nostanc om Spring 2024

Ghost and John are two multidisciplinary artist-researchers, a cultural entrepreneur duo, and a married couple, from computer science and marine biology research backgrounds. They are best known for their collaborative approach to delivering socio-politically pertinent projects, and using technology to create embodied experiences. They are two of the six co-founders of <u>Hidden Keileon CIC</u>, a cultural enterprise working with migrant and queer people to imagine futures with freedom and justice for all by dreaming and leading multidisciplinary and life-affirming projects.

As queer migrant artist-researchers from Hong Kong, Ghost and John have developed a **dynamic and embodied practice that examines the intricacies of the body and nature, technological advances and folklore accompanying history**. Their artworks, usually in the form of performances, installations and videos, focus on the fragmented memories of traumatic experiences related to displacement, relationships, social movement, and technological interaction. They have been Moving Margins researchers with Internationales Theaterinstitut Berlin (2022), ImPulsTanz danceWEBBER and ATLAS Young Choreographer (2019) and are holders of MA Contemporary Dance, The Place.

Ghost and John's projects are presented internationally in **theatres**, **galleries**, **outdoor** and **other** odd **spaces**, including Bloomsbury Festival, Pushkin House and CCA Goldsmiths in London, ImPulsTanz in Vienna, Goethe-Institut in Hong Kong, and more.

As cultural entrepreneurs, Ghost and John collaborate with local governments, community organisers and cultural workers to **drive social change through imagination infrastructure building**. They strategise and deliver projects that platform historically marginalised voices to construct worlds beyond the current structures, usually in the capacity of Hidden Keileon CIC.

As a married couple, Ghost and John are always cooking Cantonese dishes and balcony-gardening in their London flat. Their living room is their studio, dance floor and laboratory. They enjoy hosting dinner and board game parties for their close friends, growing new plants from cuttings, watching absurdist and surrealist films and making up new recipes.

Choct and John



Ghost Chan is a multimedia performance artist, creative technologist and all-rounded digital wizard. From an experimental contemporary performance and software development back-ground, he has developed a holistic career crossing the boundaries between technology, arts, and social justice. He mainly collaborates with John Chan as Ghost and John. He is the lead creative and technologist of Hidden Keileon CIC, a cultural enterprise working with migrant and queer people to imagine futures with freedom and justice for all by dreaming and leading multidisciplinary and life-affirming projects.

As a queer migrant artist from Hong Kong, Ghost brings his embodied experience and knowledge from everyday life and computer science to create unique cross-disciplinary art. He was an MGC Futures bursary recipient (2021) and an ImPulsTanz danceWEBBER (2019). His works were presented in theatres, galleries, outdoor and odd spaces.

As a creative technologist, Ghost experiments with the use of interactive technology and immersive visuals to generate unique spectating experiences.

As an all-rounded digital wizard, Ghost delivers digital solutions for both creative and business projects and specialises in creating open structures to facilitate meaningful collaboration. He is an analyst programmer specialising in Android development with Model-view-viewmodel (MVVM) architecture pattern and website development. He designs projections, runs creative productions, operates stage shows, edits videos and photos, and a lot more. He holds a BEng in Computer Science, HKUST.

Beyond the above, Ghost lend his skills to projects as a performer and choreographer. He has received an MA in Contemporary Dance, The Place, and was trained under Siu Wan from SHOW DANCE back in Hong Kong. His works were shown internationally, including Tate Modern, Kasino am Schwarzenbergplatz, Pleasance London, CCA Goldsmiths, Streatham Space Project, Omnibus Theatre and more. **John Chan** is a multidisciplinary storyteller, creative strategist and social entrepreneur working at the intersection of arts, cultural change and social justice, from a marine biology research background. He focuses on creating dignified spaces for everyone's presence and amplifying historically marginalised voices. He is currently based in London and mainly collaborates with Ghost Chan as Ghost and John. He is the lead strategist of Hidden Keileon CIC, a cultural enterprise working with migrant and queer people to imagine futures with freedom and justice for all by dreaming and leading multidisciplinary and life-affirming projects.

As a queer migrant from Hong Kong, John's works focus on the intricacies of the body and nature, social movement and the folklore accompanying history.

As a creative strategist, John has been involved in multiple social imagination projects and building infrastructures for resilient futures through exploring embodied ecology, stewardship and abolitionist organising. John was:

- on Civic Square and Centric Lab's Ecological Health In Neighbourhoods Learning Journey (2023),

- Greater London Authority's Civic Futures fellow (2022),

- Moving Margins researcher with Internationales Theaterinstitut Berlin (2022) and more.

He led the Arts, Communities and Social Impact Peer-to-peer Exchange Programme (2024) with his colleagues at Hidden Keileon CIC, inviting 15 cohort members of social change makers to build kinships and a wisdom-sharing network.

John is a versatile maker across theatres, films, galleries and odd spaces. Productions he contributed his skills as director, writer, performer, and designer have been seen internationally, including Hellerau Dresden, TD Berlin, CCA Goldsmiths, Pleasance London, Omnibus Theatre, Goethe-Institut Hongkong and more. He is an actor represented by Hancock Agency.

John was first trained as a biologist (BSc Biological Science, HKUST) and has received an MA (Distinction) in Contemporary Dance, The Place. He was an ImPulsTanz ATLAS Young Choreographer (2019) and was trained under Siu Wan from SHOW DANCE in Hong Kong.



Installations and Performances





盤纏 – 候 Entwine – The Room

Installation with plant sculptures, a vertical video, window collage, a light sculpture, Chinese ink paintings and text on walls

With Molotov-cocktail-like living plant sculptures inspired by Penjing 盆景, as well as a twist in ancient astrology, the bar is transformed into a room visualising the psychological states of those waiting for change to come while contemplating ways to live if change never comes.

This work is comprised of five elements:

Hairy Head 昴宿

The seven plant sculptures form the Chinese constellation corresponding to Pleiades in European astronomy, also known as the Seven Sisters.

Travel Fee 旅費

A vertical video on the duo's lives before and after migrating from Hong Kong to the UK and their relationship with these plant sculptures.

Santati 相續

A window collage forming the shape of a plant sculpture made with window stickers commonly used in high-density living households in Hong Kong. Eternity 永恆

Made with copper wire and fairy lights, the stone sculpture embodies the hollowness of eternity, where the only eternal truth is impermanence.

Karma 果報

In conversation with the bar drinks beneath, the Chinese ink paintings depict the plant sculptures in bottles transformed into various forms.

Presented at Pushkin House, London (2024). Plant sculptures presented at Bloomsbury Festival 2023.









Thousand Papers

Durational performance and community installation

We draw inspiration from the profound realization that freedom of expression continues to be suppressed in various parts of the world. Our work is an amalgamation of community sculpture building, movement practices, and East Asian traditions.

We were reading and copying letters from imprisoned activists everywhere, who fight for social justice, like the ones from Hong Kong in 2021 and the ones from Poplar Rebellion in London in 1921. We compared their words and were stunned by the emotions and spirit that transcended borders, reaching us from distant lands where courageous voices are silenced and individuals grapple with the difficult decision to stay or leave.

Our performance may fade away with time, but its essence is immortalized in the form of a sculpture. Together, we weave together a tapestry of resilience and solidarity. We honour the past, embrace the present, and envision a future where voices are liberated and dreams find the courage to soar.

In collaboration with Shum Pui Yung and curated by Sandra Lam

Solo Exhibition at Making Space Gallery with Fitzrovia Noir (2021)

Presented at Goldsmiths CCA, London, Derby Theatre, Encounter Bow Festival (2021), Queen Mary University of London, Goldsmiths, University of London, and EG-1 Project Space, Bow Arts Centre, London (2019).

Commissioned by Goldsmiths CCA, In Good Company, Chisenhale Dance Space, Poplar Union, and Finborough Theatre.



Theatre and Outdoor









An Evening With Two Plant Gays

Semi-autobiographic experimental theatre with dance, dialogues, live feed video, and projection

"A thought-provoking and tender-hearted performance with dynamic dancing and artful storytelling. A parable of hopes and struggles in the lives of queer migrant artists, it is alluringly poetic, unflinchingly political and surprisingly funny." - June Ting, dance artist and university lecturer

Shortlisted for The Charlie Hartill Fund 2024

John holds up a short leafless stem of a Swiss Cheese plant. "Why are we keeping this?" Ghost smiles and replies. "Cause this has so much potential!"

Ghost and John present 'An Evening With Two Plant Gays', where the happily-married-gay-migrant-couple share their top tips for keeping their one hundred pots of houseplants alive, cycling across the city and their bizarre experience in cruising, as well as learning how to dance with some giants in their dreams.

The show tells how Ghost and John overcome challenges as a pair of queer migrant artists and heal in companionship from the traumatic experiences at activist scenes, as well as daily life microaggression, competitive cultural industry and capitalist oppression.

"My favourite to do in this whole world is cycling behind you."

Presented at The Pleasance Theatre, Camden People's Theatre (2023), Omnibus Theatre (2022).

<u>Tour pack available</u> <u>Watch the hightlight video</u>











Radio Neighbourhood

Radio drama and dance performance

Awarded Paul Hamlyn Foundation - Ideas and Pioneers Fund

"A rich, gritty and poetic piece which both moved and entertained me throughout. Radio Neighbourhood illustrates Ghost and John's unique and intelligent approach to creating distinctive storytelling and engaging theatre."

- Marie McCarthy, Artistic Director of Omnibus Theatre

This is a social innovation project transforming British open spaces into grounds for addressing migration and human rights issues through live art. Set in 2047, aliens and humans live as neighbours. A first-generation migrant and a second-generation migrant get into a conversation about identity, belonging and the meaning of life. The project crosses the boundaries between dance performance and radio drama, explores the nuances of post-humanist thinking and infuses the aesthetics of East and Southeast Asian cultures (ESEA) into our storytelling.

Presented by Hidden Keileon and curated by Sandra Lam. Performed by Yun Cheng and Yik-Sau Chung.

Broadcasted over NTS Radio in collaboration with Phambinho (2022), Bloomsbury Radio, and AAJA Radio (2021).

Presented at Bloomsbury Festival, Migration Matters Festival (2023), Canary Wharf, Clapham Common (2022), British Library, Omnibus Theatre, Migration Museum, Evelyn Community Centre, Deptford X, Bow Arts Raw Lab, and Cornmill Gardens (2021).

Funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and School for Social Entrepreneurs.













Bitter Moves Sweet Truths

Immersive experimental theatre with 3-screen projection, live sound and music, dance, and spoken text

Shortlisted for Untapped Award 2023

Without relying on Peter Pan's pixie dust, we repeatedly leap out of windows, defying limitations in our pursuit of a life well-lived.

As migrant activist artists, we constantly improvise, using our creativity as a means of survival. Drawing parallels to stargazers who stare at galaxies light-years away, we yearn for understanding and connection in a world that often feels alienating. Our hearts hold onto glimpses of hope as we navigate treacherous landscapes. Our wild wanderings fuel our determination to find kindred spirits who truly comprehend our experiences.

With a fusion of innovative storytelling and captivating artistry, we present a poignant portrayal of the human spirit's tenacity, and invite you to contemplate the universal longing for connection and a life lived authentically

In collaboration with Angela Wai Nok Hui and Jeffrey Choy.

Presented at Streatham Space Project, London (2022, 2023) and Old Fire Station, Oxford (2022).

Funded by Arts Council England and Jockey Club Hong Kong.







Paradoxical Gasp

Immersive experimental event with installations, spoken text, live sound and music, and dance

"Refreshing and welcome cauldron of ill-disguised sarcasm, genuine artistry, and thinly veiled jabs directed at the higher powers responsible... Demonstrating that this style of provocative themes and immersive techniques can make an impact"

- Everything Theatre

Dealing with the haunting legacy of tear gas exposure, this is a sensorial experience for the audience to explore how air is used as a tool of political control.

Through meticulous interviews and extensive research, we have gathered stories and historical facts surrounding the invention and use of tear gas. These narratives have served as the inspiration for our multidimensional production, staged within the evocative confines of The Crypt Gallery—a former air raid shelter during the world wars.

We invite the audience to consider how society can unite in the pursuit of freedom. Understanding tear gas's traumatic legacy expands our capacity to value human life. By understanding the traumatic legacy of tear gas, we expand our capacity to value human life and lay a moral foundation for social transformations that strive for peace and justice.

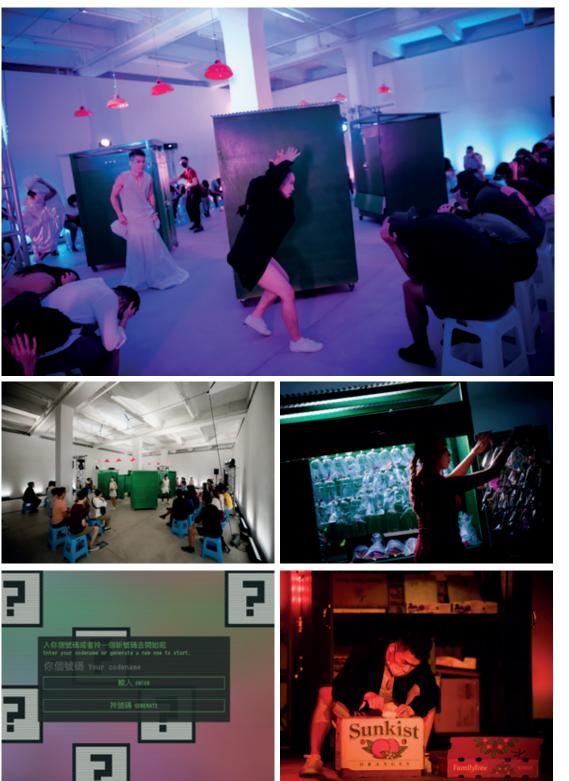
Presented at The Crypt Gallery, London (2022).

Produced as Hidden Keileon.

Support from Wellcome Collection and Bloomsbury Festival.

Funded by Arts Council England.





痴線一分鐘 Minute Moonshine

Alternate reality game and experimental theatre

In the online game, a red-dressed woman appeared at a wartime ruin in Hong Kong and encountered the main character, Ah Wing, as they spilt stories of a lost plane departing from London. Meanwhile, the game urged the players to get a ticket from Hong Kong, only to get into a plane crash as the red-dressed woman reappeared in the theatre performance.

We created a distinctive and new theatrical language with a heavy emphasis on the use of ready-made objects, accessorized costumes, fragmented scenes and immersive experiences. The nonlinear storytelling befitted the theme by bending the acknowledgement of now and past, deflecting an anxious and exhausted state of (post)-colonial identity-seeking. The work sustained itself as an uncomfortable and unsettling feeling.

In collaboration with Bonnie Chan, Jeffrey Choy, and Angela Wai Nok Hui.

Commissioned by Tai Kwun Hong Kong (2021).

Funded by Jockey Club Hong Kong and MGCfutures in London.











Meniscus

Immersive dance theatre with interactive technology, 2-screen projection, and spoken words

"These brought the experience of proximity to the performers to a whole new level, with none of the restrictions that normally apply to conventional performances. This was refreshing in a world generally tied down by rules and regulations... This was created as an interactive multimedia experience, and in this it more than succeeded." - Nick Swyft, Mark Aspen Reviews

"Ambitious but meticulously-curated performance that successfully creates an immersive experience for audience to experience the political instability." - Sandra Lam, independent curator

The project sparks from the ongoing fight for freedom and basic human rights everywhere. We look at the traumatic experience of witnessing horrific incidents unfold over the screen. With the use of digital interactions through mobile phone apps, QR codes and projections, audience gets up close and investigates the happenings in our world.

Presented at Rambert, Southbank, London, and The Place London (2019). Documentary film funded by Arts Council England.









I'M NOT SURE ABOUT YOU, BUT I NEED...

Immersive multimedia performance with interactive technology

"This is without a doubt one of the most digitally experimental fringe shows you're likely to see ... There's an undeniably attractive energy, which pulls the audience in from the moment they step foot inside and doesn't let up until the very end." - Mike Wells, The Reviews Hub

Here is 'dancing as gallery' as a rebellious response to 'dancing in gallery'. The work interrogates the nature of our digital society as the performer is surrounded by the spectators and their gadgets, at the same time, contemplating the power tug-of-war of the performance space and the contemporary society.

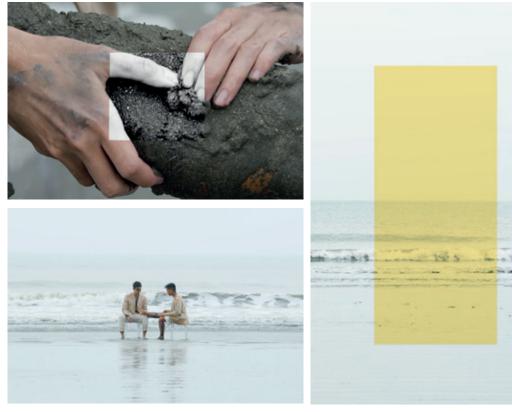
Presented at Goethe-Institut Hongkong (2020), Kasino am Schwarzenbergplatz at ImPulsTanz - Vienna International Dance Festival and The Place London (2019).

Commissioned by Hong Kong Art Development Council and Goethe-Institut Hongkong.



Films and Digital





家的形狀 Puzzling Home

Performance-to-camera

Two travellers arrive at a black and white sandy beach. Carried with them are all shapes of all sizes, holding visions of their former lives. These memories are mismatched and misaligned, yet all together form a picture we fantasise as 'home'.

Accompanied by a poem built up by collaging Cantopop lyrics, this performance-to-camera work looks at the figurative of live performances' ephemerality and the disappearance of home. We witnessed how meanings break and disintegrate in the face of feelings. With shared lived experiences in activism and migration, we form a puzzle designed to be disassembled.

In collaboration with Michael Mui and Jane Lam.

Commissioned by performingborders and Queer Art Projects (2023).

Supported by Arts Council England and Necessity Fund.



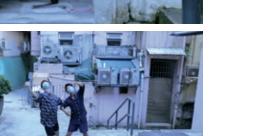














No Time For Tears

Dance film

On Guardian's list: 'Hottest front-room seats: the best theatre and dance to watch online'.

This is an experiment on dance, camera and poetry, based on Daniel York Loh's poem, *No Time For Tears*. As part of *#WeRNotVirus*, an art programme in response to racism targeted at East Asians during the time of COVID-19 pandemic, the film shows the two bodies twisted and squeezed, finding space for a restful breath in the city, while masks and racist voices pressed on their noses and mouths.

In collaboration with Daniel York Loh, Nicola Chang, and Jennifer Lim.

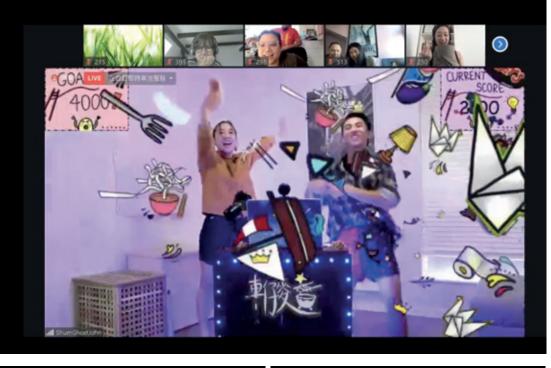
Screened at Omnibus Theatre (2020, 2021).

Commissioned by Moongate Productions.

Funded by Arts Council England.

<u>Watch the trailer</u>

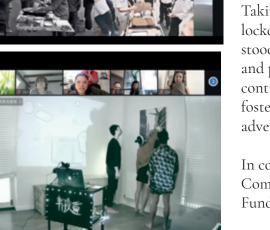












Cart Noodle Show



Game show and storytelling night

"(They) are among a number of Hong Kong-born artists who have found success in the British arts scene in recent years... As a group that emphasises the physical and tangible in their work, and frequently invokes Hong Kong's identity as a central theme, gaining their own sense of this new 'texture' was critical." - South China Morning Post

"A fun interactive experience that deforms into disillusionment and dystopia; it packs a poignant punch. The viewer becomes the subject of a gamified system that is designed to disenfranchise them. The political implications of the work are clear but sophisticated. One is left feeling both entertained and with a deep sadness about what has been lost." - Kim Pearce, British Theatre Director

Drawing inspiration from the captivating Hong Kong street food, the iconic cart noodles, we crafted eight original stories. These narratives were brought to life through short films that skillfully emulated the essence of East Asian folklore.

This is a unique interactive online experience. As the audience immersed themselves in the game, they soon realized their attempts to win were futile. This served as a reflection of the challenges and obstacles faced by migrants throughout their journeys.

Taking place during the peak of a pandemic, when the world was grappling with lockdowns and sensitive geopolitics, this experiment held profound relevance. It stood as an independent migrant production, fearlessly weaving tales of desperation and perseverance. Through storytelling and artistic expression, this production contributed to a broader conversation about the human stories behind migration, fostering compassion and appreciation for the resilience of individuals in the face of adversity.

In collaboration with Shum Pui Yung, Angela Wai Nok Hui, and Jeffrey Choy. Commissioned by Upstart Theatre (2021). Funded by Arts Council England.

The Intimacy Between Migrants' Lived Experiences, Global Geopolitics, and Cross-Disciplinary Decolonial Work

Midden Keileon PUSHKIN HOUSE

Research and Curatorial











Embodied Ecology

Workshop and provocation series

There are rivers, minerals and energy that pass through us as we are being nourished and sustained by landscapes that carry us. This artistic research looks at modalities that hold the potential for collective healing and liberation for all, gentle inner space discovery and capacity building for internal peace, from a queer and migrant perspective.

The research focuses on how our worlds collide as we meet and form a greater ecology that supports us to dream and imagine bravely and freely for futures with freedom for all. The migrant and queer bodies carry lived experiences of crossing arbitrary boundaries of nationalities and identities, and manoeuvring bureaucratic visa systems. Wisdom and knowledge is collected through every step we made on the "wrong path" as like the minerals we accumulated through the water we drink.

Every gathering of us is a gathering of the lands and the rivers. The care we demonstrated becomes new source of strength for the nature, which in turn supports us in building sustainable and resilient futures, broadening the landscape for all of us to be included, and putting the concept of national borders to question.

It is an exploration of abolitionist practice, ways to collaborate, our personal and the collective embodied ecologies and its potential in interpreting boundaries, as well as everyday decolonisation.

Seminars and workshops at University of Cambridge, Bow Arts, Pushkin House (2024), Civic Square and Centric Lab (2023).











#12Artworks

Curatorial and co-learning residency with 12 other artists on score-based performances

This is a two-week residency creating an anarchist space for independent artists. This is an experiment on radical acts of collectivity in the face of reduced funding for art and culture.

We collaborated with a diverse group of talented artists, collectively hosting workshops, conducting research sessions, and sharing initial explorations on four thought-provoking themes: socio-politically sensitive subjects, materials and societies, post-humanism, and displacement and memories of home.

As we delved in, a fundamental question echoed in our minds: "Where should we go?" In the midst of our exploration, the concept of 'shared vulnerability' emerged and resonated deeply within us. We likened ourselves to thirsty elephants, united in our search for nourishment.

We embraced moments of awkwardness when our ideas fell short, and we celebrated breakthroughs when new discoveries were made. We shed tears as past traumas intersected with the present, recognizing their profound impact on our creative journeys. Continuously reflecting on the present, we dared to envision and demonstrated alternative approaches for this new era.

Residency at London Performance Studios (2021).

With artists Adam Moore, Alina Sakko, Bettina Fung, Bonnie Chan, Elina Akhmetova, Iris Chan, Isabella Leung, Jay Yule, Mark Bleakley, Peggy Yau, and Yik-Sau Chung.

<u>Watch the hightlight video</u> <u>Read more about the project</u>











Apocalyptic Shopping and Apocalyptic Mapping

Workshop and provocation series

With a focus on collaborative practices, we navigate the challenging landscape of competition and reduced cultural funding. We strive to uncover ways to support and foster the flourishing of the arts, even in an era that often perpetuates an illusion of scarcity.

Rooted in our experiences as migrant queer artists, we approach this work with a curiosity that extends and engages stakeholders from diverse fields and communities. We explore how everyone can be mobilized to envision a future centred on healing and collective actions. Against the backdrop of the pandemic and significant geopolitical shifts, we recognize the trauma experienced by many, which hinders their ability to envision a participatory role in driving positive change. We seek to transform this by devising and constructing tools and strategies that facilitate the creation of safe spaces for all.

Through workshops and conversations, we invite everyone to navigate the current climate collaboratively to build a more inclusive and nurturing ecosystem.

Workshops at Pushkin House (2023), Internationales Theatreinstitut Berlin, Cell Project Space (2022), London Performance Studios, and Care Curatorial Collective (2021).

Conversations at Wellcome Collection (2022), Chisenhale Dance Space, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and Centro per la Scena Contemporanea (2020).

Research commissioned by Moving Margins (2021-22).

Funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media, Germany.

Watch the hightlight video during Moving Margin















Air Mattress Sequence

Durational performance

A group of people resting, chatting, sleeping, dancing on an air mattress, thinking about radical self-care, healing from traumas, co-existing, and displaying promiscuous love.

Wearing a yellow raincoat with the words 'cold-blooded police', Mr Leung jumped from a building in Central Hong Kong on 15th June 2019 on a busy street. The next day, two million citizens marched on the street. How far would you go to wake up a community? What if there is an airbag catching him? What community infrastructures can we build together, so no one has to die to prove a point?

Somewhere on the water, there is a group of refugees sitting on an airboat, escaping from where they can no longer live. They keep pumping air into the boat, fearing the leak will eventually sink them. They pull others up from the water, even though the boat is already packed with bodies. How can we hold space for each other when we barely have enough?

While the cultural industry is busy bringing its previous glory in the (post)-pandemic world, we just want to take a nap together and chat about our dreams on this very tight bed. How do we negotiate space/borders? How much rest do we need to build capacity? Are you okay with me being intimate with you? Are we going too fast? Do you just want to hold hands?

Air Mattress Sequence is a playful yet sleepy social intervention, an innocent reflection on our collective traumas.

Commissioned by Chisenhale Dance Space (2022).

Acknowledgements

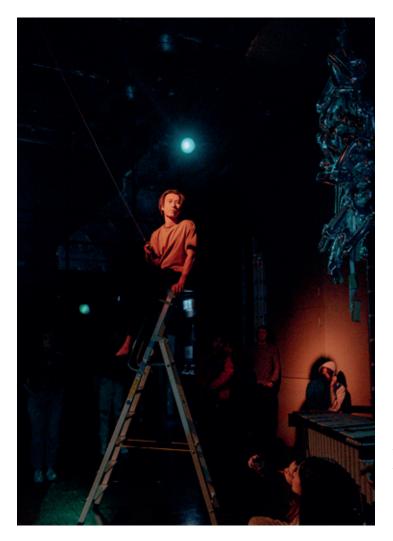
We humbly recognize that none of Ghost and John's projects was created solely by ourselves. The successes in our careers are indebted to the invaluable contributions of our esteemed collaborators, including directors and writers, performers, curators and producers, photographers and videographers, venue staff and technicians, and countless others.

In particular, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to those who have stood by our side and believed in our artistic vision from the very inception of our creative journey. We sincerely thank Siu Wan, Michael Mui, Shum Pui Yung, Georgina Tsagka, Sandra Lam, Dominic Farlam, Kim Pearce, Eva Recacha, Jeffrey Choy, Bonnie Chan, Angela Wai Nok Hui, and the entire team at 'Meniscus' and 'Radio Neighbourhood' for their unwavering support and dedication.

Without our collaborators' talent and generosity, our artistic endeavours would not have been possible. We are forever grateful for their spirit, passion, and commitment to our shared vision.

Additionally, we would like to extend our appreciation to every commission, award, and funding source that has supported and fueled the execution of our projects. Their belief in our work has provided us with the necessary resources and opportunities to thrive as creatives.

This portfolio represents a curated selection of works and does not encompass the entirety of our creative career. It serves as a testament to the collective effort and support that has shaped our artistic journey as Ghost and John.



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Monkey and cat logo: Georgina Tsagka

Choct and John