Ade Darmawan, Ferry trip from Merak to Bakauheni, Sunda Strait, Indonesia, 2018, documentation. Courtesy the artist

König Books, 2016. Film, and Video, in collaboration with Bildmuseet Umeå. Theatrical Fields: Critical Strategies in Performance, Tomás Saraceno: Arachnid Orchestra. Jam Sessions. 2017. Sternberg Press, 2017. Becoming Palm, Simryn Gill and Michael Taussig. Sternberg Press, 2017. South East Asia: Spaces of the Curatorial. Jahresring 63. distributed by NUS Press, 2018. PLACE.LABOUR.CAPITAL. Mousse Publishing, commissioned and published by NTU CCA Singapore, 2018. Voyages de Rhodes, Phan Thảo Nguyên, artist's book

**G TECHNOLOGICAL UNIV** 

butions to discourse beyond its physical parameters. publications allow the Centre to disseminate its contriresearch projects. The mobility and lasting nature of on contemporary art linked to the Centre's ongoing various departments to capture and deepen the knowledge of the Centre by expanding the connections across the The publishing activity emphasises the holistic approach

## PUBLICATIONS NTU CCA SINGAPORE

knowledge. social-political spheres with other fields of histories of contemporary art embedded in practices that intersect the present and forms of emergent artistic and curatorial It brings forth innovative and experimental the Centre focuses on Spaces of the Curatorial. art of Nanyang Technological University, A national research centre for contemporary Research and Academic Education. Exhibitions; Residencies Programme; thinking in its three-fold constellation: and partner creating and driven by dynamic NTU CCA Singapore is a platform, host,

## ART SINGAPORE CONTEMPORARY NIU CENTRE FOR

A leading international art institution,

oibuts.onom Collaterals:

Jonathan Liu Isrudy Shaik Frankie Fang Exhibition Production:

Ilya Katrinnada Binte Zubaidi Magdalena Magiera Public and Education Programmes:

> Rani Lawson Ana Sophie Salazar Curatorial Team:

> > Philippe Pirotte Guest Curator:

22 March – 23 June 2019

and back again to above the wind From below the wind ARUS BALIK

> ntu.ccasingapore.org For updates please visit NTU CCA Singapore. and take place at are admission free all programmes Unless otherwise stated,

> > please see overleaf For artists' and curator's biographies,

forbidden book. as well as notions of censorship and the body of work, its influence and legacy, Philippe Pirotte, to discuss Pramoedya's will be joined by the curator of the exhibition, on view. Three of the participating artists starting point for the eponymous exhibition Pramoedya Ananta Toer, which is the Arus Balik (1995) by Indonesian author this panel discussion will focus on the book

The first session of a two-part conversation, moderated by Philippe Pirotte and Melati Suryodarmo,

with Ade Darmawan, Shubigi Rao, In Conversation Part I: Arus Balik Saturday, 23 March 2019, 3.30 – 5.30pm

**LKOCKYMMES** 

PUBLIC AND EDUCATION

In Conversation: ila and Khim Ong Tuesday, 16 April 2019, 7.00 - 8.30pm

identity, and historical narratives.

work explores issues about gender,

negotiation, and how her performance

body as a space of confrontation and

will also discuss how she uses her

the sea and its manifold stories. She

of living in close relationship with

and explores the collective memory

provenance and heritage. ila reflects

The artist will expand on the works

which directly address matters of she has developed for the exhibition,

on what it means to live on an island,

C — Ade Darmawan

Tuban, 2019 Installation with distillation process, books, pottery, spices, seawater, leaves, stones, and soil.

D — Melati Suryodarmo

Dancing Under the Black Sky, 2019 Four-channel video, 5 min

Paradise Blueprint, 2017 Wallpaper based on a cyanotype photogram of the removed legs of a bird of paradise

E — Zac Langdon-Pole

Passport (Argonauta) (viii), 2018 Paper nautilus shell, Campo del Cielo meteorite (iron; coarse octahedrite, landsite: Chaco / Santiago del Estero, Argentina), 9.4 x 3.1 x 5.3 cm

bekas, 2019 In collaboration with Kin Chui Video projection, stereo, 12 min

the sons and daughters of hungry ghosts, 6 photographic prints, 29.7 x 42 cm each

in the heart of Novena, Singapore's medical district.

buildings. Besides its 200-ha lush green, residential

campus is frequently listed among the top 15 most

Green Mark-certified (equivalent to LEED-certified)

beautiful university campuses in the world and has 57

and Social Sciences, and its Graduate College. NTU's

of Engineering, Business, Science, and Humanities, Arts

undergraduate and postgraduate students in the colleges

A research-intensive public university, NTU has 33,000

ABOUT NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL

perspective and action that dominates much of human life.

Speculative Lecture: Becoming Post-Human

topic CLIMATES, HABITATS, ENVIRONMENTS.

Tuesday, 2 April 2019, 7.00 – 8.30pm

7 March - 7 April 2019

subconscious. She expounds on the duality and sometimes hypocrisy of certain ideologies and theories

of our identities. Her work is rooted in self-portraiture, exploring themes such as gender, sexuality, and

Norah Lea (Singapore) is a multidisciplinary artist whose works investigate the performative aspects

of their personal oral histories through spoken word and collectively imagining the past

identities, belonging, and speculative histories, this workshop invites anyone who feels

decolonisation of the Malay archipelago. Centering around themes of intersecting

Nusantara," an arguably dated and oftentimes unclear regional construct that has

(Who is the Nusantara Woman?), aims to create conversations around the idea of the

This workshop, a follow-up to a workshop held last year, Sinpa Dia Wanita Nusantana

Where is the Musantara? Who is the Musantara? What do we align ourselves with in the

resurfaced every now and then with regards to recent waves of conversations around

that they can benefit from sharing their own stories and experiences, and the explorations

Nurshafitri Ya'akob (Singapore) explores the nuanced psyche that individuals keep hidden in their

In the Lab

ethnicity through photography, film, performance, and spoken word.

past and what futures will we create together?

by ila, Norah Lea, and Nurshafitri Ya'akob

Workshop: Reclaiming Nusantara?

Saturday, 6 April 2019, 3.00 – 5.30pm

Workshop fee: \$10

that have been made palatable for the society.

by Professor Ute Meta Bauer, followed by a conversation with Sophie Goltz

UNIVERSITY, SINGAPORE

different juxtaposed formats.

to this curatorial framework to unfold

and curator Fareed Armaly, respond

exhibition spaces, designed by artist

settings and in particular throughout

cultural production in diverse cultural

presenting and discussing artistic and

s'erogagnis ADD UTM sejesis

Southeast Asia's vastly changing

infrastructures and modes of

expanded field. What are the

potential of "curating" and its

The Centre seeks to engage the

CURATORIAL

SPACES OF THE

campus in western Singapore, NTU has a second campus

in August 2018. Kochi, India, 2018. Traduttore, traditore, 2019

The Tower of Tuban: the first level, 2019 Mixed media on paper, 70 x 100 cm

Learn more: adm.ntu.edu.sg/programmes

A — Lucy Raven

on sand-L. 2019

on sand-R, 2019

B — Shubigi Rao

**Book**, 2016–18

2-26-19: Debris flow erosion, wet cement

Cement and sand on silk, 228 x 133 cm

Cement and sand on silk, 228 x 133 cm

Cement and sand on silk, 223 x 134 cm

3-3-19: Debris flow erosion, wet cement

Cement and sand on silk, 214 x 133 cm

3-3-19: Debris flow erosion, wet cement

Cement and sand on silk, 231 x 132 cm

Pulp: A Short Biography of the Banished

5 photographic prints, 60 x 85 cm each

1. Books rescued from the burning National

and University Library, stored and unused

in dilapidated stables for the last 26 years. Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2016. 2. Damaged manuscript salvaged from the

burning of the Oriental Institute in 1992.

3. Singular transcribed copy of forgotten oral stories, from writer Syeda Hamed's personal

Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2016.

collection. New Delhi, India, 2018. 4. and 5. Library books destroyed by floods

Mixed media on paper, 50 x 70 cm

on dry cement and sand-R, 2019

on dry cement and sand-L, 2019

on dry cement and sand-R, 2019

2-28-19: Debris flow erosion, wet cement

2-26-19: Debris flow erosion, wet cement

field of contemporary curating. highly complex and diverse museum landscape in Southeast Asia and the ever-expanding Curatorial Practices. The programme prepares graduates for professional positions in the In August 2018, NTU welcomed the first intake of MA students for Museum Studies and

> Applications deadline: 31 March 2019 Master of Arts in Museum Studies and Curatorial Practices

AND MEDIA, NTU

fields of knowledge. understand these realities through art and culture in dialogue with other geopolitical, social, and cultural systems. The Centre intends to discuss and consequences of human intervention are felt on a global scale, affecting forcing the migration of humans and other species at a critical level. The shifts impact habitats, and vice versa. Precarious conditions of habitats are Changes in the environment influence weather patterns and these climatic

ENVIRONMENTS.

WITH THE SCHOOL OF ART, DESIGN SHARED ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

connects the Centre's various activities over a period of several years. is NTU CCA Singapore's overarching research topic which informs and

CLIMATES. HABITATS.

Gallery of Modern Art, and the Ateneo Art Gallery.

civic infrastructure),

collections of the Singapore Art Museum, Queensland Art Gallery,

the Singapore Biennale (2013). Her works are currently in the permanent

Contemporary Art, Brisbane (2015); Yokohama Triennale (2014); and

several international art events such as the Asia Pacific Triennial of

filmmaking at the Mowefund Film Institute. She has been featured in

in Human Ecology, and pursued further studies in 16mm documentary

University of the Philippines-Los Baños with an undergraduate degree

Kiri Dalena (Philippines) is an acclaimed visual artist and filmmaker

slow creep, explosive, eruptive), and form (pyroclastic ashflow,

to liquid flow, to solid cement, and back again), speed (fast rush,

change. A short horror film, the material monster has the ability

as a means to explore the larger implications and effects of state

unpredictable state changes from liquid to solid and back again,

Notes from the Curator) in the Philippines, it is a study into

Shot entirely with miniature models and sets, but referring

will screen material from Kongkreto, currently in production.

the curfew—a gloomy reminder of a lost freedom. Lucy Raven

track of a police car at night prompting the citizens to respect

political unrest spanning two decades, and an ominous long-

footage from the artist's own archive with documentation of

by sequences with authentic 16mm, analog, and digital video

in the seabed. This hypnotic and captivating dream is shuttered

brandishing a red flag. Around her, many red flags are planted

surreal sequence underwater in which a woman dances slowly

film From the Dark Depths (2017) opens with a beautiful and

will be followed by a conversation with both artists. Based on

Screening and Conversation: Kiri Dalena and Lucy Raven,

the true story of the drowning of a young activist, Dalena's

filmmaker Kiri Dalena and by American artist Lucy Raven

Screenings by Filipino human-right activist, artist, and

moderated by Philippe Pirotte

Tuesday, 14 May 2019, 7.00 - 8.30pm

to the eruption of Mount Pinutabo (described further in

to opportunistically, erratically change state (from heavy rain

inequalities, particularly in the Philippines. She graduated from the

known for her works which reveal persistent social injustices and

military barracks, dams, dikes, cast Brutalist buildings,



current debate about future scenarios is not about humanity in itself, but rather the pervasiveness of an anthropocentric

Situating the post-humanist position between artificial intelligence and forces of nature, Bauer suggests that the

materials from NTU CCA Singapore's Public Resource Platform, responding to the Centre's overarching research

disappearance—of water, of trees, of entire habitats and species. This presentation interacts with books and research

of thematic "islands," in which each island corresponds to each of the four stages of the hydrologic cycle: evaporation,

the cyclical movement of water on and off the Earth's surface—as its entry-point, the presentation is an archipelago

into a present thick with possibility. Taking the Earth's hydrologic cycle—that is, the sequence of processes detailing

and between loss and regain, release and redistribution, to consider the ways in which thin air can be transformed

Thinking through the cycle of water, Vapour Islands: to live and die well together in a thick present\* moves through

and Soh Kay Min, Executive, Conference, Workshops & Archive Programmes, NTU CCA Singapore and Assistant Professor NTU ADM

Conceived by Sophie Goltz, Deputy Director, Research & Academic

VAPOUR ISLANDS: TO LIVE AND DIE WELL

TOGETHER IN A THICK PRESENT\*

condensation, precipitation, and percolation. This cycle, like the ecological imminence of the present, begins with

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also contribute to the development

arts scene. Your generous support will

to play an active role within the local amount, goes a long way in enabling us

and extensive educational programmes.

research-driven exhibitions, residencies,

presenting internationally-acclaimed,

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Fok Jing Yi, Young Professional Trainee, Communications

**EXHIBITION** 

Zac Langdon-Pole

**EXHIBITION** 

Darmawan

Lucy Raven

Communications

THE

HÁLL

ila

THE SINGLE

SCREEN

THE LAB

PLÁN

Melati

Suryodarmo

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NTU CCÁ SINGÁPORE

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(except on Mondays)

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**Exhibitions** 

Block 43 Malan Road,

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Singapore 108934

+65 6460 0300

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> **COVERNING COUNCIL** NTU CCA SINGAPORE

> > Jogia (2015); amongst others. Ahmett and Salina were Artists-in-Residence at NTU CCA Singapore in March 2018. (2018); Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Watsaw (2017); ST PAUL St Gallery, Auckland (2016); and Biennale to conditions of human and environmental vulnerability. Their work has been exhibited at Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media catastrophes, political repression, colonial legacies, and the exploitation of human and ecological resources. Spanning from the ephemeral interventions articulate sharp social commentaries on urgent issues concerning urban development, ecological An artist duo based in Jakarta, Indonesia, **Irwan Ahmett** and **Tita Salina** have been working together since 2010. Their

> > heir investigation by showcasing video documentation and material traces of their performances as well as performative actions that are poetic and poignant at the same time. This presentation conveys the scope of continuously share the imaginative resources to transpose political, environmental, and affective fractures in since the inception of the project. Fuelled by an activist attitude and a zest for playfulness, Ahmett and Salina Indonesia to New Zealand, from Taiwan and South Korea to Japan. The Ring of Fire (1014–ongoing) brings struggles, colonial histories, and environmental crises encountered along erratic routes that stretch from

> > demarcates a field of artistic inquiry. earthquakes and eruptions occur. For Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina, this geologically unstable territory tectonic plates running around the edges of the Pacific Ocean, a deadly area where the majority of the world's course of human life. In geography, The Ring of Fire denotes the volcanic belt and the collision zone of When they manifest themselves, it is often in apocalyptic forms that disrupt existing ecosystems and the

> > > curated by Anna Lovecchio, Curator, Residencies

Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina

In the Lab

of Photography, Penang; the Chiang Mai University Art Center; and the Photobook Exhibition for Athens Photo Festival; the Obscura Festival Art Museum at 8Q; the Singapore International Photography Festival; relationship with nature. Her work has been presented at the Singapore Her practice draws on historical and field research and reflects on human itinerant childhood, she is interested in place attachment and displacement Juria Toramae (Thailand/Singapore) is a visual artist. Having had an

Dr Imran bin Tajudeen (Singapore) is Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, School of

Гіргагу Иеtwork), а grassroot literacy movement (2018). Since 2014, he has been actively developing Pustaka Bergerak Indonesia (Indonesian Mobile Semesta (A Conversation with the Universe) (2017), and Semesta Manusia (This Universe of Mankind) include Two Essays (Trilingual edition: Indonesian, English, German. 2016), Percakapan dengan appeared in the Inter-Asian Cultural Studies and International Journal of Asian Studies. His publications Curator Board of Bentara Budaya Jakarta, and as Director of the Freedom Institute. His writings have Gadjah Mada State University. He has worked as a guest editor for Kompas Daily, a member of the Nirwan Ahmad Arsuka (Indonesia) completed his formal education in Nuclear Engineering,

Independence - A Global Forum in Alternative Space, Los Angeles (2011); and Expressing Political and conferences such as Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society Conference, Surabaya (2015); State of as a researcher and developer since 2007. He was invited to speak in several forums, seminars, 2005, he moved to Jakarta and in 2012 graduated from Political Science, while working in ruangrupa 2004, he enrolled at the Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, majoring in French Literature. In early Mirwan Andan (Indonesia) was born and raised in Watampone, South Sulawesi. From 1999 to

to profoundly influence our existence.

a transpiring age-old knowledge of the region, but also as a habitat that continues Straits will be considered as an environment with an incipient psychology, invoking of belonging, and strategies of mapping. Rather than a static given, the Musantara and mental habits. The participants will discuss complexities of heritage, notions which will necessarily stretch the limits of ingrained westernised cultural visions This involves an approach to the region through underlying indigenous patterns, history of the Straits, historical maps, and the geography of maritime Southeast Asia. The second session of a two-part conversation, this panel discussion will focus on the

Dr Imran bin Tajudeen, and Juria Toramae, moderated by Philippe Pirotte with Mirwan Andan, Nirwan Ahmad Arsuka, Zac Langdon-Pole, In Conversation Part II: Living with the Sea Saturday, 25 May 2019, 3.30 – 5.30pm

together for the first time the most significant works realised by the artists, either together or individually, Since 2014, the Indonesian duo has embarked upon a journey that engages issues of social injustice, political

and cosmopolitan in the vernacular urban heritage of maritime Southeast Asia. and is currently working on a monograph that extends his doctoral dissertation on the local/regional editor of Southeast Asia's Modern Architecture: Questions in Translation, Epistemology, and Power (2018), He was a postdoctoral fellow at MIT's AKPIA (2009–10) and the IIAS in Leiden (2010–11). He is coquestions on Southeast Asia's Indic and Islamic architecture from a vernacular architectural perspective. ventions, and colonial and nationalist heritage representation, and second through historiographical in Singapore and Southeast Asia, first in their intersections with colonial practices, modern inter-

a visual statement on the artists' working methodology.

Invisible to the human eye, geological kinships flow under the oceans and lay deep into the Earth's crust.

13 April – 11 June 2019

THE KING OF FIRE (2014-ongoing)

Design and Environment, National University of Singapore. He researches architectural encounters

Aspiration Creatively, Jakarta (2011). In 2015, Andan was researcher for the Jakarta Biennale.

Singapore, and the inequalities created by ruthless economic development. man addresses archipelagic histories, the relations between Indonesia and Following the free movement of sea waves across the Straits of Malacca, the the work revolves around a man's nostalgic longing for the Lion City Performed from a vantage point rife with strategic and symbolic implications, casted in livestream from Batam, the Indonesian island closest to Singapore. that holds true until today. A Tumbling Inch is a performative action broad-Ahmett made the solemn pledge (sumpah) not to return to Singapore, an oath On 28 March 2018, Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina concluded their residency

Performance: A Tumbling Inch

mq08.8 - 00.7, 11 June 2019, 7.00 - 8.30pm occurrences, and present-day social and environmental crises. the ways in which the works weave together natural catastrophes, historical

Artist's Tour Saturday, 13 April 2019, 3.00 – 4.00pm

Join Tita Salina for a walk-through of The Ring of Fire. The artist will

Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina, A Tumbling Inch (image taken from the closest distance between Irwan and Singapore border on December II, 2018), 2018. Courtesy the artists.

discuss the origin and the development of this five-year project, charting out

Institute of Education, specialising in visual arts education in museums and galleries. resources for the National Gallery Singapore and trained teachers at the National Tyler Print Institute, and Alliance Française. Reedy has developed educational and Berlin, as well as locally at the Jendela Visual Arts Space, Esplanade, the Singapore an artist and educator. She has exhibited her artworks internationally in Paris, Chicago, Kelly Reedy (United States/Singapore) has worked in Singapore for over 18 years as

where we come from, and where we are going. transitions in this region have influenced our concepts of who we are, this journey, probing how the social, geopolitical, religious, and cultural The work by the six participating artists will guide and challenge us on turning of historical tides form our personal and collective identities. author Pramoedya Ananta Toer, this workshop will examine how the Taking inspiration from the novel Arus Balik (1995) by Indonesian

23 March 2019: turningtides-23march2019.peatix.com

by Kelly Reedy Workshop for Teachers: Turning Tides: Identities in Transit Friday, 26 April 2019, 3.00 - 5.30pm Saturday, 23 March 2019, 10.00am - 12.30pm

and drawing a map of one's own imagined Singapore. creating a map. The workshop will include conceptualising form and will guide the participants through the basics of Artist Juria Toramae will discuss map-making as an art

Map-Making by Juria Toramae

Workshop: Visualising Sense of Place through Saturday, 1 June 2019, 3.00 – 6.00pm ARUS BÁLIK to above the wind From below and the back wind 22 March - 23 June 2019 again

Ade Darmawan ila Zac Langdon-Pole Shubigi Rao Lucy Raven Melati Suryodarmo

Curated by Philippe Pirotte

Left: Shubigi Rao, Singular transcribed copy of forgotten oral stories, from writer Syeda Hamed's personal collection. New Delhi, India, 2018. Right: Shubigi Rao, Books rescued from the burning National and University Library, stored and unused in dilapidated stables for the last 26 years. Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2016. Both from *Pulp*: A Short Biography of the Banished Book, 2016-18, 5 photographic prints

60 x 85 cm each



Shubigi Rao (b. 1975, India/Singapore) is an artist and writer working with layered installations of books, etchings, drawings, pseudo-scientific machines, metaphysical puzzles, video works, ideological board games, and archives. These works demonstrate her diverse interests in subjects such as archaeology, neuroscience, libraries, archival systems, histories and lies, literature and violence, ecologies, and natural history. Her current decade-long art project, Pulp: A Short Biography of the Banished Book, is about the history of book destruction. The first portion of the project, Written in the Margins, won the Juror's Choice Award at the triennial APB Foundation Signature Art Prize 2018; and the project's first book was shortlisted for the Singapore Literature Prize (non-fiction) 2018. Rao graduated from Delhi University with a BA (Hons) in English Literature, and a BA and MA in Fine Arts from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. She recently completed a residency at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, and has presented solo exhibitions at Objectifs Centre for Photography and Film, Singapore; Künstlerhaus Bethanien; National Museum of Singapore; Grey Projects, Singapore; and the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, LASALLE. Rao's work has been featured at Kochi Biennale (2018), Taipei Biennial (2016); Pune Biennale (2017); Singapour en France-Le Festival (2015); Digital Arts Festival, Copenhagen (2013); and Singapore Biennale (2008).

Rao's photographs feature burnt manuscripts from the 1990s in Sarajevo and images of books destroyed by floods in India in August 2018. Selected from her ongoing research into burnt books and destroyed libraries, as well as communities that form around print, defence of open access, and the endurance of text—particularly handwritten or transcribed texts—these photographs call to mind the destruction of Pramoedya's library, and the constant attempts to silence him. Initially, in prison, Pramoedya was not even allowed to write, but he started telling stories to other prisoners to raise the general morale. Rao's Singular transcribed copy of forgotten oral stories, from writer Syeda Hamed's personal collection. New Delhi, India (2018) can be read as a response to Pramoedya's community of storytellers and their audience which formed in the barracks on Buru Island.

NTU CCA Singapore is pleased to present you the exhibition Arus Balik - From below the wind to above the wind and back again, featuring the six distinguished artists Ade Darmawan, ila, Zac Langdon-Pole, Shubigi Rao, Lucy Raven, and Melati Suryodarmo, with works that engage with the maritime history of Southeast Asia, its political trajectories and struggles, as well as the diversity of its cultural wealth.

This exhibition stems from an invitation by the NTU CCA Singapore to the renowned curator Philippe Pirotte, the Rector of Frankfurt's Städelschule, and Director of Portikus, who is this academic year Visiting Professor at NTU's School of Art, Design and Media, in the newly established MA in Museum Studies and Curatorial Practices.

With Arus Balik, in reference to Pramoedya Ananta Toer's epic novel, Philippe conveys the Centre's contribution to this year's bicentennial that commemorates the arrival of Englishman Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Dutch East Indies and Bencoolen, considered the founder of modern Singapore. In his novel, Pramoedya argues that it was a strategic mistake by the coastal kingdoms of 16th-century Java to focus inland instead of continuing to consider the sea as a connecting body. Arus Balik unpacks humankind's perpetual longing to build empires, overwrite cultures, and produce grand narratives, which inevitably continues today in the form of renewed nationalism across the world. The project comes from ongoing conversations between the curator and the artists, some over years, some more recent, bringing together every artist's individual attempts to come to terms with the complexities of their own cultural and political history and identity.

We are grateful to the curator and the artists, as well as to each contributor of the public programmes, for lending us their readings and subsequent artistic interpretations, their journeys into the fictionality of constructed pasts, and allowing us to contextualise and situate recent historical events within a wider context. We hope that you will enjoy this exhibition as a point of departure for your own journey and enquiry into history and its entanglements.

Founding Director NTU CCA Singapore, and Professor, School of Art, Design and Media, NTU



In a series of drawings and photographs, book-aficionado, artist, and writer Shubigi Rao connects her research to the difficult conditions, but also extraordinary examples of solidarity, that Pramoedya Ananta Toer encountered and developed on prison island Buru. Freed from physical labour after some years of imprisonment, his daily needs, such as food, medicine, and cigarettes, were provided by fellow inmates, often fellow intellectuals and artists. He used an old typewriter and adopted a routine organised around writing. Re-typed copies were distributed inside the camp, and prisoner confrères would write their comments. Pramoedya's library and archive had been burnt prior to nt and the network of oral memory developed by the priso Buru Island became, unknown to the camp guards, an editorial and social space.

> Though published only in 1995 (the 50th anniversary of Indonesian independence), Arus Balik was the first novel Pramoedya wrote while imprisoned on Buru Island in 1974. Arus Balik and Arok Dedes were the two major historical novels he wrote there, next to the famous Buru tetralogy.6 Considering all of them together provides a glimpse of a broader project Pramoedya once described as the effort to write to "the roots" of Indonesian nationalism. Arus Balik is the only one of those novels that was never translated into English, with the exception of the first chapter, and the translation of its title in English is debated. The literal translation from Bahasa Indonesia would be the "reversal of the tide." The Dutch title, however, De Stroom Uit het Noorden, translates to "The Flow from the North," which is already more an interpretation of the novel.

(film still), 2019, in

Courtesy the artist.

Below: ila, the sons

hungry ghosts, 2019

photographic print, 29.7 x 42 cm. Courtesy

and daughters of

collaboration with Kin Chui, video projection

## NOTES FROM THE CURATOR

Arus Balik - From below the wind to above the wind and back again is an exhibition project that developed from conversations I conducted with Jakarta-based artist Ade Darmawan, initially about the topography of the early colonial city Batavia (now Jakarta) and its orientation of buildings and canals, and about the history of Javanese rulers, who, from the 16th century onwards, moved their attention away from the sea, a tendency they maintained until very recently (former dictator Suharto was a general of the land forces). The conversation led to Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta Toer's epic book Arus Balik (1995), which in English means a "turning of the tide," Darmawan and I chased the book in Jakarta antiquarian and second-hand book shops, only to realise it was very difficult to find (certainly its first edition), though we knew that a lot of people own a copy of the book privately.

This historical novel by Pramoedya is placed in the early modern period of globalised trade and geopolitical intrigue around the Straits after the waning of the Majapahit Empire. Throughout history, trade into and out of the Straits provided strategic power positions to many early empires like Srivijaya or the sultanates of Aceh and Malacca. For example, Pasai, which plays an important role in the book, or later Aceh, Indragiri, Singapura, Johore, and Kedah used the Straits as their lifeline and path to prosperity. The sea passages connect and divide a region characterised by immense cultural wealth and biodiversity. Arus Balik is in part a soul-searching about who was to blame for the weakening of the coastal kingdoms in the Straits—and especially of Java—in the early 16th century, the progressive Islamisation of the region, and the beginning of Portuguese occupation on parts of the now Malay and Indonesian peninsula and archipelago.

From the 16th century onwards, Sumatra, Java, the Riau/Islands, and the Thai-Malay Peninsula, once linked by the Straits into one cultural area with many cross-cutting networks of trade and religion, were carved up by colonial powers. Rivalries and the increasing penetration of foreign traders led eventually to the Dutch colonisation of parts of the now Indonesian archipelago. Pramoedya suggests that the final decline of the Majapahit Empire—in Arus Balik mostly the swan song of the port city of Tuban, presented as the main successor state to the empire—and the "change from traditional independence to colonial possession" was caused largely by the different Javanese kingdoms gradually turning their back to the sea and jealously

guarding their sovereignty, rather than attempting to recreate the empire. Another element was the doubt amongst many of them whether to fight the Portuguese who appeared with powerful ships in the Indian Ocean, or to accommodate them. The book recounts the story of the two failed expeditions that a federation of kingdoms, under the lead of the Demak Sultanate, undertook to win back the strategically important city of Malacca from the Portuguese. With the exception of these two expeditions, Pramoedya locates the end of Majapahit and its cosmopolitanism in the notion of "Kampung civilisation," an idea that depicts extreme parochialism and lack of interest in the outside world that existed among the Javanese aristocracy, even before colonisation. With the fall of Majapahit, the outside world imposed itself on its own terms, and Pramoedya vividly portrayed this reversal of the current: "Now fewer and fewer Javanese ships sailed to the north, to the lands Above the Winds, such as Champa or China. The stream of ships to the north became reduced to a trickle. The stream to the south, however, became wider and swifter, carrying new commodities, new ideas, new religions. One branch of this stream came to Tuban." 2

> The title of the book refers to this reversal of Java's position in the world, from actively sailing out to remaining inactive and receiving others. "Arus balik" is "a current, particularly a current of water, that turns back and heads in the other direction," according to Pramoedya scholar John Roosa.<sup>3</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer's reversal of the current also involves another reversal, a meta-geographical impulse that is comparable to the notion of the "inverted telescope" that Benedict Anderson advances in his seminal book The Spectre of Comparisons, as a non-Eurocentric method of comparison in which, for example, Portugal is viewed from the standpoint of Southeast Asia.<sup>4</sup>

Have the multiple colonisations in Southeast Asia alienated the people from the sea coast? Is it possible to attempt a return? The reversal of the colonial fact, the promise of reversal of a geopolitical, cultural, and social system, initially embodied by the Bandung Conference in 1955, caused Afro-American author Richard Wright to write that "it smacked of tidal waves, of natural forces." 5

The exhibition Arus Balik - From below the wind to above the wind and back again aims to imagine the implication of histories and politics in processes of transition, such as colonisation and decolonisation, or shifts in maritime power for people and ports below (the Straits of Malacca, South China Sea, Java Sea, and further east) and above (the Indian Ocean and further west) the wind. The exhibition takes the novel Arus Balik as a starting point to reflect on perspectival shifts in geopolitical, cultural, social, religious, and natural spheres.

medicine for cancer treatment or as an aphrodisiac.

As a starting point for his installation, Ade Darmawan re-read Arus Balik with a special focus on how different characters in the book use natural resources. He undertook a field trip to the city of Tuban, that plays a central role in the book, and to the nearby town of Bojonegoro, a are not far from Blora, the birthplace of Pramoedya.

major producer of teakwood and tobacco, where recently For the exhibition, Darmawan created an installation with laboratory equipment, and gathered different materials such as soil, spices, and plants to transform them through distillation processes using alkaline water from the Java Sea and Singapore Straits,

Darmawan's laboratory setting is a reminder that the scramble for the control of the archipelago and the sea passages was about the extraction of ore and goods in a tightly knit network of trade relations. He draws connections between the colonial cultuurstelsel, a Dutch government policy for its colonies in the mid-19th century that required a portion of agricultural production to be devoted to export crops—referred to by Indonesian historians as Tanam Paksa (enforcement planting)—to Suharto's New Order regime (1965-98) in Indonesia, by placing his distilling laboratory on books about the regime's policy on land and resources. Moreover, Darmawan links the local trade, which has been carried out through the centuries, to contemporary improved traffic conditions such as ferries and airlines, promoted by the Indonesian government and answering to a rapid, dynamic development, with sometimes contentious nationalistic overtones.

for example, pala (nutmeg), fundamental for its preservation qualities during long sea travel; cendana (sandalwood); kayu manis

(cinnamon); lada (pepper); kemiri (candlenut); daun cengkeh (clover leaf); daun sirih (betel leaf); daun nipah (attap palm); daun

kelapa (coconut leaf); or the healing dawn tapak liman (Elephantopus Scaber Linn. in Latin). Tapak liman was used in traditional



Ade Darmawan, Ferry trip from Merak to Bakauheni, Sunda

Ade Darmawan (b. 1974, Indonesia) lives and works in lakarta as an artist, curator, and director of the artist collective ruangrupa. He studied at the Graphic Art Department at the Indonesia Art Institute, and was a resident at the Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam (1998–2000). He works with installation, objects, drawing, digital print, and video. Recently he has had solo exhibitions at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2016) and Portikus, Frankfurt (2015). Darmawan participated in the Gwangju and Singapore Biennales (both 2016), and was a curatorial collaborator in Condition Report (2017); Media Art Kitchen (2013); and Riverscape in-flux (2012). ruangrupa, an artist collective co-founded in 2000 with five other artists in Jakarta, focuses on visual arts and its relation with the social cultural context, particularly in urban environments. The collective has exhibited at the São Paulo Biennale (2014); Asia Pacific Triennial, Brisbane (2012): Istanbul Biennale (2005): and Gwangju Biennale (2002), among others. They were also curators of the 2016 Sonsbeek International, Darmawan was a member of the Jakarta Arts Council (2006–09) and became the Artistic Director of the Jakarta Biennale in 2009. Since 2013, he is executive director of the Jakarta Biennale.



ila (b. 1985, Singapore) is a visual and performance artist who works with found objects, moving images, and live performance. She seeks to create alternative nodes of experience and entry points into the peripheries of the unspoken, the tacit, and the silenced. With light as her medium of choice, and invisible communities as her point of interest, ila weaves imagined narratives into existing realities. Using her body as a space of tension, negotiation, and confrontation, she creates work that generates discussions about gender, history, and identity in relation to pressing contemporary issues. ila has performed at National Design Centre (2019), Performance Archives Resource Orchestrator, Singapore (2018); and ArtScience Late, Singapore (2018); had a solo presentation at Coda Culture, Singapore (2018); and exhibited at OH! Open House, Singapore (2019); Objectifs - Centre for Photography & Film, Singapore (2016), Ketemu Project Space, Bali (2016), and Unifiedfield, Granada (2015); among others.



In the sons and daughters of hungry ghosts (2019), Singaporean artist ila reflects on the idea of Singapore as an island and brings forth memories of living near the sea. ila photographed seascapes in the Singapore Straits: Ubin, East Coast, Sentosa, Sisters' Islands, Batam, and Bintan. When put in saltwater taken from these areas, the films corroded, partially disintegrating like the collective memories of the sea. ila directly addresses matters of provenance and heritage, reminding Singapore Island of its intricate and historic relation to the ocean.

> In her video-installation bekas (2019), ila questions what it means to be Boyanese, Buginese, Minangkabau, or Javanese through encounters with citizens now conflated as Malay Singaporeans, writing the one-line answer to the question "What does it mean for you to be... (for example, Javanese/ Boyanese/ Batak/ Bugis)?" on her body. These testimonies slowly wither as they are exposed to salty water and hot weather on reclaimed areas of Singapore or removed enclaves. process of "writing over," taking away multiplicity by using simple answers to a complex question. bekas means looking at the past, at identities formed within Nusantara, which is old Javanese for "archipelago," or the Malayo-Polynesian name of maritime Southeast Asia.

Zac Langdon-Pole's (b. 1988, Aotearoa New Zealand/Germany) work is underpinned by questions of belonging, translation, and identification. He has worked in a variety of media, including sculpture, performance, photography, film, textiles, poetry, installation, and using the work of other artists, to explore processes of montage, transposition, travelling, reinterpretation, collaboration, and appropriation. He is the latest recipient of the BMW Art Journey Prize (2018), was awarded the Ars Viva Prize for Visual Arts in Germany (2017), and received the Charlotte Prinz Stipendium in Darmstadt (2016). Langdon-Pole completed a BFA (Hons) at Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland (2010) and at the Städelschule Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Frankfurt (2016). Recent exhibitions include scions, Kunsthalle Darmstadt (2018): Ars Viva. S.M.A.K., Ghent (2018). and Kunstverein Munich (2017-18); Discoveries, Art Basel Hong Kong 2018 (presented by Michael Lett Gallery); emic etic, Between Bridges, Berlin (2018); Trappings, Station Gallery, Melbourne (2017); La Biennale de Montréal (2016–17); and Oratory Index, Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland (2016).

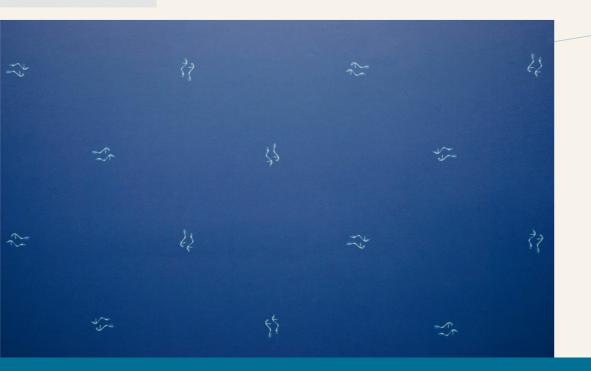
> Above: Zac Langdon-Pole, Passport (Argonauta) (viii), 2018, paper nautilus shell, Campo del Cielo meteorite (iron; coarse octahedrite, landsite: Chaco / Santiago del Estero, Argentina), 9.4 x 3.1 x 5.3 cm. Courtesy the artist.

Right: Zac Langdon-Pole, Paradise Blueprint, 2017, wallpaper

based on a cyanotype photogram of the removed legs of a bird of paradise. *Ars Viva* (2018), S.M.A.K., Ghent, detail.



Langdon-Pole's Passport (Argonauta) (viii) (2018) is part of a series of works that proposes a metaphysical reimagining of the notion of a passport. Each piece in this series combines a delicate paper nautilus shell with a unique meteorite fragment handcrafted to fill its known as Argonauts, of the genus of Octopedes. The Argonauts are often cited as being observed floating upon their shell, using their webbed tentacles to catch the wind. The meteorites used for each shell come from different geographical land sites and are entirely unique in their chemical composition. Formed in outer space before the earth existed and having travelled across unfathomable distances and time-scales, meteorites are unlike any



Through memories of ritual dances she witnessed in her childhood, Melati Suryodarmo returned to a specific performance tradition that demonstrates physical strength called Reog. A series of memories of trapped bodies—whipping, dancing accompanied by monotonous music, eating the broken glass of incandescent lights, dancing on horse braids, and carrying a giant lion-figure mask named Singa Barong Dadong Sirap—were always embedded in her mind.

In Dancing Under the Black Sky (2019), Suryodarmo traces the history behind Reog performances informed by Kejawen, a Javanese spiritual tradition that consists of an amalgam of animistic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Sufi beliefs and practices. Reog is said to be a satirical art of resistance and criticism of the Ponorogo people of East Java towards Bhre Kertabhumi, a Majapahit king who slowly lost his authority in the 15th century. Bhre Kertabhumi was the last king of Majapahit before Islam became a major force in Demak and controlled the coastal region of Java. Reog encompasses various kinds of political satire and elements of violence that are presented through a performance in which bodily attractions and beauty, and their relation to the spirit of traditional culture, unfold as various subtle layers of a political body.

Reog Ponorogo dancers traditionally perform in a trance-like state. The dancers are expected to follow strict rules, rituals, and exercises, both physical and spiritual. In Reog, a Warok dancer leads the show, where he presents his pride, the Gemblak, a young feminine man, who dances on a kuda kepang, a horse made of bamboo. The boy lover, called Gemblak, is usually kept by the Warok in their household under the agreement and compensation to the boy's family. Many Warok and Gemblak were massacred by Islamic groups during the anti-communist massacre of 1965-66, their heads placed on pikes for public display. Today, the Warok-Gemblakan practice is discouraged by local religious authorities and is being shunned through public moral opposition.

> Suryodarmo's video-installation is, in part, a critical reading of Pramoedya's overlooking of queer traditions when he refers to, or sometimes idealises, precolonial Indonesian indigenous culture. Dancing *Under the Black Sky* features dancing bodies of Gemblak boys in a sweaty close-up on four flat screens rhythmically configured on the wall.

Zac Langdon-Pole's Paradise Blueprint (2017), a wallpaper based on a cyanotype photogram of the removed legs of a bird of paradise, covers the walls of the exhibition space entirely. mythology surrounding the so-called birds of paradise native to Papua New Guinea. These birds became the first form of currency between Papuans and European explorers in the 16th century when they were traded for tools, nails, and blankets. They first reached Europe as trade skins that had—as part of a local Papuan preservation tradition—been prepared with their feet removed. Devoid of their original context, this triggered many exaggerated speculations by European naturalists as to why exactly these birds had no feet. One such projection was that the birds lived in an imagined "world of paradise" and that they had never touched the ground, perpetually held aloft by their elaborate plumes, until they fell from the heavens.

aperture. Paper nautiluses are paper-thin, fragile egg-case shells made by deep sea creatures one of the original inspirations for building sailing boats in ancient Greece since they were matter found on this planet. This particular piece uses a meteorite from Argentina, from a place which gives it its name, Campo del Cielo, which translates as "Field of the Heavens."



Lucy Raven creates silk paintings or monoprints, made by imprint of sedimentation in erosion boxes, as scrim backdrops she uses for a forthcoming film production called Kongkreto, the Tagalog word for concrete. The film is inspired by the 1991 volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippine state of Pampanga and the subsequent evacuation of nearby Clark

Clark was the largest United States air base outside the country for most of the 20th century the backstage for America's involvement in all of the wars of the Pacific, the site of Reagan's evacuation of Ferdinand Marcos, and a city in itself with a resident population of 15,000. Despite growing Filipino opposition to the base beginning in the 1980s, the United States military showed no signs of leaving—until Mount Pinatubo's unexpected eruption (which began on Filipino Independence Day) forced its evacuation and the abandonment of ongoing lease renegotiations.

Due to its massive energetic detonation, Mount Pinatubo ejected not lava but a molten, ashy, pyroclastic flow, called lahars, which, combined with a typhoon, distributed the material in a devastating spiral of ashy downpour throughout the region. Lahars, known as wet concrete, solidifies as it cools, first burying, then immobilising anything in its path. It also has a seemingly endless afterlife: each new significant rainstorm remobilises inert lahar deposits upstream, causing a cascade of destruction and uncertainty.

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> > Art, Design and Media.



informed by butoh, dance, and history, is the result of ongoing research in body movement and its relationship to the self and the world. These are enshrined in photography, translated into choreographed dances, enacted in video, or executed in live performances. A belief in change or growth through bodily action belies her early induction in meditation, which she continues to practice. Suryodarmo has presented her work worldwide, including Fukuoka Art Museum; National Museum of Contemporary Art Korea, Gwacheon; Kiasma, Helsinki; National Art Centre Tokyo; National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Para Site, Hong Kong; Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; Seoul Museum of Art; and Singapore Art Museum. Her work was included in the 5th Guangzhou Triennale (2015); Incheon Women Artists' Biennale (2009); Manchester International Festival (2009); and Manifesta 7, Bolzano (2008). Since 2007, Survodarmo organises the annual Performance Art Laboratory and Undisclosed Territory, a performance art festival in Solo, Indonesia, having also founded the art space Studio Plesungan in 2012. She was Artistic Director for IIWA, the 17th Jakarta

Melati Suryodarmo (b. 1969, Indonesia)

Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig,

Abramović and Anzu Furukawa. Her practice,

graduated in Performance Art from the

Germany, under the tutelage of Marina



Melati Suryodarmo, Dancing Under the Black Sky

(digital film still), 2019, four-channel video, 5 min

Courtesy the artist.

labour. The artist has received numerous awards, including the San Francisco Bay Area component of the Artadia Award (2013), and residencies at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2011–12) and Oakland Museum of California (2012). Her Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2014); Portikus, Frankfurt (2014); Hammer Museum (2012–13); and Nevada Museum of Art, Reno (2010). She participated in group exhibitions at the Whitney Museum, New York (2013); Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, Oregon (2013); MoMA PS1, New York (2013 and 2010); and Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (2010), among others. Her work was included in the 2012 Whitney Biennial, and can be found in permanent collections such as Tate Modern, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum, and the Guggenheim. The exhibited scrims in the end are some sort of monotype made

Lucy Rayen (b. 1977, United States) received a BFA in studio art and a BA in

art history from the University of Arizona, Tucson, and an MFA from Bard College's Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, New York. Primarily

grounded in animation and the moving image, Raven's multidisciplinary practice also incorporates still photography, installation, sound, and performative lecture.

Throughout her oeuvre, Raven explores how images can convey networks of

by stretching silk on a sheet of plywood inside a box with a "landscape model." The scrims hang in the exhibition space on horizontal rods suspended from C-stands, typically used to hang, suspend, or position flags, backdrops, lights, and other equipment during film production. Forming planes of one landscape, the scrims' imprint comes from the modelling or "terraforming"—here solid form breached by liquid in the erosion boxes—re-enacting the solid becoming liquefied through eruption and indexing the barrier between solid and liquid or between the land and the sea.

Like chapters in a novel, a new narrative is created through the juxtaposition of all these works that engage with interwoven historical trajectories. From Rao's dusty book archives to Darmawan's analytical distillations, from ila's questioning of the collective memory to Langdon-Pole's reimagining of travel and navigation, and from Raven's heroic lava to Suryodarmo's decontextualised dancing bodies, the viewer is, not unlike Pramoedya in his own personal experience, caught in between the tides of history, identity, and belonging.

Philippe Pirotte, Curator

Philippe Pirotte (Belgium/Germany) is an art historian and curator. He is the Dean of the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste – Städelschule. and Director of Portikus, both in Frankfurt am Main. Next to that he serves as Adjunct Senior Curator at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. In 1999, he co-founded the Antwerp contemporary art centre Objectif Exhibitions, and from 2005 to 2011 he was Director at Kunsthalle Bern. From 2004 to 2013, Pirotte held the position of Senior Advisor at the Rijksakademie for Visual Arts in Amsterdam. He was curator of the 2016 edition of La Biennale de Montréal, entitled Le Grand Balcon, and in 2017 was a member of the curatorial team of the Jakarta Biennale.

<sup>1</sup> See Hilmar Farid Setiadi, "Rewriting the Nation, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and the Politics of Decolonization," unpublished PhD dissertation, Cultural Studies in Asia Programme (Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2014), 246.

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, "The Port of Tuban," first chapter of Arus Balik, Pramoedya's Novel of Java's Lost Maritime Empire, trans. John Roosa, Emergences 10, no. 2 (2000): 288.

<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson, The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World (London: Verso, 2011).
<sup>5</sup> Richard Wright, The Colour Curtain (London: Dobson, 1956), 238.
<sup>6</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Arok Dedes (Jakarta: Lentera Dipantara, 2015 [2006]).