FADE TO BLACK

EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS: THE VIETNAM CAVES
CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FADE TO BLACK

Fourteen students explore the wild ways of art and
make media artworks based on their experiences.

Fourteen students utilise their varying artistic
practices to make works that represent their unique
experiences.

3 – 13 JUNE 2015

red dot gallery
City University of Hong Kong

For further information:
www.cityu.edu.hk/schools/creative
Introduction by Dean Jeffrey Shaw

About The Extreme Environments Program

Photos from Hei An

Photos from Ho Mer

Photos from Trang Nha

Map of the Expedition

Student Artworks

Jose Uribe

Matthew Ayres

Tao Qi Yu

Jacky Wong

Ngoc Phuc, Ho Ho

Chuang Man Hong

Ching Man Hing

Chai Kei Shek, Janet

Wong Micmow, Donalda

Chai Sai Choy, Michael

Fong Shu Make, Nelson

Tian Xinhua

Alexandro Carballo

The Students Would Like To Thank

Credits

In Appreciation by Executive Producer Scott Nessels

Ching Man Hing: Introducing the Cave World

Chai Kei Shek, Janet: The Dream of Flames

Chai Sai Choy, Michael: The Hidden in Densities

Wong Micmow, Dornalda: The bustling

Chai Sai Choy, Michael: The Quayside

Fong Shu Make, Nelson: The Waterfall

Tian Xinhua: The Journey of Nothing

Wong Micmow, Dornalda: The Dream of Flames

Alexandro Carballo: Mapping the Hidden Landscapes
The Mesoamerican, Antarctica, the Tibetan Plateau, Tibet, ice, earth and water: hot, cold, dark and wet. The sensuous at its extremes, to contact with its extreme limits, confronting habitation thresholds, wanting new perceptions and engaging artistic creativity. The Extreme Environments Programme, the branch of Associate Professor Scott Hettel, as its flagship City’s Discovery Zerox Brushed Curriculum (DEE), however, it’s not just about these awesome, existential situations that our students have the privilege to experience, but also about the science of our planet’s heritage and the elegant balance of excellence and social forces that constitute the wonderland of life on earth.

This science is the visual, and what mathematics is to music: it is an underlying structure that informs the potential for aesthetic expression. In essence, the visual impact enhances and enriches our understanding of the (now threatened) equilibrium of forces that constitutes the beauty of this planet.

Visiting these extreme environments also leads us to the recognition that they have, this interplay between this and the worlds, can also be conceived as such. Within its contextual geography, huge populations density, high per capita income, severe income inequality and damaged political systems, this highly urban city is symptomatic of our contemporary condition, a “fragile theater” to see the shifting balance of power. Artists are in a special position to reflect on these challenges and illustrate our understanding of the political system positive action. This is the unique opportunity the programme offers our students.

Professor Jeffrey Shaw
Dean, The School of Creative Media
CityU’s Extreme Environments program is a highly regarded experiment in discovery-based education presented by the School of Creative Media (SCM), thus only self-study in China. This project is one of the most accessible sites. In each expedition, students explore an environment on earth that is transformed into new media art, thereby promoting a better understanding of the issues affecting the environment.

The students research and create their work through web-based field research, which is a groundbreaking way to design education. While scientists working in natural sites strive to keep their influence on the results, artists in the approach, the point of view and presentation is the most important part of the experiment. By using the tools of creative media to express their direct personal experience on location, both the site and the art in the site are built by the message. The resulting artwork represents more than just nature but our relationship with it.

Each expedition partners with scientific and environmental organizations dedicated to the protection of the fragile sites. The students join existing field studies to make that their impact is minimal — nothing is taken or left behind. Once back in Hong Kong, they use the unique tools of the School of Creative Media to heighten and extend their discoveries in new forms. Data is not only visualized but mediated — transformed through this game, interactive networks, onsite, and more, to help engage with wider audiences.

The Extreme Environments program is now one of the most respected discovery-based education initiatives in the world, disseminated in top international journals, news media and conferences. 2010’s Antarctica expedition and exhibition were highlights of City University’s 50th anniversary celebration and 3010’s trip into the Mekong Postcard Series partnerships with some of the world’s leading scientists and field workers in exploration. "The book" was also exhibited inspired by one of the planet’s most hidden secrets to its achievements.
Nearly 300 students proposed ideas for the 2010 edition of Extreme Environments and fourteen art and design students were chosen to participate based on their mushroom, origami, grade, and research skills. In February, the team visited the historic port town of Hoi An in Vietnam, toured the PHOULD site, and stayed on a farm near the heat-cracks of Thinh Gia before trekking into the remote, wild jungle caves.

The trip was custom-designed by members of the British Cave Research Association after discovering rare bats of the site only three years ago. Their population, bats, is the only bat species allowed to move through the cave system. These caves are one of the last undiscovered places on the planet and home to a variety of plant and animal life that stimulates research. Their discovery, however, has triggered an aggressive interest in developing the site for tourism. Vietnam is struggling with how to allow visitors while protecting the fragile ecosystem.

This student team is the first group of artists and designers to see many of these amazing underground formations and the exhibition tours will feature larger conversations about including the right balance. Even more physically demanding than the school’s previous expeditions to Antarctica and the Mute Desert, the students realized local villages and cities through dense jungle, reused jetties, makeovers, and swam hundreds of meters underground and in close proximity all while carrying a range of nude and scientific gear. The students camped in the jungle and in the caves themselves. In Hoi An, they explored distinct cave ecosystems, sometimes entering one side of a mountain and exiting the other after being and swimming underground for hours.

The art and design students did a wide range of creative research while underground. Some worked with scientific teams to record cave acoustics and vocals, color spectrums in the beams of light, wind movements, wave forms, inside human emotions. Othe world media technologies to project images, light patterns, and laser scree in the caverns. A range of criteria accompanied the expedition from the latest digital models, 3d self-fashioned black and white prints available in places of sun light. At the end of it all, in order to collect the new materials, create 3 different artworks each directly connected to unique phenomena in the caves.

“Facade to Black” presents student artworks that are not possible at any other school in the world. They took the strength of fully陆军 consultation in creative media to reveal a unique perspective on a hidden world that is seldom seen.

The project was developed in partnership with University of Waterford, Wexford Institute of Technology and the School of Engineering and Creative Industries.

The project is supported by the Irish Research Council, Waterford Institute of Technology, Wexford Borough Council, and Wexford County Council.

ABOUT THE VIETNAM CAVES EXPEDITION AND EXHIBITION

關於越南洞探察與展覽
QUYẾT TÂM THỨC HEN THẲNG LÒI
NGHI QUYẾT DÀI HỌC VÀ CÁC CADDRESS
XÂY DỰNG HUE XƯỞNG ĐĂNG
LÀ TRUNG TÂM VĂN HƯỚNG DU LỊCH,
THÀNH PHỐ FESTIVAL QUÁI VIỆT NAM.
MAP OF THE EXPEDITION

Digital painting based on satellite imagery and topographical survey data by Harsh Agrawal.

Regions and features include:
- Rao Nan River
- Rat Cave
- TAN HOA
- Hung Ton Cave
- Camp Site 1
- Camp Site 2
- Harse Ken Cave
- Halse Lan Cave

(Coordinates and more details can be found in the survey data.)
ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

The extra properties of the area can be acquired by recording loud bursts of sounds within the space, using multiple digital microphones, recorded sounds within the caves were collected and then computerized digitally processed for reproduction. The patterns were then processed and visualized as a generative animation.

The visual elements are created by the artists using digital software and visual composition techniques, combining visual elements in a dynamic and immersive way, creating a sense of depth and movement.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The sound of living water is something that never experienced in an overly populated city, we feel it in our bones. The caves’ remote location and cavernous structure have a unique quality of responding to sound. This location creates levels of sonic resonance that are truly breathtaking. The animation contrasts the sounds of silence by giving visual form to the roar of overheard whispers. As a musician, I aim to pass the experience of hearing place on to others, experiencing the worlds as playing postcards.

In the context of this project, we are creating a shared experience of the underground caves, which are located in a remote and natural setting. The soundscapes of the caves are captured through digital microphones and then processed into an immersive visual experience. The sound and visual elements are combined to create a dynamic and engaging experience for the audience.
HYBRID WAR BUGS

PHOTOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL PAINTING

ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

Sisters and insects were selected based on their camouflage and movement, then photographed. Using stop-motion techniques for improved detail, the insects were digitally painted and composited.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The military presence during the Vietnam War still lingers in the country. Through photography, sculpture, and her display, Harsh Agrawal has captured a piece of the country’s DNA. In addition, the war was among the causes for the heroin wars, and the habits continue. Although these hybrid bugs are funny to look at, they comment on how war becomes ingested into the very nature and soul of a culture.
TARNISHING PURITY

ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

Molotelakiate wells blowing in the wind were filmed from both outside and inside cave entrances — red wells were filmed from inside, while wells from outside. At the exhibition, the video installation will be presented.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The video is a natural view of various beauty and mystery. By shooting the cave entrances with wells, the film shows that society views the recent discovery of the caves, which are built to protect, however, the view from outside the caves is only a small part of the wells. The visual association between the two elements represents humanity's interaction with nature and its secrets. The banned film from a perspective about development and resistance shows the conflict of exposure to newly discovered natural sites.

ARTIST

Teo Qi Yu

Description:

- The work is a natural view of various beauty and mystery.
- It highlights the importance of protecting nature and the significance of discovery.
- The video installation will be presented at the exhibition.
- The artist, Teo Qi Yu, explores themes of development, resistance, and human interaction with nature.
ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

Using a 360-degree lens, cave-insculations were photographed while reflection light was projected onto them. To give the still photographs life they were then digitally modified, animated, and fused, presented in a never seen before manner for the exhibition space.

ARTIST STATEMENT

As industrial development continuously destroys our natural environment, the untouched cave came to represent a second chance to start anew with nature. Inspired by a traditional Chinese belief about finding another world within a cave, the animation shows a underground world that can act as a new start for mankind. The dome experience is the most vivid media presentation system to actually entering the cave.

Jack Wong

王維杰
ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

Artwork Description

Using a computational spectrometer, color in the light were measured in the canvases and then represented graphically in 3D. The interactive display increases in color as more audience members approach the screen.

ARTIST STATEMENT

When there is no light there is no color, so while doing light studies in the cases, the spectrum data was often affected by the presence of the portable lights we brought with us: by entering the cases, we went into changing color. This idea of an transporting an invisible spectrum made me think about how it is possible to affect an environment with color. Induction and remote influence can be nearly unnoticeable, even artificial lightings that influence environmental impact.

---

Ngai Po Yiu, Boba

将色彩
ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

Lasers beams from handheld projectors brought to the site were captured using time photography in the camera and presented in lightbars.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Using the same drawing gestures I use as a sketch artist, the photographs are hand-drawn imitations of the scanned. A common 3D printing technology is utilized. By removing the ‘drawing’ of a machine in a place that is realistic, the artwork comments on art’s shift in space drawing being replaced by scientific and commercial technologies. I also used the variations in underground water flow to reflect the light on the cave walls so that the laser effects were distanced by the presence of structure of the site.

Cheung Man Hong

Pampano
INTO THE CAVE

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPOSITE

Cheng Man Hong

ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

The photos that make up digital imagery consist of a spectrum of 256 different colors. These colors were projected onto the cave formations. Close up with the naked eye, the colors were then photographed and re-appropriated as pixels, creating a photograph of the Hong Kong Dykeout.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Starting with total darkness, I wanted to fill the cave with a color spectrum never before seen in the site. Making colors with the textures of the cave’s interior surfaces. By using these colors, I recollect and capture the Hong Kong Dykeout becomes a composite of hundreds of projected lights and hidden surfaces.
ARTWORK DESCRIPTION 作品介紹

Stalagmites and stalactites are rock formations formed by dripping from cave ceilings. The heights of these formations were measured and, according to the process of development, the ages were calculated. Using slate, painting, video and glass, a modified hashtag presents a sculptural contrast between natural and constructed forms.

The riser of the sculpture is adorned with flake meals, giving it a sense of weathering. To those who are not familiar with the topic, the sculpture can be displayed as an artwork, with an intention of using metal images to awaken the public's awareness of the issue.

ARTIST STATEMENT 藝術家語

The constant dripping all around us in the caves reminded me that the stalagmite formation is a slow, continuous process that brings a type of stone to human beings. The formula of the formation of such a sculpture—both the materials and the procedure—create a contrast between the skill and craftsmanship of natural art and man-made, mass-produced development. The cave represents an absence of politics, economy and human resources that allow for growth to occur at a scale that is small and with necessary beauty.

Choi Ka Man, Janet

嘉麗

The riser of the sculpture is adorned with flake meals, giving it a sense of weathering. To those who are not familiar with the topic, the sculpture can be displayed as an artwork, with an intention of using metal images to awaken the public's awareness of the issue.

ARTIST STATEMENT 藝術家語

The constant dripping all around us in the caves reminded me that the stalagmite formation is a slow, continuous process that brings a type of stone to human beings. The formula of the formation of such a sculpture—both the materials and the procedure—create a contrast between the skill and craftsmanship of natural art and man-made, mass-produced development. The cave represents an absence of politics, economy and human resources that allow for growth to occur at a scale that is small and with necessary beauty.

Choi Ka Man, Janet

嘉麗
ARTWORK DESCRIPTION 作品行腳
A vertical projection merges a flow of collected video of falling water and patterned stone with interspersed calligraphy. This forms a landscape that uses waterfalls as a metaphor for the evolving times of languages.

Chen Gianzun, 廖君澤, is an artist working in a predominantly digital medium, his artwork does not adhere to strict boundaries. His work often contains elements that are difficult to categorize.

ARTIST STATEMENT 藝術家語
Language shapes history and history shapes language — much like water falling over stone. On the expedition, we encountered beautiful patterns in the rock that were formed by a flow and gradual erosion of time. The effect was much like how language also leaves its trace through our culture — word by word, water drop by water drop. Language is in fact what water is to the stones. Our interest in historical languages led us to create a ‘word rock’ thatPlainly shows how patterns of communication act as a type of memory.

Chen Gianzun, 廖君澤, is an artist working in a predominantly digital medium, his artwork does not adhere to strict boundaries. His work often contains elements that are difficult to categorize.
ARTWORK DESCRIPTION 藝術敘述

A series of photographs taken in Hong Kong ranging from large landscapes to personal close-ups were projected in the caves in corresponding scale — the framing of the shot was contracted to the size of the projection. The diverse photographs were large projections, smaller shots were created. In the installation, four screens were placed in a way that creates physical depth and service the “Dimension” technique to move from wide shots to close-ups.

ARTIST STATEMENT 創作背景

In a dense city of millions, the individual is often lost or ignored. The anonymity and the language of a cinematic screen can be applied to the psychology of living in an ordinary life in isolation. The structure of the space is used to imitate the effect of a close-up, as we move deeper into a larger frame our eyes become clearer, more concentrated and remote, we are also more closer to seeing the individual. The cave space features: our ability to see the detail in the photographic, much like the anonymity of urban living where the details around us are lost.

Wong Winsome Dumalagan 傳達心

In this exhibition, Wang Wimsome Dumalagan combines the fragments of photographs that were taken by different people. This exhibition is a representation of the photographer's ideas and vision. The fragments of the photographs were taken in Hong Kong and the scenes are mostly about daily life. The fragmented photographs are then re-arranged to form new images. This exhibition is an attempt to show the diversity of ordinary life in Hong Kong.
ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

Wind direction and speed were measured at a rave rotation. For the art installation, the trees have been replaced with small fans and the wind data collected transformed into musical notes. A video image of a rave party is played above the fans, along with a recorded computer soundtrack. When a visitor presses the keys, musical notes are played and the screen image switches to a blotted desktop background.

The installation is designed for the LSDV Gallery in Hong Kong. In the gallery space, the tree trunks are replaced with cut-out metal objects, allowing visitors to physically interact with the installation.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Feng Shui (wind-water) is a philosophy regarding the relationship between humans and their surrounding environment. However, in the Internet age, the computer is now our essential and indispensable connection to the outside. In my piece, the wind becomes music when no one is present. But when a visitor presses the computer keys, nature becomes a digital background—another predecessor, the wind, justifies the feeling that we can communicate with nature through technology. To me, there is no Feng Shui—there is just human-computer interaction. In other words, anamorphic art is now possible not only on the computer but also in the real world.}

Choi Kei Chee, Mike

FENG SHUI MACHINE

風水機器

INSTALLATION AND INTERACTIVE VIDEO

互動裝置及互動影像

45
NOTHING CHANGES IF NOTHING CHANGES

ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

Cave entries and eye view apartment windows were photographed from the same viewpoint, masks used out. Two large prints—dine image chosen from both locations—are cut and placed onto the vertical plate of aluminum bleeds and both sides, creating a rectangular type effect. An electric switch controller is attached and programmed to flip the images in regular intervals.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Caves are located (they Nikki us and what us off us from the outside world. The sense of exclusion (self created and sometimes real) when leaving out. Inside the caves is reminiscent of that of living in small apartments in this city. A sense of escape (real and fake), both physical and emotional together. The split in relation to the architecture of relation time passes and the stone only changes in appearance — we have still not changed.

We entertain the idea of becoming invisible. To be invisible feels like being safe. To feel safe can be dangerous and leave us feeling invisible. Art becomes a way of showing our hiddenness. It is not a way of escaping, where we are ourselves all the time. Art is a way of saying, "I am not here, I am not here, I am not here, I am."


Tian Macleod M

李俊天
ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

During a series of choreographic performances, the artist uses a remote control to lower a camera and position it at different bodies of water while filming the effects. For the art installation, four different screens show pictures from Vietnam, capturing images of everyday life. Capturing the surface of water and the visual space, the works combine the soundscape, the visual space of the installation, and the performance of the artist. Vicky Do's installation, 1116, evokes the visual space of Vietnam and the performance of the artist.

ARTIST STATEMENT

To the local tribes in Vietnam, water from the river is believed to be both mysterious and scary. In a sense, water and local power are inextricably linked. The art installation is based on the local beliefs and the poetic potential of the river. The artist uses a remote control to lower the camera and film the effects. As they are lowered into the water, the images are obstructed and distorted. The distinctive sound of the water adds to the overall effect. In the work, the artist reflects on Vietnam's natural beauty and heritage, emphasizing the interaction between nature and human culture.
"Who needs to know my location? Stangers do, outsiders, others. Location is always about others. It’s about me to them. It’s about them to me. It’s about us to each other."

"I am somewhere here is somewhere. Anyone outside of me, an outsider, an existent one, is assuming my position and location. The others, the others."

(Excerpted from "The Case for Anonymity: About Prospects")
Chen Qiuxuan 吳千樂 and Ouyang Jiebian 覇陳潔

Special thanks to Wen (writer of ‘Rainy’) for the safety guidance during the shooting process. Special thanks to Yi for helping up in post-production matters.

Wong Wizanne 汪姿恩

Thanks to my parents, grandparents as well as my friends, Shekten, Roland and Kyle for supporting me in my work. At the same time, thanks Scott and my mates for helping me with this work.

Choi Kel Chevron, Mike 蔡凱賢

Mum and Dad, the awesome Vietnam posters and four guides, all the members in thisitty, Scott, and my friends Aay, Ariz, Conra, Harith and others that possibly received, thank you guys.

Tian Macledr 卢美天

Thanks to: Ann Chih, CK Cheung 陈星荣, Jen Chen, Leong, Scott Russell.
Program Executive Producer: 監製蘇浩華
Scott Heeles
Legibility and Communications Coordinator: 執行助理總編輯
Wicky Ye
Equipment Coordinator: 裝備總監
Tian Macduff, Ph
Guest Artist and Expedition Assistant: 嘉賓藝術家及行駛助理
Assistante Carlier:
Jackie, Office Assistant: 行政助理
Emily Je Tsai Kei
Catalogue Writer: 書籍編審編輯
Scott Heeles
Catalogue Editor: 書籍編審編輯
Lisa Maria Thorsen
Translation: 翻譯
Lam Chi Yip, Ph
Translation edited by: 譯本編輯
Noel Prasad Mel San
Catalogue Design: 封面設計設計
Dee Fai Chung
Website Design: 網頁設計
Tilting & Design: http://www.tiltingu.com

For Further Information: 詳情請參閱網址
https://www.sva.cuhk.edu.hk

All images and text in this catalogue, exhibition and website are the property of the School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong, 2015. 本目錄冊內一切設計、圖片與文字版權為香港城市大學2015所有。
We encourage schools, media and organisations to spread the message of environmental awareness presented through this program. Please contact the university’s Communications and Public Relations office for materials to support your efforts.
香港城市大學、學校、媒體與機構發佈將宣傳環保。為鼓勵政府、學校及公眾機構發佈將宣傳環保。為鼓勵政府、學校及公眾機構
IN APPRECIATION

The Vitamix Casas exhibition and edition here was made possible through the hard work of an outstanding team of education and support professionals and deeply thank everyone involved for their support.

Only one tour operator is placed into these cases and we were very fortunate that they shared our passion for preserving the special social "Quilts Activity Teams." We are excited to be part of that team and "Quilts Activity Teams" and "Rice" activity in the community. The dedication of these excellent professionals makes this program possible.

The executive committee of this edition were among the first to have welcomed the "Quilts Activity Teams" and "Rice" edition. They have removed that the edition when "Rice" activity on the next level, reach the next level, and brush off the "Quilts Activity Teams." Thank you all and may they have a fine "Quilts Activity Teams."
The Extreme Environmental Program is committed to the preservation and understanding of the world’s most endangered ecosystems. Nothing is taken or left behind. We encourage readers to share this catalogue to help raise awareness and support future initiatives.
FADE TO BLACK
EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS: THE VIETNAM CAVES

極地計劃：越南岩洞探索之旅