

MEDIA RELEASE

**SAM OPENS LONELY VECTORS: A MULTI-SITE EXHIBITION THAT TRACES
THE FLOWS AND NETWORKS OF A WORLD IN MOTION**

Through a series of three interconnected presentations, Lonely Vectors will kick off at SAM's hoardings and in public libraries before opening in Tanjong Pagar Distripark on 3 June.



Zheng Mahler, *The Green Crab: A Diagram of Auspicious Spatial Organization*, 2022.

Image courtesy of the artist.

Singapore, 23 February 2022 – From 19 February to 11 September 2022, Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is launching a new multi-site exhibition titled ***Lonely Vectors***, which will unfold in three stages. It will first open at the local libraries and public hoardings, then focus on the site of SAM's space at Tanjong Pagar Distripark – a logistics warehouse near a busy shipping port.

Lonely Vectors presents a series of artworks and new commissions that draw attention to the flow of bodies and labour, exclusive zonings, fault lines, choke points, and infrastructural politics that characterise the global economy. These include lines and networks around the world such as agricultural and irrigation channels, trade and shipping routes, economic zonings and migratory patterns, which not only reflect the movement of goods, but also highlight the uneven distribution of the global economy.

Mi You, guest curator for *Lonely Vectors*, says, "This multi-sited art experience aims to get visitors thinking about what it is like to live in a global economy that is constantly in motion. We want to convey these ideas through three interconnected presentations across everyday

spaces, so that audiences can draw different perspectives on themes such as the movement of goods, information and labour across the world, and how these choreographies have an impact on us and the people involved. Some of the works, such as the seed distribution network in Chu Hao Pei's *Seeding Sovereignty*, point to the personification of networks and their desire to connect differently, allowing audiences to actively participate in the unravelling of these networks."

Dr Eugene Tan, Director of SAM, says, "As part of SAM's aim to be a 'disappearing' museum, *Lonely Vectors* is a way to diffuse the experience of art across multiple spaces in the city. When thinking about the site of the port where SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark is located, we recognise that the choreographies of the global economy do not simply pass through the port but also extend outwards to those living in Singapore and beyond. In the same way, we hope to reflect these movements through the different presentations in various sites, before the exhibition is presented at Tanjong Pagar Distripark later in the year."

The Green Crab: A Diagram of Auspicious Spatial Organization

Till 28 August 2022 at SAM's Bras Basah and Queen Street hoardings



Zheng Mahler, *The Green Crab: A Diagram of Auspicious Spatial Organization*, 2022

Image courtesy of the artist.

Kicking off the first presentation at SAM's Bras Basah Road and Queen Street hoardings, *Lonely Vectors* opens with a newly commissioned site-specific installation – *The Green Crab: A Diagram of Auspicious Spatial Organization* – a speculative *feng shui* map of Singapore's urban environment that juxtaposes the philosophy of *qi*¹ against the logic of the global economy's flow, providing an alternative guide for navigating the city.

Created by Australian artist-duo **Zheng Mahler** in collaboration with Singaporean architectural historian Ian Tan and One Bite Design Studio, the work reveals the hidden *qi* flows woven into

¹ A concept in Chinese philosophy that represents cosmological energy.

the fabric of Singapore's master plan for urban development. It is an exploration of the intersection between state-led urbanism in East Asia, and the guiding principles of Chinese metaphysics.

Zheng Mahler says, "It has been an incredibly interesting process as Hong Kong based artists to try and engage with and understand Singapore from afar during the pandemic. This has only been possible through our collaboration with and learning from Ian Tan and his deep knowledge of Singaporean architecture and urbanism, and our engagement with the work of Master Tan whose reading of the city through the lens of Chinese metaphysics created a mythic and imaginary version of Singapore in our minds. It is also only through the incredible work of One Bite Design in Hong Kong that we could realize our vision. We hope the work gives a different perspective on the city to locals, as seen through alien and distant eyes."

The latest in a series of commissions to wrap around SAM's hoardings, *The Green Crab* invites the public to interact with the work by locating familiar neighbourhoods through annotated maps. As visitors discover various symbolic metaphors, myths and legends will be unravelled by way of these visually captivating maps.

Seeding Sovereignty

1 March to 11 September 2022 at Bedok, Ang Mo Kio, Jurong, Tampines public libraries



Left: Chu Hao Pei, documentation photographs of the artist's experiences in Yogyakarta with seed advocacy; image courtesy of the artist. Right: Chu Hao Pei, work-in-progress image of *Seeding Sovereignty*, 2022.

Image courtesy of Marcuse Woodworks.

In the second presentation of *Lonely Vectors*, a new commission by Singapore artist **Chu Hao Pei** will travel across the public libraries in Bedok, Ang Mo Kio, Jurong and Tampines. Titled *Seeding Sovereignty*, the presentation takes the form of a series of cabinets that function as a seed library to showcase Singapore's intertwined past with rice and the region.

Chu says, "*Seeding Sovereignty* was born out of my lived experience working together with vernacular youth farming collectives in Indonesia which led to my interest in the circulation and histories of rice in Singapore and Southeast Asia. Rice is a staple within our diet, but most of us do not know much about the crop: how is it cultivated? Who grows our rice? Are there certain cultural practices of ours that are tied to our relationship with rice? Over the course of my research into rice, I've found that the most enduring and compelling way to encourage a certain cognisance about these ideas is to have access to native rice seeds and try growing these varieties for yourself."

Both visual and tactile, these cabinets are accompanied by archival texts, images and myths within its drawers, and visitors are encouraged to interact with the seed library by gleaning information from its drawers and taking a packet of rice seeds home with them. The work reflects a different mode of seed distribution in response to the spatial typology of a library, inviting audiences to consider their relationship to the land, the food we eat, and how rice can bring a region together.

Chu adds, "Approaching this work as a seed library was a way for me to bring together some of the materials I've accumulated and to incorporate a clear call to action. *Seeding Sovereignty* is a work that is premised upon the exchanges and relations that it can facilitate, and in the process, responds to the fact that it is sited within the location of the public libraries – itself a place of knowledge, literature and dissemination."

Drawing on Chu's long-term interest in the circulation of rice within Singapore and the rest of Southeast Asia, the work is a continuation of Chu's research on seed sovereignty, which was also explored at *Present Realms*, a joint presentation that concluded the pilot SAM Residency programme. The first instalment of *Seeding Sovereignty* will be presented at Bedok Public Library from 1 March to 31 March 2022. Exhibition dates for the subsequent instalments at the other three libraries can be found in Annex A.

The third and final presentation for *Lonely Vectors* will be held at SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark from 3 June to 4 September 2022. More information on *Lonely Vectors* and its

programmes can be found at bit.ly/SAM-TheGreenCrab and bit.ly/SAM-SeedingSovereignty.
Media assets can be accessed via bit.ly/SAMLonelyVectors.

- Annex A: Exhibition Details for *The Green Crab: A Diagram of Auspicious Spatial Organization and Seeding Sovereignty*
- Annex B: Artist Biographies

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For media queries, please contact:

Tricia Low
Senior Associate
Tate Anzur
+65 9231 7480

tricia.low@tateanzur.com

Hilary Tan
Senior Associate
Tate Anzur
+65 8727 4845

hilary.tan@tateanzur.com

About the Singapore Art Museum

Singapore Art Museum opened in 1996 as the first art museum in Singapore. Known as SAM, the museum presents contemporary art from a Southeast Asian perspective for artists, art lovers and the art curious.

SAM's mandate as a non-profit arts institution is to build one of the world's most important public collections of Southeast Asian contemporary art, to preserve, research, exhibit and connect the art and the artists to the public and future generations through thought-provoking exhibitions and meaningful programmes.

SAM is redefining the idea of the museum by presenting art in multiple spaces including Tanjong Pagar Distripark, and two heritage buildings along Bras Basah Road and Queen Street that are slated to re-open by 2026.

As Singapore's national contemporary art museum, SAM is proud to be the organiser of the Singapore Biennale – a festival that celebrates contemporary art from all over the world across the island-city of Singapore. To find out more, visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg.

Annex A: Exhibition Details for *The Green Crab: A Diagram of Auspicious Spatial Organization and Seeding Sovereignty*

The Green Crab: A Diagram of Auspicious Spatial Organization

19 February to 28 August 2022 at SAM's Bras Basah and Queen Street hoardings



Zheng Mahler, *The Green Crab: A Diagram of Auspicious Spatial Organization*, 2022.

Image courtesy of the artist.

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. It also explores the intersection between state-led urbanism in East Asia, and the guiding principles of Chinese metaphysics. 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.

The same map is presented across SAM’s Bras Basah Road and Queen Street sites. The former takes the form of an unfolded scroll that traces the terrain of Singapore by way of the coastline, while the latter provides an oblique aerial perspective with annotations. Commissioned as a site-specific installation, *The Green Crab* serves as an auspicious opening for SAM’s multi-site exhibition *Lonely Vectors*.

Seeding Sovereignty

- *Bedok Public Library (1 to 31 March 2022)*
- *Ang Mo Kio Public Library (2 April to 6 June 2022)*
- *Jurong Regional Library (8 June to 24 July 2022)*
- *Tampines Regional Library (27 July to 11 September 2022)*



Chu Hao Pei, work-in-progress image of *Seed Sovereignty*, 2022. Image courtesy of Marcuse woodworks.

Seeding Sovereignty is a situated mode of seed distribution that affirms mutuality, community-building and decentralised organisation. Citing the spatial typology of a library and his long-term interest in the circulation of rice within Singapore and Southeast Asia, Chu Hao Pei's work takes the form of a seed library.

As a cumulative index of texts, stories, and images, visitors are encouraged to interact with the seed library by gleaning information from its drawers and taking a packet of rice seeds home with them. As one rummages through these holdings, established methods of information arrangement give way and new meanings can be composed through these materials. By providing a reflective topography of rice that is both mutable and empirical, *Seeding Sovereignty* invites audiences to reconsider their relationship to the land, the food we eat, and how one humble crop can knit a region together.

Seeding Sovereignty was made in collaboration with Dhanny Sanjaya and Marcuse Woodworks.

Annex B: Artist Biographies

About Zheng Mahler



Zheng Mahler is an ongoing collaboration between artist Royce Ng (b. 1983, Australia) and anthropologist Daisy Bisenieks (b. 1983, Australia) which examines global trade, the relational networks connecting nature, technology and human geography and beyond, as well as flows of mutual influence and the environmental architectures produced. The pair use digital media, performance and installation to develop speculative scenarios and immersive encounters that explore the limits and potentials of their respective disciplines. Together, they have exhibited, performed and participated in numerous art spaces, institutions and residencies, working alongside various communities in Australia, Asia, Africa, Europe and the US.

About Chu Hao Pei



Chu Hao Pei (b.1990, Singapore) is a visual artist whose works are primarily influenced by his long-standing interest in the interrelations between culture and the environment. Chu's practice explores the shifting physical, sociological and emotional connections with our natural and urban landscapes. His works shed light on the overlooked and accidental by interweaving the processes of engagement, documentation and research. In this way, he examines the

complexities of environmental and cultural loss (or resurgence) shaped by political, economic and social factors. Chu uses certain methods of documentation and representation to reveal aspects of his subject, while simultaneously concealing and drawing attention to what has yet to be communicated or understood.