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*Artist duo's STPI show is dense but ultimately rewards the patient viewer*

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[\(PAGE 1 OF 2\)](#) - [NEXT PAGE \(?PAGE=1\)](#) | [SINGLE PAGE \(?SINGLEPAGE=TRUE\)](#)

SINGAPORE — When it comes to provoking questions with only the title of your exhibition, it's hard to top The Printer / The Paper / The Layer / The Thing's Right(s) / The Little Fat Flesh, a series of phrases by turns gnomic and starkly literal.

Featuring more than 30 new works by conceptual artist duo Inga Svala Thorsdottir and Wu Shanzhuan, produced as part of a residency at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI) last year, the exhibition plumbs the depths of the artists' long, storied careers, bringing together past and recurring ideas, as well as motifs with techniques and materials afforded to them by STPI's devotion to the printed form.

Heads-up for the uninitiated: The sheer wealth of information and stimulation to process might prove something of a deterrent, particularly for those not armed

with an exhaustive familiarity with the artists' past works.

To wit, and in a visually striking example of their meticulous approach, the prints of A Perimeter Of Little Fat Flesh appear, at first, to be little more than large, rectangular fields of solid, vivid colour. Yet, on closer inspection, reliefs appear — single, massive impressions of a shape in some and orderly tiling progressions in others. In every instance, the basic shape used is what the artists call the "little fat flesh", a combination of two pairs of brackets that they hold to be a kind of mystic geometry, as well as a playful subversion of the function of a bracket — to enclose and also exclude.

This repetitive process, however, yields a subtle complexity, as the lines between each individual shape vary in visibility, producing seemingly random combinations of the shapes within the rectangular frame. Despite its apparent simplicity, the series turns out to have surprising depth — layers, as the exhibition's title suggests, of imagery, ideas and associations, all bound to the layered processes employed by the artists.

It's more readily apparent in the series Thing's Right(s) Printed 2013, which presents such a degree of informational density that it may come as a slight shock after A Perimeter Of Little Fat Flesh. Drawing a kind of inspiration from the United Nations' Universal Declaration Of Human Rights, the series expands on the duo's 1995 pamphlet, Thing's Right(s), which translated the human-centric language of the UN declaration to a more general perspective, yielding a declaration of the rights of things in the language of materiality.

Not only is it a subversively humorous look at human-centric language and the notion of rights as a whole, the imagery deployed in the series of 30 prints, in the form of diagrams, drawings and public information symbols, is drawn from previous works and projects by the artists. As opposed to simply referencing the past, however, their approach suggests the re-contextualisation of past imagery and iconography, projecting it speculatively into the present and future — a tendency which may also be found in The Map Of Arctic Fox, though applied instead in the context of map-making and ecological concerns.

It's an exhibition which slowly rewards patient consideration, an open mind and a freewheeling, even perverse, imagination that can think of possible connections.

(PAGE 1 OF 2) | [NEXT PAGE \(?PAGE=1\)](#) | [SINGLE PAGE \(?SINGLEPAGE=TRUE\)](#)

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