

THE ARTIST

- Ong Kian Peng (b. 1981, Singapore) is a media artist based in Singapore.
- His practice focuses on gradual changes in the climate that are barely perceptible by our senses and explores immersive and technological ways of visualising and representing the invisible and intangible.
- He was a joint winner of the Grand Prize of Singapore Art Museum's Present's Young Talent in 2015.



THE ARTWORK



THE VISCOUS SEA

2022

Video, 6 channels, HD format, surround sound, 20 min

Collection of the artist

Singapore Biennale 2022 Commission

- **MEDIUM:** Videos shot and audio elements collected by the artist during his residency in Jordan.
- **TECHNIQUES/PROCESSES:** *The Viscous Sea* is an installation that explores how we experience and are affected by climate change. While Ong plans the content that he hopes to record prior to a shoot, he often encounters unexpected situations and must rely on his intuition while out in the field. As environmental conditions are unpredictable, actively observing and responding to his changing surroundings are key parts of his practice. He has documented the effects of rising sea levels on his treks along the valleys and seasonal rivers that connect to the Dead Sea. He has collected footage of waterways as well as the nomadic Bedouin tribes that roam around the valleys of Jordan. Ong hopes that audiences can derive meaning from what they hear or see.
- **IDEAS/INSPIRATIONS/CONTEXT:** This installation was developed while Ong was an Artist-in-Residence at The Darat al Funun – The Khalid Shoman Foundation. His artwork addresses the impending demise of the Dead Sea and how it affects the larger ecosystem of water networks in Jordan.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. The Dead Sea has healing properties due to the high concentration of antiseptic minerals found in its salt and mud.
2. You can float easily on the dense, hypersaline water of the Dead Sea.
3. The Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth. Its surface is more than 400m below sea level.

Artist Folio – MEETING NATASHA

SECONDARY:

PHYSICS

HISTORY

GEOGRAPHY

ENVIRONMENT

ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS

PRE-VISIT

**“All I knew about Jordan before was
(the archaeological site of) Petra.”**

Ong Kian Peng

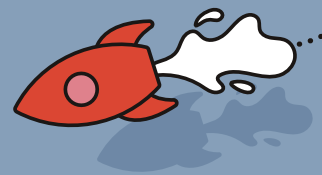
How much do you know about Jordan and the Dead Sea?

- Discuss with a partner and/or list all the information you can remember on a piece of paper.

DURING YOUR VISIT

Walk around and experience the installation.

- Why do you think the artist chose video as the medium for this artwork?
- Did you learn something new about Jordan or the Dead Sea from the video?



POST-VISIT

Which aspect of Ong’s installation left a deep impression on you? Share it with your partner.

- What are the similarities and differences between how the both of you experienced the artwork?
- Does his installation give you a better idea of how climate change is affecting Jordan?

FIND OUT MORE

- Ong, Kian Peng. “Ong Kian–Peng.” *Ongkianpeng.art*. <https://www.ongkianpeng.art/> (accessed 20 October 2022).
- Ong, Kian Peng. “ongkianpeng.” *Vimeo*. <https://vimeo.com/ctrlsave> (accessed 20 October 2022).
- Yeap, Stephanie. “All about Amman: Ong Kian Peng on his Singapore Biennale artist residency in Jordan.” *Plural Art Mag*, 2 August 2022. <https://pluralartmag.com/2022/08/02/ong-kian-peng-singapore-biennale-2022-jordan/> (accessed 20 October 2022).
- Bickerton, Ian J., Irvine, Verity Elizabeth and Jaber, Kamel S. Abu. “Jordan.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 18 October 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Jordan> (accessed 20 October 2022).