

**SYDNEY'S 4A FEATURES HONG KONG IN
BEFORE THE RAIN EXHIBITION**

January 21 – March 29, 2017



MEDIA RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Before the Rain

Luke Ching, Liu Ding, James Kong,
Sarah Lai, Swing Lam, Ellen Pau,
Tang Kwok Hin, Sampson Wong,
Yuan Goang-Ming,

Curator: Mikala Tai
Curatorial Assistant: Micheal Do



Image courtesy of The Umbrella Movement Visual Archive and Research Collective.

4A CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ASIAN
ART
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
21 JANUARY – 29 MARCH 2017

Sydney's 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art dives into the rifts of democracy in their latest exhibition *Before the Rain*, opening Saturday 21 January at the Centre in Haymarket, Sydney.

***Before the Rain* addresses the tensions that precipitated the recent political and civil urgency in Hong Kong and the city's pressing need to reimagine its future. The exhibiting works are imbued with a need to safeguard the city and feature a range of artwork complemented by works from the Umbrella Revolution Visual Archive.**

The presence of heavy humidity signals the inevitability of a downpour that will interrupt and intercept patterns of normality. For Hong Kong, a city defined by humidity, "The Umbrella Movement" that began on September 28 2014 was the result of a long and steady buildup of uncertainty, anxiety and the long held need to articulate a cohesive identity for the city.

Before the Rain's artists frame the conversation from a multiplicity of perspectives presenting the complexity and concerns of a city facing a future planned by others. They approach the city with an intent to protect it; their works may appear as warnings but they are underpinned by a need to safeguard.

Commissioned for the exhibition is a new work by Sampson Wong that transforms the entrance of the gallery into a narration of the Umbrella Movement. Ephemera taken from the streets, continuous loops of CCTV and news footage, blogs, tweets and newspapers will populate the gallery inviting the viewer to sift through the materials

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and navigate their own opinion of a city in flux. *Before the Rain* responds to a continuously evolving discourse that shifts and tangents are proving to be one of the most critical events in South East Asia's recent history.

The exhibition is open to the public and will be open daily (Tuesday – Sunday) at the Centre's Gallery at 181- 187 Hay Street, Haymarket, and will run from 21 January to 29 March 2017.

Exhibition opening and associated events:

Exhibition Opening

Saturday January 21, 2017

4.00pm – 6.00pm

Before the Rain will be opened by Michael Lynch, AM, CBE, who has served as Interim Director, National Art School; Chief Executive of the Sydney Opera House; General Manager of the Australia Council; General Manager of the Sydney Theatre Company; Chief Executive of London's Southbank Centre and as Chief Executive of the West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong.

VIP Media Event & Artist Talk

Monday January 23, 2017

11AM – 12PM

Join *Before the Rain* artist and artistic leader of the movement, Sampson Wong, for a special artist talk event. For details, please email bridie.moran@4a.com.au

Exhibition venue:

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art

181-187 Hay St, Haymarket, Sydney NSW 2000, Australia

Open Tuesday – Friday: 11am-5pm

Saturday and Sunday: 11am to 4pm (excluding public holidays)

Public Programs:

Cinema Alley: Ten Years - Thursday 2 February 2017

Golden Age Cinema, tickets on sale mid-January 2017.

As part of the exhibition *Before the Rain* five young Hong Kong directors consider the future of their city. *Ten Years* (103 minutes, Cantonese drama, with Chinese and English subtitles), was one of the 2015 HKAFF Center-pieces, is a collection of five short stories; a prophecy, and a fable for Hong Kong.

Congee Breakfast Tour – 10AM, Saturday 11 March 2017

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art // Chinatown, bookings open mid-January 2017

Join 4A Assistant Curator, Micheal Do, for a pre-work tour of *Before the Rain* and get a taste of Hong Kong with breakfast congee. Places for this special tour are limited and this event is presented as part of Art Month Sydney.

Exhibition dates:

21 January – 29 March 2017

#BeforetheRain

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To register for our media preview, RSVP to the opening or arrange an interview with the artists or curator, contact Bridie Moran, Marketing, Communications and Development Manager at 4A: bridie.moran@4a.com.au, +61 402926031

****ENDS****

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Luke Ching (b.1972, Hong Kong; lives in Hong Kong) is an inter-disciplinary artist creating multimedia installations in which traditional and new media coexist in an imperfect balance. His work identifies and attempts to deconstruct the changing urban landscapes of his home city as emblematic of Hong Kong's pluralist history as one location caught between eastern and western hemispheres. Ching has held a number of solo exhibitions including *Screensaver* (2014), Gallery EXIT, Hong Kong; as part of the *Folk Art Series* (2008), Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery, Blackburn, England; and *2 in 1* (2007), Hong Kong Visual Art Centre, Hong Kong. He has participated in group exhibitions not limited to *Ceramics Show by Non-ceramics Artist* (2015), 1a space, Hong Kong; *The Invisible Hand: Curating as Gesture* (2014), CAFAM Biennale, Beijing, China; *The Problem of Asia* (2010), Chalk Horse, Sydney; and the *Hong Kong Art Biennial Exhibition 2005* (2005), Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong. Since completing his Master of Fine Art in 1998 at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Luke Ching has received awards both in Hong Kong and abroad while undertaking residencies internationally in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Japan.

Liu Ding (b.1976, Changzhou, China, lives in Beijing) pursues a research-based practice that manifests in a range of media, from painting to theatre production, as well as curatorial and theoretical work. His most recent work involves appropriating the aesthetics and creative system of Chinese socialist realism, particularly in painting, to reappraise its legacy in art and visual culture. Through contrasts and comparisons between past and present archetypes, Liu examines shifting ideas of the model citizen, the role of artists and intellectuals in society, and conditions of cultural production and historical knowledge. Typified by a large, politically loaded rendering of the year 1989 in the corner of a computer desktop window, Liu's paintings address emergent forms and conventions of seeing, showing and experiencing enabled by new technologies, with significant implications for public discourse in China and elsewhere.

James Kong (b. 1985, Hong Kong; lives in Hong Kong) graduated with a Bachelor of Science at the School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong. Since then, as an Interactive Media Engineer he dedicates his creative work to explore human-computer interaction and the application of multimedia techniques to theatrical environments. He also explores the possibilities of computational media in the arts.

Sarah Lai (b. 1983, Hong Kong; lives in Hong Kong) is a painter concerned with beautifying and capturing the aura of the mundane. Her subjects are often highly familiar objects or environments detached from the humdrum of everyday life, deprived of their utilitarian functions, allowing the artist to subtly abstract the concepts of form and function as relics of contemporary commodity culture. A recent Master of Fine Arts graduate from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Lai has consistently held solo exhibitions in Hong Kong including *Unsettled Heart* (2016), The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; *In Stasis* (2015), Art Basel Hong Kong, Para Site, Hong Kong; and *Safety Island* (2013), Gallery EXIT, Hong Kong. Her works are collected internationally after participating in group exhibitions internationally, such as *The 2nd CAFAM Future Exhibition* (2015), CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China; *I submit to the wisdom of the body* (2015), Silverlens Gallery, Manila, Philippines; *The Hong Kong International Art Fair* (2013), Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong; and the Sovereign Art Prize (2010), ARTSPACE at Helutrans, Singapore.

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Swing Lam (b.1986, Hong Kong, lives in Hong Kong) specialises in various art forms, including painting, performance art, temporary architecture research and is involved in cultural and urban sketching studies. He writes arts and cultural columns for *Mingpao* and *Stand News* amongst others. He earned a bachelor degree of Visual Arts in HKBU and a MA intercultural studies in CUHK and is one of the fotanian artists concentrated on drawing, painting and happenings. Swing started the project *Flaneur 11* in 2012's spring; a project of waking across 10 cities over the world. Swing showed his project in Atelier Muji gallery as his first solo exhibition in spring 2013. RTHK also made an documentary of his work in January 2013. In 2014, he developed a Facebook page to introduce and study some of the featured architecture, tools and creations found. It helped the public look into the temporary facilities from an artistic point of view. In the project Swing embraced his experience of walking through cities and his interaction with the public in this public space. Currently, Swing is working as a Lecturer in Lingnan University Community college for Art and design courses.

Ellen Pau (b. 1961 Hong Kong; lives in Hong Kong) made her first super-8 film in 1984. Being a self-taught artist, she worked as a MTV director, cinematographer, video artist, curator, educator and arts administrator. Pau started her international career in 1995 at the Gwangju Biennale in Korea, curated by Kim Hon-Yee and Nam-June Paik. She is the co-founder and artistic director for the media art organisation Videotage, and a member and curator of the organizing committee for the Microwave International Media Art Festival, Hong Kong since 1996. A radiographer by profession, Pau teaches part-time in Hong Kong University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, as well as being a full time medical image technologist. Pau is advisor to the HK Museum of Art, the HK Art Development Council and a number of festivals.

Tang Kwok Hin (b. 1983, Hong Kong; lives in Hong Kong) is a mixed-media artist who blurs boundaries between art and life by integrating creation with conflicts of human kinds which reveals intrinsic values. Tang received his Master of Fine Arts from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2008 and Bachelor of Arts (major in Fine Arts) in 2006. Tang starts the artistic path from continuous queries towards his native background. He often appropriates and reconstructs daily and personal contexts to narrate hidden stories in life, dealing with growth, inheritance, freedom, capitalism, consumerism, politics, norms, etc. He previously participated in la Biennale di Venezia: 15th International Architecture Exhibition at Hong Kong Pavilion, 15th WRO Media Art Biennale, Hong Kong Contemporary Biennial Award 2009, etc.; also exhibited in Ice Palace, Miami, U.S.A.; Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany; Museum Bäregasse, Switzerland; Esplanade, Singapore; Singapore Art Museum; Vargas Museum, Manila, Philippines; Busan Cinema Center, South Korea; Hong Kong Museum of Art; Taipei Museum of Contemporary Art; Kuandu Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, etc. He was awarded the first prize at Hong Kong Contemporary Art Biennial 2009; selected by Sovereign Asian Art Prize 2010, 2011 and 2014; awarded a Young Artist Award by Hong Kong Arts Development Awards 2010; granted by Asian Cultural Council in 2013. Collectors of his art include Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Deutsche Bank, Amelia Johnson Contemporary and private collections over the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Singapore, Austria, Taiwan, Hong Kong, etc.

Sampson Wong (b. 1985, Hong Kong; lives in Hong Kong) is an artist, independent curator, academic and urbanist from Hong Kong. He engages in art-making, curatorial practice, teaching, research and writing, and see them as intellectual means exploring issues about urbanism, space, power and freedom. His research interests also include politics of epidemics and Hong Kong studies. He is now writing books about plagues in Hong Kong, urbanism and art, and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement. His writings often appear in the *Stand News* and *Mingpao* (Sunday Life). Recent projects in 2016 include *From 60 seconds to 2047, Countdown Machine* and *Land Visions: In Search of Land Art in Hong Kong*. He also curated the *2nd emptyscape art festival: Beyond the Village School 2016; Studio in-Situ – Assembling! 2016; and Affordable Art Base!* In 2015. He received his Ph.D in Urban Studies & Geography at the University of Manchester in 2014.

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Yuan Goang-Ming (b. 1965, Taipei, Taiwan; lives in Taipei) is one of the foremost Taiwanese artists of media art, and has been a pioneer of video art in Taiwan, a medium in which he started working in 1986. In 1997, he received a Master's degree in media art from the Academy of Design, Karlsruhe. Combining symbolic metaphors with technological media, his work eloquently expresses the state of contemporary existence and profoundly explores the human mind and consciousness. Yuan has been the recipient of many awards, including the Jury Prize of the first Art Future 2000 by the Acer Digital Art Center. His works, ranging from photographs to multi-media installations, have been exhibited worldwide, including at the Taiwan Pavilion at the 50th Venice Biennale (2003). Recent solo exhibitions include *BEFORE MEMORY* (2011), TKG+, Taipei, and *DISAPPEARING TRACES* (2011), TKG+, Beijing.

ABOUT 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art fosters excellence and innovation in contemporary Asian and Australian culture through research, documentation, development, discussion and presentation of contemporary visual art.

We believe that Asian cultural thinking will have an important impact on the future. 4A's aim is to ensure contemporary visual art plays a central role in understanding the dynamic relationship between Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

4A has a distinctive approach to addressing Australia's cultural diversity through a dynamic program including local and international exhibitions, public programs, workshops, seminars, symposiums and community activities. These have been recognised locally and internationally as having raised awareness of Asian-Australian art and culture and Australia's place in the Asia-Pacific region.

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