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The (gendered) body
and place in contemporary
southeast Asian art

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Presented by 16albermarle Project Space

Curator

Jennifer Yang

16albermarle Project Space, Sydney

20 August - 22 October 2022



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Sam Lo
Our Grandfather Road 2016
photographic print on sihl textured artistic archival paper
90 x 160 cm

FOREWORD

John Cruthers

Our Grandfather Road: The (gendered) body and place in contemporary southeast Asian art is an exhibition drawn from the collection of my partner Elaine Baker and I. We began collecting in 2014, shortly after first travelling to southeast Asia to learn about the region's art. This exhibition is our first opportunity to present the collection to Australian audiences and for us to assess the range of works we've assembled and what they can tell us about the artists and their localities.

I come from an art collecting family with a focus on women. From 1974, I worked with my mother Sheila (later Lady Sheila) Cruthers to build a serious, focused collection of Australian art by women. Sheila believed women artists had not received adequate recognition, with the work of many falling from view. So she sought out their works and by collecting and exhibiting them, brought the artists back into the light. She also supported and purchased the work of young artists. In 2007 the Cruthers Collection of Women's Art was gifted to the University of Western Australia in Perth, so it could be available to the public and used for study and research. Now numbering almost 800 artworks, it's the largest standalone collection of women's art in Australia.

So it was not unexpected that when Elaine and I began travelling in southeast Asia, we were drawn to women artists. In 2014, on almost my first day in Indonesia, came a defining moment. I was visiting Ace House, a collective in Jogjakarta started by artist couple Gintani Swastika and Uji Handoko Eko Saputra (Hahan). In the back room I met three young women, all artists. I told them about my family's collection and gave them a copy of our book *Into the Light: The Cruthers Collection of Women's Art*.

They were astonished. "You mean, in Australia people collect work by women artists?", one asked. When I replied yes, she told me that in Indonesia, collectors avoided buying work by women artists, because most women, once married, were not encouraged to pursue their careers. She went on to say she hoped we could bring the collection to Indonesia to show collectors that women can have careers as artists and their work is worth collecting. It brought home the fact that in much of the region the battle for the recognition of women as artists is just beginning.

Eight years later, *Our Grandfather Road* is a selection of the works we've assembled since that conversation. We've also collected work by male artists¹, but our focus has been women. By showing the quality and range of art being made by younger and mid-career artists in Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Myanmar and Singapore, the exhibition advocates for women artists and acts as a corrective to local collecting biases.

The limited coverage of the region reflects our travel. Partly due to Covid, there are several countries we have not yet visited. It also reflects the exhibition program at 16albermarle Project Space, which I started in 2019 to present art from southeast Asia to Australian audiences.

Our focus has been on artists who have built significant careers in their home countries but are not widely known elsewhere in the region. Alongside this cohort is a smaller number of works by more senior artists who have been exemplary figures for the following generations. As collectors we've been conscious of choosing works in a range of media and with diverse approaches. We've purchased wherever we found works of interest – from national survey exhibitions such as Art Jog and art fairs such as Art Stage Singapore and Art Fair Philippines, to collectives, group and solo exhibitions at commercial galleries and project spaces, to fundraising exhibitions and artist's studios.

Meeting artists and speaking with them about their lives, their countries and their work has also been a priority, often through visits over several years. We've been inspired by their passionate commitment to their work and its content, often within a national context and national debates in which they see themselves as active participants. In much of the work social and/or political activism is never far from the surface.

Over the course of our looking it's been interesting to note the thematic concerns that have reappeared from artist to artist across countries in the region. Some are gender-based, others socio-economic. Whilst not suggesting artists should make work around given themes – or any themes for that matter - to some extent our collecting has been guided by the concerns of the artists themselves. We also know

1 Male artists include Mohamad Yusuf (Ucup), Seti Legi, Surya Wirawan, Prihatmoko Moki, Anang Saptoto, Eldwin Pradipta, Ignatius Wenski, Enka Komariah, Dias Prabu (Indonesia), Tada Hengsapkul, Suebsang Sangwachirapiban, Somopote Ang (Thailand), Bart Was Not Here, Richie Htet, 882021 (Myanmar), Svay Sareth (Cambodia)

from years of collecting that themes can help knit together a collection and encourage interesting and productive conversations between works made by different artists in different countries across different periods.

The final shape of the exhibition and its thematic focus and framing are the work of curator Jennifer Yang. Jennifer has had some academic and practical experience with Indonesian art but this has been her first curating job. We'd like to thank her for her perceptive reading of the collection and tireless work in researching, writing, exhibition planning, lecturing and public programs. We'd also like to acknowledge the initial curator Sineenart Meena, who began on the project

in early 2021 but was unable to continue due to pressure of work. We also thank those who joined us for our public programs - artist Sam Lo from Singapore, leading regional art specialists Wulan Dirgantoro, Elly Kent and Luise Guest and collectors Konfir Kabo, Stephen Shaul and Wiyu Wahono (in absentia).

Finally, thanks to all at 16albermarle – gallery manager Tommy Carman, interns Sineenart Meena, Josephine Kurniawan and Ellya Gunawan, installer Mary-Anne Cornford and her team, and associates Luise Guest and Jasmin Stephens. Without the dedication of these people, this exhibition would not have happened.



Our Grandfather Road installation view



Sam Lo
Please tell me more 2016
photographic print on sihl textured artistic archival paper
29.7 x 39.6 cm

OUR GRANDFATHER ROAD

Jennifer Yang

By its design, *Our Grandfather Road* is an exhibition about gender and geography. It presents the works of seventeen southeast Asian artists from a private collection, sixteen of them women and one a transmasculine person. These intersecting frameworks serve as the conceptual parameters for the exhibition, and yet they double as urgent and deeply contested dilemmas that beset each of the works on display. For insofar as such categories aid in the organisation of our knowledge of people, place and context, they also, when uncritically applied as definitive and uniform measures of identity, fail to capture the full complexities of the art practices they are imposed on. The challenge mounted in *Our Grandfather Road* thus is not to find affirmative answers to pre-existing notions and narratives of femininity, or nationhood, but to productively scrutinise the ways in which these constructs—which are always unstable, everchanging and variable—intersect to inform social experience and inspire creative responses.

In its inquiry, *Our Grandfather Road* looks back to a lineage of feminist and transnational scholarship and curatorial practice which has sought to trouble definitions of “feminism” and “southeast Asia” as they brought the two terms into interrelation. This has involved problematising a singular “global” narrative of feminism by drawing attention to the heterogeneity of women’s movements and feminist theorising as they shift across geographies. At around the time the Euramerican feminist movement shifted toward a more international outlook—a “global” turn most visibly heralded by *WACK!*¹ in Los Angeles, and *Global Feminisms* in New York, in 2007—the all-woman, pan-Asian exhibition format had begun to take root. Notable examples included *Womanifesto* (Thailand, 1995-2008); *Women Imaging Women* (the Philippines, 1998-1999); and *Text and Subtext* (Singapore, 2000).² Each in their own ways, these exhibitions formulated responses to the question posed by the scholar Joan Kee in the catalogue essay for *Global Feminisms*: “what is feminist

about contemporary Asian women’s art?”³ For such feminist-inspired projects, to brandish the label of an “Asian women’s art” was, in part, an attempt at recuperation, at shifting the vision of the Euramerican art world toward the activities of women artists in Asia ‘by unifying artists under the rubric of common geographical affiliation, on the one hand, and by emphasising their cultural differences on the other.’⁴

Yet there are issues with the uncritical adding of the category of “Asian woman artist” to the mix, which often produces assumptions of a certain “feminine style” or “feminine aesthetic”. As Kee notes, this oft-repeated and tokenistic emphasis on identity politics is one which ultimately fails to challenge the hegemonic structures of a Eurocentric, male-dominated art world and does not aspire toward real parity.⁵ The dilemma for feminist curators in the contemporary Asian art space then is centred around the question of how to enfold the works of contemporary southeast Asian women into feminist practice. To some degree this entailed the recovery of forgotten and marginalised histories as a way of redressing the underrepresentation of women in art institutions and art historical discourse. Beyond the project of recovery, however, feminist researchers and curators were concerned with overturning the masculinised standards of ‘success’ and ‘greatness’ for artworks. While *Womanifesto*, as an ongoing series of collaborative exhibitions and transnational exchanges, sought to create a space and network for women artists and give value to the perspectives and methodologies which arose specifically from women-run projects, the exhibition-project series *Women Imaging Women* curated by Flaudette May V. Datuin, adopted a scholarly approach which concentrated around the intersecting identities of artist, woman and the merging of the personal and the political between the gendered spaces of the home, body and the art world.⁶ As these projects endeavoured to situate the artwork in broader social, political and historical processes and discursive structures,

1 *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* was curated by Connie Butler at The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, and *Global Feminisms* was curated by Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin at the Brooklyn Museum in New York.

2 See Yvonne Low, “Women Re-Modelling Art Worlds: Exhibitions and Projects on Southeast Asian Women Artists (1990-2015),” *The Journal of the Asian Arts Society Australia* 24, no. 4 (2015): 4-6.

3 Joan Kee, “What is Feminist about Contemporary Asian Women’s Art?” in *Global Feminisms*, ed. Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin (Brooklyn: Merrell Press, 2007), 106.

4 Kee, “What is Feminist About Contemporary Asian Women’s Art?” 107.

5 *Ibid*, 108.

6 Flaudette May V. Datuin, “Women Imaging Women: Feminine Spaces, Dissident Voices: Categories for a Feminist Intervention in the Art Histories of Southeast Asia,” in *Text and Subtext: An International Touring Exhibition*, ed. Binghui Huangfu (Singapore: Earl Lu Gallery, 2000), 16-31.

they also sought to emphasise the ways in which gender identity intersected with historical and locational specificities to inform artists' experiences. In Datuin's words, this meant a clear acknowledgement of "positions at the fringes" and the consequent transformation of "marginal positions into sources of strength, intervention and empowerment."⁷

In this spirit, *Shaping Geographies* (Singapore, 2019-20), an exhibition featuring ten southeast Asian contemporary artists and one women's artist collective, and co-curated by Wulan Dirgantoro and Michelle Antoinette, once more embraced the interpretative axes of gender and geography through the notion of 'intimacy.' In *Shaping Geographies*, southeast Asia is conceived as an 'affective counter-geography'—a shifting and everchanging entanglement of people, space, history, memory and affect to be challenged and reimagined.⁸ The exhibition framing then relied upon the strategic usage of the constructs of southeast Asia and femininity as subjects of interrogation and transformation. Borrowing the terminology of philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Dirgantoro and Antoinette suggest that the construct of region can be deployed as a 'pass-word', which 'moves and agitates', rather than an 'order-word', which 'fixes and defines.'⁹

Likewise, *Our Grandfather Road* concerns itself with many of these familiar issues which beset feminist curatorial practice in (contemporary southeast Asian) exhibition spaces. But just as it pays homage to its predecessors, the exhibition also seeks to find unique points of connection between the works and artists represented. Held in the intimate space of a Sydney-based private home gallery, *Our Grandfather Road* is also in many ways an introduction for urban Australian audiences to contemporary art practices emerging from countries in Australia's immediate region. Threading through this "introduction" of sorts is not a monolithic narrative of womanhood, nationhood or regionalism, but an emphasis on a mutual responsiveness between the body and its environment. The artworks, as the material manifestations of this active engagement between artist and surroundings, are persistent reminders and vocalisations of the immediacy of a lived, contextually sited reality, as it wears itself on the body, sometimes subtly or playfully, and sometimes violently or overtly, but always with a political urgency. At times this is revealed in artworks which explore recent developments in local and global spaces—the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, the political turbulence catalysed by the 2021 Myanmar Coup, troubling changes in governance structures and urban space, and recent political points of protest and

contention figure in many of the works. Yet this sense of urgency comingles with the concerns of an older generation of women artists, for whom the feminine body remains central, as a site for social control and for the servicing of political narratives. The challenge in developing a curatorial framework around such a diverse range of works, then, has been to allow for such varying matters of interest and protest to coalesce in the one space and under the broader thematic umbrellas of "body" and "place", while drawing attention to both their potential affiliations with one another, and points of contextually inflected difference.

In many respects, this curatorial emphasis on the body-place connection is reflected in the exhibition title: *Our Grandfather Road*. The exhibition is named after the Singaporean artist **Sam Lo's** (they/he) photographic series, in which they document public interventions enacted across the Singaporean Central Business District. In 2012, Sam was eventually arrested by the police for spray-painting the words 'My Grandfather Road' onto a major road in Singapore. The Singlish phrase, used colloquially to berate people for obstructing others in a public space (you think this is *your grandfather's road?*), is repurposed here as a way of reasserting a sense of place, heritage and belonging in the face of rapid urban development—a phenomenon pertinent to the Singaporean landscape but common also to the major metropolitan centres of southeast Asia. The title then, which substitutes "my" for "our", serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, it offers up an intimation of the thematic pulse which runs through the works in the exhibition, that is, a deep-rooted connection between human bodies and place, and an emphasis on the body as it exists and exerts agency in relation to its environment. On the other, it implores us to reflect upon the idea, and imagine that what is "mine" could very possibly be "ours".

This palpable sense of responsiveness between the artist and their surroundings is interwoven across all the art practices represented in the exhibition. At times, it appears with great urgency and undeniable saliency. We see an example of this in the photographs taken by the Burmese artist **Emily Phyo**. Since the beginning of the military coup in Myanmar, on 1 February 2021, Phyo has posted images on her Instagram account documenting her life in Yangon daily. Of the 365 photographs, the image included in the exhibition was taken on 22 February 2021. There is special significance assigned to this date, which is marked onto Phyo's raised hand, with protestors comparing it to 8 August 1988,

7 Datuin, "Women Imaging Women," 16.

8 Michelle Antoinette and Wulan Dirgantoro, *Shaping Geographies, Across Time and Space: Art, Woman, Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Gajah Gallery, 2019), 13.

9 From Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Athlone Press, 1988). Quoted in Antoinette and Dirgantoro, *Shaping Geographies*, 13.



Emily Phyo, #response365 #029 2021, inkjet print on matte poster paper, 84 x 101 cm

date of the 8888 Uprising which began as a pro-democracy student protest but ended on 18 September after a violent military coup. The subject of the photograph itself is the three-finger salute, a symbol transposed from a dystopian fiction trilogy to become a sign of protest in Myanmar. Between references to historical events in public memory, and to visible symbols drawn from contemporary media, Phyo's photograph bears witness to the imbrication of human lives in a landscape of political turmoil while drawing attention to the histories of struggle and possible futures of hope carried within these bodies.

Some of the most contentious flashpoints in contemporary Indonesian politics are also subject to interrogation in the exhibition. **Fitriani Dwi Kurniasih**, a Yogyakarta-based art worker who is closely involved with underground spaces of political critique and artistic activity in Indonesia, such as Taring Padi and SURVIVE!Garage community, presents a series of graphic black-and-white woodcut prints. Each records key issues of political discord in Indonesia, including the heavy-handed military repression of the indigenous population of West Papua and the decimation of the natural environment for the building of infrastructure projects and palm oil plantations. Meanwhile, **Olga Rindang Amesti**'s elaborate installation of wooden crates, soft sculpture and miscellaneous found objects forms a microcosm of the Indonesian political system. With the word 'think' stitched across the limbs of soft toys—a clever play on the notion of political puppetry—and scrawled onto seashells, Amesti is incisive in her critique of the recent proliferation of political parties and figures of influence in the years since the collapse of the authoritarian New Order regime. The crates and their contents—ambivalent objects which open themselves to

interpretation as either containers of precious cargo or old junk, or something in-between—speak to the all-too-real risk of deception, collusion and the making of empty promises in political campaigns. And finally, the reverberations of the coronavirus pandemic punctuate **Ipeh Nur**'s portrait of Yogyakarta in lockdown, which is visualised in her black-and-white batik painting. As one of six batiks created over the course of 2020, *Pagar* (translating to fence) recalls the artist's discussion with village elders about the handling of lockdown regulation, and the differing perspectives which emerged from the conversation. A person bowed in prayer, people captivated by their mobile phones and a man smoking a cigarette by an imposing fence are all suggestive of the ways in which people adapt to the pandemic. Most notably, Ipeh draws upon the idea of *pagar gaib*—an invisible fence, believed to serve as a supernatural protective force—as a source of metaphysical assurance and a symbol of survival and adaptation, but also one which confines and contains the bodies in her drawing.

Of equal interest, however, are the ways in which such responses to social, cultural and political landscapes manifest and operate in subtler and perhaps more understated ways. The artworks of two Filipina artists, **Wawi Navarroza** and **MM Yu**, each experiment with the idea of the photograph as a documentary medium. For Navarroza, who frequently works in self-portraiture, the photograph is not merely an index of a specific moment in time and place, but also an intimate connection to family history. Attaching a handwritten eulogy dedicated to her grandfather, who became ill and passed away from a lifetime of closely handling chemicals used to develop photographic images, Navarroza carefully crafts a self-portrait which immerses the viewer into a scene of interlapping gazes. It is simultaneously an image of the artist and of her history and craft as essential components which inform her sense of self. As if to affirm the status of the



Olga Rindang Amesti, *Mind and Boxes* 2014 at ARTJOG 2014

photograph as a material document of identity, place and heritage, Navarroza marks the image twice—once on the back with her signature, and again, for our eyes, in her letter's sign-off: Wawi Navarroza, Manila, 2007. By contrast, the body as a marker of self disappears in Yu's photograph. Printed onto a wooden surface, the horizontal grain of the wood gives the image a painterly quality. The depicted scene itself is ordinary—a construction site in rapidly urbanising Manila—but the careful framing of the shot transforms it into something comparable to a thoughtfully composed art installation. Blurring the boundaries between what is considered mundane and what is considered art, Yu reimagines the documentary image and the objects which we deem worthy of documentation. In the process, she draws attention to the agency and intuition of the photographer, highlighting the role of the artist in mediating, nurturing and possibly altering the relationship between people and place, and people's perceptions of place.

Yet the “contemporaneity” of these works seems to perennially intersect with historical experience and the memory of the past. Certainly, this is expressed in the Balinese artist **Citra Sasmita**'s painting, which was originally conceived as a response to the brief “Into the Future”, as part of an exhibition hosted by Cemeti Art House in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. There is a connection to tradition both materially and symbolically in Sasmita's referral to the Kamasan tradition of painting from East Bali, which pays meticulous care to the delineation of line and form, and her use of culturally significant motifs such as the placenta (*ari-ari*). As Sasmita challenges a linear conception of time and progress, she also raises for questioning the position of women in such social and historical processes. In veiling the women—whose bodies have so often been photographed and painted (by male artists) as a symbol of Balinese tradition and culture—but allowing them to carry what Sasmita describes as ‘symbols of nature and nurture’¹⁰, the work celebrates the role of women as the drivers and agents of change and continuity, rather than the voiceless symbols of unchanging tradition. Similarly interested in the position of women in historical narratives, **Maharani Mancanagara** references the image of Kartini, a Dutch-educated Indonesian woman widely considered to be a proto-feminist figure in the history of the Indonesian women's movement, in her drawing of Kartini and her sisters dressed in *kebaya-kain*, with their hair styled in a low bun. Interestingly Kartini took on a near-mythic status,

memorialised as a symbol of a pious, domesticated femininity under Suharto's New Order regime in Indonesia during the 1960s.¹¹ But Mancanagara's drawing of Kartini and her sisters, unassuming, marked onto old wooden planks and almost secretively hidden between two oil lamps, recalls an image and legacy of Kartini in a ‘monument’ reconstructed by women for women.¹²

This consciousness of the body as a site for political contention, the construction of cultural meaning, and social control persists as a key focus in the works of the represented artists. It is powerfully and viscerally articulated in the Chinese-Burmese ceramicist **Soe Yu Nwe**'s glittering, dissected and tormented porcelain snake, which represents the artist and her feelings of alienation as a woman of the Shan Chinese ethnic minority, born in the Chinese zodiac year of the Snake. It is glimpsed in the melancholic and meditative turquoise gaze of the girl depicted in **Arahmaiani**'s painting, who wears a bloodied necklace of roses and thorns. And it is the subject of the late Balinese artist **IGAK Murniasih**'s graphic pastel painting which pictures twisting, caricatured female figures, caught in abject states of self-inflicted bodily harm and erotic gratification, fitted into high-heeled boots and contorted into forms resembling Balinese temple structures. Each of these works walk a thin line between the beautiful and the grotesque, the sensual and the repulsive, and vulnerability and violence and, in their wanderings, give voice to the suffering and trauma endured by the gendered and raced body, often in correlation to the servicing of the ideological project of nationhood in the southeast Asian context.

Just as the exhibited artworks are critical and perceptive in content, many also carry a deep personal intimacy. For an older generation of women artists in the region, artmaking has been an important means of expressing the burdensome intersection of one's identity as an artist, mother and woman. As a tribute to her own mother, the Thai artist **Bussaraporn Thongchai** offers up a haunting charcoal portrait of a standing woman, her body cloaked and malformed by a “dress” of breasts. The child-mother relation is inverted in the work of Indonesian artist **Maria Indriasari**, who incorporates within her fabric and soft sculpture a poem for her son, grieving the inevitable physical and emotional separation of mother from child. Indriasari is intentional with her use of waste fabric found within the home, which as an

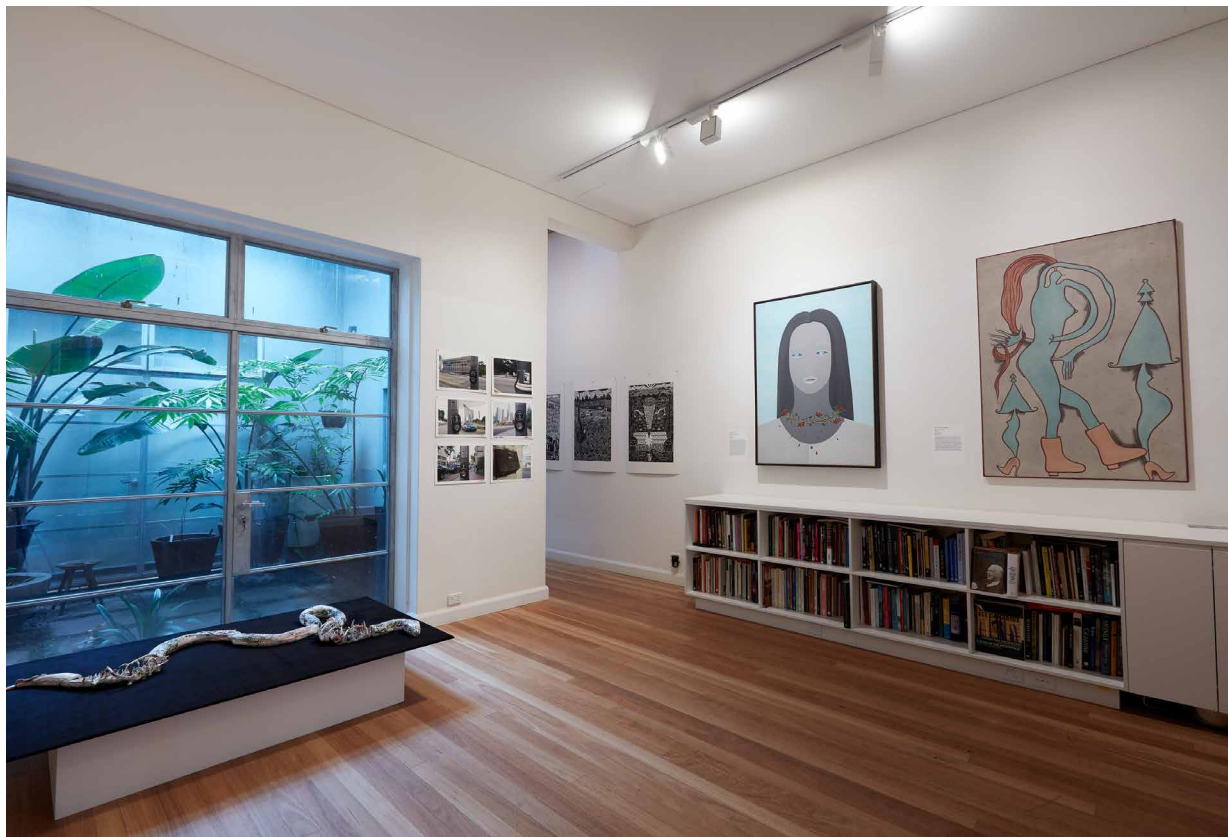
10 Quoted in Richard Horstman, “Balinese artists the highlight of “Selamatan Masa Depan” – an exhibition of emerging Indonesian artists in Bali,” *Life as Art Asia*, 12 April 2019, last accessed 14 September 2022, <https://lifeasartasia.art/2019/04/12/balinese-artists-the-highlight-of-seلماتan-masa-depan-an-exhibition-of-emerging-indonesian-artists-in-bali/>.

11 On Kartini's legacy see, Paul Bijl and Grace Chin, eds., *Appropriating Kartini: Colonial, National and Transnational Memories of an Indonesian Icon*, (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020).

12 Maharani Mancanagara refers to her works as ‘reconstructed monuments’. See for example: Maharani Mancanagara, *Solo Exhibition: “Zero Sum Game”* (Bandung: Galeri Soemardja, 2018), 10.

accompaniment to the text forms a visual lexicon in and of itself in its reference to craft tradition, transforming materials typically associated with the domestic sphere into works of art. In a similar fashion, **Restu Ratnaningtyas** stitches together pieces of discarded textile in her sculptural work, turning waste into an object of aesthetic contemplation. Arranged into the vertical structure of a temple, but with dismembered body parts and limbs drawn onto the fabric itself, Ratnaningtyas's work prods at the tension between internal states of being and external appearances. At times, these intimate explorations into gendered bodily experience can also be hopeful and celebratory. The Thai artist **Kasarin Himacharoen** produces a suite of vibrant, miniature etchings of women's bodies in rest, contemplation and motion—created over a period of six months during the artist's days of menstruation. The Indonesian artist **Sekarputri Sidhiawati** creates playful ceramic vases decorated with whimsical floral motifs and female figures which embrace and cling to the vessels. In their artmaking, we witness joyous and wide-ranging expressions of femininity, encompassing celebrations of girliness, feelings of desire and longing, sentimentality as well as lived corporeal experiences of fear, fatigue and vulnerability.

Altogether, the artworks by these seventeen artists—some already well-established in an international circuit of contemporary art, and some only just emerging—represent a diverse and impressive array of art emerging from the region. When gathered and viewed as a whole, they testify to a remarkable fluidity in identity and experience—multifaceted, mutable and always inflected by temporal and spatial specificities and varying social, cultural and political structures. Although the thematic parameters of gender and geography have offered an important starting point in uniting and spotlighting such art practices within an Australian exhibition space, it is clear that the works themselves defy the assumption of a universal experience of womanhood, or of a notion of southeast Asia as a cohesive body of nations. Instead, they demand our attention and our patience; they ask us to listen and observe as viewers from the outside, and in the process to join in the artists' imaginings of new possible ways forward—of voicing and staging political resistance, in the hopes of leaving an imprint.



Our Grandfather Road installation view

Arahmaiani Feisal

b 1961, Bandung, Indonesia

Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

In the 1980s and 1990s, Arahmaiani's art attracted public controversy and death threats from Islamic fundamentalist groups in Indonesia for her provocative use of religious symbols. This led to a period of imprisonment in 1983, the censorship of her works and a self-imposed exile in 1994, during which the artist fled to Australia for her safety. In *Tatapapan Gadis (Girl's Gaze)*, Arahmaiani embraces a sombre colour palette of muted greys and cool blues. Although Arahmaiani is better known for her performance works, the painting bears traces of the artist's ongoing explorations into the intertwined relation between the gendered body, religion and spirituality, and tradition and modernity. Solemn, still and gazing toward the viewer with an inscrutable expression, the girl exudes an aura of reverence and possibly martyrdom. The meditative blue of her eyes, however, is disrupted by the red of bloodied thorns, strung around her neck. Referencing Christian iconography but rendered in Arahmaiani's usual abstracted style of painting, *Tatapapan Gadis* asks us to consider the various forms of suffering endured by the contemporary woman's body, particularly those connected to patriarchal belief systems, including that of an increasingly neoliberal, westernised culture of "globality."

One of Indonesia's most seminal and respected contemporary artists, Arahmaiani has long been internationally recognized for her powerful and provocative commentaries on social, political, and cultural issues. Born in 1961 in Bandung, Indonesia, she established herself in the 1980s as a pioneer in the field of performance art in southeast Asia, although her practice also incorporates a wide variety of media.

Since 1980, Arahmaiani has been included in over one hundred solo and group exhibitions around the world. Her works have been performed and exhibited widely in museums and biennials, including: the Venice Biennale (2003); Biennale of the Moving Image, Geneva (2003); Gwangju Biennale (2002); Bienal de São Paulo (2002); Performance Biennale, Israel (2001); Biennale de Lyon (2000); Werkleitz Biennale (2000); Bienal de la Habana (1997); Asia-Pacific Triennial, Brisbane, Australia (1996); and the Yogya Biennial (1994). In New York City, she was included in the landmark 1996 exhibition, *Traditions/Tensions*, at the Asia Society, as well as *Global Feminisms* at the Brooklyn Museum in 2007. Her performances and other artworks have recently appeared in institutions in the United States, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan and Indonesia.



Arahmaiani Feisal
Tatapan Gadis 2004
acrylic on canvas
140 x 100 cm

Bussaraporn Thongchai

b 1985, Nakhon Phanom, Thailand
Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

In Bussaraporn Thongchai's drawings, misshapen and highly stylised figures are rendered in charcoal gradations of black and white. Here appears the ghostly form of a woman, cocooned in a bulbous mass of breasts. Teetering between the grotesque and the erotic, *The Dress* mourns the burden of maternity and of sexual reproduction which, quite literally, weighs down on the body of the mother, obscuring and disfiguring the woman beneath the dress. Painfully aware of the sorrow and unhappy sacrifices of motherhood, Thongchai, who created the work as a reflection upon her own mother's life, writes: 'the smell under my mother's breast [is] the strange and bitter smell of tears, sweat, milk and blood, [one] that I never want to have on my own body.'

Bussaraporn Thongchai was born in 1985 and raised in a small town on the Mekong River in northeast Thailand. She completed her Bachelor's and Master's degree at the Faculty of Painting, Sculpture and Graphic Art, Silpakorn University, Bangkok. Most of her early work consisted of drawing and painting which often showed the naked body in a grotesque form. The main subject of her work thematizes personal gender issues such as questioning the power of patriarchy in her family as well as exploring and criticizing discourses about female issues in Thai society. She approached these topics by revealing the history of her personal relationships. Accordingly, Thongchai's work is often described as being representative of women who dare to show their life experiences, transgression and sexual scandals, based on the understanding of rights and ownership over the female body.

Since 2015 Thongchai has lived and worked in Berlin, where she has extended her engagement with gender issues in her art to other social and political contexts, such as social inequality, human rights, and women who've migrated. She continues to create artworks, many inspired by her work as a cultural mediator and interpreter at Ban Ying, a shelter home for migrant women. In 2019, six large drawings from her series *Pieces from Berlin* were purchased for the German national contemporary art collection.



Bussaraporn Thongchai
The Dress 2013
crayon and acrylic on paper
145 x 75 cm

Citra Sasmita

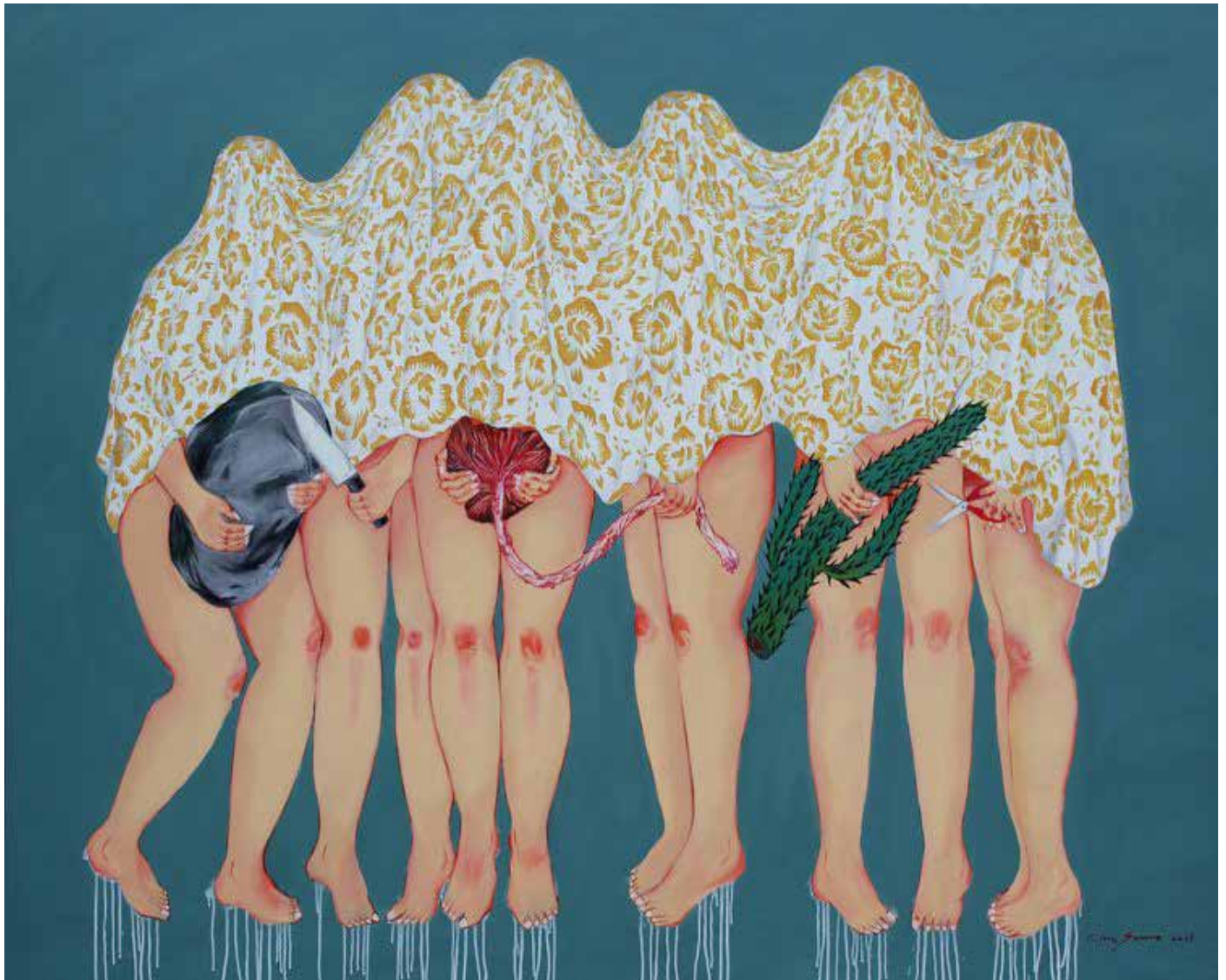
b 1990, Bali, Indonesia
Lives and works in Bali, Indonesia

Arguably one of the most salient symbols of Indonesian culture in the foreign imagination, the body of the Balinese woman—often half-dressed and swaying in dance—has long been a subject in visual representations of the island nation, from the colonial era until now. In Citra Sasmita's painting, however, the women are hidden away from our gaze. Veiled by a white cloth, patterned ornately with gold rose motifs, we are permitted only a glimpse of the women's legs, which are anchored by trickles of paint that appear almost like the roots of a tree. Their arms each cradle a stone, a cactus, a knife and a pair of scissors. Surrounded by these sharp, hostile objects, is a placenta (*ari-ari*) with the umbilical cord still attached. Believed in Balinese culture to be the deceased younger sibling of the birthed child, the ari-ari in Sasmita's painting conjures images of life and death; of the connection between mother and child; the passage of time and knowledge between generations; and of the ever-changing face of 'culture' as it struggles between the push and pull of tradition and modernity—all consummated in the flesh of the woman. Originally produced in response to the theme "Into the Future", *Metamorphosis: Flowers of Carnage* imagines a potential pathway forward in representations of Balinese art, culture and bodies, without forsaking historical experience and the memory of the past.

Citra Sasmita is a contemporary artist from Bali whose work focuses on unravelling myths and misconceptions of Balinese art and culture. She is also deeply invested in questioning a woman's place in the social hierarchy and seeks to upend normative constructs of gender.

Born in Bali in 1990, Citra has never formally graduated from an art institution. She studied for a Literature diploma at Udayana University (2008) and at the Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences, Ganesha University of Education, majoring in Physics Education (2009).

Citra was a Gold Award Winner in the UOB Painting of The Year 2017. She was included in Biennale Jogja XV 2019 and her solo exhibition *Ode To The Sun* ran at Yeo Workshop, Singapore in 2020. Her work is represented in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia.



Citra Sasmita
Metamorphosis: Flowers of Carnage 2018
acrylic on canvas
150 x 200 cm

Emily Phyo

b 1982 Yangon, Myanmar

Lives and works in Austin, United States

Part of a documentary project titled *#Response365*—a reiteration of an earlier project—this photograph was one of many posted once a day for a year, in response to the 2021 military coup in Myanmar. In uploading such provocative images to her Instagram account (@emily_phyo), Phyo facilitates a transformation of her social media platform into a subversive online space for recording on-the-ground developments in real-time, as the military targeted press and journalists. With all the urgency and immediacy evoked in a quick photographic snapshot, Phyo pictures the notorious three-finger salute—a symbol transposed from a dystopian young adult fiction trilogy to become a real and salient sign of resistance in contemporary Myanmar. Irreverent and stubbornly defiant, Phyo’s act of documentation—which has continuously fixated on the human body, often the artist’s own—makes visible ongoing realities of political protest, survival and perseverance, while bearing witness to the imbrication of human lives in a landscape of political turmoil and repression. Below is Phyo’s account of the day the photograph was taken.

It was captured on 22nd of February, 2021, the day known as 22222 Day. I was hiding in a friend's apartment in Hledan township, Yangon, with my husband and 7-year-old son due to the risk of getting arrested during night searches. Thousands of people gathered at Hledan junction on that day. It was like a sea of people. There was a sense of unity that I never felt before.

As I was moving among people towards the flyover to take a picture for the day, a thought came into my mind, "What if there was an explosion? I'll be dead from being run over by the panic[ked] crowd."

When I got to the flyover, I saw a fire truck, armed soldiers and riot police in full gear on the University Avenue side. On the other side, fearless people who want freedom, peace and democracy. I decided to take a picture of people with my three fingers in the foreground. I saw hope in the sea of people.

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. 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 followed her 2015 *#Being365* series with *#Response365*, a daily interpretative performance photographed and posted on her Instagram account which traces the trauma and reactions of living in Myanmar since the military coup on 1 February 2021. A selection of works from this series was included in *Fighting Fear: #whatshappeninginmyanmar* at 16albermarle Project Space in May 2021, from which six works were purchased by the National Gallery of Victoria.



Emily Phyo
#Response365 #022 2021
inkjet print on matte poster paper
84 x 143 cm

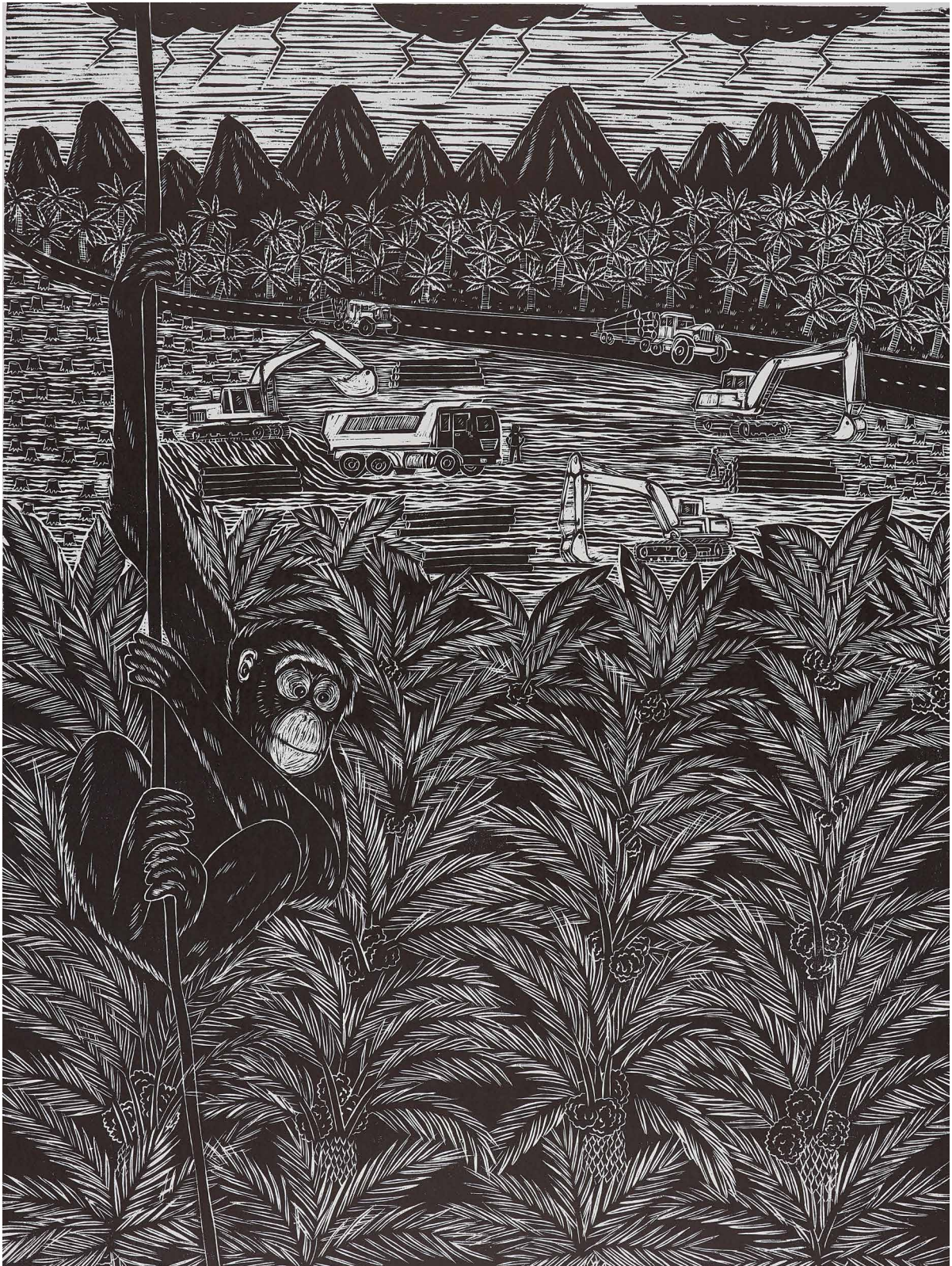
Fitriani Dwi Kurniasih

b 1981, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

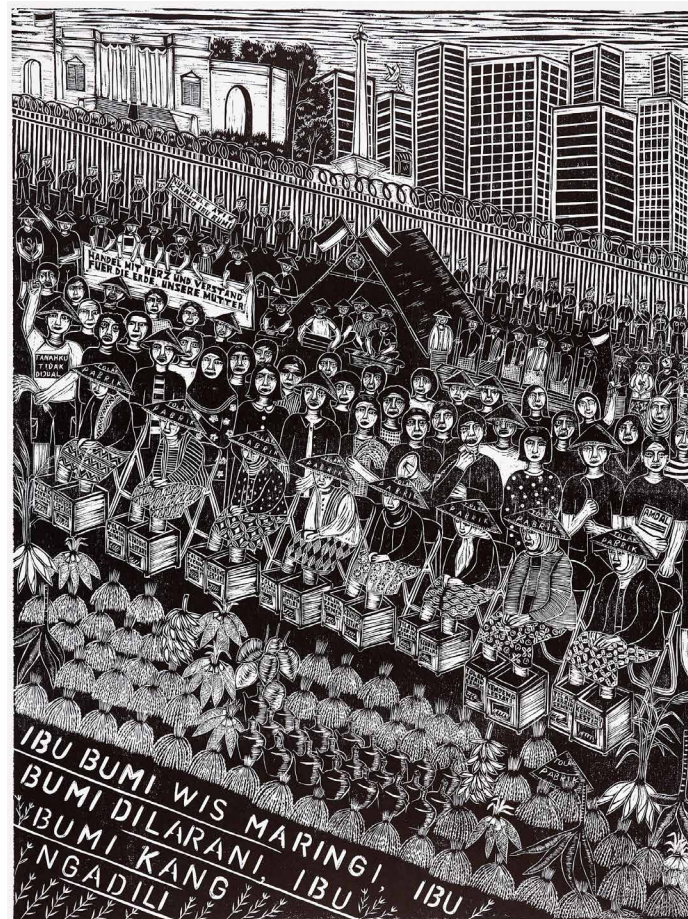
Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

A vocal activist for women's rights and environmental issues, Fitri Dwi Kurniasih (DK) is closely involved with spaces of critical, socio-political dialogue in Indonesia, working with underground art communities and the Yogyakarta-based protest band, Dendang Kampungan. It is this attentiveness toward the forms of collective mobilisation and demands for change occurring at a grassroots level that informs and inspires DK's series of graphic black-and-white woodcut prints. The prints each document some of the most pressing and contentious flashpoints in contemporary Indonesian politics, including the brutal repression of West Papuans at the hands of the Indonesian military, and the rapid expansion of the palm oil plantation industry at the cost of the natural environment. But in *Kendeg Lestari*, DK draws our attention to the forces of local resistance. Through a lengthy process of drawing, etching and printing, DK documents in painstaking detail the defiant figures of women who shackled their feet with cement to protest the construction of a cement factory on indigenous land in Kendeng—a startling testament to the crucial and often deeply physical role played by indigenous women at the forefront of such movements.

Fitri is both an art worker and a visual artist who uses graphic art techniques to critique and promote dialogue surrounding social and environmental issues. She is committed to raising women's issues through art and music and consistently provides a strong female voice in an extremely patriarchal culture. Fitri is a member of SURVIVE!Garage community and Taring Padi art collective, and is vocalist of the band Dendang Kampungan. She also runs @democrafty, an online store of her handmade craft, embroidery, jewellery and prints. In 2019 Fitri took part in the exhibition *Beneath the Surface: Prints by Kollwitz, Catlett, Coe, Kurniasih* at Cora Miller Gallery, York College of Pennsylvania, USA. In 2022 she took part in Documenta 15, Kassel, as a member of Taring Padi art collective. Four of her prints are held by the National Gallery of Victoria.



Fitri DK
Ruang hidup yang dirampas (Robbed living space) 2019
woodcut print on paper
80 x 60 cm



Fitri DK
Derita suda naik seleher (Up to our necks with suffering) 2018
 woodcut print on paper
 80 x 60 cm

Fitri DK
Kendeng Lestari (Everlasting Kendeng) 2019
 woodcut print on paper
 80 x 60 cm



Fitri DK
Kami musu dia wawo tana (We live on the land) 2019
woodcut print on paper
80 x 60 cm

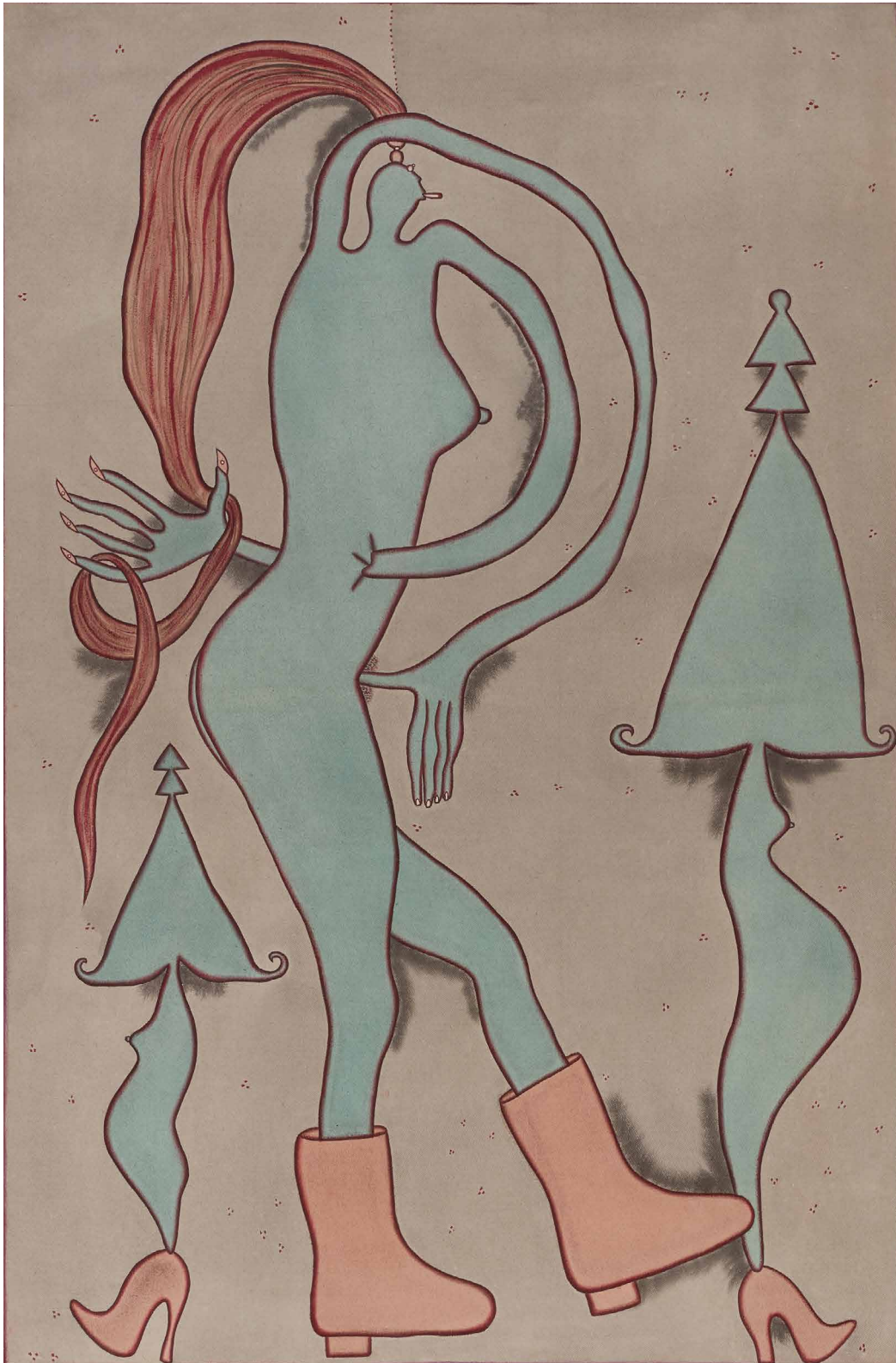
I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih

1966-2006, Bali, Indonesia

The exaggerated anatomical forms and pastel colours of IGAK Murniasih's (Murni) *Nyut Nyut* bestows upon the painting a deceptively light-hearted and comedic quality. But as our eyes travel along the twisted arm of the woman in *Nyut Nyut*, to the claw-like hand which has penetrated her own body, we bear witness to an unsettling image of violence. The image is one of simultaneous threat and desire, picturing both the (self-enacted) transgression of the woman's body and an erotic gesture towards her genitalia. Murni deploys these contorted bodies as vehicles for the expression of a broader landscape of gendered oppression and trauma inflicted on women's bodies, during but not limited to the patriarchal ideological system of New Order Indonesia. Even as she does so, they remain powerfully and viscerally evocative of feminine desire, sensuality and sexuality.

IGAK Murniasih's vision is often labeled as disturbing and deeply biographical, yet there is also humour and pathos that can be seen throughout her paintings. Born in Tabanan Bali in 1966, Murni's prolific artistic career was sadly cut short due her illness and subsequent death in 2006.

A mostly self-taught artist, Murni was not particularly constrained by academic conventions in her painting. After learning the techniques of her mentor, I Dewa Putu Mokoh, she developed her own style that marked her as one of the most important women artists in Indonesia. Her artistic style and willingness to tackle difficult subject matter, such as pleasure and sexuality, has inspired a generation of young female Balinese artists to pursue a career in visual arts. In the last decade, her work has been seen increasingly widely outside Indonesia, including in the exhibitions *Afterwork* at Ilham Gallery in Kuala Lumpur and *Contemporary Worlds: Indonesia* at the National Gallery of Australia, both in 2018.



Igak Murniasih
Nyut Nyut 2001
acrylic on canvas
150 x 100 cm

Ipeh Nur

b 1993, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia
(she/her)

Created during the pandemic in 2020, Ipeh Nur's black-and-white batik drawing is one of six documenting lockdowns in the city of Yogyakarta. Although batik is typically seen as a traditional media form in Indonesian culture, Ipeh Nur's work contains details which clue the viewer into the contemporaneity of the piece—children wearing face masks, a signpost which reads 'lockdown' and mobile phones, plugged into power points and clasped in the hands of the human figures. In a statement about the work, Ipeh Nur recalls a conversation with village elders held in a local diner after the government issued PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions) regulations. Noting that each of the men expressed differing views, one sceptical of the severity of the virus, believing Yogya to be protected by an invisible 'magical' fence (*pagar gaib*), and another insistent that the virus was a form of divine punishment, Ipeh Nur sought to create a work that reflected the ambivalent stance and confusion of local communities as they adapted to the pandemic. The result is an unsettling portrait of suffering and survival; life and death; grief and hope; the body in confinement, and the invisible, imagined 'fences' which confine and preserve it.

Born in 1993 in Yogyakarta, Ipeh Nur graduated from the Indonesian Art Institute, Yogyakarta in 2016, majoring in Graphic Arts. Most of her works are black and white illustrations on paper, but she makes extensive use of other techniques and media such as screen printing, etching, batik, murals and sculpting from resin. Her work derives from the anxiety, fear, cynicism and skepticism drawn from her own experiences and the issues surrounding her. She has exhibited solo in Indonesia and in group exhibitions in Indonesia, the Netherlands and Australia. In 2021 she exhibited with Yolngu artist Margaret Rarru in the exhibition *Dhomala Dhäwu: Makassar Sail Stories* at The Cross Art Projects. In 2022 she was included with her partner Enka Komariah in Art Jog 2022.



Ipeh Nur
THE CHRONICLE OF TWENTY TWENTY: Pagar 2020
hand drawn batik
100 x 140 cm

Kasarin Himacharoen

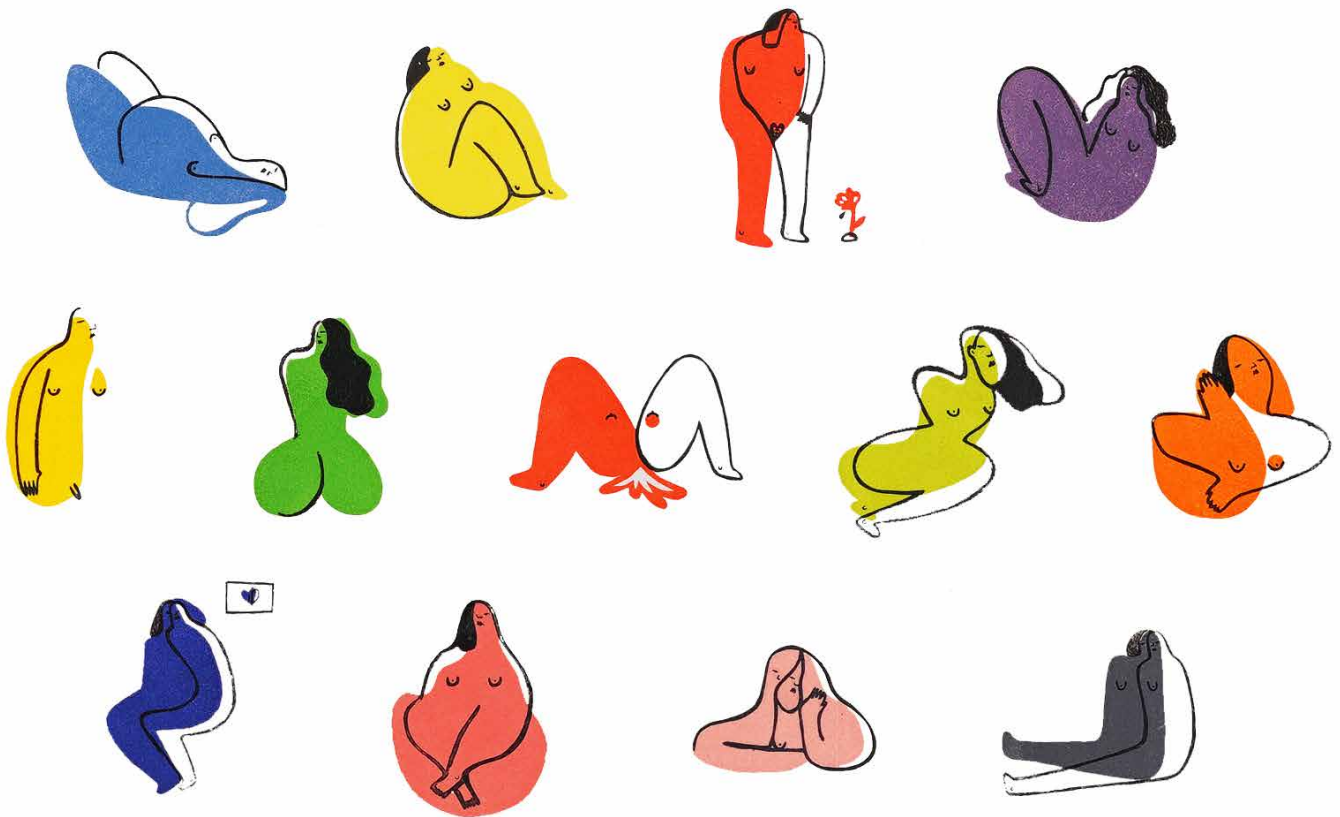
b 1989, Bangkok, Thailand

Lives and works in Bangkok, Thailand

Kasarin "TakTak" Himacharoen's suite of thirteen colour etchings was originally made for the Bangkok-based printmaking studio, Pineapple Print Press. The undertaking, however, took six months to complete. Choosing to only work on the etchings on days when she was menstruating, TakTak offers up an intimate portrait of the self in synchrony with the body. This sense of arriving at a physical and mental alignment is visualised in the intermingling of solid line and blocks of colour which bleed in-and-out of the female silhouettes she depicts. Capturing these figures in states of rest, motion and contemplation, the thirteen prints spell out a celebratory expression of bodily awareness and autonomy.

Born in 1989, Kasarin Himacharoen is a Thai female artist who is passionate about freedom of thought and expression. Growing up in a supportive family, she was encouraged to pursue her dream. She graduated with a BA in Fine Arts from the School of Architecture, Art and Design at King Monkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang. After her graduation in 2013, she worked as a freelance illustrator for two years, a sales coordinator of a trading business for one year, and then as an assistant to a stencil artist for one year. She is currently working as a freelance artist.

Kasarin is jolly and cheerful. She likes to learn new things and explore fresh perspectives, and enjoys experimenting with different painting, printmaking, sculpture and mixed media techniques to portray her liberal attitudes towards femininity and sexuality. This is a subject that very few women in Thai society dare to speak about. Believing in freedom, Kasarin regards sexuality as an everyday subject that no woman should feel guilty about or ashamed to discuss.



Kasarin Himacharoen
Untitled series 2019
colour etchings
13 pieces, 15 x 11 cm each



Kasarin Himacharoen
Untitled 2019
colour etching
15 x 11 cm



Kasarin Himacharoen
Untitled 2019
colour etching
15 x 11 cm each

Maharani Mancanagara

b 1990, Padang, Indonesia

Lives and works in Bandung, Indonesia

(she/her)

After perusing her late grandfather's diary in her university years, Maharani Mancanagara came to realise that he was a political prisoner exiled to Buru Island under the New Order regime (1966-1998) in Indonesia. Intrigued by the incongruities between her grandfather's notes and the official histories taught in school curricula, Mancanagara created works, or 'reconstructed monuments', that dealt with such contentious and forgotten histories—finding new ways to document the past. In the space between two oil lamps (*lampu teplok*), Mancanagara transcribes in near photographic detail a group portrait of Kartini—a proto-feminist figure in Indonesian history—and her sisters, who gaze back at the viewer. It appears to be a domestic scene, drawn onto unassuming pinewood boards. But the sizeable proportions of the piece lend the image an air of monumentality, allowing these women to occupy and reclaim a place in a national and visual history which has often manipulated their image to service patriarchal conceptions of an ideal Javanese femininity.

Born in Padang, West Sumatra in 1990, Maharani Mancanagara lives and works in Bandung. She graduated from Institut Teknologi Bandung, Faculty of Art and Design, majoring in the printmaking studio. She primarily works with different mediums of drawing, mixed media and installation, often using wooden supports. Her works explore Indonesia's history, from ancient times to the present, based on her personal and family experiences.

Drawing on her family background, Maharani developed an interest in visualizing the long history of education in Indonesia. Over recent years she extended this topic into the exile of political prisoners in Indonesia—a part of history she could explore through artifacts among her late grandfather's possessions. Based on this perspective, Maharani then aimed to express these artifacts to a work of art, a path she took in identifying herself which she hopes will provide recognition for a larger group of people with a similar background.



Maharani Mancanagara
Rekonstruksi Daun Semanggi #2 2014
charcoal and assamblage on pinewood
100 x 150 cm

Maria Indriasari

b 1976, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Working with fabric and thread, Maria Indriasari creates soft sculptures which explore her personal experiences of motherhood. In *Hujan (Rain)*, a small plush toy peeks through from behind a curtain of fabric “rain”. But what first appears to be an innocent and light-hearted scene, reveals a more complicated mixture of emotions upon closer examination. Decorating the strips of vertically suspended fabric is a poem penned by Indriasari in Bahasa Indonesia. Contemplative and mournful of a perennially unbreachable distance between a mother and a child born of her flesh, the artist’s poem drifts between wistful expressions of an unconditional maternal love, and pained lamentations over a child that must eventually be separated from her. Beautiful and yet oppressive, the words which cascade over the doll asks viewers to move beyond superficial perceptions of motherhood as a joyous milestone. Rather, Indriasari’s words— ‘rain does not always make sense.../ time drops on the surface of your fragrant skin.../ your dance of life is certainly not for me.../ ignore me...keep your pure dance...’—reveal hidden dimensions of the woman-mother identity: of motherhood as struggle, suffering and inescapable bodily trauma.

Maria Indriasari was born in 1976 in Yogyakarta and has practiced the arts from a young age. She obtained her degree from the Indonesian Art Institute with a major in artistic arrangement. As a mother of two, a wife and an artist, her art practice cannot be separated from the influences of these three roles.

In the process of her works, Maria explores media that are easily available around her, such as metal, wood, textiles, yarn, acrylic, coloured pencils and many more, and dynamically transforms them in her work, according to the concept of the work she wants to convey. Recently, Maria has been fascinated with exploring textiles. A lot of Maria’s works talk about the basics of living, which includes the will to live, the balance of body and soul, spiritual beliefs and domestic matters. Through her works, Maria hopes to convey how these small things can be a drive to living a good life.



Maria Indriasari
Hujan 2017
 fabric, thread, button, foam, plywood, and teak
 two parts, 197.9 x 116 cm, 89 x 61 cm

MM Yu

b 1978, Manila, Philippines

Lives and works in Manila, Philippines

Tree Grid pictures a seemingly mundane scene of everyday life in Manila. Yet, through the lens of her camera, Yu somehow captures a more picturesque side of a quotidian urban setting. Against a palette of earthy greys and dull browns, two trees grow from a side path, their sprightly green leaves filling out the literal “grid” created by the scaffolding. Between the trees are a neatly lined row of sandbags, which sit in front of a pile of rubble. The tactfully framed composition seems to draw a parallel to an art installation, or even an incomplete sketch of a landscape, with gridlines that are yet to be erased. In this simple act of taking the city and transforming it into an art object, Yu invites us to consider how a documentary image can be accidental, intuitive and deeply perceptive—a way of mediating and nurturing the relation between self and place, and the body and its environment.

Born in 1978 in Manila, MM Yu has worked between photography and painting since obtaining her degree in Fine Arts from the University of the Philippines in 2001. Her works in both media tackle the nuances achieved between composition and colour as they occupy the frame. Primarily drawn to street photography and documenting the everyday, her photographs evoke the ever-changing cultural texture and topology of Manila as seen through its inhabitants. She documents the city’s infrastructure and its waste-product as it archives not only the economy but also the ecology of life in the myriad forms it takes in the city.

The hybridity and density of MM Yu’s subjects remind us of how objects and signs are not necessarily self-contained but take part in larger systems of interaction. These recorded static scenarios show, through their thematic variety, the artist’s interest in discovering and valuing the fleeting present moment. Through her ongoing interest in deciphering the unseen landscape of ordinary things, she compels us to rethink what our minds already know and rediscover what our eyes have already seen.

Yu is a recipient of the CCP 13Artist Award (2009), an Ateneo Art Award (2007), was a finalist in the Sovereign Asian Art Prize (2010), and was awarded the Goethe Institute Climate Change workshop grant (2014). Yu received her BFA in Painting from the University of the Philippines and completed residencies with Big Sky Mind, Manila (2003), Common Room Bandung Residency Grant (2007) and Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, France (2013).



MM Yu
Tree Grid 2017
photographic print on wood
101 x 152 cm

Olga Rindang Amesti

b 1994 Surakarta, Indonesia

Lives and works in Surakarta, Indonesia

Born just four years before the collapse of the authoritarian New Order regime, Olga Rindang Amesti grew up during a time of political transition and turbulence. As Indonesia entered a period of democratisation, new legislation removed previous limits on the number of political parties, leading to a proliferation of parties in the 2000s. In *Mind and Boxes*, Amesti turns a critical eye to this contemporary political landscape. Several dusty wooden crates hang on the wall, while others lie in disarray on the floor. A flimsy ladder to the right-hand side is suggestive of the high barriers of entry to the upper echelons of Indonesia's political hierarchy. Meanwhile, the contents of the crates are revealed to contain colourful assortments of plushies—potential figures of power. The largest of the dolls reclines on the floor, the word 'think' written on its leg. Playfully deceptive in its assemblage of objects that blur the boundaries between trash and treasure, the precious and the paltry, Amesti's work urges viewers to think critically in response to a political system still plagued by widespread networks of patronage and clientelism, the lingering influence of wealthy business elites and the prevalence of collusive, cartel parties.

Born in 1994 in Surakarta, Indonesia, Olga Rindang Amesti is a contemporary female artist who has pursued fine arts since childhood. She often participates in art competitions and has consistently loved art since elementary school. She has no compulsion or special plan to be an artist; it is a love from the heart. Olga has a degree in Fine Arts Education. Her initial interest in drawing and colouring led her to painting, before she began to explore soft sculpture. Olga began the collaboration Robet X Olga in 2013, and eventually married her collaborator in 2019. Their collaboration was spontaneous, rather than planned. For Olga, it is the unexpected events and meetings, and the Call of Life, that led to their collaboration.

Olga X Robet primarily work with installation, soft sculpture and soft relief, exploring fabric media, especially fabric waste. Their choice of fabric is due to the pervasiveness of cloth in everyday life, especially in the events of their lives. The concepts behind their works are sourced from simple daily life, but by also using or combining other media or techniques, they become more complex, often commenting on current events. Their concepts are also derived from interesting moments that come from playing with imagination. They have participated in several major exhibitions in Indonesia such as Art jog, Art Jakarta and many others.



Olga Rindang Amesti
Mind and Boxes 2014 (detail)
mixed media
dimensions variable

Overleaf: Olga Rindang Amesti
Mind and Boxes 2014
mixed media
dimensions variable

413 92
The artist's work is a collection of hand-made puppets and dolls, often made from found objects and recycled materials. The puppets are characterized by their exaggerated features, such as large eyes, long limbs, and colorful, textured surfaces. They are displayed in a variety of ways, including hanging from the ceiling, mounted on the wall, and placed on the floor. The artist's work is a celebration of the handmade and the found, and it is a testament to the power of imagination and creativity.



Restu Ratnaningtyas

b 1981, Tangerang, Indonesia

Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Thoughtfully stitching together discarded scraps of fabric, Restu Ratnaningtyas transforms textile waste into an eerily beautiful object of contemplation. The work is replete with textural variegations—sheer stretches of pastel fabric layered over polka dots, smudged ink in collocation with haphazardly stitched thread, and a soft fabric chain link anchored to a brown quilted cloth base. Altogether, these components form the vertically stacked structure of a temple, as the name of the work suggests. But just as the artwork itself embraces a multi-layered and complex materiality, the temple it depicts is not all that it seems on the surface. With dismembered limbs and body parts confined within its structure, Restu's *Temple of Gloom* teases the boundary between the seen and unseen, internal states of being and external societal pressures, and in the process, offers up the body as a corporeal site for such negotiations.

In her series of watercolour paintings, Restu Ratnaningtyas takes an autobiographical approach, exploring the intersections of her identity as 'an adult, mother, human, and artist.' Created during a time of great adversity in her domestic life and pressures surrounding her public status as an artist, Ratnaningtyas once more expresses a sense of inner emotional turmoil and conflict in her art making. In the fleshy and viscous forms which twist, float, and suffocate the human figure in the *Tantrum* paintings, the artist externalises the seemingly trivial but often overwhelming burdens of daily and domestic life.

Restu Ratnaningtyas is an artist and illustrator. After studying Fine Arts Education at the National University of Jakarta (2000-2003), she moved to Yogyakarta in 2008. In the same year, she held her first solo exhibition, *Momento Privatization Room* at Vivi Yip Art Room, Jakarta. Her practice involves explorations in the fields of video art, painting, installation and multimedia, investigating the potential of all mediums. She particularly focuses on watercolours, paper and fabric, looking to everyday topics, small narratives and objects related to the balance of human life.

Programs, projects and workshops that Restu has participated in include the Public Space workshop (2004), the +ROAD residency program between Indonesia and Myanmar (2010), Hotwave #1 (2010) and a residency at Van Every/Smith Gallery in North Carolina, USA. She first exhibited in Jakarta 32C (2004, Galeri Nasional, Jakarta), before becoming involved as a curator in the *Instant 3in1* project (2006, CCF, Jakarta). Her solo exhibitions include *Tantrum* at Kedai Kebun Forum, Yogyakarta (2016), *Subsume* at Baik Art, Los Angeles (2017), *Domain/Terrain*, Cemeti, Yogyakarta (2019) and "CYANOSIS", *SERRUM*, Jakarta, Indonesia (2019). Restu's participation in international group exhibitions includes *mnēmōnikos: Art of Memory*, Bangkok, Thailand (2013); *The Roving Eye*, Istanbul, Turkey (2014) and *Stealing Public Space*, Substation, Singapore (2020).



Restu Ratnaningtyas
Temple of Gloom 2020
cloth, cotton, polyester, natural dye
200 x 125 cm



Restu Ratnaningtyas
Tantrum 2016
watercolour on paper
55 x 45 cm



Restu Ratnaningtyas
Tantrum 2016
watercolour on paper
75 x 55 cm

Sekarputri Sidhiawati

b 1986, Jakarta, Indonesia
Lives and works in Bali, Indonesia

Sekarputri Sidhiawati's series of ceramic vases form playful meditations on self, girlhood and bodily identity. At once fantastical and functional, the vases are painted over with flowers, some drawn from nature, like daisies, passionflower and baby's breath, and some make-believe. Amid the wildflowers are the miniature forms of female figures, leaning against, clinging to, and embracing the vessels. This whimsical juxtaposition of naked bodies against a decorative surface with imagery blurring the bounds between the real and the imaginary, inspires contemplation of certain states of emotion that wield a powerful hold over the feminine body. Through the delicate beauty of the flowers and the vulnerability of the female figures, the works celebrate a yearning for affection and fear of loneliness. In the eyes of Sidhiawati, this impulsion to be 'clingy' (*lekat*)—a word so often pinned onto women in romantic relationships—may not be so self-contained, selfish or pitiable after all, but rather an ever-present feeling to be found in 'everyone and anyone who doesn't want to be separated from things that they enjoy and like.'

Born in Jakarta, Puti relocated to Bandung to study in the Ceramic Art studio in the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB). She decided to take ceramics, she says, because "when I entered college I wasn't sure whether I wanted to be an artist or an entrepreneur. The only studio that accommodated this doubt was Ceramic Art." Her interest in both areas led her to start Derau, a brand of home-made ceramics that could be sold in shops, whilst also developing a solo practice built around exhibition pieces. In 2018, she and her family relocated to Bali to set up a ceramics studio to expand her production.

Asked what inspires her work, Puti says: "Girls – women of all ages, ethnicities and tendencies. Their stories, politics and powers. Their magic, beauty and sins". Puti has had two solo exhibitions and was included in ArtJog 2021. Internationally, she took part in the exhibition *Termasuk: Contemporary art from Indonesia* at Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, in 2019.



Sekarputri Sidhiawati
Beautiful Dream 2019
ceramic
30 x 11 x 11 cm

Sekarputri Sidhiawati
Keep Moving #2 2019
ceramic
24 x 10 x 11 cm

Sekarputri Sidhiawati
Clingy #2 2019
ceramic
31 x 11 x 11 cm

Sam Lo

b 1986, Singapore
Lives and works in Singapore
(they/he)

In 2012, Lo was arrested for spray-painting the words 'My Grandfather Road' on roads throughout the Central Business District, leading to a year-long court case and a subsequent charge of 240 hours of community service. Lo's photographic documentations of their work, which survive the actual material interventions, serve not only as a record of their 'crime', but also as an intimate snapshot of the entangled relationship between community, space and the city-state unique to Singapore. The phrase, used colloquially in Singapore to berate people for obstructing others in a public space ("you think this is your grandfather's road?") is repurposed in Lo's work as a way of reasserting a sense of place in the face of Singapore's rapid urbanisation, economic development and attempts to rebrand itself as a model global city. Here, the photographic remnants of Lo's transient material markings invite us to reflect on the ways in which the connection between people and place can be re-imagined, reinvigorated and reclaimed over time. As Lo suggests, the power of their art can be found in its subtlety—'It was like a little inside joke, our intimate moment found in a chance encounter on the streets to make it feel like home again.'

Over a period of five years, Lo pasted stickers all over the Singapore cityscape. Small, inconspicuous, and mostly uniform in design, the stickers appear to be the unremarkable insignia of corporate advertisement, or an ordinary feature of urbanised space. But in Singapore, where the state has historically taken a heavy-handed approach to regulating public space, Lo's stickers generated major controversy and were denounced as acts of vandalism. Seemingly anticipatory of the furore, Lo's stickers bear tongue-in-cheek phrases in Singlish, a creole language that is widely spoken in Singapore but frowned upon by the government for its perception as a form of 'broken' or 'bad' English. One sticker placed on a lamp post captures this flippancy in its tagline: 'Anyhow paste kena fine' (just paste it anyhow and cop a fine).

Sam Lo (aka SKLO) is a Singapore-based visual artist whose work revolves around social commentaries fueled by daily observations of their surroundings and research into the sociopolitical climate. Their intrigue with the concept of culture and bold execution in some of their earliest forays into street art saw them dubbed the "Sticker Lady", a nickname lovingly given by the city in reference to the saga that was birthed from their work in the streets. Since then, the artist's work - whether installations, large scale murals or digital designs - has been centred on understanding the world around us and how our actions are interdependent on each other.

Selected shows include solo exhibitions *Rising Change* (Mandarin Gallery, Singapore 2019), *The LIMPEH Show* (The Substation, Singapore 2015), *Greetings From Singapore* (One East Asia Gallery, Singapore 2017) and *"For Better, For Worse"* (Pegasos5, Besser Space, Melbourne 2017). The artist has also showed and participated at showcases such as Art Central Hong Kong (Hong Kong, 2018), Singapore Art Week (Singapore, 2018), Melbourne Festival (Australia, 2017), Project Dreamcatchers at Singapore Art Museum (Singapore, 2016), Georgetown Festival (Penang, Malaysia 2014), Seoul Art Toy Culture Convention (Korea, 2014), Urbanscapes KL (Malaysia, 2012) and Affordable Art Fair (Singapore, 2013). Sam was also one of the two artists chosen to embark on an artist residency in New Delhi to paint the Arjan Garh Metro Station, a large scale project with involvement from The Singapore High Commission, Singapore Tourism Board, ST+Art India Foundation and the Delhi Metro Railway Company. In 2017, Sam released a publication titled "Greetings From Singapore" documenting their work on the streets with Math Paper Press, which also highlighted the biggest road painting ever accomplished in Singapore.



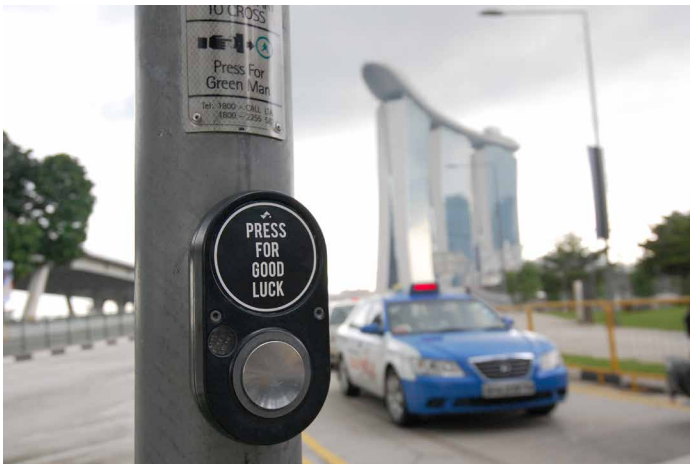
Sam Lo
O.G 2012
photographic print on sihl textured artistic archival paper
29.7 x 39.6 cm



Sam Lo
The beauty of development 2016
 photographic print on sihl textured artistic archival paper
 29.7 x 39.6 cm



Sam Lo
Limpeh 2016
 photographic print on sihl textured artistic archival paper
 29.7 x 39.6 cm



Sam Lo
You'll need it 2012
 photographic print on sihl textured artistic archival paper
 29.7 x 39.6 cm



Sam Lo
Panic at the crossing 2016
 photographic print on sihl textured artistic archival paper
 29.7 x 39.6 cm



Sam Lo
A cautionary tale 2012
photographic print on sihl textured artistic archival paper
42 x 27.9 cm

Soe Yu Nwe

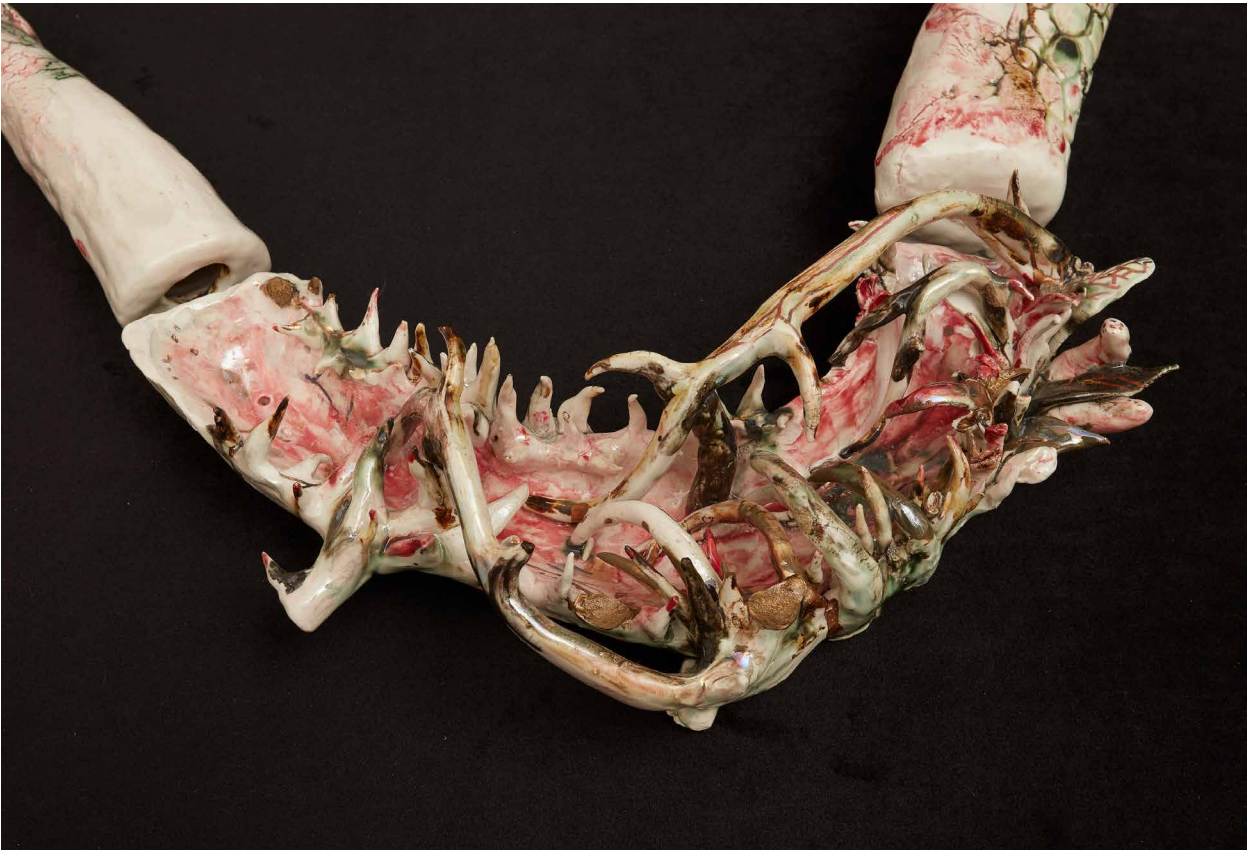
b 1989 Lashio, Myanmar

Lives and works in Yangon, Myanmar

(she/her)

Soe Yu Nwe's *Feminine Wound* takes the form of a glittering porcelain snake—the artist's Chinese zodiac animal. Originally created as part of a series of serpents, the autobiographical work references the artist's feelings of isolation and difference growing up as a female of the Shan Chinese ethnicity in Myanmar. Offering up this zoomorphic symbol of self, Soe's work finds a material means to express and explore psychological and social trauma, and a sense of feminine interiority in the luminescent but bloodied and dissected body of the snake. Visually alluring with its colourful red-green glaze, but gruesome in sight, the length of the snake is partially exposed to reveal the bone white of its skeletal structure and the blood red of internal organs. Evocative of a sense of beauty, delicacy, as well as physical injury, Soe's snake constitutes an intimate reflection of cultural alienation, and a feminine identity and experience that is inseparable from bodily trauma and pain.

Born in 1989, Soe Yu Nwe is an artist from Myanmar. After earning an MFA degree in Ceramics at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2015, Soe has participated 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. Soe's participation in international exhibitions include the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (Australia), 2018 Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh), and The New Taipei City Yingge Ceramic Museum (Taiwan). She has exhibited with Yavuz Gallery (Singapore), ZieherSmith in Chelsea, New York (USA), and The National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta (Indonesia). Recently, Soe has become an invited member of IAC (International Academy of Ceramics) as the first member from Myanmar. Her work has been acquired by the Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane, Australia. Soe was named in Forbes 30 Under 30: Art & Style 2019.



Soe Yu Nwe
Feminine Wound 2015 (detail)
porcelain, glaze, and oxides, lustre
167 x 182 x 20 cm

Overleaf: Soe Yu Nwe
Feminine Wound 2015
porcelain, glaze, and oxides, lustre
167 x 182 x 20 cm





Wawi Navarroza

b 1979, Manila, Philippines

Lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey

(she/her)

Self-portraiture is a genre frequently adopted by Wawi Navarroza in her artistic oeuvre. Often large-format and compositionally crowded with culturally coded symbols, Navarroza's photographic tableaux vivant are visually spectacular, carefully staged portraits of the artist in relation to her surroundings. In her self-portrait dedicated to her late grandfather, however, Navarroza takes a more pared-down approach. Here, the artist offers an intimate and smaller-scale image bathed in deep earthy tones of mahogany, maroon and sepia. With a handwritten letter attached along the lower edge of the work, intended for the viewer's eyes, Navarroza draws onlookers into what feels like a deeply personal and private web of gazes. Between the lens of two cameras—one pictured, and the other through which we peer— Navarroza's wandering gaze, and the direct stare of Navarroza's grandfather from a photograph-within-a-photograph, we are momentarily invited into a shared space and time, through Navarroza's act of documenting self, ancestry and craft.

Wawi Navarroza is an Istanbul-based Filipina multidisciplinary artist known for her work in photography. Her images navigate self and surroundings as seen in her works in constructed tableaux and self-portraits, as well as landscape and installation. She is informed by tropicity within the dynamics of post-colonial dialogue, globalization, and the artist as a transnational agent. As a female artist, southeast Asian and Filipino, her works transmute lived experience to the symbolic while probing materials and studio practice; exploring the hybridity of identity, photography and place.

Navarroza has exhibited widely in the Philippines and internationally, including the National Museum of the Philippines, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, National Gallery of Singapore (upcoming 2022), Singapore Art Museum 8Q, Hangaram Museum (Korea), National Museum of Fine Arts (Taiwan), Yogyakarta National Museum (Indonesia), Fries Museum of Contemporary Art & Museum Belvedere (Netherlands), Danubiana Museum (Slovakia), and in galleries in Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Laos, Cambodia, England, Spain, Italy and Russia; with continued participation in international photography festivals and art fairs such as Art Basel HK.



Wawi Navarroza
 Self-Portrait for My Grandfather, the Photographer (after Frida Kahlo's
 Potrait of My Father/ Retrato de Mi Padre, 1951) 2007
 Lambda C-print
 61 x 45.7 cm

List of works

Arahmaiani Feisal

Tatapan Gadis 2004
acrylic on canvas
140 x 100 cm

Bussaraporn Thongchai

The Dress 2013
crayon and acrylic on paper
145 x 75 cm

Citra Sasmita

Metamorphosis The Flowers of carnage 2018
acrylic and oil on canvas
150 x 200 cm

Emily Phyo

#Response365 #022 2021
inkjet print on matte poster paper
84 x 143 cm

Fitri Dwi Kurniasih

Ruang Hidup Yang Dirampas (Robbed living space) 2019
woodcut print on paper
80 x 60 cm
ed. 6 of 6

Derita Suda Naik Seleher (Up to our necks in suffering) 2018
woodcut print on paper
80 x 60 cm
ed. 6 of 10

Kami Musi Dia Wawo Tana (We live on the land) 2019
woodcut print on paper
80 x 60 cm
ed. 6 of 8

Kendeng Lestari (Everlasting Kendeng) 2019
woodcut print on paper
80 x 60 cm
ed. 6 of 8

IGAK Murniasih

Nyut Nyut 2001
acrylic on canvas
150 x 100 cm

Ipeh Nur

THE CHRONICLE OF TWENTY TWENTY: Pagar 2020
hand-drawn batik
1 of 6 batiks, each 100 x 140 cm

Kasarin Himacharoen (TakTak)

Untitled series 2019
colour etching
13 pieces, each 15 x 11 cm
ed. 2 of 10

Maharani Mancanagara

Rekonstruksi Daun Semanggi #2 2014
charcoal and assemblage on pinewood
100 x 150 cm

Maria Indriasari

Hujan 2017
fabric, thread, button, foam, plywood and teak, wood
two parts, 197.9 x 116 cm, 89 x 61 cm

MM Yu

Tree Grid 2017
photographic print on wood
101 x 152 cm

Olga Rindang Amesti

Mind and Boxes 2014
mixed media
dimensions variable

Restu Ratnaningtyas

Temple of Gloom 2020
cloth, cotton, polyester, natural dye
200 x 125 cm

Tantrum 2016
watercolour on paper
55 x 45 cm

Tantrum 2016
watercolour on paper
75 x 55 cm

Sam Lo

Our Grandfather Road 2016
photographic print on sihl artistic textured
archival paper
90 x 160 cm
ed. 5 of 5

Limpeh 2016
photographic print on sihl artistic textured
archival paper
29.7 x 39.6 cm
ed. 1 of 7

O.G 2012
photographic print on sihl artistic textured
archival paper
29.7 x 39.6 cm
ed. 1 of 7

Panic at the crossing 2012
photographic print on sihl artistic textured
archival paper
29.7 x 39.6 cm
ed. 2 of 7

Please tell me more 2016
photographic print on sihl artistic textured
archival paper
29.7 x 39.6 cm
ed. 2 of 7

The beauty of development 2016
photographic print on sihl artistic textured
archival paper
29.7 x 39.6 cm
ed. 2 of 7

You'll need it 2012
photographic print on sihl artistic textured
archival paper
29.7 x 39.6 cm
ed. 2 of 7

A cautionary tale 2012
photographic print on sihl artistic textured
archival paper
42 x 27.9 cm
ed. 4 of 7

Sekarputri Sidhiawati

Beautiful Dream 2019
ceramic
30 x 11 x 11 cm

Clingy #2 2019
ceramic
31 x 11 x 11 cm

Keep Moving #2 2019
ceramic
24 x 10 x 11 cm

Soe Yu Nwe

Feminine Wound 2015
porcelain, glaze and oxides, lustre
7 parts, 162 x 182 x 20 cm (overall)

Wawi Navarroza

*Self-Potrait for My Grandfather, the Photographer
(after Frida Kahlo's Potrait of My Father/ Retrato
de Mi Padre, 1951)* 2007
Lambda C-print
61 x 45.7 cm
ed. 8 of 10



Sekarputri Sidhiawati
Beautiful Dream 2019
ceramic
30 x 11 x 11 cm

Curator Jennifer Yang

Jennifer Yang completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) majoring in Art History at the University of Sydney in 2022. Her research centres on East and Southeast Asian modern and contemporary art, and she was awarded the University Medal for her dissertation on the contemporary Chinese-Indonesian artist Tintin Wulia. Jennifer has previously interned with Jakarta-based Museum MACAN's curatorial and collections department in 2019-20, worked collaboratively with the Art Gallery of New South Wales' public programs team for the 2021 ArtExpress Exhibition, and has been awarded for her speech responding to Samoan-Australian artist Angela Tiatia's work. Her recent work includes an essay on contemporary Southeast Asian photography, published by the University of Colombia's Undergraduate Journal of Art History, and an article on the "forgotten" Chinese-Indonesian painter Chiang Yu Tie written with the support of the Sydney Southeast Asian Centre and published by New Mandala.

16albermarle Project Space

16albermarle is a project space in inner-city Sydney founded to present new art from southeast Asia to Australian audiences. Director John Cruthers has travelled widely in the region learning about contemporary art. His first exhibition *Termasuk: Contemporary art from Indonesia*, featured 12 artists and ran successfully at Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney in early 2019. Since opening in October 2019, 16albermarle has presented 10 exhibitions of new contemporary art from countries including Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar. The gallery is committed to an education program including catalogues, public programs and artists' talks for every exhibition.

Published in association with the exhibiton

Our Grandfather Road

The (gendered) body and place in contemporary southeast Asian art

Acknowledgements

Photography	Jenni Carter
Installation	Mary-Anne Comford Tayrn Malzard Marianne Simpson
Gallery manager	Tommy Carman
Wall texts	Jennifer Yang
Educational materials	Luise Guest
Digital printing	Darkstar Digital
Catalogue editor	John Cruthers
Catalogue design	Josephine Kurniawan

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ISBN 978-0-6455621-1-8

