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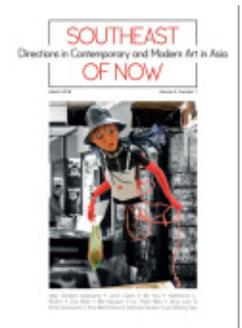
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Amy Lien, Enzo Camacho

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Amy Lien and Enzo Camacho

Preface

Manananggal has appeared in Yiwu is a series of digital collages and text by collaborating artists Amy Lien and Enzo Camacho, produced specially for *Southeast of Now*. The collages draw on two sources: images taken by the artists in Yiwu, a Chinese city known for its small commodities market; and documentation of the artists' 2016 exhibition, *Manananggal has appeared in Berlin*. This exhibition centred on a folkloric monster of the Philippines, the *manananggal*, who appears as a human woman during the day, but gruesomely splits into half at the waist at night. Lien and Camacho crafted a series of split-body sculptures of this figure, which they distributed across several different venues in Berlin, including galleries, stores and private apartments, constituting, in the words of the artists, "an exhibition in pieces, with no central axis".

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普通玩具
REGULAR TOYS

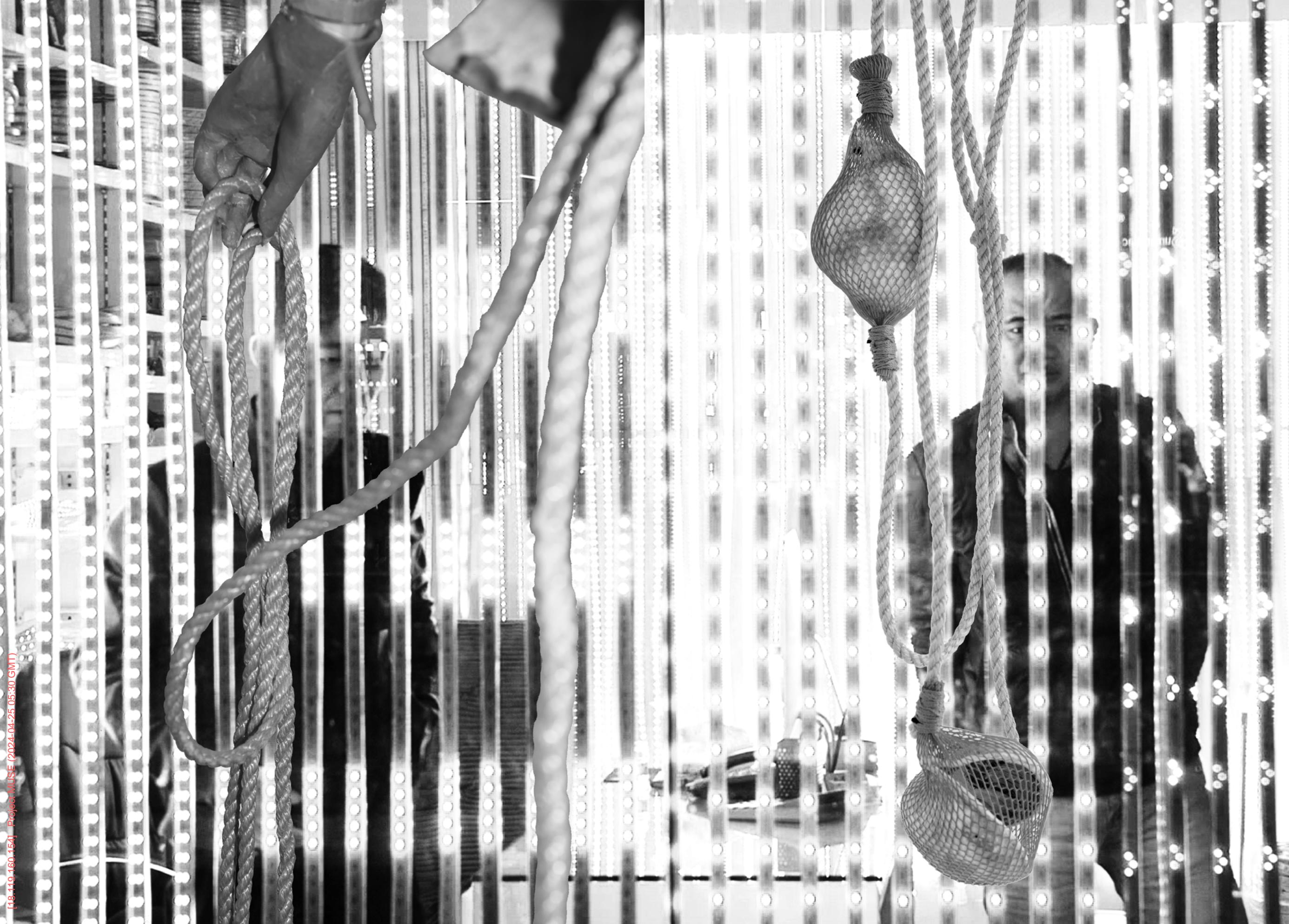
普通玩具
REGULAR TOYS

DORA
EXPLORE

NINJA

NINJA

NINJA
NINJA
NINJA





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“Yiwu, a city where every business transaction is honest and credible.”

It's like the high-speed rail into the city splintered upon arrival into thousands of human-scale trajectories, winding themselves into tight-knit bowel-like loops to and from the regional factories, the small commodities market, the e-commerce villages, the creative and technology parks, the shopping plazas, the night markets, the Party headquarters, the marketing studios, the shipping and transport companies, and the train station. Converging along these entangled trajectories are the bumpily synchronised activities of many sets of hands tinkering, sorting, pressing buttons, calculating, scanning, resting, feeding children, stacking, wrapping objects, and pushing materials in and out of digital and dusty spaces. Then these materials are spat out, sent to a near endless set of geo-marked points outside of this centrifuge of sales, where supposedly in ancient times travelling merchants would pass from door to door, exchanging sugar for chicken feathers.

A man chopping red polyester fleece by the roadside of an e-commerce village is blinking through swirls of dust puffed off the road by the heavy passage of transport trucks. He uses a kind of provisional chop saw that has been rigged up with plywood and blades. The man pushes down on one side to cut the stacked sheets of fleece into scarves, and down another side to cut uniform fringes into each scarf's ends. Scraps and wisps of bright red polyester lint collect in the clumps of weeds below his work station, like dribbles of fresh blood from a street butcher's stand.

A shipping company operating out of a residential parking garage is staffed with dozens of workers arranged into a beehive of rapid-fire intersecting honeycomb paths. Everyone is silent and focused on their precise function. Laser barcode scanners relay a call-and-response of beeps from different locations, as their red lines criss-cross with scruffy packets flying into and out of repurposed metal chicken cages. Outside, three elderly women wearing quilted pajamas, gloves and rubber boots use metal-tipped sticks to scrape expired listings for apartments targeting would-be entrepreneurs, written by hand on dew-brittled pieces of red and pink paper, off the public wall where they have been glued. The sticks scrape inefficiently at the papery, gummy residue, but the women are happily chatting as they scrape.

In the world's largest small commodities market, many of the stalls have innovative arrangements that are both childlike and shrewd, driven by a seemingly voracious market of vicissitudes. Someone has covered a mannequin

standing outside of their wholesale commodities shop with so many varieties of mopheads that it has become a shaggy and forlorn patchwork fashion monster. In a mirrored window display, plastic holographic electronic tablet prostheses materialise immaterial 3-D renderings of rotating animals. The effect is pure magic.

A multi-font logo for a multinational shipment manager reads, "TIME: struggle for a better future".

In some of the high-traffic passageways, small toy robots buzz in circles and figure eights on the floors, managing to catch passersby in some kind of aphasic reverie of novelty technologies. Men, women and children cluster around these kinetic objects in collective silence. The most eye-catching toys operate through a combinatory logic of effects ... such as a train that runs in circles on a bent oval track, causing the track to topple over and stomp the ground each time the train turns the hard curve. Or a razor scooter that lights up and splits into two ski-like parts for each foot.

A shopkeeper wedges her body into a tight space between a stool and what can hardly be called a desk, cocooned in a fuzzy proliferation of furball/bunny/monster bag charms dangling from delicate chains. They capture desire by inducing *gigil*, that untranslatable Filipino word for the deranged, hungry excitement you feel when faced with something too-cute, like when you see a chubby baby and feel an overwhelming urge to sink your teeth into its cheeks, or squeeze it until it cracks. The shopkeeper's unblinking face is bathed in the glow of her smartphone while she eats a clay-pot meal bought from a travelling vendor. (The vendor has been continuously shouting his menu down hundreds of shop aisles throughout the morning and mid-afternoon, and will return later to add her used pot to the stack in his wagon.) Across the aisle, a woman feeds her infant while checking stats on a computer monitor.

All surfaces of these square stalls display the myriad permutations that one or two product categories may generate. The texture and color variations of pom-poms, hair clips, make-up mirrors, fake foliage, thermoses, decorative spinning crystal-fractured LED lights, hammers and heat-proof suits create a kaleidoscopic sense of a world spinning further and further out of the landscape of what is imaginatively possible. This endlessly spinning alien stuff is also fatefully bound to tired, overtaxed bodies.

Manananggal has appeared in Yiwu to prey on this beguiling sensation. She feels a rootedness in this locus of endless diversity and mass-generic, of trashiness and tawdry thrills, pressed to a competitive globalised haywire of choices, which sucks, discharges and touches all our far-flung lives.





BIOGRAPHY

Amy Lien (b. 1987) and **Enzo Camacho** (b. 1985) have been collaborating since 2009. They have had previous solo exhibitions at Green Papaya Art Projects (Quezon City, Philippines), 47 Canal (New York, USA) and Mathew Gallery (Berlin, Germany), and have participated in recent group exhibitions at the Kestner Gesellschaft (Hannover, Germany), the Jim Thompson Art Center (Bangkok, Thailand) and the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing, China). They have been artists-in-residence at Sa Sa Art Projects (Phnom Penh, Cambodia), am Artspace (Shanghai, China), the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art (Singapore) and Gluck50 (Milan, Italy).