

Lucas Ihlein

盧卡斯 艾靈

Trevor Yeung

楊沛鏗

SEA海
PEARL珠
WHITE白
CLOUD雲

30 JULY – 24 SEPTEMBER 2016

Sea Pearl White Cloud is a project realised through a collaboration between 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art and Guangzhou's Observation Society, one of China's most exciting contemporary art project spaces. The binary relationship between two artists - Lucas Ihlein and Trevor Yeung - and two organisations across two cities is signaled by the project's title: Haizhu (海珠) or 'Sea Pearl,' indicating a process of materiality - and even beauty - being forged through time; and Baiyun (白雲) or 'White Cloud', suggestive of interminable transience, while in a more prosaic sense being the name of the district in which Guangzhou's mountainous range and international airport is located. Accordingly, this project is informed by fieldwork undertaken by Ihlein and Yeung within Haizhu, as well as further afield throughout the Pearl River Delta and Guangdong province. More recently, fieldtrips were undertaken in Sydney that included the urban waterways and parklands of Bardwell Creek, Wollie Creek and Cooks River, which all feed into Botany Bay and the area around Sydney's international airport, as well as several creeks traversing the suburban and industrial areas of the Illawarra region.

Both Ihlein and Yeung are interested in environmental and ecological systems and their inherent imbalances of stasis and change. The artists' work produced for this project proposes future scenarios and metaphors that illuminate everyday occurrences of material and spiritual transformation. For instance, Trevor Yeung's *Mr Dehumidifier*, presented at Observation Society, was designed to extract the abundant moisture from Guangzhou's subtropical climate. Resulting in more than eight litres of water per day, Yeung encouraged visitors to fill plastic bottles using a hand pump and to do what they wished with the city's 'air', now in liquid form. The artist continues the hydrological cycle with *Mr Humidifier*, presented in 4A's ground floor gallery, transforming the water extracted from Guangzhou's atmosphere back into vapor dispersed in Sydney's mid-winter climate.

A keeper of many pets in his Hong Kong apartment - birds, fish, tortoises and even a flying squirrel named Fei Fei (肥飛) - Yeung is especially fascinated by the emotional triggers and adaptations inherent in symbiotic connections between humans and animals, and the never static equilibrium between autonomy and control. Intrigued by the fate of invasive species in Australia - specifically the case of *Lantana camara*, which has led to a reduction in biodiversity along Australia's eastern coastal areas where the weed has prospered at the expense of native shrubs, and the distressing reality of the use of the myxoma virus in culling rabbits - Yeung's work proposes metaphoric actions and reactions that reveal the human animal's inner coping mechanisms. Drawing connections to his aquarium installation presented at Observation Society, *White Cloud Mountain Minnow*, Yeung has created *The Pond of Outsiders* at 4A. The artist's pond acts as temporary home to a small school of mountain cloud, an antipodean variation of the Guangdong fish. A native species of Guangdong, the white cloud mountain minnow was considered endangered in the wild until its viability as commercial stock as pets and feeder fish actually helped replenish the species, especially around Baiyun mountain overlooking Guangzhou. In its explicit artificiality through the use of mundane materials of home and garden improvement, *The Pond of Outsiders* balances an endearing humility with a somber meditation on the commodification of the natural world and the human limits of empathy and depths of our callousness.

Lucas Ihlein's screen prints, texts and animation, *Guangzhou Delta Haiku (Haiku Couplets)*, exposes a topography of the precarious projections of sea level rise as it might affect Haizhu and the broader Pearl River Delta as the most densely urbanised landscape in the world. Surprised to discover that the discrepancy between the colossal risk Guangzhou faces in an uncertain environmental future and the lack of transparency in the city's planning, Ihlein has extended his study to Sydney's situation via a presentation of work that borrows pedagogical structures of communication. Ihlein's work is also borne of his long-standing fascination with the artistic potential of the haiku in crystallising perceptual complexity in the brevity of poetic form. Read alongside a selection of imagery that documents his fieldtrips, Ihlein's undertaking is a kind of quasi-scientifically informed psychogeography that reveals contradictory and chance encounters between human and natural imperatives within a region commonly referred to by economists as 'the world's factory,' given its manufacturing clout and stupendous share of global exports, albeit with environmental impacts generated by global demand.

盧卡斯 艾靈 **Lucas Ihlein** (b. 1975, Sydney, Australia) is a Wollongong-based artist whose current work explores the relationship between socially engaged art, agriculture and ecological management. He is a founding member of artists' collectives SquatSpace, Big Fag Press, and Teaching and Learning Cinema. Exhibitions include *The Yeomans Project* (with Ian Milliss), AGNSW, Sydney (2013-14); *Green Bans Art Walk*, The Cross Arts Projects & Big Fag Press, Sydney (2011); *In the Balance: Art for a Changing World*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2010); and *There Goes the Neighbourhood*, Performance Space, Sydney (2009). Ihlein completed a PhD at Deakin University in 2008 entitled *Framing Everyday Experience: Blogging as Art*, which was awarded the Alfred Deakin Medal for best Doctoral Thesis in Humanities & Social Sciences. In 2015 he was awarded an Australia Council for the Arts Fellowship for Emerging and Experimental Arts. He is currently an ARC DECRA Research Fellow at University of Wollongong, Australia. <http://guangzhou-delta-haiku.net>

楊沛鏗 **Trevor Yeung** (b. 1988, Dongguan, Guangdong province, China) lives and works in Hong Kong. He graduated from the Academy of Visual Arts at Hong Kong Baptist University in 2010. Yeung's practice uses botanic ecology, horticulture, photography and installations as metaphors that reference the emancipation of everyday aspirations toward human relationships. Solo exhibitions include *No Pressure*, Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Zürich (2015); *Garden Cruising: It's Not That Easy Being Green*, Blindspot Gallery, Art Basel Hong Kong (2015); *That Dog at the Party*, Gallery EXIT, Hong Kong (2014); and *Trevor Yeung's Encyclopedia*, Observation Society, Guangzhou (2013). Group exhibitions include *Adrift*, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal, Shenzhen (2016); *Peep Show*, Long March Space, Beijing (2015); *A Hundred Years of Sham - Songs of Resistance and Scenarios for Chinese Nations*, Para Site, Hong Kong (2015); and *Social Factory*, 10th Shanghai Biennale, Power Station of Art, Shanghai (2014).

LIST OF WORKS

Ground Floor (left to right from front entrance):

盧卡斯 艾靈 **Lucas Ihlein**
廣州三角洲俳句 (俳句對聯)
Guangzhou Delta Haiku (Haiku Couplets)
inkjet prints, chalk; dimensions variable.

吃飯時說飯
Talking About Rice While Eating Rice
rice, rice cookers, audio; dimensions variable

廣州三角洲俳句 (植物學灣洪水地圖)
Guangzhou Delta Haiku (Botany Bay Flood Map)
offset lithography, inkjet print; 70 x 100 cm.

楊沛鏗 **Trevor Yeung**
加濕先生 *Mr Humidifier*
humidifying unit, water extracted from Guangzhou air
dimensions variable.

飲別擔心的藍 *Drinking the Blue of No Worries*
offset lithography, acrylic; 70 x 100 cm
Original image National Archives of Australia: A1200, L44186.

First Floor (left to right from gallery entrance):

盧卡斯 艾靈 **Lucas Ihlein**
廣州三角洲俳句 (珠江三角洲洪水地圖)
Guangzhou Delta Haiku (Pearl River Delta Flood Maps)
screen prints, inkjet prints, chalk; dimensions variable.

楊沛鏗 **Trevor Yeung**
馬纓丹切花 *Fresh Cut Lantana*
Lantana camara, vase; dimensions variable.

盼春 *Waiting for Spring*
Magnolia x alba; dimensions variable.

外人塘 *The Pond of Outsiders*
white cloud mountain minnow, weeds, gardening objects
dimensions variable.

最傷心的日出 (拜倫灣) *The Saddest Sunrise (Byron Bay)*
c-print; 80 x 120 cm.

可愛的刺 *The Cute Thorn*
Acacia sensu lato; 43 cm.

液瘤雲 *Clouds of Mixy*
archival inkjet print; 25 x 30 cm.
Original image National Archives of Australia: A1200, L44186

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Public program: *Talking About Rice While Eating Rice* Thursday 11 August, 6.00PM - 7.30PM,

Join us for an evening with this most ubiquitous of grains. Building on his recent visit to a rice farming enterprise in Guangdong, Lucas Ihlein hosts a conversation with artist Vic McEwan, recipient of the Arts NSW Regional Fellowship 2014-15 (Narrandera NSW), and rice farmer Tim Randall (Griffith NSW) to ask, 'what social, environmental and economic factors affect rice farming communities in Australia and China today?' Several varieties of Randall Organic Rice will be sampled on the night! A 4A co-production with the Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation (KSCA) and the Material Ecologies Research Network (MECO) at University of Wollongong. **FREE / RSVP at 4a.com.au**

SEA PEARL WHITE CLOUD LUCAS IHLEIN & TREVOR YEUNG

PRODUCED AND PRESENTED BY



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