

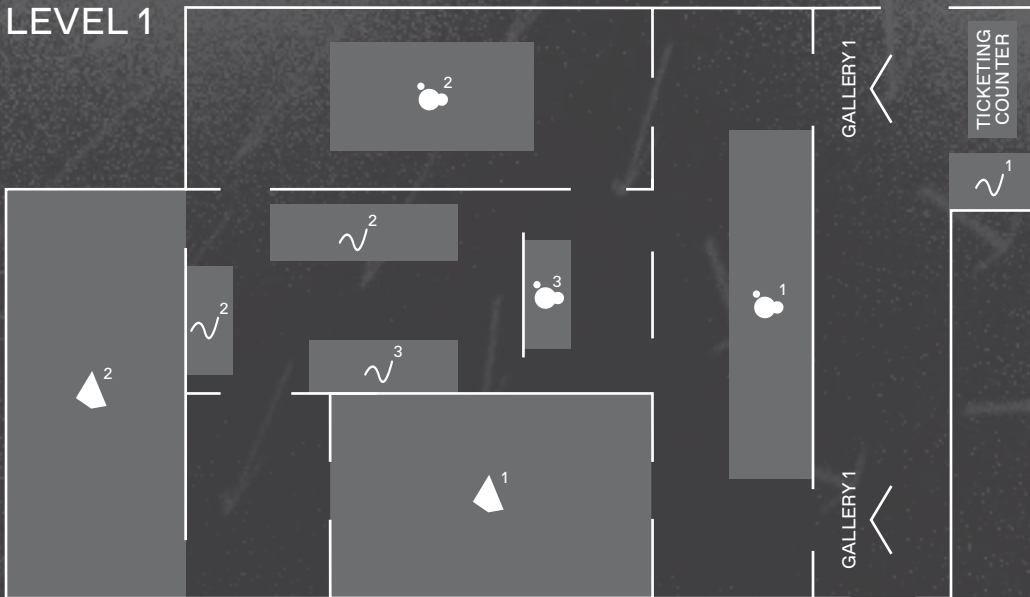
LONELY VECTORS

3 JUN – 4 SEP | TANJONG PAGAR DISTRI PARK
SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM




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CONTEMPORARY ART IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Lonely Vectors takes its cue from SAM's new space at the Tanjong Pagar Distripark. With its proximity to the port, this site is representative of the global economy and its choreography of movements. This exhibition reflects that and considers, beyond the circulation of goods and commodities, other terrestrial flows such as the bodies and histories that have been unmoored and set adrift by this world in motion. From the construction of special economic zones to patterns of migration, from seed distribution to peasant movements against mega-plantations, from the uneven flow of land and water to the cosmologies and worlds lost over time, *Lonely Vectors* looks at the different ways we connect.




LEVEL 1



CHOREOGRAPHIES OF LABOUR

-  ¹ Bo Wang
Fountain of Interiors
2022
Rebar column, fluorescent tubes, mirror base and potted plants; dimensions variable
-  ² P7:ISMA
Loading/Unloading
2022
Performance, video installation, steel plate and metal modules; dimensions variable
-  ³ Cian Dayrit
(in collaboration with Henry Caceres)
Penitent Plant
2022
Books, maps, embroidery and digital print on fabric; dimensions variable


HEATMAPS AND HOTZONES

-  ¹ Shu Lea Cheang
UKI VIRUS SURGING
2022
Digital Installation; Video: HD, seven channels, 16:9 format, colour and sound, 2 min (loop)
-  ² Ho Rui An
The Economy Enters the People
2021–2022
Lecture, video installation, digital prints on paper, conference table, office chairs, desk, stool, book trolley, books, thermos flasks, cups, saucers and acrylic name plate holders; dimensions variable
-  ³ Tiffany Chung
Reconstructing an exodus history: boat trajectories, ports of first asylum and resettlement countries
2017
Embroidery on fabric, 140 × 350.5 cm

MORE-THAN-HUMAN ECOLOGIES

-  ¹ Ho Tzu Nyen
H for Humidity
2022–
Virtual reality installation, ambisonic sound, 9 min
-  ² Zarina Muhammad, Joel Tan and Zachary Chan
Dioramas for Tanjung Rimau
2022
Multi-channel video installation, fermentation jar, wind instruments, spirit houses, salvaged oar, sand and rock; dimensions variable

LEVEL 5

 ² More of *Dioramas for Tanjung Rimau* can be found along corridor facing Tanjung Pagar port, Level 5.

~ CHOREOGRAPHIES OF LABOUR

Facilitating the global flow of goods and capital is a force that is equal to that in magnitude: labour. Many workers move in search of gainful employment, including transient labourers. The process of globalisation has been romantically hailed as the age of free trade and movement around the world, and while that is certainly true for the hypermobile elite, it is less so for these labourers.

Located outside Gallery 1, Bo Wang's *Fountain of Interiors* builds on the artist's 2016 residency, where he sampled light temperatures from various locations around Singapore. He found that light temperatures within migrant worker dormitories were the harshest and bluest out of his collected specimens, especially when compared to the warm ambient light found in spaces of consumption located in downtown Singapore. Building on these observations, *Fountain of Interiors* turns its attention towards architecture and construction. Migrant labourers are essential to Singapore's urban landscape, and *Fountain of Interiors* illuminates this by exposing the structural skeleton of many buildings—the rebar column. The lights that stream down the central rebar column create a blindingly bright waterfall that is surrounded by a motley selection of plants, both real and plastic. Much like other local architectural landmarks, Wang's work teeters between artifice and nature. The work highlights the demanding working conditions of transient labourers, as well as the estranged experience of living in the blinding lights of a city built on their toil and labour.

P7:1SMA's *Loading/Unloading* responds to the exhibition's proximity to the Tanjong Pagar port through an installation and a series of somatic interventions. The main undulating structure is a modular one, and will be disassembled and reassembled by P7:1SMA's associates in a series of performances and activations that will take place throughout the exhibition. As the associates balance, step or move the modular structures during

these performances, the structure will gradually flatten out and lose elasticity. Next to it, viewers will also encounter a film that documents the collective's rehearsals and activations. The artists had extensive conversations with casual port workers around Tanjong Pagar and incorporated real-time observations of the port's spatial architecture into their choreography. *Loading/Unloading* questions the dominant narrative that man-made megastructures such as shipping ports are super-efficient, and urges us to acknowledge how the workers that prop up these systems have been rendered invisible.

Penitent Plant is centred around the Philippines' role as the third largest exporter of bananas in the world. By tracing the production and consumption of Cavendish bananas, Cian Dayrit lays bare the global chain of supply and demand for the tropical fruit. Instead of surveying the existing infrastructures that enable the production and consumption of the Cavendish banana, Dayrit turns our attention towards the experiences of workers and their stories. The central textile features a banana tree surrounded by references to organisations and industry players that dominate the business of growing and exporting the fruit, and this is in turn built on a composite image of banana plantations in Mindanao. The work is accompanied by a series of drawings and texts that served as reference points for the artist in making this work.

When viewed as a cluster, these three works invite us to reconsider the global economy and its rhythms of production and consumption. It is easy to assume that the global economy is simply a well-oiled machine, especially when encountering a space like Tanjong Pagar Distripark. Yet, the entire global economy's infrastructure is dependent on the choreography of labourers who are less "movers" of the world than they who are moved around the world for reasons beyond their control.

HEATMAPS AND HOTZONES

Our understanding of physical space is often facilitated through the use of maps.

Topographical maps trace the surface of the earth, functioning as both documents and surveys of the land. These maps are supposedly neutral, but artists have questioned this assumption while examining the iterative possibilities of how maps may be reimagined to fully capture the diversity and nuances of life on earth.

Cartography can be a tool of violence and oppression, often used by institutions to sanction or conduct the extraction of resources. With *Penitent Plant*, Cian Dayrit wrings, cracks open and loosens the act of mapping and challenges its authority. The hand-drawn maps featured in the work are the result of counter-mapping workshops. Each map is a different assemblage, revealing the individual daily routines of workers and imbuing the scientific act of cartography with a playful subjectivity. By including these documents in this work, the artist invites viewers to consider the imperfections of data collection and urges us to advocate for stories from the margins on their own terms.

Similarly, the need to trace, survey and locate has also informed Tiffany Chung's practice. In *Reconstructing an exodus history: boat trajectories, ports of first asylum and resettlement countries*, Chung traces the movement of refugees between 1979 and 1989 with an embroidered map. Usually left off the map altogether, these refugees take centre stage in Chung's work. With stitches that vary in intensity and spacing, Chung alludes to the gaps in maps and charts, as well as the omission of refugees' personal histories. This work is part of Chung's long-term project, *The Vietnam Exodus Project*, that combines academic research with years of relationship building and activism. Though increased mobility is a trend in our interconnected world today, the artist asks us to consider migration

in Southeast Asia—whether voluntary or forced—as a multi-faceted phenomenon.

Ho Rui An's ongoing body of research focuses on the political and economic vectors in East and Southeast Asia since the turn of the 20th century. In his new work *The Economy Enters the People* he reflects on Singapore's role in China's economic transition. The state of the global economy today would be improbable without the emergence of China's market after its economic reforms in the 1970s. Ho looks at an entire generation of Chinese leadership who followed their Singaporean counterparts in taking the "economy" as their primary object of government. The work takes the form of a lecture performance and an installation that refers to the multiple assemblies and meetings between Chinese and Singaporean representatives. At the core of the work lies the question: What is the "economy," and how do we monitor and govern it?

Shu Lea Cheang's *UKI VIRUS SURGING* is a new iteration of the artist's ongoing series *UKI* (2009–), which itself was conceived as a sequel to the earlier film *I.K.U.* (2000). Reproduction in both the biological and social sense remains central to many of Cheang's works as she examines the body's cellular ability to evolve and, by extension, society's ability to become something else altogether, redefining gender, social roles and mechanisms. Much of the science-fiction scenarios in Cheang's work draw from her engagements with the recent economic crashes (first in 2000–2002, then in 2007–2008), through which she reimagines different ways of reconnecting with others.

These works provide alternative ways of remapping the global economy and place the people and the bodies who perform and reproduce these flows front and centre. By focusing on these bodies and their cellular potentials to evolve, they remind us that another world is possible.

▲ MORE-THAN-HUMAN ECOLOGIES

It is a cliché these days to claim that we are living in the Anthropocene—a time when human activities have led to dramatic effects on our environment, to the extent that we now operate with a magnitude comparable to that of a geological force as our actions change the geophysical surface of the earth. A large proportion of Anthropogenic geological forces come from the vectors of the global economy, and how these vectors have reshaped and damaged the surface of the earth over time. To protect our future, the global stewardship of the planet cannot continue to be operated from the usual control rooms; it requires us to tune in to other worlds that have been lost to us over time.

Shu Lea Cheang's ongoing *UKI* series (2009–) is a great point of entry to this line of thinking, as we consider our own cellular potential to become something other than ourselves. The work is an ever-evolving science fiction that serves as a critical response to the global financial crises of the 2000s, prompting us to reconsider the possibilities of a different social order altogether. In Cheang's *UKI* universe, everything that we think of as “normal” or “human” is always and already strange. Rather than a singular understanding of humanity, Cheang's work proposes that we contain multitudes, and we are always and already more-than-human.

Ho Tzu Nyen's *H for Humidity* seeks to re-frame and re-imagine Southeast Asia as worlds of water and air. It draws on the fact that the region has some of the highest intensities of rainfall and humidity, and how creation myths often begin with the churning of the seas. It also draws from the region's—in particular, Singapore's—colonial history of water management and public works, and our air-conditioned struggle against humidity in an age of climate change. At a time when sea levels are rising, what might it mean for us to “be like water”?

A string of smaller islands surrounds the southern coast of mainland Singapore. These islands include the renamed—and rebranded—Pulau Blakang Mati, or Sentosa. Today, Sentosa is known as an urban tourist destination, but it is also where one can find Tanjong Rimau, a protected coastal landscape where ecosystems made up of intertidal creatures can thrive. In the work *Dioramas for Tanjong Rimau*, Zarina Muhammad, Joel Tan and Zachary Chan refer to this site and the southern waterfront of Singapore, which has been earmarked for further redevelopment. The work features vessels that bubble and murmur out incantations, drawing audiences into the installation's soundscape. Looking towards the land and its layered history, the work draws on ancient cosmologies and spirit paths as a means of remembering. Here, “cosmologies” is used to refer to a community's shared understanding around the formation and organisation of the world, which often binds human and more-than-human realms together. Forgotten for generations, the past lives of the land are hiding in plain sight even as these places are redeveloped beyond recognition, nestled amongst the luxury apartments and skyscrapers that typify today's urban environment.

Against the busy backdrop of the Tanjong Pagar Distripark, these three works invite us to reconsider what is at stake if business continues as usual and if we continue to consume the world around us. What happens after a crash—or after our imminent extinction as a species—when the towering fortresses that we have built for ourselves prove insufficient against rising sea levels? Perhaps it is high time that we tune in and reconnect with the other worlds that were long thought to have been lost.

Information about *Lonely Vectors* at Public Libraries and Hoardings

Lonely Vectors is an exhibition that is presented across multiple venues, including local libraries and public hoardings.



The Green Crab: A Diagram of Auspicious Spatial Organization Zheng Mahler

19 Feb–28 Aug 2022
Hoarding around SAM's building
on Bras Basah and 8 Queen Street

The Green Crab is a speculative feng shui map of Singapore, which provides an alternative guide for navigating the city. Created by artist-duo Zheng Mahler, and in collaboration with Singaporean architectural historian Ian Tan and One Bite Design Studio, the work refutes the critique of Singapore as an inauthentic and artificial built environment. By looking past the functional modernity of the city-state, the work reveals the hidden qi flows of the "spiritual state" woven into the fabric of Singapore's master plan for urban development. While this work tunes into the elemental principles of feng shui, perhaps we should find a more inclusive approach to the environment around us, where cosmologies and engineering can co-exist.



Seeding Sovereignty Chu Hao Pei

1–31 Mar 2022
Bedok Public Library
2 Apr–6 Jun 2022
Ang Mo Kio Public Library
8 Jun–24 Jul 2022
Jurong Regional Library
27 Jul–11 Sep 2022
Tampines Regional Library

Seeding Sovereignty is artist Chu Hao Pei's attempt to provide an alternative mode of seed distribution. The work takes the form of a seed library, and is designed to build on shared knowledge, affirm our mutual dependence, and reimagine different ways of organising ourselves. It emerges from the artist's long-term interest in rice and its circulation within Singapore and Southeast Asia. As an alternative economy of seed re-distribution among peers, the work showcases a different choreography of labour that is much more transparent and contingent on informal relationships.



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