

Singapore at 54th Venice Biennale INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION

ARTIST

HO Tzu Nyen (b. 1976, Singapore)

Tzu Nyen's first feature film *HERE* premiered at the 41st Director's Fortnight, Cannes Film Festival (2009), and went on to numerous film festivals around the world, including the 14th Pusan International Film Festival (2009). In the same year, he made a medium length film *EARTH*, which premiered at the 66th Venice International Film Festival (2009), and subsequently was shown at film festivals such as the 39th Rotterdam International Film Festival. He has collaborated with renowned experimental musicians from around the world, such as Black to Comm (Berlin) and Oren Ambarchi (Melbourne).

His art projects have been presented at the Liverpool Biennial (2010); the 6th Asia-Pacific Triennial (2009); the 26th Sao Paulo Biennale (2004); the 3rd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (2005); the 1st Singapore Biennale (2006); the Dojima River Biennale (2009).

His theatrical experiments have been presented at *KunstenFestivalsdesArts* (2006, 2008), *Singapore Arts Festival* (2006, 2008) and *Theater der Welt* (2010).

He is currently having an exhibition at *Artspace, Sydney*, as part of the *Sydney Festival* (2011), and his work *NEWTON* (2009) is nominated for the *transmediale* prize, for the upcoming edition of the *transmediale.11* in Berlin, February 2011. He has an upcoming solo exhibition at the *Mori Art Museum* in Tokyo in November 2011.

About the artist and his work

Since the inception of his practice in 2003, Ho has deftly taken on the roles of theatre director, screenwriter, film director, historian and teacher, besides that of artist, choreographing and mounting increasingly more complex and novel projects that assume a variety of forms — on stage, screen and in galleries.

The work of Ho Tzu Nyen is characterised by three themes: historiography — the production of new histories, from pre-colonial founding myths (*Utama — Every Name in History is I*) to art histories (*4 x 4: Episodes of Singapore Art*); re-interpretation — the reworking of historical objects, ranging from philosophical texts (*Zarathustra: A Film for Everyone and No One*), history painting (*EARTH*), and popular songs (*The Bohemian Rhapsody Project*); and the analysis of the production of visual aesthetic and acoustic deconstruction (*NEWTON* and *EARTH*).

Ho's past works have in common the investigation and incorporation of important cultural moments as their material, these are ideas and expressions that have had significant impact far beyond their individual cultural and geographical origins. The chart-topping hit *Bohemian Rhapsody* by British rock band *Queen*, the philosophical treatise of the German philosopher *Friedrich Nietzsche*, the magnificent tragedy of *King Lear* by *Shakespeare*, the

brutal aesthetics of Post-Revolution French paintings, and the obscurity of the founding myth of Singapore, are in Ho's works much more than a look back at these historical occurrences. Rather, framed in a contemporary setting and at times translated into a different medium and platform, they are transformed and reinvigorated for a contemporary audience. As art historian George Kubler describes of the history of things as comprising of signals and transformations iterating and relayed across time, Ho's works are bearers of the ideas and messages that cut across culture and geography, yet in their transmission they take on local flavour and nuance.

Selected past works

Utama - Every Name in History is I (2003)

4 x 4: Episodes of Singapore Art (2005)

The Bohemian Rhapsody Project (2006)

The King Lear Project (2008)

NEWTON (2009)

HERE (2009)

EARTH (2009)

Zarathustra: A Film for Everyone and No One (2009)

Artist at selected film festivals

39th Rotterdam International Film Festival (2010)

41st Director's Fortnight, Cannes Film Festival (2009)

66th Venice International Film Festival (2009)

14th Pusan International Film Festival (2009)

Artist at selected art festivals

Theater der Welt (2010)

Sydney Arts Festival (2010)

KunstenFestivaldesArts (2006, 2009)

The Singapore Arts Festival (2008, 2009)

Artist at Biennales

Liverpool Biennial (2010)

6th Asia-Pacific Triennial (2009)

Dojima River Biennale (2009)

1st Singapore Biennale (2006)

3rd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (2005)

26th Sao Paulo Biennale (2004)

Selected Solo Exhibitions

MAM Project 015, Solo exhibition at Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, in November 2011

Earth, solo exhibition at Artspace, Sydney (2011)

2010, solo exhibition at the Contemporary Art Centre South Australia, Australia

Bohemian Rhapsody/4 x 4, solo exhibition at the Contemporary Art Centre South Australia, Australia (2007)

4 x 4 - Episodes of Singapore Art, Arts Central (broadcast), Singapore (2005)

Utama – Every Name in History is I, The Substation, Singapore (2003)

Ho's works presented at selected exhibitions

2010

transmediale.11, Berlin, Germany

Liverpool Biennial, Media Landscape -Zone East, Liverpool, United Kingdom

Future Perfect, ShContemporary 2010

No Soul for Sale, Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom

VideoZone5: Video Art Biennial, Tel Aviv, Israel

2009

6th Asia-Art Pacific Triennial, Australia

Yokohama Festival of Art and Media, Japan

The Dojima River Biennale, Osaka, Japan

Some Rooms, Osage Kwun Tong, Hong Kong

2008

Art Multiple, Ke Center for the Contemporary Arts, Shanghai, China

MU Popshop, Stichting MU, Eindhoven, Holland

Art & Entrepreneurship, Credit-Suisse Exhibition, Dubai, New York, Berlin, Moscow, Geneva, Milan, Madrid, London

2007

Soft Power, Shanghai Zendai Museum of Modern Art, China.

The Bohemian Rhapsody Project, Gallery 3,14, Bergen, Oslo, Norway

Asia – Europe Mediations, National Gallery of Poznan, Poland

Thermocline of Art, ZKM Center of Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany

2006

Underplayed: A Mix-Tape of Music-Based Videos, The Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, USA

4 x 4 – Episodes of Singapore Art, ARGOS, Brussels, Belgium

1st Singapore Biennale, Singapore

Move on Asia, Alternative Space Loop, Seoul & Tokyo Wonder Site, Japan

The Guernica Project, ARCO, Madrid, Spain

2005

3rd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, Japan

No Time for Space, Para-Site, Hong Kong

Utama – Every Name in History is I, Sparwasser HQ, Berlin, Germany

2004

Image Smugglers, 26th Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil

2003

Utama – Every Name in History is I, The Substation, Singapore

CURATOR

June YAP

June Yap is an independent curator based in Singapore. She previously curated with the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore (LASALLE) and the Singapore Art Museum

Curated selected exhibitions

You and I, We've Never Been So Far Apart: Works from Asia, VideoZone5 - Fifth International Video Art Biennial, organised by The Center For Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, Israel (2010)

The Future of Exhibition: It Feels Like I've Been Here Before, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, LASALLE (2010)

Culture(s) of Copy, Goethe-Institut Hong Kong and Edith Russ Site for Media Art (Germany) (2010)

Das Paradies ist Anderswo / Paradise is Elsewhere, at Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) Stuttgart and Berlin (Germany) (2009)

Some Rooms, Osage (Hong Kong), co-curator (2009)

Bound for Glory, exhibition of works by Wong Hoy Cheong at National University of Singapore (NUS) Museum (2008)

MATAHATI - For Your Pleasure, Galeri Petronas, House of MATAHATI, The Annexe Gallery (Central Market) and 12 Art Space Gallery, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) (2008)

Techniques of Storytelling: Speaking the unspeakable, co-curator, organized by Ssamzie Space, Alternative Space LOOP and Art Space Hue, part of the Artist Forum International event in Seoul, Korea (2007)

Trading Craft, performance and exhibition by Khairuddin Hori, at The Substation (Singapore) and The Art Centre, Chulalongkorn University (Thailand) (2007)

The Second Dance Song: New Contemporaries in conjunction with the inaugural 2006 Singapore Biennale (2006).

Seni: Singapore 2004, Art & the Contemporary co-curator, co-organised by National Heritage Board and National Arts Council. Co-curator for 'City Art Project' with festival partner Multimedia Art Asia Pacific (2004)

Twilight Tomorrow, New Media series at the Singapore Art Museum (2004)

Encounters with Modernism, co-curator and organiser with the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2004)

Interrupt, inaugural New Media series at Singapore Art Museum (2003)

alpha 3.8: translocated, preview at Singapore Art Museum (2003)