

True Value

Curatorial text

What makes an artwork valuable when the places and memories from which it emerges are constantly changing? In True Value, Ane Alfeirán approaches this question through the material traces of a life lived in Hong Kong. Developed during the Artbridger residency at Soho House Hong Kong, the series follows the ways a city enters the body: through the paths we walk, the smells we recognize, and the images we carry away.

Trees recur throughout the work. Their roots press into and around the built environment, making visible a form of belonging that is neither fixed nor entirely secure. Alfeirán's fragmented images and layered surfaces echo this condition. They suggest that memory does not preserve a place intact; it gathers pieces, alters their scale, and binds them to later experiences. A self, too, is assembled from what endures and what has already begun to disappear.

Other works return to the dried seafood shops of Sheung Wan, a neighborhood where the artist first lived in Hong Kong. Fish and squid become unlikely vessels for the intimate history of a place. Their distinctive smell can summon a street, a relationship, or an earlier version of oneself more forcefully than a photograph. By giving these ordinary forms sustained attention, Alfeirán asks whose experiences are considered worth keeping, and which details of a city are lost when its familiar spaces change.

The title True Value resists a single measure. Value may be assigned by a market or an institution, but it also accumulates through attachment, repetition, and care. The works hold these meanings in tension without claiming that art can stop change or recover the past exactly as it was. Instead, they offer memory as an active process: one that selects, transforms, and sometimes invents as it preserves.

Across the series, Hong Kong is both a particular place and a site of personal transformation. The work asks what remains with us when we leave a city, and what part of us remains there. Its value lies in making that exchange perceptible - in allowing a root, a scent, or a fragment of an image to carry a history that might otherwise go unnamed.