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POST-CONSUMER
WASTE INTO A
LUXURY BRAND

Gazing Beyond Technology

Photography of Singapore's Youth

Words by Peter Schimke

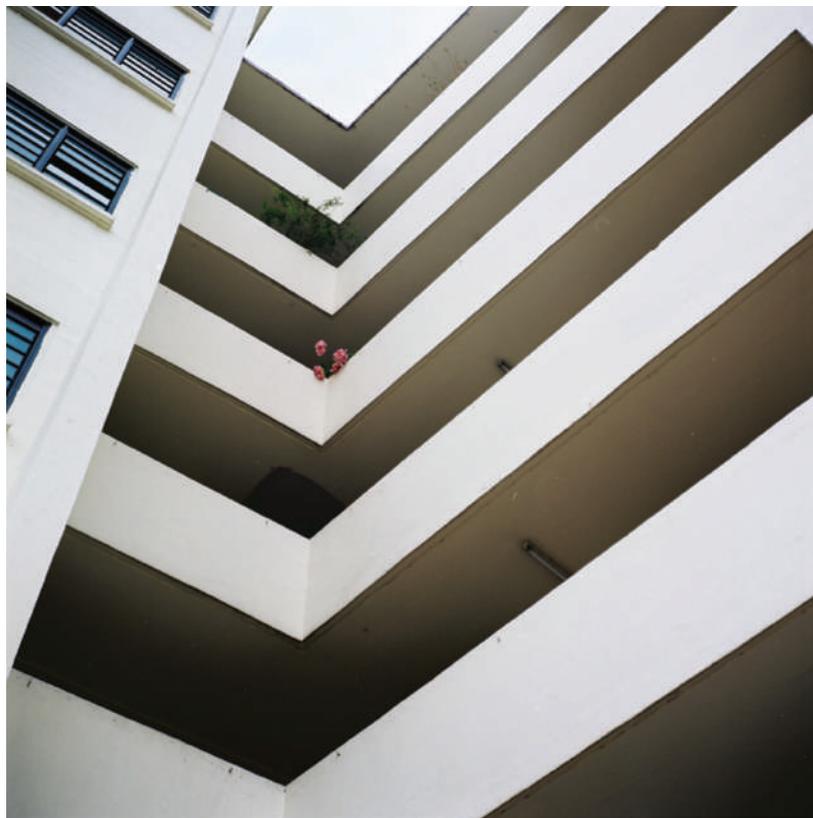
There are multiple ways in how technology is changing art, starting from digital photography and audio-visual installations to 3D-printed sculptures and calibrated fine art. Whether it is a necessary step or a positive development is a different discussion to this one. However, on occasion the influence of technology on our daily lives can show us the most pure and humble vision – the vision of youth – simply by the mere absence of it.

Living in an exaggerated world filled with continuous obstacles and opportunities, one wonders where to still find pure vision. The answers I found are in the untrained eye of youth. The city-state of Singapore is known for incubating technology start-ups and reaching high fast. As technology and connectivity seems to be ingrained from an early age onward, the economic powerhouse of Southeast Asia isn't the place where one would suspect to find a pure and unspoiled eye. However, a group of teenagers recently looked beyond the scenic skyline and the so seemingly

desirable glamour that magazines like to portray, to capture what really matters to them in their world.

Objectifs in Singapore is a small educational programme, exhibition venue and developmental platform seeking to animate and support young, local creative minds. Their project 'Shooting Home' is an annual initiative encouraging participants to find inspiration in their immediate and existing environment. The centre recently hosted a reunion exhibition of their junior programme to see where the artists were now.

A group of innocent teenagers that grew up in an environment – which they were supposed to draw their inspiration from – is heavily technologically influenced and subject to an always-imminent amount of governmental control, captured quite the opposite. Mohammad Jafri Bin Jaafar was just a young 18-year-old with no more than an interest in photography. Shying away from capturing



LIM PAN HIM, SHOOTING HOME – OBJECTIFS GALLERY, SINGA

bright lights, he found some of the most intimate scenes that his environment has to offer – a silhouetted man that stares at Polaroid pictures on his wall, framed by nothing but the silent darkness of his room at night. Technology can't substitute for company.

What may seem as trivial and unimportant at very first glance becomes fascinating and moving within its context. The show establishes that creative expression and art is not only reserved for those who have studied, and have a proven record of historical art understanding. The photographs in Objectifs' 'Shooting Home' exhibition remind us that art isn't a possession, but something that is supposed to be done. The photography is more than a naïve gaze through the camera's finder; it is an investigation of what they are not supposed to be looking at.

Perhaps one of the most interesting and intriguing aspects of the photographs is their subject matter. Ben Yap, who is the assistant manager of Objectifs, explains that no participant was told what to capture and how to capture it. "They were given assistance, but no direction," he says. Living in Singapore, one doesn't necessarily feel the isolation expected from an urban jungle, but the pressure on youth and on the choices they make are somewhat oppressive. A society that is continuously being stratified doesn't offer many detours in life. While there are gaps, orientation and an overwhelming range of choice elsewhere, there are structure, pressure and surveillance in Singapore. The simplicity, tranquillity and the sense of privacy in the photographs are highly captivating in this context. Each one of the young photographers sought out a certain amount of calmness that suggests a parallel world

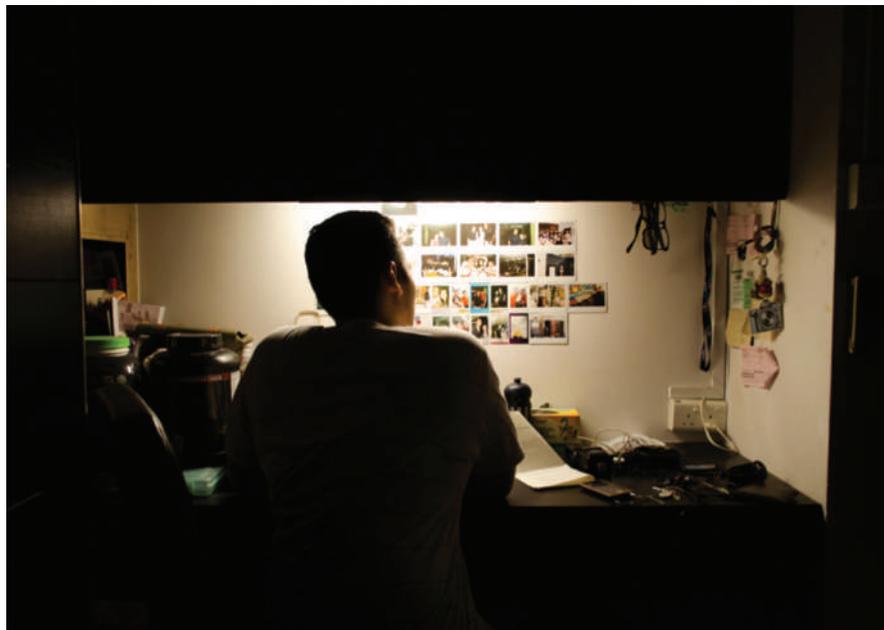
to the one that Singapore wishes to be.

The young Singaporean Pin Han subtitles her work with a question that is so fitting for what Singapore has achieved: "do people make a place, or does a place make us?" Her photographs of a public housing complex are almost void of life. One can't help but see a political context, especially if you know that all these housing complexes are built and controlled by the government. However, there is no judgement in her work. It is perhaps both the inhabitants and the audience that make the place what it is.

The work of the eight young participants unites through the perception of age. It seems curious that Singapore's political aspirations are rooted in meritocracy, a form of governance that favours academic credentials as an objective measure. There is no need to overthrow governance, but there is a need to listen to the youth. Leaving all economic ambitions and technological advancements aside, it is sometimes the pureness and calm thoughtfulness that is most interesting to the next generation.

Junior Shooting Home 2013/2014 Reunion Show
Curated by Joseph Nair
Featured works by Chen Jingxi, Ching Ann Hui, Chuah Xin Ci, Dara Ong, Er Xue Hui, Lim Pin Han, Muhammad Jafri Bin Jaafar and Pearlyn Chang

Objectifs Centre, Lower Gallery
155 Middle Road,
Singapore 188977



MOHAMMAD JAFRI BIN JAAFAR, SHOOTING HOME – OBJECTIFS GALLERY, SINGAPORE

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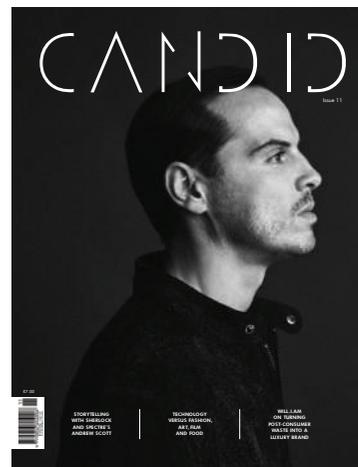
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The Cover

Candid Issue 11 features Andrew Scott, photographed by Leigh Keily. Andrew wears Made & Crafted Levi's suede jacket and John Smedley jumper on the front and back cover. Styled by Danny Keeling. Grooming by John Biles.



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