

The Turn of the

Fifth Age





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The Turn of the Fifth Age

A project initiated by Selasar Sunaryo Art Space and Taipei Contemporary Art Center

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FOREWORD

The Turn of the Fifth Age is an exhibition initiated by Selasar Sunaryo Art Space (SSAS) in Bandung, Indonesia, and Taipei Contemporary Art Center (TCAC) in Taipei, Taiwan.

Selasar Sunaryo Art Space (SSAS) is a non-profit art institution with the objective of supporting the development of practices and study of art and the visual culture in Indonesia. Established in 1998 by the artist Sunaryo, SSAS is active in holding activities oriented at public education. With the guidance and support from Yayasan Selasar Sunaryo (Selasar Sunaryo Foundation), the main focus of SSAS would be holding contemporary art programs through exhibitions, discussions, residency programs, and workshops.

Taipei Contemporary Art Center (TCAC) is an independent art space established by Taiwanese artists, curators, critics, writers, scholars, and cultural researchers in 2010 to provide an open platform to present, exchange, create and share. The core value and mission of TCAC is to create a critical public sphere, promote international exchange and provide diverse art experiment possibilities and learning programs.

The plan started in 2019. The idea was instead of focusing on an exhibition program we tried to organize a series of discursive workshops among artists and curators. The objective was to gain a deep understanding of each other's practices. Since international travel is nearly impossible caused by the pandemic crisis, we changed the plan. We then also conceived the idea of "the turn of the fifth age", based on Margaret Atwood's short text. Basically, Atwood describes a series of declining processes of our human civilization. The fifth age is the post-apocalyptic world.

The Turn of the Fifth Age becomes an exhibition based on a series of dialogues, prolonged correspondence, between Taipei and Bandung at the time of a pandemic crisis. Curators and managers from both sides worked together with artists that have agreed to participate in the project.

What can the art community do to contribute to the current turning point of our world? This partnership between SSAS and TCAC may result in a series of artworks that share our concern on important issues such as humanity, the relationship between humans and non-human, industrialization, climate change, etc. This is a collaborative work of many people. We hope that our collaboration can share a common understanding of the urgency of co-existing among all creatures.



The Turn of the Fifth Age

Can an exhibition be an oracle or a method for reading the future? The Turn of the Fifth Age was conceived before and during an extremely unsettling year, as the global unforeseeable conditions of the pandemic challenged us to reconsider the way we construct our material relationships with the world. Many reflections on different body politics and new practices for sustainable local economics, community, and network mushroomed amidst moments of mourning. Our initial premise of imagining a feminist post-capitalism society retains its urgency under these circumstances.

The title of the exhibition follows Margaret Atwood's Time capsule found on the dead planet, written for The Guardian in support of the 10:10 climate change campaign started ahead of the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. In this short story, Atwood outlines four ages for our world: "In the first age, we created gods", "In the second age we created money"; "In the third age, money became a god"; "in the fourth age we created deserts". We find these peculiar times not only fragile but a vividly tangible moment in such deserts1. It's as if we are striving to survive in a whirling simoom² while submitting our ways of being to new rules and logic propelled by invisible viruses or Gaia³. It is time we learn all the names for dust cyclones; it is also time we unlearn our entanglements with living forms and matter. Hence, we hope our proposal of varying methodologies and ways of imagining speculative futures can nurture an allegorical space to rest or an alternative time capsule that enables a reset of the current climate.

Our attentions go toward exploring the tensions present within the material realities driven by technology and capitalism. Many artists in the exhibition share their research and concerns over ecological issues, for humans and nonhumans alike, as an effort to dilute humanist binaries. They offer alternative connections to other forms of consciousness—from mosses, penguins, and cyborgs to Al. Some revisit human evolution through speculative narratives that reverse and re-imagine our notions of progress through a critical reflection on ideas of development, production, and ruins. There are also attempts to understand the different political imperatives that inform our future body, which will circulate in a more complex food chain and economy. From a pragmatic or materialist view, the proposition the exhibition makes may reveal much anxiety and shed light on pressing struggles. However, it equally presents diverse abstractions, rhythms, movements, and patterns of "time" through the displayed artworks and their articulation within the three galleries.

Furthermore, they resonate with and open up readings of Elisabeth Grosz's fascinating discussion on time—that enigmatic and unreal form of material existence that creates relevance for living matter to be situated not in social, political, or cultural inscriptions, but by resuming corporeality and energy in continuous temporal reconfiguration, or becoming⁴. Her exploration of the modalities, forms, and effects of time on both inorganic and organic materiality

offers intricate thoughts and references when we try to grasp how the world is animated by our immersion in the relentless movement of time. The underlined meaning of the exhibition and its title can perhaps be expanded by bringing this ontological question of time into the exhibition as a turn to new materialism. Maybe we would then consider living and co-living not only within the temporality of now since both the past and the future can be animated in the present tense. The "Turn" is further enlivened by extending this expanded temporality not only to linear time but also to the consciousness of species and matter.

The different approaches presented in the exhibition process our realities as relativities rather than oppositions. Instead of a didactic warning of crisis, *The Turn of the Fifth Age* creates new accesses to the multiple horizons of today's 'deserts' so we can reshape (the sense of) our realities and respond to the "living" status of matter. If these were the new departure points for our speculative futures, might we find new faith and gods? What are we learning in light of this current experience of global incapacitation? By posing such harsh questions, the exhibition raises its voice to provoke daring imaginations and actions: into what are we delivering and transforming our futures? How do we find new harmony and the next humanities?



¹ Atwood, Margaret. "Time capsule found on the dead planet." *The Guardian*, 26 September 2009. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/sep/26/margaret-atwood-mini-science-fiction

² In Arabic, the name means poisoned wind, referring to a strong, dry, dust-laden wind. It occurs in the Sahara and the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. Its temperature may exceed 54°C and humidity may fall below 10%.

³ The Gaia hypothesis coined by James Lovelock "proposes that living organisms interact with their inorganic surroundings on Earth to form a synergistic and self-regulating, complex system that helps to maintain and perpetuate the conditions for life on the planet." https://enwikipedia.org/wiki/Gaia_hypothesis

⁴ Grosz, Elisabeth. The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely. Duke University Press Books. 2004.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Heru Hikayat ID

This Home Called the Art World

In 2019 when Selasar Sunaryo Art Space (SSAS) in-house curator and program manager at that time Chabib Duta Hapsoro and Dea Aprilia started the project titled "The Turn of the Fifth Age", I was still managing some projects for the Director-General of Culture in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. Most of the responsibilities I had were still about curatorial responsibilities; the difference is, curating cultural festivals was an extended challenge dealing with massive budgets and regional events. Long story short, it was all about public policies and day-to-day political considerations. It was completely different from the art world I usually cope with.

The duty also brought me and my family to Jakarta, the biggest metropole in Indonesia, and when the pandemic began its grip at the capital, it turned the big city into a giant mess. With 10 million people crowding the spaces, being caught by the plague was a matter of inching down closer to infection. As a precaution, I took my family back to Bandung when the partial lockdown was implemented in March 2020. When SSAS gave an open calling to fill the chair of the in-house curator, I thought no timing was better. It was a chance for me to go home, to go back to the art world I always knew.

This position gave me the opportunity to meet Taipei Contemporary Art Center (TCAC), especially with Esther Lu, Shih-yu Hsu, and Bochun Hsiao. At SSAS, the new program manager Christine Toelle and I resumed Chabib and Dea's project and took it to the next step. Initially, it was designed not as an exhibition, but as an artist exchange, residence, and workshop program. It was to be launched in 2020, lest the partial lockdowns in Indonesia forced us to reschedule all we had on our list. To be relaunched in February 2021, the program's design was then switched into a series of online meetings and an emphasis was added to the exhibition part.

The unfortunate delay is not necessarily for the better, however. The beginning of this year still does not leave us with the liberty we had before the pandemic shook us all last year. Precautions are never to be underestimated, and we still have a new definition of the crowd under the new normal policy. My presentation for the curatorial board of SSAS was derived from this worst-case scenario: whether public art spaces like SSAS could really survive if the word 'public' had become virtual. This was the thing in mind I had to everyone right in SSAS from the beginning: whoever the new curator would be, she or he had to deal with this "new normal".

Least to say, the delay has only given us a single message: that we have been used to this pandemic. We cannot really say that we are now less anxious than we were then, but the silver lining is that we have managed to pull off some sound strategies out of the ongoing hardships. Everything was new: I even did not have the usual chance to directly greet and meet our TCAC colleagues, and some of the artists involved in this exhibition. We had all this prepared from a virtual distance.

That gave us a new challenge to the event. The director and also the founder of SSAS, Mr. Sunaryo, emphasized that this event would have to go in line with the mission of SSAS, that is to provide a solid art space for young artists in terms of international exchange opportunity and artistic breakthroughs. In this turbulent time, it is the way artists can keep nurturing their creative spirit and maintain their artistic stamina. The director's message is the reason why we at SSAS cannot put a definitive hold on everything we have on our agenda despite the ongoing global crisis.

About the spirit to stay creative, the title "The Turn of the Fifth Age" itself originated from a post-apocalyptic prediction by Margaret Atwood. The titling and writing took me to arrive at a conclusion that art, despite all the human life turbulence and uncertainties, is a never-fading constructive — or even optimistic — drive that can endure the ultimate challenge of mass extinction. Through art, the words "to become extinct" have lost their claws and shady

Technically speaking, this exhibition unites Indonesian and Taiwanese artists, including another that currently resides in New Zealand. There is one thing we can easily grasp from this collaboration: the fateful rendezvous between humans and non-humans.

Take Yu-Hsin Su for example, who collaborated with sound artist Aloïs Yang to create a six-channel sound installation for *Hibernatemode*. Visually, there are images of the maps of the Antarctic and several video footage from the weather stations located in the frozen continent. This is certainly a remote space escaping our daily understanding of human dwelling. The artists take us to gaze at an "unnatural" human living space in nature. The question then goes back to the problem of time: how human beings can "grasp and time" time, whose dimension far exceeds the stretch of human history. This is one of the works that give us a non-human perspective, whose massive scale far belittles our puny pride of humanity.

Still saying something about time, Yahui Wang presents a poetic video installation. In this, the visible objects projected on a wall are shadowed by the change of direction of the sun. This in turn invokes the "physical" movement of time. It is made possible by taking complex image calculations concerning both concrete and virtual spaces. Through the experience of space and vision, a question lingers still: is it possible for us humans to completely discern the mystery of time?

Further, Sorawit Songsataya was completely taken for kites, or perhaps "manmade artifacts that dance with the wind". The question posed here is about the relation between culture and nature. In the video, we can see how various

artifacts were merrily dancing with the wind. We even got the image of "gliding" and even flying; on the contrary, the handmade kite installation was not designed to really fly. There is a stark contradiction between digital images and handcrafted objects. The title of this piece is "Jupiter, a planet with one of the most severe storms". The wind, therefore, may be beautiful, but it can also be menacing. This work reminds us that we are nothing but a mere speck of existence in the universe.

Artist Chi-Yu Wu got the inspiration from the pre-historic cave painting on Sulawesi Island. The creative process leading to the cave paintings must have something to do with the immersive experience from nature and how the cave dwellers were strongly awed by it. The prehistoric traces are so much in common with our today's reality of virtual experience. Isn't our coexistence with the grand universe is something marvelous? This raises another question: are we really the center of the universe or are we just a meaningless part of the infinite universe?

There are also essay films from Tzu-Huan Lin that draw on personal histories, mythology, historical events, science theory, and pseudo-documentary. The visual mixtures further lead us to a question on how we imagine utopia. Definitely, utopia is just an illusion; it is something that is imagined rather than seen. The artist then intentionally obstructed direct visibility of the work. This obstruction is indeed a challenge: despite our inability to completely isolate everything with our limited senses, do we still have the drive to comprehend reality?

We also have the lololol collective that computed data from various sources, and then put them on the screen. Our human days are inevitable "screen" days, in that we experience our life through digital screens. What can we actually get when we fixed our eyes on that flat space? Further, can our basic understanding concerning the body, mind, and space be enhanced or worse distorted by what we see on it?

There certainly many questions -clouded by the anxiety haunting our pandemic days. If we stubbornly keep anchoring our thought to rational grounds, perhaps the only thing we get is simply nothing. Speculative science suffocates us, leaving us no space for our hearts and mind. Imagination and artistic perspectives are ever fresh, giving us the time to rethink and the air to breathe. I would like to thank TCAC and all the participating artists. My homecoming kickoff has never been more energizing. This new way of cooperating has shown us another way for me, and for SSAS, that the uncertainty of our uncertain future is both opportunity and possibility; something that can propel us far ahead of our worries and fears.

The Turn

The Turn of the Fifth Age is curated and produced in a world that I would have never imagined, a world of planetary emergencies only seen in disaster films. Esther Lu, in Taipei, was first invited, by email, by Selasar Sunaryo from Bandung to co-produce a new media exhibition in November 2019. That was before the COVID-19 pandemic. We did not realize then that developing an exhibition premised on Margaret Atwood's Time capsule found on the dead planet could be so relevant to the situation we are currently facing. In her essay, Atwood describes four different ages that symbolize the gradual progress of civilization. The fifth age is in fact the post-apocalyptic world. This is the reason we named the exhibition The Turn of the Fifth Age.

Along with participating artists from Taiwan and Indonesia, we would like to imagine a world that escapes the inevitable destination of Atwood's text. Is it possible for creative imagination and artistic speculation to impact the direction our world is taking? The original plan was to counter the inevitable acceleration of contemporary exhibition-making with a proposal that was not exhibition-focused. Esther and I planned to create a series of discursive workshops, deeply immersing ourselves and the artists in each other's practices. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic made international travel nearly impossible. The exhibition's response to the current situation, whether in Taipei or Bandung, is more pressing than ever, not only because art and artists may stimulate and reflect on new ways of seeing and thinking, but also because we would have the chance to challenge prevalent modes of the exhibitionmaking process from the very beginning.

For me, part of the challenge comes from trying to learn about and understand the artworks of the participating Indonesian artists from a distance that is both physical and epistemological. Throughout the project period, several keywords kept reappearing as I studied the artworks:



DEEP ECOLOGY

Deep ecology is an ecological philosophy proposed by Arne Naess in 1973. The idea is to not view nature and non-human species as instrumental tools for human use. This resonates with the world-views of Tao and ecofeminism - a holistic view of the world. Deep ecology addresses the importance of maintaining biodiversity and self-realization. Self-realization is not understood in the neoliberal spirit of mobilising one's own agency the most. Instead, its aim is to achieve commonality among all living species on the planet, transcending the Self, identity, and nation. Deep ecology also puts the ethical responsibility of humans and the sustainability of life on a larger time scale, extending it to the third and fourth generations. On this time scale, the non-human perspective can hold insights on the possibilities of living holistically. In the exhibition, Natasha Tontey's Pest to Power (2019) urges us to learn from cockroaches, the only species to have survived multiple mass extinction events; while Tromarama's Domain (2019) sees the ocean through penguin's eyes. Might self-realization be achieved through the eyes of these species?

MATERIALITY

The omnipresence of media technologies - social media, vlogs, fragmented messages, and so on - dominates the way people consume and produce information. Yet the material infrastructures of these technologies are often neglected in the discussion of media culture. Since The Turn of the Fifth Age is a media art exhibition, it is necessary to discuss the materiality of media. The material infrastructure is entangled with the distinct histories, cultures, and natural resources of specific geographical areas, manifesting a certain media culture. Medianature, Jussi Parikka's term for this, is a variation of Donna Haraway's nature-culture. Previously existing dichotomies, such as nature and culture, biologics, and informatics, are in reality interconnected. They cannot be understood separately. As a result, media technologies have to be scrutinized and analyzed by taking their material constitution into consideration. When the focus is shifted to materiality, the grand narrative of contemporary society becomes open to imagination and speculation. Some of the artworks in the exhibition directly address the material reality of Earth. Kasiterit (2019) by Riar Rizaldi uses future Al to look into the extensively exploited tin mine on Bangka island in the Indonesian archipelago. Mooi Indie 21st Century (2019) by Andrita Yuniza reinterprets well-known genres of painting by presenting gleaming spheres made out of chemicals from the textile industry.

CAPITALOCENE

Although the idea of the anthropocene draws much attention in the contemporary art world, Jason Moore's capitalocene was of more interest to me. Humans are not the only ones creating planetary crisis. The belief in capitalism, clearly expressed in Atwood's essay as the third age when money became a god, brings the 'deserts' that follow. The birth and expansion of capitalism are built on exploiting and consuming the resources of non-white territories, affecting millions of women, colonized people, and the non-human. The supremacy of the global techno-economic network escalated the impact of any potential emergency, such as the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Abshar Platisza's self-powered installation demonstrates the modern anxiety of energy depletion, how life is forced to adapt to technological advancement. In order to seek new directions for this planet, we have to question the fundamental beliefs of capitalism; we have to reinvestigate the model of production and reproduction. In terms of production, there is a need to ask how the dynamics and entanglement were formed within and alongside its geopolitical history? That legacy, whether toxic or not, still affects every living species and the environment on this planet. The artist collective Bakudapan, for example, appropriated the imagery of Indonesian propaganda to expose the fragility of the food supply chain.

These terms are not the only facet I would like to unfold in the exhibition. However, they are the leads to outline my experience of the reality I am living. Like when I read a piece of fiction with a storyline involving multiple universes, I cannot help wondering: how might this turn out in the end?



Fragmen Teritorial

2021

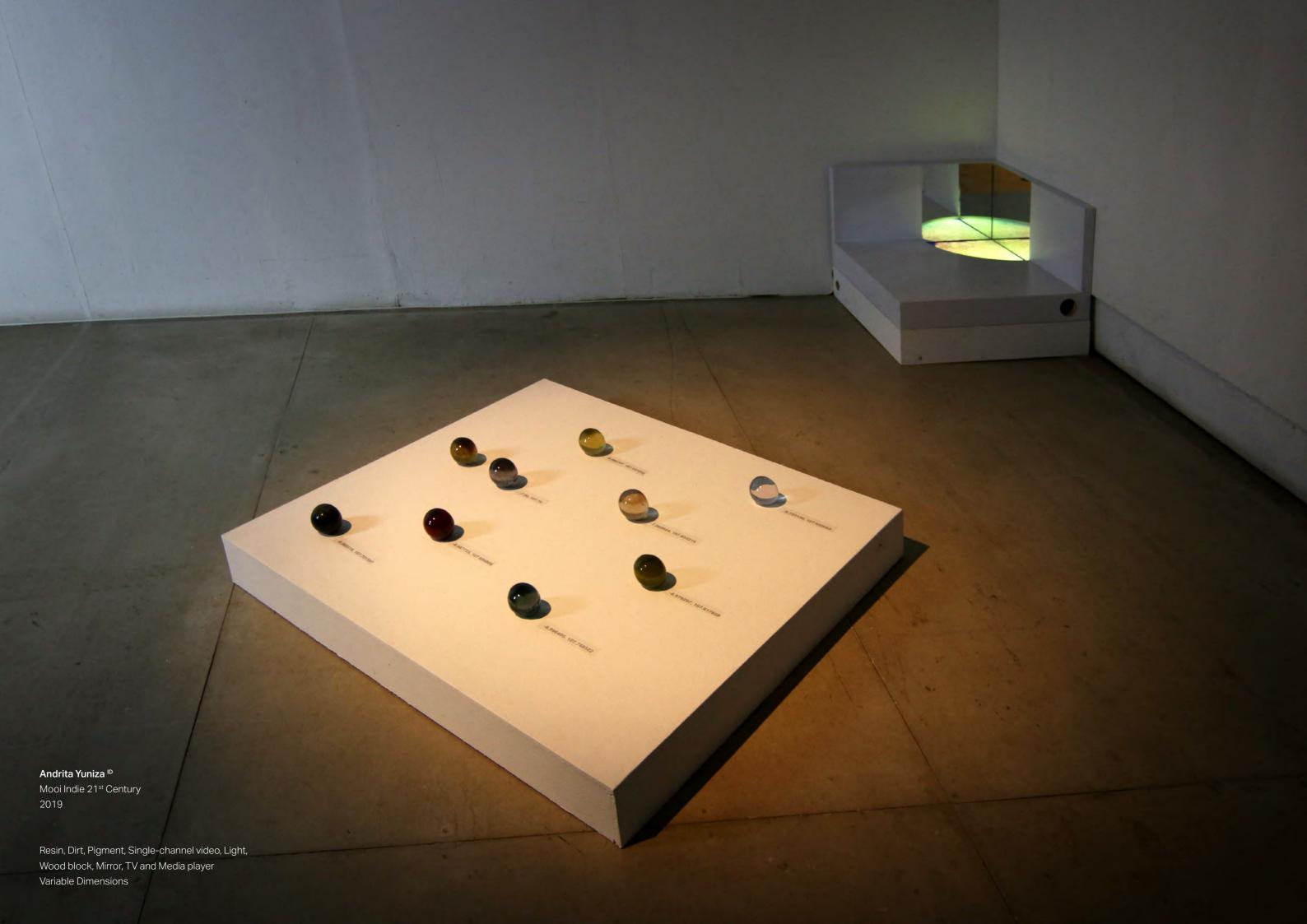
What we call science may well be a series of experiments and hypotheses (of what we expect to happen). In science, our burden of "being reliable" results from the relation of the experiments, the obtained results, and their correlations with reality. Taking this into account, Abshar's work can be regarded as an experiment. He used microbial fuel cells to generate electricity using soil to produce kinetic energy. Yet, it is not just any soil that he experimented with: it is tainted mud taken from polluted areas.

Visually, we can perhaps judge Abshar's work as merely a weird-looking and poorly crafted robot, but behind all the unpleasant sight it gives us, there is a solid hypothesis about an energy source from the earth heavily degraded by pollution. Therefore, his idea is to chain the soil, the pollution, and the possibility to generate energy. Will it work? In art, this result-demanding question may probably and primarily be set aside. The idea itself is a work (of art).



Abshar Platisza ID

Abshar is an artist and creative technologist based in Bandung, Indonesia. With his interest in the fine intersection between art and science, Abshar sees art as a tool of problem finding. Driven by curiosity towards natural phenomenons and captivated by environmental issues, he works by traversing to an interdisciplinary method involving artistic and scientific perspectives expressed through installation, sound, video, kinetic, various types of technologies, and non-human involvements as artistic materials. He believes everything that exists in this world, whether it is natural or artificial, everything has a social context, issue representation, and can become a metaphor.



Andrita Yuniza ID

Mooi Indie 21st Century 2019

The Mooi Indie movement has often been taken as the cradle of modern Indonesian visual art. It is not by coincidence that this school took its preliminary steps from colonialist paintings. Visually it was all about the landscape. The "beauty" itself has always been problematic, as it could never forego the stereotyping embedded inside. When the nationalist movement was on the rise, there went the perennial debate: "Doesn't that kind of beauty conceal a darker side of indigenous exploitation by the colonialists?"

The dichotomy "indigenous versus colonialist" has certainly expired, yet like all post-colonial nations, these nations inevitably have to make do with everything inherited from their former colonial era, where modern art is also not an exception. In this work, Andrita put all the ingredients on the table: art, landscape, and the toxic industrial world. Andrita then took the sample from the polluted rivers of Citarum and Citarik around Bandung. It is not unexpected that those water samples are spoiled, for Bandung has long been a center for the textile industry. This is the sad memento of polluted reality that has been represented by Andrita. Staring at fresh and pristine water may be a pleasant experience in that we may take days gazing at it. However, enduring seconds or minutes of seeing these polluted samples may prove to be hard, unless they have been formed as an artwork.

A visual artist based in Bandung, Indonesia, Andrita graduated with her BA in Fine Arts from Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) in September 2016. She studied Sculpture and New Media Art with Raimund Kummer and Candice Breitz at HBK Braunschweig, Germany, from October 2016 to June 2017. She is highly driven by her personal venture of how one single atom that is being enforced with a certain task, could create an enormous impact—like a ripple to its surrounding, Andrita is interested in investigating the interaction of energy through its manifestation in living and dead matters. Interaction of such matter is best understood through an experience with the matter itself. Therefore, Andrita works closely with public and new media art to test, research, and discover such interaction in a real environment.





Bakudapan ^{ID}

Re-plating Mooi Indie 2018

Print on Photo paper on Acrylic Light Box. 120 x 180 cm

Re-plating Mooi Indie

2018

Bakudapan is a food study group. They have been widely known for their signature in using art and art spaces to put their concerns about food and food sources in the spotlight. Their visuals show images quite common to Indonesians and their South-East Asian neighbors: tempeh, corn, nuts, vegetables, and the likes. The basic staples were then lined up forming a recognizable landscape. By having an Indonesian modern visual art narrative in our mind, it is not difficult to recognize that it is the Mooi Indie, the beautiful Indie. Mooi Indie is considered as the beginning of Indonesian modern art, consist of the image of the beautiful "Indie" (the name before Indonesia was "Dutch-Indie").

It was 1985, the year when the second Indonesian president, Suharto, was awarded by the FAO for his effort in self-sustaining the domestic amount of rice needed to feed Indonesians. There was a small problem though: not all Indonesians need rice on their table. Rice is only one among many, and having enough rice was not the same as having sufficient food for Indonesia. The rice culture was only partly successful, for President Suharto did not see the equation completely. In short, the rice self-sustenance program was a failure. This can be seen clearly and easily when the global pandemic knocks at Indonesia's door, the food supply mismanagement from Suharto's presidency prevails. This is how Bakudapan froze the "beautiful" picture about the Mooi Indie: ironically like how the colonialists pictured the "beauty" of their heavily exploited colonized lands.

When the pandemic hit Indonesia, Bakudapan turned their eyes on that narrative. It is about how people went through the hardships of hard times and still have something to fill their stomachs with. It is an ongoing discourse on how a person can still have something to eat on the table and how people in general deal with it. Bakudapan has even arranged public discussions – focus group discussions (FGDs), with figures and institutions taken to be exemplary in food sustaining programs. Before Covid-19 they had planned their research and residence agendas in Taiwan, aimed to better learn the ropes of successful agriculture. As countries are still closing their gates, these FGDs have now become the other way around to tackle this critical issue faced by prolonged food sovereignty crises and uncertainties.

Putting images together, having a series of discussions, and conducting research are how Bakudapan maintains their artistic urges and rhythm. This analytical scrutiny and artistic artifacts are integral parts of their work.



Bakudapan ID

Bakudapan is a study group that discusses ideas on food and everything it relates to. They believe that food is not merely an activity of filling the stomach, nor is it restricted to the activity of cooking. Food can be an instrument to speak about broader issues, such as politics, social, gender, economy, philosophy, art, and culture. The main scheme in their projects is to do cross-reference and research on food, which overlaps between art, ethnography, research method, and practice. In doing research, they are interested in exploring and experimenting with methods and forms, from art (performance, artistic setting, exhibition, etc) to daily life practices (cooking, gardening, reading, etc). As a reflective process, they like to hold participatory workshops, discussions, and reading activities with people of the same interest. They are also committed to publishing a journal in every project, as a mission to generate and share knowledge.



Visions of Tomorrow Today 2019

Tzu-Huan Lin creates video and installation-based works. The plots of his essay films draw on personal histories, mythology, historical events, science theory, and pseudo-documentary. Together with found footage and 3D simulation, his works capture contemporary humans' existential dilemmas and unspeakable desires. *Visions of Tomorrow Today* poses the ultimate question: what does utopia look like? This question inspired humans to create fine arts and literature as a means of making visible something none of us has ever been to or seen. An answer is suggested in the work: draw a cat with your eyes closed. Several unintelligible outlines of cats are juxtaposed with interviews of people talking about their ideal homeland. Although the drawn shapes are reminiscent of cats, there is no assurance this is what they are.

This reflects our current situation where we may appear to share a belief but that belief exists in separate echo chambers, isolated from each other and unable to be heard or understood by the outside world. Even though the idea of utopia is an illusion, it brings an unpredictable result: the more people are convinced of its existence, the more likely it is for them to differentiate between an 'us' and a 'them', and to draw boundaries. Projected close to the ground, the work is also enclosed by fences that block it from an immediate view. This challenge to the viewing experience reflects the limitations to comprehending the knowledge systems of others.



Tzu-Huan Lin ™

Tzu-Huan Lin, whose work centers on his personal experience as an immigrant, adapts this phenomenon to connect different subjects or stories. The plots of his essay films are sourced from personal histories, mythology, historical events, science theory, and pseudo-documentary. Combining found footage and 3D simulation, his works capture the existential dilemmas and unspeakable desires faced by contemporary humans. Lin received an MFA in Digital Arts at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. His work has been included in international group exhibitions such as The 15th Digital Art Festival Taipei, The 6th International Video Art Exhibition, ADAF 14th Athens Digital Arts Festival and solo exhibitions at Taipei Fine Art Museum and Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts.



Surface Habitat

2021

Inspired by the vibrant and overwhelming internet culture during the pandemic in 2020, the artist collective lololol has been exploring different ways of navigating our deepening dive into the internet—from the surface to borders, shadows and reflections, resistance, admittance and loss—as users, how can we behave, perform and interact in a reality where our presence and movement are constantly mediated via the sleek surface of omnipresent screens and cameras. *Surface Habitat* is a future research, as well as a proposal to understand how our ideas of being are under continual negotiation in the current dynamics of technological applications.

lololol's practice focuses on how emotions and body politics are informed by technology; their scope of technological interests ranges from ancient knowledge of martial arts, medicine to all kinds of contemporary inventions. The series of Surface Habitat stems specifically from the monitor-based perspective through which we engage with each other in the internet environment.

The project has thus far developed in four stages:

1.0 HEAVEN & EARTH

An introspective exercise by exploring one's sense of orientation within a live cam window frame, assuming that mediated virtual reality is not a floating reality in nothingness, but a space where one attempts to reinterpret the meaning of heaven and earth.

2.0 CALLING FORTH

Silent, tactile live-stream performance in google hangout featuring continual obstruction and manipulation of a tiny live cam to generate abstract natural events for one single audience at a time.

3.0 RISE & FALL

Real-time live-feed on the top of Alishan, capturing continuous mountain hikers reaching the peak, and a daily sight of brilliant sunrise and sunset. Presented on a custom website where artists can interact with a parallel window at home.

4.0 SEEING WITHOUT LOOKING, HEARING WITHOUT LISTENING

Ongoing engagement with a wilderness live-cam featuring a life-giving pond around which animals gather daily for water. Our perspective dances with the camera's movements in and out of mediated reality, while our hearing is a continual mix of field intake and our own viewing environment. We continue our journey with this remote destination, slowly discovering our relationship with the place and what is being presented on screen.



Iololol TW

lololol is a boundless laughter, an endless extension of lol (laugh out loud), an acronym that appears to be constructed by the building blocks of I-Ching and/or computer code. Founded by Xia Lin and Sheryl Cheung in 2013, the artist collective focuses on how emotions and body politics are informed by diverse technology cultures, with a special interest in martial arts and Tao-informed philosophies. lololol's projects have been included in international exhibitions and festivals including *Taipei Art Festival*, Taipei (2020), *Flaneur Festival*, Haus der Kunst de Welt, Berlin (2019), *Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival*, UK (2019), *Fun Palace*, OCT-LOFT, Shenzhen, China (2019).



Natasha Tontey D

Pest to Power 2019

Single-channel video (multimedia installation) Variable Dimensions

Pest of Power

2019

This work is about an unusual relation between humans and non-humans. And Natasha Tontey has picked a rather unlikely species as a "partner" for human beings: the cockroach. The basic premise laid down by Tontey is simply about how in human civilization eliminating the nuisance that invades our civilized space has become nothing but a simple chore. On the contrary, on a scientific line of arguments, cockroaches are extremely durable species that managed to walk through a string of mass extinctions unscathed. To our urban eyes, they are nothing but pests. In this, we are used to thinking that human civilization works not only by constructing but also by eliminating.

Tontey then posed a strong counter-narrative, and she constructed an imaginary event when humans would go face to face against the cockroach, or at least the images about it. The pandemic currently we are dealing with challenges our species to the very survival of human beings — about fulfilling basic needs like food other primary things we need to survive. By putting human beings in the cockroach's path of evolutionary challenges, we can see how vulnerable we are. Thus, if our civilized species is still struggling to overcome a "simple" challenge of being extinct, why then we take our adversary — that is proven to be evolutionary tougher than we are — lightly?

Tontey basically leads us to a simple question: "Can't we use cockroaches as our role model in overcoming the subsequent disastrous events in the future to survive and avoid mass extinction?" There is also a thin line blurring the distinction among science, quasi-science, imagination, and even fact and fiction; therefore, Tontey's narrative is taunting and tempting us to pull us, humans, out from our comfort spaces that we call civilization.



Natasha Tontey ID

Natasha Tontey is an artist and graphic designer based in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She is interested in exploring the concept of fiction as a method of speculative thinking. Her works have been shown at *transmediale for refusal* (2021), *Asian Film Archive* (2021), *Kyoto Experiment* (2021), *Other Futures: Multispecies Experiment* (2019), *Polyphonic Social by Liquid Architecture* (2019), and *The Wrong Biennale* (2019), among others. She received the HASH Award 2020 for Net-Based Projects in the Fields of Art, Technology, and Design by ZKM | Karlsruhe and Akademie Schloss-Solitude.



Kasiterit 2019

Single-channel video 18 minutes 22 seconds

Riar Rizaldi ID

Riar Rizaldi works as an artist and amateur researcher. He was born in Indonesia and is currently based in Hong Kong. His main focus is on the relationship between capital and technology, extractivism, and theoretical fiction. Riar has also curated *ARKIPEL Jakarta International Documentary & Experimental Film Festival* — Penal Colony (2017), *Internet of (No)Things* (2018) at Jogja National Museum, and co-curated *Open Possibilities: 'There is not only one neat way to imagine our future'* at JCC, Singapore & NTT ICC, Tokyo (2019-2020). His works have been shown at Locarno Film Festival, BFI Southbank London, International Film Festival Rotterdam, NTT InterCommunication Center Tokyo, Centre Pompidou Paris, Times Museum Guangzhou, and National Gallery of Indonesia amongst others.

Kasiterit

2019

The Rainbow Troops is a novel about a bunch of merry lads from Belitung Island trying to remake their days from the face of poverty. The novel was so widely accepted that it did drew attention to the major filming point depicted within: an elementary school in the brink of collapsing. The local administration even actually built a museum in a form of the crumbling school for the sake of the novel's fans. The novel itself goes as far as presenting a stark divide, between those who surf the lucrative waves from the tin mining industry deteriorating the island, and those who do not. But in this story, everybody is involved in the mining industry.

Taking a similar lens, Riar Rizaldi went to put another spotlight to the neighboring island, Bangka. In this work, an AI (Artificial Intelligence) entity traced her root back to this landscape sharing the same fate from mining industry. Amidst the roaring role of tin in today's technology, Riar saw something different. Aside from its profit seeking aim, the mining company has even gone as far as owning the word 'timah' in Indonesian language to itself — as it is called PT Timah, a government-owned mining corporation extracting in the strategic Isles of Bangka, in which Bangka and Belitung main islands are still in its top list.

As the narrator in this work said: "a part of me may very well be in your pocket..." We may have these sad images in our head, as the advent of human technology always goes hand in hand with its destructive by-products, not to mention information technology. However we may read this tainted picture, Riar shows us that there is something inevitably and undeniably goes in our reality: that technological achievement has "infected" our identity. None of us is sparred form this digital plague so strongly pervading our daily life. Every time we go about with our gadgetry, there is an "Al" inside and her traces of existence; these in a way may take us all, whether we like it or not, to the island of Bangka (or Belitung).





Jupiter

2019

The force of nature has been borrowed by humans to build civilizations around the world for millennia; as the mesmerizing and overwhelming power that inspires imagination and progress. During his visit home in 2018, Songsataya traveled to Buriram, a province in northeastern Thailand, to learn the crafts and culture of traditional Thai kites. Later, the artist extended from this field research to address manmade artifacts that dance with the wind as an attempt to understand the complex dynamics between culture and nature, rendering flickers of reflections on human activities on the planet. While the videos take us to the air voyage with various kites, wind turbines, sailboats, and fairground lights; the delicate kites, hand felted by the artist and composed of wool and dried flowers in the installation, however, are not made to fly. The organic materials may feel moist and weighted, and the copper wires instead of bamboo frames are electrically conductive. The juxtaposition of these contradictions creates a new open sky to contemplate on our cultural behaviors in return. As well, the work is named after the gas giant Jupiter, a planet with one of the most severe storms and the fastest wind speed in our solar system, to share a planetary scale of thinking.

The parallel interest in both the digital medium and the traditional craftsmanship can be regarded as Songsataya's specific approach and artistic language to find the meeting points of today's pressing ecological issues and diverse cultural flows. Laboring in between these media, his work reveals a sensitive and warm gesture to understand how an individual or a society can act, make and participate in the contemporary process of worlding. The materiality employed in *Jupiter* also reminds us of being part of a vulnerable system that requests our caring gazes and reconnections.



Sorawit Songsatya NZ

Based in Wellington, Sorawit Songsataya's practice explores the many tangents that connect and redefine our understandings of subjectivity and ecology. Songsataya often employs moving images and sculpture within installation environments, incorporating both digital and tactile media to engage with world-making in imaginative and tangible ways. Winner of the Molly Morpeth Canaday Award 3D (2020) and New Zealand's National Contemporary Art Award (2016), Songsataya has held artist residencies with Enjoy Contemporary Art Space, Wellington; McCahon House, Auckland; and the International Artists Studio Program, Stockholm. Recent exhibitions include *Come Up for Air*, The Lightship (2020); *Rumours (Mermaid)*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery (2020); *The Interior*, Auckland Art Gallery (2019); *Offspring of Rain*, Enjoy Contemporary Art Space (2019); *Jupiter*, Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery (2019); *Soon Enough: Art in Action*, Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm (2018).



Yu-Hsin Su^{TW}
Hibernatemode
2019

Dual-channel video, Full HD, and Six-channels sound installation by Alois Yang 16 minutes

Hibernatemode

2019

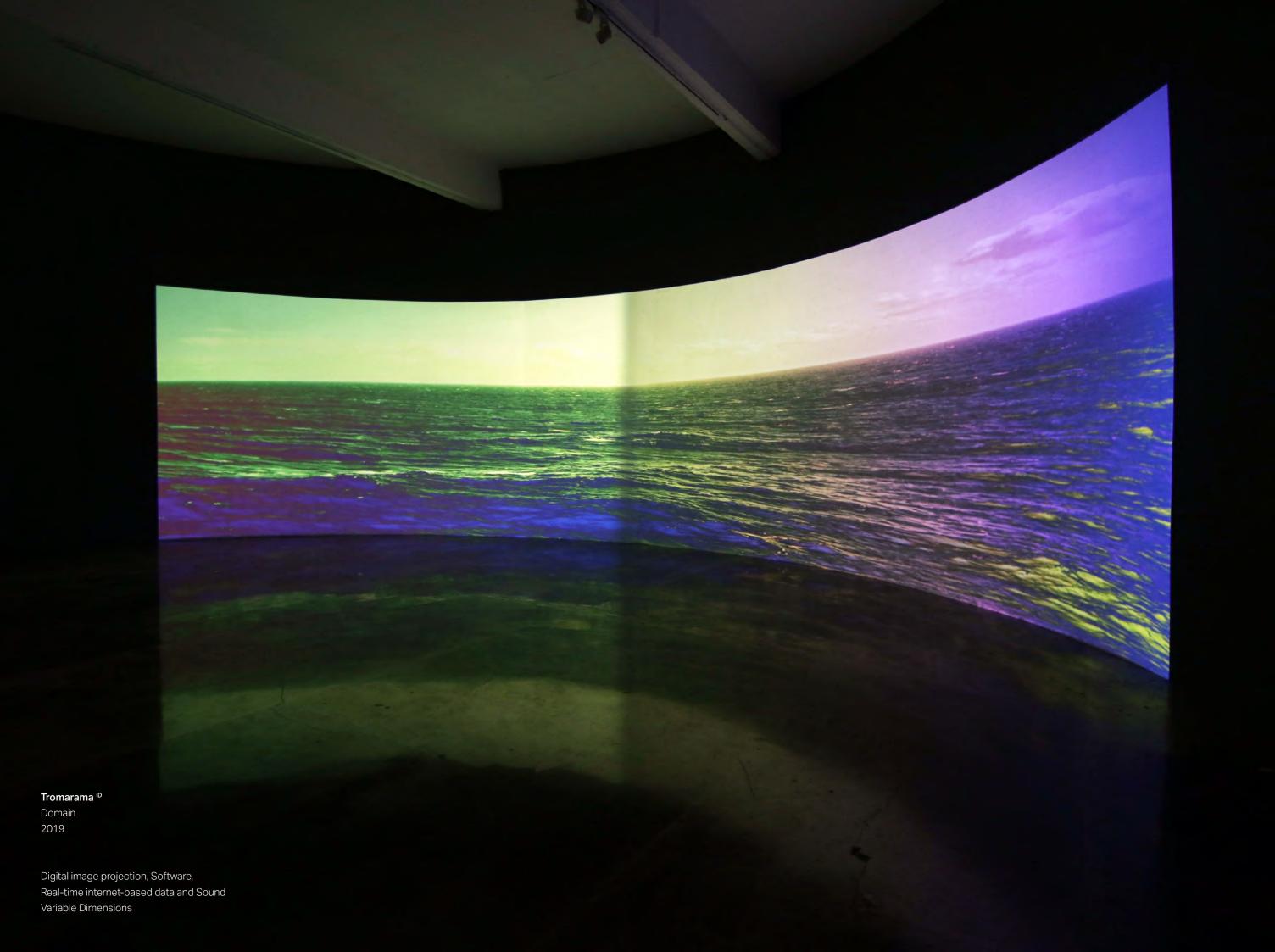
Yu-Hsin Su uses found footage, scientific visualization, and research data to construct an image of the world from a non-human perspective. Her essay films usually combine philosophical thinking and scientific investigation to create a speculative narrative that questions the current epistemological system. In *Hibernatemode*, Yu-Hsin Su takes the length of moss growth as a measurement unit to challenge the human perception of time. Time was once considered an absolute measurement necessary to the objectivity that scientific research requires.

How do we, as human beings, measure and perceive time? *Hibernatemode* employs the map of Antarctica and video footage from the Antarctica weather station, to suggest a time scale that exceeds the expected lifespan of a human being, or deep time. Can we understand the world, and our existence, in terms of deep time? Yu-Hsin Su collaborated with sound artist Aloïs Yang to create a six-channel sound installation for *Hibernatemode*. The sound and the visuals iterate asynchronously, creating a sense of déjà vu. Without any notion of before or after, without any markers of time, this other dimension of time is revealed through endlessness and in-betweenness.



Yu-Hsin Su ™

Yu-Hsin Su is a Taiwanese artist and filmmaker currently based in Berlin. She approaches ecology through its close relationship with technology. In her essay films and video installation works, she develops artistic research that reflects on technology, ecology, and the critical infrastructure where humans and non-human converge. Her analytical readings focus on map-making, operational photography, and the technical production of geographical knowledge. Su participated in group exhibitions including the Taipei Biennial (2020), ZKM Karlsruhe (2020), Kyoto Art Center (2020), UCCA Center for Contemporary Art (2020), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (2019), and Junín Contemporary Art Museum (2018). She was shortlisted for the 8th Huayu Youth Award (2020) and LOOP Barcelona Discover (2018).



Domain

2019

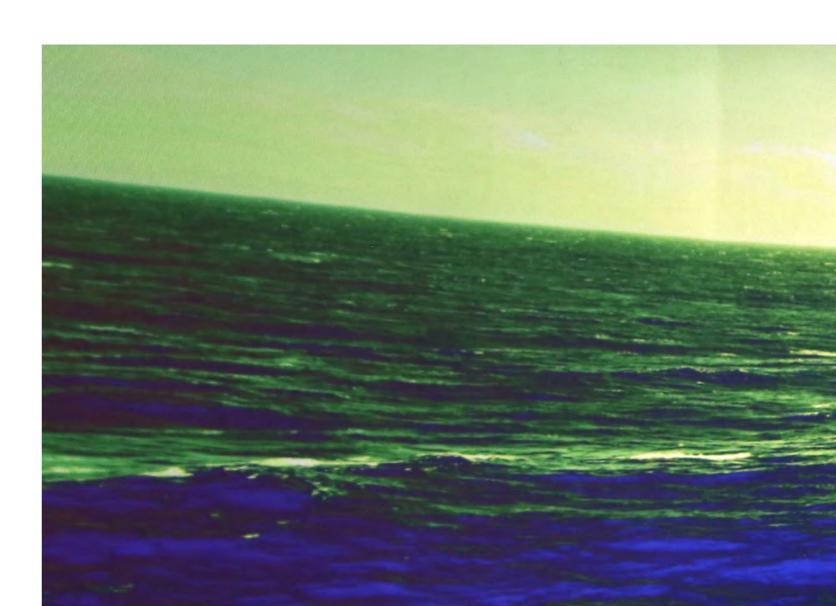
For Tromarama, this work was triggered by a unique experience being in a restaurant in Jakarta where there were a group of Humboldt penguins in a cage, along with the image of the sea projected onto the wall inside the cage. The penguins were clearly in a cage, in Jakarta, far away from their habitat. However, the image of their genuine habitat was there, as if it had to be presented as well.

Tromarama stated that in *Domain* that they intentionally processed the color spectrum in sea images based on the tendency of penguin eyes that sensitive to some particular colors: purple, blue, and green. They also mounted sounds they recorded in the restaurant. The recorded sound was not the only effort to re-enact the "genuine" elements of the experience: they also embedded pictures and the sound of sea waves caused by weather dynamics (the air temperature, pressure, and wind speed). That means the "authentic" is continuously blended with the "forecasted"; each erratically juxtaposes another.

That being said, probably the human world is more of an artificially constructed one, nicely wrapped like a brand and completely predictable like time table, whereas the world of the penguin freely invades our "manmade" restaurants.

Tromarama ID

Tromarama is an artist collective founded in 2006 by Febie Babyrose, Herbert Hans, and Ruddy Hatumena. Engaging with the notion of hyperreality in the digital age, their projects explore the interrelationship between the virtual and the physical world. Their works often combine video, installations, computer programming, and public participation depicting the influence of digital media on society's perception towards their surroundings. They have held solo exhibitions at the Liverpool Biennial Fringe; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Mori Art Museum, Japan among other locations. Their group exhibitions include the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) Manila, Frankfurter Kunstverein; Gwangju Biennale; APT 7 QAGOMA, Brisbane; and the Singapore Art Museum.





Sunshine on Tranquility

2005

With a subtle gesture, a heterotopia is seamlessly generated in Yahui Wang's video installation that features prosaic elements in its imagery narration. Light, walls, a pot plant, and a crumpled paper ball are arranged to render the flow of time, while its ever-changing spatiality indicates a fictional world of its own, mirroring yet contrasting what is outside. The order of things in the simple and seemingly realistic scene however holds an otherwise magic breath in its composition. The room invites viewers to comply with a new orbit of the sun along with the motion of wall folding that unfolds the gap between reality and illusion in return.

The artist's poetic visual language is embedded in the smooth and precise manipulation of the materiality of images in relation to the viewer's sensation in multiple layers of a built environment. As a continuous leitmotif, Wang employs the fine interstice between image and space, or the contradiction of logic, as a trigger for viewers to contemplate on one's own very existence in space and time. While the video functions as a powerful gravity to draw us into the realm of illusion and rewrites the sense of reality, the work also sheds light on the embodiment of physical construction and senses. Therefore, the viewer's bodily awareness is anchored at the very center of the operation of this heterotopia, and one can feel empowered to turn the clock and to navigate through fiction and reality at the same time. In an almost theatrical sense, Sunshine on Tranquility performs and proposes this peculiar vision and power to levitate everyday landscape with a new resolution of imagination. The work is installed as the opening chapter of the exhibition, sharing the artist's sensibility to catalyze the first leap of mind.



Yahui Wang ™

Yahui Wang has an enduring focus on the interplay between moving images and architectural space. The simplicity in her effortless aesthetic expression is built upon her genuine attention to everyday life, embracing the literati tradition of Chinese culture and philosophy. It is the practice of mind and body that gives her work a witty strength to tickle the edge of technology and illusion, allowing the flow of thoughts to become a dialectic matrix of reflections and meditations. Wang is based in Taipei and has widely exhibited in Taiwan and internationally. She was awarded the Taipei Art Award in 2002, and for the Best Gallery Work and Presentation in Loop Award, Barcelona in 2007. Her recent solo shows include *The Diamond That is Raindrops*, Absolute Space, Tainan, Taiwan (2020); *A Brief History of Time*, Eslite Gallery, Taipei (2019), *Questions to Shadow*, Neuer Kunstverein Giessen, Giessen, Germany (2018), *A Slant of Light*, TKG+, Taipei (2016), etc.



Chi-Yu Wu ^{TW}
Hominins
2019

Single-channel video, Surround sound, Full HD 15 minutes, 58 seconds

Hominins

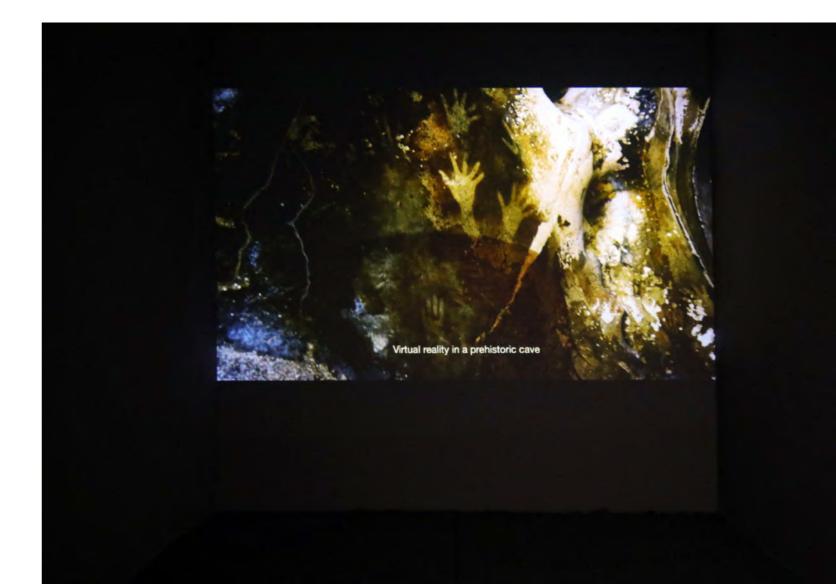
2019

Chi-Yu Wu focuses on discovering missing links and re-enacting connections between humans, animals, technical objects, and celestial spheres. Hominins challenges the hegemony of vision that led to drawing boundaries between humans and other species, between other species and objects. The imagery of the visual organs of living organisms — the eyes of human beings, and those of squid — as well as technological visualization images frequently repeat in the storyline of this work.

These images question the categories of the existing system: What do we refer to when we separate ourselves from the Other? What definitions, grammatical, biological, or geographic, are used to construct boundaries? Taking the cave paintings on Sulawesi Island as a starting point, Chi-Yu Wu re-imagines painting as a prehistoric virtual reality experience. By viewing these cave paintings as the prototype of current cutting-edge visual technology, the artist suggests dissolving the linear progress of history. The old and the primitive are no longer necessarily replaced by the new and the advanced. As a result, notions of origin are questioned, and current scientific knowledge systems need to be re-examined.

Chi-Yu Wu ID

Chi-Yu Wu is an artist based in Taipei, Taiwan. Chi-Yu's work focuses on re-establishing the connections between humans, things, animals, and a world left ruined by technocapitalism. His practice examines moving images and, through reproducing oral histories and myths, searches for contemporary narratives in those lost memories. He also collaborates on installations, video installation, and performance projects. The artist has participated in group exhibitions including *The Ouroboros*, TheCube Project Space, Taipei/ Casino Luxembourg (2019); Serious Games, HOW Art Museum, Shanghai (2019); 12th Shanghai Biennale: Proregress, Power Station of Art, Shanghai (2018); Trans-Justice, MOCA, Taipei (2018); Crush, Para Site, Hong Kong (2018); Taipei Biennial, Taipei Fine Arts Museum Taipei (2016); The 2nd CAFAM Future Exhibition, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing (2015). His films have been screened at the Short Film Program-Art Basel Hong Kong (2019); Beijing International Short Film Festival (2017); EXiS Festival, Seoul (2017); Arkipel Festival, Jakarta (2016). In 2017, he had a solo show, 91 Square Meters of Time, at TKG+ Project, Taipei. From 2014-2015, he was a resident artist at Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten.



ABOUT THE CURATORS

Esther Lu TW

Esther Lu is a curator and writer with a background in literature, art history, activism, and curatorial studies. She is interested in formulating conceptual ways of seeing and discursive events crossing art and reality. Many of her projects focus on interplays of sensibility, body, institution, and memory, driven by the curiosity to explore human conditions, boundaries of knowing, and how art embodies and exceeds our imagination to address various concerns toward humanity, culture, and relevances of life. Esther was the director of Taipei Contemporary Art Center from 2015 to 2017, and the curator of This is not a Taiwan Pavilion, a collateral event in the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. She has curated a number of international exhibitions and workshops in Asia and Europe. Her recent curatorial practice involves creating co-learning and innovative mediation strategies for professional workshops and audience experience.

Heru Hikayat ID

Heru Hikayat is an alumnus of the Faculty of Art & Design Bandung Institute of Technology, (ID). He has actively contributed his art reviews, essays, and obituaries to various newspapers, magazines, and other media; and up to 2012 was a correspondent for the Visual Arts Magazine, published in Jakarta (ID). Besides working as an independent curator, from 2012 to 2016 he was also a board member of Platform3, an initiative space in Bandung. From 2016 to 2018 he was a member of the teamwork for the Indonesian National Congress for the Arts, initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. In 2017 he initiated Seni Bandung--a collaborative arts event for the city of Bandung and was appointed as its first artistic director. In 2018 he was recruited by the Ministry of Education & Culture as part of the expert team for "Indonesiana"--a platform for cultural festivals; as well as a delegate for the Edinburgh International Culture Summit 2018. In 2020 he worked as a special staff for the Director-General of the Culture of Ministry of Education & Culture (ID) and joined Selasar Sunaryo Art Space as its in-house curator.

Shih-Yu Hsu ™

Shih-yu Hsu studied Communication Engineering and Visual Art Administration at National Central University in Taiwan and New York University. Her research field includes image, media, and feminism. She co-founded bi-lingual online media art platform SCREEN, organizing What Kind of Technology is Culture? as a part of the program in Asia Contemporary Art Week 2015, and presenting three-city screening The Art of Living in Beijing, Berlin, and New York. In 2016, she was the executive assistant of Taiwan Pavilion of Venice Biennale 2017. She currently works at Taipei Contemporary Art Center as a curator. Curatorial Projects include Video Lounge Series 1-3 (2018), Female Avatars' Futurist Statement, co-curated with Li Yu-chieh (2019), and Sensuous Tua-Tiu-Tiann (2019). Her writing on art has been published in several publications including Artforum.cn, Artist Magazine, Art Investment, and Yishu. Her independent curatorial projects include Emit at The Schoolhouse, Brooklyn, New York (2014); Level Up at Taiwan Economic And Cultural Office New York (2015) and Resistance is Futile at Gallery 456, Chinese American Arts Council, New York (2017).

The Turn of the Fifth Age

A project initiated by Selasar Sunaryo Art Space and Taipei Contemporary Art Center

26 February – 28 March 2021 Ruang B, Ruang Sayap and Bale Tonggoh Selasar Sunaryo Art Space Bandung, Indonesia CURATED BY

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Heru Hikayat Shih-Yu Hsu

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