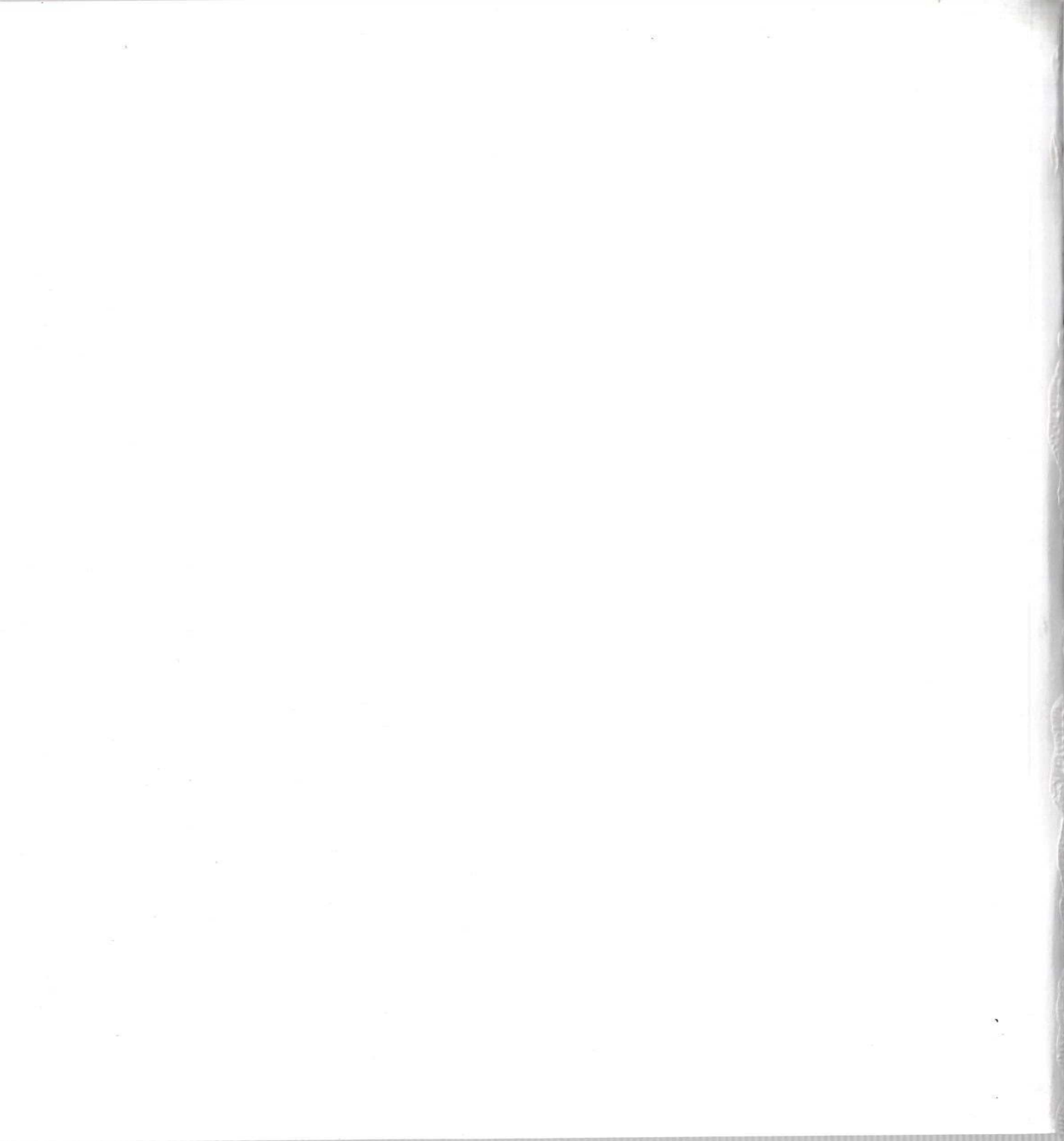


The background is an abstract composition of various shades of green, brown, and black. The shapes are irregular and layered, creating a sense of depth and texture. The colors range from dark forest green to light sage green, with some brown and black accents. The overall effect is reminiscent of a stylized landscape or a map.

tanah ayer:

Malaysian
Stories
from
the Land



***tanah
ayer:*** *Malaysian
Stories
from
the Land*

Selasar Sunaryo Art Space
April 29th - May 22nd, 2011

Selasar Sunaryo Art Space

Tanah Ayer:

Malaysian Stories from the Land

April 29th - May 22nd, 2011

Artists

Ahmad Zakii Anwar
chi too
Chong Kim Chiew
Chong Siew Ying
Eiffel Chong
Flica + Fairuz
Gan Chin Lee
Goh Lee Kwang
Jalaini Abu Hassan
Kow Leong Kiang
minstrel kuik
Sharon Chin
Sun Kang Jye
Tan Nan See
Vincent Leong
Yee I-Lann

Curated by

Eva McGovern

Text by

Agung Hujatnikajennong
Eva McGovern
Simon Soon

Published by

Selasar Sunaryo Art Space
and Valentine Willie Fine Art

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Fine Art

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Joko Suharbowo

Printed @ 2011

Sinar Agung, Bandung

Edition

500 copies

Selasar Sunaryo Art Space (SSAS) is pleased to present an exhibition of Malaysian contemporary art: *Tanah Ayer: Malaysian Stories from the Land*. Presenting artists from a broad range of generation and media, the exhibition aims to highlight the complexities of the Malaysian experience as negotiated by a relationship to the land and environment. Held in cooperation with Valentine Willie Fine Art (VWFA), this exhibition marks SSAS' effort to expand its mission and program on the regional art scene.

The development of Asian and Southeast Asian on regional contemporary art has been one of the foci in SSAS' international programs. Several exhibitions at SSAS, such as *Asia Video Art Conference* (2004); *The Wahana Project: Imagined Legacies* (2005); *The 22nd Asian International Art Exhibition* (2007) and, *KITA!!!* (2008) held in the past, represent a few examples of how this mission has been attained. Through the regional exhibitions, we often deal with questions of Asian cultural identity amidst the complex process of the 21st century globalization, through which we can learn about our current society, country and nation.

SSAS wishes to utilize this exhibition as a sample for research on Southeast Asian contemporary art. Although focusing on particular country, namely

Malaysia, the exhibition *Tanah Ayer* can represent a larger cultural map of the Southeast Asian region. Despite the cultural differences and diversity in the region, the variety of economic, social and cultural roles after the modernization, industrialization and the post-colonial status of the Southeast Asian countries has situated the region in a specific and common circumstance that may not exist in any other region elsewhere. Malaysia, in this case, being one of the closest neighbors, has a long history of interaction with Indonesia. The colonial history and shared native civilization of both countries are other common factors to consider. It is the cultural specificity in the two countries that should be seen as a trigger to foster exchanges and interaction through contemporary art.

SSAS would like to extend its deepest gratitude to Valentine Willie Fine Arts, one of the most active galleries in the region, for initiating this exhibition. A special thank must go to Eva McGovern as the exhibition curator; all the VWFA staff for their kind collaboration, and the participating artists for their great contribution. We do hope that this exhibition could trigger further cooperation in terms of Southeast Asian networking, dialogue and discourse.

Selasar Sunaryo Art Space

Tanah Ayer: Malaysian Stories from the Land

Valentine Willie Fine Art is pleased to collaborate with Selasar Sunaryo on *Tanah Ayer: Malaysian Stories from the Land*.

The exhibition expresses a curatorial view of the Malaysian landscape as a fluid, shifting concept for human activity often filled with contradiction. Through the lens of contemporary art it utilises the fact that in Bahasa Malaysia there is no distinction term for landscape, the closest being Tanah Air, literally meaning earth and water, that conveys the idea of nation and homeland. Manipulating a further textual device, the title of the exhibition deliberately uses a now discarded, more traditional spelling of the term: Tanah Ayer. By anchoring the exhibition in the past, it attempts to emphasise projected desires and imagined mindscapes around notions of space (abstract/general) and place (specific/local). This then leads into reflective and critical viewpoints of estrangement absorbing the realities of socio-political intervention and its affects on different communities. Organised around three themes: Poetics/Puitis, Traffic/Trafik, and Entropy/Entropi, these categories aim to present departure

points for audiences to consider various issues within the Malaysian context surrounding nature and nostalgia, human migration and environmental change as well as decline and social critique, to create an overall understanding of landscape as an artistic genre and backdrop/protagonist in human biography. The exhibition incorporates the specificities of urban Kuala Lumpur and the Malaysian countryside as well as the symbolic construct of landscape and culture across various media. Presenting human subjects and vast silent spaces, *Tanah Ayer* does not however, aim to be a survey of landscape genre itself but a cross section of voices from the Malaysian contemporary art scene. Elements of longing, frustration, technical skill and conceptual vigour unfold throughout, highlighting aesthetique and philosophical exercises as well as a critique of landscape as a concept manipulated by official narratives of nation building.

Although rooted in a geographical context due to the imprinting of cultures and politicised borders, the exhibition also incorporates wider global commonalities. Landscape as a genre developed during 16th century European painting as a technical term to literally and philosophically define the land

The Production of Place

By Simon Soon

Nationhood and its accompanying narrative, is often thought of as a manufactured concept or what Benedict Anderson describes as an 'imagined community'.¹ Malaysia despite its relative youth (gaining independence from the British in 1957) experiences the same political marketing approach to nation building. However, as a necessary strategy of resistance to such illusions, it is the nuances of the local that provoke and texture such abstracted spaces of national identity and culture. Although ethnically diverse Malaysians² have been tasked to imagine a harmonious multi-cultural co-existence of people as a singular unity expressed in the recent 1Malaysia political campaign, arriving at this national imagination is importantly filtered and questioned through the locality of everyday encounters.

Here the local retains its idioms, quirks and distinctions. It is a locus of history and of specificity that does not necessarily fall in step with the

broader shared, and perhaps compromised, vernacular of the nation. Therefore, exploring the landscape of Malaysia as a subject requires artists to work quite differently from how the modernity of Malaysia is conceived and projected within the space/place dichotomy. It privileges in this instance a way of negotiating one's sense of belonging on a range of emotional tenors that are broader and more complex than the brand of patriotism normally associated with nationalism.

The character of Malaysia's modernity can be inferred from how modernisation is attributed in history textbooks to the Fourth Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Given the epithet of 'Father of Modernisation', Dr. Mahathir's 22 year long prime-ministership from 1981 to 2003 saw him prioritizing economic growth and expansion as the main measurement of modernity in Malaysia through a willful erasure of the local and disregard for continuity and social belonging.³ The consequences of such policies created a type of disconnect between government and people, progress and culture, economy and history. The expansion of oil palm plantations that have endangered bio diversity, the deployment of culture solely for political and economic goals, the policing

of public spaces, increasing Islamic conservatism, and the stoking of racial sentiments for political goals alongside keystones of what is considered as 'progress', concludes that from government perspectives, space is ideologically assumed to come prior to place.

While space is commonly defined as that abstract condition or dimension through which the particular or locality "place" can occur, Edward Casey has argued that this Kantian mode of understanding perception belies that our understandings are not located within space, but rather we must already be in a specific place in order to perceive space.⁴

This reversal of values resonates on a methodological level with the artistic strategies that are featured in *Tanah Ayer: Malaysian Stories from the Land*. In contrast to the nationalised narrative of relentless progress, crystalised in the Wawasan 2020 (Vision 2020) campaign of the early nineties,⁵ artists are compelled to reexamine the cost of unfettered development on two grounds – by looking both geographically (the local) and temporally (in the past). Here the past and the place are not just setting of nostalgia and pining,

but are the very lens through which one's sense of belonging can be expanded in order to reinvent the now and the future against the amnesia of Malaysia's modernity.

Tanah Ayer (purposefully employing a more historical spelling) combines two words: land (tanah) and water (air), to describe the sum of one's concept of nation and homeland.⁶ This affiliation not only connects the subject to the lived compound of one's home but also its environmental complement. Encapsulated in this word is a place for civilization and nature, the built environment and the landscape that surrounds it.

The multiple layers of *Tanah Ayer* are refracted across three nodes that pattern the spectrum of locality. Firstly, through the poetics of place by considering the affinities between artists and the land; secondly, the traffic of bodies or the movement of people across geography and finally, the entropic dimensions of the Malaysian dream. However, these are not thematic arcs that are aimed at limiting the interpretative scope of each individual work. Instead, one should conceive them as inflections on the terrain through which the artworks' meaning can be read and are able to fluidly circulate.

Poetics/Puitis

The poetics of place applies to the affinities one emotionally invests in a particular locale. Its expression is couched in a symbolic language that is in romantic conversation with the history, myth, values and people of place. Here, the universal referent is rendered local, distinguished by a stylistic accent that develops its own flavor and tempo. Like the *Girl from Nanyang* by Chong Siew Ying, who looks out from within her reverie amidst the bloom of hibiscus, as a lyrical shorthand for the complex web of association when one centres one's claim to home.

chi too's *Maghrib Di Machang* captures this tonal rhythm by way of composing a cinematographic still life. The closing of the day draws the curtain of night upon the street peddler, the pulse of his individual world juxtaposed against the universal call to prayer. Here the floating balloons draw us into meditative contemplation on livelihood in a small town even as the spiritual charge suggested in the title pulls us towards a very different direction, that of transcendence.

Artists have also sought the poetics in the natural.

Whether this is through depicting the feminine beauty of the rural landscape through the wistful outlook of a demure Malay village girl as Kow Leong Kiang does in *Wind Blowing*, or exploring the surreal and spiritual dimensions of this landscape through the dark brooding world of Ahmad Zakii Anwar or through the very locality of the material itself as in the case of Sun Kang Jye's skillful sculptural transformation of local wood, artists have also grappled with the question of nature on many different levels as a marker of distance or originality where its reality and values can challenge the dominant narratives of Malaysia.

Yee I-lann's *Horizon* series projects the Malaysian dream on the vast expanse of an Australian desert landscape to acknowledge her own personal hybridity and to decentre both localities by examining them from a new horizontal vantage point filled with hope and contradiction.

On another level, I-Lann's *Malaysia Day Commemorative Plates* returns to mine the founding of Malaysia as a regenerative dialogue. Archival photos of the four signatory bodies: Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak, celebrating 16th September as the birth of a new nation charts an

optimistic conceptual horizon as they are displayed side by side as moments across geography activated by the promise of a singular aspiration towards commonwealth.

Traffic/Trafik

In the geography of culture, one cannot but consider the idea of arrival and departure, the movement of a body of people across the land and perhaps how this mobility creates new ways of seeing and understanding place-ness. It is an allegory of our negotiation with space through the particular and how we aestheticise it even as we are constantly moving and changing, by turn refracting the mutable lens, which must continuously give shape to a different picture stirred by the slightest change in one's affinity.

Study of Malaysian Modern Visual Arts in Landscape by Tan Nan See examines the typology of landscape representation. It charts a national art history on its own terms, through the miniaturising of iconic landscape paintings that calls for slippages and attention to an act of personally attenuated homage in order to construct an alternative trajectory to

national imagination. This litany includes colonial landscape painters such as colonialist Captain Robert Smith and Frank Swettenham; the founder of the Penang straits colony, early watercolourists Yong Mun Sen and Abdullah Ariff, abstract modernists Jolly Koh and Latiff Mohidin through to contemporary artists such as Sharon Chin who is featured in this exhibition. Presenting a specifically designed chronology the series presents both the shifts in artistic styles and concerns as well as the changing view of landscape.

In a similar sense, Chong Kim Chiew represents Malaysia's fraught history through a series of paintings of old stamps. The stamp represents postage as a modern communication medium, which celebrates pictorially the achievement of a particular state. In this series, Kim Chiew represents a Johore State stamp, a stamp of federated Malaysia with a map of the United Kingdom, and a faceless portrait of Malay nobility. Together they weave the fraught histories about connection and disconnection, reminding us that Malaya is a composite of different states whose destinies and movement of people within it are entwined by the history of colonialism.

In another work that explores the azan, Sharon Chin's *Pole Positions* grafts the spires of the Petronas Twin Towers, Malaysia's very own symbol of late-capitalism, with the Islamic prayer mat. The Twin Towers are often cited as an architecturally postmodern style that borrows from the arabesque of Islamic motifs, yet its verticality resonates much closer to the phallic ideology of capitalist mobility elucidated in Rem Koolhaas's study of New York. The prayer mat's orientation takes the tightly cropped twin spires as its spiritual compass and through it, questions the very values that have been set in place by the veneer of Islamic modernity that has driven much of Malaysia's economic progress.

In her photographic series, *Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer. rily, Mer.rily*, minstrel kuik props up everyday objects with her hand against the blue sky from her balcony. Among the objects we find a paper airplane, a mandarin orange, a toy bird and a jasmine flower. Extracted from a larger series which includes pictures of her family, her neighbourhood and household items, they provide us with a snapshot into her migrant background, her sensitivity to the everyday moments of her childhood home, even as an artist who has spent many years studying and living abroad in France.

What troubles this optimism is the racialised realpolitik of the present day. Gan Chin Lee's portrayal of street life takes us into the mamak restaurant portraying a coterie of nonchalant youths from non-Malay backgrounds. What seethes beneath what would normally be considered a portrait of hapless youth is hinted in the title, '*Balik! Atau Membalas Budi* (Go Home, or return our kindness!)'. Racist undercurrents that have labeled non-Malays as 'pendatang' or 'newcomers' shape a discourse that see these as parasitic communities that only have economic rather than national interests at heart. The mamak restaurant thus becomes the space of foreignness. Moreover, mamak refers to a mercantile class of Indian Tamil Muslims who arrived in the Malay peninsular during British colonialism and have since carved an economic niche for themselves as restaurateurs serving a selection of street food. Gan's painting is ironic in summoning these tensions to the surface of an otherwise banal portrait, compelling us to acknowledge the future of Malaysia's multiculturalism.

Entropy/Entropi

In a world marked by absence, whether it is human presence or activity, the monuments of modernity suddenly turn phantasmic, haunting us by their lack of vitality or signs of life, their incompleteness and dysfunction. The photos of Eiffel Chong illustrate this world. In *Monumentalisation of Death*, a construction site eerily lit at night transforms itself into a kind of modern day ruin by its inactivity. Similarly, *Mathematical Equations with Emotional Contours* inverts the logic of consumerism by highlighting an empty billboard. In moments where the urbanscape seems disused or dysfunctional, Eiffel is able to demonstrate the strangeness of a city, as a product of capitalism, at the point of its unraveling.

The dying hibiscus (Malaysia's national flower) sapped by the container of Malay nationalism symbolised by the songkok headgear in Vincent Leong's *meLayu (to Wither)* is an allegory of the nation withering under the burden of Malay nationalism, perhaps in reference to the UMNO political party. What was once a movement that led the independence struggle now resorts to inciting communal distrusts and racial tensions in order

to stay in power at all costs. This allegory is also narrated pictorially through Jalaini Abu Hassan's painting which references the fabled King Midas. The King is said to be able to transform everything he touches into gold yet the irony is that his greed in turning everything into gold renders the currency valueless.

In Bataille-esque reckoning,⁷ entropy is the force of formlessness, the loss of coherence and of meaning. The entropic agent is therefore not necessarily destructive or a negative property. In Flica + Fairuz's performative cinema, we see this agent at work as it adopts the language of abstraction to visualise the frenetic energy of our urban environment. Similarly in Lee Kwang's layered soundscape, a sampling of falling rain, trains arriving and departing, mechanical sounds and coffee shop conversations presents a contemporary symphony of Malaysia – its fragmentation, multidirectional trajectories, and evocation of the uncertainty border on schizophrenic.

While many would perceive entropy as a pessimistic note to conclude *Tanah Ayer* with there is also found in interpretative dimension of what Robert Smithson once called an 'all encompassing

sameness⁸, a new register of the sublime. In the patient manner in which artists document the wilting of narrative, we find within the larger ossified and glorified narrative of Malaysia its own time bomb, perhaps some acknowledgement of its destructive dimension is a step towards reconciliation and amelioration.

By interrogating the symbolic and aesthetic values of place as well as the individual attachment to place and identity, the exhibition is able to present complex artistic responses to politics, economic progress and the shifting cultural values of race, religion and class. Resisting against oppositional flows that threaten to pull apart the fabric of coherence, of meaning, we turn to the Tanah Ayer as the site we experience before we dream, the place that comes before the space of our imagination.

Simon Soon is currently completing a PhD in art history at the University of Sydney. His research focuses on social practice in Southeast Asia art from the 70s - 90s.

(Endnotes)

- 1 See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso (New Edition), 2006.
- 2 The racial demographics of Malaysia are roughly: 54% Malay, 26.5% Chinese, and 7.5% Indian, with the remaining 12% a mixture of indigenous and other ethnicities.
- 3 See Barry Wain, *Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.
- 4 Edward Casey, 'How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena' in *Senses of Place*, S. Feld and KH Basso (Eds.), Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996. pp. 13-52.
- 5 See Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, *The Way Forward*, presented at the Malaysian Business Council, (<http://www.wawasan2020.com/vision/index.html>)
- 6 Tanah Ayer is also an older spelling for what is commonly spelled as Tanahair today. This usage resonates with the strategies of artists that are not only looking at landscape but also into the Malaysia's past.
- 7 See Yves Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formlessness: A User's Guide*, Zone Books, 1997
- 8 Robert Smithson, 'Entropy and New Monuments' in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, Jack Flam (ed), University of California Press, 1996

POETICS

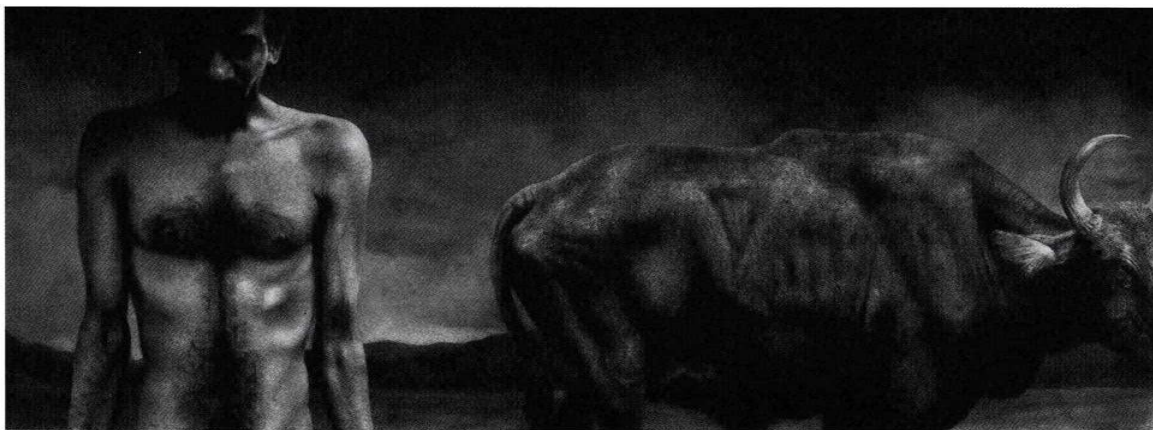


Ahmad Zakii Anwar

(b. 1955) currently based in Johor Baru.

Ahmad Zakii Anwar is known for his sophisticated approach to line and form. He began his career as a graphic artist before turning to fine art practice. His paintings and drawings have been celebrated both locally and throughout Southeast Asia; speaking of the beauty and power of the human body and spirit, of traditional Malaysian and ancient cultures, whilst remaining rooted in the mode of contemporary life.

A graduate of the School of Art and Design, MARA Institute of Technology (known now as UiTM), Selangor, Malaysia, Zakii has exhibited extensively since his first solo show in 1997. His recent solos include: *Being*, NUS Museum, National University of Singapore, Singapore, 2009; *Disclosure: A Mid-Career Survey*, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2008; *Ahmad Zakii Anwar: Paintings, Drawings & Prints 1991-2007*, Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Singapore, 2007; *Subliminal*, The Drawing Room, Manila and Numthong Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand, 2006, and; *Primordial Dream*, Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Singapore, 2005.



Gerhana

charcoal on paper, 71 x 198 cm, 2011

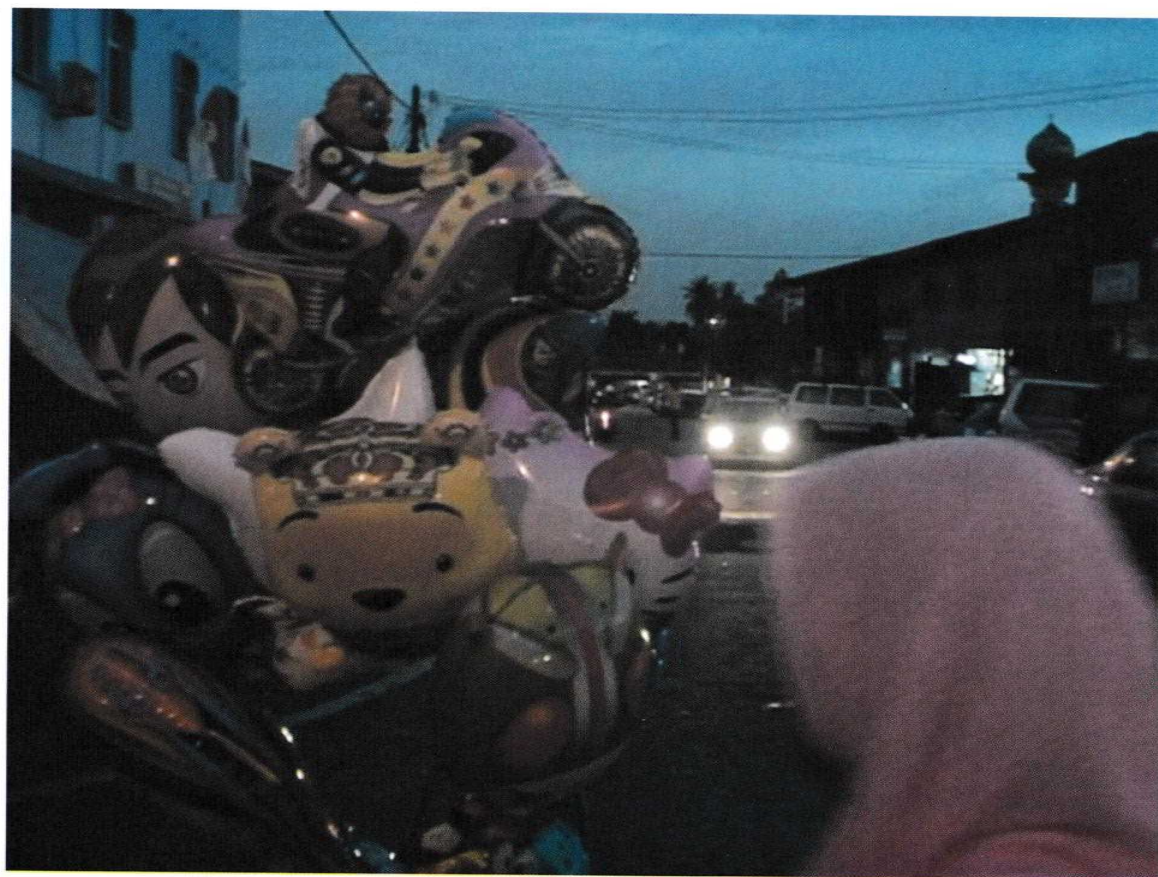
chi too

(b. 1981) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

chi too has recently shifted his focus from film making to fine art practice using humour, satire and visual poetics to create a diverse system of objects that reveal his own never ending emotional struggles. Working in video, installation and sculpture, his practice rejects socio- political statements for personal reflections and frustrations. His experimental music, poetry reading and playful self-organised public art projects such as Main Dengan Rakyat, Everything's Going to Be Alright and Lepark display a genuine need to engage with space and audiences that form part of his complex multifaceted approach to practice.

Graduating with a Diploma in Mass Communications from KDU College, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2003, chi too has worked on numerous film and sound engineering projects and wrote, directed and edited the film *Membaca Kafka Di Amerika*, which was screened as part of the Bombay Sapphire Art Projects 2008, at the 51st Oberhasen Short Film Festival, Germany, in 2008. Since then he has been developing his fine art practice and has participated in exhibitions and performance events. chi too is part of The Best Art Show in the Universe; a loose collective of art practitioners, whom together, have exhibited work in *Al Kisah, Once Upon a Time in Malaysia*, MAP, KL, 2010 and have organised their own group show of the same name at 67 Tempinis Satu, KL, in 2009. chi too has also participated in the International Documentary Fellowship, George Washington University, USA, 2008 and, has most recently participated in the group show *3 Young Contemporaries* held at VWFA KL, 2010.







page before

You and Me Put The 'You' and 'Me' in 'You and Me' (part 2 of many)

a.k.a. Where Are You On A Day Like Today

video, 2 mins 53 secs, 2010

left

Longing #8: Maghrib di Machang

video, 3 mins 11 secs, 2010

right

Longing #2

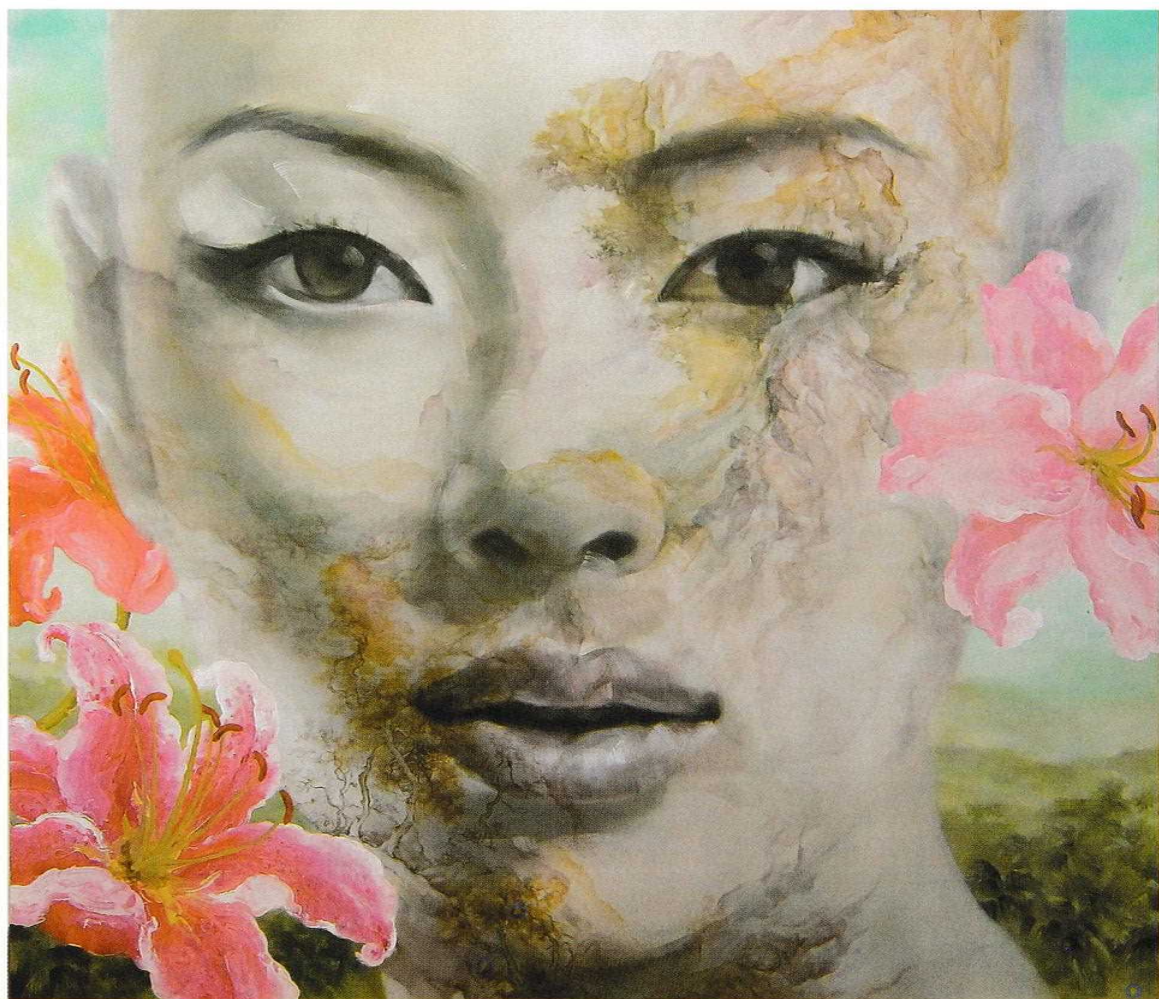
video, 3 mins 29 secs, 2009

Chong Siew Ying

(b. 1969) currently based in between Paris and Kuala Lumpur.

Chong Siew Ying remains a dedicated aesthete, grounded in the painterly traditions of both East and Western sensibilities. Well known for her strong gestural brush strokes and expressive compositional arrangements Siew Ying continues to develop new techniques and approaches to subject matter that communicate a distinct visual poetry. A lyrical and elegant painter, her work is profoundly emotive, embracing broad themes such as nature, human psychology and emotions. As a multi-centred artist, travel and place continue to be an important influence on her practice. A true grand voyageur she has conducted epic journeys overland from Europe to Asia absorbing the cultures and landscapes of multiple places along the way that emerge in her work through a strong understanding of space and the human connection to home and culture.

Siew Ying left Malaysia after studying at a local art college and enrolled at L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Versailles, France, in 1991. After graduating, she studied and taught engraving at Atelier 63 in Paris, whilst working as an artist and exhibiting in the city. She returned to Malaysia in 1998, holding her first solo show in Kuala Lumpur that year. She was artist-in-residence at Rimbun Dahan in 1999 and at the Vermont Studio Centre in the United States in 2001. Her career has spanned a large number of solo and group exhibitions in Malaysia, as well as across Asia, Australia, Europe and the USA. Her most recent solo show *Infinity*, takes place at Valentine Willie Fine Art Singapore, 2011.



The Girl from Nanyang

oil on canvas, 150 x 173 cm, 2009

Kow Leong Kiang

(b.1970) currently based in Rawang.

Kow Leong Kiang is well known for a visual vocabulary that includes ideas about memory, poetic realism and nostalgia, mediated by a connection to the land, human emotion, portraiture as well as a subtle political/social consciousness within the Malaysian context.

Kow has garnered much attention and success since winning the Grand Prize at the Philip Morris ASEAN Art awards in 1998. He has held seven solo exhibitions to date, notably: *Intimate Collisions*, VWFA KL, 2010; *Jogya Constellation*, Tembi Contemporary, Yogyakarta, 2009; *Other People*, VWFA KL, 2007; *Silent Conversations*, VWFA KL, 2005; *Human*, Red Mill Gallery Vermont, USA and *Floating World*, VWFA KL, 2003. He has also participated in group exhibitions in Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Vietnam including *Headlights*, VWFA Singapore, 2009; *Tenggara: Contemporary Paintings from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines*, Novus Contemporary Urban Centre, Liverpool, UK, 2008; and *Continuities: Contemporary Art of Malaysia at the turn of the 21st Century*, Guangdong Museum of Art, China, 2004. In 2008 he completed a residency with VWFA and Tembi Contemporary in Yogyakarta and was in 2004 awarded the Asian Artist Fellowship by the 11th Annual Freeman Foundation, where he was an artist in residence at the Vermont Studio Centre in the USA.



Wind Blowing

oil on linen, 120 x 120 cm, 2011

Sun Kang Jye

(b.1978) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

Inspired by the redemptive message of his faith, Sun Kang Jye scavenges and transforms discarded and unwanted wood, abandoned by the Kuala Lumpur City Council, into sensitive contemporary sculpture; incorporating and exploiting the form and defects of his medium to add character to his works.

Sun graduated with a Diploma in Art and Design from the Kuala Lumpur College of Art in 2000, majoring in Oil Painting. However, his interest in 3-dimensional art, together with his upbringing in a Malaysian kampung; where wood is a precious material, combined to stimulate his practice in the media of wood sculpture. He was the winner of the Starhill Gallery Arts Festival Visual Arts Award, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2010.



I've Dyed my Hair into Gold
wooden sculpture, 38 x 14 x 73 cm, 2008

Yee I-Lann

(b. 1971) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

Yee I-Lann's work interrogates the impact of political structures on the collective and individual experience, the cultural nexus of the Southeast Asian archipelago's seas, as well as Malaysia's communal memory.

She received her BA in Visual Arts from the University of South Australia, Adelaide in 1992, majoring in photography and cinematography. She represented Malaysia at the Third Asia-Pacific Triennial, 1999, held at the Queensland Art Gallery. Her solo exhibitions include: *Fluid World*, The Contemporary Art Centre, South Australia, 2011, *Boogeyman*, Valentine Willie Fine Art KL and Map KL, 2010 as well as *Horizon*, Valentine Willie Fine Art KL, 2003. She has taken part in international exhibitions such as *Contemporary Commonwealth* at the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia, 2006; *Thermocline of Art: New Asian Waves*, ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art, Germany, 2007; *New Nature*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Zealand, 2007, and; the recent Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, 2009.



top

Horizon (Horizon Series)

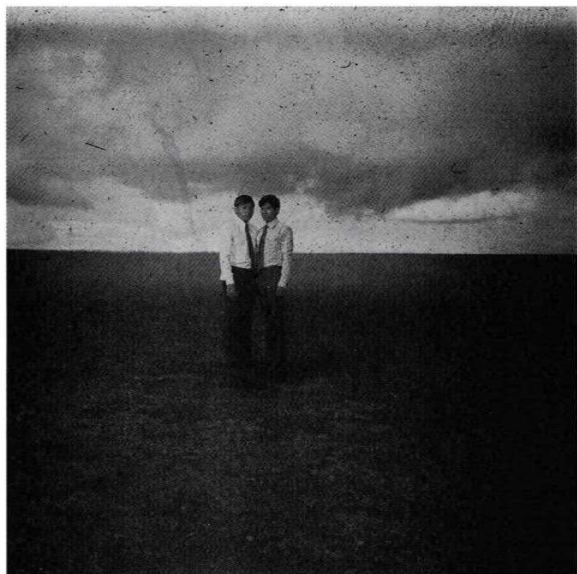
digital C-type print, 91.5 x 183 cm, 2003

bottom

Malaysia Day Commemorative Plates (Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak, Singapore).

In collaboration with Royal Selangor

pewter, d 25.4 cm (each), 2010



top

Ke Puncak

digital C-type print, 45.5 x 45.5 cm, 2003

bottom

Welcome

digital C-type print, 45.5 x 45.5 cm, 2003

TRAFFIC



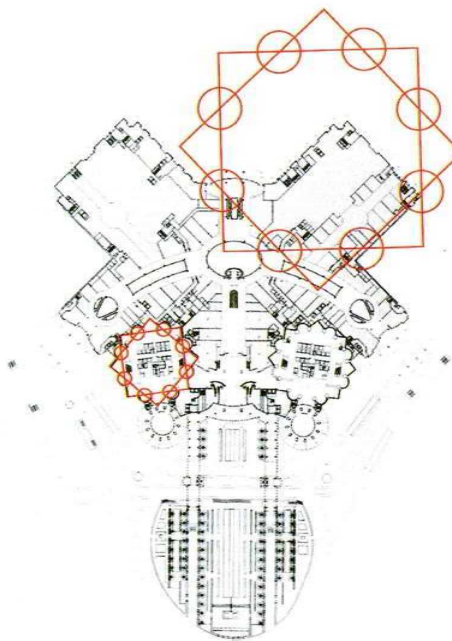
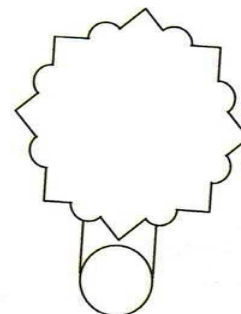
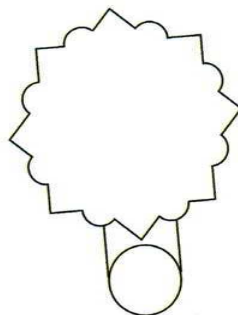
Sharon Chin

(b.1980) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

Working with text and sculpture especially in site-specific installations, Sharon Chin's works look at how we negotiate geography, history, human relations and language in the contemporary imagination. Her video and performance work explore the possibilities of art as a communication strategy.

Sharon Chin obtained a BFA from the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Australia in 2003. As well as exhibiting in numerous group exhibitions, she has had 3 solo shows: *Sensors: Banned Books and Other Monsters*, The Annexe Gallery Central Market, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2007; *Fourth World*, Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2006 and *Boats & Bridges*, Reka Art Space, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2005. Her work is currently part of *Negotiating Home, History and Nation: 2 Decades of Contemporary Art from SE Asia*, Singapore Art Museum. In addition to her art practice, she writes and curates and is also co-founder and managing editor of ARTERI (www.arterimalaysia.com), a website dedicated to arts and culture in Malaysia and Southeast Asia.

Proposal for *Selamat Datang Malaysia* Installation concepts



Top: Oriental carpet and floorplate design
Bottom left: Layout plan of Petronas towers and surrounding site. Floorplate based on Islamic design principles, built up from two interlocking squares
Bottom: Petronas towers, aerial view

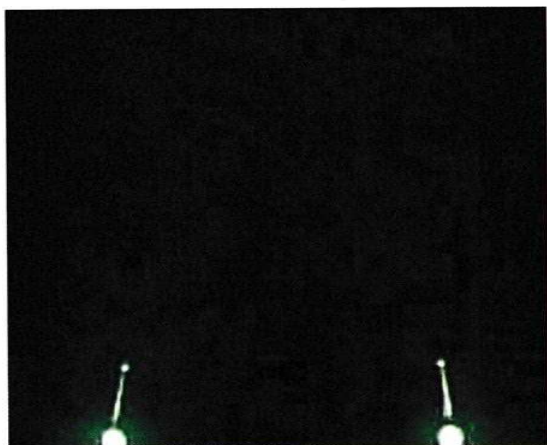


Pole Positions



Pole Positions

installation with mobile phone video, 15 mins, 2007



Chong Kim Chiew

(b. 1975) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

Using maps and, the symbols and images of nationhood, Chong Kim Chiew uses his paintings to explore and question the arbitrary demarcations of national borders and the privileging of objects; to explore concepts of identity, belonging and, nation-building.

Chong Kim Chiew graduated in 2001 from the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Art in China, majoring in oil painting. Based in Kuala Lumpur, he focuses mainly on his art practice as well as teaching at a local art college. He has had two solo exhibitions: *Isolation House* at Rumah Air Panas, Kuala Lumpur, 2005, and; *Magnitude*, organized by VWFA Kuala Lumpur, at 67 Jalan Tempinis, Bangsar, 2009.



The Stamp of Misreading
 acrylic on paper, 122 x 91 cm, 2005



The Picture of Misreading #2
acrylic on paper, 110 x 91 cm, 2006



The Picture of Misreading #3
acrylic on paper, 110 x 91 cm, 2006

Gan Chin Lee

(b. 1977) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

Emotional detachment and physical fragmentation repeatedly occur across Gan Chin Lee's distinctly Malaysian tableaux. Subtle disturbances through first person perspective and multi paneled images punctuate his narrative sequences to become a collage of painterly sensibility and social observation. Negotiated by the artist's own personal experiences, his genre paintings reveal the frustrations and hopes of the contemporary Malaysian condition.

Gan Chin Lee obtained a Diploma in Illustration from the One Academy of Communication Design, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia in 1998 and went on to obtain a Master Degree in Fine Art from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, China in 2008. He has exhibited in numerous group exhibitions: *Tempo*, The Gallery Star Hill, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2010; *Art Triangle Project: The Gray Zone Project*, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2010; *The Energy Trap*, Valentine Willie Fine Art at The Annexe Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2010 and; the 14th Da Dun Fine Arts Exhibition, Tai Chung City, Taiwan, 2009. In 2010 he was a finalist for the Starhill Gallery Visual Art Award (VAA) and in 2009 received the Malaysian Emerging Artist Award, which led to his first solo in 2010 at Galeri Chandan, Kuala Lumpur entitled *Fragment Defragmentation*.



Balik! Atau Membalas Budi

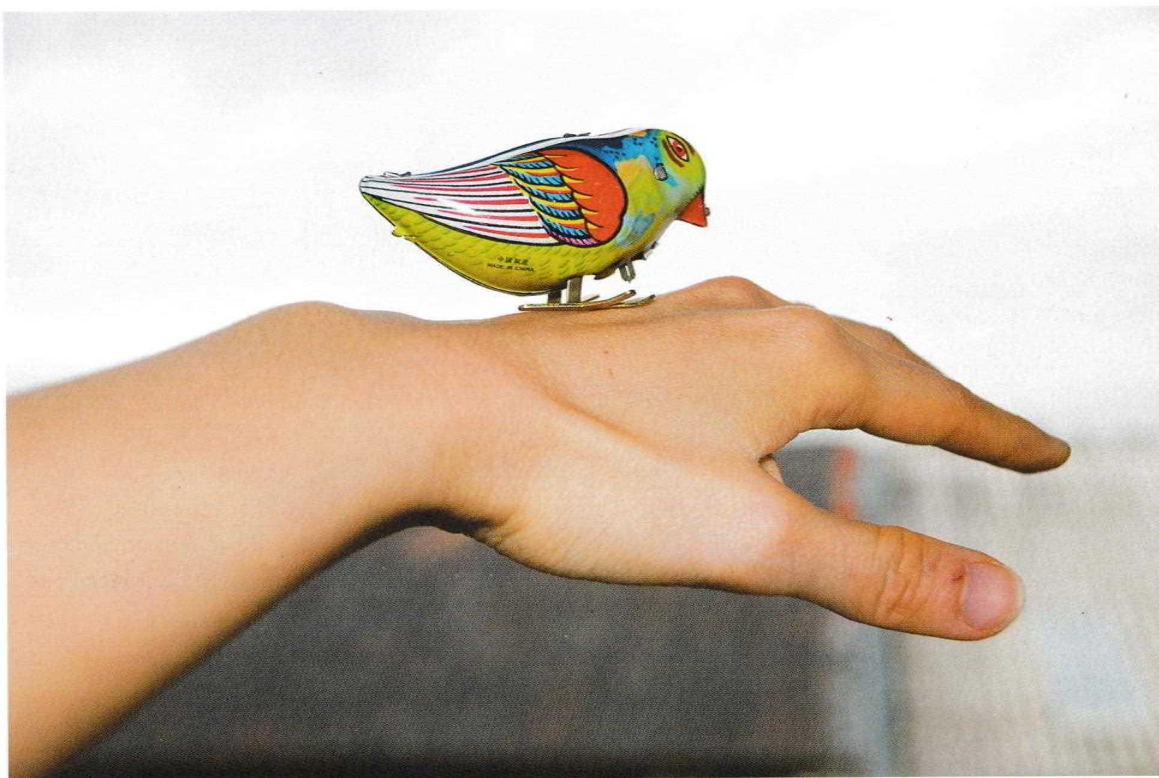
oil, acrylic on jute, 152 x 152 cm, 2011

minstrel kuik

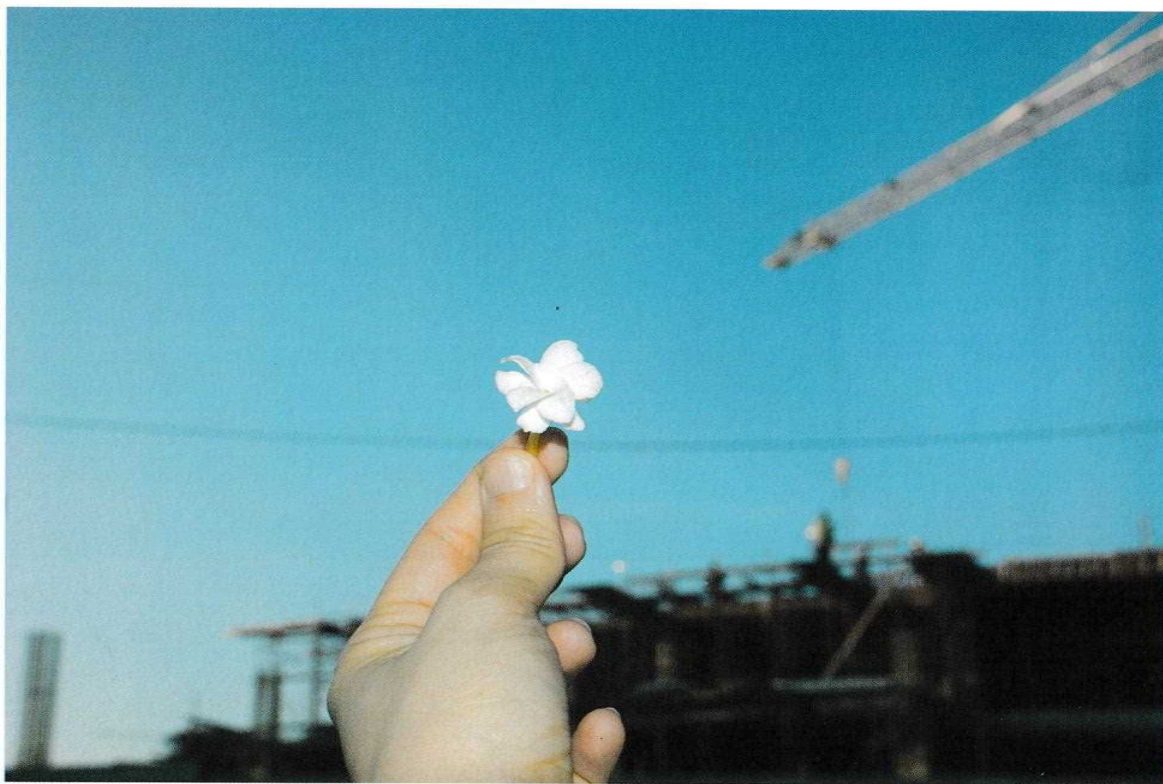
(b.1976) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

Inspired by the need to understand, deconstruct and reinvent notions of home, cultural identity and photography itself minstrel kuik takes multiple images of her family and hometown to create images which are displayed in various ways and formations that question both identity and formalist photographic principles.

minstrel kuik graduated with a European Masters of Fine Arts in photography with felicitation of jury from the École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie, France. Her most recent solo exhibition *See the Water* toured Kuala Lumpur in 2008, stopping by at the Alliance Francaise, The Gallery at Taylors University College and, Help University. Her recent group shows include *3 Young Contemporaries*, Valentine Willie Fine Art Kuala Lumpur, 2010; *International Discoveries II*, FotoFost Houston, USA, 2009; *Secured Area*, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2009 and *Entry Points*, 1948 ArtSpace, Seri Kembangan, Malaysia, 2008. minstrel also lectures part-time at New Era College, Kajang.



From Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily (bird)
digital C-type photo paper glossy, 102 x 110 cm, 2008



left

From Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily (flower)

digital C-type photo paper glossy, 102 x 110 cm, 2008 - on going

top right

From Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily (paper plane)

digital C-type photo paper glossy, 102 x 110 cm, 2008 - on going

bottom right

From Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily, Mer.rily (mandarin)

digital C-type photo paper glossy, 102 x 110 cm, 2008 - on going

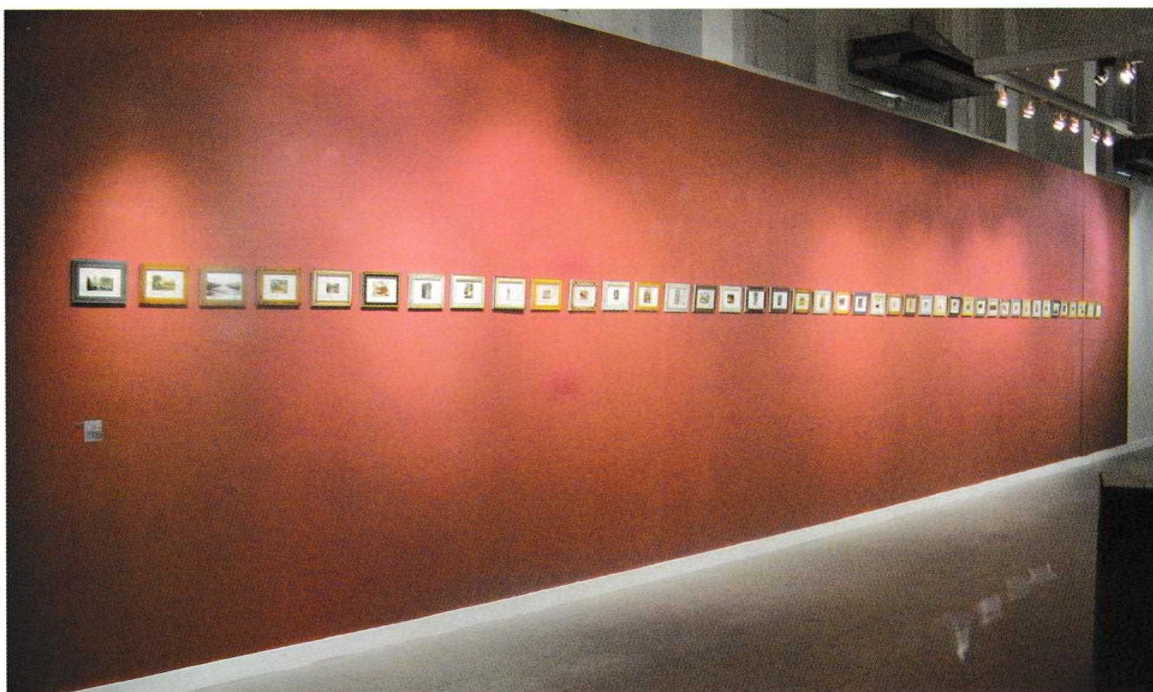


Tan Nan See

(b.1979) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

A photographer by training, Tan Nan See's practice has evolved and broadened to include painting. Such as in her recent on-going work; where she appropriates common, tourist postcards upon which she paints, creating and curating her own personal, intimate view of Malaysian art history.

Graduating from University Science Malaysia in 2000 with a BA in Fine Arts, Tan has exhibited regularly both in Malaysia and internationally since her graduation. She is the recipient of numerous awards and grants, such as the *Malaysia National Art Gallery Art Fund* in 2008 and, the *Krishen Jit Astro Fund, Malaysia* in 2009. Tan was also the recipient of *The Young Contemporaries Juror's Award*, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur in 2011. Her first solo, *Dokumen Melankolik*, was held at Rumah Air Panas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2004 whilst her second solo, *Artist Soujourn*, NN Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, is taking place in April 2011.



top

Study of Malaysia Modern Visual Arts in Landscape
 painting on postcards, 16 x 21cm each (44 pieces), 2006 - on going

bottom
 detail



ENTROPY



Eiffel Chong

(b.1977) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

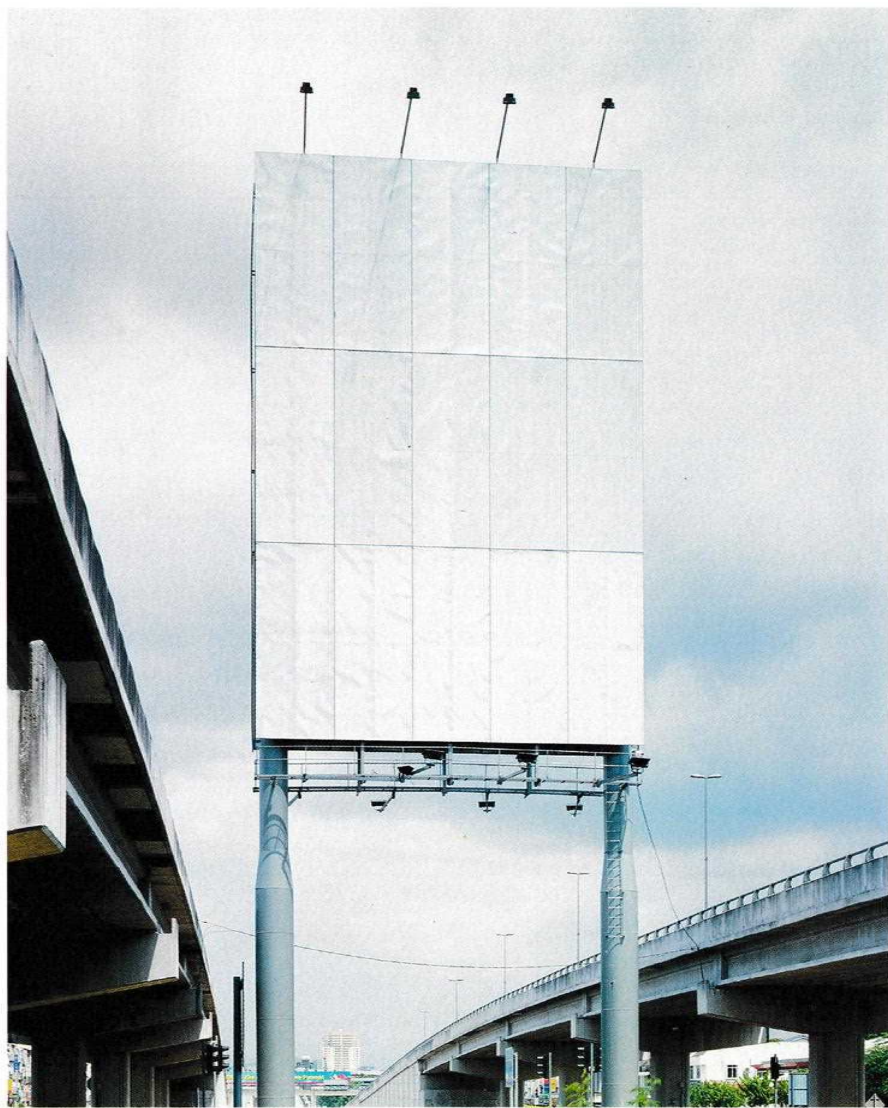
Eiffel Chong's work considers abstract concepts of life and death through the banal details, silent landscapes and curious obsessions he observes from daily life.

Chong graduated with an MA in International Contemporary Art and Design Practice from the University of East London. He is currently a photography lecturer at an art institution in Malaysia. Chong has been featured in numerous exhibitions in Malaysia and around the world. Among the exhibitions are: *Silent Auction* at London College of Communication, London, 2008; *A New Wave of Responsive Images* at Nikon Ginza Gallery, Tokyo, 2009, and; *CUT2010: Parallel Universe*, which toured Southeast Asia, showing at Valentine Willie Fine Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur & Singapore, Sangkring Art Space, Jogjakarta and, Manila Contemporary, Philippines. Chong also participated in the *Singapore International Photography Festival 2008*, Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore.



A Promise that couldn't be Fulfilled

digital C-type print paper glossy, 102 x 81 cm, 2007



Mathematical Equations with Emotional Contours

digital C-type print paper glossy, 127 x 102 cm, 2008



Monumentalisation of Death

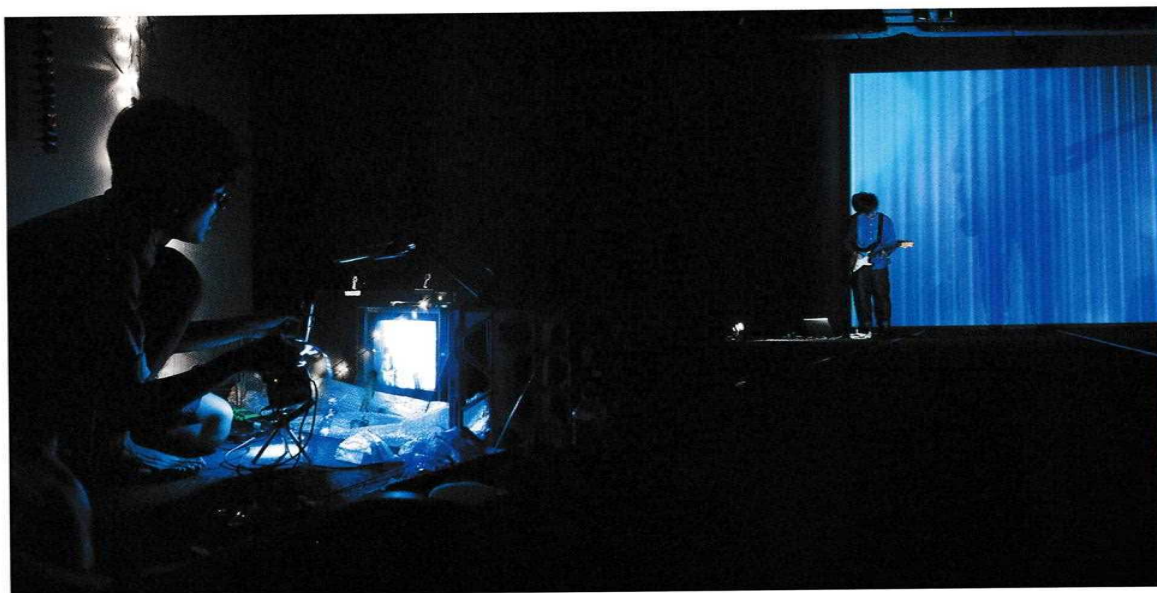
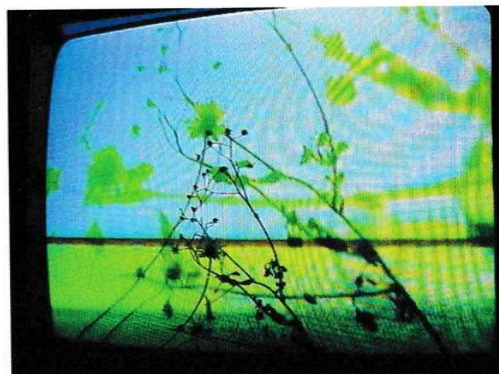
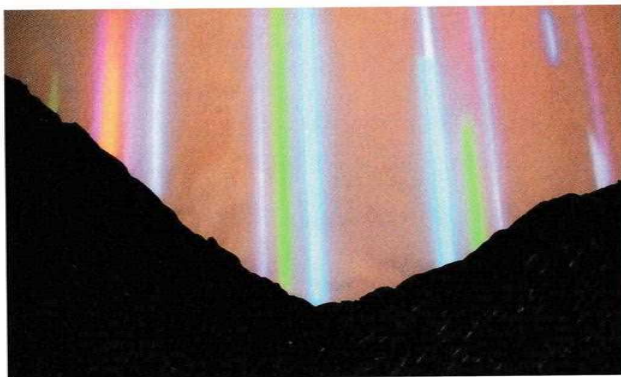
digital C-type print paper glossy, 127 x 102 cm, 2009

Flica + Fairuz

(b.1982) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

A motion graphic and new media artist Euseng Seto and Fairuz Sulaiman (b. 1982) collectively founded and make up Flica: a live performance act and artistic collaboration between these two talented individuals, combining the visual spontaneity of Sulaiman with the musical acuity of Seto.

Sulaiman graduated in 2005 with a Bachelor in Multimedia, majoring in Film and Animation, from Multimedia University, Cyberjaya, Malaysia. Together with Euseng Seto, as Flica, they continue to work and collaborate closely with indie Japanese label Schole and producer Akira Kosemura. Flica have released three albums thus far: *Windvane and Window*, Mu-nest, 2008; *Nocturnal*, Schole, 2008 and; *Telepathy Dreams*, self-release, 2009.



top left

Motherland

color video, paper, 6 mins (approx), 2011

top right

Video still of visuals for Flica + Fairuz

bottom

Flica + Fairuz performing during KL Design Week 2010

Goh Lee Kwang

currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

Goh Lee Kwang is an internationally recognised sound artist from Malaysia who creates sound and

sonic-visual interactive installations.

Goh's works utilise single-channel videos, multi-channel videos, electro-acoustic improvised music performances and, tape music. Goh also works for radio broadcasts and soundtracks for theatre, dance, and independent movies. His concerts have been held in many cities across the world, such as Manila, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, Dublin, London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Stockholm, Zurich, Budapest and, Amsterdam.

Tanah Ayer-Soundhorizontal
Audio, 10', 2011

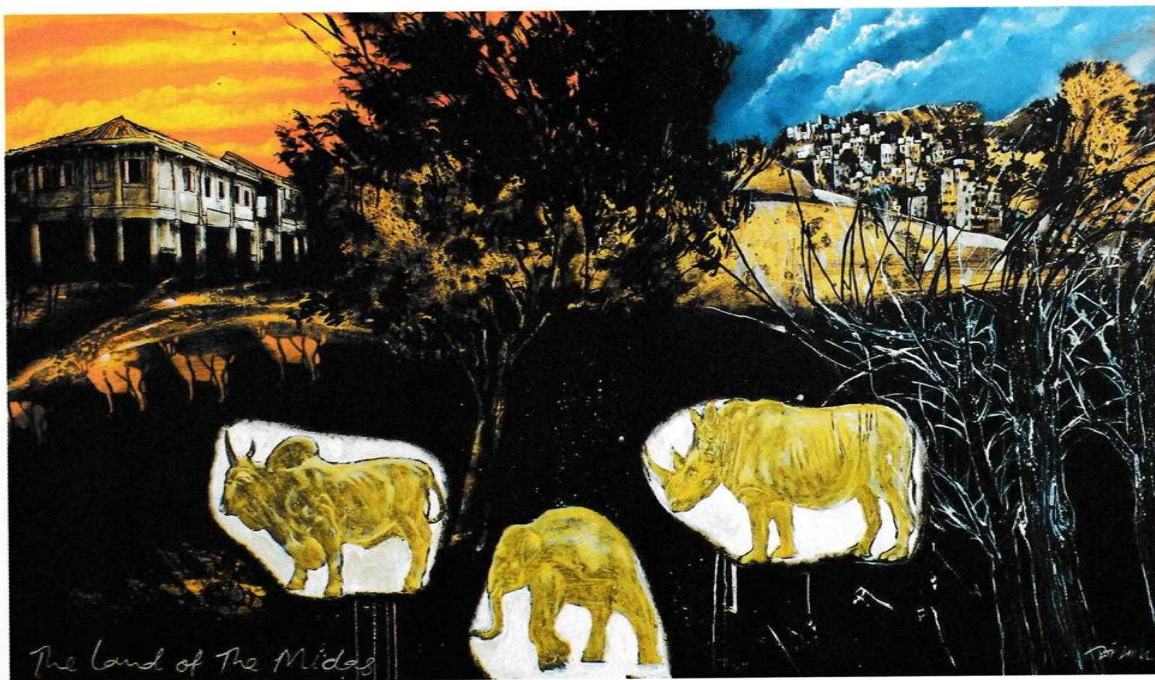


Jalaini Abu Hassan

(b.1963) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

Jalaini Abu Hassan better known as 'Jai' is a contemporary artist committed to exploring the potential of raw materials in painting and drawing and who constantly pushes the formal and technical possibilities of both traditional and experimental media. Working from a particular, personal experience, real as well as imagined, felt in the immediate present as well as the remembered, his works make up a textured narrative that combine elements of traditional Malay and modern global culture; the natural and man-made environment; kampung and city life, to express the Malaysian experience.

Jai obtained his BA in Fine Art at MARA Institute of Technology (now UiTM), Selangor, Malaysia in 1985 and was awarded a Malaysian Federal Scholarship to the UK, where he gained his MA from London Slade School of Art. In 1994 he went on to obtain his MFA at New York Pratt Institute, graduating in 1994. He has exhibited in Malaysia, Singapore, the USA, the UK and also, in Spain and Iraq. His most recent solo show *Bangsawan Kebangsaan*, takes place at Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York in 2011.



The Land of Midas

acrylic and bitumen on canvas, 121 x 213 cm, 2011

Vincent Leong

(b. 1979) currently based in Kuala Lumpur.

As an iconoclast and saboteur, Vincent Leong works in video, assemblage and site-specific installation, often paring down the viewer's experience to sets of structures and systems. By selecting aspects of the ordinary and the popular, Leong investigates social misconceptions within a larger cultural context.

Vincent Leong graduated from Goldsmiths College, London in 2004. In 2006, he was invited to participate in the Asian Cultural Content Creation Centre workshop in Gwanju, Korea and in 2007 he was artist-in-residence at Sculpture Square, Singapore. He has participated in group shows including: *Selamat Datang ke Malaysia*, Gallery 4A Sydney, *The Independence Project*, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur and Gertrude Contemporary Art Space, Melbourne, *CAIS: Contemporary Art in School*, Kuala Lumpur, *The Jakarta Biennale*, 2009 and he was a resident artist of the Koganecho Baazar in Yokohama in 2009. Leong also curates and co-curated with Eva McGovern *Ghost* by Roslisham Ismail @ Ise, Kuala Lumpur, 2010 and co-curated with Simon Soon *Colour, Shape, Quantity, Scale* by Liew Kwai Fei, Kuala Lumpur, 2010.



meLayu (to Wither)

Duratrans print, acrylic lightboxes, LED-lights, HD DVD 66.5 x 38.5 cm each print (2 pieces), video, 2011

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Curator Incharge

Agung Hujatnikajennong

Bale Tonggoh Coordinator/Exhibition Officer

Yus Herdiawan

Assistant Curator Incharge

Chabib Duta Hapsara

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Rostia Marhamah, Vanny Septiani

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