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Exquisite art from 'exquisite corpse' game

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FOUR international artists, each known for a distinctive practice, came together to paper-and-print gallery STPI to "play a professional game", so to speak.

The game is called *cadavre exquis* (exquisite corpse) and it involves one artist creating a portion of an artwork, which will be passed on to the next artist to pick up from where the former left off.

The challenge is that each subsequent artist does not get to see much of what was created before him. In fact, he only sees a sliver of the previous portion, and draws inspiration from this sliver alone to execute his portion.

Yet the results, now on display at STPI, are nothing short of playful, clever and exuberant. Because there were four artists involved, the works are large. Two of the works measure between three and five metres long and have to be hung from the ceiling or rolled out on the floor.

Yet the images they conjure, from cartoon characters to bright geometric shapes, are frequently light and buoyant.

The four artists - namely Carsten Holler, Tobias Rehberger, Anri Sala and Rirkrit Tiravanija - have often invested their individual portions with familiar forms, images and materiality from their respective practices. But serendipitously enough, the portions often complement each other to maximum effect, impressing even the artists.

Tiravanija says: "All of us were kind of surprised by how everything came together. Even though we were each working on different fragments, the end-result seems to have been carried through by a common aesthetic and spirit."

Tiravanija, Holler and Rehberger have known each other since the 1990s and have always wanted to work together. Sala, the youngest of the four, got to know them later when he became a practising artist.

Sala is best known for his video art, and Holler for his large-scale sci-

ence-based installations. Rehberger typically works with colour and geometric forms, while Tiravanija made his name through relational aesthetic works that involve strangers sharing meals, books or music together.

Rehberger, who was in town with Tiravanija for the show's opening, says: "Not only are our practices quite different, it was actually quite hard trying to create something out of that sliver we were shown. They were often too small to inspire, so they became problem-solving tasks instead."

Asked if it was harder working collectively than alone, Rehberger replies: "Yes, I felt more responsibility when I worked communally with my fellow artists, than when I work alone - but in this instance, I didn't want to be the guy who f---s up the whole artwork. So I made sure my portions are good-looking and conceptually smart. And I think the others felt the same way too."

■ The exhibition titled *Exquisite Trust* is on display at STPI till April 22





Left: Rehberger and Tiravanija. Above: Using the "exquisite corpse" method, the four artists took turns working on various artworks. PHOTOS: KELVIN CHNG