

PHASMAMHAMMER

Born Gadigal Land/Sydney, lives and works on Gringai Country/
Monkerai

***Hininga* 2026**

tyvek, sinamay, acrylic paint, lycra, sound, digital video projection, air
pumps
21 minute loop

Concept Design: Justin Talplacido Shoulder & Matthew Stegh
Production: Justin Talplacido Shoulder, Matthew Stegh, Luna
Aquatica,
Ash Kok, Sebastian Nocelli
Sound Design: Corin Ileto
Lighting & Vision Design: Fausto Brusamolino

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Monash University Museum
of Art | MUMA, Naarm/Melbourne.

In Anitism, the Indigenous folk religions of early Filipinos—and many
still today—a life force called *Anitos* inhabits all entities, animate or
inanimate.

There are two types of *Anitos*: ancestors and nature spirits. Nature
spirits encompass the material and spiritual as a connected continuum.
Ancestral spirits merged over time with the surrounding environment.
Filipinos venerated the moon, the stars, the rainbow, the rivers, the
seas, the rocks and the animals. *The trees did whisper when the winds
passed through.*

The title of this new work by Phasmahammer, *Hininga*, is a Tagalog
word meaning breath and refers to the spirit or animating principle.
When a person passes away, we say their breath has ended. Anitos
are believed to dwell in the baleté fig tree which is thought to be a
portal connecting the sky-world, underworld and middle world of
humanity. Phasmahammer embraces this site of collapse and renewal
and proposes a space where creatures grow and die simultaneously.
The work is underpinned by animism in which aliveness extends
beyond the human, encompassing hybrid forms of life—spirit and
matter, animal and human, organic and non-organic matter. Nature
spirits here act as guides towards futures shaped by an ecopoetics of
possibility, and away from Western concepts of the Anthropocene and
apocalyptic.

Phasmahammer proposes a syncretic Anitism informed by the artist's
and their collaborators' ancestry, queer embodiment and diverse history
of practice. This mode of expression is born from a collective history of
community engagement and world building. Rooted on Gadigal Land,
Sydney, Justin Talplacido Shoulder and partner Matthew Stegh have
been co-creating events for eighteen years including *Monsta Gras*,
a politicised, avant-garde, community-led ball for LGBTQIA+ artists
2008–20. In *Hininga*, their collaborative practice enlivens the gallery
spatially and temporally and invites us to spend time with the cycles of
this animate, breathing landscape.

NATASHA TONTEY

Born 1989 Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Primate Visions: Macaque Macabre 2024

Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

Natasha Tontey's immersive multi-part work, *Primate Visions: Macaque Macabre 2024*, explores a reversal of power relations between monkeys and humans, as understood through the lens of Minahasan cosmology. Minahasans being First Nations people of the North Sulawesi province of Indonesia

Incorporating video with costumes, film sets, props and sculpture, *Primate Visions: Macaque Macabre 2024* creates a fantastical, playful environment engaging with the dynamics of primatology, ecofeminism, technology, environmental preservation and Indigenous cosmologies through speculative fiction.

The black-crested macaque primate, known as Yaki in Minahasa, is simultaneously viewed by the Indigenous community as part of the social structure of everyday life and as vermin, known for invading villages and stealing crops. This relationship is further complicated by the recognition of the Yaki as an endangered species, prompting international organisations to encourage their preservation. Tontey's work considers the ways in which worldviews can conflict.

Tontey's Minahasan ancestral heritage shapes her imaginative universe and her collaborative practice —most of the performers in this work are part of her Minahasan community. Through a reinterpretation of Mawolay—a Minahasan ritual in which the community wear monkey-like costumes to deter the yaki from raiding their villages and crops—the artist humorously explores the biases and connections humans share with their animal kin, envisioning a world where a deeper understanding between species is possible.

Natasha Tontey

Born Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Deep Time: Alter-Destiny 2024

wooden door, metallic frame, synthetic fur, foam, latex, door hinge, single-channel audio

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

We enter the exhibition through a cave door that takes the form of a yaki's bottom. The sculpture features in the film that appears in the next gallery.

The prehistoric cave becomes a site for rethinking humanity's origins and its relationship to primates. Tontey draws on Donna Haraway's text *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989) which positions primatology not simply as a science but as a form of storytelling. Haraway emphasises that humans, apes and monkeys belong to the same biological order, while questioning how representations of these relationships are constructed. Building on this idea, Tontey foregrounds both the affinities and differences between monkeys and humans, inviting viewers to reconsider these relationships.

The act of entering the cave through the yaki's bottom becomes a playful yet subversive gesture. It disrupts conventional frameworks for understanding power, evolution, history and knowledge itself, encouraging audiences to approach these narratives from an unexpected—and provocative—perspective.

Natasha Tontey

Born Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Creation is Fabrication; Intimacy of Strangers 2024

trolley, chair, cables, metallic stand, dacron, spandex foam, latex, synthetic polymer paint

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

This multi-layer installation recreates the experimental biology lab from the film set, run by a strange figure called the Cellular Being. The space is filled with medical equipment and soft, flesh-like panels covered in hair. These unsettling shapes resemble organs, tissue or cells.

In the film, several characters—including a primatologist, the Cellular Being and the yakis—take part in an experimental medical procedure. Set in this eerie laboratory, the procedure becomes a journey inside the body at a microscopic level. It also suggests a deeper exploration of the characters' inner thoughts and emotions.

As they each go through the process, they react with a mix of discomfort, fear and curiosity. At the same time, they are driven by a desire to learn more about the origin of primates. The experiments are shown as mutual and cooperative, imagining a new kind of relationship between humans and monkeys that challenges the boundaries between species.

Natasha Tontey

Born Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Imago's Chair 2024

chair, spandex foam, latex, synthetic polymer paint

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

Natasha Tontey

Born Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Primate Visions: Macaque Macabre 2024

single-channel video, 32 minutes, 47 seconds

Written and directed by Natasha Tontey

Production designer: Awigarda Penata

Sound designer and composer: Harsya Wahono (Studio Oposisi)

Director of photography: Aditya Krisnawan (Piring Tirbing)

Editor and VFX: Arief Budiman

Handicam operator: Natasha Tontey

Art director: Muhammad Erlangga Fauzan (Piring Tirbing)

Cast: Fredy Sreudeman Wowor, Sylvester Presley Setligt, Kezia Alaia, Ng Astinovya Etheldreda, Thereisje Ru'us

Wallpaper 2024

digital print on vinyl

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

Set in a haunting dystopian future, *Primate Visions: Macaque Macabre* follows Imago Organella, a daring experimental primatologist, who—alongside Xenomorphia and Madame Chauffeur—liberates two yakis from captivity. What unfolds is a surreal odyssey: a curious dinner fuelled by a mysterious pudding elixir, a journey through an experimental biology lab and a descent into a prehistoric cave where subconscious worlds collide.

As reality bends, the group embraces the unpredictable forces of evolution and knowledge, ultimately returning to Minahasa—where the true meaning of freedom awaits them.

Throughout their journey, lively and thought-provoking conversations emerge. The characters question the boundaries between species and consciousness: Does the hair on human arms echo our animal past? Do humans and yakis share a common ancestry? If our DNA is so closely intertwined, is an alliance between humans and animals imaginable?

Blending theatrical horror with surrealist comedy, the artist draws inspiration from late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century French theatre, infusing it with Minahasan cultural references and contemporary pop influences. The result is a richly layered work that challenges modern assumptions—asking how Indigenous knowledge systems might disrupt scientific thinking—while reimagining the boundaries between humans, animals and the natural world.

Natasha Tontey

Born Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

***Yaki Number 1* 2024**

***Yaki Number 2* 2024**

faux fur, foam, dacron, papier-mâché, phone cable, synthetic polymer paint

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

Yaki Number 1 and *Yaki Number 2* are two playful, yet conceptually layered characters derived from the black-crested macaque, known locally in Minahasa as yaki. Performed by Minahasan artists, the characters' costumes merge naturalistic and fantastical elements, combining black faux fur, a pronounced cranial crest and the species' distinctive pink buttocks—with anthropomorphic and speculative forms. The costumes draw inspiration from the *Mawolay* ritual, a Minahasan cultural tradition meaning 'becoming the macaque', where people transform into a yaki to enter a relationship with them.

Yaki Number 1 appears slender and fragile, adorned with elongated fur boots and a silver locket that introduces a delicate, almost intimate human association. In contrast, *Yaki Number 2* presents a robust and muscular body, characterised by a torso shaped like a mobile phone and an animated tail that lifts gym weights. These contrasting embodiments extend beyond visual play, offering a reflection on multiplicity, identity and the coexistence of difference within both macaque social structures and human societies.

Within *Primate Visions: Macaque Macabre*, the yaki figures function as agents of a speculative world-building practice that foregrounds interspecies entanglements. Their hybridised forms articulate a porous boundary between species, inviting viewers to reconsider relationships between humans and non-human primates while engaging with themes of embodiment, technology and cultural continuity in contemporary Southeast Asian contexts.

Natasha Tontey

Born Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Imago Organella 2024

cowhide-printed cowboy hat, faux fur, cotton shirt, denim skirt, keys, clay, synthetic polymer paint

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

Imago Organella is a character presented in the film as an experimental primatologist who studies non-human primates, including apes and monkeys. Departing from the conventional image of the scientist, Imago is dressed in cowgirl attire, marked by a distinctive cowhide-print hat. Her shirt, bearing the phrase *Primate Visions*, references both the film's title and the work of philosopher Donna Haraway.

Through this character, Tontey draws together global cultural and sartorial influences that resonate with Minahasan identity. Imago's cowgirl aesthetic recalls the vaquero tradition, which originated in medieval Spain and later developed in the Americas during the late-nineteenth century. In the film, she also plays John Denver's *Take Me Home, Country Roads*, a song that enjoys enduring popularity by the local community in Minahasa.

Imago Organella embodies the artist's exploration of cultural syncretism, foregrounding the ways in which diverse influences intersect and evolve. These visual and auditory references evoke the layered histories of colonialism and capitalism that have shaped the modern social and cultural landscape of Minahasa.

Natasha Tontey

Born Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Xenomorphia 2024

cotton cloth, lace, leather pants, spandex foam, faux fur, hair clips, shower hose, keys, clay, synthetic polymer paint, gloves, cable ties

Madame Chauffeur 2024

cotton cloth, rattan, synthetic hair, dacron, faux fur, ribbon

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

A key distinction between monkeys and apes is the presence of a tail. While most monkeys have tails, a small number—such as the black-crested macaque—do not, aligning them more closely with apes and humans.

Tontey explores this anomaly through *Xenomorphia*, a hybrid figure whose human form is extended by a tail constructed from bones and a yaki skull. Associated with the ceremonial dress of Minahasan warriors, the yaki skull reoccurs throughout the film, often depicted smoking and serving as a striking symbol of intellectual individuality. *Madame Chauffeur* is Imago Organella's trusted companion, who wears a cowboy hat spun from hair as she ferries bodies and ideas across unstable thresholds.

The name *Xenomorphia* signals the character's composite identity. 'Xeno' suggests otherness and resonates with Xenofeminist ideas that challenge fixed gender hierarchies through technology, while 'morphia' denotes transformation. Through this hybrid embodiment, Tontey invites a reconsideration of the divisions between human and non-human life, proposing a fluid and speculative reconfiguration of identity.

Natasha Tontey

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Cellular Being Chair 2024

hand-sewn vinyl, dacron, spandex foam, latex, synthetic polymer paint

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

Natasha Tontey

Born Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Sylvester 2024

plastic chair, dacron, plastic plate, spandex foam structure, latex, synthetic polymer paint, clay

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

Natasha Tontey

Born Jakarta, Indonesia; lives and works in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Epilogue: Conversation with The Veteran of Battalion Jin Kasuang 2024

single-channel video, 21 minutes, 22 seconds

Yaki Armchair 2024

sofa seat, faux fur, spandex foam, resin, hand-sewn upholstery

Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Audemars Piguet Contemporary

This work marks the finale of Natasha Tontey's *Primate Visions: Macaque Macabre*. Here a staged interview is presented between a group of yakis and Rens Sarapung, a Minahasan war veteran who served in Battalion R—also known as Jin Kasuang—during the Permesta (Perjuangan Rakyat Semesta, or Universal Struggle) movement in Indonesia (1957–61). Originally emerging as a protest led by military officers and civilian leaders in eastern Indonesia, Permesta called for greater regional autonomy and decentralisation. By the late 1950s, it had escalated into armed conflict between the central government and several regional factions, concluding in 1961 with a peace agreement that granted amnesty to those involved.

In the film, Sarapung speaks with visible emotion as he recalls the hardships of the conflict. He reflects on the fighters' initial decision to take up arms, the influence of foreign support and their experiences living as guerrillas. The yakis listen attentively and empathetically, engaging with the complex realities he describes while also reflecting on their own condition—simultaneously classified as endangered globally and treated as pests locally.

Their exchange moves beyond storytelling, creating a space for mutual understanding between human and non-human perspectives. It highlights broader tensions between protection and marginalisation, as well as ideas of civilisation and savagery. Although fictional, the interview is grounded in real historical events.