

SUSANNE KRIEMANN



CLIMATES. HABITATS. ENVIRONMENTS. / THE RIVER — 242

With *Mngrv* (2020), Susanne Kriemann adds a new plant species to the botanical sciences. The *mgrv* emerged in South and Southeast Asia, where mangroves' rhizomatic roots, always exposed to the rhythm of the tides, get entangled with fishnets, plastic waste, and oil remnants. Kriemann imprints the photographs she took during field research in Singapore, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka with the plastic waste she found on location, using a chunk of raw oil picked from the ocean as a binding agent. Neither rope nor root, neither nylon nor plant, *mgrv* is a material

witness to the intertidal processes shaped by the forces of capitalism, colonialism, and petro-culture, which the artist and anyone engaging with the work are inevitably a part of as well. The work thus has a circular nature: Kriemann brings plastic waste found in Singapore, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka back to the EU, where much of it came from in the first place, and every time the artwork is exhibited, she supports the community-based efforts of Desa Wisata Pengudang in Telok Sebong (Bintan, Indonesia) to sustain the mangrove habitats in the Riau Islands.

This and following spread:
Susanne Kriemann, *Mngrv*, 2020.



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From Here, Any Now, *Mngrv*
Susanne Kriemann

The hybrid assembles, material rests,
and *mngrv* forms.

They are habitats, described in
magazines and classified in books.
I learn through online-sources about the
cradle of life. The ocean forest.
The mangrove habitats on the shores of
Bintan Island, southeast of Singapore,
accumulate an ever-evolving, mercurial
archive of modernity.

Searching for microplastics brought
me all the way here. And an imaginary
certainty that a former refuge, full of fairy
bliss and whispering spirits, has become
cyborg fires up my civic consciousness.
"Cyborg" is only a humble word for what
we encounter. It is clear that we have no
name for it, nor language to unmute us in
the *Gegenwart*¹ unfolding.

Then.
Flying, ferrying, walking,
slipping through the mud,
codriving, shutter releasing, screen
touching,
chatting about new seedlings and
posting adult Rhizophoraceae.
Polymers of all kinds are dismantling,
unwinding, un-enchanting the
mangroves.
Ebb and flow.
Mngrv, *grv*.



Thousands of tons of plastics released
into the ocean each year, for more than
60 years, cannot be reassembled, nor
reconstituted.

Ropesroots, leavesicecreampacking,
applelightbulb, slipperswatermonitors.
Botanyplasticity.
That is what addresses us, what glues
to us: plastics.

Polymersday, nylonsnoon,
celluloidsnight.
Every time I unwrap any food and throw
the packaging away, I am handing it
over . . . And by the corrupted routes of
the garbage industry, it is received by a
seaweed river, by mangroovy roots, by
tormalinish² leaves, until it sneaks into
every lifeline on earth.

Slow violence slips into the hand. And
being entangled across tectonic plates
sadly does not contribute to a common
narration of our primitive accumulation.
All the while, as I sit behind my
computer writing these lines, plastics
are composed, consumed, and released
into the ocean. And the edge between
the releasing and receiving bodies is
as sharp as a knife. The true cause of
us becoming plastic, as we live through
the sixth mass extinction, is no longer
cloaked up.

Wir verzahnen uns³ with mangroves
and industrial chemistry. We carry
our smartphones into habitats and
cannot take a picture of the habitats or
ourselves separately. We are already
documented in fish, in mangrove, in
waterairwind.

At the limit of sea and land, polymeric
layers in cellulose and cellular
coatings in nylon are calling us. Here
comes the polymeric fish, comes the
rosebabybluepastelyellowpolyurethane,
comes the bird with a stomach full
of nylons, comes the crab, comes the
mosquito. Here come the humans
parasitised by their microplastics
consumption. Embodied indexes of
our time rendered impossible
to photographically capture, for
microplastics enter directly into any
receiving vein. There is no way to
tourist myself away.
It expands into anything I duskiy view.

1 German for "present time".

2 Tourmaline is a complex borosilicate mineral,
its crystals are commonly black, brown, pink,
green, or colourless.

3 German for "we intermesh ourselves".

