

HOMELAND . . . .  
- . - IN . - - . . .  
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. - . . TRANSIT

ARTISTS  
MAY FUNG  
KONGKEE  
LAW YUK MUI  
LEUNG CHI WO  
MAP OFFICE  
YUKIHIRO TAGUCHI

CURATOR  
ANGELIKA LI

EXHIBITION 01 OCT - 01 NOV 2020  
OPEN HOURS WED-SUN 13.00-19.00  
VIDEO TALKS SAT 03 OCT 16.00  
MOMENTUM  
KUNSTQUARTIER BETHANIEN  
MARIANNENPLATZ 2 BERLIN

CO-PRESENTERS

ONKILI



## HOMELAND in TRANSIT

**EXHIBITION:** 1 October – 1 November 2020  
**Open hours:** Wed - Sun · 13.00 – 19.00  
**Venue:** MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Mariannenplatz 2, Berlin

**VIDEO TALKS:** Sat 3 October · 16.00–19.00  
**Live streaming:** [momentumworldwide.org/exhibitions/homeland-in-transit](https://momentumworldwide.org/exhibitions/homeland-in-transit)  
**Venue:** MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Mariannenplatz 2, Berlin

**CO-PRESENTERS:** MOMENTUM [momentumworldwide.org](https://momentumworldwide.org)  
ONKILI [onkili.com](https://onkili.com)

## HOMELAND in TRANSIT

next stop: BERLIN

Angelika Li, Basel, Autumn 2020

The word 'homeland' evokes a physical and permanent form on the surface, yet when we dive a little deeper into our memories and emotions, the word urges us to reflect on its complex and shifting nature. The inaugural exhibition of HOMELAND in TRANSIT in 2019 channelled narratives of 'homeland' from Hong Kong perspectives: the floating islands, borders and boundaries, unfolding histories of diaspora, the metamorphosis of cultural identity, colonial ideology and beyond.

In only a few months, our world has changed dramatically and each word in this title developed a wider scope of meanings and expanded relevance: we feel an urgent need to further communicate and encourage more exchanges and discussions. The HOMELAND in TRANSIT VIDEO TALKS launched in Basel in February 2020 continues the exchange and leads to the next exhibition taking place at MOMENTUM, Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin in October 2020 with time-based works by 7 Hong Kong artists May FUNG, Kongkee, LAW Yuk Mui, LEUNG Chi Wo and MAP Office (Valerie PORTEFAIX & Laurent GUTIERREZ) and a Berlin-based Japanese artist Yukihiro TAGUCHI who has community-based project experience in Hong Kong. The selection of works explores the notions of self-searching, migration, memory and our resilience as humans. An intrinsic and characteristic element of Hong Kong - water - occupies a strong presence.

Despite many differences in our backgrounds, the sense of homeland is constantly being questioned and reinterpreted. How do artists perceive these transformations and how do they represent it in their art?

MAP Office's 'The Book of Waves' (2018) brings to mind the often forgotten natural geography of Hong Kong, which consists of more than 260 individual islands, though it is better known as a densely populated modern cityscape. Engulfed in the sound of



MAP OFFICE

'The Book of Waves' (2018)

animation, duration: 2 min.

250 hand drawings on computer screen

inspired by Ha Bun Shu by Mori Yuzan, 1917

Sound recorded around Shek O Headland, 2018.



MAP OFFICE

Inkjet print on 160gsm Japanese Art Paper.

Paper: 27 x 16.2 cm. Box: 28.4 x 17.6 cm.

In a box, numbered, with certificate.

Viewing upon request by appointment.

Edition of 3/7

waves recorded from Hong Kong's Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay, MAP's video animation of 250 hand-drawn waves and ripples in the nihonga style takes as its starting point the 'Ha Bun Shu' of Mori Yuzan, an archive of waves drawn from the Edo period. To achieve the quality of an animation, the artist duo had to imagine what the missing links of waves would be in order to weave the stories together. The traditional technique of handwork merges with new technology through the form of animation. MAP construct their own representation of the oceans around the world, which is the core of their current research.

Not only does this work reflect the ocean condition, it also metaphorically represents the life of our city as ups and downs, calm and unsettling, in between the foreseeable and unpredictable. The water element recalls the controversial theory by French scientist Jacques Benveniste that water retains its own memory. If these are all true, can we presume that water also carries evidence of our history? This notion of memory echoes the historic and colonial narratives in Leung Chi Wo's video 'My name is Victoria' (2008).

Leung's practice primarily draws from references and archives with history as a subject matter. He often digs up small details and reveals unknown facts. Eleven years after Hong Kong's sovereignty changed hands from Britain to China in 1997, the artist created this work in 2008 to explore the perception and interpretation of the name 'Victoria'. This video work unveils an unfamiliar route in the city: starting from Victoria Road in Kennedy Town, the border of Victoria which was the former capital of the crown colony, to Aberdeen where the British, under the reign of Queen Victoria, landed for the first time in Hong Kong in 1841. Through an open call on the internet, the artist collected forty women's stories behind their name 'Victoria' which are narrated by a soft female voice in a distinctive British accent with music by Franz Schubert playing in the background.



LEUNG CHI WO  
 'My name is Victoria' (2008)  
 video, duration: 21 min. 30 sec.  
 Edition of 5



LEUNG CHI WO  
 Artist book: 15 x 21 cm, paperback with jacket, 48 pages

The light-hearted atmosphere in the video juxtaposes the heavy cultural and political issues the work is concerned with. The name 'Victoria' carries a majestic air and represents a time in the past in the Hong Kong context. In these stories, one notices how different generations think about naming and in the artist's curiosity on how a name is re-interpreted over time and across cultures and beliefs play. Once a foreign name is transplanted, new meanings are born.

Leung brings up these multiple layers of naming with irony and wit. The proper phonetic transliteration for Victoria in Cantonese is 'Wai Dor Lei Nga' which connotes a majestic and elegant air. But it is commonly written as 'Wik Dor Lei' literally meaning 'Region of Profit' which reflects certain local values and also contradicts or even ridicules the regal background of the name. How does history and the knowledge of history shape our perception and self-recognition?

Moving from Victoria Road to the opposite side of the Victoria harbour of Hong Kong – we find Junk Bay, now known as Tseung Kwan O (TKO). The earliest inhabitants of the area can be traced back to the 13th Century and major settlements dated back to the late 16th Century when small fishing villages were formed. With its geographical advantage, shipping industries emerged in the 1960s until 1982 when the local government kicked off the development of TKO as a new town which saw a chain of humongous reclamation constructions. Notably, the government never addressed the old name 'Junk Bay'.

In 'On Junk Bay, The Plant' (1990-present), Law Yuk Mui leads us to revisit the geographical history and metamorphosis of Junk Bay, where the artist used to live. Her lens captures the natural landscape of the area mixed with the history of its phenomenal land development through reclamation where foreign plants were transplanted and re-rooted. Through her investigation of Hong Kong cartography and passion in geology, the narratives delve deeper into the contemplation of migration, native vs foreign, borders and the relationship or negotiation between human and nature. Using plants as metaphors, foreign plants are like migrants and refugees transplanted



LAW YUK MUI

'On Junk Bay, The Plant' (1990-present)  
video, duration: 2 min. 56 sec.



LAW YUK MUI

Cyanotype of plants from Junk Bay

to a new land, as in her parents' migration from China to Hong Kong. As the speed in Hong Kong is always so fast, the artist strategically paces the video in slow motion to prolong 15 seconds of real life to create time to engage the audience with her subject matter. The distorted sound is excerpted from Hayao Miyazaki's animation 'Castle in the Sky' with its tree trunks growing into the sky offering a sense of future and hope.

With rapid urbanisation in Hong Kong since the 1970s and an influx of migrants from China, how do we perceive the changes of our city and our own identity? May Fung is one of the most influential video artists at the forefront of experimental practice for over three decades in Hong Kong. Her work often interweaves local history, cultural landscapes, politics and poetics. Her two works 'Image of a City' (1990) and 'She Said Why Me?' (1989) offer images of Hong Kong through a time tunnel from the 1967 Hong Kong riots to the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests with footage drawn from the Hong Kong Government Record Service. Cityscapes marked with architectural references that reflect the parallel worlds of both Chinese and British, the artist channels out her emotions and memories along the pivotal transformations or negotiations between the two worlds in one city. The anxiety and frustration expressed in the works have become self-fulfilling prophecy. What the footages depict keep resurfacing through our timeline, as seen in the recent movements in Hong Kong and other parts of the world.

Recordings of scholar Ackbar Abbas' lecture on the notion of 'culture in a space of disappearance' guides us through 'Image of a City' (1990): "Hong Kong...has never seized being a port, a door, a threshold, a passage way. It is a space in transit. Everything is provisional, temporary and ad hoc." Overlapping the voice of Abbas in the video is Margaret Thatcher's speech on 'one country, two systems'. Abbas described Hong Kong as "not so much a place as a space of transit," whose residents consider themselves as transients and migrants on their way from China to the next place. What is disappearing? Is it something visible or intangible? Is it our heritage and identity or sense of belonging? Is it the memory of our past or our imagination of the future?





MAY FUNG  
'Image of a City' (1990)  
video, duration: 11 min.

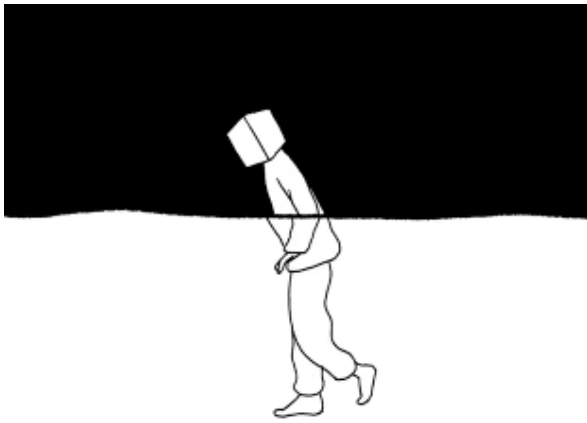


MAY FUNG  
'She Said Why Me' (1989)  
video, duration: 8 min.

The narratives of disappearance and the cityscapes linger with a strong sense of frustration and self-searching in 'She Said Why Me' (1989) in which a blind-folded female protagonist starts her journey from a Tin Hau temple where traditionally fishermen in Hong Kong worship and pray to the deities for protection in the waters. The artist uses the temple as a form of attachment to her heritage. Interwoven with historical footages with focal points or quasi surveillance on women, the protagonist transits into the modern cityscape of Central finding her way along the monuments that represent the colonial era. At one point, she loses her blindfold yet she still moves like a sleep-walker. When she comes to realise her blindfold is no longer there, she starts running aimlessly, but from what and where to? Seemingly lost with a sense of displacement and despair, the woman acts as the artist's outlet of emotions, vents out her emotions and frustrations about her gender, cultural identity, the transformation of our city during this self-searching process. At the pivotal junction on Queen's Road Central, she turns and stares back sharply at the camera with anger and fear: 'Why me?' She then finds her way, though blindfolded, back to where she came from. That leads us back to the sea, the notion of water.

In his latest animation creation in 2020, Kongkee anchors his concept on Greek philosopher Heraclitus' famous analogy about life: "You cannot step twice into the same river" which recalls the Chinese philosophy of change in the Yijing, I-Ching or Book of Changes: the only certainty is change, as such each moment is unique. This line of thought resonates with MAP Office's idea on the unique moments of each single movement and form of waves.

Both videos are silent, the viewers' eyes are fixated on the movements and visual expressions of the maker. Kongkee uses 'I can't find myself, most of the time' (2020) as a mouthpiece to project his state of mind. The motion and gestures of the walking man is similar to that of a sleepwalker or someone in the state of dreaming. To the artist, dreaming also feels like walking in the water. The walking man has a strong sense of direction but where is he heading? Could it be read an analogy of the discoordination



KONGKEE  
 'I can't find myself, most of the time' (2020)  
 animation, duration: 1 min. 56 sec.



KONGKEE  
 'River' (2020)  
 animation, duration: 5 min. 03 sec.

between the mind and body, consciousness and physical strength? In the water and above the surface, time is lapsing between the two realms. The work becomes a meditation for the maker to release his emotions and perhaps from what can be felt – distress and powerlessness. Like a self-reflection, with his head being trapped in a box over the complex process of thinking, he does not seem to be able to escape from the situation.

The qualities of the bodily gestures and movements of being in a lost state and the tremendous sense of frustrations and despair as experienced in Fung's 'She Said Why Me?', are repeating after three decades. The two works were created respectively during the pivotal times of Hong Kong in 1989 and 2020. Are their protagonists trying to reach a destination they can never reach, leaving themselves in a state of transit? A sense of temporality, a moment of the present, a lens into the future. What does the future hold? The story unfolds as time goes forward and everything is always in a state of becoming, in a state of transit.

'Magu' (2012) is a stop-motion animation set in Male, Maldives by Yukihiro Taguchi who deals with objects and memories of a place of transit. Male is the capital of the island country Maldives and it is a famous transit hotspot for tourists travelling to the other islands. The majority of its inhabitants consists of locals and migrants. Roaming around the island, the colourful island fabrics are rhizomic and absorbing imprints from daily elements of the vibrant island life - wall textures, manhole covers, iron grills and street signs - and the interactions in the local environment in every aspect. These fabrics become records of memories and spirits of the place and people. During Taguchi's stay, he learns from the locals that certain colours represent certain cultural, political or religious ideals and identities, and some colours should be avoided. Colours carry different cultural, social and political meanings with them in every culture. This notion of colours also broadens the discussion of Leung's exploration in 'My name is Victoria'.



YUKIHIRO TAGUCHI  
'Terasu' (2015)  
stop-motion video, duration: 4 min. 44 sec.



YUKIHIRO TAGUCHI  
'Magu' (2012)  
stop-motion video, duration: 4 min. 49 sec.

As colourful as the visual impact as seen in 'Maru' (2012), Kongkee's River (2020) has a very different point of departure. The familiar daily objects in our city are floating in the same direction as in 'I can't find myself'. The colours are vibrant yet the manifestation of the beaten, powerless or lifeless objects evoke fear, melancholia and darkness. What are their stories? Where are they going? Fear often comes from the unknown, uncertainty and instability. Based on the artist's sensitivity in terms of challenging global situations, people are getting closer and building solidarity, exporting and importing ideas. Along this line of thought, the idea that construction is built on destruction is once again obvious. In reality, we are quite uncertain as to what is coming in the future and can we really write the script and storyboard of our lives like in an animation? In the artist's words: "there is a feeling that our destiny, unfinished, is still to be written." One might easily be drowned in this melancholic blackhole of current affairs and situations in her or his homeland. Humans are resilient. By going forward, one shall see hope. In the darkest hour, the slightest ray of light will illuminate to the brightest and show us the way.

'Terasu' is a Japanese word meaning 'to illuminate'. Taguchi contemplates on the notion of darkness and light. It was during the winter time when he was invited to create a site-specific project in Arnsberg, Germany. What would the strategy be when the sky goes dark so early? Taguchi applies his survival instinct to use fire and he starts by the most primitive method – hand drilling. The artist draws with the fire across the town in lines and signs, creating soul-like energies. Like a magic touch harmonising the contradictory the yin and yang, using fire to draw a boat and a waterscape. At the end, the fire is transferred onto torches, and the people from the town draw the signs that represent themselves and their place. These are records of the collective memories and solidarity of people.

A recollection of what John Berger said: "Hope is not a form of guarantee, it's a form of energy, and very frequently that energy is strongest in circumstances that are very dark."



## FUTURE PLANS

HOMELAND in TRANSIT in its German title 'HEIMAT im WANDEL' is postponed to 4 - 21 March 2021 at Villa Meier Severini, Kulturkreis Zollkon, Switzerland. A curatorial partnership is formed between Martin Brauen and Angelika Li who attempt to interweave the different perspectives and experiences of Swiss Tibetan artist Sonam Dolma and six Hong Kong artists HUNG Fai, LEE Ka Sing, LEUNG Chi Wo, MAP Office, Lulu NGIE and WAI Pong Yu.

VIDEO TALKS will resume in Basel, Switzerland in November. Programmes in Asia are postponed. Updates on the book publication will follow.

## ABOUT THE CURATOR

With expertise and experience in the history of art and architecture as well as cultural management, Angelika Li is committed to engaging with the essence of local culture, heritage and valued stories, and driving a continuous dialogue between local and international communities. Li is the founder of the curatorial project HOMELAND in TRANSIT and is the co-founder of PF25 cultural projects, a research initiative focusing on the everyday life and ecologies of Switzerland and Hong Kong.

In 2015, Li was the founding director of MILL6 Foundation bringing it to ICOM museum status and the Award for Arts Promotion by Hong Kong Arts Development Council in 2016. Her previous projects include 'Tracing some places. Leung Chi Wo' (2015); 'Textile Thinking - The International Symposium' at Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art 2016 co-organised with Zhejiang Art Museum; 'Social Fabric. New works by Kwan Cheung Chi and Mariana Hahn' in collaboration with curator David Elliott (2016), 'Old Master Q: What The @\$% Is Going On? Original Works by Alphonso Wong' (2014); 'Beyond the Paper Screen - An Exhibition of Japanese Erotic Prints from The Uragami Collection' (2013) and 'NEW INK: an exhibition of ink art by post 1970 artists from The Yiqingzhai Collection (2013)'. Li lives and works between Basel, Switzerland and her hometown Hong Kong.

## ABOUT MOMENTUM

MOMENTUM is a non-profit platform for time-based art, active worldwide since 2010, with headquarters in Berlin at the Kunstquartier Bethanien Art Center, directed by Dr. Rachel Rits-Volloch, with Co-Director Emilio Rapanà.

MOMENTUM's program is composed of local and international Exhibitions, Artist and Curator Residencies, Video Art in Public Space Initiatives, complete Archives of the Performance Program and Education Program, and a growing Collection. Positioned as both a local and global platform, MOMENTUM serves as a bridge joining professional art communities, irrespective of institutional and national borders. Working on a model of international partnerships and cooperations,

MOMENTUM supports artists and artistic innovation, bringing to Berlin work by international artists that would not otherwise have been seen there, and ensuring an international audience for exceptional local artists. The key ideas driving MOMENTUM are: Cooperation, Exchange, Education, Innovation, and Inspiration. MOMENTUM continuously seeks innovative answers to the question 'What is time-based art?'. By enabling Exhibition, Discussion, Research, Creation, Collection, and Exchange, MOMENTUM is a platform which challenges the notion of time-based art in the context of both historical and technological development.