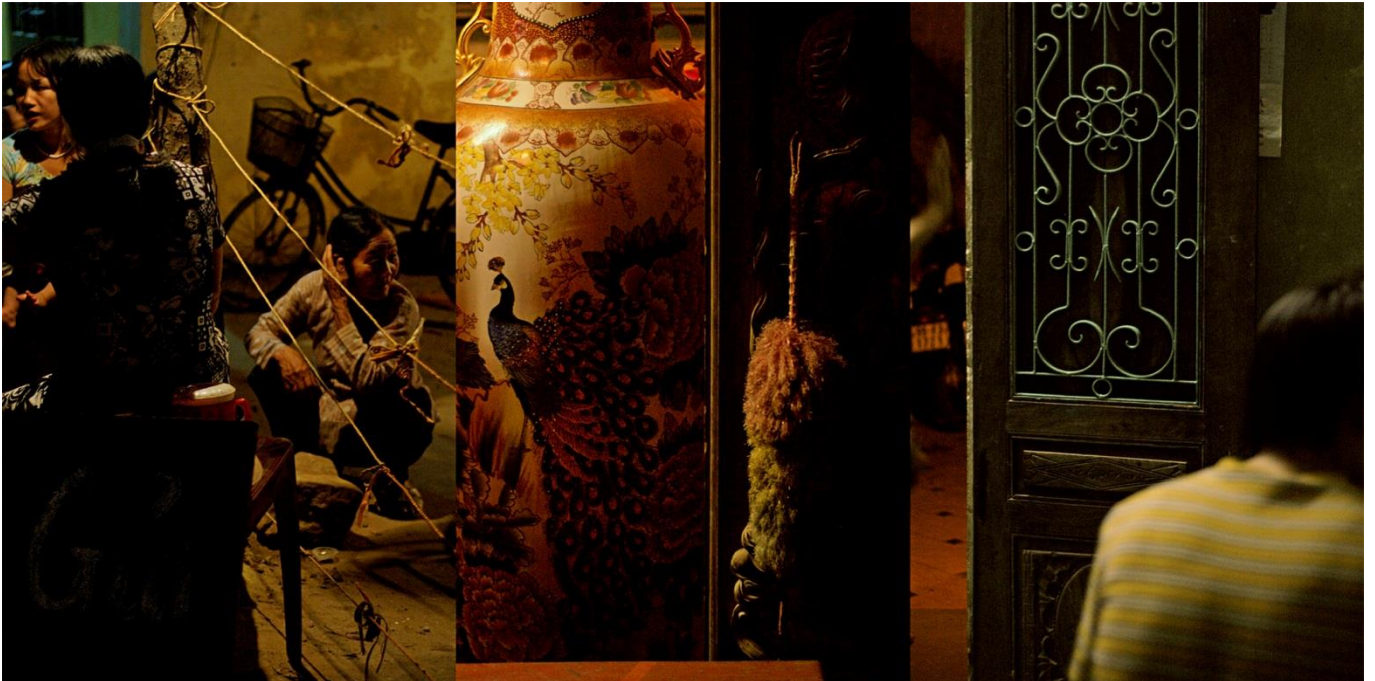


Sherman ONG (Born in 1971)



Peacock, 2006

Diasec Print on Archival Paper

75 x 150 cm

Edition of 10 + 2 AP

For Art Paris 2015, Art Plural Gallery presents three of Ong's photographic series, *HanoiHaiku*, *Monsoon* and *Spurious Landscapes*, as well as the short film, *Tickets*, which first debuted at the Singapore Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2009.

HanoiHaiku captures the social versus private spaces within an evolving urban environment like Hanoi, presented in the style of a visual Haiku. The series deals with the idea of transition and its evolving relationship with the memory of the past, the changing of values, the passing of tradition and the aspirations of a different reality. The works are intentionally left untitled, so that the juxtaposition of images produces their own narratives, temporal connections, and is open to many interpretations infused with the personal experiences of individual viewers. Similar to the Japanese Haiku, they are observations in its purest form, distilled into a simple gesture, a moment of reflection, a point in a continuum, touching on the beauty of imperfection, in delicate, quiet, nuanced moments.

In another series, inspired during Ong's residency in Hanoi in 2005, *Monsoon* contemplates the impact of the monsoons and its intervention on human mobility, the landscape and the psyche of the inhabitants of Hanoi. Taken through a moving van with the windows wound up, the images offer another way of looking at the urban landscape through the intervention of water, wind and glass. *Spurious Landscapes* draws inspiration from the following statement by John Berger, an English art critic, novelist, painter and poet, whose essay on art criticism, *Ways of Seeing*, is often used as a university text: "*Landscapes can be deceptive. Sometimes a landscape seems to be less a setting*

for the life of its inhabitants than a curtain behind which their struggles, achievements and accidents take place.” The series vacillates between the ‘random’ and the ‘planned’. Here, the viewer is invariably drawn to question the validity of the photograph as a document or as a construction, as well as question whether the scene was found or intervened. The answers are to remain ambiguous and to open up possibilities for the real and the surreal to intertwine.

Much of Ong’s video and film works tap on the format of ‘docu-dramas’ that slip between documentary and fiction. *Tickets* is one such short film, centering on Xiao Jing, a ticket seller in an old cinema in Singapore. Having come from China to study acting in Singapore, her ambition is to break into the Singapore film industry as an actress. The film deals with the notion of acting/re-acting/reprising real and imaginary roles, and also touches on the themes of diaspora, migration, displacement, identity and the sense of belonging.

“I am interested in exploring the intersection between the natural world and human nature, between landscape and body, offering an alternative viewpoint to the banal, while eliciting subtle beauty in everyday life.”

– Sherman Ong

Filmmaker, photographer and visual artist based in Singapore, **Sherman Ong** develops a wide corpus on various themes linked by his photographic and fragile, moving aesthetics. Human figures evolving in disrupted public places and overwhelmed by the changing nature of space – affected by the monsoon, the wildness or the bundling up of urban sites, seem to be looking for a localized identity. Seeking relationships and belongings, characters are often immortalized in action as if the latter was a unique conveyor of meaning, the only common ground in such a varied and fluid environment. Is space escaping or are humans running away from it? Sherman Ong patterns and unfolds this recurrent question structured by the paradoxical human quest and suspicion to infrastructures.

Sherman Ong was born in 1971 in Malaysia. Winner of the 2015 Prudential Eye Awards for Photography and 2010 ICON de Martell Cordon Bleu Photography Award, Sherman Ong has premiered works in art biennales, major film festivals and museums around the world. In 2009, he was invited to participate in the Singapore Pavilion, Venice Biennale which garnered a Special Mention. Ong was also nominated for the APB-Singapore Art Museum Signature Art Prize in 2011. His works have been exhibited at Mori Art Museum Tokyo, Japan; Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan; Martin-Gropius-Bau Berlin, Germany; Musee du Quai Branly Paris, France; Centre Pompidou Paris, France; Institute of Contemporary Arts London, UK; Noorderlicht Photo Festival, The Netherlands; Rotterdam International Film Festival, The Netherlands; Video Brasil International Electronic Art Festival, Brazil; Singapore Art Museum, Singapore; Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Brazil; South Australia Contemporary Art Centre, Parkside, Australia and Vilnius Contemporary Art Centre, Lithuania.

He is a founding member of 13 Little Pictures, a film collective based in Singapore. He collaborated on the Little Sun project headed by Olafur Eliasson, which premiered at the Tate Modern London in 2012. He also serves on the committee of the Singapore International Photography Festival, as an educator at schools and universities, and was an Associate Artist of the Substation. His work is part of many private and public collections including the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan; Singapore Art Museum, Singapore and the Seoul Art Centre, Korea. The artist lives and works in Singapore.