

## ***Escape Velocity V***

By Zai Tang

You have arrived, right where you're supposed to be: in a world facing ecological disaster. Birds still sing here. But, perhaps, not for long.

Welcome to *Escape Velocity V*, an immersive sound installation by artist Zai Tang. I'm Kenji Praepipatmongkol, Curator at the Singapore Art Museum.

Over the past ten years, Tang has recorded the songs and calls of hundreds of different creatures across Singapore. They are the inhabitants of Bukit Brown Cemetery, MacRitchie Reservoir, Mandai, the Rail Corridor and Pulau Ubin—areas rich in biodiversity, but under threat from human development.

*Escape Velocity V* will take you into this archive of disappearing sounds.

The first part of the exhibition will introduce a visual vocabulary of birdsong and animal sounds. Zai employs graphite, charcoal and digital media to translate the sensuous particularities of chirps, croaks, hoots, howls, trills and tweets into graphic form.

For the second half of this experience, you will be seated and plunged into darkness. The tempo of the sonic composition you hear will accelerate, and previously recognisable voices will morph into abstract presences and ghostly spectres.

“Escape velocity” is a physics term that describes the speed needed to break free from gravitational influence—here, perhaps it means to break free from the human drive to dominate the environment, and to imagine the possibility of a different relationship with nature.

As you prepare for this journey, please put your mobile devices on silent mode. Listen well. Your ears are your best guide.