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Installation view of **GENEVIEVE CHUA**'s "Closed During Opening Hours" at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore (ICA Singapore), LASALLE College of the Arts, 2019. Photo by Wong Jing Wei. Courtesy ICA Singapore.

# DE SARTHE

## CLOSED DURING OPENING HOURS GENEVIEVE CHUA

[WEB REVIEW](#) BY MARYBETH STOCK  
 INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE

The exhibition galleries at LASALLE College of the Arts, home of the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore (ICA Singapore), are all a bit wonky: off-kilter layouts, jutting angles, challenging wall-space—and lots of glass. The somewhat triangular Earl Lu Gallery is one of these, and Singaporean artist Genevieve Chua encapsulated its irregularities in her solo exhibition, "Closed During Opening Hours." By completely sealing off the gallery and making it inaccessible to viewers, she produces a diorama of sorts that explores the limits of display and perception.

Puzzled visitors to the show are confronted with locked glass doors. Inside the gallery, a scattered array of objects is clearly visible: paintings, digitally printed decals, several ramp-like structures, and random interjections of tile and gravel. Each artifact begs the eye to

affirm its materiality—and therefore its function—based on remote appraisal, as dictated through the glass panes.

# RICHARD LEWER

Chua’s multidisciplinary practice encompasses painting, installation, prints, video and photography, and morphed amalgams of these. Her cerebral and astringent work is inspired by natural taxonomies and progressions within physical systems (the structure of cicada wings; inundated topographies). She injects her conceptual analogies of process and classification with empirical precision. Previous works have involved ravishing hand-tinted photographs of nocturnal flowers; an installation of flawed brass geomancy die, used in divination; and paintings whose optically slippery graphic patterns and shaped canvases whose titles and forms allude to sequences of personal experience.



Installation view of **GENEVIEVE CHUA**’s “Closed During Opening Hours” at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore (ICA Singapore), LASALLE College of the Arts, 2019. Photo by Wong Jing Wei. Courtesy ICA Singapore.

26.05 - 25.05.2019	29.05 - 31.05.2019	EMPTY GALLERY
Tishan Hsu	Art Basel Hong Kong	
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“Closed During Opening Hours” recasts works from past series with new pieces. Several low wedges, or ramps, served as plinths for paintings excerpted from “Edge Control” (2016–18), a series of predominantly black-and-white diagrammatic and grid-like graphics, some on shaped canvases. A few of these contrasty paintings hang at floor-level, bottom edges even with the gallery’s floating walls, where they manage to insinuate vague trompe l’oeil fissures and portals. The simple ramp structures appear to exhibit texture and depth: through the glint of glass, we perceive shiny white tile, asphalt, gravel, stone and steel. In reality, however, they



are composed of plywood, rubber and digital imagery of asphalt and steel, though the tile and gravel are genuine—a canny mix of authenticity and analogy. Two heavy-looking architectural forms rise above floor level: an unoccupied table and chair, ostensibly for a “visitor service officer,” and an open-work stepped fragment (plywood; not, as one might think at first glance, stone). Overhead lights create twinned reflections on the glossy plane of floor, and the eye happily accepts the notion of half-submerged sculptural anatomies.

42 × 60 cm. Copyright and courtesy the artist.

Easy to overlook, a modest projector launches video imagery through the glass beyond the gallery, as Chua moors the impenetrable exhibit space to a busy outer atrium. The interior gallery-scape seems static; but the outer wall next to it pulses with the artist’s playful video of animated GIFs—larded with contradictory aphorisms à la neo-conceptualist Jenny Holzer (“all apologies are performative”; “a drone in the hand is better than two in the bush”). The video’s colors reflect on the gallery glass and then refract unexpectedly inside the exhibit space, where they dance and shimmer across an interior pillar.



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In and outside the gallery, Chua hangs distorted digital text describing the phenomenon of surface tension, in which “a man coming out of a bath carries with him a film of water about one-fiftieth of an inch in thickness,” an observation made by scientist JBS Haldane in 1927. In “Closed During Opening Hours,” Chua asks: What knowledge may an object represent? What is “seen” and how may it be codified? At ICA Singapore, the gallery’s reflective veneer of glass elicits intriguing, and misleading, layers of conjecture as to what is perceived. By denying immediacy, Chua persuades the mind’s eye to transform material complexion.

*Genevieve Chua's "Closed During Opening Hours" is on view at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore until May 3, 2019.*

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