

- Fringe Gallery -

Goddess of Mercy

Alecia Neo (Singapore)

15 – 26 February 2012

11am – 7pm

The Substation Gallery

Admission is free

www.alecianeo.com | www.villaalicia.info

(Fringe Commission / World Premiere / Co-presented with The Substation)

Two families. Four faiths. Visual artist Alecia Neo and sound artist Clarence Chung bring forth an art installation about love and faith, and how each needs the other in order to survive.

In a huge rustic house in upper Bukit Timah lives Tan Ying Hsien and his mother Dr Nalla Tan. Nalla suffers from Alzheimer's disease and her condition has deteriorated to the point whereby she is a stranger even to herself. While Dr Tan was an active member of church, her youngest son Ying Hsien calls himself agnostic, and unconvinced about life after death.

In a shophouse unit in Queenstown lives the Neo family. Filled with books about Buddhism and cooking, it reveals Mdm Tay Siew Hwa's areas of specialties. After being diagnosed with breast cancer, she devotes more time to self-study about her religion and life after death, while undergoing chemotherapy. Her oldest son Alex Neo, builds his own shrine of beliefs with religious pendants and symbols from Thailand.



Photo Credit: Alecia Neo

Guests are invited to participate and witness rituals of healing. Photography and soundscape installations will evoke the range of emotions experienced by the mothers (Alzheimer's sufferer and Cancer patient) in trying to reach out emotionally to their sons, as well as the abstract phenomena of how religion functions.

Relationship to Art & Faith

The proposed installation brings together an unusual mix of personalities (middle class vs. upper class, Methodists vs. Buddhists, believer vs. non-believer), however, the revelations evolving from the project are significant.

Fear of death often motivates a person to devote time and energy to a religion, as most

religions help the believer anticipate death, by teaching that there is life after we pass on, that death is not an end in itself. Hence, by preparing the believers for afterlife by equipping them with all the knowledge of what's to come when the lights go out, religion alleviates the weight, fear and pain that we associate with death.

By setting up a space to contrast the two families and their rituals of faith and healing, the audience is equipped with a visual library to explore the following questions: How do we deal with disappointment (prayer, making offerings to God(s) in exchange for a wish, etc)? Is religion a solution to emotional bonding between people? How do we heal (physically, mentally and spiritually)? How do families strike the balance between faith in one another and their religious beliefs?

Religion is prone to change in the act of recollection and historical context; therefore, it is mutable. The faculties of the mind that supports memories and learning are also prone to deterioration with time, age and disease; it is therefore fragile. Through my installation, I hope to present to my audience ideas about how our faiths (in religion, in family, in the present) functions as a healing source. Healing of the body, mind and soul can be achieved by understanding our reasons for fear.

Biographies of Creative Team

Alecia Neo

Artist

With a great love for people and cultures, **Alecia Neo**'s work is often about common human experiences of alienation and loneliness, dislocation and belonging, and the search for self. Having recently embarked on a series of documentary projects in Singapore, she is enthralled by the process of getting to know her immediate surroundings and the nucleus which she operates from.

Her latest body of work, *Home Visits* has received a Honorable Mention in the 2009 Berenice Abbott Prize by juror Tim B. Wride, Curator of the Department of Photographs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The series was selected for the 2nd Singapore International Photography Festival (SIPF), in 2010. It was first exhibited in whole, in the first annual Singapore Survey show at Valentine Willie Fine Art Gallery, in 2009.

Portraiture has become the main focus of her art work. She has also been recently selected as 1 of 5 mentees of renowned NYC based photographer John Clang for his 2011 mentorship programme.

Clarence Chung

Sound Artist

Paid to perform for the first time in 2006 at the tender age of 19, Clarence has been performing professionally ever since. Today, he entertains as resident musician at RedDot Brewhouse at Dempsey Road. In 2010, Clarence found an interest in contemporary sound design and post-modern composition and hence began to take on freelance motion picture projects that require the manipulation of sound effects and music to create emotive and abstract commentaries.

- Fringe Gallery -

Kim Jong Phil

Phillip Toledano (England)

15 – 26 February 2012

10am – 10pm

ION Art Gallery, Level 4, ION Orchard

Admission is free

www.kimjongphil.com

(World Premiere / Co-presented with ION Orchard)

“I think a great deal about what it means to be an artist.

“I reflect on the elaborate psychological mechanisms required to pursue something so elusive, so ambiguous.

“I often wonder: ‘Am I talking to myself?’

“I don’t make work for other people, but as an artist, I need to be in dialogue with the world that exists beyond my overpopulated cranium.

“I’ve concluded that to be effective-to be functional-I must guzzle an eye-popping cocktail of delusion and narcissism.

“It occurred to me that being an artist is a great deal like being a dictator.

“Just like a dictator, I must live in a closed loop of self-delusion. A place where my words and ideas always ring true.

“A gilded daydream of grandiosity. There can be no room for doubt. I must be convinced that I have something vital to say.

“I must believe that the world is waiting in keen anticipation to hear my message.

“For my palette, I’ve copied pre-existing dictatorial art. Paintings from North Korea, statues of assorted dictators (Kim Il Sung, Laurent Kabilla, and Saddam Hussein). I had these works re-created in China, and each instance, I’ve replaced the great leaders with myself.”

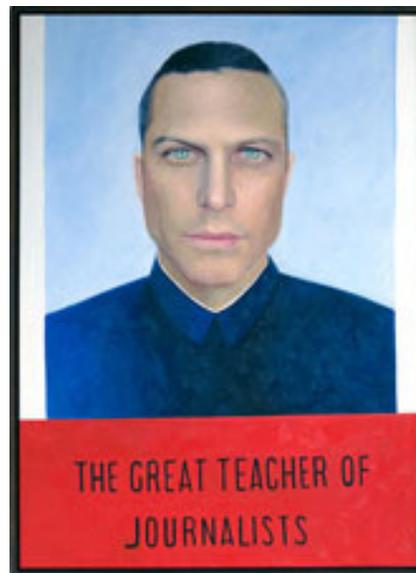


Photo Credit: Phillip Toledano

- Phillip Toledano

Relationship to Art & Faith

Kim Jong Phil is about self delusion, which is of course a form of faith in the intangible.

Biography of Phillip Toledano

Phillip Toledano was born in 1968, in London to a French Moroccan mother, and an American father. He believes that photographs should be like unfinished sentences. There should always be space for questions.

Phillip's work is primarily socio-political, and varies in medium, from photography to installation, to sculpture and painting.

His first book, entitled *Bankrupt (Photographs of recently vacated offices)* was published by Twin Palms in 2005. His second book, *Phonesex* (again by Twin Palms) came out in December of 2008. His third book, *Days With My Father*, was published by Chronicle, and was released in June of 2010. The rights for *Days* have been optioned to be a movie. Another book, portraits of people who've recreated themselves through plastic surgery, called *A New Kind of Beauty* (published by Dewi Lewis), was released in September 2011.

Phillip also works outside the realm of photography. *Days With My Father* was previously exhibited at the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2009. His installation project *America, the Gift Shop* was shown at the Center for photography at Woodstock as well as the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2010. The premise: If George Bush's foreign policy had a souvenir shop, what would it sell? His most recent project is called *Kim Jong Phil*, about artistic narcissism and self-delusion. The medium is oil paintings and bronze sculpture.

His work has appeared in *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times* magazine, *The New Yorker*, *Harpers*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Interview*, *Wallpaper*, *The Sunday Times* magazine, *The Independent Magazine* and *Le Monde*, amongst others.

- Fringe Gallery -

Feng Shui

Munkao (Malaysia)

15 – 26 February 2012

10am – 10pm

ION Art Gallery, Level 4, ION Orchard

Admission is free

www.munkao.com

(Co-presented with ION Orchard)

Feng Shui is a meeting point between age old metaphysics of Feng Shui and contemporary art. This exploration sees Munkao, an artist well recognised for his painterly foray into our everyday pop culture, apply Feng Shui principles and imageries to his new series of “painstallations”, “prosperity sculptures” and “auspicious neo-landscapes”.

Feng Shui breaks new ground by inviting a Feng Shui Master to curate the exhibition display based on his expert knowledge of Feng Shui. Through this exploration of a new curatorial strategy, we believe that the viewers' experience of and expectations for the exhibition will be enhanced and challenged.



Photo Credit: Eiffel Chong

Relationship to Art & Faith

Feng Shui by Munkao considers, within an exhibition format, an artwork's post exhibition life within a private collection and the curatorial values that it embodies through the language of popular Feng Shui. It features three series of works, - 'painstallations', 'neo-auspicious landscapes' and 'prosperity sculptures' - all of which draw on Feng Shui imageries as well as utilise its affective register to provoke us into thinking about how an aesthetic object can influence our thinking and feeling.

The exhibition dialogues with the broader M1 Singapore Fringe Festival theme of 'Art and Faith' by exploring an alternative curatorial strategy, one that is not govern by academicism or modern day discursive practice. Instead it is based on a completely different metaphysical system and its aesthetic ideals. This is done by inviting a Feng Shui master to hang the artworks based his expert knowledge of Feng Shui metaphysics.

Through this operation, the exhibition brings into relief the pattern of ideological/material consumption, the relationship between art and metaphysics, an incisive observation of

popular/mass culture, as it treads the fine balance between humour and farce, complicity and criticality that shape Feng Shui by Munkao's ability to drive the discussion of 'art and faith' by providing both intelligent critique as well as entertainment.

Biographies of Creative Team

Munkao

Artist

Munkao (born in 1982, Kuala Lumpur) translates images and illustrations from our folk and pop culture into quirky observations of our everyday experience. He is also a member of The Best Art Show in the Univers art collective who are well loved in the Kuala Lumpur art scene for their highly unoriginal, funny and satirical art projects.

Simon Soon

Project Curator

Simon Soon is a researcher and writer on modern and contemporary Southeast Asian art.

Master Chang Kim Hua

Guest Curator

Master Chang Kim Hua is recognised as one of Malaysia's foremost Feng Shui experts, with more than 25 years of experience as a Feng Shui consultant. Master Chang has also lectured and written extensively on the subjects of Feng Shui, Chinese numerology and spiritual education, and has been featured in many newspapers, magazines and radio programmes. Master Chang founded TDR Geomancy Consultant to introduce professional and innovative ways of sharing his knowledge and experience with a wider audience.

- Fringe Gallery -

We Oui!

Fumiko Imano (Japan)

15 – 26 February 2012

10am – 6pm

The Atelier, National Museum of Singapore

Admission is free

www.fumikoimano.com

(World Premiere)

Since 2002, Japanese artist Fumiko Imano has developed an ongoing project as a means of self-healing, excavating her own massive identity crisis as she adapts to living in an adult society. Imano has been a nomad, spending her childhood in Rio de Janeiro before moving back to Japan, and then later moving to the UK to study art and fashion photography. This sense of dislocation has become an integral focus in her art work.

“If I were a pair of twins, I want to stay as a child, so as to enjoy life by being more playful!”



Photo Credit: Fumiko Imano

Imano began splicing photographs of herself, creating instant twins collaged in a naïve, playful fashion with scissors and glue. Through this process, she creates an intriguing dialogue by being both subject and object, reality and fiction, re-staging herself in a variety of environments from home settings to famous monuments. Her childlike and candid images are uplifting, joyful and life-affirming – yet, the portrayal of twins hint at issues dealing with the multiplicity of identities, self-image, companionship and body politics.

We Oui! invites visitors people to participate in the communication of these images taken since 2002, as well as new pieces, artefacts and video projections. As part of the Fringe, Imano also invites members of the public to contribute woollen objects (such as booties, sweaters, etc.), which will be made by the artist into cute “omamori” (Japanese amulets) – these items of the past will be refrabricated into charms to protect your future.

Relationship to Art & Faith

We Oui! explores the notion of an eternal childhood through the project involving duplicated twins of the artist.

Through the work and video footage, Imano seeks to show children's vibrant and firm belief in life, as they strive to achieve hope through seemingly banal moments of everyday life – step by step, little by litter, with their honesty, feelings and humour. Their attitude may be imperfect yet pure and child-like, their life-affirming belief robust. Children by and large possess strong faith in their choices and deeds, and their light and playful attitudes have never failed to be uplifting.

The collage feel of Imano's work plays with this idea of belief for the viewers as well – they may well be aware of the duplicity in the splicing of her own photos to create fake companions to herself, and yet, they may choose to believe in that despite the obvious nature of the “cut and paste” work. Two versions of realities are thus presented, and their borderline (or faultline) remains as evidence of the fakeness of what Imano seeks to show: that she is unique.

We Oui! (pronounced “we we”) was originally created for the twins portraiture series. “We” indicates the twosome of the twins, as well as the idea of a global community; “Oui” (“yes” in French) symbolise the positive reaction towards that possibility of union.

The twins in Imano's works are excitedly shouting, “Yes, We Can!” to the audience from the bottom of their hearts.

Biography of Fumiko Imano

Fumiko Imano is a Japanese artist based on self-portraiture in photography, video, collage, sculpture, and performance with DIY spirit. She studied BA Fine Art at Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design, and fashion styling & photography at London College of Fashion. Her work *prêt a porter?* was shortlisted and exhibited at 17th Festival International des Art de la mode a Hyeres in France in 2002. She has collaborated with photographer Nick Knight's SHOWstudio for the video *Dream Closet* and fashion designer Charles Anastase for creating jewelry and music performance for his Paris fashion show. She has exhibited in London, France, Berlin, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Iceland. Imano's images have featured in magazines like Dutch, Big, Cream, Dune, Capricious, Lula, and many other magazines, including online features with fashion journalist Diane Pernet's A Shaded View On Fashion . Her video *Rubbish or Treasure* has been touring around the world for screening. There are two self-published pieces made by her which are entitled *fumiko imano 1974-2004* and *I Hate Photography!*

Imano now lives and works in Hitachi city in Japan.