

firstdraft

Gallery 2

9 Sep – 16 Oct 2022

Telesm

Shaye Dương

We exist in parallel to the built environment. Our movements are marked by the banal, yet powerful geometries of urban architecture. Pedestrians follow the footpath of a familiar circuit and remain close to orbs of fluorescent light along dark streets at night. We repeat the commands of architectural structures through ritual actions, such as keeping to the left or turning a key clockwise.

Such practices could be thought of as monotonous processes of habitualised un-thinking. The rituals prescribed by divine authority, in contrast, are believed to be a tool to bridge the profane and the sacred. Within our cycles of movement is a sense of predictability, so can the sublime still be experienced within monotony? Simone Weil described monotony as the most beautiful or the most atrocious thing, noting that “the circle is the symbol of monotony which is beautiful, the swinging of a pendulum of monotony which is atrocious.” Historically and culturally, the circle has also been considered a symbol of unified perfection, infinity, and the deity; so naturally, the perfect circle does not exist in material reality.

As such, rituals of movement in and around the built environment are prescribed by higher means – the architectural structures that both permit and obstruct. In *Telesm*, objects endemic to the urban landscape are reimagined as talismanic artefacts that promise protection and guidance within the urban landscape. Through spatial exploration of the psychic terrain of the urban landscape, *Telesm* constructs a space of contradictions; both internal and external, accessible yet obscure, physical yet spiritual.

Shaye Dương is an artist living and working on Kurna Country (Adelaide). Working across sculpture and installation, her practice examines human engagement with objects and sites associated with intimacy, security and ritual. Often leaning on her own diasporic experience with translational slippages and spatial uncertainty, Dương aims to create new forms that hold traces of both the arcane and familiar. She is currently a Studio Program artist at Adelaide Contemporary Experimental. Recent exhibitions include presentations at Adelaide Central School of Art; Holy Rollers Studios, Adelaide; and Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts.

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Gallery 1

so hot right now now now

Co-curated by Amala Groom,
Kris Townsend, and Alex Wisser

Gallery 3

Just Guzzling

Gabriel Curtin

Gallery 4

댄싱머신: Dancing machine

EJ Son

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**we acknowledge and pay respect to the gadigal people of the eora nation,
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Artworks (clockwise from left to right)

For sales enquiries,
please email shaye.duong@hotmail.com

First attention awareness, 2022
resin, surveillance camera
27 × 58 × 10 cm

You may rely on it, 2022
resin, mild steel, synchronous motor
60 × 60 × 18 cm

Second attention awareness, 2022
resin, surveillance camera
dimensions variable

*Like a gas, the soul tends to fill the
entire space which is given it, 2022*
aluminium, air humidifier, sage oil
50 × 50 × 20 cm

Salt Lamp, 2022
pewter, glass light fixture, Himalayan salt,
LED lights
20 × 20 × 7 cm

Presented by Firstdraft in partnership with Adelaide Contemporary Experimental.

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1.

The astronomical history of Eastern divination practices is evident in the development of instruments and techniques.

The magnetic compass was first invented as a device for identifying the heaven arrangement. Its first iteration was an image of the cosmos which served as a means to assign distinct positions in time and space.

The compass had two plates, known as the *heaven dial* and the *earth plate*. The heaven dial rotated freely on the earth plate.

There is a symmetry to how we measure an arrangement, and in mathematics, every kind of structure will have its own kind of symmetry.

2.

There is such a thing called a circumpolar star, which is a star that never sets below the horizon.

It is visible for the entire night, every night of the year.

According to the three laws of motion, under certain conditions, nothing can occur by happenstance.

By the logic of this system, there is no such thing as noise.

As Earth rotates daily on its axis, this star appears to move in circular paths.

It continues to rotate in larger and larger circles, as a gesture for us to engage with its pattern and gain some kind of understanding.

It is only a momentary event, where light is transposed into motion, geometry transfers from object to perception, and this becomes its own experience.

3.

Mathematical symmetry may be significant when it comes to the passage of time and how one wishes to move through it.

For example, you may keep a mirror at the top of your house, to reflect away any unwelcome spirits.

Our relationship to the talismanic is deeply functional; we are designed to look for patterns and to stand under them for protection.

And so everything becomes a kind of fantasy, or, as Bahar describes it, it is “the burden of everything being meaningful, we will be pinned under that rock.”