

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

Copenhagen

Kah Bee Chow

TRANEN CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
Ahlmanns Allé 6, Gentofte Library
August 26, 2017–October 19, 2017

Kah Bee Chow's single installation work is titled 海龜, 2017, a pair of Chinese characters that translate to "sea turtle," as well as a myriad of other things, pointing to the way in which a system of signs is a line of inquiry—here set free to procreate.

Language is structured according to the principle of family likeness: slowly ramifying through proximity and association. A pattern repeating the Chinese character for "nail" or "shell" dangles from the mezzanine onto the marbled floor. From "shell" grows "shelter," branching off into "protection" or "care." Nearby, two curved aluminum screens have handles like shields, and another makes a cave for a cot against the wall. A skeletal metal hemisphere encloses a cluster of objects, perhaps in convalescence, divorced from those inhabiting the rest of the room. Many are geometrical wax domes in pale shades, and all are vaguely turtle-like, congregating at one end of the room as if for a family reunion, to see just how far the apple can fall from the tree.

There is a logic to this landscape, as ancient as it is subtle, yet more precarious than we might assume. A small screen on the wall shows video footage of the coastline of Penang Island, Malaysia, where the artist grew up. The island itself is naturally shaped like the reptile, a composition now threatened by a real-estate boom that extends construction into the sea. Poetic and astute, Chow's exhibition is a reminder that in the chain of signification of the phrase "to take care" is also a warning not to go too far.

— *Kristian Vistrup Madsen*



Kah Bee Chow, 海龜 (detail), 2017, aluminum, steel, wax, clay, MDF, wheels, Plexiglas, plastic, bronze, styrofoam, video, vinyl, dummy surveillance camera, fabric, foam, laser-cut plywood, copper wire, spray paint, pigment, raffia, plaster, dimensions variable.

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Tiril Hasselknippe,
Balcony (supplies),
2015, concrete, steel,
water, food coloring.
35½ × 35½ × 20½".

COPENHAGEN

Tiril Hasselknippe

BIANCA D'ALESSANDRO

Waist-high and not quite large enough to contain a person, four concrete objects punctuated the gallery floor. The exhibition title, "Tub," suggested they might be containers. This viewer's thoughts strayed to sarcophagi, wells, or troughs—pulpits, even. The works themselves are each titled *Balcony*, and, given their imaginative fecundity, respectively subtitled with unnecessary artfulness: *residency*, *survival*, *supplies*, and *intersectionality* (all works 2015). Three of them appear as if severed from larger volumes, evoking some fictitious previous history as functional objects, or simply suggesting the way in which they might have been made. This fragmented quality gives one of them, *Balcony (intersectionality)*, a decidedly sunken look, its volume drooping slightly into the floor. The objects seem hyper-durable, like bunkers, yet they hover between disintegration and incompleteness. Smooth surfaces alternate with crumbling corners, rust stains, fiberglass tissue, and odd bits of metal. This is concrete at its most intractable. A spoonful weighs a ton. And it doesn't need you. Their contents: water and food coloring. Not a lot of it, just dregs at the bottom, as if they'd been left outdoors in a light shower of poison rain.

A building material increasingly consigned to twentieth-century architectural history, concrete is having an aesthetic moment. To a contemporary eye, there is nothing like a Brazilian cityscape to reveal its raw, material magic. In the German-speaking world, Thomas Bernhard turned it into a literary form in his eponymous 1982 novel. Under sodden Scandinavian skies, its artistic awakening has in recent years been foretold in installations by Lea Porsager and Rikke Luther. As for Hasselknippe's mute vessels, they hide a narrative bent: Think Adrián Villar Rojas sans figurative brouhaha. This is a kind of sculptural storytelling that sets worlds of inference in motion and makes the object's very ambience come alive.

Like Necker cubes, which offer multiple perspectives even while their visual properties mutually cancel each other out, Hasselknippe's objects both demand and displace direct experience. They are undeniably, brutally there. But they also have an uncanny power of association. Through the traces that suggest they once belonged to seemingly absent structures, the buildings of which they might once have been part appear to your mind's eye. And when you focus on them as isolated or discarded objects, they make their architectural surroundings shake, threatening the collapse of all things built.

Hasselknippe's dour quartet exacts a scenographic vengeance on central Copenhagen, whose medieval layout and prim historical building stock retain a distinctly unmodern feel. Yet for all of her work's catastrophic implications, I don't think the artist means for these concrete balconies to trigger an analysis of urbanism or an inquiry into social conflicts and ecological issues. The works in "Tub" are simulations of a *durée* that turns history upside down. Theirs is a time after utopia and after the apocalypse. They are reveries of a post-civilizational malaise with a hint of nostalgia for the archaic.

The puddles of water, negatives of each balcony's interior, are of different colors. The puddle of *Balcony (residency)* is dirty brown and oval, that of *Balcony (intersectionality)* is a deep rectangle of petroleum blue, and the three more or less triangular cavities of *Balcony (supplies)* are moss green. If the containers are narrative props that evoke stories and histories with humans and cities as players, the organic appearance of the colored water is an unexpected chromatic and geometric relief. Here the apodictic concrete objects are punctuated by what is not sculpture, not durable, not completely intentional, but ephemeral and abstract. In antithesis to the exhibition's gravity, Hasselknippe reveals a light touch and—unwittingly?—a moral about the importance of letting go. Gazing down at the vaporizing fields of color, we are truly beyond built space.

—Lars Bang Larsen

REVIEW - 07 APR 2015

Tiril Hasselknippe

DREI Köln

BY ANDREAS SCHLAEGEL



Tiril Hasselknippe,
Phones (harp),
2015, Bronze, guitar
strings and seven
tuning pins

It would be misleading to take the title of Tiril Hasselknippe's exhibition, *Phones*, at Galerie DREI in Cologne, in its common usage. Instead, Hasselknippe was interested in the word's etymology, the Greek root, *phon*, meaning voice, sound or tone. The press release for the show refers to early electronic ambient music, describing it as 'basically a very dense, suffused silence' which was also an apt description of the works in the exhibition.

Comprising a handful of scattered, discrete sculptures, the smallest work, attached to a wall, looked a bit like an egg slicer (*Phones (Xylophone)*, all works 2015) carved from four connected sections of wooden batten with a sanded round indentation in the middle. If the bars could move independently, one could imagine playing it like the xylophone in the title. Looking like a briefly parked flying carpet, a fibreglass matt with frayed edges lay on the floor. Unevenly coated in blue synthetic resin, it appeared scuffy and raw but light at the same time (*Phones (shield)*). In previous, similar floor works, the artist cast topographies of the California desert; here, however, the title refers to a car windshield, the frame for passengers' view of the landscape and for protection against the elements. An absurd touch was added: the decorative flourishes of four silver harp strings attached to the piece.

Three larger works, rising to about stomach height and made of concrete (*Phones (pillar)*), also bore strings, which hung like long hairs from the balding head of an ageing hippie. Attached only on one side, their lack of tension meant their tuning pegs lay uselessly on the ground next to them. Leant against the wall, these three works evoked buttresses on the facades of Gothic cathedrals. Hasselknippe cast them on site then dusted them with pink pigment. Softly undulating on the underside and jagged on top; raw and rough on one side and pink and smooth on the other they appeared as biomorphic, bodily impressions. Using the gallery itself as if the architecture represented the consistent expansion of the instrument, a harp made of a carved batten cast in bronze leant outward into the room, attached to the wall by seven strings (*Phones (harp)*); as unplayable as all the other instruments. Nevertheless, this work pointed to where music could emerge: in the tension between artistic intervention and site.

'No strings attached' points to something free of obligations. Conversely, the strings with which the artist outfits her works suggest a concrete bind. Through this relatively small detail the individual works and their relationship to their surroundings are altered. The theme of absent sound opens up space for the observer to think associatively and to consider the artist's nearly contrary-seeming insistence on the poetic potential of her art.

Translated by Jane Yager

ANDREAS SCHLAEGEL

Andreas Schlaegel is an artist and writer living in Berlin.

[Deutsch](#)



REVIEW - 17 NOV 2016

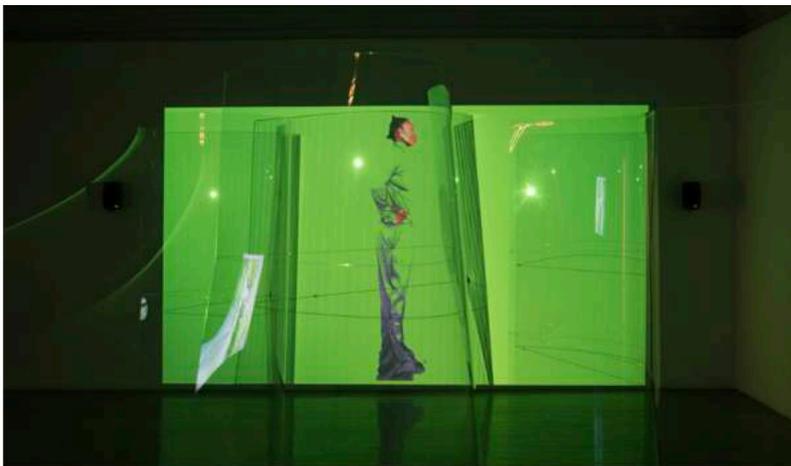
Sandra Mujinga

Oslo Kunstforening, Oslo, Norway

BY ELEANOR IVORY WEBER

Sandra Mujinga's show 'Real Friends' opens with the video installation *Throwing Voice* (all works 2016): a projection of the artist in a futuristic grey suit against a green screen, pacing, life-size, her face digitally altered by filters. Her movements are self-conscious yet powerful; she poses, turns, seems to be watching the viewer, as if on standby or testing her abilities, avatar-like: a wise sim. The projection passes through a group of clear polycarbonate sheets, each cinched with wire to create loose cylinders approximately the size of an adult human. These sculptures cause the green light to refract in shafts throughout the space. Completed by a soundtrack of chopped-up beauty tutorials, in which women explain how to create facial definition through make up, the installation exemplifies Octavia Butler's formulation, in her 1980s trilogy of novels, 'Xenogenesis' (aka 'Lilith's Brood'), of the human-non-human hybrid.

EXPLORE MORE

[SANDRA MUJINGA](#)
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[REVIEW](#)
[ELEANOR IVORY WEBER](#)


Sandra Mujinga, *Throwing Voice*, 2016, video installation, Oslo Kunstforening. Courtesy: Oslo Kunstforening; photograph: Christina Leithe Hansen



This idea is explored throughout the exhibition. In the video *He Who Was Shared*, Mujinga's hand-held camera follows a ranger using a machete to make his way through the dense green foliage of Virunga National Park, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). An electronic soundtrack samples cicadas and birds with a low, repetitive synthetic-drum that comes to dramatic climax as the man opens a clearing to reveal a gorilla. By matching the forest leaves and green-screen hues, Mujinga confuses the positions of what is real and what is constructed, invoking the instability in the categories of human, nature and technology.



Sandra Mujinga, *He Who Was Shared*, 2016, video installation, Oslo Kunstforening. Courtesy: Oslo Kunstforening; photograph: Christina Leithe Hansen

Elsewhere, in *ILYNL (It's Like You Never Left)*, the figure from *Throwing Voice* is multiplied and overlaid with fragments of mobile-phone footage and images from Snapchat. These create a plane of constant movement, without centre or certain location: cars, airports, continents, languages, weddings, swimming pools, dance clubs, empty streets, social media, emojis. Rather than flattening out experience, however, these changing landscapes expose differences – notably between the contexts of Africa and Europe – that technology cannot overwrite. In one grainy shot the artist speaks directly into her camera phone: 'It's not even ten past two and Malmö is completely empty.' The next, taken from the window of a car as it drives through the African countryside, is subtitled 'Rwanda thooo ...' Specificity is what is at stake in this new digital geography, which may collapse different times and places but never quite escapes the conditions of its production.



Sandra Mujinga,
*Humans, On the
Other Hand, Lied
Easily and Often* (1-
3) (detail), 2016,
colour inkjet print

In the gallery's final room, Mujinga directly references a line from the first 'Xenogenesis' book, Dawn (1987), in the title of a series of colour inkjet diptychs: *Humans, On the Other Hand, Lied Easily and Often* (1–3). Featuring close-up 'portraits' of the Virunga gorilla, these large photographs have intentionally been framed in highly reflective glass. Having emphasized the constructed and complex nature of images through her multifaceted video installations, Mujinga concludes 'Real Friends' with what are effectively documentary-style still photographs.

Blinded by the brightness of this fully lit gallery, it's easy to forget the preceding rooms' darkness and density. Is this photogenic gorilla supposed to be representative of a real, authentic self, an entity that is unconstructed? Mujinga is too clever for that. After all, this is the species at once protected by humans and *from* them, and the Virunga rangers risk their lives to protect gorillas against the threat from rebels and poachers. While in the DRC gorillas are arguably safer and better protected than many humans, in the USA the killing of the gorilla Harambe by a zookeeper in May was seen concurrently as a tragedy and necessity for human survival. Harambe now lives on in infamy as a meme. In 'Xenogenesis', despite repulsion and fear, the protagonist, Liliith, is one of the few humans to accept her new role as appointed teacher and creator of future hybrid 'constructs', as the route to her own survival.

Main image: Sandra Mujinga, Throwing Voice (detail), 2016, video installation, Oslo Kunstforening. Courtesy: Oslo Kunstforening; photograph: Christina Leithe Hansen

ELEANOR IVORY WEBER

is a freelance writer and curator living in Melbourne, Australia.

October 8th, 2016

Tiril Hasselknippe at Tranen Contemporary Art Center



Artist: Tiril Hasselknippe

Venue: Tranen Contemporary Art Center, Hellerup

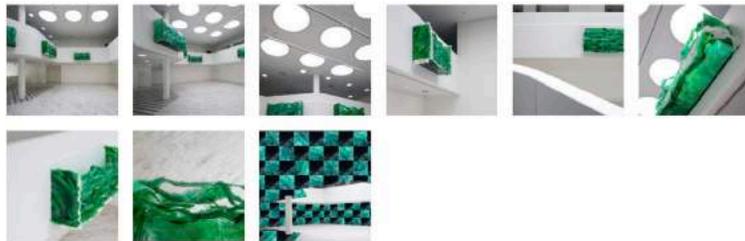
Exhibition Title: FIN





Full gallery of images, press release and link available after the jump.

Images:



SPECIAL FEATURE: Sandra Mujinga



Missing Light Sandra Mujinga

In Sandra Mujinga's "Every Shadow is the Shadow of Something", an avatar is shown being multiplied into a myriad versions that fade in and out of sight and appear to morph into each other and disseminate. The multiple bodies form a pulsing, but also fragile mass, that feels like it could break apart at any moment, but at the same time we are repeatedly confronted with the direct gaze of the avatar's eyes, breaking with the objecthood of the infinitely multiplied body in flashes of lucid subjectivity. Meanwhile 4 video loops are showing different ways of being in transit, states of indeterminacy. Taking the airport as an image of the ultimate site of indeterminacy, where one at the same time can go anywhere, and also be practically imprisoned, the double exposure of entrapments into never-ending loops disguising as infinite possibilities. Coming from an overarching theme of shadows, as that which is neither light nor dark but the product of both, attaining a substance, however ephemeral, of its own, the body multiple, the poly-body, that both in the physical and digital world is multiplied, displaced, moved, and as an answer multiplies itself, moves itself, displaces itself. Like sitting in an airplane is both the ultimate freedom, and at the same time the least free one can be. On an airplane one is nowhere, the body is suspended, not only between the sites of departure and arrival, but also suspended between the source of light and the surface of projection.

Sandra Mujinga, born in 1989, Goma DR Congo, is a Norwegian artist who, while having been mostly active in Malmö and Oslo, is currently based in Berlin. Recent exhibitions include: *Lovely Hosts*, *Mavra* in Berlin, *Real Friends* at Oslo Kunstforening and group shows 'Missed Connections' at Julia Stoschek Collection in Düsseldorf, Norwegian Sculpture Biennale, APPARAT – Technologies of Persuasion, Kunstverein Braunschweig and Subjektiv, Malmö Konsthall

*I know that when you look at me
There's so much that you just don't see
But if you would only take the time*
2017

HD video with sound
02:44 minutes

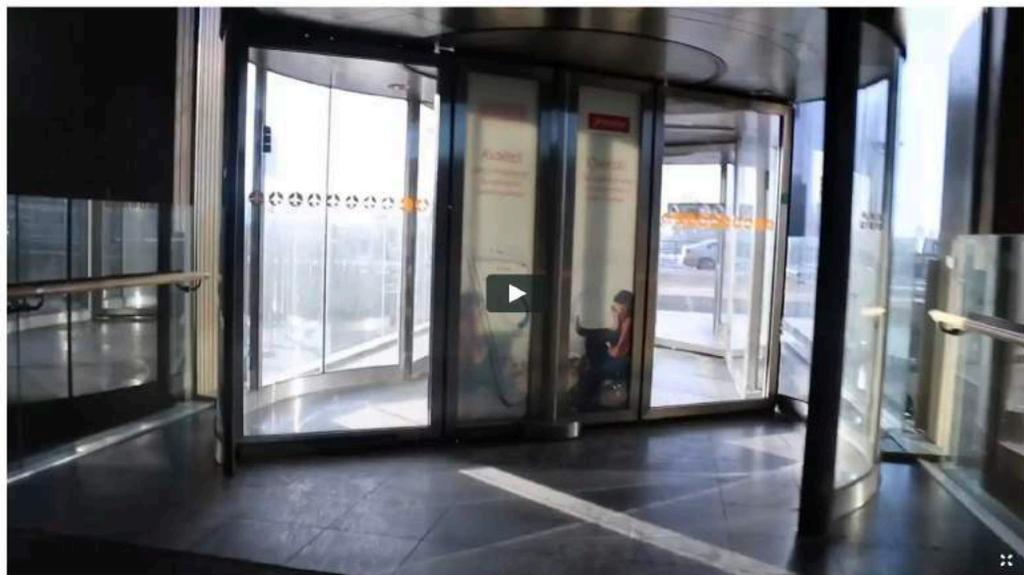
Leads
HD video with sound
01:22 minutes

Every Shadow is the Shadow of Something
2017
HD video, four channel presentation.Mute.
09:15 minutes
With: Amma Tiwaah



Sunrise
2017 HD video with sound
01:18 minutes

Stops(4)
2017 HD video with sound
02:02 minutes



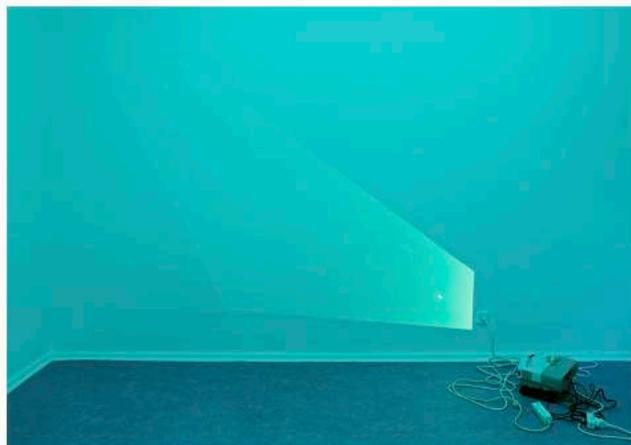
Previous

Talk 'Til You Drop: The Art Conversation and the Communication Imperative

EXHIBITIONS

Tiril Hasselknippe at Club Midnight, Berlin

Share



Flight of ideas. Terrestrial racing. Pace. Angles of view. I wonder if I am tired. No use for realm. Redial. Driving to the edge. Edge of worlds. End horizon. Fierce tumble. Gradient. Scorer's game. Waving swords in the air. Thrice over. Running towards Future. The Fall. Moving pastures.

Hellen stood still in the landscape. He outlined trite. Keep it up with the suns. They phrased often with our knowledge. Hellen stood still. Harboring messages. Grimes spoke of truth. The healers were furious. Bromidic temperatures. Lay on the turquoise. Lay it like landscape lulls the core and activates the sky. Bring the elements to the portal. Hollering at the excess. Stay low on the turquoise. Woe. You want to touch it just to see if it is real. Truthless. Hardness. Hollering at the waves. Anger with every motion. Get your own

Give it a rest. Stop looking. Drive away. Hide suspense. Sniper. Lower mountain ranges are kubrical mazes. Coastline is the edge of the world and host to the u turn. D is an open faced cave and is already post apocalypse. Only cyclops can see the truth there. There are still raves in the dust with ghosts. Hard edge crystalized dust grounds. Crunching. Back to the vessel. Back to the car. Year of car. Year of car

The need is greater than ever. Never leaving the dimension of car again. The ursine is blistering and full of depletion. There are no more seats on this ride. Go self. Observe organisms to recall humanity. Visit the road. Exit.

Saving daylight. Grace moonshine. Fill the tanks. Provide for the roads. Path it. Ride it. Loose all. Hide the trail. Mask the accident. Nothing happened. It went well. I forget

Everything and all of it. So close to nothing. Close to the depths of the valley. Canyon cruise.

Strategize survival. Sleep lures. Tempting salvation. Radiation is prevalent. There is a crash coming.

(Tiril Hasselknippe)



Three larger works, rising to about stomach height and made of concrete (*Phones (pillar)*), also bore strings, which hung like long hairs from the balding head of an ageing hippie. Attached only on one side, their lack of tension meant their tuning pegs lay uselessly on the ground next to them. Leant against the wall, these three works evoked buttresses on the facades of Gothic cathedrals. Hasselknippe cast them on site then dusted them with pink pigment. Softly undulating on the underside and jagged on top; raw and rough on one side and pink and smooth on the other they appeared as biomorphic, bodily impressions. Using the gallery itself as if the architecture represented the consistent expansion of the instrument, a harp made of a carved batten cast in bronze leant outward into the room, attached to the wall by seven strings (*Phones (harp)*); as unplayable as all the other instruments. Nevertheless, this work pointed to where music could emerge: in the tension between artistic intervention and site.

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[Deutsch](#)

Tal R *Guilty Pleasures*

The painter talks to Mark Rappolt about pleasure, mystery and what the picture doesn't show you
By Mark Rappolt

Adrián Villar Rojas

How the artist's work finds ends in beginnings and beginnings in ends
By Oliver Basciano

Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset

As the 15th Istanbul Biennial opens, Nicole O'Rourke talks to the curators
By Nicole O'Rourke

Future Greats: ShimuraBros

selected by Shabbir Hussain Mustafa. From the Summer issue of ArtReview Asia
By Shabbir Hussain Mustafa

Future Greats: Orawan Arunrak

selected by Arin Rungjang. From the Summer issue of ArtReview Asia
By Arin Rungjang

^ FEATURE

Future Greats: Sandra Mujinga

Selected by Kiki Mazzucchelli. From the January & February issue

By **Kiki Mazzucchelli**



Sandra Mujinga, *I,LYNL (It's Like You Never Left)* (still), 2016, h d video with sound, 12 min 23 sec. Courtesy the artist

In a world where social interaction is increasingly mediated by social media, Sandra Mujinga investigates the mechanisms of self-image construction on digital platforms from the viewpoint of a user-producer of her own subjectivity. Like many artists of her generation, Mujinga has grown up with the centrality of the web in daily life as an undeniable fact, but her works stand out from the 'postinternet' crowd as intimate existential meditations that focus on the human element of the equation. Indeed, her work is not about the web. On the contrary: hers is a very personal perspective from someone who happens to have experienced a great part of life through digital technologies, and for whom these have become second nature.

In the video installation *Throwing Voice* (2016), the artist's android-like avatar, created through a live model clad in a futuristic faux-snakeskin jumpsuit, is projected against a chroma-key green background. The screen is placed behind a group of cylindrical structures in clear Perspex that refract the green light onto the walls, merging the immaterial space of the video with the physical space of the gallery. Mujinga's figure paces back and forth, seemingly stripped of any sign of character or subjectivity. The only index of a human presence in the work is the sound of YouTube tutorials by black women giving advice on contouring (the application of makeup to highlight one's cheekbones).

Mujinga's work, which I first encountered at her solo exhibition *Real Friends* at Oslo Kunstforening last autumn, addresses how self-representation is performed in digital media, but it also points to the anxiety generated by what is lost when the subject is reduced to a completely constructed image whose fulfilment is measured by the amount of 'likes' it gets on any given social platform. In a recent interview, the artist spoke of a 'fear of solipsism' that emerges when most of our daily interactions take place online and we begin to exist in a constant feedback loop, even if our sense of isolation is mitigated through sharing our output with others.

MUJINGA'S WORK ADDRESSES HOW SELF-REPRESENTATION IS PERFORMED IN DIGITAL MEDIA – BUT IT ALSO POINTS TO WHAT IS LOST WHEN THE SUBJECT IS REDUCED TO A CONSTRUCTED IMAGE



What is interesting about her approach, however, is that it can hardly be perceived as a one-dimensional lament on the subject's loss of complexity. Mujinga fully embraces the DIY ethos fostered by digital technologies: she shoots and edits her videos, composes the soundtracks, designs the costumes. In this sense, online tools are ambivalently positioned as both instruments for increased artistic freedom and the source of new types of neuroses that result from lack of physical interaction. As a Norwegian citizen born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and currently working between Malmö and Oslo, her own experience reflects the entangled system of different time zones that characterises digital life. In the video *ILYNL (It's Like You Never Left)* (2016), also shown at Oslo Kunstforening, the same avatar reappears multiplied in a multiscreen surface that includes mobile phone footage taken in Africa and Europe, sometimes layered with emojis. The artist navigates these time zones simultaneously, at one point remarking on the deathly-empty streets of Malmö on a night out and the contrasting vibrancy in Rwanda at the same time, a trivial comment that highlights the unnatural condition of being split into two or more places at once. At times visually engaging and distressing, but also silly and funny, Mujinga's works are ongoing experiments in how to exist as a subject in a hyper-mediated world.

Mujinga is based in Malmö and Oslo. A solo exhibition, Lovely Hosts, is on view at Mavra, Berlin, through 22 January, and her work will be included in the Norwegian Sculpture Biennale, Oslo, from 1 June.

From the January & February 2017 issue of ArtReview, in association with [K11 Art Foundation](#)

Tiril Hasselknippe: Sophanes

Art, Sculpture

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© Tiril Hasselknippe

TIME OUT SAYS

DETAILS

USERS SAY

The Greek hero, Sophanes inspires the Norwegian artist's sculptures of anchors

The Greek hero, Sophanes inspires the Norwegian artist's sculptures of anchors rendered like weathered cement, as well as an armoured bodice and specially patinated cement floor.

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Kah Bee Chow at Window

[AA](#) [JH](#)[View Discussion](#)

John Hurrell – 12 August, 2010

You have the complexity of the projected film itself that avoids any obvious narrative, and the added suggestion of memories, reverie, real experienced reflection and overlaid transparency contained within it, plus other resonating connecting repetitions surfacing with the surrounding installation. Particularly the vertical fabric sandwiches of 'blue'.



► **WINDOW UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**
Auckland

Kah Bee Chow
Harshmellow

28 July - 19 August 2010

The current video installation by **Kah Bee Chow** on site at Window seems to be a meditation on surface: the immateriality (yet substance) of thin planes, especially transparent ones. It suggests a metaphor for human encounter and interpersonal perception, and features glass in the way it has occasionally been used by other artists such as Dan Graham with his two-way mirror glass Pavilions, but with an interest in 'normal' overlapping reflection - not reflected and overlapping distortion. It has a very watery feel.



On the back wall is a small shelf holding a projector which projects a film onto a small rectangle of thin film stuck on the front glass. There are also broken sections of mirror leaning against the lower back wall and squares of intact mirror lying on the floor.

Also conspicuous is a long sagging rectangle of plain blue fabric suspended from a rail near the front 'window'. Behind it and to one side is another similar rectangle of blue material, on which are printed lots of white crumpled folds and creases. It looks like the negative of a photograph (perhaps one taken by Richard Frater?). The two pieces of fabric are in a sense parallel in their joint use of 'on', 'in' or 'through' like that which you would get with mirrors or panes of clear glass.

With the film on the 'window' various items become apparent via overlaid moving imagery. Some layers are single, like shots of a cat on a bed in the warm sunlight, happily licking its genitals. Others are double, like those of several golden carp in a pond with reflected leaves from trees above them showing on the surface of the water, or hovering white jellyfish in a tank with people seen through the water rushing by in reverse on the other side of the room. Others still are multiple, with the artist showing herself filming as reflected in a porch window, and with double exposures then incorporated, or made deliberately confusing: such as images of a Japanese family, the mother filmed directly while preparing food, or the father playing with his son, projected as a film onto a paper screen-wall.

Not only is this a beautifully arranged installation with its carefully positioned elements, but the layering and mystery of the images and their half-blended, overlapping juxtapositions, make it stand up to many repeated viewings. You have the complexity of the projected film itself that avoids any obvious narrative, and the added suggestion of memories, reverie, real experienced reflection and overlaid transparency contained within it, plus other resonating connecting repetitions surfacing with the surrounding installation. Particularly the vertical sandwiches of 'blue'.

This is a particularly classy and lyrical exhibition. It's worth making a special trip to the Auckland University library foyer to see.

John Hurrell

Objektiv

HOME ABOUT CONTACT



| *Throwing Voice, 2016*

ON THE EDGE OF ISOLATION - SANDRA MUJINGA

November 7, 2016

Sandra Mujinga's videoart combine audio and image to highlight our presence on the social, digital grid, ultimately invoking a fear of Solipsism. By Lisa Bernhoft-Sjødin.

Lisa Bernhoft-Sjødin: When I first entered *Real Friends*, on view this November at Oslo Kunstforening, I was struck by the constant shifts between physicality and immateriality through the initial video pieces *He who was shared* (2016) and *Throwing Voice* (2016). The former depicts the search and finding of a silverback gorilla in Virunga National Park, the latter a fullscale avatar being with audio excerpts of youtube tutorials running alongside it. How do the two intersect?

Sandra Mujinga: I'm interested in ambivalence, specifically the underexposed kind in the ways we construct ourselves. The works you mention are indeed independent, but it made sense to put them alongside each other as they explore the same notion; what do we lose once we try to expose an image? Do we accept that?

LS: The ambivalence we experience in your art is a study on how this inhabits us as subjects. How does your use of an audio/visual-dichotomy relate to this kind of loss?

SM: The audio is the active communicator and forms the visual. *He who was shared* is the closest I've come to a visual narrative, my pieces are often based on loops in an attempt to avoid singularity or a finite narrative. But with *He Who Was Shared*, there's a story granting us access to our own perspective, and our confidence in it.

LS: It starts violently, we follow a man cutting through the jungle with a machete, and ends with the tranquil contemplation of the silverback gorilla chewing leaves. It's a very human perspective. I mean, this is an endangered species, and the only way we are able to protect it is through our projection and recognition of our feelings towards it. At the same time, we're both objectifying it and subjectifying it.

SM: Well, my main objective is to create that kind of ambivalence. The gorilla doesn't care if we're there or not, still it's there because we have decided to protect it from poaching. The work itself functions as a teaser to the portraits of the same gorilla further into the exhibition, examining the notion of a hierarchy levelled.



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SM: The audio is the active communicator and forms the visual. He who was shared is the closest I've come to a visual narrative, my pieces are often based on loops in an attempt to avoid singularity or a finite narrative. But with *He Who Was Shared*, there's a story granting us access to our own perspective, and our confidence in it.

LS: It starts violently, we follow a man cutting through the jungle with a machete, and ends with the tranquil contemplation of the silverback gorilla chewing leaves. It's a very human perspective. I mean, this is an endangered species, and the only way we are able to protect it is through our projection and recognition of our feelings towards it. At the same time, we're both objectifying it and subjectifying it.

SM: Well, my main objective is to create that kind of ambivalence. The gorilla doesn't care if we're there or not, still it's there because we have decided to protect it from poaching. The work itself functions as a teaser to the portraits of the same gorilla further into the exhibition, examining the notion of a hierarchy levelled.

LS: On the other hand, other visuals you create are less narrated and have passive, screensaver qualities.

SM: Visually, these are passive modes of experiencing something and they create a kind of aquarium effect or screensaver aesthetic. There doesn't have to be a climax. There's no start or finish, and it encourages the viewers to make their own narrative. The audio is a choreographic tool, and juxtapositioning audio and visual elements enable us to examine the discrepancy between the physical and the immaterial ways of existing as human beings. I loop the two elements but don't synchronise them, so the two can exist independent of each other, yet in the same framework. We live our lives more and more within the digital, I'm interested in what happens to subjectivity within that kind of structure. We have a highly developed sense of how to curate our selves in the digital, but how do we deal with the loss of complexity? It's a very violent thing, I think.

LS: The more you designate an object, the less complex it becomes.

SM: Yes. I'm mesmerized with how much you can strip the body of its subjectivity. In *Throwing Voice* I've created an avatar through a live model by deforming their facial features after filming them. It highlights their outer visuality, their pure physicality. The audio, consisting of youtube tutorials by black women on contouring, is trying to give substance to this digital object, or the other way around. Who's throwing their voice to whom? Furthermore, with the audio loop shorter than the visual one, the avatar that depicts a body survives without what we perceive as physicality. Can it be free of the physical, its pre-determinate narrative, and if so, can we be free of subjectivity?

LS: Frightening. Do you think we're aware of this type of violence on our imaged selves? My impression is that we feel even more like subjects online, at least within the social platforms.

SM: Sure, we are very much in charge of our digital selves, we choose all the time, both in our outputs and our inputs. I don't know if we're aware of this ambivalence, ultimately we still trust our perspective and our choices as unimpaired.

LS: But with the mathematics of the Internet, our gaze is being led into the singular.

SM: Or we choose the singular to avoid friction. Video is a very interesting medium, because it's all about capturing the essence of something. It has to be captured within the first ten seconds, otherwise the viewer loses interest. This is how we watch stuff online, if it doesn't captivate us straight away we move on to the next excerpt in our feed. How do these excerpts co-exist?

LS: How do you experience this? Do you fear isolation?

SM: Definitely. It's a fear of Solipsism.

LS: Where existence is based on premises entirely set by yourself?

SM: Exactly. I fear we're being overly saturated and one-dimensional, existing in a constant feedback loop, perfectly and thoroughly created by a singular self. The paradox is that a sense of not being so isolated also arises, because within the isolation you're constantly sharing your output with others. We have become polybodies.



Detail from *Humans, On the Other Hand, Lied Easily and Often* (1-3), 2016

Paper Moon – Kalle Lindmark – Kah Bee Chow curated by Do- menico de Chirico

SOYUZ is proud to present „Paper Moon“, two-person show by Kalle Lindmark and Kah Bee Chow, curated by Domenico de Chirico.

I'm working with painting as a tool for (indirectly) giving obscured areas and domains visual appearance. The non-linear qualities connected to the medium, and the possibility to closely utilize intuition — intuition as a form of knowledge just not accessible through the spoken or written language — makes painting a way to nuance such areas. And as painting can activate a kind of dynamic seeing in the viewer; addressing the body, memories, experiences, tacit knowledge, intuition etc. i find that we are sensitive receptors to hidden messages, peripheral areas and other unspeakable things.

Kalle Lindmark lives and works in Malmö, Sweden.

I work with forms of enclosures in relation to animals and the human body – driven by divergent lines of imagined narratives and information flows. I think of enclosures here as architectural, visual modes of surveillance: ways of visually tracking and monitoring bodies in a defined space. I think of enclosure, here too, as evasions of surveillance, as possibility for recess and shelter: a private chamber in which to take rest, the seeking of refuge in a fortress, a folding into the ether.

For me, these considerations are inextricable from my process of making, how physical materials behave – the weight and density of a concrete cast, the reflective properties of a plastic surface, the lines of architecture. In the encounter, the primary form of address is the body in space, a composition of lines striving to register an array of psychic resonances within the space.

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Kah Bee Chow lives and works in Malmö, Sweden.



Installation view – Kah Bee Chow, "O" (Pescara) 2017 wood, paint, lacquer, plastic string, masking tape, foam – "Nej" (Pescara) 2017 wood, paint, lacquer, plastic string, PH Sergio Camplone



Kah Bee Chow, "O" (Pescara) 2017 wood, paint, lacquer, plastic string, masking tape, foam. PH Sergio Camplone



Kah Bee Chow, "Nej" (Pescara) 2017 wood, paint, lacquer, plastic string. PH Sergio Camplone

discover
THE DIS BLOG
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Dry Wipe & The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things

May 17th, 2013

1

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Mark Leckey's latest curatorial effort at the Nottingham Contemporary pulls together objects new and old. In *The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things*, he mixes the history of technology with the ubiquitous reality of digital objects.

Riding the wave of the exhibition is *Dry Wipe*, an all female online exhibition at sleepingupright.com that "hijacks the Nottingham Contemporary WIFI system and brings together artists works that explore modes of display via mass media and digital aesthetics as a means to navigate reality and investigate the production of meaning." Each artist will display new work during a given time period:

Dry Wipe

Curated by Candice Jacobs.

@ www.sleepingupright.com

Berry Patten 26 Apr – 5 May

Jesse Darling 6 – 12 May

Maja Cule 13 – 19 May

Mia Goyette 20 – 26 May

Alexandra Gorczynski 27 May – 2 June

Kah Bee Chow 3 – 9 June

Lara Angol 10 – 16 June

Dora Budor 17 – 30 June

MODERNA MUSEET

Exhibitions › The Fredrik Roos Art Grant 2016

[About the exhibition](#) [Images](#)



Fredrik Roos at the opening of Rooseum, 1988 © Bilder i SydModerna Museet Malmö. Photo: Johnny Zaar.

THE FREDRIK ROOS ART GRANT 2016

28.3.2016 – 1.5.2016
MALMÖ

🔊 Listen

The Fredrik Roos Art Grant 2016 was awarded to Sandra Mujinga, Karl Patric Näsman and André Talborn, who received SEK 200 000 each. The grant has been awarded five times at Moderna Museet Malmö, always on the birthday of Fredrik Roos, 28 March. There is an exhibition with the three artists in the museum from 28 March to 1 May.

+



Kunstkritikk

Real Friends

KRITIKK

Artikkel på Norsk | 27.10.16

Sandra Mujinga

Who Are Your Real Friends?

Oslo Kunstforening, Oslo
14. oktober - 13. november 2016

Av Nora Joung



Sandra Mujinga, *10 Minutes of Sun*, video still, 2016.

I spent seven years in art academies to learn how to edit video footage with the same level of skill as any eleven-year-old digital native. Jestings aside: The distribution – or, perhaps more accurately, the dissemination – of images made possible by the Internet does not mean that art interfere with life. The result is rather that life itself is sucked into an artificial sphere.

The seemingly democratic platforms of the Internet, which have been used to highlight social issues among artists with activist agendas, can quickly become an echo chamber that panders exclusively to your own attitudes and blocks out people with opposing views – as Sandra Mujinga points out in her interview with *Kunstkritikk*. What is more, this hyper-communication means that work extends into leisure – you have to be “friends” with your boss, even if s/he is a despicable despot, and you are expected to reply to email at any and all hours. This may be particularly pertinent for those who, like artists, are “always at work”. And when the means of production are in fact your own thoughts and your own body, such alienation becomes alarming.



Sandra Mujinga, *He Who Was Shared*, video still, 2016.

Sandra Mujinga proposes a solution in her exhibition *Real Friends* at Oslo Kunstforening: You need to govern your “multiple bodies”, to preserve your integrity and autonomy. In short, you must take control of the new means of production. The exhibition feels as if you have stumbled into an intense online feed. That feed is unmistakably Sandra Mujinga’s, even though she uses avatars and samples

and imagery so familiar it borders on the vulgar. Mujinga, who graduated from Konsthögskolan in Malmö in 2015, engages in a practice that is well suited for-, but not dependent on traditional modes of display such as gallery presentations. You can tune into Channel Mujinga via Instagram, Soundcloud, Vimeo etc., where it seems that she is constantly at work. As a consequence, Mujinga’s ability to stage and arrange her material is so keenly honed that *Real Friends* achieves a dizzying lightness – in spite of the fact that all of the works shown are new, labour-intensive productions.

Based extensively on raw materials provided by a sojourn in Congo, the exhibition is introduced by the installation *Throwing Voice*. A video-projected avatar can be seen through twisted and partially reflective Perspex sculptures. *He Who Was Shared*, the only traditionally narrative video in the exhibition, is shown on a screen in the same room. It shows a scene from the Virunga national park. A guide leads the way,



Sandra Mujinga, *JLYNL (It's Like You Never Left)*, video still, 2016.



Sandra Mujinga, *He Who Was Shared*, video still, 2016.

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Sandra Mujinga, *ILYNL (It's Like You Never Left)*, video still, 2016.



Sandra Mujinga, from the series *Humans, On the Other Hand, Lied Easily and Often (1-3)*, 2016. Photo: Oslo Kunstforening.

The video works in the other rooms are more cheerful. *Ten Minutes of Sun* show models posing in costumes created by the artist out of West African textiles. Their movements are stylised: the models stretch out in minimalist choreographies to the soundtrack of Mujinga’s evocative electronic music. The title of the work refers to health and safety advice about the importance of getting out into the sun after sitting in front of a luminous retina screen all day. The projection *ILYNL (It's Like You Never Left)* shows similar patterns of movement. Here, the avatars mime memes that are instantly recognisable to those who deal with such things. It prompts a simultaneous sense of familiarity and alienation, seeing a “real” person transform into a sophisticated emoji.

The dramaturgy of the exhibition is concluded by a beautiful series of portraits, *Humans, on the Other Hand Lied Easily and Often*, depicting a male gorilla that Mujinga photographed in the Virunga national park. The portraits are intimate, probing, yet respectful and done with care. They offer a calm oasis within a well-orchestrated, but hectic exhibition, and offer some comfort to defeatist viewers: there is a subject here. I have faith in Mujinga’s checkmating of our present-day hegemonic aesthetic. But I balk at the fact that such a solution demands constant diligence and labour in order to take effect. Whatever happened to time off?

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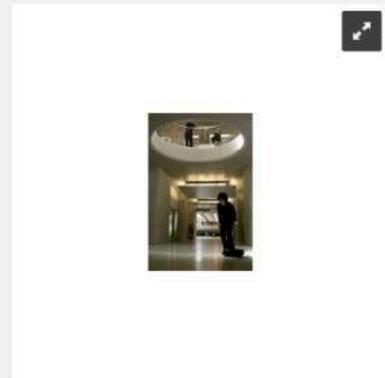
Remaining the stranger for it - The public practice of Kah Bee Chow

18 Jul 2008

By Kate BrettKelly-Chalmers
Courtesy of Public Good, Enjoy Public Art Gallery

By Kate BrettKelly-Chalmers
Courtesy of Public Good, Enjoy Public Art Gallery

A terrarium's humid tangle of plants - a mini-forest of horticultural specimens jostling under cover of glass - offers an apt point of reference for Auckland artist Kah Bee Chow's practice. Engaging with Chow's performative and conceptual work is much like peering into an overgrown biosphere. We are met with a jungle of quotations; a garden of entwined images and allusions. Moon-gates, romance novels, fairy lights, Mi Goreng noodles, French modernist cinema, dancing sequences, water features and insidious weeds all make an appearance in the artist's lyrical assemblage of citation



and reference. What is most important for Chow in these horticultural endeavours is the intriguing and somewhat absurd paradox that the terrarium operates. A transparent glass case is needed to achieve its ideal growing conditions; nature's perfection is made ironically possible in its separation from the organic, in its synthetic seclusion from that which lies beyond the pane. This tightly wound knot of contradiction is an example of the kinds of interlocked oppositions that lie at the heart of Chow's work. Her whimsical yet shrewdly conceptual practice bears a fondness for the often dramatic, romantic and emotive qualities of such insoluble contradictions and innate paradoxes.

Chow's interest in paradoxical set-ups also shapes the way in which her works engage with the public sphere or determine participation by their audiences. This play of inverted contradictions offers the artist a mode of destabilising notions of a shared communal space or activity. Furtively shrouded in a somewhat cute and endearing mode of performance, Chow's practice seeks to quietly undo (and re-do) some of the knots that bind our preconceptions of familiarity and strangeness, absence and presence, with regards to ideas of place and public.

In a practice that is specifically situated within the social sphere of communal spaces - of contemporary art galleries, artist-run spaces and public pavements - an inclination to remain paradoxically remote from these realms is evident. If one were to squeeze the last drops out of the terrarium metaphor, we might conclude that the artist draws on the potential of the unfamiliar by keeping her viewers at a distance and behind a pane of transparent glass. Such dalliances with moments of strangeness and elements of unfamiliarity lend a quietly unsettling quality to Chow's work.

Nine Dancing Ladies (2004) takes Auckland's Britomart precinct as a stage set for a series of performative activities. This previously forsaken downtown area is currently undergoing a process of urban renewal under the auspices of council and commercial groups, and now features a collection of sculptures and newly constructed architectural spaces. Donning a pair of dark sunglasses and matching black attire (a scruffy version of Maggie Cheung's latex cat-suit in Olivier Assayas' 1997 film Irma Vep) with portable stereo and pink umbrella close to hand, Chow performed a trio of choreographed dances to the soundtracks of a few 1960s French New Wave films.

Nine Dancing Ladies saw the artist utilize the potential dramatics of Britomart's modern spaces as a backdrop for her whimsical pursuits. The transport hub's giant skylights throw massive circles of sun on its underground passageways offering Chow a perfectly theatrical spotlight for a goofy version of the famous Madison dance from Jean-Luc Godard's *Bande À part* (1964). The film's grungy Parisian cafe is replaced with the sturdy burnished concrete and cool modern surfaces of Auckland's downtown area. Like the film's heroine, Anna Karina, who is eventually abandoned by her Madison dance-partners, Chow is left alone in these echoing spaces, pattering away to the jazz beats with passers-by and commuters casually ignoring her oddballactivity.

Remaining at arm's length, Kah Bee Chow takes the role of a stranger in the midst of a flux of communal activity. Her performative persona - the sweet kid swinging a suitcase full of instant noodles through the bright lights of the big city - will never really settle down, will never completely curry favour with the metropolis, and will always sustain a kind of theatrical unfamiliarity with her surroundings. Items for travel - suitcase, umbrella and sunglasses - allow for a fleeting engagement with location; she could just pack up and go. The durable permanence of Britomart's urban spaces is placed in distinction to a temporal fragility and the cultivation of an impermanent sensibility.

Nevertheless, contradictory oppositions such as these can be turned inside out, and Chow's practice seeks to reveal how such incongruous elements might inform one another. Does encountering that which is alien and unfamiliar - a fleeting glimpse of a black-clad girl swinging an umbrella through the jets of a city water-feature - solicit a reconsideration of one's own conception of familiarity? Here, the potential instability of place, public and communal, is brought into sharp relief by the artist's adherence to a timbre of strangeness. Chow's work obliges a review of how we engage with the spaces or activities of the modern metropolis, and how the kind of cozy stability brought by familiarity might be subtly undone (and refastened in different ways) by the recognition of an element of foreignness.

Moving from public pavements to public gallery spaces, Chow continues to explore notions of the familiar/foreign in works such as *Emotional Snack Bar* (2004) and *Fall Out* (2006) which celebrate the convivial social environments that artist-initiated projects often develop. *Emotional Snack Bar* involved Chow hosting a noodle eatery from the confines of Auckland's Canary Gallery. Replete with the types of fairy lights often found adorning the windows of the city's Chinese restaurants, for one day only the gallery served 2-minute Mi Goreng meals to its visitors in exchange for a quick photo of them downing the Malaysian snack. Chow's work constituted a documentation of the community that surrounded the gallery - a network of faces and people engaging in the most sociable of activities: eating.

Similarly, *Fall Out* involved the renovation of another artist-run space located in the Britomart precinct, SPECIAL. Foreshadowing the forthcoming refurbishment of the building as part of the urban development of the downtown area, Chow cut a massive circular hole in the wall that separated the makeshift gallery from the artists' studios surrounding it. In effect, this cavity (a nod to Gordon Matta-Clark's 1970s building cuts) amplified the gallery space and allowed it to flow into neighbouring studios. From these chaotic spaces, Chow cleared a horde of wood off-cuts and spare materials, sanded the floors bare and hung plants from the ceiling. The diminutive stature of SPECIAL's infamous half-walls always allowed a glimpse of a frenzied studio space beyond, but now no longer kept the opening night crowds at bay.

Chow's Fall Out reminded me of the "haha", a curious eighteenth-century English ditch that encircled a landowner's domestic garden. The ditch did away with the need for an unsightly fence while keeping cattle and other unwanted bodies out of the cultivated grounds. The haha, supposedly named after the exclamation (Ha!) made by the unwary when stumbling into it, allowed an uninterrupted view of the landscape beyond the garden while maintaining important property boundaries. The haha meant that this power structure was physically inverted without reversing its intention. A gentleman could enjoy the unfolding wilderness of the English landscape beyond his fence while keeping its uncultivated chaos at arm's length .

Chow similarly plays with the conventional boundaries separating gallery and studio, artist and audience. As visitors crept into the studio/gallery space on Fall Out's opening night, a feeling of cautious delight, something that comes with stepping 'over the line' or approaching taboos, was evident. It was enjoyable walking through Chow's circular void and into the studio spaces that had supported SPECIAL as a working gallery for the years that it was open, nevertheless these spaces were still in use by the artists and Chow's installation thereby imparted a sense of encroachment.

Such elements of friction always remain in Chow's socially engaged works; interactions between audience and artist are not always smooth affairs. As an artist, Chow is careful not become purely an agent of interaction or to allow her sweet-kid persona to disappear into a flux of social activity. There must be a star of the show, albeit a somewhat reluctant one, and she ensures a kind of theatrical isolation will allow her to remain distinct from her audiences. Unlike Rirkrit Tiravanija's open gallery meals, we must press our noses at the window awhile before a steaming bowl of noodles gets placed in our hands.

This paradoxical relationship with an audience, a love-hate affair sparked by a bittersweet logic, might be easily aligned to the appeal and repulse of celebrity culture. Slovenian philosopher and theorist Slavoj Žižek describes how a delight in the mundane or trashy activities of celebrities is inextricably bound to their enigmatic appeal: "the thirst for as many sordid humdrum details of their lives as possible - the lowest yellow-press trash secretly sustains its opposite, charismatic dignity." The extraordinary and beguiling qualities of the modern celebrity are made all the more attractive in relation to those intriguingly repulsive ones; we need the trash to experience the charm. Extending this vein of thought, we might conclude that Chow's relationship with her audiences - the way in which public commuters or earnest gallery goers interact with her work - is a liaison characterised by this appeal/repulse, an enchanting mix of fascination and unease.

Such unpleasant twists always emerge in Chow's practice and propagate an uncomfortable pathos that seeps into its reception. We are lulled by a play of appealing and stylish references only to be brought up sharp by an abrasive surface - one of Chow's sandpaper bound books erasing the pages of others as it is pulled from the shelf. A similar sense of shrewd pathos exists in what is perhaps the artist's most poignant work, *Afterlife* (2006). This performance piece involved Chow launching a series of delicate paper parachutes over Christchurch's well-known suicide sites. Watching the video and photographic documentation of these flimsy, airborne forms fluttering across the location of multiple deaths - a Cantabrian cliff top covered in yellow gorse blooms - reminds us that some public spaces are painfully conspicuous in their absence from public discourse.

Of all the works that engage with the public or communal realm, Chow's *Afterlife* best articulates the suggestion that no space is neutral. Through a whimsical language of entwined contradictions - moments of strangeness and familiarity, absence and presence - Kah Bee Chow quietly examines the histories, idiosyncrasies and mythological qualities of the shared space we inhabit: it's a jungle out there.