



INFINITE NARRATIVES

*An artist book by the Tomato Grey artist collective
With 6 artistic collaborators*

In direct response to Tomato Grey's New York exhibitions in 2010 and 2012, scholar Alexandra Chang of New York University published an essay entitled "Approaching the Infinite Narrative: Asian Art Now & The Tomato Grey Collective" in 2014. In this article, Chang discusses cultural narratives and their unfolding in the "Now" vis-à-vis the complex trans-national tendencies of a "Hong Kong identity:"

"How does one approach a narrative that veers towards infinite possible simultaneous trajectories in a real-world setting? This is the ultimate difficulty in thinking through a longue dure'e Asian contemporary art history within a global and transcultural framework while taking into account transnational artists' mobility and the international flows of their artistic production [...] When using the term 'Now', I am not indicating the contemporary as a moment of vanguardism, but as the visualization of artistic production within a specific contextualization relative to a given narrative of the near-infinite possibilities of the 'Now' of art history."

- Alexandra Chang, the *Third Text* Vol. 28

Numerous animated – even heated – discussions among the group's artists followed Chang's publication. We questioned exhibition making as a way to generate meanings. We questioned the legitimacy, operative logics, and boundaries of a so-called "collective voice." We questioned our authenticity. Ultimately our questions rest with one fundamental issue: why do we cling to a (collective) Hong Kong voice? Why must we speak as one? Could one speak for/as many? If a united front is merely a "necessary evil" in the name of political resistance, then how do we permit, enable, and even nurture infinite narratives within a singular authentic voice? In Tomato Grey's 2017 project, each Tomato Grey member – all of whom are self-identified Hong Kong artist but some of whom reside in New York – will each choose an artist partner (whom they got acquaintance in New York) from outside of her/his city of resident to perform actions of identity re-enactment. Individual artist's contributions are unified by two common understandings, namely that:

(a) The result shall constitute a "collective action," and (b) Hong Kong artists are to respond to Alexandra Chang's closing remarks in her 2014 essay, which stated that: "...There is no final conclusion [when it comes to a Hong Kong identity]... only the hope of gaining a grasp on what is yet to be done or strived for, even if that horizon will never quite be reached."

While the self-proclaimed Hong Kong artists from the Tomato Grey collective will produce works that explicitly reference Hong Kong, the partnering non-Hong Kong artist will be asked to "copy" and "respond to" the perceived identity as projected in the work, in acts of deliberate and creative misreading. The "now-ness" is brought into sharp focus through a chain of representation, re-presentation, and re-appropriation.

Components of this book were first shown as work-in-progress at an exhibition at Gallery 456 in New York in 2017. This publication is the final result of this collaborative thinking process.

Tomato Grey artists:

Teresa Kwong, Bing Lee, Annysa Ng, Wong Kit Yi, Kaho Yu, Samson Young

Collaborating artists:

Erika Kobayashi (with Teresa Kwong)
Ik Joong Kang (with Bing Lee)
Patrick Fabian Panetta (with Annysa Ng)
Freddie Cruz Nowell (with Wong Kit Yi)
Yoko Naito (with Kaho Yu)
Seth Cluett (with Samson Young)

About Tomato Grey

Tomato Grey is a New York-based Hong Kong-artist collective comprised of artists across disciplines. Tomato Grey is devoted to:

- The promotion of Hong Kong Art in New York City.
- The fostering of cultural exchange and mutual appreciation between practitioners of arts in Hong Kong and in New York.
- The raising of awareness of the many facets of Hong Kong's creative activities, which is achieved through regular exhibitions, performances, public lectures and other cultural activities.

Tomato is neither a fruit nor a vegetable, while grey is an achromatic color. Tomato Grey we take to signify a state of constant flux, a gesture towards embracing, rather than rejecting, this state of constant drift. As a collective of artists from Hong Kong – a city of perpetual cultural motion – we do not believe in the act of disambiguation as a cultural strategy and artistic goal, as it leads an forged singularity of origin that is dependent upon the political climate au currant. Rather, only by acknowledging the full extend of our multi-cultural, multi-national and multi-faceted heritage will then a genuine geographically-relevant artistic voice emerge.

Supported by



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“Hong Kong Arts Development Council fully supports freedom of artistic expression. The views and opinions expressed in this project do not represent the stand of the Council.”



Chinese American Arts Council

GALLERY 456