

28th ifva Media Art Category Jury Meeting Transcript

Jury Members : Bryan Chung (Chung), Ng Tsz-Kwan (Ng), Max Sacker (Sacker), Billy Tang (Tang), Joon Moon (Moon)

Organizer representatives : Kattie Fan (Fan)

Fan: Today's mission is to select the Gold award, Silver award and Special Mention. First, we will go through the 10 finalists one by one so you can give some comments or suggestions. After that we will nominate the prizes. If you don't have any questions, we will begin with the first work, *A fable of a fable < Black-tailed gull >*. It is a work from Japan. What you saw was a prototype of the artwork because the shipping was really complicated. We talked to the artist and they agreed to do a smaller scale prototype.

Sacker: What's on the television is the actual complete work.

Moon: Is this based on a well-known story in Japan?

Sacker: I didn't know what the fable is either, so I tried to ignore that and look at it without any previous knowledge. I thought it was beautiful and delicately crafted. The technique is interesting. I've never seen it before as two interlaced images split with delicate line slits, and it was hypnotic to look at. After a while, I found myself transfixed and watching very slowly, coming to a calm space. I thought it was nice and very Japanese. In the actual piece, there's a little train engine moving around in the circle. And I think that helps to convey the loop, because it mentioned the fable is an eternal fable with no beginning, you know, and I think having a circular motion that the train makes a little bit clearer. It looked like going left and right, but I guess because it goes on forever, it's also a loop.

Ng: When I look at the TV, it is a really good and nice installation. But it has to be in a loop, otherwise it's not making sense. This whole idea, not only the story itself and also how we see it, this stillness and movement from a static into becoming an animation or motion, that would make it much simpler and cleaner without human interaction.

Tang: That was my impression when I saw the display, immediately I thought there were perhaps some issues or maybe some kind of complication because you saw the final video, which is not ideal, and then you saw the a portion of the work, which was interesting as a proof of concept, but I still feel as an exhibition experience compared to the other ones, I thought that was the one that had the most struggles. I agree with the idea of it being more cyclical, it adds to the poetry and the kind of idea of a fable. And it makes sense with the technology because I think the criteria that we have in terms of creativity, originality, but also this idea of cross-fertilization. If it was realized in its form, it would be amazing maybe. But based on what we just saw, it seems not

as compelling as others for me at least. But it's not something I haven't seen before. That kind of animation is very poetic. Those are my observations.

Chung: For the request to do the installation, space is not an issue for them. The only restriction is cost. The Arts Centre has enough space for them to if they want to install the real version. In this case, they made the decision not to have the original three-dimensional installation, but something like a painting or moving pictures hanging on a screen. That's their decision.

Fan: From my understanding, we talked to the artist for some time. We tried to persuade them to show the actual complete artwork. But of course, at the same time we also have the budget restraint and we try to encourage them to see if we can do a prototype or any part of the artwork so that we can show to the audience, not just video documentation. Then they suggested this kind of setting.

Chung: For me the poetry is quite important in that piece of work to have this loop. It is something similar to objects in our childhood. We also have this kind of toys.

Sacker: This is something that people are familiar with? It's the first time I've ever seen this.

Chung: For people in my age, yes.

Sacker: Is that potentially part of the idea, to bring back a nostalgic feeling?

Chung: I think so. This is something that's been used in the past, but not that common for teenagers now, because they have very easy access to animations on the iPhone and other devices.

Moon: I agree with the rest of you in saying that the overall presentation is really well done. Re-adapting the slit technique through the kinetic installation. Before I saw this work in person, I was expecting something more of an in-depth explanation as to why this story about the black tailed gull is more relevant to this specific technique. Because as we talked about in the beginning, we don't know if this story is existing prior or something the artist had crafted. I think that the storytelling part could have been better if there's explanation about how the two can coincide. This slit animation technique is not new, so I thought there should be a very good reason for that. Actually, there was not. It was just a story of about a gull and just a technique, a very nice technique. There is no explanation why this animation, this storyline is relevant to this technique, but overall the presentation conveys it quite well.

Tang: I think that's a really good point. Based on the information that we got, we don't see too much about the result.

Fan: We move on to the next one, *Active Statue*.

Sacker: I thought it was an interesting idea. We don't think of statues as transmitters. Certainly. I've never thought of that. Visually, nicely created in a new texture. It looks like it was an unconventional statue. It took me a while to understand that the metallic part base is connected to the radio. Maybe that's the placement of the radio behind the stairs. Sacker! It's interesting philosophically, that a statue is not just a visual marker for some important person, but actually has something to communicate on its own. That was an interesting way of depicting the statue. I don't know what the podcast is about that's being transmitted. It's just a very imposing thing in the corner of the room. It took a moment to take in that idea and just philosophize about it. I thought that was strong.

Ng: The form itself is quite interesting. It looks like an old statue. Usually a statue is talking about something else. There is a person and then we have a whole story of just visual look of the statue. I'm not sure he's really intended to do that. He tried to not only eliminate that visual look, but at the same time literally transmitting a radio wave from the statue itself. I think the story must be very important. But sadly, I don't know what is it about the story, and also the information of the statue itself. There should be some existing statue somewhere in Korea. I wish I know what it is about.

Moon: Maybe this is this is a good time to explain that because I'm the Korean who can understand everything. It is a South Korean story about a young boy fighting against North Korea. We have a story about North Koreans capturing a boy and forcing him to follow Communism, and then he was killed. So South Koreans think that's a very symbolic statue. A lot of these kind of children statues are quite prominent in Korea, you will see them quite often in public schools, like secondary and primary schools. It reminds people of the history after the splitting of the Korean Peninsula, it's like a historical reminder of how the children were empowering figures for the nation. I think there's kind of humor involved because there's an antenna being shot up. You could see from the lining of the chair, there's a stool beneath the statue. The legs are antennas, and the child is a promising emblem for the country. There's some kind of black dark humor involved. He is fighting for justice, but at the same time he's transmitting radio signal to the air. I think that's humor. We try our best to listen to it, but the radio is very small and the sound volume level is adjusted to a very low level. We could hear a female voice describing a narrative. And the way she speaks is not outspoken, like she's very timid, a shy person describing this story, so it's really hard to follow. I speculate that it is the intention of the artist. We didn't have time to listen to the whole thing, so we don't know the duration of the podcast. We only listened to a portion and we couldn't really have a clearer view. The main reason was that the way of telling is very vague and abstract. This artist intention is not delivering specific story. I think it is more like a poetic or feeling or something like that. I think the combination of statue and story and these machines and techniques is a kind of humor also. This is a radio antenna. It is an invention. But what I am really glad about is that it is invented by an artist for the artist's purpose. No one needs a statue and an antenna at the same time. But this is meaningful because he is an artist, right? So

I am very glad to see this.

Tang: Is the author of the short story well known in Korea?

Moon: I think he's a young writer, I have never heard about her.

Sacker: Were you able to decipher the time period of the radio transmission? Is it supposed to be modern or in the past?

Moon: The story is a completely modern story.

Tang: Is the statue from a particular era or was a modern?

Moon: We don't have it anymore. That's a really old style, from the era when south and north were fighting each other. But we don't do this anymore now and we think this is very funny and ridiculous. That's why I'm saying there is humor.

Chung: Radio is also outdated and so is radio broadcasts for propaganda.

Tang: For me, this is a very strong work because every layer of the statue is very precise and connects to one another. The idea of active statue as opposed to something that's monumental that you just see it every day and you don't care about it. It activates the space as well and it is in the space physically, sending a signal with a radio. That's also quite creative. In the context of this exhibition and the translation of the idea, it feels very unified. Also, one of the criteria that we have is potentially the connection between Hong Kong and regions in Asia. This idea of the radio signal and the reference to borders and division, South Korea and North Korea, now in the context of Hong Kong between different eras as well, between different kinds of conflicts in Asia, I think that is quite strong compared to the other work that we just discussed. When I first saw this, I thought it was North Korean because of the socialist language, so it's really fascinating that during that time of early division, some of the language is very similar from that time between both sides of the conflict, and it becomes a satire. This is also quite interesting. For me, I would rank this as my top three. What I'm hearing now is reaffirming that idea for me.

Chung: For me, I tried to put it into media archaeology in the sense that the use of radio as a communication means of artistic expression. Because I have a little historical knowledge about the conflict between the North and the South Korea, I suspect in a lot of cases the statues are usually put in public squares and open areas and used for propaganda purposes. This was my impression in the beginning, and I suspect that other than communicating some sort of emotion from the appearance of the statues, it's a secret way that they can also transmit voice information that people can use their own radios to receive. But after hearing your elaboration, it seems that the work is just playing around with the radio, the outdated technology of radio in an

archaeological fashion.

Sacker: Did you get a strong feeling that that was part of the theme?

Chung: Not as strong as another piece of work. That one is a bit more focused on that.

Sacker: In Berlin, they had a giant Ferris wheel near an NSA radio facility right between West and East Berlin. The Americans were using the Ferris wheel as an antenna to listen in on the East Germans. And they financed and paid for an entire circus to run the whole year just so they could use the antenna of the Ferris wheel. So I was wondering if maybe you thought that this was humorous about placing a statue as a fake statue and using this very old fashioned historical thing.

Chung: In the past, between Taiwan and China, they also used airplanes to drop cassette tapes to the other side, with some food and candies and stuff.

Fan: I think it is also one of the challenges for us to showcase the finalist works in the exhibition, because from a curatorial point of view, maybe it's better to provide more information or hints for the audience to guess what exactly it is. But for the competition, we try to respect the artists about how much information that they like to share or what they intend to put in the space. Even though we sometimes have suggestions or advice or comments, in the end we will respect what they intend to show. The next one is *Between Orifices*.

Sacker: This one is very difficult to judge because it's so personal and so specific to what happened to the artist. It's not mentioned directly, but it's pretty clear that there is a severe trauma there that she's dealing with that she feels as if stuck in between. I don't know what the symbolism of the two is, I presume that's part of the story as well, the personal trauma. But it's very clear that when you're in that dark space and you were just watching and focused entirely just on what is presuming to be her own lips or performer's lips doing these motions, it's not comfortable at all. It's very striking. At the same time, on a visual level, it's very varied. The amount of patterns that are happening in the movement of the lips creates a lot of different reactions and thoughts. It's difficult to judge, though, beyond what you see, because we don't know more and perhaps we shouldn't know more, that it should be all that we see and it should speak for itself. So very difficult to judge, but definitely graphically and visually an impressive installation piece. And very sad to see such a heavy topic for so many people. Finally, I would say it's trauma in stasis. It just seems like an infinite loop of something or someone that is stuck recalling a memory, or has even created a kind of fixation on one visual component of that memory, and it's just running it through their head. If it's therapeutic to express it that way, to find some peace with that topic or to move on, I hope that is the effect that it has on for the artist. From an audience point of view, it's just graphically interesting, but also quite disturbing to think about what it means.

Ng: Absolutely, I totally agree. I saw this work without reading the text before I went into it, and I think I can get what message the artist wants to deliver, but of course the information is very limited. I can only say this is a very personal piece of work. The artist is probably doing it for herself, like a therapy for her, so I found it very difficult to judge. She is successful in delivering her message.

Tang: I understand the issues here. The idea is so personalized and I was asking myself what kind of criteria can you use to judge something like this because it's so highly sensitive. There's a lot of vulnerability. I also didn't look at the text and just look straight at the work. Me and Bryan saw things beforehand, so I did know a little bit about the context. And when we selected the work, we were kind of thinking and hesitating for a long time. There were a few things that stuck out for us at the time, but I was surprised when I went to see the work firsthand at the site. On the surface it seems on one hand technologically not so advanced, it's a very simple set up. It's very direct in some sense, there's not a lot of flashy use of technology and very concise. I was surprised by the variation of patterns from the mouth and the its ability to make me focus on this as well, which was an interesting tension. It reminds me of things like there's tropes in theatre, like Samuel Beckett, with the mouth, but it's very different from that when I went to the space because it was about all these different shapes, a lot of strange tension, the idea of this orifice that's hung in suspended space. There's a lot of ambiguity. I think another theme from all of these discussions that we have is how much of this information should we know beforehand and use that as a kind of judgment to gauge and assess an artwork. I think from my side, I feel that the depth for conversations we have and the associations that speaks of richness, it doesn't always have to be spoken out first automatically, immediately. There's a lot of things that are unspoken in this work. I think in the context of this person as a survivor, it is a very brave decision to be in the public space and share an experience. And I think that was something we were thinking about in the selection process, was the idea of vulnerability and the bravery. I feel like there could be audiences out there that are also survivors of sexual violence. This is a work that stands up for and always speaks to them. The idea of representation and visibility is maybe potentially one criterion that we could use. There is a tension because in some ways it's anachronistic in terms of technological innovation. It's not so direct or at the forefront of what can be considered innovative. It's very stripped back. That's also why I think it's quite difficult to place in some ways. I was surprised about how complex the work was and the experience of it versus when I saw this on a screen.

Chung: I am lucky to have seen the work twice. She is one of the graduating students last year, so it's a work present in the graduation show. I also find it difficult to judge because apparently the images are powerful and sometimes she also restrains in a center without overdoing the power of the image. At the same time, compared with the previous version, to make changes in the scale and the size of the images as well. I also understand it's quite disturbing when we need to go inside the complete darkness to see these two images together. For me, I try to see it in a more technical

way, the distance between the two projections and screen. The first version I saw in the graduation show, the sound control is much better because there's not too much air-con ambient sound in as compared with the Arts Centre one. It was a bit more confining in a sense that there's no other sound in the version I saw. Here I needed to guess whether the sounds come from her work or from the ambient. Also, the distance in the first version was a little bit closer, and the one we are seeing is much bigger in scale. When you have a bit more closed or confined space, those two images seem to be more powerful than in a more spacious environment. That's how I try to judge in a more technical way rather than from the content.

Moon: There is not much to add in terms of the technical workings. Everyone has already explained it. I read the description prior to going in. I really like the sensation and the installation successfully delivered the artist's intention. I did feel like the grotesque unpleasantness. As Billy (Tang) had mentioned, it is interesting what reading the description and not reading it has impact on everyone. If I didn't read before, maybe I would have felt this was some kind of biological occurrences happening. I would feel there's some kind of fantasy element too if I didn't know about the subject.

Sacker: I agree, the information ahead of time decides almost everything in terms of how you view the piece.

Moon: Maybe that is her intention.

Tang: She reminds me of a Korean American artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, a work where she focuses on her mouth and then she speaks the vowels, but it becomes quite ambiguous between the gap of communication and meaning. This work reminds me of this and Samuel Beckett.

Fan: The next one is *Dead End, 02*.

Sacker: It took me a minute to understand whether I was looking at a loop of a camera filming a building upwards, or whether it was CGI or 3D rendered. In the end, I figured it was 3D rendered because of the way he's done his loop, but I'm still not sure. It could just essentially be a camera shot.

Ng: It's not a loop, there's just a black frame in between.

Sacker: There was a cut. I wasn't sure because I was looking down and I saw it flash black. It could well be a camera pan, and if it is, it's interesting because the structure of the building keeps repeating certain elements, including this round light shaped fixture that keeps coming up in different areas. To the end, I wasn't sure how it was technically achieved, but I think artistically, the contrast between the flare and those rainbow patterns that come in on the edges of that flare versus the hard steel architecture is what is being played with. His description in the artist's statement is

very beautifully written, but I can't connect to any of it. It just sounds a little pretentious, if I'm honest. I'm not sure what he's trying to say. I try to look at art from an emotional point of view and cut through the bullshit sometimes. I'm not sure where I stand with this one. That's a very personal reaction that I have when I think I perceive pretense. I'm not sure if it's the case here. I'd like to recuse myself from that point of view and just say that I did find the endless loop to be very hypnotic. I was staring at it for a while, but it's not an endless loop as it turns out. I do think that, philosophically, the image of the endless tower, because it did feel like the pan is going up and up and up, it gets me to think about the futility of humans building large structures going ever upward. And the light coming in to play with it and saying, I am unpredictable creation and I'm going to mess with your structure here through bending light and prisms and such. I do think that does work, but it was a short moment and at that point I just couldn't connect emotionally to the piece.

Ng: I know this artist in person. It comes just after this lady's work, it's very interesting to put these works together. The previous work is so feminine and so personal, but this work, it's definitely very masculine. I do understand what you commented it is somehow pretentious, but both the Chinese and English text is really beautifully written.

Tang: I know the artist as well, and I think that was quite perceptive what you were talking about. You're not sure if it was CGI or if it's filmed. I also feel like this text does not explain the work or do justice to the intention of the work, it almost abstracts and makes it obscure. But the idea of not being sure if it's fake, artificial or real and this idea of an ellipsis, I think that's a key part of this work. I would say the experience. I think it's actually filmed so that maybe adds to this idea of the innovation, and plays to this idea of an illusion of power. The idea of glass as surveillance as well, that you can see outwards, but you can't see inside. There is also an illusion potentially to that idea of an endless loop and the pretense of power. I think the title is more of an accurate indication of their perspective on the situation. That also explains a bit why it also feels quite abstract because of what you can say and can't say, how can you speak about power is also part of this work. The idea originally was supposed to be overwhelming as well. Physically, like the image is supposed to be overwhelming, and I think it was a compromise that it was smaller. A question for us to think about in the context of the exhibition. But there are some constraints of our exhibition in the group show. How much of that do we take that into account when we look at this work?

Chung: I also must declare that I know him and he was one of our students who graduated a few years ago. But fortunately, I'm not his supervisor. I like his work and a lot of his former work. In the original selection process, I was not a fan of this piece of work, but when I saw the work, I quite liked it in comparison with what he submitted in the documentation. As I know him beforehand, I choose to ignore what he writes. He was just focused on making the work, and had no intention of writing an artist statement until the very end when he's forced to do so. And so that's why I didn't pay too much

attention to the artist statement. I like also the idea of the Tower of Babel that you are perpetually looking up but you never reach the end, and that fits into the title of the work. For me, it's a good piece of work to look at. I can also contemplate a little bit when I was watching the tilting movement of the video. I personally guess this video is not CGI because the artist used to work with video in most of his former works. It's probably not CGI that he is unfamiliar with.

Moon: The majority of the people here know him personally, you can try to decipher and bring more justice to his work based on knowing his works beforehand. You have some context while viewing this artwork and I don't know what it is because I'm Korean. I think I have to try to think about it in that way. I want to ask if the Chinese translation of the artist's statement could be like poetry like in a way. It's not a poem but he wrote it in a style of poem, right? Did he write both English and Chinese?

Fan: The artist statement in both Chinese and English was originally submitted by him. He submitted the English artwork description and then our editor did the translation and then confirmed it with him. The original was English.

Moon: The reason why I brought this up is because I am also a Korean artist, I feel that often when Asian language gets translated into English for submission, it sounds very much like a poem. When you translate Asian poem to English, it just doesn't make sense at all. I experienced this a lot. I think he chose buildings as his theme because he is a Hong Kong artist and buildings have a special context in Hong Kong. There are many, many tall skyscrapers. If anyone else outside of Hong Kong saw this assembly of glass with the metallic framework, they won't feel it's very beautiful, the minimalistic effortless elegance, but in Hong Kong, we have this kind of deep-seated appreciation because Hong Kong people are used to it, so they feel it. This is art. I am living in Seoul and I think this is a beautiful image. This is in the context of Hong Kong art or city or urban art.

Fan: Next one is *FM108, to...*

Sacker: This is one of my favorites, because you get an emotional reaction immediately. In context of our jury review, nobody actually sat opposite to another jury member and went on the seesaw. I wanted to, but I was too careful to ask anybody, to knock them out of their thoughts and sit down on the seesaw with me. But it's a bit of a shame because I think that is where the art takes place. What I did is I touched it and I simulated the up and down motion. I think everyone else did that too, and tried to imagine how I would feel if I were sitting opposite a complete stranger. And these sounds were going in accordance with our motion.

Moon: Do you think you can do that if you meet someone else you don't know?

Sacker: That's a good question. Can you do that? Art galleries are awkward spaces of silence

and to approach a stranger and say, "Hey, do you want to try it out with me?" It is a very American thing to do. It's not so often that you do that. But I think if it happens, it's beautiful because that's when you have a personal moment looking at somebody else's emotions and you discover something together. I tried to judge this, imagining what would happen if I sat opposite somebody I didn't know and went through these sounds. My hope is that experience would be very unexpected and also intimate. It is what makes me like this piece so much. The idea that for adults to sit on a seesaw, first of all, it's just awkward, it's strange, it's childish, it's fun. And then for those sounds to happen, it creates curiosity among two people going through it together. And once they reach the equilibrium, if I understand it right, you manage to level the seesaw perfectly, then you hear the radio sound without interruption. But as soon as you're off, it starts to break or get lost in frequency. I think that is great. This idea of two strangers without knowing each other's language, without knowing anything about each other, trying to reach equilibrium on a human level is a wonderful message. That's just the emotional aspect. Visually, I thought it was nicely presented on top of those black rocks, the curtain in between. If we are going to judge feasibility of exhibition, this is something that can be deployed in any gallery regardless of any other spatial or acoustic restraints necessarily. From a perspective of art touching the soul, I did think it was creative and quite original.

Ng: For me, this work is a bit disconnected in terms of how it looks, how it plays, and also the idea of what is written here. Because the seesaw itself is so strong, it's always so strong. This is very playful stuff. The audience always get lost there. They will start playing and forget everything. They just start playing. For artists to ride on this kind of very playful installation, they have to be very careful, especially the message how to sit weaving in between this playful moment. I found this playfulness and the message they want to talk about is silence. Radio message hidden between the air, and you have to find it. It's kind of disconnected from me and difficult to match.

Tang: Technically, is there a correlation between the radio and the movement of the seesaw? I was wondering, on the message there's a reference about broken relationship. Did you get a sense of that when you were seeing the work?

Sacker: I don't know what FM 108 means or what the message was. I unfortunately didn't focus on that at all.

Tang: It seems like there's a strong intent from the artist, a communication of something unheard, broken and getting people together to refix this kind of hidden message. But I didn't really get a sense of that. Also, we probably didn't experience it in ideal circumstance. It's also a question of, does that environment make people want to use it? I feel like most people might just see it as a sculpture and not even sit on it. I wasn't able to go into that work in that sense. I'm not sure about it from that perspective because I wasn't able to really fully experience the work.

Chung: In the original selection process, this was also not my cup of tea. But once I started working or playing with it, I began to like this piece of work. But I also agree with Kwan (Ng) that because the narration from the radio is in Mandarin, I try to understand what this particular context is in this kind of seesaw playful experience. I find it a bit disconnected, it seems that you are watching all kinds of music, like those in the circus still works for playing with some stranger. There's a little bit disconnect between the action that we engage with our body and also the narration from the radio. For the radio, I initially assumed its broadcast radio, but it's actually prerecorded sound sent through the speaker.

Moon: I think that the intention, the message and the sculptural presentation was quite astounding. But the interactiveness, I'm not sure if it was a sculpture, because it says it's an interactive installation and interactive art, so I have to talk about this. It's just full of downsides. Even though the presentation is open for everyone to try, realistically speaking, you wouldn't ask someone to join you and do it together. I think whether it's executable for encouraging people to interact with strangers. This is only a concept, but that will not happen in real life. Because the structure of the seesaw in the gallery is quite flimsy but in the playground like outdoor setting, kids can ride on it, I'm worried about the flimsiness. There were not enough cushions. So if you get kid visitors, they will break everything. Seriously, this is why I felt this is not a good interface, not a good interaction. That is very important. To find the equilibrium, you have to force the two persons to stand, so it goes against the purpose of the seesaw going up and down. This is very uncomfortable balance, so I'm not sure about it. The interactive part is a bit questionable.

Ng: Do you think if you were told by a curator that two people should enter the space together, would it change it at all? Like the onboarding of it.

Moon: Yeah, that would change it. But for me, I felt like this artist didn't care about the real interaction. He only thought about the message as a sculpture.

Tang: My takeaway is also that in principle it's good, but then it becomes self-defeating. If it's not really able to be used in a proper way that it's intended to, then it undermines the idea of it. The chances of two people in that neutral space to want to interact, the situation, the details make it quite difficult. Technically, there's a lack of refinement maybe.

Fan: The next one is *Future Forecast*.

Sacker: In full transparency, I work in virtual reality metaverse. I have partnerships with people that have very much drunk the Kool-Aid of NFTs last year and went through the ups and downs of that. This was interesting to me because I do have specific personal connections to people building these worlds that are being talked about. I would say that there is a brilliant futuristic vision that's been going through this person's mind in

every possible direction. Talking about every tech topic that we've speculated about in the last couple of years, whether it's Internet of Things, NFTs or even citizenship and how humans fit into what might be coming in the future. I thought the projection had a lot of beautiful, interesting, evocative imagery in it with various different techniques. From a technical level, you could see that there was 3D scans or photogrammetry involved mixed in with game engine elements, crowd simulations, very specific portraits of a tiny little space where humans might have forged out a home for themselves. Then there were characters that populate this world. On the right there was an interactive game, let's call it game, where you could look like a spider or a cockroach or something insectoid. And then there were interactions involved there linked with the rest of the world buildings. In general, it's extremely impressive in scale and the amount of effort that went into visualizing what a lot of tech people are talking about in terms of trends and future forecasts. That being said, it's overwhelming. You need more time with it than the short amount of time that we had looking at it. I tried to stay as long as I can and I found more and more things in there. And I thought that was a very impressive. That being said, I hope the future is not like that. It's not that it was detached from human topics. It has a lot of things in there like the cleaning of a river, the up and downs of doing that versus surveillance technology. I just felt that this human message I talked about with the seesaw thing before was lost here in the in the scale and the amount of topics being covered. And I thought it's ambitious and very well made, but maybe the artists would have done themselves a favor focusing on half of those topics and putting those under a looking glass, and honing in on that rather than connecting every single tech term or trend in in one big soup. So that was overwhelming. However, this person clearly is thinking about the future, thinking about where these things are going and doing it in a beautiful way visually. I was picking out things that I found fascinating in that whole tapestry, one of them being this idea of a digital citizen, and how individual characters were given emotions. There was a character that was jealous. There was a character that was less ambitious and more ambitious. It's hard to say if that was accomplished or because of its breadth or not accomplished because there was too much breadth. It's very difficult. So I would like to hear your thoughts on that.

Ng: In terms of the finishing and workflow, it's definitely one of the most completed works. The applicants put a lot of effort there to complete a highly finished work. But I can't stop myself to think about it because this kind of topic is too popular, to talk about this geographic thing and NFTs and all this ecological stuff and dystopia. It looked like it is a cocktail of successful topics and all the brand new and trendy issues. Millennials would love this kind of work. It's very difficult when I look at it because you have to have some sort of insight, because it's kind of easy in a way. Of course, there's so much work incurred here, but because there's so many people, so many artists talking about this. I didn't see something very unique. Maybe I didn't spend enough time to look at it. Maybe when it's talking about this topic, it has to be that kind of "cocktail" situation. You have to be putting all other things together, then you can talk about something clear enough. But for me, it's just a bit too much, as you said. But when

you compare to the rest of the works, there will be another way of thinking. Just look at this work here, because there's so much work done there, so much finishing.

Tang: It's so confusing with this one because there's a lot of things in the zeitgeist and among all the presentations, it's the most packed with ideas and complexity. It's technically very, very good. But the content, originality, focus as well because it's like doing lots of things. I've been trying to see how to assess them. I just noticed that this person has received two commissions from Guangdong Times Museum, so they've already received significant support for that project, which explains why there's the sophistication and time, and also they happen to be one of the biggest institutions in mainland China. There's a question of who do we think should benefit from this prize? Have they received benefits already? Do they deserve this? That's another thing to note. I found that the game itself was not so interesting as an experience for me. Conceptually, I didn't really feel too much of that. I felt that the moving image was more competitive because it spoke more about the ideas and synthesized a lot of ideas. The key thing is it's really like a sci-fi, it's about speculating what are the trends right now in the present and what that might mean in the future. Apparently for the artist, this is very dystopian. It's also interesting for me that it was a mainland Chinese artist based in the US, but thinking about the connection and influence of power. For example, One Belt One Road and what that digital infrastructure and dynamic have and impacts in places like the Philippines, which is one of the biggest places for cheap human labor, for call centers and so forth. But is this work really original? Is it worth supporting these artists in relation to other people?

Chung: It is one of my favorite works in the first round of the selection. And when I saw that one, I actually spent more time watching the moving images rather than playing the games. Playing the game seems to be quite boring. Initially I expected something like a world-building or some kind of simulation that you create some version of your utopia or ideal futures, using or making decisions to choose a more humanistic way or more cyber way to create a future. It seems that it's not that promising of a game, but for the moving image, I tried to look at it in the way like it's machinima. It is using game engine or photogrammetry or this kind of technology to make a documentary about a speculation of the future. In this way it puts everything into a more understandable context of what the artist is trying to do: research in the Philippines and the big giant tech companies in China as well. I particularly like the situation when he talks about the slum area in Philippines where people have stopped finding jobs because the pay for regular job is so low, that they prefer to work in the virtual world to earn energy. The other is non-tangible virtual currency rather than real labour jobs in the real job market. That's one of the things which brings me some inspiration. Maybe in the future we can solve the problem which would get between them by having a little bit more non-tangible work or employment that they can self-employ, which is also happening in China that some people actually play games to exchange weapons with virtual currency and in turns feeding themselves through this kind of game-playing experience as a professional game player. It's something like a sweatshop,

but they still get to improve their living conditions, particularly when they're living in the countryside. This is the part that I find it more interesting, when artists tap into this situation, how the virtual economy actually benefits the people in the underprivileged classes in the Philippines in this case.

Moon: I also agree about the room for improvement in terms of the overwhelming number of ideas and topics discussed, because it's just too much. But critiquing the finishing, thoroughness and execution, I want to give it a high score. I was kind of hesitant to give that high score after learning about the commission. He had the support to achieve it on this level. I understand there are a lot of repeated popular topics and trends about live simulation. But the execution level is really well done, especially the video. The storytelling and the video editing quality, everything is well done.

Fan: We move on to *Humanoid Object #3*.

Sacker: Quite the opposite to *Future_Forecast*. I thought this is brilliant and simple and thought provoking because of how simple it is. I feel that this wraps up the same amount of topics as we just discussed in one simple execution. Obviously, AI is a prevalent topic right now. It's driving everyone crazy. For better or for worse, people are thinking about it. And I think as an artist, you have an option. Either you lay out the entire dystopian fantasy like we just saw, or you lock it all in one image and make that image itself stand for so much more. I think this does it. It's personally my absolute favorite piece in the whole show because it is that clear. Drawing a smiley face, what could be simpler than that? And yet the AI struggles with it, or it has its own interpretation of what a smiley face should be. That in itself is such a provocative. It's such a thought-provoking metaphor. I just think it's brilliant, simple and thought provoking. There's nothing else to say about it. It's absolutely my favorite by far.

Ng: I keep thinking why they have to use this kind of magnetic and ink pen drawing. It's kind of ironic. The AI is supposed to be very advanced, very intelligent, but then you feel like it's struggling trying to draw a very simple smiley face. It seems like it's not really successful. Sometimes it's just impotent in a way. It couldn't control itself to draw this simple, smiley face. At the same time, I'm thinking, is there any more different way of interpretation of this way of thinking, is he trying to challenge the technology or try to embrace the technology?

Sacker: Just one thing about what you said. They say that the amount of intelligence it takes to hold a pen and to do those motor neuron movements is so complex and that's where AI struggles the most, like robotics in general. Whenever we try to build a cyborg, it can hardly walk because walking is so complicated. That's a very good point that you said that it's an old-fashioned pen, just the simple, tactile movement of that is part of the question of whether the AI is struggling or not.

Tang: When we were going for it in the initial phase and then seeing it originally by myself,

I thought it was one of the works I was least interested in. But then hearing you talk about it changed my mind a little bit in terms of this idea of AI. It's very nuanced, it's a very strict parameter, just a smiley face and the struggle of the AI to portray and think within a very confined parameter. When we think about AI, we think of the complexity and there's a lot of showboating related to the race of the AI. So this is an interesting kind of way to think in a philosophical way about the complexity of AI. Actually what I think is crucial for this work to be amazing is, it hinges on the technical aspects. Technically, could it be possible that the AI has already mapped out the face and this is just a printer, so this is not actually the AI thinking in real time, because then that would be amazing.

Sacker: I think it could be.

Tang: This is almost like a cheat or transposition of these pre-made files, the AI just crunched all these faces and so it's on the file somewhere and this is an illusion of the AI, but not quite. Then for me it kind of starts to unravel potentially. If it was AI suddenly becoming this invisible body that could be amazing. That's something interesting to think about for me as a technical thing in terms of the media.

Sacker: We'd have to ask him how it's coded.

Chung: I just looked at the bottom of the table, I think they're using a magnet to control the movement of the pen properly. The title is *Humanoid*, but it's a little bit misleading. I suspect the AI part is only the generation of the smiley face from different configurations. I remember from the documentation in the first round, there was also another presentation of this piece was just printing of those smiley faces by the software. I also suspect a drawing part is the separate process which hopefully didn't involve in the machine learning or this kind of process. Holding the pen in this case, there would be another subject of research in robotics to take care of that one. So that can be a little bit misleading with the name Humanoid.

Moon: I also think that there is a misleading part about the humanoid title. Rather than appearing as a humanoid, it came across as a kind of innovative pen that's been reinvented. From the way it's presented, the usual AI drawing, the structure has a ceiling that controls it, but here everything is happening from the bottom. I quite like the presentation, how it's very simple and minimalistic. From the perspective of the inventiveness and the technology, I was quite pleased. Coming back to the perspective of technique, the pen is drawing faces, but is it struggling or is it trying to draw well? I agree with what a lot of people said, the artist could have expanded more on how much the machine can create, how far it's willing to go. As someone had mentioned, to hold the pen for the machine is very difficult, so I wished I could have learned more about the capacity for the AI to create the drawings. I am pretty sure that this guy made this piece in the perspective of technology, it's a new invention for him. But it is not very complete. That's why we are criticizing about the downside of it,

like the shakiness, but I think this is not his intention. He just failed to make a good device and good technology. And I think this unstableness is coming from the device under the table, which is one axis two axis, that is why it is not stable. But the idea is very good because he used magnets. That is why we don't have to see other robotic arms on the pens, so that is very innovative, I think if we think about this piece as a prototype of invention, I think it is good enough. Also, if this guy wanted us to talk about AI technology, he had to describe what's the AI technology he is using, what's the difference with the other machine learning algorithms? What sets it apart from the rest of the AI? I think it will be more interesting if we can talk more about this project and the other project talking about the ice melting, because they both deal with algorithms. I think that it's essential to talk about algorithm and the artist should be able to provide us with more details.

Fan: The next one is *Imagraph*.

Sacker: Did everyone lie down and do it? I've experienced something similar in New York, where you wore a VR headset and they would flash colors at your eyes, but ask you to keep your eyes closed. That's a much more comfortable onboarding experience than having weights on your actual eyelids. I understood it was the artist himself who was bringing us under the bed today. So I snuck in a question about that. I asked him if he'd ever thought about doing it, just to make that whole physical aspect of laying down and having somebody put things on your eyes, to make the onboarding of that a little easier. And he said, yes, but for him, it's important to actually make contact with flesh, to actually shine colors through the skin. And I thought, okay, there's something more to the fascination here than flashing colors and light, something deeper. It says here, blood red, unique to their own flesh. So when he was calibrating the colors, he asked me if I haven't seen white. And I said, it's kind of white because it was reddish. And he said, that's the color of your body. So there's something there that seems to go deeper than just the effect of spilling colors through your closed eyes. That must be very personal. I didn't have time to read the context, because I just walked in, laid down, had it happened, and then came straight here. It seemed to also be a sculpture, so it isn't just what goes on underneath your closed eyelids, but also this hanging apparatus, the weights themselves, they all seem to be connected together. I wondered also why the headphones were just there to cancel out audio. He could have used a sonic sound. There are many options that could have been added on an audio level, but he chose not to, so there must be a reason for it. Just curious as to what that might be. And I don't know how it was for you, but I saw I saw colors and I saw them shifting around. Part of what made this unique compared to some things I'd seen in New York is that the application of weight onto the eyeball actually gives you an option to pinpoint a color in one corner. It's like he's using a spotlight, if that makes sense, to cast a specific color on one part as opposed to just flashing general colors at your brain. Interesting. Very tough to get a lot of people into as an exhibition. Today is the first day in Hong Kong we're allowed to take off masks, and right away, you get something on your eyeballs and you still have COVID in your mind. It's tough to deploy

for sure, but it's innovative. I'm one of the rare people who have might have seen something like that before, just by chance, but I think your average gallery visitor will be blown away by something like that. It plays with the concept of closing your eyes and seeing colors without seeing. I think there's still something quite innovative and new about that.

Ng: I have to say, I didn't try it. I'd get claustrophobic and freak out. But I saw the whole scene. I sat there and observed the whole way. The whole thing is very performative. For me, it's more like a performance instead of an installation or interactive stuff. The whole thing feels like a ritual, taking steps slowly and teaching you how to do this and that. It's like going through a ritual for me. Of course, the idea is interesting that you close your eyes to see something else, you deliver some image you have to close your eyes. It's like a metaphorical way to talk about something beyond that image you can see, there may be something else. I also wonder what's the sound about. I also like the idea of only one person. This is a very noncommercial thought in a way when it's only works for one person. I appreciate that.

Sacker: One thing that's interesting is what you just said, shutting the eye in order to see. But it seems to be this contact with the body seems to have something to do with the optical fiber nerve making contact with the eye in a different unconventional way. He also said it's 5 minutes long, please watch it until the end. Towards the end there was less happening, but it seemed to be very important to go through a process from beginning to finish. These kinds of experiences are almost therapeutic or beneficial thing in busy cities. They get people to focus. It was the same in the show in New York. People come in, stressed, they calm down and then they focus on something that they might not have thought about before. I think that's important to him as well, that one person goes through a transformation or some kind of very private experience. It's definitely interesting.

Tang: This was a work that I was surprised by. I found the experience much more fulfilling than I anticipated. That's a kind of performance, almost like a ritual. You enter the space, you have to read this text, it gives you this instruction that was presented in a particular way. It was quite interesting that he insisted it's him that does it rather than anyone else. That's an interesting feeling as a performance. How does it work technically? I liked everything, like it in terms of the way the eyes are seeing when your eyes closed. It was very pleasant experience for me as well. It was quite psychedelic and that was really great. When we think about digital, somehow this insistence on physicality of the body, everybody is different and what you see is different, all very subtle and kind of quite interesting. As a performance those parts when sometimes would just intervene with me, and I was actually enjoying this colour. I just wanted to see that colour for 2 minutes, and he kept insisting to change it. That broke this idea of the performance. I feel potentially there was a lack of resolution as a performance. But as an experience itself it was one of the things I enjoyed the most and it was also very innovative. It was originally on my top three.

Chung: I experience it under the observation in this case. I agree that this seems to be like a performance, but I'm not sure whether the artist himself actually did it as a performance, because if it was a performance, I expect that at the beginning it will switch on the light, since the apparatus is quite beautifully done and is worthwhile for us to have a look at the structure before we lie down for the experience. I also anticipate we should have those kind of beds in the hospital when you go to a surgery room. For me, the experience is not too new because I used to have meditation every day and I used to see something without opening my eyes. We experience that the image is moving but actually is not concrete images, but patches of color moving around. I also asked the artist about how many pixels, and it is 1000 something and because of the limitation of the pixels, you won't see very detailed images but just overlapping colors. I also agree that the journey lacked something like a narrative, that it was quite dark towards the end of the journey. I try to experience like going to Disneyland and I expect some kind of climax in this particular journey, but unfortunately this is not so in this case. I still think it's like a demonstration of a research project rather than a completely done artwork.

Moon: I also tried to lie on the bed to experience, but midway I felt uncomfortable. I view this as more of a prototype, like the Humanoid project we discussed earlier. I feel that it would be more convincing to also view it as a performance since the artist himself was there to guide us through the experience. There's a gray area between whether I should view it as a performance or not. It's like some kind of prototype research the artist is trying to develop. Seeing the thousands of optical fibers coming to his eyes was like nothing I have experienced, I was quite impressed by it.

Fan: We usually don't allow the artist to be present while jury members are reviewing the works. The reason why this artist was here because he did consider this to be part of the performance. Usually during the exhibition, he will be there all the way, operating all the way to show the onboarding experience and the performative elements in what you have just experienced. The next work is *Nothing Less*.

Sacker: The way I looked at this was as if I were walking through a flea market looking at photographs of people's family discarded in boxes. I think that was part of the description as well. I thought the images on those iPads and phones were very evocative of fragments of memory that did transfer, it seemed like some of them had that sort of classic film grain on there or like distortion effects that made it look like it was just a piece of something else. Without knowing what the significance of the cigarette is or any of the particular items that were shown, you do get a sense of trawling through junk and having small reflective moments of what that meant to somebody who owned it. Discarded memory was the main thing that I went away with. It is essentially that same emotional impact of trawling through a junkyard and looking at other people's pictures. If that is a very important thing for the artist, I understand and I think it works. But I don't know what's being done differently there, other than

the fact that it's a digital device now. Are we being asked to think about what happens when we discard our digital trash or what legacy or footprint we leave behind after we die? Are we supposed to actually be emotionally attached to a discarded iPhone? I'm not quite sure what the message is.

Ng: I agree with you. I think this is a good idea to start with this project, to collect those SD cards or memory cards and then retrieved these images to do something. But I think the artist should take one more step forward. I think it's a very good start, an interesting start because all this images always carry a lot of stories when you look at it, and you can't stop yourself from trying to connect different pieces of information, to make sense, and try to imagine what happened before, and what is this, who owned this picture and who was in the image. Obviously the artists have processed the images, which I am not fond of, I don't think it's necessary. The images themselves are already a found images. She could do a bit of cropping, but it's not necessarily to make it look old, it is overdone. I have doubts about how it should be set up. For now, it is just putting all the phones on the ground. I don't think it's the best way to present it.

Tang: I have a technical question. You have the market, then the SIM card and then these devices, but not all of them are SIM cards. There are iPads and all this kind of stuff. So there's a transfer from an intermediary medium, it's reformatted, right? Does that make sense? It's not directly playing from a SIM card that actually found.

Ng: No, I don't think so.

Tang: The text is a bit confusing now for me, is it their memory that they're putting into the SIM card or are they found images? I originally thought when we were assessing before that it was found imagery on the SIM card, so it's people's memories. It's like archaeology. But somehow when I was looking at the way it's manipulated, it felt that somehow there was a manipulation and maybe it was their memory. It makes me question whether it's actually the original on the SIM card. But I don't know if you got the sense of that as well.

Chung: I have similar queries about that, because if those are the found the SIM card or SD card from the flea market, she needs to show directly from the SD card rather than pre-process with some kind of editing. Once she edited those things, she puts her artistic judgment in order to construct the impression that we are going to have. I also like the original idea, the physicality of the SD card. Nowadays, a lot of people just put it in iCloud and those servers without the physicality of a card. The display of the card and the direct processing of the card, and then to display the image properly will be important, rather than arbitrarily take maybe five images from this card. In effect, this iPad probably won't have access to those SD card directly. It will probably be better to have a digital camera that displays the SD card directly rather than transfer

it to an iPad or iPhone. I saw the exhibition in the grad show last year, but that venue was probably darker than the one we have in the Arts Centre. There are two different impressions for this. One is seemed to be something like a flea market that we can check out different images, the original one is darker and then you actually cannot see the appearance of the iPhone and iPad, you only see the images. That gives us another impression that takes away the physicality of those device displaying the images, and just see the images themselves. So that would be different from what I expected in this version.

Moon: I also questioned if the recovered images have been restored. I agree with the point about image rendering. The project focus is on the memories and there are a lot of projects like this done dealing with memories. I understand why, as someone just mentioned, the artist could have taken one step further. We have seen too many artworks that's focusing on memory, so we expect one step further than that. But this work is just spreading images on the floor. I am also very curious about the process of this work, about the memory card and how she retrieved the data from it. Also, I have another question, the images look like they are damaged somehow, but I am very curious if it's coming from the damaged data or she just manipulated or put some Photoshop filters on it.

Tang: The Chinese character in the title means "overlap", and I think that's an important concept because maybe it's an overlap between found memory and their own memory from childhood. Maybe some of it is personal memory of the childhood, and then the found imagery. But you don't know which one is which.

Chung: She also mentioned that this is reconstructing her own memory.

Tang: We should note that this person is very young compared to other people, she just graduated last year.

Fan: The last one is *Stochastic Camera (version 0.2) - the melting crystal ball*.

Sacker: I do agree that we should talk about algorithms because this one is very much about that. I'm trying when I look at these and ignore the technology where possible. Same thing with the other one because I want to let it speak for itself. This one, it was hard to ignore the technology because it's very much about the technology. But I read it like this old concept that no two snowflakes are ever the same in the same way. An ice ball melting may always melt by random chance in a different way. And then to place a camera on that, and then to study that on a pixel by pixel level to see if there is a correlation or a difference. It's almost like a scientific analysis, but it's also art. I'm not sure where the where the science ends in the art starts. It's pointless science potentially. If I looked at those monitors on the side, there were color values being read out pixel by pixel as well as other data that I didn't really understand. To visualize this idea of a chaos system or this mathematical idea of randomness as a formula is

very interesting. I wonder, does the artist come every 8 hours and replace the sphere? At one point I wanted to touch it to see if it was real. But I saw that it was melting and there was water inside and I saw the bubbles. Finally, the metaphor of the crystal ball, I'm not sure if it's meant to be a projection of what can happen in the future, because that is classically what it stands for. I'm not sure what to make of it. I thought it was cool showing randomness as pixels through ice. It's a trippy concept.

Ng: I don't have any particular feeling for this work. I don't particularly dislike or like it, because I feel like almost like a scientific survey, a study to collect data and then present it to us. I couldn't think of anything else for me. The presentation itself is fine, it is a very logical presentation. The whole thing I found is very cold for me, and not because it's ice ball.

Tang: For me it's creative in the way they have been able to create contrast to demonstrate an idea. What they've done is objective science measurement and using something ephemeral as a contrast. So you question the objectivity of the measurement tools, and there's a kind of futility of this idea that's put out, and it's very calculated and precise in that measurement. There's a kind of poetry of the melting ball and the crystal ball. I also understand creativity to be going somewhere into the unknown, and maybe taking a risk. And this work for me seems to be too careful.

Chung: I share a similar experience, even though he was my student. The major issue is the distance between this work and the audience and myself. It's not totally a close disconnection, but this is quite far away, so it's quite difficult to approach it. The work seems to avoid being approached by me as well. The presentation actually is good in a sense, it is visually enjoyable to look at. The message and the motivation is a little bit difficult to get because he talks about the capitalistic ideologies and by reading through the documentation that he submitted in the first round, I found that his major concern is the algorithm that goes in in machine learning that is extremely inefficient to look into individual pixels in order to make predictions. Hence a lot of machine learning will try what they call dimension reduction to try to reduce a complex image with fewer dimension in order to get it done within a reasonable periods of time. So those kind of optimization or dimension reduction is what he wants to challenge. Whether it makes sense to perform those kinds of optimization or reduction in the complexity of those pixel information in the machine learning process, it's difficult to experience by human beings in this case. I guess there's some kind of gap that he might need to fill in such that the more perceivable element can relate to what he wants to do in challenging or questioning those algorithms that are used in machine learning. The major problem or issue is the disconnection and far distance between his work and the perception from the audience.

Moon: I have very little to say about this project. The reason why I have little to say is because the project is just ultimately presenting two equations for image making and how it's being transferred to the computer. One of us mentioned that this image could possibly

be presented in a science museum, but I want to disagree a little bit because scientists don't present images like this. They will never make something like this.

Fan: We will proceed to the next part, that we will have to nominate the award winner. Everyone can pick three works so that we can minimize the selections. This is one option. Another way is if you have some nomination that you feel very much deserve the Gold award, we can also directly nominate the award winner.

Sacker: I feel strongly that *Humanoid Object #3* is for me the best by a long shot. Should I explain why?

Fan: We can maybe shortlist first.

Sacker: *Imagraph* as well, and *FM108, to...*

Ng: I go for *Active Statue*, and *Imagraph*.

Tang: *Active Statue*, *Humanoid Object #3*. I'm not sure about the third one at the moment. I have to think about that a bit more.

Chung: *Future_Forecast*, *Humanoid Object #3*. Maybe another one later.

Moon: For me, *Active Statue*. I like it the most. And the other is *Humanoid Object #3*. The others are *Future_Forecast* and *A fable of a fable*. I am not sure between those because it got these got commission, this got support. Like I said before, I think it's unfair to give same consideration as the others.

Fan: Now, as I can see, *Humanoid Object #3*, most of you have chosen it, except Kwan (Ng). Having the most votes doesn't mean it's the best. So maybe you guys can discuss about this. The other one with three votes is *Active Statue*. Kwan (Ng), Billy (Tang) and Joon Moon selected this one. Then we have two others with two votes. One is *Future_Forecast* and the other one is *Imagraph*. Then works with only one vote, *FM108, to...* and *A fable of a fable*. At least we have trimmed down the selections a bit. Maybe you can discuss and see if you have any Gold award nominations. Joon (Moon) you said that you like *Active Statue* the most, so maybe this is your gold nomination. Are there any other nominations for the Gold award?

Sacker: *Humanoid Object #3* for me.

Tang: I was wondering as the jury, how do we approach the criteria and the balance. Technically, there is a criterion of Hong Kong and Asia. And another one of the criteria is the connection of Hong Kong and different regions of Asia.

Fan: It's not exactly a criterion. If you want to look at the criteria, we have the objective

criteria: independent spirit, creativity, originality, feasibility for exhibition, innovative use of technology and overall excellence. But we didn't make a marking scheme, so each year would be quite different, it's open for you to discuss.

Sacker: Some of us didn't have a third preference. I clearly locked in on all three. So if it makes sense to defend that decision, I could do that. But I would say that for number three, I'm between that and another one. For the Special Mention, I'd like to wait and hear what other people think as well. But for Gold and Silver, I can definitely explain why I picked *Humanoid Object #3*. I know that there were conversations about what is the, code underneath it. How was it built? We started dissecting a little bit what the algorithm might be doing, but I don't think that should matter. The magician's art is the trickery behind the stage, so to speak. It can matter if it's about putting forward a working device as art, but I think in this case I read it as just the picture I was looking at, which was a pen drawing human faces and failing at doing that and doing it over and over again. In the context of AI and the massive social hysteria that we have surrounding that topic right now. I think it's reassuring on the one hand to look at Chat GPT and all of these things like Midjourney taking the text world and the visual art world by storm and everybody literally freaking out about the implications of that. I think it's reassuring to look at this and say, actually machines don't even know how to draw a smiley face. It's a nice feeling on the plus side, but on the critical side, if a machine can't even convey a basic emotion, maybe we should look more into the value of a machine having feelings and emotions. These are the classic topics that surround AI, and I think it just all compacts it very nicely in one visual demonstration that's clean, whether or not there are magnets under the table, to me, I would have had to check and see if there is. I was looking at what was on the surface and it was graphically beautiful and simple and just got all of these thoughts kicking off in my mind that I think we should be having right now as a society around that topic. That's why for me, it's a clear winner. And then the other one, *Imagraph*, I felt that there was an artist's passion there. I know that it might potentially be strange because he was there physically and other artists might say, if you had seen me then you would have also seen my passion. But I think what I felt with him was a very unusual fascination with doing something very specific with the user's eyes that transcended almost the artwork itself. It was like there was a person there that was trying to do something personal and unique, and didn't care actually about the competition or the gallery or anything. It's really about the thing that he was trying to do, and I thought that was impressive, just seeing the whole thing together. From a sculpture point of view, from an immersive experience, the only critical thought I really have is what happens if a user opens their eyes in the middle of that. Those were bright LEDs. Even when your eyes closed, my eyes had to adjust for a minute. If he does receive the award, I would like to add a little footnote, whether he has thought about safety? I just thought that that was a very private, intimate and interesting experience. But I would be okay for that to also be a Special Mention. It's on par with *FM 108, to...*, which was my third choice because both of them are not technically perfectly executed as immersive experiences, it's shaky, but the intention was good. I think for me it's important when art conveys humanity and both of them did that, whether it's the simplistic childhood

seesaw metaphor for the imbalance in the relationship between other people that know each other or strangers, or this actual tactile thing of seeing but not seeing, both of those were in touch with what it means to be human, and I think that's very important.

Ng: I want to talk about *Humanoid Object #3* and why I didn't select it. It's kind of intuitive, and for me, it looked very familiar, the way it presents and also the element involved. And that's why I'm a bit hesitant. I am a little bit doubtful that he intentionally knows the struggling of the pen drawing smiley face, is it part of the intention because he didn't mention it in his statement. I go more for *Imagraph for Gold* award, especially for independent spirit. Even though I didn't try it myself, I look at it as a sculpture, as an installation, as a performance. It looks like a crazy scientist doing a brainwash machine. It's not something for public, there was a very personal touch for the audience.

Tang: I feel that *Active Statute* is ahead for me. There are a lot of associations, the kinds of topics that we could talk about without even knowing too much already. It made us think a lot about these kinds of things. Throughout the conversation we've been thinking about, what is the intent and the degree of completion. Some of the works are almost like prototypes and it could have been better, and then it could have been better maybe because of money or experience. If we do this, it maybe encourages them and then they go further. That could be the good thing about this. With *Humanoid Object #3*, it's definitely in the top three for me, but I wouldn't say it's the winner. I feel like a lot of intent is still up in the air for me. I like *Imagraph* as well and I just want to put it out there. In terms of completion, that's like a very complete work and logic and so forth are similar to *Actives Statute* maybe. The text doesn't really do it much justice, but as a work in and of itself, it does something. I'm not so decisive. I like *Active Statue* and feel is a strong candidate, but out of the three, I'm not sure what the order is, to be honest.

Chung: For me, I chose *Future_Forecasts* because of its ambitions and also the complexity of these projects. The humanistic concern towards the future of what the high-tech industry in developing countries. The second one I picked is *Humanoid Object #3*. This is more or less a completed work. It is also good to look at as an exhibition piece. The third one I also come up with is *Dead End, 02*, I also agree with it being a complete work in itself which does not need to have too much elaboration or description. The audience can quite easily experience this.

Moon: I feel like I have a duty to explain about *Active Statute*, because I think there are many things you couldn't discover without the Korean context. But I am very careful about this because I am Korean, so it looks like I am trying to make it better, but let me explain it. I also saw a lot of details. The shape of the pedestal at the bottom looks like a chair that we are used to seeing in Asian schools, elementary schools. There are electric devices like an iPod, a nano or something. We are kind of familiar with this device, it is not very weird. It kind of makes sense. This is not disturbing our

experience and all of them are there for a function. They are not just meaningless, just artifices. And it is like a big antenna. I think that's definitely a sense of humor because an antenna doesn't have to look like that. The most important thing is that this is invented by the perspective of an artist. If we think about the *Humanoid Object #3*, I think this guy is definitely a technologist. But this statue is I think this is a more artistic guy and maybe I think I am a technologist, so I always respect this more artistic guy. That is why I am giving more value to this piece. I was very happy to see this kind of invention, but it is invented in the purpose of art. This is a statue and an antenna. That is why I picked this one.

Sacker: It's 3D scanned and then forged out of metal. That's quite a lot of work to make this statute, physical work. It says our sculptures are based on the 3D data of outdoor statues, so I'm assuming he did a 3D scan, then somehow forged it or cast it in metal. That is artistically classical process, but it's a lot of hard work to do.

Ng: Is it a really heavy statue or is a 3D print material covered with metal?

Sacker: He printed and then painted it in a kind of rusting corten steel material look.

Moon: There are really many kinds of different things in one piece. There is a narrative story, storytelling in the radio. There is something even in the pedestals. It has a lot of things in one piece and it is fairly complete.

Ng: I'm convinced, I'll change my vote.

Sacker: We have a majority already?

Fan: Sacker and Bryan, do you agree?

Sacker: Gold for *Active Statue*? Yes, it's okay.

Fan: The next one is Silver.

Sacker: It is between *Imagraph* and *Humanoid*. We have to nominate a Special Mention. Some of you didn't.

Ng: It's between these two.

Fan: It's up to you. Sometimes the Special Mention is the third one, but sometimes the jury wants to appreciate some special things, so it depends on your thoughts.

Tang: Do we agree that it's between *Humanoid* and *Imagraph*?

Sacker: Unless someone has strong feelings about *Dead End* or *Future_Forecast*. You have

to make a strong appeal now.

Tang: He's an interesting artist, but also very difficult for him to stay in Hong Kong. Now he's studying in Holland. Does he have gallery representation? Not really, I don't think. But I feel technically he's a very strong artist, but doesn't have the opportunity to get support, and the encouragement would really help him. In terms of the technical grasp of this thing that you felt was CGI and the ambiguity, so to have that technical aspect and the subtle way of to shoot it almost seamlessly and to think about the imperfection, the perfection of a building as an illusion, I think this all kind of feels very complete, and there's no debate about that for me. With the other two, I feel they're really unique and interesting philosophically, but also imagining things that I feel in terms of how it's made, there's no ambiguity there. I can only say that with Mark, what his intention is and what he shot, it's a very elegant way to film, I think normally a lot of artists would miss that because they're trying to be a bit flashy, they'd do all these cuts. It's not the best version of the work because I think it would be better if it was on a bigger screen, it would be amazing.

Chung: The other thing would be like if we have *Humanoid Object* as the second prize, then the first and second are both from Korea, what implication would that have for the festival. And there's also no selection from local participants.

Fan: I think that's okay if both works come from the same city or country. We judge the individual work, not the artists or where the artists are from.

Sacker: I would stay with my selection as well. I think both projects transcend whatever country or region. They're very impactful on their own. It doesn't really matter who's the face behind it. The art speaks for itself. In my opinion, second would go to *Humanoid Object* and Special Mention to *Imagraph*.

Ng: Actually, I quite like *Dead End, 02*. I would put *Imagraph* as Silver. And Special Mention is *Dead End, 02*.

Chung: I changed my mind, Silver for *Imagraph* and *Dead End, 02* will be Special Mention.

Moon: I think I have to be out of this because I think I explained enough. Let me pick just only one, *Active Statute*, and I think I have I should stop talking because there is another Korean artist there, *Humanoid Object*. I think I should not talk about this.

Ng: No, don't worry about it. That's fine.

Sacker: Would you pick *Humanoid* for the Silver? Forget about the country.

Moon: Yes, because I like it all with the same reason as you. I picked the other works, *A fable of a fable* and *Future_Forecast* because their completeness is very good, so we

should give value to them and that is why I picked them. But *Humanoid Object* is definitely very creative and everything is good other than the completeness. For Special Mention I pick *Imagraph*.

Tang: The reason why I hesitate on *Humanoid Objects* is I need more kind of convincing about independent spirit, creativity and originality, because for me, intention is important. Some of us were looking at the use of technology versus the intention. I understand simplicity is really important. The use of AI in a contrasted way that is normally visible, but from the artist's perspective, where did they demonstrate the independent spirit, creativity and originality? I would have been completely sold if it had that idea of what we talked about, but there was an illusion behind it, for me it's a little bit of a compromise. That's why I'm a bit hesitant. I like *Imagraph*, too. With independent spirit, you have to be able to feel their personality or they're thinking in another way, contrasting something we've known.

Sacker: You're worried that we filled *Humanoid Object* with our own interpretation.

Tang: A little bit, yeah.

Sacker: It's possible. But that is also what art is supposed to do, right? To create conversations and interpretations.

Tang: My first impression about the smiley faces, is there's a naivety to it. *Humanoids* is a leading candidate for second place. That's undebatable. It needs now one extra vote, probably right to edge it.

Fan: Between *Humanoid* and *Imagraph*, it's 2 to 2. So your decision. Moon and Sacker picked *Humanoid* and then Bryan and Kwan (Ng) picked *Imagraph* as the Silver Award.

Sacker: The question is, what do we want to say with Special Mention, which of these awards is supposed to convey individual independent spirit? Maybe that's a better way of going about it. The first two are connected with the cash prize, and the third one isn't. So that's why everyone kind of thinks it's the stinker, even though it actually is supposed to say we value this creative spirit. And you have independent spirit, creativity and originality, feasible for exhibition, innovative use of technology and overall excellence. I guess the fairest way would be to take the two candidates and just go down that list and say which one ticks these boxes?

Tang: With innovative use of technology, it's quite easy. It's quite interesting to contrast these two together.

Sacker: Should we go down the list. *Humanoid Object* or *Imagraph*, which one of the two has independent spirit? On that one, I'll just say in my opinion, independent spirit is higher

for *Imagraph*. Creativity and originality also is very tough between the two. Feasible for exhibition clearly *Humanoid Object* because *Imagraph* is very hard to deploy. Innovative use of technology, they're both tied, but I think some people are saying *Imagraph* is maybe more. I don't know, hard to say.

Tang: I would say that the feasible for exhibition is circumstantial in a way. I feel what would really edge the competition is independent spirit, creativity and innovative use of technology. If we look at those two I think it's clearer for us all. I now have a hunch of what I would choose.

Fan: For the record, the judging criteria is only used in this meeting. We didn't ask the artwork to fit into all the boxes to submit the artwork. Some winning work in the past may not fit in all the boxes.

Chung: There's no weighting distributed among those categories. That means in some cases, some of the work absolutely had no innovative use of technology, but they are exceptionally good too.

Tang: But I think we're getting close to a decision, hopefully through this voting.

Sacker: Maybe this way of going like hands up is too didactic. We should probably not do that for second place, because otherwise you are weighing one point more strongly than another. Perhaps it should be a personal decision, for second place, at least.

Fan: For second place, if you have some work that you really want to push that maybe fit into two, three or all of the criteria, then that makes sense to make it second place. We don't usually weigh a percentage on each criteria.

Tang: With innovative use of technology, which one is more interesting?

Fan: Once again, I didn't say that we can't do that because I think we have already gone through a lot of discussion on the artwork. So we still need something to help us get the results and make the decisions. It is also one of the guidelines to help us to make a decision. That's why I said, for the record, I had to mention this, but I think we can go ahead and it is easier for everyone to make a decision.

Tang: I'm starting to edge towards *Imagraph*. For me, it's quirky. It has something that's slightly different. There's a performance element to it. It's not the most refined in substance, but there is a lot of potential and I genuinely was struck by the experience and it was quite touching for me, more than *Humanoid*. But *Humanoid* I find quite interesting as well. I would go for *Imagraph* for second.

Sacker: Now that you go with *Imagraph*, I would also go with *Imagraph* for second place because I think it's valid to do so. I would suggest putting *Humanoid Object* up for

Special Mention. But that's just one person offsetting the balance. If anyone thinks that's stupid, let me know.

Chung: The reason I switched to *Imagraph* is I like the diversity of looking into the types of works, and *Humanoid Object* is quite typical. As a gallery piece that I also found familiar in the past, using automata as a way to deal with the mechanical movement. *Imagraph* has more new things even though it's not so refined. That's the reason I switched to *Imagraph*.

Fan: So Special Mention?

Sacker: Let's do the process between the two for those criteria and again. For independent spirit. I can't judge. You guys seem to know him so well as a voice here in Hong Kong. Only you can really say about the independent spirit.

Tang: I think he's quite a brave artist. He's also quite subtle. He worked as a technician in Tai Kwun, so as an exhibition experience, when he does things in a space, it's very interesting as an artist. That's why I feel it's quite good for a Special Mention and I guess there's a bias because of Hong Kong, I want to support and encourage that as well. In terms of independent spirit, I think he has a very unique way of thinking about things that I can vouch for.

Ng: May I propose two Special Mentions?

Fan: Does anyone object the idea of having two Special Mentions? If no, then we can have two Special Mentions for this year, *Humanoid Object* and also *Dead End, 02*. The Goethe Institute they also give out a prize of for the local artist who is the top local winner. That would be *Dead End, 02* because the Silver and Gold winners are from other countries. He will be entitled to have a trip to visit Trans Media Festival in Berlin and have a solo exhibition there.

Gold Award

Active Statue

Beak Jung-ki (South Korea)

Silver Award

Imagraph

Goki Muramoto (Japan)

Special Mention

Dead End, 02

Mark Chung (Hong Kong)

Humanoid Object #3

Min Chan-wook (South Korea)