

Art installation by DOKYU

Art installation in Shodoshima, Japan

In December 2024, DOKYU (see below) held an exhibit at MOCA HISHIO ANNEX in Shodoshima, Japan. The art installation, showcasing animals extinct from Singapore through specimen photographs, aimed to reconcile art and science and raise awareness about biodiversity research, natural history, and extinction. Utilising physical elements of the exhibit space (i.e., buildings that were part of Japan's dated infrastructure), the installation provided a refreshing (and artistic) take on the lost biodiversity of Singapore.



Photo credits: Ayaka Kawabata

SIGNIFY specimens

Selected SIGNIFY specimens were framed in windows frames and other parts of previously abandoned buildings. Some of the specimens featured are species extirpated from Singapore today, drawing similarities to the old houses that are also disappearing in rural Japan. This includes bird species such as the Orange-backed Woodpecker (*Reinwardtipicus validus*), Grey-and-buff Woodpecker (*Hemicircus concretus sordidus*), Green Broadbill (*Calyptomena viridis*), Garnet Pitta (*Pitta granatina coccinea*), and Great Slaty Woodpecker (*Mulleripicus pulverulentus*). These species are no longer breeding in Singapore and any rare visits from neighbouring countries often draw large crowds excited to catch a glimpse of them. Just last year, the sighting of the Great Slaty Woodpecker attracted at least 40 enthusiasts to where it was first sighted at the Botanic Gardens¹. Hopefully this renewed interest in Singapore's biodiversity will continue to grow.



Photo credits: Ayaka Kawabata



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About DOKYU

DOKYU is a group of artists, writers and historians with interests and backgrounds in documentary poetics, environmental and community-based art and history practices, performance art, and painting. Tapping into expertise across these different fields, DOKYU is interested in reconsidering the meaning behind documenting historical archives in open conversations and workshops. Their collaborative praxis commencing in Singapore (2020–present) has now led the group to gather in pairs, triangles and other shapes in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and now Shodoshima. DOKYU seeks to expand creative ways of interacting with historical documents through sustained interactions.



Poster by Yi Qian Chan

Text by: Yi Qian Chan & Tricia J. Y. Cho

Reference

1. Chin HS (2024) Rare great slaty woodpecker draws bird watchers to Botanic Gardens. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/rarely-spotted-great-slaty-woodpecker-draws-horde-of-bird-watchers> (Accessed 11 April 2025).