

So Far, So Right
A Study of Reforms and Transitions Across Borders

Chen Szu-Han, Luchezar Boyadjiev, Phương Linh Nguyen, UuDam Tran Nguyen, Syu Jia-Jhen, Kosta Tonev, Morgan Wong, Wu Chi-Yu, Curator: Fang Yen Hsiang

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Display, Dittrichova 9/337
120 00 Praha 2, Czechia
www.display.cz

UuDam Tran Nguyen

Time Boomerang (2010-), is an installation consisting mainly of video and sculpture. The bronze sculpture was made by casting the artist's own hand with fingers spread out as if to measure something. In actuality, however, the open hand is quite ambiguous as it can freely manipulate the length of things depending on the desires of the person to whom the hand belongs, and therefore, cannot serve as an objective standard of measurement. Nguyen, inspired by the imprecise basis of this gesture, presents, as a subject matter, the person's desire hidden within the measuring of time and space.

UuDam Tran Nguyen, born 1985 in Vietnam, lives and works in Ho Chi Minh City



Time Boomerang
2014 | Performance video, etc. | Dimension variable | Installation view: SUNSHOWER:
Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, 2019
Photo: Cheng Ching-Yang | Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts



Public Tailor
2017 | Wood, shells, photography, acrylic on canvas |
Dimension variable | Courtesy of the artist

Syu Jia-Jhen

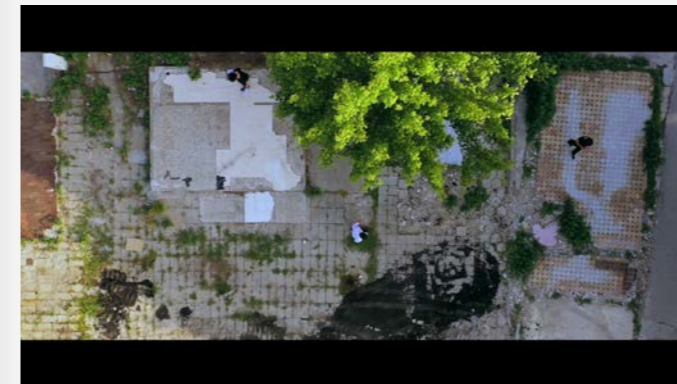
A moving narration of “Made in China”, “Processed in Taiwan”, “Assembled in Vietnam” draws trilateral links creating a world factory. The artist transported an ordinary park bench from Guangdong China to Taiwan via online shopping. Then embedding several paragraphs of text with the traditional woodshop technique of raden in Taiwan before privately transporting the processed wood into Vietnam for reassembly as part of a public space in Hanoi. These statements enter the different context and environments, continuing the dialogue that it by evoke, or be immediately dismantled from the country where the inspection is conducted. This act of smuggling not only refers to the relationship between the competition and the successive replacement in the timber industry in the three locations, but also the transfer of industries into norms in the regional economy and the rise and fall of Taiwan's traditional processing industries. Although this is the process of inputting a series of processed products, the underlying message is a political message that seeks to integrate into the popular political propaganda slogans in Hanoi. The work mirrors the relationship between production, output and input of a desire. The former “state of trauma” has now become a nation of visions projecting the global vision of a dream country. How people have moved their hopes into this international deployment of processing, assembly and distribution system.

Syu Jia-Jhen, born 1986 in Taiwan, lives and works in Taipei and Changhua

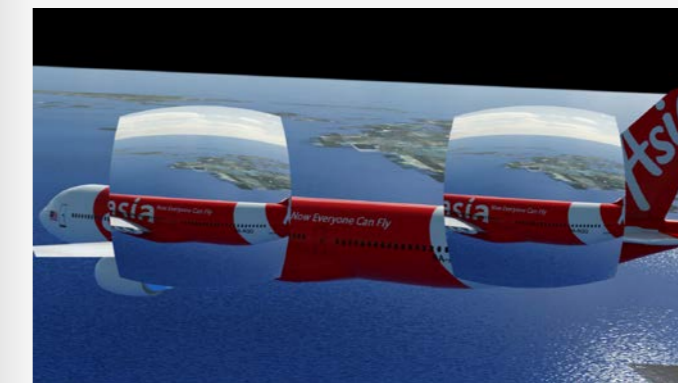
Kosta Tonev

Inspired by the song „This Land Is Your Land,“ written and first performed by American folk singer Woody Guthrie, the artist explores different political ideologies regarding property. The project traces the transition to market economy in Bulgaria and the countries of former Eastern Europe thirty years since the start of the political reforms. Looking back at the ruins of the 1990s, it examines the role of primitive accumulation in the form of mass privatization as a necessary precursor of capitalism.

Kosta Tonev, born 1980 in Bulgaria, lives and works in Plovdiv and Vienna.



Ruin Is the Destination Toward Which All Men Rush
2019 | Single-channel video | 8 min. 45 sec. | Courtesy of the artist



Asia Air
2018 | Three-channel video installation and documents, | Courtesy of the artist

Wu Chi-Yu

This is a nonexistent virtual reality viewing experience. By simulating a futuristic approach of viewing through video installation, Wu will explore Asia's aerial territory. Inspired by the aerial warfare schematic left behind by the Air Force Commander Headquarters, Wu will examine how the sky is being used, understood, and divided by humans from historical and technological perspectives. Humans have historically used the sky for political, military, trade, and entertainment purposes; now, the sky is being used in even more ways. Through flight, humans are able to traverse national boundaries, and boundaries are constantly being redefined and delineated according to the political and economic might of a country. How many air defense identification zones are we passing through when we fly from one country to another? As technology continues to advance we can now see the world from the bird's eye view of a drone while planting our feet firmly in the ground. Correspondingly, we have had to develop ways to manage and regulate the use of drones. The vastless sky before us has already been divided as to be managed.

Wu Chi-Yu, born 1986 in Taiwan, lives and works in Taipei.



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Since the balance of power shifted after the post-Cold War era, a new proposal for global governance has been in the making. In the name of a new framework, this proposal is conceived by emerging great powers, where the alliance of startups across countries, the reconstruction of transnational resources and logistics systems, as well as the acquisition of new management technologies such as information technology, together allow the new governing powers to transcend borders and enter the realm of biopolitics all the more efficiently.

Project So Far, So Right is based on the speculative concept of deforming and how it osmoses into the given framework of global governance. The project unfolds from the investigation and delineation of two post-communist narratives as well as their metamorphoses, interweaving relations, and tensions, set against the backdrop of two former socialist blocs and their political geography in the past, proposing a possible method to re-entangle their histories and imagined futures, thus launching a new life story.

The project delves into the history of the trade and labor alliance of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the gradual process of the communist system partially or entirely transitioning into the market system, and how these countries transform into emerging economies on a global scale. The project also investigates the transmutations and contradictions in the ways marketization, democratization, and the construction of national identity confront these regions during their political and economic transition, as well as how they grapple with the regional political and economic alliance of which it is part, the delicate relations between great powers, and the undercurrents and volatile states of the individual, the collective, and society.

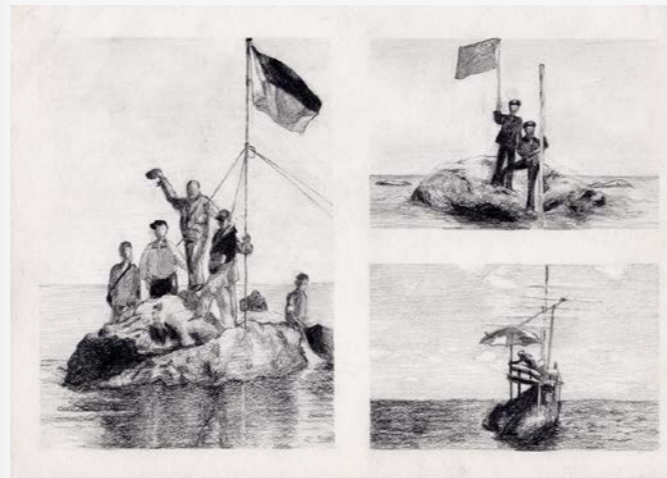
Through the manifestation and aestheticization of diaspora and cross-border experiences, portraying a unique state of passing through and interfering with conceptual or physical borders, this project attempts to trace a back-and-forth history of connection, a biohistory that transcends the governance of national planned economy and all-encompassing marketization and technologization. As we examine the biohistory from an external vantage point – whether it's the bridging of political fault lines, or the tenacious force that resists and wrestles outside the system – we witness an opposition to the framework of national power and capitalist deployment, defying the governing force of the economization of life.

The project So Far, So Right is sponsored by the Production Grants to Independent Curators in Visual Arts of National Culture and Arts Foundation of Taiwan

Chen Szu-Han

From looking up “political border” on the news and collecting the different images that reporters have captured. Then deciding on the frontier event is as if reconstructing the borders through the lens of the reporters. The artist compares how countries map political border to the traditional aboriginal Australian use of singline to negotiate borders. Through the changes in the song during migration the song informs the land and all living beings including the plants, people and their ancestors. This work attempts to explain the captured images from the news but without the people, objects or sounds. Abstracting from the element of time presenting a continuous timeline without an explanation of history or its geographical location. With no structural framework presenting depictions of people and their conscious understanding of borders. Then reconstructing those readings of relations and the passage to negotiating borders, thus creating an original outlook to the archetype of negotiation.

Chen Szu-Han, born 1981 in Taiwan, lives and works in Taipei



How to Stage an Archetype of Negotiation?
2017 | Installation with prints | Dimension variable | Courtesy of the artist



GastARTbeiter
2000-2007 | Digital print on fine-grain vinyl | 220 x 520 cm | Courtesy of the artist

Luchezar Boyadjiev

GastARTbeiter is a type of personal chronicle which presents the monetary aspects of the life and work of Boyadjiev as an internationally recognized artist traveling all over the world, working on various shows and projects. It maps his career not in terms of exhibitions and solo projects at certain institutions, but rather through tracing the amount of money Western institutions and funding programs were prepared to spend on him and his career over a ten-year period. The work consists of various documentation—hotel bills, restaurant receipts, contracts, exhibition budgets—and includes fragments of his correspondence, photographs, and commentaries. By combining the German word “Gastarbeiter” (migrant worker) with the word “art” in the title of the work, Boyadjiev associates the status of a migrant worker with that of an artist: while the first is selling his ability to work to a foreign economy, the second is investing time and effort in creating cultural value in return for inadequate monetary reward. Boyadjiev thus points out that the capitalization of cultural value by the art institutions is based on the artist's self-exploitation.

Luchezar Boyadjiev, born 1975 in Bulgaria, lives and works in Sofia

Morgan Wong

“Dashed line” illustrates the non-material boundary with its penetrable duo-sided form revealing the uncertainty of power. It predicts a demand for integrity and a direction leading out the fully scheme – even there is impossible yet unnecessary to be connected among the lines. Therefore it is a sandbagging politics claiming to leave the debates while reaching the commons.

Regarding Gestalt's point of view, it is somehow a type of politics either the lines achieve the connection or not. “One China with respective interpretations” seems to be seen as a full-length dashed line reached each ends. However “One country, two systems” implies the gaps between the dashes to be the separated parts within a whole. Perhaps exercising to see and not to see can be a way to learn Gestalt dashed politics among China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Morgan Wong, born 1984 in Hong Kong, lives and works in Hong Kong



Proposed Boundary
2017 | Single channel video | HD, stereo, color | 5 mins | Courtesy of the artist



Trùng Mù (Endless, Sightless)
2018 | Single channel video | HD, stereo, color, 16:9 | 14 mins
Courtesy: Singapore Art Museum

Phuong Linh Nguyen

Trùng Mù (Endless, Sightless) begins with two figures behind a curtain patterned with foliage: a feminized cyborg is bent over another body to engage in some facial operation. Their interaction is accompanied by the repetitive sound of a laser machine for the removal of dark pigmentation in the human skin, which sound binds the visual and temporal movements of the whole film. Oscillating between different intensities of blurring, blinding, and obfuscating the images it creates, the video drama by Phuong Linh Nguyen slowly unfolds a generic and timeless space of cosmetic technology. From the choreography of textiles and textures, of material and gaseous states, of human and non-human bodies, the beauty salon emerges as a manifestation of capitalist corpofiction, migrant labor, and global toxic bonds.