

K11 ART
FOUNDATION

2.9

13.10
2017

THE GARDEN

Curator

Enoch Cheng

Artists

Shane Aspegren

Neil Beloufa

Cai Kai

Enoch Cheng

Ian Cheng

Cheuk Wing Nam

Vzela Kook

Andrew Luk

Samuel Adam Swope



Foreword

It is simply gratifying to see the exhibition unfolding before my eyes. The glass-enclosed chi art space in Clear Water Bay enjoys warm sunlight of the day and affords a panoramic view of its scenic, tranquil surroundings. When we decided to host a group exhibition for a young curator and emerging artists here, we were intent on making these natural charms integral to viewers' experience; at the same time, we told ourselves to give all participating parties the freedom to maximise the potential of the setting, for we also wanted the exhibition to be a site for curatorial experimentation and a discursive space around artistic practice. That said, the conceptual framework of the show was not formulated until we began our collaboration with Enoch Cheng. As the curator of the show, he conceived it as nature in miniature; he examined the 'time-space' relation between the indoors and the outdoors as well as researching artists with us. He also proposed to present a work as a participating artist of the exhibition—art making is his another area of expertise. With his input and our resources, the framework was substantialised as *The Garden*; the exhibition, as it now is, features not only Cheng but also these five Hong Kong-based artists—Shane Aspegren, Cheuk Wing Nam, Vzela Kook, Andrew Luk, and Samuel Adam Swope—and three non-local artists whom we had previously worked with—Neil Beloufa, Cai Kai, and Ian Cheng.

Apart from selections from the bodies of works of the non-local artists, *The Garden* showcases art pieces that we commissioned the Hong Kong-based artists to create through expanding their artistic practices and interacting with people, space, and environment. Most of the exhibits are new media art—employing sound, moving image, and digital technology as the means of expression, artists incorporate physical materials, body movements, and characteristics of the environment into complete entities. These works are not confined to two-dimensional or three-dimensional spaces; rather, they define themselves essentially with the invisible and intangible fourth dimension, i.e. time. Viewers' involvement is demanded in the overlapping of the time contained in these works and the time inside and outside the exhibition space; if reinstalled at another location, the works will appear different from what we now see. Generally referred to as

'time-based media art', this kind of works, with duration as a dimension, is now prevalent in the art scene, equally important as painting, sculpture, photography, and other forms of art which most people are familiar with. Time makes viewers' participation and perception vital to the curatorial process and visiting experience. Immersed in this exhibition, one can scrutinise the changing shapes of nature; he is also reminded to keep up with the times, to catch up on the development of contemporary art.

As I recollect the making of the show, I must express my gratitude to the curator and all the artists, who worked closely with us at all stages of production—from concept development, artwork selection, space planning to exhibition installation—in the past several months to make all brilliant ideas happen. *The Garden* is a beautiful 'garden' cultivated collaboratively by many parties; every art piece is a fruit of hard work. I hope that when you visit this 'garden', you enjoy everything presented here and have a great time.



Adrian Cheng
Founder and Honorary Chairman of K11 Art Foundation

Vegetable

It is in this hospital room that *it* receives a name. To call you 'it' is a way to describe the state you are in, so that you would receive treatment and care. But no one is certain whether you are the same as a plant. Plants, Aristotle said, have a 'vegetative' soul, capable only of growth and reproduction. You still grow: your hair, your fingernails do; but you don't reproduce, do you?

They say that you won't be able to interact or make purposeful movements, but you can make facial expressions—you smile and grimace. There was a time you even cried. That time, no one had agitated you. You didn't tell anyone what was going on. You couldn't. Everybody looked at you staring at the tilted LCD television hung down from the ceiling, a droplet of tear gliding from the edge of your left eye to your temple. Someone quickly grabbed a tissue to help you wipe it. The feathery tissue brushed your temple, but the effect on you was enormous; it was as if someone was massaging your head.

No one knows what happened to you. That deep sleep has been a mystery. Your loved ones came and visited you. Surrounding you by your bed, not having any small talk to fill the air, sometimes they would talk to you. Or talk at you. To your face, a desperate voice once summoned, 'Why are you still sleeping?' They were afraid to say the word 'coma', because they didn't want to jinx your chances of recovery. To them you were asleep, but none of them had ever guessed that you were indeed in another world of your own, somewhere fiercer than their reality. Now in the vegetative state, you can only keep your experience to yourself.

Wind

In this turbulence, as a grasshopper, it is unable to formulate any emotions. Shocked perhaps, or confused. Before this current situation, it was in the midst of trying to locate some food in a desert in North Africa. Within a split of second, it was transported inside a dusty whirl. Here, the pair of compound eyes on the sides of its head no longer give it a practical all-rounded vision while everything is flying around in this wind. Its antennae feels the grains of sand as they flash across the air. In the usual threatening situation, in face of a predator, for example, it can escape by leaping onto another territory with its powerful hind legs. But here, there is no ground to bounce off. It has tried camouflage, hoping to startle the unknown predator by launching its bright, coloured wings in the air. But the effort has only led to frailty. There is no predator. This wind is too strong. A grasshopper trapped inside can only go with the flow. In this hasty atmosphere, there are many things: pollen grains, spores, bacteria, and silica. But are there other 'things' which have an actual brain? A grasshopper cannot tell. Seeing no shift of daylight, it cannot count the day. Later when it lands, it will not be able to identify that it is in the rainforest in West Indies. But it will quickly figure out that it is no longer at home. The place is way too humid. It will not try to return home. Who knows how it will survive? It just will. The will to adapt. Ultimately, what it will never understand is that the existence of many rainforests depends on the airborne dust from the dry land across the ocean—the dust brings organic matters and minerals to enrich the soil. A grasshopper needs not to understand; it is part of this cycle of life.

Carrot

We were in a white room, on a silver counter. The smell of airborne fats and boiled carrot filled us in short breaths. No joke—we were discovered in this smell. To be precise, it was Mr. Reinitzer who discovered us. Within a boiled carrot.

As a scientist, and as a rational being, Mr. Reinitzer knew what a carrot was. Just as well as anything can be defined, ever. Not us. We wear the hues of a changeable silk. We grow and shift with temperature. Our appearances, while predictable, are unstable. We are neither solid nor liquid nor gas. We are liquid crystals.

We are the very screen that shows our data back to our captors. On the monitor, an animated infographic charts our activities. We are both the line on the graph and the legend, not beyond representation—we are the representation.

Deep within an image, when you look closely at us, we resemble a kaleidoscope. Always shifting. Always the ultimate, for a moment. As we change, it's the end of a world, and the birth of a new one, again and again.

It has been said that the concept of catastrophe is a sort of kaleidoscope that bedazzles a child. It is an immersive environment generated by those in control. We, on the other hand, despite our appearances, are not a plaything. In order to have a life, or an end to life, the kaleidoscope needs to be smashed.

Lichen

I wish to talk about myself. I am time. Some consider me one of the oldest living things. I grew on rocks before anything else began to move. I don't need the soil to be rooted. I have 'us' to lean on. I make food from light. I pass the sugar into us. I am not vegetative. I am us. How can I be understood? I am the fungus. I am the algae. I can also be the cyanobacteria. I rest on the fungus to shelter us. I bring us nutrients with the algae or cyanobacteria. Don't call me vegetative.

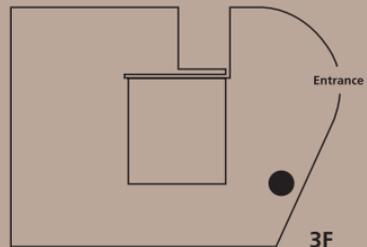
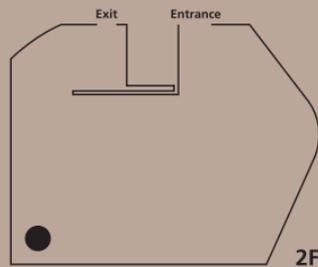
Will you be able to genuinely understand us all? Can you forget how we are alive as explained by the great storytellers? I am not one, not two, not three. Not hybrid. It is the symbiosis that makes us I, makes I us. I wish to tell you as much.

Shane Aspegren

Shane Aspegren was born in Nebraska and currently resides in Hong Kong. His projects span fields such as music, video, performance, and installation, exploring ideas through a dichotomous approach that uses obsessively-fixed and improvised or temporal elements. Apart from creating soundtracks and sound design for commercial and theatrical releases, he has made dozens of studio records and toured the world with his own projects and with other artists. He currently works as a member of the psychedelic pop band Blood Wine or Honey in addition to his solo project Pando's People, the Berg-reincarnate Ça Va Chéri, electronic duo Plot Points, and a free-improv duo with dj sniff. His work has been presented or commissioned by Art Basel, Anthology Film Archives, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Festival International du Cinéma Méditerranéen, Shanghai Gallery of Art, and Palazzo Reale.

Weather's Always Changing, for a Limited Time (2017)

Aspegren repurposes the dehumidifiers used to climate-control chi art space into the key component of a sensory sculpture. Merging with the machines are living organisms, elemental rhythms, and fabricated modes of life through a collage of manipulated source materials: water from mountain springs, pharmaceutical infomercials, cicadas, irrigation drainage ditches, insect electrocutors, and mechanically-timed air fresheners.

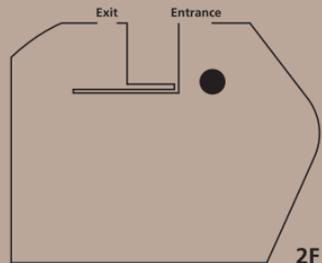


Neil Beloufa

French-Algerian artist Neil Beloufa received his Visual Arts National Diploma at École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, in 2007; he later studied at Cooper Union, New York, and California Institute of the Arts, Valencia. Beloufa's work has been featured in numerous international solo and group exhibitions at art spaces including Pejman Foundation, Tehran (2017); MoMA, New York (2016); and Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2014). His upcoming solo show *Part of the Problem* will be held at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, in 2018, and there will be another solo at Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Frankfurt. His installations reveal complex architectural structures, handcrafted with cheap and easily available materials; everyday objects such as fans, plants, and speakers are carefully assembled into larger forms that seem to be haphazardly presented or arbitrarily constructed. Beloufa is also a keen filmmaker. Often combined with video projection, his sculptures constitute, with moving images and sounds, viewing spaces that evoke cinematic experiences.

Scaffolding Series (2015)

Handcrafted by Beloufa, *Scaffolding Series* is a sculpture composed of paint on fibreglass and mounted on a sculpted steel structure with wheels. The sculpture contains four oversized helmet forms, all placed around a window. The artist edits the sculpture and the space surrounding it; he constructs meaning by offering relations. For him, what defines an artwork is not the actual object but the relation he develops with it. His intention is to facilitate intersections between the different meanings that viewers may discover on their own.

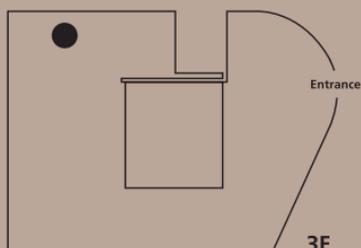


Cai Kai

Wuhan-based artist Cai Kai received his bachelor's degree from Hubei Institute of Fine Arts. His earlier works focus on surveying urban public spaces with his body and actions, forcibly restricting his intent to what he perceives as 'normal rationality'. His recent creations, usually executed indoors, tend to have an abstract touch and seek to find the essence of everyday experience through the seemingly unmanageable materials used. He founded the independent group 'network-party' in 2016.

Sunrise on the Sea (2014)

Let's just say, if Sisyphus pushed the boulder up to the hilltop, and the hilltop were the foot of another hill, the boulder would not roll back down. However, his action would remain an eternal damnation. How does the well-known tale differ from the version we have just hypothesised? Formed with RGB colours, the sun rises and sets on the sea in a silent and tranquil circle. Man's fear of futility and their submission to inescapable adversities hang in the air, impregnating the space.



Enoch Cheng

Enoch Cheng is an artist, independent curator, director, performer, writer, and founder of art collective Interlocutor. His practice spans moving image, installation, curating, dance, events, theatre, and performance. Concerned with the everyday subtleties in contemporary urban lives, his works explore recurrent themes of place, travel, fiction, memory, time, and destination. He received his MA in Creative Writing at Goldsmiths, London, and BA in English Literature and Art History at the University of Hong Kong; he has also lectured at Hong Kong Art School. He is the recipient of Award for Young Artist at Hong Kong Arts Development Awards. He is currently an artist fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany.

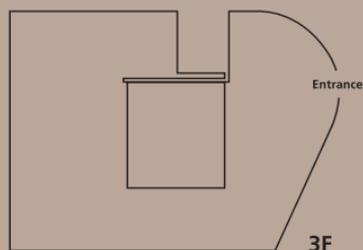
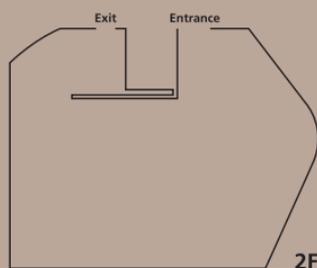
The Nature of Performance (2017)

An actor performs live at *The Garden* to explore the performance of nature. Reflecting the traits of a myriad of organisms, the choreography creates different levels of encounter for the performer and the audience to experience nature again. Movements in the performance inquire how we embody nature and how nature embodies us.

Performer: Leung Tin Chak



The performer gives his performance on both floors

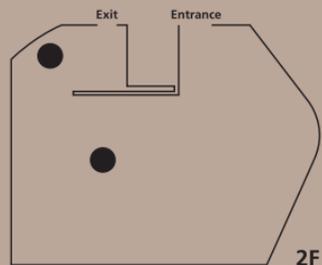


Samuel Adam Swope

Born in Missouri in 1984 and currently based in Hong Kong, Samuel Adam Swope is an artist known for his 'aerial art', through which he invents novel situations. For him, aerial art is a practice that integrates flight or levitation as a means of visual expression and air or gas as a physical medium. He believes that with innovative techniques and increasing accessibility of contemporary flight technologies, a more radical and spectacular form of aerial art is possible. Swope received his BA in Fine Arts with an emphasis on sculpture from Missouri State University in 2007, and his MFA from School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2014. He is currently a guest lecturer at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Updraft, Updraft & Last Breath (2017)

Updraft, Updraft moves back and forth between composed moments of air and light. In this work, the perceptible volume is a life-like swarm because of the moving air and accelerating motion. Multitudes of simulated maple seeds (paper simulacrum) flutter in an aerodynamic logic from the sequence of governed airstreams. *Last Breath* is an abstraction of the last moment of sunlight and the conditional green ray.



K11 Art Foundation

Founded by Adrian Cheng in 2010, the K11 Art Foundation (KAF) is a registered not-for-profit organisation that promotes the development of the contemporary art scene in Greater China by providing support for emerging Chinese artists and taking them to the international stage. Not only does KAF nurture artistic talents, but it also serves as an incubator for professional practices of promising young curators.

KAF has forged partnerships with many prestigious art institutions for regional and international art projects. It has collaborated with, for example, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí in Figueres; Serpentine Galleries and Institute of Contemporary Arts in London; Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo, and Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Armory Show, New Museum, The Museum of Modern Art, and MoMA PS1 in New York. Works of Chinese talents are showcased at exhibitions and on other occasions in Asia and other parts of the world.

The artist-in-residence programme held at the K11 art village in Wuhan, China—which has proven itself a dedicated platform for studio practices, exchanges, and connections since its establishment in 2011—is another important undertaking of the Foundation that fulfils its mission. In order to provide guest artists from Greater China and around the globe with more resources and facilities, the village will be relocated to the first K11 Art Mall in the city in November 2017. Equipped with eight studios, exhibition spaces, and multifunction rooms for activities, it promises to, as always, spare no effort to encourage creative practices and popularise contemporary art.

Through researches, initiatives, and partnerships, KAF offers the general public a wide range of programmes, fostering the appreciation of art and culture.

The Garden

K11 Art Foundation

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