
**MATERIAL
INTELLIGENCE**

**DANCE
IN THE
DESTRUCTION
DANCE**

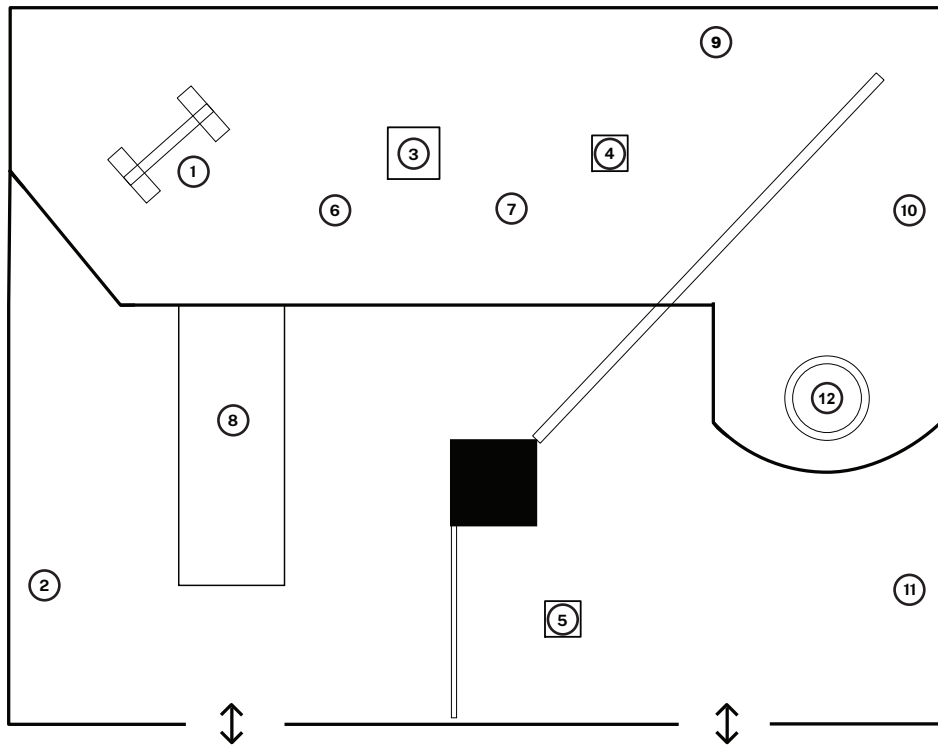
“Our experience of the world is an interpretation of our senses and a projection of our mind.” Joo Choon Lin

For artist Joo Choon Lin, a combination of the senses — sight, sound, hearing and touch — is necessary to complete our experience of the physical world. The artist’s immersive performance installation challenges the conventions of human perception: where the world around us is pictured as activity, event, and movement.

Dance in the Destruction Dance is an atmospheric environment designed by Joo. It is a performance space and art installation that features several artworks: *Glue Your Eyelids Together* (2017/2023), *I Only Make Friends With Money* (2012/2023) and *Beatific Perfume* (2020/2023). Joo’s multisensory environment is also an instrument for storytelling, drawing attention to how industrial materials such as plastic, wood and metal continuously change their shape, appearance and meaning in our contemporary world.

The installation assembles experimental use of object sculptures, video and performance to explore the distinctions between reality and appearance; the former is what is known, while the latter is what can be sensed. The artworks will be activated through a two-part theatrical performance titled *pEARs '-----' in Spring* (2018/2023). During this performance, the gallery space will shift between stage set and installation, where elements are modified and adapted for myriad functions. Scripted by the artist, the performance highlights the migration of forms and shapes the narrative of the exhibition. Joo is driven by a curiosity: how can we stretch the thresholds of our consciousness through everyday objects and contemporary technology?

Joo Choon Lin (b.1984) is a visual artist and poet based in Singapore who explores the relationship between consciousness and the technologies of representation. This exhibition is part of SAM’s *Material Intelligence* exhibition series that investigates how artists today connect modes of making associated with craft and industry to speculations about our ecological and technological futures.



Glue Your Eyelids Together

2017/2023

Sculpture composed of balloons, galvanised steel chains, sponge and wood with cement texture finish, steel frame, single-channel video (approx. 4:40 min)

Objects **1** and **2**

In *Glue Your Eyelids Together*, Joo has built a “time-based” sculpture that changes shape over time. The central components of the sculpture are tethered to a steel frame and feature two sets of “rock slabs” made with cement textured wood on the upper half and foam on the bottom half. The four rock slabs are held together by inflated balloons and galvanised steel chain said to represent the human nervous system. As the balloons deflate over time, the rock slabs at the bottom succumb to their weight and gradually fall to the ground. The progressive transformation of the sculpture offers an insight into the life cycle of industrial materials that ground our everyday experiences, where what constitutes “life” and “death” is only real if we believe it to be.

A different iteration of *Glue Your Eyelids Together* was presented at the exhibition *State of Motion 2017: Through Stranger Eyes* (2017), organised by the Asian Film Archive.

pEARs ' - - - - - ' in Spring

2023, with video documentation of the performance which took place on 13 January 2023

Installation comprising three object sculptures composed of industrial materials and assembly hardware, two aluminium vessels on specially designed plinths, acrylic sculpture on pulley system, printed transparency films, two single-channel videos (approx. 2:00 min and 22:00 min)

Objects **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** and **11**

pEARs ' - - - - - ' in Spring is an installation of autonomous sculptures which the artist terms as “film objects” and vessel sculptures. The film objects are made from industrial materials like latches, hinges, collapsible legs and casters, and are meant to be interactive. They may also be reconstituted and moved around the space, highlighting how all meaning is generated through interdependence and constant renewal. Next to these film objects are smaller, prop-like vessel sculptures made from similar materials. These have been activated through a theatrical performance staged by the artist on the opening day of the exhibition on 13 January 2023.

Scripted by Joo, the performance uses spoken language and live actors to express how artworks are dynamic beings which continue to manifest newer meanings over time. Traces of the performance are contained in the video projection. The footage was captured using live action cameras, close-up shots of the activation and stop-motion animation clips of the film objects – forming an experiential archive of the work’s life at Singapore Art Museum.

A second theatrical performance will take place on 25 March 2023, 6-7pm. A different iteration of this theatrical performance and installation was staged at FOGSTAND Gallery and Studio in USA in 2018.

Beatific Perfume

2023

Installation comprising folded tarpaulin, foam sheet, video (approx. 22:00 min)

Objects **10** and **11**

Is everything we experience just an interpretation of all that our senses tell us? *Beatific Perfume* is a series of tarpaulin sculptures that explore the spontaneity of form. Joo folds and unfolds the tarpaulin sheets endlessly into multiple two-dimensional shapes and configurations, with folding sequences arranged according to a series of improvised gestures. Superimposed on each piece of tarpaulin are the artist's experiments with object imprints on synthetic goo. Each of these images records singular occurrences that can create infinite variations.

Different iterations of this work were exhibited at The Substation and subsequently at Tzu Chi Humanistic Youth Centre, Singapore in 2020. It has been specially adapted for this exhibition.

I Only Make Friends With Money

2023

Synthetic goo, wood with cement finish, coins

Object **12**

As contemporary technology evolves, so does our understanding of appearance and reality. *I Only Make Friends With Money* is an interactive sculpture where visitors are invited to throw coins into the well before observing how the currency is ingested by the slimy substance. The practice of tossing coins into a well or fountain is a time-honoured act associated with making wishes, where money is gradually swallowed and melts away with the passage of time. All that remains is the memory of the wish and the desire to see it fulfilled. This work marks Joo's earliest experiment with the use of the inherent qualities of materials as tools for exploring how the metamorphosis of forms is deeply connected to the human psyche.

A version of this work was first exhibited at the Singapore Biennale 2013, and then at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Alberta, Canada in 2014.

Visitors are encouraged to throw a coin into the synthetic goo.

Coins collected from the work will go to the artist's charity of choice.