ALMINE RECH

The Plantation Plot

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A plot of land, the plot of a tale. At the heart of the plantation plot were growth, progress, and an open market, where monocrop commodities were planted with zeal and circulated freely across the globe. Plantations were the engine of European imperial expansion, where cash crops were produced for export and through which empires accumulated surplus wealth. Over six hundred years later, we are still trapped in the plantation plot's spellbinding reality. The plantation has not merely persisted; it is multiplying under our noses. Today, in Indonesia and Malaysia, crucibles of contemporary plantation logic, millions of hectares of forests and farmland have been cleared to plant oil palm.

We have inherited a broken world. Suppose we can no longer imagine a world without the plantation and its structuring power. In that case, we must recognize its strategies and unnatural histories, estrange it, and make aesthetic and narrative provocations anew. The plot must thicken.

'The Plantation Plot' assembles the work of twenty-seven artists and collectives who emerged in the wake of the proliferation of the plantation. Drawing from Jamaican critic Sylvia Wynter, the exhibition refigures the plantation plot in its co-constituting meaning of story and place, grounding the exhibition in the context of Southeast Asia but addressing a global condition. Attending to the affective modes birthed, damaged, and arbitrated by plantations and their (non-) logics, 'The Plantation Plot' is retrospective, anticipating a future yet to arrive.