

RIAR
RIZALDI

MUSEUM MACAN

PERIOD PIECE

museummacan.org

13.06-04.10.2026

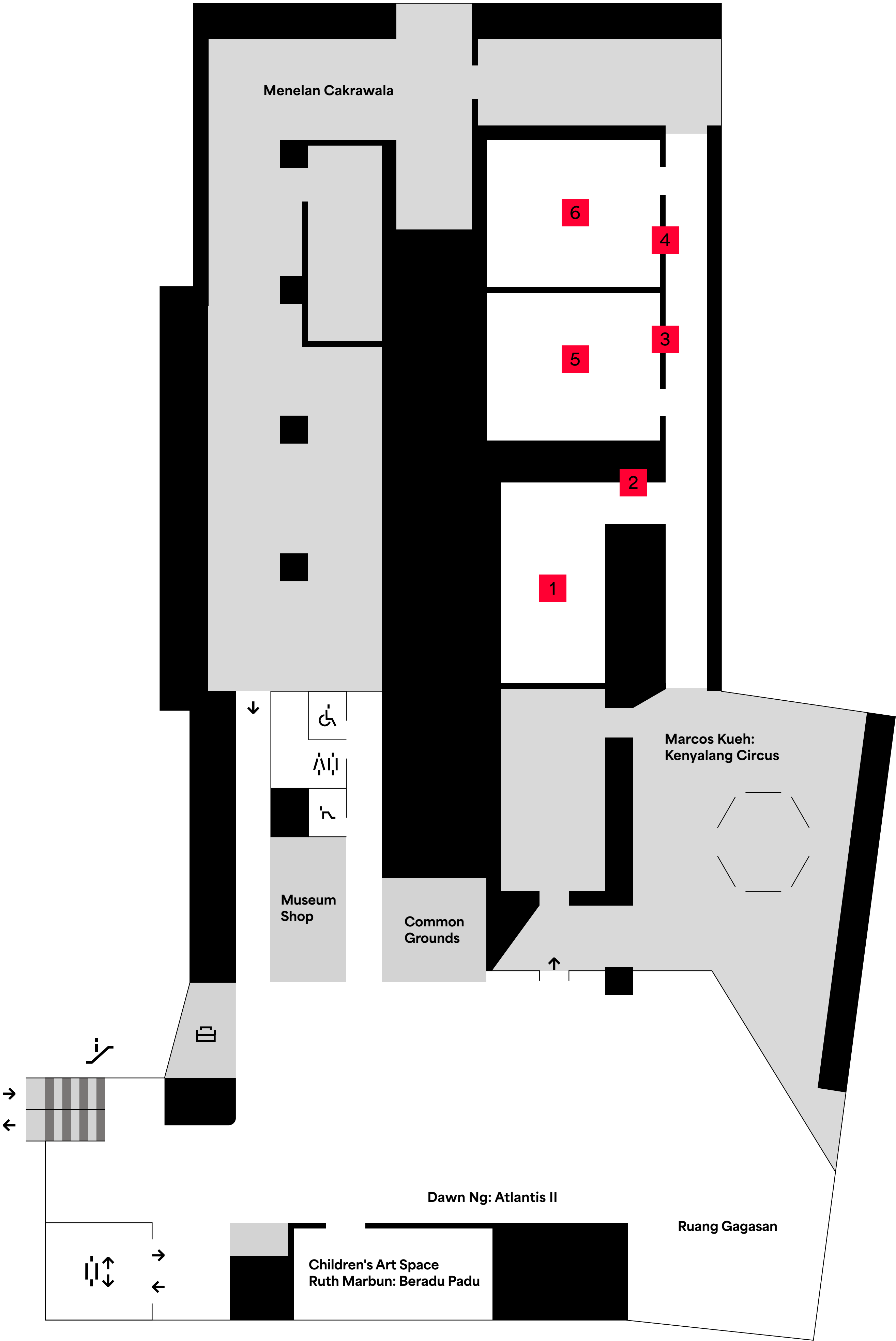
Introduction

Riar Rizaldi is an artist and filmmaker whose practice reflects the experience of a generation that grew up in Indonesia during the 1990s, when cinema, digital technology, and global popular culture began reshaping how society understood everyday life. His works often move between the colonial period and speculative futures, where different historical moments coexist simultaneously to construct alternative readings of social change, technology, and visual culture in Indonesia.

In *Period Piece*, Rizaldi examines how knowledge production, technology, and modernity have been shaped through the long history of colonialism in Indonesia. The exhibition moves from the development of volcanology in the 19th century, to the emergence of railways and cinema as symbols of progress in the early 20th century, and toward changing experiences of screens and social space as they entered the 21st century. Through these historical fragments, Rizaldi reveals how notions of progress have always been tied to the extraction of natural resources, colonial labor systems, and the development of infrastructures that continue to sustain modern life.

Period Piece also presents a newly commissioned installation based on the lobby of an Indonesian cinema from the 1990s, which Rizaldi understands as a social space where ideas about the world were produced and circulated. Through this space, Rizaldi traces changing experiences of moving images and visual technology, as collective form of spectatorship gradually shift toward increasingly personal ones. Across the films and installations throughout the exhibition, Rizaldi evokes a nostalgia of the future, referring to vision of a world that once promised progress, collective experience, and a prospective future.

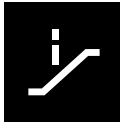
Exhibition Map



Cloakroom



Toilet



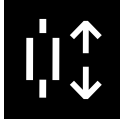
Escalator to Level 2
(Museum Lobby & Ticketing)



Nursery



Accessible Toilet



Elevator to Level 2 (Museum Lobby & Ticketing), G, B1 (ATM, Mushalla, Parking Area)

- 1

Bioskop Asymptotic (2026)

Mixed media installation

Variable dimension

Collection of the artist

Commissioned and first presented at Museum MACAN, Jakarta, 2026
- 2

Bioskop Asymptotic - Fanfictie: Evolutionary Biology poster (2026)

Mixed media installation

118 x 158 x 8.5 cm

Collection of the artist

Commissioned and first presented at Museum MACAN, Jakarta, 2026
- 3

Bioskop Asymptotic - Blob in Frame I (2026)

Mixed media installation

118 x 158 x 8.5 cm

Collection of the artist

Commissioned and first presented at Museum MACAN, Jakarta, 2026
- 4

Bioskop Asymptotic - Blob in Frame II (2026)

Mixed media installation

118 x 158 x 8.5 cm

Collection of the artist

Commissioned and first presented at Museum MACAN, Jakarta, 2026
- 5

Tropenkolder (2025)

Single-channel video installation, rotating horn speakers, audio, reclaimed railway sleepers

Duration 24'18"

Collection of the artist

Commissioned by Eye Filmmuseum, Netherlands
- 6

Fanfictie: Volcanology (2025)

Single-channel video installation, two 3D printed PETG of custom made gunung puppet and C-stands

Duration 16'25"

Collection of the artist

Commissioned by Almanac, Turin, Italy

Bioskop Asymptotic (2026)

Mixed media installation

Variable dimension

Collection of the artist
Commissioned and first presented at Museum MACAN, Jakarta, 2026



***Bioskop Asymptotic* reconstructs the lobby of an Indonesian cinema from the 1990s. Several elements within the installation reference Bioskop Regent Theatre, Nusantara Palaguna Theatre, and Pasundan Theatre in Bandung, where Rizaldi spent much of his childhood watching films. At the time, the artist saw cinemas as social spaces where audiences collectively encountered entertainment, popular imagery, and broader visions of the world. Rizaldi reflects on the major transformation in the experience of moving images since the late 1990s, as spectatorship gradually shifted from public space toward personal devices and increasingly immersive visual technologies.**

The work draws from the concept of reflective nostalgia developed by cultural theorist Svetlana Boym (b. Russia, 1959-2015), who described nostalgia as an awareness of distance, loss, and forms of change that can no longer be recovered. In *Bioskop Asymptotic*, nostalgia emerges through a space that feels like a “leakage of reality,” where architectural fragments appear anachronistic. It also operates as an aesthetic experience when confronted with the 1990s dream of communal technology.

Through furniture, lighting, and architectural elements resembling ruins, *Bioskop Asymptotic* also reflects on Indonesia’s regime of spectatorship, evoking the atmosphere of 1990s cinema lobbies heavily shaped by Hollywood visual culture. The title *Asymptotic* refers to something that continuously approaches a limit without ever fully reaching it, reflecting humanity’s relationship with the absurdity of contemporary technology as it endlessly moves toward a future that never fully arrives.

Bioskop Asymptotic - Fanfictie: Evolutionary Biology poster (2026)

2

Mixed media installation

118 x 158 x 8.5 cm

Collection of the artist
Commissioned and first presented at Museum MACAN, Jakarta, 2026



Tropenkolder (2026)

5

Single-channel video installation, rotating horn speakers, audio, reclaimed railway sleepers

Duration 24'18"

Collection of the artist

Commissioned by Eye Filmmuseum, Netherlands



Riar Rizaldi presents *Tropenkolder* through an approach rooted in the phantom ride, an early cinematic genre characterized by moving images filmed from vehicles such as trains. Film theorist Tom Gunning (b. 1949) associates this genre with the concept of the “cinema of attractions,” in which early twentieth-century cinema emphasized visual sensation, movement, and spectacle over narrative. In the colonial Dutch East Indies, many phantom ride films depicted tropical landscapes from the perspective of railway travel, functioning as representations of colonial modernity for European audiences.

Through *Tropenkolder*, Rizaldi revisits these archives to examine the relationship between cinema, modernity, and the history of railways in Indonesia. The work draws from a significant moment in the history of Indonesia’s labor movement: the 1923 railway workers’ strike organized by the labor union *Vereniging van Spoor-en Tramwegpersoneel* (VSTP), when workers attempted to sabotage their own working hours through deliberate idleness and refusal to work. Against early cinema’s fascination with trains as symbols of acceleration and progress, Rizaldi reflects on how such modernity was built through colonial labor systems and profound transformations in workers’ lives.

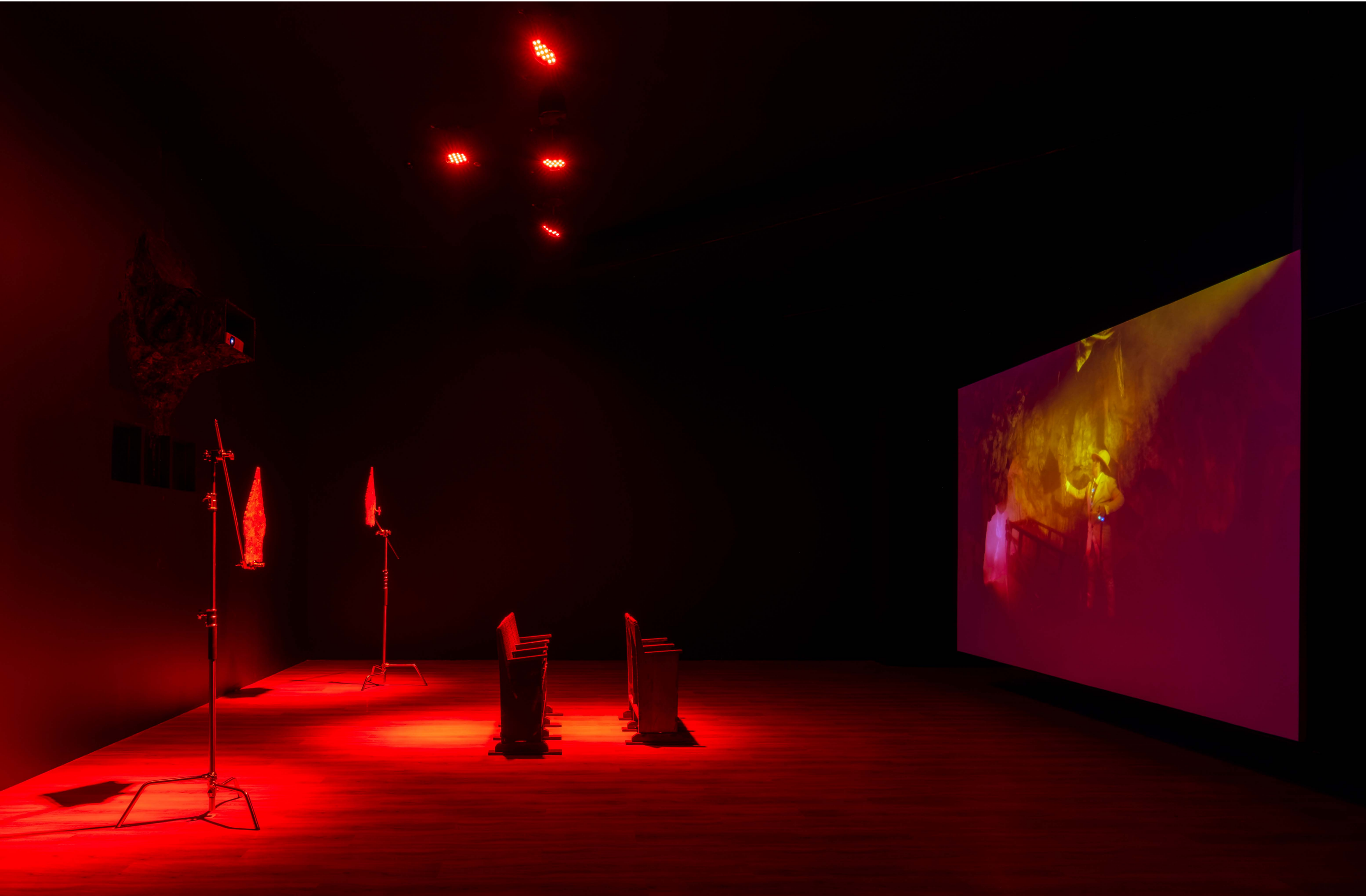
The installation combines fictional reconstruction of the workers’ strike and phantom ride archives with sound elements referencing the 1955 children’s song “Naik Kereta Api” (translated as “Train Ride”) rearranged by Ansambel Gembira, led by Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (LEKRA) figure Soebronto K. Atmodjo. Together with horn-shaped loudspeakers and reclaimed colonial railway sleepers repurposed as seating, these elements reflect on the relationship between modern technology, the colonial myth of the “lazy native,” and the history of capitalism in Indonesia.

Fanfictie: Volcanology (2025)

Single-channel video installation, two 3D printed PETG of custom made gunung puppet and C-stands

Duration 16'25"

Collection of the artist
Commissioned by Almanac, Turin, Italy



***Fanfictie: Volcanology* is the first chapter in a trilogy of video installations by Riar Rizaldi examining the history of colonial scientific activity in Dutch East Indies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The work emerges from the development of volcanology in the mid-nineteenth century, when volcanoes began to be studied as a central subject within Western modern earth sciences. Within this context, Rizaldi examines how knowledge about nature in the Dutch East Indies developed through the intersection of colonial science, the exploration of tropical landscapes, and indigenous knowledge of volcanoes.**

The work centers on Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn (b. Prussia, 1809–1864), a German naturalist who conducted extensive research on volcanoes across Java and Sumatra during the nineteenth century. Known as the “Humboldt of Java,” Junghuhn produced studies and lithographs that later became important references in the development of modern volcanology. He believed that nature was the “source of all truth” and the only “divine manifestation,” a worldview that Rizaldi sees as closely resonating with forms of Javanese mysticism. From this perspective emerges the speculation that understanding nature requires more than observation alone, and demands a form of human immersion within it.

The installation combines a single-channel film with sculptural elements shaped like gunungan, a symbolic mountain-shaped figure used in Javanese wayang performances, inspired by collections housed at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography at the University of Turin. In Javanese wayang tradition, the gunungan appears at both the beginning and end of a performance, symbolizing life, death, and cosmology. In a scene from *Fanfictie: Volcanology*, the gunungan is ultimately eaten by the figure of Junghuhn through a process of iconophagy, symbolizing an understanding of the world that occurs through the body, organs, and human metabolism itself.

**Do not touch the artworks,
even clean hands damage artworks.**

No food and drink are permitted in the galleries.

Cameras are not allowed; DSLR, SLR and Polaroid.

No selfie stick and other professional camera equipment are allowed.

Only phone photography is allowed. No flash photography.

**For security reasons, all bags will be checked at
the Gallery entrance.**

All belongings measuring more than 32 x 24 x 15 cm must be stored in the Cloakroom.

Speak softly and walk calmly.

**Set your phone on silent mode and refrain from
phone conversations in the galleries.**

No running or roller shoes allowed.

**Pencil sketching is permitted in the galleries with
sketchbooks no larger than A4 in size.**

Charcoal, pastel, permanent markers, watercolour and oil paint are not permitted.

Museum staff and museum visitors have the right to a safe environment free from violence, abuse or threatening behavior. The Museum reserves the right to remove any person acting in an unacceptable manner. Any violation to museum's regulation may result in charges and prosecution.

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