# PRESS RELEASE
# SOUND OF X – LISTEN CLOSELY …

**Video soundscapes created by artists from Southeast Asia for a digital project initiated by the Goethe-Institut**



Photo: Benny Suhendra Panjaitan

**How can we reconnect with the spaces we live in, especially in the wake of the corona 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](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, Ho Chi Minh City, Kuala Lumpur, Medan, Sydney, Manila, Tāmaki Makaurau and Yangon 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.

### 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 urbanized city-state of

**CONTACT**
Sabine Geratz
Head of Communications & Library Services
Goethe-Institut Singapore
Tel.: +65 6735 4555 ext 28
sabine.geratz@goethe.de

Valerie-Ann Tan
Programme Coordinator
Goethe-Institut Singapore
Tel.: +65 6735 4555 ext 17
valerie-ann.tan@goethe.de

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

### 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 Singapore on the concept of the project.

**Goethe-Institut e. V.**
*The Goethe-Institut is a worldwide cultural institution of the Federal Republic of Germany. With 157 institutes in 98 countries, it promotes German language learning abroad and international cultural exchange as well as presenting an up-to-date image of current-day Germany.*

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## 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 Ovtiana** (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; Künstlername: 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

The full-length works as well as behind-the-scenes interviews with the artists can be previewed on the website www.goethe.de/soundofx

Further information about the works and the artists' biographies as well as videos, high-resolution photographs and logos are available. Please send an email to sabine.geratz@goethe.de