

FRIEZE



★ IT'S  
ALWAYS  
YOU

*SIN WAI KIN* 單慧乾

15 - 17 October 2021

Regent's Park, London

Frieze Focus | Stand H22



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.



Installation view at Frieze London 2021



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[video still]

[Click here to view video](#)

*It's Always You*  
2021

4K Dual-channel video  
4' 05"  
Edition of 5 + 2AP



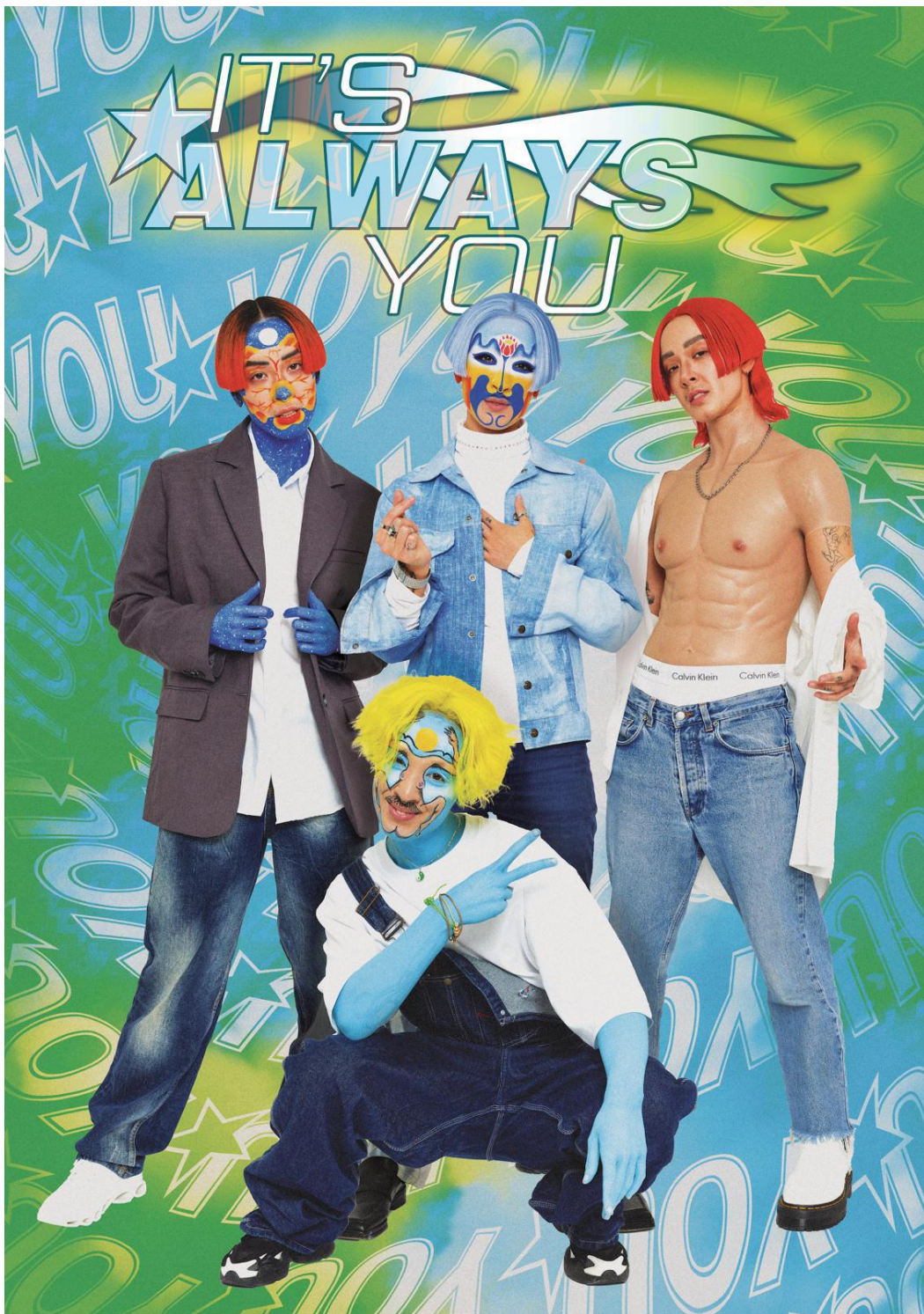
Boybands are important coming-of-age stepping stones. The boyband phenomenon of the late 1990s marked a moment when androgynous queer persona (think the young Nick Carter in early **Backstreet Boys**) was made visible and actively marketed to the populace.<sup>1</sup> Identities are revealed as products 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**.<sup>2</sup> “Shipping” becomes a site to renegotiate present circumstances and channels an utterly queer expression of joy and longing for something that may be. 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>





IT'S  
ALWAYS  
YOU

*It's Always You Signed Poster (Collective)*

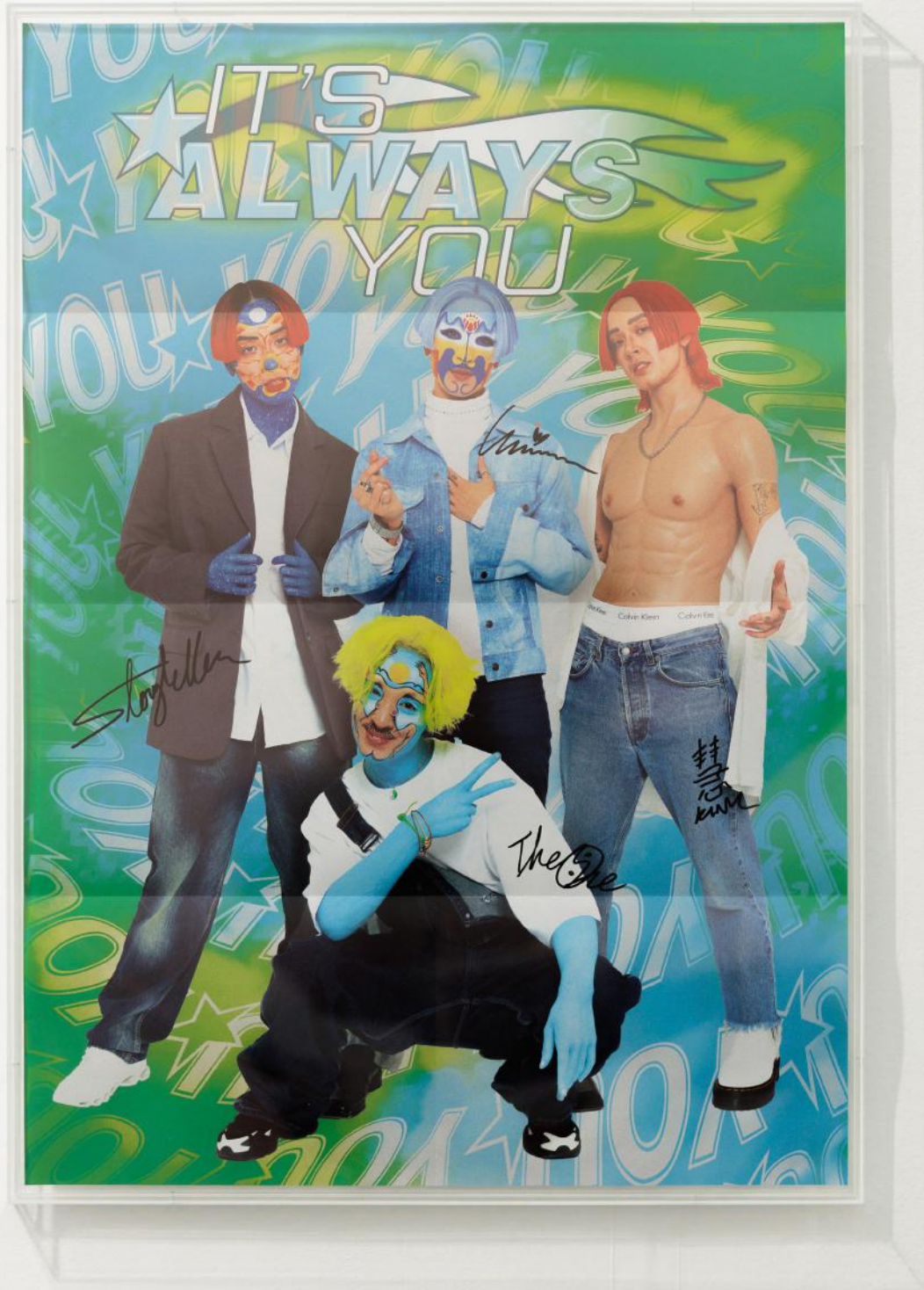
2021

UV cured ink on matt white back poster paper, acrylic ink, acrylic showcase

85.1 x 60.4 x 4 cm

Edition of 6 + 2AP

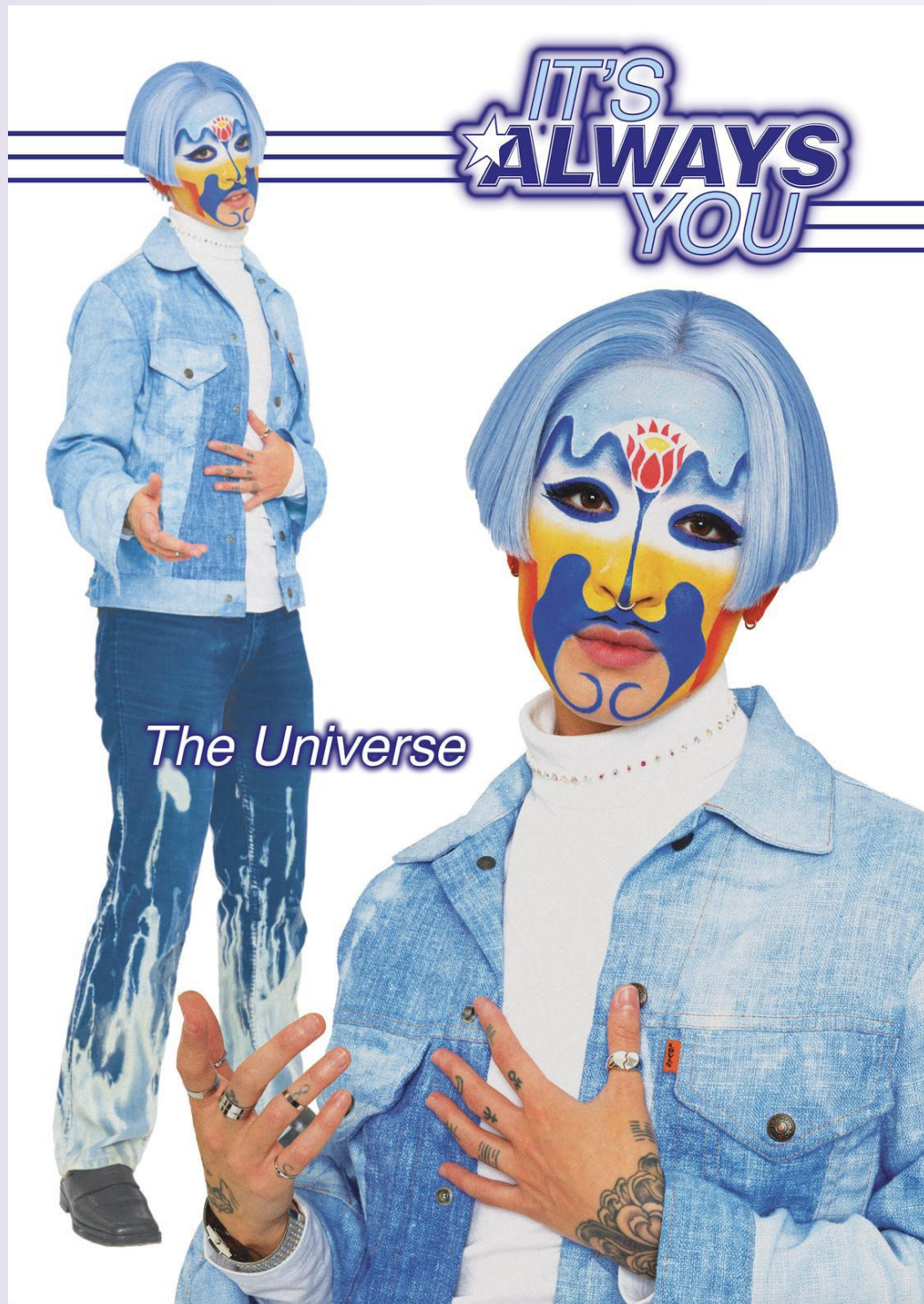




**The Universe**, the pretty boy, is inspired by the Zing warrior character in Cantonese opera and classic Hong Kong stars like Leslie Cheung. Rivers, flowers and roots foreground mountains and a starry planetary system in the face of The Universe. He challenges the binaries of the self and the other, the subject and the object, the individual and its context. Making his debut in *A Dream of Wholeness in Parts* (2021), Sin's most recent film touring with the British Art Show 9, his internal thoughts speak to him via the channel of external mediums such as a tree and a bowl of wonton noodles, his mind operating internally and externally in an attempt to blur and erase the boundaries of these binaries. The Universe is a fierce god that creates and devours worlds with his hips and smile.



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YOU



IT'S  
ALWAYS  
YOU

*It's Always You Signed Poster (The Universe)*  
2021

UV cured ink on matt white back poster paper, acrylic ink, acrylic showcase  
85.1 x 60.4 x 4 cm  
Edition of 6 + 2AP



**The Universe** in *A Dream of Wholeness in Parts* (2021)

[video still]

IT'S  
★ ALWAYS  
YOU

*Wanna*



*The Universe*



**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*. Adopting the role of a news anchor who recites philosophical propositions that are contradictory but equally true, The Storyteller is granted the authority to disseminate narratives, examining the idea that reality can often be indistinguishable from illusion and that there is no single truth within the mechanisms of the universe.



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*The Storyteller*



*IT'S*  
**ALWAYS**  
*YOU*

*It's Always You Signed Poster (The Storyteller)*  
2021

UV cured ink on matt white back poster paper, acrylic ink, acrylic showcase  
85.1 x 60.4 x 4 cm  
Edition of 6 + 2AP



**The Storyteller** in *Today's Top Stories* (2020)

[video still]



*The Storyteller*



*Storyteller*

IT'S  
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YOU

**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 mouth doubling as an orifice for the vagina, his moustache the figure's pubic hair. The One originally appeared in *The Many Faced God/dess* (2021) commissioned by Maison Populaire, Montreuil. Beyond the false dichotomy of the mind and body, Sin explores the physical boundaries that our bodies bear and how our limits of perception extend into the space around us, claiming "the body is a field of changing sensations, the mind open like the sky."



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IT'S  
ALWAYS  
YOU

*It's Always You Signed Poster (The One)*  
2021

UV cured ink on matt white back poster paper, acrylic ink, acrylic showcase  
85.1 x 60.4 x 4 cm  
Edition of 6 + 2AP



**The One** in *The Many Faced God/dess* (2021)

[video still]

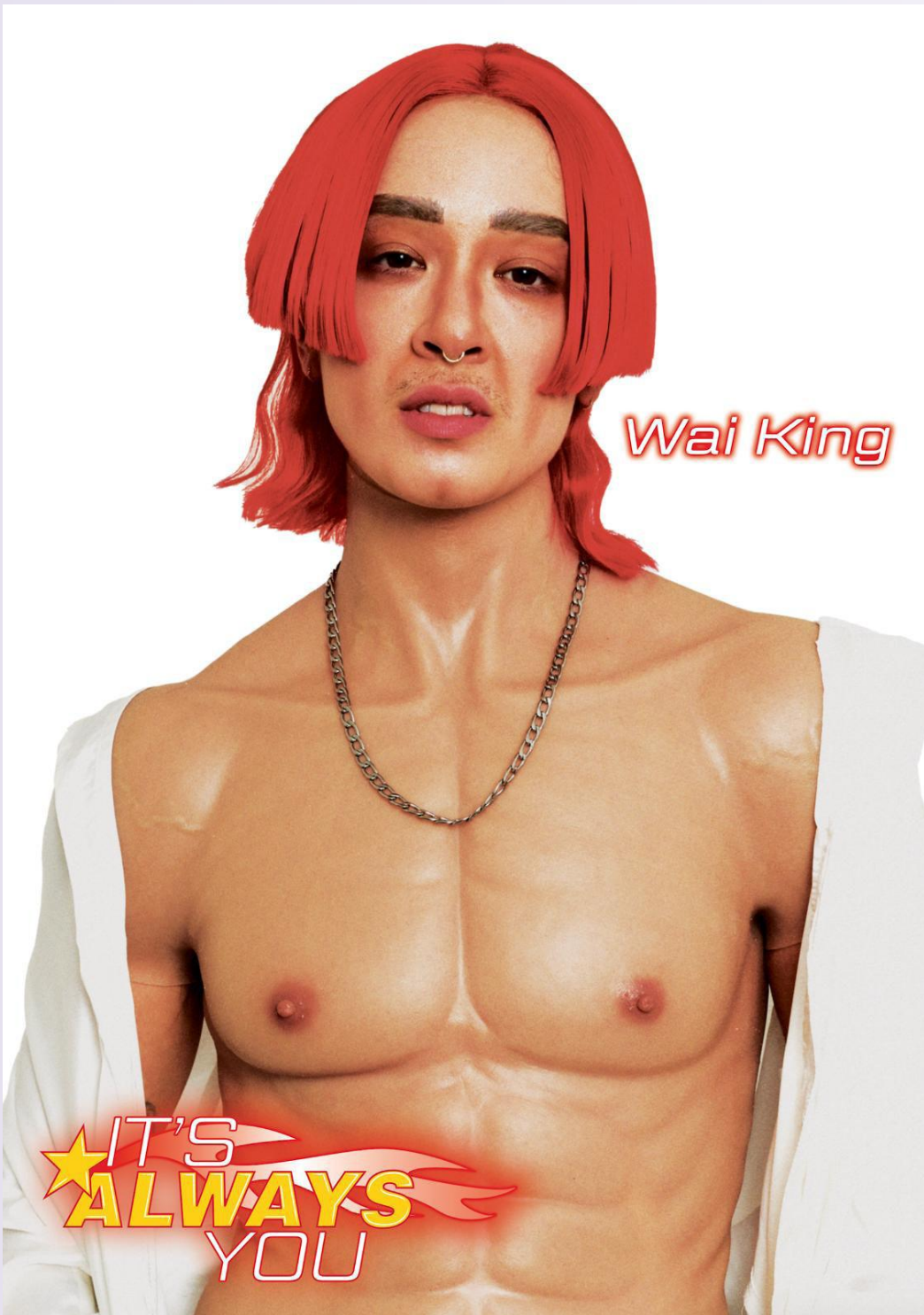


1997  
The One

**Wai King** is the hunk, the body with unparalleled sexual confidence. Imbued with the sex appeal of a 90s boyband fuckboy Wai King is Wai Kin's hypermasculine fantasy idol, the heartthrob whose being quickens your heart. Sin straddles both spectrums in attempts to deconstruct the artist's personal binaries. Formerly known as Victoria Sin, their exploration in masculine drag also marks a turning point for the artist who recently revealed a return to their gender-neutral Cantonese birth name. Wai King's character provides a pathway for Sin to decontextualize the way naming, pronouns and stereotypes have shaped their understanding of the world on a personal level.



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Wai King

IT'S  
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YOU

*It's Always You Signed Poster (Wai King)*  
2021

UV cured ink on matt white back poster paper, acrylic ink, acrylic showcase  
85.1 x 60.4 x 4 cm  
Edition of 6 +2AP



Character development of **Wai King** in *Total Fabrication* (2020)

[video still]



#  
急  
KING

Wai King

★ IT'S  
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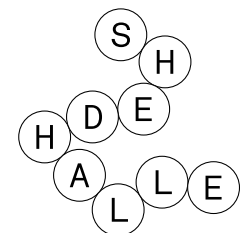




Visitors to the booth are promised the full fangirl/boy/by experience. Lifesize cut-out boards of the four characters greet viewers with ample photo opportunities (#itsalwaysyou2021 @sinforvictory). Perspex-framed posters signed by respective members are must-have collectibles for all loyal fans. And 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.



★ IT'S  
ALWAYS  
YOU



*It's Always You Cutouts*  
2021

Set of 4, UV cured ink on foamex  
Dimensions variable  
Edition of 6 + 2AP



## 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's performances and works were shown in international exhibitions and programmes, including "British Art Show 9" (UK, 2021); "INFERNO" (ICA, London, 2020); "Today's Top Stories" (Tank Museum, Shanghai, China, 2020); "Total Fabrication" (Works and Process, Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA, 2020); "Age of You" (MOCA, Toronto, Canada, 2019); "La vie des chose", MOMENTA biennale de l'image (Montreal, Canada, 2019); "Kiss My Genders" (Hayward Gallery, London, UK, 2019); "Meetings on Art", the 58th Venice Biennale (Venice, Italy, 2019); "Rising up in the infinite sky", Sophia Al-Maria: BCE (Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK, 2019); "Do Disturb" (Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France, 2019); "PLANTSEX, General Ecology" (Serpentine Galleries, London, UK, 2019); "DRAG" (Hayward Gallery, London, UK, 2018); "The sky as an image, an image as a net" (Serpentine Park Nights, London, UK, 2018); "Swinging Out Over the Earth" (Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK, 2018); "Indifferent Idols" (Taipei Contemporary Art Center, Taipei, 2018); "We Share the Same Tears" (Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK, 2018); "Glitch Feminism" (ICA, London, UK, 2017); "TATE EXCHANGE: GENDER TALKS" (Tate Modern, London, UK, 2017).

Sin currently lives and works in London.



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