

Ghostly presences in Hong Kong, living archives of artists and informal debates about why politics could crush art—some of the current initiatives at Burger Collection

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VAIN HOPES OF CLOSURE

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KARA WALKER, *The Long Hot Black Road to Freedom, a Double Dixie Two-Step* 2005–08 (detail), 2005–08. Installation, paper and adhesive on wall and paint on wall, c. 457.2 x 4572 cm. Photo by José Luis Gutiérrez. Courtesy the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York.



STEVEN SHEARER, *Poems VI* (detail), 2005, charcoal on rag paper, framed, group of five drawings, 125 x 92 x 5 cm each. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich.

Not long ago, the contemporary art world seemed to be a relatively obscure place, but now this has been supplanted by a considerably heightened visibility across the whole spectrum, whether corporate auction houses and pop-up galleries, or large-scale museum complexes and art fanzine publishers, or archives, or even murky art-related activity at random street-corners. Historical hopes for the democratization of art have been merged with a new politico-economic constellation, thereby changing, once again, the uses and the deeper symbolism of art. In order to examine its role in this constellation, Burger Collection, a private collection of contemporary art with emphases on Euro-American, Indian and Asian art, has set up a research and exhibition platform. Since 2009, three on-going research

focuses have been established: close reading the voices and methodologies of artists; exploring the transcultural dimension of contemporary art; and questioning the functions of a private collection operating within the contemporary art system. Burger Collection has worked with numerous established artists and new talents in the process, and has ventured into collaborations with local institutions and individuals, engaged in co-operations and created new site-specific works with artists both within and beyond the collection. In the following pages some of its present initiatives are singled out. Even though art is nowadays in the hands of many, it is hard to cease viewing it as a collective concern, one to be continually negotiated—and most likely with no closure redeeming us at the end.

Shadows of Latent Form

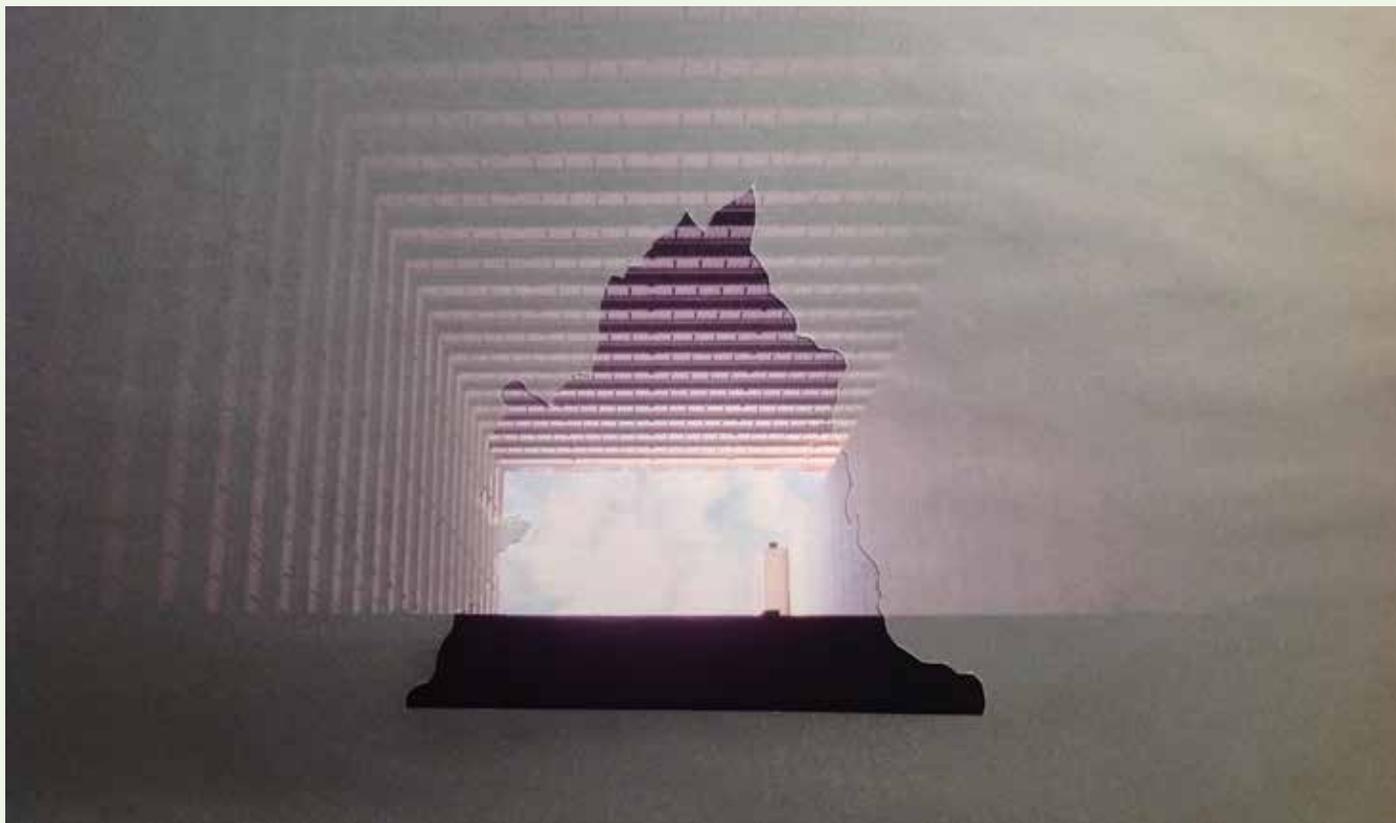
MUHANNED CADER



The images presented here are excerpts from Muhanned Cader's contribution *Shadows of Latent Form* (2014) in Burger Collection's magazine *Torrent No. 2*, in which city- and skyscapes structure the artist's field of vision. The Sri Lankan artist first experienced Hong Kong last year during a two-week residency organized by Burger Collection for the purposes of its exhibition "I Think It Rains" (2013) at the Cattle Depot Artist Village. Accompanied by local artist Swing Lam Siu Wing, Cader delved into this heterogeneous territory on numerous walks; taking in its beehive-like apartment units, passing through populated areas, visiting city temples and exploring isolated gardens. Given the massive architectural density of the city, Cader found himself drawn to the lines, horizons and intersections that buildings, near and far, form against the backdrop of the sky. The collage compositions printed here, consisting of self-taken photographs and cut-out velum paper shapes, can be viewed as visual transcriptions of these walks. Cader's full contribution is featured in *Torrent No. 2*, released in May 2014.

Torrent is a magazine focusing on source materials by artists and features previously unpublished material from artists' research archives. It is published by Burger Collection and edited by Daniel Kurjaković and Linda Jensen. See more at torrentmagazine.org.

Photographs taken by **MUHANED CADER** as source material, cut-out velum paper, c. 21 x 29 cm, 2014. Muhanned Cader was one of the four residency artists of Burger Collection's exhibition and research project "I Think It Rains," Hong Kong, 2013. See more at itinkitrains.org.



Associative Territories

Torrent Magazine by Burger Collection

Torrent is a magazine focusing on previously unpublished source material by artists. These include preparatory materials, such as sketches, newspaper articles, storyboards and photographs. They range from loose scripts, dispersed quotes, newspaper articles and brief snippets to diagrams, copies of books and other miscellaneous materials. The magazine is published by Burger Collection and provides a focused analysis of artistic practices, thereby touching upon the institutional, cultural as well as ideological contexts influencing their production and reception.

As an editorial platform, *Torrent* follows a close-reading approach to art, rather than seeking synthesis or generalization. Artists present material elements that motivate their ways of thinking and doing. This evidence reflects both physical and ideological means of testing things out: the sense of feeling around, for form or mental visualization, which is in play before the artwork is presented and received.

The magazine renders accessible how artists collect and store information, assemble ideas, formalize observations, try out certain paths of inquiry or materialize their intuitions. Whether this process leads to further exploration, or to temporary failure and a standstill, is of lesser concern: as a process this dimension has its own relevance. Thus the presentation of source material is not necessarily intended to enable viewers to *re-construct* a work in a presumably authentic fashion. Rather it frees up associative territories due to its essentially ambivalent characteristic, which hovers between documentation and fiction. Source material could be said to blur, albeit in interesting ways, rather than explain, the so-called work. Source material is the theoretical site that reduces and at the same time heightens the complexity of art.

VOICES

“In *Torrent*, there is no overload of images nor acrobatic graphic design to compete with artists and all there is in their works and lives, which the magazine has quietly but firmly chosen to present. Its weight (holding the hand down), size (just right for folding and rolling) and touch (the clash of paper, the gloss that jumps to the eye) are a little vicious, which is precisely why I find it inviting . . . It is a house that artists would be able to breathe in.”

**Yeung Yang,
Soundpocket, Hong Kong**

“*Torrent* presents itself as a hybrid object that lays in a field that is historical and at the same time creates a bond between the reader and the subjects; it becomes personal and empowers the reader to become an essential part of the artists’ storyboard. All this is packed into a simple and raw design that emphasizes the honest fluidity of its content.”

**João Vasco Paiva,
artist, Hong Kong**

“This publication helps audiences to get in touch with the ‘residual’ or hidden history in art-making (which is important but always forgotten).”

**Clara Cheung and
Cheng Yee Man (Gum),
C&G Artpartment, Hong Kong**

“As an artist, I like to see the work and thinking processes of other artists in this publication. It’s not the average ‘curator, critic or art historian said this or that.’ The artist is very present between the pages and the visual material is overwhelmingly rich and stimulating!”

**Philip Matesic,
artist, Zurich**



Covers and spreads from *Torrent No. 1* and the pilot edition. Free downloads of these two issues are available at www.torrentmagazine.org.



Torrent No. 1 touches on subjects such as the material life of books (Annie Wan), the demystifying power of printed matter (David Platzker), radio as tool for “revolution” (Lawrence Weiner) and even film’s function as a dissecting table for the mind (Vittorio Santoro). *Torrent No. 1* also includes two in-depth conversations, one exploring some of the conditions for artistic practice in Hong Kong, historically and today, the other on the status and critical significance of artists’ ephemera. Preceding this issue was the pilot edition of *Torrent* on the occasion of Nalini Malani’s video/shadow play *In Search of Vanished Blood* (2012) presented at Documenta 13, with Burger Collection acting as patron for the project.

Torrent No. 1 was published to coincide with Burger Collection’s exhibition platform and research project conceived and realized with 1a space, an independent arts organization in Hong Kong, and its project “I Think It Rains” (5/17–6/30, 2013) at the heritage site of the Cattle Depot Artist Village in To Kwa Wan, Kowloon. “I Think It Rains” represents a further installment of “Quadrilogy,” Burger Collection’s exhibition and research project, curated by Daniel Kurjaković.

Contributors to *Torrent No. 1*, Spring 2013: **CHOI YAN CHI** (artist, Hong Kong), **ENOCH HONG SANG CHEUNG** (artist, Hong Kong), **MARTHA COLBURN** (artist, New York), **DAVID PLATZKER** (curator, New York), **VITTORIO SANTORO** (artist, Paris), **ANNIE LAI KUEN WAN** (artist, Hong Kong), **LAWRENCE WEINER** (artist, New York), **PAUL WINSTANLEY** (artist, London) and **CALLY YEUK MI YU** (writer, Hong Kong).

Softcover, illus., color & b/w, 120 pages
€ 12 / \$ 15.95 / £ 10 / HKD 128

Torrent No. 2 includes a thought-provoking conversation with renowned curator and writer Robert Storr on ethics in the art world. Artist contributions explore the awe-inspiring relationship between the sky and city spaces in Hong Kong (Muhanned Cader), materials about hyper-specialists on eBay, radioactive glows and clouds of bats (Florian Germann) and text experiments and visuals related to pseudo-writings and Chinese calligraphy (Enoch Cheung). This issue also includes a visual essay about photographic materiality (Roland Lüthi) and a take on the transcultural dynamics in contemporary art through the example of kung-fu director Robert Tai’s *Shaolin Dolemite* (Manual Cirauqui).

Contributors to *Torrent No. 2*, Spring 2014: **MUHANNED CADER** (artist, Sri Lanka), **ENOCH HONG SANG CHEUNG** (artist, Hong Kong), **MANUEL CIRAUQUI** (curator, New York), **FLORIAN GERMANN** (artist, Switzerland), **ROLAND LÜTHI** (archivist and artist, Switzerland) and **ROBERT STORR** (writer/curator, New York).

Torrent No. 2 also includes a supplement titled *Silver Silence/Golden Speech* featuring conversations on art by 13 artists and cultural practitioners from Hong Kong (illus., color and b/w, 136 pages); see also an extended version of these conversations, and more contributors, on the blog at www.torrentmagazine.org.

Softcover, illus., color & b/w, 120 pages
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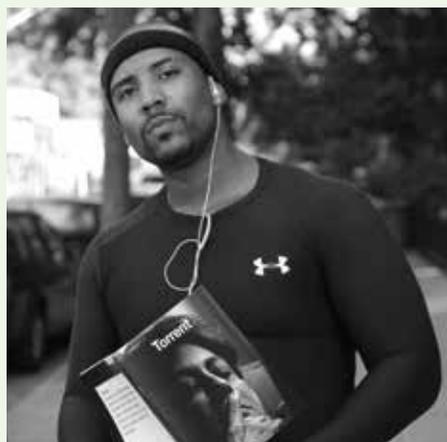
VANISHING, MONOLOGISM, HANDS, SADNESS, SEX AND READERS



1

The Sad Reality of Cultural Policy in Hong Kong

www.showingwithouttelling.org



2

Editorial Wanderings, Torrent Readers and Free Downloads

www.torrentmagazine.org



3

Monologism as Poetry
by artist Vittorio Santoro

www.conflictingtales.org



4

An Action for an Image
by artist Fiete Stolte

www.ithinkitrains.org



5

Will Politics Crush Art?
Silver Silence/Golden Speech.
Art Conversations—Torrent Supplement

www.ithinkitrains.org



6

A Sex Story to a Sex Story
by artist Wong Wai Yim

www.ithinkitrains.org



7

In Search of Vanished Blood
by artist Nalini Malani

www.burgercollection.org



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QUADRILEG
PART TWO
HONG KONG

Burger COLLECTION

Check out the publications, websites
and blogs by Burger Collection

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