

Dmitry Venkov

CCA Winzavod / Moscow

There are at least two major interpretations of the October revolution. While the global art world usually perceives it as an unprecedented event in the history of the human species, post-Soviet intellectuals tend to see it as a mere *žoup d'état*. While playing with the Russian equivalent of the term *perevorot* (overturning), Dmitry Venkov's solo show relies on the second reading. The video *Krisis* (2016) can be seen as the conceptual linchpin of the show, uniting the past and the present. The heated discussion among several professional actors is in fact an adaptation of an actual Facebook argument that ensued when Lenin's monument was toppled from its pedestal by neo-Nazis in Kiev in 2013. Its main protagonist (whose prototype is the conceptual artist Yuri Albert, infamous for his extreme neoliberal views) quibbles and turns the actual historical events upside-down. Hitler's regime and Lenin's early politics are seen as equivalent.

The spatial arrangement of the show follows the same logic. The exhibition starts with a tapering corridor filled with small monitors ("Some Other Time" series). Each depicts people inhabiting one of the underground palaces of the Moscow subway, but sucked into activities that are unusual for these messy places: they contemplate or listen attentively to something that seems hidden, or daydream. This narrow, claustrophobic space leads to a spacious auditorium with a giant suspended screen showing the artist's mesmerizing new film *Muscovy Hymns* (2017). By employing simple visual gags, such as a tracking shot and an inverted view, Venkov contributes to the long-cherished dream of Soviet avant-garde architects to create flying cities. Disconnected from their foundations, landmark Moscow edifices of different epochs and styles become weightless and rotate like immaterial 3-D models. After this vertiginous experience, the viewer comes down to earth by watching *Krisis*: physical disorientation made parallel to the relativization of politics.

by Andrey Shental

Discordant Harmony

Inside-Out Museum / Beijing

The title of this group show may be counterintuitive. It recalls Jean-Luc Nancy's ontological account of "singular plural," which contemplates the condition of coexistence without reducing it to the politics of consent. In exploring what East Asia means based on the current and historical political imagination of four respective nations, the four curators (Chien-Hung Huang, Yukie Kamiya, Sunjung Kim and Carol Yinghua Lu), with similar self-reflective vigilance, have traveled the exhibition to South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and now China.

What echoes throughout the four parallel narratives is a rising interest in aspects of daily life. Kamiya explores early cases of institutional critique as manifested in street exhibitions in Tokyo, presented in various forms including posters and magazines. Such dense information flows from the Japanese 1990s set the stage for adjacent documentation of the iconoclastic *Tactile Art* (1988) proposed by Beijing artist collective New Measurement Group, with reports by the legendary newspaper *Fine Arts in China* (1985–88).

In this curatorial historiography, the shape of the narrative forms the shape of the exhibition itself. Pivotal gestures include Lu's idiosyncratic interpretation of documents around the 1992 edition of the Guangzhou Biennial Art Fair, here understood as the blueprint of the Chinese art world in response to the further economic reform of China in 1992. These documents alter the connotation of a painting by Wang Guangyi from his series "Great Criticism," lending its "political pop" a sense of market enthusiasm that overshadows the context in which Wang's paintings were originally shown.

Taiwanese artist Su Yu-hsien's paintings draw inspiration from scenes in *Sayonara, Goodbye* (1985), a film that epitomizes Taiwanese society's opaque postcolonial drive. Paper-constructed tableaus are scripted with the artist's elliptical annotations, grafting alternative scenarios onto the ground of history. Perhaps this same perspective should be applied to the historical works and documents that span the three floors of the museum.

by Zian Chen

Mika Tajima

Taro Nasu / Tokyo

Upon entering the gallery, visitors hear a curious buzz and find a large wall dotted with dozens of small golden circular objects. Viewed up close, the objects are identifiable as bathtub jet nozzles embedded into the wall, which not only emit sound but also expel soft currents of air through their central holes.

It may take some explanation, however, for viewers to fully understand what *Force Touch (Manu Dextra Sinistra)* (all works 2017) — the central work of the exhibition — is about. The nozzles are arranged symmetrically on the wall, thirty-nine each on the left and right, in an enlarged figure of two palms. They represent a diagram indicating energy pathways in the human body, and the air currents and sounds are from computer-cooling fans hidden behind the wall, each serving one of the nozzles. Opposite *Force Touch*, two wooden sculptures with shapes reminiscent of corselets are shown on plinths. Each has four silver-chromed bath-jet nozzles attached onto it. Titled *Pranayama E* and *Pranayama F*, they allude to Ayurvedic concepts of "breath control." Hence, the palms outlined by the nozzles and the air flowing through them may readily be interpreted as an emblem of the untouchable system of our body, psyche, breath, energy, qi and what not.

The video *Human Synth* projects animated images of smoke onto an acrylic panel suspended in an adjacent space. Appearing alternately in pink and white tints, the smoke formations are visual translations of verbal data collected from social media in Tokyo. Even after learning that a computer program is responsible for the transposition, viewers may be left none the wiser; it is the texture of the genuine leather used for the straps holding the panel, the warmth of walnut in the sculptures and the brightness of the nozzles' gold and silver chrome that really engage the senses. These works suggest a state of harmonization of ancient physiology and modern technology, calling attention to our often-divergent body and psyche.

by Satoru Nagoya