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### *Islands Off the Shore of Asia*

HONG KONG, September 17, 2014 – Para Site and Spring Workshop today announced their groundbreaking joint exhibition, *Islands off the Shore of Asia*, which opens 27 September and runs through 7 December, 2014. The show, which features several artists including Ming Wong, James T. Hong, Julieta Aranda and Rosa Barba, can be viewed at Spring Workshop, located in the Wong Chuk Hang industrial neighborhood of Hong Kong.

This innovative exhibition is based on the ideological, historical, mystical, and fictional interpretations of the remote and largely uninhabited islands claimed by different nations across East Asia. In recent years, these small islets have become the focus of growing nationalism in the region and vehicles through which countries are choosing to project national pride and power.

A diverse panel of international artists has contributed to the exhibition including Julieta Aranda (Mexico/Germany), Rosa Barba (Italy), Alvaro Barrios (Colombia), James T. Hong (Taiwan), Katsushika Hokusai (Japan), Takiji Kobayashi (Japan), Charles Lim (Singapore), Pak Sheung Chuen (Hong Kong), Howie Tsui (Hong Kong/Canada), MAP Office (Hong Kong), Ming Wong (Singapore) in collaboration with Thomas Tsang/Dehow Projects (USA), and Zheng Guogu (China).

Curators for the show are Cosmin Costinas, Executive Director/Curator of Para Site and Inti Guerrero, Associate Artistic Director-Curator of TEOR/ética, Costa Rica.

The work of featured artist and filmmaker, James T. Hong, directly addresses the theme of discord among nations in Asia. He personally made several unsuccessful journeys to reach some of the disputed isles, including an attempt to land on Diaoyutai Island, which both China and Japan claim. In each case, authorities turned him away. Hong was finally able to reach Dokdo Island, currently in dispute between Korea and Japan, and used it as the location for his most recent film, which is featured in the exhibition.

Berlin-based Singaporean artist Ming Wong is back in Hong Kong for his second Spring/Para Site research residency in September. He will complete a new commission based on research carried out in the first residency (December 2013 to February 2014), focused on Cantonese Opera and Science Fiction cinema. He is working with Thomas Tsang, Assistant Professor of the Department of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong and Founder of

Dehow Projects, to develop a theatrical-film-set structure for a "SciFi-Cantonese Opera". The work references Tarkovsky's Soviet sci-fi classic film, SOLARIS, which deals with failed human attempts to communicate with alien intelligence.

*Islands off the Shore of Asia* represents the second phase of the widely acclaimed exhibition, *A Journal of the Plague Year: Fear, Ghosts, Rebels, SARS, Leslie, and the Hong Kong Story*, which last year launched at Para Site and is now showing in an expanded version at the Arko Art Centre in Seoul, where it opened 30 August and will run through 16 November 2014.

For this exhibition, Spring and Para Site teamed up to use sci fi and fiction to explore the current ideological turn towards nationalism and confrontation in the region. While the previous show focused on Hong Kong's identity in the context of the SARS epidemic and the city's near shut down in 2003, the current exhibit explores the region's small, largely uninhabited islands, which are effectively invisible on maps but are now the object of territorial claims by every single nation in East Asia.

Costinas commented, "The show explores these small islands, sometimes referred to as "insignificant rocks" but increasingly seen as symbols of national pride – and insecurity. Inti Guerrero and I see this phenomenon as a dangerous sign of the future and hope the exhibition ignites a conversation about why these islands have taken on such an important role in regional politics. Is it chance or are there deeper reasons, rooted in myth and cultural tradition, which attract the passion of so many to these previously invisible landmasses?"

Mimi Brown, founder and director of Spring adds, "Since opening two years ago, Spring Workshop has been delighted to collaborate with Para Site on many projects and artist residencies, ranging from the performance program of Taiping Tianguo to Ming Wong's ongoing research residency. This upcoming exhibition will be our biggest partnership yet, and we look forward to contributing to Para Site's excellent program in this way."

*About "A Journal of the Plague Year: Fear, Ghosts, Rebels, SARS, Leslie and the Hong Kong Story" in 2013*

*A Journal of the Plague Year: Fear, Ghosts, Rebel, SARS, Leslie and the Hong Kong Story* starts with the turbulent events that impacted Hong Kong in the spring of 2003: the most significant airborne epidemic in recent years, SARS, coupled with the tragic death of pop figure and icon, Leslie Cheung. The unparalleled shutdown of the city and the atomization of society in quarantined segments led to an unexpected shift in the political awareness of Hong Kong citizens.

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#### EXHIBITION HOURS

September 27 – December 7

12pm to 6pm (Tuesday to Sunday, Open on Public Holidays)

Opening reception with James T. Hong, Charles Lim, MAP Office, Pak Sheung Chuen, Howie Tsui, Ming Wong and Zheng Guogu  
September 27 (Saturday), 5-8pm

#### PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Artist talk

September 27, 6-7pm, Spring

Boat exploration through Hong Kong's remote islands guided by artist Charles Lim (Singaporean representative at the 2015 Venice Biennale)  
28 September 2014

Boat exploration through Hong Kong's remote islands guided by artist James T Hong  
26 October 2014

Guided tour by curators

7 December 2014

#### ABOUT SPRING WORKSHOP

Spring is a non-profit arts space committed to an international cross-disciplinary program of artist and curatorial residencies, exhibitions, music, film and talks. Anchored in the Wong Chuk Hang industrial neighborhood of Hong Kong, it opened in its current layout in August 2012. Spring serves as a platform and laboratory for exchange between the vibrant artists and organizations of Hong Kong's rich cultural landscape and their international counterparts who seek to engage in far-reaching dialogue.

[www.springworkshop.org](http://www.springworkshop.org)

#### ABOUT PARA SITE

Para Site is Hong Kong's leading contemporary art space and one of the oldest and most active independent art centres in Asia. It produces exhibitions, publications and discursive projects aimed at forging a critical understanding of local and international phenomena in art and society.

[www.para-site.org.hk](http://www.para-site.org.hk)

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