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PRESS RELEASE

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***A roast of Asian nine tails topped with broken femur
and bile, accompanied by more curious ingredients***

A solo exhibition by Shayne Phua

20 July – 1 September 2024

Opening Saturday 20 July, 3 - 7 pm



Ceramic artist Shayne Phua's objects are mischievous oddities. For her first solo exhibition with Yeo Workshop, she has fashioned a series of sculptures that are defamiliarized, fantastical forms, from multi-tailed fox spirits as incongruous bearers of Confucian morality, to candleholders in the shape of broken bones, to lights shaped like gallbladders. These surreal objects, however, more than simply suggesting the artist's interest in the unusual, speak to the socio-political realities and complexities of contemporary life – especially in Singapore, where the artist was born and raised. Phua is particularly interested in the discourse of 'Asian values' that has loomed large in the collective consciousness of Singaporeans, a discourse that emphasizes the needs of the community over the claims of the individual. Her work casts a critical lens on the discontents of the twenty-first century

through the visual language of the atypical – in the manner of the Qing-dynasty anthology, *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, a collection of supernatural narratives that blur the lines between mortal society and spectral realms. The litany of peculiar objects in *A roast of Asian nine tails topped with broken femur and bile, accompanied by more curious ingredients* juxtaposes the artist's ceramic objects with her personal collection of vintage furniture and collectibles, and represents an idiosyncratic, singular response to a world rife with contradictions.

The artist worked with independent curator, Louis Ho, on this exhibition.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

SHAYNE PHUA (b. 1997, Singapore) uses the medium of clay to narrate stories and turn a critical eye on everyday realities. Her ceramic objects employ history, myth and literature to reflect on the world around her. She graduated with a BA(Hons) in Communication Design from The Glasgow School of Art, Singapore.

Phua enjoys observing the forms and functions of utilitarian objects. Her work focuses on these aspects of ceramics as the vehicle for exploring a host of discourses, including oral traditions, folklore, historical anecdote and socio-political ideologies. In a world increasingly flattened out by social media and cultural homogenisation, her practice is premised on a keen interest in the local and often overlooked – a register of things and tales that flicker beneath public attention. As the artist notes, “That which I see or hear, or both, often coalesce into a surreal vision. I unpack its relation to daily life, alter and make sense of it by forging an allegory of my own. In a sense, I am bringing the past and present into conversation, into play.”

In 2019, Shayne was an Artist in Residence at Zentrum fur Keramik in Berlin and Guldagergaard International Ceramic Research Center in Denmark. In 2020, she had her debut solo, ‘Sehnsucht’ which acknowledges the existence of complex and indefinite emotions and the longing for nostalgia in our current age of rapid change. In 2022, she showed in ‘Blended tongue’ in Paris, featuring works of Singapore and France Artists with botanical installations by This Humid House. Most recently, she exhibited her works in a group show, ‘New Makers’ in Bangkok featuring Thai and Singaporean Artists.

ABOUT YEO WORKSHOP

Yeo Workshop is a gallery committed to contemporary art in Singapore. Based in the Gillman Barracks district in Singapore, it champions a diverse roster of artists whose practices reflect deep engagement with our contemporary socio-cultural landscape, to stimulate dialogue and critical discourse, including several Southeast Asian artists who are producing cutting-edge works. In recent years, the gallery has been focused on bringing greater prominence to local artists with several Singaporean artists joining the roster. Covering a multi-disciplinary approach and collaborative spirit, the gallery defines itself by its progressive engagements that strive to shape the trajectory of contemporary art in Southeast Asia and beyond.

OPENING HOURS

Tue – Sat, 11am – 7pm; Sun, 12pm – 6pm
Closed Mon and Public Holidays.

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