

LOST AND FOUND: IMAGINING NEW WORLDS

Gallery 1
Institute of Contemporary Art Singapore
LASALLE College of the Arts
2 February – 10 April 2019

Artists
Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook
Pamela Cevallos
Fyerool Darma
Yazan Khalili
Ismael Monticelli
Gala Porras-Kim
Rosângela Rennó
Raquel Stolf
Batia Suter
Tromarama

Guest curator
Raphael Fonseca

This exhibition represents the meeting of two constant interests in my curatorial practice. Firstly, it considers its specific context—here, the art school in Singapore where it is staged. Secondly, it introduces historical elements and characteristics that lead us to critically rethink the present. How does contemporary art fold and unfold the past? How might an exhibition be imagined as a research project that is site specific?

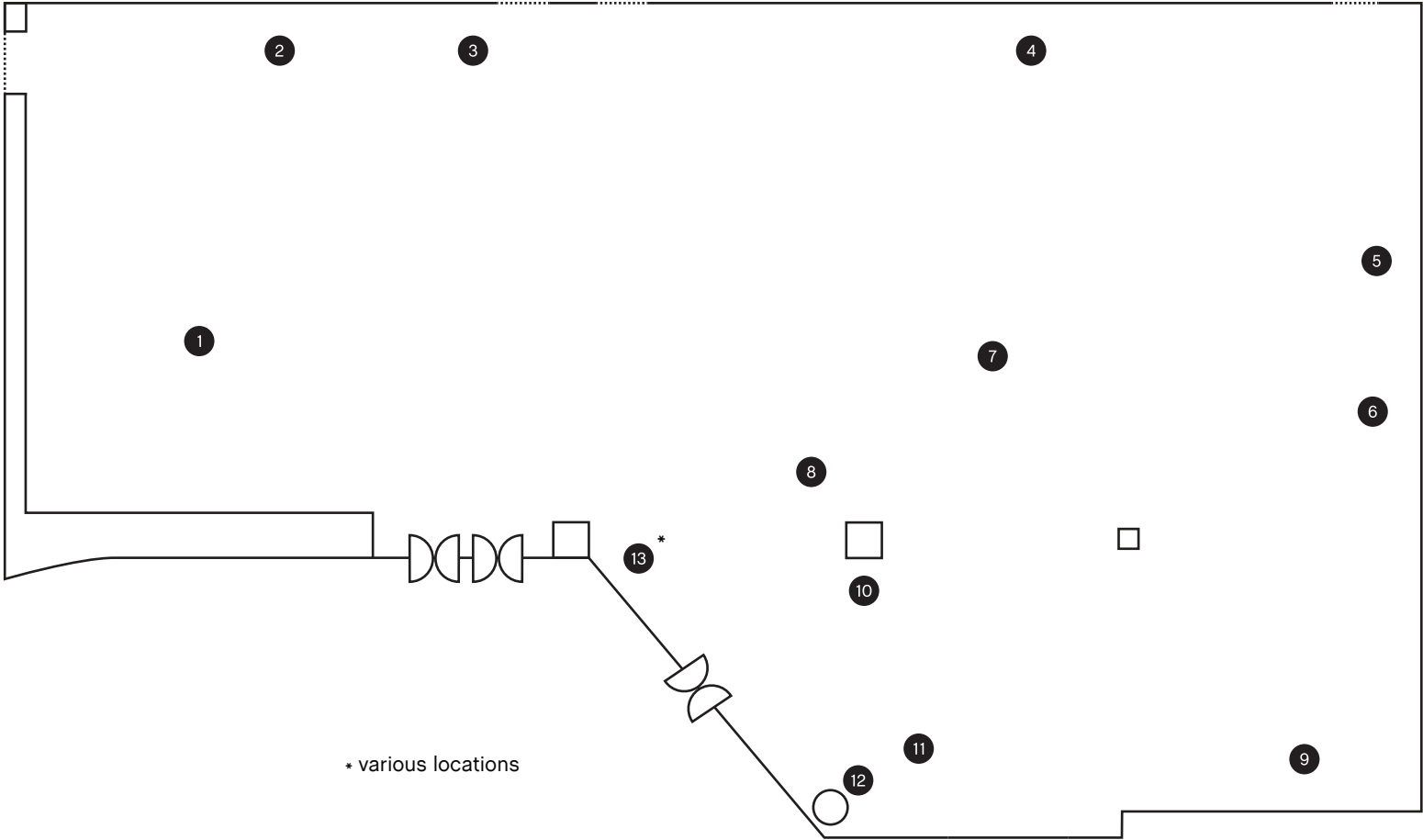
Lost and found: imagining new worlds explores aspects of the LASALLE College of the Arts Collection, which is managed by the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore. More broadly, it establishes a framework that links processes and institutions of collecting common to most cultures, but especially remarkable in Brazil (where I live) and the countries of Southeast Asia interconnected by histories of colonialism.

Isn't every collection in some way an equation of the general and the specific? What makes some groups of items significant enough to establish under the terms of a collection? On what criteria have works been purchased or donated? These questions were the driving forces behind the exhibition, whose

title proposes that any collected object can open a Pandora's box of complications, just as it is vulnerable to human rationalisation, division, inventory and classification.

Among the 10 participating international artists, Pamela Cevallos, Ismael Monticelli and Tromarama test the notion of the art collection; all worked with objects held in the LASALLE College of the Arts Collection. Others, such as Fyerool Darma, Rosângela Rennó, Raquel Stolf and Batia Suter, reflect on acts of collecting and how accumulations of things can themselves become art. Their works assemble objects acquired in public auctions, photographic documentation, news headlines and image reproductions respectively. Whether a collection is lost or found, it is the task of creating organisational criteria—or making explicit a lack of order—that enables new worlds to be imagined from such gathered things. I hope that the worlds contained in this exhibition together offer a small universe capable of being navigated from inside our own imagination.

Raphael Fonseca



List of works

Dimensions are given as height preceding width (followed, where applicable) by depth.

- 1

Ismael Monticelli
New world, 2019
15 poster boards on painted wall, found furniture; tools and materials that belonged to Brother Joseph McNally, Singapore, c. 1990s; 28 sculptures (1974–2002) by Brother Joseph McNally held in the LASALLE College of the Arts Collection, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore
installation: 346 x 1000 x 1000 cm
Courtesy the artist and the LASALLE College of the Arts Collection, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore

A guide and list of the 28 sculptures by Brother Joseph McNally is available at the reception table

- 2

Pamela Cevallos
The whispers, 2019
Bowl, unknown date
Singapore earthenware
3 fragments, (a) 7 x 3.8 x 1 cm, (b) 5.5 x 12 x 11 cm, (c) 3.4 x 7.5 x 7 cm
LASALLE College of the Arts Collection, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore. B1996.351.01–03

with Mok Xun Ying Amanda, Muhammad Khairi Bin Md Ibrahim, Lin Mengju, Fatima Bano, Raghav Babbar, Cynthia Wang Huiyuan
clay, sound work
18 replicas of the fragments described above, various dimensions; sound work 9:30 minutes
Courtesy the artists

- 3

Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook
Village and elsewhere: Jeff Koons' 'Untitled', Cindy Sherman's 'Untitled', and Thai villagers, 2011
standard-definition single-channel video, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour, sound
14:25 minutes
Courtesy the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York

- 4

Batia Suter
Radial grammar unfold, 2018–19
272 leaves (136 leaves from each of 2 copies) of *Radial grammar* (Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2018) each leaf 30 x 22.5 cm (approx.), installation 138 x 1932 cm
Courtesy the artist

Visitors are invited to view the bound copy of 'Radial grammar' at the reception table

- 5

Rosângela Rennó
Good apples/Bad apples, 2019
10 bound concertina books with inscriptions: *A and B*: 25 folded leaves, 29 photographs; *B*: 25 folded leaves, 46 photographs; *E, D, C and B*: 25 folded leaves, 46 photographs; *K, J, I, H, G, F and E*: 25 folded leaves, 46 photographs; *L and K*: 25 folded leaves, 48 photographs; *N, M and L*: 25 folded leaves, 48 photographs; *S*: 25 folded leaves, 46 photographs; *S, R, P, O and N*: 25 folded leaves, 46 photographs; *U and T*: 25 folded leaves, 48 photographs; *Z, Y, W and V*: 25 folded leaves, 48 photographs; digital print
each book: 17 x 12 x 3 cm (closed), digital print 42 x 29.7 cm, installation dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist

- 6

Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook
Two planets: Millet's 'The gleaners' and the Thai farmers, 2008
standard-definition single-channel video, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour, sound
14:43 minutes
Courtesy the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York

- 7

Tromarama
Self-portrait, 2018–19
digital prints on 10 polyvinyl chloride (PVC) cylinders, adhesive holographic paper, printer with customised software, paper printed images show the following sculptures from the LASALLE College of the Arts Collection, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore (from left facing the work, with back to entrance): B1996.071, B1996.099, B1996.072, B1996.098, B1996.113, B1996.084, B1996.106, B1996.100, B1996.105, B1996.102 each cylinder 200 cm (height) x 31.5 cm (diameter); installation dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong

- 8

Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook
Village and elsewhere: Jeff Koons' 'Wolfman' in Pakoitai Market and Sunday market, 2011
standard-definition single-channel video, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour, sound
9 minutes
Courtesy the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York

- 9

Fyerool Darma
¥ou will never walk alon£ (Exercise in drawing the constellation part 1), 2019
high-definition video, 9:16 aspect ratio, colour, sound; items acquired from public auction houses, customised TV stand
video 4:49 minutes, installation dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Yeo Workshop, Singapore

- 10

Yazan Khalili
Hiding our faces like a dancing wind, 2016
high-definition single-channel video, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour, silent
7:30 minutes
Courtesy the artist

- 11

Gala Porras-Kim
Future artifacts after west Mexico ceramics: Los Angeles index, 5, 2017
clay, GPS tracker
12.5 x 24 x 24 cm

From the series 'Naming rights', 2018–19
2 digital prints
each 27.9 x 21.6 cm

Courtesy the artist and Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles

- 13

Raquel Stolf
Dream and reality, 2019
sound work, booklets, 6 adhesive vinyl texts
sound work 4:36 minutes, booklets each 18 x 20 cm (closed), 10 leaves; installation dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist

Visitors are invited to take a booklet



Work descriptions

3 6 Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook

8 In each of her three video works, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook has created a dialogue between different visual cultures. In *Two planets: Millet's 'The gleaners' and the Thai farmers* (2008), a group of Thai farmers analyses a painting by the French 19th-century realist Millet. Diagonally across the gallery, two videos from the series *Village and elsewhere* (2011) depict public situations involving reproductions of contemporary works of art. In one of the videos, photographs by Jeff Koons and Cindy Sherman are analysed inside a temple. The second is set in a busy market and traces the responses of stall holders and market goers to a large Koons reproduction on canvas being carried through their midst. Western visual culture and Thai culture clash—but what if Koons's work could be seen, like this, outside the white cubes of art institutions? The viewers—by turns bemused, appreciative, disapproving—exercise their critical gaze, temporarily twisting the boundaries between high art and mass culture. Each of the videos explores the relationship between looking and describing, underscoring that a culturally specific image is not precluded from being seamlessly appropriated by a different community's discourse.

2 Pamela Cevallos

Pamela Cevallos has conducted sustained research in the archaeological cultures of Ecuador, on South America's west coast. Her interests include notions of originality, the dissemination of ancient forms and how museums create narratives around cultural material. Here she presents a new work made collaboratively with six BA(Hons) Fine Arts students at LASALLE. Beginning with the three pieces of a broken earthenware bowl of unknown provenance held in the LASALLE College of the Arts Collection, Cevallos created a production method in six parts. Each of three students was invited to copy one of the ceramic pieces. In the second stage, the same students copied one another's copies. After a third and final round of reproduction, a second trio of students undertook the same steps, beginning with the first group's three final-round copies. *The whispers* presents six copies of each piece—a total of 18 copies that began with the fragments in LASALLE's collection. How do we define what is original when the very origin of the prototypical ceramic bowl can't yet be confirmed? What is a copy and what is a simulacrum?

9 Fyerool Darma

In recent months, Fyerool Darma has been researching the mechanisms for distributing lost objects in Singapore. After an object is found, identified as having been lost, and delivered to a police station, the institution keeps it for three months. When this period has lapsed, many items become showroom property at public auctions. Fyerool has been learning about auction culture and visiting major public sales where he filmed events, and bought some objects with the budget offered by this project. His new work, titled *¥ou will never walk alone* (*Exercise in drawing the constellation part 1*), is a response to these auctions, based not only on documentation but also on his continual practice of appropriation. The purchased objects, the table of contents presented in the auctions, the advertisements, the auctioneer's voice, all come together in a bricolage installation that reminds us that collections can also be unromantic. Auctions themselves are typically based plainly on the principles of consumerism and highest offering price.

10 Yazan Khalili

Architect, visual artist and writer Yazan Khalili's artworks are generally made using photography and video and explore the relationship between image and text. In *Hiding our faces like a dancing wind* (2016), he presents an assortment of visual elements on a computer screen. The face of a woman, a collection of ethnographic masks, and sentences typed in real-time are in constant movement within a desktop image. The representation of the woman's face, and framing within framing that recalls the excesses of contemporary selfie culture, are in dialogue with mysterious sculpted faces sitting silently in aseptic museum vitrines. How does the weight of colonialism affect how we deal with our own images today? How might the use of digital technology endorse new forms of a colonial gaze? Instead of providing a theoretical perspective on these issues, Khalili's on-screen text presents us with yet more questions.

1 Ismael Monticelli

Ismael Monticelli's artistic practice is based on in-depth research developed in different types of institutions. Following sustained experience working with archives and collections, for this commissioned project Monticelli chose to investigate the life of Brother Joseph McNally, founder of LASALLE College of the Arts, through works by McNally held in the college's collection. He has constructed the multilayered installation, *New world*, using small to medium-sized sculptures by McNally and disused furniture found on campus. This complex monument to Brother McNally offers an opportunity to consider his position as a foreign artist in the then young nation of Singapore—what were the new worlds he proposed as an artist and educator? His art reveals clashes—between tradition and progress, between the old and the new—that also belong to Singapore history. Monticelli also quotes from Aldous Huxley's *Brave new world* (1931) in a series of poster boards designed after Singapore National Productivity Board advertising of the 1980s. His visual representation of an anxious yearning for progress suffused with dystopianism refers not only to Brother Joseph McNally but to Singapore itself.

11 12 Gala Porras-Kim

Gala Porras-Kim researches the relationship between archaeological items that come from Latin America and the way that they are institutionalised by art museums. She has undertaken research at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) where she studied a group of 235 ceramics made between 150 BCE and 200 CE. The museum purchased the items from collector Proctor Stafford in 1986. Today the collection still carries his name, a fact that Porras-Kim believes should instigate reflection. Why is a collection that was gained through looting sacred places in three different Mexican states still named for the person responsible for their appropriation? Why does Stafford's name appear where the names of the indigenous people who produced these objects do not? Porras-Kim engages in this discussion not only with a letter addressed to LACMA but also with a sculpture that dialogues with the aesthetic form of these ceramic objects. The sculpture is installed with a GPS tracker, reflecting on historical issues of provenance, dislocation and control in the fields of archaeology and museology.

5 Rosângela Rennó

Rosângela Rennó's research deals with photographs indirectly, not as part of a photography practice but as cultural artefacts that have their own history. She is interested in how monuments can be transformed into souvenirs, and recently began a major research project in public sculptures dedicated to the Russian revolutionary, Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924). As symbols of communism, many of these monuments have been destroyed and their ashes celebrated in countries that have separated from the Soviet Union. On the other hand, many nations continue to protect such sculptures, using them as models for the benefit of society. Using the internet and printed publications, Rennó has collected images of these monuments installed all over the world. Divided into 10 alphabetically organised concertinaed books, the Lenin inventory can be manipulated by audiences, who may seek to discover which of them are 'good' and which 'bad apples'—in other words, which of them remain and which have been destroyed? And even, which of them have gained new functions over time? Rennó's inscriptions are handwritten, and the photographs are affixed directly to the folded leaves of each book, just like a vintage travel publication.

13 Raquel Stolf

Since 2011, Raquel Stolf has been collecting news headlines that describe the socialisation of animals. In all of them, aspects of human behaviour and social organisation are ascribed to the experience of animals. In this sense, the many animals that appear in her new work, *Dream and reality*, are perceived anthropomorphically in their own existential crises and rites of passage. For *Lost and found*, Stolf presents this project for the first time in a variety of media—spoken-word audio, vinyl text adhered to the gallery walls and floor, and as a complete bilingual (Portuguese, the official language of Brazil, and English) compilation in the form of a booklet. Stolf is interested in the absurdity of the announcements as well as the vivid images they conjure in our imagination.

4 Batia Suter

Photo-books, collections and appropriations of technical images are major components of Batia Suter's art practice. Suter works mainly with images pre-existing in different printed formats. In *Lost and found* she shows for the first time an installation completely constructed from her book, *Radial grammar*, published by Roma Publications and Le Bal in 2018. Rather than enlarging a selection of the images published in its pages, she dismantled two books and used different sides of every leaf from each to create a grid of 272 images. This expansive series of black-and-white images invites the audience to create its own correspondences across the collection. While some relationships are compositional or tonal, others share the same anthropological use of a photographed subject. Any and all viewers' correlations are welcome. Close looking may confirm that Suter proposes this work as a collection of perceptions of everything in the world outside our own borders.

7 Tromarama

The art of the Tromarama collective focuses on the language of installation and how it can activate different temporal narratives. *Self-portrait* is an adaptation of an installation that was first presented at the National Gallery of Indonesia in 2018. At the ICA Singapore the work represents images of 10 items from the LASALLE College of the Arts Collection. Tromarama particularly sought out figurative sculptures and busts where information about maker, time period and provenance is little known. Their new collection of 'portraits of the unknown' physically occupies space in the form of a group of 10 totemic cylinders that propose a physical dialogue with the audience. The virtuality of the reproductions depicted on the cylinders is emphasised by an accompanying small printer that prints all tweets using '#selfportrait'. No information about the active Twitter accounts is given, providing a parallel in relations between unknown creators—of the works and of the printed tweets. The audience is invited to take copies of the printed A5 sheets, which will occupy more and more space in the gallery as the exhibition continues. A specific collection and the infinite database of the internet are thus connected.