Nicole Tung Investigates Overfishing

From **March 20 to April 26, 2026**, the **Bronx Documentary Center** in New York will present *Overfishing in Southeast Asia*, a new exhibition by photojournalist **Nicole Tung**, winner of the **15th Carmignac Photojournalism Award**. The project is the result of a nine-month investigation supported by the **Fondation Carmignac**, exploring one of the most critical yet often overlooked environmental crises of our time: the rapid depletion of marine ecosystems across Southeast Asia and the profound consequences this has for coastal communities and the global seafood economy.

A drone image showing the largest commercial fish port in Indonesia, Muara Angke, where hundreds of commercial fishing vessels are docked, in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sunday, June 15, 2025.
© Nicole Tung for Fondation Carmignac

Presented in the Bronx Documentary Center’s main gallery, the exhibition reveals the complex network connecting local fishing ports in Asia with international markets. Southeast Asia today produces more than half of the world’s fish, making it one of the most important regions for global seafood supply. At the same time, its waters are among the most depleted and heavily contested. Through a combination of field reporting and documentary photography, Tung investigates how industrial fishing, weakened regulations and geopolitical pressures are reshaping both the marine environment and the lives of those who depend on it.

Tofa S, 29, a fisherman who recounted his stories of working on a Chinese-owned commercial fishing vessel, posed for a photo in Pemalang, Indonesia, on Friday, June 13, 2025. Both Tegal and Pemalang are known as hubs for recruiting laborers who then work on commercial fishing vessels for Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean companies.
© Nicole Tung for Fondation Carmignac
Working across **Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia**, Tung gained access to an industry that often remains hidden from

public scrutiny, particularly at sea where large-scale fishing operations take place far from the oversight of regulators and journalists. Her photographs and reporting examine the environmental consequences of industrial fishing fleets, the gradual rollback of protective regulations, and the growing economic pressure faced by small-scale fishers who struggle to compete with globalized fishing operations.

Indonesian fishermen unloaded various types of species including sharks and wedgefish, which are one of the most threatened species, in Tegal, Indonesia, on Friday, June 13, 2025.
© Nicole Tung for Fondation Carmignac

At the same time, the project sheds light on the often invisible workforce behind the seafood industry. Migrant laborers working on fishing vessels frequently endure difficult conditions and long periods at sea, forming a critical but largely unseen component of the global fishing economy. By documenting both environmental degradation and the human stories tied to it, Tung’s work reveals how ecological crises and labor issues are deeply interconnected.

Various species of sharks, some of which are endangered, while others are listed as vulnerable, hauled on shore at dawn by commercial fishermen at the Tanjung Luar port on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, in East Lombok, Indonesia. Tanjung Luar is one of the largest shark markets in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, from where shark fins are exported to other Asian markets, primarily Hong Kong and China, was bones are used in cosmetic products also sold to China. Shark meat and skins are consumed locally as an important source of protein. In recent years, facing heavy criticism because of the unregulated shark fishing industry, the Indonesian government has sought to bring in stricter controls over commercial hunting of sharks in an attempt to balance the needs of fishermen as well as the need to protect dwindling shark populations.
© Nicole Tung for Fondation Carmignac

Environmental Crisis and Possible Solutions

The exhibition also reflects on possible responses to the crisis. Across Southeast Asia, new initiatives such as **Marine Protected Areas**, community-based fisheries management and alternative economic programs are being developed to restore ecosystems and sustain coastal livelihoods. Yet Tung’s

investigation raises an essential question: can these initiatives keep pace with the accelerating pressures placed on the world’s oceans?

Fish mongers gathered to sell the catch brought in at dawn by local fishermen at the Tanjung Luar port on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, in East Lombok, Indonesia. Tanjung Luar on Lombok is one of the largest shark markets in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, from where shark fins are exported to other Asian markets, primarily Hong Kong and China, was bones are used in cosmetic products also sold to China. Shark meat and skins are consumed locally as an important source of protein. In recent years, facing heavy criticism because of the unregulated shark fishing industry, the Indonesian government has sought to bring in stricter controls over commercial hunting of sharks in an attempt to balance the needs of fishermen as well as the need to protect dwindling shark populations.
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By following the journey of fish from **local harbors to international supply chains**, *Overfishing in Southeast Asia*exposes the fragile balance behind a food system that

reaches consumers around the world. The project ultimately invites viewers to reconsider the hidden environmental and human costs embedded in everyday consumption.

Nicole Tung is a freelance photojournalist born in Hong Kong and a graduate of **New York University**. Over the past decade her work has focused primarily on conflict, human rights and the impact of war on civilian populations. She has reported extensively on the conflicts in **Libya and Syria**, the aftermath of **ISIS in Iraq**, and the **Russian invasion of Ukraine**. Her photography has been published in leading international outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Harper's Magazine*. In 2025 she was part of a **New York Times team named Pulitzer Prize finalists for Breaking News Photography**. Tung is also the recipient of the **Philip Jones Griffiths Award** and the **Carmignac Photojournalism Award**, a prize created in 2009 by French entrepreneur **Edouard Carmignac** to support long-term investigative photojournalism projects addressing global human rights and geopolitical issues.

Filipino fishermen unload catches of Yellowfin tuna, Bigeye tuna, and Blue Marlin, after being at sea for approximately one month, at General Santos fish port, the Philippines, on Wednesday, May 21, 2025. General Santos is known as the Philippines' tuna capital and hub for tuna fishing and exports of the products. The city hosts numerous processing facilities where the fish, primarily tuna, is packaged or canned for sale to the Filipino market and for export worldwide.
© Nicole Tung for Fondation Carmignac

The exhibition will take place at the **Bronx Documentary Center**, a non-profit gallery and educational space located in the South Bronx that has become an important cultural hub for socially engaged documentary photography. Since its founding, the center has used exhibitions, workshops and community programs to explore urgent social issues and encourage critical dialogue through visual storytelling.

Overfishing in Southeast Asia continues this tradition by presenting a powerful visual investigation into the environmental and human consequences of industrial fishing, encouraging visitors to reflect on the fragile ecosystems and communities that sustain the global seafood supply.

Exhibition Information

Overfishing in Southeast Asia – Nicole Tung
Bronx Documentary Center – Main Gallery
614 Courtlandt Ave, Bronx, New York

Dates: March 20 – April 26, 2026
Opening Reception: March 20, 2026, 6–9 PM

Gallery hours:
Thursday–Friday: 3–7 PM
Saturday–Sunday: 1–5 PM

Free admission.

Useful Links

Bronx Documentary Center
https://www.bronxdoc.org

Fondation Carmignac
https://www.fondationcarmignac.com

Carmignac Photojournalism Award
https://www.fondationcarmignac.com/en/photojournalism-award/

Nicole Tung Portfolio
https://nicoletungphoto.com

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