



PRESS RELEASE

Eye Filmmuseum

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Fiona Tan Mountains and Molehills

Exhibition at Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam from
2 October 2022 till 8 January 2023

How do we hold on to memories – in archives, in the mind, in the landscape, on film? Visual artist and filmmaker Fiona Tan (born in 1966 in Indonesia) works with photography and moving images and creates spatial installations, investigating ways in which we record the world around us. This autumn, Eye Filmmuseum is pleased to present the work of Fiona Tan in the solo exhibition *Mountains and Molehills*.

Fiona Tan – Mountains and Molehills, from 2 October 2022 to 8 January 2023 at Eye Filmmuseum, IJpromenade 1, Amsterdam. www.eyefilm.nl/fionatan



Key works in the exhibition are *Gray Glass* (2020), *Inventory* (2012), and the new work *Footsteps* (2022), which Fiona Tan made at the invitation of Eye Filmmuseum. These video installations explore the relationship between the individuals on either side of the lens as well as the relationship between image, maker and viewer. For Tan, time is both a medium and a vehicle. It is a material that she studies, shapes and processes into artworks – often in combination with still and moving images. The artist observes a critical yet poetic gaze at forms of perception and representation. How do you make a true or honest portrait of an individual, a community, a place or a time?

New work: *Footsteps*

In *Footsteps*, her latest work, Tan creates connections between personal stories and the world at large around us. For this project she makes use of material sourced from the Eye collection – forgotten Dutch documentary images from the early days of silent film over a century ago.

The footage shows children at play and Dutch windmills, and also people engaged in heavy physical labour in the countryside and in factories. She combines these images with excerpts from letters she received from her father just after she moved to the Netherlands in the late 1980s. As a result of his schooling in Indonesia, Tan's father knew much about the Netherlands without ever having been there. In the letters he meanders seamlessly between personal news and world events, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing. *Footsteps* is 97 minutes long and can be seen daily at set times as part of the exhibition.

Fascination for collecting

Tan's work reveals a fascination with archives, museums, with their collections, depots and architecture. Where does the urge to collect and preserve things come from? How is information classified, organized and stored – both physically and mentally? Who controls these processes? And what power structures do they produce? These questions relate to the decolonization of archives, an issue also of concern to Eye.

In the installation *Inventory* (2012), Tan turns her cameras on the eccentric museum house of the eighteenth-century architect and collector Sir John Soane. The title of *Gray Glass* (2020) refers to an optical instrument, popular among eighteenth-century painters, which can reduce a landscape to an image. In the same period, large mirrors – too expensive and fragile to be transported by donkeys – crossed the Alps on the backs of hikers. Tan exposes a new archaeology of moving images in this three-part spatial installation.

Biography

Born in 1966 in Pekanbaru, Indonesia, Fiona Tan grew up in Australia before relocating in the late 1980s to Amsterdam, where she studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten. She has previously worked with Eye on the exhibitions *Expanded Cinema* (2012), which included her work, and *Waiting for the time to pass* (2021). She previously incorporated material from the Eye collection in *News from the Near Future* (2003) and *Facing Forward* (1999).

Fiona Tan has exhibited widely over the past twenty five years and her work is part of many international private and museum collections. Recent solo exhibitions include at the Museum der Moderne, Salzburg; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Musée des arts contemporains Grand Hornu; The Baltic, Gateshead; National Museum of Art, Osaka; and MAXXI, Rome. In 2009 Tan represented the Netherlands at the Venice Biennale with her solo presentation *Disorient*. Her work is held in the collections such as the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; New Museum for Contemporary Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Tate Modern, London.

Publication

In collaboration with nai010, Eye is publishing a book to accompany the exhibition. In an essay that reflects on how time and ways of looking and thinking converge in Tan's work, Hanneke Grootenboer sets her art in a historical and philosophical context of image culture. In an interview with Dana Linssen, Tan discusses her process of making, and she shares her thoughts on exhibiting her work. The publication also includes essays and notes by the artist herself, which offer valuable insight into her vision and way of working. The catalogue is lavishly illustrated with installation photos, film stills and photos taken behind the scenes. Also included are the complete texts of the works *Brendan's Isle* (2010) and *Island* (2008).

Public programme

A programme compiled together with the artist features film screenings, conversations and presentations in the Eye cinemas. In addition, on 20 October the Society of Arts and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) are organizing a symposium on the work of Fiona Tan.

**VRIENDEN
LOTERIJ**

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Note to editors, not for publication

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