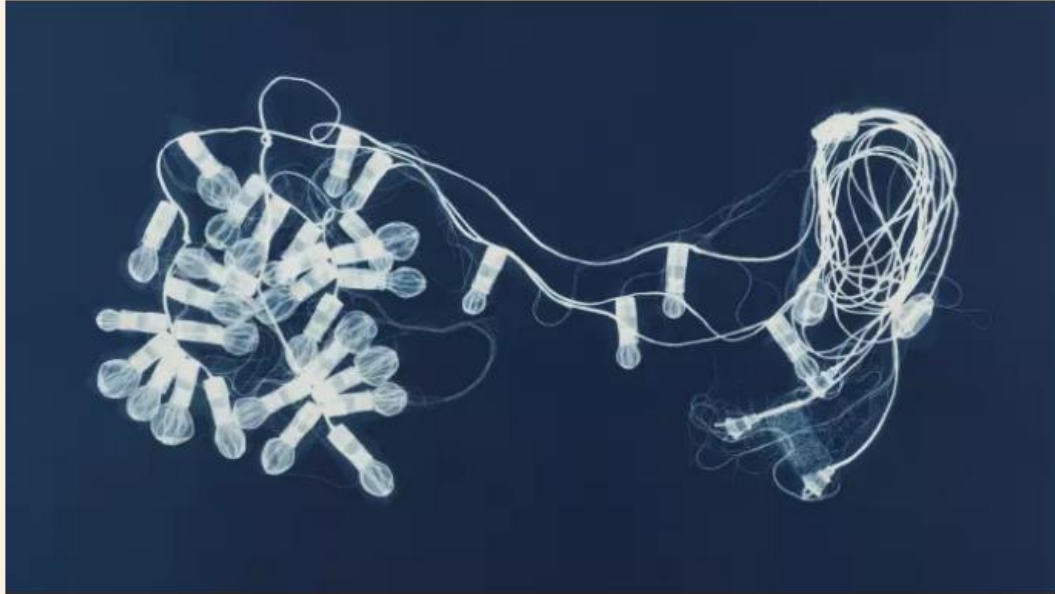


FINANCIAL TIMES

Fresh prints: Singapore Tyler Print Institute at Art Basel Hong Kong

STPI's collaborations have yielded some intriguing works



From Do Ho Suh's 'Cyanotype' series (2016), produced at STPI

Whether you are in Art Basel's fairs in Miami, Hong Kong or Basel itself, the booth of STPI (Singapore Tyler Print Institute) always stands out thanks to its array of exquisite works on paper. Based in Singapore, the not-for-profit organisation is the only gallery, commercial or otherwise, from that nation to exhibit at all three fairs.

Describing itself as a “global leader in contemporary art practice with print and paper” STPI offers studio time and technical expertise in printing and paper techniques to artists without experience in this specialised genre. The sales made at their fair appearances sustain a programme which has hosted artists including Shirazeh Houshiary, Jason Martin and Richard Deacon.

“Art Basel’s brand works really well for us as it allows us to reach buyers beyond Asia

although that’s still where we do best,” explains STPI director Emi Eu.

Among STPI’s most fruitful collaborations is that with Korean-born artist Do Ho Suh, who is best known for large-scale fabric sculptures. However at STPI, where he stays for one to two weeks at a time, Do Ho Suh transforms smaller everyday items, such as keyboards and fire extinguishers, into objects of desire (priced at US\$6,000 to US\$25,000) by wrapping them in fabricated archival paper and colouring them in pastels. He also translates these three-dimensional works into cyanotype prints (US\$25,000 to US\$38,000) that take on a near-abstract fluidity.

British conceptual wizard Ryan Gander, who spent a month at STPI in 2014, describes the experience as “absolutely amazing. It’s a bit like Willy Wonka’s chocolate factory for artists. You can do whatever you want, and there are skills and techniques there that don’t exist anywhere else”.

As well as learning screen printing and papermaking techniques, Gander also printed directly from rare stones from STPI’s 700-strong collection. “Normally you’d cut into them to make a print but they were so idiosyncratic I couldn’t resist,” he recalls, adding that it took a day to sand each stone down to a flat surface suitable for printing.

Among Gander's works at STPI's Hong Kong booth at the fair is a portfolio case printed with a mock luxury brand logo — “it's meant to be a student portfolio but no student could afford it,” says Gander with dry mischief — and a photograph of Gander lurking behind a Matisse-lush vase of flowers in an office drained to a sepia-pink hue. The print's peculiar chromatic tones, corrected using the traditional CYMB (cyan, yellow, magenta, black) process, reflect the world as the acutely colour-blind Gander actually sees it. Both are priced at around £20,000.

“As so often, my work was more about the process of making than about something outside itself,” he observes. And with such interesting processes available at STPI, who can blame him?

Art Basel Hong Kong, March 23-25, artbasel.com/hong-kong; stpi.com.sg