

Lost and found: imagining new worlds

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This exhibition is the encounter of two constant interests in my curatorial practice. First, the creation of a project that considers the contextual specificities of the place where it happens. Second, the exhibition becomes a way of bringing to the public historical elements that lead us to critically rethink the present. How can contemporary art fold and unfold the past? How can an exhibition be thought as a research project that is a site specific?

In the case of LASALLE College of Arts, I chose to reflect on some aspects of its collection and to establish broader relations with the act of collecting - something common to any culture, but at the same time something so remarkable in the territories of the Global South that were taken by different waves of colonialism. Comprising approximately 1,000 items, the collection includes predominantly modern and contemporary works produced by Southeast Asian artists, along with works—mostly sculptures—by Brother Joseph McNally, and ceramic and porcelain ware originating from different parts of Asia. Aren't all collections an equation between the general and the specific? What makes some groups of items significant enough to establish under the terms of a collection? Under what criteria were the works acquired or donated to LASALLE?

These questions were the driving forces of Lost and found: imagining new worlds. As the title of the exhibition suggests, I believe that all collected objects give rise to a kind of Pandora's box of complications, and at the same time they are vulnerable to the human effort of rationalisation, division, inventory and classification. Ten artists have contributed to the exhibition and the works shown here explore ideas of collecting and collections in different ways.

Some artists, such as Pamela Cevallos and Tromorama, are concerned to carefully test the notion of the art collection and even worked with objects contained in the LASALLE College of the Arts Collection—like the large installation constructed by Ismael Monticelli based on his research into the sculptures of Brother McNally. Other

artists, such as Fyerool Darma, Rosângela Rennó, Raquel Stolf and Batia Suter, reflect on the act of collecting any kind of material and how this accumulation of things can be an artistic gesture; journalistic phrases, image reproduction and objects acquired in public auctions are the subjects of their investigations.

Lost or found, the act of creating criteria for a collection—or the act of making explicit its lack of order—is what enables new worlds to be imagined from different sets. I hope that the sequence of worlds contained in this exhibition will bring to you a small universe capable of being navigated from our imagination.

[Curatorial text of the group exhibition "Lost and found: imagining new worlds", held at the Institute Contemporary Arts Singapore, between February 1 and April 10, 2019.]