

Select Projects 2016-2023
by Hong-Kai Wang
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The Mists

2022-ongoing

Multimedia installation

In collaboration with Lou Mo

The Ocean and the Interpreters

Solid Art, Taipei, Taiwan, 2022

Nairobi Contemporary Art Institute, Nairobi, Kenya, 2024

The Mists begins with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's telling of loss and yearning in the colonized Kenya recounted in his childhood memoir *Dreams in a Time of War* (2010):

“The changes in the physical and social landscape were not occurring in any discernible order; they merged into each other, all a little confusing. But, somehow, in time, I began to connect a few threads, and things became clearer as if I was emerging from a mist [...] How did we come to be *ahoi* on our own land? Had we lost our traditional land to Europeans? The mist had not cleared entirely.”

In some parts of Kenya, June, July and August are the coldest, misty season characterised by thick mist and a fog curtain dropped across places. People often have to contend with low temperatures and ailments. Mist is water floating and filling the atmosphere, approaching in the form of rain. It is something that obscures our understanding. For Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, mist is not only embodied as an atmospheric phenomenon in his homeland, but also insinuates the cruel absurdity of colonialism, the complexities of names bestowed on people and places, the image of a dreamland, and even a nightmare. *The Mist* draws on his multifarious approaches to mist, seeking to trace the movement of the Kikuyu who were forcibly displaced by the settlers from Ole Ngurueni, a rich and fertile region in Western Kenya, all the way to Yatta in rocky and barren Eastern Kenya — recorded and remembered in poetic ways such in the oral tradition of storytelling, songs, the beat of spoken words, spiritual practices, Christian hymns, family lore, etc. This event would be one of the omens that eventually leads to the 1952-1960 Mau Mau Uprising, divisive and controversial to this day.

In the “The Oceans and the Interpreters” exhibition at the Hong-Gah Museum, *The Mists* presents its first phase of research-based result, followed by a later fieldwork phase in Kenya in 2024 on the trails the Kikuyu once walked.

Installation shot



Installation shot



Installation shot



Installation shot



Frequencies: violet quartz, honey, cinnamon & huanglien
2022

Publication

**Coedited with Bopha Chcay and with contributions by Bill Dietz, Darla Migan,
Övül Durmuşoğlu, Hu Shu-Wen & John Pule**

BEACON Pamphlet Series

Artspeak, Vancouver, Canada

Preface by Hong-Kai Wang & Bopha Chhay

It all began with the heart. I started having palpitations in the late summer of 2020. My heart would pound tirelessly. Sometimes I could feel my pulse beating from my temples, down my neck, and to my wrists. And sometimes I would walk down the street and feel my heart racing so fast that the rest of my body could barely keep up. My heart is a sovereign being, the inside out of an out-of-body experience. I had an appointment where a cardiologist ran a full blood test on me and had me wear a 24-hour electrocardiogram vest. Nothing appeared to be obviously wrong. My gynecologist ensured me that my heart palpitations were a common perimenopausal symptom. I had the option to begin taking hormones or do nothing at all, and to live with the imminence of menopause. The Taoist priest I met with claimed my condition was a manifestation of visitations made by karmic creditors from my past lives. She advised me to chant Buddhist sutras and mantras daily to repent for my karmic debts, particularly the Heart Sutra. It was my Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Dr. K who I found to offer the most concise diagnosis. That is, my heart palpitations were symptoms of excessive fire in the heart i.e., “heart yang” as opposed to “heart ying,” the result of excessive fluctuant energy. In light of that, the treatment became a matter of how to “compose” this energy – in other words, to consider the various frequencies. To treat a heart that “bounces like a drum,” alongside acupuncture treatment, he prescribed the following combination of ingredients:

violet quartz 30g, honey 30g, cinnamon 1.5g, and huanglien (goldthread rhizome) 5g

Vermillion Bird Dan (朱雀丹) is a well-known prescription in TCM deriving from the Taoist alchemical medicinal practice (丹醫). It is named after the vermillion bird, one of four divine symbols of the Chinese constellations. Also known as the God of Heart, vermillion bird, according to Wu Xing (五行), aka the Taoist five-elemental system, “represents the element fire, the direction south, and the season summer correspondingly.”¹ This Vermillion Bird Dan prescription works to ground the fluctuant energy within one’s body: huanglien clears away “heart fire”; cinnamon warms up “kidney yang”; honey softens the medicine’s sharp taste and effect; violet quartz tranquilizes the nervous system and the mind. Dr. K speaks about the ways that TCM aims to organize one’s frequencies. As such, in my case, it’s a matter of how to (re)organize and (re)compose those uncomfortable frequencies that pulsate from the heart and disperse them throughout the body. One’s body has its own cosmology. In her text “Blood and Mother’s Milk,” Hu Shu-Wen writes “Every body is a planet with its own tides.”

Taking Dr. K's alchemical organizing of frequencies as an elemental point of departure, ***Frequencies: violet quartz, honey, cinnamon & huanglien*** is a pamphlet comprised of five texts, each of which sets out to interpret frequencies expansively in relation to a perceived ailment, condition or bodily disorder. The prescription, anchored within the Taoist elemental system, aims to adjust at a molecular level the internal workings of the body, and seeks to rectify and reclaim an elemental balance within one's body.

Grounded in our inquiry on "frequencies," each contribution sketches out a cognitive constellation anchored within the body and its politics thereof. It is our hope that this focus will provide a way to open out to wider social bodies and ideas of collectivity in different ways, whilst not overlooking ailments (often perceived as negative) and what is felt in the body. Furthermore, we want to think about how complex knowledge systems and practices pass through our individual and collective bodies, and how one participates in different systems of knowledge and care.

This small publication is as much for reading as for listening to, for stories of experiences of the way ailments reside in our bodies, something like a poetic repertoire. These contributions speak through the body it inhabits; some borrow the voices of others, while all living within a specific order of body politics. How does personal responsibility for one's own well-being affect and contribute to collective well-being and vice versa? The contributions to this pamphlet reveal how compounding pressures impact our mind, body, spiritually, and the various ways we attempt to ease, live with, and challenge and upturn what ails us.

Bill Dietz's *Because of love, I try to learn to want to sleep* takes the form of an extended breathless rumination on what happens when sleep remains elusive. What is it that prevents one from falling asleep? Dietz works through an endless list of possible reasons that have refused the mind and body the time or space to rest, alongside methods for how to potentially coax and induce sleep. Without rest there is no recovery. Under a neoliberal order, sleep cannot be prioritized despite the absolute necessity. External and internal pressures vie for attention in attempting to gauge how best to remain accountable to oneself and the communities that we are part of.

Darla Migan's *gut migraine* begins with the question "What has ancient body memory remembered to reject?" This is an

inquiry that astutely reminds us how connected our gut biome is to where we live, of our relationship to land and place, and of the communities that have sustained us. *gut migraine* outlines the shape of memories that reside within the body. The way we chart anxieties that stubbornly remain (that can double as intuitive red flags), alongside how to best determine the efficacy of detoxes and cleanses that promise that long desired reset. How do we find ways to squarely land back within one's gut, one's intuition, where deeper time scales resonate and body memory has long resided and defies fads?

Övül Durmuşoğlu's *Uncertainty is Hope: Personal Hope and Collective Rewiring* begins with the acknowledgement that our neural pathways form the basis of how we map out our bodies into the world. Following a serious accident in her youth, Durmuşoğlu shares her continuous exploration and study of knowledge systems and healing that have provided crucial possibilities to "rewire," learn, and locate these shifts within her healing process. She discerningly offers up how these personal shifts can be carried into broader collective aims. Durmuşoğlu suggests that a process of unlearning systems and epistemologies that we have inherited unwittingly can allow us to access a deeper, more resonant complexity beyond what is readily available to us, or immediately perceptible.

Hu Shu-Wen's *Blood and Mother's Milk* narrates the story of Kao Tsao, a political prisoner during the era known as White Terror (1947–1990s) in Taiwan. During this time, any perceived leftist ideology was violently repressed by the ruling authoritarian regime. Tsao's story details how contesting and opposing the political ideology of the ruling regime can result in a denial of one's freedom to live and think. Through her research and study of oral accounts of the experiences of women political prisoners (such as Kao Tsao) in declassified archives, Shu-Wen brings into question what the meaning of unwillingly sacrificing one's flesh and blood for one's lands really means. She considers the effects of political turmoil, the disruption of the wider social body, and the fracture of collective psyches on the bodies of women political prisoners, and the subsequent disruption of bodily cycles (such as menstruation and the production of breast milk).

As a way to bring these contributions together, John Pule responds ⁸ not only to the wider inquiry of personal and collective frequencies, but also galvanizes and offers a synthesis between the contributions. **John Pule's** *I try to leave with the sun* brings to the fore one of the pamphlets integral aims to carry a plurality of voices. The contributions were written with the intent they be heard, listened to, and not just read. Whilst Pule's text is firmly anchored in place (in this case, Moana, the Pacific), he provides a.

space as vast as the ocean. *I try to leave with the sun* oscillates from personal experiences to concerns of the collective and beyond. Pule offers frequencies such as tidal rhythms, lunar phases, migratory patterns of humans, and the lives of other species that coexist. The spaces between these various levels of oscillations offer ways to consider becoming attuned to different and potentially opposing rhythms, systems, and bodies of knowledge.

Publication pdf: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/j1bt358ma1p12i2/Beacon-02-Hong-Kai%20Wang-FINAL.pdf?dl=0>

The Flesh & the Phantom

2022 - ongoing

Workshop, performance

Sonic Topologies organized by The Institute of Landscape Architecture, ETH Zurich

Reservoir Lyren, Zurich, Switzerland

Performed by Jie Wang, Carolina Grifoll Argemi, Sophia Garner,

Michael Hoi Ming Du, Gereon Sievi & Hong-Kai Wang

When the city of Zurich opted to build Reservoir Lyren twenty years ago, the Hakka villagers of Meilung, in southern Taiwan, have spent decades protesting against the construction of a reservoir since the early 1990s. In both places, the notion of reservoir construction has had a tremendous impact on the natural and human landscape of the locality. In making an interlocution between two disparate choices, the project seeks to expand the connection of these two animate spaces in geographic scope and in the desire to render legible the infrasound of bygone labor or lost voices at the empty chambers of Reservoir Lyren. Wang works with workshop participants to study sonic materials collected from the archive and Meilung in dialogue with the specific site of Lyren. The materials come both from nature - seismic, aquatic or even vibratory from the tropical forest - and the inhabitants on their cultural heritage, collective psyches or chronicles of dissent. This seemingly cacophonous assemblage becomes alive and is interpreted in a participatory and exegetic performance. This is also an opportunity to reflect on how water as an essential element to life is transformed and construed in our imaginaries of subsistence, modernity and futuristic anxiety.

Written by Lou Mo & Hong-Kai Wang

Score pdf: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r1IMJ9BcFPW3SOQk4i11lY3Zx9w9B4qR/view?usp=share_link

Workshop



Workshop



Workshop



Workshop



Performance



Performance



Performance



Performance



Performance



fuengu

2021

8-channel sound & 1-channel video, booklet

P.A.N (Pan-Austro-Nesian) Arts Festival

Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

Uong e Yatauyungana (Han Chinese name: Kao Yi-Sheng, 1908-1954) was born at the C'pu'u lenohi'u (currently Lalauya Village), a part of the bigger Tfuya hosa in Taiwan's Alishan County during the Japanese colonial period. He was an indigenous Tsou educator, politician, thinker, composer and poet. He was dedicated to Tsou public affairs and the improvement of Tsou people's lives before and after the war. He had started developing the concept of an Aboriginal peoples' autonomous county before the war, and was therefore castigated during the February 28 Incident. From September 10th, 1952 to April 17th, 1954, he was incarcerated for 588 days in the Taipei Military Prison located at 3 Qingdao East Road. He was a White Terror victim and executed for accusations of treachery and corruption by the government. His case was finally rehabilitated on December 7th, 2018 by the Transitional Justice Commission.

(From Wikipedia and *Kao Yi-Sheng's Home Letters*)

In James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (1956), he muses, "Perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable condition." In this spirit, the project *fuengu* was developed in collaboration with the family of Indigenous Tsou Taiwanese composer Uong e Yatauyungana (1908-1954). In this case, "fuengu" (which stands for "mountain" in the Tsou language) not only refers to mountains, lands, and Yatauyungana's home in Keupana (Ali Mountain), but also to a geography, a condition, a consciousness, a psychic world, a perspective, and an unspeakable borderland.

Taking Uong e Yatauyungana's musical trajectory as a point of departure, ***Fuengu*** seeks to navigate how his music is entangled with land, migration, exile, incarceration, trauma, truth, and belonging at the intersections of colonial/settler nation-state, lived experience and indigeneity. As listeners, we are decidedly situated in different listening contexts and positionalities, as well as in the power relations therein. And as such, we ought to ask: is it possible to enter the space of "tmayaezoyx" (meaning "listening" in Tsou) constituted by the multiple strata of "listening, knowing, and yielding?" In considering this inquiry, we attempt to ground our body and ears in Tsou's "fuengu" and to tirelessly question: who is singing? Who is listening? Who is being listened to? And what does it mean to listen to Uong's music? Between the knowable and unknowable, the listenable and unlistenable, and in Tsou's "fuengu" of dreams, spirits, languages, forests, rivers, deities, stars, and beings - as well as in violence and its possible irreconcilability, under which sonic geographies, epistemological systems, sensate structures, and ideologies are we conditioned to listen?

Video documentation: <https://vimeo.com/634943492> (pw: Uong_Alishan)

Audio documentation: https://www.dropbox.com/s/wgi66kfvpdtrynx/fuengu_mixdown.mp3?dl=0 (stereo version)

Booklet pdf: https://www.dropbox.com/s/16bs6zg3q4847lp/fuengu_booklet_final.pdf?dl=0

Sinvi, Alishan



Makuisana, Saviki, Alishan



Saviki, Alishan





Rainbow Waterfall, Tfuya,
Alishan

Lalaksu, Tfuya, Alishan



Song: Hunting Song
Performed by Alishan Elementary & Junior High School
Lalauya, Alishan



Hohcubu, Pnguu, Alishan



'U'ungo, Tapang, Alishan



Kualiana, Tapang, Alishan



Song: pasu hohcubu
Performed by Yumi
Sinvi, Alishan



Songs: mafuefuengu & na ho cu mi no cu
Performed by Tu Duke
Poftonga-Veoveo, Alishan



Song: lalaksu & furokusu no hana

Performed by Pasuya e Yata'uyungana & Avai e Yata'uyungana

Chiayi City





Songs: lalaksu & furokusu no
hana
Performed by Avai e
Yata'uyungana
Chiayi City

Song: cogeoha to mia ne makuisana
Performed by Paicu e Yata'uyungana
Tokyo, Japan



Installation view



Installation view:

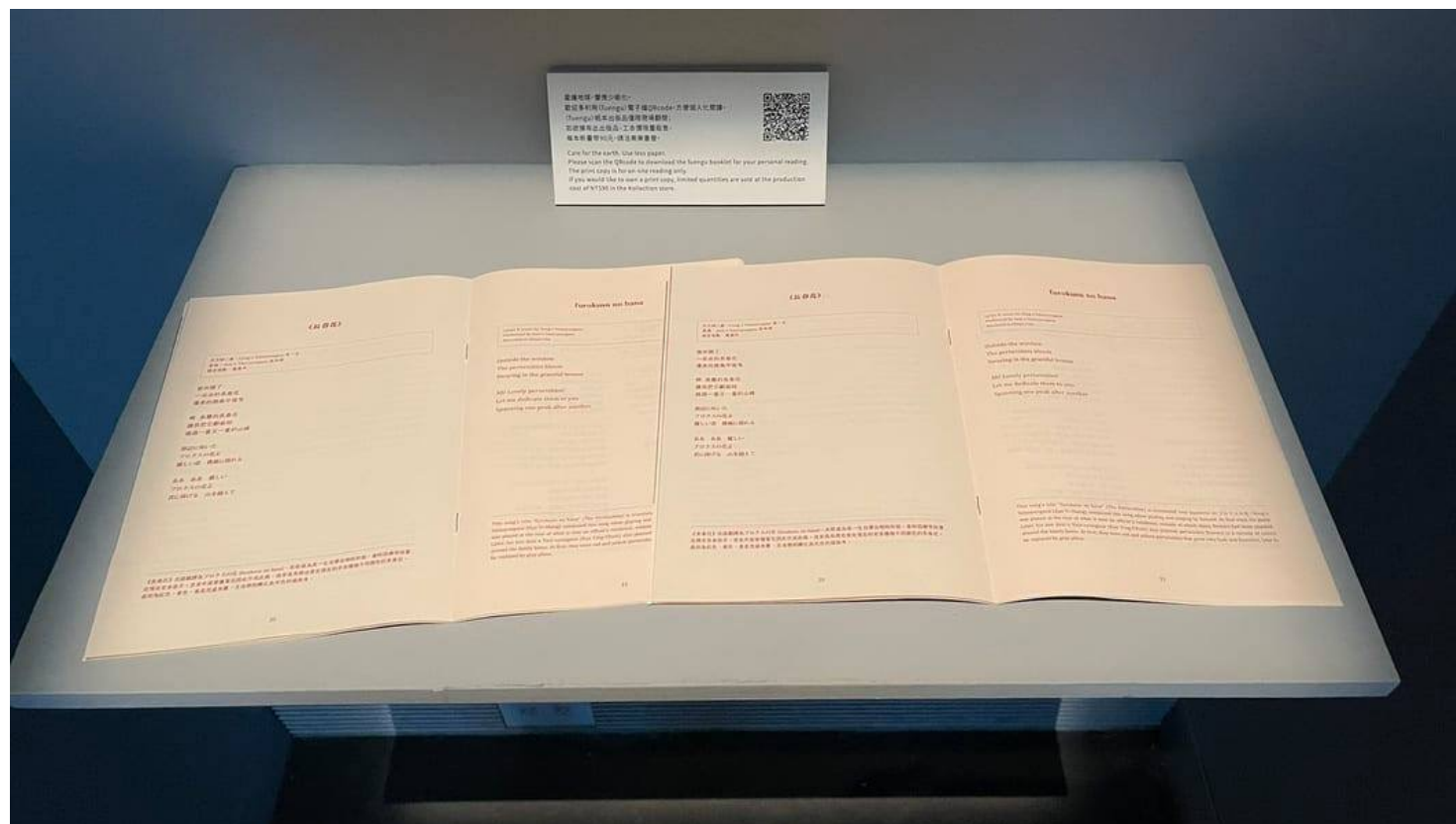
Simulation historical star map

Location: 3 Qingdao East Road, Taipei (previously Taipei Military Prison)

Time: September 10th, 1952 to April 17th, 1954



Installation view



Borom

2020-2021

Multimedia installation

Listening: Resonant Worlds

Arts Maebashi, Maebashi, Japan

(co-commissioned by Jeju Biennale & Arts Maebashi)

Online exhibition: <https://listening.artsmaebashi.jp/en/exhibit/wang/>

By definition, the wind is a movement of air, a force, a breath, a scent, an intimation, a point of the compass, or gas generated in the body. In the project *Borom* (“borom” stands for “wind” in Jeju dialect), “wind” can refer not only to both strongly felt natural & political forces on Jeju Island, but also to the corporeal and spiritual power that shapes the ways that Jeju looks, speaks, sounds, and lives.

Borom takes the Korean-Japanese poet Kim Sijong’ s fugitive journey from Jeju to Japan in 1949, following his participation in the Jeju 4.3 Uprising as its point of departure, seeking to create a speculative repertoire of the wind’ s movements. This repertoire comprises multimodal encounters between winds, Kim, and other subjects ranging from humans, deities, substances, beings to things. It navigates various webs of relations, such as radical histories, mythologies, landscapes, geology, desires, dangers, refuge, poetry, etc. Between witnessing, dreaming, conspiring, remembering, forgetting, warning, feeling, and listening, *Borom* asks: what constitutes and constructs various modes of “togetherness?” How is such “togetherness” (or “kinship”) being distributed and moved, in the form of air, breath, gas, and agency?

“Wind,” by all means, is amorphous. As such, the form of this work is akin to the dynamics of the wind, moving from one form to another, like a travelling concert that morphs itself with the changing audience, instruments, performers, settings, and so on. The repertoire pulls from multiple subjectivities and follows Kim Sijong’ s memories, traversing from Jeju’ s lands and waters to Japan. Guided by the winds along Kim’ s trajectory, ***Borom*** tries to imagine, probe, and germinate other time-spaces where distance and difference can radically connect. Perhaps, in the process of doing this together, other modes of togetherness and networked places, times, and bodies might emerge. And if so, what might such a history as / of the wind mean, and how could it articulate itself?

multichannel audio documentation & pdf booklet can be found on: <https://listening.artsmaebashi.jp/en/exhibit/wang/>

Pdf booklet: https://listening.artsmaebashi.jp/downloads/Wang_B5booklet_final.pdf

Act 1: Winds

20 recordings of winds: Kyorae forest



Act 1: Winds

20 recordings of winds: Bukchon Port (4.3 Slaughter ground)



Act 1: Winds

20 recordings of winds: Suwolbong (Lava strata)



Act 1: Winds

20 recordings of winds: Gwantal Island



Act 1: Winds

20 recordings of winds: installation view (QR code)



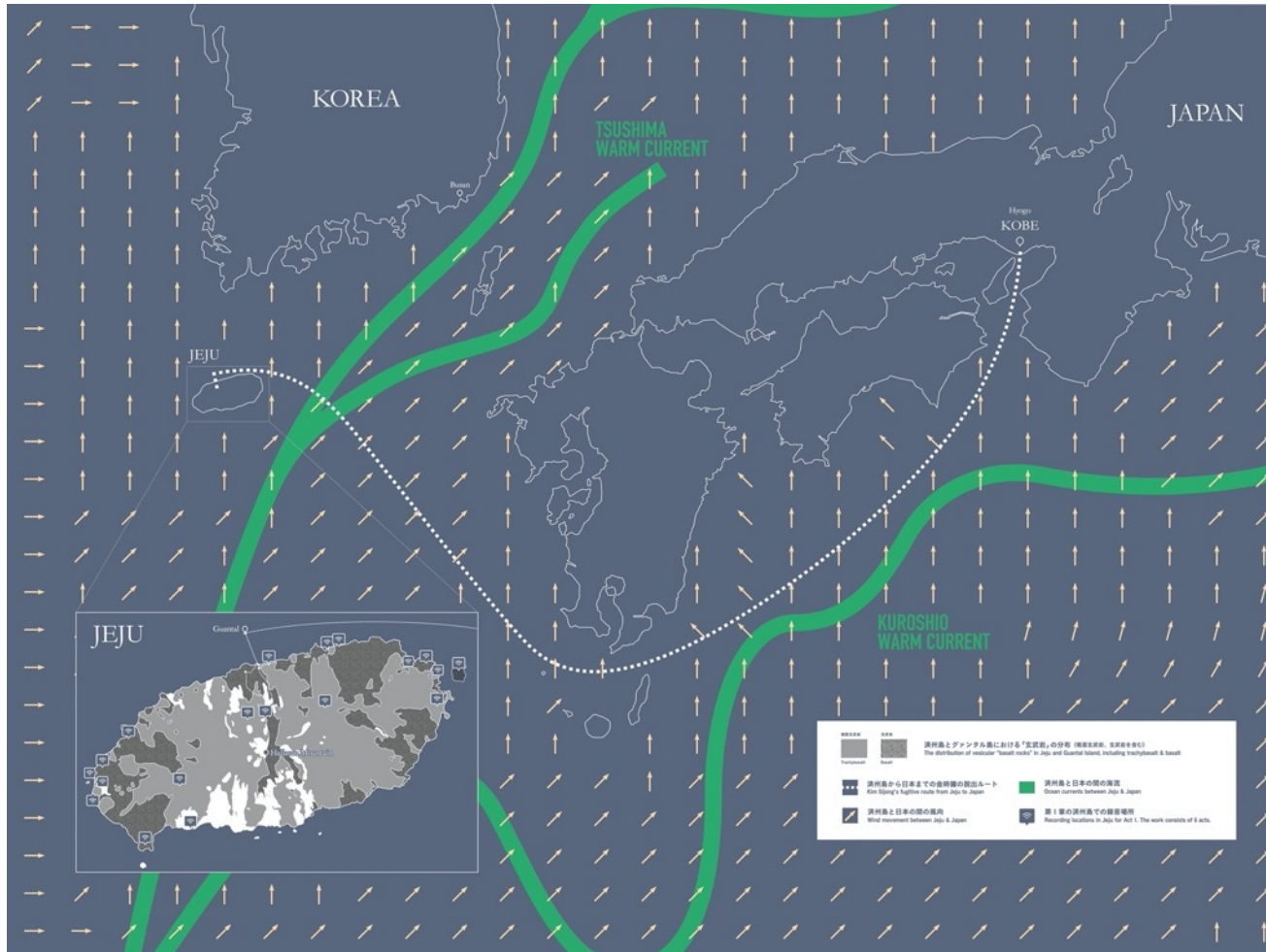
Act 1: Winds

20 recordings of winds: installation view (QR code)



Act 2: Basalt Rocks

Basalt is a dark-colored, fine-grained, igneous rock, formed from the rapid cooling of lava. It often contains holes left by gas bubbles.



Act 2: Basalt Rocks closeup of the map



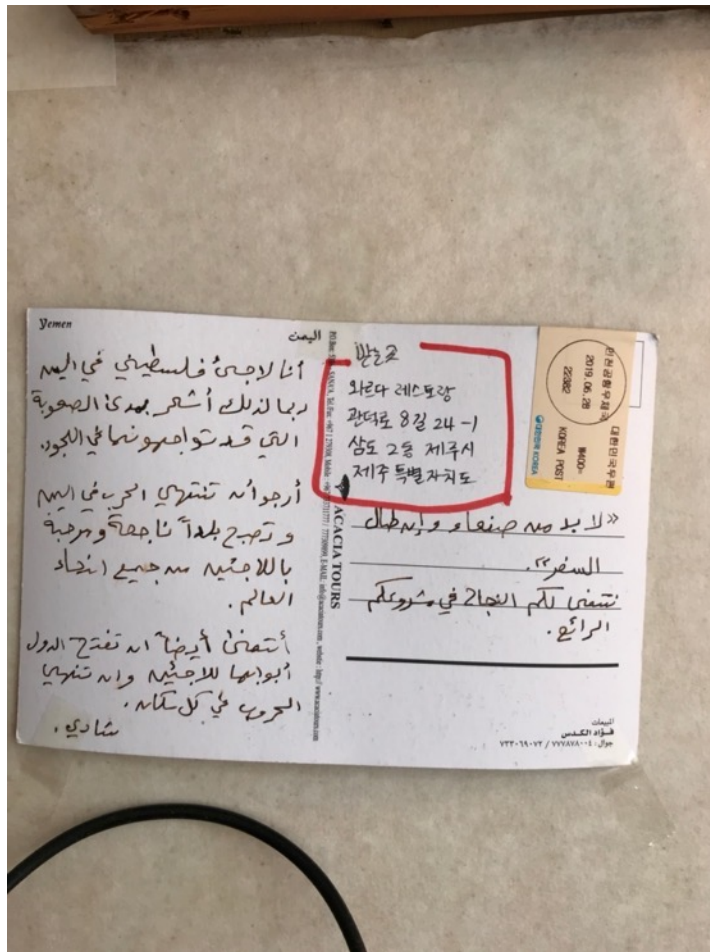
Act 2: Basalt Rocks Installation view



Act 3: Postcard in Wardah

(Wardah is a Yemenis restaurant in Jeju City)

Recited by Recited by Khalid Odeh



“I’m a Palestinian refugee in town.
Maybe that’s why I understand the
difficulties you might be facing as
foreigners here. I hope the war will end
in Yemen and that it will become a
prosperous country that is welcoming to
refugees from all over the world. I also
hope all countries open their doors to
refugees and that wars end all over the
world.” - Shadi

Act 3: Postcard in Wardah

Installation view: one-channel sound & still photo



Act 4: Yeongdeung Halmang (Goddess of Wind)

A farewell ritual to Yeongdeung Halmang by Shaman Oh Yong-Bu on Gwangchigi Beach



Act 5 : Songs

A playlist provided by a “Hope School” member from Yemen in South Korea. Hope School was founded and located on Jeju Island with an aim to build a supportive community between island residents and newly arrived Yemenis who seek asylum in South Korea.

- 1.Chanyeol (EXO) & Punch - Stay With Me
- 2.LYn - The Legend of the Blue Sea
- 3.Younha - I Believe
- 4.Adham Nabulsi - Hada Ma Byentasa
- 5.Rahma Riad - Mako Menni
- 6.Aseel Hameem - Enta Al Saadah
- 7.Faia Younan - Ohebbou Yadayka
- 8.XXXTENTACION - changes
- 9.Adele - Someone Like You
- 10.Rihanna - Love The Way You Lie
- 11.Abeer Nehme - Waynak
- 12.Ramy Gamal - Sa'af
- 13.Rihanna - Diamonds
- 14.Qomery Molatham - Hadeel
- 15.Best Songs Of Justin Bieber - Justin Bieber Greatest Hits Cover 2017
- 16.Clean Bandit – Rockabye

Act 6: My Dear Clementine, Morning Dew, My Heart

Special vocal appearance by Kim Sijong, Hwang Geum-Hyeo, Shaman Seo Sun-Shil

Performed by Jung Shin-Ji

On a Vast Wide Open Seashore (My Dear Clementine)

There's a little grass-hut
There's a father who catches fish
And a daughter he doesn't know.
Oh my love, oh my love, Oh my love
Clementine
You left the old man all alone
Oh, wherever did you go?

Achim Iseul (Morning Dew)

Lyrics and Composition by Kim Min-Ki

Staying up for a long night, on every blade of grass
I see the drops of morning dew, prettier than
pearls
As sorrow rankles my heart like beads of
dewdrops
I climb up the morning hills and learn a little smile
The red sun rises on the graveyard
And scorching heat is my trial
I go now, into the harsh wilderness
Leaving all the sorrow, and now I go
As sorrow rankles in my heart like beads of
dewdrops
I climb up the morning hills and learn a little smile
The red sun rises on the graveyard
And scorching heat is my trial
I go now, into the harsh wilderness
Leaving all the sorrow, and now I go

My heart

Lyrics: Kim Dong-myeong

Composed by: Kim Dong-jin

Translated by Kevin O' Rourke

My heart is a lake
Row toward me, love
Your white shadow I' ll take in my arms
I' ll break like jade on your prow
My heart is a lamp
Close that door, love
I' ll burn in silence to the last drop
Shimmering on your silken dress
My heart is a wayfarer
Play your pipe, love
I' ll bend my ear in the moonlight
And listen desolate through the night
My heart is a fallen leaf
Let me stay a moment in your garden,
love
I' ll leave when the wind rises again
And go my lonely wayfarer road

Act 4 & 6

Installation view: 6-channel sound



Booklet/playbill
Installation view



Hazzeh

2019-2020

Multichannel sound installation

Stars are Closer and Clouds are Nutritious Under Golden Trees

Performed by Ibtisam Ahmad, Henna Haj Hassan & May Marei

- **Mohammad & Mahera Abu Ghazaleh Foundation, Amman, Jordan**
- **Quivering , Artspeak , Vancouver, Canada**
- **Demo-Stream, Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei**
- **Gallery TPW, Toronto, Canada**

“his movements through Jordan and Lebanon had something like the effect of a seismographic reading, drawing and exposing the fault lines that a largely normal surface had hidden.” - Edward Said on Jean Genet

How does one root in places one doesn't visibly belong? And what does it mean when one can? What is it that can connect one to the sound of a language one has never spoken? What if revolution is one of those languages never heard, never iterated, yet understood? Painstakingly asking these questions, Hong-Kai Wang plays with various frequencies in the world that connect humans not only to the other humans but also to the land and other living beings across different times in her work. Her extended research on the sounds of Amman urban scape and sonic social histories of revolutions in the world connected her to the ***Stars Are Closer and Clouds Are Nutritious Under Golden Trees*** project with a commission on the sounds of the Palestinian landscape that are described vividly and poetically by Jean Genet in his very last *Prisoner of Love* (1986) cinematically framing many instances he spent with the fedayeen in North Jordan. Genet's movements in Jordan and Lebanon at a very critical point for the region are described by Edward Said as a seismographic reading, something that cannot help but reveal the fault lines below a thick surface. ***Hazzeh*** means shaking or quivering in Arabic, also referring to the earthquake. Here it powerfully contextualizes the tumultuous conflicts, the land that tectonically cracks and quivers under the heaviness of history. The almost forgotten, banned oral Palestinian lament tradition of “Nuwah” is the means Hong-Kai Wang decided to use to get in touch with Genet's seismographic way of understanding the landscape around him in Jordan. She collaborated with the young Palestinian and Jordanian women who had heard Nuwah only from their elderly. They sang and mourned together to the cracks in different spots in North Jordan and Palestine in an open rehearsal form as Wang recorded. Within that time gap they collectively created, they listened the frequency of the response that echoed back from the land. ***Hazzeh***, therefore, is a sensual environment weaved of such a condensed act of asking, honoring, grieving and listening, as an attempt to communicate with a history that is cut away from the world. - written by Övül Durmuşoğlu

Audio (four discreet sound files & stereo mix):

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9vwf5d7wd0ssc4y/AACt1GHCodOJqk8UbEdaKz91a?dl=0>

Fault line: $32^{\circ}19'31.5''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}43'37.1''\text{E}$
On the hilltop, Ajloun, Jordan



Fault line: $32^{\circ}19'31.5''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}43'37.1''\text{E}$
On the hilltop, Ajloun, Jordan



Fault line: $32^{\circ}19'40.6''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}41'51.8''\text{E}$
In the valley, Ajloun, Jordan



Fault line: $32^{\circ}19'40.6''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}41'51.8''\text{E}$
In the valley, Ajloun, Jordan



Fault line: $32^{\circ}19'40.6''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}41'51.8''\text{E}$
In the valley, Ajloun, Jordan



fault line: $31^{\circ}41'53.9''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}34'50.1''\text{E}$
Jordan Valley, Dead Sea, Jordan



Fault line: $31^{\circ}41'53.9''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}34'50.1''\text{E}$
Jordan Valley, Dead Sea, Jordan



Fault line: $31^{\circ}52'27.2''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}25'51.3''\text{E}$
Deir al-Quruntal , Jericho, Palestine



Fault line: $31^{\circ}52'27.2''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}25'51.3''\text{E}$
Deir al-Quruntal , Jericho, Palestine



Fault line: $31^{\circ}52'27.2''\text{N}$ $35^{\circ}25'51.3''\text{E}$
Deir al-Quruntal , Jericho, Palestine



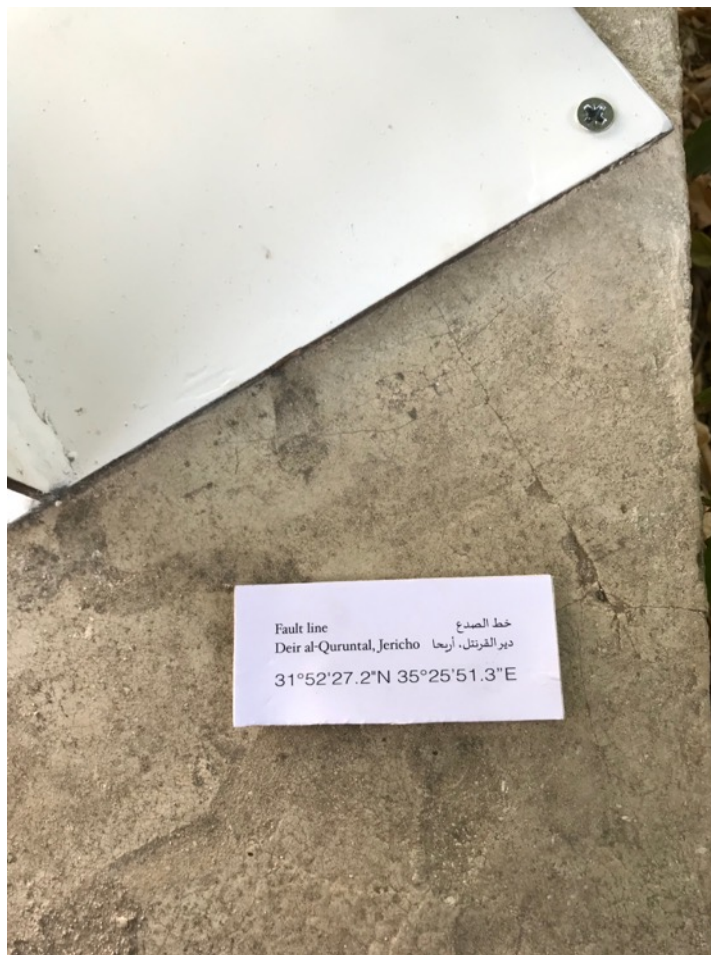
هي صالح دق الجوز والحناء
ايا عزرايين باب الدار يستنى
هي صالح دق والسماق
ايا عزرايين كاتب بينا لفراق
هي صالح دق الجوز واسقيني
ايا عزرايين حالف ما يخليني
هي صالح دق الجوز والسكر
ايا عزرايين حالف يا يتمهل
هي صالح دق الجوز بالزيت
ايا عزرايين ناوي عخراب بيتي

“O Saleh, grind the walnuts and henna
Azrael’s at the door waiting
O Saleh, grind with the sumac
Azrael has destined us to separation
O Saleh, grind the walnuts and water me
Azrael sworn not to let me go
O Saleh, grind the walnuts with sugar
Azrael sworn not to slow down
O Saleh, grind the walnuts with oil
Azrael intends to ruin my home” - *Palestinian Mournings* by Hassan Atari

installation view, Mohammad and Mahera Abu Ghazaleh Foundation



installation view, Mohammad and Mahera
Abu Ghazaleh Foundation



installation view, Mohammad and Mahera
Abu Ghazaleh Foundation



Singing is what makes work possible

2018 – ongoing

Workshop, excursion, multimedia installation

- Triangle and Blank Forms, New York (performative meeting)
- Remote Viewing, Philadelphia
- Princeton University, Princeton (performative meeting)
- *Process*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía Radio, Madrid (radio & online)
- Top頂上, Guangzhou (online workshop)

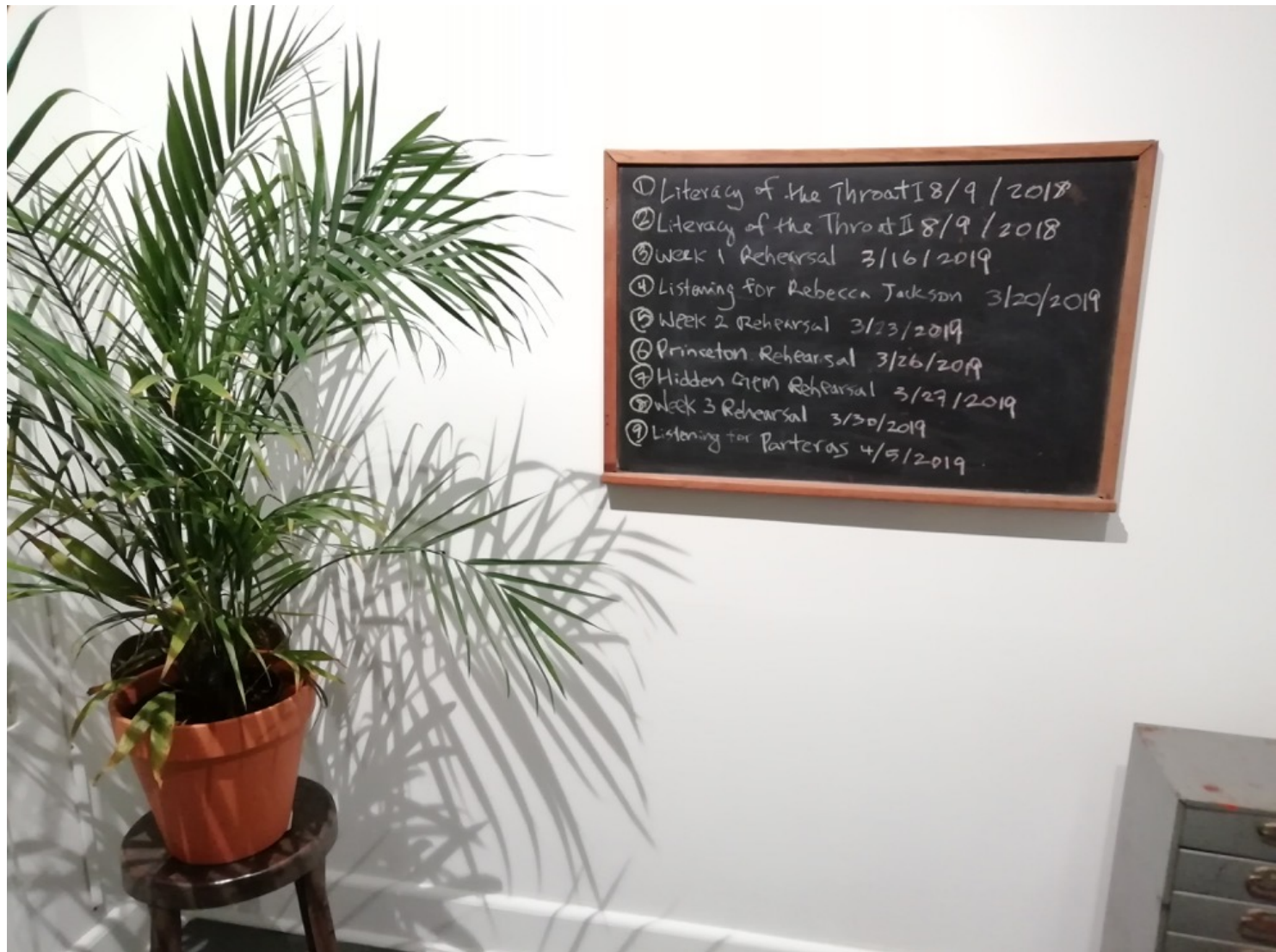
Since Fall 2018, Bill Dietz & Hong-Kai Wang have been engaged in an iterative investigation into the relations between song, labor, and value. "Literacy of Throat," the first iteration, presented in cooperation with the late artist Chris Mann at Triangle Arts Association in New York City, took the form of a tripartite "meeting" in which the artists facilitated the oral transmission of audio documents in a series of lecture-performances. "Singing is what makes work possible," the second iteration, was a month-long exhibition anchored at Remote Viewing in Philadelphia (extending beyond the gallery onto street corners, a restaurant, and a community center), in which weekly thematic foci and attendant audio documents were rehearsed in cooperation with a series of guest specialists.

Beyond the modern didactic sense of the word, the etymology of "syllabus" retains echoes of "bringing together" and "gathering." Listening toward that form of "gathering," Dietz & Wang have prepared a multi-modal syllabus for Radio Reina Sofía that invites readers & listeners to join them in study from home or other domestic settings. Taking advantage of Radio Reina Sofía's web-based interface, Dietz & Wang's contribution includes a playlist of audio excerpts from their 2019 rehearsals, a selection of textual, audio-visual, and spatial references for further exploration, two prose scores, and a digital publication entitled, "靡靡之音 / With a sound of no substance." This constellation of materials continues the disjunctive trajectory of the series, building on and incorporating materials from the first two iterations, and building toward the next instance in the artists' ongoing inquiry.

Sound documents: <http://www.r-v.space/singing-is-what-makes-work-possible>

Reina Sofía Museum's radio iteration: <https://radio.museoreinasofia.es/en/bill-dietz-hong-kai-wang>

Installation view
Remote Viewing, Philadelphia



Silent listening walk-- Listening for Rebecca
Jackson, downtown Philadelphia



Singing shaker song session in Chinatown, Philadelphia



Singing “Victory is Created by Both Hands” session with Hidden Gem’s owner Lily Yaw in Chinatown, Philadelphia



Singing “We Are the Midwives” session at Norris Square Neighborhood Project, Philadelphia



Dancing “Philly Bop” session at Remote Viewing facilitated by Tiona Nekkia McClodden



Radio from Reina Sofía Museum: <https://radio.museoreinasofia.es/en/bill-dietz-hong-kai-wang>

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://radio.museoreinasofia.es/en/bill-dietz-hong-kai-wang>. The browser's address bar and tabs are visible at the top. The website's header features the 'RRS' logo, the text 'Radio from Reina Sofía Museum', and navigation links for 'Explore', 'Channels', 'Search the radio ...', 'About', and 'Castellano'. Below the header, a green banner contains the title 'Bill Dietz & Hong-Kai Wang' and the subtitle 'Singing is what makes work possible (Syllabus)'. A navigation bar with tabs for 'Processes', 'Voice', 'Sound', 'Sound Art', and 'Music' is positioned above the title. Below the title, a media player interface shows a play button, a progress bar at 0:00, and a volume icon. A list of four audio tracks is displayed, each with a musical note icon, a title, and a play button icon. The tracks are: 01: "Music & Spiritual Labor" with Cauleen Smith via Skype, Remote Viewing, Philadelphia; 02: "Listening for Rebecca Jackson", starting outside 914 Lombard Street, Philadelphia; 03: "Migration & Sound" with Eric Hung, Remote Viewing, Philadelphia; and 04: Presentation in the "Sound Knowledges" series, Princeton University, Princeton. Below the playlist, a paragraph of text describes the project, mentioning an iterative investigation into the relations between song, labor, and value, and the first iteration, "Literacy of Throat," presented in collaboration with the late artist Chris Mann at Triangle Arts Association in New York City. A 'Share' section with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email is located at the bottom right.

Processes Voice Sound Sound Art Music

Bill Dietz & Hong-Kai Wang

Singing is what makes work possible (Syllabus)

0:00 0:00

- 01: "Music & Spiritual Labor" with Cauleen Smith via Skype, Remote Viewing, Philadelphia
- 02: "Listening for Rebecca Jackson", starting outside 914 Lombard Street, Philadelphia
- 03: "Migration & Sound" with Eric Hung, Remote Viewing, Philadelphia
- 04: Presentation in the "Sound Knowledges" series, Princeton University, Princeton

Since Fall 2018, Bill Dietz & Hong-Kai Wang have been engaged in an iterative investigation into the relations between song, labor, and value. "Literacy of Throat," the first iteration, presented in collaboration with the late artist Chris Mann at Triangle Arts Association in New York City, took the

Share

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This is no country music II

2019 – 2020

- The Strangers from Beyond the Mountain and the Sea, Asian Arts Biennial
National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung
Workshop, sound-video installation
- Lecture performance, Artspeak, Vancouver
- Lecture performance, Singapore Art Museum

Premiered and commissioned by *Theater Commons Tokyo* in March 2019, the second iteration of *This is no country music* continues to trace the musical trajectory of Taiwan-born composer, Koh Bunya. For the 2019 Asian Arts Biennial, it positions a “listening/feeling” prism onto the geopolitical time-space of the 1935 Hsinchu-Taichung Earthquake— the deadliest earthquake in Taiwan’s recorded history. In 1935, Taiwan was ruled under Japanese colonial regime.

At the invitation of Taiwan People News, Koh Bunya composed the *Earthquake Relief Song* for a relief concert soon after the quake. Despite its popularity at the time, according to a handful of musicologists and historians, there is no extant record of a score, nor a recording. Taking this lost *Earthquake Relief Song* as a point of departure, *This is no country music* attempts to traverse geology, catastrophe, body, society, and history. In addition to studying the cosmism and vernacularity in Koh’s music, the project scours the archive not only for historical seismic data, as well as written and oral records of mutual aid and survival strategies, but also for modern paradigms of seismic monitoring, and technologies of colonial governance. The question is: how to record a “seismographic reading, drawing and exposing the fault lines” of the earth *as well as* the entanglements between human ideologies “that a large normal surface had hidden?” (Said, 2007) In the process of probing, it seeks to collectively imagine a kind of apparatus constructed beyond the binaries of humans / nature, nation / state, science / humanity, or human / nonhuman as defined by global modernity— perhaps something like a “speculative seismographic hybrid.”

This is no country music takes the form of an “open rehearsal” - a series of techniques and a methodology - to navigate between sites relevant to the 1935 earthquake and Koh in Taichung. Together with the musicologist Liou Lin-Yu and the seismologists Ma Kuo-Fong and Cheng Shih-Nan, the rehearsals’ participants query how to critically feel and grapple with a heterogeneity of materialities and rhythms. As we experiment with various modes of cooperation and exchange at once with one another and with everything else around us, a tentative "concert" may unfold. The resulting installation consists of multichannel sound and moving images. It takes the form of lecture performance in both Vancouver and Singapore iterations.

*Video/sound playlist for the lecture performance iteration (script attached):

https://www.dropbox.com/s/hls3tdkllyrhig9/2019_no_country_music_lecture.pptx?dl=0

*Three discreet video channels: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/6357879> (password: Koh2019)

*Script: https://www.dropbox.com/s/v2w85g21xscla0h/2019_no_country_music_script_eng.pdf?dl=0

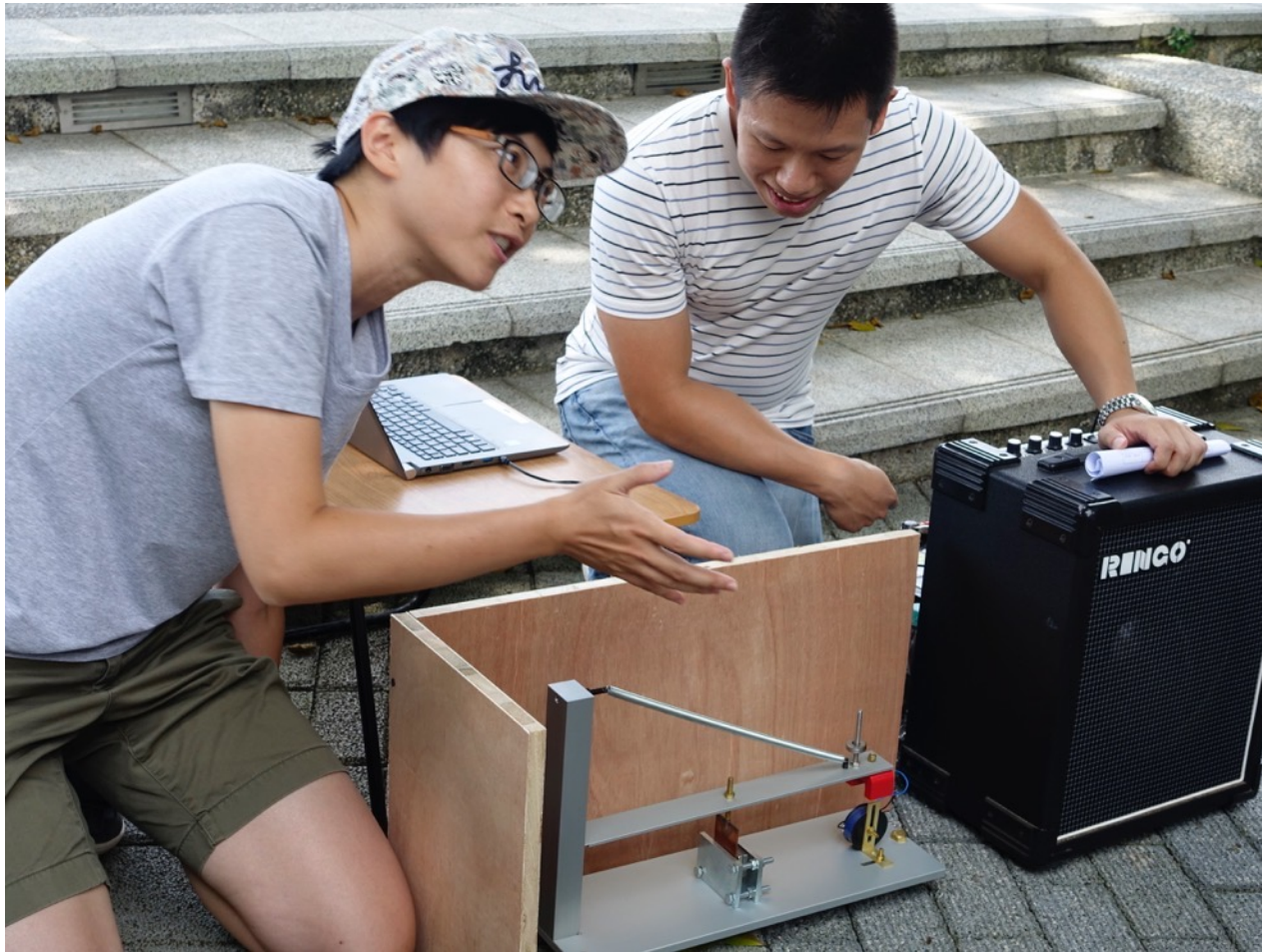
Workshop, National Taichung Theater



Workshop, Chingshui Fault Line, Taichung



Workshop, Chingshui Fault Line, Taichung, with a DIY seismograph



Rehearsal, Chingshui Fault Line, Taichung



Rehearsal, San Shan Kings Temple, Taichung



Rehearsal, Niu Ma Tou Parking Lot (former Ta Chia Municipal Office), Taichung



Installation shot, National Taiwan Museum



View of lecture performance, Artspeak



View of lecture performance, Artspeak



View of lecture performance, Singapore Art Museum



This is no country music I

Theater Commons Tokyo, Tokyo, 2019

Workshop, lecture performance

Did you know that there was a “Japanese” composer who submitted the orchestral work *Formosan Dance* to the 1936 Berlin Olympic International Music Competition, winning against the likes of Kosaku Yamada? Bunya Koh was born in Taiwan under Japanese occupation, grew up in Japan-occupied Xiamen in China and made his name as a vocalist as well as composer in Japan. While he was initially given a professorship in China, the Cold War tensions and events such as the Cultural Revolution caused him to die an obscure artist, unable to return to either of his two homelands.

Amidst the hardships of his era, Koh studied ancient Confucian music, passionately researching and collecting ethnomusic across Taiwan, Japan, and China, and writing scores based on his findings – it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that these very compositions were his fieldnotes. In the present day, how can we begin to approach the wild realm of “no country music” he left behind?

In ***This is no country music***, Hong-Kai Wang will confront this question. Having conducted, in collaboration with various ethnomusicologists, historians, archivists, and composers, research into Koh’s practice, Wang organizes a creative workshop in which she will share, sonically and somatically, the results. By embarking as a group on “listening, reading, singing, spatialization, audiencing,” and more, participants will collectively develop “clairaudience” with and a fresh, imaginative outlook on Bunya Koh and his music – as well as on the historical events that took place in East Asia during his lifetime, which have shaped us all forever.

Workshop – listening walk



Workshop – listening walk



Workshop – listening walk



Workshop – listening walk



Lecture performance



Lecture performance



Lecture performance



Southern Clairaudience- Some sound documents for a future act

2016- ongoing

Workshop, performance, sound and video documentations

- Dongshih Township, Yunlin
- Kadist & The Lab. San Francisco
- A Second Exhibition (By Other Masters, Around The Same Subject, New Date). Hotel Maria Kapel, Hoorn, The Netherlands
- Negative Horizon: Taiwan Video Art Biennale. Hong-Gah Museum, Taipei
- Arrival City. Galaxy Contemporary Museum of Contemporary Art, Chongqing
- documenta 14: Every Time A Ear Di Soun. Broadcast in Greece, South Africa, Germany, Colombia, Brazil, USA, Indonesia, Lebanon (radio)
- The South: an art of asking and listening. Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung
- The Bared Sound. Arts Center of Mississippi, Jackson
- KUNCI Cultural Studies Center, Yogyakarta (radio)
- 74 million million million tons, Sculpture Center, New York
- Madou Sugar Industry Triennale, Tainan

Southern Clairaudience is an ongoing project as part of my upcoming PhD dissertation. It proposes at once a dissonant reading of an obscured protest song written by the “Sugarcane Workers Union” in the 1925’s Japan-colonized Taiwan and a series of resonance-making queries in collaboration with diverse groups of collaborator in possibly forging their unexpected geopolitical intimacy.

This song— known as *Sugarcane Song*— is ascribed to helping mobilize arguably the first anti-colonial class-conscious agrarian uprising in the recorded Taiwanese history. Before it was cemented as the Erhlin Sugarcane Workers’ Incident, this radical event had been cast into oblivion due to many complex politico-historical reasons. In 2001, a group of Erhlin-based historians restored it together with the song based on the oral accounts as collected from the descendants of the revolt’s participants. However, remembering is often precisely a modality of forgetting. The excavated lyrics of *Sugarcane Song* in turn reveals the omissions of certain memories in the now renewed narrative: the song’s melody, the mentions of a local sugar capitalist’s complicity, the migrant slaves of color “oo-kui” (meaning black ghost), indentured laborers, women among others.

The project takes reimagining the melody of *Sugarcane Song* by a group of current sugarcane planters near Erlin as its geopolitical point of departure, seeking collaborators and audiences across (il)legible borders to respond at various performative situations. It puts forward the following question: is it possible to create the second chance(s) to hear the missing histories or knowledges about different modalities of existence and their affiliations with one another, through “resonance making”?

The audience is called upon to hear and listen to a speculative constellation of improvised sound documents generated for a future archive in the making.

*Sound work (shown at documenta 14 and Sculpture Center New York):

https://www.dropbox.com/s/4yg94ftwibpgnkW/Southern_Clairaudience_audio.wav?dl=0

*Video documentations: <https://vimeo.com/album/4269683> (Password: Tropicalhearing)

Video still (Erhlin Sugarcane Workers Incident Monument)
PS. This monument collapsed in 2017 and was re-erected in 2018.



Workshop view, Taisugar Plantation Office, Dongshih Township



Performance view, The Lab



Workshop view, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung



Performance view, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung



Workshop view, KUNCI Cultural Studies Forum & Collective, Yogyakarta
(live radio streaming)





Installation view
Sculpture Center

Installation view
Madou Sugar Industry Triennale



Installation view
Madou Sugar Industry Triennale

