



The Probability of Veracity
part 2: the re-enactments
(from analogue to digital)

An exhibition by Gilles Massot
Objectifs - 8-29 September 2018
Sound scape by Luke Chen, Rex Lee and Leslie Tan
with contributions from Laura Miotto and Ryf Zaini

Supported by the Institut Français Singapour

The Probability of Veracity

part 2: the re-enactments / from analogue to digital

Part 2 of the cycle *The Probability of Veracity* will present the photographic re-enactments of some of the daguerreotypes produced by Jules Itier during his journey around Asia in 1844-45. For about a year and a half Jules Itier travelled around the China sea as one of the members of the Lagrené Mission sent by the French government to negotiate and sign the Treaty of Whampoa, the first diplomatic treaty between France and China. Itier was in charge of the commercial part of the treaty, but he also travelled with a daguerreotype camera, still very much a novelty barely five years after its announcement in 1839.

With the help of a grant from LASALLE College of the Arts, Massot could complete a research started in 2011 and bring it to completion in 2015 with the publication of the article *Jules Itier and the Lagrené Mission* in the peer-reviewed journal *History of Photography*. In this article, Massot could established a number of important points concerning the early phase of photography history in Asia and most significantly identify Itier's daguerreotype of the Tian Hock Keng temple in Singapore shot on the 6 July 1844 as the oldest extant dated photograph of the whole Asian continent.

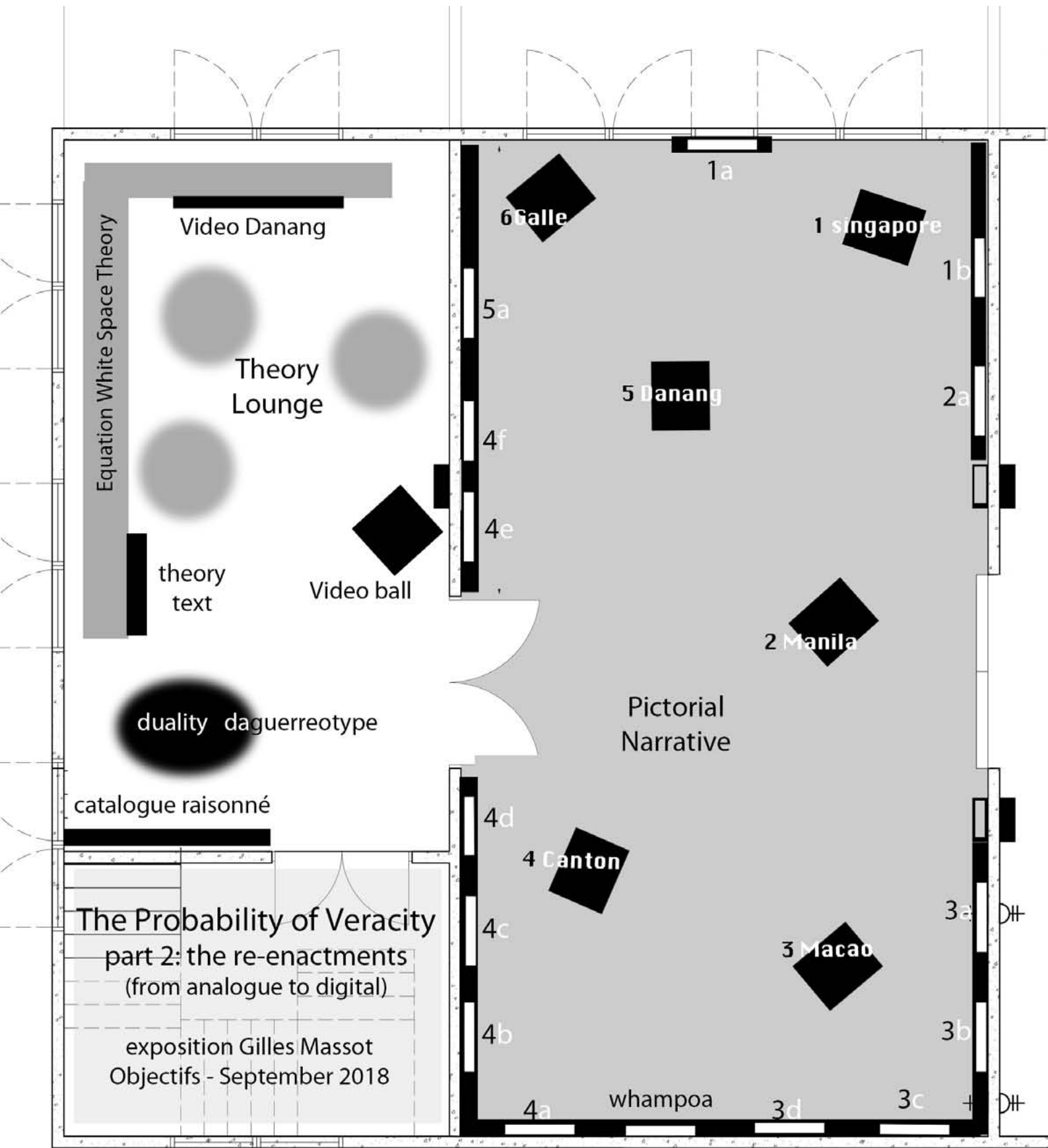
Massot's journey in the footsteps of Itier however wasn't undertaken from a purely historical point of view. As a practicing artist and photo theoretician, Massot also aimed to turn this quest in time and space into a new body of works, now presented as a cycle of exhibition under the over arching title *The Probability of Veracity*.

In Part 1, Massot used painting to re-create the seven missing daguerreotypes known through their mention in Itier's published journal. This Part 2 uses a highly experimental technique to reflect on the photographic journey accomplished since the original works were first created in the 19th century. Travelling to the six Asian cities for which we know of at least one daguerreotypes (Singapore, Manila, Macao, Canton, Danang and Galle), Massot first shot the re-enactments of the original images with a pinhole camera on 120mm film. The negative were then scanned and printed on silver paper with a video projector. From analogue pinhole to digital light, the final prints thus encompass the full technical history of the medium from its birth to today.

The shooting process too aimed to achieve a similar dialogue between past and present. The initial step was to tangibly retrace the space of Itier's physical interaction with the reality of his time based on the mnemonic traces found in his journal. With the boundaries of Itier's space in time identified, Massot could then assert through his contemporary photographic asserts his own presence by opening-up the stratigraphy of memory that is inherent in place, environment, light and human experience. With the re-enactment of Itier's actions/ time on location/space, Massot photographic act was becoming a performance that explored the practices of being and living. It re-activated and re-interpreted the past with the aim of arriving at a comprehensive understanding of the relation between mnemonic practices and the development of photography.

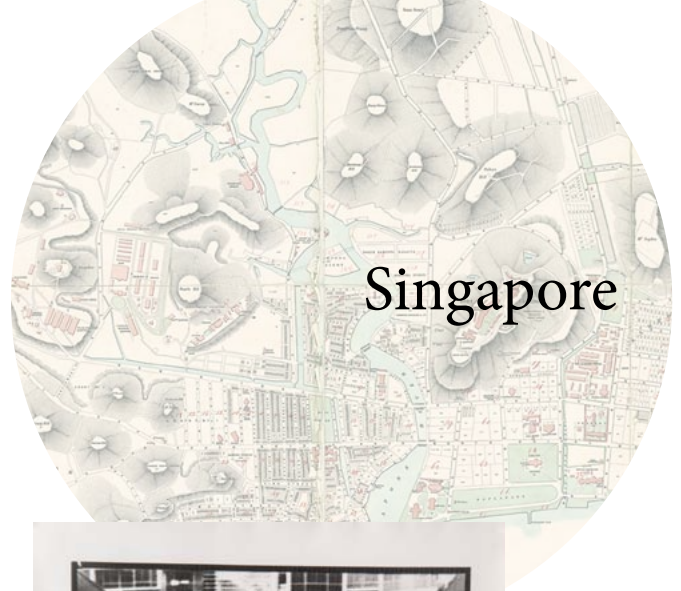
This exhibition of contemporary fine art photographic works will be complemented by two sets of documents, both written and visual. The first one will present the findings gathered by Massot in the course of over five years of historical research the results of which include among other things the identification of the oldest dated photograph of Asia and that of India. The other one will be dealing with Massot's speculative interpretation of the theory of photography titled *The White Space Theory*.

To compliment this photographic installation, Massot invited the musicians Leslie Tan, Rex Lee and Luke Chen to compose a sound scape that will blend cello, theremin and electronica to extract from Itier's journal and ambient sounds extracted from the videos that documented the shooting of the pinhole images on location, thus recreating the sonic equivalent of the visual journey.



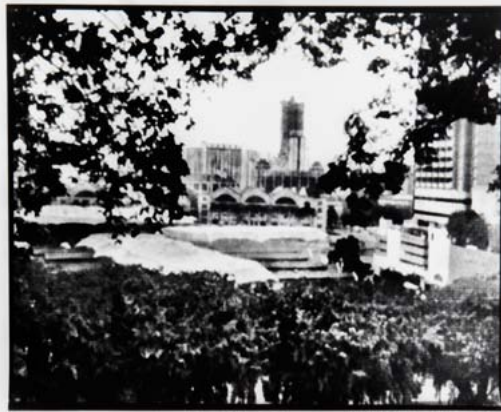
Floor Plan

Exhibited Works



1a

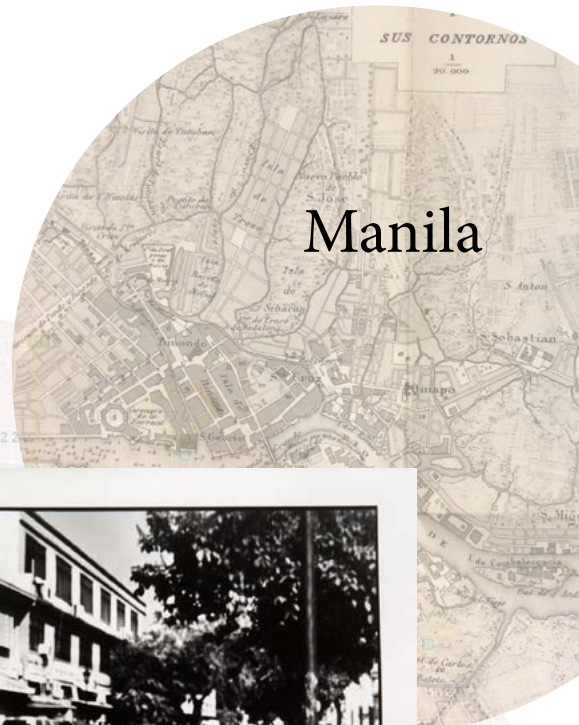
1b



2

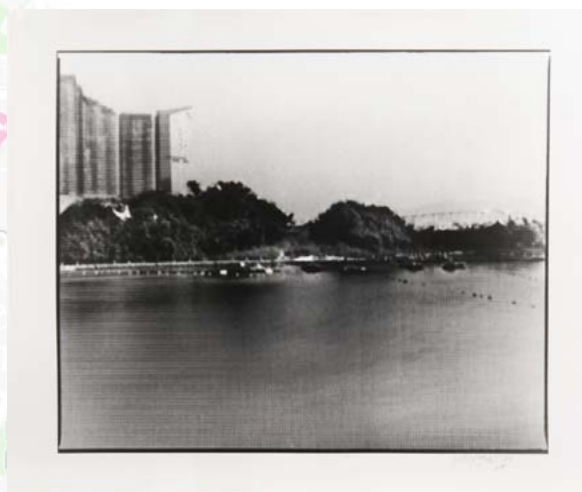
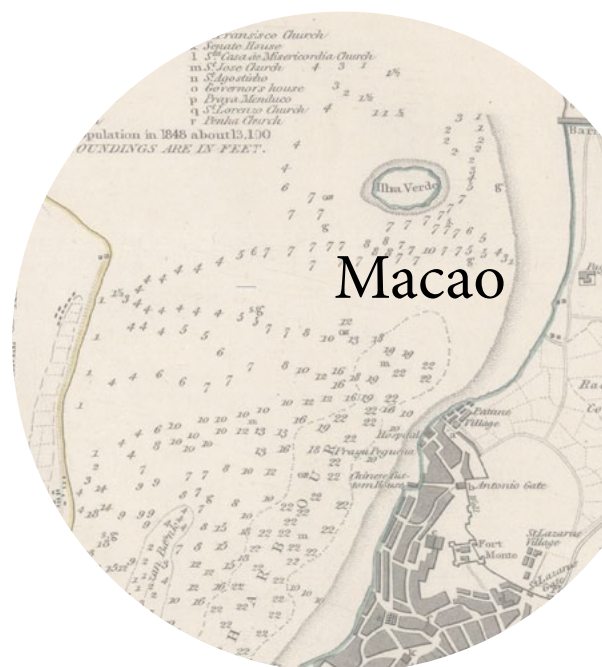


2a

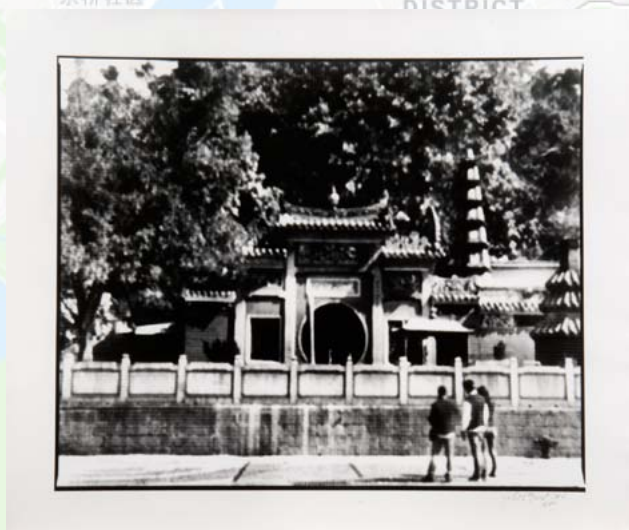


Exhibited Works

3



3a



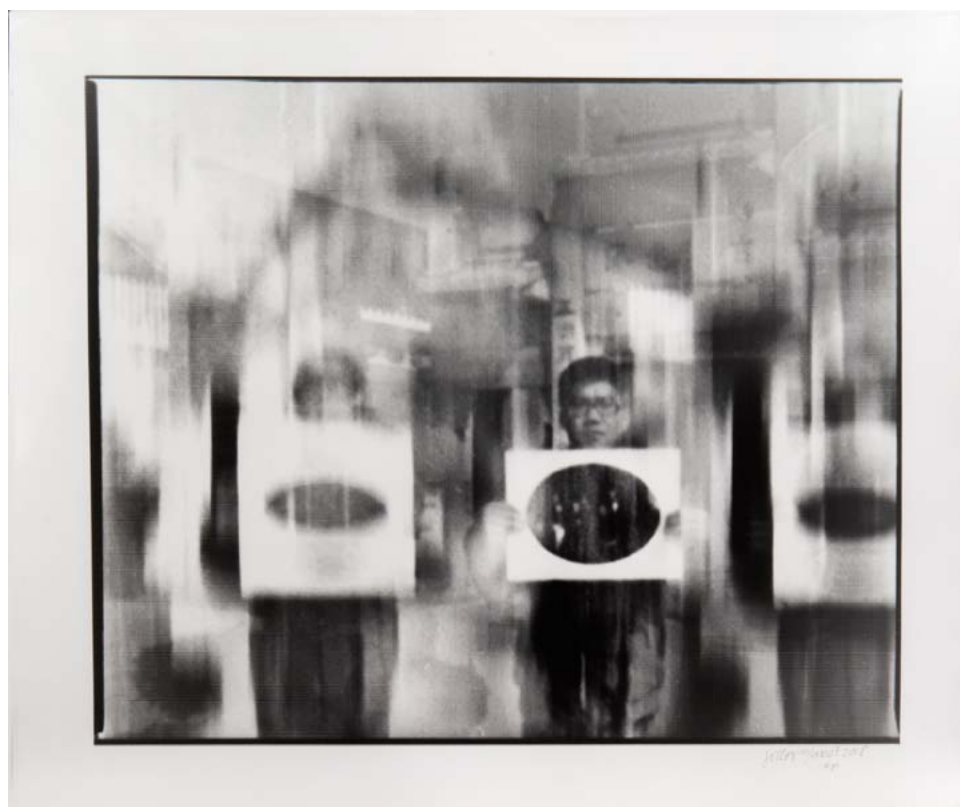
3b



3c

Exhibited Works

Whampoa

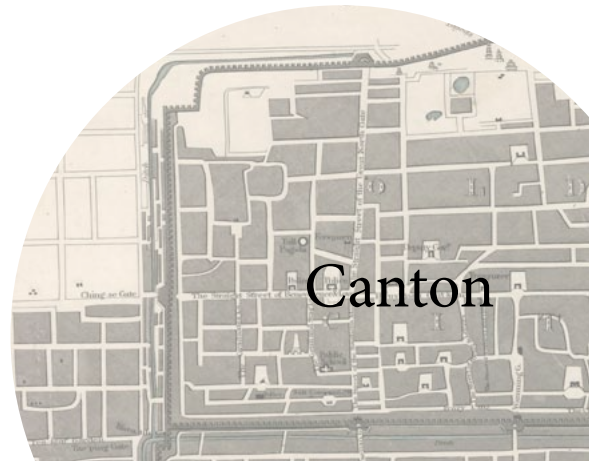


Exhibited Works

4



Canton



4a



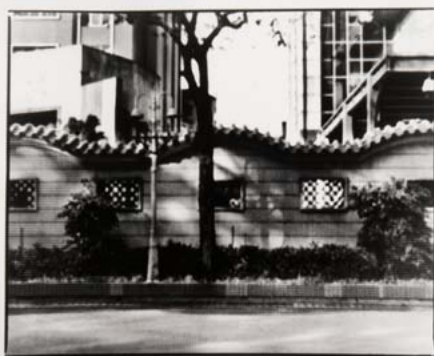
4b



4c



4d



4f



Exhibited Works



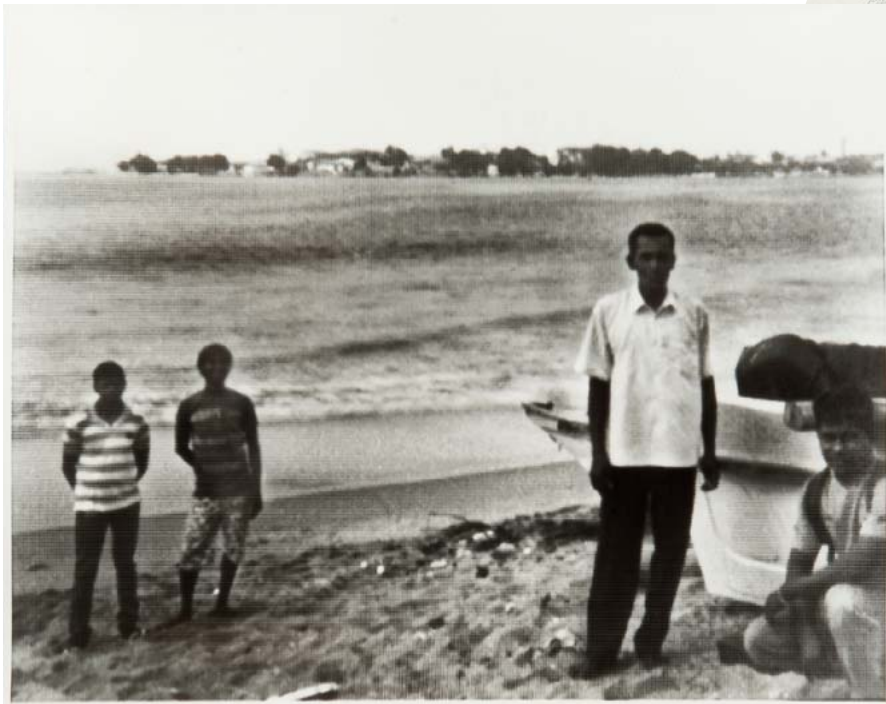
Danang



5



5a



6



Galle

