

CONFERENCE: CLIMATE CRISIS AND CULTURAL LOSS FULL PROGRAMME

Updated as of 27 June 2023

Thursday, 13 July 2023
6.00 – 8.30pm
The Arts House, Screening Room
1 Old Parliament Lane, Singapore 179429

Friday, 14 July 2023
9.30am – 4.30pm
NTU School of Art, Design, and Media
ARTB1-02A/02B
81 Nanyang Dr, Singapore 637458

The conference *Climate Crisis and Cultural Loss* marks the midway point of the titular three-year research project led by curator and educator Prof Ute Meta Bauer. Combining scientific findings with cultural and artistic practices, the project is a transdisciplinary effort to move beyond the one-directional perception of the science of climate change as the causal root of the planet's most pressing "wicked problem", attempting instead to assess the situation from the longer-term, more imperceptible, and difficult-to-quantify perspective of cultural loss. How has the slow erosion of diverse, multicultural, and more-than-human ways of living over time contributed to the climate crisis that we are confronted with today? Can we begin again with culture, to induce a necessary paradigm shift in the way we think about and respond to the climate crisis? The common task at hand is to understand this intrinsically and deeply interwoven relationship between climate and culture.

Starting with the acknowledgement of ancestral connections between the environment and its peoples, the conference opens with a double-bill of two public keynotes by the esteemed anthropologist Prof Cynthia Chou and erudite writer, curator, and policy analyst Marian Pastor Roces. On the second day, artists and filmmakers, community and cultural workers, environmental historians, radar scientists, and legal experts, come together in a full-day programme of presentations, panels, screenings, and conversations across themes of archipelagic autonomy, the socio-politics of extreme weather, environmental memory and cultural traces, in recognition of the climate crisis as a total field of research.

SCHEDULE

Thursday, 13 July 2023 6.00 – 8.30pm Venue: The Arts House, Screening Room 1 Old Parliament Lane, Singapore 179429	
6.00 – 6.30pm	Registration
6.30 – 6.45pm	Welcome Address <u>Prof Joseph Liow</u> , Dean, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University
6.50 – 7.30pm	Keynote: <i>Climate Crisis, Cultural Loss and the People of the Sea</i> <u>Prof Cynthia Chou</u> , Director, Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, C. Maxwell & Elizabeth M. Stanley Family Chair of Asian Studies, and Professor of Anthropology, University of Iowa
7.30 – 8.10pm	Keynote: <i>Vanuá: community as ecology as challenge to law</i> <u>Marian Pastor Rocés</u> , Founder and President, TAO Inc, curator, critic, policy analyst
8.10 – 8.30pm	Discussion / Q&A Moderated by <u>Prof Ute Meta Bauer</u> , Founding Director, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore and Professor, School of Art, Design, and Media, Nanyang Technological University

Friday, 14 July 2023 9.30am – 4.30pm Venue: NTU School of Art, Design and Media, ARTB1-02A/02B 81 Nanyang Dr, Singapore 637458	
9.30 – 10.00am	Coffee & Registration
10.00 – 10.15am	Welcome & Introduction <u>Prof Ute Meta Bauer</u> and <u>Dr Yun Sang-Ho</u> , Director, Remote Sensing Lab, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Associate Professor, Asian School of the Environment and School of Electric and Electronic Engineering, Nanyang Technological University
SESSION I: SOCIOPOLITICS OF EXTREME WEATHER	
10.15 – 11.15am	Panel: <i>Cyclone Pam</i>



	<p><u>Vivian Licht Obed</u>, General Manager, Further Arts, and <u>Dr Yun Sang-Ho</u>, moderated by <u>Prof Nabil Ahmed</u>, Professor (Visual Interventions), Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, Norwegian University of Science and Technology</p>
11.15 – 11.45am	<p>Presentation: <i>Climate Justice and Disaster: A Case Study of Singapore's 1954 Floods</i></p> <p><u>Dr Fiona Williamson</u>, Associate Professor (Environmental History), College of Integrative Studies, Singapore Management University</p>
11.45am – 12.00pm	Session I: Q&A from the Floor
12.00 – 1.30pm	Lunch break
SESSION II: CULTURAL TRACES, ENVIRONMENTAL MEMORY	
1.30 – 2.30pm	<p>Panel: <i>Archipelagic Autonomy, Indigeneity, and Reclamation</i></p> <p><u>Dr Hervé Raimana Lallemand-Moe</u>, Governance and Insular Development Research Team, University of French Polynesia, and Centre of International Law, University of Lyon, and <u>Firdaus Sani</u>, Founder, Orang Laut SG, moderated by <u>Prof Ute Meta Bauer</u></p>
2.30 – 3.00pm	<p>Presentation: <i>Masi Mapping Project</i> [title TBC]</p> <p><u>Dr Kristy H.A. Kang</u>, Associate Professor (Urban Media Art and Design), Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, Arizona State University</p>
3.00 – 4.00pm	<p>Screening & Conversation: <i>Tambu</i></p> <p><u>Armin Linke</u> and <u>Lisa Rave</u>, both artists and filmmakers</p>
4.00 – 4.15pm	Session II: Q&A from the Floor
4.15 – 4.30pm	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p><u>Prof Ute Meta Bauer</u> and <u>Dr Yun Sang-Ho</u></p>

PROGRAMME

KEYNOTE: *CLIMATE CRISIS, CULTURAL LOSS, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE SEA*

Thursday, 13 July 2023, 6.50 – 7.30pm

Prof Cynthia Chou

Much has been discussed about greening the urban environment in deliberations about critical ways to fight climate change. However, the marine environment and seas — and more importantly, the people living in it — are often forgotten. Southeast Asia is a region steeped in long-established maritime traditions, and sea nomadism has prevailed within its waters for centuries. As the world's largest archipelagic country, Indonesia serves as a relevant study on how the climate crisis would bear cultural losses too. With a focus on the Indonesian Riau-Lingga archipelago where the sea nomads known as the *Orang Suku Laut* (tribal people of the sea) have lived for centuries, Chou's keynote raises thought-provoking issues concerning their life and living spaces.

KEYNOTE: *VANUÁ: COMMUNITY AS ECOLOGY AS CHALLENGE TO LAW*

Thursday, 13 July 2023, 7.30 – 8.10pm

Marian Pastor Roces

Roces takes up the word *vanuá* — widespread throughout the Austronesian-speaking world from the northern tip of the Philippines, Batanes, to Vanuatu — to open up legal terrain for transitional justice in postmodernity. In the Ivatan language of Batanes, *vanuá* is a concept built on the exclusive use of an unseen, underwater channel between land and open sea, by a group of fishers and their families. Its use is protected by ritual, even today, centuries after Christianisation. *Vanuá* is hence an eco-systemic concept of community, that furthermore exists within animism's grasp of the divine. It is precisely the non-Anthropocentric order of things sundered by both "development" and romanticised notions of savage knowledge. No legal infrastructure exists for transitional justice.

PANEL: *CYCLONE PAM*

Friday, 14 July 2023, 10.15 – 11.15am

Vivian Licht Obed and Dr Yun Sang-Ho, moderated by Prof Nabil Ahmed

Levelling between the disparate realms of remote sensing and ground-truth, this panel takes the impacts of Cyclone Pam (2015) on Port Vila, Vanuatu, as a case study to discuss how different types of disaster response work together to support communities vulnerable to extreme weather events. Obed presents a first-hand account of how the Vanuatu-based non-governmental organisation Further Arts, where she serves as General Manager and whose headquarters suffered heavy damage during the cyclone, responded to the disaster, while Yun offers insights into how satellite imagery of tree damage in Port Vila due to the cyclone aided in immediate and post-disaster relief efforts. The panel concludes with a conversation between Obed and Yun, moderated by Ahmed.

PRESENTATION: *CLIMATE JUSTICE AND DISASTER: A CASE STUDY OF SINGAPORE'S 1954 FLOODS*

Friday, 14 July 2023, 11.15 – 11.45am

Dr Fiona Williamson

Taking as a central premise the claim that all disasters occur in political space, this paper considers how communities become vulnerable due to prevailing political exigencies yet, shows how the popular voice often finds a way to be heard. Based on a case study of a severe flooding episode that took place in Singapore in late 1954, this paper explores two interrelated aspects of post-disaster justice. First, it will explore why certain communities were vulnerable and the options available to

these marginalized communities for self-help and governmental aid post-disaster. Second, it considers the role of politics and politicians in creating and using disasters as a political platform. It argues that the moral claim of leading community members to political space was enhanced by the intense peaks of social disruption created by disaster, leading them to access the same political arenas from which they were formally excluded. Overall, it reveals how the study of historical disasters offers hindsight into the dynamics of a nature-induced severe event, potentially revealing insight into better understanding risk, vulnerability, and redress today.

PANEL: ARCHIPELAGIC AUTONOMY, INDIGENEITY, AND RECLAMATION

Friday, 14 July 2023, 1.30 – 2.30pm

Dr Hervé Raimana Lallemand-Moe and Firdaus Sani, moderated by Prof Ute Meta Bauer

This panel brings together the perspectives of two different archipelagic constitutions: Singapore and French Polynesia. While both share similarities in being coastal states and former colonies, they differ in their present makeup of indigenous populace and environmental memory. While Lallemand-Moe shows how in French Polynesia, traditional socio-cultural practices such as *rāhui* and *tapu* have been re-established as contemporary legal responses to the climate crisis to unexpected results, Sani shares how the historical separation of the indigenous Orang Pulau islanders from their land and waters through forced resettlement, has erased the environmental memory of the community in Singapore, the cultural traces of which are now difficult to locate and remember.

PRESENTATION: MASI MAPPING PROJECT [title TBC]

Friday, 14 July 2023, 2.30 – 3.00pm

Dr Kristy H.A. Kang

[abstract pending]

SCREENING AND CONVERSATION: TAMBU

Friday, 14 July 2023, 3.00 – 4.00pm

Armin Linke and Lisa Rave

The screening and conversation begin with a 45-minute film combining video footage filmed by Linke and Rave with written fieldnotes by anthropologist Guigone Camus, that were gathered on a 10-day journey together in the Lau group, Fiji, during the TBA—21 residency *The Current* onboard the *Dardanella* in the summer of 2017. The expedition was organised by Ute Meta Bauer to study the customary concept of *tambu* (taboo) as applied to marine biodiversity protection in a time of climate change and globalisation; to try to understand the social, symbolic, and economic connections between Fijian people, their seascape, and marine resources, and the change of the environment intertwined with and affecting local culture. The film brings together what had been seen, felt, understood and misunderstood in this brief time. It was made for the islanders of the Lau group — as a trace of their participation, conversations, landscapes and heritage in 2017 — and as a reflexive object which situates itself between contemplation and reflexive auto-criticism.

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Prof Nabil Ahmed

Professor (Visual Interventions), Trondheim Academy of Fine Arts
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

Nabil Ahmed is a researcher and writer working at the intersection of spatial practice visual culture and environmental humanities. He runs INTERPRT (<http://interprrt.org/>), a research and design studio dedicated to environmental justice advocacy. The transdisciplinary collective works with civil society organizations, lawyers, scientists, NGOs, and journalists worldwide. INTERPRT's work has been recently exhibited at Biennale Warszawa, Museum of Modern Art Warsaw and Beirut Arts Centre. He has written for Third Text, Routledge, *Candide: Journal for Architectural Knowledge*, Documenta, Sternberg Press, MIT Press and Scientific Reports among others. He completed a doctorate in Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, University of London where he has a long-term research affiliation with Forensic Architecture.

Prof Ute Meta Bauer

Professor, School of Art, Design, and Media
Founding Director, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore
Nanyang Technological University (NTU)

Ute Meta Bauer is an educator and curator in the field of contemporary art. Since 2013, she has been Founding Director of NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore and Professor in the School of Art, Design, and Media at Nanyang Technological University, where she co-chairs the Master in Museum Studies and Curatorial Practices. Bauer is currently Artistic Director of the second Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale (2024), on the helm of recent international art exhibitions as curator of the Singapore Pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale (2022) featuring artist Shubigi Rao and co-curator of the 17th Istanbul Biennial (2022) alongside filmmaker Amar Kanwar and art historian David Teh. Previously, she was the Artistic Director of the 3rd Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (2003-2004), co-curator of Documenta11 on the team of Okwui Enwezor (2000-2002) and the US Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015) featuring video and performance pioneer Joan Jonas (with MIT List Centre Visual Art Director Paul C. Ha). Her recent curatorial projects for NTU CCA Singapore include: *The Oceanic* (2017/18), *Tarek Atoui, The Ground: From the Land to the Sea* (2018), *Trees of Life: Knowledge in Material* (2018), *Jef Geys – Quadra Medicinale Singapore* (2018/19), *Siah Armajani: Spaces for the Public. Spaces for Democracy* (2019), *The Posthuman City: Climates. Habitats. Environments.* (2019/20), *Non-Aligned* (2020) and *Trinh T. Minh-ha. Films.* (2020/21). For NTU CCA Singapore, she has also edited and co-edited *The Impossibility of Mapping (Urban Asia)* published by World Scientific (2020), *Culture City. Culture Scape.* co-published with Mapletree Investments (2021), *Climates.Habitats.Environments.* co-published with The MIT Press (2022), as well as the two-part reprint of the legendary i Press series edited by architects Mary Otis Stevens and Thomas McNulty (both MIT), *The Ideal Communist City* (1968, 2022) and *World of Variation* (1970, 2022).

Prof Cynthia Chou

Director, Center for Asian and Pacific Studies
C. Maxwell & Elizabeth M. Stanley Family Chair of Asian Studies
Professor of Anthropology
University of Iowa

Cynthia Chou is Director of the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, C. Maxwell and Elizabeth M. Stanley Family Chair of Asian Studies and Professor of Anthropology at the University of Iowa, United States. She is a cultural anthropologist whose primary research has centered on a longitudinal ethnographic study on sea nomadism, and in particular, on the Orang Suku Laut (tribal people of sea

people) in Indonesia. Three main themes that have oriented her research thus far are: representations of what it means to be "indigenous"; space, place and identity; and human-environment interaction. Her publications include *The Orang Suku Laut of Riau, Indonesia: The Inalienable Gift of Territory* (2010) and *Indonesian Sea Nomads: Money, Magic and Fear of the Orang Suku Laut of Riau* (2003). She received her bachelor's and M.Soc.Sc. degrees from the National University of Singapore and PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom. In 2011, she was awarded the degree of dr.phil. by the University of Copenhagen, Denmark in recognition of her contributions to the study of the Orang Suku Laut.

Dr Kristy H.A. Kang

Associate Professor (Urban Media Art and Design), Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts
Arizona State University

Kristy H.A. Kang is a practice-based researcher whose work navigates the triangulation of place, geographies, and cultural memory. She is Associate Professor of Urban Media Art and Design at Arizona State University's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts holding joint appointments in the School of Arts, Media and Engineering, the Design School, and the Media and Immersive eXperience (MIX) Center. Prior to joining ASU, she was Assistant Professor at the School of Art, Design and Media at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and received her doctorate in media arts and practice at the School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California. Her research interests combine urban and ethnic studies, mapping, and emerging media arts to visualise cultural histories of cities and communities. Her works have been presented at the Gwangju Design Biennale, South Korea; the Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore; the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; the Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe; and the Jewish Museum, Berlin, among others and received the Jury Award for New Forms at the Sundance Online Festival.

Dr Hervé Raimana Lallemand-Moe

Public Law PhD
Governance and Insular Development Unit, University of French Polynesia
Centre for International Law, University of Lyon

Hervé Raimana Lallemand-Moe is a member of the Governance and Insular Development Research Team (GDI – University of French Polynesia) and the Centre of International Law (CDI – University of Lyon III). His research focuses mainly on international environmental law and the legal effects of climate change in Oceania. Lallemand-Moe is teaching law at the University of French Polynesia, where he is an alumnus. He also graduated from the University of Western Brittany (France) and the University of South Pacific (Fiji-Vanuatu). Lallemand-Moe is currently working at the Polynesian Competition Authority as the Head of the President department.

Vivian Licht Obed

General Manager, Further Arts Vanuatu

[bio pending]

Armin Linke

Photographer and filmmaker
Professor, ISIA, Urbino

Armin Linke is an award-winning photographer and filmmaker combining a range of contemporary image processing technologies to blur the border between fiction and reality. Currently Linke is guest professor at ISIA, Urbino (IT) and artist in residence at the KHI Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz. Previously, he has held positions across various academic and research institutes: guest

Professor at the IUAV Arts and Design University in Venice, Professor for Photography at the Karlsruhe University for Arts and Design, and research affiliate at the MIT Visual Arts Program. In his practice, Linke indagates the formation—so called Gestaltung—of the natural, technological and urban environment in which we are living. Armin Linke’s oeuvre—photographs and films—function as tools to become aware of the different design strategies. Through working with his own archive, as well as with other media archives, Linke challenges the conventions of photographic practice, whereby the questions of how photography is installed and displayed become increasingly important. In a collective approach with other artists, as well as with curators, designers, architects, historians, philosophers and scientists, the narratives of his works expand on the level of multiple discourse. Recent exhibitions and projects include: *Earth Indices. Processing the Anthropocene by Giulia Bruno and Armin Linke* (2022), *Blind Sensorium: Visual Anthropology* (2021), and *Prospecting Ocean* (2019).

Prof Joseph Liow

Dean, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University

Joseph Chinyong Liow is Dean of College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, where he is also Tan Kah Kee Chair in Comparative and International Politics, and Research Advisor and former Dean at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. He held the inaugural Lee Kuan Yew Chair in Southeast Asia Studies at the Brookings Institution, Washington DC, where he was also a Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Program. Joseph’s research interests encompass Muslim politics and social movements in Southeast Asia and the geopolitics and geo-economics of the Asia-Pacific region.

Lisa Rave

Artist, filmmaker, photographer
Head of Programme, LEONARDO, Academy of Fine Arts of Nuremberg

Lisa Rave is an artist, filmmaker, and photographer. In her work, she often explores issues surrounding postcolonialism, and history’s repeating patterns in the complex interplay of culture, economy, and ecology, as well as natural phenomena. Rave studied experimental film at the University of the Arts Berlin and photography at Bard College, New York. She was a fellow artist at the Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart in 2014. Some of her recent exhibitions and screenings include Lofoten International Art Festival (2017); Arsenal Kino Berlin (2017); Glasmooch Cologne (2017); Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary–Augarten (2017); Württembergischer Kunstverein (2016); 3rd Istanbul Design Biennial (2016); FLORA ars+natura, Bogota (2015), Meulensteen Gallery, New York (2014); Kunstverein Wiesbaden (2013); Chisenhale Gallery, London (2012); Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (2011); and Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2011).

Marian Pastor Roces

Founder and President, TAO Inc, curator, critic, policy analyst

Marian Pastor Roces is an independent curator, cultural critic, and policy analyst working out of her base in Manila, Philippines. She founded and leads TAOINC, a corporation that curates the establishment of museums and develops exhibitions, parks, and publications. TAOINC recently accomplished the creation of the online museum [21AM](#) for the Cultural Center of the Philippines, for which Roces supervised the creation of a new Accession Record System with a decolonizing trajectory. Her current project is a museum to cross cultural understanding in an island province that recently moved past a 50-year sectarian war. Published internationally, Roces’ critical writing has addressed, notably, the biennale form (in *Over Here*, MIT Press 2007, and *The Biennale Reader*, Bergen Kunsthall and Hatje Cantz 2010); museology (in *House of Glass*, ISEAS Singapore 2001); dispersed cultural material (in *What to Let Go?*, Para Site – in press 2023); and art and activism

(in *Monumental Shadows*, Jameel Arts Center Dubai, 2023). *Gathering: Political Writing on Art and Culture*, an anthology of 45 years of writing, was published in 2019 by the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (Manila) and Art Asia Pacific (Hong Kong). She is co-editor of the website, [Mapping Philippine Material Culture Overseas](#), SOAS, University of London, which negotiates with museums globally for online open access as a form of digital repatriation. Her interest in social justice issues in relation to artmaking during the climate crisis is informed by work with human rights advocates and the peace process.

Firdaus Sani

Founder, Orang Laut SG

Firdaus Sani is a fourth-generation Orang Laut/Pulau descendant. His maternal grandparents used to live in Pulau Semakau, until 1977. While growing up, Firdaus visited Pulau Semakau, where he learnt his grandparents' traditions and ways of life. In 2020, Firdaus started Orang Laut SG (@oranglautsg) to retell the stories of Pulau Semakau. He shares his family's cooking which is lovingly home-cooked by Mdm Noorani, who has honed her ancestors' original cooking methods and recipes. Firdaus advocates for indigenous voices and believes this should be included in Singapore's mainstream education. Firdaus has shared his learnings of sustainability on TedxYouth@Singapore and showcased his works at the Singapore Writers' Festival, Esplanade and Singapore Art Week.

Dr Fiona Williamson

Associate Professor (Environmental History), College of Integrative Studies
Singapore Management University (SMU)

Fiona Williamson is Associate Professor in Environmental History at the College of Integrative Studies, Singapore Management University. She is interested in the dynamics of human-environment-climate intersections, seeking to understand their interrelationship. Looking at colonial Asia, especially, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, she has studied historic disasters as a way of understanding this nexus. She also researches the history of climate and extreme events and weather science, much of which is currently in the process of becoming a new monograph on weather and meteorology in colonial Malaya.

Dr Yun Sang-Ho

Director, Remote Sensing Lab, Earth Observatory of Singapore
Associate Professor, Asian School of the Environment and School of Electric and Electronic Engineering
Nanyang Technological University Singapore (NTU)

Sang-Ho Yun is the Director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore – Remote Sensing Lab (EOS-RS) and Associate Professor of the Asian School of the Environment (ASE) and the School of Electric and Electronic Engineering (EEE) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore. To date, he has supported over 150 major disaster response efforts globally. Prior to joining NTU in 2021, he was a geophysicist and radar scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) for 14 years. Sang-Ho received the 2023 NASA Honor Award for "Proactive development of a world-leading, disaster damage-mapping system supplying vital data to a broad range of disaster assessment and relief agencies worldwide". He was the recipient of the 2018 [NASA Exceptional Public Achievement Medal](#) and the 2014 [NASA Exceptional Early Career Medal](#) for innovative use of satellite Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) data in support of rapid post-disaster response. He also received JPL's Voyager Award in 2015 and Mariner Award in 2012 for his outstanding achievements in humanitarian assistance using satellite observations. Prior to his work at NASA JPL, Sang-Ho was a postdoctoral fellow at the US Geological Survey in Menlo Park, California. He received his PhD in geophysics and MS in electrical engineering from Stanford University in California and his BS in earth system science from Seoul National University in Korea.