





Photo of VICTORIA KOSASIE's *BASINS*, 2022, live performance, approximately 22 min, at Central Saint Martins, London, 2022. Courtesy Jordan Chan.

### Victoria Kosasie BALI/LONDON

By wanting to protect their daughters from what they have experienced, mothers sometimes instill fear into them, passing on trauma from generation to generation.

Victoria Kosasie's latest performance *BASINS* (2022) explores this phenomenon. The 22-minute piece was one of three winners of the seventh Bandung Contemporary Art Awards. In the performance, Kosasie reads aloud a letter addressed to a fictional daughter as water slowly drips on her. In evoking purification and rebirth but also drowning, the act captures the contradictions that underpin mother-daughter relationships.

*BASINS* extends from the Jakarta-born artist's examinations of *kodrat wanita*. This translates as "the essential nature of women," and is a mixture of maternal piety and putting the needs of the family and nation before oneself. "As Indonesia strived for unification after independence [from Dutch rule], strict gender roles were imposed on state subjects, pressuring them to perform their roles to contribute to a stable, [post-colonial] Indonesia," explains Kosasie. Since she moved to London in 2018, looking critically at patriarchal culture, including that in Indonesia, has become central to her practice. In her videos and performances, she aims to reclaim the empowering aspects of motherhood and womanhood, and investigate the conflation of the two.

Another work that Kosasie based on the *kodrat wanita* ideology is *Kodrat, Berat Terikat* (2021, meaning "essential[ly], heavily tied"), which was dedicated to feminist pioneer Kartini and realized in collaboration with Rianti Gautama. Kosasie and Gautama each tied traditional batik baby slings around themselves, and bound the loose ends of their fabrics together. Then, they tried to reach opposite ends of the performance space, with the goal of grasping the pens and papers on the floor to write down their fears regarding motherhood. Their tug of war of sorts spoke to the maternal duties that bind Indonesian women together, allowing them to support each other, while hindering pursuits of divergent, individual paths.

There are no simple resolutions to these tensions in Kosasie's practice. Nevertheless, her nuanced works bring viewers into an understanding of what being a woman in Indonesia means—an experience that is specific, yet universal.

NAIMA MORELLI

### Su Yu-Xin SHANGHAI/TAIPEI

The deluge of images on social-media platforms allows us to live vicariously through others' lenses. But how might we make sense of a time when our first-

hand encounters are collated with, or even replaced by, scrolls upon scrolls of second- and third-hand memories? Compressing fragments of our existences, Taiwanese artist Su Yu-Xin's paintings probe our perceptions of temporality and our surroundings.

Using geotags and hashtags, Su collects photographs of the sea from the internet and subjectively merges these images into singular compositions in the series *Everyday About This Time* (2020). The paintings are at once appropriated and entirely new. Su eschews setting what she calls "a hierarchy between first-hand and second-hand experiences . . . the internet has flattened that hierarchy." Rather, in the process of selecting fragments to recompose, she becomes the conduit for our composite, simultaneous lives. She has given a name to this multiplicity of experiences and perspectives: "Parallel Impressionism."



Installation view of SU YU-XIN's *With or without the sun* (Su'ao-Hualien Roadway), 2021, sand, coral pigments, ferric oxide, white sugar, crystal dust, sulfur, soil, red ore, tourmaline dust, and other hand-made pigments on board, 225×130×54 cm, at "The Rearview Landscape, or a Trip of Ownership," UCCA Dune, Beidaihe, 2021-22. Courtesy UCCA and Madeln Gallery, Shanghai.

Fluid, intersecting timelines likewise permeate *Superficial time* (2020). The three paintings on circular gesso boards each depict overlapping clockfaces that show different intervals in the duration Su took to finish the piece, conjuring what she calls the painting's "inside order" of time, which is as layered and hazy as time in the real world. The triptych was created using custom pigment with ground-up minerals, seashells, and flora. Building on the ideas of *Superficial Time*, the painting *With or without the sun* (Su'ao-Hualien Roadway) (2021) contains both the timeframes of Su's artistic process and that of the depicted subject: a highway constructed in the 19th century in Hualien—the city where Su was born. Su collected materials from the crumbling highway, grinding up ores and other earthly elements to create vivid colors. Trained in Chinese painting, she describes the traditional method of preparing ink prior to painting as "a ritual," and carries this into her own art-making. In overlaying a multiplicity of experiences and time periods, Su's work speaks to the allusive qualities of images and how they testify to our time in the world; our experiences warping, transmuting, and given new meanings as they travel across digital and cultural borders.

ELLA WONG

### Young-jun Tak BERLIN/SEOUL

In 2014, a group of Christian protestors blocked the route of the annual pride parade in Seoul. An hours-long confrontation ensued. Standing in the crowd, artist Young-jun Tak, who was

then an art editor, caught some of the Christian group's flyers. Perplexed about the homophobic content on the printed material, he decided to collect more of these flyers and join the Christian groups. The conversations he initiated with them often turned into arguments, which led to his first work, *Salvation* (2016), a paper sculpture of Madonna cast in resin and covered with anti-gay flyers. The duplication and variation of their homophobic slogans demonstrate how fear contributes to the forging of religious ideals and orthodoxies.

After leaving his job in Seoul, Tak moved to Berlin in 2016 to pursue his artistic career. He tried to catch up on current events but was bombarded by the political scandals and refugee crises of the time. To assess his anxiety, he started making *Stressful Painting* (2017-18), based on the Perceived Stress Scale, a psychology diagnostic. While these paintings helped relieve his anxieties, the dense, slanted repetitions of the word "stress," stamped on pastel-colored backgrounds, induce unease in the viewer. Being in a new environment also led Tak to question local cultural phenomena. His white asparagus sculptures, created with a master wood carver, feature the head of St. John the Baptist at the tip, and poke fun at the German obsession with consuming "the white gold" on the summer solstice, which is also the day of St. John's feast.



Detail of YOUNG-JUN TAK's "I thought it's my fish cake.", 2022, ceramic, paper, and glue, dimensions variable. Photo by Elmar Vestner. Courtesy the artist.

Most recently, he revisited a 2006 news story about a case of sexual assault in the installation "I thought it's my fish cake." (2022). The bodies of two human-size, orange, ceramic figures are dismantled and laid on the floor. Each fragment appears like a Korean fish cake. The work alludes to story of a man who allegedly grabbed and bit another man's penis in a sauna room. Fearful of being exposed as gay, the man claimed that he mistook it as his snack. A tactic to reject societal expectations, Tak's humor helps us digest the absurdity in life.

PAMELA WONG