

(Opening)
Thur, 20 March, 6 – 8 PM

(Date)
20 March – 13 May 2025

(Opening Hours)
Tue to Sat, 12 – 6 PM
Closed on public holidays

(Location)
10 Sik On Street
Wanchai, Hong Kong

(Contact)
office@kiangmalingue.com;
+852 28100317

(Media Enquiries)
Yiyun He
yiyun@kiangmalingue.com;
+852 28100317

(All Other Enquiries)
Ella Liao
ella@kiangmalingue.com;
+852 28100318

Three Stories: Monsters, Opium, Time

(Artist) Ho Tzu Nyen

Kiang Malingue is pleased to present “Three Stories: Monsters, Opium, Time”, an exhibition of recent films and video installations by Ho Tzu Nyen. This is the esteemed artist's second exhibition with Kiang Malingue, showcasing three independent bodies of work: “Night March of Hundred Monsters” (2021), *O for Opium* (2023), and a suite of more than forty “Timepieces” (2023). *Timepieces* was first shown at Ho's recent mid-career survey show, *Time & the Tiger* at the Singapore Art Museum, which subsequently travelled to Art Sonje Center, Hessel Museum of Art, and Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, next to be shown at the Hamburger Kunsthalle in November 2025.

Known for critically reflecting upon the construction of history, myth, ideas and identities by working across a range of media in the past two decades, Ho continues to explore subjects as diverse as *yōkai* (monsters, demons, or spectres as they are known in Japan) and its intertwining with histories of Japanese Imperialism; the history of the opium trade; and the concept of time in particular manifestations. “Three Stories: Monsters, Opium, Time” is a structured exhibition that alludes to *trailokya* or the *three realms*, the religious division of the world into three domains: the netherworld, the earth, and heaven, allocated to the three-storied building of Kiang Malingue.

In the place of the netherworld, “Night March of Hundred Monsters” is an ongoing project that is directly inspired by the Japanese folkloric tradition of envisioning a horde of monsters parading through nocturnal darkness. For the two “Night March of Hundred Monsters” video installations that are shown in a quasi-cinema setting made specifically for the exhibition, Ho has observed the tradition and compiled, in his signature style, an animated encyclopaedia of monsters in which each individual *yōkai* is carefully depicted. In his picture scroll, however, one sees not only legendary monsters such as the Kitsune (Fox Spirit), Kappa (River Sprite) or Tanuki (Raccoon Dog). A number of historical Japanese individuals who participated in the occupation of the Malayan Peninsula during World War II, including General Tomoyuki Yamashita and the wartime secret agent Yutaka Tani—both of whom were widely known as the Tiger of Malaya, have found their way into Ho's bestiary. Ho further complicates the structure of the origin stories by identifying the monsters in historical events: The Illusionary Monk, for example, is identified as the many Japanese soldiers who metamorphosed into monks in the last days of World War II. Another fabled creature, Mokumokuren (Many Eyes of the Screen), is described as an analogy for the Thought Police in George Orwell's *1984*. These creatures remain firmly embedded in the everyday imagination, imputed into the realm of popular culture through Japanese media such as anime and manga.

In the second story, *O for Opium*, Ho revisits the history of the aestheticisation of opium and the opium trade, presenting an intricate image of the substance. The artist layers an array of visual materials atop each other: Archive footage of the opium trade in the Golden Triangle region; scenes from films in which opium plays a significant role, including *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984) and *Rouge* (1988); and an animated index of opium-related objects composed of smoke. These overlapping layers demonstrate the ambrosial, phantasmagorical effects of the

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substance, with history unfolding like a hazy, opiate-laced dream. First shown at the Thailand Biennale in 2023, *O for Opium* is a poignant treatise on the power, movement, and glorification of opium, a unique colonial instrument that helped shape the modern world.

The last story, which addresses the heterogeneous quality of time, consists of forty-three individual screen-based “Timepieces” that explore multiple temporalities. Co-commissioned by Singapore Art Museum, Art Sonje Center, and M+, in collaboration with Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo and Sharjah Art Foundation, the works are presented on customized screens that render time physical, testifying to time’s paradoxical materiality, elasticity, and relativity. Pondering time as an ethereal thing that is paradoxically all-encompassing, Ho also ensures that individual “Timepieces” are ontologically different: from one-second animated videos in an eternal loop, to applications—such as *Perfect Lovers (Gonzalez-Torres)* or *C4 (Harrison’s Clock)*—running on a 24-hour cycle that computationally corresponds to local time, fastened steadily to lived realities. The suite of “Timepieces” is an accompaniment to Ho’s major installation *T for Time* (2023), presently on view at Mudam Luxembourg, contemplating our contemporary experience of time as rooted in European concepts of linear progression, regulated by the Gregorian calendar, and networked by computers. Ho’s ambitious project raises the question of whether it is possible to reclaim the unassimilated experiences of time that were manifest in Southeast Asia prior to the influence of the West. As described by Ho: “In many ways, the challenge of this project was how the multiple can be composed, and how these different kinds of times can coexist without hierarchy and without collapsing into an empty pluralism.”

(About Ho Tzu Nyen)

A plethora of historical references dramatised by musical scores and allegorical lighting make up the pillars of Ho Tzu Nyen’s complex practice that primarily constitutes video and installation. Features in their own right, each work unravels unspoken layers of Southeast Asian histories whilst equally pointing to our own personal unknowns. Permeating Ho’s work is a pervasive sense of ambiguity, theatricality and unease, augmented by a series of deliberate literary, art historical and musical references.

Ho Tzu Nyen has been widely exhibited with one person exhibitions at Mudam, Luxembourg (2025), CCS Bard, New York (2024), Art Sonje Center, Seoul (2024), Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, Tokyo (2024), Singapore Art Museum, Singapore (2023), Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2022), the Yamaguchi Centre for Arts and Media, Yamaguchi (2021), Edith-Russ-Haus for Media Art, Oldenburg (2019), Kunstverein, Hamburg (2018), Ming Contemporary Art Museum, Shanghai (2018), TPAM, Yokohama (2018), Asia Art Archive (2017), Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao (2015), Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2012) and ArtSpace, Sydney (2011), amongst others. He also represented Singapore at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011). Recent group exhibitions include Whitney Biennial 2024, New York (2024), Thailand Biennale 2023, Chiang Rai (2023), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2022), Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco (2022), 13th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2021), Museum of Contemporary Art Busan, Busan (2019), Aichi Triennial 2019, Toyota City and Nagoya City (2019), Home Work 8, Beirut (2019), Sharjah Biennial 14, Sharjah (2019), Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2018), National Gallery Singapore, Singapore (2018), Dhaka Art Summit 2018, Dhaka (2018), Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017), Guggenheim Museum, New York (2016), Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2016), Times Museum, Guangzhou (2013), and Witte de With, Rotterdam (2012). He has participated in numerous international film festivals including Sundance Film Festival in

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Park City, Utah (2012) and the 41st Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes International Film Festival in France (2009). He was an Artist-in-Residency at the DAAD (Berlin) from 2015 to 2016, and the Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (2012 to 2015).