

AGAN HARAHAP
ALBERT YONATHAN SETYAWAN
JULIAN ABRAHAM "TOGAR"
MELLA JAARSA
MELATI SURYODARMO

30.09-01.11.2020

The art industry has grown quite substantially in the last few decades, to the point that the supply and demand for artworks, both in terms of the market and publication platforms see them in an accelerated circulation. The speed with which artworks exchange hands, spaces, ownership, and digital screens, whilst exciting, is indisputably fast and often overlooking an obvious but also inherently accomplished state of the artworks as they leave the artists' respective studios: the artworks are decidedly finished, their conception completed.

Paisley-Livingstone suggested that an artwork is finished once the artist has acquired a "completion disposition"¹ — an inclination grounded in certain cognitive mechanisms, to refrain from making significant changes in the work. This was further observed by Hudson Hick's additional commentary², that the process of making artwork is completed when: (i) the work is published (i.e. made available to the public) with the artist's consent and (ii) the artist does not state that the artwork is incomplete. The perennial issue of completion is an aspect of an artist's authorship that is often taken for granted. We are so used to seeing artworks as end products presented at exhibitions, that we do not give much thought to their states of completion. Conventionally the premise is, if the artworks are displayed/published, they must be finished, unless, as Hick insisted, it is stated otherwise.

In an incomplete work that is by nature additive, any absent details can be assumed to hold a high value, as each confirms the infinite probabilities to what could be. Conversely, an incomplete work that is by nature subtractive suggests that its present state then incorporates unnecessary excess to what it veritably should be. As such, the assessment of whether or not an artwork is complete is central to its genesis. How do artists come to the certainty that they were not going to move backward or forward? What constitutes completion?

In High Renaissance, as far as maker's marks go, there are even optional inscriptions demonstrating renditions of completion: *Pietà*

(1498-1499/1500) displays Michelangelo's much-discussed signature that includes the imperfect tense *faciebat* ("was making") instead of the perfect tense *fecit* ("made by"), to classify that the making of the work is never fully complete and past, but always active and ongoing. Pliny the Elder observed this as a sign of modesty but also as a precaution for any defect noted — in that the artist may one day correct it in the face of criticism. It is fascinating to pause here and muse about the denotation of authorship on finished artworks that are and will always be in a perpetual state of completed incompleteness. One particular work of Albert Yonathan Setyawan thus comes to mind.

Albeit being known for his wall and floor ceramic pieces that exhibit permanent forms of either fired or glazed clay, Albert had long been interested in the idea of the transient — the fleeting. In *Transitory Nature of Earthly Joy* (2017), the digital monitors initially show five different shapes of raw clay vessels that he hand-built accurately, still adhering to his art labour as if they were en route to being inserted into an oven firing. However, water is poured into the interior of the unfired vessels instead, and we witness their very slow but certain dissolution — deceptively mimicking a still image — before eventually reforming into their initial recognizable shape through Albert's reversed loop. With different durations on each channel, the five videos show different stages of the process after several loops. Refreshingly then, we are able to digest an artwork in the brink of inception in its fullness, not through an archived documentary, but by looking at the completed work.

Never reaching Albert's usual final stage of firing, the clay stays in their "perpetual state of form and formless, of becoming and unbecoming", thus although the actual physical vessels have disintegrated, Albert reached the dematerialization of the process when he captured an entropic cycle of time. With this, we are reminded that not all completed

¹The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Volume 72, Issue 3, pp 225-350 (Summer 2014)

²The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Volume 66, No. 1, pp 67-76 (Winter 2008)

work possess observable properties that stay constant. In fact, only through impermanence, can this work be completed.

In his other work, an Acousmonium performance with students from Kyoto Seika University in 2016 led to *Terrene* (2020), (currently) a 3-track album that collages composition of sounds from different percussive instruments (pottery, sand, broken ceramics, Shruti box, Tibetan singing bowl) as well as human breath. Whilst the recording of the improvised performance was done instinctively and had to be completed when their time slot at the studio ended, Albert reached another form of completion when he inserted sounds from outside of the studio, finalizing the composition for *Earthy Radiance* (2020), a track that can be listened to in this exhibition. This completion may be temporary though as Albert feels that he may arrive at another one with more variations of sounds. Nevertheless, the tracks are made available to be downloaded and sampled online, and as such, may fuel the finishing of works from other artists.

Another form of completion that is very much dependable on the artist's authority can be seen from Agan Harahap's four portraits in this exhibition.

Before we delve further, let us rewind to the year 2011 with the exhibition *New Pop, New World* at Element Art Space, Singapore, where he first displayed *Happy Religion* (2011) — a body of work that observed the commodification of religion as an object in mass media and the entertainment industries. After watching Morgan Freeman's portrayal as God in Bruce Almighty and after reading a 2001 Time article entitled *Jesus is Back and She's Chinese*³, Agan realized that the image of Jesus Christ and its various verifications had become an endless ongoing debate, leading him to no longer contesting the details of God's appearance and embracing his religion in a more humane way. He was then reminded of

a series of Caravaggio paintings that depicted Jesus in religious scenes⁴ and decided to appropriate their compositions but replace Jesus with a contrasting figure, modelled by an office boy from Trax Magazine, where Agan was working at the time. Intriguingly, the bald and small-eyed model could not be further from the conventionally accepted, bearded, long-haired Caucasian Jesus.



Agan Harahap, *Doubting Thomas*, 2011

Fast-forward to 9 years later, what we have here are original portraits of the model from the studio shoot. Much like in his other works, he had exercised his artist's intention in repurposing "found" images — albeit these were his and purposely made in the past. This time, Agan recontextualized the depiction of the model, not as Jesus whose image was debated, but as a figure whose mere presence is much needed today. In the form of an authentic portrait, this "flexible", more "humane" Jesus can be present any time, at any setting, even in a pandemic lockdown. Completely omitted from any digital intervention and historical narration that made up the previous series, to Agan, these portraits can now stand completed, as is. Through this, and within this context of assessing whether or not a work is finished, it is apparent that although famous

³ Forney, Matthew, (2001, November). Jesus is Back and She's Chinese. TIME.

⁴ *The Taking of Christ* (1602), *Supper at Emmaus* (1601), *Doubting Thomas* (1601-02), *Ecce Homo* (1605-06)

for it, his digital imaging prowess does not mark its completion. The visibility of Agan's thoughts and authorship does. As he resolves the urgency for an image of a non-contextual Jesus that is fitting for any given day, these portraits transitioned from being part of the preparation for the previous body of work, to a completely new work on its own.

Drummer's Gonna Drum #2

(2020) by Julian Abraham "Togar" is also a work that continued from its predecessor. The first *Drummer's Gonna Drum* was initially exhibited in *Sebelum Gendang (Before the Drum)*, an exhibition at Kedai Kebun Forum in 2017 when he was investigating the physicality of sound. In the first version, we find a video of Togar (a drummer himself) beating on selected surfaces as he walked across Yogyakarta's Javanese cosmology, from the northern Mount Merapi to the central part of Keraton and to the southern Kidul Sea. From the absence of a number in the title, Togar did not have a presumption that this exploration was going to be done in series. However, as he settled in Rijksakademie, Amsterdam at the beginning of 2020, he turned to this first quest that makes sound visible, as a method in getting to know his new surroundings. One day, Togar found an old plaque that marked the locations of 26 old windmills spread around the city, including one at the academy he is currently residing in. This became the base route that triggered ***Drummer's Gonna Drum #2*** (2020).

In retrospect, Togar felt that this second work was already completed in his mind as he already went through the motions in the first one. Executing it the second time, however, uncovered findings and made apparent a few things. One, that listening to his surroundings — that is, listening actively, with intention — had become a necessity. Two, the work's completion does not hinge on the mere accomplishment of a given route. As the

person documented, he had to be in constant conversation with both his cameraman and sound person and together negotiate the visual and audio variations, in situ. Each decision of completion was attributed to all three reaching "*titik yang enak*" (the good point), including enjoying an impromptu jamming session with a tram conductor before recording the beating of the tram rail.



A map of the walls of Amsterdam showing the location of 26 bastions, on top of which windmills were placed. Source: Julian Abraham "Togar"

Observation on a work's completion also transcends the boundaries and limitations of presentation, in an exploration of themes that utilizes a range of medium, as seen from most of Mella Jaarsma's works. Employing drawings, paintings, costumes, installations as well as performative installations as one series is part of Mella's belief that oftentimes one cannot convey everything in one work. And at times, her process of completion arrives as she takes distance and reevaluates the work as it meets the public.

An old series of Walter Spies drawings⁵ that attempted to capture the patterns of Lamak⁶ before their disintegration after Balinese rituals end, prompted Mella to reflect on its ephemerality and how this relates to our fragile existence and the mortality carried within us. The impossibility of wearing the

horizontal dresses in a conventional fit invites us to contemplate our core values and what remains in the face of uncertainty, as we can essentially only see what is ahead of us. Current circumstances render hanging the dresses to be seen in person when visiting the gallery as the most feasible display. Or alternatively, viewing them virtually through gadget screens. For the time being, we can only imagine the impossibility of wearing these barkcloth dresses, assessing the works as completed, as the acrylic on canvas (currently displayed at this year's *ARTJOG: Resilience*) as well as the series of gouache on paper and photographs shown in this exhibition. But perhaps one day, not too far in the future, much like the journey of her other costumes, they may reach another form of completion when models are finally able to demonstrate the impossibility of "wearing" *Wearing the Horizontal* (2020).

Finally, Melati Suryodarmo's *Ataraxia* (2020) is an object installation that was first prompted by her investigation of symbolism, bringing her to examine Javanese court architectural plans from the Mataram period (732-1006). Incidentally, she noticed that within that architectural blueprint, there was no mention of a place for women even though many of the area's functions (such as the market and Chinatown) cannot be detached from their presence, and this is arguably reflected in today's condition as the issue of gender equality continues. In her symbolism, she chose lace as her object, a subtle ode to its popularity amongst Indonesian women post WWII.

This dreamy, transparent material displays women's curves, and more importantly, it showcases their flesh. While this symbolic transparency exposes a woman's body, to her, it will never reveal what is really inside a woman's heart: how the accumulation of a woman's dismissal from society correlates to the proportion of her growing determination to reach *ataraxia*, an idea of serenity according to Epicurian ethics. In this work, this determination is represented by the black cloth amongst the colourful ones. This installation is

completed, and it is this very completion that has enabled Melati to ponder the possibility of a related performance one day.

The punctuation mark "?" on this exhibition's title signifies a question that is also an exclamation — to represent the thin transitional states of incompleteness-completion before an artwork's genesis. Strangely enough, an exhibition that surveys artists and their artworks' completion may never reach completion itself, as I imagine there is still more to be observed.

Artati Sirman, 2020

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Artati Sirman (b. 1986 in Jakarta, Indonesia) completed her BA in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, London, and MA in Art Business from Sotheby's Institute of Art London. Her main interests focus on art market research and arts management. She currently investigates issues that revolve around and between the beginning and completion of an artwork in the context of studio practice. Artati Sirman is currently based in Bandung, Indonesia, where she provides consultancy for Gormeteria and oversees Media Relations at Selasar Sunaryo Art Space.

⁵ Lamak Drawings, pen on paper by Walter Spies (1895-1942), ca. 1935.

⁶ Lamak: long narrow ritual hanging cloths that adorned altars and shrines in Bali, normally made of palm leaves. The stitched panels placed just for several days in front of a shrine will eventually lose their colours and fall apart.

ARTISTS



AGAN HARAHAAP (b. 1980, Jakarta, Indonesia) graduated with a BA in Graphic Design from the Indonesian Design School (STDI), Bandung, Indonesia in 2005, after which he moved to Jakarta and worked as a senior photographer for Trax Magazine. Since his first solo exhibition *SAFARI* at RUANGMES56, Yogyakarta in 2009, his works have been featured in a range of exhibitions, including: *Apa Kabar?* at Showroom MAMA, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2019); *PhotoBangkok Festival 2018*, Bangkok Arts and Culture Centre, Bangkok, Thailand (2018); *Hello World. Revising a Collection* at Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, Germany (2018); *Traces of the Future: Contemporary Southeast Asia* at Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2017); *The History of Boys: the MES 56 and Beyond*, DECK, Singapore (2017); and *The Social Realism of Agan Harahap* at Mizuma Gallery, Singapore (solo, 2017). In his studio practice, he has maintained a fascination with the art of photo manipulation often combining satire or parody with social commentaries. Harahap lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.



ALBERT YONATHAN SETYAWAN (b. 1983, Bandung, Indonesia) graduated with a PhD in Ceramic Art from Kyoto Seika University, Kyoto, Japan in 2020 and a MFA in Ceramics from Bandung Institute of Technology, Bandung, Indonesia in 2012. His ceramic works incorporate different mediums such as drawing, video, installation and performance art. He has exhibited inside and outside Japan including: *Contemporary Worlds: Indonesia* at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia (2019); *SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2017) and the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung, Taiwan (2019); *TERRENE*, POLA Museum Annex, Tokyo, Japan (solo, 2017). He was one of five artists exhibited in the Indonesian Pavilion with the theme *Sakti*, a concept taken from Indonesia's rich cultural heritage at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. Setyawan has undertaken artist residencies at Canberra's Strathnairn Arts Association, Australia (2016); and The Japan Foundation at Shigaraki Ceramics Cultural Park, Shigaraki, Japan (2009). Albert Yonathan Setyawan lives and works in Tokyo, Japan.



JULIAN ABRAHAM "TOGAR" (b. 1987, Medan, Indonesia) studied Broadcast R-TV & Film at the Indonesian Communication Academy (2005-2011) and Electronics at the Medan Institute of Technology (2013-2015). He is a drummer, musician, and a professional jammer. Togar is concerned with the relationships and connections between art, the environment, science and technology. His works have been presented in exhibitions in Indonesia and abroad, including: *ONLINE: Viral Self-Portraits*, MG+MSUM – Moderna Galerija/Museum of Modern Art + Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, Slovenia (2020); *Unorganised Response*, Auto Italia South East, London, England (2019); *Diabethanol*, for the 21st Sydney Biennale, Cockatoo Island, Sydney, Australia (2018); *Ulah Tanah*, RUCI Art Space, Jakarta, Indonesia (solo, 2019); *Bodies of Power/Power for Bodies*, Cemeti Institute for Art and Society, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2018); *Manifesto 6.0 Multipolar*, National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia (2018). Togar currently lives and works in Amsterdam, Netherland, as a resident artist of Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten (2020–).

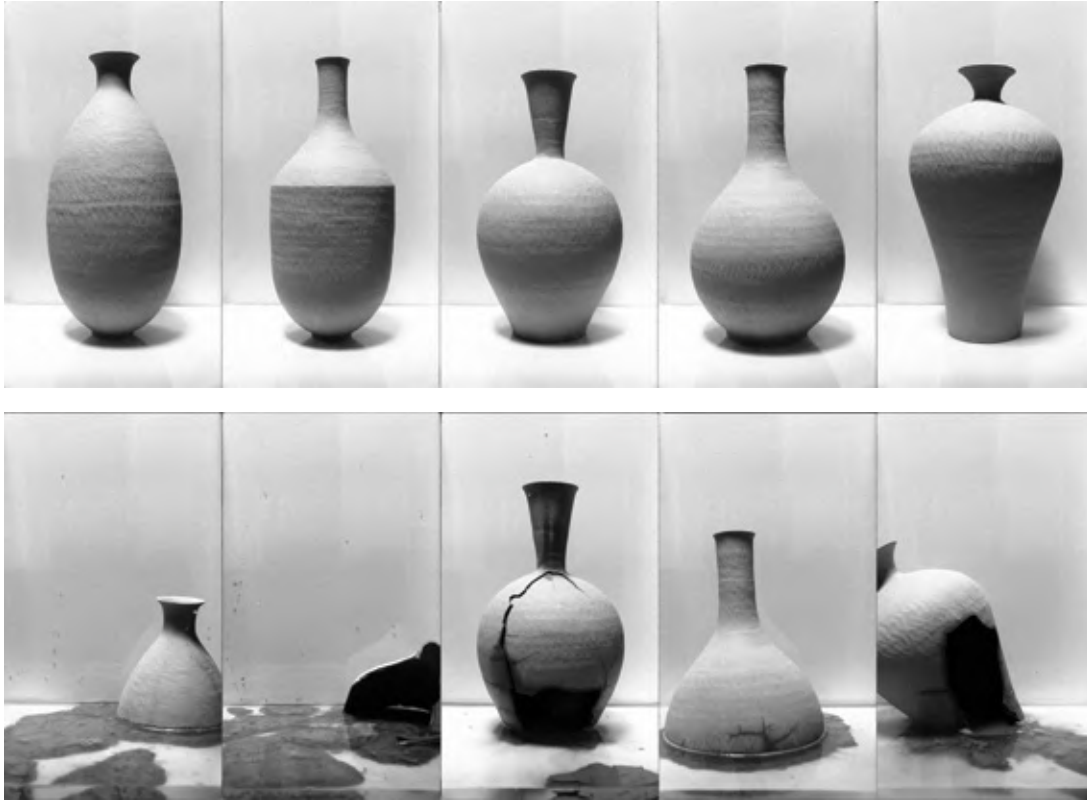


MELATI SURYODARMO (b. 1969, Surakarta, Indonesia) graduated from Padjajaran University, Bandung, Indonesia and the Braunschweig University of Art, Braunschweig, Germany with a degree in Fine Art (1994-2001) where she was under the tutelage of Anzu Furukawa and Marina Abramović. In 2002, she completed a Postgraduate Program (Meisterschule) in Performance Art at the Braunschweig University of Art, Braunschweig, Germany. Her performances deal with the identity and relationship between the human body and the environment surrounding it exploring cultural, social, and political aspects. She has exhibited and performed around the world since 1996, including: *Bangkok Art Biennale 2020: Escape Routes*, Bangkok, Thailand (2020); *Why Let the Chicken Run?*, Museum MACAN, Jakarta, Indonesia (solo, 2020); *Memento Mori*, Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Singapore (solo, 2019); *SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2017). She has undertaken residencies at the Watermill Center, New York, USA (2012) and Manila Contemporary, Manila, Philippines (2011) to name a few. Since 2007, she has been organizing *Undisclosed Territory*, an annual performance art event at Padepokan Lemah Putih, Surakarta, Indonesia. Melati Suryodarmo lives between Indonesia and Germany.



MELLA JAARSMA (b. 1960, Emmeloord, The Netherlands) studied at Minerva Academy in Groningen (1978-1984), Art Institute of Jakarta (IKJ) in 1984 and the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (1985-1986). Known for her intricate costume installations and focus on forms of cultural and racial diversity embedded within them, her works have been exhibited worldwide including: *ARTJOG: Resilience*, Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2020); *In Ravel Out*, Res Artis Project Space, Melbourne, Australia (solo, 2019); *Dunia Dalam Berita*, Museum Macan, Jakarta (2019); *Setouchi Triennale*, Japan (2019), *Thailand Biennale*, Krabi, Thailand (2018); *20th Sydney Biennale*, Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (2016); *GSK Contemporary – Aware: Art Fashion Identity*, the Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2010) and many others. Mella Jaarsma lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where she co-founded Cemeti Gallery (now known as Cemeti Institute for Art and Society) with Nindityo Adipurnomo, organizing exhibitions, projects and residencies while being an active board member of the Indonesia Visual Art Archive (IVAA).

ALBERT YONATHAN SETYAWAN



1

Albert Yonathan Setyawan
Transitory Nature of Earthly Joy
2017

five-channel digital video

1hr 10min 51sec; 1hr 1min 16sec; 1hr 5min 7sec; 1hr 11min 10sec; 1hr 31min 34sec

edition of 2 + 1AP



2

Albert Yonathan Setyawan
Earthly Radiance
2020

sound recording (ceramic, human breath, sand, Shruti box, Tibetan singing bowl)

29min 57sec

JULIAN ABRAHAM "TOGAR"



3

Julian Abraham "Togar"

Drummer's Gonna Drum #2

2020

single-channel HD video

5min 52sec

edition of 5 + 1AP

videography by Saemundur Thor Helgason

sound by Simnikiwe Buhlungu



4

Agan Harahap
Ecce Homo
2020
digital C-print on photo paper
50 x 33 mm
edition of 3 + 1AP



5

Agan Harahap
Doubting Thomas
2020
digital C-print on photo paper
33 x 50 cm
edition of 3 + 1AP



7

Agan Harahap
Supper at Emmaus
2020
digital C-print on photo paper
33 x 50 cm
edition of 3 + 1AP



8

Agan Harahap
The Taking of Christ
2020
digital C-print on photo paper
33 x 50 cm
edition of 3 + 1AP



9

Melati Suryodarmo
ATARAXIA
2020
lace, synthetic cloth, aluminium
210 x 180 x 95 cm



10

Mella Jaarsma
Wearing the Horizontal
2020

installation comprised of three costumes and triptych photography
costumes: mulberry tree barkcloth (created by Mufid), fabric, metal
100 x 133 x 45 cm, 140 x 140 x 70 cm, 110 x 130 x 65 cm
prints: archival print on Hahnemühle photo rag satin
90 x 78.2 cm each, edition 1 of 10 + 2AP

Mella Jaarsma
Wearing the Horizontal II
2020

archival print on Hahnemühle photo rag satin
triptych, 90 x 78.2 cm each
edition 2 of 10 + 2AP

MELLA JAARSMAN



11
Mella Jaarsma
Endless Dress 1
2020
gouache, pencil, ink, bamboo
on paper
37 x 28 cm



12
Mella Jaarsma
Endless Dress 2
2020
gouache, pencil, ink, bamboo
on paper
37 x 28 cm



13
Mella Jaarsma
No - Body 1
2020
gouache, pencil, ink on paper
42 x 30 cm



14
Mella Jaarsma
No - Body 2
2020
gouache, pencil, ink on paper
42 x 30 cm

Executive Director Suelo Mizuma established Mizuma Art Gallery in Tokyo in 1994. Since its opening in Gillman Barracks, Singapore in 2012, the gallery aims for the promotion of East Asian artists in the region as well as the introduction of Southeast Asian artists to the international art scene. From 2014 to 2019, the artist residency space “Rumah Kijang Mizuma” operated in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, providing a new platform for dialogue by supporting exchanges between East Asia and Southeast Asia. In 2018, a new gallery space, “Mizuma & Kips” in New York, USA, as a shared collaboration between Mizuma Gallery from Tokyo and Singapore, and Kips Gallery from New York.

Mizuma Gallery features the works of Japanese artists including Aida Makoto, Aiko Miyanaga, Amano Yoshitaka, Ikeda Manabu, Tenmyouya Hisashi, and Yamaguchi Akira. Moreover, it showcases the works of renown East Asian artists such as Ai Weiwei, Du Kun, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Ken + Julia Yonetani, and Zhao Zhao. The gallery also features the creations of prominent and emerging artists from the region including Agan Harahap, Albert Yonathan Setyawan, Angki Purbandono, Entang Wiharso, Gilang Fradika, Heri Dono, indieguerillas, Made Wianta, Mark Justiniani, Nasirun, Budi Agung Kuswara, Robert Zhao Renhui, Zen Teh, Ashley Yeo, and Ben Loong. Mizuma Gallery participates annually in international art fairs including Art Basel Hong Kong and The Armory Show New York, promoting Asian artists on an international art scale.

GILLMAN BARRACKS

Set in a former military barracks dating back to 1936 and surrounded by lush tropical greenery, the Gillman Barracks visual arts cluster was launched in September 2012. Jointly developed by government agencies, the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB), the National Arts Council (NAC), and the JTC Corporation (JTC), Gillman Barracks’ vision is to be Asia’s destination for the presentation and discussion of international and Southeast Asian art. For more information, please visit www.gillmanbarracks.com

With the support of



Mizuma Gallery Pte Ltd
22 Lock Road #01-34
Gillman Barracks
Singapore 108939
T. +65 6570 2505
F. +65 6570 2506
www.mizuma.sg
www.mizuma.shop
info@mizuma.sg

Tue-Sat: 11am - 7pm
Sun: 11am - 6pm
Closed on Mondays and
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Facebook.com/mizumagallery
Instagram @mizumaartgallery

Executive Director
MIZUMA SUEO

General Manager
FREDY CHANDRA

Gallery Manager
THERESIA IRMA

Gallery Liaison
MARSHA TAN

Design
RAISSA ALI

Printer
PRINT IDEAS

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