

DRAGONS IN THE WATERS OF BORNEO

POWER, PROTECTION & THREAT

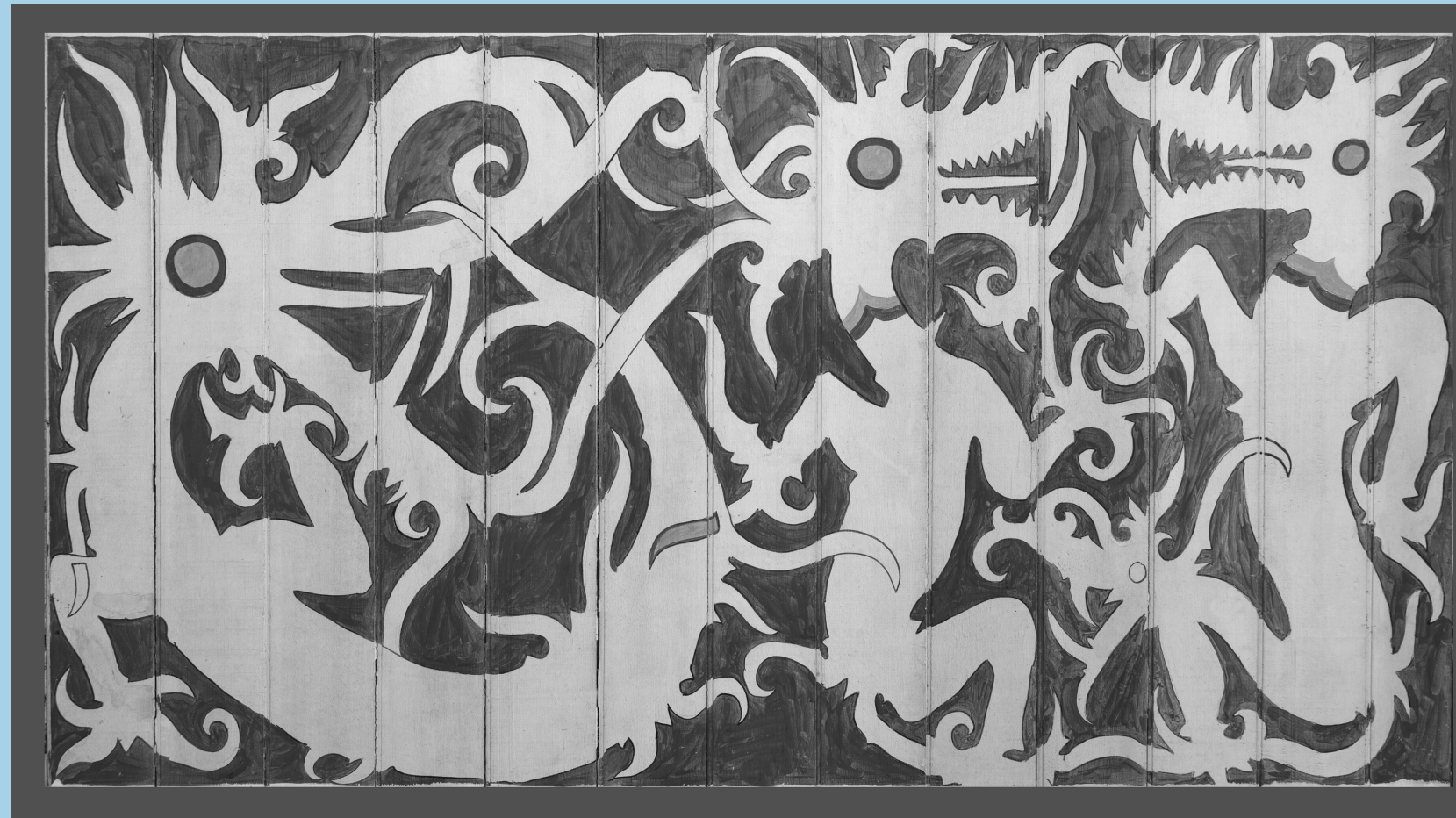
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11TH DEC 2021, SATURDAY

Beliefs about snake-like water spirits or dragons are ubiquitous in SE Asia, Borneo is no exception. These beliefs derive from east and west, from the Chinese “Lung” and the Indian “Naga”, as well as from an earlier stratum of beliefs deriving from both an Austronesian and a pre-Austronesian heritage.

These spirits are closely associated with water and its power to fertilize and to destroy; this is reflected in complex beliefs around their relationship with humans.

In this talk the focus will be on beliefs among highland Kelabit and Lundayeh, Iban, Kenyah and Kayan.



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Dr. Monica Janowski is a social anthropologist who's researched in Sarawak for more than 30 years. Her research interests focus on indigenous cosmology and the relationship between humans and the natural environment. In 2017, she began research on beliefs in dragons and watersnake spirits among all the different ethnic groups in Sarawak, while she held a research fellowship at the Sarawak Museum. This research is ongoing and is currently focusing on beliefs among Bidayuh, Chinese and Malays.

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