



Mimi Tong

In Time

19 September - 14 October 2018

Opening night Wednesday 19 September 6-8pm

Artist talk & closing reception Sunday 14 October 3-5pm

Email: Monday 02/07/18

Hi Manya

Hope you're well. I missed out in catching up with you and the gang on Friday night, it's been ages.

I believe Simon mentioned my upcoming show at Pompom, a project conceived around the notion of time. With constraints and limitations of time, it's taken me some time to realise after repeated failed attempts to make stuff in broken bits of time and headspace, I've come up with an approach that stitches all these factors as basis of the project.

Some notes about the project:

In Time is a live project that examines time, duration and process as an artist making new work in-situ. During gallery hours, I will be present in the Front Room of Galerie pompom transformed as my temporary studio space. Over the course of 20 days, I will attempt to step in an alternate life – away from home, family and paid employment to read, draw, manufacture the focus to think through making... On view a wall calendar, similar to an advent calendar will mark each of the 20 days; and an hourglass that will be manually rotated to track the passing of time.

I was wondering if you would be interested in writing a short piece for the exhibition?
Let me know your thoughts.

Best, Mimi

Text message: Monday 02/07/18

Hi Mimi, I got your email – I'd be happy to write a piece for your show. Thanks for thinking of me. Love the concept of the show. Let's try to meet up soon to chat more about it... Which days are best for you?

Conversation: Tuesday 24 July, 2.00-3:30pm, MCA Café

MT: I'm not after a straightforward piece of writing, the text could be a transcript of sorts, made up from excerpts of our conversations... I think an informal text would work well as there is a relational aspect to the project and we also know each other...

Conversation: Wednesday 15 August, 11.00-12.00pm, MCA Café

MT: I've been reading a book by Zadie Smith, the latest series of essays. 'The Bathroom' resonated with me - she's looking back to that time and unpacking this other life and other identities her parents had and now that she has the ability to appreciate what they did for her and her siblings, I thought it was interesting to read...She talks about feeling exhausted and cranky with her kids, and I thought wow even Zadie Smith feels this way. I feel my own experience is validated by others...

MS: We're all human and we're doing it in our own homes.

MT: Apart from the reading, I'm still trying to making this hourglass.

MS: How's it going?

MT: Definitely salt and rice does not work.

MS: It's too absorbent?

MT: It gets clogged up. I tried different size openings and it kept not working. So I drove to Coogee and...

MS: Got some sand?

MT: Yep, got some sand in a Tupperware container and had to sift it because it's full of stuff. It definitely looks like sand from a beach and not commercial product bought from Bunnings, the grain is variable in size and colour. I'm yet to construct the frame...I have only been able to record the sand passing at about 20 minutes so far. I think I was optimistic thinking I could get it working for 60 minutes in duration, will see...I have to keep tinkering.

MS: It's moving too fast through?

MT: Yes, so I have to adjust the opening or how the opening is shaped. I have to make some sort of conical insert but both ways so I can keep rotating it both ways...

MT: So still doing that and been doing more drawing, experimenting on different papers...

MS: I saw you posted a little something on...

MT: Yep, it took half an hour to do that because I'd forgotten how to create a post

MS: (Laughs)

MT: Because I don't do social...It's been a year and a half and I have 5 posts....so then oh I have to login and then...

MS: What's my password...

MT: Yep and what's the button to create a post again...

MS: It looked good though...so these are drawings in preparation for the calendar?

MT: So experimenting with different types of paper. There's a beautiful 635 gsm watercolour paper that I'm really set on using now

MS: Great, is it white?

MT: It is white, unfortunately I haven't been able to find it in any other colours. Parkers sell an oversize sheet - a metre by a metre and a half

MS: Nice

MT: But I don't know how practical that is

MS: Why is that, is the space...

MT: It's just so big

MS: But it might work like a wall calendar, which is also an art work. A metre by a metre half is always a nice proportion. How big is that room?

MT: 4 by 6 meters

MS: Even if you have three of them at that size, it will still be quite nice proportion wise.

MT: I was thinking multiple calendars, but I think one is enough...I've been trying to read and been going to shows...

MT: Slowly collecting more stuff. I was in Wellington earlier this year and visited the Te Papa museum which has a new contemporary art wing. They had on exhibit some of Julian Dashper's work and a copy of his book *This is not writing* was in the reading area. He writes candidly almost like a diary. In the chapter 'Location, location, location':

*I'm no residency junkie (I've had three hits in my 23 exhibiting years)
but they do give you clean studio time.*

MS: Hmmmm...

MT: I really like how he refers to the time as *clean*

*Most of my artist colleagues run between airports and teaching jobs
(if they're lucky).*

MS: Yeah, so true isn't it...

Time for serious studio wall gazing is rare.

MS: It is, it really is

*You see, I think that studio time isn't just about squeezing paint tubes.
It's also about thinking, reading, talking and visiting shows you normally
wouldn't visit...*

MT: I read the passage and thought - that's exactly it

MS: I think as an artist your brain is always in that realm, even when you are being a parent.

MT: You take it around with you, it's portable...

MS: Your show will give you a bit of clean studio time...

MT: That's exactly it... I'm creating a bit of clean studio time.

MS: It's a nice a way of putting it, isn't it?

Manya Sellers is an Assistant Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and has a background as a visual artist. Mimi has known Manya since the early noughties and they were both part of the original team of committee members running MOP Projects, Sydney, when it opened in 2003.

Mimi Tong is a Sydney based artist and a sessional lecturer at UNSW Art & Design and The University of Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning. She has a Masters of Visual Arts from Sydney College of the Arts. Tong's practice includes drawing and installation where her recent work has focused on imaging architectural space informed by abstraction and Chinese scroll painting. Tong is the recipient of Australia Council New Work Grants, the Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship and the Zelda Stedman Scholarship. She has undertaken residencies in Albany, Western Australia with IASKA (IAS); Shenzhen, China with Asialink and in 2013 was awarded the Australia Council Helsinki Studio. Recent projects include *Vintage Enamelware* (2017-18), ArtMoves, Sydney, Transport for NSW; *WWW II Julian Dashper & Girlfriends*, Glovebox, Auckland; *Formation (Winter)* 2014, Breezeblock, Sydney; *View of Albany*, Spaced: Art out of Place National Tour (2013 -2014).