

A sepia-toned landscape photograph showing a wide valley with a mountain range in the background. The foreground is filled with dense vegetation, including tall grasses and trees. The sky is hazy, and the overall tone is warm and historical.

ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO AIR;
BUT NOT MEMORY

SELECTED PROJECTS ON ECOLOGY, EXTRACTIVISM, AND DISPLACEMENT

ALIANSYAH CANIAGO

CONTENTS

IN SEARCH OF NAN TAR-TAR NAN TOR TOR (THE DANCING ONE)	03	THE TREE WITHOUT ROOTS	10
A DEAD RECKONING TOWARD SELF: CAMPHOR EXPEDITION	05	SELAMAT DATANG JAKARTA: SUNDA KELAPA	11
COPY(WHAT'S)LEFT: CAMPHOR SPECIMENS FROM KEW GARDEN	06	TITIK BALIK PROJECTS	14
PALM TO PALM	07	BIOGRAPHY	18
CARD AGAINST HISTORY: COMPOSING ARCHIPELAGOS	08		
LEAVES OF THE SAME TREE	09		



IN SEARCH OF NAN TAR TAR NAN TOR TOR (THE DANCING ONE): ON CELLULOID

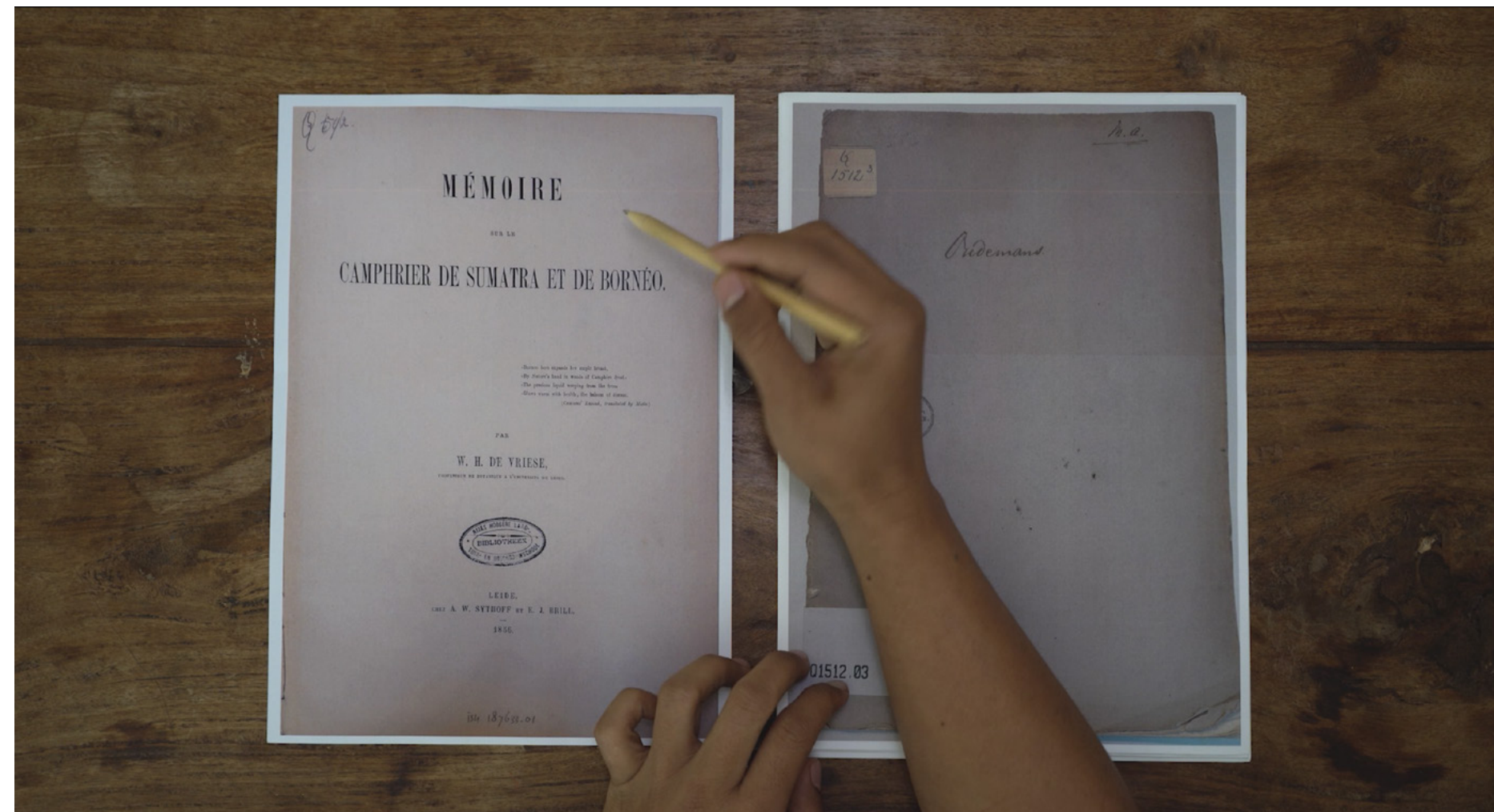
In this project, I am interested in exploring the entanglement between colonial exploitation and the loss of camphor tree in Sumatra by examining various archives, myths, manuscripts, legends, family history, as well as collective memory.

A legend of the upland peoples narrated how camphor originated from the spirit of a woman named Nan Tar Tar nan Tor Tor (*the Dancing One*) who tried to escape a malevolent ancestral ghost by seeking refuge in camphor tree after camphor tree. (Faizah Zakaria:2023)

Since the tree has been disappearing from the area, one way to find Her is to investigate into the celluloid, as the materiality has been transformed into it during the colonial time. I believe, celluloid is Her new hideout.

Exhibited at:

- Degree show, MA Art and Ecology, Goldsmiths University of London
- Intersection, Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival, Yogyakarta



click [here](#) to see details

IN SEARCH OF NAN TAR TAR NAN TOR TOR (THE DANCING ONE): ON CELLULOID

Collaborators:

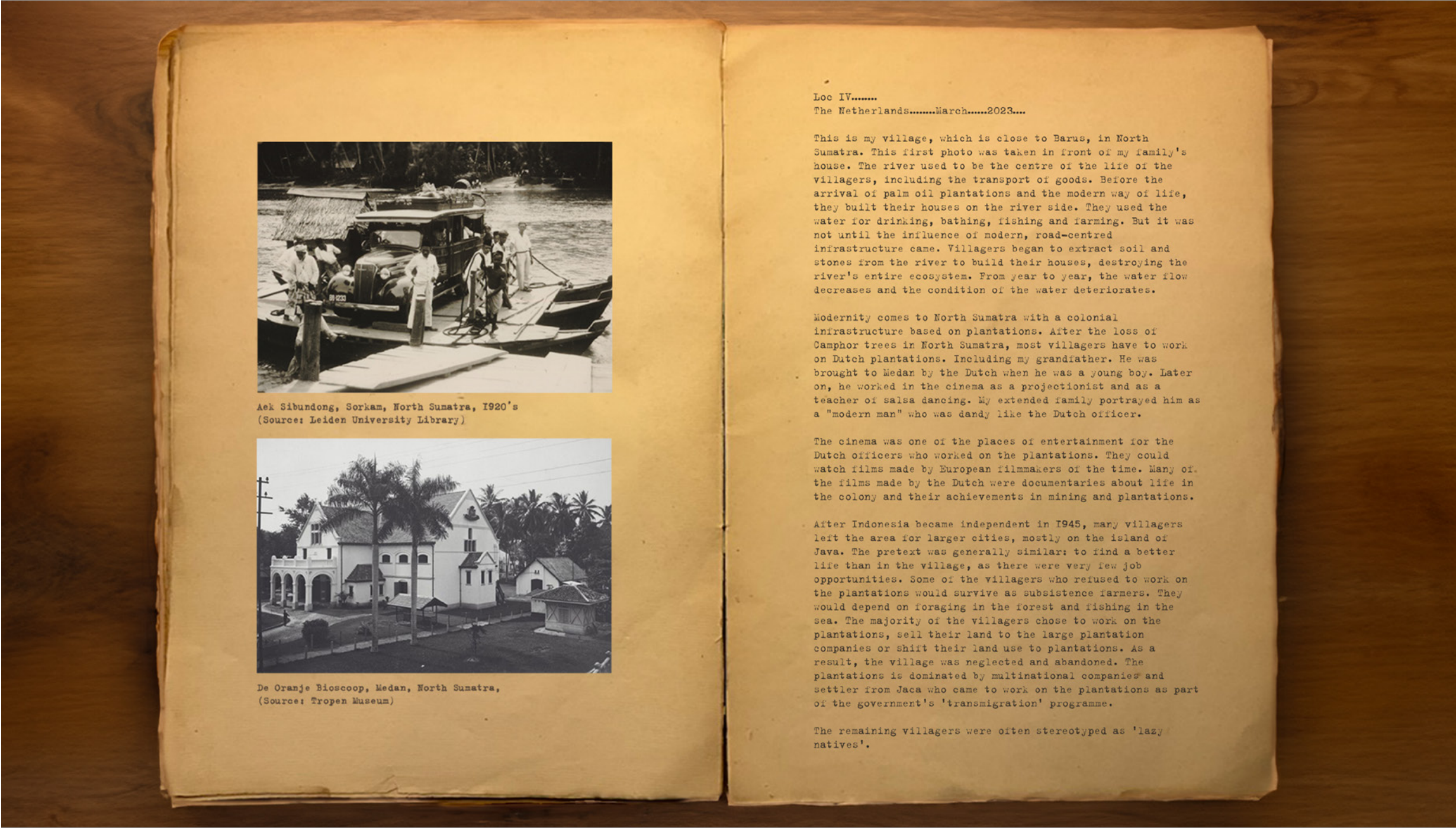
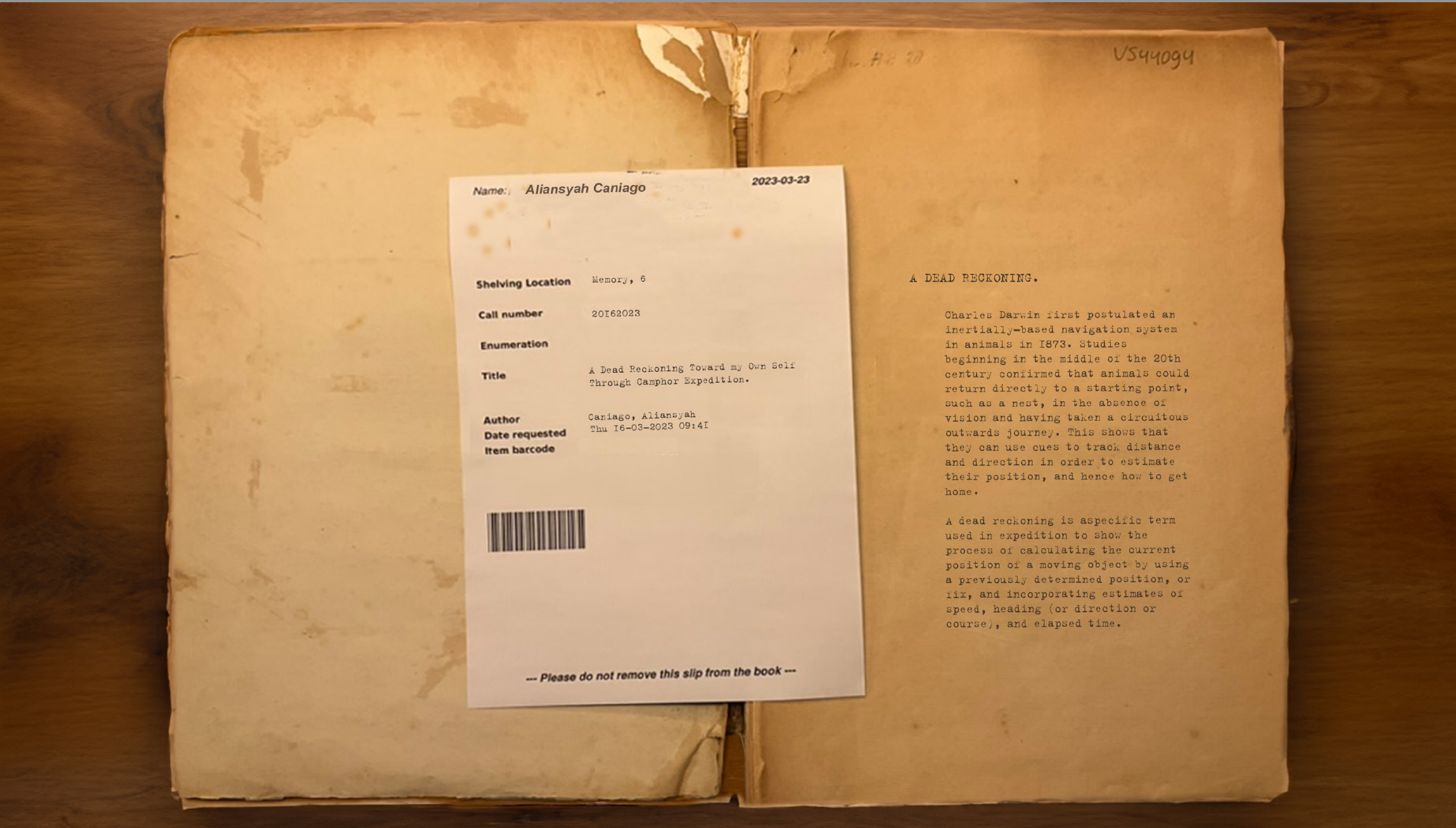
DOP: Patrick Tantra
Researcher: Raisa Kamila

Video works:

- Director: L. P. De Bussy
Title: Lijkbezorging bij de Karo-Bataks. 1917
A two-part reportage about a funeral ceremony and the ritual religious practices of the Karo-Batak, an ethnic group in North Sumatra.
Produced by Koloniaal Instituut (Amsterdam)
Collection of Eye Museum, The Netherlands

Archival materials:

- De Kamferboom van Sumatra (Dryobalanops camphora Colebr.): volgens Dr. F. Junghuhn's waarnemingen op de plaats zelve, en door nadere onderzoekingen toegelicht
Author: W.H. de Vriese, 1851
- Mémoire sur le Camphier de Sumatra et de Borneo
Author: W. H. de Vriese, 1856
- Overzicht van proeven, in Nederlandsch Oost-Indië genomen met de cultuur van den Japanschen Kamferboom
Author: Ir. W. Spoon, 1929
- Camphor oil
Barus, August 2022
Collector: Maskudin Simandjuntak
- Various cine films (Celluloid)
Source: ebay (bidding)
- Various Pustaka Batak (manuscripts)
Source: British Library



click [here](#) to see details

**A DEAD RECKONING TOWARD
MY OWN SELF THROUGH
CAMPBOR EXPEDITION**

Research Journal
Published at Journal of
MA Art and Ecology
Goldsmiths University of London
United Kingdom

2023



**COPY(WHAT'S)LEFT:
SPECIMENS AT KEW
GARDEN**

Drawings

Watercolor on paper

A5 each, 100 pieces

Exhibited at S.E.A Focus - an STPI Project

Singapore

2022



PALM TO PALM

Massage performance

Duration: 2 hours

Institute of Advance Studies, Loughborough University, United Kingdom

This performance is part of a wider project exploring the history of *Dryobalanops aromatica*, a critically endangered species of Camphor tree once widespread in Sumatra. Caniago's research has led him to *dryobalanops aromatica* specimens from Indonesia at Kew Gardens archive and herbarium, where they held the leaves and seeds of this

tree - which holds great significance in his community.

This particular form of massage comes from the artist's childhood with his grandmother as a way for him to listen to stories from his grandmother about the history of the family and family roots. Weaving together storytelling, personal and collective memory, Caniago revealed connections between migration, colonisation and ecology as he delivers massage activities to the audience.

[Laura Purseglove/Curator]

2021

CARD AGAINST HISTORY COMPOSING ARCHIPELAGOS EDITION

Cards Against History is an invitation to read texts from the journal of Dutch navigator Abel Tasman (1603-1659) and the poetry of Hamzah Fansuri, the Sumatran Sufi writer who lived between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In this game, we want both texts to be read in an unusual manner. To participate, one should pick a black card and fill the gaps with answers from the white cards. The black and white cards should be displayed side-by-side on the wall.

The text on the white cards is taken from translations of Hamzah Fansuri's *Syair Perahu* (The Song of a Boat) by Johan Doorenboos, *De Geschriften Van Hamzah Pansoeri* (1933), and Burton Raffel, *The Development of Modern Indonesian Poetry* (1967). The text on the black cards is from Abel Janszoon Tasman's *Journal* (1642-44), edited and translated by J E Heeres (1898).

Collaboration work with Raisa Kamila

Exhibited at: Contemporary Art Tasmania
Curator: Jasmin Stephens

2021



LEAVES OF THE SAME TREE

Drawings
Watercolor on board paper
A5 each, 90 pieces

Collaborators:

Bo Yu Yao
Chen, Chun-Yin
Joku S
Kun Da Li
Ling Huang
Lois Chen
MY
Shan-Yuan Lin
Yipei Lee

Exhibited at:

Indonesian Contemporary Art and Design X

Curator:

Hafiz Rancajale

2019-2020





click [here](#) to see the video



TREE WITHOUT ROOTS

Site Specific Performance

Taipei Botanical Garden, Taiwan

Performance duration:

9 hours a day, 4 days

2018

Curator:

Yipei Lee and Shanglin Wu

Exhibited at:

Wandering Seeds, Moving & Migration – Stories
from a Place to Another, National Museum of
Prehistory,
Taiwan

Materials:

Camphor Chips (Waste), Wooden Glue

**SELAMAT DATANG JAKARTA:
SUNDA KELAPA**

Exhibition view
Unsettlement, MUMA (Monash University Museum of Art)
Australia

Curator:
Charlotte Day, Shelley McSpedden and Elise Routledge

Performance Artifacts:

2018

- 2 video performances: Punching Stones, Kicking Stones
- 1 Performance video documentation of Punching Bag
Performed at Jakarta Biennale, Jiwa, 2017
- Punching bag
- Pair of gloves





**SELAMAT DATANG JAKARTA:
SUNDA KELAPA**

Jiwa, Jakarta Biennale

Performance Artifacts:

- 2 video performances:
- Punching Bag (Debris of houses)
- Gloves

Performance Duration:

9 Hours a day, 7 days performance

2017

click [here](#) to see the video





click [here](#) to see the video



click [here](#) to see the video

SELAMAT DATANG JAKARTA:

SUNDA KELAPA

Performance Art

Jiwa, Jakarta Biennale

Artistic Director:

Melati Suryodarmo

Curator:

Hendro Wiyanto, Annissa Gultom, Philippe Pirotte,
and Vít Havránek

Performance duration:

Punching Stones: 8 hours

Kicking Stones: 4 hours

2017

Video Documentation:

Punching Stones: 13 minutes

Kicking Stones: 13 minutes



TITIK BALIK PROJECT

Installation view

South East Asia Forum, Artstage Singapore

Performance Artifacts:

- Boat
- Wooden Waste
- Drawings on wooden waste
- Video performance documentation

Curator:

Nadia Ng

2016

TITIK BALIK PROJECT



Performance Art

Situ Ciburuy Lake, West Java, Indonesia

Materials:

- Boat
- Wooden Waste from Pencil Factory next to the lake

Click [here](#) to see the video

2016

TITIK BALIK PROJECT

Installation View

Ruang Gerilya, Bandung, Indonesia

Performance artifacts:

- Wooden boat
- Video performance documentation

Curator:

Doni Ahmad

Collaborator:

Gilang Mandiri, Aradea Nugraha, Wing Gantara,
Andi Dwi Cahyono, Kang Awan, Atan, Davit MT

Producer:

Wibi Triadi

2015





TITIK BALIK PROJECT

Performance Art

Pulling a boat from a lake to OKM of the city center of Bandung, West Java

9 Hours Performance, 0am-9am

August 17, 2014

Collaborator:

Wing Gantara

Andi Dwi Cahyono

Aradea Nugraha

Awan

Atan

Davit MT

Gilang Mandiri

Curator: Doni Ahmad

Producer: Wibi Rizqi Triadi

Click [here](#) to see the video

2014

Aliansyah Caniago (*1987 Indonesia) works between Indonesia and the UK. Through site-specific interventions, installations and durational performances, he integrates his work with society, creatively addressing conflicts to reclaim damaged environments. He observes how industrialisation raises issues of urbanisation and gentrification and how they affect a particular community: land use conflicts, waste, resources and contested spaces.

His current research is on Barus, a village in North Sumatra named after an extinct camphor tree, a project that explores Indonesia's modernity and its colonial legacy. The Barus camphor tree prompts an exploration of indigenous knowledge lost to colonial practices. In 2023, he created an installation *In Search of Nan Tar Tar Nan Tor Tor*, a spirit living in the camphor tree, based on a scene in the film of L.P. de Bussy, a Dutch plantation biologist stationed in North Sumatra in the early 1900s. He used industrial materials to create this installation such as celluloid and processed wood to create a funeral house.

Aliansyah has presented his works in various events and institutions, including Science Museum: Reconnect/Recollect, UK (2023), Documenta 15: Lumbung, at Wagi Wagi ArtLab, Germany (2022), Loughborough University: Radar - Ecological Thinking, UK (2021), Contemporary Art Tasmania: Composing Archipelagos, Australia (2021), MUMA-Monash University Museum of Art: Unsettlement, Australia (2018), Jakarta Biennale: Jiwa, Jakarta, Indonesia (2017), 14th Lyon Biennale: Rendez-Vous, Institute d'Art Contemporain, France (2017), Kunstencentrum STUK Leuven: Europalia-Monsoon Project, Belgium (2017), Davidson College: Baik Art Residency, United States (2017), Bangkok Art and Culture Centre: Asiatopia, Thailand (2013, 2016). Alongside his practice, he is also one of the founder of an artist collective in Bandung, Ruang Gerilya, which provides a platform for experimental works with a focus on artist's process and research.

In 2023, Aliansyah was awarded as the recipient Unconditional Trust: Indonesian Grant from Asian Art Archive and ParaSite. He is a member of Gerilya Artist Collective in Bandung and just graduated from MA Art and Ecology, Goldsmiths University of London



BIOGRAPHY

ALIANSYAH CANIAGO

[curriculum vitae](#)
[artist statement](#)

+62 821 9050 5343/+44 775 415 6937

alin.caniago@gmail.com
www.aliansyahcaniago.com