

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****“The Afterlife of Rosy Leavers” by Angela Su****20 May – 8 July 2017****Opening Reception: 20 May 2017, Saturday, 4 – 6:30pm****Artist will be present.**

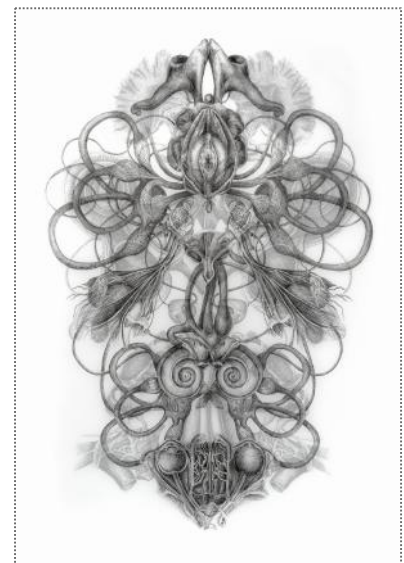
Venue: Blindspot Gallery (15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong)

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm (Sunday and Monday by appointment only); closed on public holidays

Blindspot Gallery is pleased to present “The Afterlife of Rosy Leavers”, Angela Su’s first solo exhibition at Blindspot Gallery. The exhibition will showcase the artist’s newest works that include drawing, video, hair embroidery and installation. This is the culmination of Su’s extended research on mental illness and social control, offering a dissection of her own state of mind to explore the im/possibility of autonomy, agency and empathy in one’s daily struggles.

The exhibition is a self-reflexive journey that begins with Su’s exploration with hallucination to question the perception of reality, and subsequently how she positions herself in these uncertainties. Interlaced with different key concepts, recurring motifs and historical facts, the journey contains two main intersecting narratives: the first thread focuses on the inner self and introduces doubling, hallucination and virtual reality; the second exposes external structures, relating psychiatry, social control and resistance.

By the entrance of the exhibition stand three Rorschach test ink drawings. The drawings are in perfect bilateral symmetry, as the doubling biomorphic forms emerge and evolve over two overlapping layers of drafting films, manifesting as vegetative and floral parts interpenetrated with human bodily organs, often in analogous spiral patterns. Like the Rorschach tests used by diagnosticians in psychology, the images elicit not the viewer’s logical faculties, but the free-associating, deeply intuitive side of the human psyche. Further providing a psychoanalytic context of the subconscious, a bed rests in the middle of the room, covered with a bed sheet embroidered with human hair outlining an apologetic phrase by a troubled woman.



The Rorschach drawings contain two visual motifs that weave the narrative onward: the double and the spiral. The doubles propagate themselves in the word play that starts with “twin” and “split”, which the artist visualised with found images from the Internet. With the playful slippages in the rhyming of *twin/pin/spin* and the alliterating sibilance of *split/snip/slit*, Su conceives of words as sound-images with autonomy from the subject. As psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan theorised, “The subject is nothing other than what slides in a chain of signifiers.”<sup>1</sup> These slipping signs are then vocalised in the adjacent video work, *Rosy has a spinning twin*, a moving Rorschach pattern composed of found footages of autistic children spinning – the spiral and the double have achieved an obsessive and uncanny unity.

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge (Encore) (Vol. Book XX) (Bk. 20)*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), p.49-50



The doubling also occurs in *Please tell me what's been bothering you*, which contains a conversation between a patient, who is convinced she has a doppelgänger, and ELIZA, a first-generation AI computer psychotherapist from the 1960s. Although ELIZA had passed the Turing test<sup>2</sup>, the programme is very basic, and only responds with keyword substitution and canned phrases. The resultant conversation is droll and frustrating, as the AI therapist mirrors and parrots the paranoia of the patient, effectively turning into the latter's doppelgänger.

Hallucination, mental illness, doppelgänger and artificial intelligence – these concepts all congeal into the exhibition's namesake centerpiece film-work, "The Afterlife of Rosy Leavers". It introduces the viewer to Rosy's life story: early fascination with spirals, experiences with hallucinatory psychedelics, schizophrenic episodes, joining Socialists' Patients Collective (SPK), and ultimately uploading her consciousness to cyberspace and thereby living her life as an animated character. The film starts with found footages that range from Dadaist cinema to early Fleischer studio animations, and ends with an animation of Rosy's avatar meandering in cyberspace and being molested by a panda-headed man. The exploration of digital consciousness and virtual reality is an important progression of Su's artistic practice, which had long investigated the limits of the mind-body duality in man-organic and man-bionic/prosthetic hybrids. To further extrapolate the mind-body problem of authorship, *The Interview* features a TV talk-show host interrogating the artist if one can make performance art without the body.



The militant activism of SPK, in particular the call to "turn illness into a weapon", is the inspiration for the work *A Reminder to Myself*, a set of eight poster banners composing of SPK slogans, borrowed texts and found images. Based on historical research, each poster tells the struggles and resistance of different individuals, most of them deemed invalids, deviants or criminals, against the establishment system.

The artist will be present at the opening reception. Interviews are welcome and can be arranged.

### About Angela Su

Born in Hong Kong, Angela Su received a degree in Biochemistry from University of Toronto, Canada, in 1990, before pursuing a degree in Visual Arts from Ontario College of Art and Design University, Canada, in 1994. In 2002, Su had her first solo exhibition "De Humani Corporis Fabrica" at Goethe-Institut Hong Kong. She has also exhibited in different institutions including CAFA Art Museum in Beijing, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul, Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, He Xiangning Art Museum in Shenzhen, and most recently the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Her work is held in the collections of M+ Museum (Hong Kong) and CAFA Art Museum (China). Su currently lives and works in Hong Kong.

### About Blindspot Gallery

Set up in 2010, Blindspot Gallery is a Hong Kong-based contemporary art gallery with a primary focus on contemporary photography and image-based works, amongst other media in contemporary art. The gallery represents both emerging and established artists, mainly from Hong Kong and the region but also beyond.

For enquiries and media interviews, please contact Ms. Lesley Kwok at 2517 6238 or by email [info@blindspotgallery.com](mailto:info@blindspotgallery.com)

Image captions:

Angela Su, *Rorschach Test No.1*, 2016, Ink on drafting films, 151.5 x 105 cm

Angela Su, *Please tell me what's been bothering you*, 2017, Digital print on paper, set of 27, 21 x 28.5 cm each, Edition: 3 + AP

Angela Su, *The Afterlife of Rosy Leavers* (film still), 2016-2017, Single channel video, 14' 35", Edition: 5 + 2AP

(Image courtesy of artist and Blindspot Gallery)

<sup>2</sup> Named after the English computer scientist Alan Turing, the Turing test is a test for intelligence in a computer programme, requiring that a human being should be unable to distinguish the machine from another human being by asking a series of questions and simulating a conversation.