

DAY DREAM FROM ELSEWHERE

1 . FUTURE - PERFECT WASTELAND

Set in Gwangju in the fictional year 2080 when most of the human race have relocated to Mars, Xuân Hà's video installation forecasts an evacuated city where a pregnant protagonist wanders alone through a stream of abandoned locations and objects: forlorn crossroads, monuments, gravestones, Buddhist figurines, photographic portraits of Gwangju's first Christian missionaries, a deserted memorial park dedicated to the martyrs of the May 18 Democratization Movement. The landmarks carry memories of conflicts and ideologies that are utterly specific to South Korea and simultaneously nameless in Xuân Hà's imagined space-time, where places and images of remembrance swirl in oblivion.

Meanwhile, on the other channel of the video installation, the same wanderer, now trapped inside a closed apartment, paces back and forth under the inspection of a figure wearing a white protective suit. Between the obscure wordless interactions between the two characters and an ominous TV broadcast about human exploration-colonization of outer space, the artist communicates the sense of a diseased, perhaps deceased, space on a future perfect exhausted Earth without relying on the Hollywood aesthetics of hard-edged cybernetics and holographic urbanscapes to generate a dystopian sci-fi picture.

— n g u y ễ n - h o à n g q u y ê n

on the occasion of "how i miss the taste of tangerine",
a site-specific and video installation by Xuân Hà
Sàn Art, March 2019

[Tiếng Việt]

2 . SURVIVING THE WHITE CUBE

Replicating and physicalizing the menace of urban decay, Xuân Hạ transforms Sàn Art's white cube into a site of dusty fantasy. She covers the floor space and furniture with the same translucent plastic sheets that occasionally envelop the corpse-like protagonist in the film. Shattered bricks, concrete fragments and dangling electricity wires extracted from the gallery walls and ceilings are all re-used as part of the installation. The barren atmosphere, which dims as the sun goes down due to reduced track lighting, looks prepared for a possibility of even more collapse and debris.

In this installation, the white cube not only serves as a location, address or supporting structure for the artworks but becomes as a medium to be tinkered with, taken apart and transmogrified. Inscribed with the ideology of Modernism, the white cube is now a global standard environment for the isolation and elevation of art, especially after the often-cited MoMA exhibition "Cubism and Abstract Art" formally institutionalized the practice in 1936. The new Sàn Art space in Saigon, a humble white cube located in a labyrinthine high-rise condominium surrounded by soaring financial towers, surely doesn't escape this regime of art displays. And yet, the gallery's invitation for an artist to come perturb the normative whiteness, orderliness and cleanliness of the space, and by extension, temporarily interrupt the flow of art display and transaction, is a conscious decision to resist total commercialization and embrace an attitude of experimentation.

3 . DAY DREAM FROM ELSEWHERE

The title "how i miss the taste of tangerine" is born out of a personal memory of the artist-traveler. Thinking back on her residency in Gwangju, Xuân Hạ recalls a moment during her hike to the Mudeungsan peak, when she took a break and tasted a tangerine on the roadside, a transient encounter with the revelation of nature. Whereas the artworks intimate the compartmentalization and confinement of life on Earth, the titular presence of an absent scent offers viewers a reverie of refuge. Inside, and in spite of, the delirious rhythm of the urban milieu whose breathless recursion of boxed spaces relentlessly subdivides the world into rational frames within frames, the name of the installation recuperates a tenderness, a daydream radiating from elsewhere, as it summons a drifting vision of landscapes lost.

SÀN ART

X U Â N H A

how i miss the taste of tangerine

2018

Two-channel video installation
25 minutes, color, sound

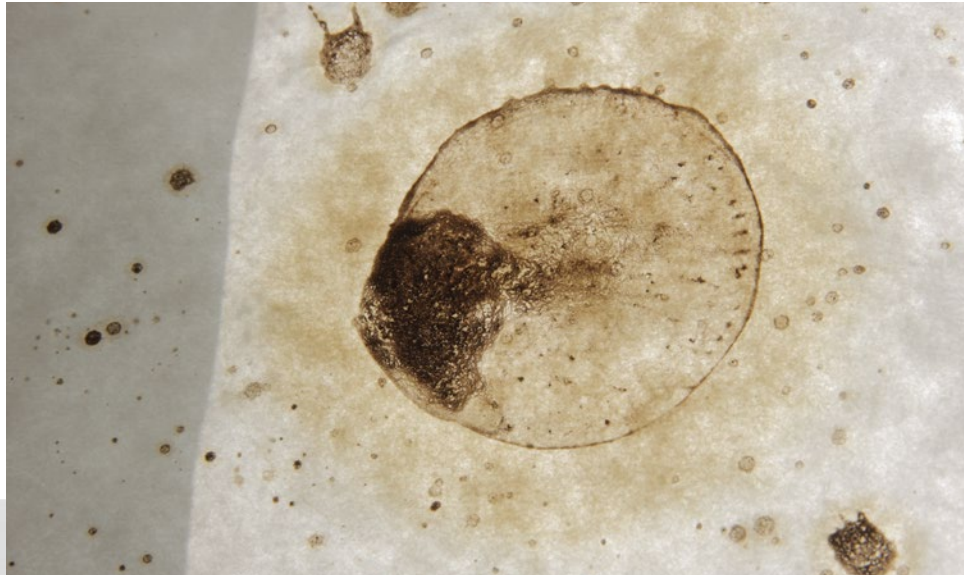
Sound by superkid Trang Ly



images from "how i miss the taste of tangerine"

images from "how i miss the taste of tangerine"





images from "how i miss the taste of tangerine"