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Writings
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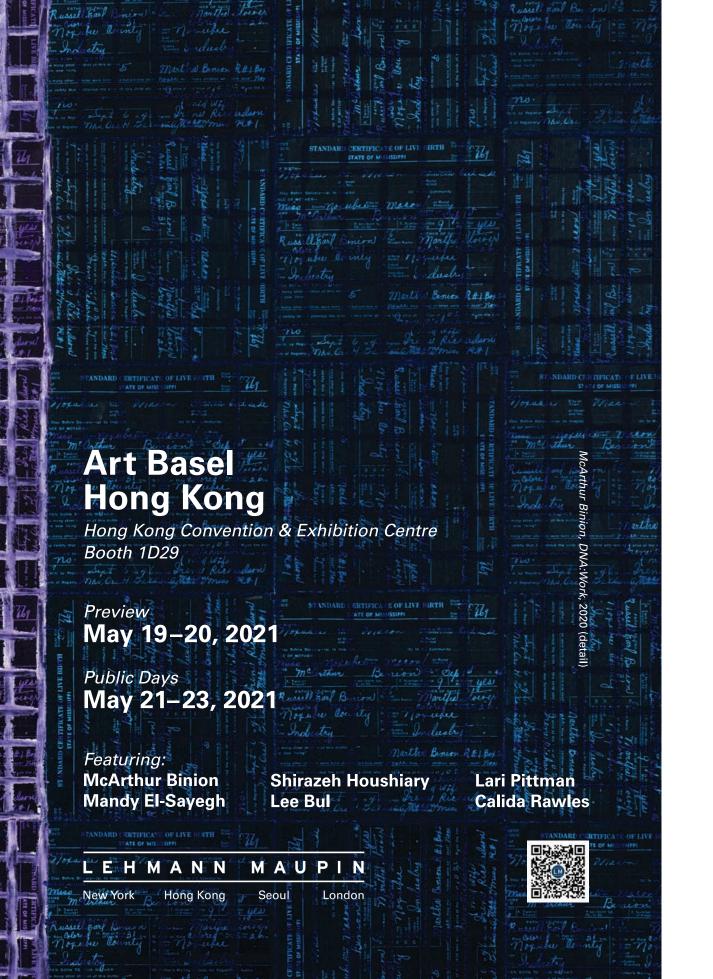




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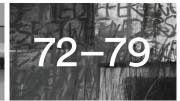


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## Andrew Luk on Audrey Goldstein



Andrew Luk

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Audrey Goldstein, installation view of Shadowtime with view of Silk Shadow and Walking Stick, at Gallery Kayafas, 2019–2021, found objects, silk, thread, fluid, acrylic, Dura-lar, wood, 259 x 457.2 x 975.4 cm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Audrey Goldstein, installation view of Shadowtime with view of Morning Room at Gallery Kayafas, 5am-9am, 2019-2021, found objects, silk, thread, fluid, acrylic, Dura-lar, wood,  $259 \times 457.2 \times 975.4$  cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

The first time I met Audrey Goldstein I was 18 years old and nervous. I had recently arrived in Boston for university and understood I wanted to do art, but had no inclination of how one went about becoming an artist. At our first meeting, Audrey (she never let us call her Mrs. Goldstein) was clearly displeased by my awkward oneword responses, but sat me down and deftly cobbled together the approximate framework of my classes for the following four years before sending me on my way. In those ensuing years, she would meticulously impart upon me the necessary neural reprogramming (a tedious craft lovingly honed over decades of working with thousands of young minds) shaping me to hold a deeply sensing existence with curiosity, care, and desire to connect—tools that are, beyond being an artist, paramount to living an authentic life.

Connecting and connections—these underlying beliefs weave their way throughout the fabric of Audrey's artistic practice. One such work that has always stood out for me was her 2009 "Data Bearer" series. Backpack performance sculptures were worn during art events where she would initiate conversations with people and collect their signatures. Audrey would then diagram her chance encounters on the backpacks in a variety of materials. Moments of technical clarity occur in fragile armatures of brass wires, joined together by a soldering iron. Over the course of the series, she extrapolated these connections to include the remote intimacy of online interactions; flashes of interpersonal contact plotted in an abstract maze of synapses became interwoven within drawings of organic forms and a frothy musculature of fibrous material. Psychological tension of the bodily, as expressed through these mapped points of contact, is caught between being ripped open and reintegrated back together. In her words the series is "based around community in the art world, of people coming together to eat real food for psychological nutrition and sustenance." She says, "Art is not a feather in the cap, it explains the world to us in ways that are beyond logic."

Audrey Goldstein, installation view of Shadowtime at Gallery Kayafas, 12am-3am, 2019-2021, found objects, silk, thread, fluid, acrylic, Dura-lar, wood, 259 x 457.2 x 975.4 cm: each 91.4 x 243.8 cm sheet is used to proportion the size of the house. Image courtesy of the artist.

Art in all its forms depends on connectivity, and the better the work is, the deeper the connection. Artists are, despite the full spectrum of disciplines and mediums, skills and conceptual frameworks, communicators.



A little over a decade later, in her new solo exhibition at Gallery Kayafas, Boston, titled "Shadowtime", Audrey's practice maintains her continued acuteness to connectivity. Newly minted by the participatory artwork project The Bureau of Linguistical Reality, the term Shadowtime "manifests as a feeling of living in two distinctly different temporal scales simultaneously, or acute consciousness of the possibility that the near future will be drastically different than the present." The exhibition is a house made of time—the residue of passing time and the haunting of time lost. Walking Stick (2020), the main sculpture in the installation, hangs from the ceiling and yet precariously pivots on a single wooden leg. A haunting presence as it looms large in the space, its contents are composed of objects delicately wrapped and joined together in womblike silk pouchesvulnerably preserved memory forms, softly veiled but not hidden. The innards of these pouches are what Audrey describes as the "flotsam and jetsam" of existence—everyday objects that hold strong personal lineal significance that she collected pre-pandemic while undertaking the cleaning of her mother's house for the last time. This experience, and by association, the objects, echo the movements and times of four generations in her family, leading Audrey to contemplate ageing and loneliness. What does it mean to watch a day pass? How does one spend time or create rituals for themselves? Solitude during a pandemic makes our connection to time seem simultaneously long and fleeting. Is time measured by connecting or is it from isolation? Solitude highlights our mortality, and our concern shifts towards those we care about most.

An immersive lattice of structural frames dividing the space into the rooms of a house surrounds the sculptural piece. Within each frame hangs a semi-transparent Mylar vellum sheet printed with cast shadows of the Walking Stick, each corresponding to differing hours of the day—the sculpture functioning as a sundial. Each print is made by pouring water over an abundance of collected "flotsam and jetsam" objects from her mother's home, allowing the pigments, which reference the light of the corresponding hour of the day, to bleed. These prints are set aside to dry, sometimes for days, revealing layers of concentric evaporation rings as well as crusty topological pigment surfaces (shadow-sediment) marked by object outlines on the Mylar vellum. Time and memory both imbue and generate the work as the colours bleed into each other, creating unplanned outcomes. The rooms of the installation simultaneously stretch and slow time, "highlighting the felt experience of ourselves beyond a digitally mediated existence. It is a building made to wander through, to move through its rooms of time and begin to reset our pandemic isolation as you would reset a clock."

In class, Audrey would jokingly warn us, "my voice will be stuck in your head for years to come."

Mantras such as "artists do more with less" and "let the work guide you" have been etched into the inside of my skull. In recently reconnecting with Audrey, as we were finishing our Zoom meeting I received another one: "The reason why we make work is so that we have a place to be honest, both with ourselves and with the way we understand our place in the universal." A simple reminder to stay grounded, it is after all a calling and not just a job.

Audrey Goldstein is an artist who lives and works in Boston.
She is currently a full professor and Chair of Art & Design at
Suffolk University School of Art & Design.

Art in all its forms depends on connectivity, and the better the work is, the deeper the connection. Artists are, despite the full spectrum of disciplines and mediums, skills and conceptual frameworks, communicators. While there is no original man or first human, communication is etched deep into our evolution from the beginning of a will for mutually assured survival and the desire for understanding beyond the individual. It transcendentally trains our empathy from which we know kindness and love, and allows messages detailing experiences and accounts to surpass lifetimes. While it may feel as though each of us is but a grain of sand tearing about in this turbulent cosmic desert storm of whim and circumstance; connections to an ecology of time, of ritual, of each other, of concern and hope, is what grounds us so that we can wake up each day and continue with, at the very least an ounce of style.



Audrey Goldstein, Walking Stick (detail), 213.4 x 243.8 x 106.7 cm. Installation view of Shadowtime at Gallery Kayafas, 2019–2021, found objects, silk, thread, fluid, acrylic, Dura-lar, wood, 259 x 457.2 x 975.4 cm. Image courtesy of the artist.



## **Andrew Luk**

Andrew Luk (b. 1988) is a Hong Kong-based multimedia artist whose practice investigates how civilisation regards itself in relation to nature vis-à-vis history, technology, material, architecture, philosophy, science fiction and more. He works across disciplines to create artwork that often defies classification, frequently engaging sculpture, dance, video art, installation, relational art, and video games. His work has been exhibited internationally including at Asia Society Hong Kong Centre; Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong; HOW Art Museum, Shanghai; and chi K11 art museum, Shanghai, among others.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Definition of Shadowtime from The Bureau of Linguistical Reality originated from Ranu Mukherjeem Alicia Escott (2015): https://bureauoflinguisticalreality.com/portfolio/ shadowtime