

SHIMMER  
*Ageless, Ageless*  
a new program curated  
by Eloise Sweetman and  
Jason Hendrik Hansma

A conversation between  
Pam Virada and Melvin Moti  
2026

## INTRODUCTION

We bring this very special conversation between Pam Virada and Melvin Moti to you in the context of *Ageless, Ageless*, Shimmer's multi-year study of charged visual figures, gestures, and forms that return throughout history.

Through his study of images, the historian Aby Warburg (1866–1929) coined the term *Pathosformel*, which he defined as “charged visual figures”: specific gestures, postures, or expressions that recur across time. Warburg noticed that these visual figures return to us as concentrated signals of suffering, fear, or ecstasy: motifs through which cultural memory stores and releases its accumulated force. *Ageless, Ageless* begins from this understanding of recurrence, asking how images, materials, rituals, and gestures continue to carry the pressure of what came before.

This conversation between Virada and Moti enters that question not through iconography alone, but through the subtle, unstable figures that move through Virada's practice: a face appearing above water, a ghost story told again and again, a smell that may be a memory, tea offered to absent ancestors, light catching dust, a screen becoming a threshold, a bubble holding air before it disappears. These are not fixed symbols. They are charged forms that return across domestic space, family history, cinema, ritual, and everyday life. In this sense, the conversation extends Warburg's question into the present: how do certain images and gestures continue to carry feeling, even when their origins are uncertain, fragmented, or half-forgotten?

Their conversation moves through the conditions that allow an artwork to come into being: trust, negotiation, domestic space, invisible labour, and the willingness to enter what is not yet fully known. Beginning with *Slowglass*, they follow Virada's attention to fish tanks,

CCTV streams, bubbles, thresholds, and the private lives that quietly support the work. What emerges is a shared understanding of art as a practice of attending to what is fragile, residual, and difficult to govern. The conversation closes with a reflection on the artist's role today, not as someone who resolves the world's anxieties, but as someone who gives sustained care and attention to minor gestures, ordinary materials, and the ceremonial possibilities of everyday life.

Installed in Shimmer's stairwell, *Slowglass* finds a fitting home in an in-between space. The bubbles in the work become filmic surfaces: complete and fragile, carrying dust, memory, and movement into the building. The aquariums are domestic, living, and remote; they are elsewhere, yet present. They ask us to look slowly at what appears, disappears, and returns.

In this conversation, Virada and Moti speak not only about how artworks are made, but how they remain in motion: through memory, through matter, through attention, and through the fragile lives they continue to lead in the world.

**Melvin:** Can you say a bit about the history of this, or the first iteration of your installation *Slowglass* (2026) at Shimmer? I remember it was related to a CCTV hack.

**Pam:** Ariane Sutthavong, a curator and writer friend based in Thailand, once told me a story about someone who liked to hack into security cameras. One day, after accessing one of the feeds, the person encountered, instead of some surveilled location, an image of a fish tank. From time to time, a face would appear very close to the tank. It turned out to be the reflection of the fish tank owner, this ghostly, spectral image suddenly surfacing on the screen. I think that story stayed with me for a very long time.

Then I was invited for a show at Loods6 project space, which is historically the old port of Northeast Amsterdam. Somehow, the place and time activated this memory in me, and I wanted to do something about the fish tank story, even though it was never my own experience to begin with, but rather a story that had stayed with me.

At that time, I was thinking a lot about hobbies and how people kill time, or how people tinker with technological objects, especially analog ones. I was interested in this hands-on relationship people once had with machines, where devices could still be opened, modified, repaired, or repurposed. It feels increasingly difficult now, because contemporary technologies are often closed systems. In a way, technology today also resists that kind of intimacy or experimentation.

So basically, I was thinking a lot about these things, and I ended up writing a piece that incorporated different experiences and relationships to hobbies from people around me. I think the story about the hacked CCTV feed eventually became the central point of the work.

It started off as a very small artwork, also titled *Slowglass* (2025). I showed a YouTube stream of an empty fish tank, and with the same approach as *Slowglass* (2026) at Shimmer, I mixed water from the Amsterdam

port and released it into the space as bubbles. This process was also quite painstaking, because the bubble machine I bought was this really small one from a second-hand shop. It required a lot of tinkering and improvised adjustments to control the speed of the bubbles. So that was the start of *Slowglass*.

**Melvin:** How has it changed at Shimmer?

**Pam:** Somehow, I feel like the work at Shimmer is something that is quite different from what I've been doing, actually, now that I've reflected on it a bit after a few of your points. For this work at Shimmer, the work lies mostly in the negotiation and trust with others, specifically with the fish tank owners. In the previous works, it feels more solitary in nature, often developing through a more self-contained process that is less dependent on the participation or agreement of other parties.

The context that I'm in is that I don't speak Dutch and I'm still navigating my relationship to the local context and community here. So that's a lot of going into the unknown, I would say, and finding the resources around me. For example, if this work, screening or looking into fish tanks, were to happen in Thailand, I would already have an existing network of contacts, and there would probably be less friction in realizing what I wanted. Looking back, I think that the uncertainty surrounding *Slowglass* (2026), when I first proposed it to Shimmer, was also something that I quite enjoyed.

**Melvin:** You were saying that the negotiation remains quite invisible. If you see the installation, it's the preparation for the work, or the conditions for the work to exist or to be developed. The negotiations are very much about entering a domestic or private space of someone, and the trust for that private space, or at least the fish tank, to be shared with the public.

The negotiation is also, I guess, the trust of people just figuring out: What does she want?



Pam Virada, *Slowglass* (2026), four monitors; bubble machine; water from the port of Rotterdam; facsimile of Mr. Carp by Mukoda Kuniko. Photography by Bart Roggeveen (top) and Pam Virada (bottom).

**Pam:** What does she want? Is this a scam in this day and age? I think those suspicions inevitably emerge now, because so much of contemporary life is structured around transaction, productivity, and extraction. So when someone approaches others with an open-ended proposition, it can immediately produce uncertainty. What is this for? What is being gained from this? I became interested in how the work had to move through those suspicions and negotiations in order to exist at all.

The maintenance and setting up of the work also require labor that is somewhat invisible in its final appearance. In actuality, there's someone behind the camera looking after the fish. There is also the CCTV stream that has to be maintained, together with the Wi-Fi connection. Going into this work, I collaborated on the stream with Oscar van Leest. He helped me with setting up and maintaining the stream.

The setup itself is something that has to be monitored, almost like a living entity. The bubbles also have to be maintained by someone at Shimmer. So I feel like it's not a work that is easy to set up, but rather one that emerges through a series of negotiations, encounters, and acts of trust, which means that much of its complexity exists before the work even becomes visible. And I think Shimmer also understands these conditions.

**Melvin:** It can almost be an instruction piece, as in, if you go to another city, the first thing you do is look for fish tanks, just to get embedded in another social sphere.

**Pam:** I'm fascinated by instructional works. Relating to conditional and score works, I was recently reading *Bosses* by Ghislaine Leung, and I'm struck by how she discusses labor in the arts. I think this also relates to the possibility of art, or a work, existing as a set of instructions or conditions. Relating to your point about being embedded in another social sphere, I've always been fascinated with other people's

homes. I have curiosity about how people inhabit their private space. In Amsterdam especially, I can catch glimpses into people's homes through the big windows while walking around the city. In some flamboyant neighborhoods, they almost look like dollhouses, or a fishbowl. This project, in a way, allows me to cross the threshold, to be welcomed as a stranger.

**Melvin:** Speaking about domestic spaces, in your film *Casting a Spell to Alter Reality* (2020), I noticed that the people in the film are also passing their time. They are cleaning something in the garden, or sitting in the living room, and you're there watching their everyday life. It's very close to how time feels in the summer. There is an abundance of time.

There is a certain pace to the film, but also a sense of intimacy, watching these people being part of their domestic space and not noticing the camera, or not reacting to the camera all the time. Sometimes there are conversations, but mostly not.

I had to think about this image you described of the owner of the tank peeking through the CCTV camera, but as a reflection. Someone who is present, but whose presence is felt rather than directly seen, or whose presence is perhaps not embodied. It's just a reflection; a light apparition.

There is something about it that relates to the story in that film of someone knocking on the door. There is a presence, but the presence is also an absence, the presence of something that's not there. There is another very beautiful story in that film, about the cat. That reminded me quite a lot about folktales. It's not just a cat. The cat is pure white. It has a faint glow to it. There is an element of the supernatural, but it is mixed with the tragedy of life. Can you say something about these two tales or stories in the film?

**Pam:** The film is a montage of stories and ghost stories, similar to นิทานพื้นบ้าน, translated directly into English as "home stories," suggesting that



Therefore, the home is no longer simply an intimate space but transforms itself into a metaphor for some form of memory expanse.



So when you're looking after a dead body, you can never let a cat in.

Pam Virada, *Spell to Alter Reality*, 2020, film stills

the stories originate from within the confines of the home and are told by family members. It is similar to folktales, but not entirely, because a folktale usually suggests that the origin of the story and its teller has become obscured over time.

I relate this to my own experience of listening to my grandmother tell stories. At that time, she still had a very sharp memory and would recount things to me in precise detail. She would repeat these stories often.

But the paradox is, as I mention in the film, although she could remember things from the distant past with great clarity, she could no longer retain the new memories she was receiving. For the white cat story, she actually lived in that house when she was young and saw the cat with her own eyes. As for the mysterious knocking, she was the one who actually experienced it.

At that time, I was researching a lot about how mythologies or folktales are formed. I remember hearing somewhere that true folktales do not really contain ulterior

motives. There are stories that function as myth-making or nation-making narratives. Real folktales feel more like archetypes; they exist simply as stories in themselves.

I'm interested in this way of storytelling and in the ambiguity of whether these stories are true, or whether the human mind is even able to recall the exact same things over and over again. Through the act of hearing the same story repeatedly, I wonder what meanings begin to emerge, shift, or reveal themselves over time.

Looking back, I've become quite fascinated by learning about my grandmother's history growing up in Thailand after her family fled the Chinese Civil War as part of the Teochew post-war migration, and later not being able to return due to the Bamboo Curtain period. The films I refer to in *Casting a Spell to Alter Reality* (2020) are Hou Hsiao-hsien's Coming-of-Age trilogy, set in Taiwan during the same historical period in which my grandmother was growing up in Thailand. I see these films as a kind of parallel reality, another trajectory of the Chinese diaspora unfolding alongside, yet differently from, the one she experienced.

Within the Chinese diaspora after the Chinese Civil War, some communities migrated to Southeast Asia while others went to Taiwan. In Taiwanese cinema, there are many nuanced representations of diasporic Chinese identity and post-war displacement. In Thailand, however, there was a strong political push toward assimilation, where Thai-Chinese identity became folded into broader notions of "Thainess"; the identity often felt flattened into a singular stereotype. This is partly why I became drawn to Hou Hsiao-hsien's films as a way of imagining a parallel historical and emotional landscape alongside my grandmother's timeline. One thing that interests me is how the *Coming-of-Age* trilogy operates as a kind of semi-documentary, as they draw from the director's own life and memories, yet remain fictionalised. I find a connection in this mode of storytelling.

**Melvin:** When you say that there was quite a lot of pressure to assimilate for migrants, that was probably due to labor. People were really forced to work and therefore also to adjust immediately into the Thai economy and social life.

**Pam:** Yes, and during that period there was also a great deal of anxiety around whether Thailand would become communist. The nation was actively rewriting ideas of “Thainess” and patriotism. From my own experience growing up in a Thai-Chinese family, there is often a pressure to demonstrate gratitude toward the country that allowed us to stay and build a life. This becomes intertwined with ideas within Asian or Confucian value systems: obedience toward one’s ancestors, loyalty, and the obligation to give back to those who have given to you. In many ways, these cultural and political structures become part of the mechanism through which assimilation takes place.

**Melvin:** It’s very recognisable, this pressure to overcompensate, to show a sense of gratefulness and gratitude.

You were also speaking earlier, when we had a conversation around the show at Shimmer, about this hybridity of different religions dissolving into each other in Thailand. And I remember you wanted to do a ceremony for Shimmer.

**Pam:** We considered it, but ended up letting the building be.

**Melvin:** The intention was to acknowledge the spirits of a building.

**Pam:** That non-human presence, something that may or may not be pleased if you fail to acknowledge it, is something I carry with me from Thailand. It exists in a space that is both half-joking and half-serious.

**Melvin:** I think you were saying that there was a show in Thailand where they forgot to acknowledge the spirits and the electricity got cut, or something bad happened.

**Pam:** I hear this a lot.

**Melvin:** But in that case, you can just quickly say thank you.

**Pam:** I don’t think you can simply say thank you. You would probably have to light something and go to the nearest shrine. They are forgiving, most of the time.

**Melvin:** I think you also spoke about spirits in relation to Thai political history, of things always returning to the same state in a way, like the same things happening again and again, or the same problem happening again and again. There seems to be some sort of forgetfulness there.

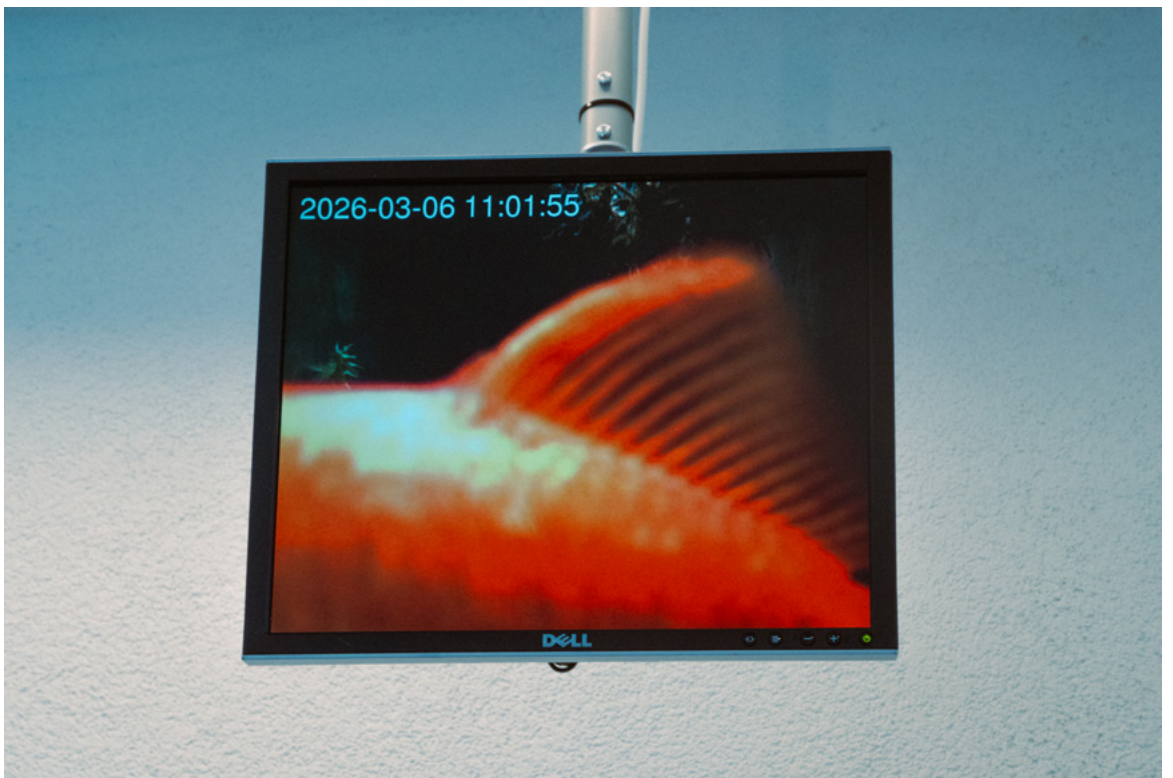
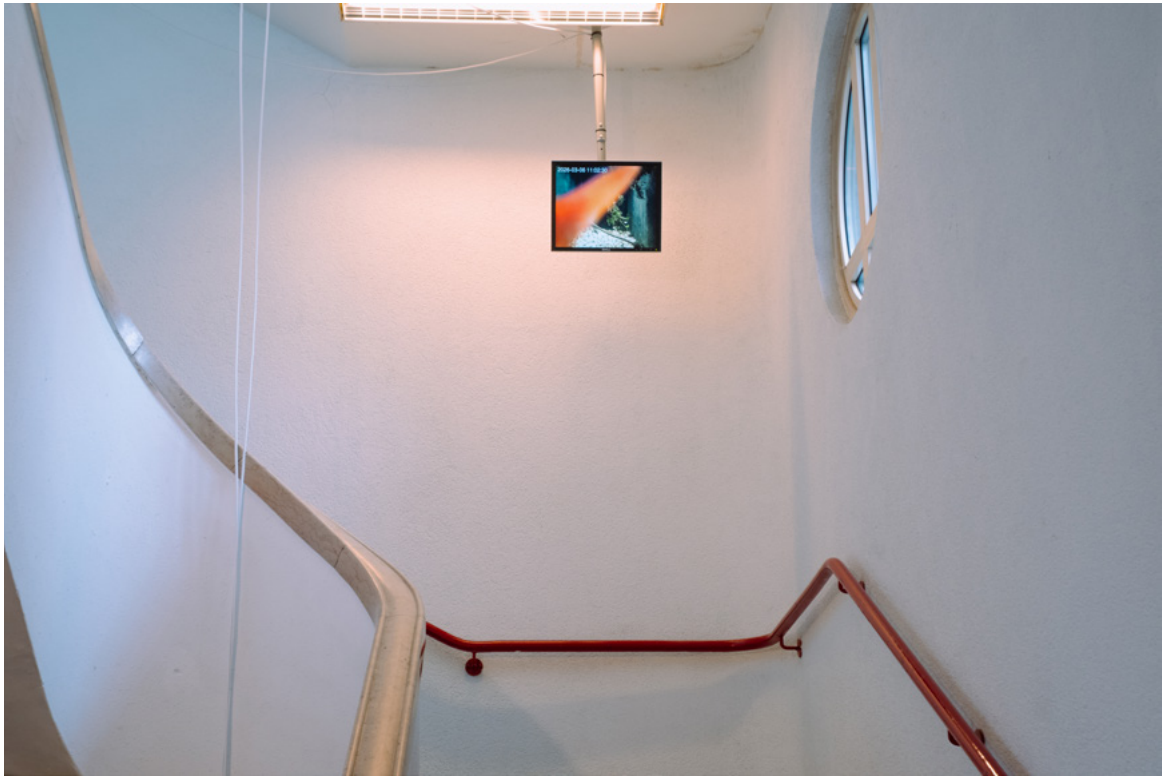
**Pam:** I don’t speak about this explicitly in my work, nor has it ever been the starting point of the work itself. But it’s impossible to fully escape the realities you come from or have lived through. In some way, they continue to shape you indirectly, like a domino effect. Everything is political in that sense.

I was thinking about this in relation to the idea of hauntology in the West, the way history repeats itself, and how certain ghosts keep returning to haunt you. Each return carries the same fear; even when the ghost comes back again and again, you never stop being afraid of it.

I’m curious about how this translation of the spirit or the ghost functions in Thailand, because belief in spirits is deeply embedded within society. There is a collective acknowledgement of non-human entities and unseen presences. At the same time, however, there is also a kind of social amnesia that occurs. For example, within politics and elections, we repeatedly return to the same outcomes. Even when society attempts to move forward or move past something, there is often a desire to suppress or forget the painful parts of history. But if these histories are forgotten, it becomes difficult to truly remember, reflect, and move forward in a meaningful or productive way.



Pam Virada, *Slowglass* (2026), four monitors; bubble machine; water from the port of Rotterdam; facsimile of Mr. Carp by Mukoda Kuniko. Photography by Bart Roggeveen.



Pam Virada, *Slowglass* (2026), four monitors; bubble machine; water from the port of Rotterdam; facsimile of Mr. Carp by Mukoda Kuniko. Photography by Bart Roggeveen.

**Melvin:** In a way, it reminds me of how you speak of your grandma, who remembers the story but forgets that she told them to you. There is this relationship between remembering and forgetting, and memories popping up like something haunting you.

Obviously, there's also a relationship to a kind of suppression, in order to make life bearable. To suppress some parts of the political past in order to make life lighter than otherwise it would be.

**Pam:** To move forward.

**Melvin:** It would be great if you could speak about ghost cinema. I remember you saying it's one of the most important moments in your work, when things started to really come together.

**Pam:** I should mention that I took part in May Adadol Ingawanij and Julian Ross' research and field lab project Animistic Apparatus in Udon Thani together with many practitioners from across the region back in 2019. It was a profound experience that led me to think more deeply about expanded cinema. In this context, expanded cinema was not only about releasing cinema from the black box or expanding its formal boundaries, but also about considering what cinema, or the moving image itself, might haunt, and the histories, landscapes, and presences it remains entangled with.

This is also just my own understanding from living in Thailand, that there has already been this interest in cinema and how a ghost, as this slippery entity, can come to signify many things in society, while also evoking very real feelings of haunting and fear.

I remember a moment when we were screening a film at one of the temples, and suddenly someone mentioned smelling a very strong scent. Then others began noticing it too. We didn't know whether we had done something wrong, or whether some kind of presence had appeared, so we stopped the screening for a while. After that, the smell disappeared. Looking back on it now,

I sometimes question whether I really experienced it, because retelling the story makes it sound bizarre, almost cliché. But it did happen.

**Melvin:** There is this attempt to communicate somehow with a spirit realm. When you say there is a certain smell that people have smelled, there is some kind of attempt to make a point. What the point is, no one knows. But something is being said.

**Pam:** There is an apparent apparition, but not uniform. In a sense.

**Melvin:** In a sense, it is some sort of communication, some sort of message from one world to another. It is interesting that there was immediate confusion about what the message meant. Did we do something wrong? Is it a warning?

**Pam:** This may also just be a coincidence, but in *Casting a Spell to Alter Reality* (2020), I speak about my grandmother's sense of smell. Around the same time she was telling me these stories, she began sensing a strange smell appearing randomly throughout the house at different times of the day. She didn't really know how to explain it, but she was frightened that it might be a ghost, or that she was somehow being haunted.

She became curious about what was happening, so we took her to the hospital, where she underwent scans and an MRI. The doctor explained that part of her brain had shrunk, and that the smell she was sensing might not have been a real smell, but possibly a memory resurfacing through neurological activity. I became very interested in this idea: that something haunting could also emerge from memory itself.

**Melvin:** Speaking of senses, I'm curious about the use of drinks in your work, in many different shapes and forms.

**Pam:** It started off with a work titled *No Transcendence, Only Immanence* (2022). The exhibition took place in

an old courthouse, and I found leak stains on the floor of the room I was supposed to exhibit in. I became fascinated by this liquid and by the way it appeared as a trace of a decaying structure. Instead of removing the excess water, I wanted it to be part of the work.

For the activation of the work, I brewed a brown liquid, actually tea, which I served to everyone. Afterwards, they could leave the glass wherever they wanted. Whether they drank it or didn't finish it, both were fine.

The act of consuming this liquid also reminds me of my mom, who would pour tea in front of the altar in the morning, or during ceremonial days. She would serve tea to the altar even though no one physically drank it. Within the ritual, the ancestors are understood to be consuming the liquid. After a day, the tea would be removed, and the cups washed and cleaned. But I began to wonder what would happen if it were simply left there.

There is this residue of time that happens when the liquid evaporates and leaves behind some pigments and stains. I find that quite interesting, objectively, in terms of how it struck me visually, but also how tea, or what I would say is mostly water infused with other elements, works. In essence, tea is the outcome of steeped elements in hot water. I remember that during the opening of the exhibition, the smell of the tea subtly filled the space. It introduced another sensory layer to the work, a non-visual element that could still be felt and experienced.

**Melvin:** Was it a smoky smell or a sweet smell of tea?

**Pam:** It was jasmine green tea. In 2024, I served tea to open my exhibition *Silvering the Sky* at 47 Canal. The piece was called *One to dampen the air, another to collect the stale* (2024). This time, it was pandan jasmine tea. Compared to the earlier tea work, here the scent dimension changes, and it invokes a different sensorial perception in the room. To me, pandan has a

special place in my heart because at home in Thailand we would grow it around the house. There is a belief that its strong, sweet scent repels snakes from entering the confines of the home. Because we had such an abundance of it, my mom would cook with pandan often. She would make a dessert called kaya toast, sweet green custard infused with pandan flavor. We would also cook it with rice, or steep it in other desserts.

**Melvin:** It's interesting what you say about offering tea to ancestors in an altar. There is this beautiful element of storytelling, almost like an image of someone actually drinking the tea. The storytelling is like a bridge between living entities and non-living entities. The image is a way to connect to it.

For that moment, it doesn't matter that they are not there. The image and the possibility, symbolized with offering tea, invokes the possibility of them being somewhere and being thirsty.

In Indian culture, there are a lot of food offerings as well, and they function in the same way. These food offering rituals happen in many different stages, especially when someone passes away. In relation to reincarnation, the foods that you offer when someone has passed away just a day ago are very different from the same rituals you do one year after. There is storytelling involved in that someone is growing and needs something, someone has a certain taste.

It relates to what you were saying earlier about ghosts, in the sense that ghosts can trigger certain things in society. Whether they are real or not is debatable, but the feeling they induce is real.

**Pam:** So they are ungovernable, right?

**Melvin:** They are ungovernable. The feeling they provoke is real. Them being ungovernable is also a warning, because they can come out of anywhere. In relation to a governmental structure that is repeating itself again and again, there are these ghosts that cannot

be governed. The feelings they invoke are very real. They are as real as seeing a real thing that you're afraid of.

**Pam:** What defines something as real? If it invokes such real feelings, does that in itself make it real?

**Melvin:** It relates also to these offerings, to acknowledging something which is absent, or perhaps present as a memory. There is this acknowledgement of non-material relationships.

I was looking at the element of light in your work. Looking at different works that you made, I realized that the lights are never the singular light source. The lights are not used as lights, but more like pointers, as if saying, look at this. It's a point of attention. But there is always light in order to see the light.

There are different forms of light appearing in your work: candlelight, natural light, fluorescent light, very small and thin lights. Can you speak about it?

**Pam:** I think one of the first things I often notice is light as a material, and how it shapes both the installation itself and the experience of encountering the work.

Maybe first, the absence of a direct light in my work comes from how I started exhibiting, which was mostly in non-institutional, more domestic spheres or abandoned domestic spaces. When I started making works in Bangkok, most of the gallery and artist project spaces were not so accessible for young artists, I would say. A lot of young artists in my generation decided to find our own spaces or try different ways of exhibiting. Most of the time it was in shophouses, old apartments, parking lots: spaces that are not conventional white cubes.

One of the exhibitions I remember well was set in my friend's family-run shophouse, where they had a business selling halogen lightbulbs in Bangkok's Chinatown. At that time, his parents wanted to close down the shop because business was declining

as people gradually shifted toward LED technology. As a kind of farewell gesture, he curated me and several friends in a fake biennial called Sangnual 2561, sangnual meaning "gentle light" and the name of his family business, and 2561 referring to the Buddhist calendar year.

For that exhibition, I went into one of the storage spaces and found that one of the shelves was missing. In the place where the shelf should have been, there appeared to be a shadow of it. But it wasn't actually a shadow; it was the accumulation of dust around the shelf over time, leaving behind an imprint of its former presence.

I found this very striking, and collected this dust and showed it alongside one of the halogen shelves. I used the dust to obscure a postcard I had also found in the building. Everything in the work was sourced from the space itself. The postcard depicted a beautifully illuminated foreign city, and the dust partially veiled its light. To illuminate the work again, I used an LED light bulb bought from the streets of Chinatown, an area known for its second-hand electrical shops and equipment.

That was one of the most memorable ways I encountered light. Of course, it was really dark in this space. There was only this LED light shining onto the dust.

As for the candle works, the candles illuminate scenes from the seasonal films of Yasujirō Ozu, such as *Late Autumn* (1960) and *Late Spring* (1949), that are etched into the sconces. I want to illuminate the characters in their domestic setting. Often, the same actresses reappear across these films, moving between different familial roles. They seem to reincarnate from one film into another, sometimes as mother and daughter, sometimes as aunt and niece, sometimes simply as another variation of the same presence. There is a cyclical reappearance within this family structure.

As the candle burns down, the light shifts and alters the animation of the etched image, creating a gradual reanimation of the scene itself.



Pam Virada, *Slowglass* (2026), four monitors; bubble machine; water from the port of Rotterdam; facsimile of Mr. Carp by Mukoda Kuniko. Photography by Jhoeko (top) and Bart Roggeveen (bottom).

**Melvin:** It makes the image move with the light moving. And also with the candle burning out, the image is lit from a slightly different perspective. It changes its direction. This connects quite well to another question. Perhaps this is happening more in your recent works. I think the pendulum videos, the way you present them and project them, is like a layering of materials and texts.

I think it was part of the work or the installation *Silent Blue* (2025), where there is some sort of superimposition or double screen happening toward the window. There is a superimposition of an image on top of an image.

**Pam:** Is it the one with the bubbles and then the sheet music?

**Melvin:** It could be the one with the bubbles. Is it called *Silent Blue* (2025)?

**Pam:** That one is called *Silent Blue* (2025).

**Melvin:** In general, can you speak about this element of doubling projections, and perhaps superimposition, this layering almost of transparent images on top of each other?

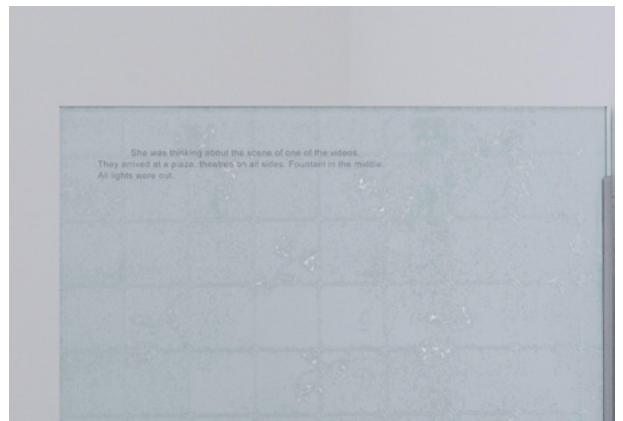
**Pam:** I gravitate towards the possibility of the screen as an image holder that exists across mediums.

For the pendulum videos, they existed before in installations called *Tree-Lined Street* (2024), *Whale Park* (2024), and *Seaside Highway* (2025). These works were projected onto privacy films, the kind that people put on the windows of their apartments on the ground floor. Other than existing to obstruct people from looking in, they usually have decorative nature motifs: leaves, snowflakes, bamboo, invoking some seasonal decor. It struck me that there is a possibility for them to hold moving images.

In *No Transcendence, Only Immanence* (2022), I also projected onto a self-made bead curtain that doubles as a screen. In this work, I'm interested in the hapticity the bead curtains create, as viewers have to



Pam Virada, *Silent Blue*, 2025, installation



Pam Virada, *Seaside Highway*, 2025, installation (detail)



Pam Virada, *Whale Park*, 2024, installation

pass through its threshold in order to see the work in its full totality. It is as if the viewers are moving with the moving image.

These are some of the ways I approach the screen, through looking at the material of the screen itself. Most of the time, when you look at moving images, for example in a black box, the screen is invisible. Most of the time, I'm drawn to the screen itself as part of the work.

**Melvin:** I was looking at *Silent Blue* now: these photographs are also a double image, because it's a score, an empty score, and a photograph printed on top of it. Turning an image into something related to musicality, or turning this form of light into a score of its own. That sort of doubling of disciplines is something I was drawn to.

In this work and installation there are also drinks involved.

**Pam:** The *Descendants* series is where I continue to make these final thoughts. It's like a pillar of suspended objects from the ceiling to the floor. In this iteration, I use my own necklace. On the bottom is also a tea offering of different pigments. In this iteration, I use tea more as a pigment, looking at different types of tea and how you can get different effects or colors as part of the sculptural elements.

Actually, I wanted to talk more about *Silent Blue* (2024).

Recently, I was approached to give a performance as a recorded form for *Dial-a-Poem Thailand*. I decided to perform the bubble notes from *Silent Blue* (2024) in this manifestation.

Because these bubbles are photographed and superimposed on sheet music by chance, the positioning of the keys isn't so exact. There's some interpretation involved in playing these scores, producing a form of aleatory music.

**Melvin:** With *Tree-Lined Street*, *Whale Park*, and *Seaside Highway*, you've started to collaborate with a musician for the music.

**Pam:** Yes, I worked with Benjamin Furtado for the soundtrack to these works when shown in the screening context. In a way, it is similar to *Silent Blue* (2024) in how the work can live on, existing side by side with itself in a different presentation.

**Melvin:** Was it very different for you working with music, in terms of the process of thinking? Is it different working with music than images?

**Pam:** I have music in my daily life, but never really incorporated it into my work, so a lot of it is intuition. It's almost like a feeling.

**Melvin:** I understand what you're saying, that you are looking for things to touch, but also constantly looking for happy accidents. Since music can be very textural, it is a matter of trying a lot of things out to see how the relationship is articulated, whether sound or music should be heavy or light, busy or quiet. It's trial and error, to see how it works together.

**Pam:** I'm currently making another work linked to music boxes. The nature of it is that the melody constantly repeats itself, like a loop. That's something I'm thinking about.

**Melvin:** It's a very extended sound, where it almost becomes floating by itself.

There's a piece by Arvo Pärt, *Für Alina*, where the idea is that there's no tempo. You can play the notes as long as you wish. There is, at some point, a tiny bit of melody, just to remind you of some structure, but otherwise they are very extended whole notes that you can keep with the pedal on until they fade away.

**Pam:** Sheet music usually has a tempo that indicates how you should play.

**Melvin:** This one doesn't. With each bar, a note is added, until halfway, when the number of notes diminishes again. The idea is that there is no given pace for it. It can take half an hour or it can take five minutes. It's really up to you.

I imagine also with the music box that if one note is played, at some point other sounds interfere with it, sounds of daily life. Something is extended to the extent that it mixes with everything around it.

**Pam:** I think that's a beautiful way of seeing the space in between them.

**Melvin:** I want to ask you if there's something you really want to address. Either a piece or a subject.

**Pam:** Maybe I'd like to ask you, as a fellow artist, what you think the role of the artist is today. It's something I've been thinking about a lot lately. Perhaps it's too broad of a question, but I feel it inevitably seeps into conversations about politics and social conditions.

**Melvin:** In Okinawa, on the Yaeyama Islands, they have a network of rocks and stones covered over most of the islands, which are used in ceremonies. These are sacred rocks, but unlike in Shintoism, these rocks are not marked; they dissolve like any other rock in nature.

Allan Kaprow calls this the blurring of art and life. It shows how things dissolve into everyday life. Mundane actions, like eating an apple: to what extent are these interesting? He mentions that they become interesting when you pay attention to them, and one way to pay attention to the mundane is to turn it into something ceremonial. Which art can sometimes be: ceremonial.

These rocks are a part of nature until they are used in a ceremony, then afterwards turn back into mundane rocks again.

A Buddhist teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, who was also an activist and experienced so much violence in Vietnam that he had to live in exile, mentioned that instead of trying to solve everything at once, as a political activist, it worked better for him to do one or two things with proper care and attention. Those two things for him were sitting and walking. By paying attention to these mundane actions, they're lifted from

everyday life and become something you can actually dedicate your life to. It's quite related to what I noticed in Kaprow's comments about paying attention to seemingly minor things.

There is so much anxiety around, and as you mentioned before in relation to the political past of Thailand, one needs coping mechanisms. Paying attention to these seemingly mundane actions, moments, or relationships is one way to ground oneself in everyday life, and become more sensitive to what gives quality to life. This becomes a support structure, both as a human being and as an artist.

**Pam:** That really resonates. I think ceremony is such a good way to hold space for everyday life. But there are two sides to the coin. When anything can be art, and anything can be commodified, one can never do enough in this neoliberal age, as an artist. You can work all the time.

**Melvin:** Kaprow writes about an anonymous artist who was doing walks without any witness, without any audience. Perhaps this kind of refusal is a way to be productive without commodifying anything. Like musicians who play with their backs against the audience. Just a complete refusal to play your part.

We can talk for ages. Thanks for returning the question. It was good to turn it into a conversation.

**Pam:** It was really nice to talk to you.

**Melvin:** Great. I hope the spirit continues for the day.



Pam Virada, *Slowglass* (2026), four monitors; bubble machine; water from the port of Rotterdam; facsimile of Mr. Carp by Mukoda Kuniko. Photography by Bart Roggeveen.

## BIOGRAPHIES

Pam Virada is an artist living and working between Bangkok and Amsterdam. In her work, she engages with the cinematic and the temporal through site-relational interventions, attuning to atmospheric and spatial conditions. She is a current resident at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten (2026-2028).

Melvin Moti is an artist living and working in Rotterdam. Moti works with film, texts and sound and is a composer of electronic, jazz and classical music.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2025, SHIMMER X AMARTE made a call for existing works that could be adapted for the stairwell. We encouraged artists to propose old ideas or existing works that could be modified for this space. By opening up Shimmer in this way, we continue to serve as a site of reflection for artists. Shimmer is proud to collaborate with X Amarte on this project and to support the work of Pam Virada. X Amarte is a platform dedicated to supporting cultural organizations and institutions that focus on showcasing talented creators through various projects, open calls, and events.

This project is made possible by Gemeente Rotterdam, and Amarte

Photography is by Bart Roggoveen, Jhoeko, and Pam Virada

## ABOUT AGELESS, AGELESS

Through his study of images, the historian Aby Warburg (1866-1929) coined the term *Pathosformel*, which he defined as ‘charged visual figures’: specific gestures, postures, or expressions that recur across time. Warburg noticed that these visual figures return to us as concentrated signals of suffering, fear, or ecstasy: motifs that operate as sites where cultural memory stores and releases its accumulated force.. Shimmer’s new program, *Ageless, Ageless*, is centred on these signals: shared cultural forms such as the lullaby’s pulse, call-and-response, the ritual of the threshold, or the cadence of mourning. Travelling across geographies, languages, politics, and belief, these hazy forms ‘flash’ up to the surface, letting us observe what repeats and what changes. By holding these patterns momentarily in view, slowly and together—with you, our audience—we intend to make a space where differences can meet without hardening.

‘Ageless, Ageless’ is a repeated lyric from *Mojo Pin* (1994) by Jeff Buckley (1966-1997), an artist who was inspired by devotional music, and in particular by the work of the Sufi singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (1948-1997), like Khan and Buckley, this program connects with repetition, where meaning melts away to connect us back to the deep. For us, agelessness is distinct from timelessness: it folds the past into the present in order to imagine the future anew.

*Ageless, Ageless* proposes artworks, exhibitions, writings, and collective studies that treat memory and presence as forms of continuity: not to rhyme with or repeat the past, but to remain continually informed by it.

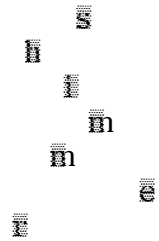
## ABOUT SHIMMER

Shimmer is a curatorial studio operating as both a studio and an exhibition space, merging artistic and administrative practices. This intimacy fosters experimentation, curatorial responsiveness, and proximity to high-quality artistic work.

Founded in 2018 by Eloise Sweetman and Jason Hendrik Hansma, Shimmer has evolved into a hybrid cultural platform working across exhibitions, publishing, pedagogy, and institutional advising. We work in the space between micro-artist-run initiatives and larger institutional centres, allowing us to remain agile and rigorous, speculative yet structurally sound.

Our approach is shaped by recursive governance: a model of institutional reflection where learning from artworks, audiences, and collaborators is folded back into our methods. We do not separate artistic production from curatorial thinking, nor public programming from internal ethics. Instead, we build Shimmer as an organisation where artworks, people, and structures co-learn together over time. We have presented works by over 200 artists and practitioners, including Nina Canell, Marcel Duchamp, Willem de Rooij, Theo van Doesburg, Liam Gillick, Ellen Gallagher, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Joseph Grigely, Ian Kiaer, Mike Kelley, Lee Kit, Liz Magor, Charlotte Posenenske, Francois Piron, Anne Tallentire, and Lawrence Weiner, among others.

Our activities include expanded exhibitions, public research sessions, education, guest curatorial positions, and micro-publishing through Shimmer Press.



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