

Wong Hoy Cheong

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WONG HOY CHEONG IN THE UK

Organisers' Foreword

Wong Hoy Cheong is a retrospective exhibition of the artist's works covering the six-year period 1996 to 2002. We felt that it was important to continue OVA's tradition of curating solo shows for non-European and non-American artists who were not well known in the UK, but who were extremely significant in their local context. As his work had been seen in two recent group shows in the UK, *Cities on the Move* at the Hayward Gallery and *babel* at the Ikon, we felt British audiences should have an opportunity to have a careful consideration of his work.

There are several reasons why we feel that this artist and his body of work would be of great interest to a British audience.

He belongs to that post-colonial generation that was born into a newly independent nation that is struggling to negotiate its position in the world. Like many of his peers he was able to complete his higher education in the West, but decided to return to Malaysia to make his artworks - a complex decision faced by other artists from countries with similar histories who have had the opportunity to train in the West. The relocation of an artist's practice to a native context belies the current belief that in order for such a practice to mature it must be located in a Western centre.

Then the particular way in which he juggles his activities around activism, education and other art forms suggested to us that here was an artist dedicated to his work in a more rounded and inclusive way. The work picks through and furthers current debates in art history around the post-colonial context but from a non-Western perspective. The geography of his work is equally important to us, as it is located in a part of Southeast Asia about which local British audiences either know little or entertain fantasies dating back to the colonial era.

Finally, he finds in the minutiae of his everyday life observations that pertain to the larger questions of today dealing with race, identity and the striving for equality in societies where multiple, complex identities now exist.

The initial and early works we saw were some of the drawings on paper installed at the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane. The artist had trained to be a painter. The drawings resonated with memory and family histories and although they were particular to a racial group in an apparently very different multi-racial country, these are all issues that we are grappling with in the UK. Those large-scale images were quite haunting as they echoed a recent past, much as black and white photographs might do, of the early part of this century.

However, the artist has gone on to use a wide range of materials in his work to create installations and more sculptural works. These have often included natural materials local to the region and the debris of colonisation still lying around in this part of Southeast Asia. This shift into installation, in a certain sense, conforms to the global phenomenon in which artists have moved into installations more and more to defy the usual logic of collectible art works defined by the traditional forms of painting and sculpture. The current trend is for works that might be short lived, that might be site specific and that usually work best in their original contexts. In spite of this, we have chosen a range of two-dimensional and installation works that represent the breadth of the artist's interests and the range of materials that he has used. Included in our overall project is the provision of a residency at Gasworks, London to enable him to make a work based on the British side of the post-colonial equation.

The London residency is an important component of the project because it gives the artist a direct first hand experience of the context of the country in which the exhibition is going to take place. The programme of visiting international artists that he will be part of is now fairly well established and serves to forge links between the artists and the art world in London. In this manner we hope that the exhibition, the artist and the audience can come together in a more meaningful and fruitful interaction than if we had simply borrowed the works for the exhibition. This interac-

tion can be instrumental in developing a deeper understanding between the artist, his work and his audience over here.

The project fits into OVA's larger programme as it has developed from group shows that question boundaries of all kinds through shows that question particular issues from a region to shows that flag issues pertinent to apparently unrelated geographic regions internationally. Over the past ten years of developing projects our interests have come to be focussed on Anglophone parts of the world, particularly in South and Southeast Asia, southern Africa, North America and Australia, on account of the ease with which certain issues translate because of a commonality of language, whilst the particularity of each region marks a local difference.

This project was envisaged as a retrospective solo exhibition within the Arts Council of England's National Touring Programme in the UK. This is to move away from the tendency to focus on group shows by artists who are not well known or well funded in Western terms. This tendency contributes to the paradigm that works by artists from countries outside the West has to be of lesser value because of their origin at the periphery. The art exhibition as an expression of international relations from overseas tends to come packaged within its own geography and the larger and perhaps more individual concerns of the artists themselves can get lost. More recently there have curator-driven thematic group shows that foreground a single conceptualisation again at the expense of the individual artist's particular interests. This exhibition attempts to correct this imbalance by shifting the focus to the heart of the artist's practice.

Sunil Gupta & Edward Ward, London 2002

INTRODUCTION

Beverly Yong

Wong Hoy Cheong's relationship to his audience is always one of the spider to the fly, consistently political and subversive. His tactics are underhand, his assault many-pronged. His works are constructs of apparent realities, designed to expose gaps and flaws within the realities assumed. They thrive on the seductive platitude and the obvious pun. The pathos of beauty, the security of fact, and the comfort of the familiar are used to bait our aesthetic and intellectual response. We are beguiled by formal completeness or exquisite craft, convinced by the trappings of objective scholarship, and tempted by the easy clichés on offer.

Thus Wong Hoy Cheong lures us into a historical narrative which he seeks to re-evaluate. Once inside, we find ourselves in a far more complex and fragile context than supposed, and our responses under scrutiny.

Hou Hanru refers to this narrative as "the history of the making of national identity". It belongs to Malaysia yet extends to wider issues of national identity in a post-colonial era, ethnicity, the distribution of political power, authorial/authoritative deceptions, consensual forgetting. The idioms the artist employs are therefore familiar and various: legal, academic, botanical, antiquary, imperialist, revolutionary, exotic, scientific.

Wong Hoy Cheong's concerns have been identified and a template for artistic strategy set in place by the 1980s. Returning to Malaysia from the United States in 1986, he spent his early career helping to revive narrative figuration in local painting.

Gauguin's question: "Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?" becomes a neat starting point - appropriating the Frenchman's style in florid, over-exoticised paintings of Southeast Asian natives, the 'native' artist turns a Western fin-de-siècle dilemma (inspired by a disturbing experience of 'the other') into a 'native' agenda. He also lampoons an aesthetic responsible for much Western stereotyping of the sultry East. The postures of lassitude and impenetrability of Gauguin's figures now express alienation and resentment (at their socio-political situation/at Gauguin?). Edmundo Desnoes points out the debt to both Gauguin and Diego Rivera ¹, whose influence is clear in works addressing specific Malaysian issues, like *Sook Ching* (1989-90) ². The artist deliberately refers to one influential Post-Impressionist from the 'centre' ³ in collision with the triumphant populist from the 'periphery' to address the problem of locating himself, an 'Asian' artist, within a biased framework.

Of Migrants & Rubber Trees (1994-96), crucially, widened the scope of Wong Hoy Cheong's interests and ambitions. As with earlier projects, *Migrants* essentially sought to break the silence on a problematic aspect of local modern history. Its pedagogy is intentional, aimed particularly at a blinkered post-Independence generation. An exhibition of charcoal drawings, documentary references and rubber-trade paraphernalia, it presented a grand diorama of the immigrant experience against a backdrop of empire/nation-building from the colonial era to today.

A number of documentary languages come into play - the black-and-white photograph and its nostalgic connotations, the official format of identity papers, the anthropological specimen, and biography itself, using specific experiences and identities as models. In *Migrants*, the artist finds a means of re-evaluating history via its own apparatus.

After *Migrants*, Wong Hoy Cheong's work splits loosely into two branches. The relationship discovered between plants and people, real and analogous, extends into a larger 'geo-political' discourse using the origins and movements of plants and foods as metaphors ⁴. Along a different axis, he pursues the problem of reading history, approaching issues of authenticity and authority through literal attacks on existing texts.

In the former category, the artist sabotages assumptions about identity and location using layers of gentle metaphor and easy association. *Exile Islands/diPULAUkan* (1998), which explores different concepts of 'exile' - political banishment, geographical distance, mental and emotional dissociation - best exemplifies this strategy. His installation successive-

1

Wong Hoy Cheong:
*Selected Paintings &
Drawings 1982-91*
GaleriWAN: Kuala
Lumpur, 1991; 'The
Search of Hoy Cheong',
Edmundo Desnoes

2

Sook Ching consists of a
video documentary,
based on interviews with
people who experienced
the Japanese Occupation
of Malaya (1942-45), and
the painting referred to
here. It is an attempt to
describe a phenomenon
during the Japanese
Occupation buried in the
collective memory. 'Sook
Ching' can be translated
from the Chinese as 'to
eliminate by purification'.

3

A number of pioneering
artists in Malaya from
the 1940s to early 50s,
especially those who
migrated there from
China, took their stylistic
cue from Gauguin and
also European painters
who settled in Bali or else-
where in the East, intent
on capturing the exoticism
of their new home and its
inhabitants.

below: *Grass-Eaters*
(detail), 1985



ly undermines a series of invited readings: colonial period classroom gives way to the lure of South Sea fantasies (*Robinson Crusoe*, *South Pacific*, etc.), made bitter by the sweat of native/ immigrant labourers (growing indigo, sugar, tobacco, etc.), linked to contemporary oppression (island as political prison, leper colony, or refugee camp), forgotten as holiday resort (eg. Sentosa Island, Singapore, formerly political prison). He embarrasses his audience with our easy acceptance of the abridged narrative.

Seeds of Change (1997) explores trading currents, power shifts and the 'subversion' of cultures through trade by charting the history of popular foods. *Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Skins* (1998-2000) and *Poison* (2000) investigate flaws in racial stereotyping often used for political ends in a matching game between plant and human moulds of various origins⁵. The human rights petition *Tapestry of Justice* (1998-) is stitched with leaves and petals symbolising each country in which thumbprints were collected⁶. Thus seemingly neutral, impotent everyday matter is invested with a political charge, through their revelation of hidden/forgotten meaning.

The artist's text-based works employ an opposite strategy, sapping or re-directing political charge in the lofty, authoritative document. In *Text Tiles* (2000), we are invited to stand/walk/trample on a floor of Asian history and values, pulped, burnt and laid on tiles. *The Definitive ABC of Government* and *The Definitive ABC of Ethnography* (1999) mock their reader, pulping and weaving together political agenda, scientific and social study in a disturbing pastiche of outdated and contemporary ideologies.

In perhaps his most moving polemical act, the artist has fed pages of two British school text-books (*Great Men of The East* and *Exploring the British Isles*); and the Malaysian Constitution and Malay chronicles (*Hikayat Hang Tuah* and *Sejarah Melayu*) to a colony of termites. The eaten areas create maps of absence – in *The Colonies Bite Back* these signify both the dissolution of colonial power, and the erosion of its memory. In *The Colonies Turn on Themselves* the artist sees contemporary Malaysian politics eating at the national constitution, and corrupting or abusing Malay cultural identity⁷. The map of the nation, its 'identity', becomes one of wounds.

Ray Langenbach examines Wong Hoy Cheong's role as a "Cartographer" in his effort to locate himself, his work, and his nation in resistance to the pull of history. In *Buckingham Street and its Vicinity* (2002), the first of a series, the artist literally maps the 'centre' (London, former seat of Empire) from the 'periphery' (Penang, former colonial port and his birthplace). Throughout the span of his career, Wong Hoy Cheong has fused histories and locations in order to destroy the illusion of objective distance, steadily eroding previous claims to power over a volatile narrative.

4

The artist first used real plants as metaphor in *Lalang*, a performance and installation work. Here he razed a crop of lalang (an indigenous weed) collected from the wild and replanted on the National Art Gallery lawn on the 7th anniversary of Operation Lalang, a government operation in October 1987 which detained over 100 human rights activists without trial under the Internal Security Act

5

In *Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Skins* the artist cast in resin faces of nine Malaysians who are born of mixed marriages, have immigrated into or out of Malaysia or have changed their religion. One set of casts is covered in the dried skins of indigenous plants, a second set uses non-indigenous plants. In *Poison*, the heads of four Malaysian students, of Malay, Chinese, Indian and Melenau racial origin were cast in resin and each covered in non-indigenous plants and indigenous poisonous plants

6

See Ray Langenbach, p.21 and footnote 17

7

The term 'Malay' here refers to the indigenous majority race of Malaysia

RE-READING HISTORY: FROM DISCOURSE TO ACTION

Hou Hanru

Living in Kuala Lumpur at the turn of the millennium is a risk. As the capital of Malaysia, a newly (re)born post-colonial nation-state, KL is one of today's most exciting and vital metropolises. Situated at the very centre of Southeast Asia, KL has transformed itself into a significant 'global city', or key knot of the global economic network via the speedy realisation of its ambitious urban expansion and technological development projects. Drastic development does not come without contradictions and conflicts in society. Social and political conflicts and negotiations, urgent and at times even violent, are in fact a driving force of development despite an 'officialised' image of harmony maintained by the authorities. For those living in KL, it is almost impossible to be detached from this turbulent reality. For artists living here, there is an obligation to engage with it. Wong Hoy Cheong, born in the early 1960s and establishing his career through the 80s and 90s, is without doubt the most engaged representative of a generation of artists growing up in a wave of social and historic mutation.

A fundamental question for a post-colonial society like Malaysia is that of identity. It is a doubly complicated issue here because the history of migration in this country began long before Western colonisation.

Different ethnic groups with their own cultures arrived and coexisted in this territory, a major historic gateway between East and West, long before the invasion of Portuguese, Dutch and British powers. Cultural difference and hybridisation have therefore always been an integral part of society here. Relatively recent colonisation accelerated these processes and added a new dimension – Western influences. Contemporary Malaysia, with further complicated relations in its regional geopolitics, has achieved its independence based on such a complex condition of cultural hybridity.

Being Malaysian always implies a need to embrace cultural hybridity. It is vital to understand this condition to appreciate the significance of Malaysia's rapid modernisation. A unique version of modernity is generated in this process. The key to such understanding is scrutiny of the history of the making of national identity. Wong Hoy Cheong is particularly sensitive to the situation and invents ways of re-reading history through reinterpretation of a rich reservoir of images, private and public, of the nation. His work is a veritable archaeology of knowledge, articulated by revealing real historical processes and critical engagement with them.

The question of how to read history has become more and more crucial to historical inquiry. Historian Manuel De Landa, in *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*¹, has proposed a provocative and insightful methodology of history-reading through the overlapping of "geological/biological/linguistic elements" in the play of history. For De Landa, the complexity and mutual movements of these three aspects, contrary to the linear concept of historicity, are the very pivot of history's evolution. This opens a radically inspiring perspective on understanding both history and reality. At the turn of the millennium, with history once again a main concern of culture and social consciousness, it seems particularly significant.

Wong Hoy Cheong is not only a versatile artist who can range from drawing to installation, from painting to performance, from theatre to dance. He is also deeply involved in negotiations with history. His art is first an act of social and political engagement. This engagement is rooted in a powerful consciousness of history, especially when he deals with identity, the central question of both his intellectual concerns and the Malaysian social reality. His understanding and exploration of history echo De Landa's vision. In his work, he emphasises a need to merge different key elements, from natural conditions to human society via linguistic structures, in the interpretation and representation of history's evolution.

One of Wong Hoy Cheong's first works to attract national and international attention was a large-scale drawing and installation series *Of Migrants & Rubber Trees* (1994-96). Here, he recycles images of his family's history of migration from China to Southeast Asia to confront and blend with the history of colonisation as embodied by the import of rubber trees

1

Manuel De Landa,
*A Thousand Years of
Nonlinear History*, Swerve,
1997

to the region as an economic staple. *Of Migrants & Rubber Trees* tells a story that many living in Malaysia can identify with. It embodies the historical process of the making of the nation.

In other works like the installation *Seeds of Change* (1997) and *Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Skins* (1998), the artist pursues his exploration of history from an unexpected angle: he tracks the history of the making of Malaysia's natural and economic environment through the migration of plants, everyday foods and economic plantations in the colonial period. Revealing the movement and mutation of 'natural conditions' caused by social change, he convinces us of the importance of the historical functions of these elements since:

"the migration of plants from one part of the world to another [occurred] through colonization and trade. Like the migration of people, the plants become adopted in a new home... In the new countries and cultures, these plants assume new identities... used sometimes so strongly that they become 'indigenised', or 'naturalised' ... Often what we assume as 'indigenous' and 'authentic' is actually not so authentic after all. Hence, the seeking of authenticity, purity in ethnic groups, nations and culture can be quite meaningless as culture migrates, becomes hybridised, and is in a constant state of flux."²

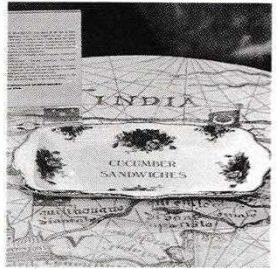
Certainly, this "constant state of flux" is not limited to the confines of the natural world. On the contrary, it plays an even more important role in the making of the society. It is the driving force behind the creation of knowledge, power structures and geopolitical situations. Wong Hoy Cheong, therefore, brings his artistic and intellectual expedition to the domain of geopolitics and linguistics. In his installation *Exile Islands* (1998), he creates a classroom for the public to take a lesson in the formation of national territory by means of mapping and re-mapping. He reminds us that geopolitical borderlines are only temporally defined by imposed power systems. They can change; and the change is inevitable.

Relating to this, in book-based works like the *Definitive ABC of Government* (1999) and *Text Tiles* (2000), he suggests even more subversive readings of history, especially the history of Southeast Asia, by introducing an intellectually and physically deconstructive process of 'rewriting' history and other social texts. Clearly, this is a call for resistance to the hegemonic manipulation of history and language by the mainstream power system. In the specific context of Malaysia, and Asia at large, as the artist states himself, they are "attempts to provoke a more self-conscious look at Asian histories and the fashionable stance of Asian 'values' and 'democracy' as espoused by many Asian leaders."

2

All citations of Wong Hoy Cheong's statements, artist's description of works, 2002

below: *In Search of Faraway Places* (Migrant Series) (detail), 1996
bottom: *Seeds of Change* (detail), 1997



It is true that history, and related questions of nation, identity, values and social systems, etc., have often been hijacked by the authorities to serve political ends. Definition and 'defence' of identity and values become too often a business of propaganda and social control rather than credible democratic debates, regularly violating the rule of democracy which outwardly appears to be promoted. Wong Hoy Cheong's interventions in this domain, on the contrary, stand resistant to this politically correct version of the nation as promoted by the authorities.

Behind the spectacular modernisation process as an image of national and regional pride, political manipulations and crises are an everyday feature in the region. Facing such an urgent reality, the artist has gone beyond the field of discourse and image as a political activist. 1998 witnessed the political struggle of Malaysia's Prime Minister Dr Mahathir and his ex-protégé and deputy, Anwar Ibrahim. This had far-reaching consequences beyond the two individuals' power struggle. This event precipitated a crisis in society, it exposed and revealed two opposing visions of history and understanding of the democratic system based on 'Asian values' where one leader attempted to hold onto unchangeable identity, values and status quo, while the other argued for a 'renaissance' and changes for real social progress.

A long-standing member of the Malaysian political opposition, the events of 1998 prompted Wong Hoy Cheong to a series of art works to express his activist position: in *Tapestry of Justice* (1998-), he has collected thousands of thumbprints from Malaysia and abroad for the repeal of the Internal Security Act (ISA) in Malaysia³, the notorious law inherited from colonial rule by the government as a means of suppression. In *Vitrine of Contemporary Events* (1999), he directly exposes "the upheavals Malaysia has been going through" and denounces the authorities' violation of democratic rule and social justice.

It is remarkable is that these works have been widely exhibited and continue to be developed outside of Malaysia. They actively invite the participation of audiences from different parts of the world. This internationalisation not only calls for support from abroad. By bringing the attention of the international community to the 'internal crisis' in his country, Wong Hoy Cheong's activism also makes a statement about the destiny of history: today, nobody can escape from the process of globalisation.

3

see also Ray Langenbach, *Mapping the Cartographer* in this catalogue, p. 21, footnote 17

Hou Hanru is an art critic and an independent curator based in Paris since 1990. Currently, he is a professor at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, a member of the Global Advisory Committee of Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA, and a French correspondent of Flash Art International. He has curated numerous exhibitions including: Shanghai Biennale 2000; Cities on the Move (1997-2000); French Pavilion, Venice Biennale 1999, etc.

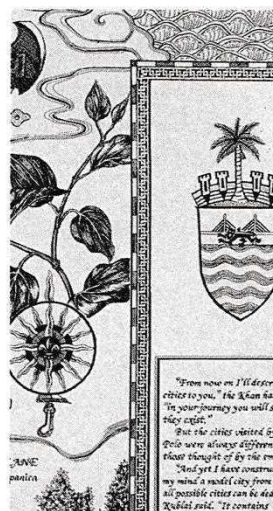
MAPPING THE CARTOGRAPHER

Ray Langenbach

Wong Hoy Cheong has inscribed his hybrid map of London-Penang, *Buckingham Street and its Vicinity*, with a passage drawn from one of many apocryphal conversations between Kublai Khan (c.1215-1294) and Marco Polo (1254-1324) in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*:

"... I have constructed in my mind a model city from which all possible cities can be deduced," Kublai said. "It contains everything corresponding to the norm. Since the cities that exist diverge in varying degree from the norm, I need only foresee the exceptions to the norm and calculate the most probable combinations."

"I have also thought of a model city from which I deduce all others," Marco answered. "It is a city made only of exceptions, exclusions, incongruities, contradictions. If such a city is the most improbable, by reducing the number of abnormal elements, we increase the probability that the city really exists. So I have only to subtract exceptions from my model, and in whatever direction I proceed, I will arrive at one of the cities which, always as an exception, exist. But I cannot force my operation beyond a certain limit: I would achieve cities far too probable to be real."



above: Buckingham Street
and its Vicinity (detail),
2002

While Kublai Khan¹ at the seat of administrative power in his capital, *Da-du* (now Beijing), works from the 'rule of the norm' to the exceptions; the itinerant explorer works from the 'rule of exception' to the norm, from the improbable to the probable. Paradox is the real subject of this discourse, using the characters as ventriloquists. When working from the 'rule of exceptions', the most probable itself is the most improbable to the degree of its probability. Khan and Polo are themselves both 'creatures' of this paradox.

Calvino's narrative reveals *itself* through paradox to be also an improbable mapping. Imagine the two model cities represented on two maps, such that when superimposed – the Khan's placed over Polo's or vice versa – the two correspond at the same cities.

Each of these cities is identified as either an *exception* to the norm or a *probability*. Like the glass that is half-full or half-empty, the Khan and Polo may view precisely the same cities as models of their respective hermeneutics. Similar interpretive schisms – between models of landed power and itinerant power, between Asian and Western, between the dystopic norm and its utopian improbability – characterise the art of Wong Hoy Cheong.

Wong's love of narrative literature (and his delight in subverting meta-narration with paradox) leads me to circumambulate his work via another two paradoxical narratives:

"That's another thing we've learned from your nation," said Mein Herr, "map-making. But we've carried it much further than you. What would you consider the largest map that would be really useful?"

"About 6 inches. to the mile."

"Only 6 inches!" exclaimed Mein Herr. "we very soon got to 6 yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundred yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile!"

"Have you used it much?" I inquired.

"It has never been spread out yet." said Mein Herr: "The farmers objected: and said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well."²

Map

The map is a series of 'marks' produced by the metonymic walking, *marching*, or *marking* out of boundaries and *margins*. The words, *map* and *mark*, are bound together, both derivatives of this ancient gesture of circumambulation. The map (an accretion of gestures and residual marks left behind...the traces of walks) and the *drawing* (the remnant of a point drawn across a surface) are one and the same. A drawing is always a map, even if a map in the digital age is no longer always a drawing. The word, *mark*, shares a root with 'boundary', 'landmark', 'sign', 'trace', but also with 'money', from the old English *mearc* and the German, *mark*. It is through the transfer of *marks* (symbolic capital) that *real estate* is exchanged. And it is through the power of representation that *real estate* is transformed into liquid *symbolic capital*.

1

'The Great Khan,' the first emperor of China's Yuan (Mongol) dynasty (1271-1368), Grandson of Genghis Khan. Marco Polo, Venetian explorer and merchant, served at the court for twenty years, between 1275 and 1292. (Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Dictionary of Global Culture*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996:387)

2

Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893) cited in Hughes, Patrick and George Brecht, *Vicious Circles and Infinity*. London: Penguin Books, 1975:66 and Bibliomania <http://www.bibliomania.com/0/0/11/20/frameset.html>

Lewis Carroll's paradox of the nation covered by a nearly totalised map, subsequently displaced by the nation itself as its own map, is now unavoidably conditioned by our knowledge of post-coloniality. Nationhood itself is a complex mapping of ethnicity, culture, gender, class, order and disorder that Carroll, writing during the heyday of Empire, may not have foreseen.

In Carroll's story the complaints of the farmers' objections had effect on the cartographers' decisions. The history of class relations and the distribution of power among city and rural dwellers in the 20th Century should leave us less optimistic. Wouldn't it be closer to the *norm* if a hegemonic class of technocrats – like Mein Herr – were to maintain its 'map' at all costs? Mappings, in the form of a national (and global) narrative, or a historical or racial telos have often been used as a means for justifying continued rule – *even when* or *especially when* it blocked out the sun and suffocated the people. The history of the last century has been the history of innumerable attempts to totalise discursive power, regardless of human costs.

Mein Herr's map (and the Khan's and even Polo's mapping of improbable probables) is precisely such a meta-discursive representation, and it is through such 'tropographies' that power is distributed and maintained. However, it is equally common that – if the discourse fails to convince – the meta-discourse is propped up through the exercise of power and the application of force. One might say that the purpose of power is to preserve the discourse to the degree that the discourse preserves prevailing power relations.

MAPPING NATION

In Carroll's utopian tale, the fusion of map and landscape is never completed, forcing the cartographer to the realisation that the country could serve as its own simulacrum. We can imagine that the development of the technologies of representation and the rise of an 'aesthetic technocracy' led the inhabitants of the country to see their country 'resolved' as an entity – as a nation. Sooner or later, they would realise that graphic representation wasn't needed to resolve the real – only the idea of representation was necessary. Mein Herr's country was resolved through the *imagining* of the nation.³ As he recounts his failure, with the pride of the technocrat who has found peace in knowledge-power, Mein Herr seems genuinely relieved that the technology failed. He narrates the Pyrrhic victory of history's progressive failures.

BORGES' DEGENERATE MAP

Let's take another story... this one by J.L. Borges, who imagines a country (perhaps the same one), in which the people present at 'Year Zero' when the perfect map was laid out, were so enthralled by their technological achievement that they forgot the effects of entropy.

In that empire, the art of cartography achieved such perfection that the map of one single province occupied the whole of the city, and the map of the empire, the whole of a province. In time, those disproportionate maps failed to satisfy and the schools of cartography sketched a map of the empire which was the size of the empire and coincided at every point with it. Less addicted to the study of cartography, the following generations comprehended that this dilated map was useless and, not without impiety, delivered it to the inclemencies of the sun and of the winters. In the western deserts there remain piecemeal ruins of the map, inhabited by animals and beggars. In the entire rest of the country there is no vestige left of the geographical disciplines.

— attributed to Suarez Miranda, 1658⁴

Unlike Carroll who gives us only what may be resolved within the telling, Borges (like Calvino) destabilises the narrative by apocryphally attributing his story's authorship to a Suarez Miranda supposedly writing in 1658⁵. If this story is indeed itself a *dilated map* of Carroll's 1893 paradox, then the neat hermeneutics of Carroll's cartographic metaphor now resembles the ruin inhabited by animals and beggars that Borges describes. Carroll himself, writing of his perfect map, has been appropriated into Borges' tale with a new name, gender, nationality, and era. Borges' story is mapped on this spurious attribution, which is mapped onto Carroll's story – text on text on text, rupturing the cartographic filament with the intrusion of a 'real' lie: the author's identity. If we thought for a moment that Borges was using his text to lay bare paradox as an exceptional semiosis, we now find that Borges is using the index finger to reflexively index the pointing finger. Paradox is no longer the subject of the story; it is the cartographic projection within which the story is produced.

Carroll's and Borges' paradoxes, taken together, nicely represent the mathematical, instrumentalist utopianism of modernity and the hermeneutic ruins left in its wake: *ratio generis* and *ratio degeneris*. While Carroll's modern trope of the map taken to its logical conclusion is tautological and serenely suicidal, it still conveys a belief in the benefits of accurate scaling. Carroll assumes that a sign may indeed come to represent the real, if the problems of the farmers can be resolved, or if we rid ourselves of these unnecessary trappings of the sign altogether.

4

Borges, J.L. and A.B. Casares, *Extraordinary Tales*, London (1973) in Hughes, Patrick and George Brecht, *Vicious Circles and Infinity*, London: Penguin Books, 1975:65.

5

Hughes and Brecht speculate that this attribution by Borges to Suarez Miranda, 1658, is probably a hoax and that it is likely that he appropriated the paradox from Lewis Carroll's story (Hughes and Brecht 1975:65)

Borges, for his part, coming later – a ‘vertical invader’⁶ from the ‘South’ (Argentina) – has added a corrosive ending to Carroll’s paradox. He disallows any return to a utopian vision. Dissimulating the authenticity of his own authorship, he covers his footprints with the debris that is all that remains of Carroll’s utopian inversion. With these four models in mind, let’s now turn to Wong’s reflexive mappings.

MAPPING WONG

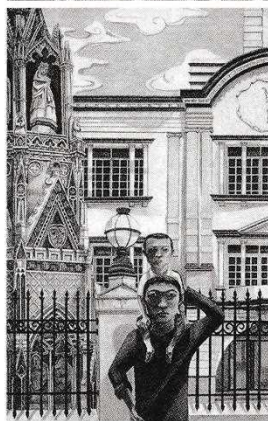
Wong has *mapped* Penang-onto-London-onto-Penang, in the mathematical sense of the word⁷. The colonial port had already been ‘mapped’ by the colonial centre – the colonial planners nostalgically duplicating London’s street names and some building designs, in this game of ‘Who’s on top?’. By now mapping Penang onto London, Wong has provided the copy the aura of the original, the authentic... the norm. This oscillation from the original to copy and back (analogous to a spatial oscillation between centre-periphery) is a conflicted concern in Wong’s work. It is also the source of his dark humour.

Consider his duplication of the photographic print (already twice removed from the original subject) in *Aspirations of the Working Class* (1995), especially the charcoal, *Father and Son*.

Then flash-forward to the most recent parental snapshots of what may be third generation post-colonials, sandwiched between *their* centre and *their* periphery: *In Between Malayan Railway Building and Eleanor Cross* (2002).

Like orphans out of a British children’s murder mystery, they stare at the camera. Are they bored, alienated, resentful? Where are their father and mother? Assuming one parent is behind the camera snapping the photo, where is the other? Missing? Divorced? Are these missing signs of modernity and paternity the ‘atropia’ of nation and empire?

Wong doesn’t deploy his signs anarchically or arbitrarily; he keeps them on a short leash. In *Buckingham Street and its Vicinity* (2002), he has graphically conflated the colonial economy of Penang/London, using signs that don’t collide or cancel each other but converge, merge, overlap, inflect. In this map *both* London and Penang are revealed as parasites⁸ of each other: each obtains its completeness in the distorted reflection of the other.



top: *Father and Son*, 1995
above: *In Between Malayan Railway Building and Eleanor Cross*, 2002

6

John Berger’s term for Pablo Picasso who prodigiously entered Paris from Barcelona, ‘vertically’, as if through a trap-door from that area cartographically ‘below’ and abject to central European civilisation.

THE ORDER OF THINGS

Once one skews art production toward problems of similitude and authenticity – rather than, say, beauty, the sublime or existential quandary – the placing of things in their proper set or class takes on particular significance. Rather than problems of ontology, Wong shares with Marco Polo and Kublai Khan a concern for problems of categorisation, epistemology, hermeneutics: what Foucault called *the order of things*⁹. He construes problems of authenticity as manifestations of class and classification, placement, composition. It is through this concern with order that he approaches the era in which the colonial powers mapped and measured the earth and its inhabitants, redistributing all creatures as signs in an all-encompassing discourse of atlases, encyclopaedias, laws; and innumerable treatises on zoology, anthropology, and biometry.

Systems of classification are understood and transmitted through pedagogy. From the beginnings of his career, studying Literature at Brandeis, Education at Harvard, and Fine Arts at UMass-Amherst, Wong has seen pedagogy (and indoctrination) as the flipside of art. He recuperates the hermetic indulgences of art practice and the market with the broad social habilitations of pedagogy. Wong's assignments for his students hold an uncanny similarity to some of his studio practices. He works his way through his own formal problems by teaching, and this may help us to understand why he never just speaks; he always seems to be *speaking to*. His messages are calibrated to be received; reception is built into the form. We are often instructed how to receive his work, and, when we receive it, we invariably 'learn' something. Wong's statutory modernism splits the difference between the incremental sedimentations of the pedagogue and the motivational force of the propagandist.

THE PROPAGANDIST

Wong served in 1999 as Election Campaign Manager for Syed Husin Ali¹⁰, President of the opposition Parti Rakyat Malaysia¹¹. Wong, in his own words, "helped in giving a new... contemporary visual, public image to PRM".¹² But Wong's political poster *are these MALAYSIAN values?* instead showed his formative attachment to the aesthetics of modernist political posters, and the mid-century collages of Fluxus, Rauschenberg, COBRA, and the Situationists. Executed during the same period as the posters, Wong's collaged books, *The Definitive ABC of Government* (1999) and *The Definitive ABC of Ethnography* (1999), with their complex layering and intertextual ruptures are far more 'contemporary'.

During the election, Wong perhaps believed that the populace would 'read' the opposition posters in the manner that a party platform or

7

The mathematical usage of *mapping* denotes a rule of correspondence between two (mathematical) sets, such that there is a direct association between each member of the first set to one particular member of the other. If we imagine the two sets spatialised as planes, we can then see that one may overlay the other so that corresponding points appear superimposed.

8

From *para-sites*: proximate sites.

9

Foucault, Michel, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Random House 1973 (1970/1966)

10

in the latter's campaign for a Parliamentary post in Petaling Jaya Selatan constituency

11

PRM: Peoples' Party of Malaysia, part of the Barisan Alternatif (Alternative Front)

12

Email correspondence, 3/5/02.

manifesto should be read. The posters sought to 'call out' the public, to teach, to explicate, to reason. But, through this spectacle of earnest convincing, the posters also communicated the anxieties of oppositional politics that had produced them – disjunction, incompleteness, marginality, disenfranchisement and anger¹³.

Unencumbered by Wong's concerns with developing a conscientised populace, the ruling party, Barisan Nasional, presented images of violent street demonstrations also seen on television news¹⁴. Barisan Nasional's posters sought to represent the opposition as socially irresponsible, engaging in the politics of subversion, playing off middle-class fears of racial riots, and social dismemberment. They exhorted the people to cohere and retain the status quo out of fear of an uncertain future, while Wong's images, subverting easy spectacle, invited the people to critically reflect and imagine a new future.

While the purpose and audience for art is not the same as for political campaigns (or the classroom), there remain traces of the need to convince, to propagandise and over-determine interpretation. Wong modulates his need to interpellate the viewer through various performative strategies. Generally, he introduces a kind of Brechtian alienation into his art works, layering formal codes with surface patterns and compositional structures that interfere with perspectival depth. He oscillates between exacting attention to detail, serialised stereotypes, and objectivist panoptic arrays. He ruptures the visual text with discontinuous typography, appropriated from dialectically opposed literatures, inserting endless historical botanical and zoological references, etc.. These devices produce a rich performative inter-textuality and refract the tendency toward predictable ideological profiling.

Wong uses another performance technique to nuance his message. He consistently positions his own subjective experience (usually in the form of a narrative of migration and movement) at the centre of the work. In *Buckingham Street and its Vicinity*, one map is laid over another, and sandwiched between them is Wong's experience of the two cities. The 'site' where the mapping resolves is from *his* subject position. But here we find ourselves between the horns of yet another paradox. The very notion of a 'subject position' itself implies an *a priori* 'mapping' of the subject, and the interpellation of subjectivity/subjection via the discourses of identity: post-coloniality, geography, nationality, race, power, et al. We may surmise from this map and from the three accompanying charcoals of the children, who are positioned *in between* (*In Between Betelnut Palm and the Sphinx*, *In Between Masjid Kapitan Keling and Narcissus*, *In Between Malaysian Railway and Eleanor Cross*), that Wong experiences *his* subjectivity between. This infinite regression of a set that is included in one of its com-

13

The Star newspaper in Malaysia required changes to 'are these MALAYSIAN values?' resulting in a loss of design coherence.

14

In Malaysia the content of television and almost all printed press is controlled by the ruling party through either linked corporations or licensing oversight.

below: poster for Parti Rakyat Malaysia, 1999

bottom: poster for Barisan Nasional, 1999



ponent parts, or a map that includes itself, including an image of itself including an image of itself... *ad infinitum*, is described in *The Paradox of the Inclusive Map* posed by Josiah Royce in 1899:

Let us imagine that a portion of the soil of England has been leveled off perfectly and that on it a cartographer traces a map of England. The job is perfect; there is no detail of the soil of England, no matter how minute, that is not registered on the map; everything has there its correspondence. This map, in such a case, should include a map of the map, which should contain a map of the map of the map, and so on to infinity.¹⁵

MAPPING THE SUBJECT MAPPING THE NATION

"It creates a hurdle for the impostors who circulate among us."—Charles N. Faerber, of the Notary Public Association (USA), which wants its members and their clients to put thumbprints on documents.¹⁶

The notion of the subject as map within a map brings us to the final turn in this essay. In Wong's unfinished work, *Tapestry of Justice*, begun in 1998, the thumbprint functions as a tiny map of the tip of a digit within a map of the citizen within the map of the nation, a configuration of typology, subjectivity and subjection, norms and exceptions. The thumbprint is a synecdoche, in which the unique encoding of the body/subject is revealed. A clue or a testament to the existence and acts of the irreducibly authentic subject is left behind. While it isn't a code, *per se*, in the sense of DNA or symbolic language, the thumbprint is a residual trace of a code—its manifest. Wong presents these tiny impressions of the thumb infused with ink as mute micro-manifestos declaring genuine solidarity, commitment and resistance to statutory oppression in Malaysia¹⁷. He plays off Malaysian tradition in which the thumb-print is used as identification in voting and government fund deposits (an extension of earlier British thumbprinting as a means of colonial era classification)¹⁸.

Wong carries out at least three tactical turns in this work. First, he inverts the sign of criminal transgression (the fingerprint) to read as the sign of a moral stance against crimes of the state. Second, by utilising a technology of colonial classification, he links the present Malaysian government (and, perhaps unintentionally himself as the collector of the thumbprints) with the former colonial state. Wong has set up an oscillation between the colonial classification system, the post-colonial state, and the subject positions of criminal, activist, artist and global art consumer. Third, he inverts our notion of the thumbprints as irreducible signs of

15

Hughes, Patrick and George Brecht, *Vicious Circles and Infinity*. London: Penguin Books. 1975: 66-67

16

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/20/national/20PRIN.html?todayshadlines>

17

The text read by each of the participants reads: "This is an appeal, very much like a signature campaign—to offer your thumbprint as an assertion of your identity in no uncertain terms to support the abolition of the ISA (Internal Security Act), a draconian law which allows for indefinite detention without trial in an open court of law. The original thumbprints-of-appeal will eventually sent to the Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs. Photocopies of the thumbprints will be used to make a "tapestry"—a tapestry in support of justice in Malaysia. Thank you. Wong Hoy Cheong"

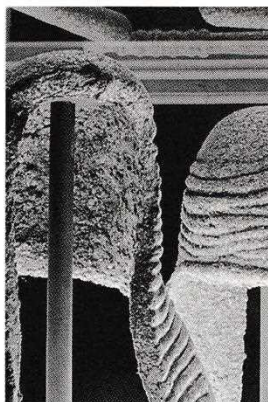
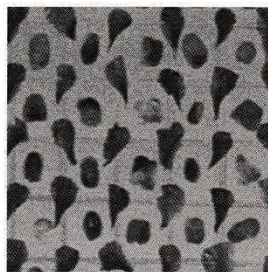
identity and authenticity by photocopying them for the composition *Tapestry of Justice* (each print surrounded by the real petals of the Bunga Raya (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*), the Malaysian National Flower)¹⁹.

To date Wong has collected thumbprints from over 10,000 individuals during exhibitions in England, Finland, Denmark and Malaysia. As with the map that displaced the real landscape and then was displaced by it, even 'actual' thumb-prints, as performance residues, can only point to the 'real', but can never embody it. With the other icons of the Malaysian *Reformasi* movement that Wong has placed in the *Vitrine of Contemporary Events*²⁰, the thumb-prints provide a 'teach-in' about the Malaysian Internal Security Act for people around the world. However, these copies of genetically determined micro-manifestos also tend to round off a complex and disjunctive local politics to a gesture, and they conflate resistance with the global-positioning system of the international art market. Wong is aware of and struggles with the polyvalent politics of global reception²¹.

THE ITINERANT CARTOGRAPHER

These signs of dilemma raise questions concerning the placement of Wong's work as an unfinished itinerancy between cultures: his own trajectory, migrations, and destiny as a 'glocal' artist, that extend the narrative of his family's migrations to Malaysia, in the earlier set of works, *Of Migrants & Rubber Trees* (1996). He has already found it necessary to divide his tactics. In Malaysia, thumbprints are collected at demonstrations, vigils, political gatherings, churches and pubs²² as well as gallery exhibitions. Abroad, the collecting takes place solely at exhibitions of his work. The global market will gradually fetishise the material conditions that have produced Wong's art. His particular, local socio-political concerns have already been translated into globally consumable tropes *about* Malaysia, rather than as a praxis *within-by-for* Malaysia. As local Malaysian political detentions merge with the post-911 'global war against terrorism'²³, Wong's 'model city', Malaysia, like so many other geographic localities in the world, has become increasingly improbable by virtue of its probability... or is it the other way around?

Originally from Boston, artist/writer Ray Langenbach lives in Kuala Lumpur.



top: *Tapestry of Justice*
(detail), 1998-
middle: *Vitrine of
Contemporary Events*
(detail), 1999
bottom: *Vitrine of
Contemporary Events*
(detail), 1999

18

Fingerprinting (dactylocopy, dactylography) takes the impression of the loop and whorls of the papillary ridges of the finger tips. The first police system for taking and mapping fingerprints was developed in 1888 by the Argentine Jean Vucetic, subsequently refined in Britain by Sir Edward Richard Henry, from research done by one of the foremost proponents of anthropometrics and the founder of the field of eugenics, Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), the cousin of Darwin. Dactylography was one component of a larger project of colonial era anthropometry.

Galton set up a laboratory for the purpose of measuring individual characteristics at the *International Exposition of 1884*, one of the last great spectacles of the colonial era which included living displays of colonial subjects. For thrupence, the public were ushered through *his assembly-line of tests and measures, and received his assessment at the end.* (Gould, Stephen Jay, *The Mismeasure of Man*, London: Penguin Books, 1981:75ff.; *The New American Desk Encyclopedia*, New York: Signet, 1993; Jacoby, Russell and Naomi Glauberman, 1995, *The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, Opinions*. New York: Times Books)

19

Is this juxtaposition of the 'real' state emblem and the photocopied print of human bodies an ironical or cynical gesture concerning the powerlessness of art in the face of state power, or perhaps a tongue-in-cheek bow to Walter Benjamin, who theorised the end of the aura of the 'real' representation (the genuine artefact) in the age of mechanical reproduction?

20

These included objects collected and loaned to Wong by friends and others he collected himself: candle-wax collected from a street vigil, 18 October 1998; fliers from a street rally, 17 October 1998; flowers from a vigil, 26 November 1998; tear gas canisters from a demonstration, 20 September 1998; and sculptural objects representing the Malaysian Federal Constitution made from house-dust, judge's wigs and police batons cast in cow dung.

21

Discussing the reception of his performance and installation, *Lalang* (1994), a work which recalled the government crackdown on opposition groups, unionists and dissidents, in 1987, Wong says: "Staying and practising in Malaysia and showing abroad pose a dilemma, a complex necessity to slightly shift the conceptualising of the work. *Lalang* for example, strikes a deep emotional chord when shown in the local playing field. Supposing that this work was repeated/re-enacted in lets say, Japan or Sydney or London, I would be gazed at quite differently. Not the provocateur, the "subversive" gnawing at the State, but as a pitiful "other" from the third/developing world where human rights abuses are a constant. That is why, when [...] I show my work abroad, it is very important that I conceive of my works slightly differently, I refuse to fall into the trap of the abused/victimised or exotic other. It is so easy to be located as such. That's why in *Text Tiles* [2000], Hirohito's and Kim Il Sung's and Thatcher's images are there, as much as the Mahathirs and Suhartos and Pol Pots. It is important that "they" get to walk over their own leaders, and not merely tread over third world dictators. That's why the termite colonies gnaw at the British Isles as well as the Malaysian Constitution." (Wong, email 10 May, 2002)

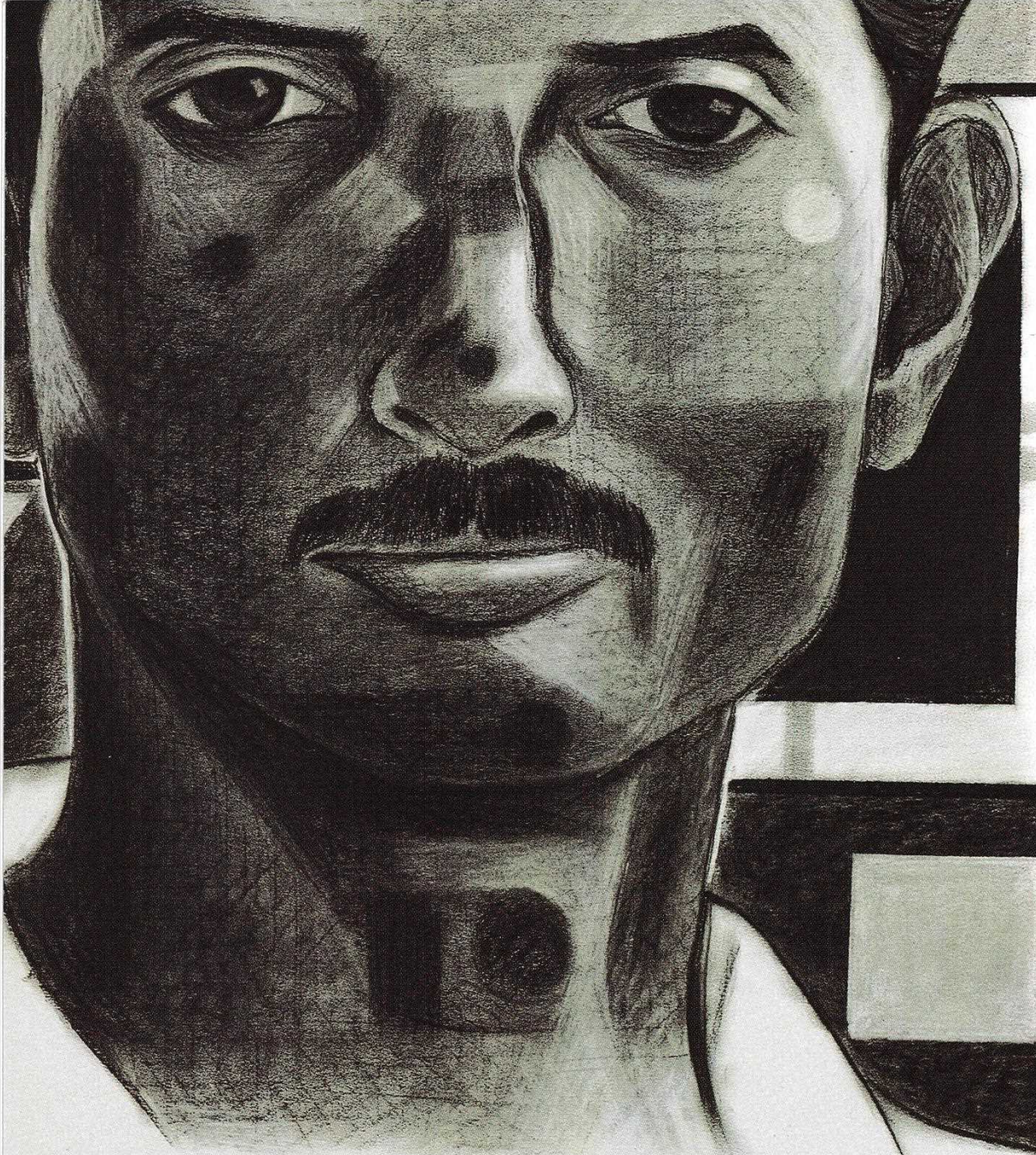
22

"As I have said before I feel this has been my most 'successful' marrying of activism and art, the most engaged. When done in Malaysia, I had conversations with each contributor - they agreed, pontificated, harangued, complained, agreed, and disagreed.... And done in the climate of fear in 98-99, giving a thumbprint was indeed a form of courage for many Malaysians, especially with the connotative baggage that thumb printing carries." (Wong, email 10 May, 2002)

23

John Ashcroft, the United States' Attorney General, yesterday (13 May, 2002) acclaimed Malaysia's Internal Security Act, pointing out the similarity with the post-911 *Patriot Act* in the United States, which allows for the indefinite detention (without *habeas corpus*) of immigrant "terrorist suspects", and "material witnesses" in terrorism related cases.

WORKS 1996 – 2002



NAMA: (Name)	Mohammad Hugu	Umur: (Age)	40
TEMPAT LAHIR: (Place of birth)	Jessor	WARGANEGARA: (Nationality)	BANGLADESH
PEKERJAAN DI NEGARA ASAL: (Occupation in country of origin)	Petani		

facing page:

New Migrants:

Mohamad Haque,

Construction Worker II

1996

Charcoal and silkscreen

on paper

125 x 91.5 cm

this page, clockwise from left:

New Migrants:

Mary, Washerwoman

1996

Charcoal and silkscreen

on paper

125 x 91.5 cm

Kak Norbati,

Office Worker

1996

Charcoal and silkscreen

on paper

125 x 91.5 cm

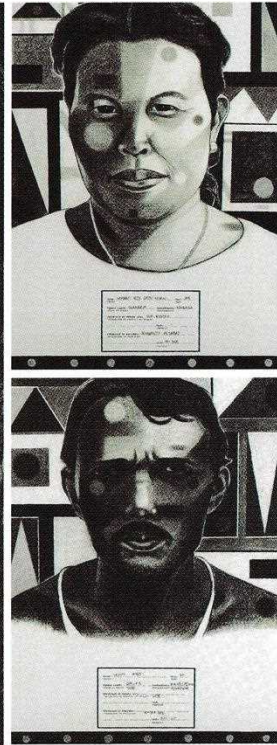
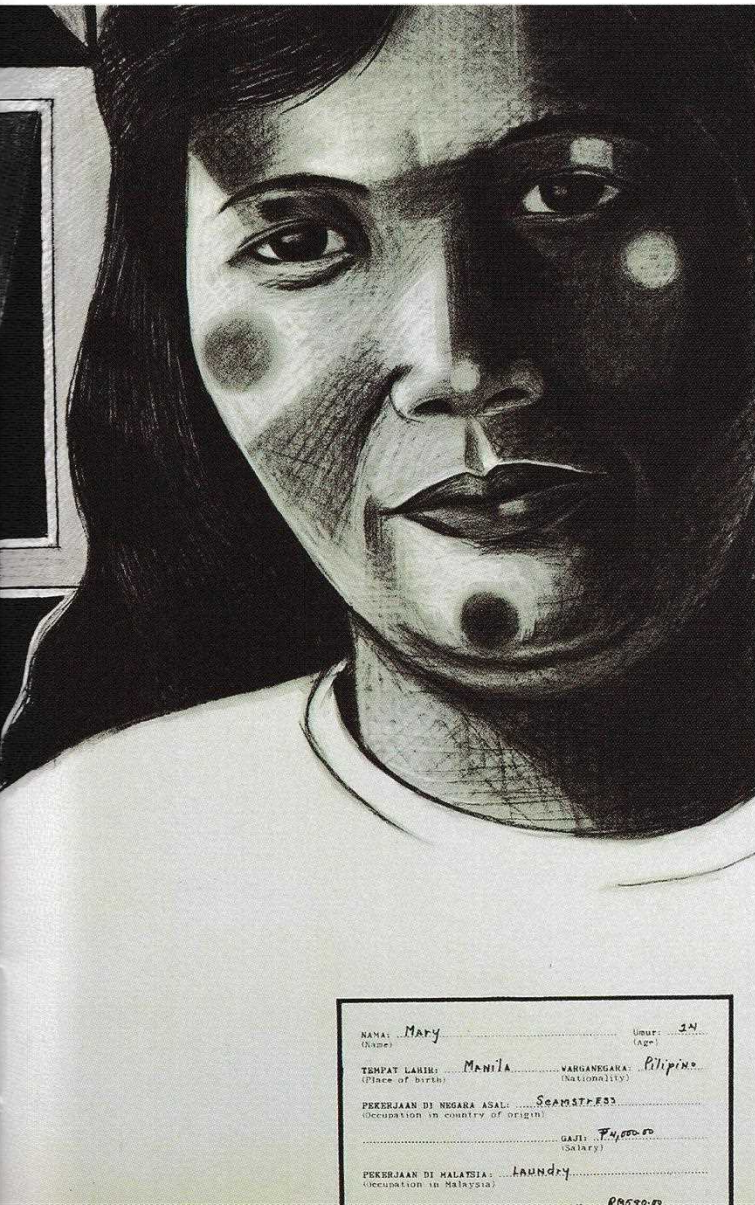
Rajun, Gardener

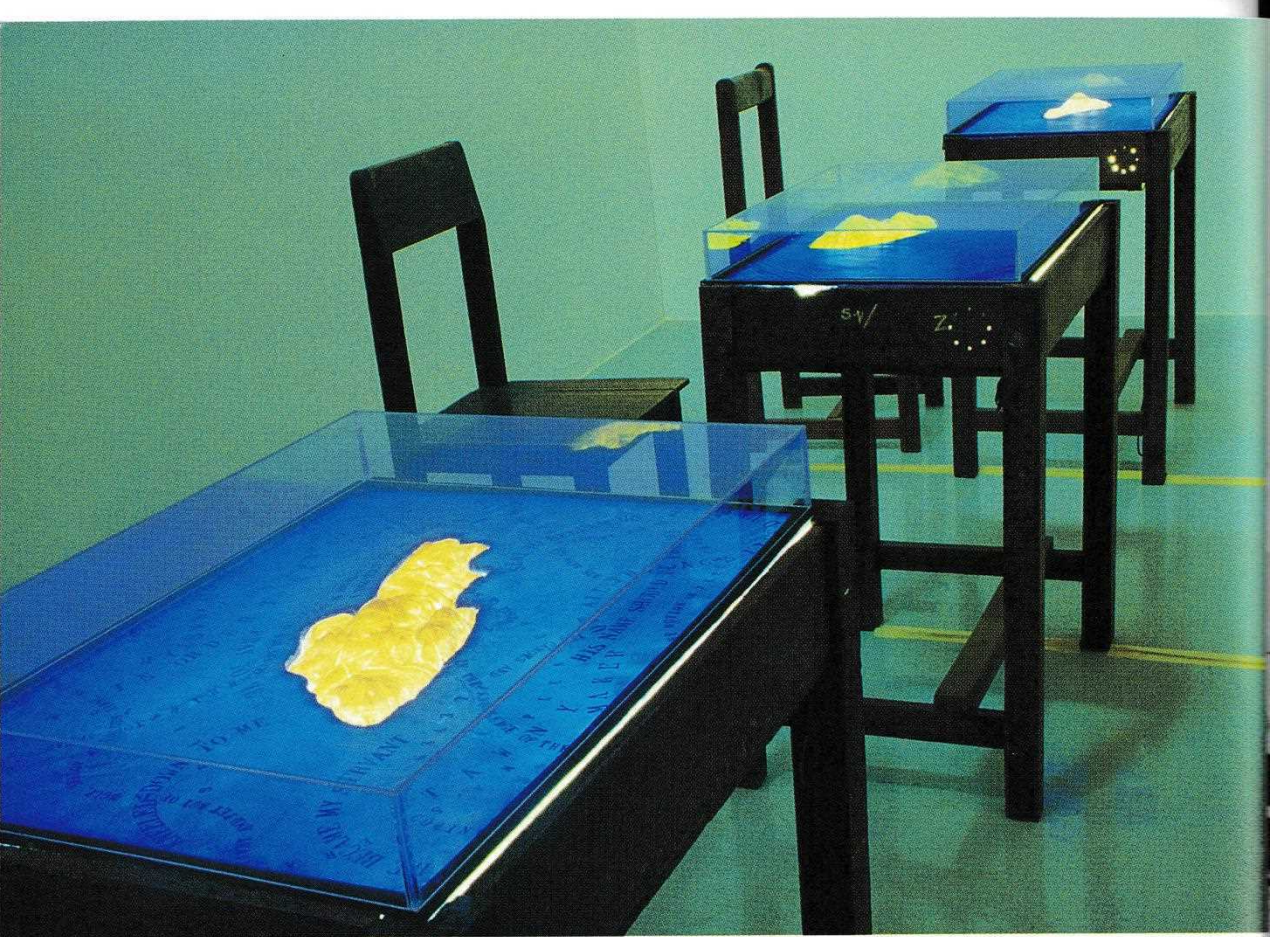
1996

Charcoal and silkscreen

on paper

125 x 91.5 cm





courtesy of Kwangju Biennale 2000

**Exile Islands/
diPULAUKan**

1998

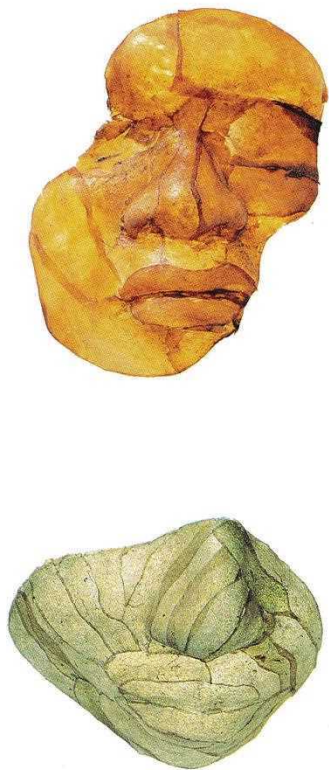
Installation with six school
tables and chairs, sugar,
indigo, dried plants and fruit
skins

above:
installation view

facing page, top:
detail of Bidong Island, a
Vietnamese refugee camp in
Malaysia; breadfruit skin

facing page, bottom:
detail of Buru Island, a
camp for political prisoners
in Indonesia; tobacco leaf





Non-Indigenous Skins

1998

9 partial faces/masks cast
in resin, covered with dried
fruit and plants

122 x 255 cm in vitrine

Edition of 2

clockwise from top left:

detail of Papaya (2/2);

installation view (1/2);

detail of Soya (2/2)



Indigenous Skins

1998

9 partial faces/masks cast
in resin, covered with dried
fruit and plants

122 x 255 cm in vitrine

Edition of 2

clockwise from top left:
details of Water-Apple;
Banana; Coconut;
Starfruit

this page:

Tapestry of Justice

1998-

Collected thumbprints

joined by petals and leaves

Size variable

installation view

facing page:

Vitrine of

Contemporary Events

1999

Display of found objects,

cow dung, video, postcard

petition, dust

Size variable

clockwise from left:

installation view; details

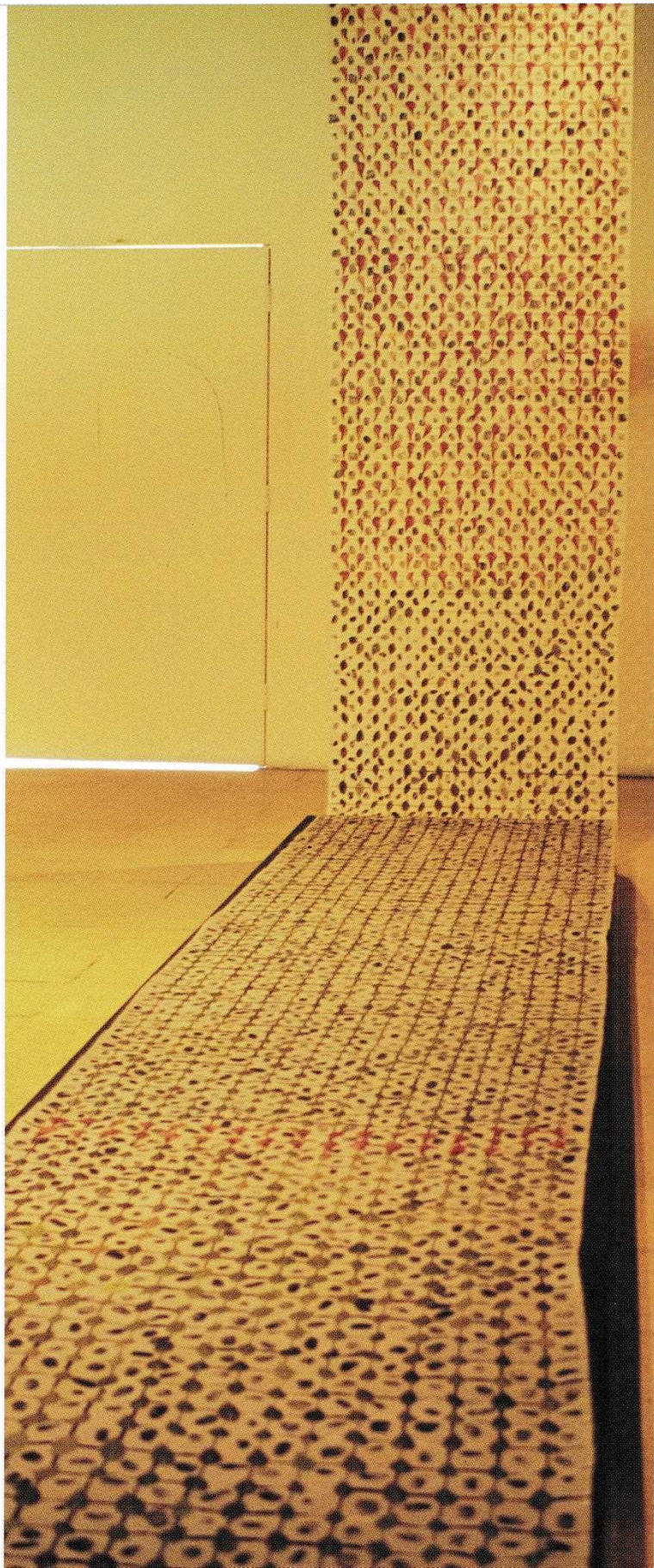
of judges' wigs and batons

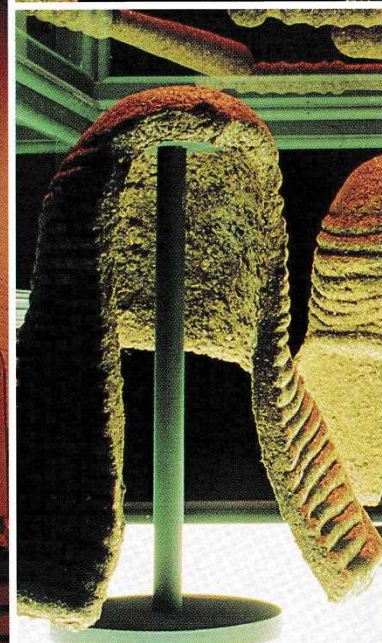
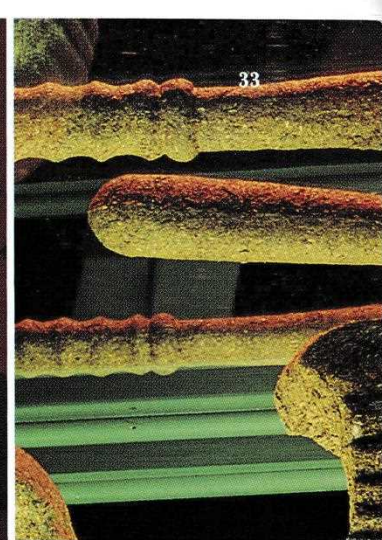
cast in dung; detail of

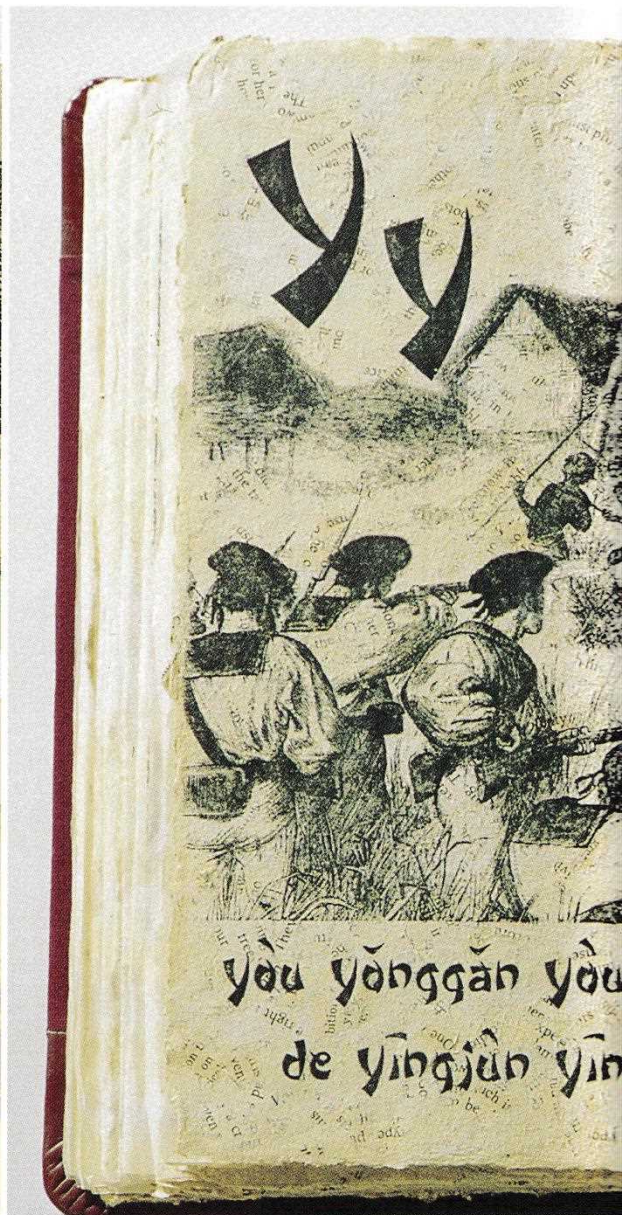
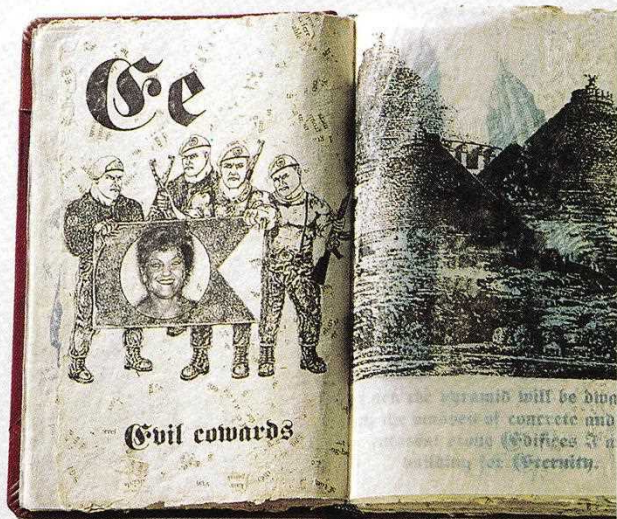
Malaysian Constitution,

Article 19, printed on

parchment of dust







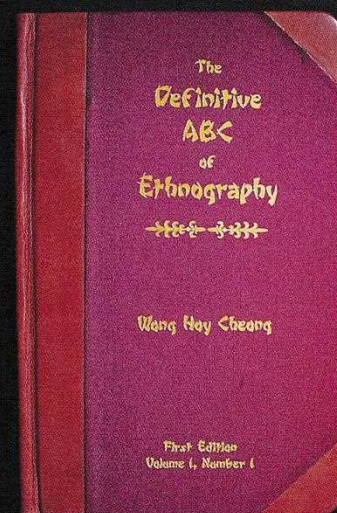


The Definitive ABC of Ethnography

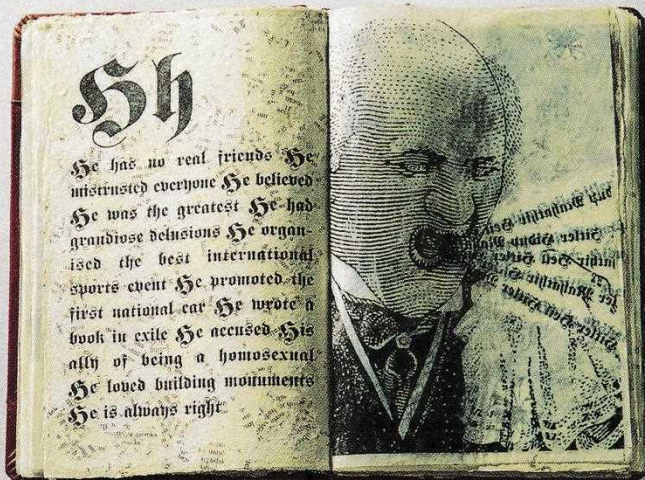
1999

Bound book with text
and images transferred
onto glassine paper and
paper made from
disintegrated pulp copies
of V.S. Naipul's
Among The Believers and
Margaret Mead's
Coming of Age in Samoa,
artist's original

26 x 16.5 x 2.5 cm



李 李



**The Definitive ABC
of Government**

1999

Bound book with text
and images transferred onto
glassine paper and paper
made from disintegrated
pulp copies of Adolf Hitler's

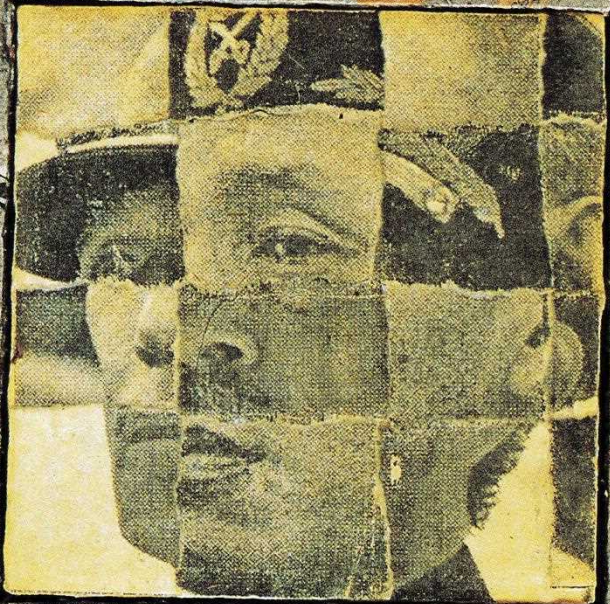
Mein Kampf and Mahathir

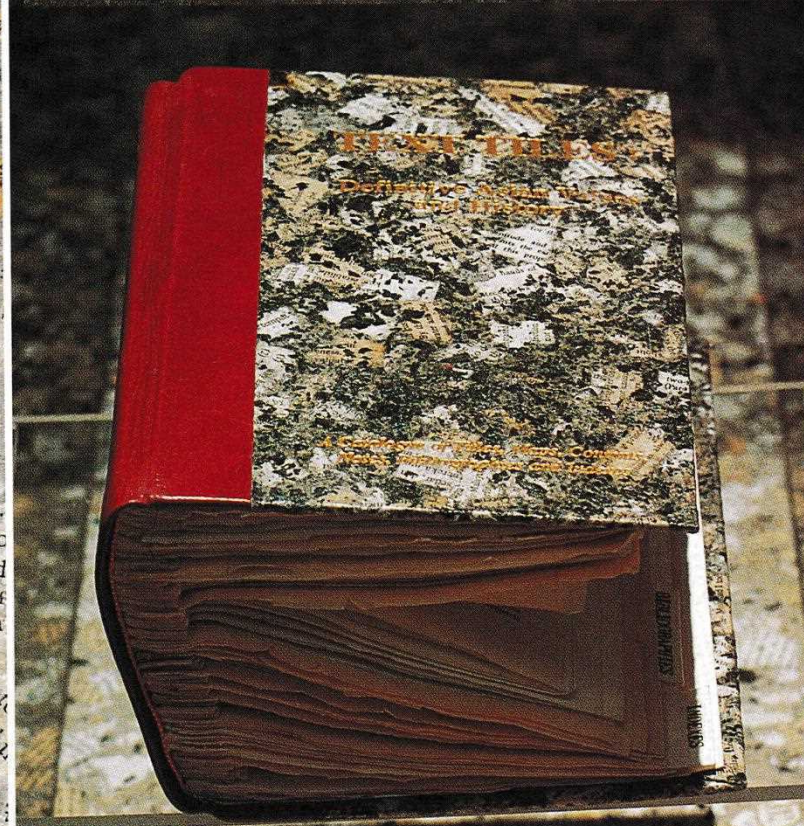
Mohamad's *The Malay*

Dilemma, artist's original

26 x 16.5 x 2.5 cm





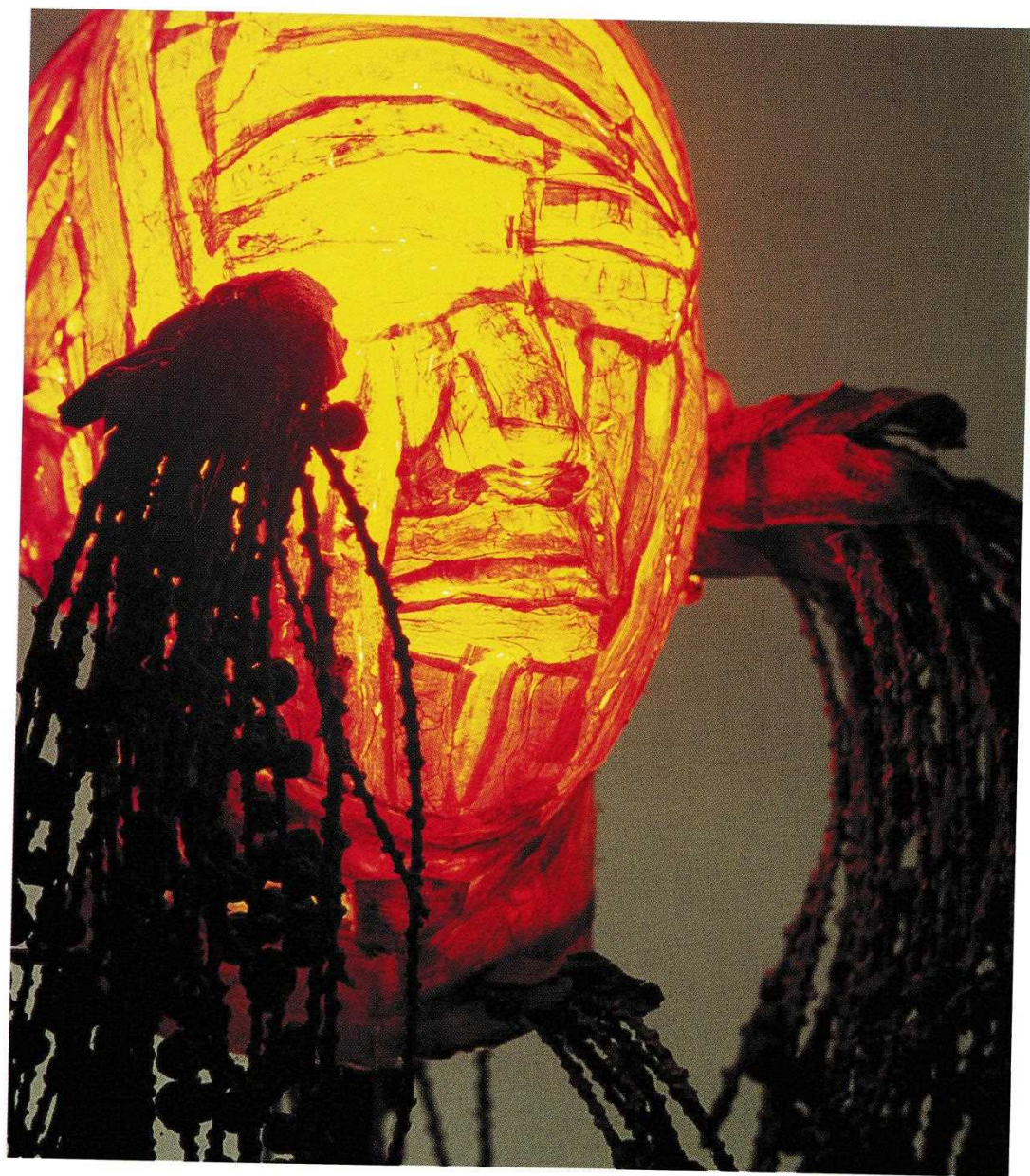


Text Tiles

2000

290 tiles covered with pulp and disintegrated text taken from books on modern Asian and non-Asian history, and woven images of political figures

470 x 550 cm





Poison

2000

Four heads cast in resin, covered with dried poisonous and non-poisonous plants; light bulbs, metal stands
Size variable

facing page:
detail of Chili

this page, left:
detail of installation

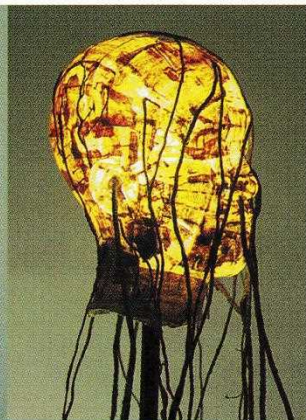
this page, below,
from left to right:

Head of Malaysian student of Chinese descent made from Soya with flowers of Poison Lily;

Head of Malaysian student of Malay descent made from Chili with fruits of Fish-Tail Palm;

Head of Malaysian student of Indian descent made from Tea with Giant Elephant's Ear;

Head of Malaysian student of Melenau descent made from Tapioca with roots of Hunter's Robe





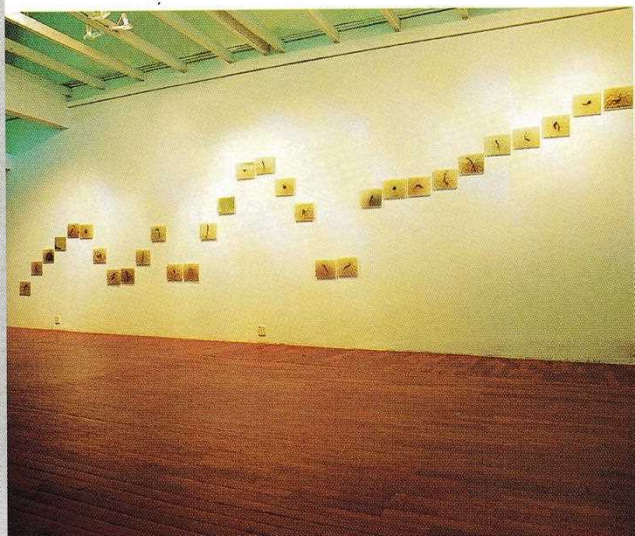
**In Search of Refuge
during the October
Downpour**


2002

31 colour photographs,
encased in resin

15 x 20 cm (x 31)

1st in edition of 2





St. Francis X.

St. Francis Xavier
(from an old portrait)

monasteries, but went out into the world each.

One day, when Francis was proud because he was becoming famous at the university, Ignatius spoke to him. He praised Francis for his cleverness, but better than merely being proud and famous. He asked Francis to be a Jesuit and to go on to teach the message of Jesus.

Francis saw that Ignatius was right. He became one of the first members of the Society of Jesus, and went for a time to study in Rome. When he was chosen to be a Christian missionary to the eastern lands. It was a hard and dangerous task, and he had to give up his wealth and friends; but he readily agreed to go.

He sailed to Goa, the Portuguese headquarters in India, and there he began the great work of his life. Dressed in poor clothes, he travelled all over preaching and helping the sick, and ever loved them because he was so cheerful and kind. He was also very stern and strict in his teaching, and he was not living in

deration on appointed by the Director of Operations; their
eration before as directed by the Director of Operations.
absence which

The functions of the Federal Cabinet were transferred to the National Operations Council and Ministry of Home Affairs State Operations Committee, but after the end of the emergency fully re-emerged into its normal position. The Minister of Home Affairs persons who were members before the emergency, but some of them who had lost the election), but the Minister of Home Affairs constitution provides that during the emergency the Minister of Home Affairs may appoint from amongst the members of the House of Representatives legislation before the disallowance of the House.

particularly if his name was on the list of candidates for citizenship. But sometimes it happens that a person's name is on one's birth certificate but he does not have Malaysian citizenship if one of his parents is not a citizen. This situation is still alive and can produce difficulties in the future. Reason; but it may well be that he has never applied for citizenship or other cannot produce satisfactory evidence of his citizenship. In these and similar cases of doubt it will be possible to issue a grant of citizenship under article 30.

A person whose citizenship is doubtful because he was born in Malaya between March 1946 and the end of September 1962 and there is no difficulty about the place and time of his birth, sometimes experience difficulties when an official through ignorance refuses to accept his citizenship. There is no machinery for granting citizenship like the one under article 30. Many people would say, "I should be, and I am inclined to agree with them."

If a person applies for a certificate under article 30, he must find that he is not a citizen at all it is wrong. He should be advised to apply for citizenship under article 30 immediately or as soon as possible.

What if a person who is already a citizen under article 30? It is difficult to say what the Minister of Home Affairs makes him a citizen. If there is evidence that he is a citizen, it is enough. If not, secondly, it is evidence that he is a citizen, which is sufficient. Thirdly, status at a subsequent date.

A person who is a citizen under article 30 certificate has been taken into consideration in circumstances where there are no difficulties in his papers are in order.

despite the fact that the Minister of Home Affairs has established the Ministry of Home Affairs Originally the Elections Commission was under government control, we

BRINHAM HARBOUR
A fisherman takes the opportunity to patch his boat when the tide is out

SEAMEN AND FISHERMEN

The moorlands, valleys and plains all help to provide for West Country people. So does the sea. For generations men in this part of England have been famous as fishermen of rough grazing seamen. The big ports of Bristol and Plymouth, and smaller ones there is a smaller, too, saw many a brave captain and his crew set out on their great expeditions in search of discovery. From Plymouth Sir Francis Drake sailed his ships to find new worlds. From Plymouth John Cabot set out to discover North America. And from Plymouth John Cabot's roots are grown this voyage round the world, and from Bristol John Cabot's sons and daughters have found it when he discovered Newfoundland.

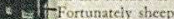
5. THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND—DOWNLAND & WEALD

THE DOWNLANDS

FROM the north of Hampshire two chalk ridges run on. These ridges are the *North Downs* and the *South Downs*. The lowlands lying between the North and the South Downs are called the *Weald*, a word meaning forest.

Over there is a flock of sheep. But these sheep are not the Welsh sheep, which wander freely over the hills. The Southdown sheep are led by a shepherd, who is helped by a wonderful sheep-dog, which is very skilful in rounding up sheep. But in early autumn, before the cold weather, the flocks are driven down to the lowlands, where they remain until the end of spring.

Here and there we shall probably come across a *desert*. These ponds have been made by man, many of them probably hundreds of years ago.



A hollow is dug in the ground and is then covered with layers of straw. On top of the straw is placed a thick layer of clay. This is well beaten down to make it water-tight. The result prevents the heat passing out of the earth into the clay, and therefore remains cool. The moisture in the air is condensed on the surface of the cool clay, and so a dew-pond is formed. Fortunately sheep do not need much to drink, for, apart from these ponds, there is little water.

The rain sinks through the chalk of the Downs until

THE MEETING ES AND CHURCH

6. THE THAMES AND ITS BASIN

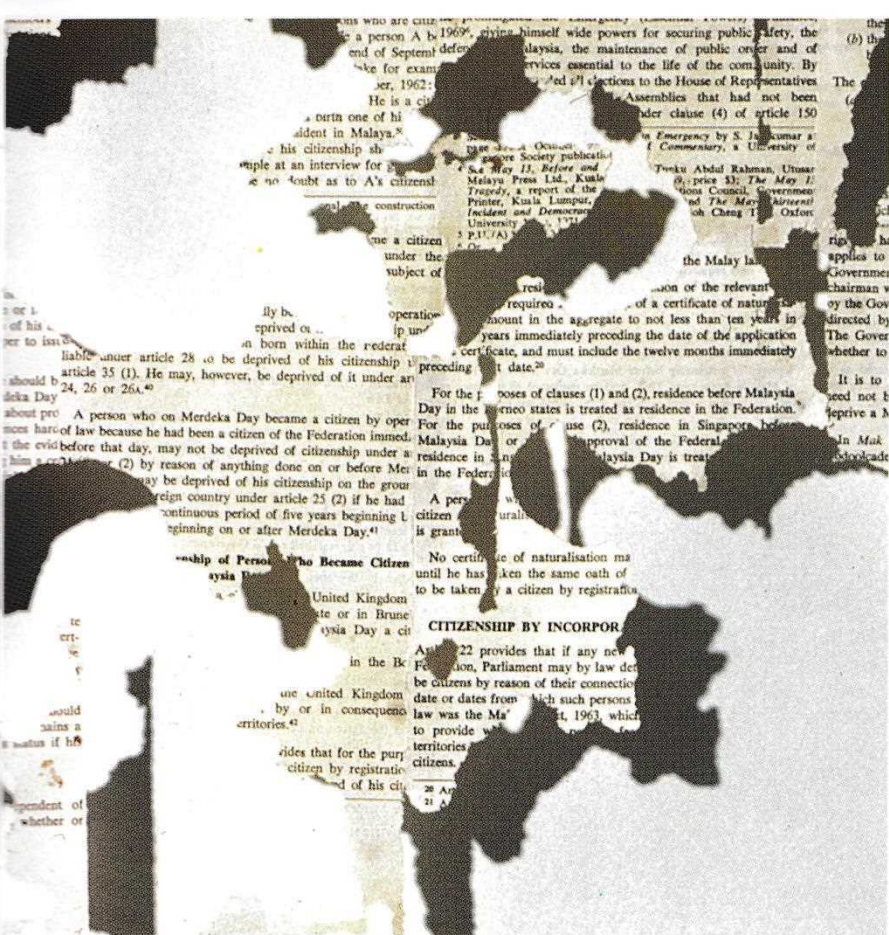
THE BASIN OF THE UPPER THAMES

If we look at the map we shall see that nearly all the *scarp* running down the gentle south-eastern slopes of the Cotswolds help to form the Thames.

Were it possible to draw a line just outside the sources and tributaries of the Thames, the land inside that line



1 Sport and Gen...



facing page, top to bottom:

**The Colonies Bite Back I:
Great Men of the East**

2000

Collage made from pages of
book fed to termites

48 x 117 cm

**The Colonies Bite Back II:
Exploring the British Isles**

2000

Collage made from pages of
book fed to termites

48 x 117 cm

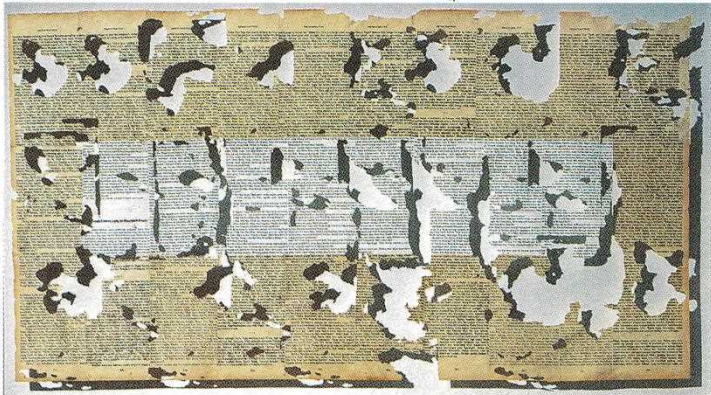
this page, top to bottom:

**The Colonies turn on
Themselves I: The
Malaysian Constitution**

2002

Collage made from pages of
book fed to termites

56 x 125 cm



**The Colonies turn on
Themselves II: Sejarah
Melayu/ Hikayat Hang
Tuah**

2002

Collage made from pages of
books fed to termites

67 x 104 cm

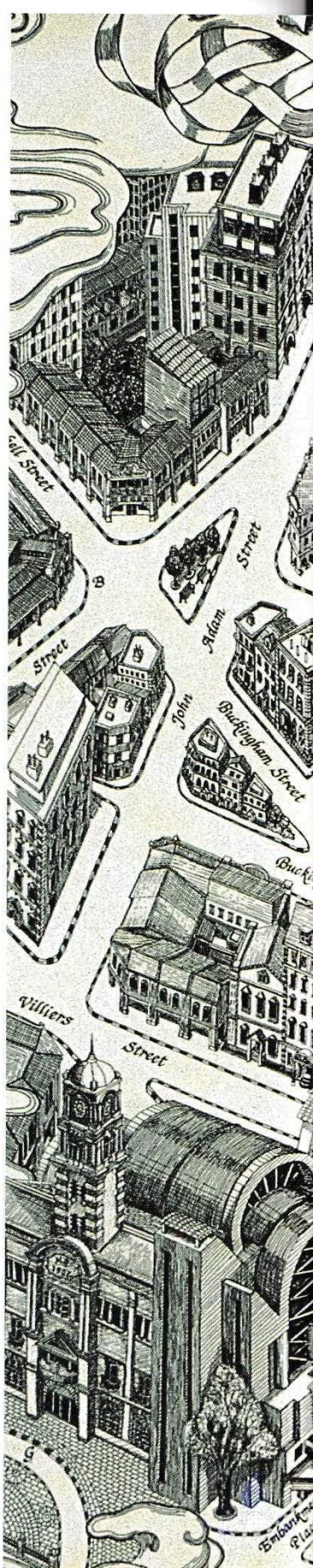
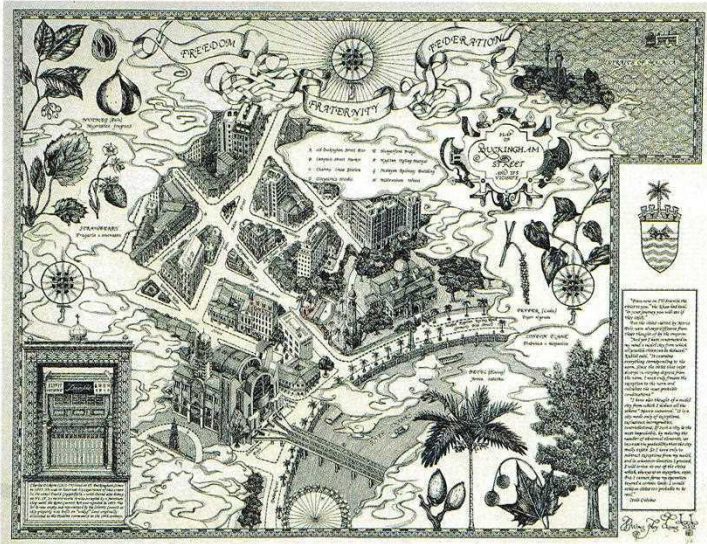
**Buckingham Street
and its Vicinity**

2002

Offset line lithograph

62 x 82 cm

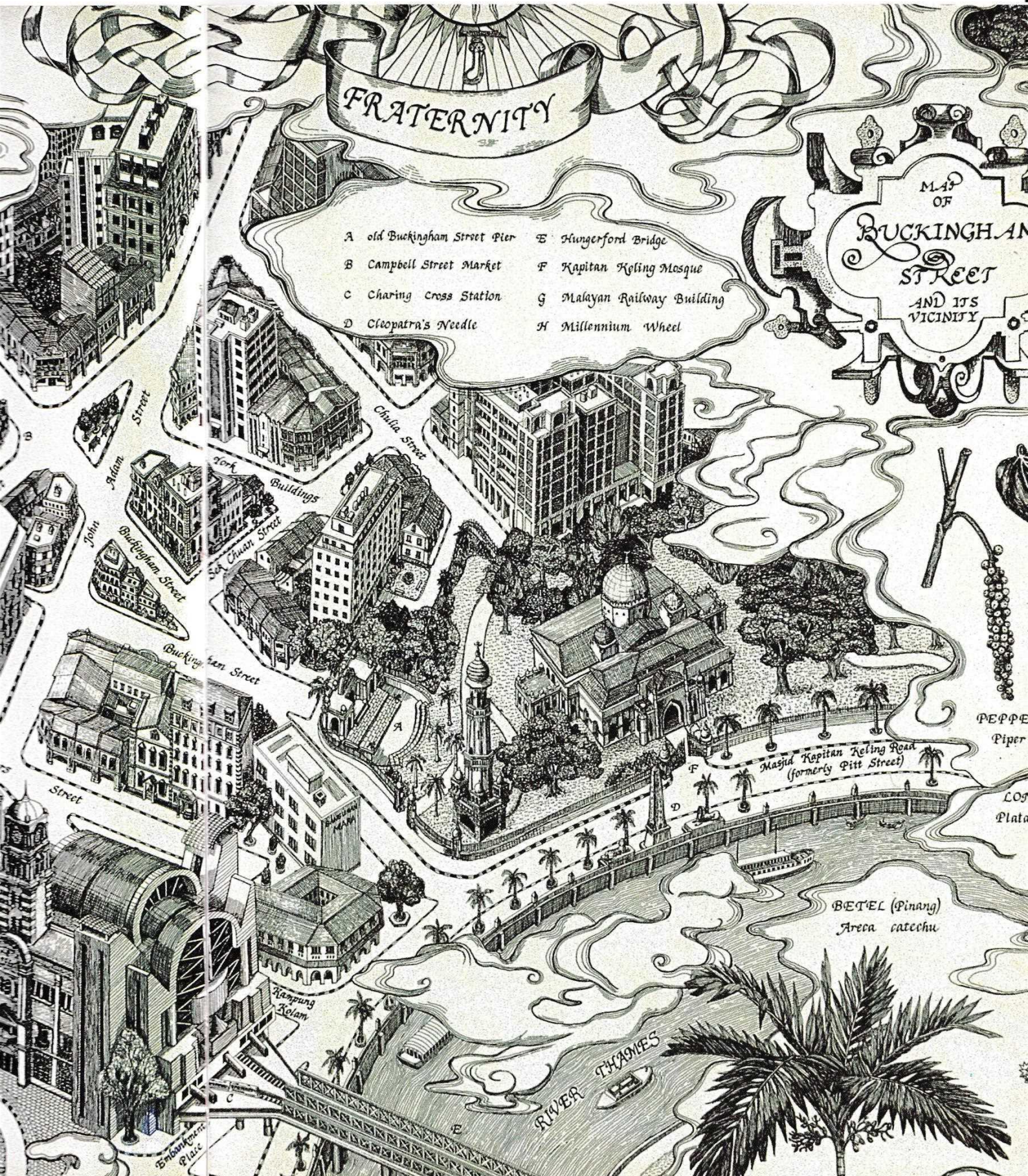
Edition of 6



FRATERNITY

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| A old Buckingham Street Pier | E Hungerford Bridge |
| B Campbell Street Market | F Kapitan Keling Mosque |
| C Charing Cross Station | G Malayan Railway Building |
| D Cleopatra's Needle | H Millennium Wheel |

MAP OF BUCKINGHAM STREET AND ITS VICINITY



PEPPER
Piper

LOF
Plata

BETEL (Pinang)
Areca catechu

RIVER THAMES

Masjid Kapitan Keling Road
(formerly Pitt Street)

Kampung
Kelan

Buckingham
Place

Buckingham Street

Buckingham Street

Adam Street

Chulia Street

Buildings

John Street

Street

this page, left to right:

**In Between Malayan
Railway Building and
Eleanor Cross**

2002

Charcoal on paper

75 x 51.5 cm

facing page:

**In Between Masjid
Kapitan Keling and
Narcissus**

2002

Charcoal on paper

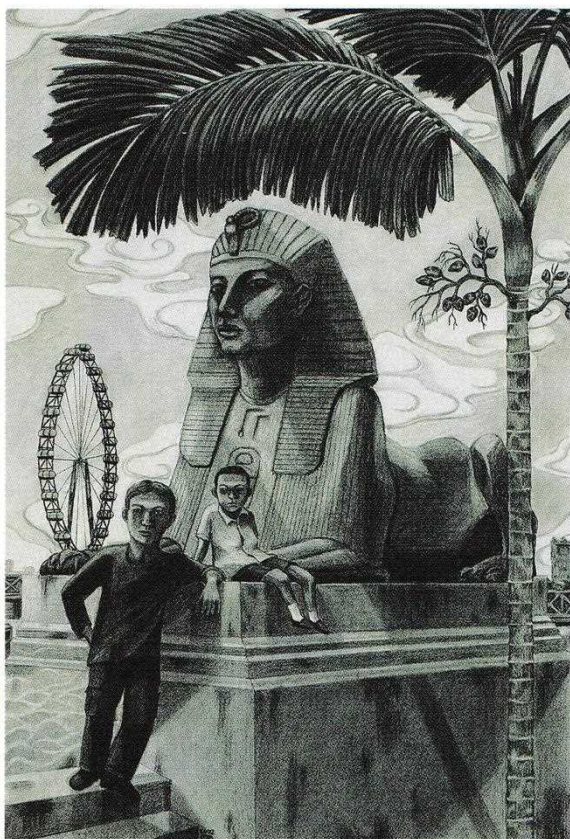
75 x 51.5 cm

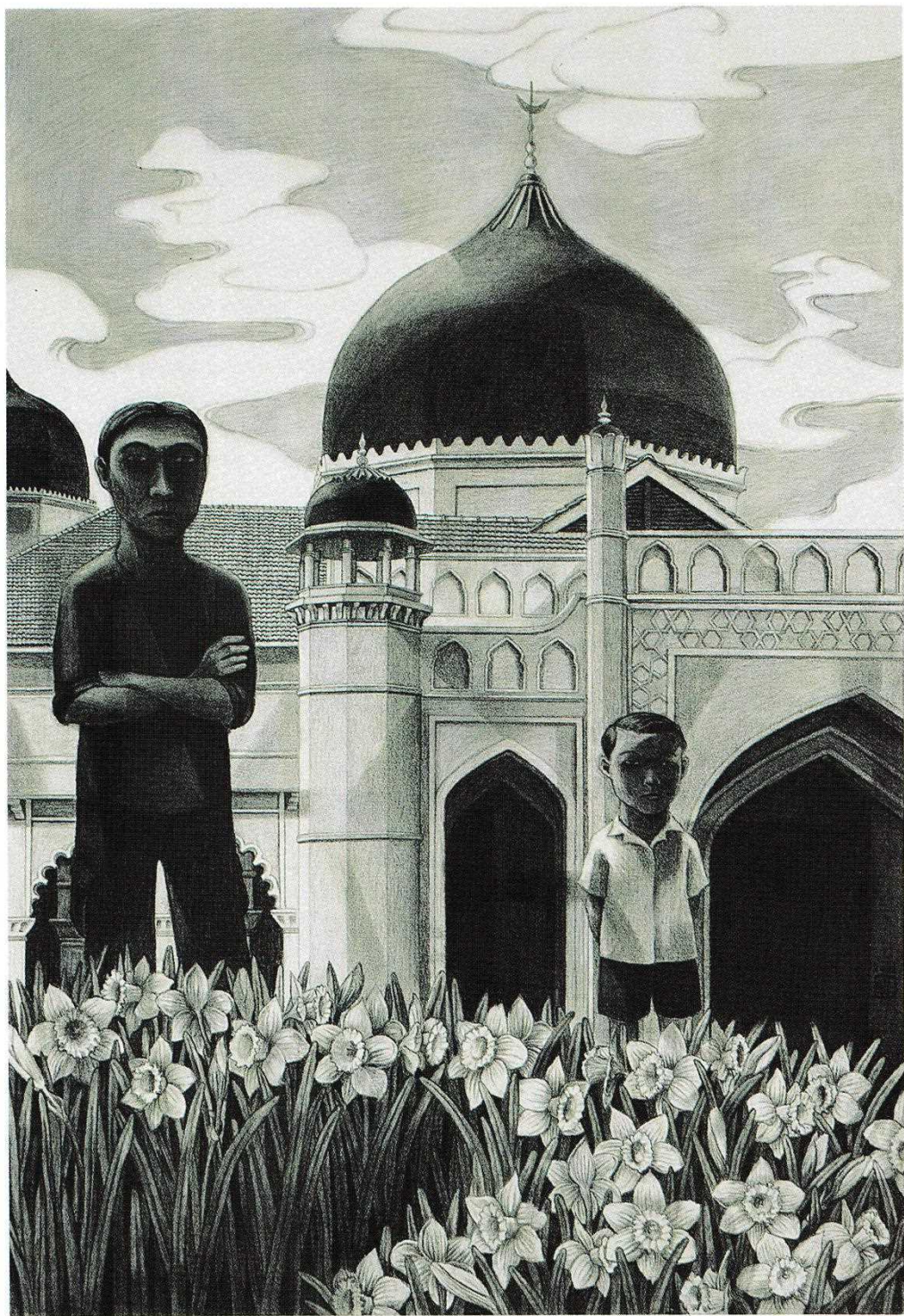
**In Between Betelnut
Palm and the Sphinx**

2002

Charcoal on paper

75 x 51.5 cm





ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Wong Hoy Cheong was born in 1960, Penang, Malaysia. He has previously taught painting and drawing at The London Institute / Bandar Utama College, Malaysian Institute of Art and the University of Massachusetts, USA. He was Artist-in-Residence (1992) at Canberra Institute of Art, Australian National University; Visiting Tutor (1998) at Central St. Martins, London; Visiting Fellow (1999) at Goldsmiths College, University of London; and a resident at Gasworks, London (2002). He currently teaches at the Center for Advanced Design campus in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Since the 1990's, his work has been inter-disciplinary, involving areas such as drawing, installation, text-based projects, theatre/performance and video; and has explored the interrelationship of history, politics, culture and ethnicity.

EDUCATION

1986 Master of Fine Arts

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

1984 Master in Education

Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

1982 Bachelor of Arts (Magna cum Laude with Honors)

Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2002 *Whose Text?* Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

1999 *Seeds of Change* Habitat, London, UK

1996 *Of Migrants and Rubber Trees: Drawings and Installations*

Creative Centre, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur

1991 *Selected Paintings and Drawings 1982-1991* The Gallery, TheatreWorks,

Fort Canning Centre, Singapore

1986 *New Works* New York University, New York City, USA

In Search of Faraway Places Herter Gallery, Amherst, Massachusetts

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PROJECTS

2002 *The Spice Route* ifa gallery, Stuttgart, Germany

Identities: Who We Are National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur

Refuge Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden, Norway

Asian Party (Global Game II) ARCO, Madrid, Spain

ARS 01 KIASMA Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland

Flashpoint Rimbun Dahan Gallery, Kuang, Malaysia

Headlights Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur

2000 *Overtag* BildMuseet, Umea, Sweden

Lines of Descent Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia (touring exhibition)

La Ville, Le Jardin, La Memoire Villa Medici, Rome, Italy

- Poisonous Targets (2-person show)* Gallery 4A, Sydney, Australia
Mutations / Urban Rumours Fri-Art Contemporary Art Centre, Fribourg, Switzerland
Invisible Boundary Utsonomiya Museum of Art, Utsonomiya, Japan
3rd Kwangju Biennale Kwangju, Korea
- 1999 *Time for Tea* National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
babel Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK
Sogni/Dreams Fondazine Sandretto Re Rebaudengo PerL'latre / Venice Biennale 1999
Cities on the Move 5 Hayward Gallery, London, UK
1st Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan
Cities on the Move 4 Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, Denmark
Intervention Museum-in-Progress, Vienna, Austria in Der Standard, Feb 11 1999
- 1998 *Siapa? Apa? Kenapa?* Artis Pro Activ, Kuala Lumpur
Schools: Textual Works Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
Cities On The Move 2 CapeMuseum d'art Contemporain, Bordeaux, France
Rupa Malaysia Brunei Gallery, London and National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur,
- 1997 *Cities On The Move* The Secession, Vienna
Art in Southeast Asia: Glimpses into the Future Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
 (touring exhibition)
- 1996 *Imagining the Contemporary Body: Malaysia, Philippines & Singapore* Petronas Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
2nd Asia-Pacific Triennial Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
- 1995 *Visions of Happiness: 10 Contemporary Asian Artists* Japan Foundation, Tokyo
- 1994 *War Box, Lalang, Killing Tools* Creative Centre, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Vision and Idea: ReLooking Modern Malaysian Art National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- 1993 *What About Converging Extremes?* GaleriWan, Kuala Lumpur
- 1992 *New Art from Southeast Asia* Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka (touring exhibition)
Artists' Regional Exchange Perth Institute of Contemporary Art / Lawrence Wilson Gallery
 Perth, Australia
- 1990 *Artists' Call* GaleriWan, Kuala Lumpur
- 1988 *Contemporary Malaysian Art* Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California, USA
- 1987 *30 Years of Malaysian Art* National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Young Contemporaries National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
- 1986 *Annual Exhibition* Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, USA

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Clark, John *Modern Asian Art* (Craftsman House: Sydney, 1998)
- Pan, Lynn *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas* (Harvard Univ. Press: Cambridge, 1999)
- Turner, Caroline (ed.) *Tradition and Change: Contemporary Art of Asia and Pacific*
 (University of Queensland Press: Brisbane, 1993)
- Hassa, Salleh & Dadi, Iftikhar *Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading*
 (Museum Boijmans van Beunigen & Nai Publishers: Rotterdam, 2001)
- Sabapathy, Kanaga (ed.) *Vision & Idea: ReLooking Malaysia Art*
 (National Art Gallery: Kuala Lumpur, 1994)
- van Fenema, Joyce (ed.) *Southeast Asian Art Today* (Roeder Publications: Singapore, 1996)

Video

The Museum in Progress Video Archive Vienna, Austria (15 min., Nov. 1997)

Voices of Asia NHK, Tokyo, Japan (45 min., Nov. 1992)

Journals / Magazines

'Wong Hoy Cheong: Avant-garde artist', Mahlon Meyer *Newsweek* (USA), Summer Issue, 2001

'Valuing Asia', Sumit Mandal *Art AsiaPacific* (Sydney), Issue 29: 2001

'babel', David Briers *Art Monthly* (London), Oct 1999

'Cities on the Move', Kristian Woznicki *Freize* (London), Sep-Oct 1999

'Artis Pro Activ', Lee Weng Choy *Art AsiaPacific* (Australia), No. 24 1999

'Leaders for the Millenium', Sangwon Suh and Santhi Oorjitham *Asiaweek*, Feb 5 1999

'Cities on the Move', Douglas Fogle *Flash Art* (Italy), Mar-Apr 1998

'A Controversy of Silence', Laura Fan *Art AsiaPacific* (Sydney), Fall 1997

'Report for Australia: Pacific Rim Future', Judith E. Stein *Art in America* (USA), June 1997

'The Social Narrative', Ian Findlay Brown *Asian Art News* (Hong Kong), Vol 6, No 5,
Sep/Oct 1996

'The Indiscreet Charm of Wong Hoy Cheong: Politics vs. Aesthetics...', Karim Raslan
Art AsiaPacific (Sydney), Vol 1, No 2, 1994

'New Art from Southeast Asia at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space', Maggie Pai *Asian Art News*,
Nov/Dec 1992

'Malaysia's Video Quarantine', Ray Langenbach *Afterimage* (USA), April 1991

Exhibition Catalogues

Whose Text? Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2002;

'Rhetorical Questions', Beverly Yong

ARS 01 Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Finland, 2001;

'Wong Hoy Cheong', Beverly Yong

Poisonous Targets Gallery 4A, Sydney, Australia, 2000; 'Serious Mischief', Sumit Mandal

Gwangju Biennale Gwangju, Korea; 2000; 'Invisible Boundary', Arata Tani;

'Wong Hoy Cheong', Niranjana Rajah

babel Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK, 1999; 'In other words...', Claire Doherty

First Asian Triennial Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, 1999; 'Wong Hoy Cheong', Niranjana Rajah

Schools Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, 1998; 'Holding up the skies', Sumit Mandal

Imaging The Contemporary Body Valentine Willie Fine Art: Kuala Lumpur, 1996;

'Imagining the Contemporary Body', Laura Fan

The Asia-Pacific Triennial 1996 Queensland Art Gallery: Brisbane, 1996;

'Five Malaysian Artists', Simon Elliot; 'Wong Hoy Cheong', Krishen Jit

Of Migrants and Rubber Trees Five Arts Centre/Valentine Willie Fine Art: K.L., 1996;

'Wong Hoy Cheong', Valentine Willie; 'Wong Hoy Cheong - from Urban Guerilla to
Country Farmer', Karim Raslan; 'In Conversation...', Ray Langenbach

Visions of Happiness; Ten Asian Contemporary Artists Japan Foundation: Tokyo, 1995;

'Visions of Happiness', Shimizu Toshio

War Box, Lalang, Killing Tools Five Arts Centre: Kuala Lumpur, 1994;

'Wong Hoy Cheong's "Radical" Garden', Ray Langenbach

New Art from Southeast Asia Fukuoka Art Museum: Fukuoka, 1992 ;

'The Labyrinthine Search for Self-Identity...', Masahiro Ushiroshoji

Wong Hoy Cheong: Selected Paintings & Drawings 1982-91 Galeri Wan: Kuala Lumpur, 1991;

'Introduction', Krishen Jit; 'The Search of Hoy Cheong', Edmundo Desnoes;

'Painting into Video: Memories of Malaysia', Ray Langenbach;

'An Artist Finds His Voice', Tan Joo Lee

Newspapers

'Closer look at the written word', Veronica Shunmugam *The Star* (Malaysia), June 2 2002

'Shedding Power', Laura Fan *The Edge* (Malaysia), May 13 2002

'Exuberant word play', Robert Clark *The Guardian* (UK), Oct 16 1999

'Watch your language...', Terry Grimley *The Birmingham Post* (UK), Oct 30 1999

'International Impact', Laura Fan *The Edge* (Malaysia), July 5 1999

'Postcards, thumbprints and the odure of things', Sharon Teh *The Independent* (UK), May 6 1999

'Facing up to realities of migration', J. Anu *Sunday Star* (Malaysia), July 28 1996

'Paintings trace migrant roots', Ooi Kok Chuen *New Straits Times* (Malaysia), Aug 1996

'Provocative show by three artists', Ooi Kok Chuen *New Straits Times* (Malaysia), Oct 31 1994

'Tribute to a resilient weed', J. Anu *Sunday Star* (Malaysia), Oct 16 1994

'There's art in growing lalang', Ooi Kok Chuen *New Straits Times* (Malaysia), Sep 3 1994

'Sook Ching goes to Hiroshima', Ooi Kok Chuen *New Straits Times* (Malaysia), Oct 16 1992

'Sign of new orientation', Martin Thomas *Sydney Morning Herald* (Australia), May 13 1992

'Depicting nouveau riche on canvas', Lida Geh *Sunday Star* (Malaysia), Nov 3 1991

'Expressive figures', K. Sabapathy *The Straits Times* (Singapore), Oct 15 1992

'Shadow of the scissors', Mansor Puteh *Sunday Star* (Malaysia), Nov 11 1990

'Enacting a past horror', Ooi Kok Chuen *New Straits Times* (Malaysia), Oct 28 1990

'Artist drawn to outsiders', Ooi Kok Chuen *New Straits Times* (Malaysia), Aug 4 1987

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia

Canberra Institute of Art, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

University Of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA

KLM, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Bank Negara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Deutsche Bank, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



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