

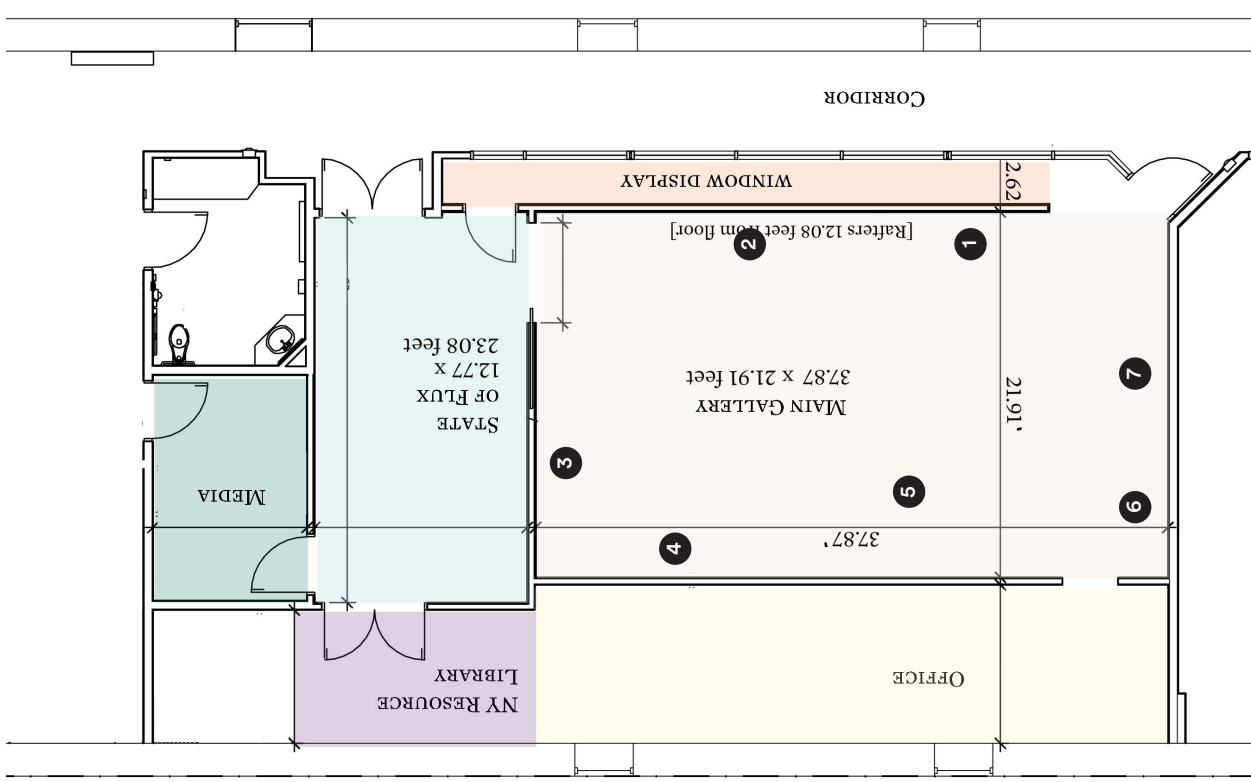
***I heard there is a party***

**Jennifer Chan, Fang Di, Marisa Kriangwiwat Holmes,  
Will Kwan, Alvin Luong, Midi Onodera, and Karen Tam**

**Curated by Henry Heng Lu**

**Main Gallery**

**June 10 to July 22 2023**



**MODERN FUEL**  
**ARTIST-RUN CENTRE**  
 Suite 305 - 370 King St. W.  
 Kingston, ON K7L 2X4



- 1** Fang Di's *Triumph of the Skies*
- 2** Midi Onodera's *Nobody Knows*
- 3** Karen Tam's *Karaoke Sessions*
- 4** Alvin Luong's *Utopia Social*
- 5** Jennifer Chan's *Body Party*
- 6** Will Kwan's *Cultural Revolu-*
- 7** Marisa Kriangwiwat Holmes's

## ***I heard there is a party***

Jennifer Chan, Fang Di, Marisa Kriangwiwat Holmes, Will Kwan, Alvin Luong, Midi Onodera, Karen Tam

*Join the party of your dreams: dance party, birthday party, tea party, makeshift party, your local political party (that no one votes for). Party like there is no tomorrow!*

***I heard there is a party is an experimental and curious multimedia project that offers views on expanding and challenging the concept of party*** as a form of social interaction, as well as representations of a political entity or a belief system. First initiated through wordplay, and then activated by a composition of moving images and installation works, the project foregrounds and inquires into the cultural and political implications of *party* and its intricacies in the context of a contemporary society. In this proposition, there is *party* for one person, for politically engaged individuals, for racialized bodies, and for culturally isolated communities. It sets out to develop new possibilities: *Party* is for everyone, tangible or intangible; it's a call and response.

***I heard there is a party includes:*** **Will Kwan's** *Cultural Revolutions* that draws a parallel between historic events and rave culture; **Karen Tam's** *Karaoke Sessions* that invites multi-lingual performances of old favourites; *Utopia Social Club* by **Alvin Luong** offering an EDM version of the Internationale; **Fang Di's** *Triumph of the Skies* making wishes into faces for three flight attendants; **Marisa Kriangwiwat Holmes's** *Harry* brings back the memory of the ever-lasting Y2K; **Midi Onodera's** *Nobody Knows* embraces solitude for moments of the self; and, **Jennifer Chan's** installation *Body Party* that puts the party where it longs to be – in bed.

### **Credits:**

Curated by Henry Heng Lu, through Call Again, a nomadic initiative/collective committed to creating space for contemporary diasporic artistic practices in the context of North America and beyond.

This exhibition is a continuation of the 2022 exhibition, *If this is the party I want, you may not be part of it*, at Hamilton Artists Inc. and a new iteration of the 2018 exhibition, *OMG, it's a Party!*, curated by Henry Heng Lu and Winnie Wu, at Vtape, Toronto.

## **If this is the party I want, you may not be part of it**

Henry Heng Lu

*Join the party of your dreams: dance party, birthday party, tea party, makeshift party, or your local political party (that no one votes for). Party like there is no tomorrow!*

Before you say “huh?”, I would like to let you know that this exhibition is about being part of something, or situating oneself. As a person of the diasporas, I know this searching desire for a sense of being or belonging all too well. As someone who had embarrassing dance moves when younger and did not know how to *party*, I identify so much with those awkwardly dancing alone in the corner of a nightclub – a drink in hand, shaking their head, and trying extremely hard to catch up with the beats of pounding electronic dance music.

The word *party* is ostensibly associated with joy, but, to me, it also goes beyond the act of gathering to have fun, or letting loose. The thrust of it is how we interact with one another and co-exist; and, in the context of this exhibition, how to party by way of misidentifying the idea of *party* intentionally. Taking up different spots of the gallery space, the dazzling videos and films that populate the composition of the exhibition make statements of their own – whether it’s political, nostalgic, cultural, or nothing of a particular agenda. This exhibition is absolutely experimental and curious, intending to expand on the concept of *party* as a form of social interaction, as well as representations of a political entity or a belief system.

*Utopia Social Club* by Alvin Luong presents an EDM version of “The Internationale,” a 19th-century left-wing anthem composed by Eugène Pottier and Pierre De Geyter that has ever intertwined with the socialist movement. Playing on affect, the soundtrack resonates with an imposition of a populist politician.

Will Kwan’s *Cultural Revolutions* draws a parallel between the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in China that secured former chairman Mao Zedong’s power and influence over the country and western rave culture. The two maniacal “revolutions” radiate a similar level of energy, as two *almost* religious manifestations.

There is a certain level of comfort I hope visitors can find in Karen Tam’s *Karaoke Sessions*, a collection of well-known Western classic tunes sung in Chinese languages paired with imagery of landscape, strangers, seagulls, and flowers. The diasporic sensibilities embedded in the work give it an infinite power to translate (no pun intended) something strange yet familiar and make space for a culturally-specific sonic field that transcends linguistic barriers. Marisa Kriangwiwat Holmes’s *Harry* (2020), a snapshot of a *Time* Magazine with Harry Potter on the cover, brings about memories of a moment in time interwoven with pop culture and stardom that defined a whole decade.

There is no shortage of quirky and fun representations in the assembly of works: Fang Di’s *Triumph of the Skies* depicts a party with three doll-faced flight attendants who aim to save innocent lives by consuming a poison that the government wanted to transport on a plane and later use to kill. A glorious state of bliss and an edge of raunch come hand in hand to make visible a counter-authority agency – achieving a crushing victory by sabotaging the government’s plan.

Midi Onodera's *Nobody Knows* embraces solitude for moments of the self, illustrated by a video shot with toy cameras and a calming tune. The flow of thought dangles within random imagery (who doesn't love the kitten that made a cameo?!) and creates a unique contrast with the big sounds running through the exhibition site.

The exhibition is also an attempt to give form to some of the minor feelings one has when situated within a larger structure that favours the majority, identified by Cathy Park Hong as "the racialized range of emotions that are negative, dysphoric, and therefore untelegraphic."<sup>1</sup> Karen Tam's *Karaoke Sessions* not only serve tunes, but also pokes fun at so-called assimilation. Jennifer Chan's mattress installation *Body Party* is a collage of pictures of men's naked torsos that she found online. Literally, one can lie in a sea of men and feel awkward, sexy, or depressed, to insinuate gender dynamics and masculinity.

*I heard there is a party* consciously makes inquiries into the cultural and political implications of *party* and its intricacies in the context of contemporary society. Engaging with these works, I search for answers about becoming that may or may not be there – perhaps this is really a "to be, or not to be" question? How do we navigate our states of being with our own agencies?

I imagine the exhibition as a site where one does not necessarily know how to interact with others. Each work can be imagined as a person on a dance floor, and each of them has their own awareness. The show ponders a range of possible identities and actions within different social backgrounds and concerns: there is *party* for one person, for politically engaged individuals, for racialized bodies, and for culturally isolated communities. *Party* is for everyone, tangible or intangible; it's a call and response, set out to foster new possibilities for co-existence.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cathy Park Hong, "Stand Up," in *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*, (New York : One World, 2020), page 60.

## Biographies

### *I heard there is a party*

**Jennifer Chan** is a video and new media artist and web developer based in Toronto. She makes videos, installations, websites, and objects as social commentary on sex, success, love, equality, suffering and happiness. Her work has been featured in Rhizome, LEAP, Modern Painter, Dazed, Sleek, Kunstkritik, VVORK, and ARTFORUM. She recently completed a commission for New Forms festival (Vancouver) and had a solo show at Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba (Brandon). Her videos are represented by VTape (Toronto) and Videotage (Hong Kong). She has had solo presentations at Galleri CC (Malmo), Images Festival (Toronto), Future Gallery (Berlin) and Transmediale (Berlin).

**Fang Di** is a Chinese artist who is currently working in Shenzhen, China. His work discusses racism and social hierarchy through studies on news and political affairs. By switching in between identities like a chameleon, he moves smoothly among different social classes, absorbing and resolving people's desire and wisdom gained through migration with his sensitivity. He often uses various artistic languages to explore the entanglement and meaning of urban life, and bravely discovers how special groups are defined under globalization and nationalism in the inverted reality, which has become an inevitable social fracture today.

Fang Di has exhibited at many solo shows: including The Golden Bowl at Vanguard Gallery (Shanghai,2019), DÀ QI DÀ LUÒ at Vanguard Gallery (Shanghai,2017), Lost in Shenzhen presented by Jiu Society at 33 Art Space (Shenzhen,2016), HIT ME! at the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts (Wilmington,2013). His group shows include Macalline Art Center (Beijing,2022), Museum of Modern Shopping(London,2022), Guangdong Times Museum(Guangzhou,2021),Kunstverein in Hamburg(Hamburg,2021), OCAT (Shenzhen,2020), Kulturforum Staatliche Museen zu Berlin(Berlin,2019), Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (Manchester,2019), Shanghai Biennale (Shanghai,2018), Julia Stoschek Collection(Düsseldorf,2018), Shenzhen & Hong Kong Bi-city Biennale of Urbanism Architecture (Shenzhen,2017). Fang's films have been screened at the Chicago Underground Film Festival (Chicago, 2014) and Pantalla Fantasma (Basque Country, 2014). He is a recipient of the New Star Award (2017), Toby Devan Lewis Fellowship (2013), and finalist of Huayu Youth Award (2018) and Yishu 8 Award (2018). And he has been a resident artist at the Djerassi Resident Artists Program (California,2014) and Storefront for Art and Architecture (New York,2013). Fang received a BFA from Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art. He is also co-founder of the Jiu Society.

**Marisa Kriangwiwat Holmes** (b. 1991) is a Hong Kong-born artist based in "Vancouver, Canada." Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include Infinity Ball, Unit 17 (2022); My Owns, Project Native Informant, London (2021); Everything Leaks, Polygon Gallery, North Vancouver (2020); Open Heart Run Off, Sibling, Toronto (2019); Keep Your Eyes On Your Prizes, Calaboose, Montreal and ddmmyyy, Artspeak, Vancouver (both 2018). Select group exhibitions have been held at the National Gallery of

Canada (2022); Royal Academy Antwerp, Access Gallery & Centre A, Vancouver (all 2017). In 2020, Holmes was longlisted for the New Generation Photography Award from the National Gallery of Canada and received the award in 2022. She was the winner of the second annual Lind Prize in 2017. Holmes graduated from ECUAD with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography & a Curatorial minor in 2017.

**Will Kwan** is a Hong Kong-born, Toronto-based artist and educator. His artistic practice examines the diverse ways that hegemony is produced through economic systems and cultural narratives.

Kwan received his MFA from Columbia University and from 2004-2006 was a research fellow at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht, The Netherlands. He has been a full-time faculty member at UofT since 2007, teaching courses in interdisciplinary art practice and time-based media at the University of Toronto Scarborough and serving as a faculty member in the Master of Visual Studies Program at the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design at the St. George campus.

Kwan's work is held in the permanent collections of M+ in Hong Kong, the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Doris McCarthy Gallery at the University of Toronto Scarborough, and Canada Council Art Bank. His work has been exhibited at triennial and biennial exhibitions in Folkestone, Liverpool, Montreal, and Venice, and at venues including MoMA PS1, Art in General, and the Cooper Union in New York, the Zendai Museum of Modern Art in Shanghai, the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, the ZKM in Karlsruhe, the MAC VAL in Vitry-sur-Seine, the CAC in Vilnius, the Polish National Museum in Poznan, the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and The Power Plant in Toronto, and The Western Front and Centre A in Vancouver. Kwan has been an artist-in-residence at the Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto in Biella, the Duolun Museum of Modern Art in Shanghai, the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art in Manchester, and the Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito.

**Alvin Luong** works with stories of human migration, land, and dialogues from diasporic working class communities to create artworks that reflect upon historical development and its intimate effects on the lives of people. His focus is expressed through videos, photographs, and sculptures.

Luong has shown and screened artworks in places including the Images Festival (Toronto), Boers-Li Gallery (Beijing), Gudskul (Jakarta), and The Polygon Gallery (Vancouver). The artist has held research and resident artist appointments at the Inside-Out Art Museum (Beijing), HB Station Contemporary Art Research Center (Guangzhou), the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), and Gallery TPW (Toronto). The artist's works have been acquired and shown by The Rockefeller Foundation (New York City).

**Midi Onodera** is an award-winning filmmaker and media artist who has been making films and videos for more than 35 years. She has produced over 25 independent shorts, ranging from 16mm film to digital video to toy camera formats. In 2018 she received the Governor General's Award in Visual and

Media Arts. *Skin Deep* (1995), her theatrical feature, screened internationally at festivals including the Rotterdam International Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival. Her film *The Displaced View* (1988) was nominated for Best Documentary at the Gemini Awards.

Her experimental narrative project *ALPHAGIRLS* (2002) was the first Canadian interactive performance art DVD, and since 2006 she has made over 500 vidoodles (defined as bite-sized 30-second to 2-minute video doodles). From 2006–07 she published one a day for 365 days and has since released a video project each year, addressing themes of language, media, politics and everyday life. In 2017 she published an interactive narrative developed from her experience in Afghanistan as a Canadian Forces Artist in 2010.

Onodera's work is held in collections around the world, and she has given lectures and workshops at galleries and institutions across North America and Japan. She currently teaches and continues to work on experimental media projects in Toronto.

**Karen Tam** is a Tiohtià:ke/Montreal-based artist and curator whose research focuses on the constructions and imaginations of cultures and communities through her installations in which she recreates Chinese restaurants, karaoke lounges, opium dens, curio shops and other sites of cultural encounters. Since 2000, she has exhibited her work and participated in residencies in North America, Europe and China, including at the Victoria and Albert Museum, He Xiangning Art Museum, and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. She has received grants and fellowships from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts du Québec, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Karen Tam was the winner of the Prix Giverny Capital 2021 awarded by the Fondation Giverny pour l'art contemporain and was a finalist for the 2017 Prix Louis-Comtois, a finalist for the 2016 Prix en art actuel from the Musée national des beaux-arts de Québec, and long-listed for the 2010 and 2016 Sobey Art Award.

Karen Tam holds an MFA in Sculpture (School of the Art Institute of Chicago) and a PhD in Cultural Studies (Goldsmiths, University of London). She is the Adjunct Curator at Griffin Art Projects and is a contributor to the publication *Asia Collections outside Asia: Questioning Artefacts, Cultures and Identities in the Museum* (2020) edited by Iside Carbone and Helen Wang, and to Alison Hulme's (ed.) book, *The Changing Landscape of China's Consumerism* (2014). Her work is in private, corporate and museum collections in Canada, the United States, Ireland and the United Kingdom. She is represented by Galerie Hugues Charbonneau.

This year Karen Tam is preparing the launch of three publications: *Whose Chinatown? Examining Chinatown Gazes in Art, Archives, and Collections* published by Projects, *With wings like clouds hung from the sky* co-published by Richmond Art Gallery, The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Varley Art Gallery, and *SHEEN-wah-ZREE* edited by Ariane de Blois, co-published by Plein Sud, Contemporary Art Exhibition Center in Longueuil, and *EXPRESSION* Exhibition Centre in Saint-Hyacinthe.



**Henry Heng Lu** is a curator, artist, and consultant based in Vancouver. Currently, he is the inaugural Gallery Manager for the new Chinese Canadian Museum in Vancouver that is slated to open on July 1, 2023. He was the Executive Director/Curator at Centre A, and was Artistic Director for Modern Fuel. He is co-founder and curator of Call Again, a mobile initiative/collective committed to creating space for contemporary diasporic artistic practices and to expanding the notion of Asian art in the context of Canada and beyond, through exhibitions, screenings, and roundtables. His writings have been published by Canadian Art, ArtAsiaPacific, Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art, C Magazine, Richmond Art Gallery, PLATFORM Gallery, ArchDaily, OCAT Shenzhen, and Gardiner Museum. In 2018, Lu won an Ontario Association of Art Galleries (OAAG) Exhibition of the Year Award for his curatorial project, Far and Near: the Distance(s) between Us, at Justina M. Barnicke Gallery. Lu holds a Master of Visual Studies from the University of Toronto.

He was on the jury for the 2020 Sobey Art Award at the National Gallery of Canada. He has been a member of the City of Vancouver's Public Art Committee since 2020, and has served as a juror for municipal and provincial arts councils, as well as international prizes.