

POOR IMAGINATION

Sullivan+Strumpf | Singapore
27 July – 8 September 2019

Media Preview: Friday, 26 July 2019, 3.30 – 4.30pm

Opening Reception: Saturday, 27 July 2019, 5 – 7pm

Curated by Rafi Abdullah, featuring the work of Stephanie Comilang (CAN), Fyerool Darma (SGP), Agan Harahap (IDN), Takuji Kogo (JPN), Tristan Lim (SGP), Michael Lindeman (AUS), and Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran (AUS).

Poor Imagination borrows its title from artist and writer Hito Steyerl's term: the 'poor image'. The 'poor image' is characterized as having an atrocious quality which deteriorates as it is distributed, an image that is readily and easily accessible. It is dormant debris in the landscape of excessive image production. Comprised of ceramics, paintings, photographic prints and new-media works, the exhibition features seven artists whose works — whether overtly or covertly — employ the 'poor image' or embody its characteristics. The exhibition is an allusion to the autonomy and agency that the 'poor image' offers, and a mediation of the plausible imaginations that they propose.

Stephanie Comilang's science-fiction documentary, narrated by a ghost drone named Paradise, tells the story of three Filipina migrant workers (May Salinas, Lyra Ancheta Torbela and Romylyn Presto Sampaga) in Hong Kong. The film captures the interactions - through the transmission of cellphone photos and video logs - between the domestic workers and Paradise, unpacking themes such as isolation, the conditions of migration and the diaspora, as well as solidarity and connectedness as a navigational means. **Fyerool Darma** recomposites a found image of *Sentosa* (a leisure island attraction) used in a promotional ad by the Los Angeles Times and stretches the imagination of a site as a cultural marker by corrupting the image to appear foreign and alienating. The recomposed image features two tower structures at the "Southernmost point of Continental Asia", which has made appearances in films as filler imagery, allow for a rumination over the potential of sites designed for purposes of leisure as a location of culture.

Agan Harahap's distinct style juxtaposes worlds by superimposing celebrities onto local bodies donning religious garbs. His 'fictive portraits' serve as a commentary on the increasingly divisive dichotomy between religion and local culture in Indonesia and reflects upon the role of images in cultural paradigm shifts. **Takuji Kogo** borrows texts ranging from advertisements, comments and announcements found in online communities for military personnel and recomposes them as songs. His mixed-media installation offers new viewpoints from which the borrowed banal texts can be resuscitated to contemplate diverse issues that are derivative of a geopolitical military complex.

In his new media works, **Tristan Lim** appropriates and assembles Singaporean TV commercials sourced from the internet, that although are not officially archived, find their way on public platforms at the will of uploaders who resonate with them. The transmission of the found ads in the work, glitching and bleeding into one another, reflect upon the idea of images as signs and signifiers that help in shaping our understanding of identities. The inimitable and irreverent sculptures by **Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran** pushes the boundaries of what is to be traditionally understood as ceramic art. His mischievous approach towards the medium is encapsulated in his sculptures, which are to be taken as avatars from which one can deliberate religion, spirituality and popular culture. **Michael Lindeman's** satirical, subversive and conceptual paintings emulate the form of newspaper classifieds that critiques the conditions of the contemporary art world. In his signature self-deprecating humour, Lindeman's provocations jab at commodification, personalities, narcissism, social dynamics, and gatekeeping in the art world.

Press Enquiries

Hazelina Oh

hazel@sullivanstrumpf.com
+65 91740715