

# Native revisions

CHUA CHYE TECK

NOH SUNTAG

ANUP MATHEW THOMAS

TOMOKO YONEDA

## Contents

Foreword	BALA STARR	2
Images		4
Native revisions	MELANIE POCKOCK	20
Images		35
Artists' biographies		50
Catalogue of works in the exhibition		52

Challenging geopolitical histories in our world mean that claims to one's own place, ideas of belonging to land and of personal 'territory', are fragile, fraught, even impossible, for many. We can no longer take for granted the once-shared values—change, conciliation, togetherness, benefiting from one another's diverse life experiences—of modern communities. Through major works of art, *Native revisions* addresses some of the ethics and aesthetics of locations as 'origins'. More broadly, it explores what curator Melanie Pocock describes as our personal stake in places.

Chua Chye Teck, Noh Suntag, Anup Mathew Thomas and Tomoko Yoneda are internationally recognised artists who each present a substantial body of photographic work in the exhibition. Melanie Pocock has worked closely with each artist to position their art in the context of *Native revisions* and the Gallery 1 space. They have considered questions related to the selection of works that properly represent a larger series; the framing and mounting of images; the bringing forward of elements from previous exhibitions; and the situational circumstances of the gallery, among many others.

After a two-year development period, it has been wonderful to welcome the four artists to LASALLE College of the Arts, especially Noh Suntag, Anup Mathew Thomas and Tomoko Yoneda, who have travelled from their home cities in South Korea, India and the United Kingdom respectively. Artists' participation in the installation period and public programmes is an important and potentially transformative aspect of international projects at ICA Singapore. It broadens networks, builds understanding of Singapore's contemporary art scene from the outside, and enables learning and exchange within LASALLE.

Chua Chye Teck, Anup Mathew Thomas and Tomoko Yoneda's participation has been generously supported by agencies that are committed to encouraging artists' artistic development. The Arts Fund (National Arts Council Singapore) supported the production of new work by

Chua Chye Teck; the Japan Foundation Asia Center supported Tomoko Yoneda; and a major work by Anup Mathew Thomas, exhibited here for only the second time, was originally supported by the 2015 edition of the Han Nefkens Foundation—BACC Award for Contemporary Art.

*Native revisions* is Melanie Pocock's third major curatorial project at the ICA Singapore, and again attests to her insightful and detailed analysis of art practices and her interest to experiment with modes of display. I warmly thank Melanie for her exceptional work on the exhibition and this publication. I congratulate each artist and thank them wholeheartedly for their ambition and purposefulness, and for their collaboration with the whole ICA Singapore team.

BALA STARR

Director

Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore

LASALLE College of the Arts



*Native revisions*, installation view showing photographs by Tomoko Yoneda (at left) and Chua Chye Teck, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, 2017. Photo: Geraldine Kang





*Vakathanam vs Ancheri, final, Velloor YMCA tournament, 06/05/2012, Velloor, Kottayam*



*Velloor vs Peroor, final, Kottayam YMCA tournament, 06/05/2012, Nagampadam, Kottayam*



*Heian Shrine II, Kyoto (Sorge & Ozaki)*



*Takarazuka Theater, Tokyo (Clausen & Vutokevich)*





*Modern Hotel, Harbin (Clausen & Benedict)*

Tomoko Yoneda, *The parallel lives of others—Encounter with Sorge spy ring*, 2008  
Catalogue no. 9

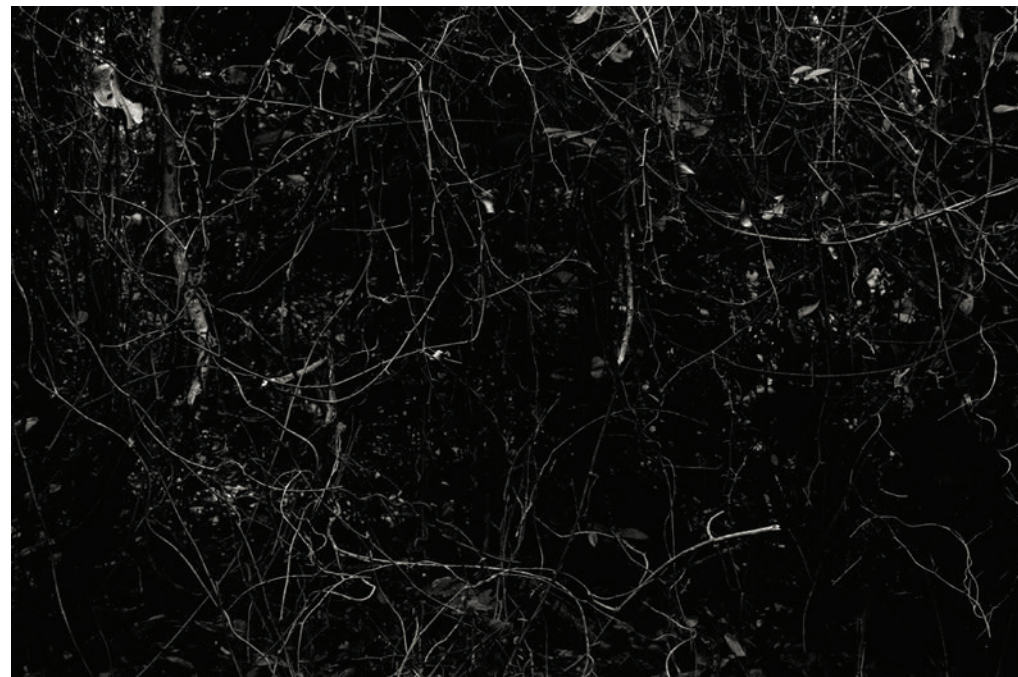


Tomoko Yoneda, *The 70th 6 August, Hiroshima*, 2015  
Catalogue no. 7



Kuruvilla Varkey Kunju of Nedumbarakkadu ordered a coffin, dressed himself up and lay down in it. He asked his wife and her father to pose next to the decorated coffin while a relative photographed the event. Varkey Kunju displayed this photograph prominently in his house. Three years later, on the 26th of August 2011, Varkey Kunju passed away and was buried in the same coffin.





Chua Chye Teck, *Beyond wilderness*, 2014–16  
Catalogue no. 1





Chua Chye Teck, *Beyond wilderness*, 2014–16  
Catalogue no. 1





Chua Chye Teck, *Beyond wilderness*, 2014–16  
Catalogue no. 1



Why return? I have often asked this question when visiting the town in England where I grew up. At home, the landscape and people rarely change—streets have the same names, parks have the same tired lawns, and bars have the same clientele. Many young people of my generation would consider the return journey and its associations with familiarity and habit regressive, preferring to explore new destinations offering unprecedented experiences. Apart from seeing family and friends, I feel no great desire to return to my home town, a place that seems to offer little in the way of discovery.

Yet on my last visit home I was struck by a number of changes. Several streets had been widened, and new tenants had replaced two-thirds of the retailers in the local shopping centre. To my surprise, the residential housing development in the former Royal Air Force base that had been such a feature of my childhood had finally come to fruition. The local demographic had changed: more young families and migrants from Eastern Europe. There was a different atmosphere, less conservative and more cosmopolitan. It was as if these shifts had happened imperceptibly, like the snail that moves so slowly it hardly appears to be moving at all. Now, the collective presence of these changes seemed impossible to ignore.

I doubt these changes were as pronounced as they appeared in my mind. Having lived in the town for over two decades, I am sensitive to changes in its physical make-up. Staggered visits in recent years have also made me perceive as sudden changes that have been occurring for some time. These experiences clearly influenced my perception, but perhaps no less so than other biased perspectives, such as overexposure, which can lead us to favour elements of places because of our familiarity with them.<sup>1</sup> Had

1 In psychology this phenomenon is known as the mere exposure effect, in which 'repeated exposure of the individual to a stimulus is a sufficient condition for the enhancement of his attitude towards it'. Zajonc, R 1968, 'Attitudinal effects of mere exposure', *Journal of personality and social psychology*, monograph supplement, vol. 9, no. 2, part 2, p. 1.

childhood memories enabled me to notice things that others would have difficulty perceiving? Had living away made me more objective and able to see things that I would not have been able to if I still lived there? And how had return visits over the years blurred my understanding of the town's 'original' character?

*Native revisions* reflects on the dynamics of return and its influence on our perception of places. It considers these questions particularly in relation to notions of origins, such as the aspects of a place that are seen to come from, or belong there. As my own thoughts reveal, notions of places are often shaped by our personal stake in them, which draws us to features that favour these stakes. The title of the exhibition alludes to such stakes, which shaped concepts of native identity during the colonial period in the interests of colonial powers. Literally meaning that which is 'grown, produced, or originates in a particular place or vicinity',<sup>2</sup> the term native was used by colonial invaders to describe indigenous communities and territories that were assimilated into colonial empires. From the colonial point of view, the natural traits of native lands and people were backward and needed to be reformed according to European standards.<sup>3</sup>

But if the term native, then, evoked negative images of indigenous communities as 'primitive', it also evoked romantic images of people and places 'untouched' by the corruption of modern industrial societies.<sup>4</sup> This image maybe most corresponds to its meaning in nature, where

2 'Native', *Merriam-Webster: Dictionary and thesaurus*, Merriam-Webster, Springfield, Mass., viewed 5 January 2017, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/native>>.

3 Okazaki, S, David, E & Abelman, N 2008, 'Colonialism and psychology of culture', *Social and personality psychology compass*, vol. 2, no. 1, p. 92.

4 This romanticism is found, for example, in the concept of the 'noble savage' in literature, which describes 'an idealised concept of uncivilised man, who symbolises the innate goodness of one not exposed to the corrupting influences of civilisation'. 'Noble savage', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, viewed 17 January 2017, <<http://global.britannica.com/art/noble-savage>>.

it is used to describe species that belong to a certain region and which have not mixed with other species or substances.<sup>5</sup> The paradox of this definition is that in many geographical contexts it is difficult to distinguish 'native' from new or foreign species, the former nearly always being derivatives of other organisms. If these concepts of native phenomena reveal anything about the nature of origins it is their variability, and their frequent use to justify narratives of development and territorial expansion.

In *Native revisions* we experience shifting notions of origins and places through photography and moving image by four artists from Asia. The artists—Chua Chye Teck, Noh Suntag, Anup Mathew Thomas and Tomoko Yoneda—have all returned to specific locations over a number of years. The locations in their works cover a range of geographies and themes: forests in Singapore, a village in South Korea adjacent to a United States military base, communities in the Indian state of Kerala, and significant sites of World War II in Japan. The locations are all connected to the artists' native regions: Chua, Noh and Thomas were born in Singapore, South Korea and Kerala respectively, and Yoneda's parents were evacuated to the Japanese countryside during WWII. The artists' long-term engagement with these locations is evident, their works not only capturing the topography of these places, but their cultural and historical phenomena. In their works, we see wild landscapes, resurging traditions, political clashes and commemorative rituals, which have all emerged as a result of specific environmental and socio-political conditions. But as much as their works form important visual records of these locations, they also convey intangible aspects, such as their changing nature and mood, which highlight the temporal and emotional dimension of places. These aspects also reveal the contingent nature of physical places

and photographic images, as moments in time formed through combinations of local and external forces. The ambiguity of the artists' images—generated through photographic techniques and ancillary texts—conveys the difficulty in distinguishing these forces and their often-cyclical dynamics.

In the series *Native ball* (2014) by Anup Mathew Thomas (pages 6–7), we see the resurgence of *nadan panthu kali*, a traditional Keralan ball game, in villages around the district of Kottayam. Originally played on naturally occurring flat spaces, temple or church grounds, the game has regained popularity in recent years due to the interest of younger generations and the establishment of new federations organising *nadan panthu kali* tournaments. The images in the exhibition show games from two YMCA tournaments being played in the village of Vellor and the centre of the town of Kottayam on a grass football pitch and athletics stadium respectively. What immediately strikes the viewer is the difference between the two locations: in the former, jungle flora surrounding the pitch indicates the relative isolation of the village, while concrete buildings and advertising billboards in the latter indicate Kottayam's modest urban development. These visual contexts tell us important information about the nature of Kerala, where rural villages co-exist with modern infrastructure.<sup>6</sup> Thomas' focus on this context—the diminutive bodies of the players figuring within a wider narrative of adaptation and development—is telling. The narrative is far from linear: the vibrancy of the players and spectators belies the notion of *nadan panthu kali* as an old tradition, and several buildings look outdated. Even the athletics stadium in the centre of Kottayam, for instance, looks archaic, with its worn-out circuit and moss-covered bleachers.

5 'Native', Merriam-Webster: Dictionary and thesaurus, Merriam-Webster, Springfield, Mass., viewed 5 January 2017, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/native>>.

6 Vilanilam, JV, Palackal, A & Luke, S (eds) 2012, *Introduction to Kerala studies: A multidisciplinary reference book for universities and Malayali diaspora*, IISAC, Newark, New Jersey, p. 71.

In photography, the present can only ever be past; a moment captured, but in fact no longer there. The images in *The parallel lives of others—Encounter with Sorge spy ring* (2008) by Tomoko Yoneda (pages 8–10) are suffused with this sense of absence, presenting images of locations that were frequented by the Sorge spy ring in Japan and China during World War II. Led by Soviet military intelligence officer Richard Sorge (1895–1944), the spy ring provided important information that led to early Soviet victories, such as the Battle of Moscow, to which Stalin sent troops from the Eastern Front due to intelligence from Sorge stating that Japan had no imminent plans to attack the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup> The locations where the spy ring met—such as the Heian Shrine in Kyoto, the Takarazuka Theatre in Tokyo, and the Modern Hotel in Harbin—are public locations, and seem strange choices as venues for conspicuous meetings. Yet the very public nature of these locations would have enabled the members of the spy ring to blend into the background, an illusion that is mirrored in Yoneda’s capturing of the sites mostly empty. Printed on silver gelatin paper, the images have the appearance of historical photographs as opposed to contemporary images. There is an irony in the historical quality of the images; while evoking the retrospective nature of photography they also illustrate the contemporaneity of the past, which is made ‘alive’ through our experience of the sites in which it occurred.

At times, photographs not only seem to emphasise the absence of their subjects, but replace them. By ‘filling [our] sight by force’, Roland Barthes argues, photography effaces as it captures, confusing our sense of the original event from its photographic image.<sup>8</sup> *The 70th 6 August Hiroshima* (2015) by Tomoko Yoneda (page 11) embodies this idea,

7 Goldman, S 2010, *The spy who saved the Soviets*, HistoryNet, Tysons, Virginia, viewed 5 February 2017, <<http://www.historynet.com/the-spy-who-saved-the-soviets.htm>>.

8 Barthes, R 1982, *Camera lucida*, Hill & Wang, New York, p. 91.

fusing place and event with their memorialisation. The photograph presents a view of the seventieth edition of the Peace Memorial Ceremony that is held in Hiroshima every year to commemorate victims of the atomic bomb and ongoing conflicts around the world. The image is composed of exposures from three negatives, which Yoneda has staggered to create a blurred image. From afar the work looks like a faulty print; up close, we see the edges of the three layers, their lines resembling the traces of a palimpsest. Each layer shows a different moment in time, with figures and details appearing in some and not others. The title of the work raises questions about its intended subject; does *The 70th 6 August* denote the bombing or its commemoration? A quick calculation tells us that it is the former, but its abstract reference to a date implies both. There is also the violent quality of the repetition in the image and title, which seem intent on countering the tendency of human memory to erase traumatic experiences. Here, we experience the paradox of commemoration, which in seeking to revive past events highlights our distance from them.

In *Staging at Nedumbarakkadu* (2012) (pages 12–13) we see the opposite phenomenon: an event presaged and memorialised before it occurs. The photograph by Anup Mathew Thomas shows a view of a photograph, which depicts a man lying in a coffin. By all appearances, the image shows the wake of a Keralan man named Kuruvilla Varkey Kunju; the curtains are drawn, and we see two family members beside the coffin poised in a manner of mourning. Yet the work’s accompanying text explains that the wake is actually a staged event created by Varkey Kunju three years before his death. The clear positioning of the image as a photograph—the former propped up on a table—highlights its staged nature, and the role of the photographer in the creation of this visual fiction.

The presence of the photographer as a seeing and sensing eye beyond the frame is also felt in *Beyond wilderness*



(2014–16) (pages 14–18), a series by Chua Chye Teck that captures forests in Singapore. Chua's images highlight the natural lines of intersecting vines and the dense foliage of the forests, which in darker images creates shadows that draw viewers into the picture plane. Prolonged exposure creates a sense of extreme visual immersion in some images, where details are almost washed out. In Chua's photographs, the forest seems to have no beginning or end, the multitudinous vines disappearing into one another and out of the frame. One gets a sensation from these images of multiple visits blurred into one; an impression that mirrors Chua's own experience of the forests, during which he would often spend hours in a meditative state.<sup>9</sup>

In presenting the photographs, Chua hopes that people will recognise the value of the forests as rare uncultivated landscapes in Singapore. His concerns are not unfounded. The constant urban rejuvenation of Singapore has resulted in the destruction of natural heritage, which has erased much of its historical identity. Where natural heritage has been maintained, it has often been adapted with user-friendly paths rather than embraced as a wild site.<sup>10</sup> Chua's photographs do not romanticise the wilderness in them, and are not in this sense stereotypical protest images. Instead, they are poetic odes; ghostly images of forests that seem to have already disappeared. It is this premonitory quality that makes the photographs effective as political images: we observe their beauty at the same time as mourning their potential loss.

The use of photography to highlight native environments and communities under threat is a motivation that also inspired *The strAnge ball* (2004–07) (pages 35–41), a series by Noh Suntag that documents the resistance of inhabitants from the village of Daechuri in southwest

Korea to enforced displacement as a result of the extension of a United States military base. During and since the Cold War, the United States has had a strong military presence in South Korea, using it as a base to monitor North Korea and prevent communist expansion. Recognising the strategic importance of the southwest region of Korea, the US military decided to expand their base next to Daechuri, which is situated close to the sea and China—another geopolitical threat. Noh's images capture the expansion of the base and clashes between villagers and riot police between 2004 and 2006. In one image, we see the emotional turmoil of the villagers, who, exhausted from protesting, have collapsed to the ground (page 38).

At first, the black-and-white images look like photographs you would see published in a newspaper accompanying a provocative article. Close observation, however, reveals compositional and symbolic elements that call into question their status as documentation. In every image we see a white ball, visible amidst the action and landscape of the village. Situated within the US military base, the ball is a dome that is used for radar, communications and intelligence gathering. In the photographs the dome is framed in various ways: as a silhouette resembling the moon, as a hazy vision at dusk, and as a tiny speck within the landscape. Whether the dome or the surrounding landscape forms the subject of the photographs is unclear, the former's presence seeming more designed to highlight the latter. In one image (pages 40–41), we see the dome through a steel board that has been cut into the shape of the United States, a dark and humourous pairing that highlights the interwoven politics of the United States and South Korea. Other metaphors are created through the juxtaposition of the dome with features in the landscape, such as a fire, within which the ball appears aflame, and the flames stoked by a farmer and his rake (page 39). The dominance of the dome in the photographs, however, is an illusion; most people living in the village were not aware of

9 CT Chua 2016, interview, 19 April.

10 Kong, L & Yeoh, B 1996, 'Social constructions of nature in urban Singapore', *Japanese journal of Southeast Asian studies*, vol. 34, no. 2, p. 404.

its presence and function before Noh's research during his time there. For Noh, the dome symbolises the continued and controversial influence of the United States on South Korean politics, and the ongoing effect of this on Korean people.<sup>11</sup>

Other works, such as *Path—Path to the cliff where Japanese committed suicide after the American landings, Saipan* (2003) by Tomoko Yoneda (pages 42–43), also frame places as visual tropes. In this image, we see a view of the cliff on a clear, sunny day; the sky is blue and the grass a brilliant green. The photograph resembles the kind of 'picture postcard' image that a travel agency might generate; a resemblance that symbolises the popularity of the region among Japanese tourists. The contrast between this view and the history of the site could not be more stark, provoking reflection on how our impression might be different if we were not aware of its history. The pairing of the image with this reference suggests the tragedy implicit in concepts of beauty, such as the sublime, where images of fear or danger are perceived as alluring.<sup>12</sup> One could argue that both notions of the site are as true as they are dependent, the contrast between them allowing a greater appreciation of their singularity and significance.

Distances between images and their references are a common feature in the works, particularly those of Anup Mathew Thomas. While the texts that accompany Thomas' images describe elements within them, they also allude to phenomena outside them; a dynamic that renders their status ambiguous as explanatory documents. The physical distance of the texts from his images and their presentation as printed or framed texts also highlights their independence, as if image and text were two versions of the same truth. The titles of other works in the exhibition—*Beyond wilderness, The parallel lives of others—Encounter*

*with Sorge spy ring*—also propose images as independent realities, with time periods that stretch beyond their immediate frames.

The artists' use of captions and titles implies the limited ability of still images to represent a sense of time beyond a single moment. For Anup Mathew Thomas and Tomoko Yoneda, time-based media has allowed them to overcome these limitations, through the presentation of moving images shot over extended periods of time. In *We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness* (2013) by Yoneda (pages 44, 48–49) we see three unfolding views. The first is a recording of a public square in the island of Sakhalin, Russia, at night, which contains a statue of a tank commemorating the end of Japanese occupation of the island. The second video shows the lurid green glow of the Northern Lights ebbing in and out of darkness. The third video shows a lorry driving down a road in Kilpisjärvi, Lapland, which is situated near the border between Finland, Norway and Sweden. In the work, each video unfolds at a different pace, the only constant being the view of the Northern Lights. In the third video, time is literally slowed down, reflecting the gradual descent of snowflakes across the scene. We almost feel like we are watching static images, until moments where they shift, or where there is a sudden rupture, such as the moment in the first video where the street lights surrounding the square suddenly cut out. This sense of oscillating time is enhanced by the work's accompanying sound, which punctuates these moments with crescendos of noise. An ambient sound, unsynced with the videos, operates at its own speed, creating a sense of endless time.

By contrast, Thomas' single-channel projected slide show *Assembly* (2008) (page 45), follows a regular rhythm, showing images of temporary arches erected in Kerala to promote political, religious and community events. After brief still projection, the arches spin and disappear out of the frame like products in a commercial sale. While the

<sup>11</sup> Noh, S 2006, *The strAnge ball*, pp. 1–4.

<sup>12</sup> Vaughn, W 1978, *Romantic art*, Thames & Hudson, London, pp. 32–33.

colours, design and locations of the arches vary, they are remarkably similar; certain typefaces dominate, and they are more or less shaped in the same semicircular form. The rhythmic transition from one arch to the next creates a feeling of infinite revision, and of a landscape in subtle evolution. The short projection mirrors the ephemerality of the structures, while their presentation in the form of an advertisement reflects the content of the arches, which can display anything from welcome messages and announcements for religious festivals to notices for dog shows.

In viewing these works we feel the cyclical nature of history, in which recurring events form a necessary and natural part of life. In *Scene from a wake* (2016) (pages 46–47), we witness cycles of life through the wake of the Suffragan Metropolitan of the Malankara Mar Thomas Syrian Church based in Tiruvalla, Kerala. In the photograph, life and death literally sit side by side, the body of the bishop displayed in a glass case viewed by worshippers and onlookers. The list of current bishops of the Church in reverse chronological order in the accompanying text also evokes transitions, and the inevitability of aging and death. Thomas' capturing of the scene at a moment between official services gives the event an element of banality: we see people standing around, chatting in corners, and a fan that has been temporarily installed for the occasion. The sense of ritual in the image is strong, and extended in the form of a physical curtain, whose pattern and material matches those that are used to conceal altars in Syrian Christian churches. The curtain's central motif—a variation of the orthodox cross—underlines the symbolic significance of the cross as a marker of the Syrian Christian faith. The slight variation in its design from the curtain in the image also shows the alterations that occur as a result of different producers, prices and tastes.

There is a sense of volume in the exhibition generated through these works and their repeated subjects and motifs. But while the artists consistently observe subjects they do

not always photograph them, and even when they do they often take time to consider and process the images. Anup Mathew Thomas spends several years researching subjects, and Chua Chye Teck often keeps objects and images in the studio for several months before deciding on the form they should take. Tomoko Yoneda's projects also take several years because of their requirement of particular environmental conditions, as well as cultural contexts to make them historically relevant. Final presentations of their works often comprise only a selection of images, which bring out notable aspects, or that together create a narrative or theme. The time that the artists spend processing and ruminating on their images is unusual in contemporary photography, which has become increasingly dominated by the speed and efficiency of digital cameras. The ease with which photographs are now taken has ironically led to less careful observation, the quantity of images being perceived as somehow proof of their detail.

Digital photographs also often appear disconcertingly carefree, where people and subjects are captured without their awareness. This lack of regard for subjects contrasts with these artists' acute sense of responsibility for the subjects that their works portray. Anup Mathew Thomas, for example, takes care in explaining his projects to the people and communities that he photographs, considering their involvement as key to the integrity of his images. This sense of responsibility is also manifest in the artists' immersion in the places that they photograph. Noh Suntag, for instance, spent four years working in Daechuri, where he not only took photographs of the dome but also images of elderly residents for them to use as ancestor portraits after their death.<sup>13</sup> That the artists consider themselves advocates of a personal approach to image-making also shows in their willingness to be associated with them. Tomoko Yoneda, for example, has described how having a Japanese name

13 S Noh 2015, pers. comm., 10 November.



makes her feel accountable for the content of her images, particularly their representation of Japanese imperialism and identity.<sup>14</sup> This self-identification with their images contrasts with values of the postmodern contemporary art world, where national markers of identity are perceived as limiting artists to being representatives of national culture.<sup>15</sup>

In the case of Yoneda and the other artists, however, this personal connection serves as a way of emphasising the invariable influence of environment, upbringing and culture on artists, and the circumstances that shape subjectivity. By grounding art within this frame, the artists' works reflect a truth that arguably even the illusion of globalisation cannot dispel; that we can only speak from what we know and feel through the material conditions that surround us.

Ultimately, photographs reflect the interests of those who create and view them. But by acknowledging our personal stakes in places, I do not wish to suggest that we only interpret them in our own image. Rather, it is these personal stakes that enable us to see places closely, and at times more clearly. The works that these artists have created portray salient and overlooked aspects of the geography, culture and politics of locations, which would have been impossible to capture without their personal relationship to these places. Not claiming to be objective observers or bystanders, the artists have used personal insight to create images that testify to the subtle transitions of people and places over time. Where a place might begin

or end is a boundary that perhaps lies outside ontological possibility; a notion that even the artists' images cannot capture. In the exhibition, we see places and origins as abstractions, metaphors and myths. In the works, we see place as a point of convergence, a contingent image subject to constant revision.

MELANIE POCOCK

<sup>14</sup> T Yoneda 2017, interview, 9 January.

<sup>15</sup> This form of criticism is especially found in reviews of art exhibitions organised along national lines. The Venice Biennale, for instance, has long been criticised for its national framework, in which participating countries select curators and artists—most often from the participating country—to represent them in a commissioned pavilion. While commissioning bodies are often criticised in public media for selecting foreign artists and/or curators, art critics have criticised selection according to nationality as misrepresenting the 'global, émigré art world'. See, for example, Mclean, M 2015, 'Asia in Venice: 56th Venice Biennale', *Frieze*, 28 May, viewed 7 February 2017, <<http://frieze.com/article/56th-venice-biennale-3>>.



Noh Suntag, *The strAnge ball*, 2004-07  
Catalogue no. 2



Noh Suntag, *The strAnge ball*, 2004–07  
Catalogue no. 2





Noh Suntag, *The strAnge ball*, 2004–07  
Catalogue no. 2



Noh Suntag, *The strAnge ball*, 2004–07  
Catalogue no. 2





Tomoko Yoneda, *Path*—Path to the cliff where Japanese committed suicide after the American landings of WWII, Saipan, 2003  
Catalogue no. 10





Tomoko Yoneda, *We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness*, 2013, installation view,  
Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, 2017  
Catalogue no. 8  
Photo: Geraldine Kang



Anup Mathew Thomas, *Assembly*, 2008  
Catalogue no. 6





Anup Mathew Thomas, *Scene from a wake*, 2016, installation view,  
Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, 2017  
Catalogue no. 3  
Photo: Geraldine Kang





Tomoko Yoneda, *We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness* (detail), 2013, installation view,  
Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, 2017  
Catalogue no. 8  
Photo: Geraldine Kang

CHUA CHYE TECK

Chua Chye Teck was born in Singapore in 1974, and lives in Singapore. Recent exhibitions include *Singapour mon amour: Politics and poetics of space(s)*, Point Emphémère, Paris (2015); *Memories*, Esplanade Tunnel, Singapore (2015); *Modern love*, Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, LASALLE College of the Arts (2014); *Medium at large*, Singapore Art Museum (2014); *Crossing SEA(s)*, 2902 Gallery, Singapore (2011); *Sovereign Asian Art Prize (Singapore finalists)*, Artspace@Helutrans, Singapore (2010); and *Notes from the south: New photography from South-East Asia*, Orange Photo Festival, Changsha, China (2010). Chua participated in a one-year residency at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, in 2009. His photographic series *Beyond wilderness* was published by Epigram Books, Singapore, in October 2016.

NOH SUNTAG

Noh Suntag was born in Seoul in 1971, and lives in Goyang, South Korea. Exhibitions include *Dance of order*, 43 Inverness Street, London (2016); *Really good, murder*, The Fitzrovia Gallery, London (2016); *Korea tomorrow 2015*, Sungkok Art Museum, Seoul (2015); 9th Gwangju Biennale (2012); *Public: Collective identity | Occupied spaces*, Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto Canada (2012); SeMA Biennale Mediacity Seoul (2010); *Appropriating reality/The room*, Total Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul (2009); and *State of emergency*, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany (2008). Noh was awarded the Korea Artist Prize in 2014, and was one of three finalists for the Hermès Foundation Missulsang art award in 2013.

ANUP MATHEW THOMAS

Anup Mathew Thomas was born in Kochi, India, in 1977, and lives in Bengaluru, India. Recent exhibitions include *Scene from a wake*, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (2016); *Native ball and revisions*, GALLERY SKE, Bengaluru, India (2014); Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2012); *The matter within: New contemporary art from India*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2011); *The generation in transition: New art from India*, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2011); *The self and the other*, Artium, Centro-Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain (2009); *Reflections of contemporary India*, La Casa Encendida, Madrid (2008); and *Metropolitan*, Gasworks, London (2007). Thomas received the Han Nefkens Foundation—BACC Award for Contemporary Art in 2015. In 2014, he was one of five recipients of the Abraaj Group Art Prize.

TOMOKO YONEDA

Tomoko Yoneda was born in Hyogo, Japan, in 1965, and lives in London. Exhibitions include *Tell me a story: Locality and narrative*, Rockbund Museum, Shanghai, 2016; *Discordant harmony*, Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei (2016) and Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan (2015); *Beyond memory*, Grimaldi Gavin, London (2015); SeMA Biennale Mediacity Seoul (2014); 10th Gwangju Biennale (2014); *We shall meet in place where there is no darkness*, Himeji City Museum of Art, Hyogo, Japan (2014) and Tokyo Photographic Art Museum (2013); Aichi Triennale (2013); The First Kyiv International Biennale of Contemporary Art: Arsenalet 2012, Ukraine (2012); *Japanese house*, ShugoArts, Tokyo (2011); and *An end is a beginning*, Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2008). In 2015, Yoneda was one of seven finalists of the Nissan Art Award.

## Catalogue of works in the exhibition

Dimensions are given as height preceding width (followed, where applicable, by depth)

### CHUA CHYE TECK

- 1 *Beyond wilderness* 2014–16  
6 black and white photographs  
(a)–(b) 80 × 120 cm,  
(c)–(f) 49 × 74 cm

Courtesy the artist

### NOH SUNTAG

- 2 *The strAnge ball* 2004–07  
6 digital prints  
each 54 × 81 cm

Courtesy the artist

### ANUP MATHEW THOMAS

- 3 *Scene from a wake* 2016  
jacquard curtain, digital print on adhesive vinyl on wall,  
2 texts printed on paper on wall  
curtain: 334 × 1853 cm  
digital print: 195.2 × 292 cm  
texts each 29.7 × 21 cm  
This work was first produced on the occasion of the 2015 edition of the Han Nefkens Foundation—BACC Award for Contemporary Art
- 4 *Native ball* 2014  
– *Vakathanam vs Ancheri, final, Velloor YMCA tournament, 06/05/2012, Velloor, Kottayam*  
– *Velloor vs Peroor, final, Kottayam YMCA tournament, 06/05/2012, Nagampadam, Kottayam*  
2 type C photographs, text printed on paper on wall  
type C photographs each 120 × 160 cm  
text: 29.7 × 21 cm

- 5 *Staging at Nedumbarakkadu* 2012  
digital print, text printed on paper on wall  
digital print: 38 × 50 cm  
text: 29.7 × 21 cm

- 6 *Assembly* 2008  
slide show of 250 photographs transferred to single-channel high-definition digital video, projection, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour, silent 31:09 minutes

All works courtesy the artist and  
GALLERYSKE, Bangalore

### TOMOKO YONEDA

- 7 *The 70th 6 August, Hiroshima* 2015  
type C photograph  
76 × 96 cm
- 8 *We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness* 2013  
3-channel high-definition digital video installation, 16:9 aspect ratio, colour, sound, 9:50 minutes, dimensions variable  
Sound designed by Tomi Räisänen  
Video edited by Yusuke Shigeta
- 9 *The parallel lives of others—Encounter with Sorge spy ring* 2008  
15 gelatin silver prints  
each 9 × 9 cm  
Vitrine 1  
– *Takarazuka Theater, Tokyo (Clausen & Vutokevich)*  
– *Koishikawa Botanical Garden, Tokyo (Miyagi & Yamana)*  
– *Heian Shrine I, Kyoto (Sorge & Ozaki)*  
– *Heian Shrine II, Kyoto (Sorge & Ozaki)*  
– *Ueno Park, Tokyo (Ozaki, Smedley & Miyagi)*  
Vitrine 2  
– *Modern Hotel, Harbin (Clausen & Benedict)*  
– *Shenyang/Former Fengtian (Clausen & Heinrich)*  
– *Imperial Hotel (Sorge, Bernhardt, Clausen, Vukelic, Ozaki & others)*  
– *Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (Sorge & Miyagi)*  
– *Nara Park (Sorge & Ozaki)*  
Vitrine 3  
– *Ueno Zoo I, Tokyo (Miyagi & Stein)*  
– *Kobe Port I (Vukelic)*  
– *Ueno Zoo II, Tokyo (Miyagi & Stein)*  
– *Kobe Port II (Vukelic)*  
– *Rokko Mountain, Kobe (Kawai & Ozaki)*
- 10 *Path—Path to the cliff where Japanese committed suicide after the American landings of WWII, Saipan* 2003  
type C photograph  
76 × 96 cm

All works courtesy the artist and  
ShugoArts, Tokyo

## Native revisions

Published by the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore on the occasion of the exhibition *Native revisions*, 11 February to 12 April 2017.

Curator: Melanie Pocock

© Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore 2017

This work is copyright. Apart from fair dealing for the purpose of research, criticism or review as permitted under the Copyright Act 1987, no part may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted by any means without the prior permission of the publisher. No illustration may be reproduced without the permission of the copyright owner. Copyright for all texts is held by the authors and the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore. Copyright for all works of art and images is held by the artists.

ISBN 978-981-11-2615-4

Typeset in Adobe Arno Pro  
Design: Kong Wen Da and Darryl Lim  
Printer: First Printers Pte Ltd, Singapore

Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore  
LASALLE College of the Arts  
1 McNally Street  
Singapore 187940  
Email: icas@lasalle.edu.sg  
www.lasalle.edu.sg/institute-of-contemporary-arts-sg



The production of new work by Chua Chye Teck was supported by

a.r.t.s.fund

Tomoko Yoneda's participation was supported by





