

For Immediate Release

## ***Soy Dreams of Milk***

Featured Artists: Patty Chang, Michael Ho, Lap-See Lam, Tan Jing, Zadie Xa, Xiyadie

Curated by Nick Yu

13 September - 29 October 2022

**Opening Reception:** 10 September 2022; Saturday; 4:00-6:30pm

Venue: Blindspot Gallery (15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong)

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10:30am to 6:30pm (Sunday and Monday, by appointment only); closed on public holidays

Blindspot gallery is pleased to present *Soy Dreams of Milk*, a group exhibition of 6 East Asian artists that explores the complex experiences of migration, movement, and diasporic worlding. The exhibition title entangles a compact imagery comprising of universal substances, relating "soy", a legume endemic to East Asia and a major export food crop in the Americas; "milk", a white mammalian fluid evocative of the biblical promise land "flowing with milk and honey"; and "dream", a cherished aspiration or a series of scenes and sensations occurring unconsciously in the mind. In its surrealist assemblage, *Soy Dreams of Milk* attempts to stage the complex sensorium conjured by the restlessly wandering subject. What is the experience of leaving, of being diaspora, and of returning? Why are you here, and what are your dreams?

The selection of 6 artists in *Soy Dreams of Milk* presents a sample of a diverse network of migration routes. Not only do we have artists speaking from a traditional diasporic perspective of people of Asian origins emigrating and making home in the West, but we also have artists speaking of repatriating from Southeast Asia or migrating internally within China. Thinking fluidly by viewing migration as natural history in a non-anthropocentric lens, *Soy Dreams of Milk* posits animal and species migration as part and parcel of a continuously unfolding ecological archive. This story is besieged by climate change and geopolitical forces, but vivaciously full of aspirations, fantasies, perils, and heartbreak.

Collectively, artists in *Soy Dreams of Milk* articulates an aesthetic of animist, mnemonic, and elegiac forms that expand on the senses and pathos of being diaspora. Embodying the fantasy of travel, the journey of migration takes us to faraway countries, telling many myths and adventures, promising or shattering the illusion of a good life. **Zadie Xa** paints a scene depicting a fantastical procession of shapeshifting animals, female shaman, and shadowy spirits, creating a world centered on the folkloric imagination of a distant ancestral land. **Patty Chang** ritualistically washes the body of a beached whale in Canadian Newfoundland and a stranded boat in the dried-up Aral Sea, meditating on the fragments of mortality and cyclicity in a global trans-species movement.



Zadie Xa in collaboration with Benito Mayor Vallejo, *Parade*, 2021, Oil on linen, bleached and dyed denim on handmade cherrywood frames, 200 x 325 x 6cm. (Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery.)



Lap-See Lam in collaboration with Wingyee Wu, *Mother's Tongue* (film still), 2018, 3D-animation, HD video and stereo sound, 17'42". (Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery.)

Living and dying along the way, artists summon ghostly scaffolding, messy signifiers, and malleable vessels of cultural symbols in the process of emigration, assimilation, and acculturation. **Lap-See Lam** uses 3D-scan to capture the leaky interior details of Chinese restaurants in Stockholm, revealing the glitchy cultural transmission across generations and regions. **Tan Jing** creates a multi-sensorial account of her family's history of repatriating from Thailand to China by reincarnating her grandfather as a dog who gathers memory traces through smell, sight, and touch.

Cruising to waves, yearning to be touched, and longing for love, this sensualizing journey is nonetheless filled with queer jouissance and salty dreams. **Xiyadie**, the Siberian butterfly, channels homoerotic desire in the traditional craft of papercuts, creating an earnest expression of sexuality and yearning for freedom at the root of his emigration to the capital city. In his oil paintings executed en recto and verso, **Michael Ho** lays bare the fragility of cross-cultural relationality and meaning making, whereby leather cowboy boots belie an alienated Asian masculinity, and the mighty dragon claws devolve into indelible chicken feet.

Thinking in Hong Kong, a city built on intersectional waves of immigration and presently witnessing another wave of outgoing emigration, to look at migration expansively is integral to cultivating an idea of what it means to have belonging here, to be "from" here. People tend to think of themselves as special and their cohort the "chosen generation." Against such egocentrism, seeing that our epoch is extraordinary but neither exceptional nor unique, it is possible to forge kinship with other immigrant communities and solidarity with other movements.



Xiyadie, *Gate (Tiananmen)*, 2016, Papercut with water-based dye and Chinese pigments on Xuan paper, 140 x 140 cm. (Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery.)

### 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 mainly emerging and established Chinese and Asian artists from the region, but also beyond.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. Sharon Fung at 2517 6238 or by email [sharon@blindspotgallery.com](mailto:sharon@blindspotgallery.com)

### About the Curator

#### Nick Yu (b.1990, Hong Kong)

Nick Yu is a trilingual curator, writer, and researcher from Hong Kong. His artist-centric curatorial practice focuses on gender discourses and biopolitics at the intersection of decolonial struggles, movement of peoples, and history of ideas. His exhibition projects include "Soy Dreams of Milk" (2022), a group exhibition centred on migration experiences of the Asian diaspora; "Play and Loop" (2020-2022), an ongoing video screening programme, and "Holy Mosses" (2019), a group exhibition exploring non-anthropocentric queer eco-aesthetics spanning non-binary ancient mythologies and asexual post-humanist technologies. As a writer, he contributes reviews to ArtAsiaPacific and Ocula, in addition to producing all the bilingual curatorial texts for Blindspot Gallery. He is currently the Associate Director of Blindspot Gallery.

## About the Artists

### Patty Chang (b. 1972, San Leandro, US)

Patty Chang works in performance, video, writing, and installation. Her work has a capacity to explore complex subjects nearly simultaneously, as does life. Her work has been exhibited internationally at such institutions as the Museum of Modern Art (New York, US, 2014); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York, US, 2011); New Museum of Contemporary Art (New York, US, 2005); BAK BAK- basis voor actuele kunst (Utrecht, the Netherlands, 2011); the Hammer Museum (Los Angeles, US, 2005); Chinese Arts Centre (Manchester, England, 2005); the M+ Museum (Hong Kong, 2015); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco, US, 2011); and the Moderna Museet (Stockholm, Sweden, 2006). Chang's work received a 2003 award from the Rockefeller Foundation and a 2012 Creative Capital award.

Chang currently lives and works in Los Angeles, US.

### Michael Ho (b.1991, Arnhem, Netherlands)

Michael Ho graduated from the Architectural Association in 2019. As a second-generation immigrant from China, Ho's works investigate the notions of the Chinese diaspora, cultural mismatch, and subsequently cultural rediscovery through his painting practice. He employs a specific technique of painting from back to front, superimposing diluted images with resolved brush strokes. Ho's critical engagement with the orientalist images and tropes is multifold: from the playful to the political and from the erotic to the domestic. His solo exhibition with his previous work partner Chiyan Ho includes: *Kūnlún, V.O Curations*, London, 2021. His works have been featured in group exhibitions at ICA, London; Guts Gallery, London; Gallery Vacancy, Shanghai; Intersticio, Madrid; Soft Opening, London; and Delphian Gallery, London. His film projects have been screened at Piccadilly Circus, London and at the ICA, London. Ho's newly commissioned video work by FVU, London will be part of the group exhibition *Hollow Earth: Art, Caves & the Subterranean Imaginary* on view in September 2022 at Nottingham Contemporary, co-organized with Hayward Gallery Touring.

Ho currently lives and works in London, UK.

### Lap-See Lam (b.1990, Stockholm, Sweden)

Lap-See Lam holds an MFA from the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, Sweden. In 2020 Lam was listed in American *Forbes* as one of Europe's "thirty under thirty" most promising people in arts and culture. In 2023 she has upcoming solo exhibitions at Portikus, Frankfurt am Main and at Studio Voltaire, London. Recent solo exhibitions include *Bonniers Konsthall* (2022); *Trondheim Kunstmuseum* (2021); *Skellefteå Konsthall, Skellefteå* (2019) and *Moderna Museet Malmö* (2018–2019). She has taken part in group exhibitions at venues including *KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin* (2022); *Power Station of Art, Shanghai* (2021–2022); *PinchukArtCentre* (2021); *Performa 19* in New York (2019); *Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris* (2019); *Luleå Biennial* (2018); *Kópavogur Art Museum, Kópavogur* (2018); and *Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen* (2017). Lam was the winner of *Dagens Nyheter Culture Prize* in 2021 and a recipient of the *Maria Bonnier Dahlin Foundation Grant* in 2017. In 2021 she was shortlisted for the *Future Generation Art Prize*.

Lam currently lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden.

### Tan Jing (b.1992, Guangdong, China)

Tan Jing obtained her BA in Chelsea College of Art in 2015 and her MA at the Royal College of Art in 2017. Tan is keen on experimenting with textures, materials, and form within sculpture and installation. Her practice combines her expertise in the unpredictable composition of materials and techniques, with her whimsical intertwinement of elements from biology and folklore. She often creates scenarios of the surreal striking the viewer aesthetically and psychologically, aiming to make visible and sensible the trauma and solitude of individuals in society, along with the object and space respectively. Her works have been shown internationally in institutions such as *HB Station, Guangzhou* (2022), *Para Site, Hong Kong* (2021), *Guangdong Times Museum, Guangzhou* (2020), *Alt Handelsschule, Germany* (2018), *Spielzeug Welten Museum, Basel* (2018), *Camden Art Center project, London* (2017), and more.

Tan currently lives and works in Guangdong, China.

### Zadie Xa (b.1983, Vancouver, Canada)

Zadie Xa was born in Vancouver, Canada on unceded, ancestral and continually asserted territories of the *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish), and *Səl̓íl̓wətaʔ/Selilwitulh* (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations and is now based in London, UK. Xa earned an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art in 2014 and a BFA at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2007. Her practice focuses on familial legacies, interspecies communication and diasporic worlding. Throughout her practice, Xa uses water and marine ecologies as metaphors for exploring the unknown whilst also alluding to abstract notions of homeland.

Xa's practice is highly collaborative, and she has developed ongoing exchanges with dancers, and musicians. Since 2006, Xa has worked closely with artist Benito Mayor Vallejo. Together they have staged live performance, moving image, installations and painting. Xa is slated to open her solo exhibition at *Whitechapel Gallery, London*, in September 2022.

Xa currently lives and works in London, UK.

### Xiyadie (b. 1963, Shaanxi, China)

Xiyadie is a self-taught traditional Chinese papercut artist who started creating works with homoerotic themes to tell his narrative of transformation. Xiyadie means *Siberian Butterfly*, a name he chose after his move to Beijing as a migrant worker in 2005, where he found an accepting community in the burgeoning gay subcultural scene. As he relates, the *Siberian Butterfly* is a northern creature. Surviving in the harshest conditions, it maintains its vanity and pursuit of freedom in an environment that does not lend political agency or representation to queer-identifying people.

Since his debut solo exhibition at the *Beijing LGBT Center* (2010), Xiyadie's works have been shown extensively. He was a participating artist in *Spectrosynthesis: Asian LGBTQ Issues and Art Now* at *BACC, Bangkok* (2019) and *MOCA, Taipei* (2017) marking the largest survey exhibitions of its kind in Asia. His works have also been shown at *Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw*; *Long March Space, Beijing* (2019); *Gwangju Biennale* (2018); *Nome Gallery, Berlin* (2018); *Para Site, Hong Kong* (2017); *Galerie Verbeeck - Van Dyck, Antwerp* (2015); *Topenmuseum, Amsterdam* (2015); *Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg* (2013); *Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm* (2012); and *Flazh!Alley Art Studio, San Pedro, USA* (2012).

Xiyadie currently lives and works in Shaanxi, China.