

Asian Film Archive presents State of Motion 2019: A Fear of Monsters

Singapore, 15 January 2019

ANNEX B

A FEAR OF MONSTERS CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION AT 11 KAMPONG BUGIS

25 January – 17 February 2019

1pm – 9pm daily (except Public Holidays)

Venue: 11 Kampong Bugis, Singapore 338988

- The art exhibition brings together works by renowned contemporary Southeast Asian artists Heman Chong, Ho Tzu Nyen, Sung Tieu, Viet Le, Yason Banal and Yee I-Lann, with new commissions by Fyerool Darma, Ho Rui An, Shubigi Rao and architecture firm, Lekker. The show will present a diverse range of research practices and plural histories of monsters from the region.
- The world of on-screen monsters, new and old, is imagined through the artworks of these Southeast Asian artists whose practices have been informed by parallel careers in film, or explorations in moving image production.
- 11 Kampong Bugis is a site layered in history. The buildings where the exhibition is sited have been used as quarters for the staff of Kallang Gasworks and offices for businesses, including film production houses. Next to the exhibition is the Sri Manmatha Karuneshvarar temple which was built in 1888 by the migrant Hindu workers of Kallang Gasworks. The area around the exhibition was the site of Kallang Gasworks, which was the first facility to provide piped gas to enable street lighting in Singapore as a modern colony. In local folklore, the area along the Kallang river is rumoured to be haunted by *Pontianaks*.

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ARTWORK

2 or 3 Tigers, 2015

By **HO TZU NYEN**



Ho Tzu Nyen's *2 or 3 Tigers* (2015) responds to the Malayan folklore of the weretiger. The tiger in Ho's work is CGI animated and narrates his story through singing. His tale is a composition of his myths, cosmologies, and histories and annihilation in the age of colonialism, followed by his spectral and anthromorphic return as feared figures from history.

Like the Banana Tree at the Gate, 2016

By **YEE I-LANN**



Image credit: *Like the Banana Tree at the Gate: A Leaf in the Storm* (2016) by Yee I-Lann

Yee I-Lann's series "*Like the Banana Tree at the Gate*" examines another monster of folklore and film – the *Pontianak*. Yee studies this monster in relation to the Gerwani feminist movement. Yee imagines the *Pontianak* as a frustrated feminist figure made monstrous. She is identified, de-faced and laden by her luscious, unruly dark hair.

The Yellow Scarf, 2019

By **SHUBIGI RAO**



A new commission by Shubigi Rao excavates the horrific and entangled histories of strangler trees, our fear of the forest, dark men that come out of the forest and the assassin cult of the Thuggee (from which the modern word for 'thug' and the 1959 film *Strangers of Bombay* were based on) that was ultimately decimated by the British colonial administration.

No Gods, No Masters & Newspaper 1969 - 2017, 2019

By **SUNG TIEU**



Sung Tieu's work recovers 'lost' monsters of history. Tieu's installation is based on *Ghost Tape No. 10*, a soundtrack inspired by Hollywood horror films and that imagines a fallen Viet Cong as a ghost speaking to his comrades. The soundtrack was broadcasted on the battlefield by American GIs and used as a form of psychological warfare during the Vietnam war to scare the Viet Cong to reveal their position – making them easier to kill.

Chop-Chopped First Lady + First Daughter, 2005

By **YASON BANAL**



Yason Banal's *Chop-Chopped First Lady+ First Daughter* (2005) presents monstrosity in a less sober tone by cheekily superimposing Kris Aquino, the bloodied screen queen of Philippine slasher horror films from the 1990s, onto historical footage of Imelda Marcos.

Stairway to heaven, 2019

By **FYEROOL DARMA**



Not all monsters in the exhibition are figurative. Fyerool's *Stairway to heaven* (2018) is a tongue-in-cheek sonic exploration of the popular culture around horror films and the complex commodification of fear into friendly consumerable products. Inspired in part by the film history of the *Orang Minyak* as it was translated from a monster into a superhero in *The Oily Maniac* (1976) for the Hong Kong market by Run Run Shaw, Fyerool's installation questions the transmutation of the monster across language and market boundaries as it transforms from a fearsome warning, a figure at the fringes of society, to an everyday commodity carried in a pop song.

Student Bodies, 2019

By **HO RUI AN**



Ho Rui An's *Student Bodies* (2018) employs the cinematic logic of sound design in the creation of horror and imagines an atmosphere as a monster, an inhuman voice speaking through history that twists the human body in its collective and individual form into something truly monstrous. *Student Bodies* threads together a historical evolution of the student body from the Satsuma students of the pre-Meiji period, who were among the first students from Japan to study in the West, to the student movements of the historical counterculture movements, to contemporary horrific imaginations of the student in Japanese horror films after the Asian financial crisis. What becomes apparent as a viewer watches Ho's film installation is that the narrator of the film itself is a monster of history, a seeming ghost in the machine that is speaking through the film.

A Constellation made up of works from "Foreign Affairs" and "Abstracts from the Straits Times", 2019

By **HEMAN CHONG**

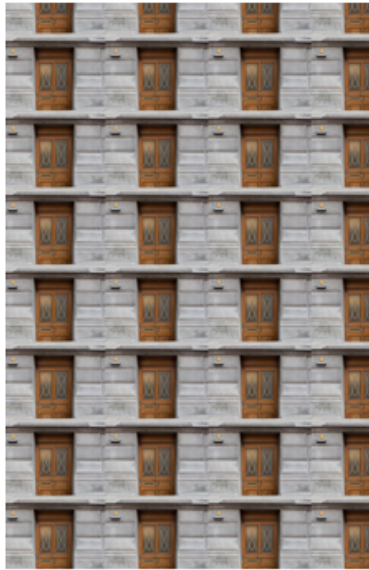


Image credit: *Foreign Affairs* #169, (2018) by Heman Chong

In *A Fear of Monsters*, the medium as much as the mundane is the form of the monster. Heman Chong's staging of selections from his series 'Foreign Affairs' and 'Abstracts from the Straits Times' appropriates the logic of the cinematic frame that doubles as a logic of the surveillance camera. Repetitive images of the 'back-doors' of embassies placed alongside Abstracts from the *Straits Times* speak to the sites of exception which define the infrastructures of power in today's society. The art work speaks to society's real fears of 'back door' actors invisible and insidiously pulling the strings behind the veil of the everyday. As representations of data, the images of the two different series reflect both the front and back stage upon which fears of international conflict, calamity and national disaster play out and are produced.

Eclipse, 2015

By **VIET LE**

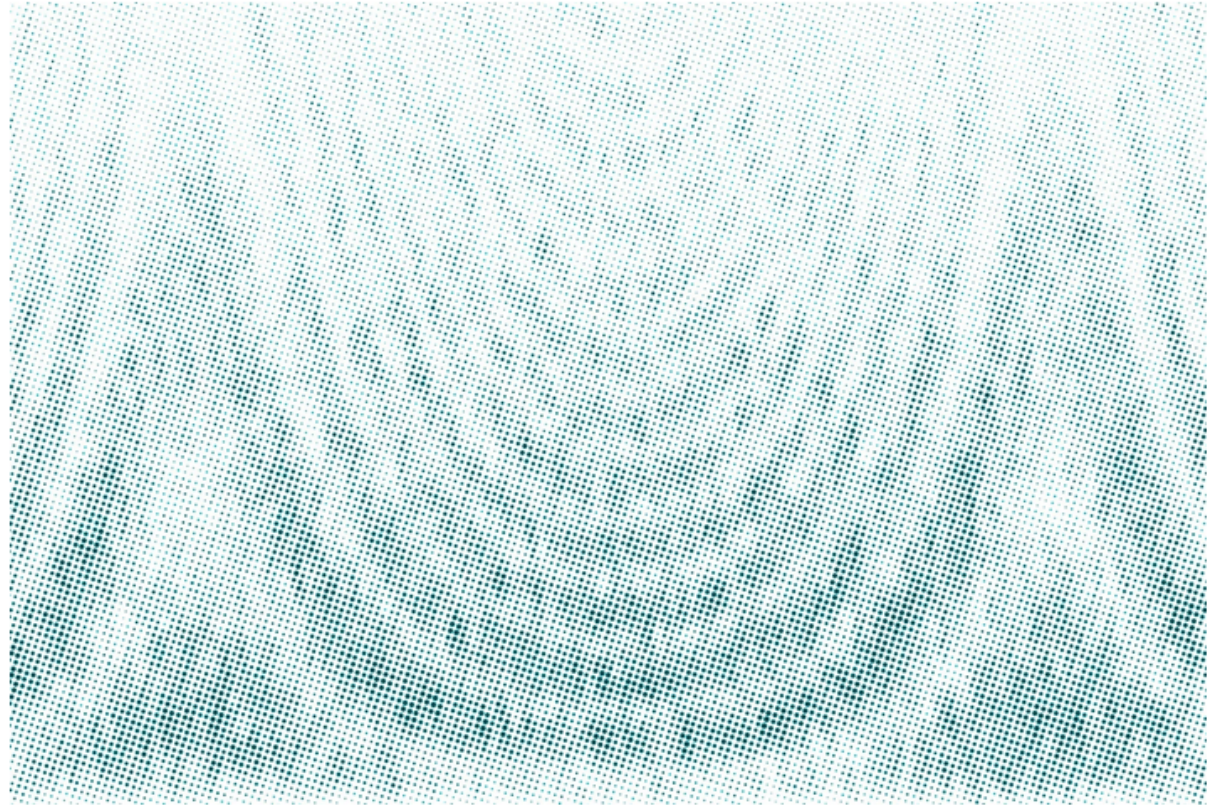


Image credit: flicker from the eclipse series (2016) by [Việt Lê](#)

Viet Le's 'Eclipse' presents a love story of longing and desire and the spirits that haunt history. Filmed in Hanoi on the 40th anniversary of the military engagements in Southeast Asia, 'Eclipse' is a love story about the spirits that haunt history. Developed with conceptual artists Nguyen Phuong Linh, Tuan Mami, Nguyen Quoc Thanh and the dancer in the film, [Duy Thanh](#), Viet Le imagines each of his collaborators as ghosts or spirits in a haunted space. The lyrics in the video and the sound are about longing and loss. It is informed by the artist's experience as a refugee of the Vietnam war and his desperate desire to want his 'country' back but finding no recourse.

Horror Vacui 2019

By **LEKKER ARCHITECTS**



An intervention into the space by architects Lekker, Horror Vacui is an atmospheric art work that measures the fear of individual viewers through the passive collection of data that we leak as we move through the city. The exhibition thus moves from outward manifestations of horror in the form of the historically inspired monster to the 'monster' in Lekker and Chong's work which is nowhere to be seen. Instead, horror is internalised, slowly creeping out of the viewer, infecting and colouring the everyday with fear.