PRESS RELEASE
SOUND OF X – LISTEN CLOSELY …

Video soundscapes created by artists from Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand for a project initiated by the Goethe-Institut

© Groupe Dejour – Key Visual Sound of X

How can we reconnect with the spaces we live in, especially in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, which has forced people all over the world into isolation? Musicians and artists of *Sound of X* propose answers: using sounds, noises and acoustics as the basis for their urban re-imaginations, they explored their sonic environment. The resulting video soundscapes offer a unique way to reconnect with the cities we live in. The works are freely accessible on goethe.de/soundofx and on the Goethe-Institut's social media channels from 19 June 2020 onwards.

Sound of X was initiated by the Goethe-Institut as an international, digital project before the coronavirus crisis struck. In its first phase, artists from Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand are presenting works, which examine the ignored soundtrack of a city and how the musicality of everyday life reveals its characteristic social fabric.

In times of isolation, social distancing and severe travel restrictions, *Sound of X* offers a unique way to explore different places. The unusual perspective uncovered by artists and musicians contrasts representations in tourism and marketing on social media.

We are constantly immersed in the soundscape of our urban environment; sometimes louder, sometimes softer, but ever present in its uniqueness. What is noise? What is sound? And how can we listen in a different way? These are some of the questions the artists from Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Medan, Sydney, Manila and other cities explore in *Sound of X*.

Bird song merges with the clatter of a mailbox. Bubbling and sizzling street woks join the beat of an electronic soundtrack. A bike ride becomes a visual exploration of a city, winding through the messy traffic and the cacophony of noises. These short video soundscapes reveal unusual perspectives to the familiar settings of our cities. For others, they can provide an immersive atmosphere of a place they cannot see or hear in person.

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Nature as a Place of Longing in Singapore
The musicians of the artistic duo **NADA** joined forces with media artist **Brandon Tay** to explore nature as a place of longing in the highly urbanised city-state of Singapore. In search of the legendary Monkey Man in the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, they use sounds and images to convey the Singaporeans' ambivalent relationship to nature.

© Taufiq Jaafar – NADA/Singapur

Inner City Vibes of Kuala Lumpur
The artist duo **Another Universe**'s filmic and photographic exploration of Kuala Lumpur takes them through parts of the city that are often overlooked. "Most people are not aware that everything started in this old section of Kuala Lumpur, which is still important for trade today," they explain. "A lot of migrant workers still live here, which hints at how this city actually got started: with people who came from somewhere else looking for a better life."

© Razlan Yusof – Another Universe/Kuala Lumpur

The Last Winter in Sydney
Travel through Australia's biggest metropolis with **Anomie** listening to the sounds around us, rhythmically abstracted and constructed from the iconic city scenes, and the incredible natural environment. Recorded with a specially designed and "divined" microphone stick, the film focuses conceptually on the dynamic struggle between the diverse and "at-risk" environments and cultures of Sydney, a frantically busy city heaving with the sounds of constant change and construction.

© Anomie

Project Concept Summary
The Goethe-Institut has initiated *Sound of X* as an international initiative with focus on Southeast Asia. In times of closed borders and movement restrictions places become more distant, therefore it is even more meaningful to maintain access to different cultural environments, communities and artistic practices. The Goethe-Institut stays committed to continue cultural exchange and collaborations between societies, and to maintain transnational dialogues within civil and artistic communities.

"Digital culture and social media have brought a shift towards the visual. Often we are unable to establish an actual relation to what is shown. At a time in which screen culture is becoming increasingly desensitizing, the artists of *Sound of X* present alternative approaches to visual and acoustic perception. In the context of our urban environment, sounds can emerge from the ambient noise which, although invisible, hold many things together: the musicality of everyday life and the often ignored soundtrack of a city that reveals or reflects its characteristic social fabric" says Han-Song Hiltmann, Director of the Goethe-Institut in Singapore.

About the Goethe-Institut
The Goethe-Institut is the cultural liaison between Germany and Australia. We are a not for profit, independent cultural organisation with a global reach. Our mandate is to promote the study of the German language abroad, and to encourage and facilitate international cultural exchange. The Goethe-Institut has 158 branches in 98 countries. Our branch in Melbourne was founded in 1972, followed by the Sydney branch in 1974. We work with partners and networks across Australia.

goethe.de/australia | facebook.com/goetheinstitut.australien | instagram.com/gi_australien

2. FACTS AT A GLANCE

Project   **Sound of X**

Initiators   The Goethe-Instituts in South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand

Project launch   19 June 2020

Topic   How can we reconnect with the spaces and places of our everyday urban lives? Artists show their personal view of a place, city or neighbourhood in the form of a video soundscape using sounds and acoustics, but no words.

Website   **www.goethe.de/soundofx**
Documentation website emphasizing audiovisual features with little or no text, as in the project itself

The launch of the website will be accompanied by an interactive multimedia campaign on social media. #soundofx

Artists   **Ho Chi Minh City – Fractal Diversity**
Jade Mai (visual artist)
Nick Chan (sound designer)

Kuala Lumpur – Downtown Collage
Another Universe: Uzair Sawal & Kent Lee (sound artists)

Manila – Flow State
Escuri (sound artist)

Medan – nostalgic contrasts
Rani Fitriana Jambak (sound designer)
Evi Ovitiana (filmmaker)
Matthias Jochmann (producer)

Singapur – Ride and Liberate
KoFlow (musician)

Singapur – In Search of the Bukit Timah Monkey Man
Nada x Brandon Tay (musician and media artist)

Sydney – The last winter
Sofie Loizu / Anomie (artist)

Tāmaki Makaurau – He aha e tangi te kainga rite? |
            What sounds like home?
Uniform (artist collective from Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland)

Yangon – Yangon Never Sleeps
Kyaw Ko Ko (sound designer)
Aye Nilar Kyaw Künstlername: AJ (filmmaker)

3. PRESS MATERIAL

Further information about the works and the artists' biographies as well as videos, high-resolution photographs and logos are available for download here:

https://ablage.goethe.de/?f=4b8e33cdc2
The material is available until 6 July 2020.

- **Artist Profiles and Concepts**
- **Photographic Material**
  - Key Visual
  - Photos of artists/stills of works
  - List of photo material
  - Goethe-Institut logos
- **Videos**
  - Project trailer
  - Teaser videos of each work

The **full-length works** as well as **behind-the-scenes interviews** with the artists can be previewed here:

- Ho Chi Minh City // Jade Mai (Mai Ngoc Bich)/Nick Chan
  - *Fractal Diversity* https://youtu.be/bZJO1TLKh1w
  - Behind the Scenes https://youtu.be/c45unZ_aGCk
- Kuala Lumpur // Another Universe
  - *Downtown Collage* https://youtu.be/MhzfjOksgwQ
  - Behind the Scenes https://youtu.be/Ostnj2ElYk0
- Manila // Escuri
  - *Flow State* https://youtu.be/NqPLxSZ_q2c
  - Behind the Scenes https://youtu.be/B-xWyUkUurY
- Medan // Rani Fitriana Jambak/Evi Ovitiana
  - *nostalgic contrasts* https://youtu.be/Mvr6iWTIIiY
  - Behind the Scenes https://youtu.be/OA1ud7iMiiM
- Singapore // KoFlow/Toke Hong Loong/Matthew Sia
  - *Ride and Liberate* https://youtu.be/oniDUbF4vFQ
  - Behind the Scenes https://youtu.be/Ele_-bWHnv4
- Singapore // NADA/Brandon Tay
  - *In Search of the Bukit Timah Monkey Man* https://youtu.be/vtVfyQ3wh4s
  - Behind the Scenes https://youtu.be/kz65sTyjsMk
- Sydney // Anomie
  - *The last winter* https://youtu.be/HhJwItxT594
  - Behind the Scenes https://youtu.be/hSzn6YMRoIY
- Tāmaki Makaurau // Uniform
  - *He aha e tangi te kainga rite? | What sounds like home?* https://youtu.be/Ijj9BSGjHQs
  - Behind the Scenes https://youtu.be/6LbdeA1GDdY
- Yangon // Kyaw Ko Ko/Aye Nilar Kyaw
  - *Yangon Never Sleeps* https://youtu.be/ozVrxiuunq8
  - Behind the Scenes https://youtu.be/_l4j-ovd5xU

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