

13. Liyen Chong

Born Malaysia 1979

BFA (Painting) Ilam 2001

MFA (Distinction in Design) Ilam 2003

Lives in Auckland

Liyen Chong currently has two modes of art practice, linked by her remarkable attention to detail. In one mode, using her own hair, she embroiders miniatures that resemble engravings, or ink drawings done with a fine pen. Her other conceptual work consists of the creation of simulacra of small packaging and printed material through the language of graphic design.

Chong's embroidery will withstand the closest scrutiny. The fine black hairs appear to lie on the surface of the linen support, twisting and turning like a drawn line. There seem to be no gaps where the hair goes into the backing and comes out again. A repeated subject is the human skeleton and skull. The skull is, of course, the source of hair, but is hairless. Using her hair, Chong delineates the internal structure of the body, bringing the realms of life and death together through embroidery. The engravings of Albrecht Durer come to mind, and the works can be interpreted as death being overcome by the power and longevity of art. In 2008, using different shades of hair, Chong created a perfect \$5 note, complete with its Ed Hillary portrait.

Chong's other interest is in the stream of words that flow past our eyes daily and constantly, much of it unread, or only superficially scanned. How many of us read all the text on a box of pills, a bottle label or a packet of sugar? Then there are the business cards thrust into our hands, the magazine leafed through at the dentist's, the official forms, the junk mail. Chong re-presents these items to us, but they have been totally rewritten and turned into surreal dream messages, admonishments or devices to prompt introspection. The thinking viewer cannot toss one of these items aside, as one would if



IT'S SILLY
DEPARTED
THIS CONTINENT
01.01.2000
AS IF WHAT YOU SAY AT THAT
TIME WOULD BE THE MOST
IMPORTANT THING YOU
COULD SAY, WHAT
ABOUT THE BITS
IN BETWEEN?
TRYING TO KEEP A DIARY ...

Visa/Visas

Disillusioned, Cynical,
And Sad (but healthy if
I Have Not Lost Myself
In The DISEASE OF
SOMEONE ELSE'S SPEECH

Visa/Visas

13

DO YOU TRAVEL ALL THE TIME?
Holder may remain indefinitely
(travel-no place, no place)

Current from **YES I DO,**
my eyes are constantly open,
But I do not see what the people who live here see.

WILL you find me???? Immigration Officer
The right choice.

TRAVELER'S CHECKS & FLIGHT TIMES & DISTANCES
**DON'T FORGET
WHO YOU ARE
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY,
SOMETHING
TO PASS THE TIME**
AS WELL AS YOUR SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

TRAVELLING DO WE GET THERE?
STATIONARY
BECAUSE MY SELF IS
STILL MY SELF.
REPRODUCTION of sealed self sufficient projection of the globe
MAKES IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

TO ARRIVE
BTTWZ

MEANING:
to begin to look with both
the eyes of a stranger
and native in one.

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