

Fighting Fear II

It Goes Without Saying

8 February - 11 March 2023

Media Kit

16albermarle Project Space

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MYANM/ART

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

Media Release

Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying presents new work by nine Burmese artists - some in Myanmar, some overseas - responding to life under the military government.

Sydney, Australia: *It Goes Without Saying* is the follow-up to 16albermarle's May 2021 fundraising exhibition *Fighting Fear: #whatshappeninginmyanmar*, in which 11 artists from Myanmar made passionate and angry work responding to the military coup of 1 February 2021, which deposed the elected government, instituted military rule and deprived the people of democracy and freedom.

The new exhibition revisits the ongoing struggle of the people in Myanmar. Coinciding with the second anniversary of the military coup, it showcases the varied responses of artists to developments and the current situation in Myanmar now.

Returning artists such as Emily Phyo, Soe Yu Nwe, Richie Nath, Bart Was Not Here and 882021 - most now living overseas - follow up on their previous works with new insights. New additions including artists Kaung Su, Maung Day, Min Ma Naing and Anonymous - all still living in Myanmar - show a range of responses to the coup and to survival as an artist.

It Goes Without Saying will examine more deeply what fear means in post-coup Myanmar and how people live with it. The revolution has changed and censorship has returned. But those artists still living in the country – whether in Yangon or safer areas - are finding new ways to work and exist despite the terrible day to day reality of living under a military regime. The exhibition will broaden the conversation around the coup and the responses to it. While many horrific events have ceased to be reported on international media, life continues in cities, towns and villages across Myanmar.

For artists who fled the country for their own safety, they now face new and daunting circumstances living as refugees and immigrants, far from home and their families and having to cope with feelings of powerlessness about events in Myanmar.

It Goes Without Saying is presented as a partnership between Myanm/art (Yangon), Myanm/art founder Nathalie Johnston (Colombo) and 16albermarle Project Space (Sydney). Lead curator is Nathalie Johnston with support from current Myanm/art director Sid Kaung Sett Lin.

In the Australian context, the exhibition will inform the Australian public about the current situation in Myanmar and how artists are continuing to respond to it. By opening at the time of the second anniversary of the coup, the exhibition will provide information and images for the Australian media to present stories about the coup and life now in Myanmar, and to keep pressure on the Australian government to take more meaningful action against the junta which now illegally controls Myanmar.

The works comprise editioned photographs and prints and all are for sale. Eighty percent of sale proceeds after printing costs will be returned to the artists.

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Participating Artists



Bart Was Not Here, *Dancing on your Grave* 2022, inkjet print on matte poster paper, 64.5 x 105 cm

Bart Was Not Here (aka Kyaw Moe Khine): 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.



Emily Phyo, #response365 #365 2022, inkjet print of Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper, 43 x 43 cm

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.



Anonymous, Untitled #9 2022, inkjet print of Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper, 40 x 60 cm

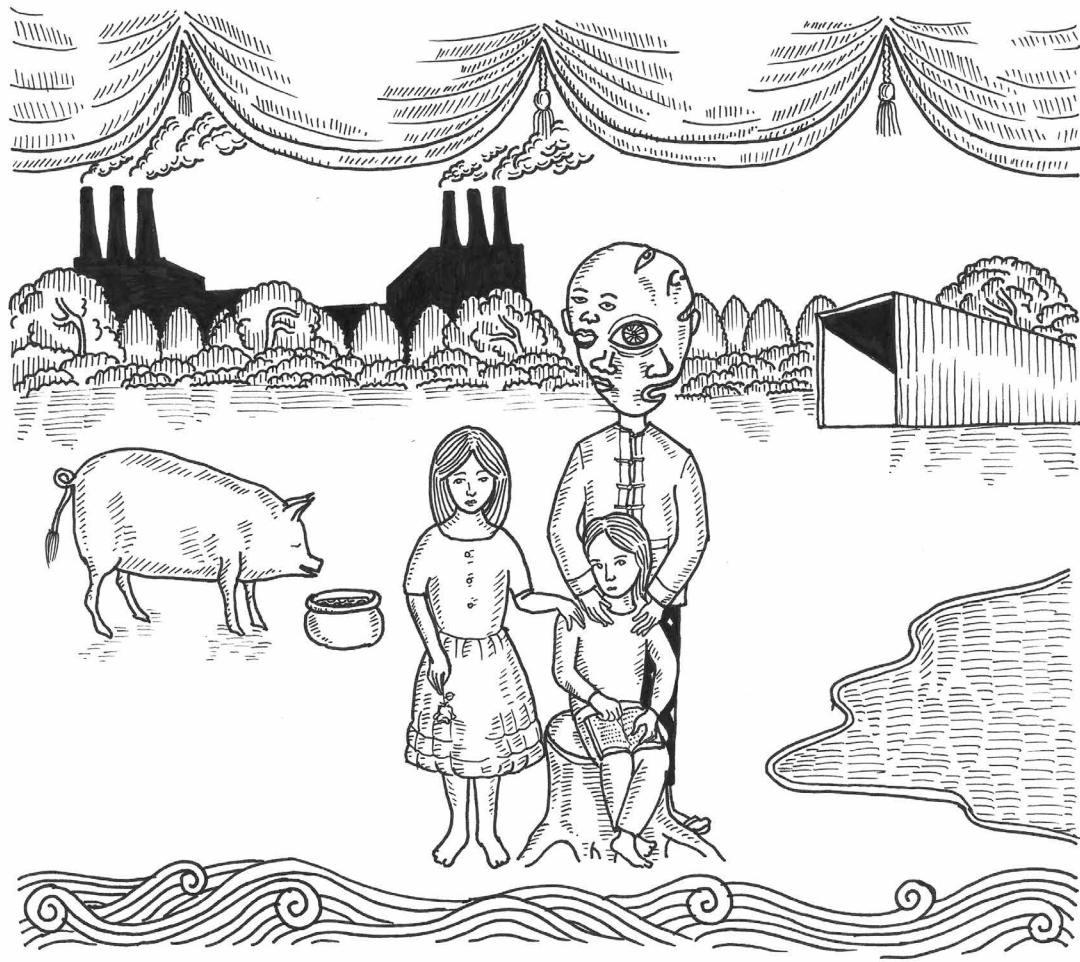
Anonymous is a documentary photographer from Myanmar. He works on his projects and under assignment from international news organizations. His interest in photography ignited in 2011 after the civil war broke out again in Kachin State, Northern Myanmar. He started shooting his projects for people to recognize and to witness ongoing and unsolved issues in Myanmar, such as civil war, natural resources and environmental issues, drugs and opium up-rooting movements in Kachin State.



Kaung Su, Untitled #4 2022, inkjet print of Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper, 38.5 x 50 cm

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 Myanmar/art. In 2021 Myanmar/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.



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Maung Day, *Lost Children 3* 2022, inkjet print on matte poster paper, 21 x 29.7 cm

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 Aul*, *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.



Min Ma Naing, *Faces of Change: Research consultant*, 28 2021
inkjet print of Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper, 61 x 40 cm

Min Ma Naing: *Faces of Change: Portraits of Myanmar's democratic awakening*

It's been 1 year and 8 months that Myanmar has been under military dictatorship. Min Aung Hlaing's armed military forces brutally killed thousands of people including innocent children in their own classrooms. As of October 5th, 2022, 2336 people have been confirmed killed and 2,572 people have been detained, as recorded by AAPP. It has been reported in international and local media outlets that torture and sexual harassment of several women activists in custody is taking place. *Faces of Change* is a tribute to the ordinary individuals who participated in the spring revolution and—as strangers acting in unison—radically changing their country's history, and serving as a reminder to the world about what's happening in Myanmar.



Richie Nath, *Maya and the Burning Village* 2017
inkjet print on matte poster paper, 90 x 53.5 cm

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.



Soe Yu Nwe, *Spring Revolution February Salute 2021*
inkjet print on matte poster paper, 62.5 x 45 cm



Soe Yu Nwe, *Our Struggle for Freedom: Feb 1st 2021*
inkjet print on matte poster paper, 62.5 x 45 cm

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.

Excerpts from Curatorial Statement

Artist's 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 artist's 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.

Art will always be relevant to a revolution. Artists themselves feel a complex mix of survivors' 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.

Nathalie Johnston
January 2023

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 stock 180gsm using ultra chrome ink, 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 by enquiring 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.

A price-list will be available from preview day, 7 February 2023.

Most artworks included in our previous exhibition *Fighting Fear: #whatshappeningin-myanmar* are available for purchase online, with all proceeds after print costs being returned to artists –

[View Artworks](#)



Emily Phyo, *Being Emily #006* 2023
inkjet print of Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper, 43 x 43 cm

Fighting Fear II It Goes Without Saying

Acknowledgements

Curator	Nathalie Johnston
Co-curator	Sid Kaung Sett Lin
Cultural advisor	Khin Thu Thu
Design	Tommy Carman
Educational materials	Lauren Barlow
	Luise Guest
Installation	Mary-Anne Cornford
Gallery intern	Amber Wan Ling
Printing	Darkstar Digital



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