

de montañas submarinas el fuego hace islas



Adjani Arumpac

Karthik Pandian

Wing Po So

Rox Lee

Jonas Van and Juno B

Jes Fan

Thaís Espaillat Ureña

Maria Estela Paiso

de montañas submarinas el fuego hace islas
(from underwater mountains fire makes islands)
is part of an ongoing curatorial project which
began in 2019.

Spearheaded by Yina Jiménez Suriel, this project emphasizes the expansion of the human perceptual system through aesthetic knowledge. It explores the role of aesthetic tools and strategies in promoting imaginations that embrace constant movement and challenge traditional structures. The project involves itinerant phases in locations including San Francisco (KADIST) starting in October 2023, London (Delfina Foundation) starting in January 2024, and Manila (Museum of Contemporary Art and Design Manila) starting February 2024.

The screening program on the 8th of February at the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) is curated by Lara Acuin and Yina Jiménez Suriel. It is co-organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) Manila and KADIST. It features four films from the KADIST collection and six works from filmmakers and artists from the Philippines, Hong Kong, and the Dominican Republic.



artists



Adjani Arumpac

Adjani Arumpac is a Filipino filmmaker with a specialization in documentary filmmaking. In addition to completing her BA at the University of the Philippines, cinematography at the Mowelfund Institute and her MA in Digital Media: Technology Form and Cultural Studies Pathway 2 (Theory and Practice), Arumpac is also an art writer who works with artists and local international galleries on curatorial texts of exhibitions. She expresses her fascination with connecting the documentary film genre and contemporary art through the creation of documentary films.

These films have been translated and incorporated into installation pieces showcased in various locations such as Manila, Lucban, Guangdong, Berlin, Hong Kong, and Paris.

Her works have been screened at various film festivals such as the 2013 Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (Japan), 2014 Beijing Independent Film Festival (China), 6th DMZ International Documentary Film Festival (South Korea), 2014 ChopShots Documentary Film Festival (Indonesia), Southeast Asian Film Festival, ASEAN Film Festival, Jocelyne Saab's Cultural Resistance International Film Festival (Lebanon) in 2014, Doclisboa 12th Festival Internacional de Cinema (Portugal), and London 1st Essay Film Festival.

Karthik Pandian

Karthik Pandian, an artist born in Los Angeles, delves into our connection with historical awareness and the diverse ways we understand and enact the past.

Engaging in mediums such as moving image, sculpture, performance, and film, where he embraces the 16mm format influenced by ethnographic filmmaking, Pandian characterizes his work as primarily focused on how history resides within material substance. Consequently, he draws inspiration from the architecture and archaeology of locations, enabling the material history of objects and places to convey their narratives.



Many of his multimedia installations feature videos and films accompanied by architectural structures or sculptural components onto which he frequently projects. In a significant piece like *Unearth* (2011), for instance, Pandian's exploration of the Native American Cahokia culture and its ceremonial monuments led to films being projected onto pillars constructed from soil extracted from the researched sites. While Karthik Pandian's art is based on research and includes cultural references like labyrinths, temples, and ancient structures, his main focus is on the creative possibilities these representations of the past can hold. By playing with the concepts of time and material, and embracing uncertainty and ambiguity in his thinking, Pandian's captured monuments and relics get caught up in flickering echoes that bounce back and forth between the past and the present.



Wing Po So

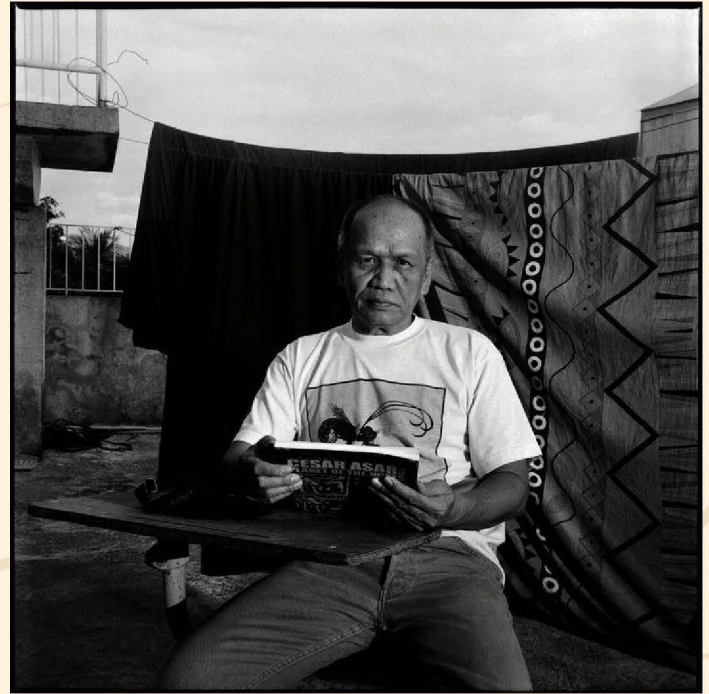
Wing Po So is a Chinese artist, living and based in Hong Kong. Growing up in a family of Chinese medicine doctors, being constantly surrounded by medicinal ingredients led her curiosity to transform them into raw materials for toys. This ultimately translated into art. Her work deals with the alienation and towards nature and our living environment; derived from the idea that when nature is turned into medicinal ingredients, they are often burnt, cut into pieces, and incomplete. By integrating medicinal herbs and everyday items into extensive installations and sculptures, So incorporates Chinese medical and philosophical concepts into marvels that reimagine the connection between substance and existence.

Given that traditional Chinese medicine is rooted in observing, being attuned to, and imagining nature, So employs a similar epistemological approach in her exploration of forms, materiality, and relationships.

So has had solo exhibitions at Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong, titled *Six-part Practice* (2018). Another recent solo exhibition is *From the Body to the Body Through the Body* (2019) at de Sarthe, Hong Kong. So has participated in Kathmandu Triennale (Nepal, 2022); Taipei Biennale (Taipei, 2023); the 14th Shanghai Biennale (Shanghai, 2023); and The First Trans-Southeast Asia Triennial (Guangzhou, 2023). Moreover, So has exhibited at institutions and galleries including UCCA Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing, 2020); Power Station of Art (Shanghai, 2023); and Para Site (Hong Kong, 2023). Art Asia Pacific, ArtPress, and Artomity featured her latest endeavors, and in 2018, she authored an artist book titled *From Space to Space*.

Rox Lee

Roque Federizon Lee, or Rox Lee, studied architecture and is an advocate of independent cinema. A painter, he ventured into making short animations, experimental films, documentaries and feature films. He served as cartoonist for the comic strip *Cesar Asar* which he and his brother, Mon, turned into a film.



He is one of the founders of Animagination, which became Animahensayon, an annual animation festival. Rox Lee is also the founder of Cinema Regla, an assembly of filmmakers, visual artists, and musicians dedicated to promoting independently created Filipino art across the nation. He played a role in establishing the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, and a fellowship grant from the Japan Foundation allowed him to reside in Tokyo during the 1990s. At present, he is doing self-produced films and continues to paint.

Jonas Van and Juno B

While Jonas Van and Juno B are not part of a collective, their joint video project mirrors their individual artistic approaches and intricate personal perspectives. Jonas Van explores monstrosity as a fictional and profoundly personal narrative, representing a linguistic and temporal rupture from an anti-colonial standpoint. On the other hand, Juno B navigates through gender nonconformity, adaptive landscapes, transformations specific to trans experiences, and climate-related changes and migrations. This collaborative effort seeks to generate tension around the intersections of humanity, aesthetics, ethics, and politics.

Jes Fan

Jes Fan is an artist residing in Brooklyn, originally from Canada and raised in Hong Kong. Engaging in a cross-disciplinary approach, his artistic practice evolves from a continuous exploration of the intersection between biology and identity.



The core focus lies in speculating on the concept of otherness, particularly in connection with the material aspects of the gendered body. Jes Fan works with sculptures that use materials like soybeans and depo-testosterone along with steel, resin, and glass. His art often delves into the politics of transgender identity and the idea that people can easily change their physical appearance to align with how they feel inside, thanks to things like hormone replacement therapy and bodybuilding. Recently, he's been looking at the intricate connections between biological elements (including those in our bodies) and the world around us, challenging the usual distinction between living and non-living things.



Thaís Espailat Ureña

Thaís Espailat Ureña is a poet and filmmaker from the Dominican Republic with a primary focus on uncovering the surreal elements concealed within ordinary existence. Their interests lie in exploring peculiar relationships that emerge due to the internet and the process of (re)shaping the world through humor and anarchy. Additionally, they hold a deep appreciation for the sea as a symbol of perpetual movement and constant change.

They have released various books and zines, including *Pudo haberse evitado* (Eloísa Cartonera, Argentina, 2017; Ediciones Cielonaranja, Dominican Republic, 2018), *¿Tienes quien te cuide la mula?* (Ediciones Liliputienses, Spain, 2020), *Notas sobre la morfología del Malecón* (Ediciones de A Poco, Dominican Republic, 2020), and *¿Viste los pingüinos?* (Editorial Matrerita, Argentina, 2021). Their writings have appeared in magazines and anthologies across Latin America and Europe. Currently, they are pursuing a Master's in Visual Anthropology in Lima.

Maria Estela Paiso

Maria Estela Paiso, a filmmaker from the Philippines, has been working in post-production activities since 2016, editing numerous feature and short films. Operating under the pseudonym *metromaria*, she independently produces hip-hop music videos for local rap artists. These videos often incorporate political commentary on societal issues in the Philippines. In 2021, she ventured into directing her short film titled *Ampangabagat Nin Talakba Ha Likol (It's Raining Frogs Outside)*. The film made its debut at the Berlinale Shorts Competition in 2022 and was featured at the Sundance Film Festival in 2023, as well as MoMA/Film at Lincoln Center's New Directors/New Films in 2022. Currently, it is being showcased in over fifty film festivals.



Her sophomore short film *Kay Basta Angkarabo Yay Bagay Ibat Ha Langit (Objects Do Not Randomly Fall From the Sky)* is in the post-production phase, while her feature film *Karaoke Dreaming* is currently in development.

About the curators

Lara Acuin (b. 1986, Manila) is a writer and cultural worker. She has contributed exhibition, collections, and curatorial work and support to various projects locally and overseas. She teaches arts management at the De La Salle College of Saint Benilde and is a graduate student at the University of the Philippines Diliman.

Yina Jiménez Suriel (b. 1994, La Vega. Lives and works in Santiago, Dominican Republic) is a curator and researcher and the TBA21–Academy The Current IV Curatorial Fellow, a three-year research project entitled *otras montañas, las que andan sueltas bajo el agua*. She is the Adjunct Curator of the 14th Mercosul Biennial (2024), and Associate Editor of the magazine Contemporary And (C&) for Latin America and the Caribbean. Her curatorial projects include Vehículos. Una revisión (2018) at Casa Quien (Dominican Republic); one month after being known in that island (2020) at the Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger (Switzerland) curated with the artist Pablo Guardiola and co-produced by Caribbean Art Initiative; and the first chapter of the research project *de montañas submarinas el fuego hace islas* (2022) at Pivô (Brazil) and Cinemateca Dominicana (Dominican Republic) co-produced with KADIST. She was in residence at the Delfina Foundation, London (Summer 2022). She is part of the curatorial team for Opening at ArcoMadrid (2023-2024) and has contributed to various international art publications and artist catalogs.



films



COUNT
Adjani Arumpac
2021
12 min 56 sec

Count is a video essay that delves into data emerging in a context of oppression. Taking place amidst the extended and rigorously enforced pandemic lockdown in the Philippines, the video reflects on the recurring patterns observed in daily life. By incorporating news regarding the Philippine Drug War and COVID-19 fatalities, it aims to illustrate how the shadow of colonial history affects the routine existence of a middle-class family during the current times of the pandemic lockdown, which is notably the longest in the world and enforced with strict police regulations.



ATLAS
Karthik Pandian
2012
4 min 58 sec

Filmed in Morocco, the film titled *Atlas* extends Karthik Pandian's exploration of history, site, and monument. The film delves into core concepts of movement, freedom, and cinematic imagination using the camel as a central figure. Instead of focusing on Morocco's heritage-rich landscape, often shaped for tourist fantasies, Pandian chose Ouarzazate, Hollywood's preferred location for desert scenes in various films. The video captures the disoriented setting, filled with deteriorating sets from movies set in Jerusalem, ancient Egypt, Rome, Mecca, and more. Pandian blurs the line between set and location, prompting questions about the portrayal of the Middle East. Are we seeing the actual region, the Western perception of it, or a Moroccan fiction created for a Western audience? In the video, camel 'actors' don custom-tailored costumes adorned with American coins, traversing the frame in a restive manner. Pandian's stroboscopic editing references Eadweard Muybridge's 19th-century studies of animal motion, particularly focusing on camels in the American West. The film includes an original score by experimental composer Christian Wolff, performed with coins. Both the score and the coin-embellished costumes evoke the uneven exchanges – cultural, political, economic – that linger in the pursuit of liberty.



THE MAKING OF VOIDS

Wing Po So

2021

2 mins 34 sec

The research-driven artwork, *The Making of Voids*, contemplates the events unfolding since the summer of 2019 in Hong Kong. During this time, extensive protests erupted against proposals permitting extradition to mainland China. Following the protests, the coronavirus crisis emerged, leading to a reduction in demonstrations due to mass arrests. Hong Kong, like the rest of the world during the pandemic, has experienced successive crises, transforming it into a changed landscape for many. *The Making of Voids* serves as a portal bridging these two worlds, aiming to break away from the past and envision a new world.



LIZARD

Rox Lee

1986

4 mins 22 sec

The film transitions to a peculiar gathering with heavy metal accompaniment, featuring a punk performance that delves into the trinity of man, the holy spirit, and the lizard. It then shifts to scenes of a man stumbling around a room with a stocking covering his head, juxtaposed with imagery of a lizard. This combination suggests unconventional and heretical associations, reminiscent of worshippers praying to a large reptile within church settings.



KEBRANTO
Jonas Van and
Juno B
2021
15 mins

Kebranto centers around Boitatá, a serpent within the mythical Guaraní communities residing across present-day Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Boitatá is a legendary guardian of jungles and forests. In Guaraní language, Boitatá combines "Mbói" (snake) and "tatá" (fire). According to one myth, Boitatá's flaming body has the power to blind eyes. The artists recognize Boitatá's permeable and influential presence as a means to address desire as a crucial energy in humans, cyclic and fleeting temporal aspects, nonconformity in gender identity within the human species, and the imaginative process of constructing alternative worlds for shared existence. The video employs a combination of sound and subtitles, utilizing virtual realms from video games as a medium to embody these philosophical discussions.



XENOPHORIA

Jes Fan

2018–2020

7 mins 35 sec

Jes Fan's video piece, *Xenophoria*, diverges from the term 'xenophobia,' signifying an appreciation for the foreign. It draws inspiration from a mysterious aquatic carrier shell species called *Xenophora pallidae*, which solidifies floating objects in the water onto its spine, incorporating foreign elements into its own structure. Similarly, *Xenophoria* initiates a fervent exploration of melanin, the pigment responsible for skin color, in both human and non-human entities. With influences from microscopic imagery and ASMR videos, the artwork portrays activities such as dissecting squids, bursting ink sacs, examining discolored tumors in Qing Dynasty painter Lam Qua's medical paintings, gathering fungi, and scrutinizing bodily moles. This surreal exploration delves into the essence of racial differentiation.



CÁPSULAS DESDE EL ESPEJO

Thaís Espaillat Ureña

2018–2023

13 mins

In a betacam cassette, there's a pilot episode for a TV show that never made it to the screen. Characters are seen floating in front of a blue screen and a mirror, reading poetry and watching TV. In an audiovisual work called *Cápsulas desde el espejo* (*Capsules from the mirror*), a character in a purple robe recites poems by Thaís Espaillat Ureña, while other characters wearing shiny outfits interpret them. This piece draws inspiration from the look of esoteric TV shows in Caribbean television. *Cápsulas desde el espejo* creates a world where gender is unclear, and the body seems to hide and vanish behind machine-like and mannequin-like qualities. It explores identity as both a performance and a kind of confinement, expressing the struggle of not being able to completely escape it. There's also a sense of relief or distraction in the idleness portrayed in the work.



APPEARANCE

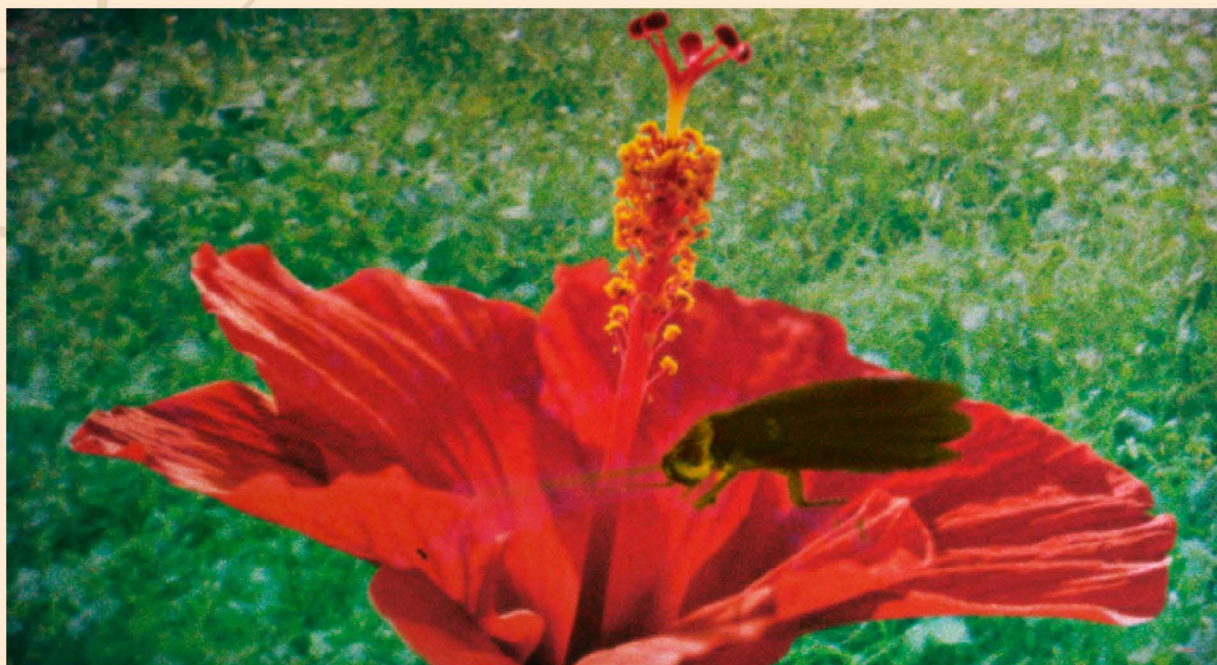
Wing Po So

2018

3 mins 50 sec

The viewer encounters what appears to be a desert landscape in constant flux—from sunrise to twilight and on to midnight, and all over again. A breeze rushes across the surface, moving mountains and unveiling valleys, inadvertently transforming the landscape with its presence. The scene is eerily familiar—like some untouched desert in a faraway land, or a lunar landscape, or an apocalyptic scene in a film. But the sand we see is more botanical than mineral. These dunes are in fact composed of spores—spores of the climbing fern, a vine-like fern native to Asia.

The world we inhabit is dictated by the arrow of time—indicating a unidirectional progression forward. Just as the voyage of light in the video recalls the passing of the seasons and the continuous rotation of the Earth around the Sun, the falling sands and changing landscape look back to the tectonic shifts millions of years ago, thus referencing the constant state of flux of every earthly material. The work is an ode to the transformation of order into chaos.



AMPANGABAGAT NIN TALAKBA HA LIKOL

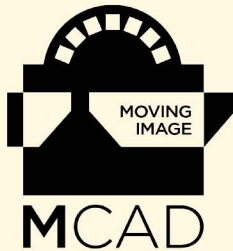
Maria Estela Paiso

2023

14 mins 3 sec

The end of the world is night and frogs are raining down from the sky. Maya is back in her childhood home but it no longer feels like home. Being forced to be alone is torture and her memories are increasingly condensing into a fever dream.

The film explores the unpredictable dimensions of the mind, particularly those that surface in challenging situations. As the inevitability of life's end approaches for the protagonist Maya, she grapples with fleeting memories from both the past and present. Instead of portraying a nostalgic reflection on Maya's childhood through the theme of remembrance, Paiso transforms this journey down memory lane into a horror narrative. In this portrayal, the central character is depicted as losing control over her own identity and the essence of life itself.



MCADxMoving Image presents a program of events, talks, and screenings that look at culture, society, politics through the media of the moving image. Evolving from our Screenings program, MCADxMovingImage continues to explore the medium through more in-depth programming and planned screenings meant to broaden and deepen our engagement.

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