paces belonging to the people in Ulsan. It also works as a reminder to pay attention and reconsider the value of time and success.

*Art Recycle Bin* | 2019 | Acrylic, stainless steel, vinyl | 80 cm x 50 cm x 30 cm  
Exhibited at H Queen's as an official satellite event's of Art Basel Hong Kong 2018



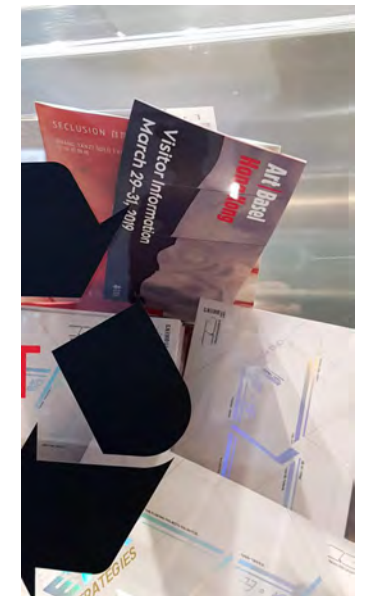
*Art Recycle Bin*, an acrylic box with a slit placed at the endpoint of the art experience on the 1st floor lobby. Visitors are invited to insert thin pieces of paper such as floor maps or exhibition leaflets, which many visitors will have in hand over the Arts Month in March. Fong sees this act as a means for visitors to clear their mind after an exhilarating experience and as a form of recuperation that injects new life to these sometimes overlooked materials.



Taiwanese artist Lai Chih-Sheng put someone's business card into *Art Recycle Bin*.



Full of unwanted leaflets, brochures and business cards collected during Art Basel Hong Kong 2018





REACH NEW HEIGHTS

# Sad

sad school of artists development

19 - 31.07.2019

INFO DAYS

19.07.2019

5-7 pm Opening

6 pm

Curator Hong Leeji  
in Conversation with  
Prof. Silas Fong

29 - 30.07.2019

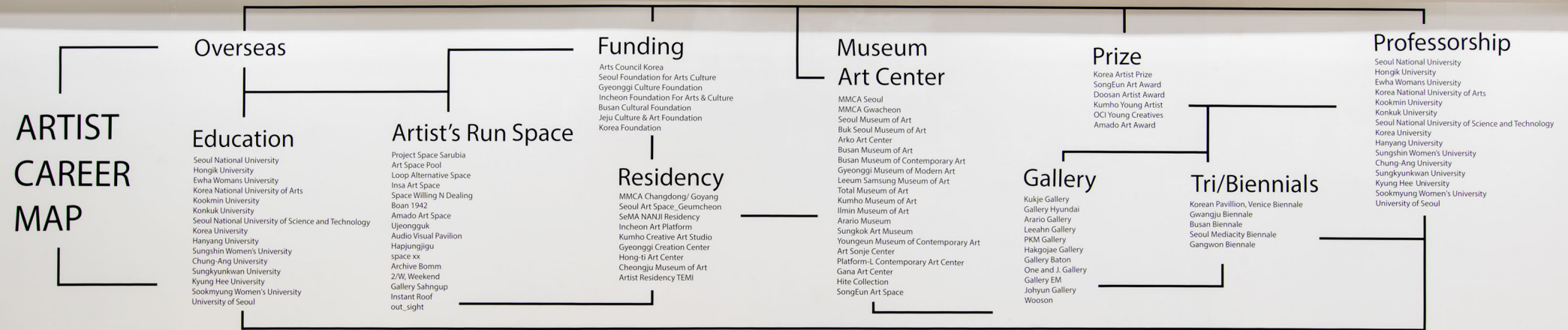
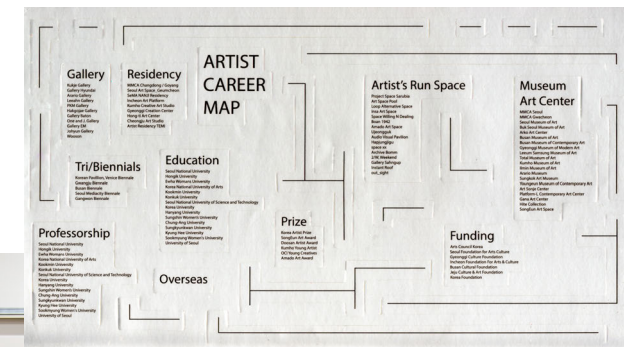
2-6 pm

Portfolio Review &  
Career Consultation  
for Young Artists  
by Prof. Silas Fong

## Artist Career Map | 2019

Text Vinyl on Wall | 1400 cm x 300 cm

Stickers, 21cm × 12cm, 1000 장, 2020



SAD School of Artists Development presents the Artist Career Map, an insightful career path for emerging artists in South Korea. With this grand picture, young artists can easily set their destination and choose the fastest way to achieve. SAD arranges the sections such as education, overseas, artist's run space in hierarchical order. Higher position on the map indicates a higher status. SAD systematically ranks lists of institutions from the best to the worst. Artist Career Map is not a comprehensive map but apparent pathways through important organizations. Artist Career Map is an essential tool for art graduates, emerging artists and frustrated artists. It helps to understand and learn to develop an artist career in the right way. Follow the example and build an ideal map. If you are creative, you can always make your way.

The photograph captures a panel discussion during an event at MMCA Seoul. Two individuals are seated on chairs facing each other, engaged in conversation while holding papers. They are surrounded by an audience of young people sitting on the floor, some looking towards the speakers. The background features a large-scale graphic titled "ARTIST CAREER MAP". This map branches into several categories: Overseas, Education, Artist's Run Space, Funding, Residency, and Museum Art Center. Each category lists specific institutions or programs associated with it.

**ARTIST CAREER MAP**

- Overseas**
- Funding**
  - Arts Council Korea
  - Seoul Foundation for Arts Culture
  - Gyeonggi Culture Foundation
  - Incheon Foundation For Arts & Culture
  - Busan Cultural Foundation
  - Jeju Culture & Art Foundation
  - Korea Foundation
- Museum Art Center**
  - MMCA Seoul
  - MMCA Gwacheon
  - Seoul Museum of Art
  - Buk Seoul Museum of Art
  - Arko Art Center
  - Busan Museum of Art
  - Busan Museum of Contemporary Art
  - Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art
  - Leeum Samsung Museum of Art
  - Total Museum of Art
  - Kumho Museum of Art
  - Ilgwang Museum of Art
  - Arario Museum
  - Sungkok Art Museum
  - Youngeun Museum of Contemporary Art
  - Art Sonje Center
  - Platform-L Contemporary Art Center
  - Gana Art Center
  - Hite Collection
  - Eun Art Space
- Residency**
  - MMCA Changdong / Goyang
  - Seoul Art Space\_Geumcheon
  - SeMA NANJI Residency
  - Incheon Art Platform
  - Kumho Creative Art Studio
  - Gyeonggi Creation Center
  - Dong-ti Art Center
  - Daegu Museum of Art
  - Artist Residency TEMI
- Education**
  - Seoul National University
  - Hongik University
  - Ewha Womans University
  - Korea National University of Arts
  - Kookmin University
  - Konkuk University
  - Seoul National University of Science and Technology
  - Korea University
  - Hanyang University
  - Sungshin Women's University
  - Chung-Ang University
  - Sungkyunkwan University
  - Kyung Hee University
  - Sookmyung Women's University
  - University of Seoul
- Artist's Run Space**
  - Project Space Sarubia
  - Art Space Pool
  - Loop Alternative Space
  - Insa Art Space
  - Space Willing N Dealing
  - Boan 1942
  - Amado Art Space
  - Gyeongbuk Visual Pavilion
  - Gyeongju
  - X Bomm
  - Weekend Sahngup
  - Roof sight

In education, a teacher often shows students the best way or the right knowledge in understanding and doing things. In art-making, the artist questions and gives sarcastic or no answers. What happens when an artist became a teacher? What if teaching became an artistic media . As a teacher, can I teach the wrong things. On this occasion, I would like to make learning materials and instructions showing students the wrong way. I doubt if it would be a more effective and critical way for students to learn.

In education, a teacher often shows students the best way or the right knowledge in understanding and doing things. In art-making, the artist questions and gives sarcastic or no answers. What happens when an artist became a teacher? What if teaching became an artistic media . As a teacher, can I teach the wrong things. On this occasion, I would like to make learning materials and instructions showing students the wrong way. I doubt if it would be a more effective and critical way for students to learn.

*Vocabulary: Understanding Your Art Professor And Make Life Easier* | 2019  
Artist's zine | A6, 48 pages, black & white laser print, softcover in 10 colours

Book Preview  
<https://rb.gy/kyacrs>



For the first time, with this pocketbook, you can explore the vocabulary and phrases that your professors often use. You will acquire the technique to understand your professor, better and faster. Hopefully, you will understand what your art professor means in the end.

*Introduction to International Art English (IAE) | 2019*  
LED display panel, art magazines 250 x 100 x 10 cm



*Art jargon displayed on eye-catching but hard-to-read LED panel.*



*Back side of the LED panel supported by art magazines.*

Artists, curators and critics used popular art jargons to decorate their writings and artworks. It might sound more professional, contextualized, more important than it is but difficult to be understood. These jargons pop up on the LED display like an attractive billboard. One keeps looking without reading a word from it. The LED panel is supported by piles of important art magazines borrowed from the archive of Seoul Art Space Geumcheon. Visitors could pick up the magazine but they would bear the risk to make the panel fall.

## *Artist Portrait Basics* | 2019

Digital print on polyester, studio flash, camera, backdrop stand | 480 cm x 370 cm (size of the print)



*Digital rendering of an ideal studio*

For a successful career as an artist, you need a good portrait. For a successful artist's portrait, you need a perfect studio. What if you do not have a high ceiling and tall windows at your studio? What if you do not even have a studio? Artist Portrait Basics offers you a chance to get familiar with the essential ways to show off your potential, productivity and professionalism in a single photo backdrop. You will also learn several hands-on skills to project your ego and charisma through your posture. For better opportunities in your future career as an artist, take this course by SAD School of Artist Development, regardless of your discipline.

## Practical Application Basics | 2019

### Digital print on papers, wooden shelves, pens



■ SAD관리법 시행규칙 [별지 제17호서식] <개정 2019. 7. 19.> (제1쪽 / Page 1)

### 예술가직업훈련학교 신청서

### SAD SCHOOL OF ARTISTS DEVELOPMENT

### APPLICATION FORM

<신청서 작성방법>

- 신청서는 사실에 근거하여 정확하게 작성하여 제출하여야 합니다.
- 신청사항의 모든 질문에 대한 답변은 한글 또는 영문으로 기재하여야 합니다.
- 신청사항의 해당 칸 [ ] 안에 √ 표시를 하시기 바랍니다.
- 7페이지를 신청한 경우, 신청서류를 7페이지까지 제출합니다.
- 신청서를 작성한 후 기각되거나 기각됩니다.

How to fill out this form

- You must fill out this form completely and correctly.
- You must write in block letters either in English or Korean.
- For multiple-choice questions, you must check [√] all that apply.
- If you select "Other", please provide up with more information in the given space.
- After you have completed the form, please keep it yourself!!

PHOTO 사진 (35mm x 45mm)	1.1 신분증에 기재된 성명/Full name (as shown in ID card)	영 Given Names
• 흰색 바탕에 오리를 찍지 않음	1.2 성 Family Name	1.3 성별 Sex
• 원본 사진으로 촬영한 후 (앞면) 이 컬러로 출력하여 함	1.4 생년월일 Date of Birth (yyyy/mm/dd)	남성/Male [ ] 여성/Female [ ]
A color photo taken within last 6 months (full face without hat, front view against white or off-white background)	1.5 국적 Nationality	1.7 국가신분증번호 National Identity No.
1.6 출생도시 City of Birth		

1.8 이전에 펀딩이나 아티스트 레지던시 지원에 합격한 적이 있는지 여부  
Have you ever succeeded in an application for funding and artist residencies?  
아-Is No [ ] 예 Yes [ ] → '예' 선택 시 상세내용 기재 If "Yes" please provide details  
(기관명 Name of organization, 지원금 Amount)

2.1 매체 Medium \*둘 이상일 경우 가장 많이 사용하는 한 개만 선택 If more than one, choose only the most used.

회화 Painting [ ]	조각 Sculpture [ ]
설치 Installation [ ]	미디어아트 Media Art [ ]
사진 Photography [ ]	퍼포먼스 Performance Art [ ]
사운드아트 Sound Art [ ]	기타 Other [ ]

→ '기타' 상세내용!! 'Other' please provide details ( )

210mm x 297mm [백상지 (80 g / m²) 또는 중질지 (80 g / m²)]

## 4. 혼인사항 및 가족사항 / MARITAL STATUS

### 4.1 현재 혼인사항 Current Marital Status

기혼 Married [ ] 이

### 4.2 배우자 인적사항 Personal Information of Your Spouse

a) 성 Family Name (in English)

c) 생년월일 Date of Birth (yyyy/mm/dd)

e) 거주지 Residential Address

### 4.3 자녀 유무 Do you have children?

없음 No [ ]

## 5. 학력 / EDUCATION

### 5.1 최종학력 What is the highest degree or level of education

석사/박사 Master's / Doctoral Degree [ ]

고졸 High School Diploma [ ]

→ '기타' 선택 시 상세내용 기재 If 'Other' please provide details

### 5.2 대학교명 Name of University

### 5.4 고등학교명 Name of High School

### 5.6 학교명 Name of School

### 5.8 초등학교명 Name of Primary School

### 5.10 유치원명 Name of Kindergarten

One application a day keeps loans away.

It is a common misconception to think that artists must struggle against financial hardships for their artistic pursuit. This stereotype has circulated in history for centuries. Famous examples are the life of Vincent van Gogh and The Poor Poet by Carl Spitzweg. On the other hand, Franz Kafka's A Hunger Artist might suggest a more accurate perspective close to SAD's belief. It is a choice of life for an artist to suffer, especially in the 2020s. Korea offers one of the best governmental and institutional support to the local artists in the world. It is a survival skill to secure these supports. If you are an artist in your budding period; no matter if your work is interesting or not, you must learn to fill in the application form correctly and efficiently.

# Sad

school of artists development

[www.sadschool.org](http://www.sadschool.org)

# SAD Art Rental ART ON AIR



Production set of a art rental TV home shopping educational programme



In the recent trend of the art world, Silas Fong analyses the mechanism of ecology in the world of artists, artwork and collectors. He discovered the growing potential in art rental services. He offers solid training for the students in SAD School of Artist Development to practice and master the skills in promoting art rental service through home shopping TV channels.

NEW SAD 아트 렌탈

지구 하나뿐인  
'원화' 렌탈이  
월 39,900원

홈쇼핑 특가  
월 25,000원~  
(10호 기준, 사이즈별 상이)

홈쇼핑 특가  
지금 상담예약 필수

마지막 생방송! 이후 방송미정  
**바로 신청**

상담원 010-2188-8240

SAD Art Rental  
ART ON AIR

이벤트 종료까지 02:49

NEW SAD 아트 렌탈

**SAD만의**  
특별한 아트렌탈

전문 큐레이터의  
그림추천

오늘 결제 NO  
상담만 하세요

지금 신청하면 1달간 무료체험  
**바로 신청**

상담원 010-2188-8240

SAD Art Rental  
ART ON AIR

이벤트 종료까지 02:16

NEW SAD 아트 렌탈

**TV쇼핑 최고**  
그림 렌탈 서비스

세상 단 하나뿐인  
'원화 작품'을

원하는 공간  
'어디든' 가능  
(공간에 따라 변경 가능)

지금 신청하면 1달간 무료체험  
**바로 신청**

상담원 010-2188-8240

SAD Art Rental  
ART ON AIR

이벤트 종료까지 01:50

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홈쇼핑 특가  
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마지막 생방송! 이후 방송미정  
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세상 단 하나뿐인 원화 렌탈  
월 25,000원 ~

이벤트 종료까지 00:27

## Greetings for Artists | 2020

Text vinyl on wall, speakers, interactive device | 1600 cm x 140 cm

추운데 고생하셨어요.  
You did a great job in this cold weather.  
더운데 고생하셨어요.  
You did a great job in this hot weather.

이거 잘 팔리겠다.  
This is going to sell well.  
이 작품 갖고싶다.  
I want to buy it.  
와 이거 갖고싶다!  
Wow I want this!

와 정말 아방가르드 하네요!  
Wow, it is really avant garde!  
역시 앞서나간다!  
It is way ahead as expected.  
\* 난재할때  
\*when you cannot comprehend

잘 그렸다.  
Well painted.  
와 사진같이 잘 그렸어요.  
Well painted like a photo.  
이거 진짜인줄 알았어요.  
I thought it was real.

작품 엄청 좋은데요!  
This is a great work!  
와 작품 너무 좋다.  
The work is so nice.  
역시.  
I knew it.

축하합니다.  
○○작가님 축하합니다.  
Congratulations

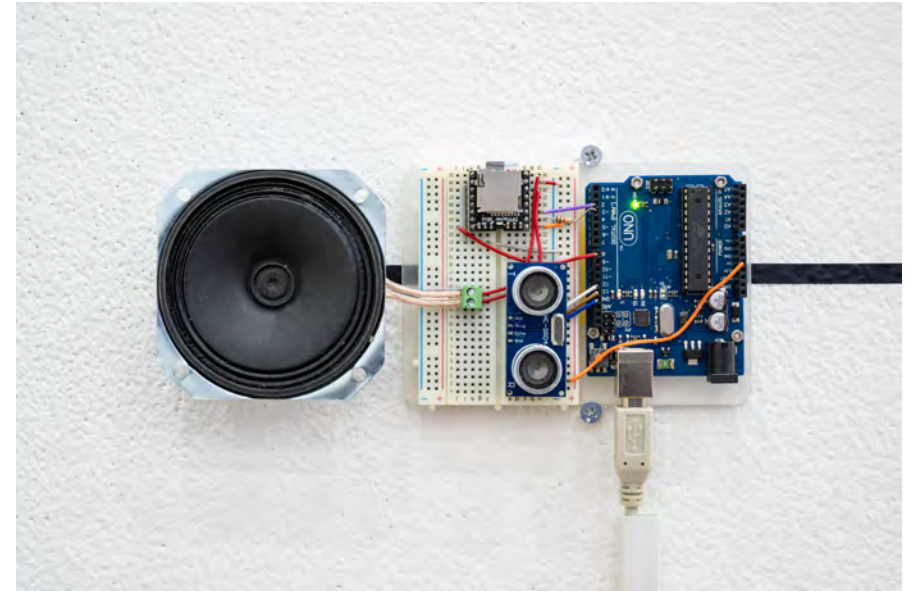
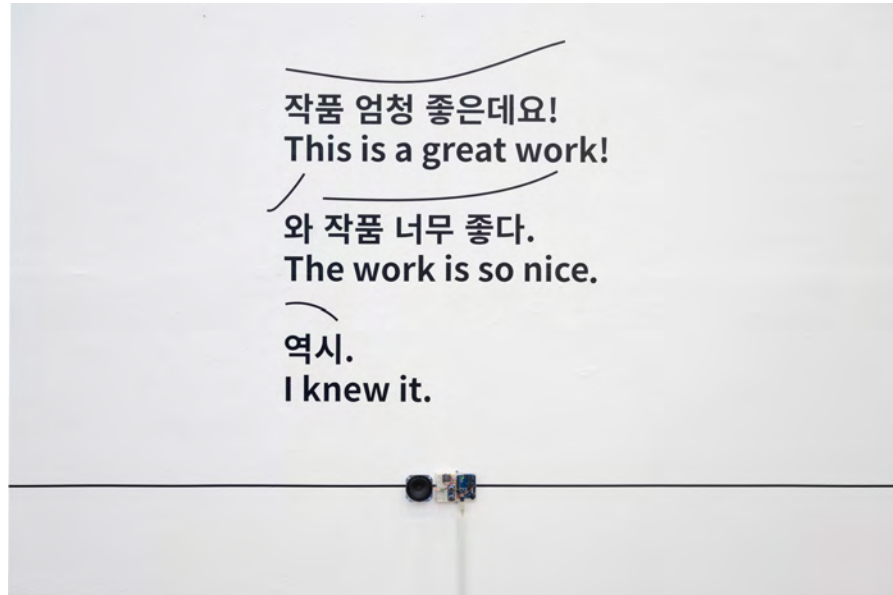
다음 발음을 잘 듣고 따라 하세요.  
Listen carefully and repeat the sentence.

## *Greetings for Artists* | 2020

Text vinyl on wall, speakers, interactive device | 1600 cm x 140 cm

Video documentation

<https://vimeo.com/491974225>



Beginners in the art world often get frustrated in the way they should start a conversation in exhibition openings. There are thousands of ways to greet an artist. How should one choose. In Artists greet, you will listen to the pronunciation of selected expressions and follow to practice. It is suitable for native Korean speakers who just started their career in art and foreigners who have basic knowledge in Korean culture and etiquettes.

# sadshop

school of artists development



CASHIER



Sadshop  
school of artists development



*The Artist's Plant* | 2020  
Plants | Size variable



When preparing an exhibition, an artist has a constant dilemma.  
'Should I fill up this space or should I leave it empty?'  
'Am I going to put another work here, or a decorative display? Now, with this gadget, you will not waste any more time. Try our organic solution. The Artist's Plant eliminates any unnecessary empty space. It provides a moral reason that is hard to criticize. There are different sizes, colours and types of Artist's Plant to fit all kinds of exhibition spaces.

*Greeting Tote* | 2020  
Screenprint on cotton bag | 35 cm x 39 cm



This tote brings you the most accurate way to pronounce important greeting expressions in Korean. Be it at an exhibition opening, in an artist's gathering or any other social situation in the art scene. Are you ready to greet?



## *Media Artist Starter Kit* | 2020

Laboratory gown, glass specimen jar, petri dish, funnel, funnel stand | Size variable



Have you wondered how to become a media artist immediately? Buy our Media Artist Starter Kit. Curator, critic, art magazines editors, exhibition audience, and even your friend will recognize you as a media artist in no time. The starter kit includes a laboratory gown, a glass specimen jar, petri dish of different chosen sizes, a funnel and a funnel stand. You don't have to worry about the content to put into the specimen jar. Everything you put in it will become a genesis of science and art. You will enjoy a lot of opportunities to pitch projects, funding, competition as a media artist.

*Social Smoker's Box* | 2021  
Handmade Paper Box | 87 mm x 56 mm x 22 mm



Where does everyone go in the middle of a dinner after an exhibition opening? Are you the only one who stay and wait for the others to come back? If you have a Social Smoker's Box, you will never have to wait again. Artists seize every chance to socialize with each other, build a network, gather information and earn opportunities, especially during their 'breathing time'. Even you are not a smoker, join and pretend that you are out of cigarettes. The one next to you will always be happy to offer you a free cigarette. It is the perfect conversation starter. Who knows if that will be your next collector?

*SAD Corporate Video* | 2021  
UHD Video, Sound, 5'58"



A scene from a work-in-progress, *Artists Lookbook*, based on *Artist Portrait Basics* (2019).

Video Work  
<https://youtu.be/AZu6c6L4L24>





SAL  
SCHOOL OF  
ARTISTS

DIDACTIC

SAD Info Days 2021  
Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre



SAD Info Days 2021  
Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre



藝術家職業訓練學院  
SAD MASTERS

藝員訓練班



楊修麟 X NIKE TSANG  
2021.8.1 15:00 HKT



A PROJECT BY SILAS FONG



SAD Kitchen | 2021  
UHD Video, Sound, 10 hours

Video  
<https://youtu.be/v388C9ccn2I>

# SAD 키친

사이언스월든 소나무 레지던시 & ARTIST CANVAS 결과전

실라스 풍

레지던시 2021.10.12-26 | 전시 10.25-11.2

예술가들은 어떻게 살까? 예술가 레지던시 프로그램에 참여하면서 매일 라면을 먹어 생활이 힘든 작가들이 있다고 들어!

예술가들이 인스턴트 식품으로 건강하지 못해 힘들 수 있지만 어떤 방식으로 사는지는 선택의 문제입니다. 성공적인 예술가가 되기 위한 첫 번째 단계는 잘 먹는 것처럼 간단할 수 있습니다. 맛있는 음식을 요리하고 배우는 것은 힘든 작가의 삶을 더 행복하게 해줍니다.

SAD 키친에서는 실라스 풍이 사이언스 월든 - 소나무 레지던시에서 예술가로서 식사를 준비하고 음식을 즐기며 설거지를 하는 것이 아티스트 캔버스에 통해 생방송으로 스트리밍됩니다.

SILAS FONG

RESIDENCY 2021.10.12-26 | EXHIBITION 10.25-11.2

'How do artists live? I heard artists who suffered staying in artist residencies because they eat ramyeon every day!'

While artists might suffer from the unhealthiness of instant food, it is a matter of choice in which way you live. The first step to being a successful artist can be as simple as eating well. Learn and cook delicious food to make your difficult artist's life happier.

In SAD Kitchen, Silas Fong prepares meals and enjoys the food, wash the dishes as an artist in the Science Walden - Sonahmoo residency live streaming to the artist canvas.

(우) 17598 경기도 안성시 미양면 이박골길 75-33 대안미술공간 소나무 | TEL. 031-673-0904

Art Space Sonahmoo, 75-33, Ibakgol-gil, Miyang-myeon, Anseong-si, Gyeonggi-do 17598, South Korea

주최 : 물산과학기술훈원 사이언스월든센터



주관 : 대안미술공간 소나무



후원 : 한국연구재단



*SAD Kitchen* | 2021-2022 UHD Video | Installation, Sound, Colour, 10'46



*Artist of Tomorrow*, Cheongju Museum of Art, 2022

# SAD KITCHEN

## Procedures

1. Make a list of questions you want to know about an artist living in a foreign country.
2. Contact a target artist and ask for interview permission.
3. Interview the artist in person or via online conference.
4. Ask the artist about the struggle of living in a foreign country.
5. Ask the artist about the food that comforts the most during a difficult time.
6. Prepare ingredients as clear as possible to the food that the artist ate.
7. Prepare and cook the food as accurately as possible as described by the artist.
8. Eat the food after successfully recreating the artist's comfort food.
9. When eating the food, sympathize with the artist's struggle and reflect on your own's struggle.

Tip: It doesn't matter if the food is not delicious as long as you can share the artist's feelings.





*Bienenstich* | 2021  
UHD Video, Sound, Colour, 10'46

Video  
[https://youtu.be/dX\\_ekHcBVec](https://youtu.be/dX_ekHcBVec)



Artist learns to survive in difficult situations, in poor financial status, joblessness, pressure from society and family, occupied by an unrelated full-time job or taking care of their family, further studies, lack of space or exposure to the audience and collectors. On top of these, many artists live in a foreign country for good reasons. While living abroad offers lots of advantages, not every artist enjoys equal respect or understanding. Silas Fong interviewed artists who have lived or living in a foreign country about their struggling experience. He asked about their comfort food when they were frustrated, angry or sad. During the preparation and consumption of the comfort food, Fong tries to empathise with these artists and feels better.



SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide - A Comfort Food Journey, 2023



"They might've forgotten the food,  
but they sure remember  
how to lighten your spirits!"  
— Funky Foodie Flicks

SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide - A Comfort Food Journey, 2023



"SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide - A Comfort Food Journey, 2023" is a restaurant where empty plates, full hearts, and just a quirky slogan!

Fun Food Files



SAD Kitchen: Oil Guide - A Comfort Food Journey, 2023

## SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide - A Comfort Food Journey

Solo Exhibition at Oi!, Hong Kong, 2023

In my recent project "SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide - A Comfort Food Journey," I utilized 3D printed objects, 3D scanning, animation, wall vinyl, printed matters and installation art to transform the Oi! Warehouse into a multi-sensory "kitchen." This interactive space invites visitors to explore personal emotions and communal bonds through a site-specific game. Hidden psychological test questions were integrated into the 3D objects and animated features, encouraging self-reflection. Visitors received a personalized "Comfort Food Guide," pointing them to local dishes in the North Point community. My art aims to use food—and digital media—as vehicles for social and cultural construction, connecting people, places, and stories.



# CURATORIAL AND CRITIC TEXT

# The Eyes of Truth Don't Look at the Broken Mirror (2021)

Seoung Won Sun\_ Art Critic

There should be nothing more reckless than an attempt to read the context of a creator through a work. The value of art is not born from the material but is generated when the material is transferred to a substitute. For example, the value of art is beyond the realistic interpretation of the shape and the color that the paint produces on the canvas. Instead, it means perceiving an esthetic value of the harmony made from the difference of the shape and the color, and creating its reflection on new things in each period of the history.

There is no principle or method of putting the object of art and the value judgment in one line, but the act, intention and interpretative context that a piece of art can have through the process of its creation and circulation let us discover new value again. That is the 'endless spiral structure of value' and the virtuous circulation of the art, which is circulated beyond the material value of the art.<sup>1)</sup>

The linguistic elements that Fong proposes as context are revealed through the visual form. The series work <School of Artists Development> (SAD hereinafter) of Silas Fong started from his exhibition 《SAD Info Days》 presented at Art Space Geumcheon in 2019. The poster of SAD with the blue sky in the background takes a similar form as the ones to promote the university where he works as professor. This poster, which catches our eyes with the blue sky and the cloud mark of the airplane up in the sky, attributes to the university a role of a 'railroad switchman' <sup>2)</sup> who suggests a bright future to students.

Fong asks.

What does it mean to learn art at a university? How concretely does the future we imagine show us our reality?

The form of the SAD works aims at the conceptual art based on specific factual information. Through the works, he clearly states his social status, which is a university professor, and manipulates the interpretative judgmental awareness of viewers by inverting the social image of artist and professor. He presents the schema to execute the 'way to become a successful artist' covering the entire wall, and asks back to the viewer/participant the essence and the critical judgment hidden behind the work. Through question and answer process about the value that building one's career as an artist should obtain, the participants in this project got to connect the social relationships into an arbitrary structure, not by learning. In addition, in the success schema of the art world that Fong analyzes, the Korean society is presented as a competitive ranking structure with a satire on its pervading rankism. Through the project of "Info Day" of SAD subtitled as "For a Better Success", he questions if art and artist can ever develop by education and learning, and reveals the gap between the essence of art and its intended goal in the reality.

In 2020 at Cheongju Art Studio, he expanded the steps of the way to success as an artist in SAD project into the stages of sales and distribution of artworks. He attempted to structuralize the way of becoming a successful artist through the method of marketing and to interpret the artistic value.

Fong found the boom of TV home shopping a unique social and cultural phenomenon of Korea, unlike Hong Kong. In the Korean society where the on-line commerce is much activated through mobile platforms and social media, the majority of customers using TV home shopping in Korea are middle-aged or older female consumers. Many of middle-aged or older consumers prefer TV home shopping because of its simple access with just one remote controller. Therefore, the advertising copy for them should be phrased simple and clear; Fong's

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1) In the interpretative sociology, we try to answer the questions such as 'How is the meaning born and preserved in a social system?', 'How does the cultural background (norm, value, assumption taken for granted) influence on people's decision?', and 'What does a specific piece of art mean?' Max Weber, through the concept of 'switchman metaphor', believed that when people decide something, they behave legally according to their individual understanding. The meaning of reasonable choice, namely the profit, is based on the culture or concept.

2) Weber said "Not ideas, but material and ideal interests directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world-images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest." The perspective of interpretative sociologists of 'believing is seeing' is often efficiently used to help understanding the meaning of a piece of art and how people produce a meaning out of a piece of art.

exhibition also adopted the expressions like 'Only one on earth!', 'One in the world!', 'Recommended by the expert curator!', and 'Transformation of a boring space into a gallery!' which aim to delude customers. Of course, all this process in the work of Fong takes place in the exhibition venue. The artist invited the professional show host as the performer of his project to show the circulating method of art as commercial goods by reproducing a TV home shopping program in the exhibition space. The showy speech of show host and the clear advertising copies covering all over the screen is no different from the actual home shopping channel program in reality. Walking a fine line between real and virtual, this project directs the position of artist, art piece, collector and viewer in an unconventional way. The reconstitution of a studio that produces an art rental home shopping program, thickly covered with only the marketing terms to sell the art pieces rather than to convey the essential value of the work, invites us to see the reality of art museums of our time from a critical perspective.

《Greetings for Artists》, a sound installation to learn the common conversing manners used in the art world, describes the meaning hidden behind the actual said, yet still expressed in the intonation of Korean language, through social relational psychology. Fong is fond of this kind of unique psychological tug-of-war that can attract the attention of viewers/participants. 《Stolen Times for Sale》(2008–2010) that he created at the very starting point of his career as an artist is also a video work that recorded people in the elevator during the short time of 6 seconds when the doors remain open on the 6th floor of a 40-story building in Hong Kong. Through this tug-of-war of gaze between the object, the people who are placed in a slightly different position each time the doors open, and the artist, he mischievously questions whose time it is. Fong induces some questions: Is the time acquired in a justifiable way (he had the right to stop the elevator by pushing the stop button) really justifiable? Is the materialization of the immaterial that can happen in the system of art, which is also a process of commercialization, (he resold DVDs containing the video filmed in such way) justifiable? Whose time was he selling?

One of his works that particularly attracted my attention was 《Flat D》 that he presented at the Hong Kong Art Center in 2015. He reconstituted his living space at the exhibition venue perfectly as it was including the shape, sound and lighting, and let the viewers/participants experience that space for 10 minutes, after they pledged some code of conduct to be observed in the exhibition space. Through the promise with the viewer to follow the pre-decided regulation by the artist, he hides the time of the viewer/participant as well as the time of the artist himself in the form of the exhibition and questions back to the viewers what art is. It seems that he intended to twist the value of art suggested at the limit of conceptual art, highlighting the forced appreciation and enjoyment of art pieces and the one-sidedness of their experience.

His art is aiming at the conceptual art, but he rearranges in time certain immaterial things such as video, letter, text and sound, and makes use of the structure of relational psychology that connects Langue and Parole in the works, and the artist and the viewer in the society.

He regards his exhibitions as a place to build an ecosystem of art. Also the artist summons the viewer as a co-creator of his social experiment. His works are always based on a pre-determined scenario, but they do look like a real society including variable and constant, because the artistic awareness of the participants has to be placed in his works. The information presented in Fong's works is mostly undefinable as truth. Moreover, the gaze observing those pieces of information is also made in the social relationships, in the social conventions and their cultural background. Particularly, his observation to reveal the relation between the art and the society of our time is caustically critical and paradoxical. In the explanatory note of the exhibition, he said "SAD is a recurrent observation in the art community, self-awareness, and critique." However, even someone who has the eyes of truth, if looking through a broken mirror, would see the fragments of images reflecting a distorted consciousness.

The works of Silas Fong, reflecting the consciousness about the problems that the art world of Korea is facing in reality, are not to be understood from some art theories or common art perspectives, but to be perceived as a work of critical interpretation of our art society. His works invite us to realize that a new interpretation of art can obtain the justification, through our eyes as an observer summoned as viewer/participant to this event.

*SAD School of Artists Development: Silas Fong*

## ***What Makes Art Art? (2020)***

Leeji Hong (Curator, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea)

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There is a Korean expression ‘*nunchi* (literally eye-measuring)’ commonly used by Koreans. Similarly, in Japan they say ‘read the air’. It means sensing the atmosphere of a situation and gauging others’ mind or attitude without being awkward. In an artistic category as well, we try to measure others’ mind. *Nunchi* for success, *nunchi* for relationship - Silas Fong has constantly been interested in certain contexts that have been accepted and tacitly agreed in the name of the art. Such interest may be derived from the fact that he is multilingual; his mother tongue is Cantonese, he teaches students in English at a Korean art school, and speaks German at home. Understanding language, culture and sentiments requires highly developed concentration and experience to read the air and measure minds subtly. This is similar to habits of the art. The atmosphere and context, intrinsic to art, is hard to be explained in letters or words or to be grasped at once, and presupposes comprehensive understanding and information. One step away from the representational thought and subjective value judgement of art, Fong tried to suggest an objective index based on very realistic and rational judgment on art, in order to objectify the process of analyzing the meaning and value of art. For many years, he has been interested in the expressions suitable for each situation and the conversation method to set up relationships for social life, and also produced small publications in that matter. <Small Talk> (2018) and <Vocabulary> (2019) contain the expressions adapted to each situation, to lead the atmosphere avoiding awkwardness. Through this work, the artist observed the expressions that people use commonly and inertially to set up a relationship, and suggested a sort of guideline to get adapted to a circumstance without being awkward. This interest of Fong in language and attitude has evolved into his concern about the formal expression method and representation of the intrinsic attributes and meaning of education and art, which he has experienced as a professor of an art university in Korea in 2017.

## **SAD School of Artists Development**

Silas Fong's SAD (School of Artists Development, hereinafter 'SAD') was first introduced at <SAD Info Days> held at Seoul Art Space Geumcheon in 2019. <SAD Info Days (hereinafter 'Info Days')> is planned to announce the beginning of the SAD project and deal with the role of artist and the ambivalent aspects of art through this. <Info Days> held on 19 – 31 July 2019, provided the SAD programs such as the basics for portrait of artist, how to complete application forms, international art English class, and specialized course for SAD career development. During the event, SAD also arranged a portfolio review session for rising artists and students who are aspiring artists. To objectify and analyze 'visual artist' and also to play that role, Fong attempted to divide his role into educator, observer and performer, eventually to reconsider the fundamental meaning of art. Through <SAD Info Days>, subtitled 'For a Better Success', Fong questioned 'Can art and artist be developed by education and learning?' and intended to examine the essence of art as well as the other side of art. The artist suggests the exhibition space as a platform to perform 'the way to be a successful artist' and asks back the viewers/participants the hidden essence of this project and the critical judgment on it. Furthermore, he also proposes the figure of an artist, which other people think 'an artist should be', the steps to succeed as an artist, and the basic survival skills to be adapted to the ecosystem of Korean art world. Then he asks again whether these things can be acquired through education and information.

Silas Fong presented the new curriculum and program of SAD during his stay as artist-in-residency at Cheongju Art Studio in the year of 2020. At this second edition of SAD, Fong went forward to the next level from how to become an artist and the basic conditions for an artist to possess, to expand his interest to the artwork and its collection, the production of value of artwork as goods. Organizing spaces according to 3 works, Fong installed a studio where the students participating in SAD can practice the skills to promote and sell the art rental service through home shopping TV channel. Silas Fong, the founder of SAD who has been constantly dealing with the ecology of art and the nature of art since 2019, sometimes directly yet subtly, proposed <SAD Theory> and introduced

his way of revealing the phenomenon by twisting the snobbish attribute of art and the social convention around it, taking the art collection as an example. He expresses with humor, but by adopting indirect methods and attitudes, he points out the excessively standardized conditions to become successful as an artist, and paradoxically reveals that now it is time to reexamine the practice of such series of processes which are so familiar that we got tamed with them. The second work <Greetings for Artists> is a sound installation work that Fong created to learn the general knowledge commonly used in art world. It aims to reconsider the nuance of Korean language and the 'greeting' culture. Fong describes the delicate nuance and culture that are so familiar to us that we never mention. He experienced them living in Korea since 2017, through his dual status of a foreign artist who should present his works and persuade the Korean art world, and at the same time a professor who teaches art to students in English, which is not the mother tongue for him. Lastly, he presented <SAD Shop> which is a window exhibition where we can also buy various artworks. The Shop consists of <The Artist's Plant>, <Artist Career Map>, <Media Artist Starter Kit> and <Greeting Tote>. The public can actually purchase the goods proposed by the artist and also the Shop itself is an artwork. The work implies the ambivalent and paradoxical aspect and prejudice often found in the contemporary art which divides the commercial and non-commercial, with an ambiguity between pretense and sincerity. Through this experiment, the artist urges to rethink about how the hegemony of an exhibition space is created. An exhibition is a place to evaluate a posteriori the act of the artist and the artwork that has already left the workspace, where innumerable ideologies and political discourses indwell.

### **What Makes Art Art?**

After all, Silas Fong prompts to maintain temporarily the ideological conflict and irony in the context of art, rather than to accept the position of artist and the place for art to stay in a metaphorical, inertial way. By this, he urges eventually to reveal the snobbery through the space of white cube – as Brian O'Doherty suggested in 'Inside the White Cube' - and to reexamine the persistent habit of self-definition. The artist stated in his explanation of the exhibition that "SAD is the result of a continuous observation of artists in the art world

and the result of self-awareness and criticism.” These experiments and trials of Fong remind us of the words of Arthur Danto: “to see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry - an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld”. The most important lesson we learned from the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is that if we don’t do anything, there is no change. Witnessing the things taken for granted disappearing and collapsing instantly, wouldn’t Silas Fong like to say that, if we act and think in an inertial way without any doubt in the matter of creation, the place of art, in which we have believed so firmly, would also be easily fading, and that it is the reason why our choice has a great importance?

CASE #22 — FLAT D, 6/F, ALDRICH GARDEN  
Prof. Beate Gütschow  
2016

Silas Fong zeigt in seiner Ausstellung fünf Arbeiten, die sich mit Ineffektivität, Langeweile und Isolation beschäftigen. In einer Fotoinstallation ist ein lebensgroßes Modell von Fongs eigenem leeren Schlafzimmer zu sehen, Besucher müssen in dem kahlen Zimmer 10 Minuten verweilen. In einer fotografischen Arbeit zeichnet Silas Fong das Licht auf, das sich auf einer leeren Wand im Laufe eines Tages suggestiv verändert. In drei weiteren Arbeiten dokumentiert der Künstler Situationen, in denen er sich selber sehr langweilt: eine Busfahrt, ein Seminar an der KHM und seine Tätigkeit als Aufsicht im Museum Ludwig. Silas Fong macht in diesen Situationen lapidare Fotos mit einer Kompaktkamera und schreibt seine Gedanken akribisch auf, ebenso die Handlungen seiner Mitmenschen. Ein Aspekt dieser Arbeiten mag ein institutionskritischer sein, denn es wird durchaus ironisch aus dem Betrieb einer Kunsthochschule oder eines Museums erzählt. Jedoch reicht Silas Fongs Anliegen über das Reflektieren dieser Gegebenheiten hinaus. Es ist ein Blick eines Fremden, der in alltäglichen Handlungen der anderen eine versteckte Ablehnung vermutet, der gewünschte Dialog findet nicht statt oder endet im Nichts. [BG]

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In his exhibition, Silas Fong shows five works dealing with inefficiency, boredom and isolation. A life-size model of Fong's own empty bedroom can be seen in a photo installation, and visitors must spend 10 minutes in the bare room. In a photographic work, Silas Fong records the light that changes suggestively on an empty wall in the course of a day. In three further works, the artist documents situations in which he is very bored: a bus ride, a seminar at the KHM and his activity as a supervisor in the Museum Ludwig. In these situations, Silas Fong makes succinct photos with a compact camera and painstakingly writes down his thoughts, as well as the actions of his fellows. One aspect of this work may be more institution critical because it is quite ironically told from the operation of an art school or a museum. However, Silas Fong's concerns extend beyond reflecting on these realities. It is a look of a stranger who suspects a hidden rejection in the everyday actions of others, the desired dialogue does not take place or ends in nothingness. [BG]

[English version translated by Google Translate.]

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Text written on the exhibition Flat D, 6/F, Aldrich Garden

# The Subject Matter

## Silas Fong

### 2016

**The subject matter** of my work is the concept, perception and the value relating to time in different situations that affect my daily life priorities. "Spending time where it's worth more; don't waste your time on unimportant things" are the most common lines heard in Hong Kong. But what is worth more? What is unimportant? Who has the right to judge for you? By raising such questions, I can re-evaluate my own world view. I try to retain my own time and pace, and demonstrate it to others.

The idea is to observe and notice the overlooked details in daily life and transform them into temporal, spatial and psychological experiences. These artistic experiences may provoke audiences to understand and reflect on their values and modes of life. It particularly deals with the value in my home town Hong Kong.

To document everyday life is to look at the mundane and the repetitive. This allows me to grasp the slowness of time and more importantly to look at myself. These documents are in-depth self-portraits and personal accounts. By slowing down my pace and reviewing these documents, which are most common to everyone, I can understand myself better and be more connected to other people.

The speed of urban daily life blows away our ability to deliberate and almost forces us to live in the same way. We do not own our time anymore, but are convinced to spend all on unnecessary and unwanted activities. However, if we can retrieve a sensitivity to our *trivial* personal feelings, beware of the choices we actually have, we can choose different ways of living. Ways which are more humane than mass produced. A better life.

# FLAT D, 6/F, ALDRICH GARDEN (2015)

## Anthony Yung

Flat D, 6/F, Aldrich Garden' is the title of this exhibition but also the artist's home address. This implies a doubleness: an address is functional and indicative – as a concept, it is most commonly understandable – but at the same time it is also meaningless because it is not meant to help you to find the place, as for the audience of this exhibition it refers to a place so far away that it may as well not exist. Such a conceptual doubleness epitomizes Silas Fong's artistic project in temporal experiences and psychological activities – things that are utterly personal, yet also entirely common.

The address is also giving us hints with which to understand the exhibition: first of all, it brings us to Hong Kong. A global financial center built first by manufacturing industries (the predecessor of 'the world's factory'), then by financial-trading freedoms, the city likes to evaluate its business and its people in terms of productivity and efficiency. In this society of pragmatism, wasting time is no different to burning billnotes. Growing up here, people pick up an almost ethical obligation to spend time in the 'correct way', and for the younger generation to not do so is a major rebellion. With this context in mind, Fong's works are actually a research on sheer unproductivity, on the moments that we learn to feel guilty and negative about. He questions if these moments really are worthless and whether our personal histories are not in fact constituted within all these 'ahistorical times'.

The address also brings us to Flat D, a piece that was first shown in the Hong Kong Art Centre in 2015. There, Fong had taken corner of the exhibition space and reconstructed it into his bedroom at home. He then invited visitors to spend ten minutes in this room. With the time set to precisely 10 minutes, and the fact that there was not anything at all in the room to look at or contemplate, visitors could do nothing but go with whatever came up their minds. Coming inside Flat D, their plans, their experiences of the day were interrupted, though voluntarily, and now they had to stop and think about the interrupted. Eventually, the piece provided an experience and a question: what does this interruption, these ten minutes that are cut out of our life, mean to us?

Three other pieces within the exhibition (Work Report for Museum Ludwig, Attendance Report for Academy of Media Arts Cologne and Passenger Report for Meinfernbus) can be seen as elements of 'fieldworks' relating to such research – with pictures and texts, he documents the activities of his mind during long hours undertaking internship duties in a museum, attending classes and taking long bus rides. These records may remind us of the typical texts of 'stream of consciousness', in particular Camus's Outsider, but literariness is not Fong's main concern here. What he tries to explore is the common rather than the unique – he wants these records to

remind us of our own experiences. Think about it, we all talk to ourselves during moments of boredom and distraction, when in our minds words start to flow randomly, unbounded from social norms (manners, ethics, and so on) and a chain of memories appears, no matter how irrelevant they are to the things immediately surrounding us. Using the artist's own experiences as case studies, these pieces ask us to pay attention to these conversations we have with ourselves.

Even two years ago, Fong was already a considerably experienced artist. Coming to 'study' in Germany, what is the most precious to him is perhaps not the new information to even methodologies, but the unfamiliar environment, a sense of distance and indifference that provokes thoughts and experiences. For as we can tell from these works, the core theme of Fong's practice is an inevitable loneliness, and art is a tool to process and transcend it and make us understand ourselves better. In this sense, we may see the last work in this exhibition as a beautiful metaphor – Afternoons (2015) is a series of books, but books with no words, no knowledge, no 'history' – just the sunlight that changes as time goes by. It symbolizes what Fong attempts to create with art: a sensitivity to the subtleties of our time and our mind.

*'Flat D, 6/F, Aldrich Garden' is a text written for [the exhibition](#) with the same title.*

## **Time, Furtive Glances and Banality: a discussion of Silas Fong's early works**

Anthony T. K. Yung

2010

### **"Stolen Times for Sale"**

"Stolen Times for Sale" is a game of conceptual switcheroo. During the morning rush, Silas Fong pushed the hold button in the elevator of a Hong Kong high-rise apartment building. He filmed the fleeting six or seven seconds between the opening and closing of the doors. He then sold these dozens of six and seven second segments at a price determined by the number of people in the elevator, their expressions and their responses. Each segment is sold only once. The sold segment of video is replaced with a text on screen [Sold – XX Seconds for \$XX]. When sales are good, and "time" is sold out, all that remains of the work is a textual record of the length and sale price of each segment.

This work has attracted attention in so far as it purports to not only steal a fleeting moment, but then sell it. It asserts the power to challenge the absolutism of time. However, what the artist is selling is not to time, but images. On that morning, seconds of time are stolen from the elevator passengers (the artist's put-upon neighbors), time that should not have been lost in this way and which can never be wrested back. What has been sold is simply the image of the process of that theft, and not the time itself. The result is that those blameless few seconds now belong to no one: neither to the artist, nor to the buyer.

At this point we have already perceived that the conceptual switcheroo involves the concepts of "time" and "image."

"Sale" is the work's other central concept. Because images are reproducible, buyers and collectors of video art have been hesitant to enter the market. But in "Stolen Times for Sale," the videos are only being sold in the name of "time." The sale of the video makes effective use of the sense of absolute singularity that is associated with time, and is, in this way, seemingly effective at taking the measure and establishing the value of video art.

Thus, the structure of the work is established in the following way: wildly pushing elevator buttons is a favorite mischief of children in Hong Kong, and dull moments spent waiting for and riding in elevators—time spent in impatience—are also an unavoidable experience of Hong Kong life. Silas Fong turns these authentic experiences into an artistic subject, a game of logic, and uses the conceptual obfuscation of the artwork to package apparently reasonable products.

### **"Following strangers"**

People continue to advocate for privacy, and privacy protections have been enshrined into law. At the same time, we can not wait to engage in performances of the self and to violate each other's privacy. Facebook has easily surpassed Google as the world's most popular website. Compared to Facebook, Google is but a serious, just and trustworthy librarian! When people log into Facebook, do they sense that they have now been placed beneath an

infinite series of eyes? "Friends" on Facebook are uninterruptedly connected. Friends always have friends, and these "friends of friends" fall far outside the limits of our imaginations. They can be someone who you will never meet in your life, or they can be someone who is greatly offensive to you. The eyes of "friends of friends" are the eyes of the big other, the eyes of the world. Deeds and images that you might rather not have made public can be posted at any time to Facebook by people who know you (not "friends," but people who merely "know" you). The degree to which your precious privacy has been unveiled to the world will be unknown to you, let alone within your power to stop.

What is frightening about Facebook is that even if you do not participate, you can not avoid it. Its primary driver is something that everyone shares in common: an objectless curiosity, a kind of voyeuristic tendency, a continually growing and insatiable desire, one that exists, in particular, in the virtual world of the internet.

Silas Fong's work "Following Strangers" is a self-made, web-based platform, where he gathers account information of interest to him from users of Facebook and other social media platforms, and where he cites his reason for his interest in this person, his impressions of him/her and his reason and motivation for wanting to add them. Here, the artist is taking on the role of voyeur and surveiler/follower, and, at the same time, attempts to explore the background motivations for surveilling/pursuing/following these people. In this inverted social media platform, the focus is not on whether the photos and information from these strangers is truly interesting, but rather the disclosure of the psychic motivation of surveilling/pursuing/following strangers. For the most part, these so-called "motivations" are dull and banal, and reveal, to a greater or lesser extent, that in social media space, forming "real" relationships with strangers is beside the point, and what is most important is that when taking a furtive glance into the world of strangers, our curiosity is being continually nurtured.

Staring, being stared at, and the disappeared starrer

The work "In some seconds" is the artist's documentation of the roadside scenery that passes over the course of a bus route. Throughout the recording, passersby cast their curious glances towards the lens. While in "Waiting," the artist takes surreptitious pictures of the expressions of people waiting in Times Square. The installation of "In some seconds" is highly designed: it reproduces the visual experience of riding on a bus, which has no difficulty in attracting the viewer's formalistic interest. The latter, we can easily place the latter within the urban documentary photography tradition of Walker Evans and Helen Levitt.

In fact, both works have developed around a topic of continuous interest for the artist. Everyday strangers appear in "In some seconds." Their visages, expressions and gazes are videographic documentation of a transient moment in the rush of daily life. "Stolen Times for Sale" is concerned with fundamentally the same topic. "Stolen Times for Sale" forcibly interrupts people's elevator journey to attract their gaze. When viewing, "In some seconds," we can not be sure what it is exactly that is attracting the bystander's gaze. Fascinatingly, when we view the work, we substitute ourselves for the subject of the staring, and imagine the self through the gazes and expressions of those strangers. In other words, other people are mirrors.

When compared to “In some seconds,” “Waiting” is far less grand in terms of subject and skill. The people waiting at Times Square in Causeway Bay are everyday people, strangers. They are unoccupied. Because their pictures have no particular significance as social documentary, these people can function as pure aesthetic objects. And because these were taken surreptitiously, the gazer disappears, and again we walk into this paradox: is the focus of this work on the aesthetics of the object or is it the subjective feeling of pleasure produced from voyeurism? Here, Silas Fong is in the process of simplifying the form and conceptual structure of his work, attempting to utilize an exceedingly banal attitude to represent the banality of people.

[Translated from Chinese by Jesse Robert Coffino.]

# EXPANDED TIME (2009)

**Alvaro Rodriguez Fominaya**

When American photographer Walker Evans trawled the New York subway taking his “subway portraits” at the end of the 30s and early 40s, he anticipated the collective anguish and alienation of the metropolis. With a hidden camera, Walker Evans would take the portraits of his unsuspected sitters, bringing the art of portraiture into the realms of life in the 20th century. In similar ways, Silas Fong adopts strategies that continue this research well into the 21st century. But as times have changed, the camera is shown in full flare, challenging the sitter to react, or to model suitably. Many things have been transformed after Warhol’s 5 minutes of fame or Guy Debord’s Culture of Spectacle, resulting in new behavioral patterns. On the other hand, life in the Big City – New York or Hong Kong – still is a fertile terrain for solitude, and as the artist puts it well: anonymity.

The place of the human being in the metropolis and the multiple possibilities of socialization have been major preoccupations for philosophers and artists akin, as 20th century meant society moved deeper into the urban landscape. Recognition of the Other and its nature has most intrigued us. Translating ourselves into the public space, where fortuitous encounters are fostered, has provided us with an ephemeral knowledge of the Other. These issues have informed Silas Fong most recent production: “Stolen times for sale”, “When the door opens” and “Surveil the strangers” are good examples of this research within his work. Digital technology, including video, web access and mobile phone, update this sociological quest. A definition of each project explains the procedures and rules that the artist has established. For “Stolen times for sale”, the artist writes: “The performer steals time from strangers through pressing the buttons of the elevators”.

In his works there is a reflection on the notion of time. The video “When the door opens” shows footage of the brief instant when the doors open at a MTR train, at the same time the artist sets the footage into slow motion, effectively “freezing” time, providing us with a contradicting measure of the rhythm of the urban web. The accelerated path in this interstitial “locus” suddenly becomes a choreographed series of beautiful movements that capture our imagination. It is in the idea of the expansion of time, where we revel, and where he delves into the nature of this time based media. As we always want to be supersized, this concept of expanded time suitably fits into our 21st century essence.

“Stolen times for sale” is another of his recent projects that deal with related issues. On this occasion there is a performative edge to the video. Although the performer is hidden behind the camera and we only witness the consequence of his action. His simple action – pressing the

elevator call button – generates a sequence of reactions. We suddenly view the occupiers of the elevator peer through the open door. It also connects with this notion of relayed or expanded time, his actions originating a relational performance. In a second stage of the project, during the public showing of the video, the gallery visitors get the chance to purchase these “stolen times”. As Silas Fongs describes: “The video sequences once sold are replaced by “SOLD – XX SECONDS FOR \$ XXX”. This results in the video becoming a work in progress, subject to continuous transformation, where the end would only come when all the sequences have been allocated with new “owners” of this time.

It was only natural that Silas Fong turned his eyes into the public bus system, having already explored the MTR as a ground for his work. Bus transportation invested him with a higher number of possibilities related, not only to the subjects of his videoperformances, but also to the surrounding urban landscape. His latest work, takes us into the realm of experience. The artist is not just preoccupied with the production of the images, but this time he applies the idea of circulation to his videoinstallation. Armed with a video camera inside a bus, he shot from the left side of the bus, thus filming a footage that shows us the life on the other side of the window. Passersby are invited to react to this filming as the artist reuses some of his tactics. The resulting video is exhibited in a real life size two channel projection; the visitor being sandwiched in between the two screens showing mirror like images. This idea of spatialization of video connects with the development of the genre of the installation. Sculptural qualities are linked to the moving images, enhancing the experience of the viewer, who at this stage is transformed into a visitor. Other issues, such as the representation of the real are also brought in through this strategy, adding complexity to what was originally a simple idea. Although the themes of Silas Fong’s work go back to the origins of video and its relation to experimental cinema, the way he resolves these dilemmas are only possible with the current technological and conceptual development. This is because of the way he uses space, but most importantly because of the use of a 16:9 panoramic ratio, which enhances the cinematic aspect of the work and points towards a departure from 70’s videoart.

# Hong Kong culture and its people's relationship with food explored in art exhibition SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide – A Comfort Food Journey

Silas Fong Sum-yu set up the interactive exhibition SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide – A Comfort Food Journey as part of his artist residency at Oi! in North Point

Through a series of interactive exhibits and videos, it looks at the concept of comfort food, and how Hong Kong people relate to eating together



Ashlyn Chak

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Among the many ways a community can express itself, food is one of the most accessible, down-to-earth and universal. However, it is also deeply personal – no two people have the exact same experience with food, and every person has a different relationship to the kitchen.

During the [coronavirus pandemic](#), social distancing stopped the fundamentally human experience of sharing space and eating together, creating a social barrier in spaces that used to be communal.

This inspired Silas Fong Sum-yu to create “SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide – A Comfort Food Journey”, an interactive exhibition that is part of his artist residency at Oi!, a government-owned art space in North Point.

SAD stands for School of Artists Development, Fong’s ongoing conceptual project which responds to his inquiries into arts- and education-related topics through installations, videos and publications.



Silas Fong Sum-yu's "SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide – A Comfort Food Journey" is an interactive exhibition at Oi! art space in Oil Street, North Point, Hong Kong. Photo: Oi!

The focus on comfort food is not so much on the food itself, but the concept of it.

"There's no Chinese translation for the English term 'comfort food'," says Fong, who began to ponder what different people do when they seek comfort as he explored the journey of comfort food from the processes of cooking to sharing.

Cancer had him questioning his legacy – he's found the answer in art

7 Sep 2023



While in isolation during the pandemic, he asked other artists and people around him to share their comfort food recipes, prepared the dishes and "dined" with others in separate locations with the help of social media.

This is depicted in a video installation above a kitchen counter at the exhibition. Fong tells the Post: "In the process, I felt less alone as I focused on the recipe owners' personal stories as shown in the video's subtitles, realising that we all experience sadness similarly."

"A Comfort Food Journey" is divided into three sections: wash, cook and eat – the progression of meal preparation. Visitors are not only allowed, but encouraged, to touch everything in the interactive exhibition.

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Some of the kitchen parts are real – such as the fridge, which is plugged in and fully functioning; the bread and vegetables on the kitchen counter and the sausage, bell pepper and slice of cake on the dining table, however, are not.



“A Comfort Food Journey” looks at our relationship with food, communal eating and culture. Photo: Oi!

3D-printed appliances, utensils and other random household items scattered across the exhibition’s three main zones hide a game full of Easter eggs.

As a light parody of the MBTI test, a psychometric questionnaire, and similar online personality quizzes, Fong created a “Comfort Food Psychological Test”. At the circular reception in the centre of the exhibition, visitors are offered a multiple-choice answer sheet reminiscent of public exam papers, which the artist hopes will trigger nostalgia in those who grew up in Hong Kong.

Many of the 30 questions – hidden away in the kitchen sink and underneath rice cookers and kettles – refer to dining practices specific to Hong Kong, such as “If you’re cooking rice but not sure how many people will be eating, what would you do?”; “How much sugar do you add when you make milk tea at home?”; and, “What kind of company do you prefer during a meal?” (choose between TV, people, computer, video call and none).

After answering as many questions as possible, visitors can calculate their score and pass the sheet to the “comfort food specialist”, who will present the quiz result in the form of a card with a food illustration.



Game cards used in a tongue-in-cheek personality test, part of Fong's "SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide – A Comfort Food Journey".  
Photo: Oi!

Fong calls this a “Comfort Food Guide”, featuring food recommendations for the neighbourhood around Oil Street, from cucumber espresso to seasonal gelato made with local produce and gourmet slow-cooked soup and black sesame rolls, an old-school Hong Kong dessert.

The solo visitor who wants company for their North Point adventure can ask for a “food companion”, but the service is only available in designated time slots.

Visitors are also invited to write down their own recipes, from ingredients to methods, on the “comfort food sharing” sheet, which does not have to be exclusive to food. The chosen responses will be posted on the “SAD Kitchen Comfort Food Share Board”.

As part of Fong’s artist-in-residence programme at Oi!, the site-specific “SAD Kitchen” uses food stories to connect people to places and inspire togetherness. Its interactive game element is part of what sets the Oil Street Art Space apart as a [community art centre](#) focusing on specific local cultures, nuances, and above all, the people.

*“SAD Kitchen: Oi! Guide – A Comfort Food Journey”. Oi! Warehouse 2, Oil Street Art Space, 12 Oil Street, North Point. September 1 to January 7, 2024. Monday 2pm to 8pm; Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 8pm.*

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Installation view of **TAP CHAN's** *Entanglement* (detail), 2018, wood, sponge sheet, fabric, nylon fiber, dimensions variable, at "The Day the Gods Stop Laughing," Duddell's, Hong Kong, 2018. All images courtesy the artist and Duddell's, Hong Kong.

## THE DAY THE GODS STOP LAUGHING

[WEB REVIEW](#) BY PAMELA WONG

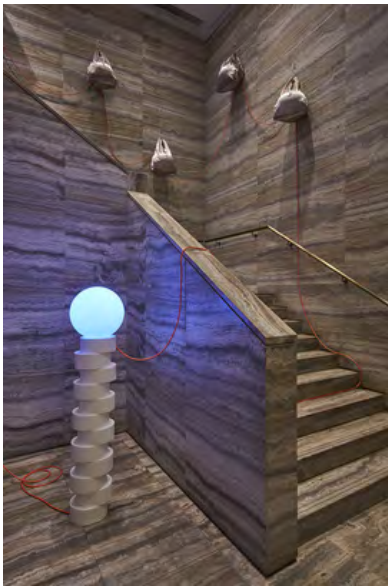
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A fluorescent blue spherical lamp is supported by a stack of toilet paper rolls, standing stubbornly by the stairs leading up to the Duddell's restaurant—a bizarre but intriguing contrast to the venue's sleekly designed interiors. An orange wire connects the lamp to a set of gold-colored reusable shopping bags hung along the walls by the stairs. These common household objects disrupt the site's deliberate sophistication with their ordinariness, symbolizing the repetitive, mundane and unglamorous aspects of life.

This strange arrangement comprises Doreen Chan's installation *He Is Alright* (all works 2018), part of Duddell's latest exhibition, "The Day the Gods Stop Laughing." Curated by Yuan Fuca, the show invited four Chinese artists to create "independent yet intertwined narratives and situations within the subliminal states of the site," employing visual and audio elements to situate the audience within various imagined scenarios. According to the



Installation view of **DOREEN CHAN's** *He Is Alright* (detail), 2018, ball lamps, toilet paper, reusable bags, electric cable, dimensions variable, at "The Day the Gods Stop Laughing," Duddell's, Hong Kong, 2018.

curatorial statement, the show's grouping of unconnected narratives embodied Carl Jung's concept of "synchronicity"—a series of meaningful but causally unconnected coincidences.

The idea of recreating a scene most palpably materialized in Silas Fong's *Enjoy Your Meal!* Entering the members-only library, one may be shocked at the sight of a homeless man in a black hoodie bent over a table in the corner, a partly eaten McDonald's meal left on a tray in front of him. This hyperreal sculpture comments on a pressing social issue in Hong Kong, colloquially known as the "McRefugee" phenomenon—homeless people seeking shelter at McDonald's. Fong's recreation of this scenario in a high-end establishment like Duddell's is reminiscent of Mark Rothko's aim to "ruin the appetite" of diners with his Seagram Murals, originally commissioned in 1959 for the Four Seasons' restaurant in New York. *Enjoy Your Meal!* is a poignant reminder of the deep socio-economic disparity in Hong Kong aimed directly at Duddell's VIPs, forcing them to reflect on their social responsibilities.



Installation view of **SILAS FONG's** *Enjoy Your Meal!* (detail), 2018, clothing, dummy, plastic food model, dimensions variable, at "The Day the Gods Stop Laughing," Duddell's, Hong Kong, 2018.

In an alcove in the dining area outside the library, Tap Chan's *Entanglement* presents subtler social critique. Affixed to the back wall of the alcove are two rectangular, symmetrically aligned cushions in aqua velvet fabric recalling an old-fashioned sofa, with hair-like, silver nylon fiber sprouting out of them. Holographic, semi-transparent screens are pasted onto the glass panes adjacent to the wall, while rainbows are projected onto the two blue cushions—shaped like windows with faux-stone frames—hung on the two walls at the entrance to the alcove. The rainbow motif is a reference to Stanley Kubrick's 1999 thriller *Eyes Wide Shut*, in which "where the rainbow ends" is a euphemism for the debauched underground gatherings attended by the rich and powerful. Chan's work implies that Duddell's is similarly a place "where the rainbow ends," only available to the upper class and hidden from the outside world.

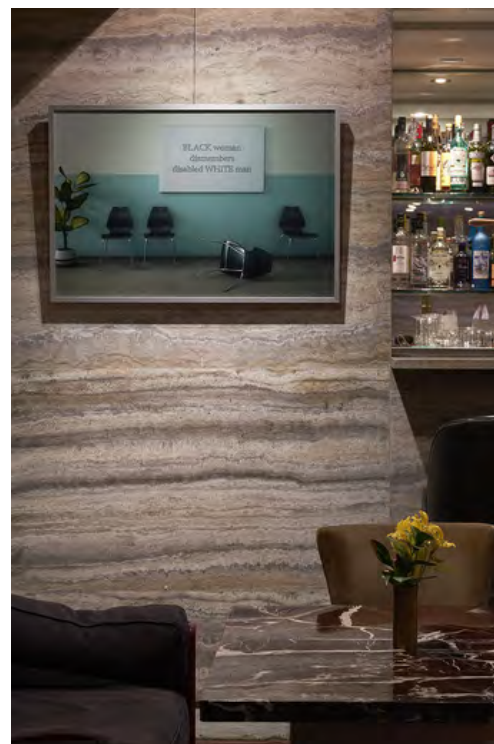
Among the chatter of diners, in a corner of the restaurant, one may pick up the intermittent whispers of three women recounting their misfortunes. Guangzhou artist Ye Hui's audio installation *The Waiting Room* presents the stories of three characters of different races and time periods, each having murdered her partner. On the wall, a color-print photo depicts the room where the women had possibly sat and talked, furnished with a potted plant and four chairs, one of which is lying awkwardly on the floor. Above the chairs is a board that reads, "BLACK woman dismembers disabled WHITE man." Alternating between miserable sighs about their experiences of domestic abuse to unremorseful accounts of their crimes, the dialogue between the women reflects the media's (and the public's) polarized and gendered perceptions of violent female criminals as victims and attackers, and highlights a marginalized group that would have no place in an establishment like Duddell's.

"The Day the Gods Stop Laughing" presented a group of site-specific works that all seemed to incorporate some form of commentary on social inequality, the impact of which was heightened by the prestigious venue itself. Ironically but unsurprisingly, the curatorial statement refrains from making any explicit comment on class. In leaving the socio-political themes of these works a "coincidence," it was doubtful that the show would register as meaningful for Duddell's high-end clientele, its message lost among the dishes and wine.

*Pamela Wong is an editorial intern of ArtAsiaPacific.*

*"The Day the Gods Stop Laughing" is on view at Duddell's, Hong Kong, until September 23, 2018.*

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Installation view of **YE HUI**'s *The Waiting Room* (detail), 2018, site-specific audio drama installation, six Bluetooth mini-speakers, C-print, installation: dimensions variable, C-print: 90 x 60 cm, at "The Day the Gods Stop Laughing," Duddell's, Hong Kong, 2018.

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