

Travels in Trans-Sensoriality

Traditionally, concepts such as space, time, balance, proportion, rhythm, design, and composition have meant very different things in different disciplines – architecture, dance, or music. They have also meant different things in the culturally divergent calibrations of the senses.

Drawing on diverse artistic practices as well as on anthropology, engineering, ornithology, philosophy, media studies, performance studies and sociology, this 2-day symposium engages with questions such as: How does urban computing impact the perception of physical spaces, affect, and performance? What role do sensorial markers (scaling, framing, frequency, pitch) play in knowledge production? How do trans-racialism, mestizaje, and posthumanism code sensorial perception? What is the role of trans-culturality in the making of pluri-sensorial meshworks in which all matter is experienced as the human body's double, capable of calling forth the memory of the world?

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Introduction

Venka Purushothaman
Vice-President
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LASALLE College of
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A twenty-first century world with its fast dissolving boundaries and global mobility is riddled with contention, localisation and a design and implementation of new spatial boundaries. An enquiry into understanding border-crossing (philosophical, cultural and socio-political) is vital for a world to make-sense.

LASALLE is pleased to host the students participating in the international MA Graduate Semester Transcultural and Transdisciplinary Programme. Initiated by Zurich University of the Arts (Switzerland) in collaboration with institutions in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan and Singapore, the semester titled *Ecologies – Matters of Co-existence* provides young graduate students to make-sense of contemporary issues and topical concerns through critical engagement with artistic practice, research and cultural specificities. Students will critically evaluate concerns in-situ in different parts of the world.

Ecologies coincides with LASALLE's first interdisciplinary practice symposium – *Travels in Trans-Sensoriality*. The aim of the symposium is to foster a deeper appreciation of interdisciplinary approaches so as to inform contemporary artistic practices. Interdisciplinarity – as method – is a curricular activity at LASALLE. As such, both the symposium and *Ecologies* provide a relevant arena to broaden the conversation around transculturality and interdisciplinarity and emerging concepts and theories contextualising these. The challenge I place before participants is to conceptualise an understanding of cultural and artistic practices outside of the world that their prefixes seem to determine: that is, can there be an imagining devoid of 'trans-' or 'inter-'? A transcendental moment, I believe, awaits.

About the Transcultural Collaboration International Graduate Semester Programme

Web
transculturalcollaboration.com
Instagram
transcultural.collaboration

We are convinced that encountering and debating transcultural issues is essential for young contemporary art and design practitioners to be optimally prepared for their future (professional) life. Today's world requires artists and designers to critically reflect on manifold issues and questions within a global framework. Thus, they are challenged to position and distinguish themselves within different political, social, economic, and cultural contexts.

The program has two central characteristics that can be experienced and explored in this unique setting. Its general foci are transcultural topics, such as traditions, identity, genealogy of the present, values, ethics, different forms of life, globalisation processes in general and between Europe and East Asia in particular. Their social and cultural sensitivity makes art and design practices ideally suited to contributing to transcultural discourse and to expressing a variety of topics through aesthetic means.

The program's second important focus is practical collaboration between different cultures and forms of art and design. This principal working method promotes intense exchange about and first-hand experience of transcultural issues. It also helps participants to further differentiate and extend their own discipline. Students receive close supervision and expert support from selected faculty from all partner institutions and from independent artists and experts from various art and design disciplines.

This year's specific semester topic is called *Ecologies – Matters of Coexistence* and examines forms and aspects of ecologies in different directions: concepts and cultural notions of nature, social or cultural environments as ecological systems, the influence of human in the age of Anthropocene and speculations of biological beings blending with artificial intelligence.

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Hong Kong Baptist University, Academy of Visual Arts
China Academy of Art, School of Intermedia Art, Hangzhou
City University of Hong Kong, School of Creative Media
Taipei National University of the Arts
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Symposium Guide

TUESDAY, 31 OCT 2017

- 09:45 **Arrival and Refreshments**
- 10:15 **LASALLE College of the Arts' President's Welcome**
Steve Dixon
- 10:30 **The Art of Transgressing Boundaries** Wolfgang Muench
- 10:45 **Introduction to the Symposium** Natasha Lushetich
- 10:55 **Participant Announcements** Elizabeth de Roza
- 11:00 **Asian Sensescapes and Imaginaries** Chair: Natasha Lushetich
- Senses and the Social in Asia: Some Theoretical Propositions** Kelvin Low, National University of Singapore
- Imagining in Oppressive Contexts, Or, What's Wrong with Blacking Up?** Robin Zheng, Yale-NUS College
- Violence as Spectacle: Exploring the Trans-Sensoriality of Pain, Sorrow and Anger** Maribeth Erb, National University of Singapore
- 12:45 **Lunch**
- 14:00 **Magic, Memory & Alchemy: Hauntings from the Past to Present** Adeline Kueh, LASALLE College of the Arts; Chair: Wolfgang Muench
- 14:45 **Into the Urban Currents** Andreas Schlegel & Dhiya Md, LASALLE College of the Arts; Chair: Wolfgang Muench
- 15:30 **ZHDK Discussion Panel: The Knowledge of the Body, Space, and Sound** Panel Members: Serge von Arx, Østfold University College; Dimitri de Perrot; Liu Xiaoyi; Sasitharaan Thirunalan; Hartmut Wickert, Zurich University of the Arts; Chair: Daniel Späti
- 16:30 **Coffee Break**
- 17:00 **Keynote – Lessons from Bali's Water Temples**
J. Stephen Lansing, Nanyang Technological University; Chair: Natasha Lushetich
- 18:30 **Reception**
- 18:45 **Performance – Origami as Movement**

WEDNESDAY, 1 NOV 2017

- 09:30 **Arrival and Refreshments**
- 10:00 **Keynote – The Critical Dictionary of Southeast Asia**
Ho Tzu Nyen; Chair: Natasha Lushetich
- 11:00 **Sensory Evolutions and Medial Transformations**
Chair: Natasha Lushetich
- Aesthetics and Evolution of Structural-Color Producing or Biophotonic Nanostructures in Birds**
Vinod Saranathan, Yale-NUS College
- From Chiaroscuro to the Collapse of the Wave Function: Light as the Quintessential Trans-Sensorial Phenomenon** Gilles Massot, LASALLE College of the Arts
- Revisoning Chinese Antiquity** Jon He, Yale-NUS College
- 13:00 **Lunch**
- 14:15 **Hypnosis, Moon Travels and De-colonisation of The Extraterrestrial** Felipe Cervera, LASALLE College of the Arts & National University of Singapore; Chair: Elizabeth de Roza
- 15:00 **Somatic Archaeologies** Chair: Elizabeth de Roza
- Reading an Invisible Scene through the Experience of its Temperature** Leung Chi Wo, City University of Hong Kong
- The Embodied Image, the Image Embodied**
Susan Sentler, LASALLE College of the Arts
- Phallophone: A Physical Manifestation of the Trans-Visual/ Aural Experience in Performance**
Dirk Stromberg, LASALLE College of the Arts
- Digital Performance in 21st Century Taiwan: Huang Yi & KUKA, a New Form of Sino-Corporeality**
Lin Yatin, Taipei National University of the Arts
- 16:00 **Coffee Break**
- 16:30 **Keynote – Swiss Psychotropic Gold – A Critical Fabulation**
knowbotiq, Zurich University of the Arts; Chair: Wolfgang Muench
- 18:00 **Performance – Duoture**
- 18:30 **Dinner and Refreshments**

Keynote Speakers

- 11 **J. Stephen Lansing**
- 12 **Ho Tzu Nyen**
- 13 **knowbotiq**

Keynote **Lessons from Bali's Water Temples**

J. Stephen Lansing
Nanyang Technological
University, Singapore

ABSTRACT

Along a typical river in Bali, small groups of farmers meet regularly in water temples to manage their irrigation systems. They have done so for a thousand years. Over the centuries, water temple networks have expanded to manage the ecology of rice terraces at the scale of whole watersheds. Although each group focuses on its own problems, somehow everything works out in a way that optimises rice harvests for the farmers in dozens of villages. How is this possible? Google Earth reveals transitory patterns in the rice paddies that closely resemble phase transitions in physics, like the onset of magnetism. This unlocks a story of hidden order that charms the physics community, perplexes economists and offers everyone a startlingly new way to think about how people interact with nature.

J. STEPHEN LANSING is the Director of the Complexity Institute, Professor in the Asian School of the Environment, Nanyang Technological University, and external Professor, Santa Fe Institute and Vienna Complexity Hub. He is an emeritus professor of anthropology at the University of Arizona, a senior research fellow at the Stockholm Resilience Centre, and president of the Anthropology and Environment Society of the American Anthropological Association. His recent research has to do with adaptive self-organised criticality and the long-term dynamics of coupled social-ecological systems. Before moving to Arizona in 1998, Lansing held joint appointments at the University of Michigan in the School of Natural Resources & Environment and the Department of Anthropology, and earlier chaired the anthropology department of the University of Southern California. He has been a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, the Institute of Advanced Study at Durham University and the Eijkman Institute for Molecular Biology in Jakarta.

Publications and films are available at www.slansing.org

Keynote The Critical Dictionary of Southeast Asia

Ho Tzu Nyen

ABSTRACT

The Critical Dictionary of Southeast Asia (CDOSEA) begins with a question: What constitutes the unity of Southeast Asia – a region never unified by language, religion or political power?

CDOSEA proceeds by proposing 26 terms – one for each letter of the English alphabet. Each term is a concept, a motif, or a biography, and together they are threads weaving together a torn and tattered tapestry of Southeast Asia.

The Dictionary has, since its inception in 2012, generated a number of filmic, theatrical and installation works by Ho Tzu Nyen. From T (for Tiger) and W (for Weretiger), emerged *Ten Thousand Tigers* (2014), *2 or 3 Tigers* (2015), *Timelines* (2017) and *One or Several Tigers* (2017). *The Nameless and The Name* (both 2015) came out of L (for Lai Teck) and G (for Gene Z. Hanrahan) respectively.

Since 2016, Ho Tzu Nyen has been working with a group of collaborators to ‘manifest’ the Dictionary as an whole. With Berlin-based programmers Jan Gerber and Sebastian Lütgert (ox262o), a platform for absorbing and annotating online materials was created to “feed” an Editing System that endlessly composes new combinations of audio-visual materials according to the 26 terms of the Dictionary.

HO TZU NYEN makes videos, installations and theatrical performances, often working with historical and philosophical texts and artefacts. His work has been presented at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin, 2017); Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2015); DAAD Gallery (Berlin, 2015); Guggenheim Museum (New York, 2013); Mori Art Museum (Tokyo, 2012); the 54th Venice Biennale (2011); ArtSpace, (Sydney, 2011); Tate Modern (London, 2010); the 6th Asia-Pacific Triennial (Brisbane, 2009); the 1st Singapore Biennale (2006) and the 26th Sao Paulo Biennale (2004). His feature and medium length films have premiered at Cannes Film Festival (2009) and the 66th Venice International Film Festival (2009). His theatrical works have been presented at the Asian Arts Theatre, Gwangju (2015); Wiener Festwochen (2014); Theater der Welt (2010); the Kunsten-Festival des Arts (2006, 2008). He was born, and lives in Singapore.

Keynote Swiss Psychotropic Gold – A Critical Fabulation

knowbotiq
Zurich University Of The Arts

ABSTRACT

For more than three centuries, Swiss commodity trade has been caught up in colonial, and later in postcolonial and neoliberal entanglements. Having fuelled early modern industrialisation as well as contemporary finance, Swiss trading activities have influenced vivid cultural, affective and moral economies. They have contributed to Swiss wealth, but also to national narratives of independence, safety and white and aesthetic supremacy. The Swiss mythology of neutrality transforms the often violent and “dirty” material complexities of mining and trading into an opaque and orderly form of technocracy, discretion and smartness. *Swiss Psychotropic Gold* re-narrates global gold trade— from mining in former colonies to its refining and re-diverting in and out of Switzerland—as a series of transformative im/mediations of primary materials, values and affects. Gold as a material-discursive metabolism involves bodies, technology, aesthetics, psychotropic substances, hormones and financial derivatives –which all fuel the affective assemblage that surround and permeate gold. From drugged miners and psychotropic traders to the matrilinear handing-over of crafted gold, to the hidden and secured Gold refineries in the Swiss landscape: Gold becomes an affective state, an investment, a meditative stabiliser and tranquiliser, a security, an harmonizing energiser, an acupuncture needle.

Swiss Psychotropic Gold activates the cultural archives both affectively and ethically. It challenges the uncanny linkages of Calvinistic eagerness, philanthropic love and the white innocence of the “small” country Switzerland. It alludes to the hopeful acknowledgement of violence and suffering and a politics of reparation in the present. The emanating sociality of Gold we look for is a sociality of mutual indebtedness, dispersion in space and time, and of a different aesthetics.

KNOWBOTIQ has realised different interventions, performances and installations in the context of the post-colonial, psychotropic and epistemic violence of the gold and will present them in an artistic lecture. knowbotiq (Yvonne Wilhelm, Christian Huebler) has been experimenting with forms and medialities of knowledge, political representations and epistemic disobedience. knowbotiq has participated in the 48th Venice Biennale, Seoul Biennale, Hongkong Shenzhen Biennale Biennale Rotterdam, Moscow Biennale and has received major awards including: the Swiss Art Award, the Claasen Prize for Media Art and Photography, Cologne; the international ZKM Media-art award; August Seeling-Award of Wilhelm Lehbruck Museum and the Prix Arts Electronica. knowbotiq has a professorship at the University of the Arts Zurich.

<http://knowbotiq.net>

Speakers

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- 17 **Maribeth Erb**
- 18 **Adeline Kueh**
- 19 **Andreas Schlegel**
Dhiya Md
- 20 **Serge von Arx**
Dimitri de Perrot
Liu Xiaoyi
Sasitharan Thirunalan
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- 26 **Leung Chi Wo**
- 27 **Susan Sentler**
- 28 **Dirk Stromberg**
- 29 **Lin Yatin**

Senses and the Social in Asia: Some Theoretical Propositions

Kelvin Low

National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT

Sociocultural meanings of the senses in society have in recent years received academic attention in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and history. However, extant works have mainly focused on Euro-American contexts, or on non-industrial societies, with some exceptions. Generally, there is a lack of both primary and secondary sensory research on non-Western contexts (Smith 2006, 2007). This paper aims to document and analyse how the senses in everyday life manifest in historical contexts within Asian communities and cultures. It deliberates upon how social actors and institutions employ and accord meanings to the senses which can be located in the fabric of everyday life experiences, spanning different social arrangements and interactions in such domains as religious life, foodways, linguistics, and colonial encounters. I propose three theoretical directions – sensory models and modalities, moral economies and social structures, and sensory interfaces – in engaging with Asian sensescapes across a plurality of sociocultural settings that also cross-cut different dimensions of social life. Broadly, the paper aims to locate the ideographic meaningfulness of sensory experiences by bridging selves, community, social institutions, and varied cultural forms.

DR. KELVIN E.Y. LOW is Associate Professor and Deputy Head of the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He also serves as the President of the thematic group, TGo7 Senses and Society with the International Sociological Association. His research interests include sensory studies, migration and transnationalism, social memory, and food and foodways. He is author or editor of four books, with the most recent being *Senses in Cities: Experiences of Urban Settings* (Routledge; forthcoming). He is presently working on a monograph about Nepalese Gurkha families and their migratory lifeworlds in the context of Singapore, Nepal, Hong Kong, and the UK.

Imagining in Oppressive Contexts, Or, What's Wrong with Blacking Up?

Robin Zheng
Yale-NUS College, Singapore

ABSTRACT

Imagining is a perfectly everyday activity, and absolutely central to aesthetics. Many everyday imaginings, however, contain unethical content. When we tell off-colour jokes, watch films, contemplate taking revenge on fellow motorists, entertain sexual fantasies, attend fancy dress parties, listen to country murder ballads, appreciate news cartoons, or invite others to do the same, we frequently engage in imaginative activities that trade in unethical attitudes or representations. Is there anything intrinsically wrong with such imaginings, if not acted upon? While many defend the affirmative, Brandon Cooke argues that only those imaginative acts prescribing participants to “export” unethical attitudes out of the imagined world and into the actual world exhibit intrinsic ethically flaws. This paper carves out a middle ground, using speech act theory to characterise some ethical flaws as arising in the act constituted by the imagining itself. What is being done with an imagining depends on the context in which it is performed: sometimes, imagining is oppressive when it prescribes unethical attitudes towards oppressed groups, even without export.

DR. ROBIN ZHENG is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Yale-NUS College. Prior to coming to Singapore, she was a Visiting Junior Research Fellow from 2015-16 at Newnham College, University of Cambridge. She received her PhD in Philosophy from the University of Michigan, where she wrote her dissertation on moral responsibility for implicit bias. Her research interests include ethics, moral psychology, feminist and social philosophy, philosophy of race, and philosophy of sex and love.

Violence as Spectacle: Exploring the Trans-Sensoriality of Pain, Sorrow and Anger

Maribeth Erb
National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT

Sacrifice is an integral element of ritual events worldwide. Spilling of sacrificial blood as a sign of the paradoxical relationship between death, fertility and regeneration, as well as being the substitute of a life for a life, are part of the important ideological underpinnings of these events. Though often celebrated with animal substitution, sometimes a direct form of “human sacrifice” is involved, including some kind of ritualised violence. In the western part of Flores in eastern Indonesia, among the Manggaraian ethnic group, ritualised violence is a traditionally important part of pre-harvest and pre-planting rituals. One such ritual, the playing of *caci*, has become an important symbol of Manggaraian identity and a popular activity to perform at all local and national celebrations, as well as tourist cultural displays. This ritual performance entails male competition to hit each other with whips. In this paper I explore the interaction between 3 “agents” involved in the promotion and display of *caci* in the contemporary era--the government, the players and the audience--, to examine how senses and emotions are understood across different cultural landscapes. Most particularly I explore the expression of pain, sorrow and anger, as it is displayed by the players, and the relationship of these senses and masculinity, as it is understood by different cultural audiences, and promoted by the government and others interested in presenting this game as a symbol of cultural identity.

DR. MARIBETH ERB is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore, and has been teaching there since 1989. She has been doing research out in eastern Indonesia, on the island of Flores, since the early 80's. Her research has grown from an initial look at kinship, ritual and myth, to examining the effects of tourism development, political change and mining activities, on the people and environment in this increasingly less remote part of Indonesia. She has published on all of these topics in a wide range of journals and books.

Magic, Memory & Alchemy: Hauntings from the Past to Present

Adeline Kueh
LASALLE College of
the Arts, Singapore

ABSTRACT

According to an adage in conjuring, the strongest magic happens in the hands of the audience. This presentation on my practice-as-research will be focused on the use of tangible and intangible materials alongside the idea of drawing as a conceptual device. While employing differing mediums such as installation, photography and durational performance, drawing and objects are used as ways to make sense of everyday life, extending across space and time. Slippages of what is simultaneously real and imagined are negotiated through issues of sexuality, embodiment and historical dimensions.

By looking at a body of work, these attempts in making visible the invisible relations of things around us will trace my personal journeys to the connections we have to the now and the unseen in an all-rationalised and often disembodied (digital) world we live in.

ADELINE KUEH makes installations, photography and sound works that reconsider the relationship we have with things and rituals around us. Her works are imbued with a sense of desire and longing, and act as modern-day totems that explore personal histories and overlooked moments. Adeline has exhibited in Singapore and internationally. Some of her notable works were presented in the Prudential Singapore Eye Exhibition (2015), Objectifs Centre for Photography and Film (2015), Mizuma Gallery (2015), Gajah Gallery (2017) & Japan Creative Centre (2017). Other projects include installations and interventionist projects within the collaborative MatriXial Technologies with Faith Wilding & subRosas (2001-2005) in Europe & USA. She was also the guest artist for Hermes Singapore in 2016. Rooted in critical studies, her research interests include notions of monstrosity within Southeast Asian contexts, architecture, fashion and the future of cinema. Adeline has chaired and presented at a number of cultural studies conferences in UK, Australia, Finland, Hungary, Singapore and Malaysia. Currently a Senior Lecturer with the MA Fine Arts programme at LASALLE College of the Arts, she is also a consultant for a number of research, lifestyle, film, design & architecture projects.

Into the Urban Currents

Andreas Schlegel
LASALLE College of
the Arts, Singapore

ABSTRACT

The Urban Explorations Project began as an investigation of ordinary happenings and encounters in the Singapore heartlands, narrated through the retrieval of sound, colors, smells, soil samples, found objects, behavioral observations and traffic patterns. It stems from an interest in sensing and documenting the various phenomena of the urban landscape. Driven by a low-tech and location-based approach to collecting small data rather than making use of digitally available big data sets, the project participants discuss, conceptualise and design their own methods and strategies to collect, document and express data. In this presentation, we will focus on two explorations conducted in Singapore and Paris respectively, elaborating the processes and experiences of sensing and collecting small data.

ANDREAS SCHLEGEL works and teaches across disciplines. He develops artefacts, tools and interfaces where art and technology meet in a curious way. Many of his works are collaborative and concerned with emerging and open source technologies. In his artistic practice he creates audio, visual and physical outcomes driven by computation, interaction and networked processes. He lives and works in Singapore where he heads the Media Lab at LASALLE College of the Arts. The Lab's work is collaborative and interdisciplinary; it blurs the boundaries between art and technology.

DHIYA MD, also known as M-D-R-N, is adjunct lecturer at LASALLE College of the Arts where he facilitates and runs workshops for UNIT: Design Labs. He is also one of the founding partners of STUDIO SWELL, a Singapore-based graphic design studio. Dhiya's interests lie at the intersections of art, design, science, and technology; he works in the areas of visual communications, DIY approaches, digital and analogue tools reflective through his graphics, prints, objects and structures. He is a frequent Media Lab collaborator and VJ with audio-reactive visuals.

ZHDK Discussion Panel: The Knowledge of the Body, Space, and Sound

Serge von Arx
Østfold University
College, Norway

Dimitri de Perrot

Liu Xiaoyi

Sasitharan Thirunalan

Hartmut Wickert
Zurich University Of The Arts

ABSTRACT

Thinking is not the first thing in the human being [...]. The human being, the animal, first senses himself obscurely, then senses himself vividly; he subsequently senses pleasure and pain within himself obscurely; after which he senses the pleasure and the pain outside himself; only then does he have cognition (Herder).

The panel will focus on knowledge incorporated in the dancing body and its methods, the designed space, and the staged sound; it will also focus on knowledge generated through movement, through design and sound. We will establish the framework for discussing experience as counterpart of scientific knowledge.

SERGE VON ARX, architect and professor of scenography, is the artistic director of the scenography department of the Norwegian Theatre Academy (of the Østfold University College). In 1997 Serge von Arx completed his degree in architecture at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. In 1998 he began his long-term collaboration with Robert Wilson on various stage, exhibition and installation design projects all over the world. He has been a regular mentor and architectural consultant at the “Watermill Center” on Long Island, New York since 2003. In 2001 he opened his design studio in Berlin and has since 2006 been based in Oslo. Serge von Arx lectures at various international universities and works internationally as a scenographer, designer and architect, focusing on “performative architecture”; the encounter of architecture and theatre. His research includes various international publications and curatorial engagements.

LIU XIAOYI was born in Guangdong, China. He came to Singapore in 1998. He is an acclaimed playwright and the director of The Theatre Practice’s Practice Lab. Last seen in the sold-out production of *Art* in this year’s Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts, he’s currently writing and directing *Fluid*, a play presented as part of TTP’s M1 Chinese Theatre Festival that essentially questions what theatre is.

DIMITRI DE PERROT, the famous Swiss performing artist, is part of the Zimmermann & de Perrot duo. His recent performances include *Myusic*, which explores the interaction between sound, music space and audience: ‘Imagine you go to a concert and there is nothing to see on stage – yet. You can’t hear anything, either, even though the performance has already begun. A performance that, for the time being, consists of a backdrop of sound, that plays with the empty space, with the pause before the onset, the tension before the explosion. And with you. You are the primary ingredient of the evening. You generate the sound, acting as the instrument and soundbox. You are at once performer and the audience. And suddenly your seat begins to vibrate, you sway and pulsate in close dialogue with everything that surrounds you.

SASITHARAN THIRUNALAN established Theatre Training & Research Programme in 2000 with the late Kuo Pao Kun. Prior to that, he was Artistic Director of The Substation 1996 – 2000. From 1988 – 1996 he was The Straits Times’ theatre and visual critic. For more than 30 years, Sasi has been actively involved as an actor/performer and producer in the local theatre scene. He has performed in more than 25 plays directed by Singaporeans Chandra Lingam, Max Le Blond, Ong Keng Sen and Kuo Pao Kun, as

well as delivered invited lectures at UNESCO’s Forum on Communication and Cultural Expression in the Dominican Republic, the International Association of Theatre Critics in Hong Kong, the Instituto De Estudos Europeus in Macau, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, Columbia University, the University of Buffalo, New York, the Shanghai Theatre Academy, and at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. He has served on the boards of several institutions including: National Arts Council, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore International Foundation, National Book Development Council, and the Asian Arts Network.

HARTMUT WICKERT is the vice-president of the Zurich University of the Arts where he has also been Head of Department of Performing Arts and Film since 2006. Prior to 2006 Hartmut Wickert was a freelance theatre director, staging production at Thalia Theatre Hamburg, Schauspiel Graz, Staatstheater Mainz, Staatstheater Karlsruhe, German National Theatre Weimar, and Theaterhaus Jena. From 1993 – 2000 he was Leading Director at Niedersächsisches Staatsschauspiel, Hannover; from 1989 – 1993 he was Freelance Director at Theatre Basel and Leading Director at Theater Konstanz; and from 1984 – 1988 he was artistic director of Tübinger Zimmertheater.

Aesthetics and Evolution of Structural-Color Producing or Biophotonic Nanostructures in Birds

Vinod Saranathan
Yale-NUS College, Singapore

ABSTRACT

Vivid ultra-violet (invisible to humans but visible to birds), violet, blue and green colors seen on bird feathers are generally produced by the scattering of light by sub-surface nanostructures. This class of fade-proof colors called structural colors forms an important part of the appearance of many birds as they are frequently used in inter-sexual mate-choice, or sexual selection. Interestingly, these biophotonic nanostructures in the bird feathers are not diet-acquired as in pigments, but are self-assembled, i.e., produced spontaneously by the physical phenomenon of unmixing of feather proteins (beta-keratins) from the cellular soup of developing feathers. These nanostructures have analogs in materials science. Curiously, certain species have evolved gemlike crystal structures in feathers and skin as a result of intense sexual selection. In my talk, I will review the current mainstream consensus and the alternative aesthetic viewpoints in the evolution of such colorful plumages in birds.

DR. VINOD SARANATHAN received his bachelors in Physics with a minor in Philosophy cum laude from Ohio Wesleyan University. He obtained his M.S. and PhD from Yale University, in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology under Professor Richard Prum. Subsequently, Vinod was a Royal Society Newton Fellow at the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford. At Oxford, he was also elected to an Edward P. Abraham Cephalosporin Junior Research Fellowship at Linacre College. Just prior to joining Yale-NUS as an assistant professor, Vinod was a Research Fellow in the Division of Physics and Applied Physics at Nanyang Technological University.

From Chiaroscuro to the Collapse of the Wave Function: Light as the Quintessential Trans-sensorial Phenomenon

Gilles Massot
LASALLE College of
the Arts, Singapore

ABSTRACT

Sometime at the turn of the 16th century, two artistic-scientific events opened up a whole new era in the human representation of reality, while working in almost two opposite directions: the chiaroscuro pictorial technique that uses the representation of light's contrast to develop a realistic 3D representation of the world; and the camera obscura, which affords a realistic representation of reality while leading to a brand new medium that can turn the world into a virtual image. Camera obscura made the world look more real, but it also made fiction look real. Photography is based on the pinhole phenomenon that makes the world visually real for us. However, photography also initiated the development of what we know today as the Infocom Society. Most significantly, it has changed the human perception of time and space, and perception of the self. But was photography truly an invention? Or, rather, a discovery? Many aspects of the history of the medium suggest that the world may have wanted photography to 'exist' in order to 'record' its own existence, a process I have, since 2004, been referring to as "the Constant Self-recording Mode". As I progressed in my explorations of photography's history, I began to notice cross-overs, parallels, and direct connections between the history of photography and that of quantum mechanics. To begin with, they both share the same "mother": Light. I believe that they could, or even should be regarded as "sisters". This talk will present an updated version of this research.

GILLES MASSOT's multidisciplinary process looks beyond disciplines to establish links between narratives, occurrences and parts of the world. Based in Singapore since 1981, his book *Bintan, Phoenix of the Malay Archipelago* (2003) deeply influenced his artistic work, which now often deals with history and ethnology while conceptually concerned with the theory of photography and the phenomenon of "recording". He recently completed a research on Jules Itier and the first photographs of Asia done in the 1840s, and is currently exploring the relations between the history of photography and that of quantum mechanics. A recipient of the French award Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, Gilles's work has been presented in over 50 exhibitions in France and Asia.

Revisoning Chinese Antiquity

Jon He

Yale-NUS College, Singapore

ABSTRACT

The ongoing development of digital technology has impacted almost every aspect of time-based art forms. These advanced technologies have expanded and pushed the boundaries of aesthetics, artistic processes, analysis, pedagogy, and archiving of musical traditions. In turn, musical traditions inform and inspire the development of sound and music computing, and the discovery of new musical interaction modalities. To this end, some questions are raised: What are the new creative outputs afforded by these new technologies? How do they push the envelope of artistic expression? What are the implications of preservation, outreach, and inheritance in musical traditions? To answer these questions, this paper presents two works: *g.qin*, a gestural hand controller developed to capture the characteristic range and nuance of Chinese *guqin* performance gestures; and *serra*, a mechatronic scraper-class percussion inspired by the ancient Chinese *yu* percussion. The paper also presents a discussion of the new human-mechatronic interaction(s) and amalgamation of ancient and modern sonic territories that emerged.

DR. JINGYIN (JON) HE is an experimental sound and integrated media artist, researcher and educator. He works within a hybridised culture of art and technology, exploring the frontiers of computational creativity in contemporary sonic and visual arts practices. His works have been published at major international academic conferences/ journals and performed at specialised events in US, Europe, South Korea, Japan, Singapore and Australia. Currently, Jon is a postdoctoral fellow (Sonic arts) at Yale-NUS college.

Hypnosis, Moon Travels and De-colonisation of the Extraterrestrial

Felipe Cervera

LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore

National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT

I performed my first trip to the Moon on 9 June 2017. The launch site was the fifth floor of an old building in Hamburg, Germany. The crew included approximately twenty people, none of which had undergone any sort of astronaut training. The “mission” was a performance titled *Voyage: A Session For Remembering...*, by Mexican performance artist Nahum, who, through a mix of hypnosis and guided meditation, “implanted” a “lost” memory of a lunar sojourn into the minds of all attendants. The experience was truly mesmerising, if only because—whether we fell asleep or whether we actually went into hypnosis—when, in future, we recall the occasion, we will remember that we travelled to the Moon together. Having that collective memory is important. While it is undeniable that such memory will be coloured according to our own visual recollections of how the Moon looks like in popular science fiction films, or as it is depicted in scientific imagery, it is the personal encounter with the Moon that has in itself a profound political, historical, and aesthetic potential. This paper addresses the sensorial dimension of the extraterrestrial, and questions the soft-colonisation to which it is subject as a result of the politics and economics of the material extraterrestrial exploration of the XX and XXI centuries. The paper inspects Nahum’s work and other cases of performance artists working with radio astronomy in order to suggest a de-colonial epistemology of the extraterrestrial based on our permanent sensorial encounter with the universe.

FELIPE CERVERA’s main research focus is the intersection of extraterrestrial exploration and performance theory. Secondary interests include practice-as-research in performance, Islamic and Malay theatricalities, and the politics of theatre. He holds an MA in Drama by Practice-as-Research from the University of Kent (UK), and a BA in Dramatic Literature from UNAM (Mexico). His essays have appeared in *Investigación Teatral*, *Performance Research*, *Performance Philosophy*, *Global Performance Studies* and *Theatre Research International*. As an actor and director, he has worked in Mexico, UK, and Singapore. He serves in *Performance Studies International’s* Future Advisory Board, and co-leads the international research group, *After Performance*.

Reading an Invisible Scene through the Experience of its Temperature

Leung Chi Wo
City University of Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

Bright light has much the same effect as ice (2012) is a project that explores the myth of renowned Hong Kong photographer Pun Lun, who was reputed to have captured the never-before-seen snowy scenes of Hong Kong in 1893. Based on the texts from 1893 describing the exceptionally cold weather, a freezing silver coin of Hong Kong, minted in the same year, and connected to a hidden refrigeration system, was juxtaposed with the original photographic productions by Pun Lun. When the silver coin-button was pressed and the freezing cold temperature was sensed at the audience's fingertips, the light boxes opposite would be turned off and the engraved text on top would be visible for reading. This project addresses the indexicality of artifacts and photographic images, and their physical reference to audience's sensory experience, their tactile and visual perception of a poetic intervention.

LEUNG CHI WO, co-founder of Para/Site Art Space, is Associate Professor of the School of Creative Media at the City University of Hong Kong. His site-specific project was featured in the first Hong Kong pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2001. His works have been exhibited in major international museums and institutions including Tate Modern in London, NRW Forum in Dusseldorf, Museu da Imagem e do Som in São Paulo and biennales in Shanghai, Gwangju and Manchester, among others. He had his first survey exhibition at OCT Contemporary Art Terminal in Shenzhen in 2015.

The Embodied Image, the Image Embodied

Susan Sentler
LASALLE College of
the Arts, Singapore

ABSTRACT

A reciprocal dialogue between image and sensation can emerge through a heightened somatic sense. The role of the artist is in how to materialise, make visible this relationship, allowing the spectator to enter into a shared experience. This experience can transcend a specificity of place, of culture, creating a parallel felt recollection, reminiscence of the viewer to emerge. In this talk, I will unpick the making of my work *signs of a nest* that began with an accumulation of photographic images taken on my arrival in Singapore, focusing on intimate details of various HDB (public housing). The piece revolves around a sense of place, of bodily 'nesting', questioning the virtual and its everyday usage. It takes the form of an installation, a democratic composition equally orchestrating still and moving image, object, sound, and absence/presence of the performing body. The choices are anchored in an embodied dialogue, a honed somatic sense of noticing. Through the use of the images in relation to body, space, and time, the viewer is encouraged to participate in this sensorial dialogue, coming at once from a precise place, but at the same time inducing a wandering of personal associations, rooted from my initial experiences with Singaporean culture.

SUSAN SENTLER is a dance artist/maker working as choreographer, teacher, researcher, director and performer. She served as Senior Lecturer with Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance for 18 years and has taught globally in the field of dance for over 30 years. Susan has presented at numerous conferences and symposiums in Europe, USA and Asia, such as CORD and Dance and Somatic Practices Conference/Coventry University. Her practice is multidisciplinary, with a distinct focus on site specific/gallery/museum contexts creating 'responses' to specific visual art works and exhibitions as well as durational installations using the body, objects, sound, moving and still image. Her work has been exhibited and performed in the UK, USA, Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Ireland and Singapore. In 2013 Susan earned a Masters in Creative Practice, professional practice pathway, awarded by Trinity Laban in collaboration with Independent Dance in London/UK. Currently she is a Lecturer of Dance at LASALLE College of the Arts.

Phallophone: A Physical Manifestation of the Trans-Visual/Aural Experience in Performance

Dirk Stromberg
LASALLE College of
the Arts, Singapore

ABSTRACT

Much research has been done on the link of musical performance and the audience's understanding of a musical experience. E-luthier Dirk Stromberg has been exploring this interaction and recently (2015) created a new instrument, the Phallophone. The Phallophone was developed to be a versatile and instrument free of genre with a diverse voice. In its application by its creator, the instrument tries to demystify avant-garde and experimental music by having a "clear transparent, intuitive control metamorphosis with a clear audio-visual link" (Cedric Spindler). This performative presentation, and accompanying short paper, explores how intuitive musical interaction with the instrument's gestural nature and sonic language creates a sculpture/instrument, which invokes curiosity while also projecting a believable and concrete audience experience.

DIRK JOHAN STROMBERG is an American music technologist, composer and improviser. His body of work explores dynamic interaction between performer, technology and performance practice. Designing both hardware and software has led to the development of network based audio cards, embedded hardware, and e-instruments. He has thrice worked on Art Creation Funds supported by the National Arts Council, Singapore – a major arts development grant. Dirk has been an artist in residence at a number of Institutions in the US, Europe and Asia. He has been invited to present his work as a composer and technologist at a number of international conferences and festivals.

Digital Performance in 21st Century Taiwan: Huang Yi & KUKA, a New Form of Sino-Corporeality

Lin Yatin
Taipei National University
of the Arts

ABSTRACT

This presentation looks into the rise of digital performing art in Taiwan through the lens of Huang Yi. As a child of the dotcom generation, Huang often incorporates elements from videography, digital arts, and even mechanics in his choreography. This thirty-something dancer/choreographer/videographer has won various recognitions both at home and abroad. Huang Yi & KUKA, his duet with an industrial robot, received the top prize from the 2012 Third Annual Taipei Digital Arts Awards. Later grants allowed him to expand the piece into a full-length program of the same title in 2015, including two additional dancers from his Huang Yi Studio+. Through Huang Yi's career, I look at the ecology of digital performance in twenty-first century Taiwan within the Sinophone performing arts context, analyse his duet with his anthropomorphic digital double, as well as at an alternate model for multi-talented artists who experiment with innovation in technology, but do so on their own as culturpreneurs, independently of big established dance companies.

DR. LIN YATIN is Associate Professor at the Graduate Institute of Dance and Chairperson of the Cultural and Creative Industries MA at the Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA). As a dance historian/critic, her book *Sino-Corporealities Contemporary Choreographies from Taipei, Hong Kong, and New York* has been published by TNUA Press, and has contributed writings to anthologies including: *Identity and Diversity: Celebrating Dance in Taiwan*, the *Routledge Dance Studies Reader* (2nd Ed.), *Danses et identite: de Bombay a Tokyo*, and *Dialogues in Dance Discourse*. She has presented papers at International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR), The Society of Dance History Scholars (SDHS), Performance Studies International (PSI), and World Dance Alliance (WDA). Former co-chair of the Taishin Arts Award Final Jury, she also served on the SDHS Board of Directors and is current President of the Taiwan Dance Research Society (TDRS).

Performances

- 31 **Origami as Movement**
- 32 **Duoture**

Origami as Movement

The Origami as Movement showcase is a site responsive exploration by LASALLE College of the Arts' Diploma in Dance Level 3 students, with music by Brian O'Reilly from School of Contemporary Music. Working collaboratively for the second year, the Diploma in Fashion Level 3 students have responded to and developed a costume in conversation with the dance students as they developed their movement language. Through the interactions and dialogues with one another, the process of the collaboration became an extension of their individuality and expressions. Taking the paper folding technique of origami as a starting point, the fashion students considered the visual, sensory and kinetic embodiment of their design to be worn by the dance students in a performance inspired by the theme 'The Aviary'. The dance students will investigate the relationship between garments, bodies and space through the thematic development, as well as the embodiment of the techniques that allows the creativity and the expansion of imaginative ideas.

Duoture

American Improvisor and E-Luthier Dirk Stromberg and French Experimental Filmmaker and VJ Cecile Chagnaud continue to join forces as an improvising duo. First working together in the acclaimed mammoth work time:space;, they have continued to grow their collaboration of organic electro-instrumental sounds and haltingly quirky videos of our world to create performances that are both exciting and ground-breaking. Duoture is interested in the intersection of sound and visuals. Cecile's works have received awards from the Academy Awards and Cannes Music Festival. Dirk has been featured in residencies and festivals in Europe, Asia and the United States.