

GHOSTS FROM THE PAST: **IPEH NUR & ENKA KOMARIAH** ART FROM INDONESIA

EDUCATION KIT **STAGE 5 & 6**



Ipeh Nur & Enka Komariah, *Rumah Yang Yahud (A Cool House)* installation at ArtJog 2022

Ghosts from the Past: Ipeh Nur and Enka Komariah

Revealing a divergent narrative of the past, through a perspective of the present.

Ipeh Nur and Enka Komariah's *Ghosts from the Past* is a leading example of contemporary artists redefining cultural and artistic conventions through a rich material and conceptual Practice. The artworks selected in the educational resource bring to the forefront of student enquiry the Yogyakarta couple's complex Practice, which comprises of academic research, experimental art making and curatorial concernment. The artworks employ media ranging from drawing, oil painting, and charcoal, collectively forming a postmodern installation approach that speaks to the artists' perspective as a younger generation of artists articulating their ideas about their country's history and memories of the past. Questions and activities invite students to engage with individual artworks and the exhibition in its entirety, to consider themes that emerge from the artists' research on history and art. Students are encouraged to make significant connections between these artists and the wider study of art history.

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Ipeh Nur & Enka Komariah, *Tolak Bala*, (door installation), clove extract, charcoal, rock powder on window and iron, varied dimensions 2022

THE EXHIBITION

Ghosts from the Past brings to Australian audiences a body of work by Yogyakarta artist couple Ipeh Nur and Enka Komariah that engages head-on with many of the social taboos and events of Indonesian history since independence in 1945. The artists suggest that not until these issues are faced up to and discussed will the Indonesian nation and people be able to move forward.

The exhibition is anchored by *Rumah Yang Yahud (A Cool House)* 2022, a collaborative installation comprising 19 drawings, paintings and objects measuring approximately 400 x 300 cm. In other artworks in the exhibition, Ipeh Nur presents a selection of works based on her observation of the life of the Pambusuang Mandar coastal community in West Sulawesi, along with her involvement in the boat-building ritual in Tana Beru, South Sulawesi. The artists will exhibit two large mixed media paintings, *Manuskrip Perjalanan* 2022 and *Keluar untuk Ke Dalam* 2022, in addition to *Menghanyut: Tubuh dan Perjalanan* 2022, a 22 minute video work she made in collaboration with Tajriani Thalib. These artworks are developed from travel notes, body memories, reflections and other insights during the observations. The exhibition presents artist's choices and discernment that extend beyond the artmaking practices, exploring the relationship between art, academia and curating.

THE ARTISTS

Ipeh Nur and Enka Komariah are a young Yogyakarta couple collaborating as artists since connecting as Graphic Art students at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta. Collectively, their work engages with their Nations history, in the context of the post-Pacific War and Independence in 1945 onwards. The artists lead academic research which has contributed to the current debates on contemporary Indonesian artistic practice and the possibilities of looking divergently at their national narrative. Their artworks are personal reflections and perspectives that are used to provoke a shared questioning in response to the absence of official national historiography.

Their collaborative piece *Rumah Yang Yahud (A Cool House)* was presented at the ArtJog 2022 festival in Yogyakarta.



Left - Enka Komariah | Right - Ipeh Nur (Image courtesy of the artists)

Ipeh Nur

Ipeh Nur was Born in Yogyakarta in 1993. In a city rich in traditional arts and cultural heritage, Ipeh has developed a practice that draws inspiration from personal experiences, everyday struggles and memory. Ipeh enjoys creating dramatic visuals that evoke the feeling of being on stage, featuring several plots or narratives within a single image. While most of her practice comprises black and white drawings on paper, she also experiments with other mediums and techniques such as batik, ceramics, screen printing, etching, sculpture, resin relief and mural painting.

Ipeh has exhibited extensively in Indonesia and the Indo-Pacific region. She has participated in exhibitions focused on emerging female representation and narrative such as *Women, Art & Politics* at FCAC Roslyn Smorgon Gallery in Melbourne. Ipeh has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Sydney, including *Indonesi Calling 2020* and *Our Grandfather Road* at 16albermarle.

Enka Komariah

Enka Komariah was born in Klaten, Central Indonesia in 1993. Enka's work is unique for its sensitive combination of drawing on paper and imaginative introduction of an alternative mediums. Enka often incorporates satirical and ironic symbols into his art, blurring the lines between societal taboos and norms. He also explores his personal identity by drawing from the agrarian traditions of Java Nan and contrasting them with popular cultural images.

Enka is a member of several art collectives, including Barasub (comics), Gegerboyo (murals), and Beresyit (illustrations). He has exhibited widely in Indonesia, winning the Young Artist Award at Art Jog in 2019 and since has featured in exhibitions in Australia and Japan.

FOR TEACHERS

Ghosts from the Past presents exciting opportunities to integrate new works by younger generation Indonesian artists into existing curricula and case study investigations. The exhibition gives insight into practising artists and how they can use contemporary techniques to create artworks that question historical narratives and events, inviting the possibility of new and alternative perspectives that can bring a sense of cultural and generational progression. The artists also demonstrate a strong ability to use personal experiences as an avenue to prompt broader cultural and societal discussions. *Ghosts from the Past* addresses the critical relationship between art, culture, academia, historical documentation, and social experience.

Consider examining the exhibition as an in-depth focus study within a broader investigation of Art & Social Provocation, Art & Archival Documentation, Art & Collective Narrative/Identity, Art & Healing and Art & Symbolism.

Through these lenses students investigate the exhibition to examine artists as truth seekers, risk-takers, academics and social provocateurs. The artists communicate through a diversity of media, employing significant Postmodern techniques. Contemporary material practice such as the use of archival documentation and images, found and designed objects for curatorial presentations, the recontextualization of texts and appropriation of cultural symbols are significant aspects focused on in these resources and are encouraged to be addressed by teachers throughout the study.



Ipeh Nur & Enka Komariah, *Mata-mata*, oil on paper, 79 x 107 cm. As part of the *Rumah Yang Yahud (A Cool House)* series 2022

CURRICULUM LINKS AND SYLLABUS OUTCOMES

Teachers are encouraged to adapt this education resource for their curriculum, in and outside NSW. This education kit makes the following connections to:

Visual Arts Syllabus:

- *Artists' Practice* – ideas and inspiration / choice and discernment / curatorial techniques and the role of galleries in supporting artist intentions
- *Conceptual Framework (Artist/Artwork/World/Audience)* – Art as a reflection of society and contemporary culture / the relationship between artists, subject matter, art work, world events and audience
- *The Frames* – Postmodern approaches to artmaking / impact of time and place on artwork

Art Criticism and Art History Outcomes:

Stage 5 Course: 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10

Stage 6 Year 11: P7, P8, P9

Stage 6 HSC Year 12: H7, H8, H9

International Baccalaureate Diploma Syllabus:

Focus: *Visual Arts in Context*

- *Theoretical Practice*: Students examine artists working in a different cultural contexts and seek to understand the limitation and possibilities to discuss historical events through artmaking.
- *Curatorial Practice*: Students develop an informed response to work and exhibitions they have seen and experienced.



Ipeh Nur & Enka Komariah, *Neo Eksotic*, cloves extract, charcoal, rock powder on canvas, 96 x 103 cm. As part of the *Rumah Yang Yahud (A Cool House)* series 2022

CASE STUDY: ART & NATIONAL IDENTITY

Students investigate the impact an artist's practice can have in contributing to the discourse of their country's cultural, historical and National identity. Students can begin by researching the relationship between arts and the cultural identity of a nation using the Tate Modern's Artist Rooms: Cultural Identity.

In a broader conversation, students begin with works as early as the Chauvet Cave paintings (c 30 000 years ago) and the Parthenon Sculptures (447-442 BC) to understand art as a form of communicating a culture's values. This leads into a discussion on historical documentation by examining traditional artworks in history that have famously contributed to a country's narrative by depicting a social or political scenes such as Velázquez' *Las Meninas* (1656), Ilya Repin's *Barge Haulers on the volga* (1870), Käthe Kollwitz *The Peasant War* (1895), Hiroshige's *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (1856) and Honoré Daumier's series *The First Class Carriage / The Second Class Carriage and The Third Class Carriage* (1864). Students are encouraged to consider the following provocations and debate their perspectives amongst peers:

- How does an artwork contribute to the framing of culture and National identity?
- Are artists expected to capture the majorities truth (societal norms), or *their* truth (informed by perspective)? What can be a consequence of either of these outcomes?
- Is a 'snapshot of culture' in the form of an artwork a reliable source of historical reflection and documentation?

They consider the continuum narrative artists have on the evolution of culture and National identity by analysing works such as John Brack's *Collin St. 5p.m.* (1955), Norma Rockwell's *A Problem We All Live With* (1964) and He Duoling and Ai Xuan's *The Third Generation* (1984).

'Personal and National identities are built on and influenced by immediate and past events, environments, traditions, and cultural legacies. Artists capture and document not only the physical conditions of a society but the emotional and mental conditions. Across history, artists have captured moments of political and social adventure as archival tools to document time and place. Through their artworks, artists construct a sense of who we were and are as a person and as a collective, this is National Identity. Society's identity is always fluid. When we see identity as static, we record people with stereotypes and do not see them for who they are. Art is one way to challenge static notions of identity by engaging the viewer in visual narratives that are unfamiliar to them, and that educate and challenge their previously held notions.'

- (Adapted from *Introduction to Art: Design, Context and Meaning*, Pamela J. Sachant and Peggy Blood)

Finally, students will use the text above and explore the focus artworks from *Ghosts from the Past*, to extend their knowledge and appreciate how contemporary and younger generations of artmaking practices contribute to the questioning, advancing, and reshaping of national identity.

They might also look comparatively at works by artists such as Abdul Abdullah, Brook Andrew, Liam Benson, Gordon Bennet, Tony Albert, Albert Namatjira, Ken Done, Sidney Nolan, Norman Rockwell, Narsiso Martinez, Nadia Hernández, William Kentridge, JR, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, Hector Guimard, Zhang Xiaogang, Sun Xun , Liu Xiaodong, Yu Hong, Chiharu Shiota, Tetsuya Ishida, Kimsooja, Ruangrupa, Ai Wei Wei, Tammy Wong Hulbert, Rushdi Anwar and Wawi Navarroza.

QUESTIONS

Questions for Years 9 – 12

The questions provided in this resource may be used for written responses, examination preparation, or for open-ended discussions in the gallery or the classroom.

- Define and discuss what is meant by art that is 'installation'.
- Why is collaboration in art making such a valuable tool to generate new ideas and discussions?
- How can art influence the community in which it is made?
- An artist practice is more than art making. Discuss this statement.
- What role can art play in reshaping our understanding of history and the world?

Questions for Written Response Years 11 – 12

Cultural Frame – Conceptual Framework:

To what extent are Ipeh and Enka's artworks a mirror and a lens of their time?

Contemporary art can provide a valuable yet unsettling critique of society.
Discuss this statement with reference to artworks from *Ghosts of the Past*.

Frames:

Analyse how artworks in *Ghosts from the Past* represent and document cultural histories.

Analyse the roles of memory and experience in the creation of artworks.
Discuss this statement with reference to artworks from *Ghosts of the Past*.

Practice – Frames:

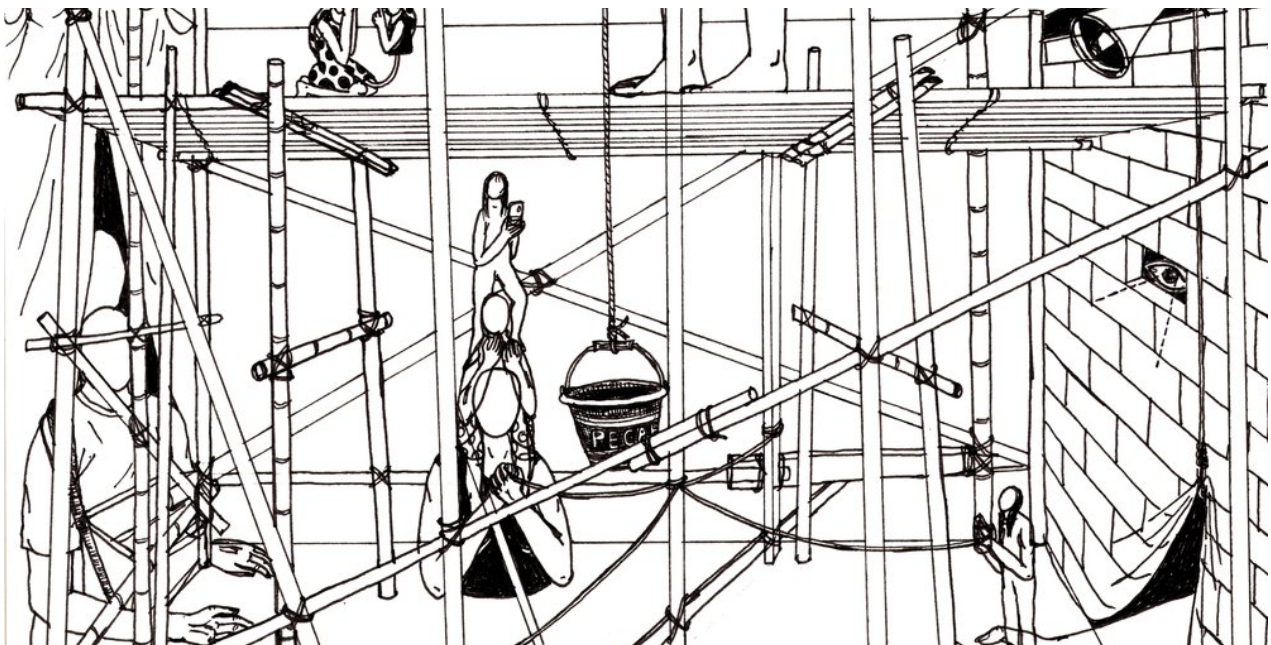
Analyse how artists use traditional materials in contemporary artworks.

Conceptual Framework:

Evaluate the different ways in which artists make demands on their audiences. Discuss this statement with reference to artworks from *Ghosts of the Past*.

Practice:

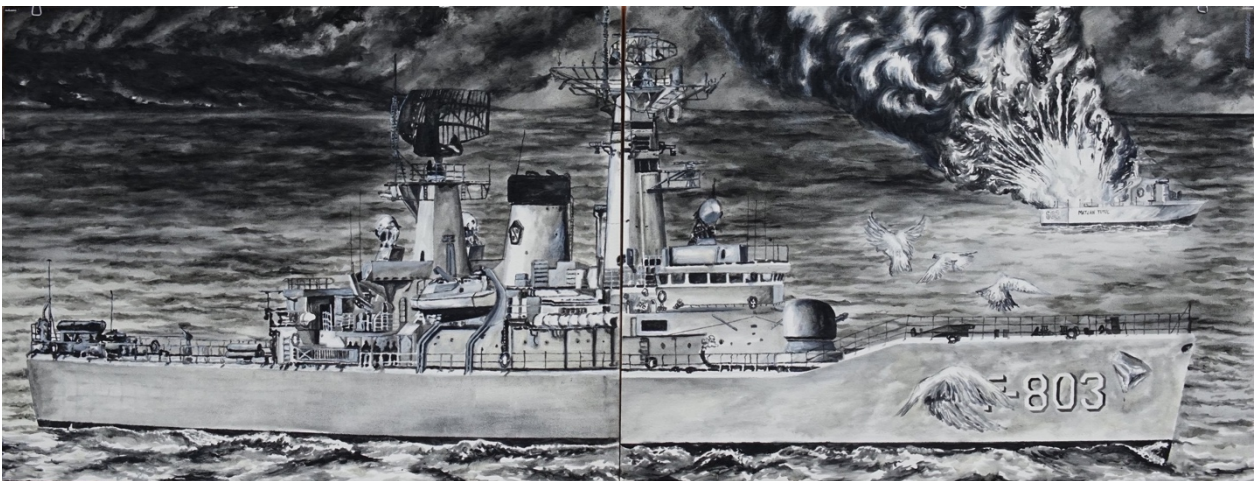
Explain how artists collaborate with others in the production of their artworks. Discuss in reference to the artists of *Ghosts of the Past*.



Ipeh Nur, *Perancah 2*, drawing on paper, 24 x 32 cm, 2020

VOCABULARY

- **Appropriation:** the use of pre-existing objects or images with little or no transformation applied to them, using original context/connotation to create new meaning.
- **Agrarianism:** a social and political philosophy, perspective that stresses the primacy of family farming, widespread property ownership, and political decentralization. Agrarian ideas are typically justified in terms of how they serve to cultivate moral character and to develop a full and responsible person.
- **Archives:** a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people.
- **Call to action:** an exhortation or stimulus to do something in order to achieve an aim or deal with a problem.
- **Documentation:** material that provides official information or evidence or that serves as a record.
- **Identity:** the fact of being who or what a person or thing is.
- **Narrative:** a spoken, written or drawn account of connected events; a story.
- **National Identity:** a sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture, and language.
- **Nationalism:** identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion of the interests of other nations.
- **Recontextualisation:** an object is taken from its original meaning/purpose and reused in an alternative context to create new meaning.
- **Social provocateur:** a person who deliberately behaves controversially to provoke argument or other strong reactions.
- **Societal Taboos:** a group's ban, prohibition, or avoidance of something (usually an utterance or behaviour) based on the group's sense that it is excessively repulsive, offensive, sacred, or allowed only for certain persons.



Ipeh Nur & Enka Komariah, *Matjan Toetoel*, oil on paper, 52 x 152 cm. As part of the *Rumah Yang Yahud (A Cool House)* series 2022

FOCUS ACTIVITIES

Here you will find focus themes and activities from *Ghosts from the Past*. Activities have been designed to unpack the exhibition through aspects of the NSW Visual Arts course.



Ipeh Nur and Enka Komariah

Rumah Yang Yahud (A Cool House) series installation at Artjog 2022

Unpacking: Curatorial Concernment

Think About/Discuss:

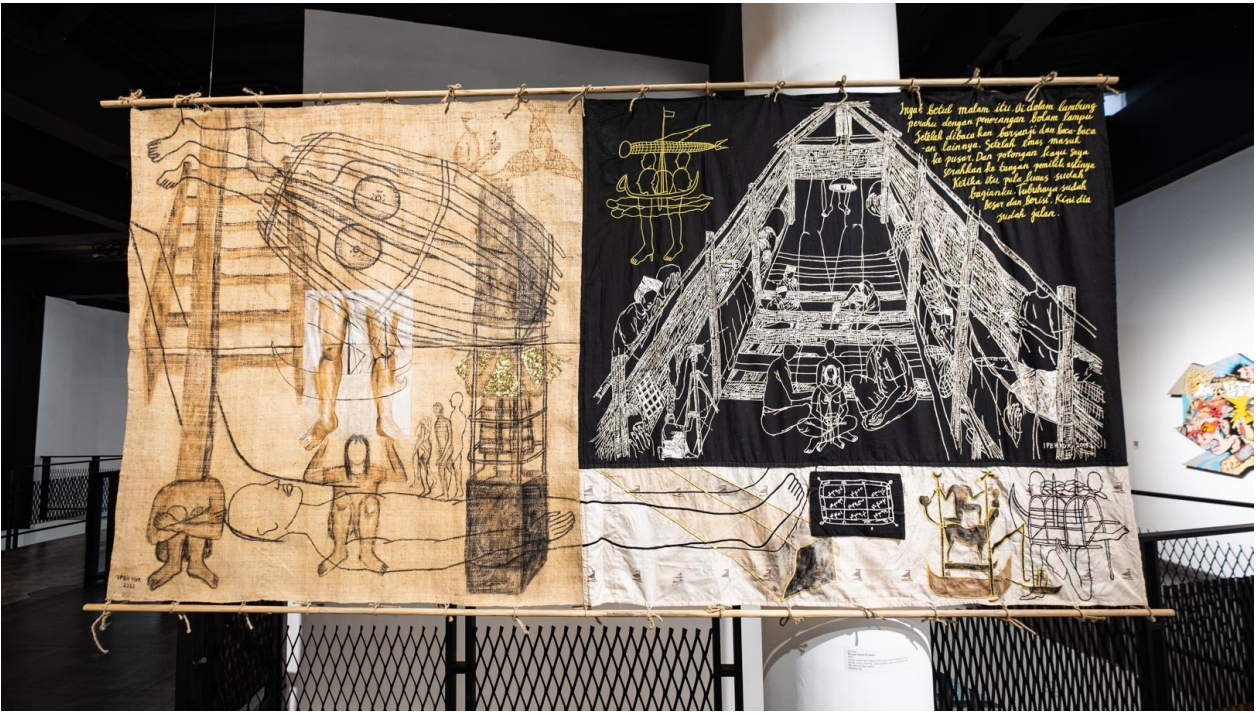
The Home or House has been used as a metaphor and symbol throughout art history, often referencing domesticity, safety, intimacy and belonging. In contemporary practices, artists continue to explore the imagery of Home or House, to dissect the multiplicity of meanings, interpretations and definitions.

How have the artists used material practice and choice to further communicate their ideas about the Home/House?

What are the themes and perspectives being discussed through these Home-like installations?

Why do you think the concept of a Home/House is so often discussed by artists through artmaking?

For a more in depth version of this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ex-13-education-unpacking-curatorial-concernment>



Ipeh Nur

Keluar untuk ke dalam, lanu sail, charcoal, cloves extract, rock powder, sequins, cassava paper, hand drawn batik, embroidery, silk weaving 2022

Unpacking: Material Practice

Think About/Discuss:

Practise Section I Questions using the two artworks by Ipeh Nur.

- Outline the importance of line in Ipeh Nur’s material practice. (5 Marks)
- Evaluate how the materials used by Ipeh Nur’s affect the way their ideas and intentions are communicated. (8 Marks)
- Identify postmodern techniques used by the artist to redefine conventional artmaking practices? (12 Marks)



Ipeh Nur

Naskah: Perjalanan, cloves extract, charcoal, rock powder, drawing pen on canvas 2022

For a more in depth version of this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ex-13-unpacking-material-practice>



Ipeh Nur and Enka Komariah

Lukisan penyambutan (Welcome Painting), oil on paper, 79 x 107 cm 2022

As part of *Rumah Yang Yahud (A Cool House)* Series 2022

Unpacking: Appropriation

Think About/Discuss:

In *Lukisan penyambutan (Welcome Painting)*, we see the familiar images of Princess Diana, Prince Charles, 1st Indonesian President Sukarno (1901-1970) and 5th President Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001-2004). Also, in this artwork (and throughout the exhibition), traditional Javanese masks and batik shirts are appropriated and used as suggestive uniforms.

Compare Enka and Ipeh's use of appropriation as a means of questioning Indonesia's history with the following artists:

- Emmanuel Fox's *The landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay* (1770) and Daniel Boyd's *We call them pirates out here* (2006) as part of his *Treasure Island* exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary art (2022-2023).
- Artworks by John Glover and the appropriated digital animation *The claiming of things* by Joan Ross (2012).
- Vincent Namatjira's *The Royal Tour* (2020) in response to press and media releases from 1950-2000.

For a more in depth version of this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ex-13-unpacking-appropriation>



Enka Komariah

Pencuri Acra #1, oil on paper, 79 x 107 cm 2022

Unpacking: Symbolism

Think About/Discuss:

A consistent imagery is the appropriation of traditional Javanese masks covering anonymous faces and Enka's key symbols; objects with metaphoric significances. The Genasha in this work is often used in Java as a *tetenger* or guardian of a place of misfortune. Using The Frames as your point of enquiry, discuss some of the significant symbols and meanings portrayed in this series. Some ideas could be:

- Use of black and white
- Use of historical/religious relics
- Traditional Java Masks
- Ropes
- Environment/setting

Structural Frame: Investigate ways in which artists have created a visual language to reveal what is invisible to others.

Postmodern Frame: Investigate how and why contemporary artists sample the past and repurpose it for the present.

Subject Frame: Analyse how emotion is used in artworks to provoke and generate discussion about ideas and issues.

Cultural Frame: *Artworks shape the way we understand culture.* With reference to this statement, explain how artists raise awareness of economic, political or social issues.

For a more in depth version of this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ex-13-unpacking-symbolism>



Ipeh Nur

Naskah: Perjalanan, cloves extract, charcoal, rock powder, drawing pen on canvas, 100 x 300cm 2022

Unpacking: Self and Identity

Think About/Discuss:

Consider how reflection of one's own identity can create a broader understanding of your cultural and national identity. As a class or group complete the Identity Exchange activity:

Identity Exchange

Brainstorm: Each person is given ten index cards. On each card, write a word or phrase describing something important to your identity. It can be a value, a belief or a moral (eg. Animal rights)

Connect: Lay your cards out on a desk or surface. Walk around the room, reading what others wrote on their cards.

Anytime you see a work or a phrase that you also identify with, add a dot or a sticker to that person's card.

Reflect: As a group, discuss what you noticed during the exercise. Which cards have the most dots on them? Did anything surprise you?

Extend: Now take a moment to discuss what would happen to your words if you all lived in a different time or place. What if your country was currently experiencing a war? What if you lived 200 years ago?

How are self-identity and national identity linked?

For a more in depth version of this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ex-13-unpacking-self-and-identity>



Left: Ganesha wayang/puppet, buffalo skin, dimensions variable 2022

Right: Enka Komariah self-portrait as contemporary/appropriated puppet in *Orang Jawa 1*, wayang/puppet, buffalo skin, dimension variable 2022. As part of *Okupasi 2022* artwork.

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A 16albermarle Project Space resource to support Australian teachers and students in the education of Contemporary South-east Asian art.