

# Kar-men Cheng

ARTIST • RESEARCHER • WRITER

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## EDUCATION

**LASALLE UNIVERSITY**, Singapore

M.A. Fine Arts, June 2020

**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**, New York, NY

M.A. International Education, Dec 2015

**CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY**, Pittsburgh, PA

B.A. Hispanic Studies; Social Cultural History, May 2009

## SELECTED PROJECTS

**[WHEN IS ENOUGH, ENOUGH? The Performance of Measurement](#)**, Venice

Artist, Researcher, Writer, January – May 2023

Organised by Singapore Institute of Architects and commissioned by Urban Redesign Authority and Design Singapore, the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2023 offered the following challenges for reflection: How can different stakeholders involved in urban development calibrate for different entities, environments, and dreams?

I was hired along with the other curatorial writer, Elwin Chan, to conceptualise the inquiries that would drive the interactive installations and create a reflective environment through text – five interactive features which marked down visitors' responses to questions pertaining to Design Singapore's inquiries about what makes cities lovable, 105 more questions that appeared on moving scrolls, 41 thematic write-ups, and the curatorial texts. Our research and creation process involved conducting semi-structured interviews with ecologists, architects, and activists; interrogating and refining the theme of intangible qualities of Singapore, and working with the digital and installation artists to create the entire visual and textual experience.

**[RECONCEIVING THE FUTURE OF MALLS](#)**, Singapore

Artist, Researcher, September – October 2022

Initiated by design and research firm Spatial Anatomy, Beauty Meta World is an experiment in reformatting a strata-titled mall within a virtual environment that encapsulates its historical, cultural and spatial essence.

I produced two artworks for the digital space– *Resonant Irrelevance*, a sound piece that played with the resonant frequencies of the mall, and *Handwritten Vents*, a visual work borne out of field work and interviews with tenants in Beauty World Shopping Centre. The project is part of Spatial Anatomy's year-long research project *Reconceiving The Future of Malls*, supported by Design Singapore Council.

**[THE SINGAPORE MALL GENERATION](#)**, Singapore

Wrote the chapter, *Shopping for Culture in a Single-Owner Society*, Published 2022

Edited by Cultural Studies researcher Dr. Liew Kai Khiun, the Singapore Mall Generation is a collection of interdisciplinary explorations into the Singapore mall.

"This book unearths Singapore's latent histories, cultures and communities that grew within its now ageing modern shopping centres, envisioned in the 1960s futuristically as "Arcades in the Air"...Amidst Singapore's constantly changing urban landscape, these otherwise dated shopping centres stand precariously as venerable sites of collective social and cultural memories." (Epigram Bookshop, 2022)

**[DBLSPACE](#)**, Singapore

Artist-in-residence, October 2022

dblspace is a residency program at Peninsula Shopping Centre. Together with two other artists, our project examined how people from different demographic groups interacted within an evolving artist-run space

occupied by newcomers to a community that had been forming over four decades. I was interested in how people might or might not feel a sense of autonomy in a social setting with no prescribed agenda. Through a process of organic experimentation with the other artists and visitors, we created several participatory interventions. One of them was a “fantasy machine”, where we photographed tenants and shoppers against a green screen and created a mediated fantasy environment for them through portraiture and conversations that began with “What’s your fantasy?” and allowed the interpretation of the question lead into different topics of discussion.

## JOBS

### **FREELANCE WRITING & CONTENT PRODUCTION**, Singapore

Various writing jobs, Ongoing

- Copywriting clients include GovTech, LifeSG, DBS, GOJEK, Redmart, Silicon Box, and CapitaLand.
- Provides consultation and editing services for academic papers.

### **3PUMPKINS**, Singapore

Research assistant, September 2021 – December 2022

3 Pumpkins (3P) is a community arts and social development organisation which uses participatory art platforms to engage vulnerable communities. I conducted research on the evolving practice through ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with children at 3P’s community youth centre, Tak Takut Kids Club, and developed reports and articles for relevant stakeholders of the charity.

### **FREELANCE ARTS WORKER**, Singapore

Various roles, June 2020 – January 2021

- Researcher and writer, *Drongo Jukebox*
- Artist assistant, *Escape Velocity V*
- Sound recording assistant and translator, *Like Shadows Through Leaves*

### **NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL**, Singapore

Recipient of the National Arts Council research grant., Oct 2017 – July 2018

My research mapped out the opportunity structure and the sociocultural capital of non-mainstream electronic music scenes in Singapore. You can read the abstract of my paper, *The Social and Cultural Capital of Singapore's Independent Electronic Music Scenes* [here](#). Please contact me for the full text pdf.

### **ERNST AND YOUNG**, Singapore

People Advisory Services Consultant, Oct 2016 – May 2017

Served a key role in a project to implement a new corporate culture within a leading commodities company

- Created an organisational culture survey to analyse values of 20,000 employees across 5 countries
- Developed a stakeholder engagement plan to integrate new corporate values. This includes training curriculum, behavioural change interventions and a high-level policy framework.

### **INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE (INTERNATIONAL IDEA)**, New York, NY

Communications Intern, Aug – Oct 2016

- Represented International IDEA, a UN permanent observer, as their on-site reporter at the United Nations General Assembly 2016
- Supported advocacy agenda through the drafting and editing of materials used in bilateral projects

### **826 NYC, BROOKLYN SUPERHERO SUPPLY CO.**, New York

Education Developer, Feb 2015 – Oct 2016

- Conducted weekly creative writing and bookmaking workshops for elementary and high schoolers
- Designed and led two in-school programs:

- 1) Bronx Leadership Academy Journalism Project, an investigative writing workshop for high schoolers
- 2) A 5-week STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Maths) workshop for 4th graders at Brooklyn Arbor School taught through the speculative immersion in a zombie apocalypse

### **FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES**, New York, NY

Non-profit education development organisation focused on the teaching of historical atrocities

Apprentice, Sept – Dec 2015

- Contributed to program-related research and development, including planning professional development workshops and identifying 13 Holocaust survivors to invite as workshop speakers.
- Conducted Professional Learning Circles, a focus group session that produce insights from teachers who have attended the workshops and have implemented the curriculum into their classes.
- Assisted facilitation at three teacher workshops attended by NYC high school teachers, superintendents, and Teacher's College Columbia University students. The workshops were about how to contextualise and discuss moral values in regards to the Holocaust and the Jim Crow era in the US

### **INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES (IPS)**, Singapore

Copyeditor, July – Sept 2015

- Edited early stage manuscripts of the *Singapore Chronicles*, a 50-volume series on Singaporean culture, society, and history

### **I0AM COMMUNICATIONS**, Singapore

Senior copywriter; Creative Strategist, Sept 2010 – Jan 2014

- Developed conceptual and execution strategy for a wide range of communications campaigns in financial services, real estate, beauty, F&B, and public service.
- Conceptualised programming plans for 3 CapitaLand commercial real estate developments in Shanghai, Hangzhou and Singapore, including Jewel Changi, a 134,000 sqm mixed-use terminal in Singapore Changi Airport.
- Provided research and creative strategy for the National Museum of Singapore's permanent Singapore history gallery, supporting its pivotal shift into narrative-driven, interactive exhibition design.
- Translated and wrote subtitles for *Against The Wind*, a documentary about stroke patients in Malaysia, and *A Conversation with Jean Nouvel*, a promotional video featuring an interview with the Pritzker Prize-winning architect.
- Contributed to the conceptualisation of a series of interactive installations for the Singapore Memory Project, a government-led initiative to engage Singaporeans to share their memories in the National Archives.

### **AIDHA**, Singapore,

Workshop leader, Sept 2009 – Jan 2014

Aidha is a nonprofit organisation which offers technical and financial literacy programs to foreign domestic workers. I designed and taught a bi-weekly computer skills workshop to several cohorts of 16–20 students.

### **EQUAL-ARK**, Singapore,

Research assistant, Jan 2013 – Dec 2013

Equal-ARK is an equine therapy school for at-risk adolescents. I worked part time in their extracurricular programming as a mentor and research assistant to the program's psychologist. I was in charge of monitoring the students' development and gathering data for the year-end review.

## EXHIBITIONS & RESIDENCIES

### **WHEN IS ENOUGH, ENOUGH? THE PERFORMANCE OF MEASUREMENT**,

Singapore Pavilion, Venice Biennale, Venice, May 2023

### **RECONCEIVING THE FUTURE OF MALLS IN SINGAPORE**, The Projector, Singapore, April 2023

[DBLSPACE RESIDENCY](#), Singapore October 2021

[BULANUJUNG](#), Web, May 2021

[NATIVE SEED NETWORK](#), Web, April – December 2021

[LASALLE x PLATFORM ARTS DIGITAL EXCHANGE RESIDENCY](#), Web, April – July 2021

[PUBLIC DREAMS, PRIVATE MYTHS](#), Starch, March 2021

[405 ART RESIDENCY](#), Singapore, December 2020– April 2021

[ART X ACTION // PART 2](#), Online Video Art Festival by Yeo Workshop, Web, December 2020

[IN SPITE OF...](#), Web, August 2020

[STREETS OF HOPE](#), Orchard Road/National Arts Council, Singapore, July 2020

[GALLERY LIGHTUP 2020](#), National Gallery, Singapore, July 2020

[VJ>PLAY #30 VISUAL JALANAN](#), Web, March 2020

[IDEASCITY](#), Singapore, January 2020

[NURTURE](#), Galeri Rj Katamsi Isi, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, August 2019

[ACARA KOMPLIT](#), Sesama, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, August 2019

[TROPICAL LAB 13: ERASE](#), Institute Of Contemporary Arts, Singapore, August 2019

## LANGUAGES

**ENGLISH** (fluent) **SPANISH, FRENCH, MANDARIN** (proficient) **CANTONESE** (working proficiency)

## SKILLS

**MICROSOFT SUITE, PHOTO AND VIDEO EDITING (ADOBE SUITE), NVIVO**