



**NANYANG
TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY**
SINGAPORE

**Centre for Contemporary
Art Singapore**

College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

**KENT CHAN
THREE ACTS OF THE SUN**

18 January – 1 February 2026



We are delighted to present *Three Acts of the Sun*, the first solo exhibition by Kent Chan in his home country since 2019. Insightfully curated by Dr Anna Lovecchio, the exhibition holds dual significance for our institution. We first worked with Kent at the time of his residency with us in 2017–18. We are honoured to host his work which timely addresses the climate crisis—a pressing issue of our time the Centre is deeply invested in. Like many of our undertakings, this exhibition emerges from a long-term commitment. It demonstrates our enduring relationships with our Artists-in-Residence and, more broadly, the vitality of the connections we build with cultural practitioners across different platforms, including residencies, exhibitions, publications, and research projects.

Speculating on the climate futures of our warming planet, Kent's works demand us to reconnect with the present and take action to reclaim a more sustainable future. Climate change and its impact on habitats is a core subject of curatorial research for the Centre which we actively pursue through our involvement in the Climate Transformation Programme, a major interdisciplinary research initiative spearheaded by the NTU Earth Observatory of Singapore and supported by the Singapore Ministry of Education Academic Research Fund. Our involvement

● **DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD** by Ute Meta Bauer, Acting Director, NTU CCA Singapore and Professor, NTU School of Art, Design and Media

with this programme further anchors our ongoing research on *Climates.Habitats. Environments.*, an interdisciplinary framework dedicated to fostering the holistic understanding of this vital triangulation. Initiated in 2017, it aims to advance critical thinking and public awareness about the ecological complexities and the climate crisis through collaborations across disciplines.

Three Acts of the Sun would not have been possible without the generous support of the National Arts Council Singapore and the Mondriaan Fund. Their recognition of this project's relevance was instrumental in the successful production of Kent's body of work that we are excited to present in our space. I must thank the Centre's team and, in particular, Dr Anna Lovecchio whose commitment to the curatorial framework of the Centre never fails to engender thought-provoking programmes. I also wish to express my gratitude to Professor Jon Wilson, Dean of the NTU College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences since 2025. Ever since he joined the University, he has been highly supportive of the Centre and is playing a pivotal role in steering the outstanding developments we will soon be able to announce. Last but not least, my heartfelt thanks go to Kent for his trust into the Centre's commitment to artistic research. It is rewarding to witness the impressive evolution of his practice.



SOLAR-DARITY

What foresight does the current state of the world demand? While climate change already permeates the present, it most critically urges us to confront what lies ahead. As a planetary process, its compounding complexity engenders far-reaching and profoundly interdependent consequences across ecology and society, economy and culture, politics and affects. It is from the vantage point of this impending change that Kent Chan looks forward and summons worlds to come. *Three Acts of the Sun* captures a significant chapter in the artist's creative trajectory, focusing on the growing entanglement of his tropical imaginary with climate change, the most momentous planetary challenge of our times. The tropics have long been the matrix of Chan's imagination, the breeding ground for his reflections on culture, climate, art, and future. The exhibition navigates the tension between the artist's persistent desire to imagine the tropics *in the future tense* and the looming threat of a warming planet. How, then, to inhabit heat?

Driven by a speculative impulse, the works in *Three Acts of the Sun* invite us to step into a future Earth altered by the phenomenon of tropicalisation—the poleward expansion of tropical ecosystems due to the heating of the planet.

● **WARMING UP TO THE FUTURE** by Dr Anna Lovecchio, Curator, NTU CCA Singapore

They envision worlds where the familiar boundaries of climate, culture, and geopolitics are redefined by the loss of climate demarcation and the ubiquitous spread of heat and humidity. For Chan, heat and humidity are not just elemental manifestations of tropical weather, they are “companions in thought”, appearing time and again in his works. Here, they also feature as atmospheric contributors. Relinquishing climate control, The Hall welcomes Singapore's equatorial weather to seep in from the outside, in a subtle subversion of the cool indoor temperature criteria of the notoriously ‘air-conditioned nation’. Thus, heat and humidity bring viewers to experience the core concerns of this project not just visually, sonically, and intellectually, but in the flesh of their bodies. Chan's own narratives frame the climatic shift of global warming through the prism of the embodied human experience speculating on environmental migrations, the burden of intergenerational injustice, and the hubris of technological mastery over nature. The characters in his films, be they humans or deities, appear at a loss in a world altered by anthropogenic climate change, haunted by memories of lost weathers, extinct but not yet forgotten. Tropicalisation is revealed to be more than a climatic phenomenon; it becomes an existential condition.

Kent Chan, *Solar Orders*, 2024, still from film.



In geography, the tropics designate a band of latitudes that extend northward and southward from the Equator. Decentralising the terrestrial perspective, the works in *Three Acts of the Sun* enact a cosmic emplacement of the tropics; they remind us that the tropics are, first and foremost, “Children of the Sun”, to quote the title of a 1965 painting by Malaysian artist Khoo Sui Hoe from the collection of National Gallery Singapore which appears in one of the films. The tropics are engendered by the Earth’s relation to the host star of our planetary system, their terrestrial expanse being drawn by this celestial connection. Indeed, it is the solar zenith—that exact, however fleeting, cosmic happening which, twice a year, brings the Sun at its highest point in the sky—that marks the thresholds of the tropics. Nowhere outside of the tropics the Sun ever reaches those heights. And the moment when the Sun’s rays stream perpendicularly upon the Earth and its radiance evenly envelops the world, it is then that cast shadows, those dark stalkers of earthly substance, momentarily disappear. This is an uncanny moment ripe for the epiphany of the forces that govern us; or, perhaps, blindness; or, perhaps, foresight.

Positioning earthly dilemmas under a solar spell, the exhibition situates planetary vulnerability within larger cosmic frameworks. The more-than-terrestrial orientation is distinctly present in *Future Tropics* and *Solar Orders*, which are interspersed with references to outer space and astral mythologies. In the aftermath of global warming, when the tropics have expanded and temperate zones have disappeared, humans are bound to inhabit a monoclimate world, drenched and adrift in a perennial tropical climate. In both works, the Sun does not just illuminate; it dazzles humanity and wipes out the seasons. The ingrained, escapist, Western trope of the endless tropical summer finds its ultimate

manifestation as a global climatic reality. However, if in *Future Tropics* the Sun’s relentless heat melts old forms of life and drives planetary and interplanetary migrations, in *Solar Orders* it forges a lexicon of new values. Disembodied hands raise against a bright sky to signify ideas such as abundance, growth, gift, and generosity. This ritualistic, almost apotropaic, non-verbal language beacons from a future where the unity of human societies is forged by a shared climatic fate. Of the 21 values the hands perform, the notion of ‘solardarity’ forms the conceptual core of these future societies. Solardarity is an existential bond that emerges not from ideology, but from the collective experience of living under the Sun, a plea to be informed by its radiance. Rooted in Georges Bataille’s theory of general economy—which posits the sun as the cosmic model of radical expenditure, of unproductive excess, of giving without a return—solardarity signals a future where humanity embraces the Sun’s logic of abundance, generosity, and excess rather than the capitalist logic of scarcity, competition, and accumulation.¹

Weather Casting, the new moving-image work created for this exhibition, builds upon the evolution of the human relation to the weather from a history of reverence, survival, and adaptation towards one of technological mastery. Chan’s speculative wordbuilding conflates ancestral ties to the weather and the ambition to achieve the technological management of planetary systems. In a world that, once again, has been tropicalised by global warming, the weather is turned into a technological ‘domain’ through geoengineering. With a history that harks back to the mid-20th century, geoengineering pursues large-scale modifications of the Earth’s climate. Yet, due to its scant real-world implementation, it remains in itself highly speculative. This makes it, as transdisciplinary geographer

Kent Chan, *Future Tropics*, 2023, stills from film.

Kathryn Yusoff puts it, a “promissory technology”—an emerging technology that promises future, but presently unknown, transformative impacts.² Long lingering at the fringes of scientific research, geoengineering is now gaining traction, especially within the private and profit-driven world of Big Tech.³ What is highly alarming is that, in spite of its unknown and potentially disastrous impact on planetary ecologies, this field remains wildly unregulated. In *Weather Casting*, geoengineering finds normalcy, being practiced across Southeast and East Asia to control and customise the weather in accordance to national needs and productivity agendas. The anthropocentric takeover of the aether is governed by nation-based AI systems that clear the clouds, harness the winds, and rule over rainfall. Yet, in a cosmic pull away from technodrive dynamics, the names of these AI systems are lifted directly from the pantheon of deities and spirits of water, weather, and rice—including Dewi Sri, Mae Phosop, Phaya Naga, and Longwang among others—once revered in Southeast and East Asia as guardians of the elements, stewards of planetary harmony. As it slowly emerges, these god-inspired, or god-aspiring, AIs are tasked to execute geoengineering protocols in the absence of a unified geopolitical strategy. Their disjointed interventions soon begin to clash, generating frictions and antagonisms, for the weather does not abide by national boundaries, and a climatic event engineered for one locale will wreak havoc elsewhere. Simultaneously, echoes of the ‘original’ deities reverberate through the namesake AIs, articulating narratives of displacement, despondency, and existential disorientation. The failure of the technological system thus foregrounds the collapse of cosmic worldviews, hinting that humanity’s techno-hubris disrupts not just the atmosphere but, more profoundly, the cosmic scaffolding of the world itself.

Three Acts of the Sun is an exercise in foresight. Chan’s worldbuilding straddles prediction and actualisation, conjuring near-future climate scenarios imbued with emotional depths and streaked with ancestral wisdom. It transports us into possible worlds to come where the tales and the songs, the values and the failures of our descendants reveal stories of human life as it unfolds on a heated planet. The worlds he envisions, the characters he gives voice to, the deities he evokes, all feel deliberately close, their struggles and anxieties urgently relatable. This sense of familiarity is purposeful: it suggests that these futurities are deeply entangled with the present. As the seeds of these futures already germinate in our times, the exhibition ultimately prompts us to reclaim and reconnect with vital cosmic worldviews to pave a different path into times, and climates, to come.

¹ Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share. An Essay on General Economy, Vol I Consumption* (New York: Zone Books, 1988; first published, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1967)

² Kathryn Yusoff, “The Geoengine” in Design Earth, *The Planet After Geoengineering* (New York/Barcelona: Actar Publishers, 2021), pp. 3 – 9.

³ As I write this text, Elon Musk boasted on X: “A large solar-powered AI satellite constellation would be able to prevent global warming by making tiny adjustments in how much solar energy reached Earth”, 3 November 2025.





Kent Chan, *Weather Casting*, 2026, concept image.

Conflating prediction and actualisation, weather lore and techno-agency, divination and doom, *Weather Casting* explores the radical shift from forecasting the weather to “casting” it into reality. Set in a future where planetary warming has driven a global expansion of the tropics, the film explores the friction between humanity’s quest to achieve mastery over the weather and the unyielding interconnectedness of planetary systems. Through speculative worldbuilding, *Weather Casting* conjures scenarios where geoengineering—technological manipulations of the Earth’s climate system—has become normalised, and the tropical weather has been turned into a technological ‘domain’. A series of fictional news reports, unfurling along the route of the monsoons across Southeast and East Asia, illustrate the geoengineering strategies implemented by country-specific Artificial Intelligence systems to control the weather in each locale. The geoengineering systems are named after ancient local deities who once presided over natural harmony and the elements, revealing a tapestry of shared mythologies and spiritual kinships across climates and cultures. As these narratives interlock, complexities arise: from escalating geopolitical frictions and environmental collapse to the existential crisis of displaced deities who have lost their purpose. (Text by Anna Lovecchio)

- **WEATHER CASTING** 2026, single-channel video installation, HD, colour, sound, fans, window screens, approx 35 min

Story & direction: Kent Chan
Cast: Angelique Rosemary Hendaro, Seulgi Kim, Xinyu Li, Lutfi Mahardika Haryono Nuankhanit Phromchanya, Yan Song, Zoe Tang, Yahg-ha (Haeun Yang), Xinyi Zheng
Producer: Jane Ruoyao Yao
Cinematography: Piotr Pawlusz
2nd Camera operator: Eric Lee
Additional footage: Seungho Jo
Chayaphat Phugate: Sibó Sheyang, Jiawei Wang
Makeup artist: Ika Kartika
Music: Yennu Ariendra (Y-DRA)

Character design: Jie Chen
Visual effects coordinator: Aletha Pasamba
Visual effects: Ariela Bergman, Ahmad Dahaqin
Editing: Kent Chan, Nina Djekić
Sound Designer: Zai Tang
Driver: Erik Weber

Commissioned by NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore
Produced with the support of National Arts Council Singapore and Mondriaan Fund



Future Tropics narrates fictional scenarios of a future global tropic, imagining a speculative extreme where tropicalisation, as a result of global warming, has effectively enclosed the world. With the dissolution of climate demarcation, humanity faces widespread environmental displacement and forced acclimatisation: once-temperate zones evolve into the New Tropics and contact with the Old Tropics is lost. The film reveals this tropicalised world through conversational glimpses into the lives and worries of its inhabitants and sun-drenched footage of contemporary Singapore, following the meandering of the main character and her struggle to make sense of enigmatic messages sent by her previous life. *Future Tropics* entangles ideas of reincarnation, climate curation, climate migrations, and memory against the backdrop of an irreversible climatic shift, exploring a world which must regard extinct climates as items of museum conservation and interplanetary travel as the ultimate resort. (Text by Ong Jing Ting)

● **FUTURE TROPICS** 2023, two-channel video, HD, colour, sound, 33 min

Kent Chan, *Future Tropics*, 2023, montage of film stills.

Characters: Vicki Yang, Tini Aliman, Eva Chan, Iris Ferrer, Kate Pocklington, Viknesh Kobinathan, Julian Abraham 'Togar', Siddharta Perez
 Sungazers: Sophia Sim, Olivia Fones, Ryan Tan, Adikara Dewata Batubara, Nurul Hanis Binte Moksan, Trina Chan Xiang Yuan, Shalome John, Liu En
 Producer: Sophia Sim
 Cinematographer: Jolinna Ang, Clyde Kam
 Art Director: Lou Shenna
 Editor: Kent Chan

Sound Designer: Zai Tang
 Camera Assistant: May Chong Xue Ning
 2nd Camera Operator: Eric Lee Yuen Loong
 Drone Operator: Ng Wu Gang
 Sound Recordist: Nikki Koh, Kerraine Ng, Nur Bibiyana Binte Hussain
 Wardrobe: Olivia Fones
 Production Coordinator: Png Hui Min
 Production Assistant: Ryan Tan

Supported by National Arts Council Singapore



Grounded in anxieties of accelerating tropicalisation, this work envisions a tomorrow stripped of winters and saturated in perennial equatorial heat. In the film, the tropics have claimed latitudinal bands, pushed poleward by climate change. The governing force of this new, expanded tropics is the Sun, also remembered in its ancient manifestations—Amaterasu, Agni, Inti, and Ra. Entrusted to a multiplicity of terrestrial and astral characters, the polyphonic narrative conjures the guiding principles of the titular 'Solar Orders': civilisations whose culture, politics, and economics are fueled by the superabundant resources gifted by the Sun. As the work exposes solar mythologies and personal accounts, astronomical facts and geographical trajectories, a non-verbal vocabulary of hand signs emerges to unify the enlarged tropical belt. The film's soundtrack, created by electronic music producers across the tropics—Gatasanta (Colombia), Lynn Nandar Htoo (Myanmar), Disco Puppet (India), Trypas Corassão (Brazil), and Authentically Plastic (Uganda)—synthesises sonic alliances for the solar commons of a future pantropical world. (Text by Eunice Lacaste)

● **SOLAR ORDERS** 2024, two-channel video, HD, colour, sound, 17 min 41 sec



Kent Chan, *Solar Orders*, 2024, stills from film.

Story & Direction: Kent Chan
Cast: Maria Isabel Barros / DJ Gatasanta,
Ibrahim Ibnou Goush, Laura Pacas,
Weixin Quek Chong, Ludovica Bulciolu,
Eduardo Terrén Plaza
Producer: Elisa Celda
Assistant Producer: Lucas Orozco Del Pozo
Cinematography: Pablo Paloma Marin

Sound Recordist: Isabella Bello Salvo
Editing: Kent Chan, Nina Djekić
Sound Designer: Zai Tang
Music: DJ Gatasanta, Lynn Nandar Htoo, Disco
Puppet, Trypas Coração, Authentically Plastic

Supported by Medialab Matadero and
Mondriaan Fund



Raised up against the sky, disembodied hands gesture beneath the harsh light of the sun. *Signs (Series)* is a series of lenticular prints comprising 21 hand signs that were developed for the film *Solar Orders* (2024). Expanding on the concept of 'Solar Orders', future societies where the Sun forms the central organising principle, Kent Chan choreographed these hand signs to form a vocabulary of words that reflect the importance of the star for these speculative societies, including: Sun, Solar, Tropics, Desert, Heat, Dry, Humid, Energy, Absorb, Grow, Abundance, Gift, Generosity, Light, Shadow, Darkness, Eclipse, Entropy, Solar-darity, Planetary, and Glorious. These gestures silently confront the audience, inviting us to reflect on the significance of a new non-verbal vocabulary, culture, and worldview developed around the magnitude of the sun. (Text by Ong Jing Ting)

- **SIGNS (SERIES)** 2026, lenticular prints, 29.7 x 33.4 cm (unframed)

Kent Chan, *Signs (series)*, 2026.

Courtesy the artist and ai. Gallery

Commissioned by NTU Centre for
Contemporary Art Singapore
Supported by National Arts Council Singapore
and Mondriaan Fund



In this performance, Kent Chan collaborates with sound artist Zai Tang to fuse storytelling, moving image, and music in an audiovisual act that spins global imaginaries and future scenarios around the Sun. The work revolves around 'Solar Orders', speculative societies of a future global tropics defined by a vital relationship to the Sun as a cosmic organising principle and primary energy source. Conjuring entropic dynamics, new social bonds, and ancient divine lore, the work arises from Chan's ongoing research on the tropics and climate change, channelling his vision of expanded tropical futures. (Text by Eunice Lacaste)

- **SOLAR ORDERS (PERFORMANCE)** 2024/2026, lecture performance in collaboration with Zai Tang, projection, sound, vinyl DJ set Saturday, 24 January, 5.30 – 7.00pm

Documentation of Kent Chan, *Solar Orders* (performance), Medialab Matadero, Madrid, 2023.

Zai Tang is an artist, composer, and sound designer based in Singapore. Drawing influence from acoustic ecology, philosophy, and electronic and experimental music, his practice is built upon a belief that listening is an invaluable means of attuning to and forming deeper relationships with the worlds we inhabit.

His recent presentations include No.60 at APARN, with Pichet Klunchun Dance Company, Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok, Thailand, 2025); Wild Soma at the 2nd Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale (Saudi Arabia, 2024); Sonic Medi(t)ations at National Gallery Singapore (2023); Escape Velocity V (Solo Version) at Seoul Mediacity Pre-Biennale (South Korea, 2022); Redder at the 2nd Thailand Biennale, Korat (2021).



What happens when the human desire to predict weather builds into the power to will weather into the world? Tracing the departure from forecasting the weather to casting it into reality, *Casting Weather* centres the human relation to all things meteorological in a whirlwind of natural forces, weather deities, and technological interventions. As it threads through modes of observing, summoning, and commanding atmospheric elements, the performance turns into a speculative invocation of weathers to come. (Text by Anna Lovechio)

- **CASTING WEATHER** 2026, lecture performance, projection, approx 20 min
Saturday, 17 January, 4.30pm – 5.00pm

Kent Chan, *Casting Weather*, 2026, detail.

Commissioned by NTU Centre for
Contemporary Art Singapore
Supported by National Arts Council Singapore
and Mondriaan Fund



Kent Chan, *Casting Weather*, 2026, still from film, detail.

Anna Lovecchio We first worked together at the time of your residency at NTU CCA Singapore in 2017-2018. I recall that, back then, you were starting to venture into the intricacies of the tropical imagery. Your research looked at the tropical rainforest as a locus for alternative epistemologies to challenge colonial legacies and the cultural hegemony of Western aesthetics. Fast forward to the present, and your engagement with the tropics has spun a significant body of work. Can you unearth the roots of your thinking with and through the tropics?

Kent Chan As someone Chinese in a Singapore that's largely a migrant nation, I think there's always a sense of foreignness towards my own position within Southeast Asia. It's tricky to speak about something particularly Singaporean so for a long time I asked myself what is it that I could truly say that I'm a part of and I guess my answer was the tropics. My parents, myself, we were born and raised in the tropics (along the equator to be exact). I could say that I'm a tropical creature without feeling totally like an imposter. Though again, being Singaporean my experience of the tropics is extremely different to the rest of the tropical belt, so I had to be conscious about which aspects of the tropics I could speak of. I think I can speak of heat and humidity, and through them, the tropics' wider histories and overlaps.

● THEN THE TROPICS CAME Kent Chan in conversation with Anna Lovecchio

AL *Three Acts of the Sun* zooms in on the entanglement between your tropical imagery and the reality of global warming. The work speculates on many facets of a heated planet addressing environmental anxieties, climate migrations, and the obsession with "fixing" the problems we create through technology. What catalysed this critical merge between climate change and your tropical thinking?

KC I find the meanderings to arrive at this point rather funny. When I went for my year-long residency at the Jan van Eyck Academie (2019-20), I was often told that my exploration of the tropics was very much part of the discourse on the climate crisis. I, however, always thought that the tropics was my way to look at decoloniality and the histories and culture of the region I'm from. I can see why people saw my interest in the tropics as a part of the climate crisis, but I was wary of losing sight of my own interest had I gone along with the latter. It took the better part of the year for me to realise that maybe what I should do was look at the climate crisis through the lens of the tropics instead. That's basically how the series premised around a future global tropic came about. For me to look at climate in the broader sense, I would need the tropics to exist in the broadest sense possible.



AL The term ‘tropicalisation’ refers to the poleward movement of tropical and subtropical species entailed by the dissolution of the temperate zones due to climate change. For you, this phenomenon clearly extends beyond its climatic connotations.

KC I often think that climate is very much a determinant of culture. Not the only determinant of course, but a significant one. Which leads me to wonder what would happen to cultural demarcation if climate demarcation ceased to exist? Almost the entirety of the tropics was colonised and, in the process, the West had sought to supplant local epistemologies. Then, perhaps, global tropicalisation would be the best way to decolonise.

AL You once defined heat and humidity as “companions in thoughts”. You approach them not just as atmospheric manifestations of the tropical weather but also as epistemological entities and elemental agents. Can you expand on this idea of elemental companionship and how that informs your worldbuilding practice?

KC That the tropics were too hot and humid for Europeans to think, was something often mentioned in colonial journals documenting Europe’s early encounter with the tropics. This is a train of thought that I have a lot of disdain towards because of the subsequent air of unintelligibility that it cast upon the tropics and its inhabitants much until today.

I’ve seen museums in different parts of the tropics exhibiting and conserving their collections through means of vernacular tropical architecture rather than Western climate control systems. There are countless ways honed over millennia to live with and deal with the heat and humidity of the tropics, which clearly were not respected by Europeans when they started ‘engaging’ with the tropics. I guess this is a roundabout way for me to say that in many ways these threads of history have gone a long way in how I’ve come to conceive and shape the global tropic of the future.

AL The works in the exhibition share a speculative approach. They confront us with our descendants’ struggle to come to terms with the sprawl of the tropics across the planet. In spite of this futuristic angle, your films do not mimic the sleek visuals of mainstream sci-fi. Instead, your “future tropics”

are imbued with the intimacy of the vernacular and feel incredibly close at hand—as if these futures were already taking root in our present. What drives you to make the future feel so near and relatable?

KC Where do I begin with this?! Maybe I’ll start by saying something cheeky. In practical terms, I’ve never had the budget to dress things up as per mainstream sci-fi. And given the scope of my premise, I’d rather my work be expensive narratively than expensive aesthetically.

That said, if you look at my films, there’s almost a documentary quality about them, with the characters often addressing the camera directly. In that sense my works are neither fantasy-driven like popular sci-fi, nor particularly interested in science as most hard sci-fi are. Perhaps it’s a lack of imagination on my end using practicality as an excuse, but I am more interested in stories than matters of appearances. Also, I’m a big fan of Godard’s *Alphaville*, which made me realise it’s possible for the future that’s being alluded to to seem even weirder if the appearance of the present is retained. That said, one of the reasons I often work with electronic music is the genre’s long-held associations as forms of futurist statement. I must add that, personally, I find that the best electronic music right now really does come from the tropics.

I should, however, also point out that people often speak about Singapore as looking futuristic. I hate having to essentialise things through economic parlance, but Singapore is the only economy in the tropics that’s considered to be advanced. And you can see how some scenes in *Future Tropics* do in fact leverage on the “futuristic excesses” that Singapore could uniquely afford.

Lastly, I have a somewhat pessimistic outlook towards us as a society. I think the future would likely just be us making the same kinds of mistakes with better technology. You can say the filmmaker part of me is clearly more concerned by the future mistakes we will make than the technologies we will devise.

AL Ancient divinities and ancestral knowledge populate these works. Their appearance generates a critical tension between past and future connecting us to a spiritual dimension systematically suppressed by modern industrial society. How did you come to compose and interweave this global pantheon within your narratives? What are your thoughts on the role of these spiritual belief systems in mediating human relationship to a changing planet?

Kent Chan, *Future Tropics*, 2023, stills from film.

KC In many ways, *Weather Casting* was principally conceived during my residency in Seoul over spring and summer this year [2025]. While I was there, I had the opportunity to see a lot of different rituals. Primarily Korean, but also those from other regions of Southeast and East Asia. And these rituals and performances were often very moving. Even without knowing the language, you could thread a line through the varied forms, colours, sounds, and emotions expressed by these rituals, which emerges from the affective space that exists between the rituals' localities and their desired outcomes.

Dr Kim Hyung Kun, a folklorist, told me that the shamans who have gone out of vogue are those specialising in matters of health and weather. When I asked why, he said: science. That stayed in my mind. People trust science more than shamans in matters of weather and health. I'm not going to argue against that, but neither can I shrug off how real the web of connections those rituals possessed felt to me.

Within the works, I feel that if humans were to play god with weather, I'd rather choose the gods that are rooted in age-old stories than the technology we've invented to usurp them ourselves. The former are our connections to something we believe to be beyond us, while the latter plugs right into our own hubris.

AL Let's talk about the Sun, the host star of our planetary system, the enabler of life on Earth. Its light dazzles the characters in *Future Tropics*. Its energy is harvested in *Solar Orders* and harnessed through geoengineering in *Weather Casting*. I sense a persistent pull towards placing terrestrial matters within larger cosmic frameworks. What is the tropics' unique relation to the Sun? And why is it crucial for you to place terrestrial matters within larger cosmic frameworks?

KC The original (and astronomical) definition of the tropics is based on the region's tilt and angle to the Sun! However, within my works, the expansion of the tropics is solely in terms of its climatic boundaries. I lean upon the Sun and the many myths evoked to narratively ground the premise of a global tropic. Coming back to something I mentioned earlier: even if the loss of climate demarcation (that we cause) does mean the loss of cultural demarcation, the Sun will remain unmoved by it all.

AL From the vocabulary of gestures you created for *Solar Orders* and the print series *Signs*, the term 'solardarity' is particularly resonant for me. It seems to suggest the emergence of a strong existential bond out of shared environmental predicament. What brought you to embody this, and other powerful concepts, into hand signs?

KC Whenever I type tropics, it always ends with an "s" which suggest that the tropics is inherently pluralistic. Conversely, I can type "global tropic" which connotes that as a concept it can exist singularly. Something I particularly dislike

is how, due to colonial legacies, we see much of the tropics as divided into different geopolitical regions. It's not wrong, but it also means seeing the tropics as nothing other than inherently fragmented while I feel that there's definitely something much greater (than colonialism) that connects the tropics with each other.

Cultures might not always be shared, but they can overlap. I think the signs are a way for me to think of how the fictional future societies in *Solar Orders* could use them to communicate beyond the barriers imposed by spoken language. Particularly given how in many places the coloniser's language has long-supplanted local languages.

AL Ancient philosophers theorised that the movements of planets generated an imperceptible 'music of the spheres'. Orbital revolutions were thought to produce a music that wove the universe into a fabric of harmonic relations. The spinning turntable in *Solar Orders* is conflated with the fixity of the solar disc, and the film ends with the powerful plea: "Let the music soar!". What is the role of music in your tropical imaginary? What kind of sonic ecologies do you cultivate through your collaborations with electronic musicians and DJs?

KC I've briefly touched on this earlier but let me build on it. I'd often say that if your body moves to the music then your body knows. That said, I'm not quite able to elaborate on what I think the body knows. It's clichéd, but there's a way for music to connect people beyond language. And for a pantropical region that's much defined by heat and humidity, what's felt is probably more universal than what's seen. You can feel music, and when your body moves, it in turn produces heat and moisture through sweating. I like to think of a mix of electronic music from the tropics as both a form of solar and sonic alliance.

AL *Weather Casting* explores the shift from forecasting the weather to casting weather into reality through geoengineering. How will the work tackle the bold bid for an engineerable Earth? How will it engage ancient spiritualities and modern techno-hubris?

KC It's hard for me to say while still in the process of making the work but, as I have mentioned in one of our many conversations, I think we, as a society, are possibly the worse candidates to wield weather to our own desires. In the past, with the different deities and spirits that governed weather, weather itself was perceived as something external to us. We used to appeal to the deities and spirits, but with geoengineering we risk becoming our own false gods. It's also important to remember that we have already geoengineered the climate, and we're just figuring out how to reverse-engineer it. If I were to keep to the same mythological metaphors, then I'd say we're like orphaned godlings that don't know how to undo the mess we've made.



Portrait of Kent Chan, 2022. Photo: Diana Pfammatter.
Courtesy the artist and CCA Berlin.

Kent Chan (b. 1984, Singapore) is an artist, curator, and filmmaker based in The Netherlands. Working across moving-image, text, performance, and exhibition-making, his practice centers on encounters between art, fiction, and cinema yielding works that are porous in form, content, and context. He holds particular interest in the tropical imaginary, the past and future relationships between heat and art, and contestations to the legacies of modernity.

He has held solo and two-person presentations at Gasworks (London, United Kingdom, 2023), Kunstinstituut Melly (Rotterdam, Netherlands, 2021), de Appel (Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2021), Bonnefanten museum (Maastricht, Netherlands, 2020), and National University Singapore Museum (2019). His works and films have been exhibited in institutions and festivals including Liverpool Biennial (United Kingdom, 2023), Seoul Mediacity Biennale (South Korea, 2023), Videobrasil (São Paulo, Brazil, 2023), Tate Modern (London, United Kingdom, 2022), Onassis Stegi (Athens, Greece, 2022), International Film Festival Rotterdam (Netherlands, 2022), Times Museum (Guangdong, China, 2021), BIENALSUR (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2021) and EYE Filmmuseum (Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2016).

● KENT CHAN

He is the recipient of the Paulo Cunha e Silva Award and Impart Art Prize (both 2023), and of the Foundwork Artist Prize (2021). His works are collected by institutions such as the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Kadist Foundation, Rijkscollectie, and Bonnefanten Museum. He was Artist-in-Residence at MMCA Residency Changdong (Seoul, South Korea, 2025), Art Explora (Paris, France, 2024), Pivô Arte e Pesquisa (São Paulo, Brazil, 2024), Gasworks (London, United Kingdom, 2022), Jan van Eyck Academie (Maastricht, Netherlands, 2019–20) and NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore (2017–18).

Kent Chan
Three Acts of the Sun
18 January – 1 February 2026
The Hall, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore

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NTU CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART SINGAPORE

NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore (NTU CCA Singapore) is a national research centre of the Nanyang Technological University. From 2013–21, the Centre was unique in its threefold constellation of exhibitions, residencies, and research and academic education, engaging in knowledge production and dissemination. In its former exhibition hall, the Centre featured leading artists presenting their work often for the first time in Asia or Southeast Asia, which made it one of the few spaces in Singapore to present contemporary art from around the globe. Its ongoing residencies programme facilitates the production of knowledge and research, engaging and connecting artists, curators, and researchers from Singapore, Southeast Asia, and beyond, across disciplines. NTU CCA Singapore positions itself as a space for critical discourse and encourages new ways of thinking about Spaces of the Curatorial in Southeast Asia and beyond. Located within Singapore's visual arts precinct Gillman Barracks, the Centre's dynamic public programmes serve to engage with various audiences through lectures, workshops, open studios, film screenings, and more. As a research centre, it aims to provide visiting researchers and curators a comprehensive study on the contemporary art ecosystem in Singapore and the region.

ABOUT NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Engineering, Business, Science, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and Graduate colleges. It also has a medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, set up jointly with Imperial College London. NTU is also home to world-class autonomous institutes—the National Institute of Education, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering — and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N). Ranked amongst the world's top universities by QS, NTU has also been named the world's top young university for the past seven years. The University's main campus is frequently listed among the Top 15 most beautiful university campuses in the world and has 57 Green Mark-certified (equivalent to LEED-certified) buildings, of which 95% are certified Green Mark Platinum. Apart from its main campus, NTU also has a campus in Novena, Singapore's healthcare district. Under the NTU Smart Campus vision, the University harnesses the power of digital technology and tech-enabled solutions to support better learning and living experiences, the discovery of new knowledge, and the sustainability of resources.

Exhibition Opening Hours

Monday to Sunday, 12.30 – 6.30pm
Saturday, 24 January 2026, 12.30 – 9.00pm
Closed on Monday 19 January 2026

Free Admission

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Printed in January 2026 by First Printers.

Cover: Kent Chan, *Weather Casting*, 2026, concept image.

