

Embodied ArChive

Lost & Found

Published in conjunction with *Lost & Found: Embodied Archive*, an exhibition organised by Singapore Art Museum from 25 October to 24 November 2024 at Tanjong Pagar Distripark. *Lost & Found: Embodied Archive* is the second pillar of *Lost & Found*, a multi-year curatorial study on the interplay between artistic practices, memory and the notion of the archive.

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Published 2024

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The views and opinions expressed by speakers, facilitators and docents at the workshops and tours do not necessarily represent the position of SAM.

Cover: Detail of *Skin* (2024) by Lee Kang Seung. Image courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles; Gallery Hyundai, Seoul; Alexander Gray Associates, New York.

25 Oct — 24 Nov 2024

Embodied ArChive

Tanjong Pagar Distripark

Lost & Found

The body archive is an attunement, a hopeful gathering, an act of love against the foreclosures of reason. It is a way of knowing the body-self as a becoming and unbecoming thing, of scrambling time and matter, of turning toward rather than against oneself. And vitally, it is a way of thinking-feeling the body's unbounded relation to other bodies.
—Julietta Singh, "The Body Archive"*

Lost & Found: Embodied Archive unpacks how artists radically re-envision the body as a reservoir of memory that retains convergences of the past and present while offering the possibility of new encounters. This exhibition features commissioned projects, loans and artworks from Singapore Art Museum's collection that showcase how artists explore the body as an instrument of remembrance, and consider it as a site where multiple knowledge systems coexist and the negotiation between norms and individual expression takes place.

The body is often thought of in terms of its utility: how it works, feels and senses. Yet each person's body functions differently. The somatic domain is a culminative accumulation of experiences—both ours and of the generations that came before. When we think of the body as an archive, we are asserting that reading a body might teach us the language of viscosity, and that archives can be living, breathing beings.

By incorporating the physical encounter, the participating artists jointly demonstrate how memory is ingrained in history through a variety of bodily manifestations, using the body as a historical informant and a means of personalising their respective cultural significance. In making space for what lies in the body, these works also make it a point to activate us as viewers by choreographing our encounters with them.

Refusing to remain static, *Lost & Found: Embodied Archive* embraces the process of becoming by making space for the live nature of the performative works in its midst. Many of the artists exhibiting in this gallery have conceptualised performances, workshops and talks that run concurrently with the exhibition duration.

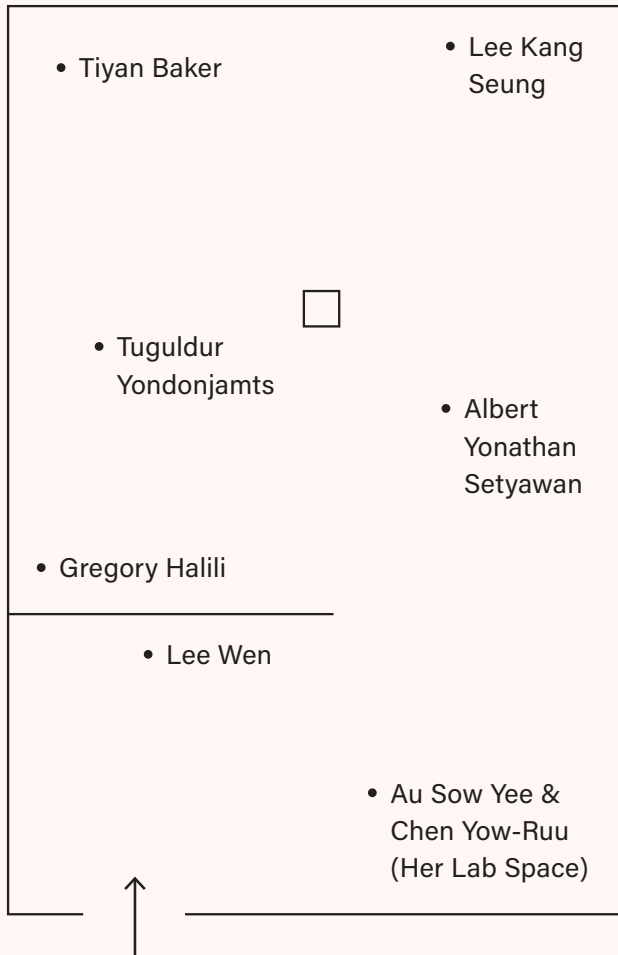
The exhibition will unfurl slowly over the course of the month as works are activated in turn, creating an intentional space for movement, rhythm and reflection.

Lost & Found: Embodied Archive marks the second pillar of *Lost & Found*, a multi-year curatorial study on the interplay between artistic practices, memory and the notion of the archive. When we think of an archive, what intuitively comes to mind is a physical site with material objects, records and documents. This exhibition seeks to expand on that understanding by inviting you to consider the body as an archive.

This brochure introduces the exhibition and presents artwork information at its outset, and then ends with a coda by Luca Lum. Lum has penned a poetic series of scores, beckoning us to consider different turns of phrase, spaces of affinity and the thickened weight of our bodies in motion.

* Julietta Singh, "The Body Archive," in *No Archive Will Restore You* (Punctum Books, 2018), 29–56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.2353890.5>.

Gallery 3



Lee Wen



*Anthropometry Revision:
Yellow Period (after Yves Klein) No. 2*

2008
Acrylic on canvas
Collection of Singapore Art Museum

Anthropometry Revision: Yellow Period (after Yves Klein) No. 2, which responds to Yves Klein's *Anthropometries* (1960), functions as both archive and artwork. Lee Wen first performed *Anthropometry Revision* in Chengdu, China, in 1998, adapting Klein's work for an Asian context and modifying its elements to enhance cultural relevance. Lee employed a traditional Chinese pentatonic five-tone scale to supplant Klein's "Monotone Symphony," in which a nine-piece orchestra played a single note. By incorporating male and female collaborators as models and positioning himself as one of the models covered in yellow paint instead of blue, Lee interrogated the gender politics inherent in Klein's original intent.

The work on display is a product of the second iteration of *Anthropometry Revision*, which Lee created when he participated in Soobin Art International in Singapore in 2008. It exemplifies the defining characteristics of Lee's artistic practice, encompassing collaboration, archival work, and vigorous engagement with art historical discourse through performance.

Au Sow Yee & Chen Yow-Ruu (Her Lab Space)



Bad Dream Rocking a.k.a The Rocking Malay(a)

2024

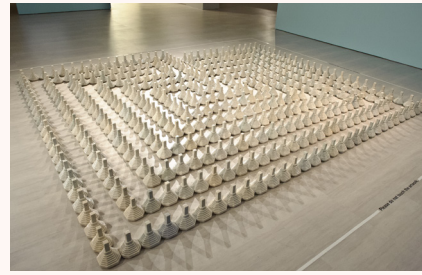
Video: single channel, 16:9 format, colour and sound (stereo), 20 min, sound recordings, vinyl cutout

Commissioned by Singapore Art Museum

Bad Dream Rocking, a.k.a. The Rocking Malay(a) examines "Si Tanggang," a renowned Malay folktale about an individual who transforms into stone as a consequence of filial ingratitude. The artwork traces the various iterations of "Si Tanggang" through retellings, cinematic adaptations and journalistic accounts. Her Lab Space has also incorporated collective memories of the folktale in the installation by integrating audio recordings of interviews with undocumented children born and residing in Malaysia; each subject narrates the story in their own words, incorporating their modifications. By deconstructing and reconstructing the tale, Her Lab Space has recontextualised "Si Tanggang" as a haunting, disconcerting dream, albeit not a nightmare.

By integrating archival materials and their numerous reenactments into the work, Her Lab Space explores the metaphor of a fracturing rock being altered by imperceptible forces, reflecting the instability of identity. The work also interrogates issues relating to the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, as well as insider and outsider status. It is part of the *Harder than Rock Trilogy*. Initiated in 2023, the project conceptualises the rock as a metaphor for identity, thereby emphasising the invisible and spectral forces that haunt the ideology of a harmonious nation-state or a definitive sense of self.

Albert Yonathan Setyawan



Cosmic Labyrinth

2011

Glazed middle-fired ceramic, installation and performance

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

Cosmic Labyrinth renders tangible the silence that occurs during the artmaking process into a visual contemplation that unfolds through the artist's durational performance and its final presentation. For Albert Yonathan Setyawan, creating art is a deeply personal, embodied experience in which his mental state and physical actions shape each piece; *Cosmic Labyrinth* is an embodied convergence between his artistic essence and the materiality of the clay. The work invites visitors to contemplate the significance of being in time at the heart of Setyawan's artistic process.

Each handcrafted pagoda on display is a testament to Setyawan's artistic labour. He applies clay, a medium with a long history in human civilisation, to recall the extended lineage of ceramic craft. Setyawan's meditative process of slip-casting imbues the clay with spirituality, bridging the material and the metaphysical. Arranged as a labyrinth, then a mandala, the pagodas take on a cosmic presence, felt also in their silence.

Lee Kang Seung



Skin

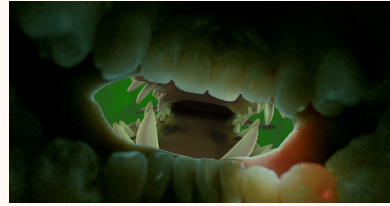
2024

Video: single channel, 16:9 format, colour and sound (stereo), 7 min 45 sec

Commissioned by Manetti Schrem Museum of Art, University of California, Davis

Skin is a video installation centred around the muscle memories of 80-year-old queer dancer and performer Meg Harper. Their skin, with its wrinkles and scars, bears witness to memories, trauma and the complex moments of pain and pleasure—modes of knowledge inscribed onto the body. Artist Lee Kang Seung presents the body as a register of the personal and political that transforms as it shifts and ages. Lee honours both Harper's long-standing practice and the many artists and activists within his extended queer community, connecting individuals who may not have overlapped in life but do so within the space of his work.

Tiyan Baker



mouthbreather

2023

Video: single channel, 16:9 format, colour and sound (stereo), 13 min 22 sec



MY MOTHER'S TONGUE

2022

Foam, epoxy resin, fibreglass mat, sand, water-based epoxy, paint, mica pigment, green food dye, titanium dioxide, water, miniature water pump, duckweed and projection, dimensions variable



nyatu' maanün mungut bigabu

2021

Digital autostereogram print on cotton rag
Collection of Murray Art Museum Albury, New South Wales

Tiyan Baker explores language, landscapes and muscle memory in these works, using the mouth as an investigate site. Here, the mouth's purpose extends beyond the act of tasting to seeing, feeling and knowing. Made at different points over the span of two years, these three works also document the artist's developing relationship with the Bukar language. Bukar is her mother's native tongue and is spoken by the Indigenous Bidayūh people who live in villages at the base of Bung Sadung, a mountain range a two-hour drive from the capital city of Sarawak, Kuching.

Baker makes many trips to her mother's ancestral lands in Sarawak. Photographs that Baker took of the Bidayūh farmlands and rivers where her mother used to play as a child were used to create *nyatu' maanūn mungut bigabu*. Mindful of how cameras were used as colonial tools of surveyance and surveillance, Baker subverted the God's Eye View angle (taking photographs from directly above the subject) by applying the illusory effects of autostereograms. Also known as Magic Eye images, autostereograms create the optical illusion of 3D scene. Baker has embedded words into the images; when walking back and forth in front of these photographic prints, viewers might see words such as "*nyatu*" (to collect fallen fruit) and "*maanūn*" (found all over the place in plenty) emerging. These are words about wandering, collecting and foraging, which have become less prevalent in the Bukar language today. These four photographic prints act as incantations that summon words and local epistemologies back from the edge of oblivion.

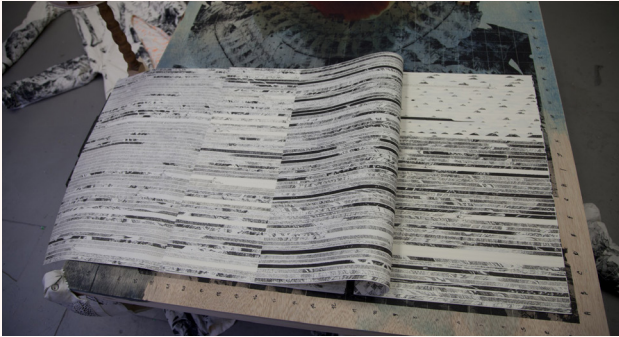
The buccal takes centre stage in *MY MOTHER'S TONGUE*. The title is a tongue-in-cheek pun on the term "mother tongue." This wordplay is amplified by the fact that the pond was carved in the likeness of Baker's mother's mouth. Baker began learning the Bukar language over long phone calls with her mother, chatting on WhatsApp with her extended family and consulting a Bukar-English dictionary from her cousin. The words projected onto the watery surface of the pond are from *Atung dengan*

Awang, the first book in Bukar that the artist finished reading from cover to cover independently. The text, dematerialised into light and cast onto liquid, echoes the elusive and knotty undertaking of learning an Indigenous language from afar.

Filed using a 360-degree camera placed in the artist's mouth, *mouthbreather* brings viewers on a journey where they cross streams, tread on forested pathways and pass through the Bidayūh village. Viewers adopt an unusual, bodily perspective, with their field of view being framed by the artist's teeth, tongue and oral cavity. Layered atop this footage is a text about acute loss and being caught between remembering and forgetting. The text, which laments how communities have lost the ability to whistle to animals and call birds, highlights how the Bukar language's significance extends beyond its role as a bridge to the ancestors: it is also a form of communication with other worlds and more-than-human beings. At the end of the film, *mouthbreather* asserts that perception is dependent on language: "The reason you can see these things," the text on the screen reads, "is because you can name them." So indomitable is the place of Indigenous nomenclature that the film reiterates this statement twice.

Baker thus invites us to consider the worlds contained in the languages that we know, and how their existences might be affirmed when we allow words to roll off our tongues.

Tuguldur Yondonjamts



The secret mountain of falcons

2011

Ink on paper, installed on acrylic stands

These four 12-page books capture the northern, southern, eastern and western regions of Mongolia from a falcon's perspective, illustrating the vast Mongolian landscape. Each book features 60 falcons navigating their surroundings, presented in strips of eight millimetres to resemble a filmstrip. By imagining the bird's eye view and embodying a non-human perspective, the artist seeks to gain insight into the natural habitat of falcons and encourage a deeper connection between bird and human.

Tuguldur Yondonjamts's works, which are predominantly on paper, address issues arising from Mongolia's societal and economic changes, particularly the disappearance of the country's nomadic culture and its symbiotic relationship with nature. For this work, the artist travelled to several provinces in Mongolia where saker falcons, symbolic birds of the country, are found. Historically, these falcons were captured by the government for diplomatic gifts and trade. In 2012, the saker falcon was officially designated as the country's national bird to protect it from capture and smuggling.

Gregory Halili



Karagatan

(The Breadth of Oceans)

2016

Oil on mother of pearl shell and oil on pearl (set of 50), dimensions variable

Collection of Singapore Art Museum

Karagatan (The Breadth of Oceans) comprises 50 pieces of intricate mother-of-pearl shell pieces, each depicting the eyes of fisherfolk, boatmen, divers and merchants who live and work in various coastal areas across the Philippines. Creating this artwork was a laborious process that required the artist's full attention and care, involving hours of precise carving, sanding and painting on miniscule pieces of shell.

These shell pieces recall a brief 18th-century English fad where lovers created personal keepsakes for one another in the form of eye miniatures. The experience of encountering the artwork alludes to the intimacy of this bygone practice: as viewers move along the wall to view the shell pieces, they meet the gaze of each eye and bear witness to the individual it belongs to.

When viewed up close, each shell piece functions as an elegiac homage to the people of the coastal zones of the Philippines. When viewed from a distance against the dark painted wall, the individual pieces resemble fishing vessels at night. As an exercise in embodied mapping, *Karagatan* visualises the landscape of seafaring cultures in the Philippines across micro and macro scales.

ASSUME THE FURTHEST DISTANCE

by Luca Lum

The object's survival of destruction is what makes it real.

—D.W. Winnicott, via Barbara Johnson

The eye conquers its hegemonic role in architectural practice, both consciously and unconsciously, only gradually with the emergence of the idea of a bodiless observer.

—Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*

Often readers/catalogues like these end up being filed away, put into an archive, re-used as scrap paper or thrown away. If this enters the bin without use, that too is a score.

In waste and in the seeming absence of attention there is a possibility for meaning as long as something in the atmosphere notices. Does a leaf on a potted plant in the corner of a room notice? Does a table notice? Is the basis of noticing the possibility of communicating the noticing, or is exposure in itself a kind of possible registry? The radioisotope levels in milk teeth in regions with plutonium activity are a kind of registry, but are they are a form of noticing? In any case, at every instance, piles of the unnoticed leak and swamp the world. Pull the teeth.

1.

12,764.221 km

I am writing to you from across gulfs. Geography necessitates distance. Distance necessitates a world beyond you. Consider our gulfs companionate, one spilling into the other. In Ciudad de Mexico, the leafy avenidas and rusted curlicue gates echo forms from home on the equator, and the altitude renders my blood errant. Seeing sameness or experiencing difference is a matter of attunement. I am dizzy, lightheaded. I hate the fact that I haven't spoken to anyone in ten days. Desculpe, no hablo Espanol. My body recalls another flood of time where I

was stitched to someone who was fading slow and then fast from the world. Chemically, adrenaline keeps you alive when all possibility seems sapped. When the rush is applied to another instant, you exist at odds in your environment, vigilant of all signs, unable to sleep, scaling things out of proportion. Reason decouples itself from my body. Another arises.

2.

Politics arranges extremities and nudges the body to accept it as a medium

3.

Notice the atmosphere as a kind of soft kindergarten
Your blood repeating the environment
Your blood cycling at the rate of information passing through the city
Information is metabolic and biological just as biology is informational

Imagine a backdoor for your blood
Hold your ear in your hand (cupped)
Feel flush
Agitation in your wrist
Imagine how it may be drained,
Put back in a different way a different frame rate
Rate of exchange
Beyond flatness are these sediments
Consider your sediments as you would gaze out at falling rain
Not too eager to regain shape

The present is a mass of earth
Burying time and attention.

4.

Wander through every single hall as though your skin were your eyes
The ventilation system, the patina of the walls
Find the thing that attracts you the most and delete it from your vision field

Allow its charge to fill, instead, your feet or your fingertips
Notice how your body is oriented or allured to the
charged thing

Through it you may reconsider your attraction or your love
Consider if the attraction is affirming in the way of
convenience, or if you glimpse parts of yourself
shooting off like a rocket

(A would-be architect once recommended the book *The
Eyes of the Skin* but disavowed the recommendation
if I did not find it good or useful; perhaps he too was in
love with representation as being, of the object being the
synecdoche for his person.)

5.

If you are dead to any charge, either the objects in front
of you lack excitement or your sensory
apparatuses and internal circuitry have
been dimmed

Excitation may be triggered like hot wiring a vehicle
Simply cut your preferred mode of excitation from your
life and witness the flood that emerges
Shadow bodies inverse blood

6.

If information feels paltry and meagre, feel its
weightlessness in your circuitry
You're now a body in the shape of new blood
If the tempo around you is difficult to reach/assess,
Look at the cranes unloading the sea
The sea is arranged with the infrastructure of the harbour
You are the excuse for this geography

Pick a crane from the sky and watch its movements
The sync of hands and machinery

Find within your hair the metallic charge of that

Consider the thrum of that through the fenced
abbreviation of your own body

Moving through its programme

A movement in shipping logs
Weather and shipment weighed in tonnes
Numbers clocked to busyness

Measure the indirect relation between
That line of movement and the circuitry of your own body
Through the seconds you watch before becoming bored

Buffers and silos and fences and zones
Are technologies of streamlining
Ergo they are technologies of speed and distance

7.

Relating to another node—an infrastructure of movement,
a habit—tells you something about your location
A movement of particles between objects sharing
an environment
Conspire the unlatching of form

If you are very alone or very wealthy you could be insured
from too much relating
Your buffer would be the record of your place in
the schema
Compare the rate and quality of your blood to that
of another
Decide if you are ill or medium-okay or deliriously happy
and if it all could shatter on another scale

8.

You do not need to feel identification to admit a thing into
your world
Assume the furthest distance and direct attention anyway
Directing attention further than where you think or want
your eye or your other senses to meet increases
the breadth of world
Enlarges space

If you and another chose to direct attention
further than identification

Think of all the world created
Admitting a thing into understanding is a blurry
peripheral, a prick at the edge

Soon there will be a thousand pricks forming something
like a landscape

9.

You need a room just as you need a body to experience
the pressure of air
Try to inhabit the body closer to the centre, or entirely
through an organ, like the liver
Try to inhabit its regulatory mechanism
Try to inhabit the body as the particles falling on your skin
As it passes through space like a shadow

Notice how many illegible things are felt between you
and others even before words are uttered
Notice how time moves when the illegible pulses
When the illegible pulses, do not give into the impulse to
hide from it

Notice if you have begun to swallow the unsayable
gradually over time
Supplanted them with a substitute
Out of the desire for everything else to be recognised.

10.

Sink into the proportions of its illness, the thing that dams
Your body has been trained to a high medium, a city's
buffers and silos

Hold the feeling of nausea in your mouth until your body
feels real
Consider falling as an alternative coordinate—
a tug sideways to another plot

An illness is a dance with the environment
Language is the lick between publicness and the private
The thing that causes materiality to show its shadow

When a world is ruptured language is also ruptured
World licking bad language holds world's debt

11.

5 inches of rain

*Your blood cycles at the memory of another city, the
one with its fingers in you. The current city you are in is
in love with representation. Everything flattens to it,
even and especially memory. You understand its weight—*

*representation makes things legible, accountable and
therefore valuable. It could go either way, becoming a
shared commons or a commodity. But that's my wound.*

Citations:

Johnson, Barbara. *The Barbara Johnson Reader: The
Surprise of Otherness*. Durham and London: Duke
University Press, 2014.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture
and the Senses*. Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005.

Luca E. Lum is an artist and writer colluding across forms.
She considers the technological, semiotic and informational as
material, relation, and predicament. She is currently based in
Cambridge, MA (USA).

Programmes

Performance

Cosmic Labyrinth by Albert Yonathan Setyawan

Fri 25 Oct 2024

6.30–8.30pm

Level 3, Gallery 3

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

Workshop

Phantoms and Their Embodiment:

A Journey on “Film” before Film by Au Sow Yee

Sat 26 Oct 2024

10.30am–12nn

Level 3, EX-SITU, #03-07

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

Suitable for participants aged 16 years and above.

Workshop

Navigating the Bodily Memory of Personal Archive

by Chen Yow Ruu

Sat 26 Oct 2024

2–4pm

Level 3, EX-SITU, #03-07

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

Performance

Tirta Maya by Rosemainy Buang and Zachary Chan

Fri 1 Nov 2024

7–8pm

Level 3, EX-SITU, #03-07

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

This performance takes place after museum opening hours. Visitors are encouraged to view the exhibition before 7pm.

Screening

ONE DAY PINA ASKED... (1983)

Directed by Chantal Akerman

France-Belgium | In French with English subtitles |
1983 | 57 min | NC16 (Some Nudity)

Sat 2 Nov 2024

2–3.30pm

Level 3, EX-SITU, #03-07

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

Screening

SHADOW (2022)

Directed by Bruce Gladwin

Australia | In English | 2022 | 57 min | PG13 (Some Coarse
Language and Sexual References)

Sat 9 Nov 2024

2–3.30pm

Level 3, EX-SITU, #03-07

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

Access

Curator Tour with SgSL Interpretation

Sat 16 Nov 2024

1–1.45pm

Level 3, Gallery 3

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

This tour is suitable for participants aged 16 and up.

For enquiries, please email access@singaporeartmuseum.sg.

Image Credits

Access

SAM Art Dose

Sat 16 Nov 2024

2.30–4.30pm

Level 3, EX-SITU, #03-07

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

Collaborating Artists: Alecia Neo, Claire Teo,
Germaine Goh, Jaspreet Kaur Sekhon, Zhuo Zihao
Sound Designer: Chong Li-Chuan

Participants should arrive 15 minutes before the start time to register.

Talk

Between (Un)tamed Worlds by Tuguldur Yondomjamts

Fri 22 Nov 2024

7–8pm

Level 3, EX-SITU, #03-07

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

Talk

Recovering Indigenous Language Through Art Practice
by Tiyan Baker

Sat 23 Nov 2024

11am–12pm

Level 3, EX-SITU, #03-07

SAM at Tanjong Pagar Distripark

For more information on the programmes or to register,
please visit the SAM website:



Page 5: Lee Wen Archive. Courtesy of Lee Wen and Asia Art Archive.

Page 6: Still from video, courtesy of the artist.

Page 7: Image courtesy of the artist and Singapore Art Museum.

Page 8: Image courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth and
Council, Los Angeles; Gallery Hyundai, Seoul; Alexander Gray
Associates, New York.

Page 9 (top): Still from video, courtesy of the artist.

Page 9 (middle): Photo by Jeremy Weihrauch.

Page 9 (bottom): Documentation by Christo Crocker.

Page 12. Image courtesy of the artist.

Page 13. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

About Singapore Art Museum

Singapore Art Museum opened in 1996 as the first art museum in Singapore. Also known as SAM, we present contemporary art from a Southeast Asian perspective for artists, art lovers and the art curious in multiple venues across the island, including a new venue in the historic port area of Tanjong Pagar.

SAM is building one of the world's most important public collections of Southeast Asian contemporary art, with the aim of connecting the art and the artists to the public and future generations through exhibitions and programmes.

singaporeartmuseum.sg

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