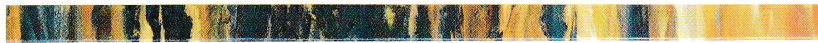
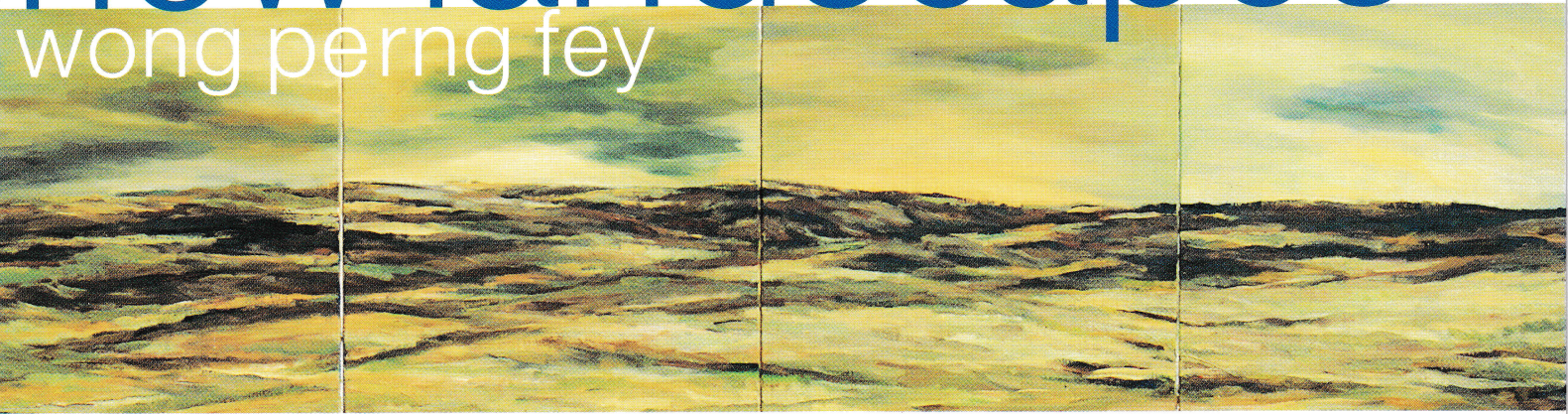


# new landscapes

wong perng fey



# new landscapes

In the catalogue to Wong Perng Fey's first solo exhibition at this gallery in 2000, Dr Askandar Unglehart writes enthusiastically of the artist's "inquisitive nature digging underneath the surface of the earth".

Perng Fey's work is driven and fed by "the land" - in his personal relationship to it, in its ideological significance, in its emotional hold over human consciousness, in its susceptibility to devastation and change by human hand, in its aesthetic richness, in ideas about landscape painting or art.

The paintings we saw over two years ago powerfully expressed this special relationship, each a very personal document of emotional states, often passionate, and nostalgic. The "land" he is concerned with lies between urban centre and rural life. In those earlier paintings he would take as his subject patches of grass or doorways in his studio in a squatters' area, or venture out to find tracts of overlooked or abandoned land and from these weave the lyrical and heroic. On the outskirts of the city, where the artist was born and has since lived most of his years, nature is caught at a moment of change, on the verge of being triumphed over. Thus the city-dweller's sense of homeland, of rootedness is gradually eroded.

The new series of work central to this exhibition is less intimate, and more ambitious. After a long period of travel, and being shunted from studio to studio, Perng Fey found sanctuary at the artists' residency at Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, where he has spent the past nine months taking time to work on some crucial and interesting ideas, and on developing new formal approaches.

**Double Horizon, Arising I & II, and Perimeter I & II** are vast canvases which explore the relationship between natural environment and man-made presence. Always a concern of the artist's, its development has certainly been enhanced and informed by his residing in an architectural project which also specifically addresses this issue. By introducing simple geometric forms into his large landscape compositions, he disturbs the human, and particularly modern, sense of the separateness of the organic and the inorganic. The shapes mark out territory, re-frame the environment.

There is a new emotional detachment from the landscape subject in these paintings - the scenes are similar, and more abstracted than in previous work. Perhaps the detachment is influenced by contemporary cinematography, and its observational, documentary stance. Without losing its energy, the pace or rhythm of his painting has become less frenetic. The fine, almost calligraphic strokes which build up his paintings give way to a looser handling. In a way, Perng Fey has brought together here the drama of his grand panoramas, and the complex inflections of his series of works focusing on grass, of previous years. Already in his previous exhibition, he had begun to experiment with broader strokes and a brighter palette in a brief series of small works. Here, he has taken bold steps, removed horizons, banished black from his palette of earthy browns, oranges, greens and sky blues. There is much more activity in his painting, the sense of movement created by more complex layering and plays of light.

If the **Hillsides** of 2000 seem to speak, if a little sadly, of the timelessness of nature, falling back on the depth and lustre of older landscapes, these paintings live in an anxious present pivoting on the tension between the natural and unnatural forces at play in each.

Smaller works in this exhibition offer a softer side to Perng Fey's "new landscapes" - these capture a particular time and mood in the artist's life, forgoing the conceptual ambitions of the larger paintings. They continue perhaps in the same strain as **Doorways** (2000), which depicted scenes from his squatters' colony, its closeness, heaviness. In the new paintings, nature's bounty is held up to the moonlight on long evening walks, pathways are cut through sheltered groves - always the artist is there with us, with his longing for the moment not to end. As before, they are a tribute to the role of place, especially that given rather than made, in personal memory.

Beverly Yong, *curator*



# wong perng fey

**born** 1974, Selangor, Malaysia

## **education**

1998 Diploma in Fine Art, Malaysian Institute of Art, Kuala Lumpur  
(majoring in painting and drawing)

## **exhibitions**

2002 *Touch - Arts for Nature*, WWF Exhibition 2002, Rimbun Dahan, Kuala Lumpur

2001 *Open Show*, National Art Gallery, Malaysia  
*Climbing the Walls - 1st Exhibition of Wall Lizards Art Group*, MIA Art & Design Center.  
*Face the Act*, Gallery Petronas, Kuala Lumpur

2000 *Philip Morris Group of Companies Art Awards Exhibition*, National Art Gallery, Malaysia  
*First Solo*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur  
*Landscape after Landscape*, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur

1999 *Fine Art Diploma Show*, Galeri MIA, Kuala Lumpur  
*Art Connection - Paintings Group Show*, Art Extreme Gallery & Studio, Kuala Lumpur  
*minority - Seven Young Artists Exhibition*, 153 Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur  
*AKU 99 Portrait Show*, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur

1998 *Expressive Drawing - Drawing Group Show*, Galeri MIA, Kuala Lumpur  
*Malaysian Heritage - Young Talent Group Show*, Bank Negara, Kuala Lumpur

1997 *FOUND - Installation Art*, Galeri MIA, Kuala Lumpur

1994 *Malaysian Art Open*, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur

## **awards**

2002 Rimbun Dahan Artist's Residency

2000 Honorable Mention Phillip Morris Group of Companies Art Awards

1995 MIA Scholarship Award

1994 Honorable Mention, Malaysian Art Open, Kuala Lumpur

## **review of exhibitions**

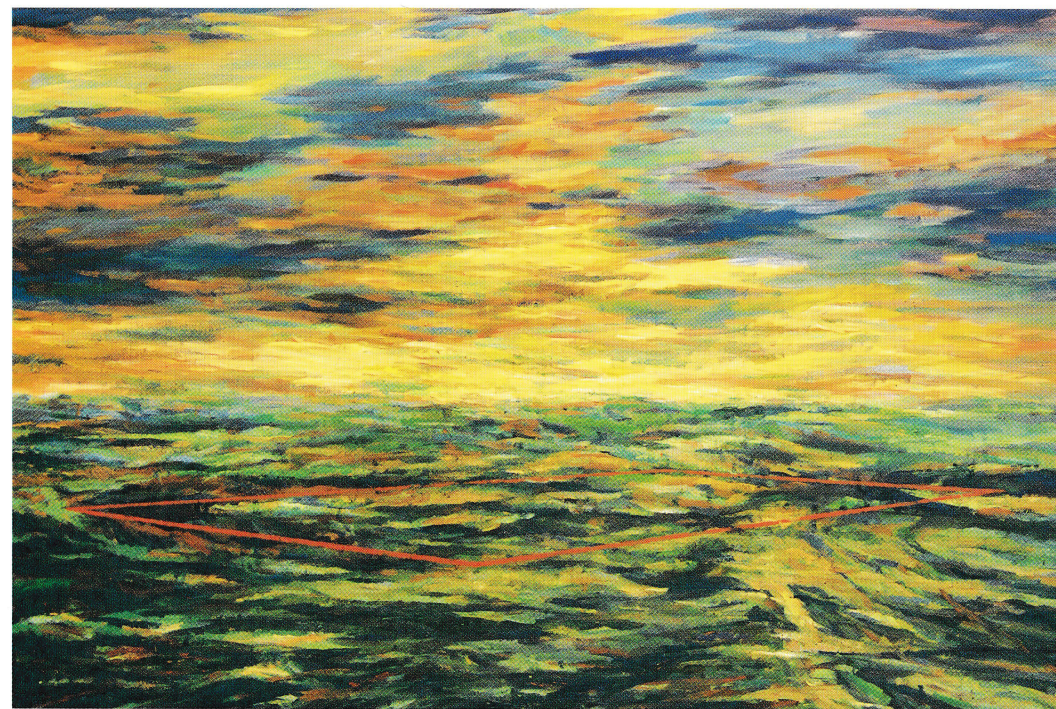
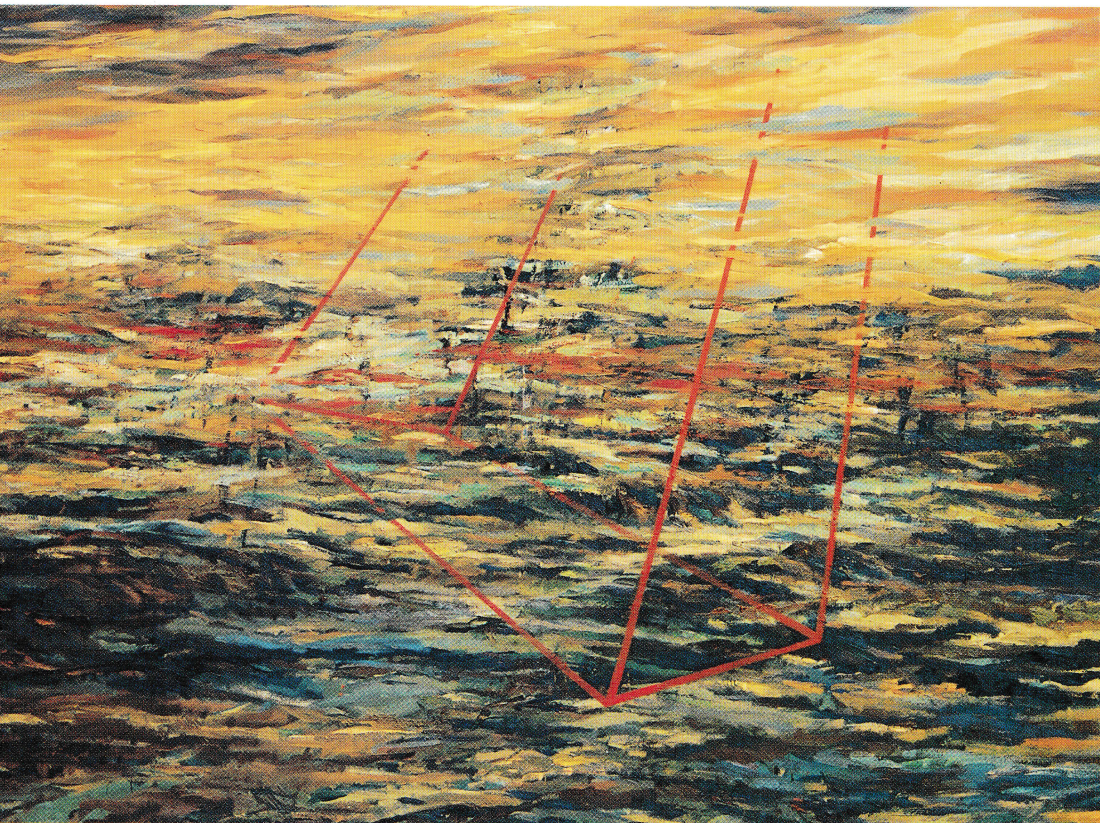
Chin, Victor *Adding a Local Flavour to Oils*. Sunday Star, 30 July 2000

Fan, Laura *The Power of Nature*. The Edge, The Arts, 31 July 2000

Ooi, Kok Chuen *Mastering Space in Art*. New Straits Times, 3 August 2000

J. Anu *An Honest and Simple Beginning*. Sunday Star, 17 January 2000





page left:  
**Arising I**  
 2002  
 Oil on canvas  
 172 x 250cm

this page:  
**Perimeter I**  
 2002  
 Oil on canvas  
 172 x 240cm

cover:  
**Still View**  
 2002  
 Oil on canvas  
 46 x 46cm (x4)