



Education Folio

Yao Jui-chung + Lost Society Document

Taiwan

**How to use this folio**

This education folio contains information about the featured artists in the Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize 2014, their artworks as well as artistic processes, giving visitors a better understanding and appreciation of the artworks displayed.

Questions and activities found at the back of the folio are meant for visitors to have a deeper engagement with each of the finalist artworks. The questions can be used for discussions when looking at the particular artwork, while the suggested activities are designed for educators or parents to explore with their students or children for further engagement beyond the museum visit.

The suggested reading and viewing lists also provide more information about the artist's practice, artwork themes and related ideas or issues, which are aimed at helping educators and readers make interesting and relevant connections to matters in their daily life.

## Introduction

The Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation Signature Art Prize is a premier juried prize inaugurated by the Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation and the Singapore Art Museum in 2008. It is a hallmark of distinction awarded to artists whose artworks represent a significant development in contemporary visual art in the Asia Pacific region.

A triennial competition, the APB Foundation Signature Art Prize seeks to highlight new developments in the visual arts, stimulate lively public discussion and critical debate, and provide a cross-cultural exhibition platform for established practitioners and significant emerging artists alike. Aimed at recognising the single most outstanding contemporary visual artwork produced in the preceding three years, the competition is open to all visual artworks, regardless of medium, subject matter and size.

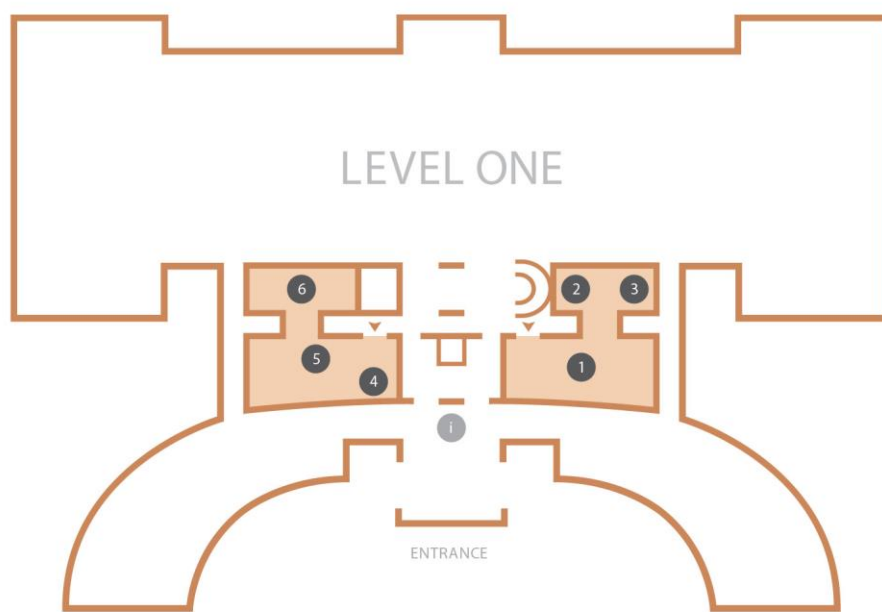
The inaugural edition in 2008 focused only on 12 countries: Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, and received a total of 34 nominations. The APB Foundation Signature Art Prize soon expanded its focus in 2011 to reach the entire Asia Pacific region, including 130 artworks from 23 Asia Pacific countries and territories. Nominations were received from new countries and territories including Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Brunei, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Australia and other Oceania and Pacific islands. The 2014 edition includes nominations from all previous countries and territories, including a nomination from new entrant, Hong Kong.

Nominators from across the region with a wide range of specialties and backgrounds are specially invited to nominate specific artworks – instead of artists – that had been aesthetically, culturally and socially significant in their particular artscenes in the past three years. A diverse panel of distinguished judges, who mostly hail from the Asia-Pacific region, are also selected specially to evaluate the nominations, shortlist the finalists, and decide on the key award-winning works in the APB Foundation Signature Art Prize exhibition

All nominated works are assessed on a set of criteria: the strength of the idea and concept; creative and interesting use of medium and material; technique, expression and form; artistic insight and interpretation, and imagination and originality. The Grand Prize and two Juror's Choice Awards are chosen by the international jury of art experts, critics and curators, while the People's Choice Award will go to the artist whose work garners the most number of public votes.

The APB Foundation Signature Art Prize is a recognition of distinction and significance in artistic practice, presenting the best of contemporary art in the Asia-Pacific region.

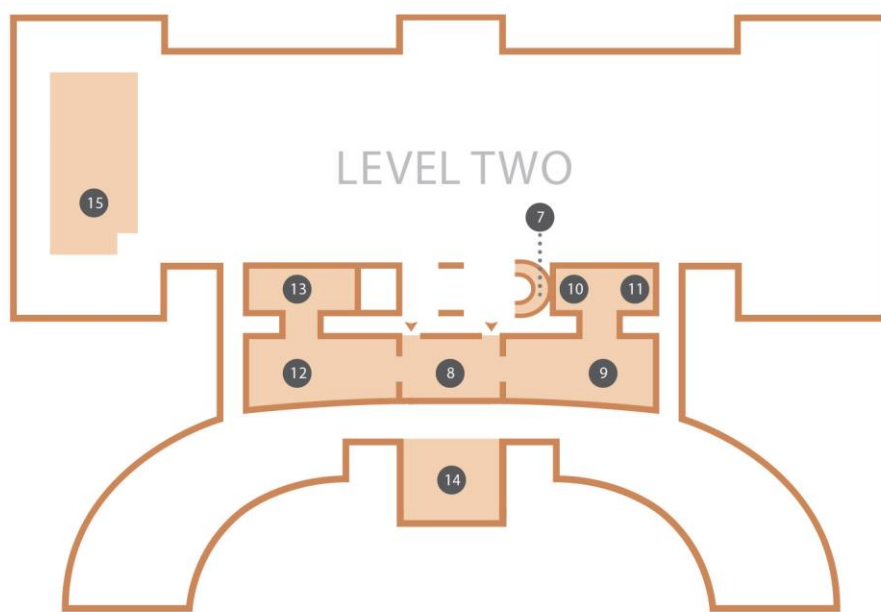
## Exhibition map



### LEVEL ONE

- 1 Nguyen Trinh Thi
- 2 Robert Zhao Renhui
- 3 Owen Leong
- 4 Farida Batool
- 5 Peng Wei
- 6 Yao Jui-Chung  
+ Lost Society  
Document (LSD)

## Exhibition map



### LEVEL TWO

- 7 Liu Jianhua
- 8 Choe U-Ram
- 9 Go Watanabe
- 10 Lisa Reihana
- 11 Naeem Mohaiemen
- 12 Arin Rungjang
- 13 Ranbir Kaleka
- 14 Melati Suryodarmo
- 15 Ho Tzu Nven

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## Artwork



### ***Mirage - Disused Public Property in Taiwan***

Yao Jui-chung + Lost Society Document (LSD)

2010 – 2014

Video and 124 photographs

Photographs: 70 x 70 cm (each), video duration 25:00 mins

Collection of the Artist

*Image courtesy of the Artist*

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### **About the artwork and artistic process**

*Mirage – Disused Public Property in Taiwan* is a series of 124 photographs and a video documentary of ‘蚊子館’, or ‘mosquito halls’ across Taiwan. The project initially started out as an assignment that artist-lecturer Yao Jui-chung gave his university students, and has since developed into an impressive Taiwan-wide exploration and **documentation** of over 300 ‘mosquito halls’. These halls refer to **obsolete** buildings constructed as a result of rapid economic growth, **rural** investments, or the strong political motivations of certain business corporations. **Dilapidated** and pest-ridden after long periods of disuse, these abandoned public properties include recreational and cultural centres, office buildings, marketplaces, car parks and even airports that lacked the funding needed for basic maintenance.

This collaboration between Yao and his students, who are referred to collectively as the ‘Lost Society Document’, garnered widespread attention from the Taiwanese media and government bodies. Most significantly, it resulted in a visit from the Premier of the Executive Yuan, who advised all relevant departments to inspect the disused facilities and either revive them within a year or demolish them.

By highlighting these ‘mosquito halls’ and raising awareness about their disuse through public domains, the artwork has effectively brought about change in Taiwanese society. This work is exemplary of Yao’s artistic focus over the last fifteen years, which employs the medium of photography in its exploration of the degradation of Taiwan’s architectural landscape due to the changes brought about by modernization.

**About the artist**

Yao Jui-chung (b. 1958, Taipei, Taiwan) graduated from The National Institute of The Arts (Taipei National University of the Arts) with a degree in Art Theory.

Yao specializes in photography, installation and painting. The themes of his works are varied, but they frequently involve an examination of the absurdity of the human condition. Apart from working in the fields of theatre and film, Yao teaches art history at the National Taiwan Normal University Department of Fine Arts, writes art criticisms and has curated several exhibitions.

Yao represented Taiwan in *Facing Faces-Taiwan* at the Venice Biennale (1997), and took part in the International Triennale of Contemporary Art Yokohama (2005), 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2009) and Taipei Biennial (2010), amongst numerous other large international exhibitions.



## Discussion and suggested activities

### Questions for discussion

- What are some of words that come to mind as you walk into the space where the artwork is displayed? [clinical, minimalist, etc.]
- Why do you think the artist has decided to use black and white photography to portray the 'mosquito halls'? Would the effect be different if the photographs were in colour or sepia?
- Each 'mosquito hall' is presented in a series of photographs. Is it necessary to use more than one photograph to depict the place? Why?
- The investigation of 'mosquito halls' would not have been possible without the participation of the art students in universities. What do you think about universities including a course where students undertake a collective social project instead of a normal class or individual assignment?
- What is the role of art in bringing about social change in the world today? How do the methodologies and presentation of art raise awareness about social issues?
- [FOOD FOR THOUGHT] The artist adopts an investigative approach in the materialization of this work as seen by the way the work is presented and the accompanying video documentation. Is this investigative approach effective in bringing the social issues to light? Yes, No or Maybe? How else could this particular issue be presented?

### Suggested activities

- In the rapidly developing world that we live in today, it is not uncommon that certain buildings are neglected and left in a state of disuse. Take a closer look at an abandoned building which you think can be revived, photograph it, and write a proposal on the possible uses of the building. Sketch your ideas out and share them with your friends and family!
- Competition for space and urban renewal are relevant issues that concern a land-scarce country like Singapore. Conduct some research on iconic buildings in Singapore that were demolished and find out the reasons for their demolition. What are some of the ways that these buildings are being remembered? [National theatre, Old National Library, Kallang National Stadium, etc.]

**Glossary****Documentation**

Material that provides official information or evidence or that serves as a record.

**Obsolete**

No longer produced or used; out of date.

**Rural**

In, relating to, or characteristic of the countryside rather than the town.

**Dilapidated**

Falling to pieces or in a state of disrepair; shabby.

## Further reading and viewing

### Artist's Website

<http://www.yaojuichung.com/>

### Video interview with the artist discussing his interest in derelict buildings

*Simulating Dereliction in Taiwan: An Interview with artist Yao Jui-chung.* Available [here](#).

### Academic essay on the artwork

*The Power of Action: Yao Jui-chung and the Mirage – Disused Public Property in Taiwan* by Lu Pei-yi.  
Available [here](#).

### Book on demolished public playgrounds in Singapore

*Mosaic memories: remembering the playgrounds Singapore grew up in* by Justin Zhuang. Available [here](#).