

## For Immediate Release

### Blindspot Gallery to participate in Frieze London 2021 Presenting Sin Wai Kin's *It's Always You*

15 - 17 October, 2021

Frieze Focus | Booth H22, The Regent's Park, London, UK

Forming a four-piece boyband whose members comprise of masculine drag characters, **Sin Wai Kin** presents *It's Always You* (2021), a new project composing of a dual-channel music video and various boyband ephemera that celebrate queer joy. Sin adopts the role of all four members in their boyband; each assuming an independent persona that strives to take on radically open positions, an embodiment of the multiplicity of identities that transcend man-made binaries.

Masculine drag marks a turning point for the artist who recently revealed a return to their gender-neutral Cantonese birth name, **Sin Wai Kin** 單慧乾 (formerly known as Victoria Sin). The artist describes this turn as one of "trying things on, rather than taking things off". While Sin's drag queen persona stripped bare the expectations of femininity and its relationship to womanhood, their drag king modality evolves space to experiment and play with fantasy in masculinity. The boyband is a carrier bag of sorts; the artist becomes gatherer and forager of characters, dances, fictions, truths, histories, and possible futures.

Boybands are important coming-of-age stepping stones. The boyband phenomenon of the late 1990s marked a moment when androgynous queer persona (think the young Nick Carter in early **Backstreet Boys**) was made visible and actively marketed



Sin Wai Kin, *It's Always You* teaser, 2021 (Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery.)

to the populace.<sup>1</sup> Identities are revealed as products that are strategically commodified for mass consumption. In keeping, "shipping" in the contemporary K-pop fandom is the fan-fictional practice of imagining idols within romantic, homoerotic sexual relationships, popular in the fandom of boy groups such as **EXO** and **BTS**. "Shipping" becomes a site to renegotiate present circumstances and channels an utterly queer expression of joy and longing for something that may be.<sup>2</sup> Thus embedded in every boyband is a codified queerness that subverts and troubles. The expanded affective space of the sovereign fandom has a restorative power in a deeply fractured society, as seen in the feverish ubiquity of **Mirror** in Hong Kong.<sup>3</sup> Boyband is the euphonious promise that disparate individuals can work together in a eusocial community, a collective striving under a fraught future.

<sup>1</sup>Daryl Jamieson. "Marketing Androgyny: The Evolution of the Backstreet Boys." *Popular Music*, vol. 26, no. 2, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 245-58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4500316>.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Baudinette. "Idol Shipping Culture: Exploring Queer Sexuality Among Fans of K-Pop." [Recorded Lecture] <https://thomasbaudinette.wordpress.com/2020/08/31/recorded-lecture-idol-shipping-culture-exploring-queer-sexuality-among-fans-of-k-pop/>

<sup>3</sup>Vivian Wang, Joy Dong. "This Boy Band Is The Joy That Hong Kong Needs Right Now." *New York Times*, Aug 12, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/12/world/asia/hong-kong-mirror-band.html>

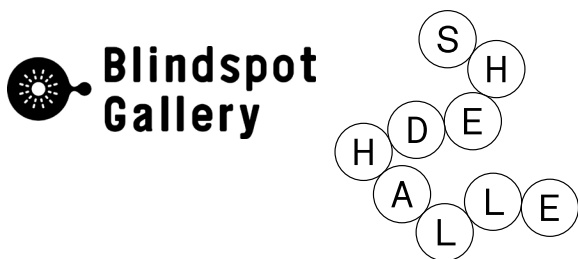
Keeping with time-tested boyband tradition, the quadruple of Sin in "It's Always You" consists of recognizable tropes:

1. **The Universe**, the pretty boy, is inspired by the Zing warrior character in Cantonese opera and classic Hong Kong stars like Leslie Cheung. He is a fierce god that creates and devours worlds with his hips and smile. The Universe made his debut in *A Dream of Wholeness in Parts* (2021), Sin's most recent film touring with the British Art Show 9.
2. **The Storyteller** is the serious one, the older boy. Authoritative in his utterances, he disseminates the paradox of fact and fiction as a news reporter. He made his first appearance in *Today's Top Stories* (2020) commissioned by the Tank Art Museum, Shanghai as part of the exhibition *More, More More*.
3. **The One** is the childish one, the playful trickster. With skin the hue of the sky and the sun disk as his third eye, he reevaluates the edge between self and world, as the sky opens into the silhouette of the body in the face. The One originally appeared in *The Many Faced God/dess* (2021) commissioned by Maison Populaire, Montreuil.
4. **Wai King** is the hunk, the body with unparalleled sexual confidence. Wai King is Wai Kin's hypermasculine fantasy idol, the heartthrob whose being quickens your heart.

Visitors to the booth are promised the full fangirl/boy/by experience. Lifesize cut-out boards of the four characters greet viewers with ample photo opportunities (#itsalwaysyou2021 @sinforvictory). Perspex-framed posters signed by respective members are must-have collectibles for all loyal fans. And a dual channel installation including karaoke style lyrics for viewers to sing along to features The Boyband's hit single, "It's Always You".

After all, the boyband is an ontological paradox, a being where individuals become one. In whatever name, gender, iteration or configuration, Sin Wai Kin articulates again and again, whatever it is, it's always you.

*It's Always You* is jointly commissioned by Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong and Shedhalle, Zurich and is being exhibited in Shedhalle, Zurich as part of the group exhibition "Protozone 4: Extra Worlding" from September 17th to October 31st, 2021.



#### About Sin Wai Kin

Sin Wai Kin (fka Victoria Sin) (b.1991, Toronto, Canada) is an artist using speculative fiction within performance, moving image, writing, and printmaking to interrupt normative processes of desire, identification, and objectification. Sin uses drag as a practice of purposeful embodiment questioning the reification and ascription of ideal images within technologies of representation and systems of looking. Drawing from close personal encounters of looking and wanting, their work presents heavily constructed fantasy narratives on the often unsettling experience of the physical within the social body. Sin currently lives and works in London, UK.

#### 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. Holly Wong at 2517 6238 or by email [info@blindspotgallery.com](mailto:info@blindspotgallery.com)