



## FIGHTING FEAR II IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING

16albermarle Project Space  
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8 February - 11 March 2023

Min Ma Naing, *Faces of Change:*  
*Businesswoman*, 32 2022

**16**albermarle  
project space

MYANM/ART



Emily Phyo  
#Response365 #339 2022  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper  
43 x 43 cm

# Curatorial Statement

Nathalie Johnston | January 2023

Artists' work reflects shifts in society. With their fingers on the pulse of culture and media, artists are the image-makers of a revolution. How does artwork evolve when the revolution changes? When we first opened *Fighting Fear: #whatshappeninginmyanmar* just three months after the coup, the urgency in the artwork was clear. Protest posters, three-finger salutes symbolising solidarity against the military takeover, bilingual chants and calls to action, and powerful portraits depicting the fight against oppression were all rendered in the exhibition. There was a chance that more voices, media and international attention might turn the tide of the coup. Now we know there are more battles to be fought. *Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying* recognises artists who continue to find new avenues of survival, struggle and resistance through their work.

The artists' lives have changed fundamentally since the coup. Some have left Myanmar and others remain, but all fear for the safety of family and friends. Yet they continue to engage. The only artists in Myanmar who have given up their craft are those that have joined the armed resistance. All others continue to organise and join exhibitions, share on social media and create in their home studios. From their perspective, it goes without saying that they must continue to speak out against the military coup.

The exhibition takes the viewer on each artists' journey since May 2021. Bart Was Not Here and Richie Nath travelled to France for a residency program. 882021 and Min Ma Naing also left the country. Maung Day headed for the coast and Emily Phyo for the Thai border. Kaung Su and Soe Yu Nwe stayed in Yangon with their families. Anonymous escaped to Kachin State after documenting the months of protests in Yangon. Wherever they are now, they continue to build on their artistic practice.

Bart's long-time dream was to live in New York City, and after a short residency in France and a trip to Los Angeles, he has finally settled there in November 2022. His illustrations in this exhibition were completed after leaving Myanmar. In his signature comic-book style, he animates

symbolic violent acts against the military that hold some comedic value despite their sinister nature. As part of a network of young people fuelling the resistance through fundraisers, Bart and his friends were targeted, and many paid the ultimate price. Bart's images are renderings of clear and direct sentiments.

Richie Nath moved to Paris in June 2021. His work in this exhibition, *Maya and the Burning Village*, was a sketch until very recently – the concept for which he had some years ago. Little did Richie know that it would take on a new relevance after the coup. One of very few artists to acknowledge the continued abuse of the Rohingya in Myanmar, Richie's inclusion of the work in this exhibition references the importance of memorialising those minority populations who have struggled for survival long before this coup. The painting also draws attention to those in Myanmar who continue to be burned out of their villages by military airstrikes. In a tragic turn of events, this recent coup has been a great equaliser in the suffering of those living outside of major cities. Richie continues to live in Paris and work on large-scale paintings that reference recent history in Myanmar.

Maung Day is a veteran artist and famous poet in Myanmar. He has always had an acute sense of social inequality and human nature, often analysed through his poems. The *Lost Children* series is a collection of drawings rendered with simple pen and paper. It points directly to a generation whose future has been stolen through violence. The most heart-breaking stories from the coup are those accounts of young people dying on the frontlines or merely caught in the crossfire. From a private studio in the western part of Myanmar, Maung Day remained in the country throughout 2022, and in his solitude created a series of work rendering the devastation of the daily news.

Min Ma Naing uses a pseudonym to present a series of documentary images that were photographed in 2021 shortly after the coup and assembled as a collaged compilation of stories. These powerful portraits juxtapose urban

landscapes with the Faces of Change. Many thousands thronged the streets of the cities of Myanmar in 2021. Their bravery touched the population and inspired those who continued to protest. We do not know their names, but we are introduced to their stories through layers in the photograph. Glimpses of flags or textiles, street art or adornment give each portrait a personality without revealing their identity. As a group, they are the sum of their parts - faces of strength.

882021 created *Generational Curse* specifically for this exhibition - a powerful testimonial to the repeated histories in Myanmar. 882021's own pseudonym references the coups of 88 and 2021. Generations have experienced the exhausting cycle of transition, military coup and resistance. Just because there is a pattern does not mean that anyone is resigned to the existence of this cycle. Pictured in the work are the figures of resistance as well as symbols representing the religious diversity of the country. It makes no difference to which faith you ascribe, this cycle affects everyone in the country.

Anonymous reports from the jungles of Myanmar, documenting the armed resistance. This series not only gives glimpses of the rigour of training, but also the intimate moments of shared quietude – a soldier playing the violin in camp or washing up in the riverbed. Of vital importance is the difference between the two red badges on the arms of soldiers. The K.I.A. or Kachin Independence Army has been in existence in some form or another since the 1960s. The PDF, or People's Defence Force, was founded in the aftermath of the 2021 coup. The latter has joined with the former for training purposes.

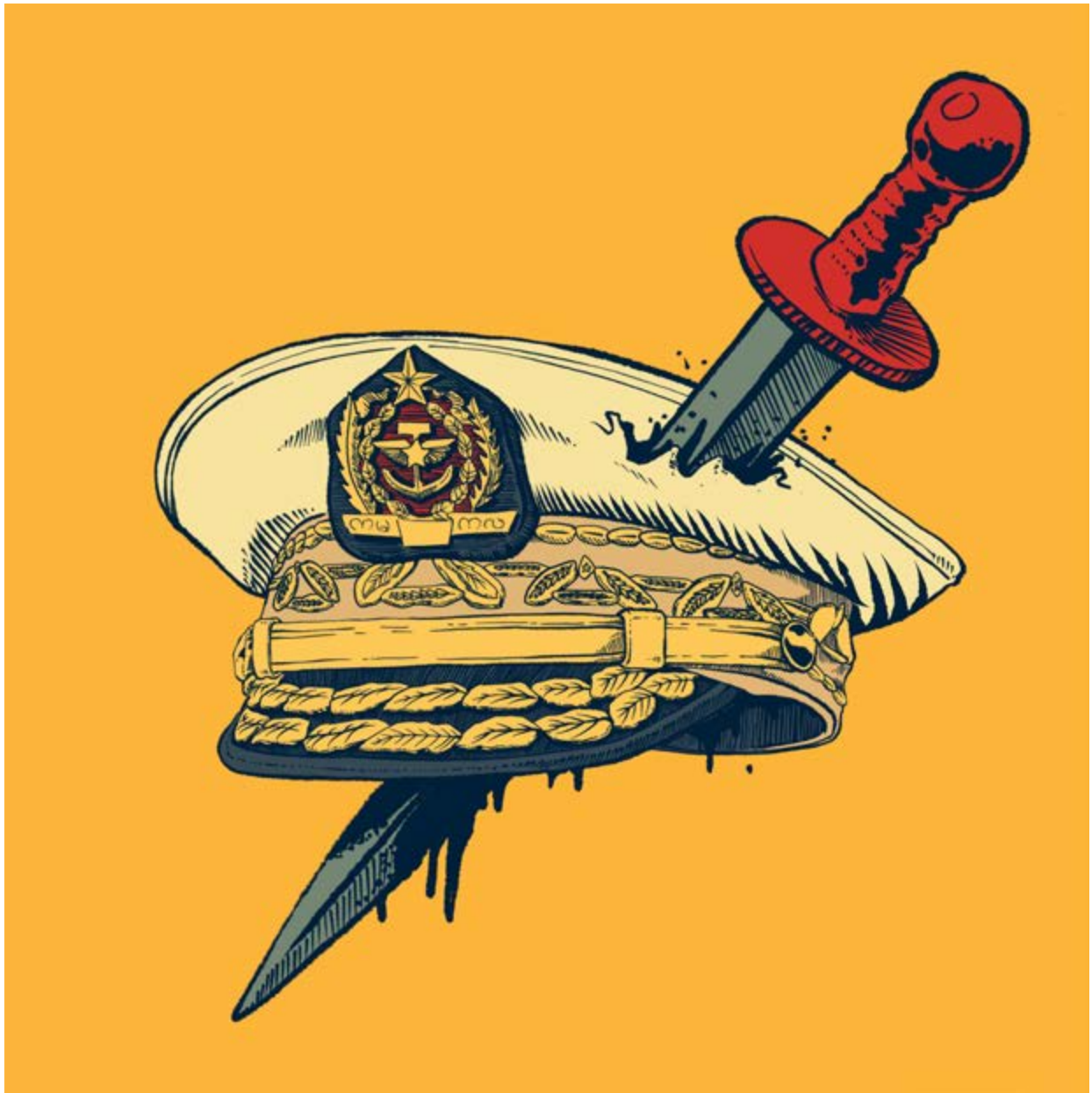
Soe Yu Nwe has continued to live in Yangon throughout these past two years and has opened her own studio – a salve in the face of so much tragedy around her. Studio Nwe is a workplace and educational sanctuary for those who want to work with clay. In this exhibition, her exceptional works on paper completed in 2021 meet with a grid of photographs of life since the coup in Yangon. Pictures of the new studio, student artwork, trips to a traditional pottery village, and some images with text commenting on the state of affairs in Yangon give us an idea of how life goes on in spite of extreme living conditions.

Kaung Su's artistic practice normally uses found materials, so this sombre series is quite a departure for him. Once the military began to use force, the protestors had to get creative. The Red Paint protests were one such way to get the attention of fellow citizens and the military, stating "we are still here" by tossing a pail of red paint on roadsides, walls, and signs. Red has all manner of connotations, but in Myanmar it has been used in artworks for years as a symbol of blood and defiance. Kaung Su performs his protest here, throwing red paint near major intersections on the streets and quickly photographing them with his phone. The charcoal drawings are more sorrowful. They speak of the lost sons and daughters killed by the military and their families left behind.

Emily Phyo returns with her 365 series. The first was a daily photo of a different person in 2015, a year of hope and change. The second was *#Response365*, a photo every day including and after the coup on 1 February 2021. In this exhibition, we see more of *#Response365* and her journey from Yangon, to the Thai-Burma border, to Bangkok, and finally to where she lives today in Austin, Texas. From centring herself in the protests, to a self-portrait in the jungle, followed by one in her new apartment block, she shares her personal story of migration. In addition to the *#Response365* series, she gives us a small glimpse into what she is working on now. *#BeingEmily* is her newest set of photographs wherein she takes one photo every day for one year. A definitive departure from her previous series, we gain insight into her daily routine, her family and her new surroundings. The story continues on her Instagram page: [@emily\\_phyo](#)

Art will always be relevant to a revolution. Artists themselves feel a complex mix of survivor's guilt, fatigue, anger, resentment, and despair. One must consider the feelings of futility when it comes to activism at this stage in the fight against the coup. If those of us in the international community are feeling frustrated with the slow-paced movement of the resistance, imagine those fighting, imprisoned and exiled. It takes courage to move forward in the face of danger and these artists are doing just that, wherever they now call home in the world.





Bart Was Not Here  
*Omen (part 1)* 2021  
inkjet print on matte poster paper  
43 x 43 cm

# 882021

*Generational Curse* is based on the traditional paintings and depictions of Samsara. Samsara is the concept of life, death and rebirth. Many Buddhists believe that to live is to suffer, and that by receiving positive karma in your lifetime, you will receive a better life in rebirth. The better karma you are able to accumulate, the closer you are to reaching Nirvana, a state of peace and enlightenment. Similar to the concept of Samsara, the Burmese people are born into this cycle of suffering. For three different generations and three different coups (1962, 1988 and now 2021), the Burmese people have had to live with this “generational curse”. 882021’s grandparents, parents and now he have had their lives affected by the unjust nature of the military regime. Throughout these three generations, the military has repeatedly used the same techniques to control and intimidate its people, whether through overt power, religion or economic means. However, just like the concept of Samsara, 882021 believes that every instance of this curse brings us one step closer to a state of Nirvana, where we are freed from this cycle of suffering.

882021 is a visual artist, animator and musician from Myanmar who makes music videos that focus on the revolution that is currently taking place in Myanmar. The name 882021 is a combination of the two years (1988 and 2021) in which major protests took place against the military of Myanmar. The name is also based on the hex colour #882021, which is the colour of dried blood; a reminder of all the people that have lost their lives to the injustices of the military.



882021  
*Generational Curse 2022*  
inkjet print on matte poster paper  
123 x 123 cm

# *Anonymous*

This stunning photographic series by Anonymous gives the viewer a very personal experience of what life is like in the KIA – the Kachin Independence Army. The KIA is the armed division of the KIO – Kachin Independence Organisation, which is a political group of ethnic Kachin people living in Northern Myanmar. Officially formed in 1961, the KIA has been engaged in conflicts and peace accords with Myanmar's military junta for decades. It is funded by taxes and the jade, gold and timber trade. The mission of the KIA has always stood for autonomy for ethnic groups and self-determination but took on yet another mission after the 2021 military coup in Myanmar. It has engaged the junta several times and seized at least 10 military bases. It has also trained groups which joined the People's Defence Force, or PDF. The photographs show the lives of young men in training and living day-to-day in the northern jungles of Myanmar.

**Nine photographs are on view in the exhibition, however only three are able to be displayed online to preserve the anonymity of the subjects.**

**Top:** Anonymous  
Untitled #5 2022  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 63 cm

**Bottom:** Anonymous  
Untitled #6 2022  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 63 cm

**Verso:** Anonymous  
Untitled #9 2022  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 63 cm















# *Bart Was Not Here*

With imagery full of influences from animation, film, drawing and references to pop culture, Bart's artworks on or off the walls are a mix of text and image juxtaposing his experiences being born as a Burmese-Muslim into military dictatorship in Burma and his life as an immigrant. His visuals have been described to be "what goes on inside the head of someone who learned about the world and freedom through screens and pages." His humour can be fully appreciated alongside a riddled punchline commentary about his past as an outsider in his home country, an outsider in the western world, but connecting with people everywhere through the love of various cultures and subcultures that have taken over the world in the 21st century. Growing up in Myanmar, an authoritarian country, Bart was frustrated by a corrupted school system, a strict religion and the inability to assimilate into the traditional Burmese culture. Access to American pop culture, such as hip hop, through movies, cartoons, comic books, novels and magazines, found in Burmese bootleg markets, provided him a lens to the alternative outside world. Since becoming acquainted with graffiti in his 8th grade, he started practicing under the moniker "Bart Was Not Here" after the character in *The Simpsons*, paying homage to René Magritte's *The Treachery of Images*. Bart graduated from Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore, as a Fine Arts major in 2018. In May of 2019, Since his first solo exhibition *God Complex* at Myanm/art in May 2019, he has done a number of freelance collaborations with major brands like AIA, Bosch, Tiger Beer, etc. He was awarded as artist-in-residence at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, France for 2021-2022.





### ***Dancing on Your Grave 2021***

*Dancing on Your Grave* is a love letter to all the urban guerilla fighters sacrificing their lives to protect civilians and disrupt the military junta's chokehold on Burma. The cherub on the left holds a homemade bomb and the cherub on the right holds hand grenades, which are nicknamed mangosteen and pineapple in Burmese language. The poses of the figures resemble Asian mythical creatures Kinnari and Kinnara. Kinnara is also the symbol of Karenni State (Kayah State) which was going toe-to-toe with military soldiers in May and June 2021. The system before the coup never offered anything solid for the youth of Myanmar, but they always managed to make something out of nothing. Now all they can do is try to survive.



Bart Was Not Here  
*The Birth of Story* 2021  
inkjet print on matte poster paper  
79.5 x 63.5 cm



Bart Was Not Here  
Khin Nyunt 2017  
inkjet print on matte  
poster paper  
43 x 43 cm



### ***Omen (part 1) 2021*** (featured on page 5)

*Omen* is an illustration prophesizing the end of the military regime in Burma. It is an exact copy of the general's cap worn by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, except for the Burmese text below the crest. This is a pejorative term in Burmese implying relations between the general and his mother. *Omen* is meant as an explicit insult to the military and a will to destroy them. All those in Myanmar who voted in multiple elections to gradually lessen the military's influence by supporting democratically elected leaders are angry beyond measure that not only was the election result of 2020 denied to them, but also their leader Aung San Suu Kyi was imprisoned, and untold numbers of peaceful protestors have been imprisoned and killed for defying the institution which has taken away their freedom.

### ***The Birth of Story 2021***

*The Birth of Story* takes its cues from a classic image of a seemingly benign female figure seated elegantly on a lily pad. The layout of the illustration mimics the cover of Burmese periodical *Shumawa* in 1973, drawn by artist Bagyi Aung Soe, a legendary figure revered by many in Myanmar. Bart selects muted colours and some features nodding to classical European paintings, including an angel floating in the background. In 2021, Bart left Myanmar and joined a residency in Paris. Touring museums like the Louvre, he drew upon the imagery he saw there. But the lady kneeling on the lily pad brandishes a dagger and the angel holds a voodoo doll – a likeness of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. The illustration is not an ode to peaceful pleasures but vengeance and war.

### ***Khin Nyunt 2017***

Khin Nyunt was the head of intelligence from the mid-1980s to the early 2000s, when he was given the position of prime minister. He outlined a 7 point road-map to democracy during his time as prime minister, after which he was ousted by General Than Shwe and put under house arrest.

# Emily Phyo

Emily Phyo is a performance artist and founder of WOMYN NOW performance art collective. She is also a tailor and owns a small shop in a market in Yangon. She was a student of New Zero Art Space in the late 2000s, where she honed her interest in performance and installation. In recent years, she has combined her keen interest in feminism, political activism and the social fabric of society to create durational, documentary performance works over year-long periods. She currently works with Myanmar/art in Yangon and has exhibited previously at Art Stage Singapore, SA SA BASSAC in Phnom Penh and in multiple group exhibitions in Yangon. In 2022, she relocated from Yangon to Austin, Texas, where she is working to revive her art practice.

## **#Response365 2021-22**

#Response365 was a project started on 1 February 2021 and completed on 1 February 2022. Emily Phyo posted a different photo each day on her Instagram page @emily\_phyo to protest the coup and engage in a daily and durational performance. In the previous exhibition *Fighting Fear:*

*#whatshappeninginmyanmar*, Emily shared a series of photos from the first weeks of the protest, often images of herself among the throngs of people in the streets, full of anger, hope and creative energy. In this next set of photos from the same series, Emily is no longer in the streets of Yangon. She is in the jungle or in an apartment. She is on a journey, a harrowing experience made by many like her, first in hiding in Yangon, then in a small town near the border of Thailand, then in the jungles between Myanmar and Thailand, then Bangkok awaiting an update in visa status, and finally in the United States of America, where she is today with her husband and son.

## **#BeingEmily 2023 (ongoing)**

In addition to the #Response365 series, Emily gives us a small glimpse into what she is working on now. #BeingEmily is her newest set of photographs wherein she takes one photo every day for one year. A definitive departure from her previous series, we gain insight into her daily routine, her family, and her new surroundings. Started on 1 January 2023, Emily shows how she finds purpose in the everyday as she and her family adjust to life living in Austin, Texas in the USA. The story continues on her Instagram page: @emily\_phyo





Emily Phyo  
#Response365 #365 2022  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 43 cm



Emily Phyo  
#Response365 #131 2021  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 43 cm



Emily Phyo  
#Response365 #268 2021  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 43 cm





Emily Phyo  
#Response365 #292 2021  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 43 cm



Emily Phyo  
#Response365 #363 2022  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 43 cm



Emily Phyo  
*#BeingEmily #001* 2023  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 43 cm



Emily Phyo  
*#BeingEmily #003* 2023  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 43 cm



Emily Phyo  
#BeingEmily #006 2023  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 43 cm



Emily Phyo  
#BeingEmily #009 2023  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
43 x 43 cm



# Kaung Su

Kaung Su was born in Yangon, Myanmar. Between 1991-94 he studied painting with local artist Pyi Soe Myint, and briefly attended Yangon's State School Of Fine Arts. Since 1995 he has been a regular participant in numerous group exhibitions both in Myanmar and abroad, as well as in performance art. In 2001, he had his very first solo exhibition at Lawkanat Gallery in Yangon. He has created installations using wood, animal bones, synthetic hair, neon lights, disposable syringes and a wide variety of other materials. He has also been working closely with video since 2009.

In 2008 Su did an artist residency in Chiang Mai, supported by the Heinrich Boll Foundation, Germany. In 2011 he received a special mention for the New Vision Award for his short film (*The Butchery Day*) at the Wathan Film Festival, Yangon. From 2009-2011 he organized three art exchange programs for Ongoing Echoes, an international art exchange project, and participated in other international art biennales/ festivals and projects. Kaung Su has also been actively involved in arts management and teaching a curatorial course at New Zero art space, Yangon. In 2012 he was inbound resident artist in Manhattan, New York, with the apexart foundation, followed by a second residency in 2015. In 2014 he participated in START art fair at Saatchi Gallery, London, presented by Yone Arts. Since 2016 he has been a regular juror of apexart's international open call for exhibitions. He is also an occasional lecturer in abstract art and art history at art spaces in Yangon. In Yangon he is also a represented artist at Myanm/art. In 2021 Myanm/art published the art book *Kaung Su; Artist's Writings and Works* and in 2022 the British Museum collected his linocut *Head of Protest No 4*. He lives and works in Yangon, Myanmar.

## **Red Paint Series 2022**

The *Red Paint* series is a documentation of one of the many creative forms of protest conducted by the throngs of citizens marking the death of over 700 people in Myanmar as of April 2021. As a resident of Yangon, Kaung Su experienced the energy of the streets and the fear of violence in the early weeks after the coup. Once the military began firing live rounds on protestors, methods had to change to keep citizens safe. Acts of protest came in many forms – a driving boycott, a business boycott, a longyi (sarong) protest and, pictured here, the red paint protest. Imagine Kaung Su walking the streets of Yangon, on overpasses and under bridges. Was he the one who threw the tin of red paint and then documented it? Or was he simply documenting the acts of others? Whichever it was, the red paint symbolizes the blood spilt by the military's soldiers in the streets. Thousands have died since and still counting...



**Top:** Kaung Su  
*Red Paint 2 2022*  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl  
photo paper paper  
42 x 53 cm

**Bottom:** Kaung Su  
*Red Paint 3 2022*  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl  
photo paper paper  
42 x 53 cm





### ***Son and Last Blood 2021***

*Son* and *Last Blood* are two in the same series of charcoal drawings done in the weeks after the coup. The atmosphere of the protests changed when the military began using live rounds on protestors and the first young people were shot and killed. Kaung Su's works are dedicated to young people who sacrificed their lives for the Spring Revolution. Fathers lost their sons. Families have empty chairs at their dinner tables. As an artist, Kaung Su uses charcoal to illustrate the tears of the lost and the feelings of darkness and hopelessness.

Kaung Su  
*Son* 2021  
inkjet print on matte poster paper  
43 x 48.2 cm





Kaung Su  
*Last Blood* 2021  
inkjet print on matte poster paper  
43 x 45.8 cm

# Maung Day

Maung Day is an acclaimed poet and visual artist hailing from Myanmar. He has penned a number of poetry books in Burmese, and some of his English poems have appeared in journals such as *Guernica*, *The Margins*, *The Awl*, *Shampoo*, *Mekong Review* and more. His art practice encompasses drawing, painting, installation, video and photography. He has shown his artworks in Japan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, Germany, Australia and Myanmar. His last solo exhibition, titled *You invented this lie for whom?*, was held at Monologue Art Studio in Yangon in February 2022.

The *Lost Children* series is dedicated to lost children everywhere. Children lost from their homes, land and families, not to mention generations of young men and women driven lost by current political, technological and economic circumstances. These exist as a trap, a song that loops over and over. These works draw on elements of folk tales and folk horror. In terms of the subject, Maung Day intuitively responded to the pied piper narrative from old classic folk tales (he was taught this story in English class when he was in grade 6 and was fascinated, but also felt indignant because in the story it is the children who must pay the price for the wrong the grown-ups commit). The style is influenced by his love of woodblocks and etchings, drawing on the medieval style and aesthetic appearance. The *Lost Children* series is the latest group of drawings by Maung Day and reflective of the situation future generations of children in Myanmar now face.





*[Handwritten signature]*

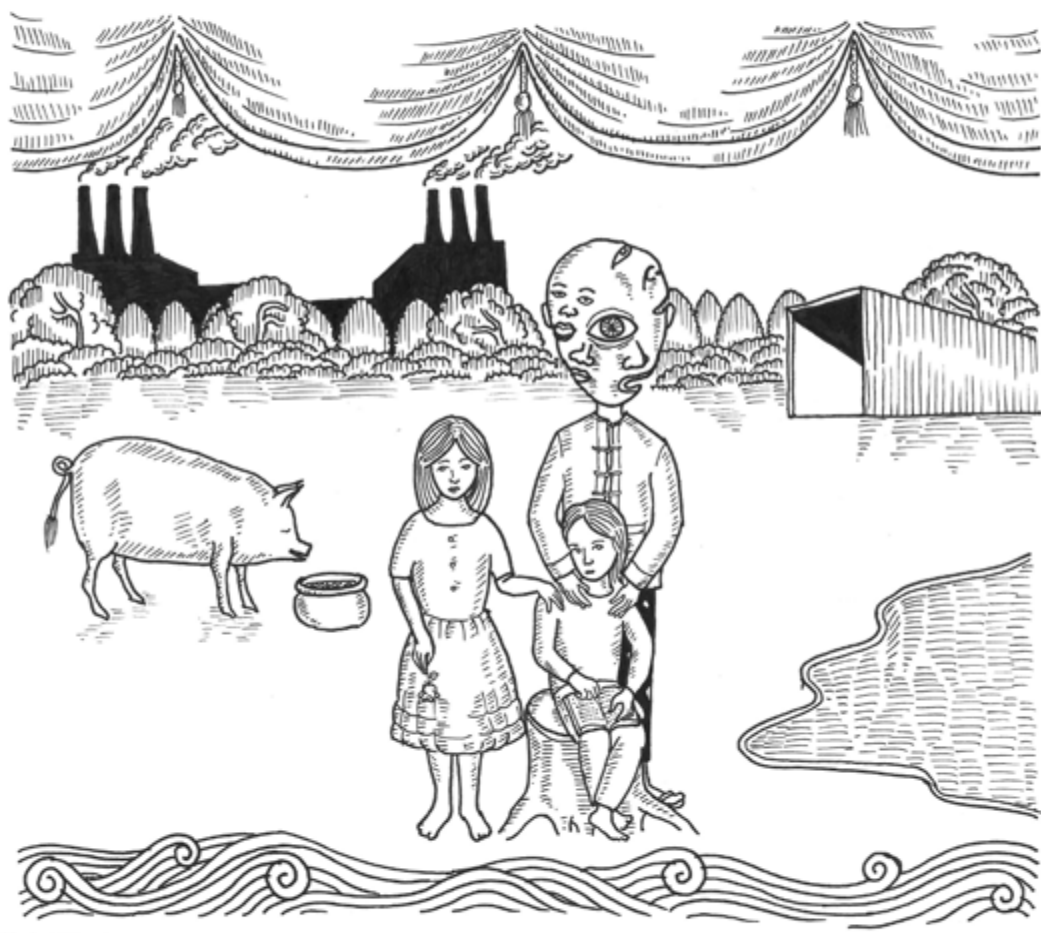
## *Lost Children, by Maung Day*

*My child, where have you gone?  
Mango buds have withered and dried  
You should have come home*

*My child, what have you done?  
The Great Bear is upside down  
And a wild cat prowls around the house  
You should have been back by now*

*Note: The Great Bear, also known as Ursa Major,  
is a constellation in the northern sky*





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## *Lost Children Part 2 by Maung Day*

*My child, where are you now?*

*The coffee is cold and the leaves are falling*

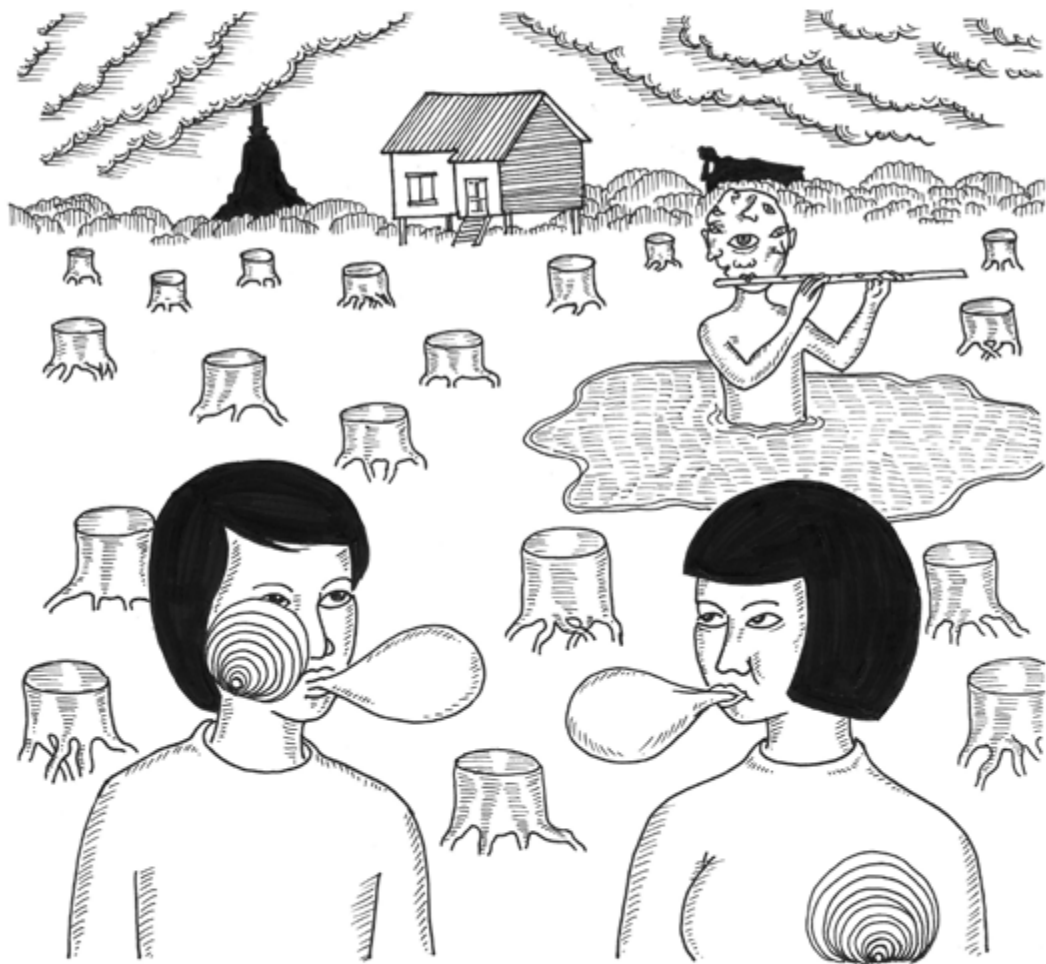
*Your dog still awaits your return*

*My child, can you even sleep where you are?*

*Will the evil spider be haunting you*

*And keeping you scared and awake?*





# Min Ma Naing

**Min Ma Naing** is a documentary photographer from Myanmar, who was based in Yangon till June 2021. Starting out as a press photographer, soon she discovers that photojournalism was too constraining for the stories she wanted to tell with the immerse and collaborative approach. Then she decided to focus on her personal stories and long form of documentary. Her works have been showcased in international art festivals such as Kochi Biennale, Photoville, Singapore International Photo Festival, and international media outlets such as New Yorker, National Geographic etc. She is also interested in making photobooks as art objects and another layer of storytelling apart from image making. She has adopted the temporary pseudonym “Min Ma Naing” because of the political situation in Myanmar. It means “The King Cannot Beat You”. She has been working on stories related with diaspora and trauma on aftermath of military coup.

## ***Faces of Change: Portraits of Myanmar’s Democratic Awakening 2021-22***

Who are the brave people who joined the protests against the military coup of February 2021? *Faces of Change* provides an intimate answer to that sprawling question: a subtle, human-focused portrait gallery of ordinary individuals who are participating in the revolution and, as strangers acting in unison, radically changing their country’s history. This gallery of ordinary people, at an extraordinary juncture in their lives, aims to bring a needed counterpoint perspective to the imagery of Myanmar’s Spring Revolution.

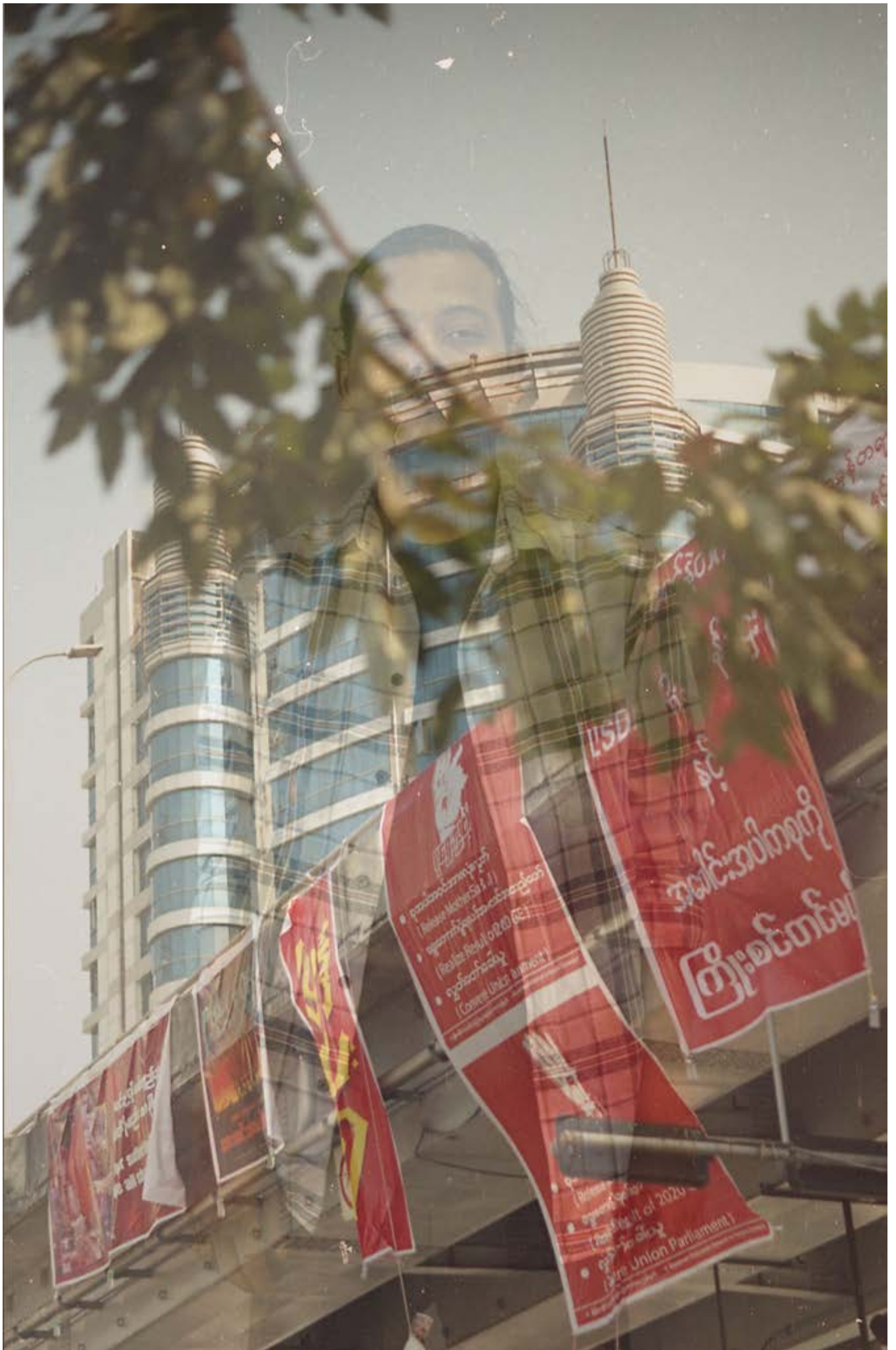
### **Artist and writer, 41**

“Art mobilizes people. We have a long tradition of that here in Myanmar— a history of protest art. Poets in Mandalay, the imperial capital, were writing rhymes against tyranny centuries ago. They compared repression to bitter cold. We can draw on that tradition. Art has a strong effect on people’s psyches. It’s a way to combat fear. That’s what artists have to do now, even when tear gas is burning our eyes.”

Posters against the coup and military rule hang from Yangon’s Myaynigone Bridge on Feb 25th 2021.

**Opposite:** Min Ma Naing  
*Faces of Change: Artist and  
Writer, 41* 2021  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
63.8 x 43 cm





## **Manager, 30**

“I have no words to express the anger and sadness. That’s all I have felt since the first day of the coup. First I am angry but later I am sad because I think of my daughter’s future. As my childhood had been under the military dictatorship, I do know how it is like. I don’t want it happening again for my daughter. I never felt having burden or regret being a mother. But for the first time, I felt guilty for my daughter because I feel really bad that she may have to face the same experience as me if we don’t win this revolution. So we must win.”

Protestors help each other before the march of the protest in the early morning under the bridge of Myaynigon, Yangon on February 12th, 2021, which is Union Day in Myanmar.





### **Retired businessman, 63**

“I have lived through many military crackdowns in Myanmar. I was an activist in all of those old revolutions. We had many strikes, many protests. We lost all of them. I had to go into hiding. I was imprisoned for four years. My whole family was imprisoned. I grew tired of all of this. I just wanted a quiet life. This time, I feel it’s a bigger revolution. It’s not about politics anymore, not about leaders or parties. It’s against fascism. We’re united now like never before. We can easily gather 500 people together fast. We’re protecting each other. Neighbour looking out for neighbour. My mind is there now —back in my neighbourhood. After you photograph me, I need to return. They need me.”

Protesters have pasted a poster of Min Aung Hlaing, the army general who led the coup, on a street in downtown Yangon. The posters are to show their anger and deter police and soldiers, who dare not step on his image on 12 March 2021.

**Opposite:** Min Ma Naing  
*Faces of Change: Retired  
Businessman, 63* 2021  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
63.8 x 43 cm

**Verso:** Min Ma Naing  
*Faces of Change: Businessperson and  
LGBTQ Activist, 20, 2021* (detail)  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth  
Pearl photo paper paper  
63.8 x 43 cm









#LGBTQ4D

RELEASE  
our leaders

RESPECT  
our vote

REJECT  
military coup

#LGBTQ4Democracy

#LGBTQ4Demo

REJECT





# Richie Nath

*Maya and the Burning Village* is a haunting homage to those burned out of their homes and villages by Myanmar's military. It can be considered a reference to the recent coup and the terrible aftermath of shelling and burning of villages throughout the country. It also recalls previous years of staggering violence, namely the news stories of Rohingya villages in Rakhine state being flattened, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee their homes and cross the border into Bangladesh. In the wake of this violence came a despicable denial of reality, one where the citizens of Myanmar supported the military's attack on Rohingya people and denied such events even occurred. *Maya and the Burning Village* is Richie's temple of remembrance to those who are lost, and a reminder to those who remain how quickly circumstances can change.

Richie Nath is an illustrator, painter and creative consultant. After studying at the London College of Fashion, he returned to live and work in Yangon. His work often explores female energy and empowerment, fashion and fabrics, as well as reinterpreting the historical gaze. His work predominantly focuses on themes of eroticism, sexual identity and his own racial background. He uses oil, gouache and ink on paper and canvas to tell the stories of his ancestral home, while addressing contemporary themes, fashion and mythologies. His recent exploration of the history of politics in Myanmar is a new and exciting chapter in his style evolution. He is now living in Paris as part of the Artist in Exile Residency program.





Richie Nath  
*Maya and the Burning Village* 2017  
inkjet print on matte poster paper  
93 x 56.6 cm

# Soe Yu Nwe

Soe Yu Nwe is an artist from Myanmar. After earning an MFA in Ceramics at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in 2015, Soe has been participating in numerous residencies in the United States and across Asia. Her experience of living cross-culturally has inspired her to reflect upon her own identity through making, conceiving it as a fluid, fragile and fragmented entity. Through transfiguration of her emotional landscape by poetically depicting nature and body in parts, she ponders the complexities of individual identity in this rapidly changing globalized society. Recently, her work explores the political and social trauma undergone by Myanmar in the past few years.

Soe's work has been exhibited internationally at exhibitions including the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (Australia), the 2018 Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh), the New Taipei City Yingge Ceramic Museum (Taiwan), Yavuz Gallery (Singapore), ZieherSmith in Chelsea, New York (USA) and the National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta (Indonesia). Soe has become an invited member of the IAC (International Academy of Ceramics) as the first member from Myanmar. Soe was named in the 2019 Forbes 30 Under 30: Art & Style. Recently, Soe has been selected as the finalist for the 2022 ASEAN residency and was awarded the Reconnect Grant from the Goethe Institute. Soe's work has been acquired by the Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane, Australia and the British Museum in the United Kingdom.

Currently, Soe is teaching at Studio Nwe, the first teaching space in Myanmar solely dedicated to clay art, which she founded early this year to share knowledge of clay with Myanmar people.





Soe Yu Nwe  
*Our Struggle for Freedom: Feb 1st 2021 2021*  
mixed media on Arches paper  
40.6 x 30.5 cm



**The original drawings of the two prints shown in the previous exhibition *Fighting Fear: whatshappeninginmyanmar***

***Our Struggle for Freedom: Feb 1st 2021 2021***

“This is a piece I made in response to the news of the capture of NLD party, Feb 1st, 2021. In the midst of a global health crisis - the covid pandemic - our world is yet destabilized furthermore with the political unpredictability resulting from the military coup. I hope to capture this sense of destabilized reality in a palette that is hopeful. In this drawing of a peacock in captivity, the peacock serves as the national symbol of Myanmar and it is also present in the flag of the Democratic Party. #freemyanmar #artasprotest #peacefulprotest #weddeservefreedom”

***April Salute 2021***

Soe Yu Nwe completed a series of Three Finger Salute drawings in the aftermath of 1 February 2021. They stood as artistic symbols of solidarity and continue to remind us of the energy and hope inspired by the weeks of protest and thousands of people standing together against oppression.

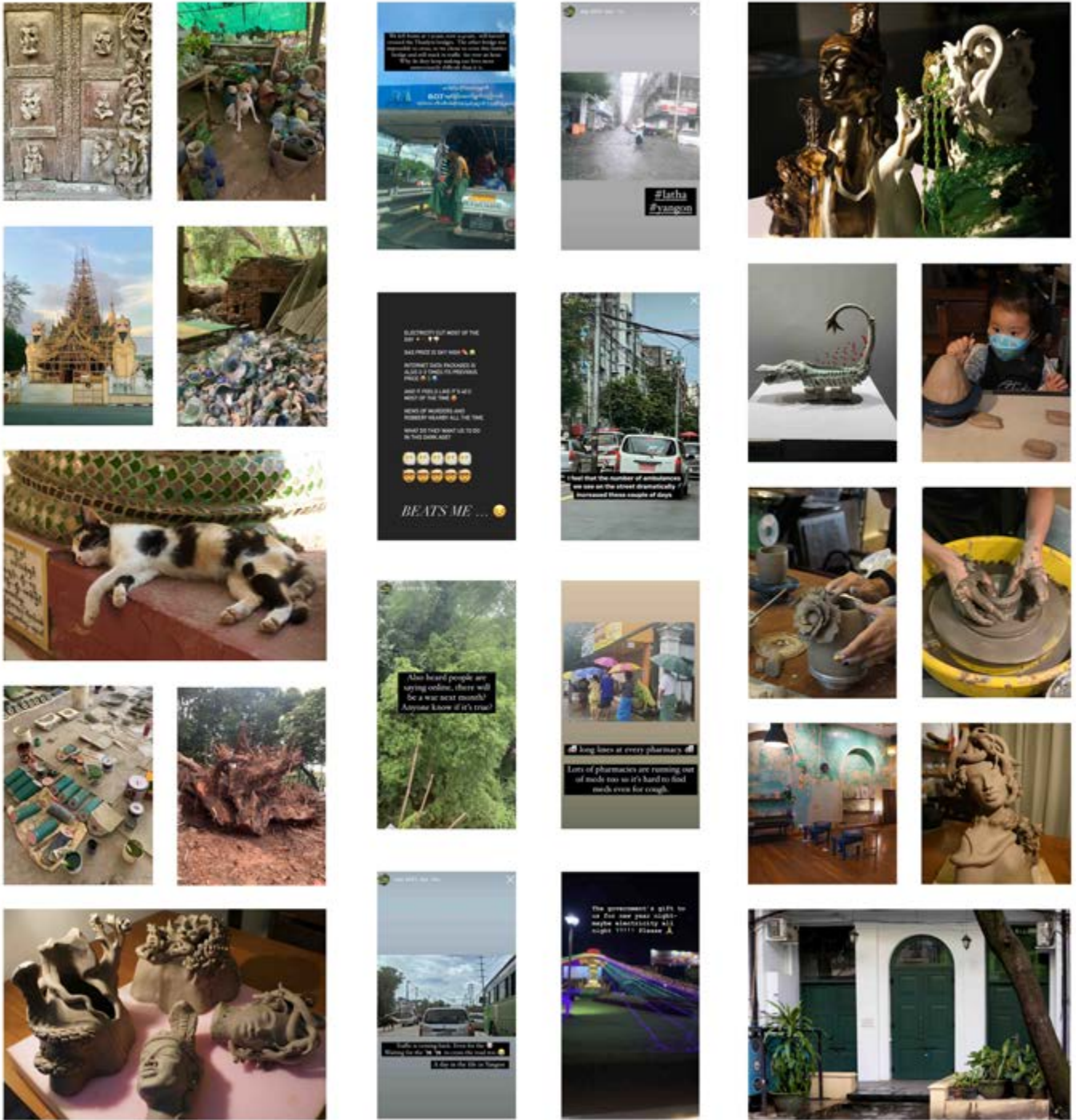


Soe Yu Nwe  
*April Salute 2021*  
mixed media on Arches paper  
40.6 x 30.5 cm

### ***A Day in the Life 2021-23***

*A Day in the Life* is a series of photographs and Instagram posts documenting several disparate experiences in the life of Soe Yu Nwe over the past two years. While witnessing traumatic events in Yangon, she opened her first studio space, Studio Nwe, where students can come to learn about hand-building, ceramic glazes and the intricate craft and fine art of clay. Investing in an open studio concept was a risk, especially in the wake of the coup and the devastating effects on her home city. Yet Studio Nwe was met with tremendous enthusiasm. Young and old come for classes and Soe Yu Nwe has benefitted by building relationships with her students. Though she does not have as much time for her own artistic practice, Studio Nwe has offered a welcome distraction from the hardships of the last two years. She has also travelled to Sagaing, where she learned about the traditional making of everyday objects like clay pots in Myanmar. *A Day in the Life* shows how enriching experiences can occur in the midst of difficult circumstances.





Soe Yu Nwe  
*A Day in the Life* 2021-23  
 inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper paper  
 70 x 67 cm

# Exhibition Partners

## Myanm/art, Yangon

Myanm/art is an art gallery, exhibition space and reading room featuring emerging contemporary artists from Myanmar. Its unique space, national and international following and calendar of events makes it one of the pioneer destinations promoting the creative community working in Yangon and other cities around the country. With regular exhibitions of talented artists, musical concerts, poetry readings, dance events, life drawing sessions, artist talks, lectures and tours, Myanm/art is expanding the growing interest in current Myanmar subcultures. Myanm/art serves artists and collectors to give a meaningful platform to the contemporary arts in Myanmar. 'Contemporary' is meant by emerging artists creating work which pushes beyond the traditional styles of figurative, impressionist and abstract painting. 'Contemporary' in Myanmar means a diverse group of female and male artists, conceptually strong and relevant to current socio-political circumstances in Myanmar. Myanm/art especially focuses on artists under 40, those with a strong voice but without spaces to expose their work in Yangon. After closing its doors in April 2021, it reopened in a new location in Yangon in December 2021 and continues to work with young artists and institutions in Myanmar to promote art and artists in Myanmar.

## 16albermarle Project Space, Sydney

Opened in October 2019, 16albermarle is a gallery and project space providing Australian audiences with the opportunity to see and learn about contemporary art from southeast Asia. It is directed by adviser, curator and collector John Cruthers. Based in a repurposed domestic space in Newtown in inner city Sydney, 16albermarle stages six exhibitions a year, including one exhibition of Australian art. In addition to exhibitions, public programs and educational resources, 16albermarle provides advice to galleries and museums looking to connect with the region, runs events in Sydney and elsewhere, and stages tours to art events in the region.





**Curator: Nathalie Johnston**

Myanm/art's founding director Nathalie Johnston is a curator, researcher and archivist currently based in Washington DC. She founded Myanm/art in Yangon in 2016 as a project space and resource centre in order to further investigate contemporary Myanmar art, assist in collaborations between creative fields in Yangon and international cities, and promote artists and their work to national and international audiences. Nathalie began her work in Myanmar in 2009, completed her MA thesis on the evolution of performance art in Myanmar in 2010, and has organised numerous projects since, including 7000 Padauk, Myanmar Art Resource Centre and Archive (MARCA), TS1 Yangon and Mobile Library Myanmar. She has curated exhibitions in Tokyo, Singapore, Stockholm, Colombo, Pingyao. In May 2021 she curated Fighting Fear: #whatshappeninginmyanmar at 16albermarle Project Space, Sydney. She is working on a book about Myanmar art of the last 20 years and curating an exhibition in Berlin in 2023.

**Co-curator: Sid Kaung Sett Lin**

Sid is the current director of Myanm/art as well as a curator, culture project leader and creative consultant based in Yangon. Before all the curatorial and art projects, he worked at the Yangon Heritage Trust, which functions to encourage conversations on heritage and advocates for protecting the city's buildings and spaces. Coming back to his home country in 2016, Sid has organized local art projects in Yangon, Myitkyina, Hpa-an and Mawlamyine, regionally. He also worked for the Wathann Film Festival, consulted researchers and artists from the late Burmese contemporary art scene, and built local hip hop programs. Since becoming a partner of Myanm/art, he has curated exhibitions and seeded the digitizing of the Myanmar Art Resource Centre and Archive (MARCA) project. He is a co-founder of 31 Curation, a new organization in Yangon founded to help exhibit private collections of modern art in Myanmar.





## Fighting Fear 16albermarle Print Edition 2

The artists in *Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying* have given us permission to edition their works and sell them at the exhibition - to help spread the word about the situation in Myanmar and to return funds to the artists. In Myanmar, civil society has largely broken down; there are no tourists, galleries have closed and artists have very limited opportunities to exhibit or sell their artwork.

Images for the exhibition have been provided by the artists to Myanm/art and downloaded from the Myanm/art Google drive. Printing files have been prepared at 16albermarle and exhibition prints have been printed by Darkstar Digital, Sydney. At the request of the artists, print sizes and paper stock have been determined by 16albermarle and Darkstar Digital.

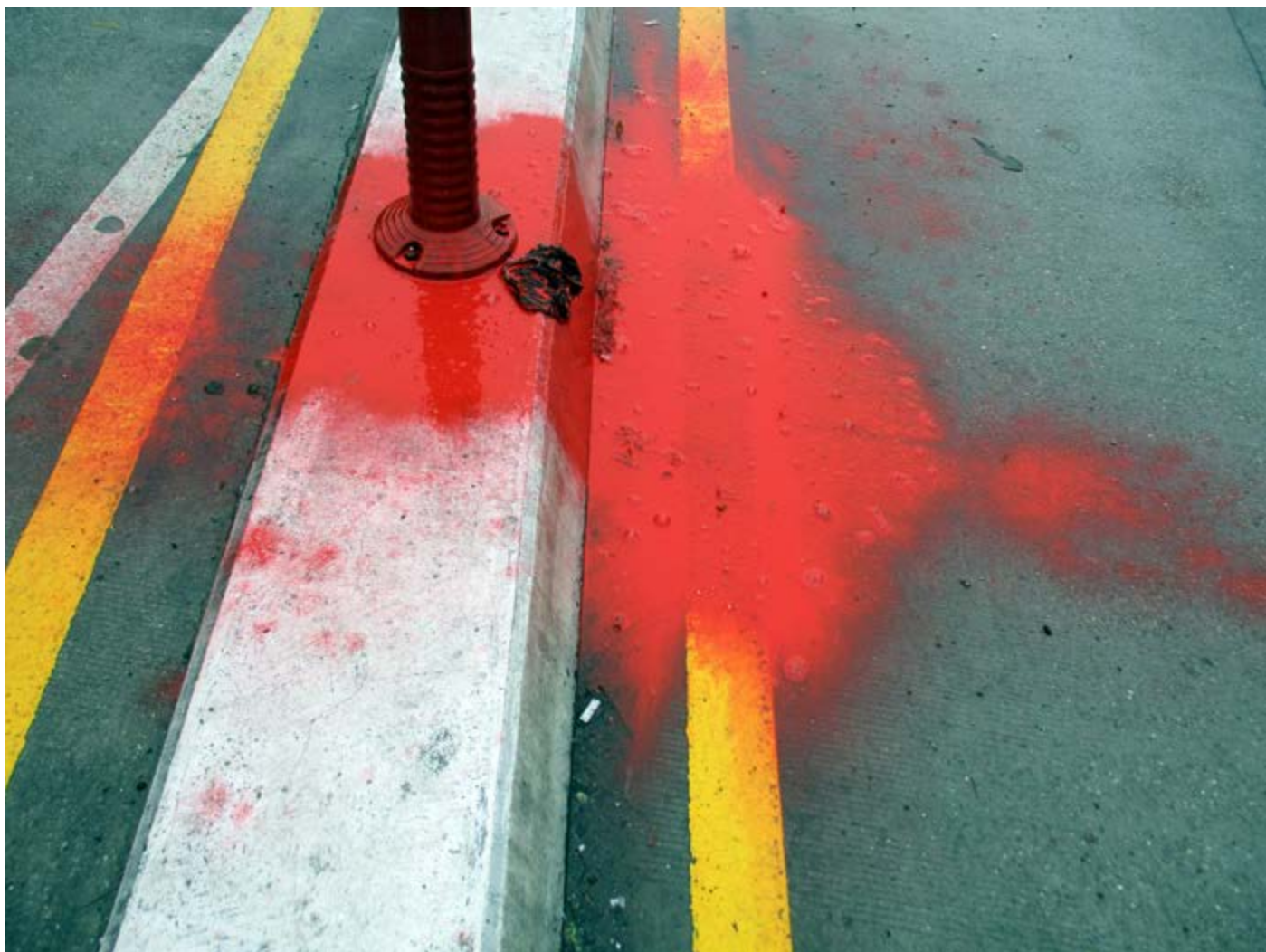
**Poster style works** will be inkjet print on matte poster, edition 50.

**Photographic works** will be inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper, edition 15.

A 16albermarle certificate of authenticity including artwork details and edition number will be provided with each artwork purchased.

Artworks can be purchased at the gallery on a print-by-demand basis for later shipping, or through the 16albermarle website. The buyer will be responsible for the cost of packing and shipping by Australia Post, and any credit card surcharge.

Proceeds will be remitted to artists after deducting print costs and 20% gallery costs.



Kaung Su  
*Red Paint 1* 2022  
inkjet print on Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper paper  
42 x 53 cm



Emily Phyo, #BeingEmily #016 2023

# Fighting Fear II It Goes Without Saying

## Acknowledgements

Curator

Co-curator

Cultural advisor

Design

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Installation

Gallery intern

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