

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**“Something There and Never There” by Leung Chi Wo****23 Jan – 10 Mar 2018****Opening Reception: 20 Jan 2018, Saturday, 4 – 6:30pm**
Artist will be present.Venue: Blindspot Gallery (15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong)
Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm (Sunday and Monday by appointment only);
closed on public holidays

“Something There and Never There” is the solo exhibition of Leung Chi Wo, centered around the tumultuous year of 1967 in Hong Kong. Linking his own biography to the history of the city, Leung constructs parallel worlds that connect vastly different events, characters and objects together. Civilian riots and vintage Volkswagen, student protests and Charlie Chaplin’s film, political propaganda and songs by The Beatles: they all crossed paths by coincidence without our knowledge or entering into official history. By using diverse media including photography, video, and installations comprising of found images, music and objects from 1967, Leung performs a deep engagement with a subjective history through archival research, conceptual intervention and poetic re-imagination. The artist demonstrates that history is full of ambivalence, absurdity and ambiguities, and that through re-enacting and reconstructing these episodes in 1967, one can as well reflect on the current socio-political situation in Hong Kong.



Leung Chi Wo was born in January 1968, after peacetime had returned and the protests had more or less ended in December 1967. Coinciding with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in mainland China that lasted from 1966 to 1976, the year 1967 was a canonical moment in the rarely violent colonial history of Hong Kong. Pro-Chinese communists and pro-colonial establishment both launched vigorous propaganda campaigns to influence and mobilise the public, even resulting in the infiltration of anti-colonialists in public schools.

Blue Volkswagen (2018) is a diptych photograph of a vintage die-cast toy car from the original 1967 *Hot Wheels* series made in Hong Kong. Referred to familiarly as a “Beetle”, this very same model was the automobile in which vocal anti-leftist radio commentator Lam Bun was burnt alive by a firebomb delivered by a leftist death squad on 24 August 1967.

In *People’s Flower* (2018), Leung Chi Wo further develops the historical co-occurrences of the Lam Bun attack by combining “Volks” (people), the first half of a 1967 vintage Volkswagen metal script which came from the rear side of the “Beetle”, and a J. Corelli acrylic Water Lily manufactured in Hong Kong in 1967. The *People’s Flower* becomes at once a fabricated fiction that was artificially imagined and combined by the artist, and an archival object brought together by history and fate.





A Countess from Hong Kong (2016) is a kinetic installation showing the school uniform of the Belilios Public School, a traditional elite grammar school founded by the British colonial government. The school uniform swings side to side to a spinning record silently playing *This is My Song*, the theme song of *A Countess from Hong Kong* (1967), the last film directed by Chaplin that was set in the backdrop of the Vietnam War and the Cultural Revolution. The fate of one of the arrested and jailed Belilios students resembled that of the Countess in Chaplin's film, who left Hong Kong and emigrated to the West, threading together the parallel themes of statehood and belonging, civil disobedience and popular culture.

What you need is a little growing up (2016) is a lightbox with an image taken in 1967 showing an anonymous woman posing in front of the island view in Lugard Road on the Peak. The sentence "What you need is a little growing up" engraved on the Plexiglas surface is the admonition from the magistrate to a 17-year-old girl found guilty of possession of a fake bomb. By juxtaposing the photographic portraiture of the leisure class to the punishing words of the criminal justice system, the artist plays with the disparate diversity in people's lived experiences of Hong Kong in 1967.

Through the exhibition "Something There and Never There", Leung Chi Wo materialises a non-linear and cyclical notion of time, anchored in a certain space. Past and present events are analogies that coexist in parallel planes where time is elastic, and happenings sometimes coincide and crisscross, and sometimes run away. Staunchly against the teleological notion of progress, the artist realises that history is looping, and prompts us to see the analogy between what happened before and what is happening now.



The artist will be present at the opening reception. Interviews are welcome and can be arranged.

About Leung Chi Wo

Born in 1968 in Hong Kong, Leung Chi Wo studied culture of photography at Centro di Ricerca e Archiviazione della Fotografia in Italy in 1991 and obtained a Master of Fine Arts from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1997. Using photography, texts, found objects, performance and installation, Leung Chi Wo combines historical exploration with conceptual inquiry, to reinforce our doubts about memory, power system and the ambivalence of history. Focusing on the 1967 anti-colonial riots in Hong Kong, Leung continues to research different social, cultural and political incidents that took place in that year. By synthesizing and collecting vintage objects, archival materials and images, Leung juxtaposes quotidian events against parallel moments of political instability.

His works have been exhibited at major international museums and institutions including Tate Modern in London, NRW Forum in Dusseldorf, Museu da Imagem e do Som in São Paulo, The International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) and Queens Museum in New York. He represented Hong Kong for its first-time participation in Venice Biennale in 2001, and also participated in other biennials such as Shanghai Biennale, Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\Architecture in Shenzhen, China, Marrakech Biennale in Morocco, and triennials in Guangzhou, China and Manchester, United Kingdom. He had his first survey exhibition at OCT Contemporary Art Terminal in Shenzhen, China in 2015.

Leung Chi Wo is the co-founder of Para Site. Leung is currently Associate Professor at the School of Creative Media of the City University of Hong Kong.

About Blindspot Gallery

Set up in 2010, Blindspot Gallery is a Hong Kong-based contemporary art gallery. The gallery began with a primary focus on contemporary photography and image-based art, and has evolved to include diverse media in contemporary art. The gallery represents both emerging and established artists, mainly from Hong Kong and the region but also beyond.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. Lesley Kwok at 2517 6238 or by email info@blindspotgallery.com

Image captions:

Leung Chi Wo, *Blue Volkswagen*, 2018, Archival inkjet prints in wooden frames, embroidery on fabric, 100 x 93 x 25 cm

Leung Chi Wo, *People's Flower*, 2018, Vintage acrylic flower, synthetic leather-mounted cushion, vintage signage, automotive paint stainless steel plinth, 116 x 40.3 x 40.3 cm

Leung Chi Wo, *A Countess from Hong Kong*, 2016, Belilios Public School uniform, cloth hanger, 1967 Hong Kong 50-cent coins, vinyl record *This Is My Song* by Petula Clark (1967), motor, 134 x 68 x 19 cm

Leung Chi Wo, *What you need is a little growing up.*, 2016, Duratrans, LED steel lightbox, engraving on acrylic, 75.5 x 56 x 8 cm
(Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery)