

KALEIDOSCOPE 亚洲 ASIA

VISUAL CULTURE NOW

当下视觉文化

CAO FEI 曹斐
Magical Digital
Landscape
魔法数字风景

夜店式思维

CLUB
STATE OF
MIND

The nostalgic
revolution of
CHEN WEI

陈怀
维旧
革命

AND FEATURING
Lu Yang 陆扬
Trevor Yeung 杨沛铿
Chen Fei 陈飞
Tetsumi Kudo 工藤哲巳
Miao Ying 苗颖
Liu Shiyuan 刘诗园

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Last year, multiple century-old banyan trees that had taken root in masonry stone walls in Hong Kong were displaced—some knocked down by storms, others dug up by authorities in the name of safety, removed without public consultation. The rallying cry against this desecration of public space had the city riled up. The works of Hong Kong-based artist Trevor Yeung, comprising photographs and installations, are similarly grounded in the social conditions of intra-subjectivity and collective memory, with notions of selfhood examined through the lens of horticulture and botanic ecology while animism activates our desires, perpetually maintained and unmoored.

Enigma (all works 2015), a constellation of works shown as part of the installation Garden Cruising: It's not that easy being green, exhibited at last year's Art Basel Hong Kong, is a mise en scène of this shifting ground of desire. In a trio of photographic works—*Green Hammock*, *Garden Sitter* and *Transparent Wrap*—the furtive gaze on singular male figures puts the viewer at the border of voyeuristic intimacy. In another trio—*Blue Koi*, *Yellow Money* and *Milky Pigeon*—the lone animals depicted appear no less solitary than human bodies. Infiltrating the installation were Osmanthus floor plants that restricted the viewers' perambulation. Scraps of fabric were hung over the frames of some of the works, further frustrating and heightening the awareness of looking. The infinite textile folds echoed the hue and physical forms of the depicted subjects, projecting an etiology of immanent desire, a longing for the other. Our cover is blown when, in the photograph titled *The Enigma*, a classically handsome man acknowledges the artist's (and, by extension, our own) gaze with a gregarious smile. Thus, viewing was choreographed into a perceptual cruising ground, though one that is

Trevor Yeung (Chinese, b. 1988) is an artist who lives and works in Hong Kong. He is represented by Blindspot Gallery and Gallery EXIT, Hong Kong.

Jo-ey Tang is an artist, writer and curator. He was a former curator at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris. His work is on view in "Le Temps de l'Audace et de l'Engagement—de leur Temps (5)" at IAC Villeurbanne, France, through 8 May.

Image:
Live in Hong Kong, Born in Dongguan, 2015
Courtesy of the artist and Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong

less about sexual culmination than the projection of intimacy, its frustration and gratification. In Jean Genet's film *Un chant d'amour* (1950), two men consummated their desire by passing cigarette smoke through a straw in adjoining prison cells, the peephole's ocularcentrism replaced by something somatic and pneumatic. Similarly in Yeung's work, the silent operation of obstructed viewing seizes on this tension, as we participate as accomplices in the stronghold of desire.

Is desire the antidote to loneliness, or do they merely uphold each other? Yeung is well aware of their entanglement. Lonesome George, the male tortoise of the Galápagos Pinta Island that went extinct in 2012, was the cipher in the project *Lonesome and George* presented at Hong Kong's Spring Workshop last year. Through street flyers, Grindr app and acquaintances, he solicited anecdotes from individuals who were "receiving pressure from [their] parents and relatives," "the only one who can remedy this situation," and "still hiding in your shell." On the flyers was *Portrait of Lonesome George*, a cigarette-wielding man cloaked in shadows and exhaling at the edge of a forest. It recalled the grittiness of Brassai and the abandon of Wolfgang Tillmans, with the photographic grain threatening to take over, deracinating desire under the tyranny of conformity. Through the vocalization of trauma and psychological damage, all participants could perhaps reclaim their agencies, bonded by kinship—but as if warding off psychic invasion, these stories were neither published nor disclosed. In Yeung's practice, the occlusion of information activates privileged information, resistance and built-in frustration as the tendrilous routes towards transformation, and the aggregate of our sentiments, social, political and amorous. ☺

“NOTIONS OF SELFHOOD
EXAMINED THROUGH THE
LENS OF HORTICULTURE AND
BOTANIC ECOLOGY”