

For Immediate Release

The Senses; Breathe between Excess and Deficiency

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Total Museum of Contemporary Art

Participating artists:

Kira Kim x Hyungkyu Kim, Seunghee Kang, Zune Lee, Eun Chun,
Jimin Kim, Xooang Choi, Bohyun Yoon, Okhyun Ahn, Adeline Kueh, Ezzam Rahman, Urich
Lau, Chen Sai Hua Kuan, Sean Roh

Curated by Seungah Lee

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The Senses; Breathe between Excess and Deficiency

The development of rapidly changing technologies has affected the human senses in various forms. With the development of the game industry, the media tools that stimulate the senses and allow the communication between the world and people in more various ways and at a faster speed, such as Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Haptic technology, have consistently been researched and developed. In addition, historically, one of the characteristics of human beings different from those of other creatures may be the continuous use of such media. Also, the technological skills of reality are evolving themselves faster and faster based on 'digital,' the medium of massive information means. In addition, consequently, it seems to be impossible to live without any digital media tools by which one's intentions or emotions, or objective information can be exchanged in the present modern society.

The media concept, predicted as an expansion of the body and an extension of sensation, which Marshall McLuhan mentioned a few decades ago, gave birth to a lot of the media tools we use today, going through the process of gradually more complex and more various abstractions and implications, and through this, it is communicated and implemented in many different ways for realistic information delivery and communication of human emotions. Also, the way or variety looks very complicated, and overflowing media contents in reality, even have come to manage and control society. On the other hand, in spite of sustainable development, there is a question whether the method of the present media is enough in the process in which people communicate with each other and make relationships in various ways, either objectively or subjectively. Do they just list up the information pouring out unilaterally or spit it out unconsciously through random editing in memory, don't they?

In *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, French Philosopher Paul Virilio said that in the era of the civilization of science and technology, the human perceptual tentacle gradually becomes dull as changes in politics, society, and culture moving the world gradually become faster. He said that accordingly, as the senses themselves become dull, they come to experience the phenomenon of the 'absence of memories', that is, 'Picnolepsis' often. 'Picnolepsis' is an everyday experience often occurring like making an unintended mistake unconsciously, and yet, it refers to a kind of the 'absence of memories,' which disappears without being distinctly conscious. He explains that this phenomenon occurs due to the acceleration of a variety of information human beings cannot digest, and accordingly, a moment when our time and space will eventually disappear comes, and thus, a time of new thinking is needed.

Of course, despite the rapid changes like now, men have had and will have the will to make a relationship, respond to, and communicate with the world or each other. For example, they have constantly 'recorded' and had relationships through sharing, renewing various media such as image, photo, video, and text. Of course, these methods may be one of the instinctive acts to make continuously communications and relationships in human subconsciousness. However, editing, constant uploading, and numerous momentary records may disappear at the moment when the media extinct someday and may disappear in the direction of the absence of memories, like 'Picnolesis' at the time of the disappearance. Thus, political, social and historical considerations on the extinction of time and speed are consistently required, and constant efforts of thinking are needed.

In fact, human beings have learned how to interact and communicate with the world, continuously through the senses of the body from before the emergence of the civilization of technology. Many documents discuss the five senses; modern researchers investigate how senses relate to one another and are mixed up with each other; and to look back, the senses have been changed in various ways in history. By the linear perspective during the Renaissance, the sense of sight had taken high superiority, and in the Middle Ages, the senses of hearing and touch looked more valuable. In reality, we cannot exclude the senses of contact, texture, contour, kinesthesia, movement or tension through mixed or hybrid media, which use two or more media. Like this, in the environment under the condition saturated with media, our senses consistently use the senses in the conditions of excess and saturation and continuously experience them, directly or indirectly and evolve themselves.

The artists who participated in the Exhibition, ***The Senses; Breathe between Excess and Deficiency*** attempt the conversion and expansion of the various senses. They would understand the world of the fundamental senses and awaken the importance of the senses and sensation as pathways for communication, not simply for the extension of communication and relationship. While the society of civilization of technology fundamentally changed the spatio-temporal relationship between human and object through acceleration, this exhibition proposes a way of experiencing and 'rethinking' of the work immediately present in front of the eyes in the real world not mediated. It is expected that visitors will have a chance to recall the experience senses they have lost through experience, breaking away from the pouring information they unconsciously accept.

Participating artists

1) Ezzam Rahman



he's been bruised by a man who can't love, artist's skin and nails, adhesive, threaded wire, epoxy resin, 2019

Singaporean artist Ezzam Rahman (b.1981) is a multi-disciplinary installation and performance artist based in Singapore. He graduated with a Masters in Arts, Fine Arts from Goldsmiths University of London in 2017, Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in Fine Arts from the University of Huddersfield in 2010 and was formally trained as a sculptor from LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts in 2003.

Ezzam is known for his interest in the body and his use of common, easily accessible and unconventional materials to produce works. Through his work, Ezzam features narratives that challenges and expands the notions of identity politics, the inherent paradoxes of presence and marginality. Most of his works are time-based ephemera that aim to pique the viewer's thoughts on the topic of impermanence, trace and abjection.

2) Chen Sai Hua Kuan



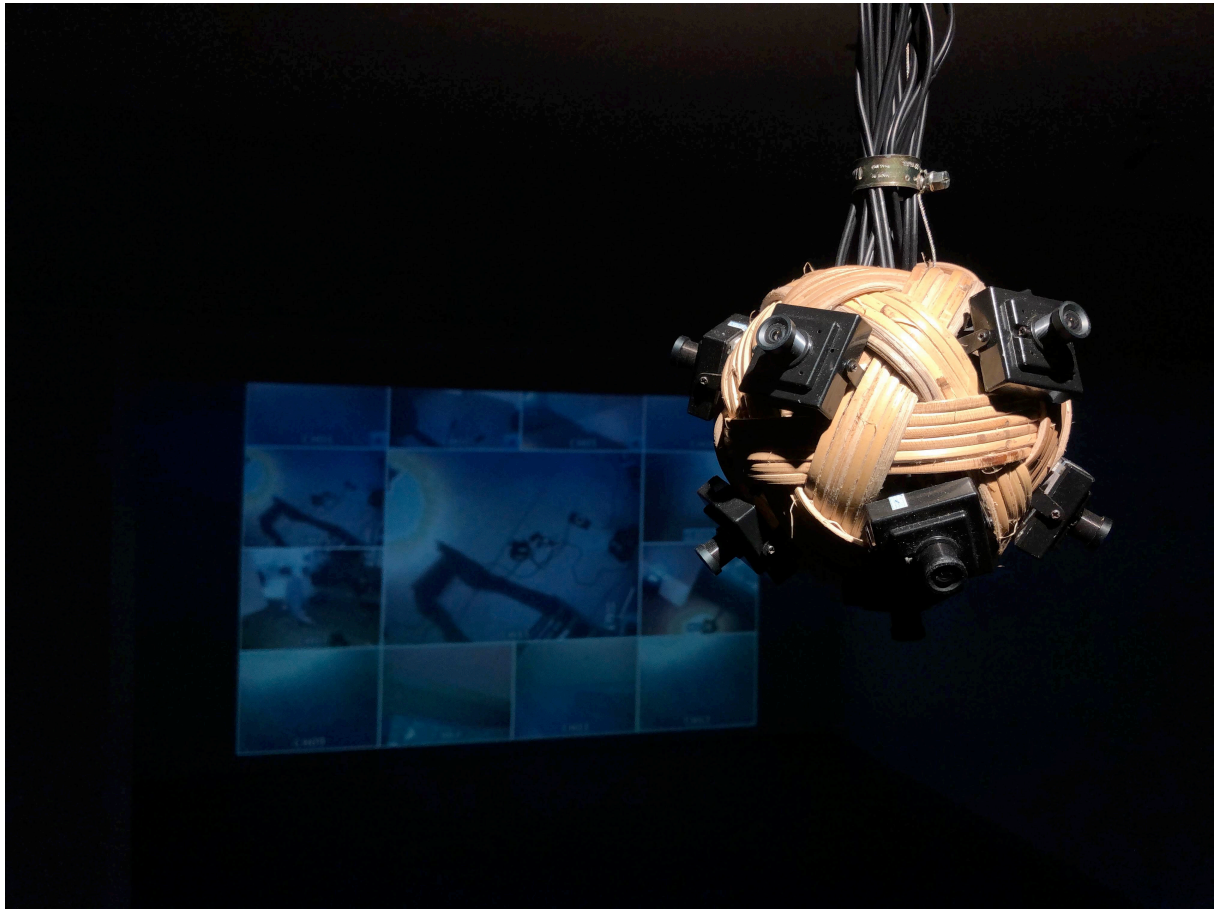
Sound of the Earth, sound installation, Singapore open media art festival, exhibition view, 2015

'Sound of the Earth – Fukuoka' is a sound installation using local clay to create sound. The kind of clay used which is well-known for making earthenware dolls in Singapore. Hakata doll, a traditional craft, has a long history. One of the basic particles that make up matter is the electron. Under certain condition the electron in an object will generate a charge of energy. This reaction happens around us everywhere both in man-made and natural materials. 'Sound of the Earth – Singapore' plays with this 'knowledge of nature' by capturing the energy generated by electron from this locally found clay, and amplifying the energy with ceramic bowls made from the same material. The installation highlights the behaviour of universe and celebrates the natural things.

Singaporean artist Sai Hua Kuan (b. 1976) received a Master in Fine Art from the world-renowned Slade School of Fine Arts in London. Visually simple and often laborious in execution, Sai's practice often incorporates cross-disciplinary elements of sculpture, drawing, installation, sound and performance with wit and energy. Over the past sixteen years, he has developed a distinct visual language: bold and witty, his artistic style turns on the careful minimalist placement or juxtaposition of objects that engage audiences with their humorously irresolvable quality.

Sai has exhibited extensively in Asia and Europe, including the International Festival for Arts and Media in Yokohama, Japan in 2009, the Moscow Biennale for Young Art in 2010, the 14th Media Art Biennale WRO, Poland in 2011, the Luleå Art Biennial, Sweden in 2011, and Singapore Biennale in 2013.

3) Ulrich Lau



Spy Ball, sepak takraw rattan ball, 11 spy cams, live-stream video, surveillance digital video, cables, 2018 – current, *Ritual of Synthesis*, Gallery EXIT, Hong Kong, exhibition view, 2019

Digital data are available to anyone who has access to the Internet. Interactions, communications and tasks could happen in place of the physical world where the physical self is bound by limitations in distance and time. As we interact and navigate in physical spaces within the realm of the Internet, we are constantly being recorded and absorbed with what we do as our digital and metadata footprints. The work was conceived as one-part of a collaboration with Taiwanese artist Kuo Pei-chi, “Small Singapore Show 2.0: TaiSing Conversation”, curated by Singaporean artist Jason J S Lee, it uses a culturally common object from the in Southeast Asia - sepak takraw ball combined with spy cams in a variety of projection and live-stream manners, that reminds us how we are being captured or self-recording at the same time.

Ulrich Lau, born 1975, is a visual artist, independent curator and art educator based in Singapore. Working in video art and photography, he has presented works in Singapore and internationally. He graduated with Master of Fine Art from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 2004 and is a lecturer at LASALLE College of the Arts, a founding member of the art collective INTER-MISSION, a member of The Artists Village, Instinctive (INSTINC Art Space), and resident artist at Goodman Arts Centre in Singapore.

4) Adeline Kueh



Whisper (100 ways to remember you), wall paint, lavender talc, wall light fixture from Lavenda Spa, dimensions variable, 2019

Smell is the ultimate time travel for me. There is something about a smell or a scent that will trigger the unconscious and take form, and then transport you to a particular moment, space, or person. It invokes such an emotional and bodily response, in a Proustian manner. In September 2014, I was invited to take part in An Eminent Takeover and to make a work for a building on the very same street, a structure slated for demolition. This lavender powder project began with memories of my grandmother and great aunt using Yardley's English Lavender perfumed talc. I also found myself looking into the history of the place. Named in a tongue-in-cheek manner by English colonisers in 1858, Lavender Street was one of the foulest smelling streets on the island: it was a cart track with Chinese vegetable gardens and sugar plantations using night soil and urine as fertilizer; as well as reeking of bad gases from the old town gasworks. Between the KTV/Karaoke rooms & the spas that doubled up as sex parlours, the rooms in the Lavenda Spa complex haunted me and I wanted to examine how art-making and sexual industries both have strong elements of the scopophilic about them.

This 2019 iteration of this work continues my desire to connect to the personal narratives of women in these spaces, as well as with the personal stories of my family. In a sense, it is about bringing to fore the neglected or overlooked stories and lives of the women involved.

Adeline Kueh makes installations, photography and sound works that reconsider the relationship we have with things and rituals around us. Her works are imbued with a sense of desire and longing, and act as modern-day totems that explore personal histories and overlooked moments. Using drawing as a conceptual tool, Adeline tries to map out the historical trajectories across time and space through her use of found objects and new production.

5) Eun Chun



IJe regarde_Adelaide I, 2010, Archival pigment print, wood frame, 105x70cm

Chun Eun's work starts from curiosity about the tools and methods used by people to dream about the world beyond. Such questions have been realized mainly through photographs and participatory projects, and her models include amateur astronomers, amateur photographers, camera collectors, people with auditory disabilities, people with visual disabilities, and sound effect artists. She has held solo exhibitions including 《Searching for the Photograph》 (2014) at the CAN Foundation's Old House and group exhibitions including 《Time Collector》 (2015) at the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art. She has also participated in 《Geum-gok, the Memorious》 (2016), a project of the Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation's Northern Cultural Agency Project.

6) Okhyun Ahn



But Not Too Much, Single channel video, 7:00 mins, 2011

Ok-Hyun Ahn is photographer and video artist. She recently exhibited her work in *Identity, Costume, Cliche: Korean Photography Today*, Photographic Center Northwest, Seattle, 2009 and *Artist as Performer*, Houston Center for Photography. She was awarded a Ssamzie Studio in Seoul in 2007.

Ahn Ok-Hyun's works are an extended meditation on emotions, a depiction of emotions, and the emotions that are again elicited by those descriptions. Her disturbing but attractive works subtly cross the boundaries of authentic and manufactured reality, the sentimentality and anguish, and the simple and melodramatic form. Deploying the interplay amidst the archetypes of the heterogeneous fields such as opera and rock-n-roll or television series and art films, Ahn Ok-Hyun draws the audiences into the swirl of emotional uncertainty and astonishment. She delves into how described emotions bring out the emotional responses of the audiences, through lip-synching. Thus, even if the audience is aware that the narrative is contrived, she explores the theory that the described emotions are able to bring out emotional responses. Touching on issues such as race, culture, and gender identity, Ahn Ok-Hyun both surprises and fascinates the audiences.

7) Bohyun Yoon



Materials: *blown glass*, 17 channel color video with sound, 1 minute 20 second, Dimensions Variable, 2013

Collection: Tama Art University, Tokyo Japan, Song Eun Art Space, Seoul Korea

This work is a remake of a Japanese historical glass toy called "Popen," which is a noisemaker made of glass. Sound and vibration resonance in glass is a reoccurring theme within my work, yet, in "Popen," I am particularly interested in the flexibility of the glass surface creating interchangeable concave and convex lens. These transformative lenses can also create organic light projections on the wall while light is focused on the vibrating glass membrane. Thus, thru using "Popen," as an instrument of both light and sound, I compose a video that displays the proliferation of microorganisms, the interaction of various luminous sea creatures, or even the impact explosions of the stars in the cosmos

Yoon received two MFAs from both Rhode Island School of Design and Tama Art University in Japan. Currently he is an assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University.

His art practice is very much influenced by the fields of science and physics as his work continuously exposes what is often invisible. This quest has sent him to explore sound waves, vibrations and much more. He is interested in the invisible properties, and he continuously explores ways of expressing those properties visible through art practice. He exposes socially constructed notions of race, class, and gender by combining images of the human body with materials that possess invisible properties. To aid the physical properties of glass in speaking about society, his art uses a variety of media and phenomena for instance sound, reflection, and human perception.

8) Kira Kim x Hyungkyu Kim



Blind man_Different way_Standardized Task. 3 channels 4K video installation, 10min 40sec, 2018

Kim Kira is called as an avant-garde artist with free mind. His provocative works include painting, sculpture, animation, installation, etc. that always successfully outsmart common senses. He is interested in social criticism that questions power structures and values of Capitalist society and imperialist ideology. However, his way of approaching the subject has been friendly and humorous ones when it comes to that the artist expresses the symbolic figures of the power. Neglected minorities today and the other side of contemporary society from the view point of the weak are depicted through ‘appropriation and parodies’ that the artist employs for his being urged to speak up against negative aspect of ruling class and the reality.

9) Xooang Choi



Under the skin, 23.5 x 32 x 85cm, Oil on resin mixed with pigment, 2019 (side)

Born in 1975 in Korea, Xooang Choi obtained his MFA in Sculpture from the Seoul National University in 2005. Already during his studies, he became recognized for his tiny figurative sculptures made of painted polymer clay. However, since 2007 and his one-man show titled *The Vegetative State*, **Choi's figures have been enlarged in its scale, which gave more presence to his figurative sculptures that unearth dark emotions.** The artist modifies proportions of the human-like characters or isolates body parts and takes them out of context to create disturbing and thought-provoking pieces that explore human rights, discrimination, society's pathological state, isolation, loneliness, and sex and gender politics among other themes.

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