



Chiara Vigo
The thread that sings, 2017
 Sea silk, pure gold thread, nail loom

ONE ON ONE

Chiara Vigo
The thread that sings (2017)
 In "A BEAST, A GOD, AND A LINE"
 Para Site
 17.03. – 20.05.2018

Chiara Vigo has found the Philosopher's Stone, or more accurately, she is the thirtieth generation to have inherited it. Before accessing its powers, she made a vow to the sea and some now say Vigo is the last person on earth who can weave sea silk – also known as byssus, or the world's rarest thread. The 63-year-old dives off Sardinia's coast to harvest the filaments of *Pinna nobilis*, or pen shells, a large Mediterranean mollusc, from which she spins fibres. The thread is then soaked in a solution during a lunar eclipse as she sings an enchantment. According to Vigo, song is the most important binding element: it's what turns the clam's secretion into gold.

Eight sea silk works were exhibited in "A beast, a god, and a line", yet they cannot be bought or sold, only given. In this way, *The thread that sings* (2017), a golden lyre-shaped loom with woven sea silk as its strings, becomes a testament to the legends of trade itself, a whisper network that escapes the logic of basic historicity. As one story goes, in 1508 an anonymous pilgrim arrived in Manoppello and delivered a cloth imprinted with the alleged face of Jesus Christ, and it is widely believed that this ancient work is indeed made of sea silk; the fibres, after all, can supposedly store light in the same way that "information is stored on a computer". As only one example of the many literate threads woven with ancient techniques in this show, Vigo's craft is a form of knowledge production that speaks in dialogue with those of Austronesian and South Asian artists in the exhibition, together forging a common language with the ethos of the Global South. **Hera Chan**

Courtesy the artist & Para Site

"Emerald City"

K11 Art Foundation Pop-up Space
 28.03. – 22.04.2018
 chi art space
 28.04. – 31.05.2018

According to the divination system devised by Chinese twin sister duo Mountain River Jump!, the Emerald City is located at Neptune, Gemini, in the eighth house. This sentiment is communicated in their work *After Three Hundred Years* (2018), featuring a spiritual counsellor in the form of three flashing iPads which hung in the corner of a cosmic geometric pattern on the wall. This installation was part of "Emerald City", the first major exhibition curated by K11 Art Foundation's Artistic Director Venus Lau, who took geometry in the expanded sense of the definition of "geo", or earth, as the show's epistemic foundation. As Lau writes, "Globalisation has narrowed the spaces in which cultural difference can exist." One consequence is that the abstraction and consequent translation of geometry's universal spatial language becomes a measure of affinity in the age of the global art exhibition. Much like how L. Frank Baum describes an Emerald City so bright that visitors must wear green-tinted glasses in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the twenty-six artists in this exhibition provided propositions for alternate environments through works that could literally be described as both abstract and geometric. Idealised and illusionistic, artists like Mountain River Jump!, Peter Halley, and Carl F. Cheng virtually realise geographies past, present, and future.

Halley covered the walls of the entrance to this exhibition with digital prints of brightly coloured rectangles and squares. Hailed in 1986 as one of the four pioneers of Neo-Geo, or Neo-Geometric Conceptualism, Halley's early suspicion of the economy of desire as one that is increasingly regulated by capitalist modes of production yielded work that could be infinitely reproduced, tessellated, and jigsawed together like pieces of code. The work shown here,

Courtesy the artist & Blindspot Gallery

Prison (2018), follows suit. If Neo-Geo was a response to modernity's mechanisation and commercialism, "Emerald City" was a proposal for a New Geo that can build a universal language within a globalised art world, a language that doesn't stumble on linguistically determined localisms.

In line with Halley's criticism of commercialism, Cheng registered the trade-name John Doe Co. in 1967 and began applying its label on his works as a critique of American mass consumerism. Here, his ideas about ecology and the Anthropocene were presented through a series of six sculptures, including *Specimen Viewer No. 2* and *No. 4* (both 1970). Both of these works comprise Plexiglas boxes with inorganic and organic materials, open for examination. On a micro-scale, they act as testaments of plastic's too-long shelf life, while on a macro level they can be seen as dioramas of their time, prepared for future study. A more literal approach toward human intervention on earth, *Autosave: Redoubt* (2017) – the brainchild of Andrew Luk, Alexis Mailles, and Peter Nelson – was a two-room installation and video display. Visitors could play the first-person shooter video game Counter-Strike: Global Offensive in which the artists recreated Gin Drinkers' Line (a British military defensive line used against the Japanese during the Battle of Hong Kong in 1941), to examine military technologies, including the influence of video games on soldiers' training modules.

In "Emerald City", Lau assembled an aesthetic that confronted a world of communication which expands faster than tools of perception can be created. An ideal illusion, the exhibition sought to critique and engage with the commodification of the art world by constructing a new language with a broad understanding of geometry. She suggests that geometry can be our green-tinted glasses, a contemporary mode of perception where this ideal illusion can be repeatedly redesigned. **Hera Chan**



Dora Budor, *Slow Ticking of the Callous Mind*, 2015
 Mixed media



Trevor Yeung, *Garden Arcanthus*, 2017
 Porcelain, stoneware, cotton, rattan,
 dimensions variable