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SEA AiR

Studio Residencies for
Southeast Asian Artists
in the European Union

Cycle 2

Priyageetha Dia
Singapore

Ngoc Nau
Vietnam

Saroot
Supasuthivech
Thailand

Künstlerhaus
Bethanien
Berlin

Jan van Eyck
Academie
Maastricht

Rupert
Vilnius

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PASSAGES

1 December 2023
– 28 January 2024

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Ngoc Nau at the Berlin Wall Memorial, Germany, May 2023. Photograph by Hong Nhung.

Welcome to the second exhibition of SEA AiR (Studio Residencies for Southeast Asian artists in the EU) at Gillman Barracks. I am delighted to experience with you here the works of three artists in the second cycle of SEA AiR: Priyageetha Dia (Singapore – residency at Jan van Eyck Academie, Netherlands); Ngoc Nau (Vietnam – residency at Rupert, Lithuania) and Saroot Supasuthivech (Thailand – residency at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Germany).

Through the second cycle of SEA AiR – a made-in-Singapore programme – we deepen our ties with Singapore in line with the EU Global Gateway initiative. Global Gateway connects people, goods and services around the world in sustainable ways. SEA AiR was launched jointly by EU Delegation to Singapore and NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore and celebrates people-to-people connectivity and diversity. We started the project in 2022 when the EU and ASEAN commemorated the 45th anniversary of our partnership. It is only fitting that we conclude the second cycle in another landmark year, on this occasion for EU-Singapore relations, since 2024 marks 20 years of the establishment of the EU Delegation to Singapore.

For me, experiencing the art in this truly inspiring project is a journey. This is reflected in the exhibition title: *Passages*, referencing the artists' journeys across geographical

Iwona Piórko
Ambassador of the
European Union
to Singapore

Foreword ← →

and cultural boundaries from one continent to another; the cultural exchanges that take place during this time; and the continuous development of ideas as they return to their home countries to create the thought-provoking artworks you see in this exhibition.

Through SEA AiR we drive further the development of Southeast Asia's contemporary art scene and the initiative serves also as a springboard for dialogue between European art institutions and Southeast Asian artists. These established European art institutions have a long history of running residency programmes and offered the artists a three-month residency and an opportunity to create new works, inspired by their experiences, engagements, dialogues and interactions with the public in Europe. In the current geopolitical context, they experienced too the narratives dominating the European political and social landscape.

Art is not just a powerful tool for sharing stories and emotions. It helps also shine a light on our world in creative ways. Together with art lovers from the region and beyond, I am looking forward to seeing how travels, cultural exchanges and the realities shaping our world have impacted and shaped the art practices of talented artists Priyageetha Dia, Ngoc Nau and Saroot Supasuthivech.

I am honoured to host at NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore (NTU CCA Singapore), SEA AiR—Studio Residencies in the European Union for Southeast Asian Artists, developed and curated by NTU CCA Singapore and supported by the European Delegation (EU) to Singapore. This residency aims to enrich artistic creativity and foster cross-cultural exchanges and collaboration across cultural and geographical boundaries. This year marks the 10th anniversary of our Centre and to date, we have hosted nearly 100 local and Southeast Asian artists in our in-house Residencies Programme. SEA AiR extends our Centre's commitment to support artists in their artistic research and creative enquiry beyond the region, through host institutions in Europe.

Now into its second cycle, SEA AiR oversaw the residencies of Priyageetha Dia (Singapore), Ngoc Nau (Vietnam) and Saroot Supasuthivech (Thailand) at three new partner institutions: Jan van Eyck Academie (Netherlands), Rupert (Lithuania) and Künstlerhaus Bethanien (Germany) through the summer. What surprisingly transpired from this geographical translocation is the discovery by each artist of elements of their own culture embedded in another. Their exhibition *Passages*, which reflects this journey of travel and discovery, follows after the Cycle 1 exhibition *New Works*, presented at our Centre during Singapore Art Week 2023, featuring artists Hoo Fan



Director's Welcome



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

Chon (Malaysia), Citra Sasmita (Indonesia) and Vuth Lyno (Cambodia). We are pleased that each one of them has gone on to receive commissions and invitations for work beyond the region, and we wish the very same for our current SEA AiR artists.

These SEA AiR exhibitions in Singapore provide artists not only an opportunity to engage with the wider arts community, but also completes each cycle; demonstrating the facilitation of building cultural bridges and opening up new possibilities and collaborations for the artists.

Such a multi-institutional, transnational partnership would not have been possible without the funding by EU Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and the efforts of many. Once again, we would like to extend our gratitude to H.E. Iwona Piórko, EU Ambassador to Singapore, for her trust in and passion for this project and Deepika Shetty, Press Officer at the EU Delegation to Singapore, for her enduring support throughout this whole time. Also to Paolo Zingale (former Head) and Michel Mouchiroud (former Deputy Head) of the FPI Regional Team Asia & Pacific for their patient guidance during the implementation of SEA AiR. My special thanks to Nanyang Technological University; Professor Tim White, Vice President (International Engagement) and Professor Joseph Liow, Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts,

and Social Sciences. Also to the tireless work of our Centre's team, particularly Dr Anna Lovecchio, Assistant Director of Programmes, who led SEA AiR fastidiously with curatorial acumen through its first and second cycles, and Tian Lim, the curator of *Passages*; as well as our former staff members Dr Karin Oen, Peter Lin and Maggie Yin, who have contributed significantly to the development of SEA AiR. Of course, not forgetting Hicham Khalidi, Director of Jan Van Eyck Academie; Viktorija Šiaulytė, Director, and Monika Lipšic, Curator of the Residency and Public Programmes, Rupert; and Christoph Tannert, Artistic Director of Künstlerhaus Bethanien; for being our partners in the programme.

I would like to end with my sincere gratitude to the three participating artists. It is through their inquiries and resulting art works that we are able to see different facets of life in Europe and to discover what we might not be aware of. Thank you for that!

Priyageetha Dia's visit to Pony Club Maastricht,
Netherlands, June 2023.

Hailing from Singapore, Vietnam and Thailand, Priyageetha Dia, Ngoc Nau and Saroot Supasuthivech were selected for SEA AiR by a Selection Committee based on their own merits and art practice, without any consideration for a collective curatorial focus for the end-of-residency exhibition. Dia has been investigating the past and present lives of rubber plantations as a point of departure for uncovering power structures and dominance. Nau, concerned with the rapid urban development in her country and its social and environmental impact, had planned to look at her host country's experience. Supasuthivech's interest lies in uncovering unwritten narratives of histories, through the understanding of spiritual beliefs and ceremonial traditions; particularly those surrounding death. Despite having knowledge of their research focus, it was not clear what their final artworks for the exhibition would be, but this is one of the exciting things about an artist residency programme. We did not know what to expect, what discoveries the artists would make, and what surprises await them. The exhibition title *Passages*, borrowed from German philosopher Walter Benjamin's *Passagenwerk* (*The Arcades Project*, 1982), refers to the "passage" the artists have embarked on for SEA AiR. During this journey, they would have assumed the role of a "flâneur": strolling through the streets, observing—and

Taking black feminist theorist Tina M. Campt's approach of "engaging the sonic frequencies of photographs"¹ (which Dia explains in our interview that follows), she has opted for low-frequency speakers to project the sound, so that it can also be "felt". On opposite sides of the walls, the phrases "Whirring Forces" and "Humming Fields" reinforce the haptic quality of low, continuous sounds. The imageries of these sounds come to mind, bringing us full circle to reimagining the memories, stories and histories of humans and other species that have been suppressed, dismissed or forgotten.

During her residency in Lithuania, Ngoc Nau visited Grūtas Park, some 120 km away from Vilnius, the capital. An outdoor sculpture garden, museum, (mini) zoo and playground all in one, Grūtas Park is known for its collection of Soviet-era monuments, including statues of Communist leaders, dismantled and abandoned when Lithuania broke away from the Soviet Union in 1990. The removal of one such Lenin statue from the central square in Vilnius—without his legs, became emblazoned and celebrated as a symbol of freedom. As Grūtas Park acknowledges, therein lies a deep-seated dilemma about these sculptures, representative of the trauma sustained under the Soviet ideology: destroy or preserve? Nau's encounters with these monuments, including Soviet-era architecture, reminded her of her own

Notes about the Exhibition



Tian Lim
Exhibition Curator

more—experiencing, participating in and contributing to kaleidoscopic exchanges that take place in the process. Their cultural experiences would in turn, shape the ideas for this exhibition.

Dia's field trip to Sónar, an annual festival in Barcelona, Spain, that celebrates innovation in music, digital arts and creative technology, was a defining moment for her in the exploration of sound not only as a medium or conduit for presentation, but also as the metaphoric narrative itself. She also made a trip to a rubber and oil palm plantation at Alor Gajah, a town in Melaka, Malaysia. The field recordings taken on this trip as research reference captured mainly the sounds of machinery, seemingly for the expansion of the plantation and its resort, and cicadas. Upon her return, her eventual proposal for this exhibition moved away completely from the moving image, which has been the main mode of expression in her recent practice. Departing from this familiarity and focusing solely on sound as her artwork, a first for Dia, has been for her, as she shared, intimidating; and no doubt a challenging process. This process entailed "watching" and "listening to" archival photographs of palm oil and rubber tree plantations in Sumatra from the album of Sumatra Caoutchouc Company, an Amsterdam and Brussels-based rubber planting company founded in 1907.

country. It prompted her inquiry into what meanings such symbols hold for the younger generation in Vietnam, where a 5.2 metre-high Lenin statue on a 2.7 metre-high pedestal in a park in central Hanoi stands, commemorated every 7th of November on the anniversary of the Russian October Revolution. In her essay *Lenin Park* that accompanies Nau's video work, Phuong Phan, a Berlin-based Vietnamese researcher and writer, reflects on the significance of Soviet Russia's gift of the Lenin statue to Vietnam, the meanings the leader holds for the country and her people, and the profound complexities of his legacy. Separately, when Nau visited the "Runde Ecke" Memorial Museum during her field trip to Leipzig, Germany, she learnt that formerly classified documents were destroyed in a grinder and mixed with soil after the fall of the Soviet Union. This, together with the knowledge of how craftsmen in Vietnam use papier mâché to make artisanal masks for the Mid-Autumn Festival, inspired her to build her own projection screen using the same technique. The newspapers Nau collects get repurposed for a new experience after being soaked in water, mashed in a grinder, then mixed with glue to be moulded for the screen used in this exhibition.

Among the many discoveries that influenced Saroot Supasuthivech's work for this exhibition, those at the Berlin State Library in Germany can be

considered critical: the original editions of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, first published as *Children's and Household Tales* (1812–15) and the archives of Simon de la Loubère (1642–1729), a French envoy to Siam (Thailand) in the 17th century. Compared to the versions that we read as children, the original Grimm stories are twisted and gory, but it is the diverse voices, traditional beliefs and fantastical darkness featured in them that fascinated the artist. This led to him exploring historical sites such as the Fountain of Fairytales, which is adorned with characters from the fairy tales (interestingly, the scarier ones have gone missing) and the Old St. Matthew's Churchyard, where the gravesites of the Grimm Brothers lie. Supasuthivech has always been drawn to cemeteries. They, as he shares in our interview, offer him “not only respite but also unexpected sparks of inspiration”. Apart from incorporating these sites and Grimm's story-telling approach in his work, the etchings in this exhibition are also inspired by the printmaking technique used for illustrations in Grimm's subsequent editions.

From Simon de la Loubère's chronicles, Supasuthivech found a manuscript of the song *Sai Samon (A Siamese Song)* from the 17th century. Its 300-year history, a cyclic journey spanning three oceans, three palaces and nine Thai dynasties, is said to have originated from the Royal Court of Versailles, under King Louis XIV's reign, in 1686. Made aware of the song from the chronicles when he visited France on his first trip to Europe, His Majesty King Chulalongkorn, King Rama V (1868–1910), had it arranged as a piano piece for the Thai royal anthem. Since then, the song has undergone transformations and used for diverse occasions, from a title song for a Thai movie in 1941 to a requiem for the royal cremation ceremony of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 2017.² Both Kings had also gifted *Sala Thais* (open pavilions), a century apart from each other, to the spa town of Bad Homburg, Germany, where Supasuthivech visited and filmed for his work.

Despite the artists' unique residency experiences and distinct research topics and practice, each of them has taken a speculative approach to the presentation of their research and inquiries, employing fiction as a way to look at historical lapses; the “‘refuse’ and ‘detritus’ of history”.³ In reimagining realities, their works explore liminal spaces between the historical and contemporary; past and present; real and imagined. As meanings get deconstructed and recontextualised, the interplay between individual and collective remembrances across diverse cultures opens up new explorations and possibilities in perceiving complex (inter)relationships. As audience, we also become participants of this “passage” when we draw our own connections from what Benjamin terms as “constellations”—an approach in understanding and relating to disparate elements in a non-linear but more holistic manner.

¹ Campt, Tina. “Introduction.” In *Listening to Images*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

² Ruangkhom, Theeraphong. “Crossing the Sithandon River of the ‘Sai Samon’: From the Court of Versailles to the Royal Crematorium in the reign of King Rama IX.” *THE STANDARD*, October 26, 2017. <https://thestandard.co/a-siamese-song-say-samon/#>.

³ Eiland, Howard, and Kevin McLaughlin, trans. “Translators' Foreword.” In *The Arcades Project*, ix. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999.



Above:
Polaroid photographs of Saroot Supasuthivech, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany, March 2023. Photograph by the artist.

Following page from top:

Priyageetha Dia in her studio at Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, Netherlands, April 2023.

Portrait of Ngoc Nau in a CGI-generated landscape, May 2023.

Saroot Supasuthivech in Berlin, Germany, May 2023. Photograph by Sareena Sattapon.

An Interview with



Priyageetha Dia
Ngoc Nau
Saroot Supasuthivech

A PASSAGE

Tian Lim: Could you share your first impressions of your host city or your most memorable memory there? For Priya and Nau, this was your first trip to the Netherlands and Lithuania respectively; while for Saroot, what was different for you this time, having been in Berlin once prior to this residency?

Priyageetha Dia: In Maastricht, one is immediately struck by the historic appeal of the city with its narrow winding cobblestone pavements and medieval architecture. Even the ambience of the air differs significantly when I was transferring from Schiphol Airport; it's even more distinct and crisp, especially when standing in the middle of St Servatius Bridge where the Meuse River flows beneath. The city itself is constantly punctuated by the sound of bicycles, which is a quintessential mode of local transportation in the Netherlands. And what's even better than the smell of fresh *shawarma*? There are even *gado-gado* fries. Seeing tulips around kind of provided a charm against the grey infrastructures even though it's not native to the country. A facet of this city's social culture is witnessing locals congregating, soaking up a tan in the afternoon sun and drinking *jenever*. As banal as it sounds, for me laying on the grass with a book and a takeaway coffee or even taking a stroll through the forests of Sint Pietersberg was one of the pleasant memories for me.

Ngoc Nau: My first impressions of Vilnius were shaped by its architecture, fresh air, green spaces and the overall

peace and quiet. One particular memory that stands out is when I was wandering around the city and the architectural design of Sporto Rūmai (Vilnius Palace of Concerts and Sports) triggered a sense of familiarity, almost like a distant memory from Vietnam.

Saroot Supasuthivech: My first trip to Berlin in 2018 was akin to a brief introductory course to the city's artistic milieu, made possible by an award from the Bangkok Art & Culture Centre. The experience was enriching but brief, providing just an exciting glimpse of Berlin's multi-faceted art scene. Fast forward to my second visit, the narrative changed dramatically. This extended sojourn allowed a deeper engagement with the city's artistic landscape. I had the bandwidth to delve into intricate projects and form valuable connections within the art community. Beyond the scope of art, the residency also served as a playground for personal growth. I even picked up cooking as an essential life skill—my own creative venture in the kitchen, if you will.

How has your impression changed during the residency and what transpired in the process to change that?

PD: The sensorial characteristics of Maastricht were later shaped by the connections I came to build within the residency itself. This was through some of the communal activities, particularly the weekly Wednesday dinners, where we would take turns to cook for other staff and residents. It's definitely

stressful cooking for over 40 people. I engaged in conversations with some of the visiting advisors such as Ahmet Ögüt and Marina Otero. I also had the opportunity to attend a session organised by Jan van Eyck for The Decolonial Summer School and joined the conversation alongside prominent decolonial thinkers and writers such as Jean Casimir and Catherine E. Walsh, which was a profound experience. Also, my interest in working with sound was significantly amplified through interactions with one of the residents, Sumugan Sivanesan, who operates *fugitive radio*. His guidance laid the foundation for my understanding of sound work. This also led to me playing my first DJ set in a bar in Maastricht, which honestly felt out of place but I got used to it after playing on several other occasions.

NN: My impression underwent a significant transformation as I delved deeper into the local stories through conversations with residents and exploring the town. I came to realise that the seemingly serene and green landscape, along with the historic architecture, held hidden layers of sad history. Some streets, as I learnt, concealed the sombre history of buried bodies from a bygone era. The ageing Soviet-era buildings, where many locals still reside in, cast a shadow of boredom and melancholy, remnants of the past Soviet influence.

Understanding the people was another aspect of my experience that evolved. I noticed that the locals exhibited caution in their interactions, and it wasn't as easy to engage with them as I had initially thought. This is in contrast with my home country, where strangers are often warmly received and invited into locals' homes as soon as they smile

and try to interact. Nevertheless I really appreciated the unique social dynamics in Vilnius.

SS: Initially, my impression of Berlin was mixed. The city's raw, unpolished vibe was intriguing but also somewhat off-putting. However, my three-month residency transformed that perception entirely. The turning point came when I participated in a community art project at Künstlerhaus Bethanien. This project made me realise how deeply integrated art is in Berlin's social fabric, serving as a platform for dialogue and cultural exchange. It was eye-opening. My



Saroot Supasuthivech filming in Bad Homburg, Germany, May 2023. Photograph by Pitchayapa Lueangtawikit.

subsequent interactions with the Thai community in Thaipark Berlin and other Thai artists residing in Berlin enriched my experience further. Each group offered unique insights that expanded my understanding of the city from various angles, enabling me to appreciate Berlin's diversity and openness. As a result, my view on Berlin shifted from initial skepticism to deep-seated respect and admiration. This newfound perspective is likely to influence my future projects; the multidimensional



Ngoc Nau at Grūtas Park, Lithuania, June 2023. Photograph by Ania.

a balance between establishing a routine and planning my visits to art events and exhibitions. Most of the events I engaged with came highly recommended by my other resident peers and the advisors from Jan van Eyck. These recommendations were often exchanged during informal conversations over dinners, which played a part in shaping my cultural engagements during those three months. Some of these include going to the Kunstenfestivaldesarts, an international performing arts festival in Brussels;

aspects of Berlin have inspired me to explore art forms that I had never considered before.

What was a typical day like for you during the residency? Did you have a fixed routine for regular days, a planned schedule to cover specific sites or events, or did you take a more laissez-faire approach of allowing each day to surprise you?

PD: For the first few weeks, I had to adjust to the longer daylight hours, with the sun setting after 9pm during the summer months. I adopted a more laid-back approach to my studio days, trying to find

Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven; Tropenmuseum, Rijksmuseum and Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam.

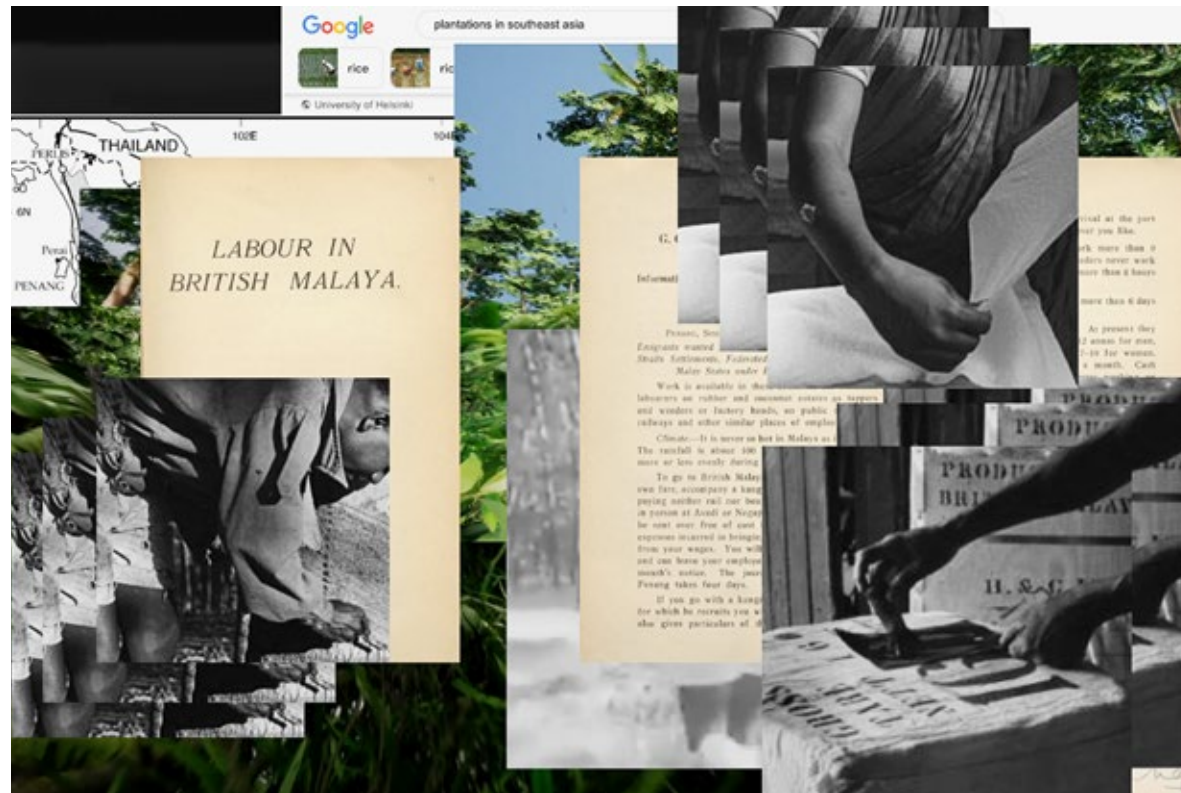
NN: A typical day during my residency followed a somewhat structured routine. I would usually wake up around 7am, prepare breakfast along with a cup of coffee, then head to my studio by 9am. Throughout the day, I'd take short breaks to do some yoga or walk from the residency to the city centre. Cooking became a regular activity for me; I often prepared meals that reminded me of Vietnam and experimented with local ingredients. I also enjoyed cooking for friends I made during the residency.

In terms of planning, I always made sure to prepare before leaving my studio. The residency building is a bit far from the city centre, requiring a journey of about an hour by bus, with a few bus transfers along the way. On weekends, I particularly liked visiting the flea market in the city centre, although I sometimes missed it since it mainly operated in the mornings. This flea market took place on the streets in front of a local market, nestled in a less affluent area. What intrigued me was the interactions between local vendors, their unique merchandise and their attire. It was like stepping into a piece of local history, as with Vietnam, where the elderly often stay at home, tending to their grandchildren. Exploring the flea market was a fascinating way to glimpse into people's homes. The vendors' array of items, seemingly collected from their households, often held sentimental value and each piece seemed to reflect a part of the past. I found it captivating to encounter such an assortment of little things that were found items in people's homes, ready to be shared with the world through the market. It felt like a personal journey through the lives of the local community.

SS: Each day typically started with a loose agenda in mind. I spent the mornings immersed in research, either by exploring libraries or engaging in insightful dialogues at local temples. My afternoons were generally devoted to fieldwork and hands-on artistic experimentation. Although I had a general idea of what I wanted to accomplish each day, I also welcomed spontaneity. Whether it was a captivating film festival poster that grabbed my attention or an unexpected invitation to a social gathering, I remained open to diversions that enriched my experience. When I felt the need to recharge or reflect, I would seek time out by aimlessly wandering through nearby cemeteries. These quiet moments offered not only respite but also unexpected sparks of inspiration.

The SEA AiR programme offers a research trip to a different city or country in Europe to enrich your research and cultural experience. How did you decide on where to go and how has the trip helped you in your practice or research?

PD: I decided to go to Sónar Barcelona which is a sound, music, and technology festival in Spain. I was drawn to this event because it has a strong focus on the intersections of new media, and AI in audiovisual production, especially sound. For me it was a space to acquire insights from keynote speeches and presentations that explored the latest trends, developments and applications of these emerging technologies. However, the understanding of these productions and the knowledge(s) around it was still focused within a eurocentric framework. There was an implicit bias towards Western perspectives on music, art, and technology



Screenshot of Participant Presentation by Priyageetha Dia at Jan van Eyck Academie, 24 May 2023.

which highlights a broader issue within the industry—the lack of visibility for non-Western methods of producing in the digital arts sphere.

In progressing my research for *Sap Sonic*, I took on a 3-day trip to a rubber plantation estate in Alor Gajah, Melaka, with the primary objective of collecting field recordings that were relevant to the soundscapes of the plantations. But during the process, I sort of experienced a disconcerting moment of 'triangulation.' I became aware of the underlying colonial dynamics in the interplay between self, the recording technology and the environment. In the end, I decided not to use any of these field recordings but

instead focused more on repurposing sampled sounds and stock audio effects, probing the question: *How can we reimagine the aural possibilities of a plantation that transcends the conventional and the historically known?*

NN: I opted for a field trip to Berlin and Leipzig due to their historical ties with the Soviet Union. Germany has a deep-rooted connection with Lithuania that extends to the present day. Many Lithuanians study in Germany, while Germans venture to Lithuania for work, research and artistic endeavours.

SS: I chose to explore the Thai pavilion in Bad Homburg, situated about an hour's drive from Frankfurt. This choice was deeply instrumental in furthering

my research as the pavilion serves as a microcosm of Thai history and culture. The experience afforded me the chance to delve into previously unexplored facets of Thai artistic and cultural heritage, enriching my ongoing work. The trip served as a catalyst for new ideas, helping me forge connections between the historical context of the area and my existing research, thereby adding layers of complexity and depth to my practice.

During our first meeting in August upon your return from Europe, it was already apparent that the sound component in your work would be of significant importance. At which point of your residency did this idea come about, and what led to it?

PD: Focusing exclusively on soundscapes has been sort of a challenge for me. The approach to my practice has predominantly been saturated with visual elements, and this development has been a deliberate shift from the visual dominance in my practice. Understanding sound not merely as a method of production, but as a narrative tool that is capable of illuminating the obscure and amplifying the subdued. This is also an influence from Tina M. Campt's *Listening to Images* (2017) in which she proposes a method of engaging with photographs that goes beyond seeing. To sense the resonance and vibration of the photographs is by "listening" to these images—attuning them to the stories and histories embedded in them, especially within Black subjectivity and agency.

NN: While working on my videos, I gradually realised the importance of sound as a crucial element. However, during my research trip in Lithuania, I didn't give sound as much attention as I should have. I did attempt to locate sound artists in the hope of incorporating

their work into my project, but my search didn't yield the desired results. Consequently, I decided to collaborate with my Vietnamese sound producer, whom I have worked with on previous video projects. The sound concept revolves around a foundation of hip-hop with elements of deconstruction and reconstruction, creating a distinct vibe that complements my work.

SS: This focus on the sound component in my work is not accidental; it evolved from my time in Europe and a deep dive into the history of music. My fascination with sound as an artistic medium began during the first month of my residency. I attended a screening of *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, a 1920 silent film by Director Walter Ruttmann, and its original orchestra music score resonated deeply with me. This newfound interest coincided with my research at the Thai pavilion and into King Chulalongkorn's visits to Europe. I discovered a rich intersection between Thai and European cultural elements, especially in the realm of music. I explored the concept of music in German Romanticism and traditional Thai culture as a universal language, transcending both geographical and historical boundaries as well as the barriers of language and geography. The interplay between the two disparate musical traditions became a harmonious bridge in my work, illuminating the power of sound to communicate across cultures and epochs. This synthesis became more than just a soundtrack; it became a vehicle for delivering the themes and emotions central to my artistic inquiry.

I would like to ask about the notion of the supernatural and divinity and the adaptation of mythology in your past projects.

To what extent do such elements play a part in your works this time?

PD: My previous works have dealt with themes around mythology but my approach to *Sap Sonic* and *Sap Script* looks at the role of the archive as a place or space of haunting in reference to Jacques Derrida's concept of hauntology. This theory posits that the present is perpetually haunted by the spectres of its past, suggesting that the past is



Barbeque with artists from Rupert during their trip to Zeimiai Manor House, Lithuania, June 2023. Photograph by Ngoc Nau.

never truly obsolete but that it continues to exert its influence on both our present and future. From this perspective, *Sap Sonic* transforms the archive from a dormant repository of the past into a vibrant, living entity. The documents and images within are imbued with a ghostly presence, serving as active agents in shaping narratives and histories. For me, it is a way to depart from the visual and into the unheard, sonic qualities; to unearth and speculate the range of frequencies these images hold and to re-evaluate our understanding of history, memory and time, intertwined with the past, present and future through these aural possibilities.

NN: During my research trip in Lithuania, I didn't place a strong focus on the supernatural and divinity, even though they have been central themes in my previous works. Prior to my residency, I had contemplated delving into these topics, but my perspective shifted upon arriving in Lithuania. The presence of these themes wasn't as apparent, and I found myself being more intrigued by the post-Soviet phenomenon, particularly through the lens of architectural elements within the city.

Weekly Wednesday dinners hosted by the residents of Jan van Eyck Academie, Amsterdam, Netherlands, April 2023. Photograph by Priyageetha Dia.

SS: In *Spirit-forward in G Major*, the elements of the supernatural and divinity are more pronounced than in my previous projects. This choice stems from my interest in how Thai expatriates preserve their cultural rituals when they pass away in foreign lands. This theme opens a rich dialogue about the fluidity and adaptability of traditions and values. As rituals change, so do beliefs, which can influence individual behaviour and societal norms.

Places of communal spiritual importance like temples also resonate with me. These sites serve as anchors for traditions and beliefs, both physically and spiritually. Similarly, my work explores spaces that hold both historical and spiritual value,

including stories of lesser-known or marginalised communities, presented through contemporary mediums like sound and new media art.

In your research and work, each of you explore the fluidity of culture and the ongoing negotiation of values that takes place in the process of crossing over space and time, albeit in very different ways and to varying extents. What about your own experience over the three-month residency period? Despite its short duration, you also had to immerse yourself in an unfamiliar culture and may undergo a similar process of apprehension/excitement; discovery/challenges; adaptation/resignation etc—how has the experience impacted your practice in general, or you, on a more personal level?

PD: Navigating the cultural spaces within this predominantly white, European setting was a challenge, even when I left. It took me nearly a month to settle in and establish a routine that suited me. Some of the frustrations were managing daily expenses, given the relatively high cost of living—a basic meal at McDonald's costs 13 euros. Even finding well-seasoned, affordable food and then facing the ultimate moment of passive aggressiveness for not speaking Dutch were part of the experience. I managed to remember the local way of greeting "hoi hoi", which is common in the province of Limburg. One of the other observations was a clear geographic segregation within Maastricht, with the locals and the ethnic migrant communities living apart—the further from the town centre, the greater the concentration of black and brown population on the outskirts. This spatial division mirrored broader social, class divisions and racial hierarchies which is a reminder of the current socio-cultural fabric in Europe.

NN: Throughout the residency I have been adaptable and have remained open to different perspectives. Sharing meals and cooking together became a means of fostering meaningful connections with people. One valuable lesson I learnt is the importance of careful planning in advance, especially when it comes to managing time and scheduling for the creative process. Additionally, I realised the significance of thorough documentation, as the information gathered during the residency proved to be invaluable for presenting and shaping the ideas behind my project.

Vilnius not only offered me glimpses of the past but also underscored my vision for the future of Vietnam. Cultural differences between Lithuania and Vietnam gave me a realisation of what I value in my country and what changes I wish for in my country.

SS: The three-month residency was a transformative period for me, functioning as a lens through which I could explore the larger themes of cultural fluidity and changing values that frequently inhabit my work. The initial hesitations I felt were quickly counterbalanced by the excitement of fresh artistic discoveries. Although language barriers and logistical challenges were part of the experience, they also became stepping stones for personal and artistic growth. These obstacles were not roadblocks but avenues leading me towards a broader understanding of my craft.

The residency also pushed me to develop greater self-reliance and adaptability. It even sparked a re-evaluation of my own cultural norms and identity. I started to see the unique aspects of my own culture, as well as those universal threads that connect us all. Not only did my residency broaden my artistic

vocabulary, it also offered deep insights into who I am and what shapes me, both as an artist and as an individual.



Saroot Supasuthivech's studio at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany, May 2023. Photograph by the artist.

Over the course of our conversations, you also proposed ideas for this exhibition that were not eventually included. Could you share the most important one that you hope to materialise in one form or another, or what you expect could transpire from it, in the near future?

PD: One of my initial concepts involved developing a dual-channel video installation that utilises advanced game-engine software to integrate real-time weather data with the landscapes of these distinct regions: Netherlands, Malaysia and Indonesia. The examination of weather data serves as a strategic tool to delve into the ramifications of geological transformations since the inception of the colonial plantation system, as well as the consequences of extractive capitalism and the contemporary environmental conditions that are prevalent today. The video installation is meant to provide viewers with a unique vantage point that allows an observation

of tropical landscapes that are characteristic of Southeast Asia, contrasted against the weather readings from seasonal



Ngoc Nau during the filming of her video in Hanoi, Vietnam, October 2023. Photograph by Hyo Jung Kim.

climate conditions from the Netherlands. It was technically challenging to develop this work, and I needed more resources and time to gather the data and integrate it seamlessly with the game-engine software. To even ensure accurate real-time weather readings in a live simulation required meticulous calibration of the data input systems, as well as extensive testing and debugging to synchronise the meteorological elements with the physical engine.

NN: There were indeed elements that I didn't incorporate into my final work, mainly because our conversations helped me gain clarity on which ideas held the strongest and most unique qualities, ultimately guiding my decision on which concept to further develop in the project. For instance, I had initially wanted to film inside the Vietnam-Soviet Friendship Palace of Culture and Labour in Hanoi, but the cost of renting the space was prohibitively expensive. Also censorship makes it harder for me to shoot on-site in

physical buildings, so I decided to take a different approach. I recreated the entire space in 3D and had performers act within this virtual environment, realising my vision without the constraints of a physical location. This challenge led me to explore new methods, such as CGI (Computer-Generated Imagery). I'm quite satisfied with the outcome and plan to continue developing this technique, as a way to gain agency over the spaces I wish to access for future projects. I am also curious as to how our human body will adapt to technology and interact with it in the future, as the blurring of the real and the virtual becomes increasingly a part of our lives.

SS: One idea that stood out for me but was not eventually included, was the use of technology to create a transformative video installation that offers a complete 3D experience in Virtual Reality (VR). The installation would also provide a sensorial experience through the ambient use of light and sound even for those without access to VR headsets. My intent was to evoke a specific emotional impact, perhaps a sense of wonder or transcendence, that would resonate with each visitor, whether through the VR video or simply from the ambient elements. Given the technological and conceptual complexity, this idea remains a work-in-progress that I hope to materialise in some form in the near future. It holds the potential for various real-world applications and for collaborations with tech companies or art institutions. As I look ahead, I'm optimistic about integrating such an experience in my upcoming projects.

This interview was conducted over email in October 2023.

PASSAGES



INTERIEUR RUBBERFABRIEK
(tydens montage 1927)



Priyageetha Dia

Interior of the rubber factory under construction in 1927, probably on the Brussels plantation. Part of the photo album about the Brussels and Pernantian plantations of the Sumatra Caoutchouc Company on the East Coast of Sumatra, 1910-1935. Courtesy Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Priyageetha Dia Singapore



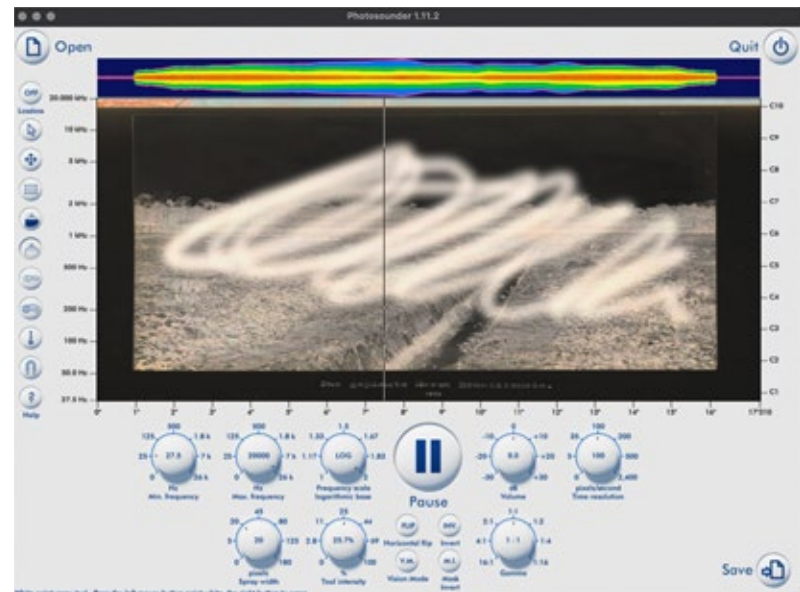
As an extension of her research into the plantations of Southeast Asia and their colonial histories, including those of migrant labour and structures of production and power, Priyageetha Dia explores gaps in historical records that are not only text-based, but also non-textual ones such as photographs, artefacts and oral interviews. Her resulting four-channel sound installation *Sap Sonic* is a sonification of images from the photo album of the Sumatra Caoutchouc Company, a rubber planting company in the Dutch East Indies, from the archives of Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The album charts the growth of palm oil and rubber trees in the company's plantations in Sumatra in the first half of the 20th century; documenting its operations, landscapes and activities.

Beyond their visual representations, the images bear witness to the power dynamics at play between the coloniser and labourers, evident in their postures, gazes, and spatial arrangements; as well as the hierarchy between nature and machine. Reframing this landscape from a visual to a sonic one, *Sap Sonic* serves as an aural gateway to the plantations as it delves into the lived yet unspoken experiences of those who work on and inhabit the plantations, both human and nonhuman. Emulating a uniform and controlled green lighting environment, *Sap Sonic* reflects the artificial and human-engineered nature

of a monochromatic environment. Perceiving that which is not visible from the images or historical narratives, Dia reimagines and deconstructs plantation soundscapes by sampling, mixing and manipulating found sound files including the synthesis of frequencies from image to sound conversion and AI voice modulation. From pulsating and echoing strengths, marked by oscillatory and spatial disturbances, the resulting sonic tapestry represents a liminal space where past and present, real and imagined, intersect and converse with each other.

Accompanying the work, *Sap Script* is a text installation in white latex paint on a black, obsidian-like background. The choice of material references the sap from the rubber (also "caoutchouc" in French) tree, hence the titles *Sap Sonic* and *Sap Script*. The typeface of *Sap Script* echoes the slender and linear structure of rubber trees, distorted to resemble the waveform of sound waves. Through the intangible, unseen nature of sound, *Sap Sonic* probes the aspects of the visual world agitated by the listening sense, hence expanding the agentive possibilities of the uncounted and the underheard.

Jan van Eyck Academie
Maastricht



Top: View of the fields with newly planted rubber trees, *Hevea Brasiliensis*. Part of the photo album about the Brussels and Pernantian plantations of the Sumatra Caoutchouc Company on the East Coast of Sumatra, 1910–1935. Courtesy Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Bottom: Screenshot of working with an archival image from the Sumatra Caoutchouc Company photo album. The image is further processed by making direct 'graffiti' edits, which manipulates how the sound notes are read between the bright and dark areas of the image.

PASSAGES



Ngoc Nau

Ngoc Nau Thai Nguyen / Hanoi

Feeling both intrigue and familiarity towards Soviet-era architecture and iconic elements in Vilnius, Lithuania, during her residency, Ngoc Nau draws from historical references and collected oral histories in her host country to explore multifaceted aspects of post-Soviet realities in Vietnam. Her video installation, *Virtual Reverie: Echoes of a Forgotten Utopia*, portrays contemporary life amidst the remnants of socialist architecture and monuments. With the use of 3D animation and visual effects, the work demonstrates the transformative power of technology in reshaping our perceptions of reality.

Central to the work is a meticulously constructed representation of the Vietnam-Soviet Friendship Palace of Culture and Labour, a venue still being used for events today. Serving as a stage for five hip-hop dancers embarking on an allegorical journey, the building is symbolic of the enduring presence of socialist architecture in a contemporary landscape; representing the preservation of a bygone era and the relics of a once-powerful regime. Also playing a significant role in the work is an evocative three-dimensional scan of a Lenin statue originally erected at Lukiškės Square in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius. Its removal in 1991, with legs severed, became a powerful emblem of historical upheaval and transformation: the collapse of

socialism as well as the restoration of independence. As the characters traverse across time and space, dancing and interacting with their environment, they bridge the gap between historical artifacts and contemporary experiences. Echoing the ebb and flow of ideologies, their passage brings about new meanings as past memories evolve in the face of shifting landscapes.

The projection screen in the installation is created by the artist using papier mâché, a technique also used by mask makers in Vietnam. Its textured surface provides a topographic landscape onto which the moving image is projected. Along with the video work is an essay *Lenin Park* (2023) by Nau's collaborator Phuong Phan, a Berlin-based Vietnamese researcher and writer. Taking the Lenin Park in Hanoi as a point of departure, the essay contextualises socialism in Vietnam in the present time.

Rupert
Vilnius



PASSAGES



Saroot Supasuthivech

Saroot Supasuthivech Bangkok

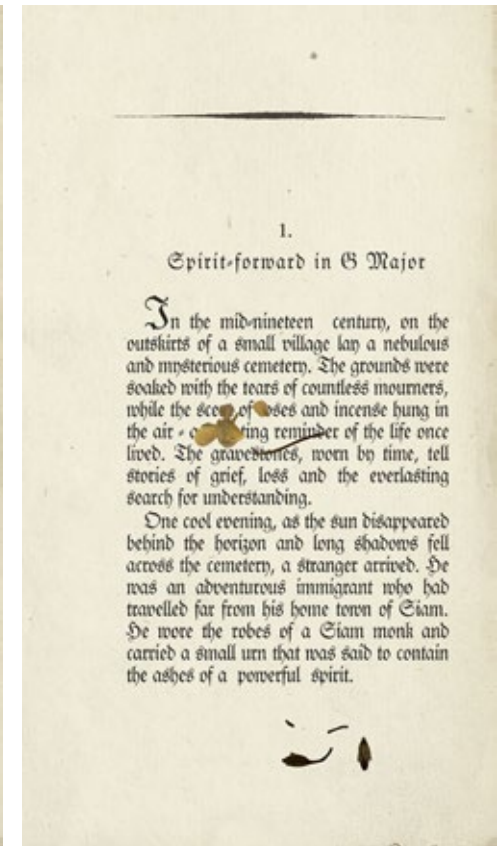
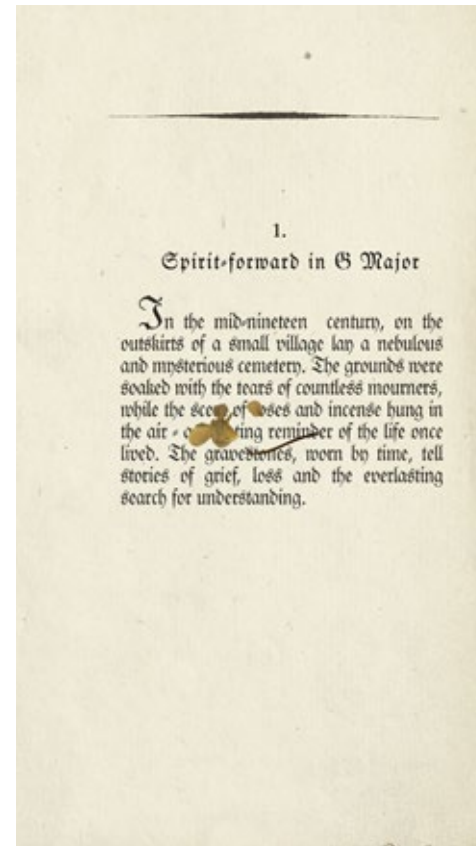
Fascinated by spiritual beliefs and rituals especially those surrounding death, Saroot Supasuthivech studies them as a point of entry into understanding the complexities and nuances of cultures—both his own and others. Looking specifically at how funerary practices of Thai people travel and evolve with their migration to Germany, *Spirit-forward in G Major* is a multimedia installation that encapsulates the interplay of tradition, adaptation and preservation within an evolving cultural landscape. Charting their transformative journey, the work's narrative unfolds in four parts, told through a metaphoric cycle of life, death and rebirth.

“New Beginnings” uses therapeutic dialogues to depict the initial migrant experience of stepping into a dreamy yet unknown world; evoking a feeling of optimism amidst uncertainty. Subsequently, “A Surreal Interlude” transports viewers into a realm of magic and mortality inspired by Grimm’s fairy tales. Based on interviews conducted with Thai monks and nuns in Berlin, it touches on the challenges and transformation that comes with cultural assimilation. The third segment focuses on a Thai music score *Sai Samon*, the oldest documented, played in G major on the violin in a *Sala Thai* (open pavilion) in Bad Homburg, Germany. Finally, “A Glimpse Beyond”, experienced via Virtual Reality, dives

into a poetic meditation on death and the afterlife, told from the viewpoint of the deceased. Serving as a mirror reflecting the cycle of life and death, this poignant culmination is an exploration into a liminal reality between the familiar and the surreal. Alternating between the two, it echoes the fragmentation and reconstitution inherent in a migrant experience. Using photogrammetry techniques, images of real-world locations and architecture taken during the artist’s residency, such as Alter St. Matthäus-Kirchhof (Old St. Matthew’s Churchyard) and Märchenbrunnen (Fountain of Fairytales), are digitally reconstructed, distorted and fragmented to create an ethereal, otherworldly environment.

Adding to this experience are brass plate etchings comprising elements from the migrant journey: a flower mirroring the ones found around the *Sala Thai* in Bad Homburg; the *Sai Samon* music score; and Cinderella from Grimm’s *Children and Household Tales* (1833).

Künstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin



Priyageetha Dia (b. 1992, Singapore) works with time-based media and installation. Her practice is braided between plantation ecologies, post-colonial memory(ies), migration politics, and the production of labour and data economics. Structured through fieldwork and archival research, she engages in nonlinear and speculative processes as a practice of refusal against dominant narratives. Her recent exhibitions include Frieze Seoul (2023); Singapore Art Museum (2023); Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kerala (2022–23); La Trobe Art Institute, Australia (2022); National Gallery Singapore (2020); and Art Science Museum, Singapore (2019). She was an artist-in-residence at NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore in 2022. She was also the recipient of the IMPART award by Art Outreach in 2019.

The multimedia practice of **Ngoc Nau** (b. 1989, Vietnam) encompasses photography, holograms and augmented reality (AR). She is currently working with 3D software and other open-source technologies to create new possibilities for video installation. In Nau's work, different materials and techniques seek to capture the subtle ways in which new media shape and dictate our views of reality. Blending traditional culture and spiritual beliefs with modern technologies and lifestyles, her work often responds to Vietnam's accelerated urban development. Her

works have been featured in several exhibitions across Asia, including the Thailand Biennale, Korat (2021) and the Singapore Biennale (2019), among others. She has also participated in documenta 15, Kassel, Germany (2022) with Sa Sa Art Projects.

Saroot Supasuthivech (b. 1991, Thailand) employs a multifarious research approach to reimagine a range of localities, merging chronologies and perspectives. Not only does he look at geographical and political facts, he also takes into account the ways specific sites are situated and depicted in memory and discourse. Reacting to popular and official narratives, he examines the corruption of our histories and the dissolution of our identities. Ritual also emerges as a particular window of insight for him as he delves into ancient traditions and their waning relevance, inspecting the present through a lens of the past. His moving images transcend aesthetic or documentary dimensions; often combining installation, image and sound to conjure the intangible aura of a socio-historical location. In studying the ritualistic, his artistic practice performs a rite in itself, offering a ceremony of remembrance. His latest video installation, *River Kwai: This Memorial Service Was Held in the Memory of the Deceased* (2022), was featured in the Discoveries Section at Art Basel Hong Kong (2022).

Jan Van Eyck Academie Maastricht, The Netherlands

As a post-academic institute, Jan van Eyck Academie offers residencies to artists, designers ranging from graphic and fashion to food and social design, writers, curators, and architects from all over the globe. The academy is committed to exploring the agency, roles and civic significance of art, design, and other creative practices in relation to the climate crisis, environmental breakdown, and their manifold effects. This institutional focus opens a wide discourse and creates a framework that embraces a diversity of practices and allows for a multitude of voices.

Rupert Vilnius, Lithuania

Operating since 2012, Rupert is an independent, publicly-funded centre for art, residencies and education. Its mission is to establish close cooperation between artists, thinkers, researchers and other cultural actors through transdisciplinary programmes and residencies. It manifests this mission through three related programmes: the residency programme, the alternative education programme and the public programmes. They are all dedicated to creating platforms for conversation, research and learning. Through these programmes, Rupert supports local and international thinkers in realising their projects and establishing their creative practice on an international scale.

Künstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin, Germany

The Künstlerhaus Bethanien is an international cultural centre with an artist-in-residence programme. It is dedicated to the advancement of contemporary visual arts and aims to establish a lively dialogue between artists from various backgrounds and disciplines, and the public at large. The focus of its manifold missions is the International Studio Programme, where artists conceive and present new projects with the help of its team. Furthermore, it encourages critical reflection on subjects related to contemporary art and culture through its publications, including the *Be Magazine*, a yearly journal for art and criticism.

SEA AiR
Selection Process
Cycle 2

Nominators

Since artists from Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia participated in the inaugural cycle of SEA AiR, the selection process for the second cycle focused on the remaining Southeast Asian countries to ensure the equitable distribution of the programme's resources. Seven artists and curators from these countries were invited to contribute to SEA AiR as nominators, leveraging their in-depth knowledge of emerging contemporary art practices within their respective countries to nominate outstanding practitioners who would benefit from this opportunity.

Con Cabrera, independent curator
(Philippines)

Anna Koshcheeva, researcher (Laos)

Yasmin Jaidin, artist (Brunei)

Ong Kian Peng, artist (Singapore)

Mary Pansanga, independent curator
(Thailand)

Phoo Myat Thwe, independent curator
(Myanmar)

UuDam Tran-Nguyen, artist (Vietnam)

Selection Committee

Ute Meta Bauer (Chair),

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

Hicham Khalidi, Director, Jan Van Eyck Academie

Monika Lipšic, Curator of the Residency and Public Programmes, Rupert

Dr Karin Oen, Senior Lecturer and Head of Department, Art History, NTU School of Humanities

Christoph Tannert, Artistic Director, Künstlerhaus Bethanien

Eszter Nemeth, former Deputy Head of Mission, EU Delegation to Singapore

Shortlisted Artists

From the nominations, five other artists besides the three selected ones, were shortlisted by the Selection Committee.

We would like to acknowledge them here in recognition of the merit and remarkable promise of their artistic practice:

Lin Htet Aung (b.1998, Myanmar)

Lena Bui (b.1985, Vietnam)

Ronyel Comprá (b.1985, Philippines)

Pam Quinto (b.1991, Philippines)

Nat Setthana (b.1995, Thailand)

PASSAGES
Priyageetha Dia, Ngoc Nau and Saroot Supasuthivech
1 December 2023 – 28 January 2024
NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore
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Ute Meta Bauer

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Audiovisual Consultancy**

ARTFACTORY

Auxilio Studio

SPACElogic

Shipping

Malca-Amit Singapore

Acknowledgments

NTU CCA Singapore would like to thank our partner institutions Jan van Eyck Academie (Netherlands), Rupert (Lithuania) and Künstlerhaus Bethanien (Germany) for rendering their support to this programme and the artists during their residencies.

We would also like to acknowledge the EU Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) for their generous funding, and express our gratitude to the FPI Regional Team Asia & Pacific: Andreas Roettger (Head), Francesca Arato (Team Leader) and Loreta Valerio (Finance and Contracts Assistant).

Funded by the European Union



In collaboration with

jan van eyck
academie

Rupert,

KÜNSTLERHAUS
BETHANIEN

Artwork

Credits

Priyageetha Dia

Sap Sonic, 2023

Four-channel sound installation,
green LED tube lights, 14 min

Sap Script, 2023

White latex paint, black enamel paint
Dimensions variable
Lettering design: Studio Darius Ou

Ngoc Nau

*Virtual Reverie: Echoes of a Forgotten
Utopia*, 2023

Single-channel video installation, colour,
sound, papier-mâché projection screen,
metal chains, 6 min 24 sec
Essay: Lenin Park (2023) by Phuong Phan

Video editor and CGI (Computer-
generated Imagery): Ngoc Nau

Assistant directors:

Ha Dao and Hyo Jung Kim

Camera: Linh DN

Lighting:

Thao Hoang, Son Hoang and Tu Le

Sound: Dustin Ngo

Dancers: C.O. crew

Saroot Supasuthivech

Spirit-forward in G Major, 2023

Two-channel video installation,
4K, colour, 4.1 sound, PAR light,
19 min 34 sec; Virtual Reality,
9 min 10 sec; brass plate etchings
Dimensions variable

Project consultant:

Chalida Asawakanjanakit

Video editor: Sorpannath Patpho

Music composer: Thanet Asawakanjanakit

Violinist: Pitchayapa Lueangtawikit

3D technical designer:

Phattara Chattuphattarakun

System design consultant: H-Lab

Camera assistant: Jonathan Mungnonbo

German translator: Wandt Phaensombun

The artworks were produced by SEA
AiR – Studio Residencies for Southeast
Asian Artists in the European Union,
a programme developed by NTU Centre
for Contemporary Art Singapore and
funded by the European Union.

All artworks courtesy of the artists.

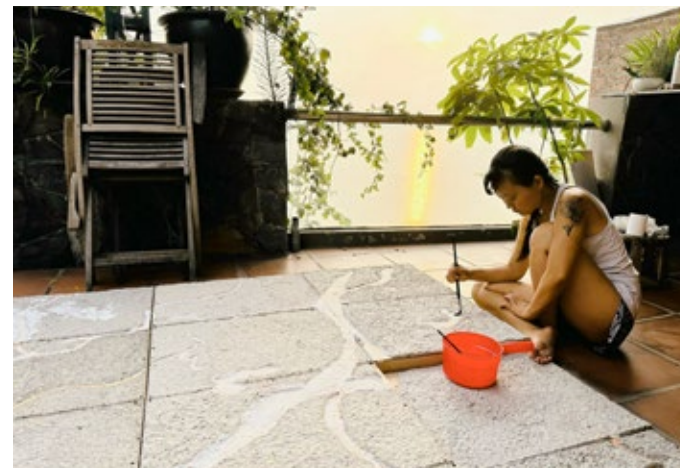
Image Credits

Unless otherwise stated, images courtesy
of the artists.

Top: Ngoc Nau making her papier mâché projection
screen, October 2023. Photograph by Phuong Thu.

Middle: Screenshot of Priyageetha Dia's field recording
playback on Audacity of the rubber plantation
soundscapes in Alor Gajah, Melaka, Malaysia, 2023.

Bottom: Illustration of Cinderella in Brothers Grimm's
Children and Household Tales (1833), Berlin State
Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage, Germany, June
2023. Photograph by Saroot Supasuthivech.



NTU CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART SINGAPORE

Situated within Singapore's premier art precinct Gillman Barracks, NTU CCA Singapore is a pioneering institution that has been instrumental in shaping the contemporary art landscape in Singapore and beyond. With a focus on fostering creativity, innovation, and critical thinking, the Centre's programmes have consistently challenged the status quo, encouraging artists to explore new realms of artistic expression.

SPACES OF THE CURATORIAL

The Centre seeks to engage the potential of "curating" and its expanded field. What are the infrastructures and modes of presenting and discussing artistic and cultural production in diverse cultural settings and in particular throughout Southeast Asia's vastly changing societies?

ABOUT NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Engineering, Business, Science, Medicine, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and Graduate colleges. NTU is also home to world-renowned autonomous institutes—the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering—and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N).

Under the NTU Smart Campus vision, the University harnesses the power of digital technology and tech-enabled solutions to support better learning and living experiences, the discovery of new knowledge, and the sustainability of resources. Ranked amongst the world's top universities, the University's main campus is also frequently listed among the world's most beautiful. Known for its sustainability, over 95% of its building projects are certified Green Mark Platinum. Apart from its main campus, NTU also has a medical campus in Novena, Singapore's healthcare district.

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