

Tsang Kin-Wah

M+ PAVILION

West Kowloon Cultural District

September 9, 2016–November 6, 2016

The inaugural exhibition at the M+ Pavilion, “Nothing,” comprises a new site-specific commission of the same name made by Tsang Kin-Wah, who represented Hong Kong at the Fifty-Sixth Venice Biennale. Tsang’s immersive installation uses black-and-white video, sound, and text, and was inspired by the famous verse from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*: “Life’s but a walking shadow . . . a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

One small image, depicting a heavily burdened donkey, is projected onto the floor. Another picture takes up an entire wall, showing young men walking through a prison in slow motion. A third part of the installation is displayed separately, in a black room: An abstract video is projected onto the walls to the sound track of Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata.” Gradually, then more quickly, the familiar music warps into noise, the shapes of the video start to move violently, and words begin to flash across the screen at random: “silence . . . death . . . flee . . . live . . . danger . . . worth . . . happiness . . . nothing.” The text, drawn from lyrics by Kurt Cobain, brings into focus Tsang’s preoccupation with the paradox of being, but at this point it feels almost unnecessary. The artist’s angst is conveyed powerfully by the sound and imagery alone.

The installation’s final component is a large-scale projection of a tree slowly losing its leaves. It is quiet and redemptive: The leaves, one assumes, will grow back. The cycle will begin again. “Nothing” is a poetic work in four acts distilling the course of a human life—the poor player’s hour upon the stage.

— Samantha Kuok Leese



Tsang Kin-Wah, *Nothing*, 2016, video projections, sound, wood, stainless steel, soil, text, dimensions variable.