

CAST BUT ONE SHADOW

AFRO-SOUTHEAST ASIAN
AFFINITIES

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AFRO-SOUTHEAST ASIAN AFFINITIES

24 SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 28 JANUARY 2022

CURATED BY KATHLEEN DITZIG
AND CARLOS QUIJON, JR.

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FOREWORD

HOSTED AT THE UP JORGE B. VARGAS MUSEUM AND FILIPINIANA RESEARCH CENTER IN MANILA,

Cast But One Shadow is the second of three exhibitions that represent a long-term research project instigated by curators Carlos Quijon, Jr. and Kathleen Ditzig. Developed in partnership with KONNECT ASEAN, an ASEAN Foundation arts

programme funded by the Republic of Korea, this series of exhibitions focuses on Afro-Southeast Asian affinities that emerged from decolonization projects during the Cold War. Having launched in January 2021 at the NTU ADM Gallery in Singapore, the third and final iteration of this project will be presented at the ASEAN Culture House, Busan in 2022. The project represents the first initiative by the ASEAN Foundation to examine an expanded and global history of Southeast Asian regionalism.

The exhibition features newly commissioned and loaned art works from artists who are engaged with transnational communities of exchange and Cold War political imaginations of race and affinity. Additionally, the exhibition converses with the library and art collection of the UP Vargas Museum as well as a range of historical materials including diplomatic gifts of paintings from former Indonesian President Sukarno to his contemporary Philippine President Diosdado Macapagal.

KONNECT ASEAN is in itself a cultural gift from Korea to ASEAN and part of a foreign policy initiative designed to strengthen ties of friendship and cooperation through the three pillars of people, prosperity, and peace. The partnership between KONNECT ASEAN, UP Vargas Museum, and the curators echoes the historical underpinnings of multilateral collaboration, an especially important concern during the ongoing global pandemic. Artists and art works connect us in tangible and dynamic ways to the world, advancing diplomatic efforts, building deep connections, mutual understanding, and goodwill that builds the resilient communities underpinning our future prosperity. Cultural diplomacy initiatives are key for us to draw ourselves out of the isolation caused by COVID19, reconnect, and build a better future for all.

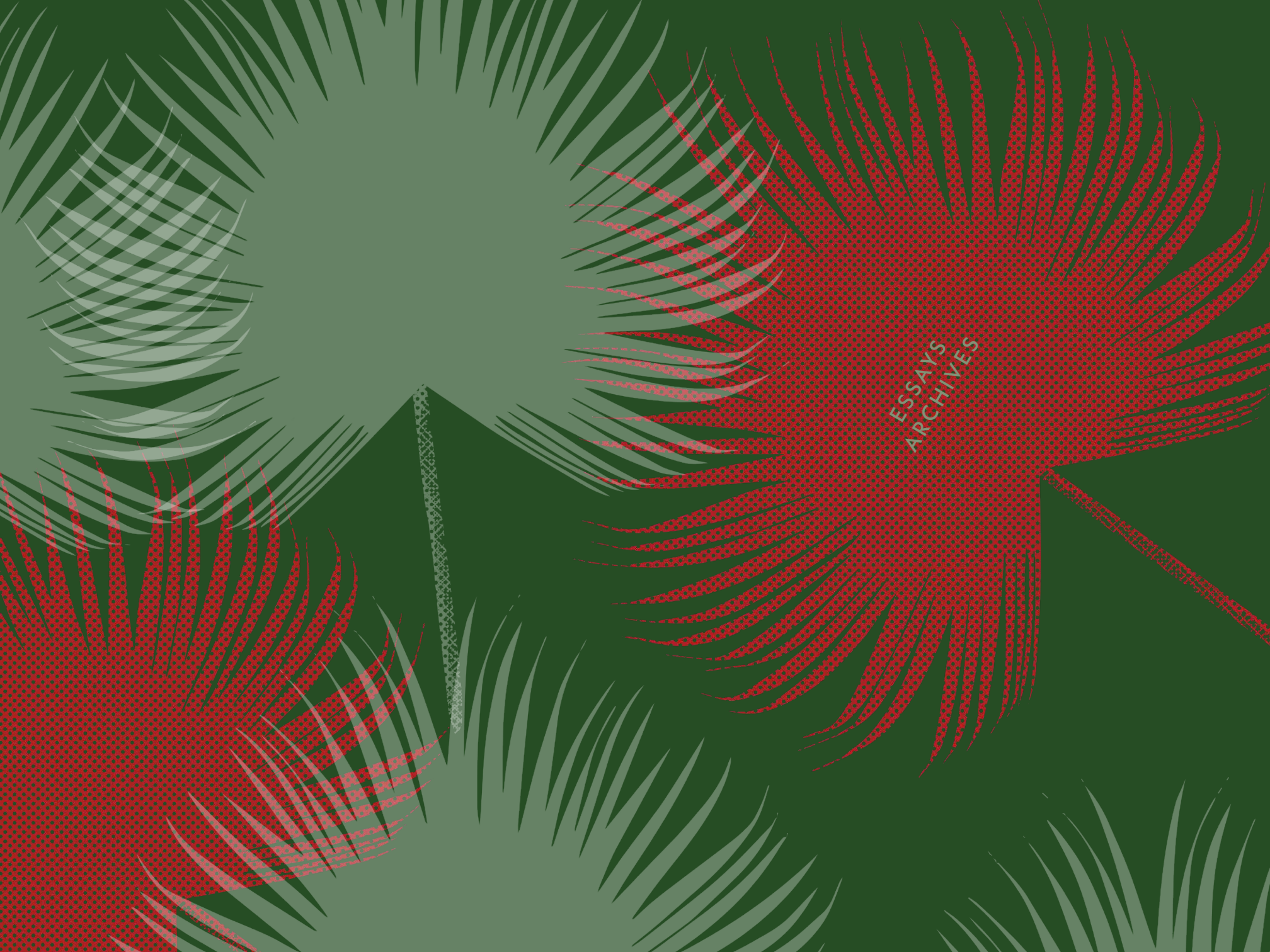


ASEAN has, since its inception, done much to facilitate people-to-people exchange in the arts sector across Asia to encourage dialogue and debate. This unique space for artistic discourse that allowed for pluralistic notions of what constituted a regional artistic identity and aesthetic is one of ASEAN's great legacies and is widely acknowledged, researched, and discussed by a new generation of art historians and curators. ASEAN nations and Korea have sent a strong signal that they are eager to highlight the enduring bonds of cultural exchange and the integral role the contemporary arts has in international relations and our everyday lives. As the post-Cold War reality of a new world has taken shape and formed new directions and conversations, this research project and its resulting exhibitions heralds a new era for cultural diplomacy and regional integration.

Many thanks to UP Vargas Museum for their generosity in accommodating *Cast But One Shadow* and to Kathleen Ditzig and Carlos Quijon, Jr. for their vision and resourcefulness in bringing this enterprise to fruition. I would like to acknowledge our stakeholders at the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Senior Officials on Culture and Arts for their endorsement and guidance and special thanks to the ASEAN Korea Cooperation Fund and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea for their support of KONNECT ASEAN.

BENJAMIN HAMPE

PROJECT DIRECTOR
KONNECT ASEAN
ASEAN FOUNDATION



ESSAYS
ARCHIVES

THE WORD AFFINITIES in the title of the exhibition curated by Kathleen Ditzig and Carlos Quijon, Jr. clarifies the hyphen between the terms Afro and Southeast Asian. The iteration of the exhibition in different places within Asia in turn complicates the claims to these relations or identifications, or perhaps, “worldly affiliations.”

Curatorially, the movement from site to site deepens the penumbra emerging from the overlays or the adjacencies.

If situated within the Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center at the University of the Philippines in Diliman in Metro Manila, the affinities intensify alongside or via the political persona and the cultural investments of Jorge Vargas, the donor of the collection. Vargas served as Executive Secretary of the Philippine Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon under the auspices of the United States in the thirties. When the Japanese Imperial forces occupied the Philippines a decade later, Quezon instructed Vargas to hold the fort as he embarked for exile in Australia. In the Japanese regime, Vargas became Mayor of Manila, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and later Ambassador to Japan. When the

Americans returned in 1945, he was tried for unpatriotic collaboration with the enemy but was later granted amnesty by the government of the post-war Philippine republic. Alongside his political career as a bureaucrat and public servant, Vargas

was an avid collector of art, books, stamps, and coins. He kept documents, memorabilia, and photographs. Such corpus articulated Philippine knowledge to be named Filipiniana; it was housed in his gallery at the family compound felicitously called “Kawilihan”, or fascination. Vargas gifted the trove to the University of the Philippines of which

he was an alumnus and Regent. To some extent, the birth of the collection aligned with the birth of independence on the heels, or within the *longue durée*, of three successive colonialisms.

It might be opportune for this essay, as a way to converse with the interests of the exhibition, to revisit the “international” locale of Vargas in Philippine history, as well as the manner by which this Philippine moment became part of a constellation of worlds beyond and through the archipelago, mediated through the politics and poetics of collecting and the collective such as the body of nation, which is the Philippines, or the body of knowledge, which is Filipiniana.

Surely, the “colonial” was a path into this international, or a world system dominated by encroaching nations, cultures, and governments. Vargas was born in the twilight of the protracted Spanish era and supervised the bureaucracy of two imperial dispensations. He embodied the ideals of American civic consciousness and the Japanese orientalist aspirations which intersected with anti-American, anti-western sentiments among Filipinos. In one of his speeches, he would assert: “The time has come for the Filipinos to discard Anglo-Saxon civilization and its enervating influence, to effect a revolutionary change in their way of life, and to recapture their charm and original virtues as an oriental people. It is for you to begin the evolution of a new national culture.”¹ The idea of the oriental under the aegis of Japan rested on a “native” culture that was a fundamental sieve through which to accept and refuse what the “world at large” was holding out. The oriental became some kind of an *ecumene* that mediated the international. Again, the words of Vargas: “Side by side with the Manchurians and the Malays, we acclaim the Rising Sun of Japan which lights the dawn of Asia. Hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, with all our Oriental brothers, from the northernmost plains of Manchoukuo to the farthest island of the southern seas, we are ready to build a new Asia for the Asian and now a Philippines for the Filipinos under the leadership of Japan, guardian and protector of the Orient.”²

1 Armando J. Malay, *Occupied Philippines: The Role of Jorge B. Vargas during the Japanese Occupation* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1967), 175.

2 Ibid., 188.



Romeo Enriquez, *Vargas and Sukarno, IV Asian Games*, 1962. UP Vargas Museum Permanent Collection.

A source of the international in Vargas was the scouting movement, which is intimately linked up with American tutelage and the consolidation of an empire of boys. The priming of a sound mind and a sound body, a persona alert to the demands of a potentially hostile world, was conceptually proximate with sports, which desired physical prowess and competition among bodies in this same world. Vargas was active in both the enterprises of scouting and sports, organizing assemblies like the Asian Games and jamborees, and thus performing the ethos of the inter/national citizen, the muscle memory of a cosmopolitan character.³

With this as the political scenography, the international in Vargas elaborated in his relationships with intellectuals who invested in idiosyncratic conceptualizations of the nation and the regions it was inhabiting. These propose a different set of layers around the entry points of colonialism, scouting, and sports. Also, these respond to the exhibition's gesture towards the fiction of place as a possible methodology in explicating affinities. After all, the word *relación* in Spanish pertains to both narrative and ties, beautifully congealing in Edouard Glissant's notion of the poetics of relations. Also, Jacqueline Rose's estimation of "fantasy" and its "states" in her book *States of Fantasy* (1998) is instructive as it reminds us, in the words of Edward W. Said, that the volition to belong is a "state," which "however far it travels...always holds its reference to the founding political condition of the modern world."⁴ In citing Rose, Said disseminates the either

overdetermining or dissipating valences of the postmodern, the nationalist, and the identitarian.

One of the influential figures to support Vargas in his collecting efforts was Aurelio Alvero, sometimes through the pseudonym Magtanggul/ Magtanggol Asa, who adumbrated the contours of Tagala that was at once language, nation, and modernity. A political kin of Alvero was Ahmed Ibn Parfahn who reveled in the ambience of a magisterial Malaya, civilizing and encompassing. Alvero or Asa helped Vargas collect and was profuse in his admiration for the patron; while Parfahn's works as an artist were collected by Vargas.

Written around 1945 by Asa and published in Muntinglupa at the Rizal New Bilibid Prison, *A Matter of Nomenclature* is almost like a manifesto for Tagala, a capacious category of ethnicity, culture, and civilization. He begins by alerting the reader to "two histories" governing the imagination of the Philippine subject: the "Hispanized" and the "real" history. The "Hispanized" narrative exceptionally occludes and rests on lies. It is the "real" history that must be "studied."

Asa critiques the name of the country, which is Philippines. He argues that it bears the trauma and stigma of Spanish colonization, as Philippines signifies the "property of Philip." He then goes through the other names that foreign powers have assigned to the archipelago in Chinese, Spanish, and English languages. For Asa, Tagala is a domain, which "includes Taiwan in the north and as far as Java in the south." The Japanese dictionary, Asa adds, alludes to Tagala in the word 'takarahune,' or "boat from Tagala," or directly refers to it in 'takara,' which indicates "treasures not belonging to Japan."⁵ From this geography emerges the "culture" of the Tagala, which speaks of the entire mode of living and habitat, subtending the cave, the forest, the plains, and the river. It also implicates the waterways and the knowledge of navigating them.

Asa proceeds to finally sketch out the phonology and philology of Tagala and proposes the reorganization of the regions according to this desired nomenclature. He ends by referencing Sun Yat Sen, whom he recognizes for leaving three doctrines to his people: San Min Tsu. Through this trajectory,

³ See Patrick Flores, "Collective," in *The Vargas Collection: Art and Filipiniana* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center, 2020), 12–37.

⁴ Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 495.

⁵ Magtanggol Asa [Aurelio Alvero], *A Matter of Nomenclature* (Muntinglupa: New Bilibid Prison, 1945), 9.



Ahmed Ibn Parfahn, *Inday Vargas*, undated. UP Vargas Museum Permanent Collection.

Asa claims that the “triune ideology” inheres in Tagala, which professes to “uprightness, action, and strength for the Country’s sake.”⁶

The historian Zeus Salazar has annotated Ahmed Ibn Parfahn’s *Malayan Grandeur and Our Intellectual Revolution* (1957, 1967), written in Mindanao, where Parfahn also lived and worked. Salazar opines that the author’s pan-Malayan fantasy is wild and fascist, short of saying it affirms Aryan supremacism through reversal. According to Salazar: “Aside from the ethnic Malays and the Filipinos, it includes an array of people across the equatorial belt, from Ireland through the Mediterranean basin, the Middle East and India to Southeast Asia and beyond the Pacific to Central America

and Peru.”⁷ This Malayan geographical all-overness was equaled only by an alacritous geopolitical talent: “Long before the descent of the Nordics and Mongols from their northern abodes, the Malay peoples occupied China, India, the Canaan area, the Balkans, the Spanish Peninsula and England. They built Egypt’s first pyramids, India’s first cities...”⁸ Cast by Salazar as an “amateur” and an “autodidact,” Parfahn would spin a breathtaking polemic resonating with Wenceslao Vinzon’s contemplation of a “Malaysia Irredenta” as conveyed in his eponymous speech in 1932. Alvero, Parfahn, and Vinzon, indeed, are ideologically concatenated.

It is of interest that Vargas visited Manchoukuo, a territory invoked and coveted by Mongolia, China, Russia, and Japan. In his speech in 1944 aired over Radio Hsinking, Vargas would declare:

This is the first time that I have traveled outside of the Philippines and Japan since the start of the war and my assumption of my duties as the Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Japan, and I thought it only fitting that I should start to see the actual operation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in the land of its first practical and most outstanding fruition. From what I have already seen of this vast and invigorating country, there is every promise of what I expect yet to see of the bounties of its agriculture, the energy and expansion of its industries, and the vitality of its national life.

In another address delivered in the capital Hsinking, Vargas was more direct in his exaltation of Manchoukuo as an exemplary outpost of Japanese progress, portent of Asiatic industrialization:

I am speaking to you from Hsinking, the beautiful new capital of the Empire of Manchoukuo, where my duties as your Ambassador to the leader nation of the Co-Prosperity Sphere have taken me in an unofficial visit of goodwill and inspection. For the past nine days I have traveled by land and air over the face of this vast continental Empire of the north, so distant in space and circumstances from our own Republic of the south, which is today the decisive battlegrounds of East Asia. Indeed it was hard for me to believe and painful to realize that the Philippines, through no fault of our Government and People, is once again being desolated by the flames of war, while here in Manchoukuo the harvested plains are silent and peaceful and gigantic factories roar with unhampered activity, transforming the fabulous wealth of this Empire, the iron, the coal, the precious metals, and the fruits of the soil, into the sinews of war.

Because of his explicit support for Japanese rule, Vargas was detained in Sugamo in Japan, alongside fellow Filipinos Jose P. Laurel, Camilo Osias, and Benigno S. Aquino, who all worked for the Imperial Army; and other figures from Germany and Burma of similar crimes. The nationalist historian Teodoro Agoncillo, who wrote a detailed account of the Vargas-Laurel collaboration case, is of the mind that the “collaboration question was not of the Filipino people’s concoction but the brainchild of

6 Ibid., 16.

7 Zeus Salazar, *The Malayan Connection : Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu* (Quezon City: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1998), 218.

8 Ibid., 219.

the Americans who, acting under the pressure of the prevailing war psychosis, dictated to the hapless Filipinos what they should and should not do or think in relation to the incidents and accidents of the war.”⁹

The prison in Sugamo was in a way an international quarter, gathering the putative enemies of freedom and democracy in a post-Japan Pacific. Vargas wrote prodigiously in detention, from November 15, 1945 to July 22, 1946, keeping a diary of his daily grind, which included calisthenics, banter over meals, and ruminations on what was happening in the outside world. He also remarked on liberation, which wistfully inflected the sentiment of exile. On July 4, he would say that “a free nation is born today, out of a world of chaos and despair.”¹⁰

In Sugamo, Vargas was in his element as a collector. He did a sketch of his cell. He decorated his room with facsimilia of some pieces in his collection. He listed down his personal belongings, from hair tonic, Christmas candy, and pictures of the paintings of Juan Luna, Fabian de la Rosa, and Fernando Amorsolo, among others. He kept a list of articles to be laundered. And he accounted for the places he owned together with the various names by which he called them. Besides Kawilihan, the family enclave in the urbanizing Mandaluyong in greater Manila, he would mention the following, inter alia: Kataasan, Katalagman, Kahadlukan, Kalangitan, Kabukiran, Kabatohan, Kapalayan, Kadagatan, Katubuhan, Kinataohan. The last appellation means homeland.



Installation view, materials from the Jorge B. Vargas Permanent Collection and Library

In his incarceration in Sugamo, Vargas was as finical as ever when it came to the curation of personal effects, which would inform social appearance, or the habitus of the cultured and the urbane. While his confreres were busy packing their luggage as they prepared for their return to the Philippines, he was thinking of his bath robe: “I asked Aquino if he had any space in his bag for my bath robe which I had forgotten to put in the trunk and the darn thing is already too full for anything. When we came back, he came over to get the bath robe and also the wire for tying up his suit case.”¹¹

9 Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *The Burden of Proof: The Vargas-Laurel Collaboration Case* (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 1984), x.

10 Ibid., 399.

11 Ibid., 422.

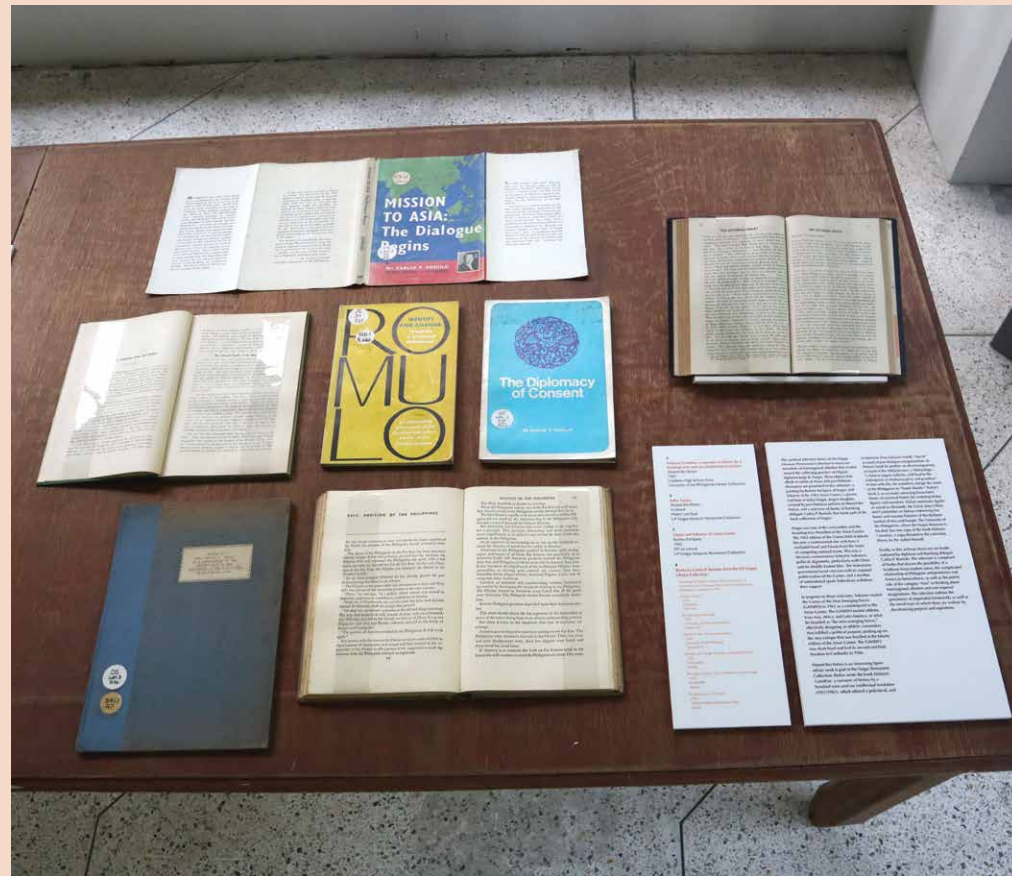
MATERIALS FROM THE JORGE B. VARGAS PERMANENT COLLECTION AND LIBRARY

THIS ARCHIVAL SELECTION draws on the Vargas Museum Permanent Collection to tease out narratives of transregional affinities that revolve around the collecting practice of Filipino diplomat Jorge B. Vargas. Three objects that allude to orbits of Asian and pan-Malayan discourses are presented in this selection: a painting by Romeo Enriquez of Vargas and Sukarno at the 1962 Asian Games; a plaster-cast bust of Inday Vargas, Jorge's wife, created by pan-Malayan polemicist Ahmed Ibn Parfahn; and a selection of books of Bandung delegate Carlos P. Romulo that forms part of the book collection of Vargas.

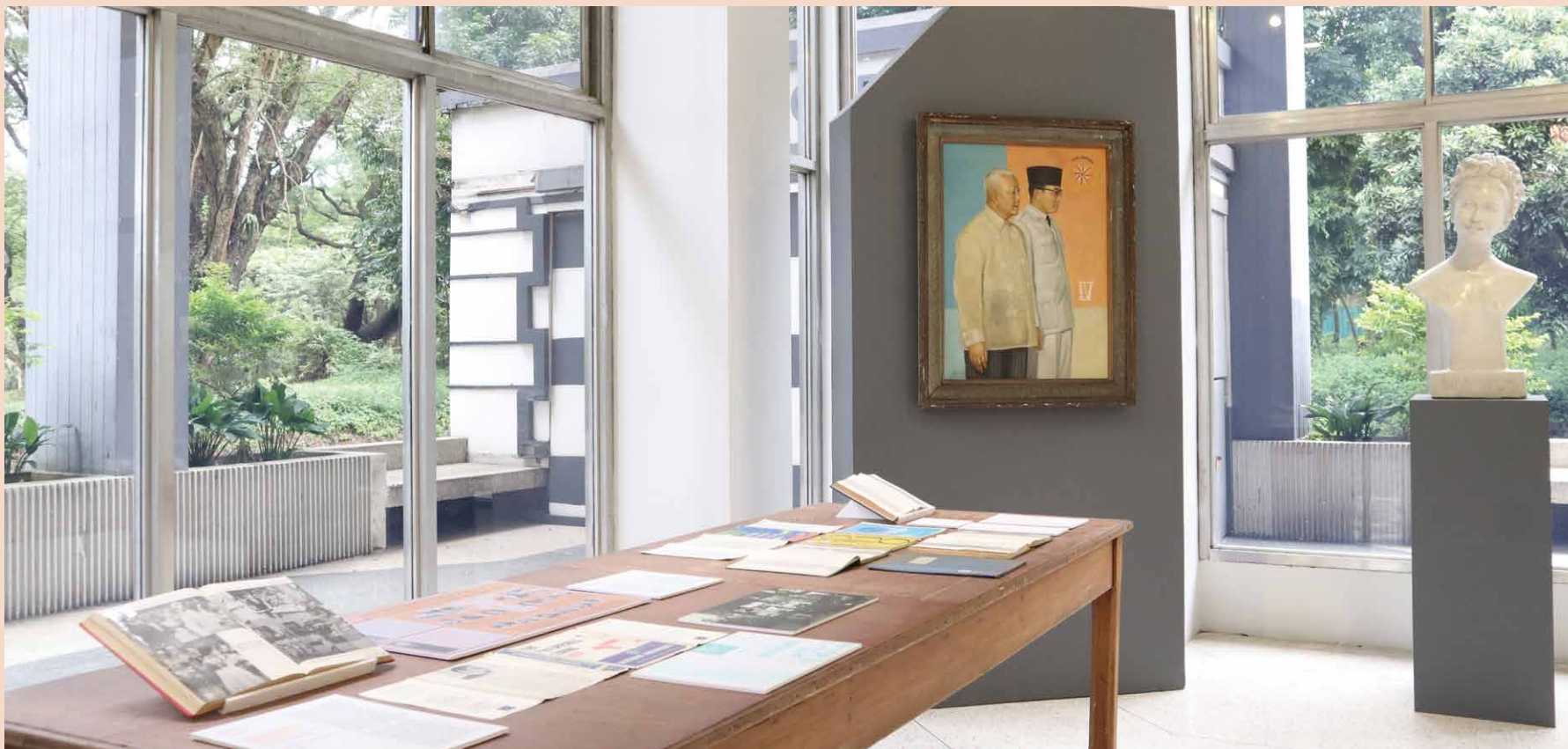
Vargas was one of the co-founders and the founding Vice President of the Asian Games. The 1962 edition of the Games held in Jakarta became a controversial one with how it excluded Israel and Taiwan from the roster of competing national teams. This was a decision commentators linked to Sukarno's political alignments, particularly with China and the Middle Eastern bloc. The Indonesian government faced criticism with its imputed politicization of the Games, and a number of international sports federations withdrew their support.

In response to these criticisms, Sukarno created the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) in 1963 as a counterpoint to the Asian Games. The GANEFO invited athletes from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, or what he branded as "the new emerging forces," effectively designing an athletic convention that fulfilled a political purpose, picking up on the very critique that was levelled at the Jakarta edition of the Asian Games. The GANEFO was short-lived and had its second and final iteration in Cambodia in 1966.

Ahmed Ibn Parfahn is an interesting figure whose work is part of the Vargas Permanent Collection. Parfahn wrote the book



Ahmad Ibn Parfahn's *Malayan Grandeur: a narrative of history by a hundred seers and our intellectual revolution* (1957/1967) and books by Carlos P. Romulo



Malayan Grandeur: a narrative of history by a hundred seers and our intellectual revolution (1957/1967), which offered a polemical, and in historian Zeus Salazar's words, "fascist" account of pan-Malayan exceptionalism. In Parfan's book he proffers an all-encompassing account of the Malayan race, a Malayology—"a field of inquiry (which)...will lead to the redemption of (Malayan) glory and grandeur." In line with this, he wanted to change the name of the Philippines to "Tanah Manile." Parfahn's book is an account correcting Eurocentric biases of universal history by centering Malay figures and narratives. Parfahn nominates figures as varied as Alexander the Great, Jesus Christ, and Constantine as Malays redeeming lost honor and narrates histories of the Malayan control of Asia and Europe. The University of the Philippines, where the Vargas Museum is located, has one

copy of the book *Malayan Grandeur*, a copy donated to the university library by the author himself.

Finally, in this archival showcase are books authored by diplomat and Bandung delegate Carlos P. Romulo. The selection is comprised of books that discuss the possibility of a Southeast Asian student union, the complicated relationship of Philippine independence and American benevolence, as well as the potent role of the category "Asia" in thinking about transregional affinities and anti-imperial imaginations. The selection outlines the persistence of imperialist frameworks as well as the novel ways in which these are undone by decolonizing projects and aspirations.

These moments sketch out the intricate entanglements of claims to pan-Malayan solidarity in the context of neo-colonial anxieties and geopolitical pressures. An editorial written by Jose Ma. Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, reviews the rhetorics that inform the establishing of Maphilindo. Titled “MAPHILINDO: Afro-Asian or Anglo-American?” and published in the *Far East Reporter: Some Background on United States in South East Asia: Maphilindo* in 1965, the essay annotates the stakes of each party in the success of a Malayan confederation. For Sison, Maphilindo had the possibility of becoming an Afro-Asian anti-imperialist instrument or an Anglo-American method to force Indonesia into a trap with two Anglo-American client nations (the Philippines and Malaysia) effectively dampening its non-aligned and anti-imperial leverage.



HAN SUYIN was a Eurasian physician, novelist, and public intellectual with Chinese and Belgian parentage who lived in Malaya during the period of the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960). Han was an outspoken commentator of Chinese affairs, identifying herself as Chinese and often advocating through her writing for more understanding between China and the West.

While her books were fictionalized accounts based on her life, they nevertheless endeavored to give as exact a picture of the time as possible. She wrote the novel *A Many Splendored Thing* (1952) based on her interracial relationship with the journalist Ian Morrison who would die in 1950 while reporting on the Korean War. The foreword to the book published in 1952 was written by Malcolm Macdonald, the Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia, in which he claimed that “Han writes with an insight far deeper than any that I command about...contemporary Asia and of relations between East and West.”



Installation view, Han Suyin archive

The selection of book covers in this display represent this trajectory in her writing. The book *...And the Rain my Drink* (1956) was a fictive account of the Malayan Emergency that supposedly damaged the career of her second husband Leon Comber who was a Special Branch Officer. *Mountain is Young* (1958) is supposedly one of the only historical accounts of the coronation of Nepal King Mahendra and Queen Ratna in May 1956. The introduction of *The Four Faces* (1963) would go so far as to claim that Han hid truth in fiction.

Beyond being a writer, Han was an icon of her time. *A Many Splendored Thing* was made into the Hollywood blockbuster *Love is a Many Splendored Thing* (1955), released the same year as the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung. It would make Han a celebrity and a voice for a “modern” racial consciousness. In Malaya, her fashion choices as much as the design of her living spaces would be featured in women’s magazines. Deeply invested in cultural life in Malaya, she collected art works by Nanyang painters as seen in the portrait of her by Ernest Haas. She also contributed to the establishment of Nantah University where she also pioneered a course on Afro-Asian literature.



Bertha's parents went away, and Bertha was left to be looked after by an Indonesian woman, a servant in her parents' house. This Malay woman thought that Bertha had been given to her as her own daughter. Malays, Indonesian, we Khmers, and many other Asians, easily adopt children, making no difference between those born of the flesh of others. And so this woman, whom I shall call Fatimah, thought the hold given to her by Allah the One and Only God, and being Muslim brought the child up as a Muslim...

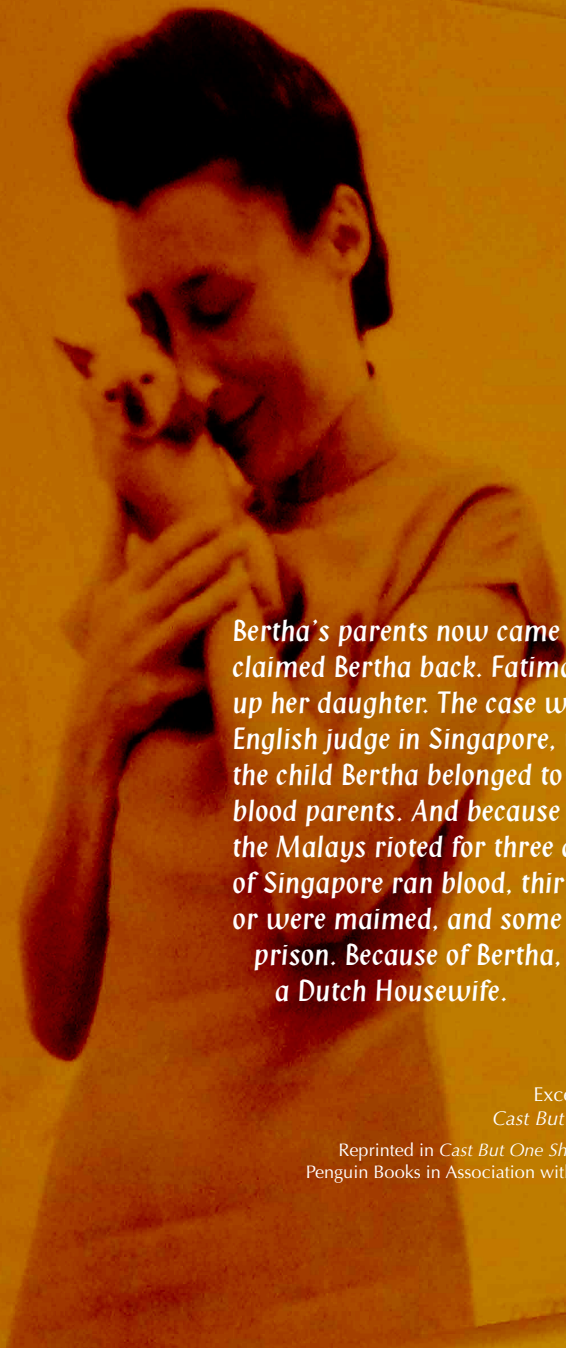
But by the time Bertha was fourteen the war was over, and her parents returned to Indonesia. The war had taught some men that all need freedom, as the bird needs to fly, but not all had learnt this lesson, certainly not certain governments. The French came back to Indo-China, the Dutch returned to Indonesia, and for a while they tried to go against the great flow of the cosmos which is forever forwards, both in the stars and in the affairs of men. And it took much blood to make them go away again.

Bertha's parents now came to Fatimah and claimed Bertha back. Fatimah refused to give up her daughter. The case was taken to an English judge in Singapore, who ruled that the child Bertha belonged to her flesh-and-blood parents. And because of this judgement the Malays rioted for three days, the streets of Singapore ran blood, thirty people died or were maimed, and some are still in prison. Because of Bertha, who is now a Dutch Housewife.

HAN SUYIN

Excerpt from the novella
Cast But One Shadow (1962)

Reprinted in *Cast But One Shadow and Winter Love*
Penguin Books in Association with Jonathan Cape, 1965



CAST BUT ONE SHADOW AS EXHIBITION:
HAN SUYIN IN MALAYA AND THE RACIAL IDIOMS
OF TRANSREGIONAL AFFINITIES

AN INTRODUCTION TO AFRO-
SOUTHEAST ASIA AS EXHIBITION

CARLOS QUIJON, JR. AND I began this research project, *Afro-Southeast Asia: Pragmatics and Geopoetics of Art during a Cold War*, to uncover the lesser known aspects of Southeast Asian regionalism as they pertained to the Cold War entanglements of international decolonial projects, particularly Afro-Asian solidarity projects. The project grew out of our respective research on histories of Southeast Asian regionalism and our meeting through the research project Modern Art Histories in and across Africa, South and Southeast Asia, supported by the Getty Foundation's Connecting Art Histories initiative and organized by the Asia Art Archive, Cornell University, and Dhaka Art Summit in 2019 and 2020.

Afro-Southeast Asia: Pragmatics and Geopoetics of Art during a Cold War posits “Afro-Southeast Asia” as a field of inquiry into the imaginaries of global solidarities that informed the conceptualization of “Southeast Asia” as region. These solidarities

KATHLEEN DITZIG
CO-CURATOR

represented different alignments that were emerging out of a postimperial project of worldmaking.¹ Some of these

alignments took on the language of regionalism that we still use. For example, Southeast Asia as both geography and geopolitical entity. Other imaginations of alignment were based on affinities of race and ethnicity, while other imaginations were based on the compromises and efficiencies found in the shadow of the struggles between world powers.

Our research into “Afro-Southeast Asia” is invested in the historical conditions that both limit and expand these imaginaries. How do solidarities and affinities arise around the trajectory of flight plans? What are the pragmatics—self-interests and needs—that limit and elaborate solidarities? How do forms of geopoetics—what curator Patrick Flores has defined as worlding not based on the jostling of states²—persist in artistic practices that resist the limitations of geopolitical pragmatism?

The exhibition weaves through modern and contemporary art works as well as archival material and the pop culture detritus that are more often found in garage sales and family estates rather than museum collections. In this regard, the exhibition and the licenses that come with exhibition-making are the kernel of this project. The exhibition is a particularly fecund medium for collaboration and for the holding together of multiple voices and perspectives that can speak to affinities across historical periods and diverse communities. While our exhibitions are not history exhibitions, they do the work of thinking historically and bring together material and contemporary art works that attempt to uncover historical trajectories that have not necessarily been studied academically. One example is our research on Diosdado Macapagal's and Lee Kuan Yew's diplomatic trips to Africa between 1963 and 1964.

“Afro-Southeast Asia” through the exhibition is a simultaneous lens upon the modern and contemporary. The exhibition unravels historical entanglements through the archival material and through art works that examine the enduring legacies and revisions of “living” histories in the present. Ming Wong's *Hand-in-Hand* (2019), a video poem that sees Wong take on the persona of a cultural ambassador revisiting the sites of Sino-Senegalese “friendship” built through Chinese aid, was presented in the first iteration of the exhibition in Singapore. It alludes to Chinese propaganda and foreign policies that “revived” decolonial projects of the Cold War, in particular the building of the Museum of Black Civilizations, an institution conceived by pan-Africanist Leopold Senghor in the 1970s but realized only in 2018 with Chinese capital. Tuan Andrew Nguyen's *The Specter of Ancestors Becoming* (2019), a four-channel video installation that expands on the legacies of Senegalese

1 The postimperial is a term employed by Adom Getachew. See Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

2 Patrick Flores, “‘Time to Unlearn’: Urgency and Practical Intelligence in the Southeast Asian Museum,” CIMAM, 11 November 2017, <https://cimam.org/forum/time-to-unlearn-urgency-and-practical-intelligence-in-the-southeast-asian-museum-by-patrick-d-flores>.

soldiers, or *Tirailleurs sénégalais*, that were deployed to Indochina to combat the Vietnamese uprising against French rule through a collaboration with Vietnamese-Senegalese descendants, presented for the first time in *Cast But One Shadow*, is an almost 80-year retrospective look at the generational fractures and personal living histories of the descendants of Vietnamese-Senegalese encounters.

CAST BUT ONE SHADOW: HAN SUYIN AS EXHIBITIONARY CIPHER

Cast But One Shadow is the second iterative exhibition of our research project. The first, *In Our Best Interests: Afro-Southeast Asian Affinities during a Cold War*, was presented in Singapore in 2021 at the NTU ADM Gallery. It focused on the discourses that shape the history and legacy of Afro-Asian solidarity and proposed Southeast Asia as a discursive and historical framework. The exhibition attended an examination of Maphilindo, an imagination of Southeast Asian regionalism based on a pan-Malayan ethnos. It was a regionalism that unfolded alongside *Konfrontasi* and was entangled in Cold War diplomacy. Carlos's research on the figure of Robert Kennedy, brother of United States President John F. Kennedy and then US Attorney General and overall liaisons officer for the Far East, has found that Maphilindo prospected an opportunity to take the war out of "the jungle."³

The title of the Singapore iteration, "In Our Best Interests," is a quote from an encounter between the African American journalist Carl T. Rowan and the Philippine Senator Claro M. Recto in 1954 that was reported in Rowan's travelogue *The Pitiful and the Proud* (1956). It points not only to literary, but more broadly, to artistic pursuits as sites of entanglements between the American Civil Rights Movement, Afro-Asian solidarity, and Southeast Asian regionalism.⁴

Cast But One Shadow expands on these examinations of race, decolonialization, and affinity through a deep examination of diplomacy

³ Carlos Quijón, Jr., "The Gift of Modernity," paper presented at the conference "Modernities in the Contact Zone: Translating Across Unfamiliar Objects," 21-23 October 2021. See also Michael Leifer, "Anglo-American Differences over Malaysia," *The World Today* 20, no. 4 (1964): 156-67.

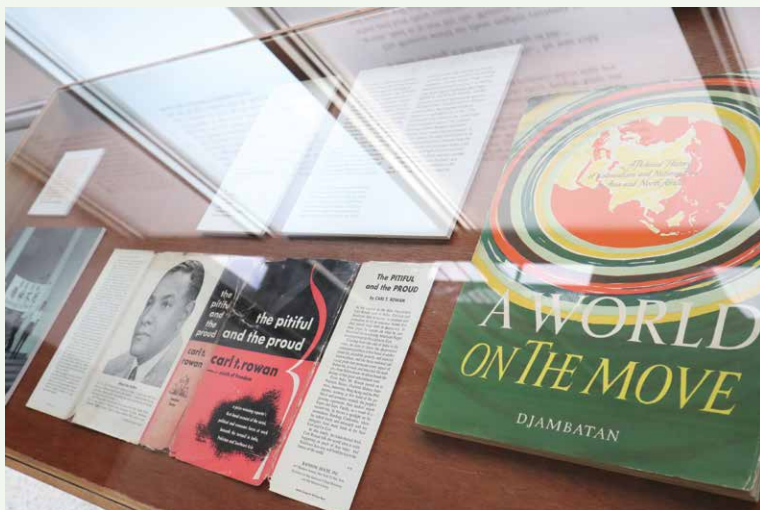
⁴ See www.afrosoutheastasia.com for the curatorial essay on *In Our Best Interests: Afro-Southeast Asian Affinities during a Cold War*.



Ming Wong, *Sunu Jappo / 手拉手 / Hand in Hand*, 2019.



Tuan Andrew Nguyen, *The Specter of Ancestors Becoming*, 2019.



Archival materials on the US state-funded African-American international cultural exchange, the 1955 Bandung Conference, and related texts

and race (particularly imaginations of Chineseness) in relation to Southeast Asia and the Philippines and Malaya as constellating points in the region's history. Like *In Our Best Interests*, the title of this exhibition in the Philippines borrows from a literary source. While *In Our Best Interests* quotes an exchange that happened in Manila, *Cast But One Shadow* quotes an exchange that happened in Malaya.

Cast But One Shadow, first published in 1962, was one of two novellas that Han Suyin wrote while she lived in Malaya (1952-1964).⁵ Its story is of a French girl Sylvie who is adopted by a Khmer woman after her parents are killed during the Japanese occupation and is later caught between being

French and Khmer. It unfolds retrospectively after her death when her brother returns to find out more about her and his ill-fated attempt of reclaiming her. While a work of fiction, Han Suyin's story was modelled on the real story of Maria Bertha Hertogh, who was also known as Nadra Adabi. Nadra was a Dutch Eurasian who had been left with a Malay woman when her father was captured as a prisoner of war during the Japanese occupation of Java and her mother was forced to go back to the Netherlands. Nadra was raised as a Malay Muslim, speaking only Malay and practicing Islam. After the war, in the early 1950, her biological parents tried to reclaim her. On August 1, 1950, she married Mansoor Adabi, a teacher in Singapore. While 13 years old at the time, by her own accounts, she had wanted the marriage and wanted to continue living as a Muslim. Upon learning of the marriage, the Hertoghs pressed their claim for their daughter through the Dutch government, creating a diplomatic issue with the British colonial government in Malaya.⁶ The court case in Singapore would overturn the marriage and assign custody of Nadra to the Hertoghs. Nadra would become Maria and return to the Netherlands.⁷

Historical accounting is a key component of Han Suyin's *Cast But One Shadow*, such that a reference to the case is made early on in the narrative.⁸ However, the novella itself was a fiction of a fiction. *Cast But One Shadow*

5 The novella was published as part of a compendium titled *Two Loves: Cast But One Shadow and Winter Love*. She wrote *Cast But One Shadow* upon her return to Malaya after attending the Geneva Conference on the International Agreement on the Neutrality of Laos from May 16, 1961 to July 23, 1962. The other books that she would publish in this period included ...*And the Rain my Drink* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956); *The Mountain is Young* (London: Johnathan Cape, 1958); and, *Four Faces* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963).

6 Over time, the issue would garner international attention and be framed as competition between the legitimacy of a Muslim or Western worldview. Keenly aware of the importance of having international support, Nadra and Mansoor would work with the Dutch photographer John Thiessen Jr. to make a film about their story. Images from the film would find their way into *Life Magazine's* feature of the case. The exhibition presents a collection of material and the said photographs.

7 Convinced that the colonial legal system had a bias against Muslims, the judgement from the case would incite a riot. The violence would be reported internationally. Historian Syed Muhammad Khairudin Aljunied who has studied the event in great depth points to it as a moment that diminished British prestige and proffered Islam as an ideological and collective platform to resist colonial rule. See Syed Muhammad Khairudin Aljunied, *Colonialism, violence and Muslims in Southeast Asia: The Maria Hertogh controversy and its aftermath* (London: Routledge, 2009).

8 See an excerpt from the novel in pages 22–3 and 46–7.

started as an original script for the 1963 film *Cast But The Same Shadow*.⁹ The film which premiered in Kuala Lumpur in February 1963 was a co-production between Cathay-Keris of Malaya, Precitel of France, and DaMa Cinematographic Co. of Rome. It was Cathay-Keris's first international co-production—its bid to break into an international market.¹⁰ In a further blending of political reality and cinema, the film would feature Madam Pung Peng Cheng, the only woman in the Cambodian parliament at the time.

Han would write later in her memoirs that she was “half-hearted about the script.”¹¹ She accompanied the film crew to Angkor Wat and criticized the film. She thought the film so disastrous she would write *Cast But On Shadow* in response. The novella was a redemptive work to tell a story that the movie could not carry.

In employing the title of this literary work as a title for the exhibition, we mobilize this history of *Cast But One Shadow* into the orbit of our inquiry. We are also therefore employing Han Suyin as a cipher to navigate the historical entanglements of race, decolonialization, and the geopolitics of postimperial worldmaking that the exhibition foregrounds. *Cast But One Shadow* in all its complexity, as a failed film project and aspiration to break into an international market as the first Euro-Asian film co-production and, moreover, as a retelling of story that is rooted in a regional identification of colonial resistance is an analogy for the ways in which projects of solidarity were both limited by the geopolitics of their time as much as they were records of the geopoetics of re-making the world.

9 The film was released in the United States as *Your Shadow is Mine*.

10 Newspapers at the time write “Many Malayan cinema goers may wonder why Cathay-Keris whose main interest is making Malay language films, has signed a co-production agreement to make this film. The answer [is] because more money is needed for Malay films and this arrangement should make a good profit. The Malay film business has always been unprofitable because the industry is new. The domestic market is very small and now there is virtually no overseas market...The studio looks to its first co-production arrangement with the French company to bring in some of this much needed money.” See “Co-production for film of Suyin book,” *Straits Times*, 30 January 1962, 17.

11 Han Suyin, *My House Has Two Doors* (London: Granada, 1982), 329.



[LEFT] Portrait of Han Suyin by Ernst Haas (ca. 1960). Getty Images.
[RIGHT] Reproduction of the poster for the film *Love is A Many-Splendoured Thing* (1955) based on Han's book *A Many-Splendoured Thing* (1952)

To understand *Cast But One Shadow* as an analogy and Han Suyin as a cipher for the exhibition, we have to look at the writer herself. Han Suyin was the pen name for Elizabeth Kwangju Chou (1916–2012).¹² Born in Xinyang to a Chinese father and Flemish mother, she studied medicine in Brussels and London. Her first husband who she married in 1938 was a Chinese nationalist military officer. With him she moved to Chongqing, the then capital of the nationalist government where she worked on her first published work, *Destination Chungking* (1942) with an American missionary doctor, Marian Manly. Her husband would die in action in 1947 fighting communist forces in the Chinese Civil War. She moved to Hong Kong in 1949, where she met and fell in love with an Australian war correspondent from Singapore, Ian Morrison. He was subsequently killed in the Korean War in 1950. Her book, *A Many-Splendoured Thing* (1952), was based on their

12 Her birth name has also been recorded as Rosalie Matilda Kwangju Chou. See Feng Cui & Alex Tickell “Han Suyin: The little voice of decolonizing Asia,” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 57, no. 2 (2021): 147–53.

love affair. An international commercial success, the book was made into the Hollywood blockbuster *Love is A Many-Splendoured Thing* (1955). It made her an internationally famous author and public figure. In 1952, she moved to Malaya after marrying Leon Comber, then a British colonial police officer. She would live in Malaya for 12 years, where she also practiced as a doctor. During this period, she was inspired by the region's politics. She would write ...*And the Rain my Drink* (1956) which was critical of the Malayan Emergency. She also promoted and supported the establishment of Nanyang University in Singapore (Nantah), the first "Chinese" university outside of China. Han and Comber divorced in 1958. She met and fell in love with a South Indian colonel, Vincent Ratnaswamy, while in Nepal at the coronation of King Mahendra in 1956. *The Mountain is Young* (1958) was based on their love story. Han left Singapore in 1964, after being criticized for giving a speech opposing Singapore's merger with the Federation of Malaya, Sarawak, and North Borneo.¹³ From the Chinese Civil War to the Korean War to the Malayan Emergency and to her associations with the broader non-alignment movement, the trajectory of her life maps key moments of fracture that inform the Cold War in Asia and an expanded history of Southeast Asian regionalism.

Through fiction and her interstitial position as a Eurasian woman, Han's writing was her way of picking at the complex geopolitical entanglements of regional and global imaginations of race and decolonialization.¹⁴ The books she wrote in Malaya in many ways were some of the most political in its ardent attempts at arguing for alternative perspectives and her own attempts at intervening into contemporary geopolitics of her time.

Cast But One Shadow: Afro-Asian Affinities features a selection of archival material within the exhibition related to Han's time in Malaya. This period was marked by her ascension as an internationally recognized writer, a glamor girl whose way of life would be emulated and celebrated in popular culture in Malaya and her lauding as a representative "Afro-Asian"

voice. Presenting material on her work alongside material on Maria Hertogh, the exhibition highlights the racial and regional consciousness that marked her writing from this period and the novella *Cast But One Shadow*.

The material within the exhibition also calls attention to how Han mobilized literature to cultivate expansive definitions of solidarities.

Even as her writing from Malaya responded to the geopolitics of her time, her aspirations were universal. She referenced race in relation to civilizational shifts and her understanding of race was one that was fundamentally geopoetic. In writing a tribute to Tagore in 1960, she would go so far as to cast race beyond the confines of ethnicity or nationality, but rather as a mentality for all human-kind:

For it is both stupid and retrograde to claim that there is such a thing as a peculiar, regional or purely eastern or western culture. We have all become interdependent in thoughts in actions in our ways of life. All of us are 'Eurasians' and Tagore is a spiritual 'Eurasian' as is Nehru or should be all the truly great men of the world who want to achieve peace and harmony and happiness for all mankind, irrespective of colour or geography.¹⁵

From the slippages in translating *Cast But One Shadow* from history to screen to print to Han's expansive definition of the Eurasian as a global mentality, Han offers a conceptual compass in moving through the exhibition and charting the evolving and expansive meanings of how race was considered in relation to decolonial worldmaking projects.

BRINGING THE WAR OUT OF THE JUNGLE

In Our Best Interests as an exhibition was committed to understanding the expansive racial idioms of decolonial worldmaking projects that brought together the African American Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968),

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Her later work through the 1960s and 1970s would focus largely on China, her family history, her own autobiographies, historical studies and fictions that had little basis on her life. Her books sought to provide a clearer, less dogmatic approach to Communist China. Her historical evaluation of Maoism, however led to a decline in her international profile and legacy in the later years of her life.

¹⁵ Han Suyin, "Tagore's Message to The World," *Suloh Nantah: Journal of the English Society*, no. 14 (28 May 1960): 4.

Afro-Asian Solidarity (1955-1965), and international Cold War conflicts that unfolded in relation to South Africa's apartheid into the 1990s alongside projects of regional imaginary such as Maphilindo (1963) in terms of their emergence from anti-colonial struggles in the 1930s and to the construction of Malaysia as a federation (1948-1963).¹⁶ *Cast But One Shadow* leans into this inquiry to look into the specific dynamics of the affinities and the slippages in visual and literary idioms that bridged different subjectivities and political projects.

Perhaps the definitive work from Han Suyin's time in Malaya, ...*And the Rain My Drink* captures life in Malaya during the Malayan Emergency. The Emergency was a guerrilla war between British and Commonwealth troops and the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), the Malayan Communist Party's (MCP) armed wing. It was a protracted conflict that ensued in the jungles, plantations, and villages of the Federation of Malaya. The MNLA fought for the independence of Malaya from the British Empire, designating the conflict as the "Anti-British National Liberation War." Meanwhile, the British categorized it as an "Emergency" to underwrite insurance claims, since London-based companies did not cover costs arising from civil wars. The MNLA had an overwhelming Chinese membership, having gained the support of the ethnic Chinese population who lived impoverished lives at the outskirts of the cities.

Included in *Cast But One Shadow* are two prints from Sim Chi Yin's research project *One Day We'll Understand* (2015-) which examines historiographies of the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960). Informed by a search for answers to her grandfather's murder/disappearance during this period, Sim mined the British Imperial War Museum's archive for images of the "communist insurgent." Often believed to be Chinese, the insurgent was a slippery figure whose ethnicity was attributed political connotations.

Sim's photographs make apparent that the jungle was also a "slippery" figure and landscape of this conflict. Resonating with her work and included in the exhibition are a series of material based on blaxploitation films of the 1960s and the American-Philippine co production *Apocalypse Now* (1971) that point to how the jungle in the Philippines was interchangeable with the



Sim Chi Yin, *Interventions: Parachutes*, 2018.

jungles of Vietnam, South America, or other imagined sites of insurgency. While these visual slippages are a result of expediency—it was cheaper to film in the Philippines—in relation to Sim's larger research project which speaks to the complex narratives of the Malayan Emergency, the jungle as trope takes on sinister undertones when one recalls that the Malayan Emergency became the blueprint for combating insurgency around the world, playing a role in the Vietnam War, the British villagization schemes in Kenya, and even more recent conflicts in the Middle East.¹⁷

THE AFFINITIES OF THE AFRO-ASIAN WRITER

Expansive definitions, the flipside of these slippages, were also productive in seeding new critical discourse as Han Suyin's work in Malaya—promoting a Chinese diaspora education and articulating Afro-Asian solidarity—would speak to. Nantah was the first Chinese university outside of China. While the idea for a Chinese university had been mooted in 1946,¹⁸ the urgency

¹⁶ These years also line up with Han's time in Malaya.

¹⁷ See Ginger Nolan, *The Neocolonialism of the Global Village* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018) for the impact of Malayan Emergency on postimperial schemes.

¹⁸ Kok-Chiang Tan, *My Nantah Story: The Rise and Demise of the People's University* (Singapore: Ethos Books, 2017), 51.

for such a university accordingly came about after the British government in Malaya discouraged the Chinese from returning to mainland (Communist) China for university education.¹⁹ The university was realized with the support of local businessmen and also overwhelming support from the local Chinese community. Han volunteered her services as a doctor in the establishing of the University, donated money to the school and eventually taught a course on Asian literature (1959-1961).

Han believed that Chinese culture was part of Malayan multiculturalism and advocated for the teaching of Malay as a language at the university. Akin to Han's investment in an expansive understanding of Chineseness, the commissioning of Lesley-Anne Cao's investigation of the social life of the *lingling-o*, jade ornaments that have attested to what Carlos has described—borrowing Eric Tagliacozzo's words—as the “Sino-Southeast Asian embrace” and Jean Claire Dy's interrogation of the history of Mindanao with China during pre-Hispanic times, speak to longer civilizational histories that complicate the tight ethnic and racial identifications employed during the Cold War.

Like Dy's and Cao's expansive visions, Han's literary course did not focus on a single canon or reference point, but instead charted a regional and Afro-Asian literary culture. After returning from the 1957 African Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conference in Egypt, also known as the “Cairo Conference,” Han would write about the affinities between Asian and African Writers and what she considered their shared political project:

Language was form and not content, no language is colonial in itself though it can be used as a means of national suppression. This is important because it got us beyond the apparent obstacle, language, to the true danger, which is... now neo-colonial exploitation and suppression of the cultures of Asia and Africa.²⁰

19 See Han Suyin, *My House Has Two Doors*.

20 Han Su Yin, “Asian and African Writers and Their Problems,” *Suloh Nantah: Journal of the English Society*, no. 21 (November 1962): 6.

Advocating for overcoming the nationalist fetish for language and focusing on how the shared conditions of neocolonialism allowed for a shared political project that brought together different regions and races. For Han, the only redress could be found in “the vigilance for solidarity for continuous and accurate information for creating and establishing associations and organisation to print, publish, translate, to disseminate the creative writing of Asian and African writers who do not wish to sell themselves into the hands of interests contrary to those of their own peoples.”²¹

From the transmedial slippages between the film and book to the visual trope of the jungle to neocolonialism to the expansive definitions of civilizational affinities and transregional solidarities conjured from being Eurasian as mentality, *Cast But One Shadow* articulates the oscillating racial perspectives that have colored geopoetic aspirations and geopolitical ties that defined the emergence of Southeast Asia. However, these evolving perspectives are not just articles of history. The art works in the exhibition make profoundly evident that they are living histories that continue to define the contemporary.

21 Ibid.



[LEFT] Installation view, *Apocalypse Now* archive
[RIGHT] Stephanie Syjuco, *Body Double (Platoon)*, 2006.

APOCALYPSE NOW ARCHIVE

PRESENTED ALONGSIDE

Stephanie Syjuco's *Body Double (Platoon)* (2006), these objects associated with the film *Apocalypse Now* (1979) point to the fantastical and neocolonial imaginary of the film as a blockbuster critique of the Vietnam War. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola in 1979, *Apocalypse Now* delved into the indelible psychological duress of the experience of war in the unfamiliar terrain of the tropics. The film resituates the narrative of Joseph Conrad's novel *The Heart of Darkness* (1899) in the context of the Vietnam War, establishing parallels between Congo and Cambodia/Vietnam as the orientalist spatial tropes of the "jungle" and the "tropics."

Like many American-Philippine co-productions that came before, the film used the jungles and people of the Philippines as canvases upon which to project other countries of the non-West. In recreating the Vietnam War, Coppola's film production would go so far as to use real human corpses and to borrow from President Ferdinand Marcos Huey helicopters that were at the time being concurrently used to suppress the state's armed conflict against communists

and Muslim separatists. The pinnacle of American-Philippine co-productions, *Apocalypse Now* won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1980. It was also Filipino filmmaker Eddie Romero's last co-production credit. He was the film's associate producer.

The logic of parallelism that *Apocalypse Now* embodies is further complicated by Syjuco's work. In *Body Double (Platoon)*, sequences presenting the lush tropical landscape from the film *Platoon* (1986) are abstracted into smaller squares leaving out actual scenes and characters from the movie. These are then interspersed and stitched together into a new film composed of only ambience and "peripheral landscapes." Alluding to how in projects like *Apocalypse Now*, *Platoon*, and other movies such as *Hamburger Hill* (1987) and *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), the Philippine jungles and forests become representative of the tropical milieu—be it Vietnam or Mexico, Syjuco's work speaks to logics of duplicity and even substitution. For her: "As a 'body double' for Vietnam, the Philippines occupies a strange place in the imagination of the American public—a physically 'insignificant' place and also a completely familiar place via its substitution for Vietnam. This video project ignores the original filmic narrative to focus on my own attempts at discovering my place of birth—a kind of reworked 'home movie.' The resulting video looks like ambient imagery of landscapes and closeups of flora and fauna."



Vinyl sticker reproduction of a letter from Willard B. Gatewood's book "Smoked Yankees" and the struggle for empire: letters from Negro soldiers, 1898-1902 (1971)

This view was held up to the time of the arrival of the colored regiments in Manila, when the white troops, seeing your acceptance on a social plane by the Filipinos and Spaniards was equal to (if not better than theirs, (for you know under Spanish rule we never knew there was a difference between men on account of racial identity. Our differences were political.) began to tell us of the inferiority of the American blacks--of your brutal natures, your cannibal tendencies--how you would rape our senoritas, etc.

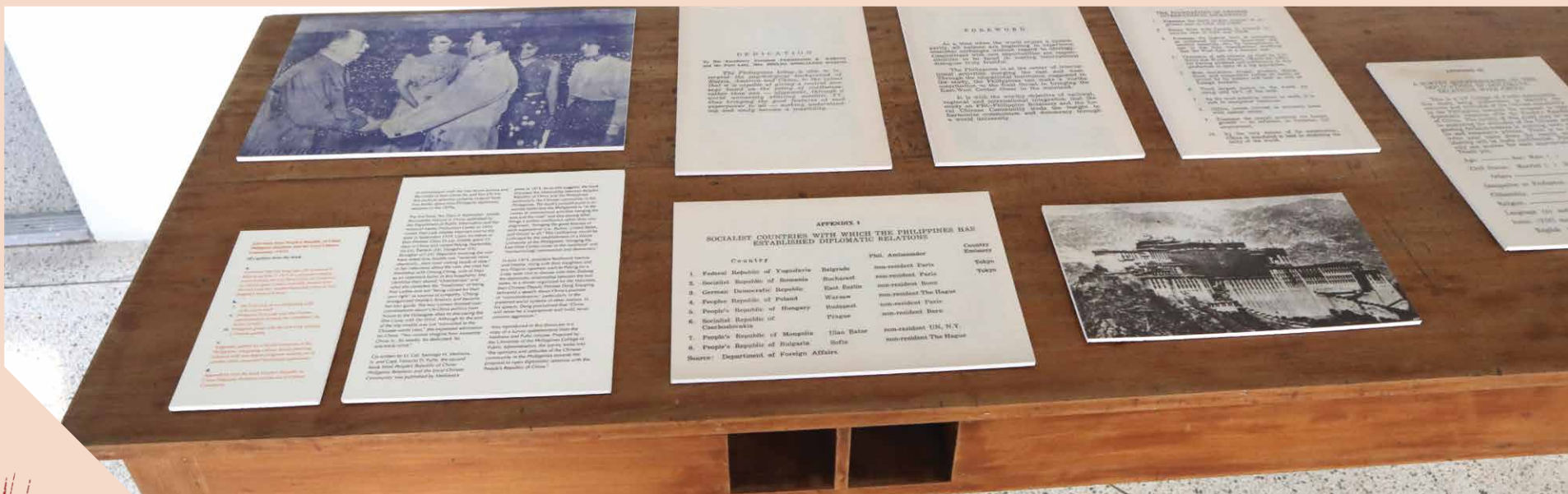
Of course, at first we were a little shy of you, after being told of the difference between you and them; but we studied you, as results have shown. Between you and him, we look upon you as the angel and him as the devil.

Of course, you both are Americans, and conditions between us are constrained neither can be our friends in sense of friendship, but the affinity of complexion between you and me tells, and you exercise your duty so much kindly and manly in dealing with us. We cannot help but appreciate the differences between you and the white

THE MARCOSES' TWO TRIPS TO CHINA

IN CONVERSATION with the Han Suyin archive and the works of Jean Claire Dy and Sim Chi Yin, this archival selection presents material from two books about Sino-Philippine diplomatic relations in the 1970s.

The first book *Ten Days in September: Imelda Romualdez Marcos in China*, published by the Department of Public Information and the National Media Production Center in 1974, covers First Lady Imelda Marcos's visit to the state in September 1974. Upon invitation of then Premier Chou En Lai, Imelda spent 10 days in China and visited Peking (September 20-23), Tientsin (24), Hangchow (25), Shanghai (27-29). Reporters covering the visit have noted how Imelda was "received more attentively...than most visiting heads of state." In her interviews about the visit, she cites her friendship with Chiang Ching, wife of Mao, as an important factor in this hospitality. She identifies their shared "Orientalness"



Reproduction of selected pages from Santiago H. Medrana, Jr. and Horacio D. Puño's *People's Republic of China-Philippine Relations and the Local Chinese Community* (1975)

and what she considers the "loneliness" of being First Ladies and not "being valued for their own right" as sources of sympathy. Chiang re-organized Imelda's itinerary and became her tour guide. The two women bonded over conversations about US-China politics from Nixon to the Watergate affair to discussing the film *Gone with the Wind*. Although by the end of the trip Imelda was not "converted to the Chinese world view," she expressed admiration for China: "You cannot imagine how awesome China is...So nearby. So dedicated. So one-track-mind."

Co-written by Lt. Col. Santiago H. Medrana, Jr. and Capt. Horacio D. Puño, the second book titled *People's Republic of China-Philippine Relations and the Local Chinese Community* was published by Medrana's press in 1975. As its title suggests, the book discusses the relationship between People's Republic of China and the Philippines, particularly the Chinese community in the Philippines. The book's jumpoff point is an earnest belief that the Philippines is "at the center of international activities merging the east and the west" and that



among other things it prefers confluence rather than non-alignment, “bringing the good features of each superpower [i.e., Russia, United States, and China] to all.” This confluence would be cultivated by the establishment of a World University of the Philippines “bringing the East-West Center closer to the mainland” and “harmoniz[ing] communism and democracy.”

In June 1975, president Ferdinand Marcos and Imelda, along with their daughters and two Filipino reporters went to Peking for a 5-day state visit to discuss with Mao Zedong the diplomatic relationship between the two states. In a dinner organized for the Marcoses, then Chinese

Deputy Premier Deng Xiaoping delivered a speech about China’s position of “noninterference,” particularly in the preferred social systems of other nations. In his speech, Deng proclaimed that “China will never be a superpower and [will] never commit aggression.”

Also reproduced in this showcase is a copy of a survey questionnaire from the Medrana and Puño volume. Prepared by the University of the Philippines College of Public Administration, the survey looks into “the opinions and attitudes of the Chinese community in the Philippines towards the proposal to open diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China.”

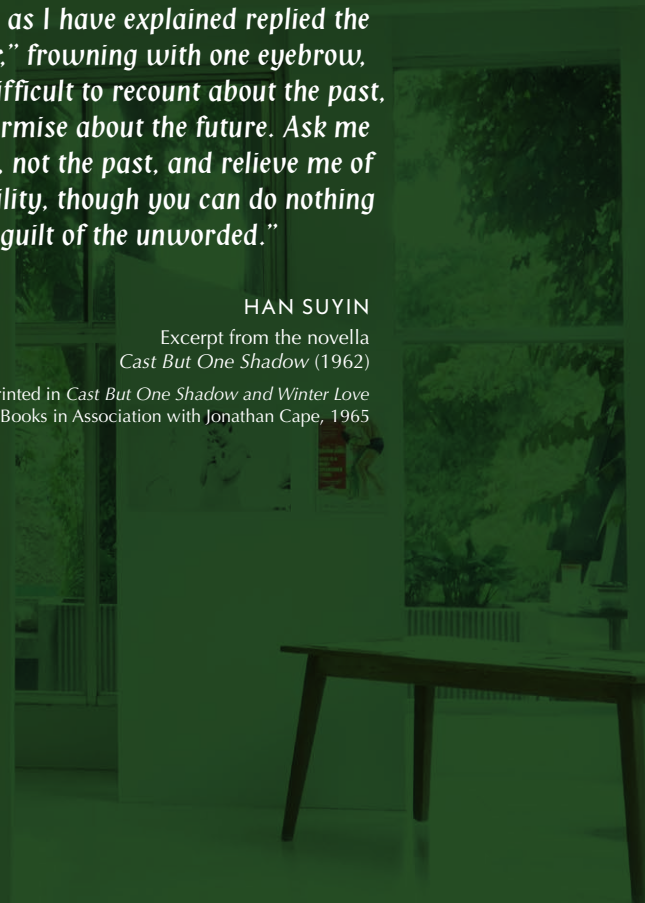


“The truth, as I have explained replied the astrologer,” frowning with one eyebrow, “is more difficult to recount about the past, than to surmise about the future. Ask me the future, not the past, and relieve me of responsibility, though you can do nothing about the guilt of the unworred.”

HAN SUYIN

Excerpt from the novella
Cast But One Shadow (1962)

Reprinted in *Cast But One Shadow and Winter Love*
Penguin Books in Association with Jonathan Cape, 1965



AFRO-SOUTHEAST ASIA AS POLITICAL DISPOSITION

THE SECOND ITERATION of the traveling research and exhibition project that started with *In Our Best Interests* held at the NTU ADM Gallery in Singapore in January 2021, *Cast But One Shadow: Afro-Southeast Asian Affinities* is presented by the University of the Philippines Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center in Manila. The iterative exhibition series nominates Afro-Southeast Asia as a field and framework that unsettles the fixations of geopolitical imaginaries of a bipolar world order and pays sensitive attention to the potency of poetic and aspirational gestures of affinity.

As a field, Afro-Southeast Asia brings together two coordinates that trace the trajectories of transregional solidarity that emerge out of the Cold War and have been cultivated by the Afro-Asia Conference in Bandung in 1955. Southeast Asia in this juxtaposition presents the limits of these discourses and at the same time elaborates on their productivity: the limitations of affinities in the face of neocolonial entanglements in the

CARLOS QUIJON, JR.

CO-CURATOR

case of Maphilindo and its eventual dissolution, on the one hand; and, the potential and political significance of the “human implications

of [Africa’s] geographic fact” in President Diosdado Macapagal’s trip to the African continent, on the other.¹ Thinking about Afro-Southeast Asia as a field

emphasizes not the discreteness of an area or discipline, but the relations that constitute it.

To place Afro-Asia in conversation with Southeast Asia is to discern how the implications of histories assumed to be unitary, singular, or self-contained, such as coloniality or decoloniality, are rendered plural and prolific in this region. It is to acknowledge the modernity of this regional imagination and its discourses and how its constitution has been informed by “altered citations” shaped by empire, wars, trade, democracy and communism.² The exhibition parses these histories and teases out how the geographic and geopolitical facets of the region refract and disperse these narratives across complex claims not only of agency and sovereignty, but also of neocolonial enmeshment and geopoetic worldmaking. In this sense, the title *Cast But One Shadow* is a provocation inasmuch as it is a political disposition that obtains in the context of Southeast Asia. The title embodies the complexity of these histories and alludes to an archipelagic condition pertinent in the region, wherein political stakes ramify and resist the unitary resolution a more global history would ascribe to them. The archipelagic allows for prolific vantage points and vistas from which these histories are illuminated.

As a provocation, the title insists on the multiple shadows of empire. The trope of casting shadows makes for a compelling argument in understanding how colonial and neocolonial effects of empire maybe thought of in relation to its multiple tropologies—from violent occupations, clientelist and developmentalist discourses, alignments, and the more insidious conditions of political enabling or more tricky strategies of navigation. These are relations that are manifested in varying intimations, palpable or spectral, at times recognizable as such but most of the times diffuse and ever elusive. Across time and geography, these shadows intersperse or spill over, assuming the slightest suggestion or the densest of shade.

As a political disposition, this proliferation plays out the divergent responses to and mediation of colonial incursions. *Cast But One Shadow* does not attempt to thematize these proliferations, nor does it create from these multiple considerations an imagined shared experience. The works in this

1 Diosdado Macapagal, “Report on United States and Africa Trip,” in *Fullness of Freedom: Speeches and Statements of President Diosdado Macapagal*, vol. IV (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1965), 162.

2 See Prasenjit Duara, *Asia Redux: Conceptualizing a Region for Our Times* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013).



Still from News footage
of Sabahans welcoming
Malaysian Prime Minister
Tunku Abdul Rahman
on October 1, 1968,
(1968). Reuters Limited.

exhibition and the archives presented tease out the traces of empire and place them side by side. The narrative woven in this enterprise is necessarily loose, interfacing and overlapping, meshing and hatching. The region then is not consolidated, in the way most considerations of it work, but comprises a composite picture.

The history of Maphilindo fleshes out these ramifications. While the impetus behind the confederation is a pan-Malayan ethnos, the events leading to its premature dissolution point us to the myriad motivations that are at play in this regional milieu. Maphilindo's aspirational rhetoric is set against Cold War neocolonial hegemonies that translate to anxieties around it that further inform diplomatic strategies. While for the Philippines, this is a history of solidarity borne of a shared ethnic genealogy, it is an instance of resisting neocolonial maneuvering for Indonesia, and a history of terror and armed violence for Malaya. The archipelagic condition is made all the more cogent by the fact that at the center of these contentious history is Sabah, something that Yee I-Lann's *Borneo Heart* (2021) brings to light.

PHILIPPINE COORDINATES

The Manila iteration extends the scope of and sharpens the stakes for these discourses. Firstly, the current exhibition converses with the permanent collection of the Vargas Museum and the figure of its donor Jorge B.

Vargas. Secondly, selected artists from Manila (Lesley Anne-Cao, Jean Claire Dy, Isola Tong) have been commissioned to create new

works for the exhibition, proposing new entry points for Afro-Southeast Asian affinities. Prominent in these novel entry points are the discourse of Chinese ethno-racial presence and the place of South China Sea in the emergence and development of discourses of transregional affinities. Finally, the Manila exhibition foregrounds and fleshes out the role of diplomacy in the crafting transregional affinities. Two case studies are explored in this iteration. First of these is the two trips to China that the Marcoses undertook in the 1970s: in 1974 First Lady Imelda Marcos, upon the invitation of Chou En-Lai, went to a 4-city, 10-day excursion wherein Imelda befriended Chiang Ching, Mao Zedong's wife, and in the last days of the trip secured an unplanned audience with the Chairman; and in 1975, then president Ferdinand and Imelda went back to China to talk about opening the diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the People's Republic. The second case study is the role of Philippine president Macapagal in the cultivation of an Afro-Southeast Asian consciousness in relation to his trip to Africa in 1963 and his relationship with Indonesian president Sukarno through the paintings that Macapagal received as diplomatic gifts from the latter. These last two cases radiate from events surrounding Maphilindo and its eventual collapse after a month in 1963.

The collection of the UP Vargas Museum points us to consolidation and dispersals of thinking about transregional affinity and its limits. For this exhibition, these are constellated across three objects: a painting, a plaster-cast bust, and a selection of books.

The painting is of Jorge B. Vargas and Sukarno side by side at the 1962 Asian Games by Filipino painter Romeo Enriquez. Vargas was the founding Vice President of the Asian Games. Held in Jakarta, the 1962 edition of the Asian Games faced major controversies because of its exclusion of Israel and Taiwan from the national teams in competition. As a sign of protest, representatives of several international sports federations withdrew their participation from the Jakarta edition. While the Asian Games was envisioned to be a platform that was immune to political color, Sukarno's decision was seen to play up political favors for China and the Middle Eastern bloc. Instead of heeding to criticisms about the management of the Jakarta edition, Sukarno designed an athletic meet in 1963 where political motivation was front and center: the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO). The title references a new political grouping that he described as "the new emerging forces" composed of athletes from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The GANEFO was short-lived and had its second and final iteration in Cambodia in 1966.

The second object from the Vargas Museum Permanent Collection is an undated plaster-cast bust of Inday Vargas, Jorge's wife, created by Ahmed Ibn Parfahn. Parfahn is a curious presence in the Collection. In 1957 and 1967, Parfahn published the book *Malayan Grandeur: a narrative of history by a hundred seers and our intellectual revolution*, a book that in historian Zeus Salazar's account depicted a "fascist" understanding of pan-Malayan exceptionalism.³ In the book, Parfahn proposes a "a field of inquiry (which)...will lead to the redemption of (Malayan) glory and grandeur," or what he nominates as "Malayology."⁴ Within this schema is the reclamation of the centrality of Malayan narratives in world history, which for Parfahn involves the correction of the hegemonic Eurocentric historical accounts. In line with this, he nominates figures as diverse as Alexander the Great, Jesus Christ, and Constantine as Malays, representative of the exceptional place of the pan-Malayan ethnos in the history of human civilization. The University of the Philippines Main Library has one copy of the book, donated by Parfahn himself.

Completing the set of objects from the Vargas Museum Collection are books from the Museum's Library authored by Filipino diplomat and Bandung delegate Carlos P. Romulo. The selection opens up the itineraries of the exhibition's interest in Southeast Asian regionalism by invoking the vaster imagination of Asia without forsaking the granularity of regional experience. From the initial conversations on the possibility of a Southeast Asian student union to the complicated relation of Philippine sovereignty to American tutelage and benevolence, Romulo's oeuvre traces the seams of Philippine neocolonial nationhood and directs us to the spaces and historical moments wherein we see the hegemony of this condition fray and unravel, usually by way of robust imaginations of regionality or transregional affinities that bring to the surface the persistence of imperialist frameworks and the strategies in which these are undone by anti-colonial projects and aspirations.

3 Zeus Salazar, "Beyond the Nation: Pan-Malaysianism and Ahmed Ibn Parfahn's 'Malayan Grandeur and Our Intellectual Revolution'," in *The Malayan Connection: Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu* (Quezon City: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1998), 214.

4 Ahmad Ibn Parfahn, *Malayan Grandeur: a narrative of history by a hundred seers and our intellectual revolution* (Cotabato City: High School Press, 1967; Davao City: San Pedro Press, 1967), 2.



Lesley-Anne Cao, *Fugue Encore*, 2021.

Curatorially, the presence of these objects opens up the scope of the exhibition. While as an itinerant and iterative project the exhibition carries with it its own premises and perspectives from previous editions and existing research, the context of the collection and the collector presents new coordinates in the mapping out of the histories that *Cast But One Shadow* elaborates on. It also underscores the overlaps in the multiple milieus that both the collector and the collection and the exhibition comprise, mutually constituting themselves as curatorial considerations in this iteration.

Another cipher of this curatorial motivation is the commissioning of new works that respond to, engage with, or even expand on the historical and discursive itineraries of the exhibition. These new commissions speak to the pertinent place of the Philippines and its historical contexts in the history of Southeast Asian regional affiliations and transregional affinities. In asking artists to embark on new research and artistic projects that relate to the historical and discursive framework of Afro-Southeast Asia, several moments are rendered especially compelling. Foremost in these is the Chinese ethno-racial presence in the region and how the Philippine archipelago prospects diverse approaches to the question of Chinese influence. Borrowing from historian Eric Tagliacozzo's formulation of the "Sino-Southeast Asian embrace," the newly commissioned works by



Jean Claire Dy, *Waves of Time and Sea*, 2021.

Lesley-Anne Cao and Jean Claire Dy intimate the intricacies and specters of China in Philippine history—both as an actual place and historical milieu or as an imaginary that shaped interaction and trade as in the South China Sea.⁵

Lesley-Anne Cao's *Fugue Encore* (2021) looks at the *lingling-o*, an archeological ornament usually made of jade discovered in areas of Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines, as an object whose social life spans the South China Sea and Southeast Asia. The *lingling-o* embodies the networks of trade that connect the maritime and the continental parts of the region. It also accounts for the connections that have been left out in the consolidation of the region of Southeast Asia as we know it, such as the compelling interfacing built within the seascape of the South China Sea, the expansive recasting of the region to include China's southeastern coast and Japan's Ryukyu islands, and the dispersals of the Austronesian ethnolinguistic diaspora. Interesting in this case is the work of archaeologist William Solheim, a student of H. Otley Beyer, who shifted the discussions of

Austronesian anthropological history fanning out from Taiwan to Polynesia to the Indian Ocean to Africa, from human migrations to networks of trade, or what Solheim considers as the "Nusantao Maritime Trading and Communication Network."⁶

Jean Claire Dy's work takes us to another facet of this historical embrace. In *Waves of Time and Space* (2021), her newly commissioned work for the exhibition, Dy considers the unique relationship of Sulu, a smaller archipelagic formation located in the southeastern tip of Mindanao, with China during pre-Hispanic times. Reflecting on historical records narrating the visit of Paduka Batarra, Sultan of Sulu, to the Ming Emperor Yong Le in Beijing in 1417, Dy's work is an audio-visual installation that foregrounds the friendship between the two leaders, against the more contemporary tenor of Chinese neocolonial infringement on Philippine economic and maritime affairs. When the Sultan fell sick and died in Shandong, the Emperor ordered the Sultan's imperial burial, allowing his sons to stay in China and intermarry with local women. Dy uses historical texts in order to sketch out an "imaginary space" that offers her the chance to explore the itinerant and performative conditions of both her Chinese-ness and Filipino-ness. What makes Dy's work more interesting is that these national rubrics of identity (Filipino, Chinese), are here inflected by histories that pre-date national formations and identities, and to a certain degree are displaced by affinities based off other forms of sympathies. She uses the ubiquitous lucky cat figurine, a good luck charm in the shape of a cat waving its paw that usually are displayed in most Filipino-Chinese-owned storefronts, to anchor her explorations of Filipino-Chinese identity, foregrounding how its performances and navigation is deeply embedded in popular culture and contemporary urban life.

Together with the new commissions of Cao and Dy, a small part of Ahmad Fuad Osman's larger research and artistic project exploring the life and time of Enrique de Malacca, the Malayan slave, guide, and translator who was part of Magellan's retinue in his exploration of the Indies, refracts the imaginations of Southeast Asian history by looking at its early modern and colonial histories. The history of Malacca, a trade entrepot central in the European Age

5 See Eric Tagliacozzo and Wen-Chin Chang (eds), *Chinese Circulations: Capital, Commodities, and Networks in Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

6 See William Solheim, "Polynesian Ancestry and the Nusantao Maritime Network," *Rapa Nui Journal* 11, no. 1 (March 1997): 24-8.

of Exploration, is implicated in Osman's research, as well as the place of trade relations with China and the rest of the ports in the Indian Ocean in regional worldmaking.

Isola Tong's *Ark* (2021) rounds out the newly commissioned works for the Manila iteration. Focusing on the infamous legacies of the late Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, Tong researches on the Calauit Safari Park in Palawan, an island safari populated by animals transplanted from Kenya upon orders by Marcos in 1976. The creation of the safari displaced the indigenous population of Calauit, which were relocated to a former leper colony. In looking at this moment in Philippine history, Tong unravels the intimate entanglements of statecraft, ecology, and displacements both human and nonhuman. Tong's work for the exhibition situates this event within the context of the Marcoses' investments on the grandiose and the monumental, as well as the tropes of the tropics as elaborated by a number of blaxploitation narratives in the 1970s.

Tong and Elia Nurvista look at histories of statecraft and how these take shape across trajectories as diverse as ecological, filmic, and architectural questions for Tong and questions on food and food politics in Nurvista. For *Tremors Ground: A Study of the Land* (2021), Nurvista expands on her research on the global politics of food. Threading through issues around hunger, food policy and technology, transregional narratives of cooperation and aid, Nurvista's work for the exhibition locates more global questions about food vis-à-vis Indonesia's national and transnational history, particularly how these interrogations play out during the regime of Sukarno (1945-1967). From a mind map of events, programs, and initiatives that affected Southeast Asian food sovereignty, a documentary following the lives of women political detainees, a selection of archival footages relating to issues of global food security, and an installation that interrogates the political tenor of rice, agricultural land and the farmers who till it, Nurvista believes that "small narratives and historic trivia are connected and have trajectories that move among one another, shaping what we understand as big global stories."

DIPLOMATIC CASE STUDIES

While most of these histories emanate from a particular geopolitical and geopoetic context in the early 1960s stretching onto the 1970s and 1980s, the works included in the exhibition and the archives



Isola Tong, *Ark*, 2021.

presented in it constellate these histories in an encompassing postcolonial political milieu characterized by the opposing claims of anticolonial resistance and solidarity and the persistence of colonial relationships within and beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. Within this schema, it is diplomacy that sketches out the necessary complexity of having to work through these considerations and the kinds of affordances that they allow. Two diplomatic narratives are explored in detail in this exhibition: the Marcoses trip to China in 1974 and 1975, and Macapagal's trip to Africa in 1963.

THE SPECTER OF CHINESE DIPLOMACY

The China trips pursued what Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Manuel Collantes identified as "diplomacy for development" wherein diplomatic decisions were dictated by economic considerations rather than ideological orientations.⁷ Alongside its active participation in programs initiated by

7 Archie Resos, "The Foreign Policy of President Ferdinand Marcos: From Traditionalism to Realism," in *International Journal on Social Innovation & Research* 6, no. 1 (2013): 98.

the Association of Southeast Nation, the Marcos government inaugurated diplomatic relations with communist nation-states.

This started as early as 1972 (the same year Marcos declared Martial Law in the Philippines) with the formalization of the diplomatic ties between the Philippines and Yugoslavia and Romania. After China, diplomatic relations were established with the Soviet Union, Algeria, Cuba, Libya and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976. This trajectory was shaped by “self-determination and self-reliance.”⁸ As Marcos explains in 1976: “The first and the most fundamental of these, stressed the supremacy of national interest in the conduct of foreign affairs. Second, we stressed the need for flexibility and pragmatism in our diplomacy to encompass not merely our hopes for peace and security, but our very aspirations to development. And third, we stressed the need for contacts with all nations desiring our friendship on the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefit.”⁹ According to historian Archie Resos this stance was the first time in Philippine history wherein foreign policy deviated from alignments with the United States and its democratic allies.¹⁰

The two trips situate the place of China in the drastically changing historical global landscape of the 1970s. It speaks not only of the unravelling geopolitical world order that coincided with the rise of authoritarian governments in the non-West but also alludes to how these changes would eventually become important factors in the entanglement of democratic movements with a more neoliberal world structured by structural adjustments, export-oriented economies, and foreign debt that plagued the less developed countries (LDCs) and the newly industrializing countries (NICs) of the Third World.¹¹

8 Ibid., 99.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 98.

11 See Robin Broad, *Unequal Alliance: The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

MACAPAGAL'S TRIP TO AFRICA

Presented in relation to these accounts of the 1970s, the exhibition is also attentive to the trajectories of diplomacy that emerge out of Maphilindo in the 1960s: Macapagal's trip to Africa in December 1963 and three paintings that Sukarno gifted to Macapagal while he was President of the Philippines. These two cases present discourses of transregional affinities in the thick of the elaborate entanglements of empire and the careful navigation of the newly sovereign head of state through the trappings of neocolonial relations.

First is Macapagal's trip to the African continent. In December 1963, after attending the wake of US President John F. Kennedy, Philippine president Diosdado Macapagal visited a number of states in the African continent. In January 1964, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew visited 17 African states. Both trips were made in relation to questions of regional importance: part of Macapagal's excursion was to advocate for the Philippines's claim to Sabah; Lee's motivation for his trip, on the other hand, was to discuss the implications of the formation of Malaysia to the fate of Afro-Asian solidarity.

These itineraries point to how Africa became a crucial coordinate in the unravelling of the Cold War's bipolar world order. In November 1963, Macapagal with the First Lady and a five-man staff visited the memorial of Kennedy. From Manila, Macapagal and his retinue went to Honolulu on November 24, and from Honolulu they flew to Washington.

This was his first trip to the country during his term. He cancelled an earlier visit planned in June 1962 because of the disapproval by the American congress of a bill filed in May 1962 appropriating \$73 million for War Damages in the Philippines. While this US trip did not push through, Macapagal's trips to other countries planned in relation to it did. In August 1962 the same bill was reconsidered and signed into law by Kennedy.

The original plan for Macapagal was to stay in the US for 4 or 5 days. During his time in the US there were rumors that Macapagal would do a side-trip to visit African countries. On December 1, these reports were confirmed. The trip was the first time any Philippine head of state visited the African continent. All the preparations were done within the time of Macapagal's visit to the US. As one account elaborates: “Washington officials

encouraged the trip, probably mainly...because 'America is proud of the Philippines; the Philippines has something to show for its seventeen years of independence.'"¹²

The trip was originally planned to travel from West to East: from Liberia to Nigeria to the Republic of Congo to Tanganyika to Malagasy to Zanzibar, all of which had recently declared independence. Boarding a Pan-American Airways jetliner which had been christened Clipper Sampaguita to give it a native touch (and that was also assigned a Filipina flight attendant named Shirley Hart), Macapagal set off to Liberia on December 5 and arrived on the 7th.

Liberia was the most apt choice as the first state to visit in this trip. Although the country had never been a colonial possession, it had for more than a century maintained close relations with the US. As a commentator explains: "Liberia was created through the efforts of the 'American Colonization Society' to settle former slaves there and its government is modelled on the American system."¹³ This is something that Macapagal recognized in his speech before the Liberian government: "Liberia was among the first experiments in human liberation on the African continent just as the Philippines was the first in Asia."¹⁴

Macapagal arrived in Tanganyika in time for the first anniversary of their independence on December 9. Zanzibar was originally in the itinerary and also achieved independence during Macapagal's tour (December 9) but was eventually bypassed because their airfield was too small. Nigeria and the Republic of Congo were bypassed in this itinerary since their head of states were also away in diplomatic visits, which highlights how impromptu Macapagal's trip was. Plans to visit Kenya also didn't pan out although

the presidential aircraft passed by Nairobi before landing in Tanganyika. Although it would have been an apt gesture to visit Kenya on its eve of independence on December 12, 1963, Macapagal's group decided against it since Prince Philip, husband of Queen Elizabeth, would be there for the ceremonies as well, and such a visit could have only brought on complications on the ongoing negotiations on Sabah.

The last destination of the trip was Madagascar, which in Wenceslao Vinzon's account of a pan-Malayan ethnos that informed the formation of Maphilindo, forms part of "a unified Malaysia extending from the northern extremity of the Malay Peninsula to the shores of New Guinea, from Madagascar to the Philippines and to the remotest islands of Polynesia, will be a powerful factor in the oceanic world."¹⁵

On December 16th, Macapagal reached Manila. Upon his return, he delivered a speech addressing the necessity of the largely impromptu trip. Macapagal remarks: "The African continent, like Asia itself, has long been a large fact in the geography of the World, but it is only in more recent times that the human implications of its geographic fact is beginning to be acknowledged as of political significance."¹⁶ Furthermore, he explains: "Yet between ours and the societies of the rest of Asia and of Africa are obvious common givens of historical circumstances. This, and the present situation of our political status is compelling enough, on our part, to make common cause and collaborate on general schemes with societies and peoples beyond the national geography."¹⁷

Macapagal's travel literalizes the aspirations and pragmatics involved in the diplomatic project at the heart of explorations of transregional affinities. From uncoordinated visits, small airfields, and potentially messy confrontations,

12 "President Macapagal's African Visit," *The Journal of American Commerce* (January 1964): 8.

13 Ibid.

14 Diosdado Macapagal, "Address of President Macapagal at the state banquet given by President William Tubman," 8 December 1963, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1963/12/08/address-of-president-macapagal-at-the-state-banquet-given-by-president-william-tubman>.

15 Wenceslao Q. Vinzon, "Malaysia Irredenta," in *The Philippine Encyclopedia of Eloquence*, ed. Andres R. Camasura (Manila: The Philippine Encyclopedia, 1936), 413.

16 Diosdado Macapagal, "Report on United States and Africa Trip," in *Fullness of Freedom: Speeches and Statements of President Diosdado Macapagal*, vol. IV (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1965), 162.

17 Ibid.

Macapagal's trip parses the motivations of diplomacy in a historical period wherein spheres of influence and sovereign self-interest proved extra precarious discourses, especially as these were read against the insidiousness of imperial capital and control. Macapagal's trip to Africa offered the possibility of truly transregional affinities despite what American political scientist Fred

R. von der Mehden declared that although mutual interest are expressed in regional problems of both territories, "no special relationship appears to have emerged between Southeast Asia and the new African states other than the one based on the fact that they are all 'underdeveloped states' with certain common problems."¹⁸ The trip dramatizes how transregional affinities prosper in these differences and how within the context of Africa and Southeast Asia these affinities are never set in stone—at best strategic and always very tenuous.

SUKARNO'S ART AS REGIONAL DIPLOMACY

A counterpoint to this approach to diplomacy is presented in the gifts of Sukarno to Macapagal. From 1961 to 1965, the period of Philippine President Diosdado Macapagal's tenure as head of state, he received three paintings from Sukarno. The three paintings are presented to the public for the first time in the exhibition. According to Macapagal's granddaughter, there have not been any traces of the paintings' provenance, no details specifying the date or occasion clarifying the nature of the gifts. From historical records, we know that Sukarno visited Macapagal in Manila in 1963 and 1964, both instances related to issues surrounding Maphilindo. Macapagal visited Indonesia in 1964 for reasons we can presume to be also relating to the developing tension among the three Malay states. In his itinerary was a visit to Bali. These two trips might be interesting leads into the nature of these gifts. However, no documentary evidence exists to support either speculation.

The first art work is an oil on canvas painting that presents an unremarkable landscape of a valley—a lush greenery in the foreground moving into a rock formation in the background. It is signed by an R. D. Saleh.



[FOREGROUND] Untitled and undated painting signed by R .D. Saleh from the Diosdado and Evangelina Macapagal Family Collection
[BACKGROUND] Materials from the Jorge B. Vargas Permanent Collection and Library

The second painting is a painted wood carving that unfolds across four panels. The images behave like a scroll unfolding from top to bottom, presenting Balinese mythology, social customs, and ways of life framed by intricately carved and colored tropical scenography. No trace of authorship can be found in the work, although a specific style can be discerned from the use of a diluted ink wash in creating a compelling monochromatic contrast and also the prominent use of white that creates a voluminous effect especially for the foliage.

The third painting is an oil on canvas painting by I Wayan Tohjiwa (1916-2001), a painter from Peliatan in Ubud in Bali. In the painting, we are in a middle of a procession. A maiden is carried on an ornate gilded horse carriage closely followed by men who carry parasols. Two guards on horseback flank the carriage. On either-side of the carriage are guards on foot, carrying spears. The front guard halts the procession in the middle of a tropical forest, raising his hand. The background is filled with ferns and draping foliage that frame the composition. In the foreground we see the guards on alert, checking their surroundings. Their heads are turned to every direction. One of them is about to crouch. A number of them are ready with their spears. In terms of perspective the painting is flat. Except for the maiden sitting in the carriage, whose depiction is much more diminutive than the rest of the people in the painting, the guards in the foreground and the background are of the same height.

18 Fred R. von der Mehden, "Southeast Asian Relations with Africa," *Asian Survey* 5, no. 7 (July 1965): 343.

Taken together, the three paintings are quite unremarkable: their artists are for the most part unknown, or in the case of Tohjiwa not as prominent in Indonesian art history.¹⁹ The style of the paintings are also in more ways than one quite counterintuitive as diplomatic gifts: the landscape for the most part is a generic, unmarked space; the two Balinese paintings participate in the colonial trope of presenting Indonesian experience as ahistorical, trapped in a mythical milieu.

The gifts embody a diplomatic disposition that thrives in the constitution of the modernity of regional imagination. The region here is Southeast Asia through Maphilindo. The modernity of these regional imaginations alludes to a self-awareness that pursues and produces a sense of regional affiliation and affinity while simultaneously acknowledging the dissipation of these very same ideas by way of the nation-state formations that comprise it.

What these unremarkable paintings play out is a sensibility cultivated in the circulation of the paintings not just as a sign of a consolidated Indonesian national imaginary as the President's gift to another head of state, but as a set of objects that travels as gifts between states. They prospect relations through

the nation all the while eluding the temptation of a hegemonic national narrative. The Balinese is an exceptional discourse in this sense, particularly its relation to tropes of modernity and how it mediates both the colonial (in terms of its ahistorical or anachronistic temporality that foregrounds ways of life prior to European colonization) and postcolonial (its anticipation of intranational region formation that participates in inasmuch as it resists the national) tendencies of the paintings as diplomatic articulations. While in Macapagal's trip there is a clear delineation of the terms of Afro-Southeast Asia as objects of diplomatic interest and activity, Sukarno's gifts constitute the very parameters of the pan-Malayan ethnos and modern region which Maphilindo aspires to become.

The exhibition *Cast But One Shadow: Afro-Southeast Asian Affinities* attempts to mediate these myriad histories and present the exhibition itself as a historical proposition. Germane in this context is how Vargas Museum curator Patrick Flores elaborates on the exhibition as a proposition: "The exhibitionary, in shaping its material, may engage in a range of curatorial practices within the modality of a proposition. It may historicize this material; it may also render it contemporary. Or it may demonstrate a particular condition."²⁰ In convening materials that span media, materials, provenance; in leaning into curatorial schemas such as the collection, the commission, and the archive; in crafting a constellation of historical moments that emanate from early iterations of Southeast Asia as a region; this exhibition imagines itself as a space wherein the historical assumes the character of a proposition: formative, provocative, and always compelling in the ways it challenges how we think about people, politics, histories.

19 The art historian Adrian Vickers considers Tohjiwa part of the "transitional" group of painters mostly active in the early 1930s. These painters' deployment of "the flatness and motifs of the wayang style were incorporated into the development of new ways of using foliage and other natural features that dominated compositions." Tohjiwa was also part of the artistic organization Pita Maha (Great Spirit, Guiding Inspiration). Pita Maha was founded by Balinese artists I Gusti Nyoman Lempad and Cokorde Gde Agung Sukawati and two European artists who lived in Bali: German Walter Spies (1895–1942) and Dutch Rudolf Bonnet (1895–1978). The organization was influential in the development of Balinese painting, particularly with its traditional themes and iconography. Spies and Bonnet were also instrumental in the exhibiting and collecting of Balinese works particularly in Netherlands and the United States. With this they were also crucial figures in the persistence of the colonial trope of the Mooi Indie (Beautiful Indies). As Vickers explains: "Westerners presented idealized scenes of landscapes and peasants as part of the colonial imagination of the Dutch colony that was to become Indonesia. Painting in this style excluded any depiction of the social realities of colonial Bali. The artists saw in the Indies the kind of simple idyll that the West had lost as it developed, and so those who worked with local painters, such as Bonnet, discouraged the Balinese from producing any scenes of modern life. For the most part, the painterly basis of Western art was not compatible with Balinese ways of working." See Adrian Vickers, *Balinese Art: Paintings and Drawings of Bali, 1800-2010* (Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2012).

20 Patrick Flores, "The Exhibition as Historical Proposition," *Yishu* 13, no. 2 (March/April 2014): 103.

AFRO-SOUTHEAST ASIA SPECULATIVE ARCHIVE

WHILE CAST BUT ONE SHADOW IS PRIMARILY AN EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY ART, it is punctuated by the presentation of historical materials that speak alongside artistic research to flesh out the complex historical milieu which the art works annotate.

On the one hand, these materials are important resources because much of the history that the exhibition and the art works allude to are hardly referenced or discussed within frameworks of national histories, thus are also frequently left out in the teaching of global histories.

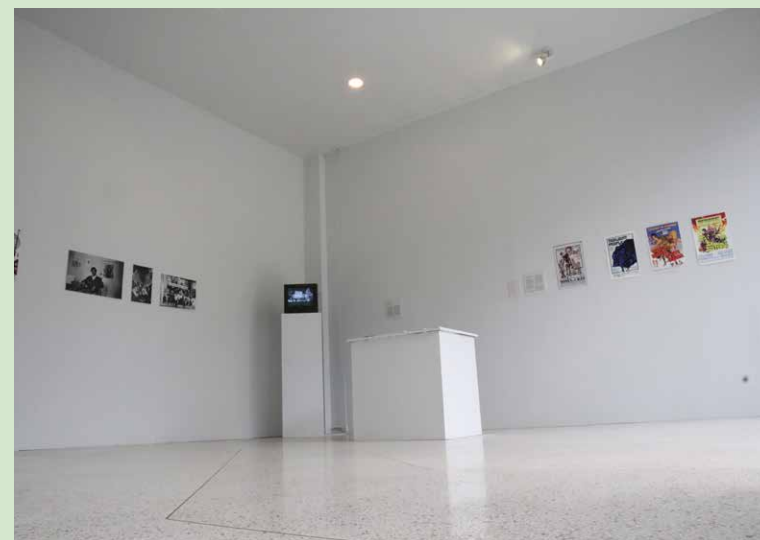
On the other hand, this selection is an amalgamation of found materials from open-source archives, reproductions of the detritus of popular culture, and materials scoured from sales of non-museum quality objects. They are inconclusive and perhaps a series of anomalies. Mostly, these are contemporary commodities that reflect on forgotten histories.

As a collection, they are tentative gestures at complicated histories—the gray matter of affinities, of aspirations brought to heel by pragmatism and the fleeting moments in which some people saw beyond regions to find affinities across archipelagoes and oceans, in between ethnicities and colors.

Constellating material from the colonial Philippines to the Black Panther Party, to student demonstrations in the Philippines that called “Brown Americans” traitors, and to the legacies and fractures of Afro-Asia in Southeast Asia, this gallery presents a collection of material that imagines an Afro-Southeast Asian historical consciousness based on the emergence of regionalisms and the remaking of the world order after World War II.



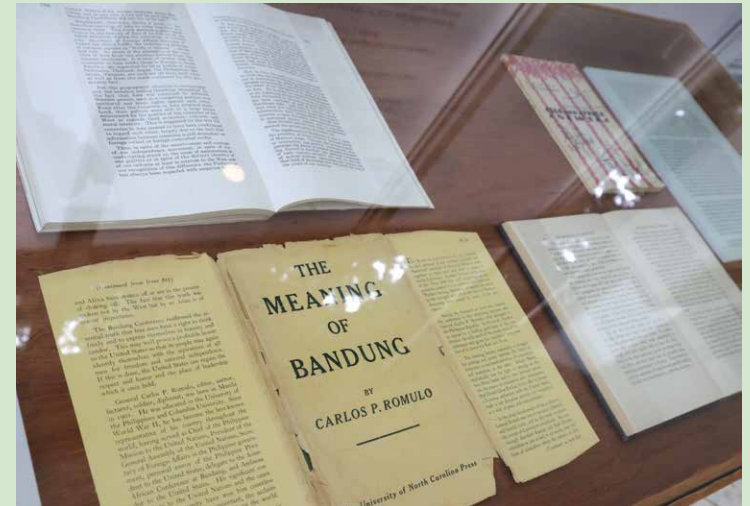
Beb Vuyk, excerpt from *A Weekend with Richard Wright*, May 2011, *PMLA* 126, no. 3.



Installation view, Afro-Southeast Asia Speculative archive



Selection of photographs of Huey Newton and the Manila chair. Getty Images.



Carlos P. Romulo's *The Meaning of Bandung* (1956), and other materials on relations between Africa and Southeast Asia



[TOP RIGHT] Spread from the magazine *Observer* (April 1965)

[BOTTOM RIGHT] Reproduction of magazine article, "The Two Worlds of Bertha Hertogh," *Life Magazine*, 8 January 1951, and materials on the tenors of Islam against imperialist agenda in the Malay world



Reproduction of film posters (left to right): *Women in Cages* (dir. Gerardo de Leon, 1971); *Twilight People* (dir. Eddie Romero, 1972); *Black Mama, White Mama* (dir. Eddie Romero, 1973); *Savage Sisters* (dir. Eddie Romero, 1974).

An abstract graphic design featuring a vibrant orange background. The composition is dominated by stylized palm leaves. A large, dark green palm frond is positioned on the right side, with its trunk extending downwards. In the center, a large, textured orange shape resembling a palm frond or a fan is layered over other elements. This central shape has a fine, dotted pattern. To the left, another palm frond is visible, rendered in a lighter orange color with a similar dotted texture. The overall style is modern and graphic, with a strong emphasis on color and geometric forms.

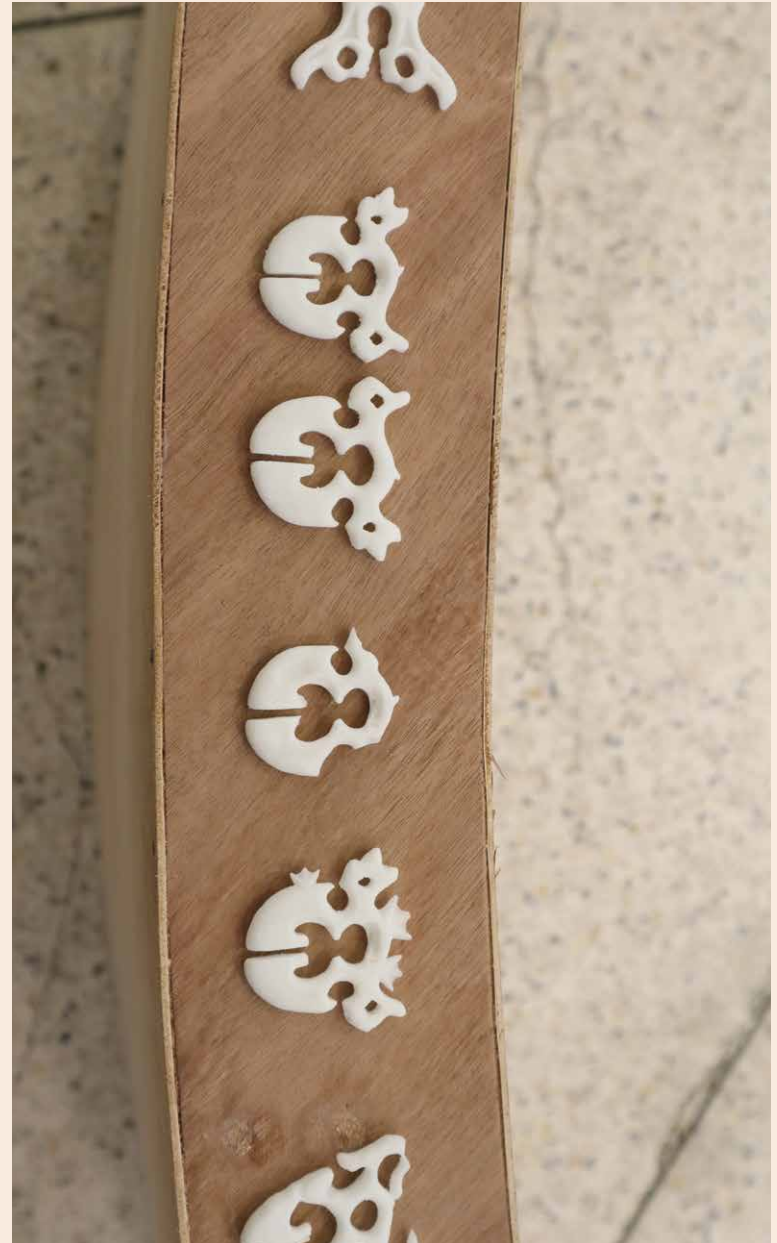
ARTWORKS
ARTISTS
CURATORS

LESLEY-ANNE CAO

Fugue Encore

2021 • CIRCULAR WOODEN DISPLAY TABLE, AI-GENERATED AND 3D-MODELED PLASTIC
LINGLING-O VARIATIONS, SINGLE-CHANNEL VIDEO • VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

LESLEY-ANNE CAO'S PRACTICE involves interrogations of objects: from their making, use, circulation, and how these contexts might inform an object's value and function. For her commissioned work for this exhibition, Cao looks at the social life of the *lingling-o*, a class of jade ornaments that have circulated across the South China Sea, mainland and maritime Southeast Asia, and Taiwan, which attests to the intimacies of what historian Eric Tagliacozzo imagines as the "Sino-Southeast Asian embrace." Archaeologists have proven that the *lingling-o* traveled with the Austronesian language—from Taiwan to Polynesia to the Indian Ocean to Africa. Inspired by archaeologist Victor Paz's method of "artifact assemblage," she fabricates the artifacts using an AI-program that creates designs from a sampling of existing photographs and records of the objects. These designs are then modeled and are 3D-printed using plastic filament. What comes out of these processes is a selection of "inauthentic" artifacts that allude to the craftsmanship and the circulation of the *lingling-o* but nonetheless assume a spectral materiality in the form of a translucent, almost ghostly, replica. For Cao, "The work engages with the status of the *lingling-o* as a document of an open-ended history and as archival material. The generation of new images and objects based upon the *lingling-o* suggests that the archive is very much alive in the present, integral to the creation of new knowledge and methods of articulation."





Lesley-Anne Cao, *Fugue Encore*, 2021.

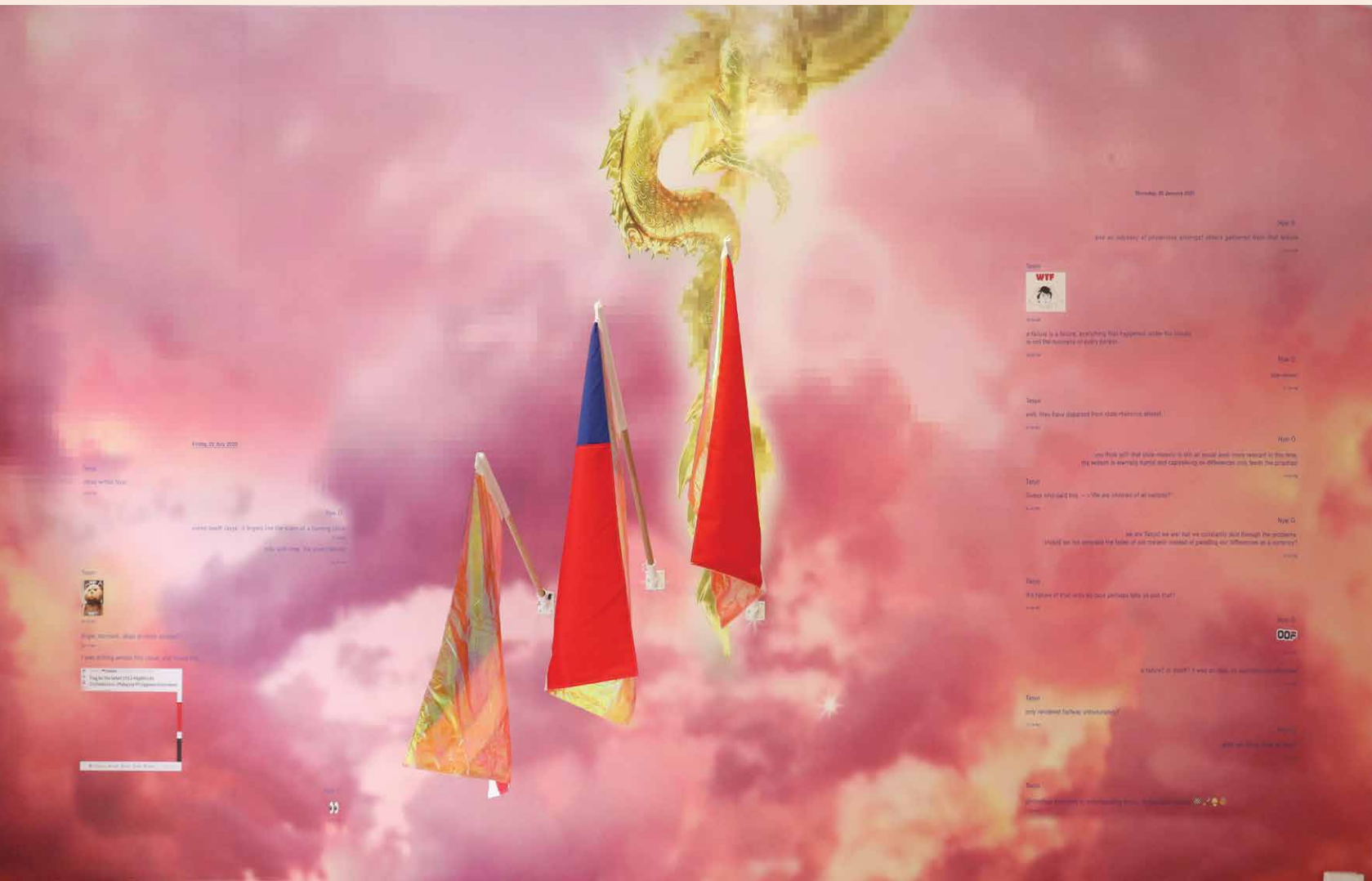
FYEROOL DARMA
(FEATURING EFUND, TATTEREDEMALION AND
EXODUCKS FROM REDDIT R/VEXXILOLOGY)

Flags for the failed 1963 Maphilindo Confederation

2021 • ARTIST TEXTILES, THREAD, WOOD, ALUMINIUM, AND VINYL ON WALL, SCREEN
VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

THREE FLAGS are triumphantly presented in this installation alongside a text that narrates an imagined text message exchange between the fictional character Don Anastacio (from Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*, 1887) and Nyai Ontosoroh (from Ananta Pramoedya's *Bumi Manusia*, 1980). Each flag is a different imagination of national representation of Maphilindo that Fyeroool found on the internet. Each flag is a "fan art" imagined by an amateur artist with a utopian imagination of this short-lived solidarity between Malaya, the Philippines, and Indonesia, which officially lasted a month in 1963 and fell apart with Indonesian President Sukarno's policy of *Konfrontasi*. *Konfrontasi* (1963–1966) was the stance adopted by Sukarno in relation to his opposition to the formation of the Federation of Malaysia consisting of Singapore, Malaya, Sarawak, and North Borneo (Sabah). This involved an openly hostile take against Malaysia's independence seeing it as a British neo-colonial ploy. It also consisted of a diplomatic forestalling of the formation of the Federation within the context of Maphilindo negotiations and an unceasing military offensive in the frontier of Northern Borneo and covert military aid to Borneo "freedom fighters." Maphilindo is generally viewed as an idealistic, failed dream for a pan-Malayan Southeast Asian regionalism. Fyeroool critically gestures towards the limitations and lapses of a historical idealism mobilized to address contemporary disenfranchisement. Why does the internet warrior of today wistfully return to this failed dream through the creation of flags and markers of sovereignty? Fyeroool's selection of flags, which he painstakingly sews together to manifest the laboring over of this ideal, speaks to the contemporary resonance and muddling of this history. The seemingly celebratory presentation of the flags ironically asks the question, what do people remember of Maphilindo, and perhaps, the more implicit and important question, why does this contentious history continue to resonate?





Fyerool Darma, *Flags for the failed 1963 Maphilindo Conferederation*, 2021

JEAN CLAIRE DY

Waves of Time and Sea

2021 • SINGLE-CHANNEL VIDEO, LUCKY CAT FIGURINES WITH AUDIO
3 MINS • VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

JEAN CLAIRE DY'S WORKS look into trauma and histories of conflict, particularly in relation to the history of Mindanao, the southernmost island group of the Philippine archipelago. Her newly commissioned work for the exhibition considers the unique relationship of Sulu, a smaller archipelagic formation located in the southeastern tip of Mindanao, with China during pre-Hispanic times. According to recorded history, Paduka Batara, the Sultan of Sulu, visited the Ming Emperor Yong Le in Beijing in 1417. On the way back, the Sultan fell sick and died in Shandong. After an imperial burial, the Sultan's sons were allowed to stay in China and intermarried with local Chinese. Dy takes two texts relevant to this history, namely, "a copy of Qing Emperor Qian Long's reply to Sulu Sultan Muhammed Alimud Din's request found in the document 476 of *Veritable Records of the Qing Dynasty* and the scroll with the imperial edict of Emperor Yong Le edifying the Sultan," and creates an audio-visual installation that attempts to parse the lineations of this relationship, foregrounding a Filipino-Chinese dynamic that focuses on hospitality and diplomacy against the more contemporary tenor of Chinese neocolonial infringement on Philippine economic and maritime affairs. These considerations are read against modes of affinities that antedate national configurations and identities. The texts are translated into sound and video, sketching out an "imaginary space" that offers her the chance to explore the itinerant and performative conditions of both her Chinese-ness and Filipino-ness. She uses the ubiquitous lucky cat figurine, a good luck charm in the shape of a cat waving its paw that are usually displayed in most Filipino-Chinese-owned storefronts, to anchor her explorations of Filipino-Chinese identity, foregrounding how its performances and navigation is deeply embedded in popular culture and contemporary urban life.





Jean Claire Dy, *Waves of Time and Sea*, 2021.

BANI HAYKAL

“We’re not satisfied with just making a noise.”

2021 • MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION COMPRISING OF A 3D-PRINTED CLARINET
AND A MULTI-CHANNEL AUDIO INSTALLATION • VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

BASED ON BANI’S RESEARCH into the history and affect of the Cultural Cold War through jazz in Southeast Asia, “*We’re not satisfied with just making a noise.*” is inspired by a performance on December 27, 1956 in Singapore by Benny Goodman, an American jazz clarinetist and bandleader known as the “King of Swing” who led racially integrated jazz groups. The title of the art work is from a response Goodman gave when he was asked why his repertoire did not contain Rock n’ Roll music. Prior to Goodman’s arrival in Singapore, he sent a replica of his clarinet to Runme Shaw to show his appreciation to the members of the Musician’s Union of Singapore. For bani, the clarinet was not only a symbol of friendship but also of the Cultural Cold War, which was in part defined by the anti-communist prerogative of American foreign policy. American policy makers began to appropriate black cultural products like jazz to make the argument that American democracy enabled creativity and to downplay American racism. The US State Department arranged the travel of African American Jazz “diplomats” like Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington. Such cultural programs were important for American diplomacy of the 1950s in Southeast Asia, where a wave of independence and solidarity movements were informed by anti-colonialism and anti-racism. Bani identifies the clarinet as an exceptional jazz instrument that becomes an object of disruption. Characterized as the most dynamic and sounding the most human, the clarinet is capable of not only producing loud, piercing tones, but also gentle, mellow, and soothing sounds. Represented through a 3D-printed replica, Goodman’s clarinet is deconstructed and presented in this installation suspended in a grey soundscape that is an abstraction of the old Badminton Hall where Goodman gave his performance. Bani’s research into American Jazz diplomacy points to the duplicitous history of jazz mobilized as an ideological instrument of anti-communism used to bring people into a “Free World” empire of American democracy and capitalism. Thus, his work can be read as a critical homage to the innocuous sounds of empire and the everyday humanity and idealism (associated with both race and music) that were deployed to geopolitical ends.





bani haykal, *"We're not satisfied with just making a noise."*, 2021.

ARIKO S. IKEHARA

Sketches of Teruya Ar(t)chive

2021 • MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION FEATURING 3 MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS
AND VIDEO • VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

THIS INSTALLATION is based on *Sketches of Teruya* (January-March 2020), an exhibition that Ikehara developed and presented for Koza X MiXtopia Research Center, an independent art and research space she opened in Teruya, Okinawa. It features updated maps of Teruya, a district in Okinawa that thrived economically after World War II in the shadow of the American Occupation of Okinawa (1945-1972). Functioning as both art work and archive, Ikehara's maps are a form of "miXtory," a term she uses to describe her methodology of weaving together the meta-narratives of history, personal stories, and the gaps or questions that emerge between history and memory. Ikehara describes this interplay in the map as performative, referring to the map as "an object that solicits the viewer into action [by] filling the gap of what is missing on the map, and translating the personal miXtory into material forms, i.e., [turning] object, event, performance into an archive." Teruya represented three economic zones, which were active for more than twenty-three years after the American occupation from 1952 to 1976: Honmachi Dori, a shopping district; Koza Ichiba, a market district; and the Black District, a bar and entertainment district. The latter district served African American soldiers in the military. During this time, Teruya's mixed racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and national geography also included people who were Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Italians, Indians, Koreans, Filipinos, and the children of mixed-racial ethnicities. Postwar economic opportunities offered to foreigners in constructing the American military bases and other business ventures drew a diverse range of people to Teruya. Through their will to survive and thrive, they created what Ikehara describes as a postwar economic miracle. They created, in her words, "a community in which everyone had a chance of making, creating, and imagining how to live in the company of others while negotiating difference." Ikehara grew up in Teruya and some of the locations on the map are based on her memories, interviews, and what she calls "yuntakuvIEWS" (*yuntaku* translates to "chatting" in Okinawan).





Ariko S. Ikehara, *Sketches of Teruya Art(t)chive*, 2021.

TUAN ANDREW NGUYEN

The Specter of Ancestors Becoming

2019 • 4-CHANNEL VIDEO INSTALLATION; 28 MINUTES • VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

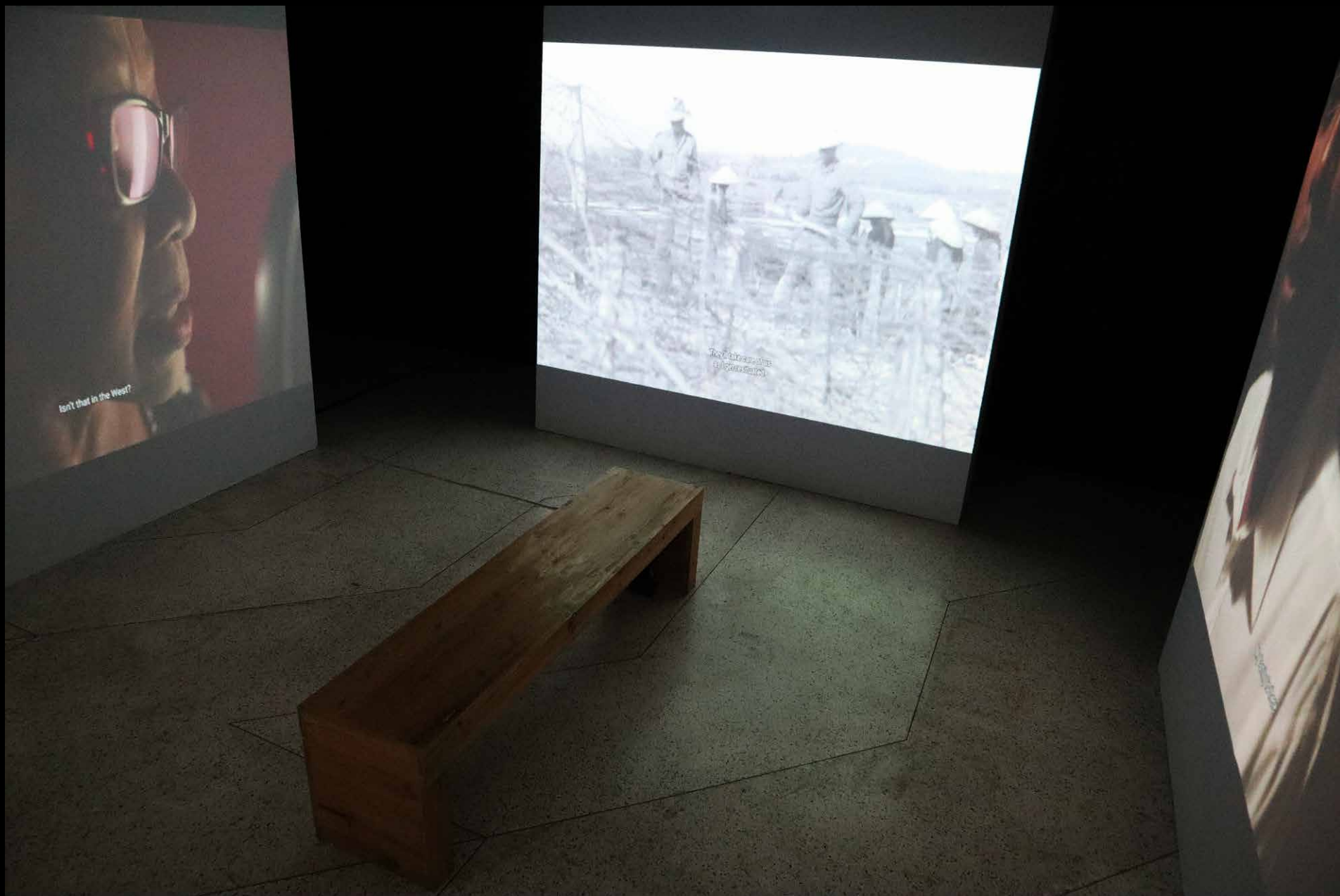
***THE SPECTER OF ANCESTORS BECOMING* (2019)**

is a four-channel video installation that expands on the legacies of Senegalese soldiers, or *Tirailleurs sénégalais*, that were deployed to Indochina to combat the Vietnamese uprising against French rule.

After World War II, France sought to reestablish its colonial position in Indochina. Following unsuccessful negotiations for independence with the French in 1946, war broke out between Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh forces and French troops in the northern part of Vietnam. These troops would include the *tirailleurs*. The conflict would continue until the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. This defeat would be described by Frantz Fanon as the beginning of the end of the French Empire. It would lead to the 1954 Geneva Conference and contribute to the American establishment of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) that same year.

The work is a collaboration with Vietnamese-Senegalese descendants, wherein personal family histories and artifacts are evoked through three dramatized stories. The stories capture the experience of Vietnamese women and their children who migrated to West Africa with Senegalese husbands who had been stationed in Indochina or of those who took their mixed-race children and left their Vietnamese wives behind. Written, read, imagined, and acted out by descendants, the stories also present the experience of these children as they face racial prejudice and the attempted erasure of their affinities to Vietnam, pointing to the fraught dynamics that structure the historical imagination of decolonizing societies, evolving over generations and spilling into the contemporary.





Tuan Andrew Nguyen, *The Specter of Ancestors Becoming*, 2019.

ELIA NURVISTA

Tremors Ground: A Study of the Land

2021 • MIND MAP, RICE SACK INSTALLATION, VIDEO WITH SOUND • VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

CONTINUING HER RESEARCH on global politics of food, Nurvista sets out to entangle discourses around hunger, food technology, food policy, and transregional narratives of cooperation and aid into the larger matrices of geopolitics and Indonesian national and transnational history. For her work in the exhibition, Nurvista frames these questions within the political shifts that transpired during Sukarno's leadership. Nurvista's work speculates on the nodes and linkages of the meshwork that constitute the global food world: from the threat and specter of communism, the prospects of a non-aligned movement, anti-colonialist projects, and aspirations of national development. From a mind map of events, programs, and initiatives that affected Southeast Asian food sovereignty, to a selection of archival footages of political action related to these, and an installation that interrogates the political tenor of rice and agricultural crops in Indonesian political history, Nurvista believes that "small narratives and historic trivia are connected and have trajectories that move among one another, shaping what we understand as big global stories."



AHMAD FUAD OSMAN

Di suatu masa dulu...

2016 - 2021 (ONGOING) • 16TH CENTURY MING BOWLS AND SPOON, SNUFF BOTTLE, LEATHER POUCH, 13TH CENTURY CELADON BOWL, 16TH CENTURY PORTUGUESE COINS AND CHINA'S MALACCA TIN COINS, INDO-PORTUGUESE CASKET, MALACCA CODE OF LAW, VINYL, SINGLE-CHANNEL VIDEO • VARIABLE DIMENSIONS



WRITING ABOUT AHMAD FUAD OSMAN, curator Shabbir Hussain Mustafa describes the artist's practice as exemplary of the "aggregate"— "a method of working that activates anachronisms, collectivities, sympathies, and commonalities, bringing them all together in a single place as an articulation of the predicament of globalization." Making use of archive, history, and fiction, Osman's research-based practice traverses the terrain of the Malay archipelago, a region connected by the South China Sea and flanked by the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific. For this exhibition, Osman presents a site-specific reiteration of his expansive research on Enrique de Malacca, Ferdinand Magellan's Malay slave and his crew member in his attempt to circumnavigate the globe. Enrique was crucial in Magellan's expedition to the Spice Islands, serving as a guide and interpreter. For this reiteration, Osman presents a selection of archival objects that flesh out the importance of Malacca, the place where Enrique was from, in the Age of Discovery during the 16th century.





Ahmad Fuad Osman, *Di suatu masa dulu...*, 2016-2021 (ongoing).

SIM CHI YIN

Interventions: Parachutes

2018 • PRINT ON HAHNEMUHLE PHOTO RAG • 91CM X 61CM

Interventions: Interrogation

2018 • PRINT ON HAHNEMUHLE PHOTO RAG • 91CM X 61CM

THE TWO PRINTS that Sim presents in *Cast But One Shadow* are part of her ongoing research project titled *One Day We'll Understand* (2015-). The project examines historiographies of the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) informed by a search for answers to her grandfather's execution during this period.

The Malayan Emergency was a guerrilla war between British and Commonwealth troops and the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), the Malayan Communist Party's (MCP) armed wing. It was a protracted conflict that ensued in the jungles, plantations, and villages of the Federation of Malaya. The MNLA fought for the independence of Malaya from the British Empire, designating the conflict as the "Anti-British National Liberation War." Meanwhile, the British categorized it as an "Emergency" to underwrite insurance claims, since London-based companies did not cover costs arising from civil wars. The MNLA had an overwhelming Chinese membership, having gained the support of the ethnic Chinese population who lived impoverished lives at the outskirts of the cities.

As part of the research behind her project and for the production of these images, Sim mined the British Imperial War Museum's archive for the few images of the "communist insurgent." She photographed prints and the negatives of images in the archive, merging verso and recto onto the plane of her image, bringing to light the annotations that have over the years defined these images and the positions they sought to represent. Scholars such as Max Houghton have credited this aesthetic strategy as laying bare "the operative logic of the colonial archive."



Sim's "exposure" of the annotations on the photograph surfaces the idiom of the British propaganda that framed this anti-colonial struggle and invested discursive weight on words such as "banditry" and "emergency." Sim's series illuminates the complex narratives of this conflict which became the blueprint for combating insurgency around the world, playing a role in the Vietnam War as well as in other campaigns such as the British villagization schemes in Kenya.



Sim Chi Yin, *Interventions: Interrogation*, 2018.



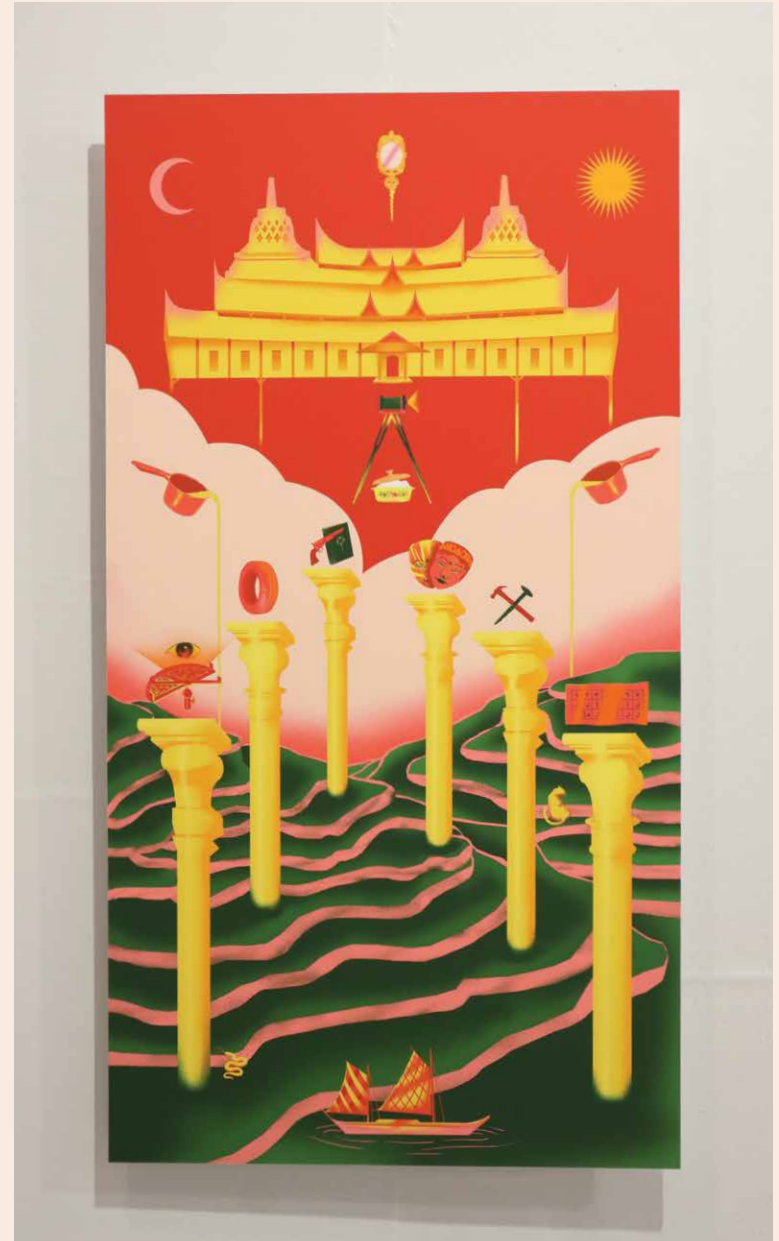
Sim Chi Yin, *Interventions: Parachutes*, 2018.

SIMON SOON AND MUNIRAH MANSOOR

Papan Soerih Perhimpoean Orang Melayoe

2021 • DIGITAL PRINT ON PAPER • 3 PANELS OF 45CM X 84.1CM

THE PAPAN SOERIH are illustrations of the various symbols and emblems that make up the three grades in this exercise to reimagine an archive of the *Perhimpoean Orang Melayoe*, founded sometime in the early 1930s by Wenceslao Q. Vinzon as a masonic organisation following from a speech that he delivered on 12 February 1932 at the 20th Annual Oratorical Contest of the College of Law, University of Philippines. In his speech he appealed for a pan-Malayan unity that spans the Malay Archipelago and the Pacific islands, arguing, “when we in the vision of United State work in concert to adopt a common language and overcome our frailties, so that by our renewed racial vitality we may give birth to a new nationalism, that of Malaysia redeemed.” While not much is known about the *Perhimpoean Orang Melayoe*, surviving accounts spoke of the organisation drawing inspiration from freemasonry and even elected a “Sumatran prince” as its vice president. The *Perhimponen* also adopted the Malay language as the ceremonial language for all its rituals. Inspired by masonic tracing boards, each of the three papan soerih corresponds to a rank in the graded hierarchies of the *Perhimpoean*. Meant to be read from the right to left like a jawi manuscript, they serve as teaching aids during the initiation rituals of the *Perhimpoean*, taking the postulant on a journey of cultural discovery and political awakening. Like masonic tracing boards, they contain symbols and concepts related to Vinzon’s vision, serving as object lessons to help impart esoteric knowledge. Drawn primarily from art historical and visual cultural references of the Malay world, the tracing board imagines a mnemosyne atlas of *Melayoe*, exploring not only its cosmopolitan resources but also offering a new gendered reading into these resources as they are reassembled into a new body of occult knowledge.





Simon Soon and Munirah Mansoor,
Papan soerih Perhimpoean Orang Melayoe, 2021.

ISOLA TONG

Ark

2021 • STEEL STRUCTURE, LIGHTBOX • VARIABLE DIMENSIONS

WORKING AT THE INTERSECTION of architecture and visual art, Isola Tong's practice looks at the intimacies of ecologies and human and nonhuman agencies. For the exhibition, Tong presents a newly commissioned outdoor installation that uses the Philippines as an entry point to elaborate on the exhibition's historical conjunctures. In 1976, then President Ferdinand Marcos requested the importation of safari animals from Kenya to Calauit in Palawan, an island province south of Manila. In order to make space for the proposed safari, some 250 Tagbanua families, indigineous people of the island, were relocated to Halsey Island, a former leper colony. Tong's work for the exhibition situates this event within the context of the Marcosian investments on the grandiose and the monumental and the tropes of the tropics as elaborated by a number of blaxploitation narratives in the 1970s. For this work, Tong uses the image of the ark in Judeo-Christian myth as a metaphor for the self-deification of the Marcoses in order to foreground "the biopolitical and ecological implications of power in the migration, extinction, and dispossession of biologies, ultimately reshaping and altering ecosystems." A rectangular structure divided into two sections, the Cage and the Cave, comprises the work. A foyer made out of chain link mesh, the Cage, allows spectators from outside to see the people entering the installation, unsettling the dynamics of gazing. Into the inner sanctum, the Cave, the artist documents herself as the deer-woman, an homage to the 1972 blaxploitation film *The Twilight People*. The film narrates the story of a mad scientist who attempts to create a super race by combining human and animal DNA, creating human-animal hybrids. For the artist: "The giraffe-woman signals the juncture of human and animal agencies exploited by the state power. Cells and Cages are recurring symbols in science fiction, representing anthropocentrism, human hubris, and apathy in the control and manipulation of nature through unethical experiments. The ark also hearkens back to the imposing brutalist structures built by the Marcoses, an architectural exercise of monumentalizing and reifying their reign."





Isola Tong, *Ark*, 2021.

MING WONG

Sunu Jappo / 手拉手 / Hand in Hand

2019 • SINGLE-CHANNEL VIDEO, COSTUME MADE OF PAINTED FABRIC,
TRANSCRIPTIONS OF SPEECH BY CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING • 14:36MIN

SUNU JAPPO / 手拉手 / HAND IN HAND is a video poem that sees the artist take on the persona of a cultural ambassador revisiting the sites of Sino-Senegalese “friendship” built with Chinese aid.

Inspired by the 2018 opening of the Museum of Black Civilizations, Wong organized a research trip to Senegal with the Chinese curators Xia Yanguo from Beijing and Enoch Cheng from Hong Kong under the auspices of Goethe Institute’s project “Migration Narratives in East and Southeast Asia” in 2018/2019. The museum, a symbol of decolonization and of Black identity was first proposed by the poet Leopold Sedar Senghor, who served as the first president of Senegal (1960-1980), as part of his vision of a postcolonial pan-Africanism. While Senghor believed that culture was at the heart of development, his museum was only accomplished 50 years later with the help of Chinese aid.

While recalling the form of televised trips by cultural delegates between Africa and Southeast Asia, Wong’s video, unlike such political performances, is reflexive of its anthropological gaze and the position of a Chinese cultural ambassador surveying a client state and an Other culture. Wong describes the video as “a tribute to Trinh T. Minh-ha’s positioning against the colonising gaze: ‘I do not intend to speak about; just speak nearby.’” Minh-ha made her first film, *Reassemblage* (1982), in Senegal.

Unscripted and made without any explicit narrative, the video is constructed from fragments of sounds and images that Wong collected with the two curators. The video’s soundtrack of a Senegalese student’s Chinese speech competition, Wong’s camera capturing a banner that states the museum “re-reads the past in consideration of new configurations,” and children rushing to shake Wong’s hand are all chance encounters that constitute the video.



While Wong’s video illustrates the negotiation of gazes and performances that underlies cultural diplomacy, his cultural ambassador is also a cipher gesturing towards the historical trajectories that are being re-mobilized today. Apart from being home to the Museum of Black Civilizations, Senegal was the first West African country to join the Chinese government’s One Belt One Road Initiative and was the first stop for President Xi Jinping’s tour of Africa in 2018.



Ming Wong, Sunu Jappo / 手拉手 / Hand in Hand, 2019.

YEE I-LANN

Borneo Heart

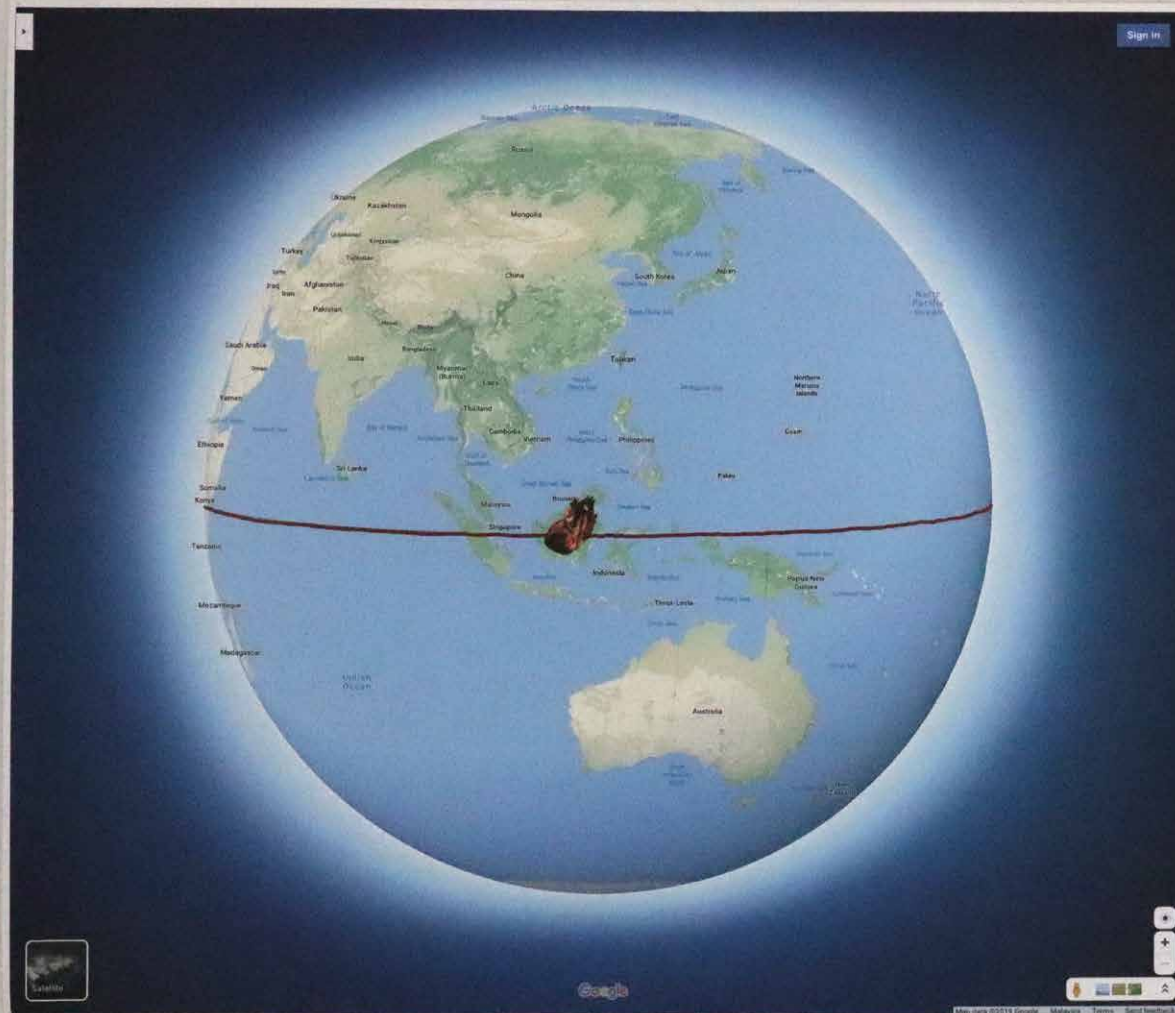
2021 • OFF-SET PRINT, PRINTED AT SABAH STATE GOVERNMENT PRINTERS • 59.4CM X 84.1CM

BORNEO HEART is a poster map of the world that literally places Borneo at the center of Southeast Asian regionalism and worldmaking.

The early 1960s saw the consolidation of discourses on Malayan solidarity, with the formalization of Maphilindo, a short-lived confederation of then Malaya, the Philippines, and Indonesia based on a pan-Malayan ethnos. Borneo assumes a central role in this milieu, as it plays out the limits and excesses of this configuration in relation to discourses of sovereignty, neo-colonialism, and communism and how these frame issues of regionality and region-formation.

Sabah, in particular, becomes a site of confrontation that deployed diplomacy and armed conflict: in 1962, the Philippines staked its claims to the territory against the British colonial power which led to a meeting between the two states in 1963 in London wherein both states framed the issue of Sabah within diplomatic relations and the impinging threat of communism in the region; in 1963, armed conflict sparked in Sabah led by “freedom fighters” encouraged by Indonesian state propaganda against the establishment of Malaysia branding it as a British neo-colonial ploy and empowering their armed offensive via covert military aid. This armed conflict and propaganda was enshrined in Indonesian President Sukarno’s policy of *Konfrontasi*, which aimed to forestall, if not prevent the formation of Malaysia. *Borneo Heart* speaks to this history and the centrality of Borneo in Cold War Southeast Asian regionalism.





**WHEREIN
BORNEO
RIGHTEOUSLY
CLAIMS ITS
POSITION AT
THE CENTRE
OF ASEAN &
AT THE
HEART
OF
THE WORLD.**

**WE ARE
YOUR
PUMPIN'
BREATHING,
EXHAUSTED,
HEART.**

LEGEND...



Planet Earth, you also have a halo cause she's also holy here & we love her by being kind & thoughtful to all, rejecting single-use plastic, by planting trees & keeping cool in the ground.



ASEAN (est. 1967)

Association of Southeast Asian Nations:
Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines,
Vietnam, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Myanmar & Cambodia.
We eat fermented shrimp paste & love volcanic buffaloes.

Borneo, geography not country, is the 3rd largest island in the world housing super rich, vital biodiversity, is our joy & responsibility to protect but can be used to also be our burden.

Life's on her without a heart. Our heart pumps oxygen and nutrients through our circulatory system and removes carbon dioxide and other waste. To protect our heart, avoid stress, sleep late, eat veggies, plant more trees & enjoy ourselves & ourselves.

The Equator is the thickest part of Earth & closest to the sun. It equidistant from the North & South poles & circulates around the world joining Borneo to the bridge at the Congo & the Amazon.

DESIGNED BY THE HEART OF THE WORLD. DESIGNED BY THE HEART OF THE WORLD. DESIGNED BY THE HEART OF THE WORLD.

Paintings from the Diosdado and Evangelina Macapagal Family Collection

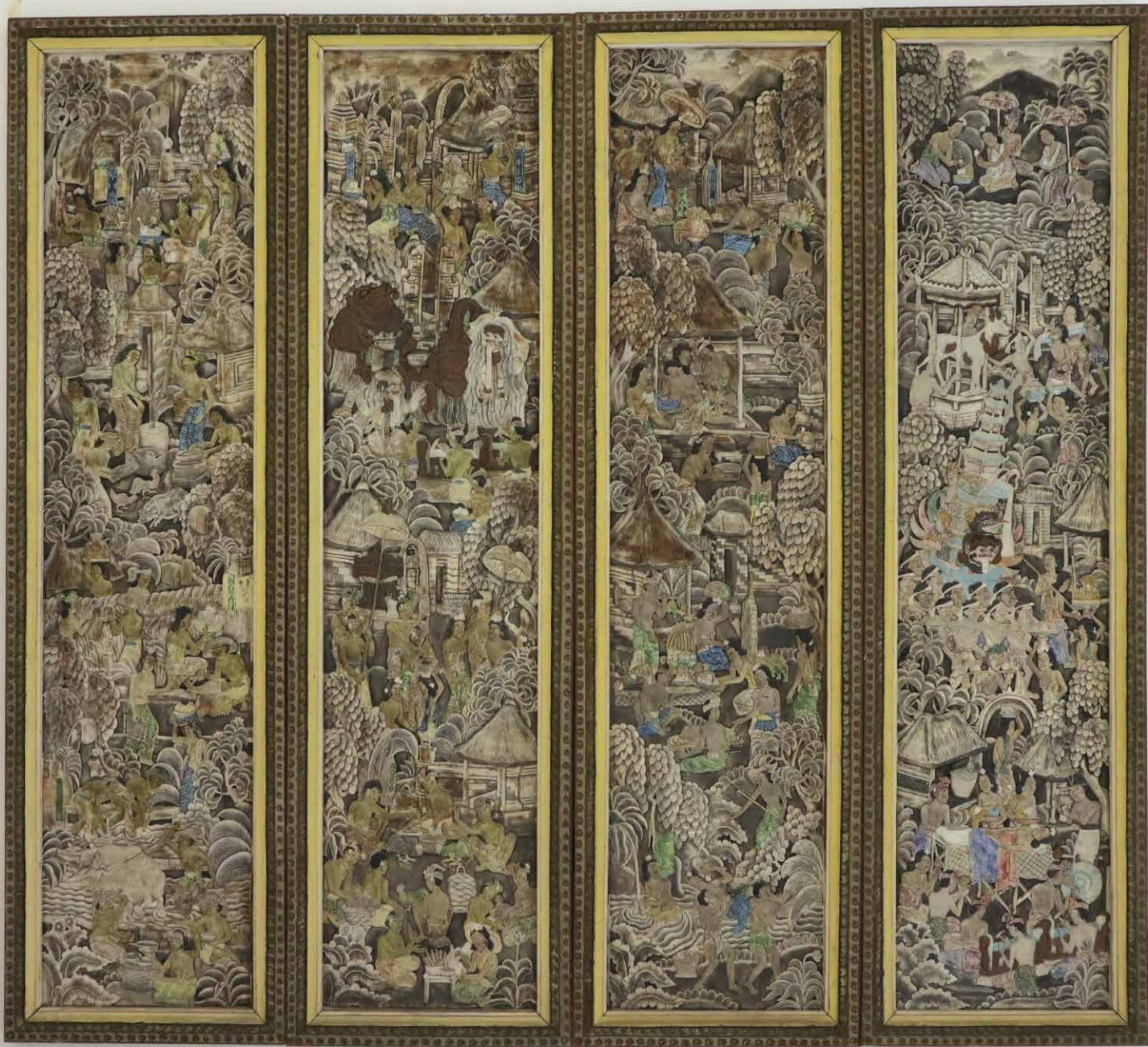
THESE THREE PAINTINGS are from Macapagal's family collection. Made by Indonesian artists, little is known about these individual paintings other than that they were personal gifts from President Sukarno of Indonesia (1945-1967) to President Macapagal (1961-1965) while he was in office.

Two of the three paintings are Balinese paintings. Sukarno became acquainted with artists based in Bali in the 1950s when he was building the Tampaksiring Palace and hosting state visits in Bali. It is probable that these paintings were gifted sometime between 1963 and 1964 when President Sukarno visited the Philippines.

Painting, and art more generally, was an important diplomatic medium for President Sukarno. For example, Mikki Susanto's research on the link between Sukarno's commissioning of art and his diplomatic visits to other countries notes that when he visited the United States in 1956, he visited the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and later that same year when he traveled to Russia, he visited the Tretyakovskaya Gallery in Moscow. Toward the end of 1956, when Sukarno met Chairman Mao Zedong, the trip was marked by a visit to see an art collection and receive a catalogue published in Peking.

President Sukarno used art as a way of building bridges with other countries. In 1964, Sukarno also arranged for the publication of a series of folios of the collection of paintings and statues that he had collected since the 1940s. The collection was intended to be passed on to the Indonesian people upon his death. The folios were also a diplomatic tool. Released in four languages: Bahasa, Chinese, English, and Russian—the book listed 384 paintings by 130 painters from Indonesia and around the world.





Lesley-Anne Cao

Lesley-Anne Cao is a visual artist based in Quezon City, Philippines. Her practice is a series of divergent processes that explore the interplay of materiality, exhibition making, and fiction. Her work makes use of recognizable materials—books, plants, debris, precious metals, and money—towards the actualization and presentation of fictional objects and environments.

Cao holds a BFA from the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts - Diliman. Recent exhibitions include *A song plays from another room at mo_* (2021) and *Hard and soft prayers* at The Drawing Room Gallery (2021). She has been granted artist residencies in Taiwan and Finland and has also presented work in Australia, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Indonesia.

Fyeroool Dharma

Fyeroool Dharma continues to live and work in Singapore. His object and material experimentations are based on an extensive visual vocabulary drawn from popular culture, literature, the archives, the Internet, and his own life. His work has been presented in group exhibitions such as *As the West Slept*, Silver

Art Projects; *Transient Museum of a Thousand Conversation: LIR* at ISCP (International Studio and Curatorial Program), both in New York, United States; *Lost and found: Imagining new worlds*, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore (all in 2019) and *An Atlas of Mirrors*, Singapore Biennale (2016), and his long-term project *After Ballads*, NUS Museum, Singapore (2017-8). He was Artist-in-Residence (1 October 2019 – 28 April 2020) at NTU - Centre of Contemporary Arts where he presented *Vivarium (wiifw w/ l4if but t4k& ø forms, ♥)* at the Centre's Vitrine.

Jean Claire Dy

Jean Claire Dy is a Filipino-Chinese filmmaker, media artist, writer, and educator from Mindanao, Philippines. She holds a Masters degree in Media Studies and Film from the New School in New York which she completed under the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program. She is currently a fellow of the Scottish Documentary Institute's Connecting Stories Program. Claire's full length documentary film *A House in Pieces* won the Golden Hercules Award at the Kasseler Dokfest in Germany and the Best Documentary Award at the Mimesis Documentary Film Festival in the US. Her video installations,

experimental films, and media art works have been exhibited in various exhibitions in the Philippines and internationally. Her other films have been screened in various festivals worldwide. In 2021, she was an artist resident at the Belgrade Art Studio Online Residency Program. She will be commencing her PhD in Fine Arts and Music majoring in Film at the Victorian College of Arts of the University of Melbourne in 2022.

bani haykal

As an artist, composer, and musician, bani considers music (making / processes) as material and his projects investigate modes of interfacing and interaction with feedback/ feedforward mechanisms. He is a member of b-quartet. Manifestations of his research culminate into works of various forms encompassing installation, poetry, and performance. In his capacity as a collaborator and a soloist, bani has participated in festivals including MeCA Festival (Japan), Wiener Festwochen (Vienna), Media/Art Kitchen (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Japan), Liquid Architecture, and Singapore International Festival of Arts (Singapore), among others. His current work frames encryption as a process

and basis for human-machine intimacy by navigating interfaces such as a QWERTY keyboard as mediums of interactivity.

Ariko S. Ikehara

Ariko S. Ikehara is Director at Koza X MiXtopia Research Center in Okinawa. She earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2016. She was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Osaka University (2017-19) and a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Gender and Women Studies at UC Berkeley (2016). Her peer-reviewed publications include "Champuru Text: Postwar Okinawan Writing," in *Beyond American Occupation: Race and Agency in Okinawa, 1945-2015* (2017), and "Third Space as Decolonial Con/Text: Okinawa's American Champuru," in *Transnational Asia: An Online Interdisciplinary Journal* 1, no.1 (Fall 2016). Since 1995, she has published essays and articles in Japanese about Teruya in Okinawan journals and local Okinawan newspapers. She is currently working on two book projects: a two-volume book manuscript in Japanese and English with the working title, *A Book of Teruya*, and a book manuscript in English with the working title *Okinawa's*

MiXtopia: Teruya Soul MiXtory, which is a choreographic study of Teruya.

Tuan Andrew Nguyen

Born in 1976 in Sai Gon, Viet Nam, Tuan Andrew Nguyen's practice explores strategies of political resistance enacted through counter-memory and post-memory. Extracting and re-working narratives via history and supernaturalisms is an essential part of Nguyen's video works and sculptures where fact and fiction are both held accountable.

Nguyen received a BFA from the University of California, Irvine in 1999 and an MFA from The California Institute of the Arts in 2004. Nguyen has received several awards in both film and visual arts, including an Art Matters grant in 2010 and best feature film at VietFilmFest in 2018 for his film, *The Island*. His work has been included in several international exhibitions including the Asia Pacific Triennial 2006, the Whitney Biennial 2017, and the Sharjah Biennial 2019.

Nguyen founded The Propeller Group in 2006, a platform for collectivity that situates itself between an art collective and an advertising company. Accolades for the group include the grand prize at the 2015 Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur for the film *The Living Need Light, The Dead Need Music* and a Creative Capital award for their video project *Television*

Commercial for Communism. Besides a major traveling retrospective that began at the MCA Chicago, the collective has participated in international exhibitions including *The Ungovernables* (2012 New Museum Triennial), 2012 LA Biennial, *Prospect3* (2014 New Orleans Triennial), and the Venice Biennale 2015.

Elia Nurvita

Elia Nurvita (b. 1983) is interested in exploring a wide range of art mediums with an interdisciplinary approach and focus on the discourse of food. Through food, she scrutinizes power, as well as social and economic inequality in this world.

In 2015 she initiated Bakudapan food study group with colleagues from different disciplines such as anthropology and philosophy. Bakudapan is guided by principles of complementarity and camaraderie between the members. With Bakudapan she has conducted research on food within socio-political and cultural contexts.

She has participated in several exhibitions including Dhaka Art Summit (2020), Karachi Biennale (2019), and the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art at QAGOMA in Brisbane (2018), among others. She also curated The Biennale Jogja XVI: Equator #6 (Indonesia and Oceania) (2021); ADAM LAB at

TPAC (Taipei Performing Arts Center) with Transient Collective (2020); and the solidarity platform *Land, Water, Farming, Food: Struggle for Sovereignty*, initiated by Bakudapan and Bodies of Power/Power for Bodies (2020/2021). She lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Ahmad Fuad Osman

Ahmad Fuad Osman (b. 1969 in Kedah, Malaysia) graduated with a BA in Fine Art from MARA Institute of Technology (UITM) in 1991. In the 1990's Fuad was involved in the Malaysia film and theater industry, and this period influenced a shift in his artistic practice from Neo-expressionist painting to conceptual multi-disciplinary works encompassing installation, sculpture, print, and video. Socio-political themes have long been a key concern as he investigates subject matters including identity politics, the abuse of power, and historical amnesia.

Recent years have shown a conceptual turn for Fuad with an interest in the veracity of truths, alternate histories, and contesting or reinterpreting of existing histories. This characteristic comes through in *Recollections of Long Lost Memories* (2007/2008), which won Jurors' Choice Award at the APBF Signature Art Prize (2008) in Singapore, and his more recent work, *Enrique de Malacca Memorial Project*, shown in 2016 at the Singapore Biennale

and shown again at the 2019 Sharjah Biennale. Drawing on historical accounts, texts, and archives, Fuad pieces together fragments of evidence and conflicting narratives, finding creative ways to fill in gaps. As such his recent practice not only reconsiders historical narratives, but opens up possibilities of contesting and rewriting established canons.

Fuad has exhibited internationally including *Blackout* at Kunsthal Rotterdam 2019; *Leaving The Echo Chamber*, Sharjah Biennale 2019; *An Atlas of Mirrors*, Singapore Biennale, 2016; *Multiple Languages*, Silverlens Gallery, Makati, Philippines, 2014; *Welcome to the Jungle: Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia From the Collection of Singapore Art Museum*, Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan, 2013; and, participated in residencies including the Vermont Studio Centre, USA (2004), Goyang National Art Studio, South Korea (2005 – 2006) and Rimbun Dahan, Malaysia (2007 – 2008). His works can be found in the collections of National Visual Art Gallery (Malaysia), Petronas Gallery (Malaysia) and Singapore Art Museum, among others.

Sim Chi Yin

Sim Chi Yin is an artist from Singapore whose research-based practice includes photography, moving image, archival interventions, and text-based

performance, and focuses on history, conflict, memory, and extraction. She is currently based between Berlin and New York.

Recent solo exhibitions include *One Day We'll Understand*, Zilberman Gallery Berlin (2021), *One Day We'll Understand*, Les Rencontres d'Arles (2021), *One Day We'll Understand*, Landskrona Foto Festival, Sweden (2020), *One Day We'll Understand*, Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong (2019), *Most People Were Silent*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore (2018), and *Fallout*, Nobel Peace Museum, Oslo (2017). Her work has also been included in group shows such as *Most People Were Silent*, Aesthetica Art Prize, York Art Gallery, United Kingdom (2019); *UnAuthorised Medium*, Framer Framed, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; *Relics*, Jendela (Visual Arts Space) Gallery, Esplanade, Singapore (both 2018); the Guangzhou Image Triennial (2021); and the 15th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2017). Sim was commissioned as the Nobel Peace Prize photographer in 2017, nominated for the Vera List Center's Jane Lombard Prize for Art and Social Justice 2020.

Sim is represented by Zilberman Gallery in Berlin and Hanart TZ Gallery in Hong Kong. She is also doing a visual practice-based PhD at King's College London.

Simon Soon and Munirah Mansoor

Simon Soon (b. 1983) is an artist, art historian, and curator based in Kuala Lumpur. He is a senior lecturer at the University of Malaya and a team member of Malaysia Design Archive. In his artistic practice, Simon extends his research into open-access knowledge sharing, digital sources for histories from below, and global flows in the art and visual cultures of Asia. His art works have been exhibited at Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh), Para/Site (Hong Kong), and The Back Room (Malaysia). Soon works chiefly in collaboration. The design of the tracing boards for this exhibition emerges from a three-month long period of conversation, archive diving, and imagination between Soon and Munirah Mansoor on the visual history of the Malay world.

Munirah Mansoor (b. 1994, Singapore) is a visual designer who is exploring areas of her cultural roots from a Malay archipelago perspective. Her focus is on observing and rethinking historical stories after a personal revelation on what could have been or what have not been unearthed archaeologically, which makes current narratives remain myths. For her final university project she worked on Hikayat Nusantara, which imagines a legend from a non-fictional fact that all of the archipelago lands were once geographically united. She began working on relevant projects after joining Studio Vanessa Ban for

a period, where she also assisted in designing the identity of the exhibition *As The West Slept* (2019).

Isola Tong

Isola Tong (Libra, Fire Rabbit, Manila, Philippines) is a Filipinx trans-womxn artist, architect, researcher, and educator engaging the intersection of autochthonous queerness and nature through performance, installation, print, painting, and moving image to disrupt and explore the tensions in the binarized understandings of nature and culture. She comes from a line of Babaylan or Filipinx shamans in the central region of the Philippine archipelago.

Isola's ongoing artistic research involves queer cultures embedded in indigenous shamanistic histories, its frictions with postcolonial realities, and the visualizations of ecology in human and nonhuman encounters. In her developing practice, the preternatural class of the spiritual Babaylan becomes one of her points of reference, whose walk of life and duties embody healing and communing with nature and spirits, especially noted in a pre-colonial Philippines. In pondering this shamanist identity as a being, orientation, vocation, and methodology, Tong seeks to study the dimensions and potentialities of human-nature relationalities, its connectedness and social interstices foregrounded in the ritualistic, and

communal care of ourselves, and our ecology.

She has shown in Post-Territory Ujeongguk, Seoul, South Korea; Sami Center for Contemporary Art, Tromsø, Norway; A+ Contemporary Works of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, Slovenia. She is currently an MFA candidate at the UC Santa Cruz, Environmental Art and Social Practice program.

Ming Wong

Born in Singapore and currently based in Berlin and Stockholm, Ming Wong is an interdisciplinary artist working with performance, video, and installation to unravel ideas of 'authenticity' and the 'other' with reference to the act of human performativity. Through a re-telling of world cinema and popular culture and re-readings of cultural artifacts from around the world, Wong's artistic research and practice explore the politics of representation and how culture, gender, and identity are constructed, reproduced, and circulated. His work has been shown in the Asian Art Biennale at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, 2019; Times Art Center Berlin, 2019; Cosmopolis #1.5, Chengdu, 2018; Busan Biennale, 2018; Dakar Biennale, 2018; Dhaka Art Summit, 2018; Para Site, Hong Kong 2018; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, 2018; Centre National

de la Danse, Paris, 2018; Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei, 2017; The Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 2017; Sydney Biennale, 2016 & 2010; Asia Pacific Triennial, 2015; Shanghai Biennale, 2014; Lyon Biennale, 2013; Singapore Biennale, 2011; Gwangju Biennale, 2010; Performa, New York, 2010. He has had solo exhibitions at ASAKUSA (2019) and Shiseido Gallery (2013) in Tokyo; Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain, Brest (2016); UCCA, Beijing (2015); REDCAT, Los Angeles (2012). He represented Singapore at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 with the solo presentation *Life of Imitation*, which was awarded a special mention.

Yee I-lann

Yee I-lann (b. 1971) currently lives and works in Kota Kinabalu in the Malaysian Borneo state of Sabah. Her primarily photomedia-based practice engages with archipelagic Southeast Asia's turbulent history with works addressing issues of colonialism and neo-colonialism, power, and the impact of historic memory in social experience, often with particular focus on counter-narrative "histories from below." She employs a complex, multi-layered, visual vocabulary drawn from historical references, popular culture, archives, and everyday objects. She has in recent years started working collaboratively with sea-based and land based communities and indigenous mediums in Sabah. She is a co-founding associate

of The Ricecooker Archives: Southeast Asian Rock 'n' Roll Treasury with her partner Joe Kidd and has worked as a production designer in the Malaysian film industry. She is currently a board member for Forever Sabah and Tamparuli Living Arts Center (TaLAC), both based in Sabah.

CURATORS

Kathleen Ditzig

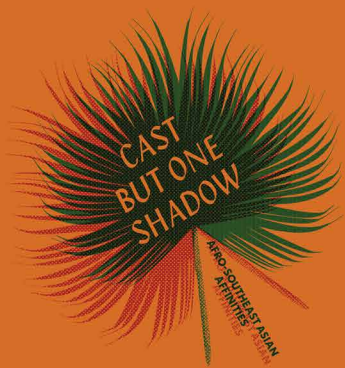
Kathleen Ditzig is a curator and researcher based in Singapore. Her work unpacks the enduring legacies of the Cold War. It examines art as an exceptional site and system of speaking to power. She is a fellow of the research platform Modern Art Histories in and across Africa, South and Southeast Asia (MAHASSA), convened by the Getty Foundation's Connecting Art Histories project and a co-founder of offshoreart.co, a curatorial and research collective that examines contemporary flows of capital and art.

Her art historical research has been published in *Southeast of Now* (NUS Press, 2017) and presented at international academic conferences and platforms. Other than being featured in artist catalogues, her writing has been published by *Artforum*, *OSMOS magazine*, *Art Agenda*, *ArtReview Asia*, and *Flash Art*, and in books such as *Perhaps It Is High Time for a Xeno-Architecture to Match* (Sternberg, 2018).

She recently curated *As The West Slept* (World Trade Center, 2019) as part of Performa 2019 and co-curated with Ute Meta Bauer the exhibition *Spring of Democracy* (2020) for the Gwangju Biennale Foundation.

Carlos Quijón, Jr.

Carlos Quijón, Jr. is an art historian, critic, and curator based in Manila. He is a fellow of the research platform Modern Art Histories in and across Africa, South and Southeast Asia (MAHASSA), convened by the Getty Foundation's Connecting Art Histories project. He writes exhibition reviews for *Artforum*. His essays are part of the books *Writing Presently* (Manila: Philippine Contemporary Art Network, 2019) and *From a History of Exhibitions Towards a Future of Exhibition-Making* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019). He has published in *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art* (SG), *Frieze* (UK), *Afro-Asian Visions* (UK), MoMA's *post* (US), *Queer Southeast Asia*, *ArtReview Asia* (Singapore), *Art Monthly* (UK), Asia Art Archive's *Ideas* (HK), and *Trans Asia Photography Review* (US), among others. In 2017, he was a research resident in MMCA Seoul and a fellow of the Transcuratorial Academy both in Berlin and Mumbai. He curated *Courses of Action* in Hong Kong in 2019, curated a *will for prolific disclosures* in Manila and co-curated *Minor Infelicities* in Seoul in 2020.



ABOUT THE EXHIBITION IDENTITY

The identity depicts two fronds of the genus *Livistona*, a tropical palm that thrives in areas in Southeast Asia, South Africa, areas of South China Sea, Indian Ocean, and the Pacific. The image takes cue from trade paperback book designs and film posters. In particular the identity converses with the graphic representations of the exoticism of the Orient and the tropics as represented by the book covers of the Chinese-born Eurasian novelist and physician Han Suyin in the 1960s and the visual language of posters of Blaxploitation films popular in the 1970s.

For the exhibition's identity these fronds overlap, creating a composite image wherein a vivid and solid green leaf interfaces with an overly saturated orange frond rendered in halftone. This interfacing results in a deeper and more somber green frond. This overlapping as logic of image-making speaks to the interests of the exhibition in looking at the entangled histories that it proposes to account for and the conditions and stakes of these historical moments that the exhibition seeks to flesh out. While these may be seen as discrete and loosely related events in the history of the region, what thinking about them as simultaneous developments brings is a richer understanding of regional histories and affinities.

This overlapping also pursues the provocation of the title of the exhibition. The title's syntax forwards the effect of casting a shadow rather than an emphasis on the shadow's source. It also prospects not a simple logic of casting multiple shadows, but the resistance to cast a singular and unitary shadow. While the identity simulates a singular image, its singularity is created by overlapping layers. The use of halftone achieves the same effect as it fleshes out the shape of a leaf by creating a continuous tone using a series of dots.



ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Jorge B. Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center is one of the nine museums and galleries in the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman campus. A center for Philippine art and culture, its main thrusts are research, curation, and education.

The institution is home to the collections of art, books, archives, memorabilia, coins, and stamps of Jorge B. Vargas, a significant political figure in twentieth century Philippines and alumnus of UP. An avid collector with a vision for sharing Philippine art to future generations, Vargas donated his holdings that he acquired throughout his illustrious career in public service, sports, and scouting to his alma mater in 1978. Since it opened its doors to the public in 1987, the institution has drawn in students of all levels, researchers, scholars, and the general public to experience the vast collection of Philippine art and culture.

The museum has galleries for permanent exhibitions as well as temporary exhibitions. The galleries are also spaces for educational events such as workshops, lectures, symposia, and walkthroughs and talks by artists and curators. The library accommodates researchers, scholars, students, and artists; it hosts small exhibitions within its spaces as well.





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