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Mitchell Chan: Art & Inactivism at Angell Gallery

Art & Inactivism is a poignant time based exhibition by artist Mitchell Chan that questions the interconnected roles of art and political narrative. With impeccable timing, the works on display nuance the dismay and polarized views evident in today's poignant news headlines. The pre-eminence of technology's ability to rapidly drive opinions forward gives way to diluted mass information and an increasingly divergent discourse among civil society. The thoughtful exhibition presents a paradox between the audacity of today's political climate and the futility of its repercussions, all while providing a space of serenity within the Angell Gallery.



Mitchell Chan. Courtesy of Angell Gallery

Mitchell Chan's *Something Something National Conversation (In 2 Characters Or Less)* is a large-scale installation that embodies the duality of spectacle and nothingness. Two rectangular pillars positioned at opposite sides of the main gallery generate over 3000 liters of water vapour per hour to create a perpetual show. Two ethereal clouds are formed, only to collide and dissipate through a ring of mist. An illuminated ring positioned under the point of contact presents a metaphorical stage for the participants of political discourse, and those who interact with the artwork. The clouds are created with such force but clash with a sense of grace. The repetitive phenomenon is ephemeral, drawing attention to the exhaustive shifts between periods of normalcy and moments of puzzlement.



Mitchell Chan, *Something Something National Conversation (In 2 Characters or Less)*, 2016, site-specific installation. Courtesy of Angell Gallery

Infinite News Feed adds an intangible and multisensory component to the physical works. Throughout the exhibition run, the algorithmically generated musical and lyrical scores add a heightened sense of vogue to the experience. As designed by the artist, headlines from The New York Times online U.S. section are dissected and paired with a musical track to create a real time audio piece accompanying the installation *Something Something*. The all-encapsulating experience becomes a performance infinite in duration that prompts visitors to question the methods by which we digest and interact with digressive political rhetoric.

JMW Turner's The Slave Ship is a site-specific installation that alludes to the 19th century painter and his great political artworks. Chan's kinetic sculpture exemplifies the continuity of politics as a powerful theme throughout art history. The undulating velvet ropes represent Turner's choppy waves reaching the shores 175 years after they were painted, entering a new cycle of political perpetuity. Accompanying the piece is a curated soundtrack varied in genre that places a subtle emphasis on the timelessness of global issues.



Mitchell Chan, JMW Turner's *The Slave Ship*, 2016, site-specific installation. Courtesy of Angell Gallery

Art & Inactivism – An exhibition about why it feels like this doesn't really matter right now, is a felicitous title for the works created by Mitchell Chan for this show. This curated exhibition denotes feelings of both ambivalence and absurdity towards disparaging political discourse and the modern news feed. The Orwellian atmosphere however provides a window for visitors to explore the exhibit in whimsy, allowing the subtext of Chan's thoughtful mediums to be understood through their elegant outcomes.

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