



a friendly distance

a solo exhibition by Trevor Yeung



**BLANK
CANVAS**

3 March - 21 May 2023
Fri Sat Sun | 12pm - 7pm

Introduction

There exists a friendly distance between every interaction. A space that is polite but not intimate. A gap that stretches between unanimity and ambiguity. That distance could exist between two individuals, two cultures, or any two species for example, humans and plants.

This exhibition is the outcome of Trevor Yeung's residency in Penang. Here, he explores the relation between Penang and his home in Hong Kong, both being island port cities under British rule during colonial time. With the majority of Penang's population being the descendants of Southern Chinese immigrants, he finds further similarities between both populations and their cultures. Like recognizing a relative after ages of separation. An undercurrent of suspicion mixed with longing and nostalgia.

Upon reflection, Yeung discovers something in Penang which he thinks has been lost in Hong Kong. A quality of peacefulness and simplicity he associates with his childhood in the city over 20 years ago. Throughout his comparisons, Yeung finds that Penang also reminds him a lot of Singapore - his first urban experience in South East Asia. Singapore, he observes, is a fellow municipality within the region with the same racial demographics, climate and cultures, but with the modernity more on par with Hong Kong.

Coincidentally, it was Chinese New Year during Yeung's residency and he had the opportunity to observe how the local Chinese community celebrates the tradition. In the three sculptural installations, Yeung revisits some of the local Chinese New Year practices through the role of a Hong Kong observer. They are all Yeung's reinterpretations of a custom that is familiar to his culture, yet practiced in a foreign way because the meanings behind these customs have been lost to him.

During the process, Yeung muses over how traditions have been distorted over the ages like a game of Chinese Whispers. How well do we even know the origins of the rituals we so blindly follow? Why do we adhere to them when the meaning or interpretation has been lost throughout time and the original intention has been diluted and distorted through generational compensations and replacements, such as using current technology to breed decorative pink-coloured pineapples, or using pineapple shaped candles and lights in representation of the organic fruit. Close to where Yeung was staying during his residency is a workshop in a stuffy shoplot which uses a sprinkler at the front to cool down the entrance way. In the set of photographs lining the walls of the exhibition, the artist captures the way the light disperses and reflects through the

water droplets from the sprinkler to cast a small rainbow across the path, suggesting that there are different ways of viewing familiar surroundings.

As per his usual practice, Yeung's works play with ambiguity. His installations result in a series of enigmas and metaphors, formed from an artist's personal expressions and conveyed into a collective experience. The bulk of the installations resemble the traditions that have been passed on for generations, yet the oddity of an unconventional display brings a sense of disorientation to old eyes. However from the perspective of a first-time observer, are they perhaps all the same?

Engulfing these installations and reenactments are walls painted in different shades of white as a form of subtle manipulation to the eye. As sterile as the space appears to be, turn a corner and that wall a shade warmer will cast a

shadow in your mind, like a smudge of dirt that can't be erased. As the sun shifts throughout the day, the natural light from the skylight and entrance-way would interfere with the fluorescents, further gaslighting one's senses and toying with one's perception.

This exhibition opens with an image of the backs of two persons standing within a comfortable distance from each other at the end of an infinity pool overlooking a dense urbanscape, which has expanded through vast areas of reclaimed land; and closes with an image of the backs of another two persons sitting side by side with a young tree nestled in between, overlooking the vast empty space of a newly reclaimed site, yet to be developed. Bookended in between is a parody of remorse for a culture that is heading towards an alternative at one end, and grasping at the tail end of an increasingly obsolete past at the other.



A friendly distance (Singapore)

2023

Archival inkjet print



A friendly distance (Penang)

2023

Archival inkjet print

01. A friendly distance (Singapore)

2023

Archival inkjet print

02. A friendly distance (Penang)

2023

Archival inkjet print

03. Two Protected Hulu

2023

Archival inkjet print

04. The Ong-Lai

2023

Pineapple, candle, lamps,
stand and water

05. Budgeted Rainbow

2023

Archival inkjet print

06. Try so hard to make things happen (Pineapple)

2023

Pineapple plant, soil,
old plant pots, concrete
and metal pole

07. Young palm that can't make it

2023

Old plant pots and soil

08. Old Sun on New Leaves

2023

Archival inkjet print

09. The time when I forget about you

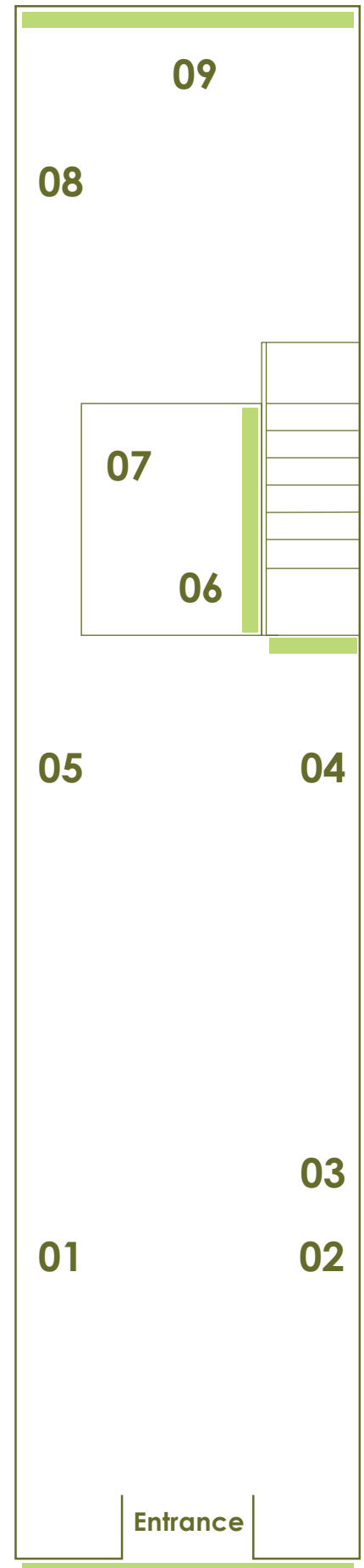
2023

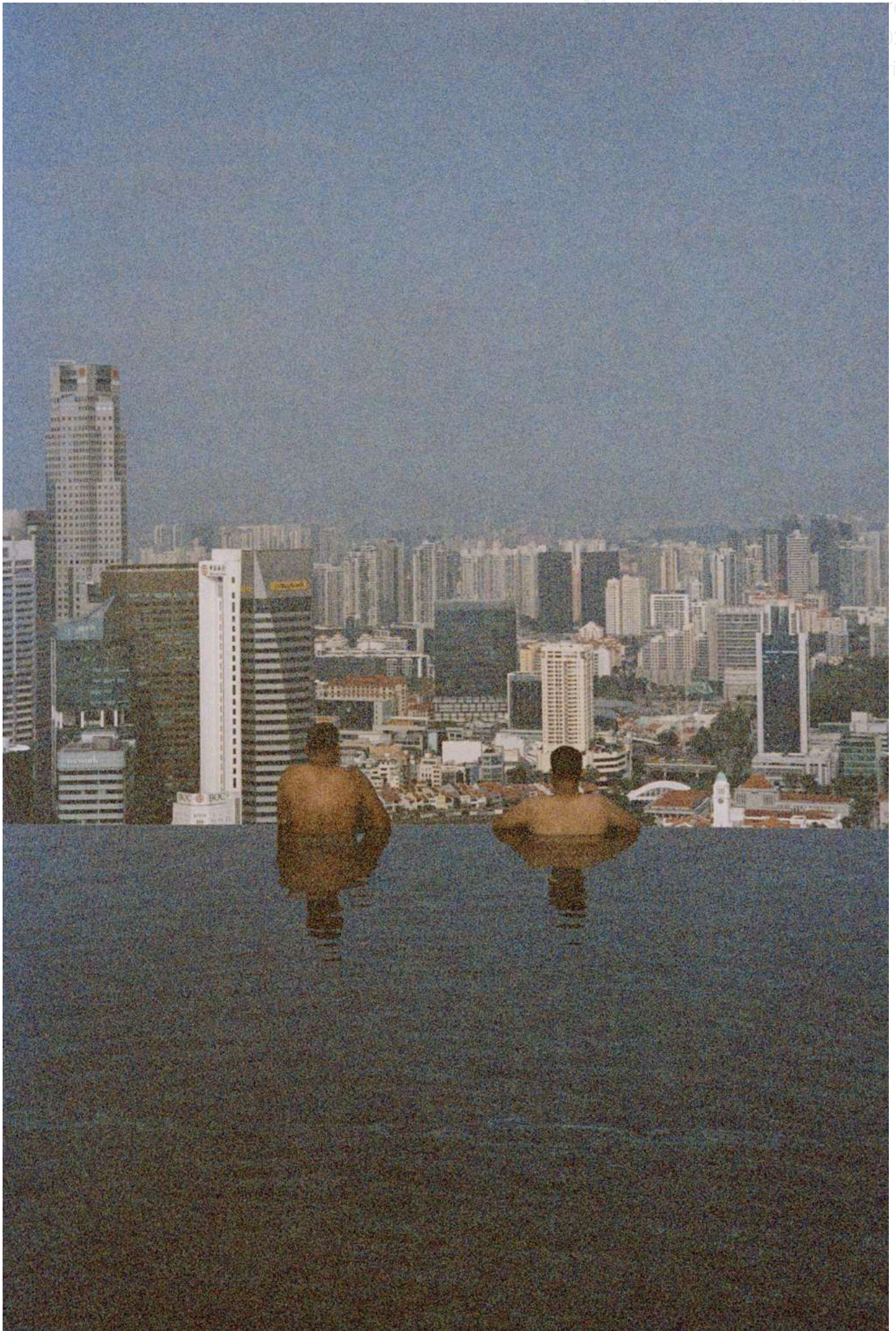
Vintage fabric

10. Gaslighting

2023

Paint on wall





A friendly distance (Singapore)

2023

Archival inkjet print



A friendly distance (Penang)

2023

Archival inkjet print



Two Protected Hulu

2023

Archival inkjet print

The Ong-Lai

2023

Pineapple, candle, lamps, stand and water





Budgeted Rainbow

2023

Archival inkjet print

***Try so hard to make things happen
(Pineapple)***

2023

Pineapple plant, soil,
old plant pots, concrete
and metal pole



Young palm that can't make it

2023

Old plant pots and soil





Old Sun on New Leaves

2023

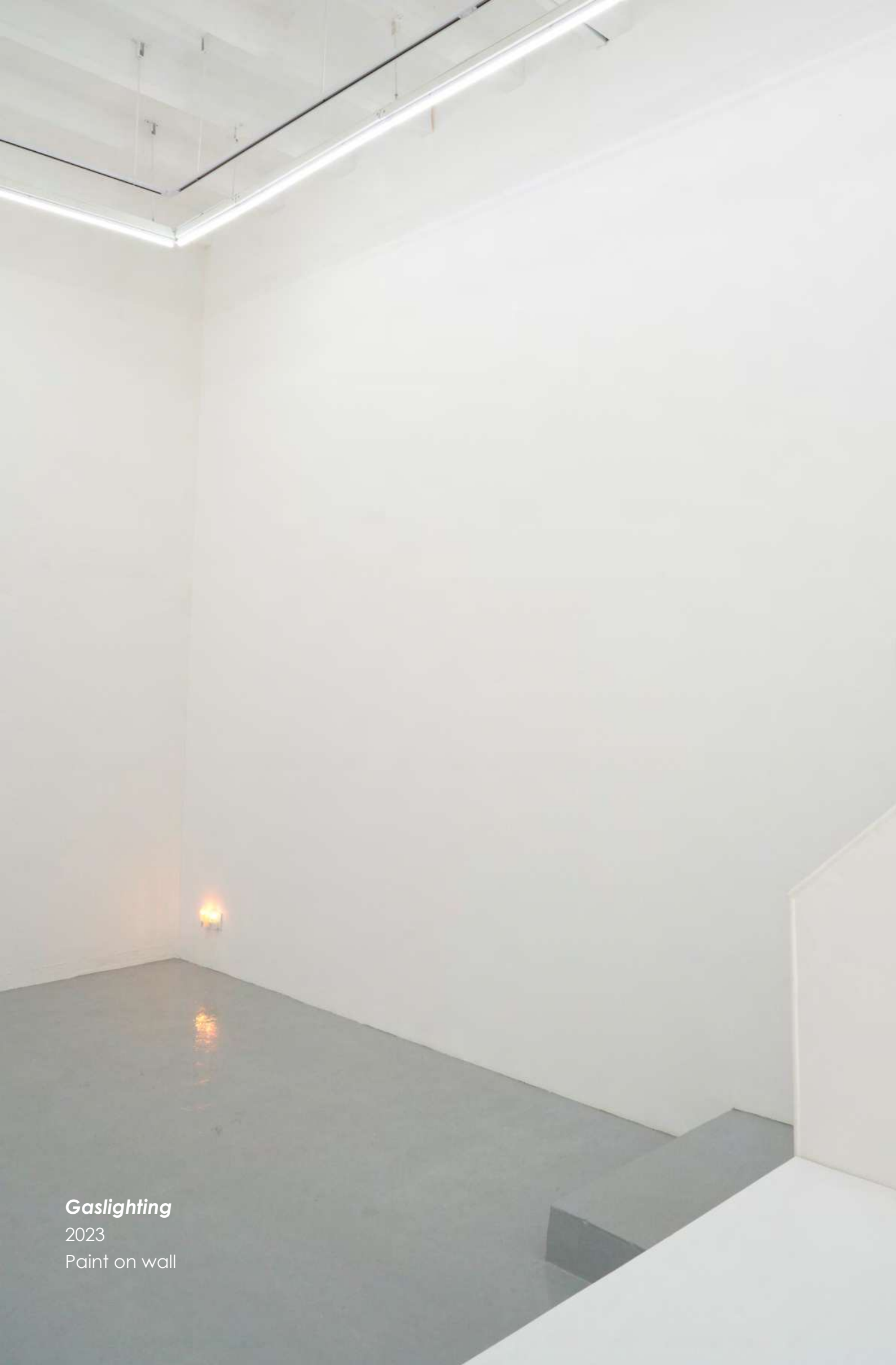
Archival inkjet print



The time when I forget about you

2023

Vintage fabric



Gaslighting

2023

Paint on wall













About The Artist

The practice of Trevor Yeung (b. 1988, Dongguan, China) consistently excavates the inner logics of closed systems and the way in which such systems contain and create emotional and behavioural conditions. In his mixed-media works, carefully staged objects, animals, and plants function as aesthetic pretexts which delicately and ironically address notions of artificiality and the processes of human relations.

Yeung has participated in biennials and exhibitions including “Kathmandu Triennale 2077” (Kathmandu, Nepal, 2022); “KölnSkulptur #10: Natural Takeover” (Skulpturenpark Köln, Cologne, Germany, 2020); “la biennale de Lyon

2019” (Lyon, France, 2019); the 38th EVA International Biennale (Limerick, Ireland, 2018); the 4th Dhaka Art Summit (Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2018); “The Other Face of the Moon” (Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, South Korea, 2017); “Soil and Stones, Souls and Songs” (Para Site, Hong Kong, 2017); “Seal Pearl White Cloud” (4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Australia, 2016); and the 10th Shanghai Biennale (Shanghai, China, 2014).

Trevor Yeung lives and works in Hong Kong.

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