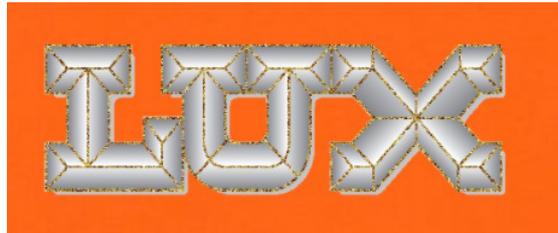


LUX

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Some of the world's greatest artists photographed in lockdown by Maryam Eisler

LUX Contributing Editor and artist Maryam Eisler has been photographing some of the world's greatest artists over FaceTime and WhatsApp for LUX. As the project evolves, our online exhibition *Confined Artists – Free Spirits: photographs from lockdown* by Maryam Eisler will grow, accompanied by musings from the likes of Marina Abramovic, Larry Bell, George Condo, Eric Fischl, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Marilyn Minter, Shirin Neshat and Laurie Simmons. Below, LUX Editor-in-Chief Darius Sanai introduces Maryam's brilliant and original oeuvre, and Maryam herself muses on her inspiration, after which we present her works in all their raw and un-retouched digital glory.

The lockdown around the world is having an unprecedented effect on every aspect of human life. Many people have lost their jobs or have seen their businesses imperilled. Others feel helpless as they see the suffering and sacrifices around them.

In such times, the *raison d'être* of creativity and artistry comes under scrutiny: who can have time for anything unrelated to the clear and present danger caused to humankind by these strands of self-replicating RNA?

But creativity is part of what it is to be human. Somewhere in our DNA (itself a complex remake of the same nucleic acid that is coronavirus) is a program for the unique human desire and ability to create art, and appreciate aesthetic, for its own sake. Some of the greatest artistic creations in our history, from the temples of the Nile to Picasso's *Guernica*, have emerged from horror and hardship. Artists cannot stop creating, even if the art world, that very contemporary construct, has temporarily stopped working.

When Maryam Eisler, one of our contributing editors, called me with an idea, a couple of weeks into lockdown, I knew it would be worth listening to. An artist and author, Maryam is the archetypal peripatetic global art world citizen: born in Iran, educated in France and the States, resident in London.

Maryam said she had started a project photographing her favourite artists as screenshots on FaceTime and WhatsApp. I said it would be an honour to run her project as an online exhibition, and also in the pages of our summer 2020 print edition. The project gained momentum, to what you see here today: some of the most celebrated artists in the world, captured in a casual moment, on a phone, and unedited. A true sign of our times. Over to you, Maryam.

Darius Sanai, Editor-in-Chief, LUX magazine

(1) Nietzsche, F. concept of the Eternal Return in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882) and also in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil* (1887)

(2) Bakewell, S. *How to Live: A Life of Montaigne in one question and twenty attempts at an answer* (2011)

Below video: *Confutatis* by W.K. Lyhne



00:00

31:34

@wklyhnestudio

wklyhne.co.uk

thesequestedprize.com





Gordon Cheung

JUNE 16, LONDON, STUDIO

I am a British-born Chinese artist who believes in bearing witness to our histories by making art. In these extraordinary times, our lives are profoundly transformed and offer a focal point for positive change. Making art about our histories is to mark it as a moment to understand its roots of how it came to be, its current emotive power and responding to what future we might want.

“China Virus” is a name propagated by the Trump administration in reference to COVID-19 that stokes anti-Chinese racism, spiking hate crimes against Asians. History has shown us the dehumanising dangers of fascist leaders who racialise viruses for political gains. The diseases and leaders are different, but we have been here before. True leadership would unite humanity to fight against the pandemic and reach out a helping hand rather than point and blame.

Covid-19 lockdown has inspired me to reach out to collaborate with artists through projects such as the #artistsupportpledge on social media as well as to raise money for charities helping the victims of the virus. I am working with Toronto-based Chinese-Canadian artist Karen Tam on an ongoing research project to chronicle and celebrate under-recognised Overseas Chinese in history who fought to overcome systemic racism. Remembering the positive achievements of those who came before us helps to counter negative stereotypes, shape who we are and inspire future generations.

I watched in horror, like many others around the world, the indiscriminate killing of George Floyd who became the current 2019/2020 pinnacle of over 1400 killings of mostly poor people of colour per year by US police. Along with the surreal mishandling of the pandemic by the richest and most powerful nation in the world, it has shown us a broken system. Meanwhile, the US Federal Reserve printed trillions of dollars and anonymously gave it to corporations to artificially skyrocket their own stock prices despite record unemployment rates beyond those of the Great Depression. It's an unprecedented transfer of wealth to the upper echelons of society and dilution of purchasing power for the poor. It is unsurprising to see the tinder of anxiety explode into flames of protests.

I hope we will be able to reflect and act on how we might improve and value the vital importance of our healthcare and economy for the benefit of the majority of people. Otherwise, we are doomed to repeat history. We have seen from those on the frontline who are saving our lives, that it takes enormous resilience to overcome a global pandemic. The human spirit in the face of adversity is incredible to witness.

Recognising beauty in these turbulent times is the premise of my collaboration with Los Angeles-based Martin Klipp, President of Beyond Art Creative. We are launching a plan to present a series of seemingly idyllic American landscapes. Captured on smart phones' cameras from around the US during the COVID-19 isolation, the images are juxtaposed and repurposed using a technique that reorders the pixels into a 'digital sands of time' that underscores the impending dark undertow of personal and political turmoil echoing the fragility of the situation across the world. In these emotionally turbulent times we need moments of beauty to lift our souls; a breath of tranquility. In isolation we can find peace before moving forward to create the future we desire.

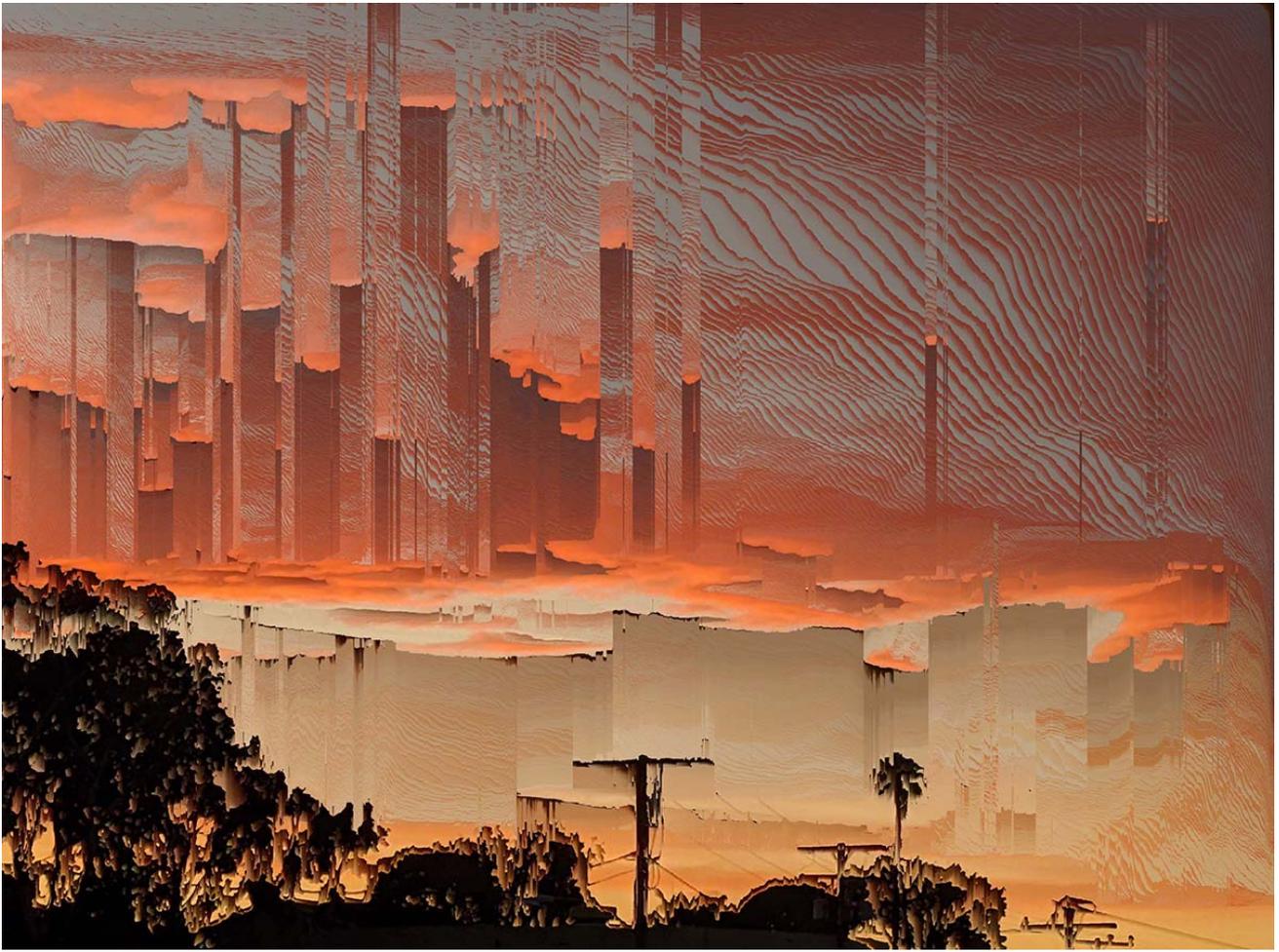
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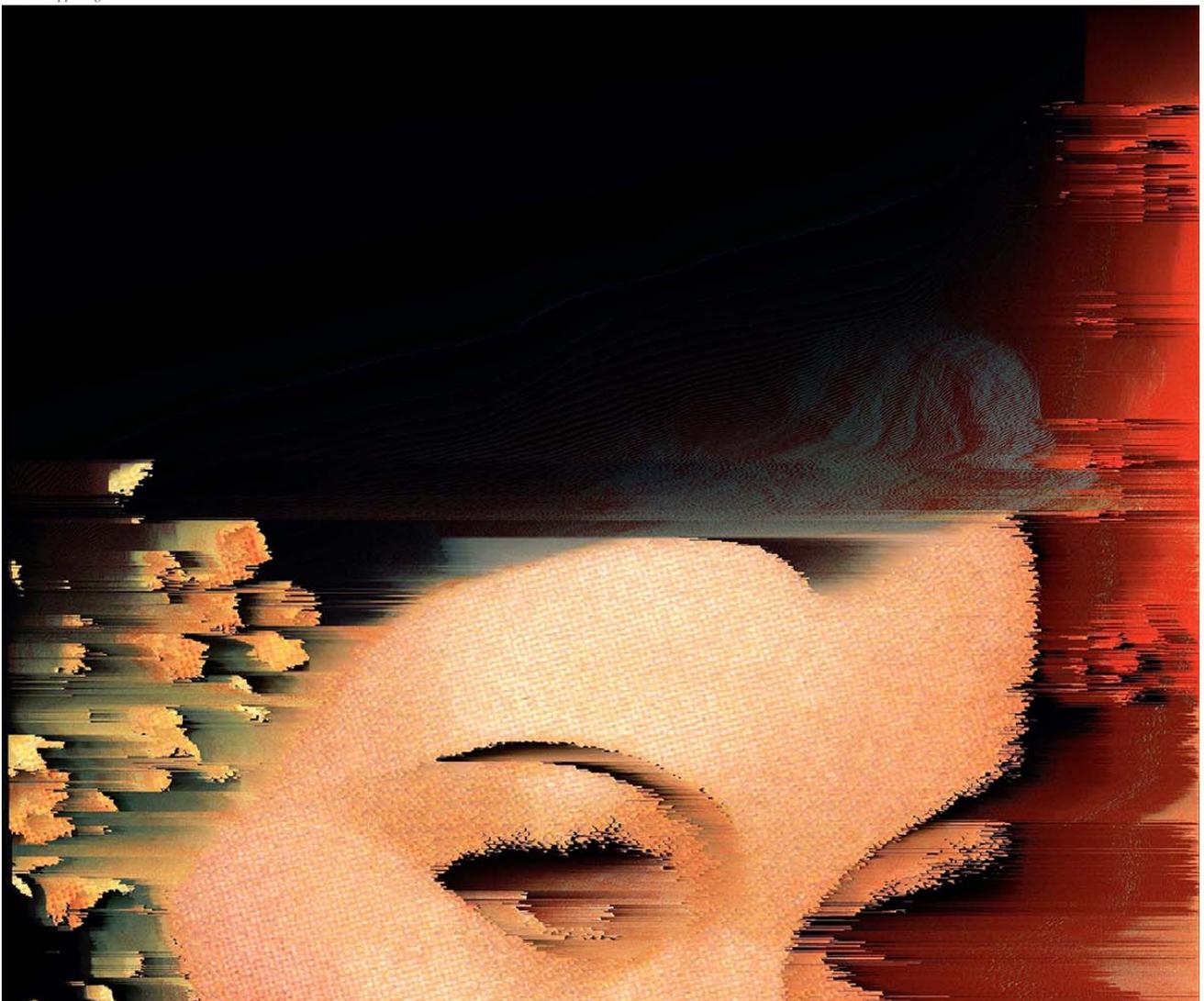


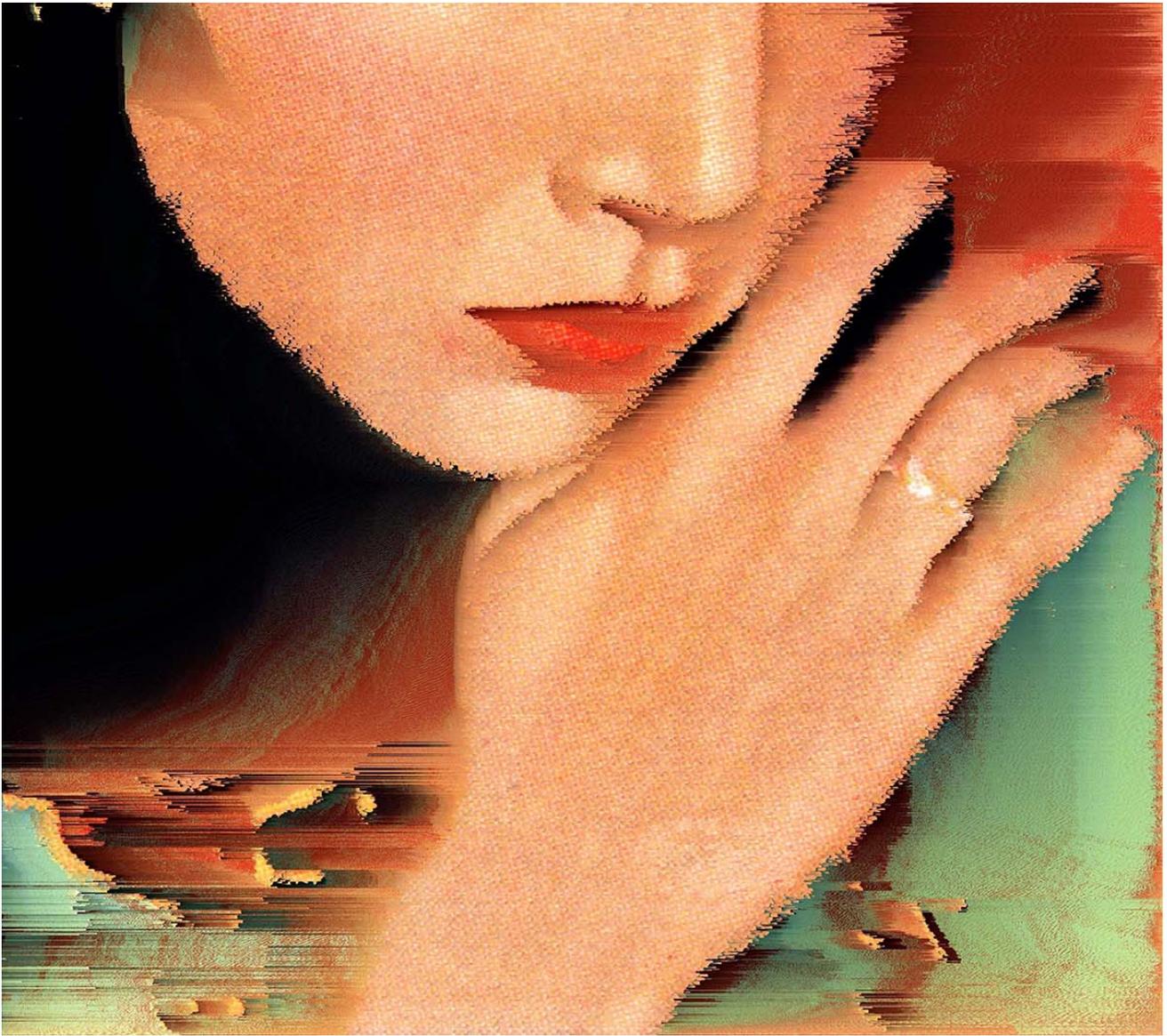


New Order Still Life with a Vase of Flowers and Dead Frog Jacob Marrel 1634



Martin Klipp Image





Anna May Wong

