

Gayle Chong Kwan

ATLANTIS

installation and photographs, 2008

- Atlantis 1'

photograph, 30.5 x 101.6 cm.

- Atlantis 2

photographs, 30.5cm high x 228.6cm wide)

'Atlantis', Gayle Chong Kwan, 2009

'Atlantis' by Gayle Chong Kwan is a series of seven photographic works and an installation of the mythical city Atlantis, which explores the mythical underwater city. The work is created out of waste plastic and questions notions of waste, climate change and how this fits into our planning of cities and communal living.

Chong Kwan has re-created Atlantis out of carved semi-opaque used plastic food packaging, collected from people who live in London. The use of throwaway packaging is in contrast to the stories of the mythical city of splendour; of beautiful temples, embellished palaces, harbours and luscious vegetation, here brought to life in the intricately carved towers and citadels, which are both beautiful and sinister, by turns luminous and ghostly.

Chong Kwan's new work is based on developments in tourism, regeneration and urban planning. This pristine but soulless city echoes the modern day tourist destinations artificially created at speed with little care of the local ecosystems. Chong Kwan's Atlantis alludes to master-planning projects, often controlled and overseen by the few, but ultimately affecting the many, whose needs they can sometimes fail to meet.

The discarded remains of Atlantis may also be found at the bottom of many of our rivers and seas, forming their own kinds of horrific waste cities or constructions. With premonitions of our rising water levels, questions surround whether we are creating or living in the Atlantis of the future.

The architecture of Atlantis is inspired by ideas of the lost city, whose beauty was unequalled but which vanished in a day. First described by Plato in around 360 BC, Atlantis was catastrophically buried under the sea, and an earthquake was unleashed onto the island, triggering the flood. Often treated as a literary device, Atlantis entered into the popular imagination in the 1880's. Expeditions continue to search in various sites for the remains of Atlantis.

bio:

Born Edinburgh 1973. Lives and works in London. Scottish/Chinese Mauritian. Holds a BA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins College of Art, an MSc in Communications from Stirling University, and a BA in Politics and Modern History from Manchester University.

Gayle Chong Kwan works with photography, video, sound, installation, and performance. Her work is often context specific or involves people in rituals of exchange, such as food or trade, to explore ideas of history, the senses and memory. The personal and global politics of food, waste, tourism and masterplanning have been a major focus of Chong Kwan's work to date.

Chong Kwan has shown extensively in the United Kingdom and abroad: 'Senscape Scotland', Vauxhall Collective, Idea Generation, London; 'Memoryscape Moravia', Centro Cultural de Moravia, Medellin, Colombia; Guest/Visitor Book', Speakeasy, Word/Play, ICA, London; 5x5Castelló09, Espai d'art contemporani de Castelló, Spain; British Subjects: Identity and Self-Fashioning, 1966-2009, Neuberger Museum of Art, New York; At Your Service, David Roberts Foundation, London; Tales from the New World, 10th Havana Biennial, Cuba; Pot Luck, Art Circuit Touring Exhibition, New Art Gallery Walsall, Aberystwyth Art Centre, PM Gallery, Southampton City Art Gallery, UK; Government Art Fund', British Ambassador's Residence, Paris; 'Cantilever', Collyer Bristow Gallery, London Festival of Architecture, London; 'The Land of Peach Blossoms', Graves Gallery, Sheffield; 'Utopia', Museu Berardo, Centro Cultural do Belem, Lisbon; 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth', Platform for Art, London; 'Conversations', Tate Britain, London; 'Different Worlds', National Portrait Gallery, London; 'Folliescape', La Villette, Paris; 'Cockaigne', Chinese Arts Centre, Manchester; Veduta Romantica', MAC, Birmingham; European Forum Emerging Creation, Neumünster Abbey, Luxembourg; Cité in Progress, Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris, Paris; 'Stellar Dentrise', Tatton Park Biennial, Manchester. Recent residencies include: Coast International Residency, A Foundation, Liverpool; Venice Printmaking, Italy; Macroyecto de Moravia, Colombia; UNIDEE, Fondazione Pistoletto, Italy; Ville de Paris Residency, Cite Internationale des Arts de Paris, Paris. Recent awards include: Pepinieres Europeenes Pour Jeunes Artistes Award; Arts Council England Touring Award.

Publications:

- 'Gayle Chong Kwan, The Grand Tour', Published by ArtSway, UK 2009

Hardback, 15.5 x 21.5cm, 72pp
ISBN 978-0-9558406-4-7

Texts by Camilla Brown, Senior Curator, The Photographers Gallery, and Edward Chaney, Professor of Fine and Decorative Arts, Southampton Solent University and others.

- 'Photography: A Critical Introduction' 4th Edition
Published by Routledge, UK 2009

Edited by Liz Wells
ISBN 978-0-415-46087-3

- '21 : Discussions with artists of Chinese descent', Published by Chinese Arts Centre, UK 2008
Softcover, 205 x 205mm, 160pp
ISBN 978-0-9545440-4-1

'Stilled. Contemporary Still Life Photography by Women', Published by Ffotogallery, Cardiff 2006

Ed by Kate Newton and Christine Rolph
Ellipsis Vol 3
ISBN – 10; 1 872771 61 0 ISBN – 13; 978 1 872771 61 8
- 'Platform for Art. Art on the Underground', Black Dog Publishing 2008

Ed Tamsin Dillon
ISBN 978 1 906155 06 3

- 'Tatton Park Biennial', Published by Tatton Park
ISBN 97809 558 72112

- 'Paris Remains' and 'Les Precieuses', Portfolio, Issue 49, 2009
Essay by Laura McLean-Ferris

- 'Gayle Chong Kwan : Atlantis' by Cristiana Bottigella, VERY 13

October 2008

- 'Cockaigne'
Essay by Fiona Candlin, Portfolio, Issue 41, 2006

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