



EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

The City of Willows by Chong Yan Chuah and Simon Soon
11th Oct - 7th Dec 2025



Screenshot from The City of Willows 2025

The City of Willows

By Chong Yan Chuah, Simon Soon

11th Oct - 7th Dec 2025

Culprint is proud to present “*The City of Willows*” an exhibition by artist **Chong Yan Chuah** and scholar **Simon Soon**, curated by **Deborah Lim**.

The exhibition features an interactive installation that centers around “*The City of Willows*” a playable game developed by artist Chong Yan Chuah and scholar Simon Soon. The work reimagines the rituals of Chinese secret societies or Triads that flourished in the Malay archipelago during the 19th century. Rooted in histories of mutual aid and brotherhood among Chinese migrants, the game transforms the traditional Triad initiation ceremony into a cosmological landscape.

Players embark on a mythic journey through dense jungles and Southeast Asian scenes, from durian stalls to Penang’s *Kek Lok Si Temple*, on a quest for the fabled City of Willows. This destination represents a symbolic sanctuary where belonging and community are embodied. If Triads once offered refuge for migrants, in a dystopian future, the City of Willows might serve as a post-apocalyptic haven.

The exhibition expands this universe through the *Geneacoscsm Index* (2023, 2025), a series of speculative Peranakan futures through the lens of machine vision. The index comprises 113 eerie and uncanny portraits that will be displayed at the exhibition bearing fragments of cultural memory while eliciting more questions than answers.

Completing the experience, a disembodied voice declares traces of presence and absence, history and mythology. These traces invite reflection and further dreaming, dissolving the boundaries of past, present, and imagined futures.

The City of Willows (2025) was commissioned by Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.



About the Artists

Chong Yan Chuah (he/him) is a Sino-Malaysian artist, architect and designer whose work bridges digital imagery, game art, and installation, between simulated space, fictive narratives and imagined bodies, redefining boundaries between physical environments and constructed worlds. Trained in architecture, Chuah has been commissioned and exhibited at institutions such as the Royal Academy of Arts, Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin, ArtScience Museum Singapore and the National Museum of Singapore.

Simon Soon (dia/he/him) is a lecturer in the Art History and Curatorship Program at the University of Melbourne. His research focuses on 19th and 20th century Southeast Asia, with a collaborative practice that reuses historical images to explore myth-making and storytelling. Soon's works have been exhibited in Hong Kong, Busan, Warsaw, and Sydney. He is the co-founder of Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia, a peer-reviewed journal published by NUS Press.



Screenshot from City of Willows, Chong Yan Chuah, Simon Soon, 2025

Artist:	Chong Yan Chuah and Simon Soon
Title:	<i>The City Willows</i>
Medium::	Video Game, Print and Artwork Book
Year:	2025
Edition:	6 + 2 Artist Proofs



Screenshot from *City of Willows*, Chong Yan Chuah, Simon Soon, 2025

***The City of Willows* – the Video Game, the Digital Print Artwork, the Artwork Book** Edition of 6 + 2 Artist Proofs · Price on Request

The City of Willows is a playable video game installation developed by Chong Yan Chuah based on the research of scholar Simon Soon. The edition is presented as three distinct yet interconnected items: the Video Game, the Digital Print Artwork, Artwork Book.

The game ***The City of Willows*** (2025) reimagines the rituals of 19th-century Chinese secret societies (Triads) in the Malay archipelago. Players embark on a mythic journey through Southeast Asian scenes from durian stalls to Penang's Kek Lok Si Temple, searching for the symbolic sanctuary, *the "City of Willows"*. A destination that functions as a post-apocalyptic haven for belonging and community.

Each edition of *The City of Willows* is delivered as a complete, ready-to-install artwork. The game is stored on a Kingston 64GB thumb drive with a LaCie Hard Disk backup, and is played using an 8BitDo wireless controller.

The work is designed to function as a standalone installation. It can be set up on any standard PC or exhibition system by following the included installation manual.

In addition to the digital game, each edition includes a unique framed print and artwork book- a complete documentation on the artwork and all technical, conservation and display guidelines. Allowing the work to exist both as a playable experience and as a collectible art object within private or institutional archives.



The City of Willows Box Set, Chong Yan Chuah, 2025

The Video Game

- Artists: Chong Yan Chuah, Simon Soon
- Title: The City of Willows
- Edition: 6 + 2 Artist Proofs
- Medium: Videogame, Engine UE5
- Dimension: 16:9, 1920x1080p
- Certificate of Authenticity: Binded with Digital Print
- Year: 2025

The Print

- Artist: Chong Yan Chuah, Simon Soon
- Title: The City of Willows
- Edition: 1/1 Unique Print
- Medium: Archival Pigment Print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta. 315 gsm
- Certificate of Authenticity: (Acting as COD for Video Game)
- Year: 2025

Hardware Contents

- Kingston 64GB Thumb Drive (Full Game Installation)
- LaCie Hard Disk 1TB (Backup Copy)
- 8BitDo Wireless Controller



Artist: **Chong Yan Chuah**
Title: *Atlasparasys (Apiwira)*
Medium: Acrylic Print on Light Box, includes
Single-channel animated video with sound [01:00
loop] on a USB Drive
Dimensions: 182cm x 91cm x 13cm
Year: 2025



Artist:

Chong Yan Chuah

Title:

Big Boy

Medium:

Video Art, Hand-Embellished iPhone 6s,
Interactive Social Media Account, USB Storage,
IPSF Cloud Storage

Dimensions:

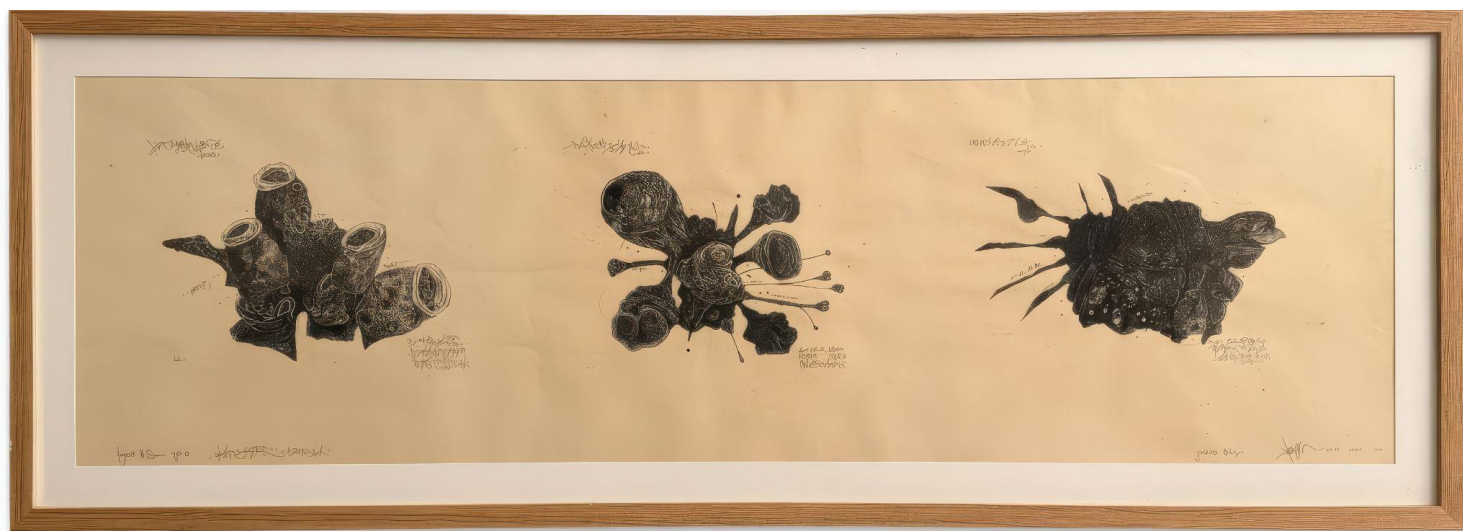
1920 x 1080p,

Duration:

04:30 min

Year:

2025



Artist:	Chong Yan Chuah
Title:	<i>Geospecimens Studies</i>
Medium:	Ink on Rice Paper
Dimensions:	155cm x 56cm x 3cm
Year:	2019



Artist: **Chong Yan Chuah**
 Title: *Geneacsm Index*
 Edition: 8
 Medium: Archival Pigment Print on Photo Rag Baryta
 315gsm, 100% Cotton Paper, Protective UV
 archival case
 Dimensions: 13cm x 8cm
 Year: 2025

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Collector sets of 10 and 113 available

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