

Exhibition
22 March
23 June 2019

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Ade Darmawan, Ferry trip from Merak to Bakabehi, Sunda Strait, Indonesia, 2016, documentation. Courtesy the artist.

Voyages of Rhodes, Phan Thao Nguyen, artist's book commissioned and published by NTU CCA Singapore, 2018. *PLACE/LABOUR/CAPITAL*, Mousse Publishing. *Southeast Asia: Spaces of the Curatorial, Jahving 63*, distributed by NUS Press, 2018. *Bringing Plam*, Sherry Gill and Michael Tassig, Stony Brook Press, 2017. *Strategic Praxis*, 2017. *Time and Video: Critical Strategies in Performance*, Green Mark (certified) (equivalent to LEED-certified) campus is frequently listed among the top 15 most beautiful university campuses in the world and has 35,000 students and postgraduate students in the colleges of engineering, business, science, and humanities, arts and social sciences, and its Graduate College, NTU.

NTU CCA Singapore's over-arching research topic which informs and connects the Centre's various activities over a period of several years. Changes in the environment influence weather patterns and these climate factors impact habitats, and vice versa. Precarious conditions of habitats are forcing the migration of humans and other species at a critical level. The consequences of human intervention are felt on a global scale, affecting ecological, social, and cultural systems. The Centre is engaging in research that takes global art and culture in dialogue with other fields of knowledge.

The Centre seeks to engage the potential of 'curating' and its expanded field. What are the practices that intersect the present and past of emergent artists and curatorial brings forth innovative and experimental art of Nanyang Technological University, the Centre focuses on *Spaces of the Curatorial*. A national research centre for contemporary art and academic education. Exhibitions, Residencies, Programs, and other events, and driven by dynamic thinking in its three-fold commitment.

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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

E — Zac Langdon-Pole
Paradise Blueprint, 2017
Wallpaper based on a cyanotype photograph of the removed legs of a bird of paradise

F — ila
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

G — Shubigi Rao
Pulp: A Short Biography of the Banished Book, 2016-18
5 photographic prints, 60 x 85 cm each
1. *Books rescued from the burning National and University Library, stored and unspined 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.* Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2016.
3. *Singular transcribed copy of forgotten oral stories, from writer Syeda Hamed's personal collection.* New Delhi, India, 2018.
4. and 5. *Library books destroyed by floods in August 2018.* Kochi, India, 2018.

H — Lucy Raven
2-26-19: *Debris flow erosion, wet cement on sand-L*, 2019
Cement and sand on silk, 228 x 133 cm
2-26-19: *Debris flow erosion, wet cement on dry cement and sand-R*, 2019
Cement and sand on silk, 223 x 134 cm
3-3-19: *Debris flow erosion, wet cement on dry cement and sand-L*, 2019
Cement and sand on silk, 214 x 133 cm
3-3-19: *Debris flow erosion, wet cement on dry cement and sand-R*, 2019
Cement and sand on silk, 231 x 132 cm

I — Ade Darmawan
Traduttore, traditore, 2019
Mixed media on paper, 50 x 70 cm

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

A — Lucy Raven
2-26-19: *Debris flow erosion, wet cement on sand-L*, 2019
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L — Ade Darmawan
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Mixed media on paper, 70 x 100 cm

M — Ade Darmawan
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N — Ade Darmawan
The Tower of Tuban: the first level, 2019
Mixed media on paper, 70 x 100 cm

O — Ade Darmawan
Traduttore, traditore, 2019
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P — Ade Darmawan
The Tower of Tuban: the first level, 2019
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Q — Ade Darmawan
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R — Ade Darmawan
The Tower of Tuban: the first level, 2019
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S — Ade Darmawan
Traduttore, traditore, 2019
Mixed media on paper, 50 x 70 cm

T — Ade Darmawan
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U — Ade Darmawan
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V — Ade Darmawan
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W — Ade Darmawan
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X — Ade Darmawan
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Y — Ade Darmawan
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AA — Ade Darmawan
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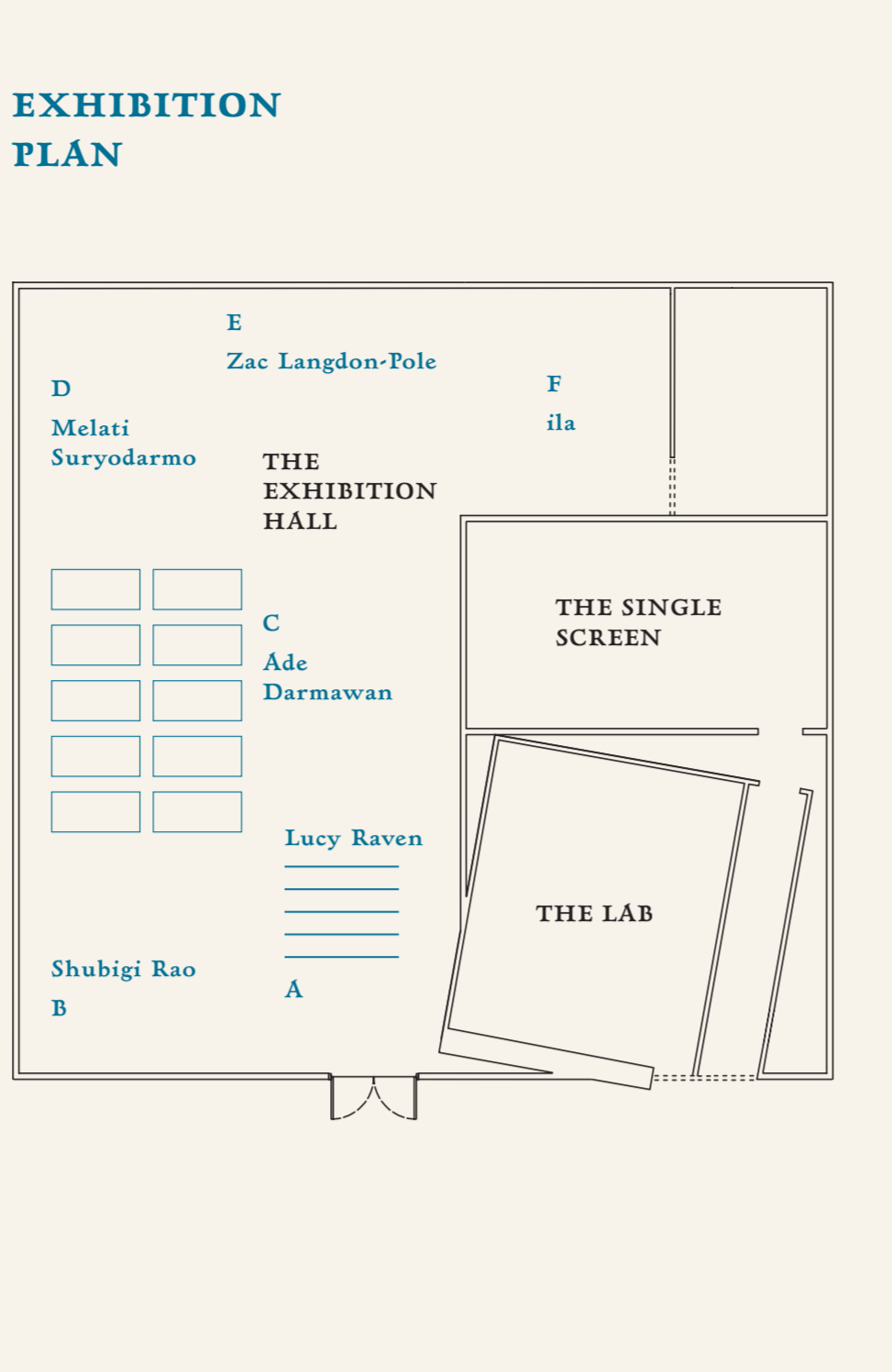
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NTU CCA Singapore is a non-profit institution that takes great pride in presenting curatorial, academic, and creative educational programmes.

Your contribution, regardless of amount, goes a long way in enabling us to play an active role within the local art scene. Your generous support will also contribute to the development of outreach and educational programmes.

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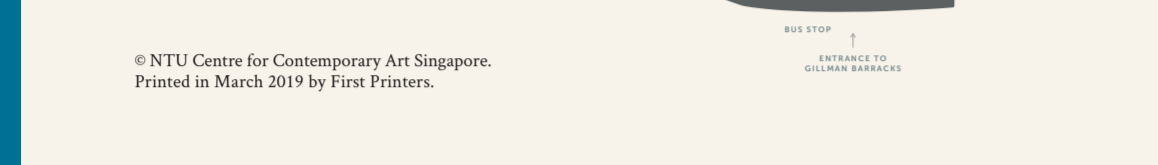
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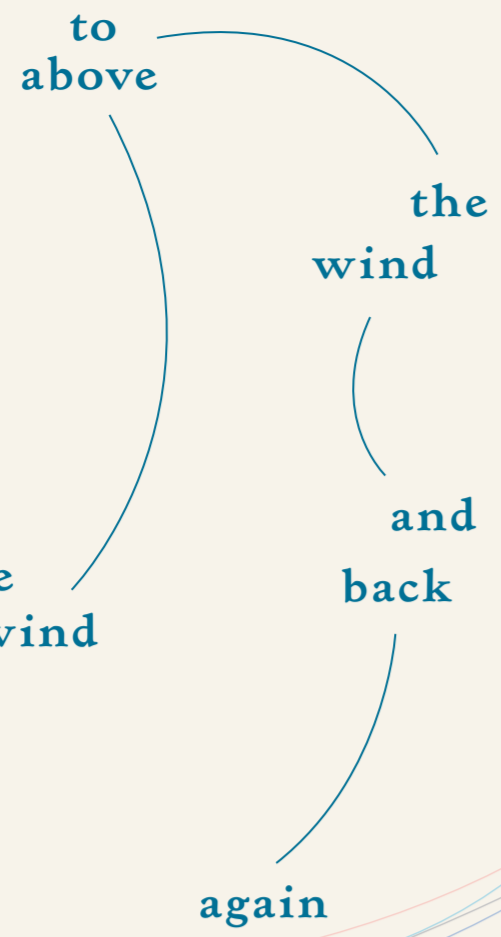
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ARUS BALIK



From below

the wind

the wind

and back

22 March – 23 June 2019

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

Curated by **Philippe Pirotte**

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.

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

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 of 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 novel *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, *Pasti*, 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 jealousy

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.

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 Bojonegara, a major producer of teakwood and tobacco, where recently the biggest oil reserve in Indonesia was found. Both cities are not far from Blora, the birthplace of Pramoedya.

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, for example, *pala* (nutmeg), fundamental for its preservation qualities during long sea travel; *cedana* (sandalwood); *kayu manis* (cinnamon); *lada* (pepper); *kemiri* (candlenut); *daun cengkih* (clover leaf); *daun sirih* (betel leaf); *daun nipah* (attap palm); *daun kelapa* (coconut leaf); or the healing *daun tapak liman* (*Elephantopus Scaber* Linn. in Latin). *Tapak liman* was used in traditional medicine for cancer treatment or as an aphrodisiac.

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 *cultuurwet*, 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 nationalist overtones.

guarding their sovereignty, rather than attempting to recreate the empire. Another element was the doubt among 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 Roesa. 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.³

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."⁴



Left: Shubigi Rao, *Singular transcribed copy of forgotten oral stories, from writer Syeda Hama's personal collection*. New Delhi, India, 2018.

Right: Shubigi Rao, *Books rescued from the burning National and University Library, stored and unused in dilapidated studios for the last 26 years*. Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2018.

Book from *Pulp: A Short Biography of the Burnished Book*, 2016–18, 3 photographic prints, 60 x 85 cm each. Courtesy the artist.



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 *conféres* would write their comments. Pramoedya's library and archive had been burnt prior to his imprisonment and the network of oral memory developed by the prisoners on 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 *Arak Dadas* were the two major historical novels he wrote there, next to the famous *Buru tetralogy*.⁵ 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 to English would be "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.

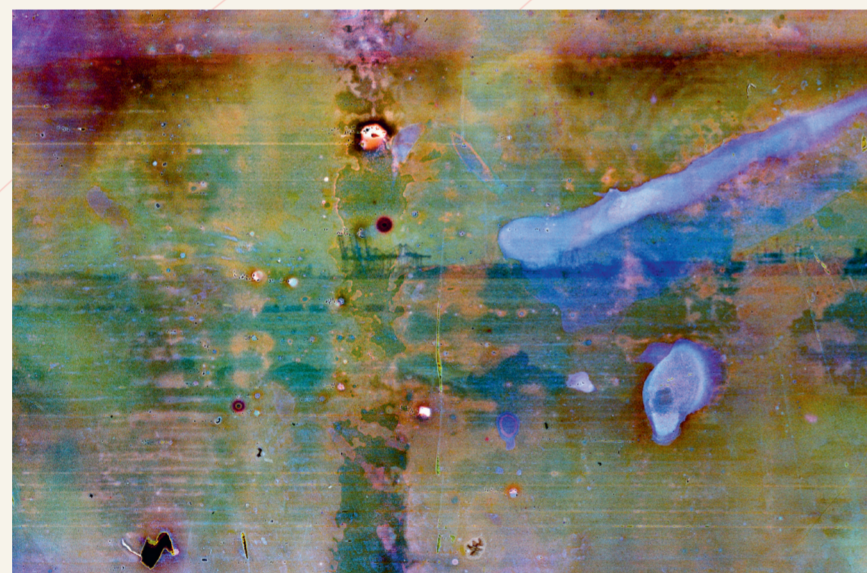
Rao's photographs feature burnt manuscripts from the 1990s in Sarajevo and images of books destroyed by floods in India in August 2018. Selected from her ongoing research into burnt books and destroyed libraries, as well as communities that form around print, defence of open access, and the endurance 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 Hama'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.



Left: ila, *Reas* (film still), 2019, in collaboration with Kin Club, video projection, stereo, 10 min. Courtesy the artist.

Below: ila, *The sons and daughters of hungry ghosts*, 2019, photographic print, 207 x 42 cm. Courtesy the artist.

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 Orchestra, Singapore (2018), and ArtScience Late, Singapore (2018); had a solo presentation at Coda Culture, Singapore (2018); and exhibited at OHI Open House, Singapore (2019); Objectivis - Centre for Photography & Film, Singapore (2016), Kertema Project Space, Bali (2016), and Unitedfield, 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. The work, even though it refers to identities outside Singapore's grand narrative, still uses a 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 Munch (2017–18); *Discoveries*, Art Basel Hong Kong 2018 (presented by Michael Lett Gallery); *emic etc.*, 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 (Argentina) (viii)*, 2018, paper nautilus shell, Camyo oil Camyo meteorite (from, coarse ochre/red), inkjet: Chaco (Santiago del Estero, Argentina), 9.4 x 3.1 x 5.5 cm. Courtesy the artist.

Right: Zac Langdon-Pole, *Paradise Blueprint*, 2017, wallpaper based on a cyanotype photograph of the removed legs of a bird of paradise. Ars Viva (2018), S.M.A.K., Ghent, detail. Courtesy the artist.

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 Dadang Sirip*—were always embedded in her mind.

In *Dancing Under the Black Sky* (2019), Suryodarmo traces the history behind *Reog* performances informed by *Kerawans*, 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 feign death, and enter a state of physical and spiritual. In *Reog*, a *Warok* dancer leads the show, where he presents his pride, the *Gembak*, a young feminine man, who dances on a *kuda kejap*, a horse made of bamboo. The boy lover, called *Gembak*, is usually kept by the *Warok* in their household under the agreement and compensation to the boy's family. Many *Warok* and *Gembak* were massacred by Islamic groups during the anti-communist massacre of 1965–66, their heads placed on pikes for public display. Today, the *Warok-Gembakan* 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 *Gembak* boys in a swasty close-up on four flat screens rhythmically configured on the wall.



Lucy Raven, *3-3-09: Delta's four eras*, we cement on dry cement and sand, 214 x 133 cm, process documentation. Courtesy the artist.

Zac Langdon-Pole's *Paradise Blueprint* (2017), a wallpaper based on a cyanotype photograph of the removed legs of a bird of paradise, covers the walls of the exhibition space entirely. This project centres upon the history of cultural exchange and 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.

Langdon-Pole's *Passport (Argentina) (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 aperture. Paper nautilus are paper-thin, fragile egg-case shells made by deep sea creatures known as Argonauts, of the genus *Ocotopodes*. The Argonauts are often cited as being one of the original inspirations for building sailing boats in ancient Greece since they were observed floating upon their shell, using their webbed tentacles to catch the wind. The meteorites used for each shell come from different geological 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 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 *Kongkret*, 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 Air Force Base.

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 negotiations.

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 ash 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.

Lucy Raven (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 notions of 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 work has been exhibited in numerous international solo presentations, including 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 Weener 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 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 Ankeny contemporary art centre Objectivis 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 Blanc*, and in 2017 was a member of the curatorial team of the Jakarta Biennale.

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¹ 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), 24.

² Pramoedya Ananta Toer, "The Port of Tuban," first chapter of *Arus Balik*, Pramoedya's Novel of Java's Lost Maritime Empire, trans. John Roesa, Emergence (6), no. 2 (2000), 28.

³ Ibid., 282.

⁴ Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (London: Verso, 2011).

⁵ Richard Wright, *The Colour Curtain* (London: Dobson, 1966), 238.

⁶ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Arak Dadas* (Jakarta: Lentera Dipantara, 2015 [2006]).