



GREAT
malaysia
contemporary
ART

GREAT MALAYSIA CONTEMPORARY ART
GMCA
Volume I

Project Team
Scarlette Lee
Faiz Aimman Mazlan
Nur Asyikin Abd Razak

Consultant Curator
Farouk Khan

Photography
Puah Chin Kok

Writer
Zena Khan

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Core Design Gallery Sdn Bhd
87, Jalan SS15/2A Subang Jaya
47500 Selangor, Malaysia

<http://malaysiacontemporary.coredesigngallery.com>

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*Abdul Multhaliib Musa's portrait is a courtesy of Siti Fairuz Abd Wahab

Great Malaysia Contemporary Art
GMCA



**Scarlette Lee,
Core Design Gallery**

GMCA or the Great Malaysian Contemporary Art Show, is a project that was conceived more than a year ago. Having immersed myself in the Malaysian Art Market over a three year period as a gallerist, I began to realise that there has been a lack of representation and public awareness, about the strength and quality of the Malaysian contemporary art. GMCA is a vision to push Malaysian Contemporary art into both local and international prominence. A vision to gain recognition for its critical and investment value. GMCA in fact is a mission that serves many fronts.

Showcasing the High Quality of Malaysian Contemporary Art.

GMCA is a curated exhibition that will showcase the months of painstaking effort that is required to produce a seminal artwork. All these artists have been specifically selected for being the best, or amongst the best, in their specific genre from painting, sculpture, installation art to assemblage. This first exhibition of the GMCA focuses on Abdul Muthalib Musa, Ahmad Fuad Osman, Ali Nurazmal Yusoff, Anuar Rashid, Eng Hwee Chu, Fadli Yusof, Hamir Soib, Husin Hourmain, Mohd Noor Mahmud, Shooshie Suliaman, Suhami Fadzir, Tan Chin Kuan and Zulkifli Yusof. GMCA is not limited to only showing these selected artists but intend to continually search for those with critical acclaim whether young emerging artists or those in their mid careers for future exhibitions.

Reaching out to both Local and International markets to create awareness.

The GMCA serves to create awareness of Malaysian art by ensuring that these works are accessible to the public at major art events. Hopefully the Malaysian Art Expo will be the first of many such events. Currently, access to Malaysian art is through public galleries and auction houses. Showing at art fairs creates yet another option in reaching out. It is hoped that people will accept Malaysian artists as truly international artists in the likes of Masriadi of Indonesia or Zhang Xia Gang of China. We have to recognise the reality of the lack of infrastructure development in the management of Malaysian art which prevents or inhibits this acceptance on an international platform. GMCA's entry into the Malaysian Art Expo is a step into this direction. GMCA subsequently hopes to venture into the international art fairs.

Initializing the system and structure for proper infrastructure for the art industry

GMCA is an exhibition that has taken one year of preparation from the day of conceptualization to the production by the artists. For the first GMCA exhibition, Core Design Gallery has the pleasure and honour to have foremost Malaysia Contemporary Art collector, Mr Farouk Khan to be our consulting curator.

With more than 10 years of collecting Malaysia Contemporary Art and a number of curated major art exhibitions in his hands, it is interesting to have the first GMCA from the perspective of a major collector. In the formation process of GMCA, he understands the importance of



curating a show that is of museum quality with the worth comparable to that of a national heritage. The curator uses his expertise to look at GMCA objectively to ensure every work of art is a major piece from the artist. He professionally sets up vigorous follow up processes and numerous studio visits with each artist. Each session was focused on intellectual discourse and developmental progress, from write up to the final work of art.

During the development of GMCA, a new art writing talent has also been found - Zena Khan. She has brought in a fresh perspective to art writing for this book. From the biography of each artist to the comprehensive analysis of each artwork, Zena Khan brings out all the essential elements and the importance of critical acclaim artists.

This book publication of GMCA Volume I portrays the necessary professionals relevant in the art industry; from photographs to meticulous design to informative content write up. GMCA Volume I intends to allow art enthusiasts to access into the world of Malaysia Contemporary Art through significant and important information.

Discussing about the meaning behind contemporary art and its quality

As a gallery owner, there have always been questions from various people on what is contemporary art. There have been many definitions been put forth by various scholars, academicians or auction houses on the definition contemporary art. Some may define contemporary art as art made after post war whereas some defines it as artists still living and still making art. Before we attempt to hypothesize on what is contemporary art, we need to understand the questions of contemporaneity itself. Contemporaneity is the most evident attribute of current world picture.

From the human interactions with the geosphere through the manifolds of cultures to global politics to the interiority of individual, all these cannot be defined or characterized by modernity anymore. Especially in Malaysia we need to understand the importance of post colonialization effects on the current society and the art history in Malaysia is still fairly young. Contemporary art is the art today shaped by its situation within contemporaneity. In short, contemporary art deals with issues directly related to its present day world.

Contemporary art is a complex world and it is not easy to make an intelligent acquisition especially to have a major work or seminal art. Certain criterias should be taken into consideration in making a purchase of an artwork comprising of the past, present and personal (PPP) factor (referenced from Biddington's test). An artwork that is too involved in the past tends to be derivative and decorative. It is not a work of art but just a pretty picture. However, an artwork that is ignorant of visual history will tend naïve in its concept. One also needs to question himself/ herself, does the art piece explain the present? An artwork that is too much of its time will lack the universal aspect of ageing with time. On contrary, artwork that is not in tune with its time will fail in the main mission of art- to be predictive and interpretive tool of the future. Last but not least, one should take note if the artwork reflects the artist's personal vision. Artwork should not be too self involved nor should it be present with no personal reflections to the point of lacking in originality and vision.

GMCA works selected for the Malaysia Art Expo 2013 reflects the meaning of quality Malaysia Contemporary Art.

Understanding the Value of Critically Acclaimed Art

A conversation between Shooshie Sulaiman, an award winning artist and curator, Aliya Khan, one half behind the seminal Aliya and Farouk Khan Collection, and Zena Khan, art writer, on the constituent factors for critical acclaim and the value of critical acclaim to artists within Malaysian Contemporary Art.

Zena Khan (ZK): What are the hallmarks of an artist being critically acclaimed?

Shooshie Sulaiman (SS): What defines this is not rigid. It changes as there is a fluid structure and support system currently in Malaysia. Malaysians have a lot of local pride. If we look at sport for instance, say football, there is of course interest in foreign teams but the turn out for the local matches, say Johor vs. Kelantan, you have a crowd of 90,000. That is a huge phenomenon. So when you talk about art and critical acclaim, you have to relate to the mind pattern of society here. The public here does relate better right now to commercial rather than critical value, so the first question is why do you need critical value?

The answer to that lies in the fact that we live in an increasingly borderless world. The minute you leave the Malaysian context you have to follow the International method, which has a head start and so a stronger support system. It is a positive position that we need to absorb into our practice. The artist's importance and relevance needs recognition from critical voices such as critics, writers, and curators, through established events. Why are triennales, biennales, documenta still very much relevant for the art world? Why do filmmakers want to gain recognition at the Oscars? These international events create benchmarks for progress and achievements, recognizes your innovation and relevance. The greatness is shown on an international platform.

Aliya Khan (AK): But one problem that we have here in Malaysia is the current lack of such events. We used to have say the Phillip Morris award, which was an important benchmark, and now such a thing is non-existent.

SS: I do feel, by looking into our context, it is not so much through critical voices but rather via cultural and social audiences, which are very....

AK: Instinctive?

SS: Yes! They love the cultural and social position. We don't have a strong formal support system of curators and critics that has led to many fields for visual artists. Some celebrate fine art, some are academics, some product designers. Let's say I want to explain Husin Hourmain's relevance, I have to touch on the fields of fine art and design. (Husin was trained formally as a graphic designer before beginning his fine art practice.) Fine art may comprise of issue based, art scene based, art event based. Design is customer based. So when a designer merges into fine art they actually have a better understanding of consumer taste rather than a purely fine artist. You have to understand Husin's flow from being a graphic designer to an artist to understand and value his body of work. Now as Husain is looking for recognition as not only a doer but also a thinker, his flow is strengthening conceptually and that's part of his journey.

Let's then take a look at Hamir Soib. He is very much a local based fine artist. His work is centered on Malaysian society, history etc. In any international environment, he would easily gain recognition for his technical abilities but to understand the depth of his content, one has to understand the Malaysian history and social landscape and then the duality of his work- the technical strength coupled with his depth of thought- really stands out. There needs to be a neutral platform now between artists and academics so that information on the work can be better disseminated to the public. You can't expect the artists to explain themselves verbally as sometimes the explanation is fragmented and the writer or curator has to pull it together and explain it to the audience. This, subsequently ties into the importance of writers and curators and the critical acclaim process.

ZK: I guess we can take *Stand Here And Choose Yourself 2* by Fadli Yusof as an example. I only knew about the two aspects to the piece, the conversation about the oil royalties between the State (Kelantan) and Federal Governments, and about taking the relationship between an individual and God to the next level. And I only found those things out through reading about his thought process, which has deepened my appreciation towards his work. They are also two quite disparate concepts that have come together in one piece.

SS: Of course. The best contemporary works have a contradictory element to them. Contradiction, instability, they play a major role as they free the work. Contemporary art has to come from a composition of knowledge.

Painting is slightly underestimated in the context of contemporary art in Malaysia right now though.

AK: By academics. They feel that to be contemporary there has to be a 'new form', say installation, new media work. But painting is also an extremely contemporary medium. It all depends on which is the best medium to express the idea.

SS: The problem is not reading contemporary from varied perspectives, but the artist has to declare what is their contemporary statement. The viewers also have their own statement on what is contemporary. Individuals have to interpret based on their own experience and learning. But one cannot miss out on the writings, you need to have an educated viewpoint.

Hasnul recently agreed with me that paintings are more relevant at this point as from the 90's until today, there has been a huge influx of other mediums. However, the support system for other mediums is not strong enough. It should be noted that artists produce evidence that they need documentation via writing and curating to cement the new knowledge. Artists like Ahmad Fuad have a strong flow from concept to research to execution and all this documentation adds to his value as an artist.

One key point I have understood from my international experiences as an artist is the great need to understand your own art. When I want to describe something, say icons within an installation, I need to take that question and formulate a relatable answer that positions the work as relevant and accessible to the audience.

In my new works, my curator, who is from the RCA in London, will truly understand my artwork and how to create its relevance not only to the academics but also to regular lay people. I suppose this underlines the manner in which critical acclaim in the form of writing and documentation via an established curator creates relevance for an artist, by injecting an understanding of the concept and process that went into its creation. And as my work deals with memory, emotion and feeling, I want it to be approachable.

AK: So you are creating a work that speaks to a general audience? You are not solely addressing the academics?

SS: Yes, as I come from a public position.

ZK: Let's talk about the need for critically acclaimed art to society.

SS: How can a country achieve relevance on an international platform? If you take the example of Mahathir Mohammad and the humanitarian work he has done during his tenure as prime minister with Palestine etc., that raises Malaysia as a shining example of an Islamic society. Paralleling this to art, the presence of a strong art scene, recognized by critical voices from around the world, raises the overall perception of Malaysia.

ZK: There is the international standard of what is critical acclaim. How does that fit in within Malaysian Contemporary Art?

SS: Well in Malaysia we can follow the international standard but also take elements from our own society and create new benchmarks to answer the question "What is critically acclaimed art?". Looking at, say the Aliya and Farouk Khan Collection, and its subsequent influential publication, *The Aliya and Farouk Khan Collection of Contemporary Malaysian Art*, that is a thesis which declares the collectors' vision of what determines critical success within the local art scene. It starts a dialogue, which is crucial to the contemporary art scene to grow.

Looking at the Great Malaysia Contemporary Art Show (GMCA), it declares what we feel is critically acclaimed art via the assembly of artists that are well documented, have taken part in residencies and important international events such as the Venice Biennale, won awards and are extensively collected by major institutions, locally and abroad. Going back now to the first question, on hallmarks for critical acclaim. It can be separated into two values, on an international level and within Malaysia. You can combine both, thus you are endorsing recognition on an international level and on a local level, and then present both to the public.

ZK: So the GMCA is presenting a variety of artists, who have international recognition and then have local recognition. These are the artists who have ticked the boxes for critical acknowledgement. Critics endorse them, curators' work with their art, writers write about them and they are collected, both here in Malaysia and abroad.

SS: Yes. Not all South East Asian (SEA) artists feel this is important, as everyone has an agenda so we need to understand our own plan here. International recognition's downfall is that it wants to 'discover' the indigenous art within its own sometimes rigid guidelines. South East Asia is a newer, almost vague culture due to the layers of overlapping identity, it is so multi racial here. It's been interesting to watch Asia Art Archives unravel this. They do want the evidence to back up the art movement here, again underlining the need for commercial relevance and critical relevance. And this becomes the documentation of our cultural identity.

AK: There is a distinct cultural identity and cultural practice here, it just needs further citation by the academic community, would you say?

SS: Yes. International platforms always look for new evidence, new cultural identities to understand. SEA art has a head start in terms of the quality of art produced, very strong in terms of craft...

ZK: Can you explain what do you mean by craft, as there is a difference between craft and high art?

AK: I think it's because our society is craft based, batik, kite making, wayang kulit, then the formal art education comes in and brings intellectualism which immediately shifts the entire industry up several notches. It parallels the earlier point about the merging of design and fine art as seen in an artist like Husin Hourmain.

SS: Yes and it's the contemporary art of Malaysia, as they are naturally talented, the formalistic training is strong through our art institutions, and they too are strong conceptually.

AK: One thing I find fascinating here in Malaysia is how the artists produce exhaustively researched work which is executed in a really detail oriented manner. If we look at, say *Pahang Warrior* by Zulkifli Yusoff, the layering of the slim canvas strips, the printing, the individually assembled and attached resin elements, or at *Harimau* by Suhaimi Fadzir which is initially painted, then has the grids of tiny toy soldiers and the lighting element added on, it shows a level of dedication not only to the evidence supporting their work but also to the production of super high quality art, which again, factors in the value of these artists who are shown here at the GMCA show.

SS: It also ties into a neat turning on a global level as there is a big shift towards work that has the intellectual elements of course, but also places value on actual art skill. The fact that Malaysian art has steadily been practicing this marriage of skill and thought shows the increasing relevance of Malaysian Contemporary Art on an international level.

ABDUL MULTHALIB MUSA



"Architecture is inhabited sculpture." –Constantin Brancusi

Constantin Brancusi's quote clarifies a clear relation between architecture and sculpture both rely on similar principles of design and construction to occupy a similar space, albeit for different purposes. Accepting this comparison opens up an understanding as to why trained architects have easily slipped into other fields of art and design, examples include acclaimed womenswear designer Tom Ford, architect Frank Gehry, who famously branched out into the jewellery design and sculpture, and in Malaysia, it is Multhalib Musa.

Multhalib Musa is considered the chief sculptor in the contemporary Malaysian art movement. His clean, kinetically influenced sculptures have earned him several awards, residencies and commissions, notable among them the Rimbun Dahan Residency in 2001 and the Australian High Commission Residency in 2004. In 2002 Multhalib won the Award of Excellence at the 6th Oita Asian Sculpture Open Competition in Japan, the Juror's Choice Award at the National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur in 2002 before going on to be selected for the Ordos 11th Asia Arts Festival, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China, as well as the Urumqi International Urban Sculpture Symposium in Xinjiang, China in 2009. Multhalib has also won a competition to design a major outdoor sculpture for the 2008 Beijing Olympics in China. In addition, Multhalib has created major commission works for Petronas, The Hilton, The Grand Hyatt, The Westin, Aliya and Farouk Khan and UMW Toyota.

Born in Penang in 1976, Multhalib went on to earn his degree in architecture from Universiti Institut Teknologi Mara (UiTM) in 2000. Sculpture and the allied arts have always been integral parts of an architect's training. These days however, modern architecture focuses on the direct manifestation of technology, usability and material, as opposed to the traditionally more ornamental buildings of the past, the link between architecture and sculpture has not been severed, and sculpture itself has transformed into sleeker, more contemporary silhouettes and often expresses itself on an architectural scale. This link is evident in Multhalib's work both in his architectural working process as well as in the manner in which his work occupies a truly four dimensional space.

Perhaps the predominant way his architectural background affects his sculptural practice can be witnessed in his approach in constructing the works themselves. Using computers, Multhalib generates patterns and envisions them technologically as three dimensional forms, and if there is a need, miniature models are created as well in either paper or metal. In this manner he has a full comprehension of the work's existence and any issues he would need to resolve before production commences, including materials, tools and methods. Often a team of builders come in to aid Multhalib in the fabrication of his work, just as in the construction of a building. Generally the sculptures are laser cut steel, finished in a rusty effect, which is attained by dousing the works in salt water.

Mathematical shapes and equations abound in Multhalib's work, which is evident in his show, *Swirls*. Shown at the Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur in 2005, the show featured, as the title suggests, a series of circular sculptures, both wall relief and free hanging, which are composed of sliced circles that are arranged to form circles, spheres, ovals and swirls. The hanging sculptures have a kinetic ability, and despite being fixed in their position, the wall relief pieces too hint at movement from their careful arrangement. Multhalib assembled these compositions via a careful geometric study of the circles and the spaces they inhabit and shapes they can create, from the two dimensional plane in which they are conceived to the final three dimensional form in which they come to exist.



1 Centrifugal 10 Degrees



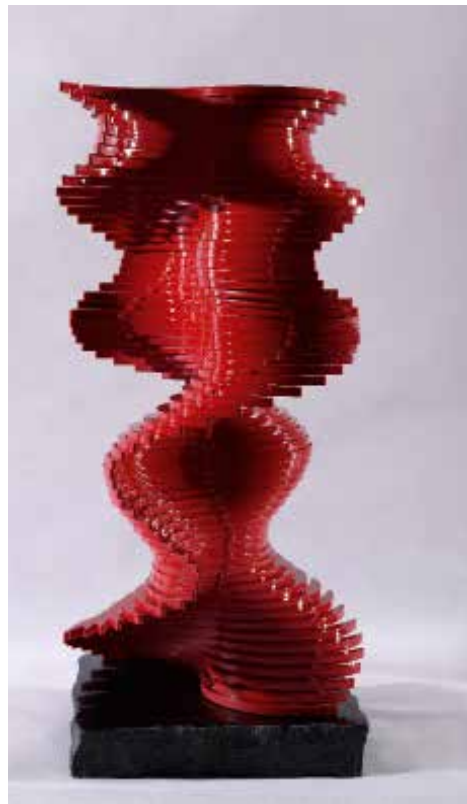
2 Involute 4.0

Multhalib approaches all his work with with a consideration he developed while working on his *Involute* series. Indeed he considers all his work to be part of this same series, despite showing them at vastly different times and under different shows and titles. Multhalib essentially tackles the same question in various styles, commenting his underlying concept always remains as what are the various methods to transform the two dimensional into three dimensional? He notes that even when drawing one is thinking in three dimension, so how can this thought then be transmitted to the audience? Fundamentally this is a principle he learnt in architecture, that he now applies to fine art.

The shadow of *Involute*, which consisted of suspended spherical mobile sculptures, is evident not only in shows like *Swirls* which shares an obvious aesthetic, but also in works such as those from *Twist*, debuted in 2008. At first glance, *Twist* seems wildly different, a series of sliced 'S' shapes standing up in tall totem-like structures. While the physicality between the two differs, the reflections behind them are closely aligned. Again, Multhalib is studying geometry within nature and the two dimensional plane, and questioning the effect of realizing his thoughts in a three dimensional environment.

The skyline of Kuala Lumpur has been referred to as a form of contemporary Malaysian sculpture in itself. Indeed, there is a miniscule number of other public sculpture with the exception of several works by Multhalib. Over the years, Multhalib has received several commissions for public spaces, notable amongst them are *Patience* for Petronas, which now stands proudly in the lobby of the Prince Court Medical Centre, *The Essence of National Legacy* which can be seen at the Putrajaya Convention Centre, *The Breeze and Bubbles* for the Hilton Hotel and his latest, *Darussalam* at the brand new Grand Hyatt. *Darussalam* is Multhalib's first foray in bronze, and was an interesting development for him as bronze limits laser cutting, which is the typical method by which he handles his metals. The final form therefore greatly differs from his previous works and shows an interesting new development in his repertoire. Rather than comprising of metal slices, the sculpture is a tall smooth edifice, mimicking the building that houses it. A bird's eye view of the piece outlines a crescent, an icon present in both the Brunei and Malaysian flags, which is one of the oldest symbols known to mankind signifying greatness and beauty.

Multhalib is highly skilled in combining his mathematical knowledge, spatial awareness and conceptual abilities to create sculptures that resonate with his audience, both at home in Malaysia and internationally. Easily at the forefront of the contemporary Malaysian sculpture movement, Multhalib's ability to connect his work to the spaces that they inhabit, all the while exploring the precarious division of two and three dimensionality, brands him as an exciting artist whose coming works are poised for an electrifying future.



«
3 **Twist Red**

»
4 **Twist Gold**



Bifurcation 1 & 2

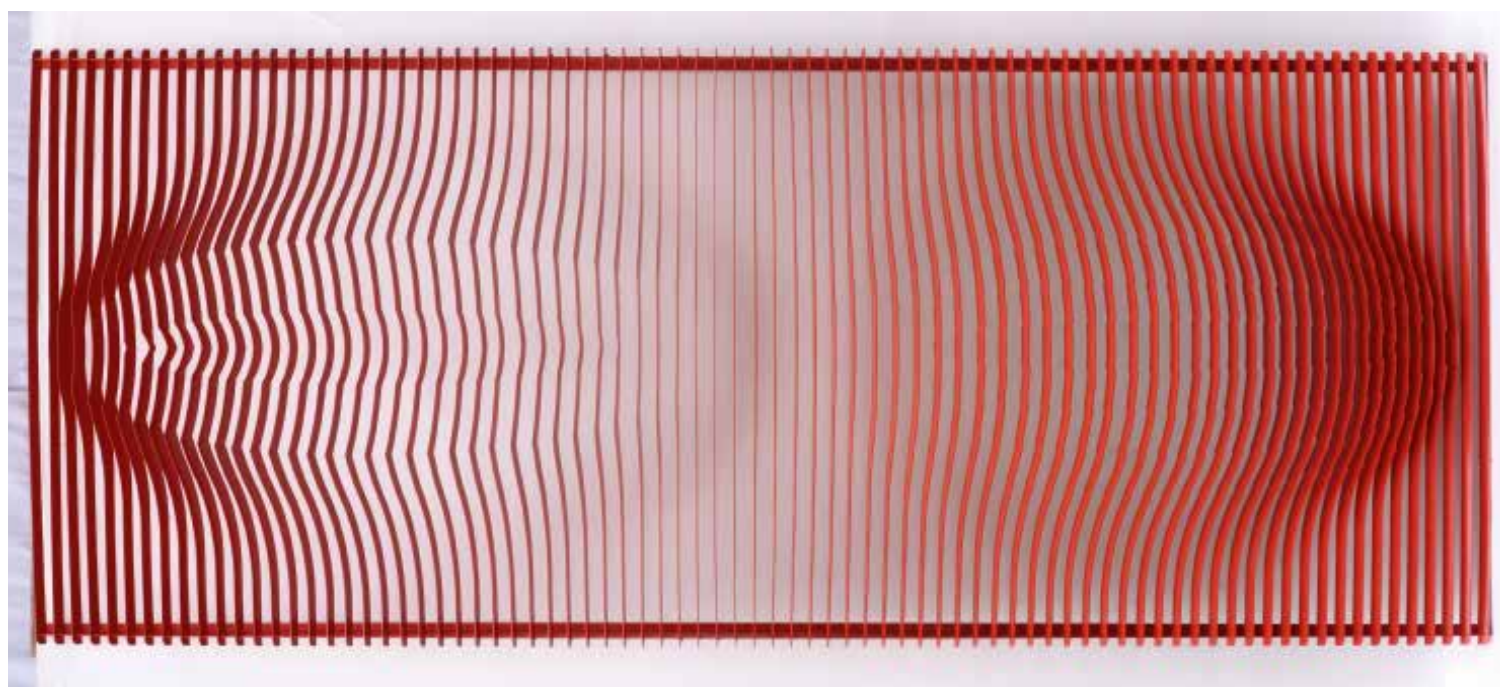
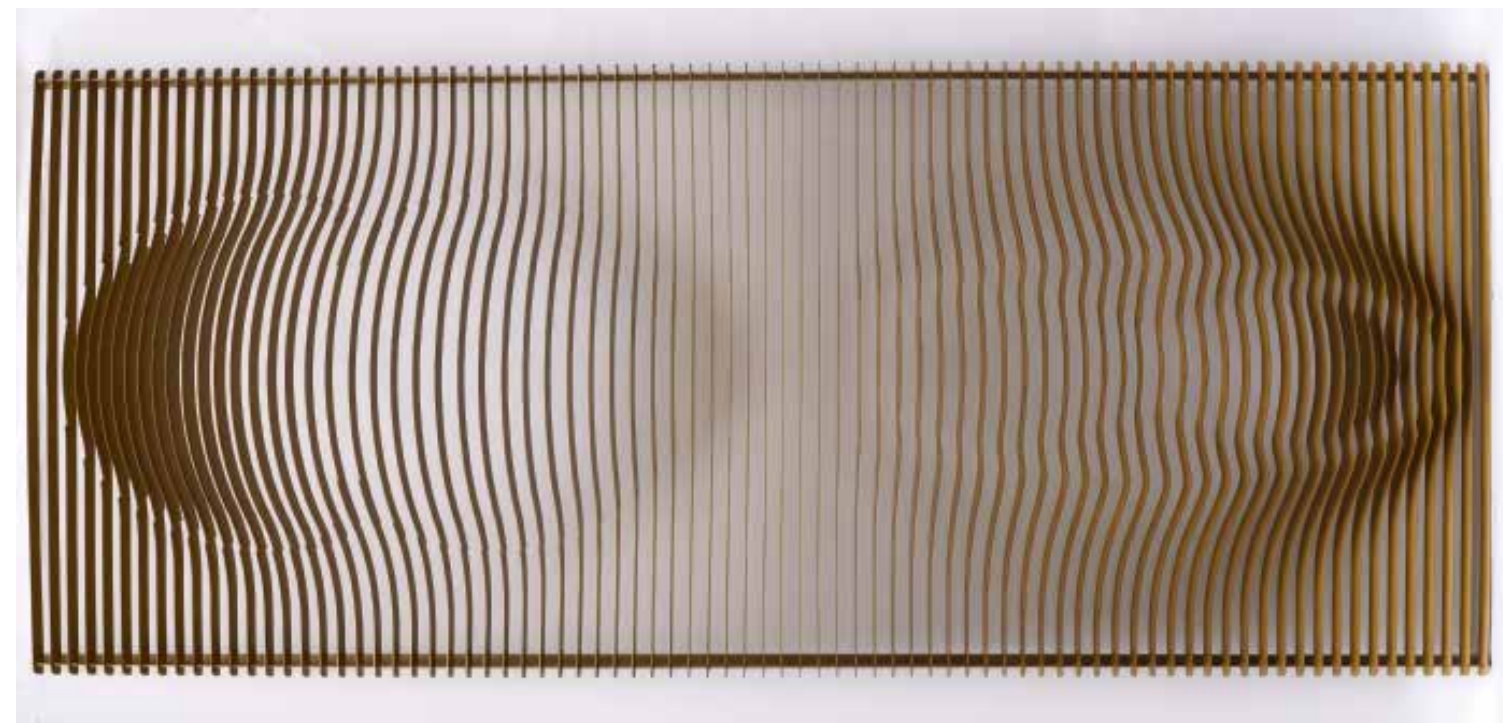
Bifurcation 1 and *Bifurcation 2* are two 2013 laser cut steel and paint sculptures by the celebrated Malaysian sculptor Multhalib Musa. Multhalib is well known for his decidedly "fluid metal sculptures" which flow in an effortlessly liquefied manner despite their inert medium, in a method he has been refining since his *Involute* series.

Bifurcation refers to the separation of a single unity into two segments, which is how Multhalib came to conceive these pieces, which are the division of a distinct pattern. Multhalib explains the way he began in his comfort zone, producing patterns on the computer, which then projects an isometric view of how the pattern will sit as a three dimensional form. In fabrication, the main body was divided into two parts, symmetrical and asymmetrical, each branching out and away and then reunifying at various intersections. Disconnecting and reconnecting the patterns in construction generated new and unexpected forms, pushing the boundaries of sculpture and the spatial area it occupies.

Although Multhalib has stayed true in part to his traditional methods of working, which involve computer aided design and laser cut steel, *Bifurcation 1* and *Bifurcation 2* are a shining example of the artist's constant quest to bring on board new techniques and ideas to further his understanding of sculpture. In a rare move, the sculptures have been finished with thick coats of paint, *Bifurcation 1* in gold and *Bifurcation 2* in red. The graphic colour blocking effect sits in contrast to his regular raw rusted metallic surfaces. Multhalib feels that while painting his sculptures is almost secondary in comparison with developing form and fabrication, it nonetheless has added a new dimension to his work.

Bifurcation 1 and *Bifurcation 2* can be seen as an extension in linear form of Multhalib's acclaimed series *Involute*, which embodied sliced metal spheres hung in the manner of mobiles, creating a play of light and fluidity with the negative and positive spaces occupied by the metal slices and the gaps between them. Multhalib's latest works travel even further in that they are a linear expression of the spatial principles evoked in *Involute*. The artist observes that these new works have a fragile quality about them, as if he subconsciously attempted to replace the elements of strength and weight traditionally associated with steel with transparency, translucency and light, almost as if the medium is fabric and not sturdy metal. Despite the fact that he has presented the basic idea previously, his knowledge of space, light and his craft has allowed him to almost change the nature of the medium to present his concepts in an entirely new manner to his audience, hence cementing his reputation as the foremost sculptor of the Malaysian Contemporary Art scene today.

Bifurcation 1
240 cm X 95 cm x 22cm
Lasercut Mild Steel with Paint
2013



Bifurcation 2
240 cm X 95 cm x 22cm
Lasercut Mild Steel with Paint
2013

AHMAD FUAD OSMAN

Ahmad Fuad Osman is recognized as one of the most eminent figurative artists on the Malaysian contemporary art scene via his large technically sound paintings. Fuad has also experimented enthusiastically and successfully with sculpture, installation and video making. Having graduated from UiTM with a BFA in Fine Arts in 1991, it was during his studying years that he met Bayu Utomo, Ahmad Shukri, Masnor and Hamir Soib - the four artists he went on to find the eminent collective MATAHATI with.

Fuad has had numerous solo exhibitions and residencies around the world. His work has found worldwide acclaim and been exhibited in institutions such as Tacheles Berlin, The Seoul Metropolitan Art Museum, Singapore Art Museum, Gertrude Art Centre, Melbourne, Australia, Guangdong Museum of Art China, Manes Gallery, Czech Republic and Red Mill Gallery, Vermont USA as well as the National Art Gallery and Petronas Gallery in Malaysia. The series of awards he has received embody the Juror's Choice at the Philip Morris Art Awards in both 2000 and 2003. Fuad was granted residencies at Vermont Studio Centre in America in 2004, at the Goyang National Art Studio in South Korea from 2005-2006 and the Rimbun Dahan Residency in Malaysia from 2007-2008.



3 **Fragile: Handle with Care**



1 **Lost Series Identity Crisis**



2 **Lost III**

Widely renowned today for his figurative style of painting, Fuad initially began his career as an abstract artist with his early influences vary from Latiff Mohidin and Ibrahim Hussain to Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee. All that subsided in 1994 when a distinct figurative theme surfaced in Fuad's work with the *Lost* series. As abstract art is devoid of identifiable forms, it can defy easy comprehension by audiences and inevitably distract from the real message the work is meant to portray, or so Fuad felt. In 1994, he began denoting figures in a clearer manner, as can be seen in his works *Lost III* and *Lost Series Identity Crisis*. 1995 brought with it an even sharper shift towards a figurative trajectory for Fuad. Works such as *Nightmare* or *Silent Sorrow* show more defined figures arranged in a more narrative and precise composition. In 1998, Fuad exhibited his first solo at NN Gallery, *Experiments With Truth*, which turned out to be one of the most seminal solos in the history of Malaysia Contemporary Art. Out of the ten works presented, the most influential was apparent in the multi canvas painting *Fragile*

Fuad was set out to invent a tribute to the untimely passing of a close friend, who had a big impact on him. In *Fragile*, Fuad was questioning life and death and the state of limbo between the two. These questions form a check and balance system that Fuad has been living his life by, and has made this painting one that resonates with the artist until today.

Surprisingly, the significance of *Fragile* goes deeper than it's personal value to Fuad. Conceptually, it acts as a base from which the artist has gone on to explore the ideas of *momento mori* and Sufism. Following the development of his career, these ideas are found to be a running thread throughout, as exemplified by the full room installation *Mat Jenin* in 1999 and subsequently the works presented at his major solo in 2007 at Gallery 12, *Dislocated*.

Dislocated showcased the works created during Fuad's back-to-back residencies in Vermont and later Korea, the *Vermont* and *Goyang* series. Both series presented ideas that have significant Sufi undertones; *Vermont* dealt with being trapped by worldly desires and an individual's will to live while *Goyang* took up a more mystical approach, taking in this world simply as a mirage. Fuad's painting *Fatamorgana* (*Fatamorgana* being the Malay word for mirage) emphasizes on the obsession with superficial aspects of life which overshadows the real truth, in a true Sufi manner Fuad is always looking to find. It should be noted that one of the Fuad's truly remarkable characteristics as a conceptual realist is the manner in which he is fixated on a theme, and later creates a comprehensive series in relation to that, and yet capable of producing wildly different works which have diversified symbols, colours, atmosphere, a highly unique trait in a realism painter.



4 **Fatamorgana #2 The State of Confusion**

Much has been made of the two foreign residencies acting as a form of personal exile for Fuad, and it is heartening to note that on his return to Malaysia, he took up a local residency and churned out a series that spoke of his desire to explore his own history, the seed of which was planted as he wrapped up his time in Korea. At a 2007 exhibition at the Petronas Gallery to celebrate 50 years of Malaysian independence, Fuad saw numerous small photographs of historical events. He explained that as he was looking at these old photos, he saw the ghost of a contemporary figure within them, suggesting the idea of modern society reflecting on the events that shaped our history. Initially, Fuad re-created these scenes with the inclusion of a series of varied figures that are meant to represent aspects of his own self in his famous large scale painting style, but as his desire to document milestones in Malaysian history in its entirety developed, he switched mediums to photography and came up with *Recollections of Long Lost Memories*.

Extrapolating from the three mediums Fuad uses in creating the works from his Rim-bun Dahan residency, painting, photography and video, research work is vital and concepts are highly regarded and indeed necessary to his artistic process. Fuad himself has stated that the idea is the most important point in his art work, and the medium he executes it is simply the best representation to his message. Fuad enjoys using various styles at the same time and this is demonstrated explicitly in his wonderful installation, *Mr D's Last Meal*. Exhibited in 2003, *Mr D's Last Meal* is highly significant as it portrayed combined elements Fuad thoroughly enjoys, painting, film-making, video projection and the inclusion of sound. In addition to the mixed medium approach put into the installation, it came about via an exhaustive research based route, another aspect of the creative process integral to Fuad's artistic integrity.

Fuad's multi-disciplinary approach to his artwork highlights his reverence for the message above all else, yet he continues to adhere to a regular practice of practice. His dedication to push his conceptual and practical abilities to higher levels with each series coupled with the weight of his accomplishments to date has him labelled as one of the foremost artists in the contemporary Malaysian art scene, whose next endeavor is always eagerly anticipated by his audience of critics, collectors and admirers.



5 **Mr D's Last Meal**

Hantuhantuhantuhantu...

Hantuhantuhantuhantu... is a 2013 freestanding metal sculpture by a renowned contemporary artist, Ahmad Fuad Osman. Standing at 3 feet tall and 7 feet wide, this sculpture marries Fuad's hallmark Sufi style of philosophical thinking with an entirely new method of working, thus acting as a prime example of Fuad's mantra "The Medium is the Message".

Hantuhantuhantuhantu... is visually centred around a US one dollar note. On to rectangular sheets of steel, the likeness of a US one dollar note has been printed on the front and back. Fuad worked the smooth steel surface by laser cutting the word "LIVE". When viewed from the reverse side, this subsequently reads as "EVIL". This plays on word mirrors the title, which combines the Malay words "*hantu*" (ghost) and "*tuhan*" (god) repeatedly, thus changing the meaning depending on where the viewer reads from, and is based on a childhood game of the artist's.

The US dollar is one of the world's most dominant reserve currencies, and the currency in which a large majority of international transactions are conducted. Therefore, it can be viewed as a universal icon for money itself. By cutting out the word LIVE/EVIL into the dollar note, Fuad makes a statement that the pursuit of money is the cause of a great deal of evil in the world, be it crime, corruption, war or the like. The artist is not however rejecting money, as is evident from the LIVE side of the cut out. Fuad acknowledges the necessity of money and comments it is not a dollar itself that is evil, rather the misuse of it.

A close study of a US dollar bill reveals it to be a beautiful artifact, intricately designed with a glut of symbols and details and, according to urban myths, secrets and codes. The secrecy of the symbols present in the note parallels the artist's notion that despite its fundamental role in everyday living, few people are aware of the design on the implications of cash, physical and theoretical. With *Hantuhantuhantuhantu...*, Fuad wants to open a dialogue amongst his audience where he encourages reflection on the flip side of money.

Fuad works successfully across all areas of art, painting, sculpture, installation and videography, commenting the medium ought to simply be the best vehicle for transmitting a particular idea. In *Hantuhantuhantuhantu...* Fuad employs high polish digitally printed stainless steel and laser cutting for the first time in his career. The physical characteristics of the sculpture tie in neatly with the concepts from which it originates, be it the free standing laser cut that allows the viewer to read both LIVE and EVIL depending on their position, to the high polish reflective finish, that physically urges the process of deliberation on such a routine artifact.

The quote "Worldly attachment is the source of life's suffering" by Buddha can be considered, in a nutshell, as a simple explanation of the Sufi thread that runs through all of Fuad's work. Works such as 1998's *Fragile* or 1999's installation *Mat Jenin* can be seen as early precursors to the Sufi philosophies that permeate all of Fuad's work. While Fuad often reworks these basic themes of juxtaposing light and dark in various conceptual incarnations, his ability to evolve his mediums through technology and the refinement of his own skills ensures that the artist is able to transmit his view to a highly receptive audience, as is evident in the excitement surrounding *Hantuhantuhantuhantu...*



(Front view)



(Back view)

Hantuhantuhantuhantu...
100cm x 210cm x 45cm
Digital Print on Stainless Steel
2013

ALI NURAZMAL YUSOFF



One of the most prolific mid career contemporary Malaysian artists, Ali Nurazmal creates large-scale paintings that study the effects of Western influences from globalization with a decidedly Asian flavor.

An avid participant of Malaysia's art scene from a young age, Ali's natural talent coupled with strong paternal encouragement led him to participate in many art competitions, both locally and internationally. Ali's first win at a young age was a main motivating factor and he went on to win the Switzerland Olympic Art Competition while still in his teens.

Encouraged by his youthful success, Ali worked on his technical ability and stylistic range, understanding that the ability to express oneself with technical precision in a wide range of mediums would be key to future success as a fine artist. Ali frequented Central Market and there managed to gain the mentorship of Aris Aziz, a portrait artist, and Abdul Ghani Ahmed, a landscape artist. The role of a mentor is key to an emerging artist as the critique of one's style, technical ability and conceptual thinking is important to push oneself to the next level.

Ali soon learnt that what would distinguish him from an ordinary self-taught artist and a high functioning conceptual fine artist



1 **Konflik : Which one # 1, #2 & #3**

would be his fine art education. Fine art education not only affords a strong technical background but also refines the ability to intellectually think and critically assess how best to express one's idea and concepts in a signature stylistic manner. In 2000, Ali graduated with a degree in fine art from UITM and the ability to "sum up my knowledge and experiences by reflecting it in my art practices, in search for identity."

In his search for artistic identity, Ali experimented with various styles, among them realism, expressionist, abstract. The 2006 exhibition *Faith, Plurality and Freedom* features examples of Ali's foray into expressionism coupled with abstraction. The constant experimentation of style was crucial to Ali discovering his own personal signature, which became evident in his first solo exhibit in 2009, *Satire in Paint*, and thrust Ali into the spotlight of contemporary Malaysian art.



2 **Imitation Master After Caravaggio**

Quite possibly the show stopper at *Satire in Paint* was the painting *Imitation Master- After Caravaggio*. Ali perfectly reproduced the famous *Cardsharps* by Renaissance artist Caravaggio. In this modern version however, Ali includes a self-portrait, standing smugly rubbing his hands together just past the card players, in an almost sinister manner as if he might trick all the participants in the game to ultimately profit. This painting correctly summarises the personality and humour which burst forth from Ali's canvases, the inclusion of self portraits and expressions that give the audience a strong insight into the artist as a person as well as his views on society.

2012 brought with it Ali's widely anticipated third solo, *Alism*. Painstakingly produced over a two year period, Ali fortified the accolades surrounding him as one of the upcoming stars on the Malaysian contemporary art scene with this meticulously painted, thought provoking series that retained the particular brand of humour audiences had come to associate with Ali. Widely touted as the highlight of *Alism* was the seminal painting *Imitation Master- After Caravaggio II*. Created over an eight-month period, Ali projected a video of the painting process for *Imitation Master- After Caravaggio II* alongside the work itself to underline what a momentous task it was, and to create an awareness of the creative process an artist undertakes on committing to creating truly seminal works.



2 Imitation Master After Caravaggio II

In the competitive landscape that is contemporary Malaysian art today, Ali stands out by producing triple threat works, starting from a well rounded concept which connects to his viewers, flawlessly executing his paintings in a manner that allows his message to be pristinely communicated and finally injecting humour and charm that seduces his audience, leaving them in a state of anticipation for the next statement he wishes to submit.

Little Girl and A Tiger in the Water

Little Girl and a Tiger in the Water is the latest painting by the prolific contemporary Malaysian painter, Ali Nurazmal Yusoff. An oil on canvas that measures at 6 feet x 8.5 feet, this new work represents a shift in direction for the artist conceptually, presented in the hyper detailed realist style that is Ali's calling card.

While on a self-imposed sabbatical of four months, Ali travelled to East Semporna, in Sabah. Initially, slightly worried about security in East Semporna due to the occasional attacks by the Filipino pirates in the area, Ali was instead struck by the beauty and tranquility of the area. Despite the constant underlying threat of attack, Ali found the locals living a peaceful, innocent life, even if the way of life is slightly behind times- this is by choice. Wandering around one day, Ali noticed that the locals still used payphones frequently, and saw a Bajau woman talking on one, her young daughter by her side. The manner in which little girl was telephoning imaginary friends and animatedly chatting to them caught Ali's attention and he took several pictures of her, feeling this encapsulated the essence of his impression of the district. We find this little girl captured on the extreme right of the canvas, painted large and bright as one of the two main subjects of the painting.

On the extreme left of the canvas, a tiger arises from watery depths. The tiger summarizes the importance of 'form' to Ali as an artist. Ali has painted the tiger as three dimensional, creating a sense amongst the audience it may emerge from the canvas itself at any moment, teeth bared, ready to pounce, sitting in stark contrast to the innocent and unaware child. The tiger symbolizes the danger that lurks in the seas by East Semporna, from which the pirates can appear at any moment to disrupt the quiet harmony that prevails.

In the past Ali has been prolific with the inclusion of self-portraits in his work, so it is interesting to note this is absent in the first major painting after his hiatus. The audience can view this as a change in direction, the artist is shifting from a point where he looks at situations in relation to himself to a new point in which he is studying the world at large. This change in direction is also noticeable in his colour palette. Ali famously uses reds and greens in the majority of his work, these colours speak of himself in terms of his Malay and Chinese heritage, yet *Little Girl and a Tiger in the Water* is brought to us in new colours with an overwhelming turquoise background and white tiger.

Ali has remarked that he considers his finished paintings as a series of studies through which he explores both his personal self and the world around him, commenting they are notes on his quest to create what he feels will be his ultimate painting. The fact that he had paused in the middle of an exploding career to centre his focus and move forward in a new direction demonstrates his dedication to his art, and speaks of his determination to be present on the contemporary Malaysian art scene as a major player in the long haul with his ability to constantly create exciting new paintings that capture the imagination of critics and collectors alike.



Little Girl and A Tiger in the Water
183 cm X 300 cm
Oil on Canvas
2013



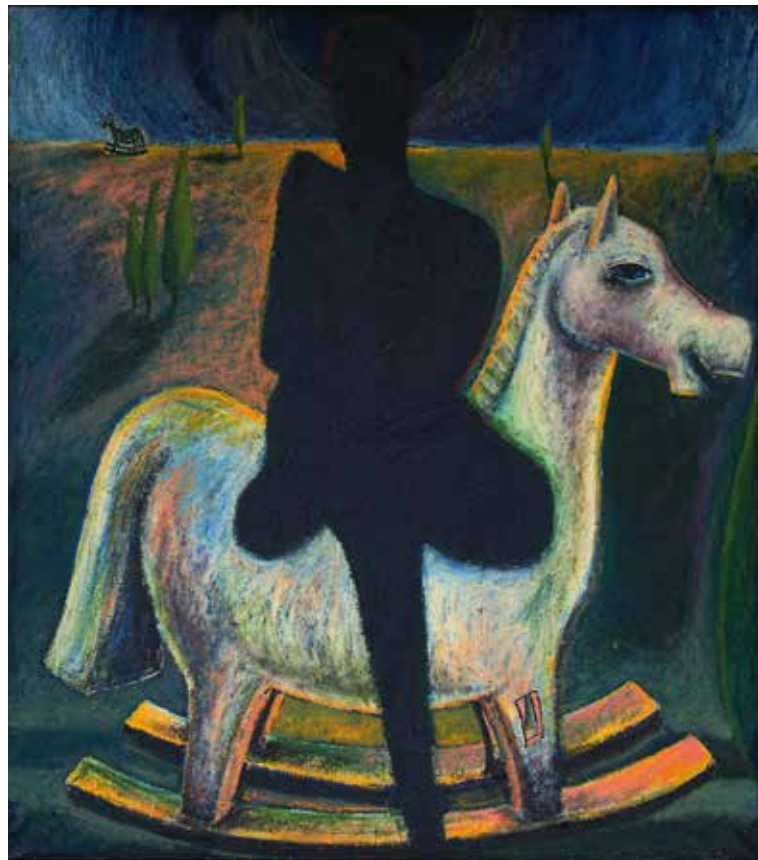
ENG HWEE CHU

Traditionally, female artists produce autobiographical works, using personal self reflections to express ideas and concepts. The surreal self-portraits of Frida Kahlo, photographs of Cindy Sherman and confessional art of Louise Bourgeois are just a few examples to this.

Joining the cast is Eng Hwee Chu, one of the most prominent contemporary female artists in Malaysia. Her works are a visual narrative of her inner struggle, culture, tradition and change, a celebration of her love and marriage to artist, Tan Chin Kuan and an outlet to rebel and break free. They are also vehicles in her quest for the truth. Not only does Hwee Chu explore her own personal issues through her work but also the wider issues in regard to women's experiences and role in society.



1 **Tragic : People Image on Rocking Horse**



Born in Johor in 1967, Eng Hwee Chu graduated from the Malaysian Institute of Art in 1989, where she now teaches at. Eng is the recipient of many major awards including first prize in the Philip Morris Asean Art Awards in 1994 and the Painting Award, Salon Malaysia 3 at the National Art Gallery in 1991. Hwee Chu has also exhibited locally and internationally-most notably at the Osaka Triennale in Osaka, Japan in 2001 and the second Asia Pacific Triennale in Brisbane, Australia in 1996, as well as in Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and of course, Malaysia. In early 2013, Hwee Chu participated in "Women In Between: Asian Women Artists 1984-2012" in Fukuoka, Japan with her work *The Role of the Female*.

The term "Magical Realism" can be applied to Hwee Chu's large-scale paintings. Art critic Franz Roh describes "Magical Realism" as faithfully portraying the exterior of an object through the realist style of painting, and in doing so revealing the spirit, or rather inner magic, of the object to the audience. One sees key icons repeatedly employed by Hwee Chu to intensely explore reality in this style, perhaps the most prominent of which for her is the rocking horse. *Tragic: People Image on Rocking Horse* is one of Hwee Chu's major early works that employs and introduces both the rocking horse icon as well as the black

shadow figure that has been featured prominently in several of her later works.

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In explaining the origin and significance of the rocking horse in her paintings, Hwee Chu tells us "Having lived in the kampong, I was not exposed to the modern invention, like the wooden horse. I was in awe when I first saw it in town, and wanted it so badly. Unfortunately, I was small enough to ride on such a fragile horse meant for children. The golden rocking horse symbolizes the things which I cannot possess." A sense of longing pervades on the canvas as Hwee Chu uses the Golden Horse to discuss unfulfilled desires and things out of her reach but the works are not necessarily melancholy. The black shadow figure is a representation of her inner self. In *Tragic: People Image on Rocking Horse*, Hwee Chu is on a search for her inner self, questioning who she really is. At this point in her life, Hwee Chu is not certain of her core identity, hence the black shadow is vague and unclear. *Tragic: People Image on Rocking Horse* is such an important work as it paves the way for Hwee Chu's celebrated Black Moon series.

In the vein of artists who create autobiographical works, such as Frida Kahlo, Hwee Chu uses her art as a means of visually expressing and documenting her thoughts and journey, much as in a diary. The *Black Moon* series which was produced between the late 1980s and early 1990s continues Hwee Chu's search for her identity and inner self. Throughout this series, Hwee Chu is exploring what she terms "the outer world", which is society at large versus her "inner self", that is, her personal feelings and thought process. Hwee Chu is expressing the view of a hostile outer world where the philosophies and principles are at odds with her own, and uses her painting as a means to try and decipher a reconciliation between the two contrasting worlds.



2 **Black Moon 4**



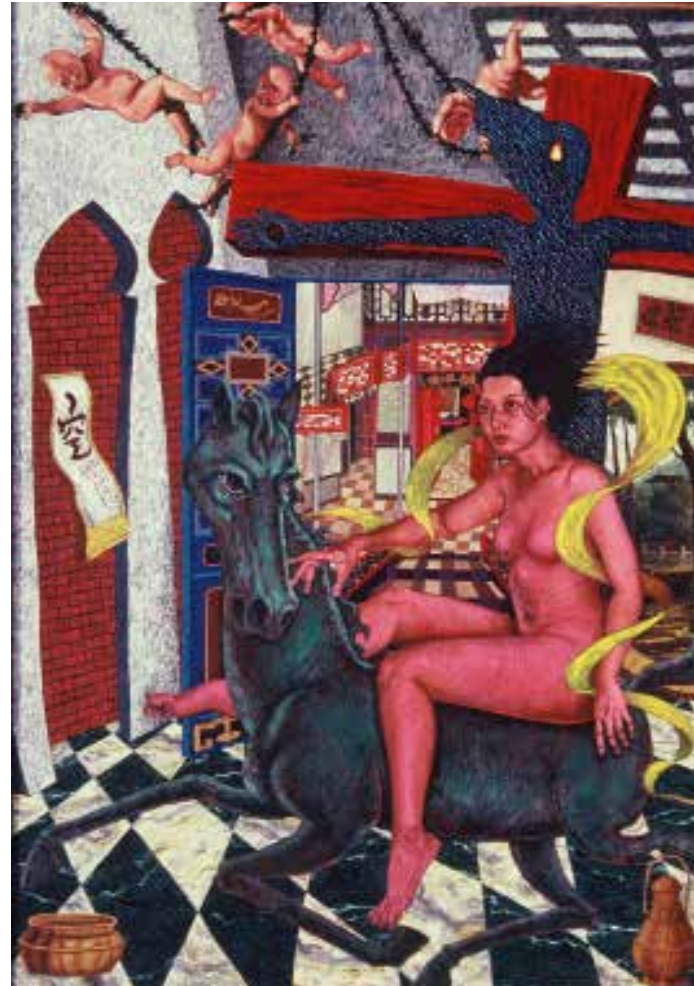
3 **Black Moon 3**

1989 brought about the painting *Black Moon 4*, which sees the creation of another key icon that Eng implements until today, the Red Figure. In this early painting, the Red Figure does not have a clear identity, present solely as a symbol of pure emotion. However, as Hwee Chu developed her identity as both an artist and a woman, she slowly gained her confidence and in subtlety, the Red Figure comes to represent her, the artist, in the paintings, but in a more mysterious or confident version of herself.

Another sign of Hwee Chu's growing confidence in the 1990's is the development of her painting style into an even finer form of realism. Paintings from 1995 such as *Treasure* and *Prospect* exemplified her increasing self-assuredness, which is demonstrated in her realistic colour palette, highly defined figures and the new inclusion of truly representational self-portraits. It is definitely the critical successes that Hwee Chu was piling up by this point, apparent in her major awards, that has contributed to her creative buoyancy. 1995's *The Holy State of Matrimony*, however, offers an insight into one of the most significant milestones in Hwee Chu's life, her marriage to Tan Chin Kuan.

As a fellow acclaimed contemporary artist, Chin Kuan is able to not only provide Hwee Chu with backing on a personal level, but also critique her as an artist. Chin Kuan and Hwee Chu have similar ideas and directions, but the differences from their gender identities have led to different methods of expression. Hwee Chu credits Chin Kuan for giving her a support system that allows her the freedom to fully express her inner desires and how she feels her true self should be represented on canvas. This further allows Hwee Chu to push the painterly boundaries of her detailed narratives without restrictions. We can parallel Hwee Chu and Chin Kuan's relationship with that of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera in the sense of these two strong successful artists coming together and being equals professionally while maintaining a normal domestic life, which is an interesting sight into the value of emotional support for these female artists who subsequently produce paintings that speak of their essence as women and their ensuing role with the traditional framework of society.

A fascinating artist, Hwee Chu creates painting that utilize her advanced abilities as a realist painter to perfectly encapsulate her inner reflections in a body of work when traced in its entirety forms a visual journal of sorts, leaving her audience with an almost greedy anticipation for the paintings that are still to come.



4 Prospect

Searching- Facing to the New Age

Searching- Facing to the New Age is a 2012 acrylic on canvas painting by Eng Hwee Chu. An extremely detailed piece that narrates Hwee Chu's continued search for her true self, her delight at her current personal life and her curiosity to the reaction of society at large towards her.

Hwee Chu's use of her well known icons- the black shadow and red figure- are the viewer's first clue that she has once again created an autobiographical work. However, unlike her previous paintings where the black shadow, which represents Eng's inner self, is a dark looming figure in a frightened or heavy stance, here Hwee Chu has chosen to represent her inner self in an energetic position, flying freely across the top of the canvas, reflecting the confidence she feels at this stage of her life.

Representing Hwee Chu's true self is the red figure that is central to the painting. Over the years, the artist has worked in self-portraits in the guise of this red figure to portray her own perception of herself, but we again are able to note the shift in her life through the shift in the usage of her famous icon. Standing straight in a completely different pose from ever before, the red figure peeps at the viewer from behind her hand. A sense of curiosity radiates from her new red figure; she seems to be appreciating the difference in the value of her new life.

Hwee Chu's identity strongly encompasses her cultural identity as a Chinese Malaysian woman, and as in previous work we see the weight she gives in this while searching for her personal identity through the inclusions of the Chinese figures on the left of the canvas who seem to be watching as Hwee Chu navigates her journey. The bright red and rich gold palette adds to the overall impression of a strong Chinese inspiration behind *Searching*.

Searching has parallels with Hwee Chu's previous work *Lost in Mind* in the use of the red figure, strong Chinese cultural icons and watchful faces of society framing the central characters thus the audience is reminded of the autobiographical narrative Hwee Chu weaves. It is wonderful to see how through subtle changes in stance and expression, Hwee Chu is able to not only communicate her inner vision of self and society, but also submit her journey and growth as an artist and an individual to her audience in a solely visual form, a true testament to her skills as a painter.

Searching-Facing to the New Age
189 cm X 132 cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2010



MD FADLI YUSOFF



Contemporary Realism associates the term "contemporary" with the techniques of old masters applied to the human experience as well as important subjects of the artist's times. Studying the classical artists of the 19th century, contemporary realist artists are the purveyors of modern day visual story telling by marrying freedom of speech with strongly accurate realism painting. Fadli Yusoff exemplifies the idea of a contemporary realist by using his exceptional skill as a figurative painter to explore themes of religion which are not only of great personal significance to him as a devout Muslim, but also highly relevant in the secular Islamic society of modern Malaysia.

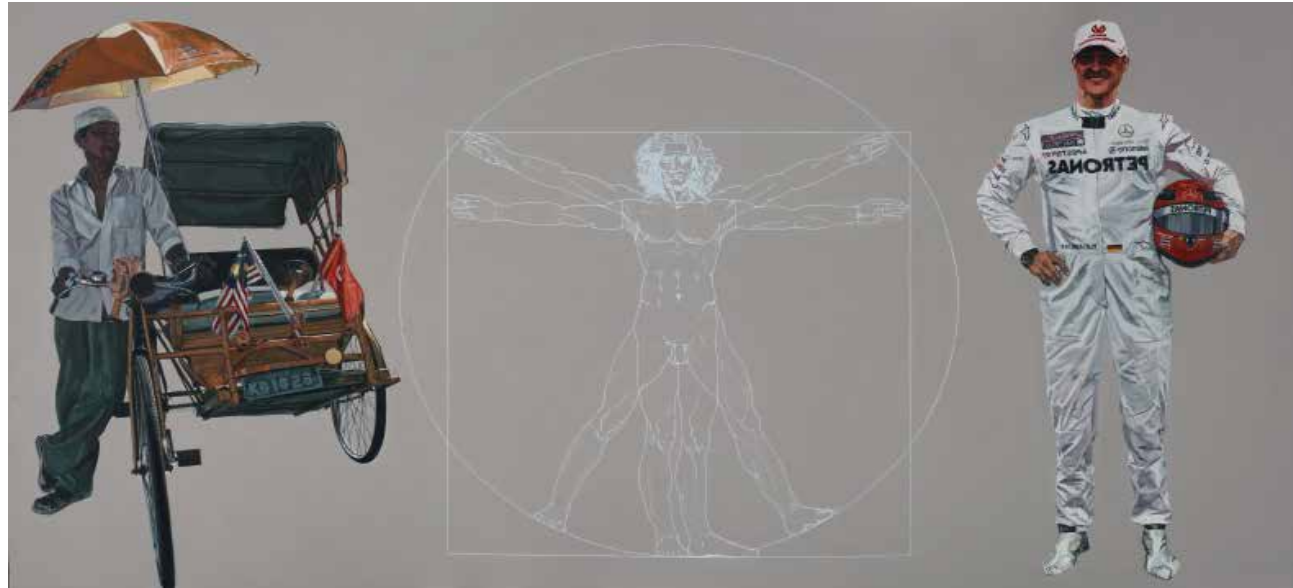
Fadli Yusoff was born in Kelantan in 1974 and went on to study fine art at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) under the highly respected figurative artist, Amron Omar. Omar has high praise for the meticulous accuracy that has led to Fadli's acclamation as an accomplished freehand realist. Fadli has achieved great critical success, not least as a recipient of major art awards including the 1999 Juror's Choice Award in the Philip Morris Art Awards Malaysia, third place in the Formula Malaysia Art Award in 2000 and the Grand Prize in 2004's Kijang Award from Bank Negara Malaysia.

Early works were characterized by his skill as a figurative painter. This however has diverted just prior to his graduation from UiTM in 1996 when he read a book by the United Ulama Council of South Africa, *The Ruling on Photography based on Islamic Law according to Fatwa Issue*. Fadli felt he was contravening the teachings of Islam by producing realistic figures and spent the next eleven years devoting his practice to landscapes and abstract subjects. The draw of his true calling as a figurative artist proved too great and, following further research on the subject, 2007 marked his return to realism. Fadli's return to realism illustrates a confidence on his part and a desire to understand the precincts of his identity as a Malay-Muslim in a modern society.

Fadli considers painting as a form of dakwah, the process of encouraging people to understand Islam via a conversational process and thus, his audience is of utmost importance to him. One of Fadli's first works on returning to figurative painting, *Stand Here and Choose Yourself* demonstrates the artist's desire to engage his public in his art. The work acts as a life sized installation that encourages audience interaction, by instructing individual viewers to act as sitters in the painting by choosing between the two figures represented therein: a modern day man dressed in a business suit or a figure dressed in a thobe, a traditional Islamic tunic. The work relates to Kelantanese born Fadli's own identity and the question of being both a Muslim and a Malay. Fadli sees the discrepancies between the two as imprecise, leading to him creating this installation as the exemplification of removal from religion of modern Muslim-Malaysians.



1 Stand and Choose Yourself



2 Stand and Choose Yourself II

Stand Here and Choose Yourself dissects the relationship between an individual and their God and was followed up with a second work, *Stand Here and Choose Yourself II*, which continued the original dialogue into the question of the bond that exists between mankind as a whole and their creator (seen by Fadli to be Allah for the purposes of this painting) and goes into exploration of the division of oil royalties between Kelantan's state government, the Federal government and Petronas. Fadli points out his role is not to judge or decide the outcome of the questions he poses via his work, but to stimulate discourse in society pertaining to issues he considers current.

It is interesting to note that *Stand Here and Choose Yourself* is seen as a collaboration between Fadli and Gallery 12, who exhibited this piece. Shooshie Sulaiman, curator of Gallery 12 and an internationally renowned artist in her own right, has been acting as curator and advocate for Fadli's manner of highly critical thinking as necessary to the development of Malaysia Contemporary Art scene. Fadli and Gallery 12 took their relationship a step further by visualizing a period of five years over which Fadli would produce art (including his two *Stand Here and Choose Yourself* pieces) that would be publicly displayed at the end of that five year incubation as a whole. This time allowance has given rise to a collection of highly detailed museum quality works, stemming from serious art subjects, all of which in some manner held personal resonance to Fadli. In February 2013, the *Md Fadli Yusoff 2007-2012* exhibition was thus debuted in collaboration with Gallery 12 at White Box to mass acclaim.

In the vein of celebrated artists across all historical and cultural periods, Fadli combines a flawless formalistic aspect and deeply abstract conceptual thinking to produce art that resonates with every level of society. His devout dedication to perfecting his craft resonates with his view that art is the medium through which he is best able to document the complexities of God's greatness, causing Fadli to be considered a rising star on the Malaysian Contemporary Art scene whose career will be eagerly followed by critics and collectors alike.

Malang Malala

Malang Malala is a 2013 painting by the acclaimed contemporary realist painter Fadli Yusof. Measuring 300cm x 195cm, it features a portrait of Malala Yusof across the centre of the canvas, under a *wayang kulit* performance of the Ramayana, and discusses the dilemma of child education activist, Malala Yusof.

Born in Pakistan in 1997, Malala Yousafzai is an education activist and the youngest Nobel Peace Prize nominee in history. Originally from the town of Mingora in the Swat District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan, she famously campaigns for the rights of women and girls particularly with regards to education, defying the Taliban who have a strong presence in the area and had outlawed women's education. Following on from a 2009 BBC blog entry and New York Times documentary, Malala rose to prominence internationally as a spokesperson for females in the Swat District, prompting the Taliban to attempt to assassinate her in October 2012 as she returned home from school. With the continued threat of further attacks from the Taliban, she is currently in the United Kingdom under asylum, where she continues to pursue her education and advocacy work. Recently, Malala was named as one of "The 100 Most Influential People In The World" by Time Magazine, with her picture on the cover, and has achieved an iconic status in the West.

Fadli uses his exceptional skill as a realist painter to re depict Malala's Time Magazine cover, thus presenting her role as an icon in Western media. Central to Fadli's work is his Islamic faith and he challenges the negative perception Malala's fate has brought on the religion. The *Bayan* tree symbol from *wayang kulit* represents Fadli's interpretations of the manner in which good and bad are played against each other in the media. Here, he shows the Ramayana as playing negative energy and *Seri Rama* in a heroic role. The question Fadli raises with his new painting is which situation is actually the unfortunate one, Malala's or Islam's?

Malang translates into English as 'poor' or 'unfortunate'. With *Malang Malala*, Fadli once again questions the role of Muslims and Islam in a modern society, continuing his theory that painting can be a form of *dakwah* through which he can engage his audience in conversations about Islam. The depth of his subject matter presented in the flawless painterly skills his audience has come to expect from him not only succinctly summarizes Fadli's skills as a painter and intellectual, but reinforces his place as one of the rising stars in Malaysian Contemporary Art today.

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Malang Malala
263 cm X 198 cm
Acrylic on Canvas
2013



HAMIR SOIB



Appearing in the contemporary Malaysian art scene in the early 1990's as a founding member of the MATAHATI collective, Hamir Soib combines his theatrical approach to painting with a magical-fantastic realism style to create works that act as a critique to the socio-political state of today's society.

Hamir's initial entry into the art scene in Malaysia was via the MATAHATI show *Life* in 1993, and from then on he participated in various group shows and competitions. Slow to receive mass acclaim, Hamir concentrated on his day job as a set designer for theatre and film, where his main forte was fashioning dramatic backdrops for the stage. Theatre backdrops are painted so as to be understood by spectators that are sat a distance away, this means that often when one views the backdrop up close it's unintelligible. It is only when the viewer moves a significant distance back when suddenly it all comes together and sets the physical scene for the ensuing performance. It formed an unconventional training for Hamir that means he is able to now create work that has a huge visual impact on his audience, and led to how Hamir is the pioneer of larger than life painting trend that is now prevalent in the Malaysian Art scene.



2 **Pilihan**

Hamir's seminal painting *Pilihan* effectively demonstrates the influence of his theatrical background in his fine art career. Measuring 24 feet by 10 feet, *Pilihan*, which translates into Choices, is a commentary on money politics debates that were raging in 2005. Hamir was remarking on the choices presented in today's world between fundamental values and material ambitions. In the bottom left corner, there is a man holding on to the roots of a tree that shoots up to the top of the painting, emphasizing Hamir's ideals of society holding on to its cultural and morale values, and thus growing stronger over time. Across the right hand side, Hamir painted a donkey exploding from a volcanic eruption, whinnying in terror and confusion. This represents the outcome of the opposite choice, of caving into corruption leading into chaos.

In 2005, Hamir founded *Gudang*, which indicated his decision to immerse himself solely in his fine art career and marked the beginning of his trajectory as one of the most important painters on the contemporary art scene. *Gudang* was Hamir's personal studio and workshop. Additionally, it serves as alternative art space that provides multi media showcases, sought funding for independent film making and perhaps most importantly granted residencies to both young graduates and foreign artists. 2005 brought with it Hamir's Young Artist Incentive Award from the Shah Alam Gallery and his first solo exhibition at *Gudang, Pameran Tunggal*.

As a Malaysian artist, living and working in Kuala Lumpur in the 21st century, his monolithic works are a representation of the times we live in, and this body of works are a witty, sometimes cynical look at what the country and its people have become. Hamir's painting *Sepat O Sepat*, which is considered as one of the most significant paintings of this era, underlines this and is a notable example of Hamir as a socio political commentator. Measuring at 6 feet by 8 feet, *Sepat O Sepat* simply features a large fish centred on a plain white canvas. *Sepat* is a type of fish that was common in the paddy field in any kampung (villages) in post-independence Malaysia. Villagers could easily catch the fish in paddy fields surrounding their homes, and along with the rice and vegetables grown in their own gardens, they would already have enough sources to prepare any meal. Over the years, as the country has become increasingly developed, paddy fields have shrunk down and sepat's habitat has shrunk, and can no longer be easily found. Here, sepat has been used as a symbol to relate Hamir's growing dismay at the realization that pollution has begun affecting the Malaysian landscape and the impact of man's therein due to development. It is a testament to both his narrative ability and connection with his audience as he encapsulates such layers of meaning and dismay with what is essentially detailed rendering of a large deformed fish.



1 **Sepat Oh Sepat**

At the time of *Sepat O Sepat*, Hamir was entrenched in painting with oils. Naturally inquisitive, he wanted to explore mediums to discover how he could affect the atmospheric quality of his work, which led to the development of his bitumen and monochromatic period beginning in 2008 and seeing him through to 2012. Bitumen is a dark paint, in shades of brown, made from coal tar that was frequently used in 19th century painting in the West. Hamir discovered that he was able to paint highly detailed and gothic art works using bitumen, such as *Nafsu Nafsi* which highlights his inimitable ability to add super fine detail into large scale paintings.

Hamir is well known for developing and refining his techniques via a work, or series of works, and later on coupling those techniques with new developments to push him to new levels. Once he had satisfied his ability to use bitumen as successfully as he could with oil and acrylic, he experimented with it as a drawing tool, while conceptually shifting from social issues to personal ones by exploring his religious identity through contemporary calligraphic works. The first of his paintings to include calligraphy, *Kering*, does so in an indiscipherable manner as a non central element, but as his calligraphic works came into high commercial demand, he began to focus on the calligraphy as the primary focus. His ultimate calligraphic work is unanimously considered to be a private commission series of four *Quls* produced for a private residence. *The Quls* are four prayers that form a core for the Quran and provide protection for the reciter, and by installing four large *Qul* paintings, one for each prayer, at the entrance of the house Hamir creates a religious narrative that blesses and shields.

Hamir's skills lie in creating large-scale paintings, that utilize line, shading and chiaroscuro to create a gothic atmosphere infused with implications of social consciousness and religious devotion. One of the truly fascinating qualities of his work is their ability to mirror the current issues facing society, be they political, social or religious which, when coupled with his unrivalled painterly technique, explains his ability to connect with his audience on a rare level that is a hallmark of an outstanding artist. As he moves forward in 2013 with a return to his socio-political narrative and re-inclusion of a colour palette in his work, as evidenced by *The Auctionland*, it is an exciting time to monitor his unending expansion.



4 4 Qul

The Auctionland

The Auctionland is a 2013 acrylic and bitumen on canvas painting by Hamir Soib. It marks Hamir's return to the social-political content art that he is famed for producing, in the vein of paintings such as *Pilihan* and *Sepat O Sepat* after a stretch of large-scale calligraphic works.

Across the main body of *The Auctionland*, Hamir has painted a large koi fish in a lateral view. On either side of the koi are bars, receding into the distance, and after a brief inspection, the viewer notices that a landscape has been dreamily painted both around and within the fish, it forms a background on which the fish has been overlaid. Hamir cements his reputation as one of the most technically proficient Malaysian Contemporary artists with the highly skilled layering effect as well as an astounding realism of the large central koi.

It should be noted that *The Auctionland* not only hails Hamir's return to commentary based art, but also a re-emergence of his desire to use colour in his paintings after a five year monochromatic period. Hamir is famed for developing and refining his painterly techniques via a work, or series of works, and then coupling those techniques with new developments to push him to new levels. This is evident in his new work as he marries the layering technique he has refined in his series of four *Quls* from his calligraphic period with a renewed sense of colour.

Layering is crucial to Hamir not only technically but also philosophically, which is reinforced with the concept that inspired *The Auctionland*. An expensive commodity, the koi has been used as an icon to represent the ideas of value, buying and selling and the auction market. Within the Malaysian Contemporary Art scene, there has been an explosion of auction houses. Hamir questions the significance of these institutions within a booming contemporary art market when they promote and idealize *Nanyang* art over contemporary. The lateral position of the koi becomes the key in this context, as within *Nanyang* art there is frequent representation of koi in a bird's eye view, Hamir asks the audience to look at issues from new perspectives.

The background scenery adds a second level of meaning to the auction metaphor. Hamir depicts a submerged backdrop to reflect the loss of land through excessive development, the initial step in which is always the transaction of buying and selling the land. Environmental concerns and the resulting effect on the Malaysian countryside are a recurring concern for Hamir, as seen previously in *Sepat O Sepat*.

Commenting that everything is for sale, Hamir draws parallels between the glamorous auctions with the chaos and mess of a fish market with the use of the super sized koi. Despite the superficial differences between the two environments, the artist feels the principles that underpin the two are the same. Clearly, Hamir is urging his audience to stop and consider what values should be held important before there is a disintegration of our physical and intellectual landscapes. The creative content and masterful execution of *The Auctionland* underline Hamir's reputation as a true master in the Malaysian Contemporary Art scene.



The Auctionland
150 cm X 360 cm
Bitumen and Acrylic on Canvas
2013



HUSIN HOURMAIN

Abstract Expressionism is a genre of experimental, non-representational art characterized by the involvement of individual style and freedom of technique to produce highly expressive works defined by energy and spontaneity. Interestingly, it is a style that lends well to calligraphic painting due to the qualities of rhythm and control that must be present in calligraphy, and the manner in which the gesture of the brushstroke infuses meaning into the canvas. Much like in abstract expressionism, a calligrapher's art marries formal elements with the idea of rule breaking to create an identifiable signature, and in Malaysia the foremost contemporary calligrapher also exemplifies the spirit of abstract expressionism, Husin Hourmain.



1 **Zero to Something, Zero to Nothing No 9**

Jackson Pollock is perhaps one of the best-known Abstract Expressionists, and his influence on Husin's body of works is strongly evident, particularly in the 2008 series *Zero to Something, Zero to Nothing*. Husin painted this series as a discourse on the stages of life, indeed individual works such as *Eight* actively highlight the predicament he found himself in at that period, deciding which direction his life should take. When discussing the production of this series, Husin revealed an interesting parallel between his and Pollock's methods of working by describing his preference for moving while painting, which probably gives rise to the decidedly energetic marks on the canvas. There is a hint of fatalism when painting in such an expressive manner, which suits Husin who likens it as a metaphor for life itself commenting, "Life cannot be controlled, you can plan, but it's not your decision how it turns out."

Born in 1963, Husin was encouraged by his father, a journalist and lasting influence on his life, to study graphic design at the Malaysia Institute of Art in 1982. Up until 2001, he worked in advertising as an Art Director, but subsequently quit to concentrate on his dream of being a full time painter. 2001-2003 was spent debating this decision, and Husin credits his wife's support as a main factor in whole heartedly pursuing painting full time. In 2003 he restarted his life as it were, as Husin Hourmain, the fine artist. Although he was largely self taught, Husin credits senior artists such as Malaysian Abstract Expressionist, Yusof Ghani and Indonesian painter, Widono Sudono as guides and inspirations to him, along with unsurprisingly Jackson Pollock.

Aside from artistic influences, one of the main inspirations for Husin is his identity as both a Malay and a Muslim. One of his earliest works was a colourful calligraphy of Allah in Arabic. Husin had witnessed a gallery rejecting a painting by one of his peers for the inclusion of Jawi lettering, and advised the artist to erase the Islamic overtone for fear the work would be unsalable. This did not sit well with Husin, in particular. He objected to the rejection of the Islamic influence, especially given the contemporary Islamic setting of modern Malaysia. Contemporary artists are meant to represent the direction society is travelling in, and after *Zero to Something, Zero to Nothing*, Husin felt that there was a growing awareness of religion amongst the younger generation of Malays and the desire to balance tradition with the modern way of life in the twenty-first century.



2 **Allah - Study**

Husin duly immersed himself in the study of calligraphy, which can be seen as a study of the increasing infusion of Malays into the urbanized Malaysia and the updated landscape of contemporary Malaysian society. As the Malay race gain is ever increasing in cultural and economic relevance, the popularity of contemporary calligraphic paintings has demonstrably risen. Testing the waters, in 2012, Husin displayed a calligraphy, *Allah Hu*, a monochromatic work which is spread out over a three panel canvas measuring at 153 X 230 cm. *Allah Hu* is seen critically both as evidence for Husin's development of his personal style within calligraphic framework, and as a precursor for his wildly successful seminal solo *Awal Hurouf, Asal Hurouf*, with Core Design Gallery.

3 **Allah Hu**





4 Lam Alif

A series of 30 paintings representing the Arabic alphabet, *Awal Hurouf, Asal Hurouf* took three years to complete before being debuted in early 2013. Husin views the series as a two dimensional installation beginning with *Alif* and ending with *Ya*, and including the addition of *Hamzah* and *Lam Alif*. Highly detailed and expansive works, in the energetic expressionist style that has quickly come to be the artist's signature, the series questions what constitutes the notion of knowledge, and where has knowledge itself been derived from? Remarkably, the works were not produced in the chronological order of the Arabic alphabet. Rather, Husin began with *Nun* before proceeding to *Ha'* and continued in this unsequential manner. He felt that removing the obvious progression would infuse a sense of unexpectedness in the individual works, and hence give them each a distinct personality and also foster extra growth for him as an artist. A sell out show, *Awal Hurouf, Asal Hurouf* launched to rave critical reviews and is easily considered as one of the stand out shows of 2013.

Husin is quoted to have said "Art is life, life is art", an apt statement for a man who has chosen to dedicate his life to his art, and is utilizing it as a platform to verbalize issues that are close to his heart. Husin speaks on deeper cultural and religious issues, which society as a whole responds enthusiastically to, marking his discourse as highly relevant within the context of Malaysia today, and thus rendering him as an indirect socio-political commentator. In the moderate Islamic society of Malaysia, Husin's lead in the field of contemporary calligraphy renders him as one of the key artists on the Malaysian Contemporary Art scene today, highlighted by the prodigious content and technique demonstrated in his painting for the Great Malaysia Contemporary Art, *Nota dan Yasin Untukmu*.

5 Nun



6 Ha'



Nota dan Yasin Untukmu

Nota dan Yasin Untukmu is a 2013 mixed media on canvas work by the celebrated contemporary calligraphist, Husin Hourmain. Five panels -to reflect the five pillars of the Islamic faith- have been worked in detailed calligraphic style that has fast become Husin's hallmark to create a personal tribute to his late father and also speak about the artist on three levels: as a son, a Malay and a Muslim.

It is said that everything has a heart, and the heart of the Quran is the (*Surah*) *Yasin*. A prayer to be read for the deceased, the *Yasin* holds strong meaning for the deeply religious Husin on several levels. The first work Husin has created after *Awal Hurouf, Asal Hurouf*, Husin shows an immediate artistic growth by taking the individual Arabic characters of *Ya* and *Sin* that he has painted in the past and paired them to create *Yasin* in large bold font over the main body of canvas in vibrant yellow and blue. Husin likens it to the progression of learning his Arabic alphabet and going on to read the Quran. As a tribute to his late father, it is fitting that the artist is using the title of the prayer he regularly recites in his memory.

The panel bordering the painting on the right is inscribed with stamps from the passport of Husin's father, a journalist who travelled regularly for work. The major stamp on the top corner reads "*Persekutuan Tanah Melayu*" which translates into the Federation of Malaya, as what Malaysia was still called in the 1960's. Husin indirectly touches on the *Tanah Melayu* issue, which is currently a great source of discourse locally. He addresses the issue of Malay rights, touching on the social contract written post-independence between the Malays, colonial powers and immigrant workers, asking for an exploration of how the Malay population will be affected if there is dissolution of this contract.

The fact that his late father acts as the reference point has brought a personal insight into the painting, which is furthered by the indecipherable notes he has written over and around the stamps. Husin records his memories of his father and is speaking to him in a personal manner as a son, underlined by the fact he has signed this painting with his father's nickname for him, "Man".

Nota dan Yasin Untukmu shows Husin's tremendous progression as an artist from his triumphant solo *Awal Hurouf, Asal Hurouf* by combining his previous creative achievements with a development in concept. Husin layers both multiple concepts with physical layering of paint and collage to create an impactful piece that carries personal and social resonance.



Nota dan Yasin Untukmu
365 cm X 213 cm
Mixed Media & Acrylic on Canvas
2013



MOHD NOOR MAHMUD

The North-Eastern state of Kelantan is commonly referred to as the cradle of Malaysian culture, and with good reason. While Kelantan's economy is largely based on agriculture, it's reputation stems from the deep-seated craft traditions that exist in the state, such as *batik*, *kain songket* (fabric woven with gold and silver thread), silversmithing and wood carving. Unsurprisingly, Kelantan also generates a stream of highly accomplished artists, amongst them Mohd Noor Mahmud.

Born in 1964 in Kelantan, Mohd Noor graduated with a BA in Fine Art from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) in 1988 before obtaining a Master's degree from Leicester in 1996. Mohd Noor has exhibited extensively including at the National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur, Sarawak State Museum, Sabah Art Gallery, Maybank Gallery, American Embassy and Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur and won the third prize in the "Pemandangan Malaysia" competition which was held by Kontena Malaysia in 1989.



2 **Siri Imajan**

Mohd Noor's artistic practice is closely linked to the craft conventions and local industry of Kelantan. The influence of the crafts of his home state is evident throughout his career, but can be seen to have begun with his first series, *Siri Imajan* (1988). *Siri Imajan* examines the global trend for jeans, and its impact on the traditional fashion in Malaysia, particularly *batik*. *Batik* has a close place in Mohd Noor's heart, both as a child and at university he predominantly wore batik, which is also reflective of East Coast of Malaysia, and the artist felt *batik* was now being phased out by the increasing demand for jeans. The series forms a commentary not only on the effects of a homogenous global society on local culture, but also on the austere struggle of an artist and student. The amalgamation of jeans and *batik* directly correspond to representations of West and East, and the fact that the artist used one of the only two pairs of jeans he owned as a model in the series, then washed and re wore them, speaks directly to the financial struggles of young artists.

Mohd Noor's subsequent series, *Siri Gua*, again highlights his affection for Kelantan and the influence that complete immersion in the state has on his creativity. In 1989, Mohd Noor visited the Gua Cha in Ulu Kelantan, which is the most actively researched archeological site in the peninsular where Hoabonians and Neolithics and their artifacts were discovered. Among the articles therein are complete human burials and grave commodities such as jewellery, pottery and stone tools, which inspired the artist to experiment with coarse materials such as sawdust mixed with glue in an effort to recreate the atmosphere of the cave and its inhabiting objects, resulting in highly textural, layered works such as *Corak* (1996) which is made up of ten layers to recreate the relief impressions the artist had observed.



1 **Siri Dikir Rambutan Rendang Rebung**

Rather neatly, it was the studies for *Siri Gua* that initially directed Mohd Noor to the motifs in *Colours of Kota Bahru*. The artist compiled ten years of documented research and experimentation to produce a body of works that articulates his deep rooted love for Kelantan, visually explaining the draw the state holds for him via an examination of traditional art forms, culminating in a series of highly detailed mono-prints and collages. The dissection of floral motifs in batik leads to their resulting representational value to Kelantanese society and thus starts new conversations of the specific roles of craft and intellectualism within society today.



3 *Siri Gua Corak I*



4 *Siri Gua Corak II*

Studying Mohd Noor's works opens a discussion about the fusion of traditional symbols and motifs in a highly contemporary presentation, and the resultant contradiction of tradition that appears. The artist feels that it is this paradox, coupled with a thorough understanding of the formal aspects of technique that enable him to produce truly original works. Indeed the weight attached to technique and skill is evident from the stunning attention to detail and patient layering processes Mohd Noor diligently applies in his practice.

Mohd Noor speaks of juxtapositions within art, between the raw and refined and harshness and beauty, which correspond directly with his concepts of peripheral cultures, established craft and art, and the evolution process as a whole. He believes any individual piece of art is intrinsically infused with the spirit of it's creator, as a pictorial representation of the artist's experiences both spiritual and perceptive. His ability to attach a personal significance within a broader context of society, religion, culture and time lead to the creation of thought provoking art which initially attracts his audience via their stunning visual before quietly slipping in the layers of embedded meaning, leading him to be considered not only a master of contemporary Malaysian art but also a leading commentator on the growing landscape that is twenty first century Malaysia in an increasingly culturally borderless world.

Alun I

The eminent mixed media artist Mohd Noor Mahmud continues his exploration of traditional craft techniques in representing contemporary social themes with his work *Alun I*. The artist mixes acrylic with sawdust on canvas to achieve a raw, gravelly effect, which contrasts with the feminine colour palette employed, and is nudged closer to the traditional process of wood carving.

Measuring 183 cm X 122 cm, *Alun I* reinforces Mohd Noor's method of creating within the framework of traditional craft, and then contemporizing it in order to highlight the underlying social commentary. Previously, Mohd Noor favoured working with fabric and *batik* which incorporated floral icons, but in this new work has moved closer to operating in the context of wood working, while retaining the essence of the floral elements formerly observed. The artist remarks that medium is crucial as a vehicle to communicate the content of his message, and in this vein the evolution of his methods reflect his personal growth and reveal new depths to his artistic abilities.

Mohd Noor views art as an artifact whose purpose is to communicate to the audience the implications of both the era in which it was created as well as the personality of the artist himself. He juxtaposes refinement and beauty with roughness and boldness to create understandings of levels both intellectual and visual. *Alun I* demonstrates this with its highly granular canvas surfaces, evoking natural textures found in rock formations, which could almost be seen as ongoing without the softness of the colours in the finish and the hint of a floral motif which vaguely recalls a likeness with *batik*, which he has employed in past works such as *Siri Dikir Rambutan Rendang: Rebung* (2008/2009).

By fusing traditional methods and motifs with a contemporary arrangement, Mohd Noor simultaneously opposes the movement of tradition and sparks new creations. Highlighting his statement that "the focus of material usage as medium is important in the process of production", he presents to his audience evidence of his thorough knowledge of the physical characteristics of his materials as more than an added element, culminating in the presentation of new artwork that beautifully describes the shifting scene in contemporary Malaysia by marrying convention with innovation.

Alun I
183 cm X 122 cm
Acrylic on Sandust on Canvas
2011



SHOOSHIE SULAIMAN



Arguably the most prominent contemporary Malaysian artist on the international art scene today is Susyilawati Sulaiman, or as she is popularly known, Shooshie. Famed for her highly personal, narrative works which consist of paintings and installations, Shooshie embodies the true spirit of an artist through her thorough understanding of her craft, the immeasurable depth with which she conceptualizes and the magnetic connection she establishes with her spell bound audience.

Born in Muar in 1973, Shooshie is of mixed Malay and Chinese heritage, a fact she has drawn on in works such as *Siapa? [emak saya Cina, bapak saya Melayu]* (*Who? [my mother is Chinese, my father is Malay]*), which combined both Chinese and Malay elements to speak about the artist's quest to reconcile both cultural identities within herself. Indeed, in the tradition of female artists, who tend to produce extremely personal bodies of work, Shooshie consistently draws on her own memories, experiences and reactions, yet is gifted with the ability to involve the audience within the artworks themselves, often times with installations which are site specific or include intimate contact in some form between viewer and artwork.

1 Darkroom



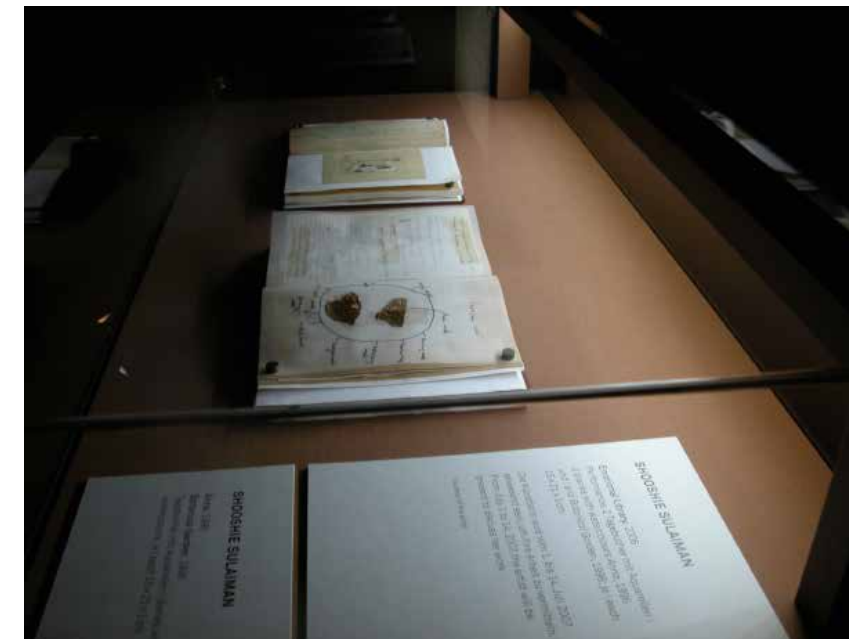
Critical acclaim began pouring in for Shooshie not long after graduating with a BA in Fine Art from the MARA University of Technology (UiTM) in 1996. 1997 brought the National Art Gallery Malaysia's Young Contemporaries Award and participation in the Philip Morris exhibition. Since then, Shooshie has partaken in numerous exhibitions and residencies, both in Malaysia and internationally, and is noted as the first ever South East Asian artist to be invited by the curators of the tremendously prestigious Documenta 12 in 2007. One of the most highly anticipated shows on the international art circuit is Documenta, which only takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany, and is affectionately referred to as "The Museum of 100 days" due to its 100 day run of thematic exhibitions of contemporary and modern art.

The extensive list of international exhibitions incorporating Shooshie's work also includes Art Stage Singapore, from the inception of fair, the Singapore Biennale (2011), the Asia-Pacific Triennial (2009-10), Continuities: Contemporary Art of Malaysia At The Turn of The 21st Century, Guangdong Museum of Art and the Florence Biennale (2003). It should be noted that to participate in a single of these events is a major endorsement of an artist by the international community, therefore the repeated recognition of Shooshie by the art world at large serves as a ringing endorsement of the caliber of artist she is.



2 Muar Art Kindergarten (top)

3 Emotional Library (bottom)





1 Rumah Sulaiman di Belakang Kedai Ah Guat

Shooshie produces paintings and drawing which, despite being small in comparison to the often large scale works Malaysian artist lean towards, are full of a raw energy that fills them with personality. Her installations on the other hand are extensive, both in size, often filling entire rooms, and in content, with their intimate insight into the artist herself. At Documenta 12 she showcased her seminal *Emotional Library*, comprised of diaries titled *Anna and Botanical Garden*. In an example of the contact she offers her audience *Emotional Library* featured a curtained area, not unlike a Church's confessional, in which they may peruse the diaries and converse with the artist. This theme was explored further in 2008 when Shooshie produced a sequel of sorts in the form of *Emotional Baggage*, where she journeyed with 16 of her private journals to Japan to exhibit in The National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo.

In addition to being a highly sought after artist, Shooshie is an award winning expert curator, having been awarded the National Art Award (Young Curator) at the 8th National Art Award, The Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture Malaysia in 2009. In Kuala Lumpur she runs 12, an exhibition and project space that has given support to and collaborated with other celebrated artists such as Fadli Yusoff, thus cementing her intrinsic value to the art community as a whole.

Shooshie has recently joined the stable of highly regarded Japanese gallery Tomio Koyama, whose roster includes superstar names such as Yoshimoto Nara. As the eyes of the international community focus on contemporary Malaysian art, it is clear that Shooshie, who has been described as an artist's artist, is a prime candidate for the one to be watching.

Demokrasi ke 13 & Propaganda ke 13

Demokrasi ke 13 and *Propoganda ke 13* are two of a series of six mixed media works by internationally renowned artist, Shooshie Sulaiman. Created after the 2013 Malaysian general elections, they reflect Shooshie's ongoing quest to document her life and the events that shape her world.

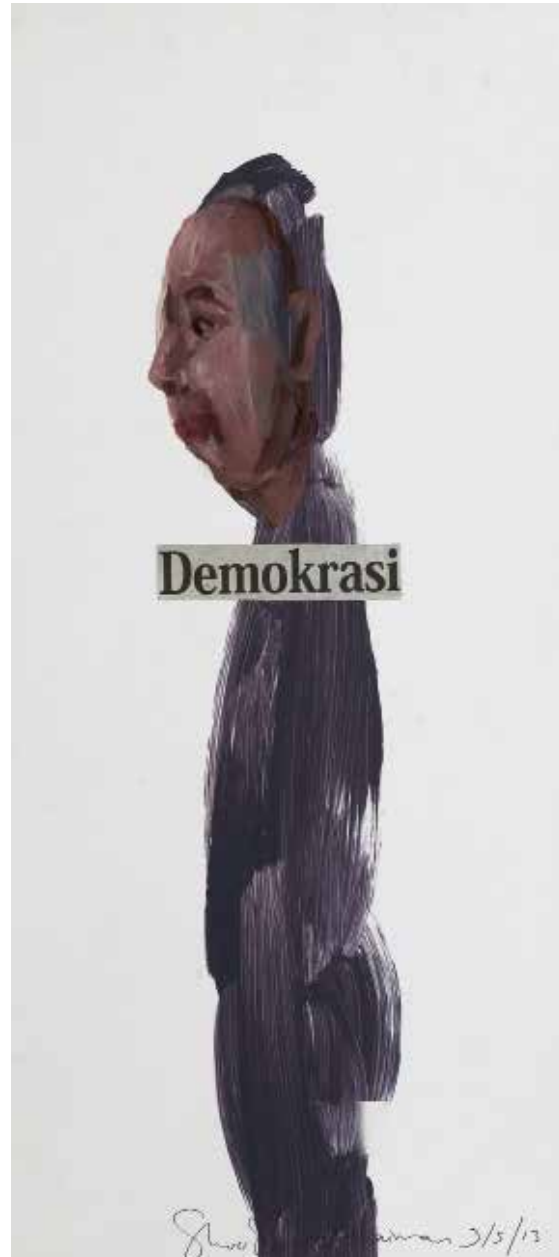
Each work measures at 46 cm x 21 cm in size and feature a caricature like figure freely painted in profile against a stark white background. *Demokrasi ke 13* has the word "Demokrasi" cut from a newspaper headline and pasted across the middle of the image over the figure while *Propoganda ke 13* has the word "Propaganda" featured in the exact same composition. It is interesting to note that Shooshie tends to produce artwork at the extreme limits of the size spectrum. Recently, she has been producing room size installations such as *Kindergarten Muar*, which she showcased at Art Stage Singapore in early 2013, and yet here she delivers a strong impact via smaller portrait works, which none the less effectively open the discourse on democracy and public perceptions, especially in Malaysian society.

The juxtaposition of the two words *Demokrasi* and *Propoganda* are highly efficient in summing up Shooshie's main point of contention within her new mini series: the ideal of democracy is being used as a political propaganda tool. The ideals of democracy, those of equality, liberty and freedom, are meant to be positive. However, Shooshie contends that by its overuse in a political arena, the meaning flips into a negative propaganda based outlook. The advocates of particular political outlooks, by re-iterating the term democracy to energize support and emotion among constituencies, overlook the purity of the ideal and instead exploited the principle for political gain, in Shooshie's opinion.

The crux of the matter can be summed up thusly, is it possible to produce a utopian democracy? The artist questions what are the elements for democracy to flourish, and what are the elements for a progressive, successful society to flourish? Shooshie questions the need for hierarchal systems within society to exist, and ultimately the responsibility citizens must shoulder in educating themselves and understanding the agendas of political parties from an unemotional standpoint, so that they will be equipped to make the choices that are most beneficial to the population as a whole.

Having closely followed the highly anticipated 2013 Malaysian general election, Shooshie's natural response was to document her feelings and findings in this series of mixed media works. Internationally renowned for her thought provoking works that not only embrace Malaysian history, society and development, but also push for greater awareness and education. Shooshie raises the critical issue of democracy and propaganda emerging hand in hand, the shades of grey that colour political landscapes world wide and the importance of awareness amongst individual citizens. Her ability to marry content and execution on these powerful small-scale works underline the reasons why Shooshie is one of the most eagerly watched stars of Malaysian Contemporary Art scene.

Demokrasi ke 13
46 cm X 21 cm
Oil on Boxboard & Newspaper Cutting
2013



Propaganda ke 13
46 cm X 21 cm
Oil on Boxboard & Newspaper
Cutting
2013

SUHAIMI FADZIR



Archipainting can be defined as the blending of fine art principles with the structural and spatial intricacies of architecture to create paintings, as is seen in the large scale three dimensional works of Suhaimi Fadzir. Trained as an architect but living as an artist, Suhaimi marries the two creative practices with his dual life in Malaysia and America to create compelling relief like works that burst with inferences to history, society and his own experiences of the two cultures.

Suhaimi has exhibited internationally in several solo and group shows, among them The Dublin Biennale where he won the Dublin Biennial Award of Excellence in 2012, the prestigious 12th and 13th Venice Biennale (Architecture), Venice, Italy in 2010 and 2012, as well as alongside photographer, Ansel Adams in America and was granted the Art Saint Louis Residency programs in the USA. His work has been extensively collected in public and private collections in Malaysia, Korea, Ireland, China, USA, Indonesia, Singapore, UK, Japan, Philippine, Spain, Uzbekistan, Germany and Mexico.

Suhaimi was trained as an architect in the 1980's at the Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri; despite that he has always viewed himself foremost as an artist. Personifying a modern nomad, Suhaimi, who is from Perak, maintains two studios, one in Malaysia and one in America. His constant shift and cultural receptiveness in between the two countries offers him unique insights into local social themes, be they environmental, political or historical, and allows him to merge them with Western art, architecture, abstract expressionism and pop icon references. In his own words, travel creates discourse and discussion that enhances his understanding of his subject and audience that help him to produce work that is highly relatable and entertaining yet filled with cultural resonance.

1 Reflection



2 Defense

An architectural background is evident in the construction of monument-like structures on Suhaimi's canvases. His works are a fusion of art and architecture, stemming from his curiosity in the world around him. Suhaimi's early series *Kehidupan* explores relationships between people, objects and the environment. Featuring collage and assemblage work in an earthy colour palette, found objects explode from the background in animated compositions, enhanced by raw charcoal marks and expressionist brushstrokes. This progression neatly segues into the aptly named *Object* series, an amalgamation of sculptural works such as *Reflection* which heave with objects such as salvaged metal rods, Plexiglas, ladders and cement, the rough metals and architectural elements commenting on international politics, climate change and cultural upheavals.

2010 ushered in Suhaimi's *RTFO* series- *Recycled Toys and Found Objects*. It has been said that contemporary art thrives on contradiction, whether between concept or medium, and this is exemplified in the juxtaposition of cheery childhood icons alongside cast off building materials. Suhaimi utilizes the contrast stemming from the innocence of children's playthings sat alongside items one can imagine were left behind from the destruction of a man made building to discuss the aftermath of a natural disaster and open the possibility of human redemption that can be found within. Works such as *Defense* incorporate toy robots and green glass on a background of splattered paint, twisted metal rods and parts of a ladder.

The artist shows the development of his colour palette from the monochromatic earth-based tones of his earlier series into brighter shades that emphasize feeling of chaos and energy. This also marks the beginning of his study of existing artifacts applied directly onto the surface instead of paint as the basis for his colour fields via the intense green glass, red tin sheeting and colourful toy robots neatly lined up across the main body of the canvas. In 2010, the *RTFO* series was exhibited alongside Ansel Adam's photography at the Schmidt Art Centre in America, a major endorsement of the quality this body of work possesses.

2012 saw Suhaimi being awarded with the prestigious Smithsonian Fellowship nomination for his in depth research on the Orang Asli of Malaysia and comparisons between indigenous tribes here in Malaysia and in Africa. This research ties in with his *Merdeka* series and exemplifies the value of society, culture and history to Suhaimi as an artist.

Harimau

Harimau is a 2013 mixed media on canvas artwork by Suhaimi Fadzir. It forms part of the artist's *Merdeka* series, which attempts to reconcile the Malaysian constitution in its original form with the manner in which it is implemented, and speak of the importance of national pride within our society.

Harimau is the Malay term for tiger, and imprinted across the entire background of the canvas is a stalking tiger. Above and around him are rows of smaller, identical tigers. Haphazardly plastered across the painting are small reflective rectangles, closer inspection reveals these to be razor blades. A neat grid of toy soldiers march over the tigers and razors, and the piece is finished off with a neon light that snakes around the soldiers and main tiger. The use of the soldiers is a direct link to Suhaimi's *Toy* series, and together with the printed tigers, mirror-like blades and neon light fixture act as the colour palette. Indeed, Suhaimi is famed for experimenting with found objects and media as alternatives to acrylics and oils to create his colour fields.

Creating layers of metaphors from mixed mediums and symbols is a specialty of Malaysian contemporary artists, and is highly evident in *Harimau*. Here, the tiger is equated to the *Orang Asli* in East Malaysia. Having spent the time doing research on the aboriginals in Malaysia, work for which Suhaimi received a nomination for the prestigious 2012 Smithsonian Fellowship, he feels that despite their passive, content nature, they are being intruded on by outside elements. Their habitats have been compromised by the building of dams, chopping down of trees and over fishing. There is a clear and obvious parallel to the tiger as these activities have encroached on their territories as well, thus endangering their very existence. Due to deforestation, tigers now wander into *Orang Asli* villages with a frightening sense of ease, threatening and attacking the villagers. Even though the *Orang Asli* appear to live much in the way they always have, the development of Malaysia has impacted them on fundamental levels.

The regimented lattice of toy soldiers in army green reinforces the notion that strong countries have strong armies. A structured framework speaks of the structure and planning that is synonymous with army life, and the high levels of precision and unquestioning obedience to instructions and strategy. Malaysia's military forces are well respected internationally, underlining Suhaimi's desire to infuse his *Merdeka* series with points of national pride for his audience. At first glance, *Harimau* appears to be almost pop-like, utilizing trendy icons to create an easily appreciable art work. It is a true testament to Suhaimi's skills in assemblage, the depth of his research and commitment to understanding the significance of patriotism that he is able to comment on the effect of modernization on culture, the importance of safeguarding our natural environments and national pride within the outline of relatable representations to draw in his audience, before transmitting the extent of his vision upon them.

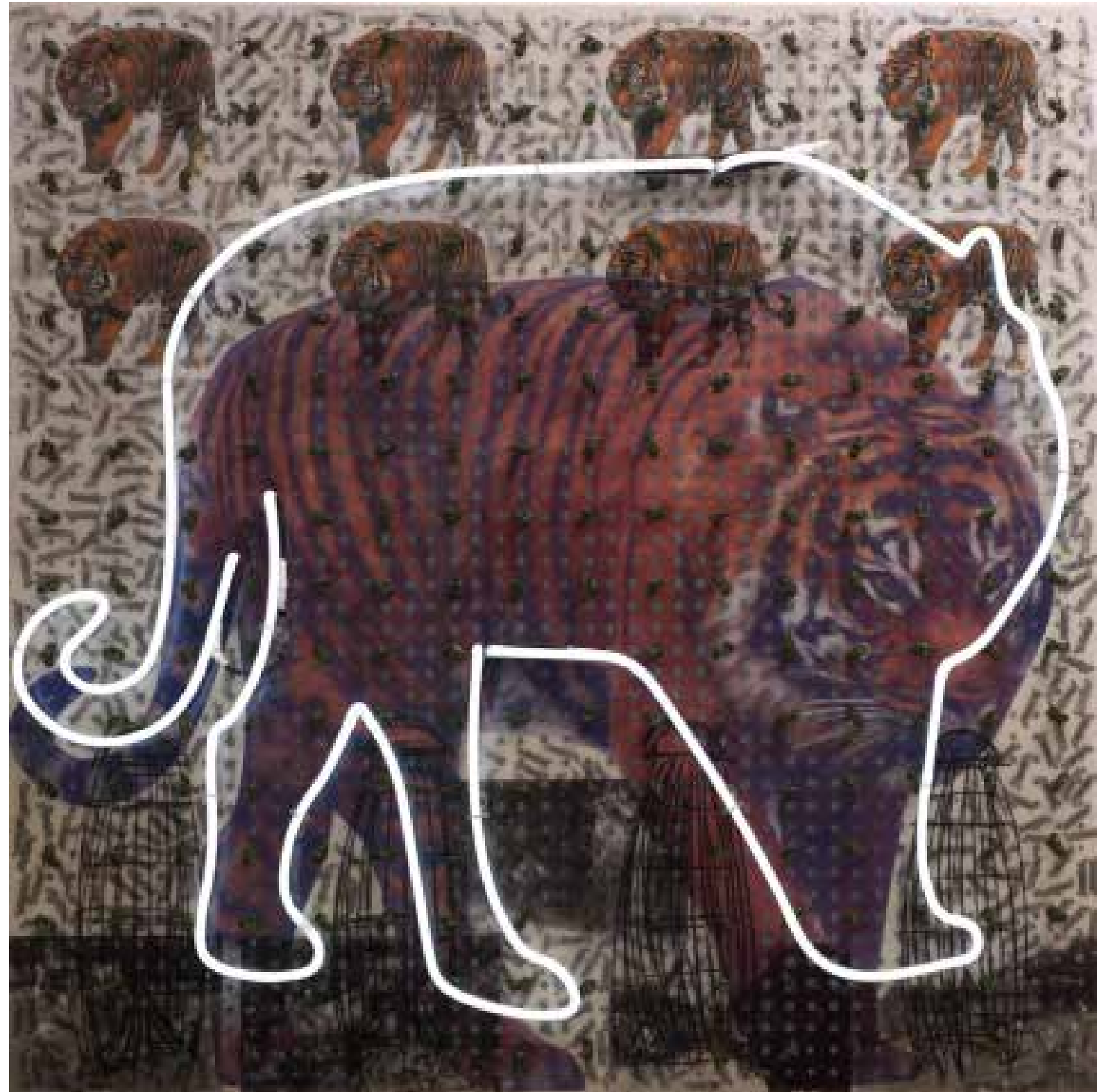


3 Freedom : Native Occupier Immigrant

"*Merdeka*" is the Malay term for independence and commonly denotes Malaysia's independence from the powers of colonial Britain. The artist wanted to explore the Malaysian constitution in terms of the original structure, what it was meant to convey and the subsequent interpretations in this current times. From his extensive research, he has produced a body of work that is strongly rooted in the assemblage style that is now clearly typical to him, while incorporating strong Malaysian iconography via the Malaysian flag, images of Tunku Abdul Rahman, gasoline lamps, rubber tapping knives and fish traps which clearly symbolize the way Malaysia was at the time of Independence. The installation entitled *Apa Erti Kemerdekaan: Pribumi Penjajah Pemandatang?* from this series exhibited at the Dublin Biennale projects Suhaimi's views on politics and the weight he attributes to our national pride.

Suhaimi has expressed his admiration for artists such as Marcel Duchamp and Robert Rauschenberg, indeed parallels can be drawn between their approaches in terms of structure within paintings or the re purposing of everyday artifacts to a higher conceptual value. With a strong belief that "art doesn't have to be traditional" Suhaimi pushes forward not only in the execution of his work but also in his research and the deepening of his conceptual understandings in an effort to underline his view that it is always the next work he produces that will be the most important, and keeps his audience keenly anticipating his coming direction.

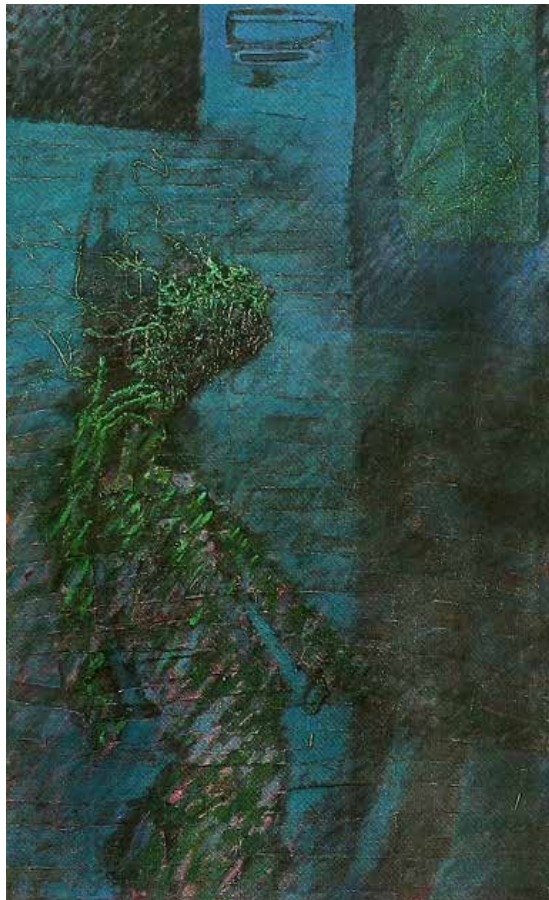
Harimau
150 cm X 150 cm
Mix Media on Canvas with Toy Soldiers & Neon Lights
2013



TAN CHIN KUAN



1 Blue night I



"A successful painting must be one that is shockingly impressive." This statement by the late Lee Ku Chan impressed a young Tan Chin Kuan so much that it has formed the cornerstone of Chin Kuan's artistic practice. Over the length of his career as an artist, Chin Kuan has strived to bring together aspiration, tone, form and execution to create a perfect storm of elements that will not only shock his audience but also establish the basis for dialogue therein.

The concept of Shock Art as it were is art that incorporates unsettling imagery, sound or scent to upset complacency and energize debate. Possibly one of the earliest examples of Shock Art is *Fountain* by Marcel Duchamp in 1917. A displayed porcelain urinal signed "R.Mutt", *Fountain*, is regarded by some art historians and theorists of the avant-garde, such as Peter Bürger, as as one of the most important art works of the 20th century. An article published at the time, which is thought to have been written by Duchamp, states, "Mr Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bathtub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' shop windows. Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain has no importance. He CHOSE it.

He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view - created a new thought for that object.' (*The Richard Mutt Case, The Blind Man, New York, no.2, May 1917, p.5.*) The underlying point in Shock Art though is always the context within which it is presented.

Context as the underlying point of art that shocks it's viewers is expressed in Chin Kuan's *Blue Night* series. Chin Kuan himself explains "Only those artists who understand the tragedy of life can create works which can astonish people, and give rise to the resonance which shakes the very selves of the appreciators, who similarly cannot escape the tragedy of life." The works are saturated with the colour blue which gives them a strong melancholic atmosphere.

The *Blue Night* series is opened with *Blue Night 1*, a work Chin Kuan describes as an almost 'horror painting'. The concept behind the painting first came to him when he was hospitalized and observed the scenes of death and mortality that surrounded him. He channeled the idea of *momento mori* into a painting that expressed his feelings of fear and loneliness and, more importantly, paved the way for the explosive collection that was to follow.

Continuing the theme of loneliness, Chin Kuan also began to explore his own character as an artist and also aggressively questioning himself and society which can be viewed as the initial steps to his development as an important socio-political commentator. While identifying his character via his work, Chin Kuan came up with the perfect symbol, the horse. Being born in the Chinese lunar year of the horse, Chin Kuan incorporates horse imagery into his works to describe himself, whether emotionally or reacting to issues.

2 Blue Night 9- Death of the White horse



The first major work that demonstrates this is *Blue Night 9, death of the White horse*. Underpinning the relevance of this work is that it is the first to combine a two dimensional and three dimensional space to better connect with the audience and impress upon them the full impact of his message. *Blue Night 9* was a major critical success and satisfied Chin Kuan's experimental streak during this crucial period in his career.

Buoyed by the success of his foray into three dimensional installation, Chin Kuan moved into a highly experimental phase in his career. The notion of providing works that encouraged audience participation eventually led to the creation of works such as *Blue Night 11: Tragic 2* which creates an illusion of emotion within a space. The spatial involvement in such a personal piece, Chin Kuan is putting his individual tragedies of poverty and an unsupportive art community in relation, which allows for a particular connection between the artist and his audience, whose reactions have been established as essential to Chin Kuan's artistic practice.

Critical accomplishments were piling up high for the young Chin Kuan by now, yet commercial success still eluded him, as it did for many of his talented art school peers who were switching to different careers at this point. Steadfast in his belief that he was meant to be an artist, Chin Kuan wondered if he would ever be able to create what he regards as salable art, to appease the market. Chin Kuan held solo exhibits, first at the Creative Centre and later at NN Gallery, where he switched his main medium from his dramatic, interactive installations to sculpture and painting, and found a measure of commercial success therein. It is heartening to note however that he continued to search for avenues to express himself freely during this time, accepting the Artist in Residence position at Curtin University School of Visual Art in 1992 and the 4TH ASIAN art show residency at Fukuoka Art Museum in Japan, two instances where he was able to produce highly conceptual performance installation pieces.

3 The Soul Under Midnight



While declaring his appreciation for artists such as Edvard Munch, Edgar Degas, a pre-surrealist Salvador Dali and Giriko, as well as his artist wife Eng Hwee Chu, Chin Kuan maintains an independent approach to his art practice. He strongly believes artists have an experimental spirit that they are duty bound to explore, and channels his own visions through his searing performances, installations, sculptures and paintings while maintaining his fierce dedication to conveying his vision and narrative to his audience in the most arresting manner he can.

A celebrated artist, Chin Kuan works across all mediums but is particularly noted for his seminal paintings and installations, for which he has won many awards. In both 1989 and 1990, Chin Kuan won the Major Award for Young Contemporaries at The National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur, going on to be presented with the Minor Award in both the categories of Painting and Sculpture at the Salon Malaysia 3 at the National Art Gallery Kuala Lumpur in 1991. 2001 saw him winning the Bronze Prize at the Osaka Triennale in Japan. Chin Kuan has exhibited internationally on numerous occasions including a solo exhibit at the Fukuoka Art Museum in Japan, the Osaka Triennale in 1993 and 2001, the Kwang Ju Biennale in Korea in 1995 and in Australia and London, in addition to frequently exhibiting in Malaysia.

Museums that collect Chin Kuan's works vary from the Fukuoka Art Museum in Japan, The Osaka Prefectural Government & Osaka Foundation of Culture in Japan, The Singapore Art Museum and the National Art Gallery in Malaysia, as well as important private collections such as the Aliya and Farouk Khan Collection in Malaysia.



4 Symbol of Communication

5 Blue Night- Tragic II



Rainy Day

Rainy Day is a 2012 oil on canvas painting by Tan Chin Kuan. Adding to the weight of his title and content, Chin Kuan has employed a palette of soothing pastels in dark hues to paint an emotionally direct work that express his current emotional state in a newly developed atmospheric technique which impresses an all encompassing sense of thunderous rainfall on the viewer.

The audience's first clue that they are looking at a painting that discusses the artist's own emotions is the dead horse that lies across the bottom third of the canvas. Chin Kuan was born in the Chinese year of the horse and often utilizes it as a symbol when referring to himself and his reaction to his surroundings or events in his artwork. In *Rainy Day*, Chin Kuan's dead horse describes his sense of being lost as an artist when he first moved to Seremban. He felt his artistic vision was sliding downhill, reflected by the death of the horse. Standing centrally in the canvas, just in front of the horse is a self-portrait of Chin Kuan. Despite the heavy rain and animal carcass behind him, and the slightly bowed head stance, the viewer is given the impression of the strength of the central figure and his desire to move forward and rise again artistically.

Rainy Day is an emotional piece for Chin Kuan. The beginning of his new series of works, Chin Kuan has used it as an opportunity to create a personal narrative that more essentially acts as an introduction for the body of work he is currently producing. The focus here is to develop and perfect his medium, particularly the atmosphere of heavy rain permeating the entire canvas, in order to subsequently be capable of efficiently expressing the socio-political commentary his art is famous for.

Chin Kuan strives to create art that shocks his audience and speaks directly to every individual on any level. With *Rainy Day*, he has again succeeded in painting a picture that forces the viewer to pause and analyze the scene before them, trying to understand Chin Kuan's thought process and inner emotions. Chin Kuan asks the viewer to soak in the atmosphere of heavy rain and the icons that represent both his inner self as well as his physical reality to see the boiling point he has reached as an artist before rising again to continue with the creation of his seminal work that strives to act as a commentary on the state of society today.

Rainy Day
189 cm X 132 cm
Oil on canvas
2012



ZULKIFLI YUSOFF

In art, symbols are incorporated as solid visual representations of ideas or concepts that would otherwise be tricky to characterize. In contemporary art, symbols included from both popular culture as well as traditional icons easily categorize an artist's heritage, his views and attitude and immediately open up forums for debate on their hypothesis of contemporary society. Noted international artists with this ability include Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Keith Haring, while in Malaysia one of the most popular contemporary artists who incorporates vivid cultural iconography and symbolism is the celebrated Zulkifli Yusoff.

An eminent artist who has the ability to successfully work across many mediums including painting, sculpture and installation, Zulkifli has won many major awards. In both 1988 and 1989, he was presented with the Major Award for Young Contemporaries at the National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur and in 1992, he gathered three prizes at the third Salon, the Grand Minister's Prize, Major Award and Consolation Prize for sculpture and also won an Honourable Mention in Painting in 1995 at the Philip Morris Awards.



Zulkifli has been invited to participate in several important international exhibitions, most notably at the Venice Biennale in 1997. He has also shown at the Biennale of Visual Arts in Seychelles, the Fukuoka Asian Art Exhibition in Japan, Immunity 11 show at Art Space, Sydney and the First Asia-Pacific Triennale in Brisbane, Australia. Major international institutions, including the Fukuoka Museum of Art and Hiroshima Art Museum in Japan and the Singapore Museum and Gallery, as well as local institutions such as Bank Negara Malaysia and the Kedah State Gallery, collect his work.

Born in Kedah in 1962, Zulkifli's interest in the arts was sparked with a copy of *Art Today* given to him by his father. He went on to study Fine Art at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Malaysia, graduating in 1989, and gained a Masters degree from Manchester Polytechnic in 1991. Zulkifli's father was a key influence in his formative years. A schoolteacher, the elder Yusof was seen as one of the most educated men in their village who disseminated information. He strongly advocated critical thinking, a trait he passed onto his son, along with his interest in politics and sense of nationalism. In a way, Zulkifli emulates his father's work by using his art as a platform to encourage discourse and national pride, and spread knowledge to the younger generation of Malaysians. It should be noted that Zulkifli himself taught for four years at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) before leaving to concentrate full time on his studio practice, he still accepts apprentices into his studio however, which leads him to be an important figure in the development of young contemporary artists.



Zulkifli feels there is an inspired correlation between the artists Ismail Zain, Fauzan Omar and himself. He puts forth that Fauzan Omar, who is an artistic influence on him, was in turn influenced by Ismail Zain, and that in the vein of true artists each has tried to learn from their predecessor and utilize knowledge acquired to travel further on their own artistic journey. Referencing his environment and issues, which always change, helps his work to evolve both conceptually and physically, as the form the works inhabit does not restrain Zulkifli. Commenting "Issue should be greater than form" clarifies why it is he is able to create equally dynamic works in the fields of painting, sculpture and installation.

Perhaps his best-known installation to date is the seminal mixed media work *Don't Play During Maghrib*, which was exhibited at the illustrious Venice Biennale in 1997. Warning children not to play outside at dusk is common in Malay households as it is thought spirits wander around at that time. As a child, Zulkifli's father would call his children in at *Maghrib* time ostensibly because of this, but also to check up on them, were they all right, had they been behaving, and get them ready for dinner and bed. Zulkifli references a behavior that is typical in every Malay childhood, but also understands it as his own father taking responsibility for his children, and imparting the notion that social responsibility begins at home.

Zulkifli continued his foray into installations infused with socio-political themes with 2003's *Hikayat Pelayaran Mushi Abdullah* which is based on the classic story *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah* (1849). This installation is a crucial turning point for the artist in terms of the research based art he produces until today, citing in depth research of text and history as a means to fully comprehend his concept before resolving them in a visual manner. This attitude is explored in further installation works such as the seminal *Pendita* (2011) and *Mereka Mencari Mas*, a sculptural piece questioning devotion to material possessions over religious obligations.



1 **Don't Play During Maghrib**

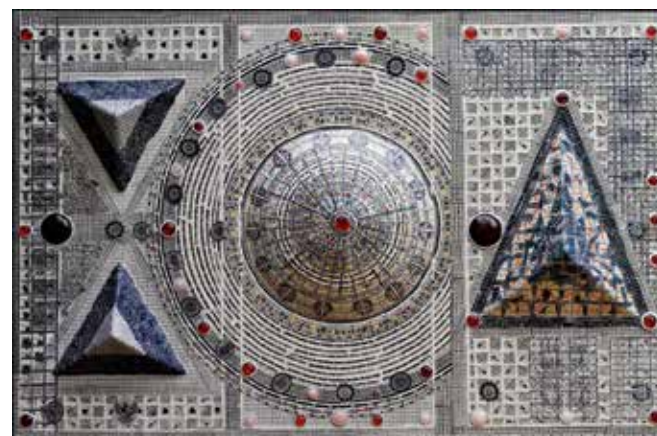
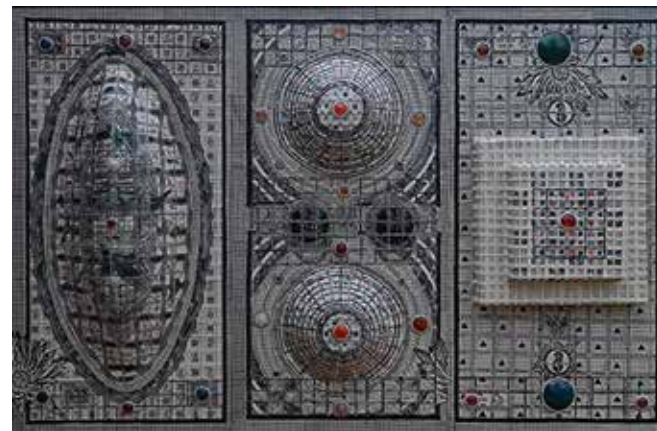
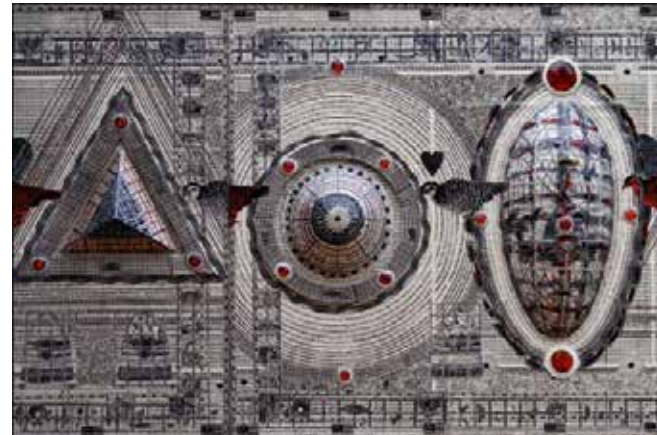
Next Page, Above
2 **Pendita**

2011's installation *Pendita* is the first time we see Zulkifli using *Jawi* on canvas strips in his works, a technique he has continued in his *Rukun Negara* series, including *Rukun Negara: Percaya Kepada Tuhan*, which was showcased at Art Stage Singapore 2013. The *Rukun Negara* series dissects the Malaysian Declaration of National Philosophy, compiled in 1970, to form a continuous conversation on the elements of nation building. Zulkifli draws from personal experience as well as textual inclusions from Usman Awang's and Cairil Anwar's poetry among other media to dissect the true meaning of being Malaysian. The audience is treated to the full range of Zulkifli's artistic practice in this series, from drawing, painting and print, to installation, all derived from his solid research intensive discoveries in the historical and social fields he is deeply theoretically rooted.

Zulkifli strives to use his position as an acclaimed artist to propagate the values he holds in high regard such as patriotism and social awareness as well as awareness on current and historical issues. His practice has evolved over the last two decades from a raw, slightly loose application to a super refined and intricately detailed practice, mirroring his growing confidence and recognition both internationally and locally as a vital component in Malaysia for the art he creates and its resonance within society.

3 Rukunegara 2 Series

Voice 1 (top),
Voice 2 (middle)
Voice 3 (bottom)



Pahang Warrior

Celebrated mixed media artist, Zulkifli Yusoff highlights his dual fascinations with history and Malaysian politics in his latest work *Pahang Warrior*. A large scale five-panel piece, Zulkifli uses multiple techniques he has been developing in the last few years including resin and collaged typographical canvas strips with printing and painting.

The entire background of *Pahang Warrior* is fashioned from strips of canvas that have been printed with *Jawi* script. Zulkifli's new work marks his second foray into the inclusion of *Jawi* script strips, the first being his critical installation *Pendita* which has recently been displayed at the Singapore Art Museum. Both the second and fourth panels are dominated by a main row of organic resin shapes. Through a specific and technical process, the artist utilizes resin elements to both infuse his canvas with colours as well as establish a nostalgic atmosphere.

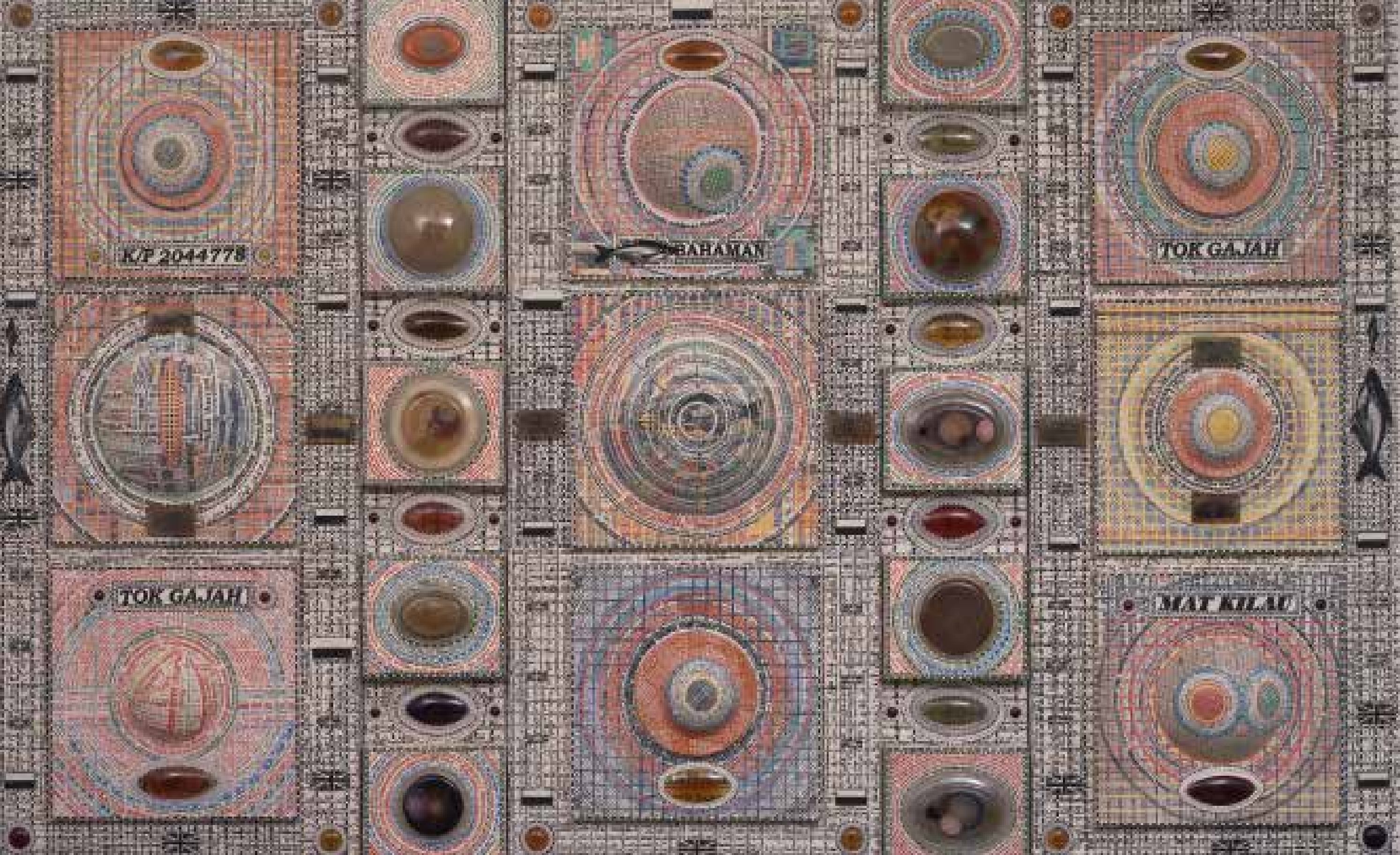
Zulkifli recently exhibited at Art Stage Singapore with works from his *Rukun Negara* series, which were the first of his strip collage work to incorporate colour. *Pahang Warrior* is a crucial development in this series as it furthers his existing palette with newer, brighter hues. It is a physical characterization of Zulkifli's recurring personal challenge to shed old attitudes for new perspectives and methods of expression.

Spaced out at the four corners are the names and references to Mat Kilau, Tok Gajah and Bahaman, four warriors during the British occupation of Malaya who were central to the fight for independence from colonization. Key icons dotted across the work such as the Pahang flag and *Patin* fish allude to the Pahang heritage of the warriors while their strong Islamic roots are reinforced with the use of *Jawi* instead of Romanized typography. As an artist who creates works that are exhaustively researched, Zulkifli has used figures that have extensive historical documentation to educate his audience on Malaysian history. He creates a parallel of sorts between the events of history and his views on the current local political situation, underlining the importance of adhering to the *Rukun Negara* as laid out in Malaysia's constitution particularly the citizen's loyalty to country and King. Zulkifli takes it upon himself to underpin how the actions of these fighters gave rise to the freedoms and privileges enjoyed by Malaysians in contemporary society.

Zulkifli endeavors to use his platform as an artist who enjoys critical success internationally, exemplified by his participation in key art events such as the Venice Biennale, to inform his audience on values he holds dearly, such as the knowledge of history and patriotism. With *Pahang Warrior*, he has succeeded yet again in manifesting his personal principles in a hyper detailed collage work that builds on his previous artistic achievements, both technically and conceptually.



Pahang Warrior
 213 cm X 348 cm
 Resin and Collaged Typographical Canvas Strips with Printing and Painting
 2013



KP 2044778

BAHAMAN

TOK GAJAH

TOK GAJAH

MAT KILAU

LIST OF ARTWORKS

1	Abdul Multhalib Musa				
2	Centrifugal 10 Degrees 120cm x 120cm x 8cm Lasercut Mild Steel with Clear 2k Coat 2005	AFK Collection			
3	Involute 4.0 90cm x 90cm x 34cm Lasercut Mild Steel with Clear 2k Coat 2005	AFK Collection			
4	Twist Red 60cm x 30cm x 30cm Lasercut Mild Steel with Car Paint, Granite Base 2008	AFK Collection			
	Twist Gold 65cm x 65cm x 30cm Lasercut Mild Steel with Car Paint, Granite Base 2008	AFK Collection			
	Ahmad Fuad Osman				
1	Lost Series Identity Crisis 96cm x 155cm Oil on Canvas 1994	AFK Collection			
2	Lost III 95cm x 71cm Oil on Canvas 1994	AFK Collection			
3	Fragile Handle with Care 300cm 350cm Oil on Canvas 1996	AFK Collection			
4	Fatamorgana #2 The State of Confusion 244cm 150cm Oil on Canvas 2006	AFK Collection			
5	Mr D's Last Meal 214cm 869cm Leather Chair, Standing Lamp and Oil on Canvas 2002	AFK Collection			
	Ali Nurazmal Yusoff				
1	Konflik : Which One 60cm x 60 cm (3 panels) Acrylic on Canvas 2007	Artist Collection			
2	Imitation Master After Caravaggio I Oil on Canvas 122cm x 290cm 2009	AFK Collection			
3	Imitation Master After Caravaggio II Oil on Canvas 168cm x 352cm 2012	AFK Collection			
	Eng Hwee Chu				
1	Tragic: People Image on Rocking Horse 102cm x 102cm Acrylic on Canvas 1989	Artist Collection			
2	Black Moon 4 148cm x 214cm Acrylic on canvas 1989	Artist Collection			
3	Black Moon 3 157cm x 147cm Acrylic on Canvas 1989	Artist Collection			
4	Prospect 223cm x 152cm Acrylic on Canvas 1995	Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo			
	Md Fadli Yusoff				
1	Stand and Choose Yourself I 214cm x 326cm Instructional Performance & Acrylic on Canvas 2010	AFK Collection			
2	Stand and Choose Yourself II 214cm x 426cm Acrylic on Canvas 2011	AFK Collection			
	Hamir Soib				
1	Sepat Oh Sepat 171cm x 245cm Oil on Canvas 2006	AFK Collection			
2	Pilihan 305cm x 684cm Oil on Canvas 2005	AFK Collection			
3	4 Qul 330cm x 183cm Acrylic and Bitumen on Canvas 2012	Dato Nazim Razak			
	Husin Hourmain				
1	Zero to Something, Zero to Nothing No.8 127cm x 97cm Acrylic on Canvas 2007	Artist Collection			
2	Allah - Study 150cm x 150cm Acrylic on Canvas 2006	AFK Collection			
3	Allah Hu 153cm x 230cm Acrylic on Canvas 2012	Dato Nazim Razak			
4	Lam Alif 213cm x 168cm Acrylic on Canvas 2011	ArtCube			
5	Nun 152cm 152cm Acrylic on Canvas 2009	ArtCube			
6	Ha' 152cm x 152cm Acrylic on Canvas 2009	Artist collection			
	Mohd Noor Mahmud				
1	Siri Dikir Rambutan Rendang Rebung 183cm x336cm Acrylic on wood on canvas 2008-2009	AFK Collection			
2.	Siri Imajan 122cm x 122cm Mix Media on Canvas 1988	AFK Collection			
3	Siri Gua Corak I 97cm x 66cm Mix Media on Canvas 1996	AFK Collection			
4	Siri Gua Corak II 97cm x 66cm Mix Media on Canvas 1996	AFK Collection			
	Shooshie Sulaiman				
1	Darkroom The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT6), Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia 2007- 2009				
2	Muar Art Kindergarten Johor Installation, site and archival material 2012-2013				
3	Emotional Library Documenta 12 Kassel, Germany 2007				
4	Rumah Sulaiman di belakang kedai Ah Guaf Site specific, Installation and Video Projection Singapore Biennale, 8Q at SAM, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore 2011				
	Suhaimi Fadzir				
1	Reflection 225cm x 390cm Mild Steel with Lacquer 2008 - 2010	Artist collection			
2	Defense 200cm x 135cm Mixed Media on Canvas 2008 - 2010	Artist collection			
3	Freedom; Native Occupier Immigrant Variable Size Mixed Media Installation with Life Birds 2010 - 2012	Artist Collection			
	Tan Chin Kuan				
1	Blue Night I 152cm x 112cm Oil and Mixed Media on Canvas 1987	Artist Collection			
2	Blue Night 9- Death of the White Horse Variable Size Mixed Media 1988	Artist Collection			
3	The Soul Under Midnight 490cm x 220cm Oil on Canvas 1996	National Art Gallery			
4	Symbol of Communication Variable Size Mixed Installation and Performance 1994				
5	Blue Night - Tragic II Variable Size Mixed Media 1989	Fukuoka Asian Art Museum			
	Zulkifli Yusoff				
1	Don't Play During Maghrib 1997				
2	Pendita 270cm x 600cm x 335cm Collage Embossed Dye Printed on Canvas 2011	AFK Collection			
3	Rukunegara 2 Voice 1 122cm x 183cm mixed media, screenprint and acrylic on canvas 2013	AFK Collection			
3	Rukunegara 2 Voice 2 122cm x 183cm mixed media, screenprint and acrylic on canvas 2013	Dato Nazim Razak			
3	Rukunegara 2 Voice 3 122cm x 183cm mixed media, screenprint and acrylic on canvas 2013	AFK Collection			

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Core Design Gallery is an exclusive boutique art gallery that represents the face of Malaysian Contemporary Artists and their cutting edge artworks.

With its main philosophy of holding major shows that have critical values and museum qualities, Core Design Gallery aims to create massive awareness on the significance of Malaysia Contemporary Art through solid art management and important publications.

The gallery is committed to promoting and developing the artists to achieve international standard and global recognition for their quality artworks.