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《物盡源起》曾敏富作品展
Where the End is the Beginning

Matthew Tsang Man Fu Solo Exhibition

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Between Beginnings and Ends

Tsang's exhibition, *Where the End is the Beginning*, reminds us of the cyclic experiences we encounter through life, sometimes as grand epochal narratives and at other times, as incidental, personal occurrences. His artworks speak of ends and beginnings as rotational forces, one needing the other, one arriving as the other exits in circulatory acts of codependence; a continuum where it becomes impossible and even improbable, to fathom where this end or beginning which Tsang is interested in, might lie.

Tsang ambitiously opens up issues relating to memory, time and space; areas well traversed by artists throughout generations and across cultures. It is in the patina of surface and charred remnants, fragments and the durational processes his materials endure, that we are left to ponder our own philosophical existence. For these are the very conditions Tsang creates for the viewer's deliberation, where form and content is extrinsically linked to the process and outcome. Whether it is the marking of slow melting ice, the singed foil, which is used to wrap his objects before they are incinerated, or the charcoal forms that remain, we are left unambiguously to contemplate our own sense of failure and endurance.

Tsang's project is poetically complex and deeply humanist. Ultimately it is the time and space between the binaries of lightness and heaviness, dark and light, remembering and forgetting, fast and slow, and beginnings and ends, that Tsang's project traverses and interrogates, pointing to a state of hopefulness and giving agency for us to act out with shared responsibility.

Rhett D'Costa

Lecturer, School of Art
RMIT University
Australia

Encounters with Change

Encountering the exhibition titled *Where the End is the Beginning* by Matthew Tsang evokes responses that challenge all the viewers' senses. There is an intensity and physical prescience in the installation and documentation of the work that takes time to experience and assimilate into our consciousness.

The burnt materiality of the constructions, the ambiguous scale of the video documentations and museological staging of charred objects combine to present a theatrical and metaphysical correlation with how we experience time passing both in the external and observed physical world as well as internally - subconsciously and bodily.

As I watch the video of black ink cubes dissolving and reappearing endlessly in a conscious and deliberate grid formation, I am reminded of the relationship between ordered thought, organized society and the birth and death of individuals who as humans are eternally similar and inevitably linked with each other over successive generations in time. The relationship to the history of drawing and mark making in this work makes the work timeless and mysterious.

The burnt chairs and molds of feet refer to the body and are funereal and ancient in their fossil like preservation. Again time passing is a theme in the work and we, as viewers, become participants in the inevitable urgency of recognizing our own mortality.

A wave of burnt silver foil pieces hover across the room like an ancient wing, moving slightly with each breeze and

movement of the viewer. In its meticulous presentation and deliberate construction this part of the installation manages to balance formal and geometric Western and Eastern artistic and philosophical traditions into a dissipating naturalistic viewing form.

The slowly melting disc of ice and its associated shadows in the dark room reference the universe in its endlessness and unknowability. This is where the real grit in the show is. The beauty and the fear in the works is that the more we know about our existence the less we truly understand it. *Where the End is the Beginning* explores the continual and inevitable changes in space and time as we all move through life searching for wisdom and acceptance of all our eventual collective and individual fates. Matthew Tsang's works elegantly examine the big questions about how we may acknowledge our mortality whilst recognizing our rebirthing each and every moment of our lives.

Dr. Phil Edwards

Lecturer, School of Art
RMIT University
Australia

Ouroboros

The word *ouroboros* is from Ancient Greek and means ‘tail-eating serpent’. As a symbol, it is depicted by the bizarre image of a snake eating its own tail, creating a circle. Across different cultures and ages, this has come to symbolize a universal theme about the cyclical nature of destruction and creation.

I met the artist in 2014. Introducing me to his artworks, he explained that he had been experimenting with process and materials whilst reflecting on his own personal experiences. At first glance, his work struck me as somewhat pessimistic with its dark tone and what I initially saw as a focus on the decaying aspects of transformation.

Nevertheless, there was some essence in his work that moved me deeply. Beyond their melancholy, I could feel the artist’s powerful obsession with the relentless changes we all face in life, and his firm belief that destruction is by no means an end but part of the process of change which leads to creation of the new. I was keen to share this paradoxical and yet insightful experience with a wider community, especially those who feel lost at the crossroads of change.

It was only whilst working on the exhibition that I was referred to the idea and imagery of *ouroboros*; the title ‘where the end is the beginning’ had already been chosen. It seemed perfectly fitting that there already existed an ancient symbol that so aptly describes the underlying context behind the works that are showcased here.

Matthew Tsang’s artworks are no doubt visually attractive, but I invite you to take the additional step of focusing on the deeper sensations they provoke in you. I hope that the exhibition will leave you reflecting on the changes that are happening around you.

On a personal note, this is the first exhibition I have curated and I must thank all the teachers and friends who have helped me to achieve this. When this exhibition ends on 28 August 2016, another episode of my journey in art will begin – *ouroboros*.

Cordelia Tam

Curator

“Ouroboros”（銜尾蛇）一詞源於希臘。作為一個符號，Ouroboros 描繪一條巨蛇正在吃著自己尾巴的奇怪現象；代表一個能夠跨越文化和時代，象徵破壞與創造循環不息的普世主題。

我於2014年認識這次展覽的藝術家。當他向我介紹其作品時，他解釋他正在嘗試以過程和物料來反映個人經歷。初看其作品時，作品的灰暗調子最令我感到震撼，而強調破壞的過程，亦讓我留下消極的印象。

不過，這些作品有一種可以深深打動我的元素。撇開作品沉鬱的調子，我注意到藝術家著迷於人生持續的轉變，以及深信破壞不但不是終結，而是一個轉變的過程，最終引致新事物的創造。我非常希望能夠與更多人分享藝術家這些既矛盾又有意思的經驗，特別是那些正處於人生十字路口的朋友。

展覽名為《物盡源起》，道盡作品背後的含意。當我策劃是次展覽時，有人向我介紹“Ouroboros” 這個符號，令我訝異於古人的想像力和智慧。”Ouroboros” 作為符號非常簡單，但卻深刻反映人類和世界的生生不息，更勝文字的表達。

我相信藝術家亦曾追隨古人的步伐，在創作過程中探索循環不息這個普世主題。這些作品無疑十分吸引視線，但我亦希望大家可以進一步注意到作品在大家心中所留下的印象，更希望展覽能夠讓大家思考和認清身邊的轉變。

在個人層面，這是我第一個策劃的展覽。2016年8月26日之後，這個展覽將會完結，而我亦會展開生命歷程的另一章。在此，我希望對老師、同事和朋友表示感謝。他們的鼓勵和支持，令這個展覽由可能變成真實。

譚若蘭

策展人

Where the End is the Beginning

Wooden chairs transformed into fragile charcoal no longer able to hold any weight; delicate foil fragments seared with burnt patterns drifting in space; a block of ice melting as a video of burning embers plays across its surface. In these and other artworks, Matthew Tsang Man Fu shows us the slow process of not just decay and ruin, but change and regeneration.

The works explore ways to metaphorically represent the passage of time and human life experience through the transformation of material states; wood to charcoal, charcoal to ash, ice to water, water to ice. There is an energy and vitality contained and unleashed in the processes of burning, melting and freezing. So while the material remains may seem at first glance to be lifeless, on closer inspection these objects are still actively undergoing the process of change but in a fundamentally longer geological time span, one in which we can place the scale and melancholy of our lives and lifetimes.

Kay Mei Ling Beadman

Curator

《物盡源起》

木椅轉化成脆弱的炭，不能再承受重量；輕巧的錫紙片烙上燒焦的痕跡，在空中飄蕩；一段關於燃燒餘燼的錄像，投影在融化中的冰塊。曾敏富透過以上不同的作品，不單呈現出一種腐朽與毀壞，更包含著轉變與再生的緩慢過程。

作者以探索物料的轉化過程—從木到炭，炭到灰；冰到水，水到冰一來比喻光陰的流逝與變幻的人生。物料盛存的能量與活力，通通透過火燒、融化和結冰等過程釋放出來。所以，乍看這些殘餘物件時，可能感覺欠缺了生命力；但再仔細觀察，會發現物件仍然在變化中，只是轉入了一個更漫長的時空、一個可媲美地質學上的時間跨度；一個與我們生活息息相關的時間跨度。

Kay Mei Ling Beadman

策展人

W o r k 作 品

Before Collapse 陷落. 前





Before Collapse #2, 2015
installation,
charcoal objects
dimensions variable

陷落.前 #2, 2015
裝置
炭物件
尺寸不一

Before Collapse #2 detail 陷落.前 #2,局部





Before Collapse #2, 2016
installation
charcoal objects
dimensions variable

陷落. 前 #2, 2016
裝置
炭物件
尺寸不一



P. 29-35
Before Collapse #2 details
陷落. 前 #2, 局部











Time Drift, 2015
installation
burnt aluminum foil
dimensions variable

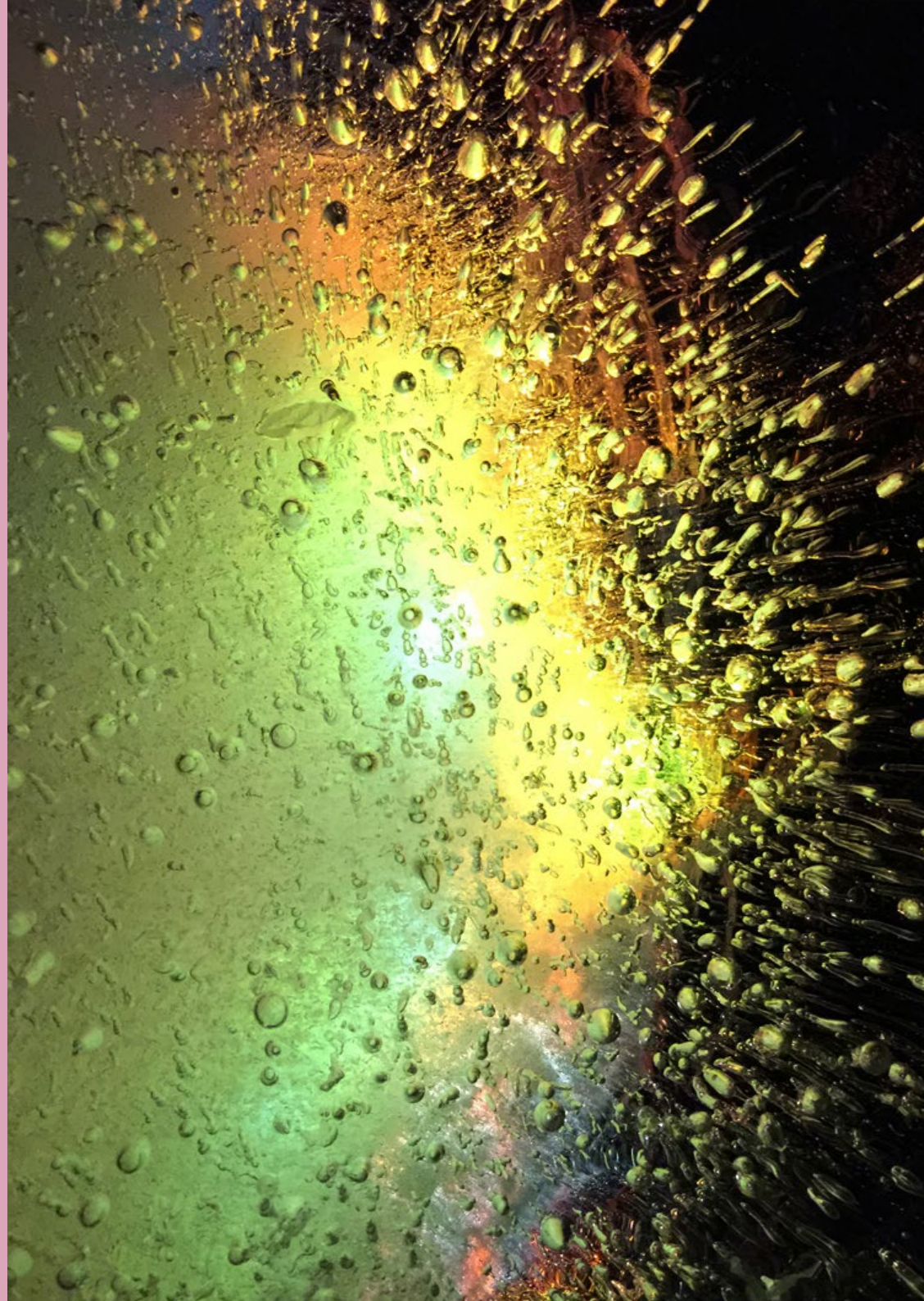
漂流, 2015
裝置
燒焦的錫紙
尺寸不一

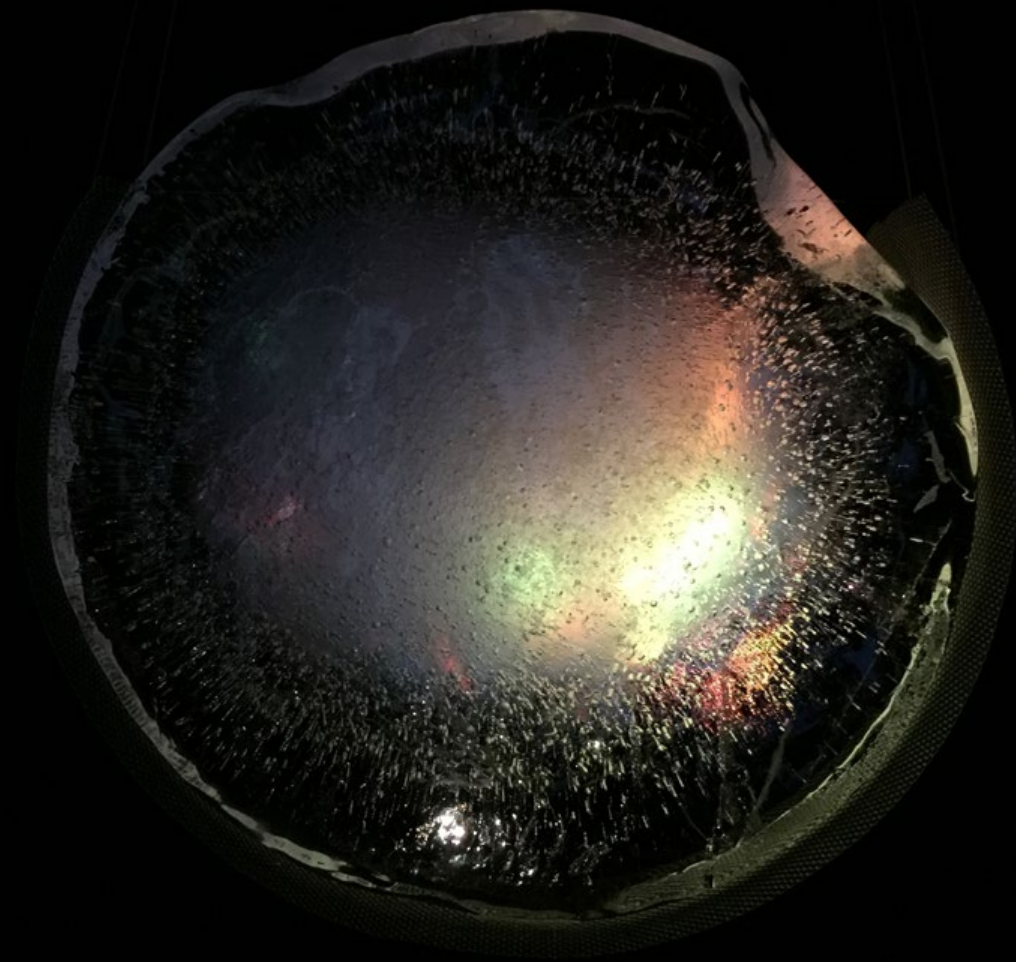
P. 40-43
Time Drift details
漂流, 局部







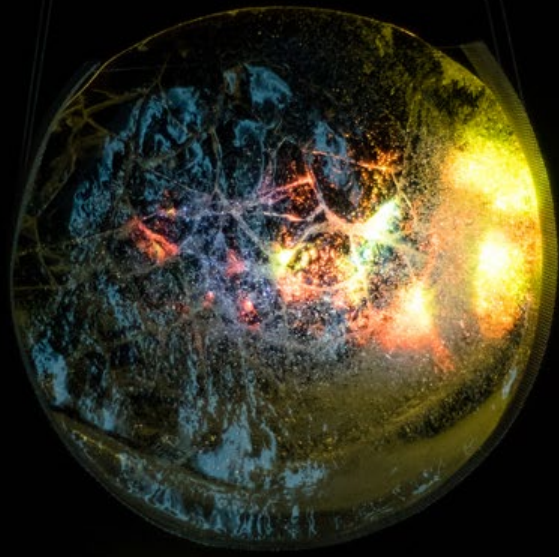




Ice Embers, 2016
installation
ice, video 00:38
dimensions variable

冰燼，2016
裝置
冰、錄像 00:38
尺寸不一

Ice Embers details 冰燼，局部





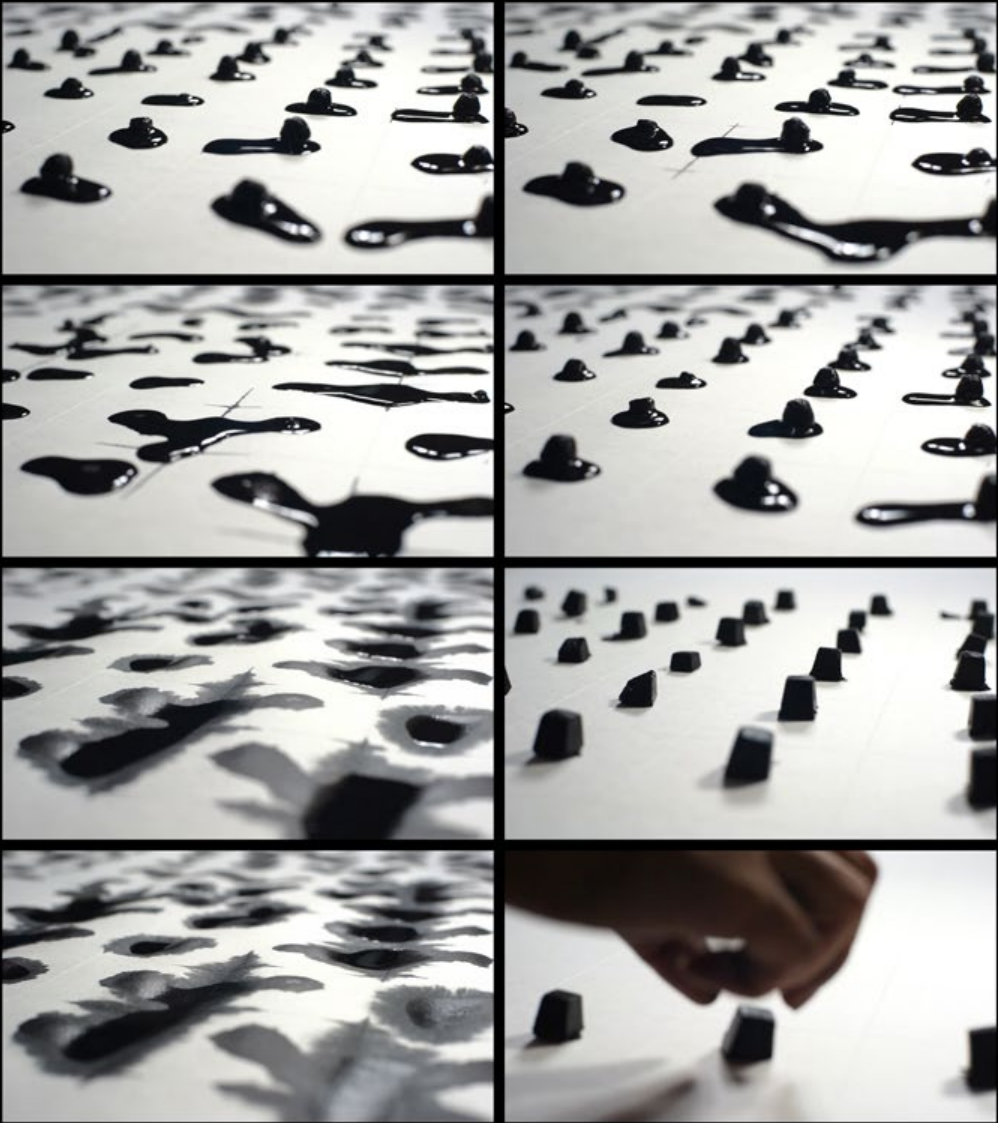
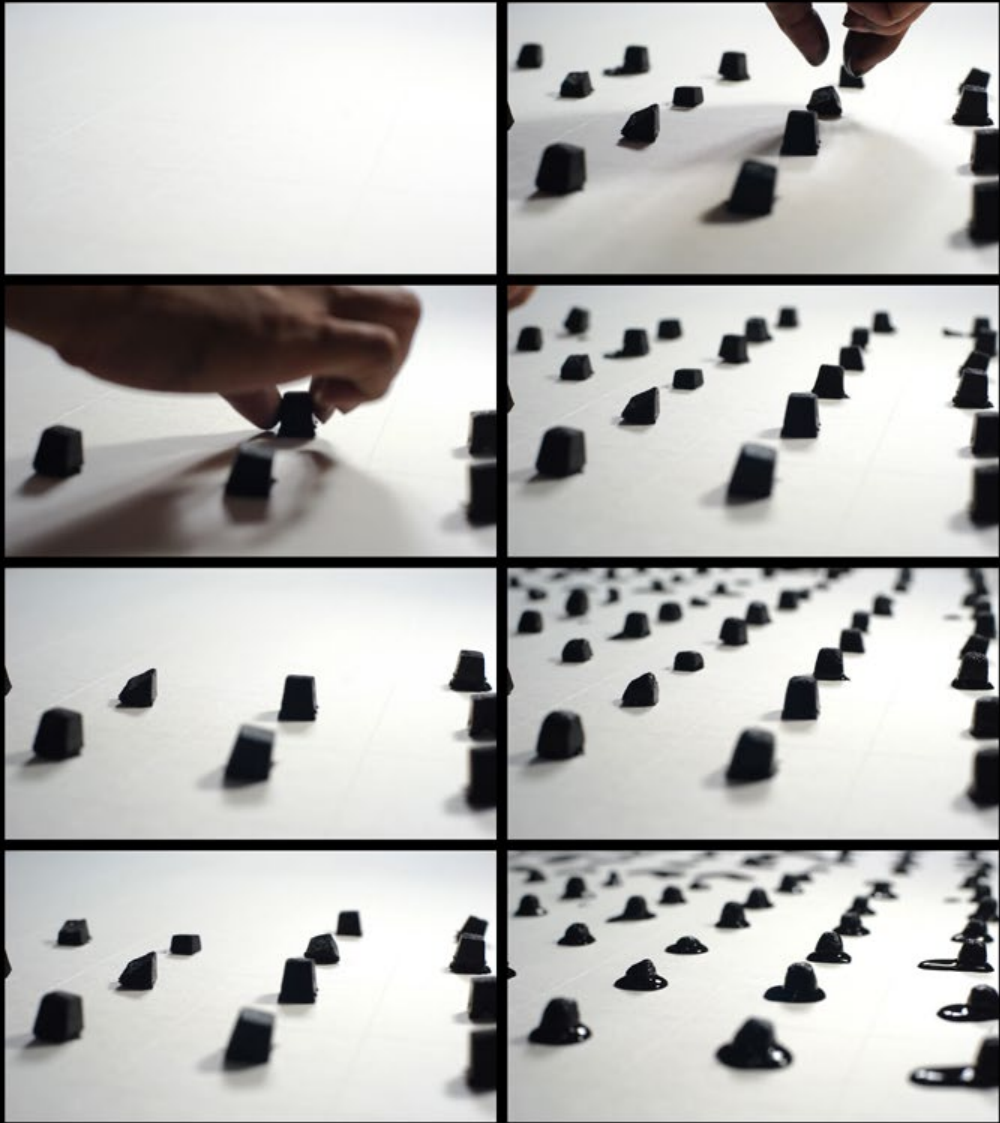




Black Ice Dissolve #1, 2015
video, 06:13

墨化#1, 2015
錄像, 06:13

Black Ice Dissolve #1 video stills 墨化#1，錄像截圖





Matthew Tsang Man Fu

曾敏富

Matthew Tsang Man Fu (b. 1973) is a Hong Kong visual artist. He completed his BFA in 2008 and MFA in 2015, both with RMIT, Australia. His works investigate the relationship between time, change, process and materiality. He works mainly with a variety of natural materials including wood, ice, water and wax and utilises processes including burning, melting and freezing. His artworks are presented in installation, video, photographs and as sculptural objects. He has participated in exhibitions in Hong Kong and Australia. In 2010 he was invited to join the East Kowloon Art and Cultural Initiation Scheme as the tutor of the sculpture course. Since 2012 he has been a lecturer at Hong Kong Art School.

曾敏富，73年生，香港視覺藝術家，分別於2008年及2015年獲頒澳洲墨爾本皇家理工大學藝術學士和碩士學位。曾氏的作品探索時間、轉變、過程和物質之間的關係，主要運用不同的天然物料，例如紙、木、冰、水、蠟，並利用火燒、融化和凍結等過程來創作，再以裝置、錄像、攝影和雕塑等方式來呈現。曾敏富曾參與香港和澳洲的展覽，亦於2010年獲邀擔任《東九龍文化藝術播種計劃》雕塑課程的導師。曾氏於2012年開始成為香港藝術學院導師。

Acknowledgements 鳴謝

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