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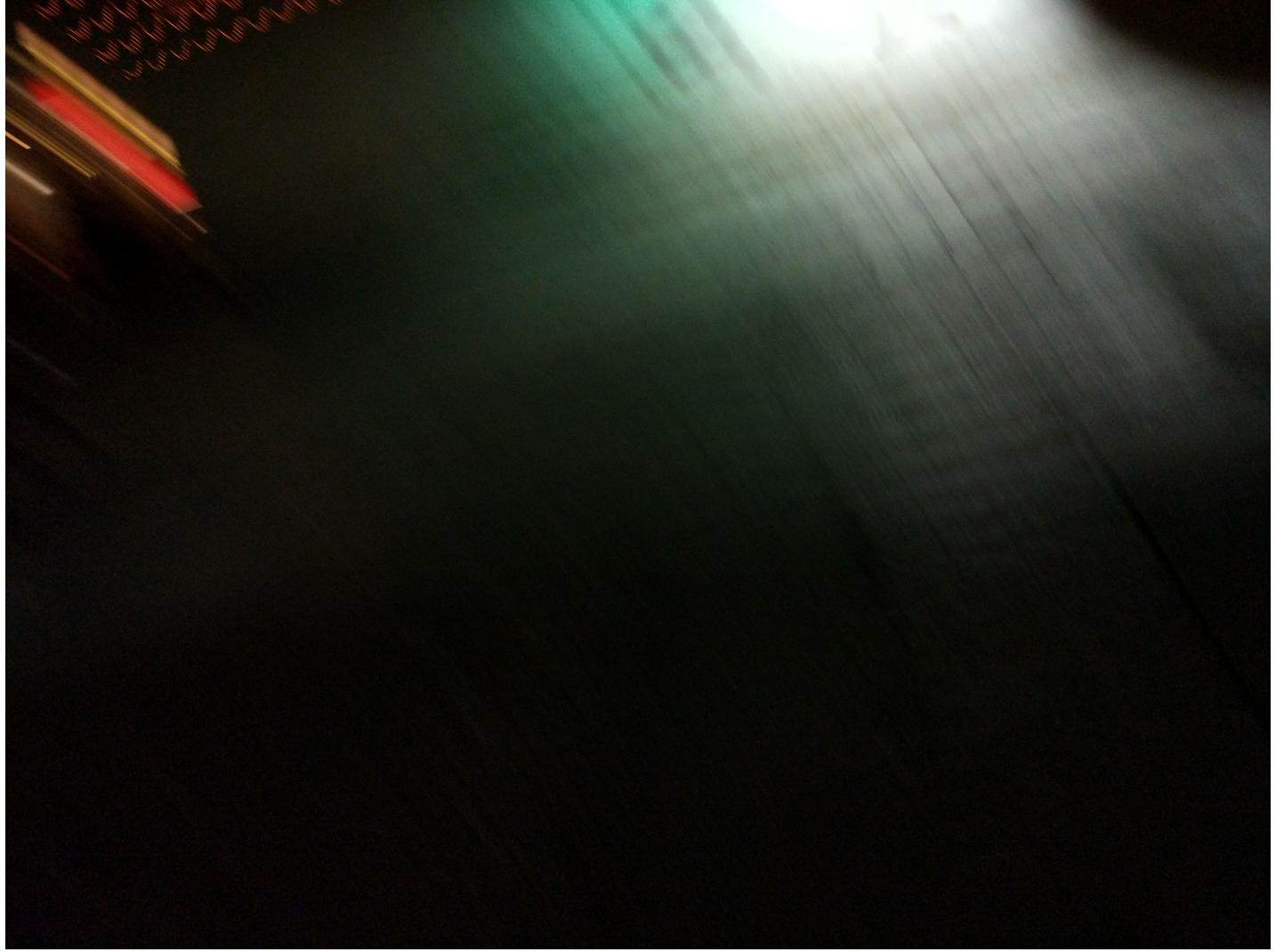
JC Jessie

JC Jessie is a research-based artist, a poet and a friend of nature.



“Sonic Waves that Sink” – Singapore Travelling to Arts 2018

September 11, 2018



The multi-culture complexity and beautiful greenery enrich the aesthetic foundation of sound composition in Singapore. With my growing comprehension and interest in “Sound Art” after the project with Sound pocket Hong Kong, I can relate a bit more to sound exhibitions.

“Water” is a universal subject matter, though it can be a spiritual matter relates to sacred rituals and holiness, it also is a necessity to all earthly creatures. The gap between these ends gives artist an indispensable reason to fiddle water in their projects. Freshwater was once a “crucial” matter in Singapore until its dependence on Malaysia water supplies changed into self-supplied through the implication of its integrated water management. Now Singaporean can enjoy good quality water daily. I guess projects related to water may add more meaning to the city.

‘Tarek Atoui – The Ground: From the Land to the Sea’

Nanyang Technological University, Center for Contemporary Art Singapore (NTU CCA) is located at Gillman Barracks Singapore. Its current mission has been focusing on the environment changes and its impact of climate influence on habitats. Hence, from 2017 to 2019, CCA's activities mainly aimed at facilitating discourse and understanding on this issue through art, cultural dialogue and other fields of knowledge.



In this exhibition, the sonic experience fell on the underwater environments in Singapore. This was a cross-cultural sonic interchanged project, mainly because the artist, Tarek Atoui is a sound artist and composer from Lebanon and France, who previously had sound works related to Athens and Abu Dhabi.

It was his first solo exhibition in Southeast Asia, he featured his old and new sound library archives and instruments to present an esthetical audio-visual

topography of the underwater sound mixture of Singapore and other places in order to find out and analyze its characteristics. To collect the sounds, he invited his friend, another sound artist Eric La Casa to join him to capture fully the acoustic features of underwater sonic environments of particular areas in Singapore such as Jurong Fishery port, Pulau Sebarok (an oil storage facility and refuelling port off the southern coastline) and on an oil tanker.



A demonstration on TV to show the way sound is made with the materials on the top of the table

Inside the spacious exhibition hall, there was eye-catching equipment scattered

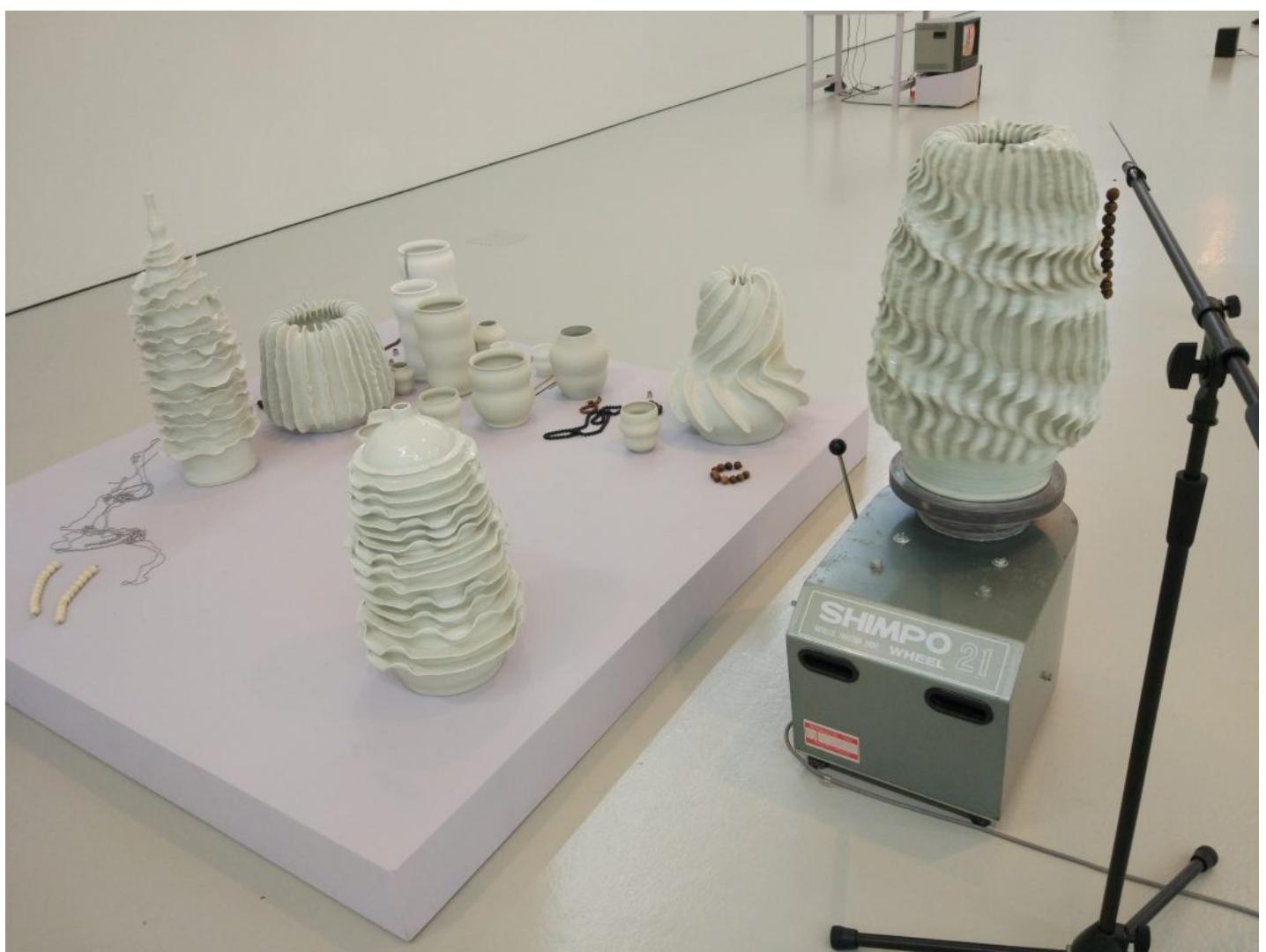
around which I had no clue how they worked until the artist's demonstration. The display included Atoui both old and new sound devices.





The record player in action + all the tools of the artist.

There was one composed of an old-fashioned record player with a number of porcelain discs. On the discs, the artist integrated his own cultural elements on the discs by engraving the traditional Arab rhythms. The record player rotated at irregular speeds to interact with the ceramic discs to release sound that was distinct to our ears. I was fond of the continuity of sound generated by his ceramics and other collective objects. It was similar to the sound of ceramic wind chimes but with more variety in tonal value, texture and volumes. The flowing rhythm delivered some soothing remedy for me during a hot day in Singapore as it reminded me of a spouting rivulet.



As the ceramic structure rotates, the beans will coordinate with its waves like exterior to create sounds.

It was a good exercise to practice active listening at Atoui's exhibition as the hall provided a sitting area for the spectator to dive deeper into his different pieces. The high ceiling of the spacious venue allowed the sound bounced back and forth for quite some time. I used the word "Dive" because the flow of the sounds

reminded me of my previous diving experience – this sonic enactment led me into the hollowness of water; sounds that flew in between the interspaces of barenness, resounded in the stillness of the air, somewhere somehow it brought back forgotten memories.

Other than Atoui, there were also 12 hosts and guest musicians to intervene in their compositions in the exhibition space over the whole course of the exhibition. A good showcase for the artists from Singapore, Malaysia, and France. The exhibition was curated by Ute Meta Bauer, Founding director, NTU, CCA Singapore, and professor, school of art, design, and media, NTU and Khim Ong, Deputy Director, Curatorial Programmes.

Photo credit: JC Jessie

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