

# antennae

THE JOURNAL OF NATURE IN VISUAL CULTURE



[DOWNLOAD THE ISSUE](#)

## uncontainable natures

ISSUE 54 — SUMMER 2021 Volume 1

The overlapping fields of the environmental humanities, posthumanism, human-animal studies, and critical plant studies still have a long way to go in order to diversify their philosophical reference points as well as truly incorporate aesthetic, material, and processual registers that do not originate, or that are not implicitly aligned, with the western tradition. Over the past ten years we have become aware that reaching beyond the comfort zone of academic research requires a committed engagement with a decolonization of our thinking.

It is in this context that *Antennae* presents a double volume entitled 'Uncontainable Natures' co-edited by Southeast Asia experts Kevin Chua, Lucy Davis, and Nora Taylor. The diversity, wealth, and breadth of content and perspectives gathered across the two volumes outline myriad opportunities to rethink the foundations of our practices as well as reconsider the directions of our inquiries. This project makes readily available a substantial body of work, which despite its importance and influence in Southeast Asia remains often difficult to access in other parts of the world. We hope that the contributions featured in the two volumes will become staples in syllabi across the arts and humanities and that they will inform the practices of scholars and artists alike for years to come.

Volume 2 will be available at the end of August, 2021.

Dr. GIOVANNI ALOI

Editor in Chief of AntennaeProject

**IN THIS ISSUE** Yu-Mei Balasingamchow | Nils Bubandt | Sharon Chin | Agnieszka Cieszanowska | Kevin Chua  
Graiwoot Chulphongsathorn | Lucy Davis | Ng Huiying | Faisal Husni | May Adadol Ingawanij | Michelle Lai | Philippa Lovatt  
MAP Office [Gutierrez + Portefaix] | Vipash Purichanont | Trương Minh Quý | Marietta Radomska | Stéphane Rennesson  
Marian Pastor Rocas | Alfian Sa'at | Zedeck Siew | Sutthirat Supaparinya | Adele Tan | Nora Taylor | Nguyễn Trinh Thi  
Anna Tsing | Harriet Rabe von Foreich



*Yet here, now, lay such a great  
beast before her – contorted and  
dead, for sure, but incontestably  
real, draped across a gravel strip  
between an incineration plant and  
the uneasy, grey-green waters of  
the Johor Strait.*

YU-MEI BALASINGAMCHOW



### The rise of the nāgas

text and images by Stéphane Rennesson

At the cross roads of cryptozoology, archeology, speleology and ritual, Stéphane Rennesson proposes a visual analysis of the sensory anchors of the magnifying Nāga cosmoecologies at the limit of pure potentialities — from their omnipresence as an icon to the ephemerality and scarcity of their epiphanies. [MORE >>](#)

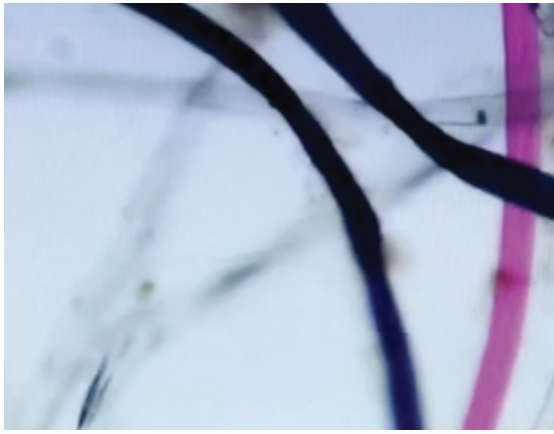


### Talking in trees

text by Alfian Sa'at

Alfian Sa'at examines how Malay words have been shaped by plants, namely through analysis of a selected sample of 1) numeral classifiers, 2) concrete nouns, and 3) abstract nouns and other linguistic constructions for conceptual terms. [MORE >>](#)





## Myco-fish Swimming

text by Ng Huiying

images by Michelle Lai and Agnieszka Cieszanowska

What happens when covid-time thrusts upon us a time of both deep need, and distant caring? At a time when we are collectively going inwards and discovering what we have neglected or overlooked, the quest for insight renders us teetering precariously on boundaries of visibility.



## Letters to a 19th century Grain of Wheat

main text by Lucy Davis  
letters by Marian Pastor Roces,  
Nguyễn Trinh Thi,  
Harriet Rabe von Froreich,  
Nils Bubandt and Anna Tsing,  
Faisal Husni, Marietta Radomska

This is a selection of letters written to a wheat grain that had been found in the straw stuffing of a 133 year dead salt water crocodile shot at the mouth of the Serangoon river in Singapore in 1888.

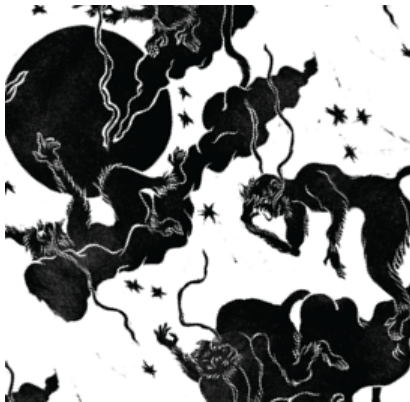


## The keramat grave on the green hill by the sea

text by Faisal Husni

*Keramat* graves may be found in many parts of the Malay world, often Malay or Muslim graves of significant and holy persons which have become shrines. In this article, Faisal Husni examines the relationship between these keramat graves and their location, with a focus on trees, heights and their proximity to water.

[MORE >>](#)



## The local is an alternate reality

text by Zedeck Siew, Sharon Chin and Lee Weng Choy

In cataloging various flora and fauna in and around Malaysia, this bestiary tackles issues of biodiversity, climate change, and the eternal question of being haunted by our future past. We set this alongside the transcript of a conversation between Siew and Chin at the Ilham Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in September 2018. [MORE >>](#)



## This earth, this island Borneo

text by Anna Tsing

Challenging the widespread view that globalization invariably signifies a "clash" of cultures, anthropologist Anna Tsing develops friction in its place as a metaphor for the diverse and conflicting social interactions that make up our contemporary world. [MORE >>](#)



## Planting and imaging precarity in Charles Lim's SEASTATE 9: proclamation garden

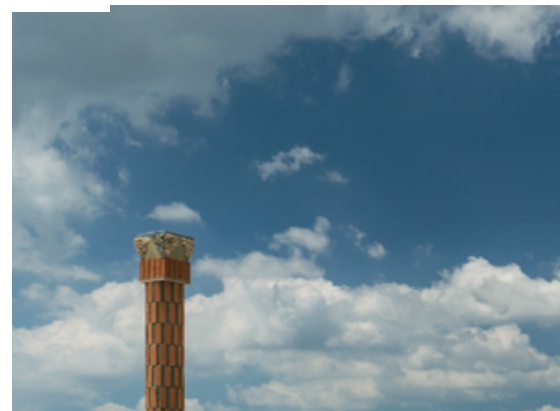
text by Adele Tan

This essay discusses the biophysical politics and strategies inhering within Charles Lim Yi Yong's *SEASTATE 9: proclamation garden* (2019), an installation for the annual Roof Garden commission at the National Gallery Singapore. [MORE >>](#)



## Tracing ecological histories





p 190



p 81



p 87



## Trương Minh Quý: A Vietnamese on Mars

Graiwoot Chulphongsathorn interviews  
Trương Minh Quý  
Translator: Nhân Nguyễn

Since 2012, Trương Minh Quý has become a part of new generation of Southeast Asian filmmakers whose works have been shown at international film festivals and art spaces. [MORE >>](#)



## Stories of animistic cinema

text by May Adadol Ingawanij

May Adadol Ingawanij's text, written in the mode of creative non-fiction, is based on her curation of the project Animistic Apparatus. [MORE >>](#)



## A heart the size of an armchair

text by Yu-Mei Balasingamchow

In 2015, a dead sperm whale was found floating in Singapore waters. Although the species has been sighted in Southeast Asia, this was the first such record for Singapore. The Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum recovered the carcass, studied the remains and prepared the skeleton for display. [MORE >>](#)

## of the Mekong

Philippa Lovatt interviews Sutthirat Supaparinya  
This interview with Chiang Mai based multi-media artist Sutthirat Supaparinya discusses her practice, focusing in particular on her "electricity generation series". [MORE >>](#)



## Ghost Island

text by MAP Office [Gutierrez + Portefaix]

Through the story of one fisherman, Gung, MAP Office delves into issues of ecological devastation, economic adversity, and state policy. [MORE >>](#)



## Edge of the Wonderland

Nora Taylor interviews Vipash Purichanont

Nora Taylor speaks with Thailand Biennale co-curator, Vipash Purichanont. Organized by the Government of Thailand's Ministry of Culture's Office of Contemporary Art and Culture, Thailand's First Biennale Edge of the Wonderland took place from November 2, 2018 until February 28, 2019. [MORE >>](#)



p 69

Antennae is a peer-reviewed, non-funded, independent, quarterly academic journal. All rights of featured content of website and PDF publication are reserved. Editor in Chief: Giovanni Aloï. © 2006 — 2021

[DONATE](#)

Antennae is a non-profit, advertising-free platform. As the journal grows in popularity, we are driven to produce issues that are always better than our previous. But to continue WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT.