

In MEAN TIME Emerging Hong Kong Artist Morgan Wong Invites a Consideration of Fundamental Questions of Agency

VANCOUVER, BC (September 2, 2016) – Centre A is pleased to announce MEAN TIME, an exhibition by emerging Hong Kong artist, Morgan Wong, curated by Tyler Russell.

Two years ago this September, students flooded and occupied areas of Hong Kong in an expression of frustration with the ongoing deterioration of One Country, Two Systems – in particular a challenge to Beijing decreeing that authorities there would screen candidates for Hong Kong's Chief Executive before giving Hong Kongers a chance to vote on them in 2017.

This was an extension of earlier protests against the Moral & National Education (MNE) curriculum. Among other things, this policy attempted to inform school aged children that the Chinese Communist Party was an "advanced, selfless and united" ruling group while bemoaning democracy's flaws. The US political system, for instance, is said to cause suffering because of inter-party bickering. True as that may be, and as flawed as the American system may be, to teach children that things are better when people have neither voice nor the agency to implement democratic will, and that moral citizens are citizens who unquestioningly accept the enlightened benevolence of the CCP, is a little beyond the pale.

When the curriculum was being implemented students and their pro-democracy supporters hit the streets, took over government headquarters, hacked websites, and told the authorities where they could shove their curriculum. Though these pro-democracy, pro-Hong Kong forces were able to delay the implementation of the MNE, that was only a tiny victory in a war whose loss may have been, through a 1984 agreement between Hong Kong's former British Colonial rulers and Chinese authorities in Beijing, already scheduled for July 1, 2047.

In a manner echoing 1997 handover anxieties and post-Tiananmen trauma, these events were forcing a young generation to come to terms with a long life in socio-political limbo-space where they would be resisting a fate whose seal they *may*, through long persistent effort, one day overcome – like the stone that Sisyphus was bound to failingly roll up a hill over and over again.

In Morgan Wong's work, it was, and continues to be Kafka and Camus in the tidy package of a 50 year time bundle; Kafka's constant march of oppressive bureaucratic nonsense, blended with Camus' notion of a Sisyphian fortune of having the opportunity to make the hopeful choice to roll the stone of basic rights and dignity up the ever-increasingly steep hill of Chinese State power again, again and again, for what may well be an eternity.

Featuring a pair of works, *Remnants of My Volition (Force Majeure)* (2014) and *Frustration of Having More than Two Choices to Make in Life* (2013), in MEAN TIME, Wong reaches beyond the Hong Kong specific context and invites viewers to consider the inevitable, merciless persistence of time, and to, despite life's absurd and overwhelming circumstances, dare hope in its possibility.

Join us on September 9, 7pm for the opening of **MEAN TIME**, an exhibition by Morgan Wong at Centre A, 229 E Georgia St., Chinatown. The exhibition is on display until October 15, 2016. Regular gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 12pm-5pm. An artist talk hosted by Howie Tsui will take place on September 10 at 4pm at Centre A.

MORGAN WONG currently lives and works in Hong Kong. Shortlisted for the Sovereign Art Prize and featured in Hong Kong Basel Encounters, Wong has exhibited extensively in Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, China, Australia and Europe, but this exhibition marks Wong's North American debut.

TYLER RUSSELL holds a BA in International Development Studies from Dalhousie University and an MA in New Intermedia Art from Tokyo National University of Fine Art and Music. He has worked on well over 50 exhibitions and artistic projects internationally, including Busan Biennale, Yokohama Triennale and Platform Seoul. In 2008 Russell founded an independent art space in North Vancouver that engaged art's role in community building and enriching public discourse. Since 2014, he is Executive Director/Curator of Centre A.

About Centre A:

Established in 1999, Centre A is Canada's only public gallery devoted to contemporary art of the Asia-Pacific. Located in Chinatown's East Georgia Gallery Cluster, we have presented the works of over 300 Canadian and international artists and produced over 80 original projects. As a key piece of Vancouver's cultural infrastructure, Centre A works with artists, curators and other cultural producers from throughout the region to facilitate critical inquiry and provide a platform for conversation and artistic experimentation. Centre A is also home to the Centre A Reading Room including among a vast collection contemporary Asian art books, the Finlayson Collection of Rare Asian Art Books.

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Available for comment on MEAN TIME:

Exhibition Curator: Tyler Russell
Artist: Morgan Wong

Images and a PDF of the press release are available through our [Dropbox press pack](#).

**To arrange an interview with any of the above, or for media requests and further information,
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