What is personhood? What is our relationship to the earth and the cosmos? This issue of The Newsletter opens with The Tone, a new section we launched in the summer of 2022. This edition of The Tone begins with four critical investigations on self and existence by Binna Choi, Nida Ghouse, June Yap, and Ala Younis, the four Co-Artistic Directors of the Singapore Biennale. Organized by the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), and commissioned by the National Arts Council, Singapore (NAC), the seventh edition of the Singapore Biennale engages participants and audiences in Singapore and around the world. While the program spans over a one-year period, its main event runs from October 16, 2022, to March 19, 2023, across a network of sites in Singapore.

The Study, The Focus, and The Region

The Study, our section dedicated to stimulating research and ideas, starts with a piece by John Smith, who reports on the current crisis in Sri Lanka. The country has gone bankrupt, social unrest has escalated, and it is unclear how the new establishment will rebuild the nation. This event by different individuals. However, in our discussions, it becomes clear that Choi, Ghouse, Yap, and Younis designate the biennale specifically as a space to reflect on the very idea of personhood, on living, and on relating to what is around us. They give the biennale a name: Natasha. By naming the exhibition, the authors aimed to extend “an invitation to encounter presence,” to ponder it, “ask what it is composed of,” and to “consider how it is felt.” Therefore, the first four pages of The Tone in this issue of The Newsletter extend beyond interviews with individuals to questions of social being itself. Their articles are about ancient stone tablets, sketches of photographs, a plot of land, and digital works. Each offers us new understandings of ourselves and the world.

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