



Looking Out A SOLO EXHIBITION BY
NOOR MAHNUN MOHAMED

The Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 13 September – 12 October 2006

Studio 1 at The Gunnery (a series of nine paintings)

In Sydney I spent a lot of time in my studio cum apartment at the Gunnery (the building was a depot for armaments) in Woolloomoolloo. The room has two ceiling-high windows and it faces an alley at the back of the building. The window on the left looks out toward Potts Point and the one on the right to Darlinghurst and its vicinity. Seidler's apartment tower¹ in Darlinghurst sticks out prominently and is hard to miss. The all-white building changes into subtle variances of colour all the time, every day. The houses across the building are inhabited but look deserted, and the only hint of their occupants is in the changing curtain arrangements. On rainy antipodean winter days, the sky is always impressive, and from the comfort of my room, I could watch the view forever.

In my previous series of portraits, (to me) the painterly concerns are very similar to those of landscape. In this new body of work, like still-lives and portraits, landscapes do capture tangible objects in real time. In this series, I painted what was in the foreground, the studio window frame, something that was within my reach and touch, which was then a take-off point for the flight of the eye over whatever else was in view.

Sky Light (a series of eight paintings)

The *Sky Light* series is taken from Angela and Hijjas's Kasturi's Rimbun Dahan gallery in Kuang, which is there for a month earlier this year, observing the changing light through each day. The octagonal skylight a church. The sun goes down quite suddenly in Kuang – these eight vignettes are views looking up from the sun and then the trees disappear.

Swimming Pool (a series of three paintings)

Last year I moved into a new apartment. The building has a blue tiled swimming pool that looks very inviting. I was always going into the pool, just to be in the water. It is very deep and only shallow within a few inches. The pool is a respite.



Swimming Pool iii, 2006
Oil on canvas
122 x 122 cm

neath the entrance atrium to their house. I was working
s in the sun which floods the underground space, like in
ery towards the sky, in a sequence caught just before the



love water very much but I can't swim. In the beginning,
n the edge. In this hot and humid tropical weather, the





Sky Light vii, & viii, 2006

Oil on canvas

25.5 x 29.5 cm

The Infrequent Transit of Venus

I visited Melbourne for ten days. I walked a lot. I love the Royal Botanic Gardens of Melbourne. I was very intrigued by the Old Melbourne Observatory (built 1863) at the Birdwood Avenue entrance, which is in fact two connecting observatories – the 'Photoheliograph House' and the '8" South Equatorial House'.

The Photoheliograph is a special camera to photograph the sun, housed in the small domed building, joined to the 8" South Equatorial telescope-house. On every clear day for over twenty years, a picture of the Sun was taken within the dome and those 1700 photographic plates still exist. Both houses were actually built in anticipation of an astronomical event – the transit of Venus. As the position of Venus and the Earth aligned to allow observation of Venus passing in front of the Sun, 19th century astronomers were given a brief opportunity to calculate distances between the celestial bodies.

Effectively, these buildings were constructed for scientific observations undertaken during six hours in two days out of the entire 19th century. Whichever nation could calculate the distance between the Earth and the Sun could build a more accurate chronometer – a navigational device used to establish positions at sea – and thus expand their empire.

A transit of Venus occurred twice in the 19th century, in 1874 and 1882, after which the Photoheliograph was used to record the surface behaviour of the Sun, and the South Equatorial telescope for the observation of comets and minor planets. Another 122 years would pass before Australians had a chance to witness the transit of Venus, in 2004.

Closer

Coming from Kelantan, I drive up the west coast and down the east coast during the Hari Raya exodus. I take the KL-Perak-Kelantan-Kuantan-KL route – sometimes it seems monotonous but most of the time I love going through this endless very leafy green Malaysian highway-scape.

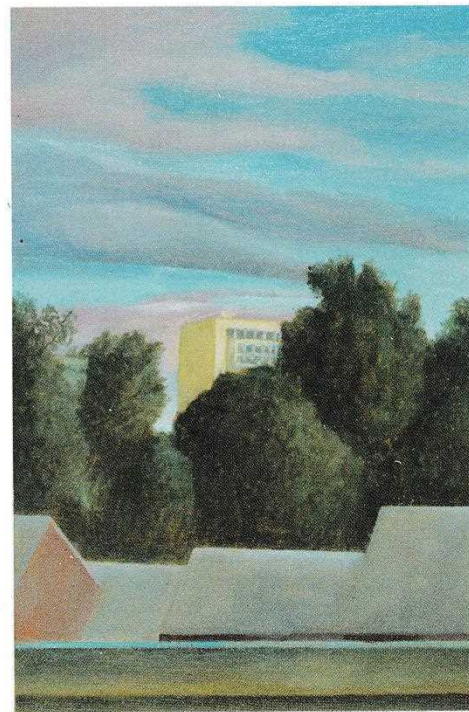
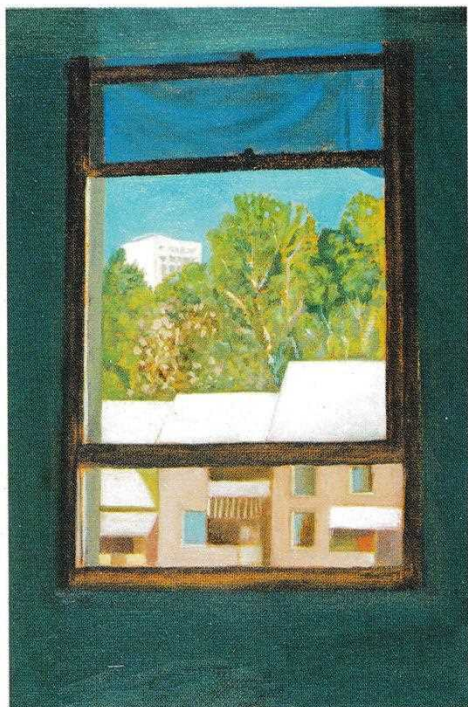
ENDNOTES

- 1 'Horizon Apartments', Darlinghurst, Architect Harry Seidler, Design/Completion 1990 - 1998

The Infrequent Transit of Venus, 2006

Oil on canvas

94 x 73.7 cm



Studio 1 at The Gunnery iv, v & vi, 2006

Oil on canvas

25.5 x 16.5 cm x 3

Noor Mahnun Mohamed studied at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Braunschweig (1989 – 1996) in Germany and graduated with a Masters in Fine Art. In 2000 she was the Malaysian artist-in-residence at Rimbun Dahan, a year long programme which invites a Malaysian and an Australian artist to live and work on a private estate outside of Kuala Lumpur. She was awarded the Italian Government Scholarship in 2003 and studied printmaking at the International School of Print and Graphic Il Bisonte, Florence, Italy.

In 2005 she was recipient of the Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur Visual Arts Residency at Gunnery Studios, Sydney, Australia. The third recipient of a unique exchange program initiated by the Australian High Commission in 2003, to give Malaysian artists the opportunity to live and work in Australia over an extended period of time. The purpose of the residency is to encourage cross-cultural links between Malaysia and Australia and encourage further partnerships between Australian and Malaysian institutions and organisations.

Noor Mahnun has had several solo and group exhibitions, locally and abroad. She lives and works in Kuala Lumpur.



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Thank you Mr. Ng, Mr. Loo, CB, Danny, Ben, Mr. Wong, Mr. Ho, Christine Gillespie, Arnd Manzewski, Albrecht Fuchs, Bill Maynard, Kevin Grace, Valentine Willie, Daniel Chong, Kwai Fei, Rachel Ng, Beverly Yong, Foo Chiwei, Angela Hijjas, Zoe Ali, David Jolly, Chang Yoong Chia, Malcolm Udey, Duncan, Rich, Rahel Joseph, Pek Har, Stephanie & Rico Dent, Christine Rowland, Mike, Mak & Abah.

NOOR MAHNUN MOHAMED

BORN 1964, Kelantan

EDUCATION

- 1989 – 96 Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Braunschweig, Germany
1996 Masters in Fine Art, Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Braunschweig, Germany

AWARDS & RESIDENCY

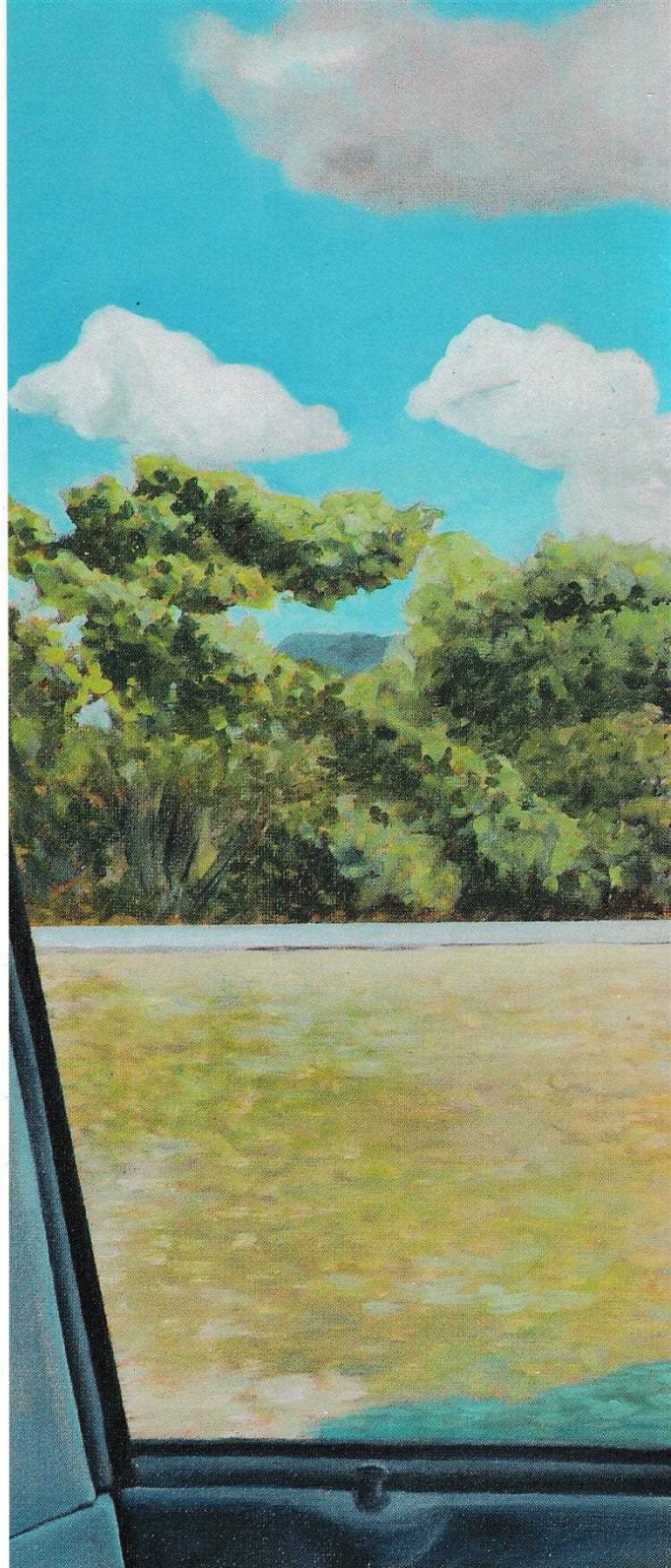
- 1995 2nd Prize, Alpirsbach Galerie Competition, Alpirsbach, Germany
2000 – 01 Rimbun Dahan, Artist-in-Residence, Kuang, Selangor
2002 Italian Government Scholarship Programme, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, studying printmaking at International School of Print and Graphic Il Bisonte, Florence, Italy
2005 Australian High Commission (Kuala Lumpur) Visual Arts Residency at Gunnery Studios, Sydney, Australia

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 Video Diva, Florence, Italy
1989 Sparkasse der Stadt, Berlin, Germany
1995 Galerie im zweiten Rang des Staatstheater, Braunschweig, Germany
1997 Kunst in Treppenhaus, Feldschlo chen, Braunschweig, Germany
1998 *Mysteries*, Angelucci, Kuala Lumpur
2002 *Noor Mahnun Mohamed: Solo Exhibition*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
2005 *Pictures of Me, Pictures of You*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1993 *Aufheben*, Alpirsbach Galerie, Alpirsbach, Germany
1994 *Werkschau Klasse Gorella*, Galerie der HBK Braunschweig, Germany
1995 *Überall*, Alpirsbach Galerie, Alpirsbach, Germany
1996 *Meisterschüler '96'*, BMG Halle, Braunschweig, Germany
1997 *5 x 5*, Galerie Peters-Barenbrock, Braunschweig, Germany
1998 *Of Allegory and Symbols*, Galeri Tangsi, Kuala Lumpur
1999 *Aku – Potret Diri*, Petronas Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
2000 *Love on Paper*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
Arang, Gallerie Taksu, Kuala Lumpur
Water For Life, Islamic Art Museum, Kuala Lumpur
2001 *Headlights*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
Ilham, Galeri Shah Alam, Selangor
Rimbun Dahan Artist in Residence, Selangor
Flashpoint, WWF Charity Exhibition, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor
2002 *Identities*, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Bara Hati Bahang Jiwa, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Laughter, iPreciation Gallery, Singapore
Painted: Southeast Asian Contemporary Artists, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
2003 *Urbanart 2003*, Melbourne, Australia
Games People Play, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor D.E.
Mostra di Fine Anno, Il Bisonte, Florence, Italy
'Il Bisonte agli Uffizi, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy
2004 *Portraits*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
Malaysian Art Now, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Paradise Lost / Paradise Found, WWF Charity Exhibition, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor
2005 *Spirit of Wood and Other Treasures*, Taksu Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Taman Sari in aid of World Wildlife Fund, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor
2006 *Signed & Dated: Valentine Willie Fine Art 10th Anniversary*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
Feed Me! An Exploration of Appetites in aid of World Wildlife Fund, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor



> *Closer*, 2006

Oil on canvas

43.5 x 63.5 cm



The Australian High Commission
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