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(Im)material Histories and Aesthetics of Extractivism in Vietnamese Artists' Moving Image

PHILIPPA LOVATT

Between 1961 and 1971, during the Vietnam War, the Americans' 'operation ranch hand' campaign sprayed 20 million gallons of various herbicides (known as Agent Orange) over Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. This was in order to destroy the forests where the North Vietnamese troops and the Viet Cong were hiding. In addition to the devastating impact it had on humans and animals, such as cancer, birth defects and neurological problems, the land and water across the region became toxic, resulting in the widespread extinction of many different species across this once flourishing and robust ecosystem.¹ But as ecological histories of Vietnam, such as Michitake Aso's *Rubber and the Making of Vietnam: An Ecological History, 1897–1975*, have described, the exploitation of the environment across this geography has much deeper roots in colonial, ecological and capitalist violence. A number of artist filmmakers associated with Hanoi DocLab² and Nhà Sàn Collective in Vietnam have been addressing similar questions of indigeneity, dispossession and environment in the context of the Anthropocene³ through experimental documentaries such as Nguyễn Trinh Thi's *Letters from Panduranga* (2015) and *Fifth Cinema* (2018), Trương Minh Quý's *The Tree House* (2019) and Pham Thu Hang's *The Future Cries Beneath Our Soil* (2018). These films reflect the embedded power relations made invisible by the colonial imagination that,

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as Kali Simmons has argued, views land, water and other natural resources as spaces of opportunity. Describing this process as a “violent erasure” of indigenous peoples and kinships, she asserts that “the Anthropocene ... can be read as an indexical mark on the planet that makes the violence of imperial projects visible.”⁴

In what follows, I keep Simmons’s words in mind as I discuss two video works by Vietnamese multimedia artists (and cofounders of Nhà Sàn Collective⁵)—Tuấn Mami’s *In One’s Breath – Nothing Stands Still* (2018) and Nguyễn Phương Linh’s *Memory of the Blind Elephant* (2014–16)—in order to consider how they address the material and ecological histories of extractivism in Vietnam.⁶ In “Blackout: The Necropolitics of Extraction”, T.J. Demos posits that “extractivism comprises a calculus of accumulation by dispossession ... an accumulation without corresponding deposit (except in the form of waste, disease, and death), which transforms whatever it touches—be that mines, forests, rivers, oceans, or human and nonhuman life—into economic value, employing whatever means at its disposal.”⁷ In this essay, I assert that both *In One’s Breath – Nothing Stands Still* and *Memory of the Blind Elephant* take up this focus, what Demos describes as the “extractivist logic of the Capitalocene”⁸, by foregrounding the asymmetrical power relations that result from the loss of indigenous land rights and cultures, and the exploitation of the natural environment (including plants, animals, minerals and water) for capitalist purposes.

Tuấn Mami is a conceptual artist whose work spans installation, video and performance. *In One’s Breath – Nothing Stands Still*⁹ explores the impact of limestone extraction on local ecosystems from mountains in the ancient forest areas of Hà Nam in Northern Vietnam, a location identified by the government as an area of significant economic potential due to its abundant natural resources, and also Mami’s parents’ hometown.¹⁰ The multimedia installation includes video, performance, sculpture, photography and a healing rice wine made to a local recipe with fruits and medicinal herbs gathered from the mountain. The work documents the transformation of the landscape as a result of industrialisation, the loss of biodiversity due to pollution, and the impact of both on the indigenous Mường community following the dispossession of land rights and the loss of a way of life that is deeply connected to the natural world through animistic practices and beliefs. The project was inspired by an animist-themed epic poem of the Mường minority, “The Birth of Soil and Water” (De dat de nuoc) about “the existence of spirituality in all beings” and the idea of a world “in a constant state of chaos, where humans struggle to cohabit harmoniously with other creatures, and especially themselves”.¹¹ Begun in 2014, *In One’s Breath – Nothing Stands Still*

was developed over several years through Mami's fieldwork in the stone mining areas of Hà Nam. Reflecting on his lived experience of the place, where as a child when visiting relatives, he would swim in the river and spend days in the forest, he describes his memory of it as "a type of paradise as other places [in Vietnam] were destroyed after all the wars and the fast development of the country".¹²

The local environment of this part of Hà Nam started to change in the early 2000s, with the development of limestone mining, an essential mineral for producing concrete, a material in high demand by the fast-growing construction industry in Vietnam (as elsewhere in the developing economies of region). This had dramatically negative effects on the daily life of the local people, including the loss of access to fresh drinking water, to forests for traditional food sources as well as to fishing because of the contamination of rivers and lakes. The locals also experienced health problems such as pneumoconiosis as a result of the toxic limestone dust in the atmosphere.¹³ *In One's Breath – Nothing Stands Still* attempts to depict the lived experience of an indigenous community trying to survive in this environment, while connecting the micro-ecologies and histories of this specific geographical location with broader global movements of people driven by socio-economic inequality; his earlier project *Myth East Mist* (2015), for example, was concerned with the economic migration of Vietnamese women to South Korea. *In One's Breath – Nothing Stands Still* similarly attempts to understand some



FIGURE 1: Mountain, *In One's Breath – Nothing Stands Still*, courtesy of Tuấn Mami.

of the reasons behind these migratory patterns, as, he explains, “almost all the people who flee their hometowns come from the countryside [for this project] I wanted to do research on why people have to run away”.¹⁴

In One's Breath – Nothing Stands Still begins with a performance: a figure¹⁵ dressed in a white leotard is crouched over a white powder dune on top of a frozen miniature lake, a reference to the local lakes that have turned to concrete because of the limestone dust in the water. The figure holds some of the powder in his hands, bends down to his knees and blows through his fingers; as the white cloud puffs into the air, his breath is given form. As the title of the work suggests, air and impermanence are central motifs in the film, connected through the different ‘bodies’ (both animate and inanimate) that are suffering as a result of the mining industry: human, animal, lake, stream, mountain—all life forms that are part of an interconnected animist cosmology in the film. In the words of the sutra (*Dong Nhan Diếu Mộ*) sung by a local shaman at the film's beginning and end: “Heaven my father, Earth my mother. Mountains and Rivers, my brothers and sisters.”

The film explores the ambiguous relationship between materiality and immateriality through the imagery of dust and smoke, breath and the body, recalling Steven Connor's assertion that “air is unique among the elements in having [an] affinity with nothingness, in signifying the being of non-being, the matter of the immaterial”.¹⁶ Although alluded to throughout the film, the physical damage caused by the toxins in the air to the bodies of those who live near the mines is only shown directly, and very briefly, towards its close, when we see and hear a dog panting and struggling for breath, and a few moments later, a man coughing and clearing his throat. At other times, the rasping rise and fall of the soundtrack (as part of an electronic score created with audio recorded inside the mines) seems to imagine and sonify the strained breath of the mountain itself. Smoke billows out across the frame from fires lit on the hillside or joss sticks lit as offerings at simple Buddhist shrines. Reminiscent of Apichatpong Weerasethakul's short film *Vapour* (2015), in which a vapour or haze descends on a village, the visual aesthetic here similarly evokes a sense of a porous membrane between material and immaterial lifeworlds.

After the performance at the beginning of the film, the image cuts to an external shot of a dusty road from the point of view of a truck descending the mountain, which reveals a colour palette of greys, faded greens and browns made pale by the dirty white veil of the limestone dust that rests on every surface. Against an image of a dead, decomposing goat, text reads: “*This is how the tale of our world ends. As it is being written and forgotten, lived and massacred ... A tale of dreams and nightmare of extinction and resurrection*

of a paradise lost.” An aerial drone camera moves across the mountainous terrain from above, revealing the scale of environmental damage caused by the mines as the methods of extraction are made visible, along with the scars of the hollowed-out mountains and the spoil tips of waste shale left over from the extraction process. Perhaps because of the constant movement of the camera or the indifference of its machine operator, the perspective feels disconnected from a ‘totalizing’ human gaze (a feeling that is reinforced by the absence of voice-over on the soundtrack), and the image has a strange aesthetic beauty in its distant and detached serenity. Although the camera does not rotate upside down, these moments recall the posthumanist aesthetics of Michael Snow’s experimental documentary *La Région Centrale* (1971), which uses a pre-programmed robotic arm to film over a deserted mountainous area of North Quebec and, in particular, what Florian Leitner has described in relation to Snow’s film as “a non-anthropocentric way of looking”.¹⁷ Like the soundtrack of Snow’s film, which “consists of mechanical blips and electronic noises [and] machine-made signals”¹⁸, the sound design for *In One’s Breath – Nothing Stands Still* is composed almost entirely of a non-diegetic electronic score produced using samples of audio recordings of the industrial machinery within and outside the mines mixed with other abstract environmental noise from the site.

While the landscape of *La Région Centrale* is entirely a “nature devoid of humans”¹⁹, *In One’s Breath – Nothing Stands Still*, by contrast, depicts a complex ecology where humans, animals (dogs, goats, birds, fish, insects), elements (earth, water, air, fire), rocks, minerals and machines coexist. Three figures in particular stand out; dressed in long-sleeved clothing and wearing hats with masks, they walk silently around the hillside while gathering herbs and medicinal plants, sometimes standing still as if in quiet protest as they return their gaze to the camera. While Mami was researching the project (over a period of five years), the local people engaged in several protests against the mining companies and the government. The masks they wear protect their lungs from the pollution, but also help to conceal their identities from their employers during these demonstrations. The government responded very “violently to the protests”,²⁰ which received very little, if any, coverage in the media. The government’s response here is typical of the wider suppression of environmental activist campaigns in Vietnam through censorship, media blackouts, prison sentences and other forms of intimidation of artists, bloggers, ‘citizen journalists’ and activists. For example, the blogger and activist known as ‘Mother Mushroom’, Nguyễn Ngọc Như Quỳnh, was arrested in 2016 and given a 10-year prison sentence. She was accused of propaganda against the Communist Party following her protests against the



FIGURE 2: Road, *In One's Breath—Nothing Stands Still*, courtesy of Tuấn Mami.



FIGURE 3: Burning, *In One's Breath—Nothing Stands Still*, courtesy of Tuấn Mami.

Formosa Ha Tinh Steel plant in north-central Vietnam, which was responsible for releasing toxic waste into the sea (she was later granted early release due to diplomatic pressure from the United States).²¹ The spill caused an estimated 70 tonnes of dead fish to be washed ashore along more than 200 km of Vietnam's central coastline in April 2016. This led to rare protests across the country after the Taiwanese company initially denied any wrongdoing. In October 2019, Hanoi-based photographer and filmmaker Thịnh Nguyễn was arrested for making a film about the spill (*Do Not Be Afraid*, 2017), which also drew attention to the cause of activist Hoàng Đức Bình, who had received a prison sentence of 14 years for blogging about the incident.²² As their activism highlighted, the disregard for the local environment by the steel company is symptomatic of global capitalism's perception of the living world as a resource to be plundered or sacrificed for economic gain, a theme that connects Tuấn Mami and Nguyễn Phương Linh's explorations of extractivism and environmental crisis in the Capitalocene.

Nguyễn Phương Linh is a visual and conceptual artist from Hanoi.²³ Her multidisciplinary practice includes sculpture, video and installations, and since 2009, her work has become increasingly concerned with exploring the material ecological histories of particular sites.²⁴ Describing herself as a "travelling artist", her practice involves extensive field trips for research, and as Trương Quế Chi has observed, displays an ongoing interest in "an

aesthetics of ... landscapes, be them natural or artificial, in their relation to geopolitics".²⁵ The single channel video work *Memory of the Blind Elephant* (2016) was part of a multimedia installation called *The Last Ride* (2017), which traced the entanglement of the political and ecological histories of the rubber tree in Gia Lai Province in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.²⁶ The installation included red basalt soil drawings on paper, raw rubber sheets placed across the floor, aluminium details of a howdah (chair) used by tourists to ride on an elephant, a metal chain, and a lance suspended from the ceiling (used to train the elephant).²⁷ As Arlette Quỳnh-Anh Trần has described, it investigates the multi-layered narratives of the rubber tree from its cultivation by the French in the late 19th century after being brought to Vietnam by Alexandre Yersin, to "the emergence of the socialist proletariat in the plantations and the contemporary globalised chain of rubber plantation, consumption and land exploitation".²⁸



FIGURE 4: Rubber Plantation, *Memory of the Blind Elephant*, courtesy of Nguyễn Phương Linh.

The rubber plantation as a site has a complex economic and political history in Vietnam. As Michitake Aso posits in *Rubber and the Making of Vietnam*, at the beginning of the 19th century, rubber was seen as a curiosity by the French colonisers who learnt from indigenous knowledge how to tap latex from many tropical plants and trees by making incisions in the plant, from which a milky white fluid would flow. While indigenous communities in



FIGURE 5: Night, *Memory of the Blind Elephant*, courtesy of Nguyễn Phương Linh.

the Amazon or on the Malay peninsula had long produced rubber from this fluid, it was only when the colonisers recognised its commercial potential in the global market that “the material moved from peasant cosmologies into a transnational capitalist system”.²⁹ Over time the identity of the plantations changed as a result of the divergent geopolitical forces that surrounded them, and Aso contends, they became “key sites for the testing and implementation of different arrangements of power, from imperial domination, to anticolonial resistance, to nation-building programs”.³⁰ After the war ended in 1975 the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) restarted rubber production in the plantations in an effort to revive the country’s economy, which had been under huge strain after over 30 years of war.

Memory of the Blind Elephant was made after a period of two years of Nguyễn researching Vietnamese history during the French colonial period and the legacy of the colonisers’ dominance in the Central Highlands. The project began in 2014, when she first travelled to the plantations in Gia Lai Province and became curious about the palimpsestic memories the surfaces, textures, smells and sounds of the forest might hold. At night, workers arrive on rickety trucks (night is the best time to gather the sap) and torchlights flash across the trunks of the rubber trees and along the neat, orderly lines they form through the forest. Haptic images of the bright red basalt soil, the twinkling of the stars in the night sky, the glistening damp of the sap against the rough texture of the tree bark, and an elephant’s thick, craggy skin tell a story of the phenomenology of the rubber plantation through time. But the

film does not offer a contemplative ‘slow cinema’ aesthetic; the relatively quick edits and the insistent rhythm and timbre of the sound design present a visual and acoustic ecology composed of the calls and stridulations of insects, crickets, flies, bees, birds and other nocturnal beings that resonate, pulse and hum. The rhythm and changing frequencies suggest a sense of agitation, as if there are unruly non-human energies and forces at work in the forest, perhaps connected with the small spirit houses we see nearby and “the ghost stories told about rubber workers who died during the years of French colonisation” that inspired the work.³¹



FIGURE 6: Elephant, *Memory of the Blind Elephant*, courtesy of Nguyễn Phương Linh.

The figure of the elephant provides a form of an embodied history of violence and oppression in the Central Highlands that can be seen as a counter-narrative to dominant colonial and state histories of the rubber plantation. Known locally for their long memories, the elephant has spiritual significance (associated with fertility and farming) for the animistic Jarai people who live in this area, the largest ethnic minority in the Central Highlands. As such, its presence allows for a nonlinear sense of layered, multiple temporalities that bring the past into the present. Connecting human, animal, ecological and technological histories through a loose narrative of labour and exploitation, the work resonates with Donna Haraway and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's concept of the Plantationocene and multi-species ecojustice.³² In one scene

in the film, we see a metal howdah suspended by a rope looped around a tree branch, waiting to be attached to the elephant's back in order to transport tourists around the plantation. The empty metal frame, though a sunny yellow in colour, seems to silently register another layer of violence that anticipates a future cruelty. At another point, we hear the elephant's heavy breath as it stands patiently with the seat strapped to its back. The violence of the elephant's fate is underscored when we see and hear the heavy metal chain that is tied around its body being dragged behind it along the ground and through the bushes as it runs ahead. In close-up, a lizard is held back from running away by a person holding its tail, only to be released, re-caught and dragged back again over the dusty ground. Through a network of relations, this cruelty seems to replicate in miniature the larger structural violence that the elephant, the indigenous Jarai people, the trees, plants and other beings have experienced in this place over time. *Memory of the Blind Elephant*, like *In One's Breath – Nothing Stands Still*, brings to the fore vital questions of environmental precarity and multi-species survival in the Capitalocene by attending to the structural inequalities engendered and perpetuated by the policies and practices of extraction in Vietnam.

BIOGRAPHY

Philippa Lovatt is Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of St Andrews where she teaches Artists' Film and Video, Asian Cinemas and Ecocinemas. She is a member of the Association for Southeast Asian Cinemas (ASEAC), and between 2016 and 2018 was Primary Investigator of the AHRC-funded research network, "Southeast Asian Cinemas Research Network: Promoting Dialogue Across Critical and Creative Practice", which held events in Kuala Lumpur, Los Angeles, Hanoi and Glasgow. Related to this project, she is currently working on an oral histories project with Jasmine Nadua Trice entitled "Memory, Process, and Practice: Oral Histories of Southeast Asian Film Organizing" (<https://www.aseac-interviews.org>). She is also working on a monograph about the politics of sound and listening in global artists' film and video that will be published with Edinburgh University Press.

NOTES

I would like to thank the artists Tuấn Mami and Nguyễn Phương Linh for their generosity in providing access to materials for this essay and for their very helpful comments on an earlier draft.

- ¹ See Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 14.
- ² Hanoi DocLab, the center for documentary and experimental film in Hanoi was established by Nguyễn Trinh Thi in 2009. In October 2019, DocLab was raided by the police and has suspended activities for the time being. See: <http://www.hanoidoclab.org>.
- ³ While it is beyond the scope of this short essay to discuss in detail, the term ‘Anthropocene’ has been critiqued for failing to adequately acknowledge the disproportionate influence of fossil fuel capitalism and imperialism on the environmental crisis and how its effects are unevenly experienced across the Global South and North. Alternative conceptual frameworks—the Capitalocene, the Chthulucene and the Plantationocene—that seek to address these inequalities have been offered. See Donna Haraway, “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin”, *Environmental Humanities* 6 (2015): 162.
- ⁴ Kali Simmons, “Reorientations; or, An Indigenous Feminist Reflection on the Anthropocene”, *JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 58, 2 (Winter 2019): 175.
- ⁵ Nguyễn Phương Linh and Tuấn Mami co-founded Nhà Sàn Collective in 2013 with several other artists, following the closure of Nhà Sàn Studio in Hanoi, which was Vietnam’s first non-profit experimental space. Nguyễn Phương Linh is also the daughter of the cofounder of Nhà Sàn Studio, Hanoi’s longest established non-profit arts space, which was based at their home. See: <https://www.akbild.ac.at/Portal/institute/bildende-kunst/vortrage-events/2016/guest-lecture-by-nguyen-phuong-linh>.
- ⁶ These works were exhibited together as part of *Trùng Mù – White Mist in Foreign Country* at District Berlin in 2019 as part of “Caring for Conflict”, which was curated by Suza Husse/NAILS hacks*facts*fictions. See: <http://www.district-berlin.com/en/6122-2/>. See also Julianne Cordray, “White Mist in Foreign Country at District Berlin”, *The Seen*, 6 June 2019, <http://theseenjournal.org/art-seen-international/trung-mu-white-mist/>.
- ⁷ T.J. Demos, “Blackout: The Necropolitics of Extraction”, *Dispatches* 1, 1 (Oct. 2018): 3.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- ⁹ In an interview, Tuấn Mami discusses the connection between the environment and the film’s title: “The scenery reminded me of a sentence by Buddha where he says something like, ‘in our human life, we live only in one breath’. This sentence has many different layers; and it opens questions about consciousness and

awareness—especially awareness of living, of your instincts, and of time.... This sentence really brought me to that moment; of movement and non-movement, beauty and ugliness. For this reason, I adopted this sentence from Buddhism and used it for my project.” Iona Sharp Casas, “Interview with Tuấn Mami”, *Framer Framed*, February 2017, <http://framerframed.nl/en/dossier/interview-with-tuan-mami/>. See also: “*In One’s Breath Nothing Stands Still*” curated by Bill Nguyễn, The Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, <https://factoryartscentre.com/en/event/in-ones-breath-nothing-stands-still/> and Christophe Robert, “*In One’s Breath – Nothing Stands Still: A Multimedia Exhibition in Hồ Chí Minh City*”, *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 14, 2 (2019): 145–54.

- ¹⁰ Ngo Truong Thi et al., “Sustainable Development and Ethnic Minority Poverty Reduction in Mountainous Region”, Thai Nguyễn University Publishing House, 2014. See: <http://en.tnu.edu.vn/Uploads/Articles/Files/372/Eng.%20Proceedings.pdf>.
- ¹¹ “*In Breath Nothing Stands Still*, Chapter 3”, <http://tuanmami.com/Project-Detail.aspx?Id=54>.
- ¹² Iona Sharp Casas, “Interview with Tuấn Mami”.
- ¹³ Steve Bass, David Annandale, Phan Van Binh, Tran Phuong Dong, Hoang Anh Nam, Le Thi Kieu Oanh, Mike Parsons, Nguyễn Van Phuc and Vu Van Trieu, “Integrating environment and development in Viet Nam: Achievements, Challenges and Next Steps”, 2010, p. 18. <https://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17505IIED.pdf>
- ¹⁴ Iona Sharp Casas, “Interview with Tuấn Mami”.
- ¹⁵ Performed by Titus Alias. Alias also performed the work in Rotterdam as part of *Rehearsal In One’s Breath* (2017) for Art Rotterdam. See here for documentation and further details: <http://tuanmami.com/Project-Detail.aspx?Id=51>.
- ¹⁶ Steven Connor, *The Matter of Air: Science and the Art of the Ethereal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 31.
- ¹⁷ Florian Leitner, “On Robots and Turtles: A Posthuman Perspective on Camera and Image Movement after Michael Snow’s *La Région Centrale*”, *Discourse* 35, 2 (2014): 268.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 269.
- ¹⁹ Silke Panse, “Ten Skies, 13 Lakes, 15 Pools – Structure, Immanence and Eco-aesthetics in *The Swimmer* and James Benning’s Land Films”, in *Screening Nature: Cinema Beyond the Human*, ed. Anat Pick and Guinevere Narraway (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books), p. 38.
- ²⁰ Iona Sharp Casas, “Interview with Tuấn Mami”.
- ²¹ Nguyễn was a founding member of the Vietnamese Bloggers Network for which she wrote about environmental issues and the tensions between Vietnam and China over the South China Sea. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/17/mother-mushroom-freed-vietnam-blogger-released-prison>.

- ²² Eugene Whong, "Vietnamese Environmental Activist Detained in Hanoi for Films Critical of the Government", *Radio Free Asia*, 25/10/2019, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/filmmaker-detained-10252019163121.html>.
- ²³ Arlette Quỳnh-Anh Trần, "Nguyễn Phương Linh", *Art Review* (March 2016). See also Enoch Cheng, "Interview with Phuong Linh Nguyen", *Asia Art Archive* (August 2011), <https://aaa.org.hk/en/ideas/ideas/interview-with-phuong-linh-nguyen> and https://artreview.com/features/2016_future_great_nguyen_phuong_linh/.
- ²⁴ Her first solo exhibition *Salt* (2009) followed several months of research in salt villages in Hai Hau in the north, Sa Huynh in central Vietnam, and Ba Ria-Vung Tau and Can Gio in the south, where she travelled to learn about salt production. *Dust* (2011–12) continues Nguyễn Phương Linh's interest in tracing the material histories and personal memories of particular places and objects, as well as the passing of time itself through the collection of dust from sites of historical significance in Vietnam, Japan and Korea. The connections between the immaterial and material, particularly in relation to the legacies of historical violence and environmental pollution, is also explored in Nguyễn Phương Linh's *Sanctified Clouds* (2013), an exhibition of photographs about Vietnam's long history of warfare, the effects of which are still continuing to be felt as a result of undetonated bombs, which contaminate large geographical areas, killing and maiming civilians. In this series, images of explosions found online are cropped to remove geographical identifiers, leaving only the dust and smoke. See Trương Quế Chi, "Linh Phương Nguyễn Portfolio", http://plinh.com/files/linh_phuong_nguyen_portfolio_2017.pdf.
- ²⁵ Trương Quế Chi, "Linh Phương Nguyễn Portfolio".
- ²⁶ "The last ride by Nguyễn Phương Linh - Skyslines with Flying People 3", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEYuwAnxC0A>.
- ²⁷ Originally commissioned by the Singapore Biennale, the installation was part of the *Skyslines with Flying People 3* art project exhibited at the Goethe Institute in Hanoi in January 2017, alongside *In One's Breath Nothing Stands Still*. See <http://swfp3.org>.
- ²⁸ Arlette Quỳnh-Anh Trần, "Future great: Nguyễn Phương Linh", *Art Review* (March 2016), https://artreview.com/features/2016_future_great_nguyen_phuong_linh/.
- ²⁹ Michitake Aso, *Rubber and the Making of Vietnam: An Ecological History, 1897–1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), p. 5.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- ³¹ Arlette Quỳnh-Anh Trần, "Future great: Nguyễn Phương Linh". Aso notes that before 1940, the working conditions on the plantations were extremely poor, resulting in high rates of death and sickness. One of the causes of death, he explains, was malaria; Yersin did not provide metal screens for the workers' housing and the conditions of the plantation made an ideal habitat for mosquitoes. See Aso, p. 3.

- ³² The origin of the term came about during a discussion at the University of Aarhus in October 2014 when “the participants collectively generated the name Plantationocene for the devastating transformation of diverse kinds of human-tended farms, pastures, and forests into extractive and enclosed plantations, relying on slave labor and other forms of exploited, alienated, and usually spatially transported labor”. Donna Haraway, “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin”, *Environmental Humanities* 6 (2015): 162.

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