

# Ho Tzu Nyen

## Artist Statement and Biography

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### Artist Statement

The voice is the spirit that animates the very flesh of things. The face attracts, but the voice seduces. It moves us and it commands us. We can shut our eyes to the lure of images, but there is nothing to prevent a voice from penetrating our innermost depths.

And there are voices that are heard only by the prophet and the mad man. There are voices in the dark and voices in the head, voices without bodies - the domain of ghosts and gods.

The term for a sound that one hears without seeing an originating cause is known as "acousmatic sound". The word *acousmatic*, from the French *acousmatique*, is derived from the Greek word *akousmatikoi* (ακουσματικοι), a term used to refer to probationary pupils of the philosopher Pythagoras who, so that they might better concentrate on his teachings, were required to sit in absolute silence while listening to their teacher deliver his lecture from behind a veil. And the acousmatic voice returns in the twentieth century through the phonograph, the radio and sound cinema, where speakers were once again concealed behind screens.

It is this constellation of ideas and histories that is played out in PYTHAGORAS.

## **Artist Biography**

### **Ho Tzu Nyen Singapore**

Ho Tzu Nyen makes films, videos and live performances related to historical and philosophical texts and artefacts. His works have been shown internationally in museums, galleries, film and performing arts festivals.

He has had one-person exhibitions in Singapore (Substation Gallery, 2003, Galerie Michael Janssen, 2013), Adelaide (Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, 2007 and 2010), Sydney (Artspace, 2011) and Tokyo (Mori Art Museum, 2012). He represented Singapore at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011). Some group exhibitions he has taken part in include the 26<sup>th</sup> Bienal de Sao Paulo (Brazil, 2004), 3<sup>rd</sup> Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (Japan, 2005), 1<sup>st</sup> Singapore Biennale (2006), Thermocone of Art. New Asian Waves (ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany, 2007), 6<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Triennial (Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia, 2009), No Soul for Sale (Tate Modern, London, 2010), 5<sup>th</sup> Auckland Triennial (Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand, 2013), No Country (Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2013).

Some of the film festivals that have presented his work include the 41<sup>st</sup> Director's Fortnight, Cannes International Film Festival (2009), 66<sup>th</sup> Venice International Film Festival (2009), and Sundance Film Festival (2012). He was the subject of profile and retrospective screenings at the transmediale 09 (2009) and 59<sup>th</sup> Oberhausen Short Film Festival (2013).

His theatrical performances have been staged at the Singapore Arts Festival (2008), the Esplanade Theatre Studios (2007, 2012, 2014), KunstenFestivalsdesArts in Brussels (2006 and 2008), the Theater der Welt in Mulheim, Germany (2009) and the Vienna Festival (2014).