

# T:>Works PerForm

**EXHIBITION: HO RUI AN & SHUBIGI RAO**

26 November to 5 December 2021

72 - 13, Home of T:>Works



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## **Asia the Unmiraculous**

By Ho Rui An

*Lecture and video installation with digital prints on backlit film mounted on LED-illuminated acrylic, books and magnetically levitated hand model.*  
2018—

Considering the 1997 Asian financial crisis against the economic “miracle” that preceded it, *Asia the Unmiraculous* is a lecture and video installation that seeks to diffuse the aura of a “miraculous” Asia by examining the entirely profane conditions—shot through by financial capitalism—that set the stage for one of the first large-scale crises of globalisation. Focusing on the relationship between race and financial capitalism, the project considers the conditions that made possible the “Asianisation” of the miracle and the crisis that followed. A key line of inquiry examines the ideological contestations between neoliberalism and the developmental state model that unfolded amidst the “miracle”, during which the invisible hand of the market was pitted against the interventionist hand of the state.

Drawing upon research undertaken over two years across Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Singapore and Malaysia, the project extends to the renewed Asian futurisms of today. In this “return” of Asia to the future, the state reasserts itself through infrastructural and technological power, seen especially in the proliferation of smart cities across Asia and the construction of high-speed rail networks as part of China’s ongoing Belt and Road initiative.

The video installation features fourteen posters—in the style of real estate listings—that critically re-examine the Asian “miracle” and a wallpaper of an inverted photograph of the horizon captured from the Port of Piraeus, which has been operated by the Chinese state-owned shipping company, COSCO, since August 2016 when it acquired a majority stake in the port.

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## The Pelagic Tracts

Dir. Shubigi Rao

*Single channel video 24:39*

2018

In 2018 artist Shubigi Rao spent several weeks in Kochi, India, researching and developing a short film and installation that immersed viewers in the texts, images, and verbal accounts of a world where books are the most valuable commodity. It begins with a text discovered by a colonial officer, S. Raoul that maps the trade route of book smugglers that threaten the monopoly of the East India Company. While much of this content is fictional, Rao constructs this mythical world from existing letters and records from the libraries, archives, and her interactions in Kochi with local librarians and paper pulpers, as well as the libraries devastated by floods earlier that year. A salvaged copy of Homer's *Odyssey*, given to Rao by a local scrapyard worker, appears as a visual and textual spectre in the film. By creating this semi-fictional history of smuggled texts and ideas, the artist encourages a re-examination of how we discuss loss, devastation of community and literary heritage, as well as the indecipherable and untranslatable. Embedded in this conversation are fraught issues of migrancy, displacement and cross-cultural experience — a conversation that is as much about the movement of ideas and language as it is about the political and economic legacies of power structures.

This film was originally commissioned by and shown at the 4th Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2018. It has not been shown since, till this premiere at PerForm by T:>Works, Singapore.

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## About PerForm

A fellowship platform by T:>Works to situate practices in the diverse local contexts around the world. The Fellow may be based in another localised context, and will digitally share knowledge as well as research produced there, with the publics in Singapore and internationally. The fellowship is open to collaborative ventures between artists, scientists, writers, curators, activators, creative communities, amongst others. PerForm is particularly attuned to the making of potential futures that speak to the ethical interconnections between humans, species, and other forces, including technology, that animate our physical world.

## About T:>Works

Established in 1985, T:>Works is an independent and international arts company based in Singapore at its space, 72-13. It is currently led by Artistic Director, Dr. Ong Keng Sen. T:>Works' mission and vision is the pioneering of thought leadership in the arts focused on transdisciplinary, transcultural, and inclusive processes. To this end, there is a strong educational perspective with research and discourse contextualising the histories, lived contemporary experiences, and situated art practices. T:>Works also serves to investigate the current urgencies of being located in Singapore through different creative expressions in the public sphere. It is a recipient of the National Arts Council Major Company Grant for the period from 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2022. T:>Works is an Institute of Public Character with charity status.

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