

Lap-See Lam / L-v-L / Karin Bähler Lavér

LIKE THE EIGHT IMMORTALS

Opening Thursday June 15th, from 5 to 9.30pm

L'Ascensore, Via Principe di San Giuseppe, 14 / Casa del Mutilato, Via Alessandro Scarlatti
Palermo

The exhibition at L'Ascensore runs through July 15th 2017
www.lascensore.it

Lap-See Lam (1990) is the first artist invited to **L'AscensoreOFF**, a series of events and a public program curated by **Valentina Sansone** for L'Ascensore, the shop-window space devoted to contemporary art in Palermo.

Lap-See Lam has been working with visual artists **L-v-L** (Thomas Bush) and **Karin Bähler Lavér** since 2010. In Palermo, they present a publication and a site-specific installation, that consists of screenings and a group of sculptures, located in two different exhibition spaces. "Like The Eight Immortals" (2017) deals with the topic of identity in the postcolonial era, starting from the artists' project in progress *Landing Strip*.

In the dual location of the shop-window space in **Via Principe di San Giuseppe** and, exceptionally for one night only, on June 15th, in the Assembly Hall of the majestic fascist architecture of the **Casa del Mutilato**, "Like The Eight Immortals" invites eight members of a family, coming from both past and future generations, to the same banquet. A genealogical tree that has been drawn for more than two hundred years: it originates in 1952, in the Meizhou district, in the Chinese province of Guangdong, and continues until 2181: encompassing California, Sicily, Sweden, Sierra Leone and comes back to Hong Kong.

According to Chinese mythology, the "Eight Immortals" are legendary figures, called "xiān" ("immortal" "transcendent"). They are the paradigm of immortality, revered by the Taoists as embodying the spirit of the Tao. During the Ming dynasty, the anonymous literary work "The Eight Immortals Cross the Sea", tells of the Immortals embarking on a journey to attend the 'Conference of the Magical Peach'. When they encounter the Ocean, they decide to unite their special powers to get them across. The Chinese proverb "The Eight Immortals Cross the Sea, each reveals its divine powers" originates from this legend: it generally refers to a situation that requires the joining of forces in order to achieve a common goal.

The commensals evoked by the installation at the Casa del Mutilato in Palermo are animated by exactly the same divine spirit. They cross the oceans and, though displaced geographically by political and economic migration, their sense of family identity continues to run. It underpins their life choices and responses.

A publication, edited by Lap-See Lam, L-v-L and Karin Bähler Lavér, consists of eight fictional letters, written between the time span of 1952-2181 by each of the eight commensals. To access those letters is also envisaged as part of the ritual presented by the artists at the Casa del Mutilato.

This new production for L'AscensoreOFF is a spin-off featuring characters from "Dream of The Walled City", a script by L-v-L, which forms the basis of the *Landing Strip* installation (2010-in progress) as well as the artists' current collaboration. *Landing Strip* is an ongoing art project inspired by the history of Kowloon Walled City, an ungoverned (and now demolished) area of Hong Kong. Enhancing the mirage created by a bar, are a script for television with accompanying soundtrack, screen tests, and drinks. The screenplay for the pilot episode was published in book form by Landfill Editions. Previous events of *Landing Strip* have taken place in Frankfurt (2016); London (2013); Moletai, Lithuania (2013); Stroud, England (2011).

Although it was destroyed more than twenty years ago, Kowloon Walled City has inspired, over the years, a number of Hollywood movies, videogames and manga. *Landing Strip* is the outcome of the artists' research on Kowloon, its dense and improvised structure. With "Like the Eight Immortals", Lap-See Lam, L-v-L and Karin Bähler Lavér recreate the same environment, similar to the ungoverned Tower of Babel, whose legendary *allure* also relates to its anarchic, labyrinthine system. Palermo, being a node in the global movement of people for over 2000 years, serves in its nature to amplify these themes.

Lap-See Lam (Stockholm, 1990. Lives and works in Athens, Greece) was born in Sweden to a Chinese family. Her work addresses issues such as cultural hegemony and ethnic identity, through digital media, sculptural installation work and performative gatherings. Part of the feminist network Grupp13, she has run a monthly club called Disko Dumpling at her parent's Chinese restaurant Bamboo Garden, together with DJ City and DJ Satan. She has taken part in group exhibitions for institutional and international public spaces, among them: Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, Denmark (2017); Moderna Museet & ArkDes, Stockholm and Ratti Foundation, Como, Italy (2016).

Karin Bähler Lavér (Stockholm, 1989. Lives and works in London) is a multi-disciplinary maker whose practice aims to activate and politicise the everyday. This happens through collective research, conversation or performance. She has presented work at Mahler & LeWitt Studios, Spoleto, Italy; Artsadmin, London; Minibar, Stockholm; Portikus, Frankfurt; Sison Gallery, Nottingham (with L-v-L) among the others. Together with Lap-See Lam, she is part of feminist network Grupp13 and she was a founding member of think tank Prekari(a)tet.

L-v-L is a collaboration based in Stockholm and London, working in time-based and spatial media. Activities are research-led and usually site specific. *Landing Strip* and its associated projects are drawn from 'Dream of the Walled City' a yet-to-be-realised teleplay set in the environs of Kowloon Walled City in the years prior to its destruction.

Casa del Mutilato is located next to the Fire Brigade in Via Scarlatti, Palermo. The Veterans' House was built between 1935 and 1937, by architect Giuseppe Spatrisano. Conceived as a reinterpretation of a Roman temple, it combines classical and celebratory elements, typical of the Fascist era. In the courtyard, the remarkable circular opening in the roof allows the interplay of light and shadow. The interiors, on four levels, are characterized by their functionality and their walnut furniture from the Thirties. In the Assembly Hall, and on the side walls of the altar of the Shrine, you can admire the frescoes by the Genoese Antonio Giuseppe Santagata, which represent scenes of battles.

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