



## Commissioned project —

### Have You Eaten Yet?

Cường Phạm, Ghost & John, Jessie Jing, Monica Tolia, Songsoo Kim, Taey lohe & Youngsook Choi

**Opening performances | 9 July, 6-10:30 p.m.**

**Exhibition | 10-18 July, 2-7 p.m.**

**Closing performance | 18 July, 2-6 pm**

**Studio 101 Courtyard (Entrance via Deptford High Street)**

**1 Resolution Way, SE8 4NT**

"Have you eaten yet?" is equivalent to "how are you?" in many Asian cultures. This question carries a tangible, direct sense of care towards one's livelihood & health, which often leads to impromptu food sharing. In line with these ethics of reciprocal care and hospitality, Have You Eaten Yet? will create an affectionate healing space for the local community during Deptford X Festival 2021, built through excavated stories, interventions and performances celebrating radical expressions of Asian joy.

The opening night will see the Studio 101 courtyard transformed by a series of performances from the artists, with the traces left from each performance comprising the exhibition during the festival.

#### **Opening night performances:**

**7 p.m.**            *'A mountain, a bundle, a spell'* (60 min) — Jessie Jing, Monica Tolia, Songsoo Kim & Youngsook Choi

**8 p.m.**            *'Yellow Furry Lullaby'* (25 min) — Taey lohe & Youngsook Choi

- 8:45 p.m.** 'Leters to Ma' (20 min) — Jessie Jing  
**9:15 p.m.** 'A snake in the house means the family will never want' (30 min) — Monica Tolia  
**9:45 p.m.** DJ set from Cường Phạm

Jessie Jing, Monica Tolia & Youngsook Choi open the event with a food and gesture performance '*A mountain, a bundle, a spell*' in collaboration with a chef/activist Songsoo Kim. Involving instant noodles produced from various parts of Asia, live letter-writing and collective object-making in the form of dumplings with adzuki beans — the beans are believed to carry protective powers from Korean shamanism. The audience will be given the packages made from the affectionate performance as offerings of joy and care.

Taey lohe & Youngsook Choi then follow with their storytelling performance '*Yellow Furry Lullaby*' which brings the awareness of the historical wound around Chinese indentured labour with recent tragedies of the Morecambe Bay cocklers and Atlanta massage parlours. Interweaving the children's story 'We're going on a bear hunt' with Korean national mythology and dandelions as resilient protagonists, their work pursues the lineage of trauma amongst Asian communities and offer this performance as a ritual of collective healing.

Jessie Jing shares her performance & installation '*Letters to Ma*', documenting various individuals of Asian heritage talking about their mothers' joys and success throughout their lives. The installed letters are transformed transcripts — ghostwritten by Jessie through these personal interviews — and bring to life their memories and stories. This is a work that honours the maternal figure within Asian heritage and celebrates the successes and joy that came with their sacrifices and resilience - all through the eyes of their children.

At dusk, Monica Tolia takes over with her immersive performance '*A snake in the house means the family will never want*', following ancient Chinese tradition where the dancer takes on masked-animal form in the role of shaman & exorcist, dispelling evil forces and protecting the community. The title references the venerated symbolism snakes hold in Asian cultures as opposed to how they're perceived as devious in the West. The performance is interwoven with an industrial materiality in the site-specific installation & costuming, referencing diaspora transformation of rituals & identity, where the embodiment of signs regarded as Other become an act of reclamation & resistance.

The opening night is closed by Cường Phạm's eclectic DJ set of Southeast Asian music tracks. For the exhibition, his work '*A Love Letter to Mixtapes*' offers a mixtape as an object of intimacy and curatorial care in an era of algorithms, trends, and viewing stats. In the exhibition space, there is a HiFi system and speakers where people can select mixtapes to play. Either through a written list on paper or digital sharing, their own selections of songs can be sent to Cường so they can be burned onto a CD. The participants can take their CD on spot or the burnt CD can be sent to them by post.

Over the course of the exhibition, the audience will have a grasp of the traces of these performances and further activate them by enjoying the letters, stories, food sculpture, the remnant scent, and making DIY music albums.

The exhibition ends with the durational performance '*There Are Gods Around Us*' by Ghost & John, an extract from their previous work '*Meniscus*'. This durational performance is a devised work by

each of the performers, where they tell stories about the imaginary gods they write up, and perform a made-up ritualistic dance of the god. Taking reference from East Asian mythology, traditions and rituals, it is a queer and Asian work that looks into what hope means in our age of great instability and crisis.

*Have You Eaten Yet?* is curated by Jessie Jing, Monica Tolia and Youngsook Choi from the Deptford X Peer Network, an evolving group of Black and POC artists and arts organisers affiliated with Deptford X.

**Artists IG & website:**

Cường Phạm | @phambinho | [www.nts.live/shows/phambinho](http://www.nts.live/shows/phambinho)

Ghost & John | @ghostandjohn | [www.ghostandjohn.art](http://www.ghostandjohn.art)

Jessie Jing | @jingely | [www.thedisoriental.com](http://www.thedisoriental.com)

Monica Tolia | @mon\_tolia | [www.monikatolia.com](http://www.monikatolia.com)

Songsoo Kim | @kim\_songsoo

Taey Iohe | @taey.iohe | [www.taey.com](http://www.taey.com)

Youngsook Choi | @young.sook.choi | [www.youngsookchoi.com](http://www.youngsookchoi.com)

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