

HUNDREDS+ THOUSANDS

DANIEL KOK (SINGAPORE) + LUKE GEORGE (MELBOURNE)

PROJECT UPDATE : SEPTEMBER 2020



SYNOPSIS

In 'Hundreds + Thousands' we enlist the participation of plants: as collaborators, mediators, or audience. Relating with plants from the basis that they know (what do plants know?), we come together to rearrange the experience of the visual, the sensual and the sensible. Listening to, breathing with... arriving at moments when the in-between reveals itself and we catch a glimpse of a world where the human is displaced.

ARTISTIC DESCRIPTION

With their sophomore project Hundreds + Thousands, Luke and Daniel go further in their research on communality by investigating alternative ways of seeing. Here, seeing is understood as a perceptual act that is more than sight. To see is also to sense with the body. To gaze at something or someone is also to empathise with them. To listen is also to 'see' what is not immediately apparent: gaps, the past, the future, the in-between.

How do we displace ourselves to have a glimpse of the other?

How can we see from points of view different to our own, welcome the unfamiliar and what falls outside the circle of normativity?

How do we appreciate together the vastness of infinity, the great history of the earth and the universe, in which we are but a blip?

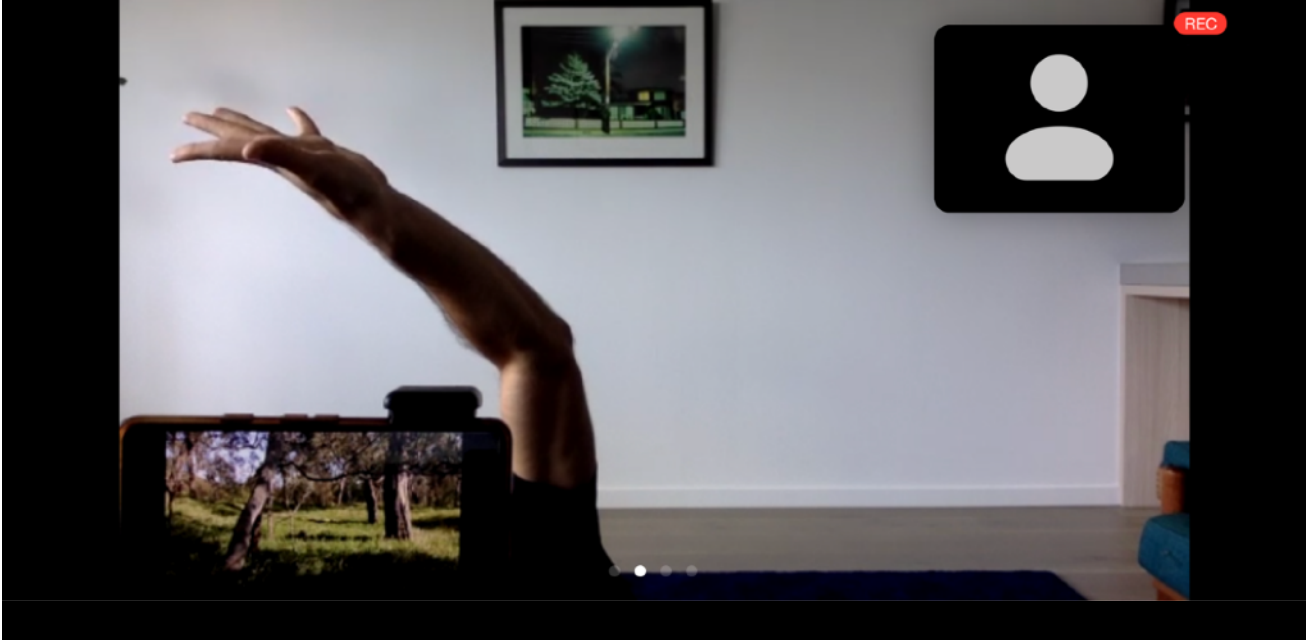
What if we 'see' together the times and spaces before the human epoch, or long after humans exist?

Hundreds + Thousands is an attempt to reorganise the way we perceive time, bodies and materiality, where what is seen is also felt, where the one seeing is also being seen, where objects can gaze back at the subject, and where identities is rendered fluid. Listening to, breathing with, waiting for... performance is the moment when subjects present themselves fully, when a movement out of stillness, as well as a movement unto stillness reveals the rich layers of relationality between things. In such a space, transformation becomes a possibility.

Luke and Daniel enlist plants as performative actants: as audience, fellow performers, artistic collaborators and social mediators. They propose a dialogic relationship with plants, working from the basis that plants know. (What do plants know? What do plants see in us?)

“Among the relics of the Anthropocene, therefore, will be the fallout of our atomic age, the crushed foundations of our cities, the spines of millions of intensively farmed ungulates, and the faint outlines of some of the billions of plastic bottles we produce each year.”

- Robert Macfarlane, Underland



leeroy



Dance Nucleus





ONLINE/MICRO-RESIDENCY AT ADHOCRACY 2020 - A RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Adhocracy Micro-Residency programme organised by Vitalstatistix (Adelaide), gave our creative team an opportunity to re-group in September 2020. Over a series of 3 online meetings, we revisited our project, reflected on how we can continue by adapting our materials to the conditions brought about by the pandemic. Some of the questions we considered include:

How to negotiate the challenges imposed by the pandemic

A creation that responds to the demands of the moment: Dealing with lockdown - sense of loss, isolation, uncertainty; an opportunity to experiment and reinvent. Zooming in and out, from the **macro** to the **micro**. Magnifying details and sharing private spaces.

Working and spending time with plants in our respective spaces (home, **garden**, studio... Melbourne, Singapore, Manila, Tainan), where plants could be our collaborators in lieu of one another.

What are the plants showing us? In this state of restriction of movement and bidding our time, our plants show us how to stay in place and experience time in an expanded and present way. In our conversations, a common thread has been around slowing down and the economy of our attention shifting to increasingly notice things about our immediate **environment** - about small yet massive changes; temperature, humidity, sunlight, wind direction, pollen traveling, density of clouds, the movement of birds, a sick branch, dormancy to new budding growth, the ground drying. Noticing more things about our bodies and how they feel and are changing, day to day, hour to hour. How our bodies **inhabit** a space - with other bodies, with other species - Incremental choices about what actions (or non-actions) and roles we take in our isolation households or temporary communities we participate in during allowed 1-hour walks or transitory movement.

DIY urban farming for food security

Eco-familial structures

Grow your body like a plant

Discovering the urban jungle

Sensing people from a distance

Sensing presence, balancing presence

How to not let the pandemic derail the project further... to complete the work by early 2021

We've been developing Hundreds+Thousands since early 2018. The work has evolved over the last 2.5 years, and continues to change even more due to COVID-19. Yet, while we want to take the time to unpack and reflect through the work, we also know that we cannot 'evolve indefinitely'. We risk more anxiety when it is impossible to make concrete plans, and we are pushed around constantly by contingencies. We needed to construct some sense of stability from/through/for the work, and to derive a collective sense of direction.

Regardless of travel restrictions and safe distancing measures, we will be able to continue working IF we adapt these restrictions and measures as part of the working process and presentation format. Presently, we plan to work with the notion of hybridity - online and onsite. We will create our own ecosystem of sorts, a world in which the real and the virtual, physical and digital, live and recorded, etc. are parts dynamically informing each other within the whole.

How to reduce anxiety for ourselves, work with what's available - what's possible and what's already there

A creation that is as nourishing to work on as it is to perform. How can art making itself be a rehabilitative process? We focus on slowing down the process, movement with breathing, encouraging each other to do things that are meaningful and enjoyable to themselves.

A creation that is technically simple, elegant, even effortless. Minimise resources required, set up and strike time. Working with an economy of means. Our laptops and mobile phones are multi-functional and already allow us to do many things. We work with lighting, sound, objects that can be found in our immediate environs (our bedroom, our garden, our studio, etc).

As we source (and wait) for more co-production support, we work with what we already have, on the assumption that more support may or may not come, and that should more support be rendered, we will adjust and change our project again.

A creation that remodels the mode of production: No longer a simple dichotomy between a 'work-in-progress' and 'finished product', but a constant evolution that responds to current/local contexts. We will keep **tending** to and **growing** the work, as long as resources allow. Different **by-products**, **off-shoots** and **variations** could be documented and presented. We will always be ready with work to present IF we understand that the art-as-work is simply what we have developed by that point in time. The focus will now instead be on how to we present material that is relevant to the context that we have been invited into, that we are engaging with.

The idea of working with what's there is analogous to principles in tai chi and taoism, which we referred to in the beginning of our process. As far as we can remind ourselves, we will harness the energies of **ebb and flow** around us, as opposed to struggling and resisting against what we have little control over. Rather than compromise our work, how may we thrive in spite of the situation?

How to continue trans-local collaboration. How to keep working (notwithstanding travel restrictions and safe distancing measures). How to stay connected with one another and with the practice.

Literally "Artists in Residence"! Remote residencies. Designing steps that facilitate working simultaneously but in different places. We meet via telecommutes. Exchanging and sharing information on Zoom also allow us to understand how to harness online meetings as a presentational form per se.

A international collaboration that minimise travel and **carbon footprint**.

As all of us are in varying states of being homebound, how each of us inhabit our own spaces have become highly relevant our work. Leeroy making face shields with plastic water bottles, first in response to political protests in Manila, then combining them with the garden that he is tending to during the pandemic lockdown in his city, growing his own food, even growing the plants as he wears them on his body.. As we exchange our experiences online, we begin to **cross-pollinate** each other's worlds, continue to **propagate** culture as a process of exchange.



FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS / UPCOMING PLANS

- NOV 2020 2-Week Online Development (Melbourne, Adelaide, Tainan, Manila, Singapore)
- MAR 2021 2-Week Online Development (Melbourne, Tainan, Manila, Singapore)
Hybrid Presentation at National Gallery (Singapore)
- 2021 Current discussions to create further iterations (ie: adaptation and presentation) in Perth, Taipei, Hong Kong and Sydney.

ARTISTIC TEAM

Lead Artists:	Luke George (Melbourne) Daniel Kok (Singapore)	lukegeorge.net diskodanny.com
Participating Artists:	Leeroy New (Manila) Alice Chang (Tainan) Nigel Brown (Tainan/Melbourne) Matt Adey (Melbourne/Adelaide)	leeroynew.com huishengchang.com nigelbrownsound.com houseofvnholly.com

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