



**Exploring the fantastic
in relation to space**

delve

12 September to 11 October 2024

Galería Josep Renau

Facultat de Belles Arts San Carlos
Universitat Politècnica de València

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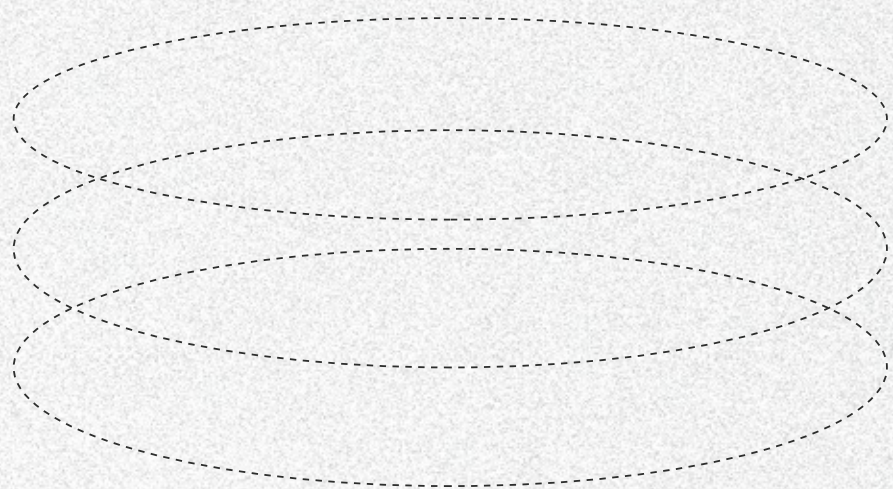
This exhibition has been enabled through a collaboration between the School of Art & Media, University of Brighton (UK), and the Facultat de Belles Arts de Sant Carles, Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain).

artists

Helena Goldwater, Lucía Imaz King, Mochu,
Javier Olivera, Mia Taylor, Pak-Keung Wan.

curators

Lucía Imaz King, Laura Silvestre García,
Miguel Àngel Cortell & Miriam Del Saz.



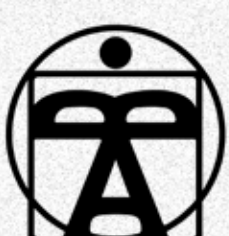
➤ **Exhibition concept**

Lucía Imaz King

➤ **Graphic design, catalogue**

Mariel Szlifman

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University of Brighton



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Concept of the exhibition

Space - the way we articulate it, is a method of organising the world, constructing it as the 'real'. Space is not a container in which we dwell; it is made for and by humans. It also becomes political when space is a question of allocation. For example, the use of the word 'globalisation' pictures a world 'as if' it were an integrated whole. Yet from a relationship between continents that, in the last century that was structured by history, the 21st century transports us into a 'depthless horizontality of immediate connections' (Doreen Massey, 2005 p.81): the prevalence of AI, 24-hour finance systems, instantaneity, the proliferation of social media networks, the collapse of spatial barriers leads to the annihilation of space by time. From a neoliberal imagining of a 'global' space comes the immediacy of a single present, a present that spans continents, and carries assumptions of an easy and seamless multi-culturalism. 'Globalisation' is imagined in terms of a 'free unbounded space' that enables the right to mobility of people or goods, controlled by wealthier nations. Yet at the same time, in debates on immigration, we are stuck in an archaic system of securitised boundaries and national protectionism. (Massey ibid)



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To be able to question our relationship with 'local' and 'global', to prioritise a politics of trans-local artistic friendships, the 'Delve' artists' group of 6 international artists are testing out a hypothesis with this show. We seek to excavate what is impossible to experience about the present, by activating the fantastic. This does not entail providing a framework in which 'the fantastic' will appear. Instead, we are positioning space itself as the fantastic (Patricia García, 2005, p.2) modeling this space to reconstruct the gallery site. The 'spaces' that our projects create do not point to localities and regional differences from the diverse environments we call 'home'. A more relevant influence is the virtual space of net culture, air travel and the constant migratory flow of digital environments.

If we think of a novel, the form of a novel allows its readers to inhabit characters who pass through holes in walls and become invisible. Literary spaces are elastic constructions in which distance fluctuates, buildings and people intermittently appear and disappear. Similarly, in the films of Mia Taylor, Mochu, and Javier Olivera, impossible occurrences become credible events; ones that unfold in a cinematic space-time. When standing before Pak-Keung Wan or Lucia King's drawings, their intense assemblage of lines may not





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yet demarcate a finite path, but they record what has been, or what is becoming a live-able space of the future. Our artworks are sites of perpetual transition. They do not 'represent' worlds, they invite audiences into a way of seeing, a process. They bring to light the uncertain depths of desired landscapes and cosmologies. Often focused on a microcosmic view that carries universal systems within it, a close attention to detail connects the works.

Helena Goldwater's works demonstrate that a portal has already been crossed; that the site we are drawn into is alien, though this 'other world' in her paintings is palpably 'real'. Collectively, the works invite a viewing and sensing through the body, in its relationship with drawing, painting and moving image. The film works use storytelling forms that also become a visceral form of de- and re-composition; an impulse to 'excavate in to root out', the fragility of thoughts becoming concepts, a brief balance and sudden decay of all imagined possibilities.

In the videos of Mia Taylor and Mochu, unsettling slippages and semiotic lacunae occur when words migrate out of context or where visual distortions represent technological facsimile and layers of cultural appropriation.



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In others' works, such as the drawings, paintings and photography works by Pak-Keung Wan, Helena Goldwater and Lucía I. King, the world of the work is generated through a slow rendering, engaging with light fall, with architectural space, or corporeal materials such as hair. Javier Olivera's *One Moment Here* - an allegorical video performance is an apparition of life, death and a transformation that equally could be read as a common process shared by all the makers who have contributed to this exhibition.

Lucía Imaz King, 1/9/2024

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Javier Olivera, video still from *One Moment Here*, 2008, (HD video)

Javier Olivera's *One Moment Here*, (HD video, 11 mins) addresses the fleeting nature of human presence, shown in a simple rite. The video loop creates an event in which 'reality' is altered by the cyclical action of a man who walks naked through a field of pampas grass, coming to rest in a specific gesture. From the superimposed alteration of his body, the apparition takes on a story, a unique place in which the body is a cipher. This moment suggests a 'life-death-life' cycle, drawing the viewer's attention to our own impermanence, echoing the genre of a memento mori (from 16th and 17th century European painting).

One Moment Later (2024) reworks the image and narrative of *One Moment Here* to reimagine and capture it in a wall-based work: a series of drawings made in different media that propose tests and study sketches of ideas made prior to the video work; a playful take on temporality that reveals the varying senses of the creative process.

Javier Olivera

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Helena Goldwater, *Top Knot*, 2019, watercolour, 41 x 31cm

Goldwater's artworks in the exhibition include one large photographic piece, *Uriel*, produced in her early career, and a series of recent watercolours (2019-2024) shown framed, and in the display cabinets. These works have an immediate connection and relationship to the body, whether in terms of its inferred absence (in *Uriel*) or with reference to bodily matter in the paintings. To be able to read and appreciate the details, viewers are required to come close to the works; an intimacy similar to the artist's proximity during the making process, thus encouraging an exchange between viewer and maker. This relationship to the body links to Helena's long-standing engagement with performance art. Her performance works have also incorporated the use of bodily materials, such as hair, used to draw and define the exterior space and bringing visceral experiences into the form of spatial drawings. Across all of her practice she questions the 'truth' behind assumed natural orders, seen humorously or with a sense of loss and yearning.

Helena Goldwater

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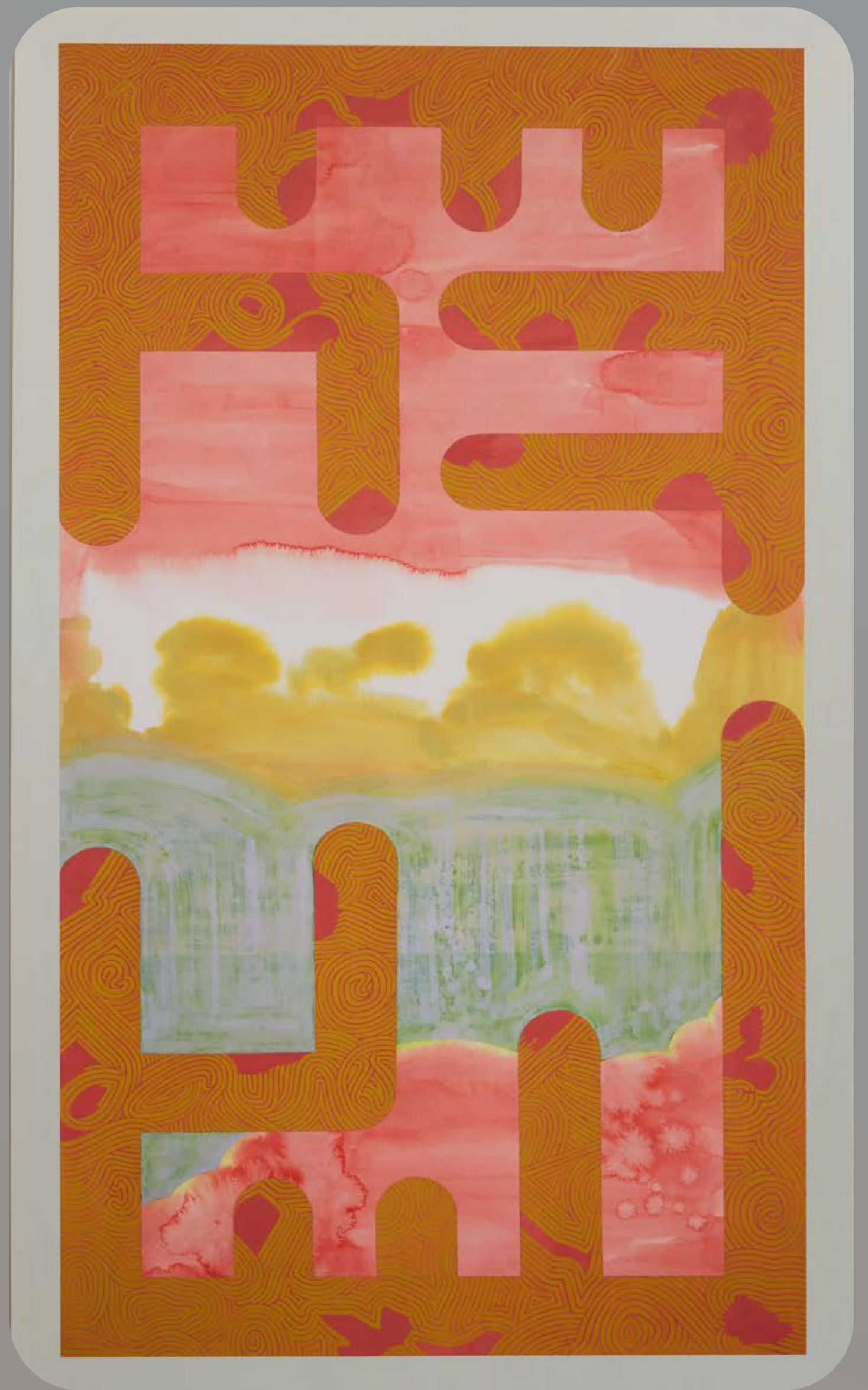
Pak-Keung Wan, *Apparition 16*, 2021 drawing on paper

Undertaken over the past five years, the works by Pak-Keung Wan in the exhibition, *Delve*, present a world that the artist has inhabited, developing a cross-generation of ideas and meaning between each piece. Drawing is an insistent form in Wan's practice, alongside his relationship with photographic processes that act as a bridge between the corporeal and spectral realms. 'Spectral realms' here refers to 'a figure that haunts the work born, not by a body, but coming from a speculative experience'. The human form made expansive towards the cosmic, creates opaque surfaces and actions that let the light in. Such ideas have grown out from this constellation of works on exhibition here. He says, "I'm fumbling with this analogy of the Black Hole (the photographic hood- also featured in the show) and likening the shutter of the lens as a threshold, like the Event Horizon, being the point where image and body are the same, since an image infers a body".

Pak-Keung Wan

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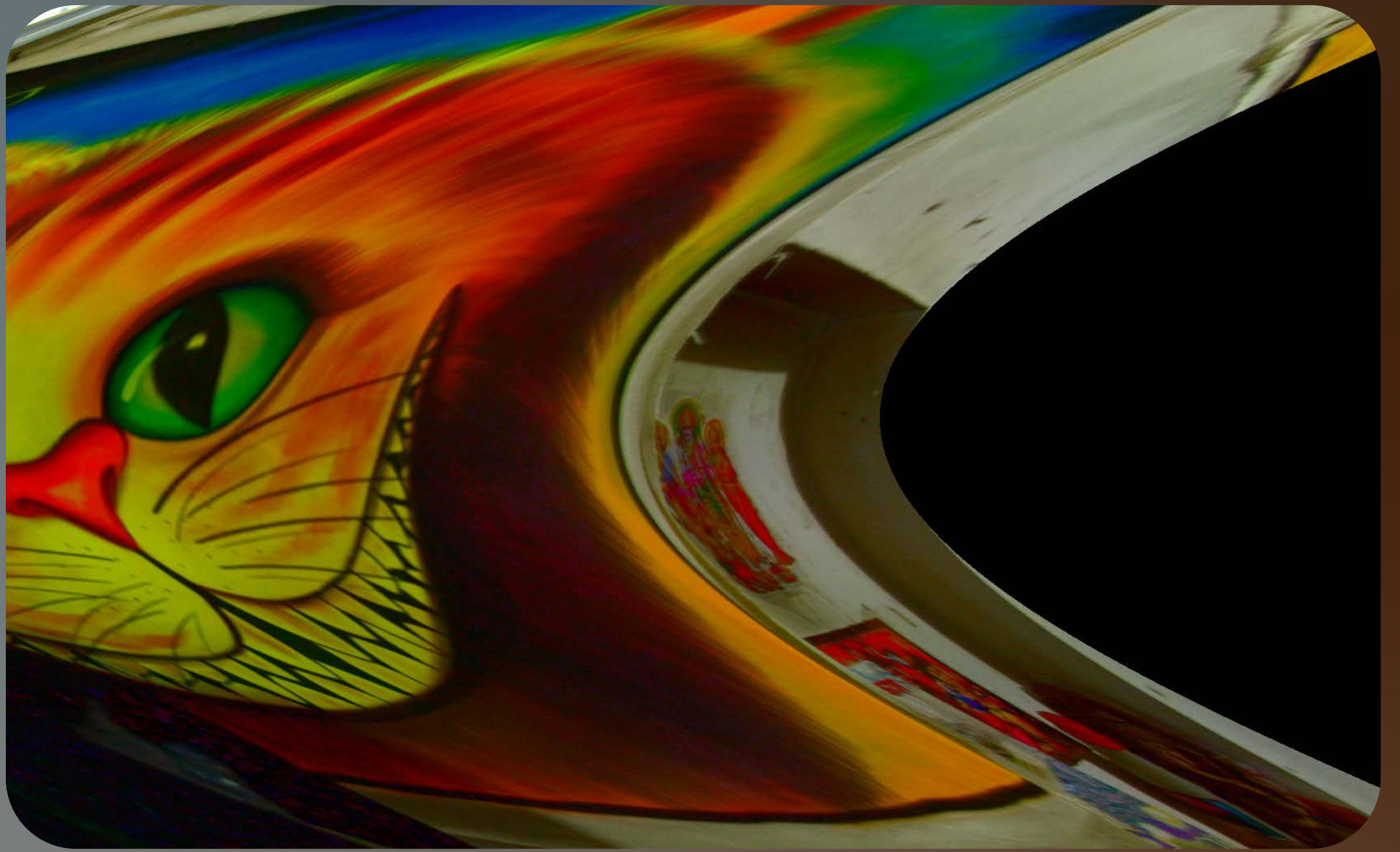
Lucía I. King, Succour, 2023, watercolour, 110 x 189cm

King's large works in watercolour (2021-2023) bring the action and physicality in which they were made (by hand) to the exhibition location: the paper soaked and stained with water and layered with colour, which is applied as a way of defining space. The size of the paintings resembles a set of doorways, each one implying that one can pass through this portal, whilst also being invited to hover at the threshold, deliberately remaining 'between worlds.' King includes familiar visual signs in the paintings, such as giant punctuation marks (written signs that cross over language groups) or forms that emblematically seem to stand for human bodies. But in the artist's signage system, it becomes apparent that these signs are meshed with personal memory and fantastic transgressions of space and speculation that occur in the mind's eye. The suggested 'landscapes' in her work are also sites of uprooting and displacement that unsettle our own positioning in relation to the presence of the works themselves.

Lucía Imaz King

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Mochu, Still from *Cool Memories of Remote Gods*. 2017. Video, 14 mins 48 secs,
Commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation

Cool memories of Remote Gods (HD video 14 mins) re-works the visual iconography of India's hippie trail- the residue of the 1960s counterculture groups who appropriated spiritual ideas as simulacra in an age of the emergence of computers and cybernetics. Mochu's interest in this trail is that, whilst still bearing signs of the techno-fictional overlaid with ancient spiritual regimens, these new technologies promised to replace the mind. The countercultures strived to recreate religious, mystical experiences as 'internal technologies' that can be custom made. This imagined 'Empire of Equilibrium' is reduced to psychedelic posters, cheap reworks of surrealist paintings, and new-age mixes of religio-techno-fusion music. The hippie trail and its associated symbolism in *Cool Memories*...mutates as a decaying corpse, but also a vampiric animation that Mochu resurrects in special-effects form (an act related to Javier Olivera's 'life-death-life' cycle in *One Moment Here*).

Mochu

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Mia Taylor, Still from *Plot Structures*, 2010, (HD video. 10 mins)

Plot Structures (HD video, 10 mins) uses a form of storytelling in which the narrator's eye, in seeming nonchalance, draws us into an aquatic, unstable surface aboard a boat. This vantage point then plummets wilfully under the water's surface with the promise of a scientific guided tour that slips into a fantastic register as the text captions describe improbable encounters with sea life. Re-emerging into the ship's cabin, we are then faced with a banal encounter between two would-be lovers, in which language hollows itself out into a dry archetype. Mining beneath appearances and abruptly changing surfaces - watery, emotive, credible and incredulous- these ruminations burst the bubble of our fixity of viewing with a surreptitious humour. Also on show will be a series of watercolours derived from the narrative text in *Plot Structures*. The excerpts translate elements of the story from English into Spanish and are borne of the desire for the work to 'speak' to its exhibition context. Inevitably, the act of translation renders words and phrases altered, nuance drifts and other meanings stick. The watercolours playfully explore the work as traveller and the fallibility of 'language' as it navigates species, space and time.

Mia Taylor

Artists' Biographies



Helena Goldwater. Helena makes performance art and paintings. Her performances often last many hours, and her paintings can take months to complete. Her attention is firmly on the details of materials re-contextualised in a space, and the intensity of an image that seems somehow related to nature, in order to explore the hidden, and unseen; to question and transform representations that attempt to authenticate the natural order. In doing so,

the works offer unidentifiable, in between states of being. Her work has been shown at many contemporary art spaces, nationally and internationally, including, *Action: A provisional history of the 90s*, MACBA: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; *gut flora*, MOCA, London; *1st Venice International Performance Art Week*, Italy; *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution*, de Appel, Amsterdam; and at the Tate [Britain + Liverpool]. She also researched and founded an online resource of 1980s UK-based Performance Art, *Edge of an Era* that investigates and archives UK performance art histories of the 1970s and '80s. This was co-curated with Rob La Frenais, Alex Eisenberg and Live Art Development Agency, also commissioning new works and a programme of events. Helena is Course Leader, BA Fine Art at Central St Martins, University of the Arts, London.

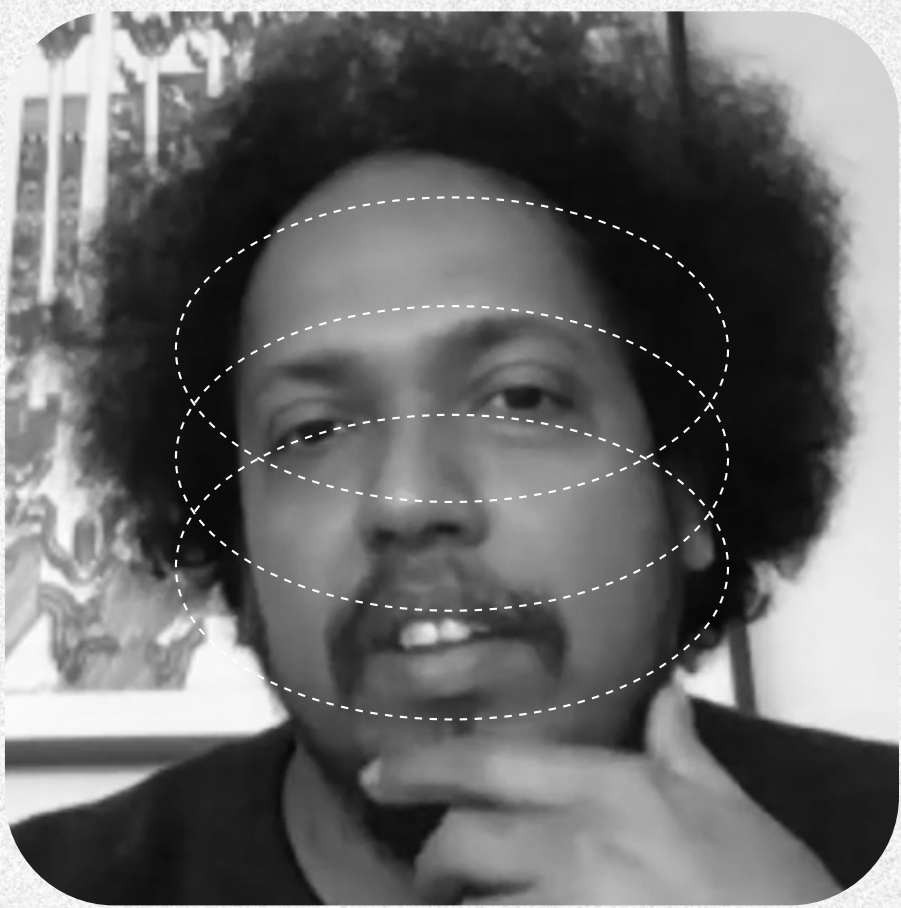


Lucía Imaz King. Lucía produces works in drawing, painting, filmmaking and video installation. These works manifest a variety of imagined, improbable and non-figurative landscapes; speculative spaces that question, and refract from a sense of belonging. Spatial investigations about the properties of filmmaking in relation to painting also inform her work. Lucía is an author of critical texts for international

journals on artists' moving image. Having lived in India in the 2000s, she obtained a PhD from SOAS (University of London), specialising in the creative methodologies of South Asian artist-filmmakers. In 2014, she

Artists' Biographies

founded VisionMix, a professional network of artists, filmmakers and curators that operates internationally; many of its associates are based in India and the UK. With VisionMix partner, Rashmi Sawhney, she regularly curates exhibitions, including a show of works by 10 leading contemporary video artists at the Hong-gah museum in Taipei: Loss & Transience (2021). Based in London, and frequently forming international partnerships, all aspects of her practice are driven by questions around cultural re-location and re-positioning; the shift of readings and interpretation as people and artworks migrate. King has exhibited projects recently at Bermondsey Project Space, London (2022) Hong-gah Museum, Taipei (2021) Espacio Santa Clara, Sevilla (2020); Aspa Contemporary, Madrid (2019); Appleton Gallery, Lisbon (2019); Santoraspace205, Santa Ana, California (2018) and 'Future Orbits', Kochi-Muziris Biennial, (collateral Event) India (2017).



Mochu. Mochu works with video and text arranged as installations, lectures and publications. Technoscientific fictions feature prominently in his practice, often modulated with anxiety, futurity and weird selfhoods, and interspersed with cameos from art history and philosophy. Recent projects have explored cyberpunk nostalgia, corporate horror, mad geologies and psychedelic subcultures. Mochu is the author of the books

Bezoar Delinqxenz (Edith-Russ-Haus + Sternberg Press, 2023), and Nervous Fossils: Syndromes of the Synthetic Nether (Reliable Copy + KNMA, 2022). He is a recipient of fellowships from Edith-Russ-Haus für Medienkunst, Ashkal Alwan, India Foundation for the Arts and The Sarai Programme, with exhibitions at HKW, Whitechapel Gallery, 9th Asia-Pacific Triennial, Sharjah Biennial 13, 4th Kochi-Muziris Biennale and transmediale:BWPWAP.

Artists' Biographies



Javier Olivera. Visual artist, filmmaker and teacher, since 1990 Javier has developed a body of work that covers painting, photography, single-channel video, video installation and artists' books. Initially trained in painting with Argentine artists Luis Felipe Noé and Eduardo Stupía, he later studied film and video at UCLA, US, and Iberoamerican literature at Fundación José Ortega y Gasset of Spain. His work deals with the relationship

between memory and culture as constructors of identity. In cinema he co-wrote and directed *The Visitant/El Vistante*, 1999; *Mika my Spanish War/Mika, mi guerra de España* (2013); *La Sombra/The Shadow* (2015) and *La extraña. Notas sobre el (auto) exilio/The Stranger. Notes on the (self) exile* (2018). His films, mostly audiovisual essays, have been screened at international festivals and shows (MOMA, NY; Viennale, Austria; BAFICI, Bs As; Márgenes, Spain, among others. His audiovisual work has been exhibited in individual and collective exhibitions in Argentina, MALBA, Museum of Modern Art, Recoleta Cultural Center, among others, and internationally: Museu da Imagem e o Som, Brazil; Museum Ludwig, Germany; Gallerie Zola, France; Tabakalera, Spain, among others. He has extensive experience in the field of teaching in Film and Art faculties between Latin America and Spain.

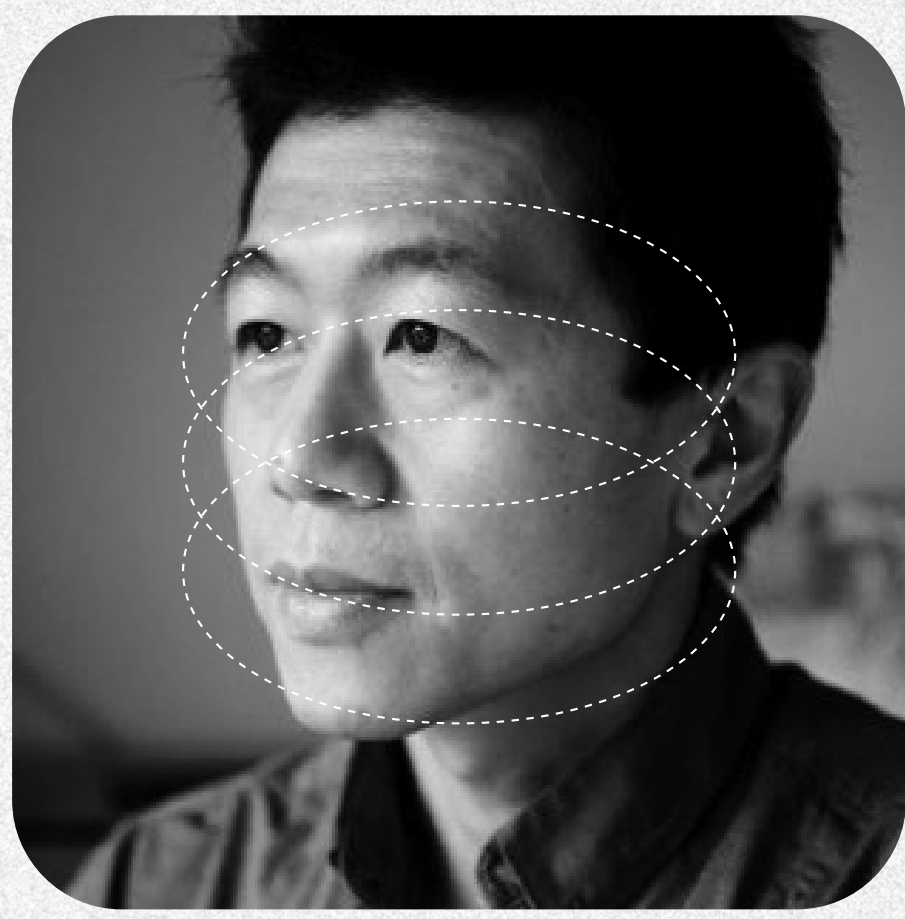


Mia Taylor. Mia has an interdisciplinary practice that includes writing, video, painting, object making and performance. Her work considers how different disciplines describe and represent the natural environment. She draws from a broad range of sources such as astronautics, oceanography, geology, alchemy and work with the symbolic systems they produce. She is interested in how forms of storytelling can speculate, obfuscate and

communicate narratives that are subjectively as well as objectively charged. Recent projects have involved working with oceanographers, considering how research on the physical environment and climate change is communicated, and how scientific narrative can be positioned in relation to personal experience.

Artists' Biographies

She has shown nationally and internationally, including at; Jerwood Visual Arts; Whitechapel Gallery; A.P.T. Gallery; Purdy Hicks; NADA Miami; Toomer Labzda, New York; and Delaware Contemporary, USA. Residencies include Signal Fire Arts, Oregon, 2017; Stoneleaf, New York, 2017; and with the OSNAP research expedition on the RRS Discovery to the subpolar North Atlantic, 2016. Mia is the Course leader for MA Art & Science at Central St Martins, University of the Arts, London.



Pak-Keung Wan. The works of Pak-Keung Wan often begin from the prosaic. There is this potential for connection and departure afforded to objects familiar and close to hand, experiences being lived through, the vestigial. Throughout the process of making, he feels alive to the attraction of things to other things, this gravitational pull around which significance and meanings accrue. How his works evolve relies on this making of

relations, where the interplay of processes, actions and forms come to enact their surroundings. Drawing remains insistent through his practice. Aligned more towards a type of behaviour than scriptive activity, he senses the form inhabiting his body, acting as a bridge between the human and non-human realm. Wan has exhibited and undertaken residencies nationally and abroad, showing recently at the Global Print Biennale, Douro, Portugal and as artist-in-residence at The Art House, Wakefield (SomeTimes residency programme). Previous exhibitions include a two-person show at Fabrica, Brighton, The White Box in New York, artist in residence at the Bemis Centre for Contemporary Art, Omaha, Nebraska and recipient of a Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship in the Arts & Crafts.

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