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NTU CENTRE FOR  
CONTEMPORARY  
ART SINGAPORE

APRIL  
MAY  
JUNE  
2020

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

Lêna Bui  
Kin Chui  
Nolan Oswald Dennis  
Liu Yu  
Marvin Tang  
Green Zeng

SPECIAL PROJECT

Fyerool Darma

A

RESIDENCIES PROGRAMME

C

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY



## RESIDENCIES PROGRAMME

Committed to supporting artists, curators, and researchers by offering them time and space to pursue their research without the pressure of deadlines and production commitments, the Residencies Programme values the open-ended nature of artistic research and embraces multiform expressions of creative enquiry. Aiming to facilitate the production of knowledge, this studio-based programme is dedicated to established and emerging artists and serves as platform for critical exchange in Southeast Asia.

The Residencies Programme offers a wide spectrum of programmes aimed at sharing the process of artistic research with the public. Residencies OPEN provides a rare insight into the often introverted sphere of artist studios by profiling the diversity of contemporary art practices from around the globe and the divergent ways artists conceive an artwork with the studio as a space for experimentation and research. Residencies Studio Sessions and Residencies Insights are flexible formats that can range from artists' talks to conversations, performances, and screenings.

For updates on upcoming events, please visit [ntu.ccasingapore.org](http://ntu.ccasingapore.org)

### RESIDENCIES TEAM

**Dr Anna Lovecchio**, Curator

**Seet Yun Teng**, Curatorial Assistant

**1 Susan Htoo**, Young Professional Trainee

## LÊNA BÙI

RESIDENCY PERIOD: MAY – JUNE 2020

BLOCK 38

#01-06

Lêna Bui's ongoing project revolves around felled trees and recurring dreams, ancestral wisdom and haunting apparitions that reveal Vietnam's connections to West Africa at the time of the French colonial empire. Inspired by the recent massive cutting down of *Khaya senegalensis* trees (a species native to West Africa) for urban development purposes on one of Saigon's oldest streets, Bui plans to examine the intersections between botanical studies and urban planning in Indochina, West Africa, and France from the colonial era to the present. In the process, she will articulate a dramaturgy of fictional and factual characters who manifest themselves as spirits residing in trees intent on observing the present while whispering unspoken stories from times gone by. During the residency, the artist will also gather information on regional folklores and mythologies relating to trees and experiment with a range of audio-visual forms to carry out her project.

The practice of **Lêna Bui** (b. 1985, Vietnam) is deeply fascinated with intangible aspects of life: faith, death, dreams, and the ways in which they influence our behaviours and perceptions. Through the incorporation of anecdotes and personal stories, her works articulate intimate reflections upon the impact of rapid development and the relationship between humans and nature. Bui's works have been included in group exhibitions and presentations at Sharjah Art Foundation, United Arab Emirates (2018); Mansfield Freeman Center for East Asian Studies, Wesleyan University, United States (2018); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany (2017); The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (2016); and Carré d'Art, Nîmes, France (2014).



## KIN CHUI

RESIDENCY PERIOD: APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2020

BLOCK 37

#01-03



The Straits of Singapore have long been a hotspot for seafaring banditry. Throughout its cultural history, the notion of “pirate” has remained negatively connoted by its ancient definition as “common enemy of mankind”. Kin Chui plans to expand his ongoing research on concepts and practices of piracy in the Southeast Asian archipelago in order to articulate a speculative framework for a decolonised artistic praxis. By unravelling its multiplicity of meanings and manifestations—ranging from sea banditry to unauthorized reproductions, from illegal taxi services to unlicensed broadcasts—and the semantic shift from unlawful practice to mode of resistance, the artist will delve into the intersections between art and activism, subversive disruptions of colonial regimes and global capitalism, and issues of privatisation of the commons. Specifically, he plans to articulate a lexicon of resistance based on the glossary of piracy and conduct anthropological research into both digital pirate initiatives and counter-piracy measures implemented in the region.

Originally trained in film, in his artistic practice **Kin Chui** (b. 1984, Singapore) inflects collaborative projects, performative interventions, and socially-oriented art initiatives with a sustained interest in emancipatory struggles. Recently, he had a solo exhibition, *Station 13010*, at Grey Projects, Singapore (2020) and was involved in group exhibitions such as *In A Hard Place*, *Apply Soft Pressure* (2018) and *Unsettling Times* (2017), both at Cemeti-Institute for Art and Society, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He curated the exhibition *Fantasy Islands*, Objectifs, Singapore (2017). Chui is an active member of soft/WALL/studs, a Singapore-based collaborative project involving several artists, writers, film makers, art workers, and researchers. He periodically aspires to be a cat.

## NOLAN OSWALD DENNIS

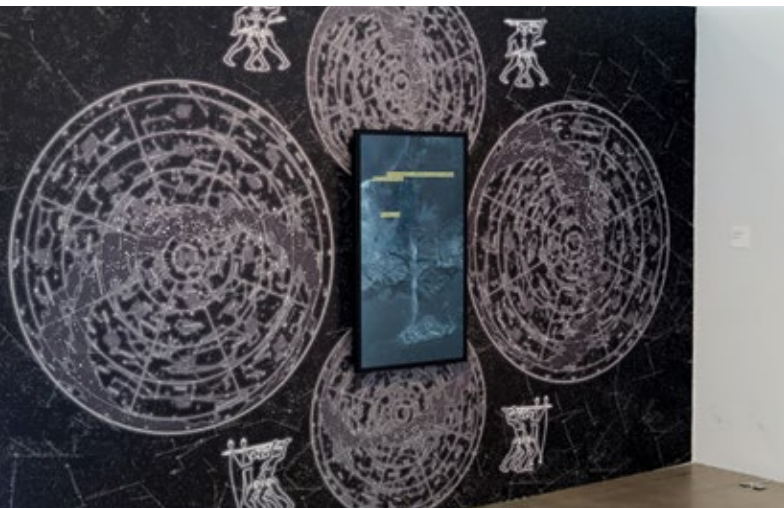
RESIDENCY PERIOD: MAY – JUNE 2020

BLOCK 37

#01-01

Looking at histories of solidarity in the global south both as strategic responses to capital and colonial power and as trajectories of collective world-making which allow for unlimited difference, Nolan Oswald Dennis will extend his ongoing research project, *A Curriculum for Mud*, in the context of Southeast Asia. Premised on an interdisciplinary model wherein soil science, geology, biology, art, translation, language, and the metaphysics of decolonisation intersect, he will pursue a deeper entanglement with the non-human world by experimenting ways of sharing knowledge across species and materials. During the residency, Dennis will assemble a “non-specific archive” comprising texts about Afro-Asian histories of solidarity, monsoon patterns, routes of slave trade, oceanic geographies, and musical scores. In parallel, he will collaborate with scientists and earth worms to decompose these materials into soil, or components for soil, with the goal to create a compostable library which, through the action of the worms, will metabolise knowledge into planetary cycles of regeneration.

With an interdisciplinary approach expressed through diagrams, drawings, and models, **Nolan Oswald Dennis** (b. 1988, Zambia/South Africa) continuously excavates the hidden logics of the systemic and structural conditions that organise our political consciousness. Engaging with “a black consciousness of space”, his practice unsettles dominant ways of knowing. His work has been shown internationally at Young Congo Biennial, Kinshasa, Congo (2019); Goethe Institute, Beijing, China (2018); Kalmar Konstmuseum, Sweden (2017), amongst others. In 2018, he completed a Master of Science in Art, Culture and Technology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States. In 2016, he was awarded the FNB Art Prize.



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## LIU YU

RESIDENCY PERIOD: MAY – JUNE 2020

BLOCK 37

#01-04

In 2012, Liu Yu chanced upon a stack of love letters in a flea market in Taipei. Dating back to the 1970s, the letters were addressed by Dong-Zheng Lai, a seafarer working on cargo ships, to his wife-to-be. Interwoven in this correspondence are descriptions of port cities and fishing villages as well as hints to monsoon seasons and the political climate of the time which cast both history and geography on an intimate scale. During the residency, Liu Yu will work on the second film of a series inspired by Dong-Zheng Lai's movements and memories. Titled *Love Letter and A Map of Memory*, this experimental documentary will focus on the monsoon route from Taiwan to Singapore, a busy shipping lane that cuts across the Riau islands and was historically frequented by pirates. Framing the sea as a space impervious to geopolitical boundaries and piracy as an instance of political upheaval, the artist will chart historical events and modern-day occurrences of piracy to create a work that speculates on power and personal relationships growing at the intersection of climatic patterns, geographical features, and human agency.

Merging fictional stories and historical accounts, the practice of **Liu Yu** (b. 1985, Taiwan) cuts across video, installation, and text. Her work is concerned with re-contextualizing stories of marginalised communities as a commentary on the intricacies of domineering power structures. Using field work and site-specific methodologies, she reconstructs alternative narratives strung together by fragmented representations of space, history, image, and narration. Recent solo exhibitions include *The history of the concave and the convex*, Hong-gah Museum, Taipei, Taiwan (2018) and *Several Ways to Believe*, Taiwan Academy, Los Angeles, United States (2016). She has recently participated in group exhibitions such as the Asian Art Biennial, Taichung, Taiwan (2019).



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## MARVIN TANG

RESIDENCY PERIOD: APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2020

BLOCK 38

#01-05



*The Colony* (2017 – ongoing) is the title of Marvin Tang's long-term research project which examines the impact of botanical institutions on the movement of seeds, plants, and people in the colonial era. For the next iteration of the project, the artist intends to focus on the history and evolution of the Wardian case, a glass container for growing and transporting flora devised by British physician Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward in 1833. The direct precursor of the modern terrarium, this transportable receptacle proved instrumental in allowing the circulation of plants across the globe in the 19th century. Here, it is framed as a point of departure to excavate the social, economic, and environmental implications of planetary plant movements and the displacement of labour forces required to sustain booming plantation economies. During the residency, the studio will be used to conduct durational experiments with natural substances and photographic materials and try out different modes of display.

**Marvin Tang** (b. 1989, Singapore) harnesses photography, moving image, and object-based installations to visualise social phenomena that simmer under, beyond, and in spite of government infrastructures and systems of control. His works often undermine the conventional representations of nature and question the linearity of historical narratives. Recent solo exhibitions include *Print Room: In Every Change of Season*, DECK, Singapore (2019) and *The Mountain Survey*, Alliance Française de Singapour (2018). His work has been presented internationally at the Thessaloniki PhotoBiennale, Greece; GETXOPHOTO International Image Festival, Spain; and Nooderlicht International Photofestival, Groningen, Netherlands (all 2018).

## GREEN ZENG

RESIDENCY PERIOD: APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2020

BLOCK 37

#01-02



The national archives contain numerous documents related to public assemblies (strikes, sit-ins, student protests, demonstrations, etc.), and yet collective gatherings aimed at voicing dissent have disappeared from the streets of present day Singapore. How do today's youth address social issues and global emergencies? Where do they voice concern and manifest disagreement? Focusing specifically on student bodies, Green Zeng plans to investigate the history of public expressions of dissent and assess their relevance for younger generations. His efforts will be first directed at creating an archive of public assemblies in Singapore. This will allow him to engage university students on a series of workshops and participatory platforms aimed at understanding the performative function inherent in such actions. Ultimately, he will devise strategies of (re)enactment to reflect on how public assemblies embody the often strained relations between power and the people and shape our understanding of democracy, freedom, and civil rights.

The works of filmmaker and artist Green Zeng (b. 1972, Singapore) scrutinise how history is written, interpreted, and disseminated. Focusing on issues such as student activism and the connection between archives, the state, and the individual, he reactivates fragments of the past and questions the artist's role in "truth-telling". His films have been presented in international festivals including the 30th Venice International Film Critics' Week, Italy (2015) and Cannes Film Festival, France (2006) and his works have been included in group exhibitions at LASALLE's Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore (2018, 2017); and Para Site, Hong Kong (2015) amongst other venues. His most recent solo presentation is *Returning Revisiting and Reconstructing*, Foundation Cinema Oasis, Bangkok, Thailand (2019).

## FYEROOL DARMA

*Viva+ium*

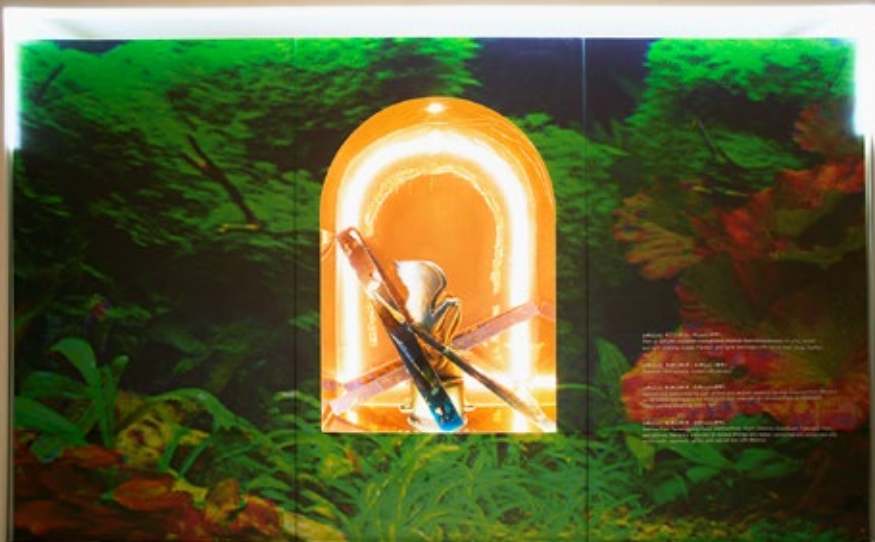
*(wii fl∞w w/ l4if but t4k£ ø f0rms, ♥)*

7 DECEMBER 2019 – 31 MAY 2020

THE VITRINE

Engaging The Vitrine as a site imbricated with complex histories and practices of display, Fyerool Darma complicates our understanding of Telok Blangah through objects found or acquired, deconstructed and reoriented by the artist and his collaborators. These objects, added one at a time with a monthly cadence, are registers of physical surplus of archives, narratives, and transactional systems that are constantly being managed, (re)written, and (re)produced. The installation encapsulates an object-based index of the area wherein the items slide like cursors along intricate trajectories and the realms of the physical and digital, the archive and the display, are merged.

**Fyerool Darma** (Singapore) interrogates the cultural consumption of history and myth in relation to contemporary markers of identity and class. His artefacts and material experimentations are based on an extensive visual vocabulary drawn from popular culture, literature, archives, the internet, and the artist's own life. He was Artist-in-Residence at NTU CCA Singapore from October 2019 to March 2020.



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## ABOUT NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, SINGAPORE

A research-intensive public university, NTU has 33,000 undergraduate and post-graduate students in the colleges of Engineering, Business, Science, and Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and its Graduate College. NTU's campus is frequently listed among the top 15 most beautiful university campuses in the world and has 57 Green Mark-certified (equivalent to LEED-certified) buildings. Besides its 200-ha lush green, residential campus in western Singapore, NTU has a second campus in the heart of Novena, Singapore's medical district.



Image captions:

Inside cover—Studio of Rossella Biscotti (detail), Residencies OPEN, 17 and 18 January 2020.

Page 2—Lena Bui, *Making rubbings of tree stumps on Ton Duc Thang street*, 2018, photograph. Courtesy the artist.

Page 3—Kin Chui, *a mapping of proxies and copies*, 2020, video still. Courtesy the artist.

Page 4—Nolan Oswald Dennis, *Black Liberation Zodiac (pre-alpha v.01)*, 2017, wallpaper and LCD screen. Courtesy the artist and Kalmar Konstmuseum.

Page 5—Liu Yu, *Caecus creaturae*, 2019, video still. Courtesy the artist.

Page 6—Marvin Tang, *The Colony. Archive - British Made*, 2019, postcard. Courtesy the artist.

Page 7—Green Zeng, *Students' Confession*, 2018, video stills. Courtesy the artist.

Page 8—Fyerool Darma, *Vivarium (wii flook w/ 14if but t4kE o f0rms,♥)*, 7 December 2019 – 31 May 2020, The Vitrine, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore.

Back spread: Studio of Trevor Yeung, installation view, Residencies OPEN, 17 and 18 January 2020.

Unless otherwise stated, image courtesy of NTU CCA Singapore.



# NTU CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART SINGAPORE

A leading international art institution, NTU CCA Singapore is a platform, host, and partner creating and driven by dynamic thinking in its three-fold constellation: **EXHIBITIONS**, **RESIDENCIES PROGRAMME**, **RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC EDUCATION**. A national research centre for contemporary art of Nanyang Technological University, the Centre focuses on *Spaces of the Curatorial*. It brings forth innovative and experimental forms of emergent artistic and curatorial practices that intersect the present and histories of contemporary art embedded in social-political spheres with other fields of knowledge.

## SUPPORT US TODAY!

As a non-profit organisation, NTU CCA Singapore's acclaimed programmes are made possible through grants and gifts from kind donors. Our exhibitions present contemporary art from leading international artists. Our residencies connect artists and curators from Singapore, Asia and beyond. Our Education and Research teams reach out to local schools and organise symposia, talks, screenings, and workshops. Most of these public programmes are free to promote greater access to the arts. Your generous contribution goes towards developing our programmes year-round.

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The Residencies Programme is partially supported by



# NTU CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART SINGAPORE



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## RESIDENCIES STUDIOS

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## RESEARCH CENTRE AND OFFICE

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Singapore 108934 | Tel +65 6460 0300  
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