



FOLKLORISTICS

18.01.2018 -
25.02.2018

Albert Yonathan Setyawan

Amano Yoshitaka

Entang Wiharso

Gilang Fradika

Heri Dono

Iwan Effendi

Okamoto Ellie

Shen Zhenglin

Zen Teh

FOLKLORISTICS

As the name suggests, this exhibition is a discussion based on the study of folklores in the present age. *Folkloristics* focuses on contemporary artists, whose works make references to and/or are influenced by folklores, addressing issues that stem from the desire to question areas that cannot be figured out by science or reason. Yet, they encompass common traditions to a culture, subculture, or group, and discuss values that were once respected. This also leads us to question whether such values have been forgotten. *Folkloristics* approaches the present age of uncertainty and confusion as an attempt to rethink human existence and our surroundings with pure curiosity, flexibility and imagination, without the limiting influence of existing structures and ideas.

Parts of our traditions are deeply rooted in the beliefs of religions, mythologies, legends, animisms, and folklores. Folklore is a body of culture shared by a particular group of people that is mainly passed through word of mouth. It reflects on the magical and mysterious, and its transmission is a vital part of its being.

The emphasis is not on the desire to question the limits of science, glorify mysticism, or pursue art as a form of entertainment. Rather, by reexamining these realms, we attempt to shed light on values that have been marginalized or completely forgotten, and while considering the relationship between human beings and nature, to suggest more flexible and open ways of relating to the world.

Death and Life – Darkness and Light

The idea of 'the right thing' varies from one person to another. But when we need to do what is considered as 'the right thing', we have to take ourselves and the other beings on earth into consideration, be it humans, animals, or plants. "*The Light*" by **Okamoto Ellie** was inspired by the Christian religious movement of Quakers (Religious Society of Friends). The Quakers consider the awareness of 'the right thing' as the human conscience, and call it 'The Inner Light'.

One form of light that humanity has had a deep affinity with since our very beginnings is the light of fire. To drive away the darkness, to give warmth, or to bring out rebirth; while on the other hand, it sometimes is the light of brilliantly burning flames that attracts all forms of life, the light of rising threat and destruction.

The works of **Gilang Fradika**, from his '*Dekomposer series*', in this exhibition are influenced by stories about beliefs and how they influence our behaviour. Gilang responded towards a night terror that haunted him – one about the deaths of the people close to him. It made him realise how a dream could teach and remind us to value life. The imaginative figures in Gilang's works were derived from existing human, animal, and plant forms. They were repeatedly drawn and over many layers, as if to tell a story about a period in time, a narrative, and an incident that happens

Okamoto Ellie

The Light
2017

acrylic on wooden panel
113 x 35.3 x 5 cm



over and over again, akin to a series of prayers.

Pattern and repetition are some elements that are familiar in the works of **Albert Yonathan Setyawan**, acting like mantra or spell on him. In this show, his new body of works evoke his perspective on spirituality. We find many symbols that can be perceived as sacred, mystical, or possibly having a double meaning: the eye that symbolizes universal consciousness, fire that symbolizes holiness but also destruction, jasmine that is associated with funerals or spirituality in Indonesian culture but also purity, and snake that can be seen as bad luck but also as a healer.

The Nature

In this exhibition, the relationship between Nature and Human is strong, but the greedy nature of human beings often destroys everything.

Zen Teh's work "*Movement : Stillness*" explores the notions of movement and stillness within nature. This is an installation of a dry garden inspired by the artist's experience of meditation and her inquiry into the Japanese dry garden. In the artist's experience of meditation, the body tries to be still while the mind is fluid. Similarly, the Japanese dry garden juxtaposes the placidity of rocks and the flux of its surrounding natural elements such as changing daylight and wind. In this work, flux is distilled into a photographic image of the sea

waves. The image is the result of the artist's study of the different phases of the sea waves motion, constructed through a composite of images from different points in time. The image simultaneously shows the sea waves accumulating latent energy, peaking, hitting the shoreline and withdrawing back. This idealisation of nature is carried through in the arrangement of stones and found marble slabs, creating a garden. Here, the garden beyond an intermediate space between man and nature, represents the mindscape of the artist.

Over the past years, **Entang Wiharso** has been trying to gather facts and information about nature, earth, and degradation of environment from a unique perspective. In an effort to produce and to build more, we often fail to realize the disruption we make to the environment around us. In a production-focused culture, we are conditioned to manipulate resources around us to maximize production. Land becomes scarce, we become surrounded by less greenery, and the environment is changed in order to accommodate human demands. Through "*Floating Garden*", Entang invites the audience to think about nature and its role in their everyday life.

The Present

An alternative approach to this exhibition is to review and comprehend the world we live in through stories of its current state.

In "*Unburied History: Wall of Nation Series*" by Entang Wiharso, the artist's personal experiences are combined with analysis of the socio-political conditions. Creating is a way of understanding the human condition, to strengthen our ability to perceive, to feel, and to understand human problems

such as love, hatred, fanaticism, religion, and ideology. The work is about the experience of being at odds with the systems of the government, as well as the corresponding norms, ideologies, and moralities. It is about borders that are designed to protect, but at the same time, divide. Its surface is embedded with autobiographical materials that tell stories about history and current events. Images of tongues and weapons, the military and the police, intestines, tables, families, and other architectural elements are combined with the usage of distortion, creating a fragmented narrative that sheds light on the role of perception in our daily life.

Whereas in the works of **Heri Dono**, we witness the complexity and the beauty of his visual language. Heri develops his own metaphors, symbols and analogies in the forms of mythical creatures. "*The Flag's Carrier*", depicts a large half-horse half-human creature, based on a Greek mythology, carrying a flag which symbolises identity and pride of a nation. Riding the saddle of the flag's carrier is a small person who appears to resemble a superhero, and wields a small gun. However, this person has the power to take control over the creature and use it to cause destruction towards his enemies, as well as his nation. Depicted alongside the creature is another figure who possess wings and a small red heart on its chest. This winged figure gives constructive and objective advices that benefit mankind, nature, and the civilization, without having to stand atop the flag-carrying creature, or even make use of firearms.

The works of **Iwan Effendi** entitled "*Chronicle of Love*", "*Pak Wi*", and "*I'm Home*" attempt to revisit folklores. In modern day Indonesia, many folklores, legends, and

myths were created after the '65 political disaster. For the victors, folklores became a propaganda tool to campaign for political reign; whereas for the losing side, new stories were created and passed on, as a refusal to forget the darkest days in the history. With the backstory of the 1965 political event, Iwan casts light on the real-life story of Widodo Suwardjo or Pak Wi, an exile who lives in Cuba as a metallurgy specialist, and who is still unable to return to Indonesia. Up to now, any attempt to find out any truth about the 1965 incident is still a taboo. Pak Wi's love story is continuously talked about as a fragment from this specific historical event, and it became a thread from which many others can retrace the history.

The Myths

"*Pandora*" by **Amano Yoshitaka** tells the story of Pandora and the Pandora Box. According to the Greek mythology, Pandora was created as the first woman and was given the jar (mistranslated as 'box') that released all evils upon man. The Pandora myth is a kind of theodicy addressing the question of why a good God permits the manifestation of evil. But in Amano's interpretation, he changes the image of Pandora to become one of his creation, the character Jun the Swan from *Gatchaman* (1972), or "G-Force" in the English adaptation.

"*Tamatabako*", another work of Amano, is titled after a mysterious box in the Japanese folktale "Urashima Taro", a story about a fisherman who was rewarded for rescuing a turtle from being toyed with by a group of children. A few days later while he was fishing, the grateful turtle came back and carried him on his back to the underwater palace known as Dragon



"Urashima Taro"

Image from Kyuhoshi website.

Palace (Ryugu) where the princess thanked him for saving the turtle. After having spent a few days there, he bid farewell to the princess, and she tried to dissuade him from leaving but eventually letting him go with a gift, the Tametabako, with a lid he was told never to open. But upon his return, he found himself in the future where everything had already advanced with time. Forgetting the warning, he lifted the lid of the Tametabako, and out came a white smoke which turned him into an old man.

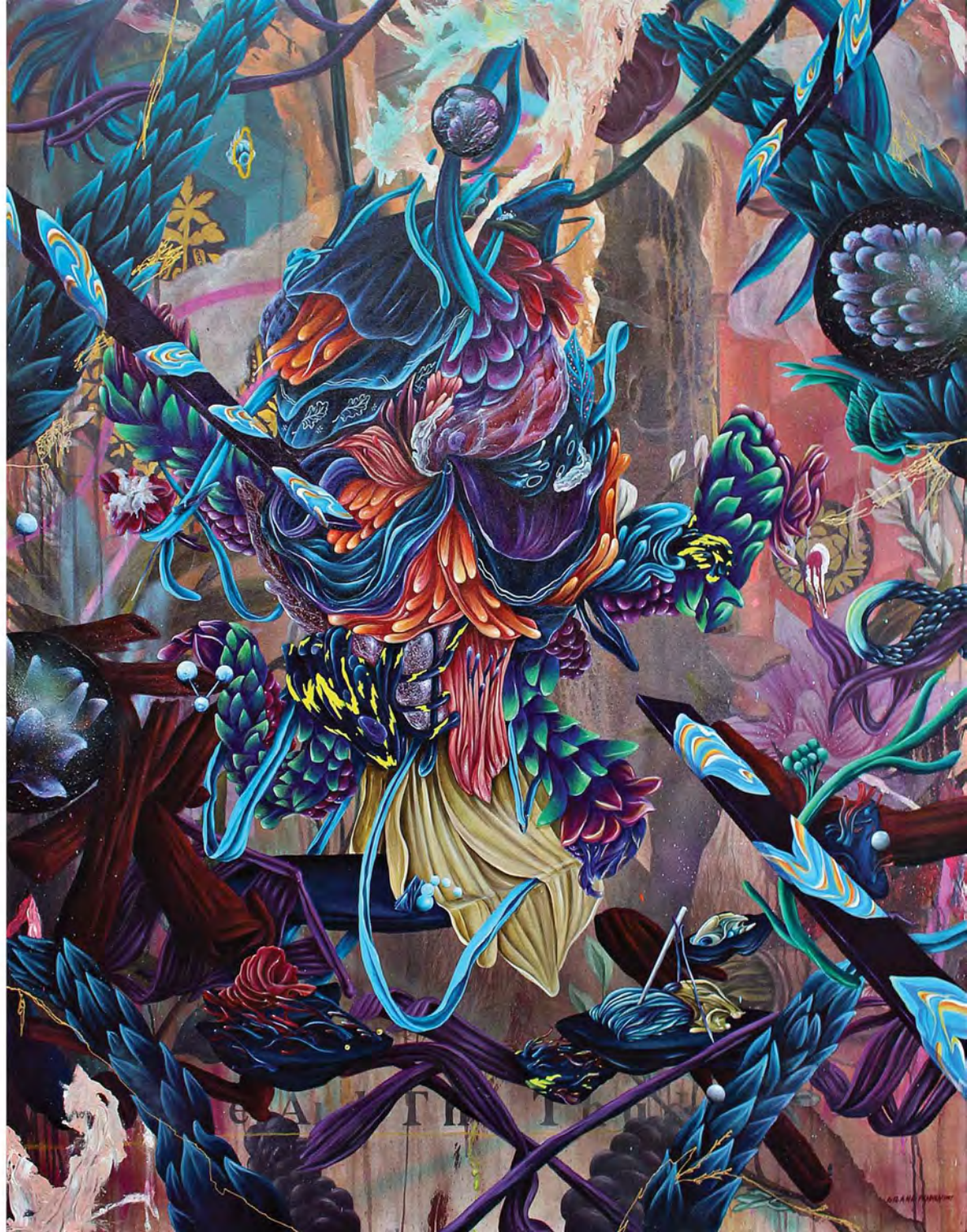
The Invisible

Shen Zhenglin engages a range of approaches to abstraction, from finding the abstract in observed figurative forms, to deploying a more rigid geometric abstraction, which is then eventually expressed directly in paint. In this exhibition, Shen shows a work called "*FAKTUM No. 3*" which means "The Fact" in German. Looking at Shen's painting, we are faced with possibilities of what it depicts. But upon closer inspection, those ideas disappear into abstraction, leaving only brush strokes and colours. As quoted from the artist, "What is interesting about the world is not what you see, but rather, what you know".

Gilang Fradika

Ambang (Dekomposer Series)

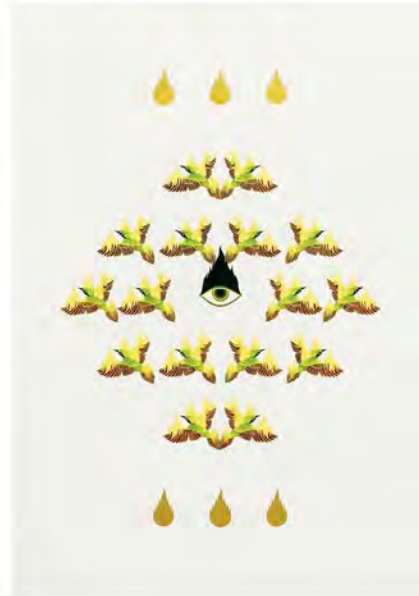
2017
mixed media on canvas
180 x 140 cm





Gilang Fradika

Hayat//Songs from deep land (Dekomposer Series)
2017
mixed media on canvas
150 x 400 cm (diptych, each panel 150 x 200 cm)



Albert Yonathan Setyawan

Left to Right:

New Lystra: The Burning Jasmine

New Lystra: The Burning Oracle

New Lystra: The Flaming Serpents

Gates of the burning mountains

2017
gouache and gold paint on paper
59 x 42 cm each

Zen Teh

Movement : Stillness
2018
installation of pebbles,
marble pieces and, inkjet
print on Japanese
handmade paper
dimensions variable



Entang Wiharso

Unburied History: Wall of Nation Series

2017

aluminium, resin, colour pigment, thread,

light bulbs and, cable

224 x 298 x 59 cm

edition of 2 + 1 AP





Entang Wiharso
Floating Garden #4
2017
acrylic and glitter on canvas
300 x 287 x 5 cm



1	2	3
4	5	

Heri Dono

1. Journey For Peace
2. Pengadu Domba
3. The King Who Save The Bomb From Disaster
4. Two Craziest Presidents
5. Trump With The Torch Of Cakra

2017
 acrylic and collage on paper
 78.5 x 66 cm each (unframed)
 79 x 91 x 4 cm each (framed)



Heri Dono
The Flag's Carrier
2016
acrylic on canvas
125 x 150 cm



1

2

3

Iwan Effendi

1 & 2. *Pak Wi*
2017

1. acrylic and pencil on canvas
60 x 200 cm
2. acrylic, pencil, leather and wood
36.5 x 16 x 18 cm

3. *Chronicle of Love*
2017

pencil and coffee stain on paper
28 x 23 x 5 cm each



Iwan Effendi
I'm home
2017
single-channel video
5 mins 56 seconds
edition of 3 + 1 AP



Amano Yoshitaka
PANDORA
2015
acrylic, shell powder, silver leaf,
wood box, ceramic and, mixed media
20 x 25 x 11 cm



Amano Yoshitaka
TAMATEBAKO
2015
acrylic, shell powder, gold leaf,
wood box, ceramic and, mixed media
23.5 x 35 x 13 cm

Shen Zhenglin
FAKTUM No. 3
2016
oil on linen
80 x 60 cm



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"Urashima Taro", Image from <https://www.kyuhoshi.com/2015/07/10/urashima-taro/>

Okamoto Ellie, *The Light*, Private collection, SG

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GILLMAN BARRACKS

Mizuma Gallery is a part of Gillman Barracks (GB) is Asia's up-and-coming destination for contemporary art. It is distinguished as a vibrant centre in Asia for the creation, exhibition and discussion of contemporary art. Named after the late British General Sir Webb Gillman, GB is now home to 12 international art galleries, five restaurants, as well as the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) Singapore. For more information, please visit www.gillmanbarracks.com

MIZUMA GALLERY

Mizuma Gallery was established in Singapore's new art cluster Gillman Barracks in September 2012 by director Sueo Mizuma. The gallery was established in 1994 in Tokyo, and since its opening in Singapore aims for the promotion of Japanese artists in the region as well as the introduction of new and promising young talents from South East Asia to the international art scene. The gallery creates a new vector of dialogue within Asia, by exchanging art projects between East Asia and South East Asia.

Mizuma Gallery has featured the works of Japanese artists including Aida Makoto, Amano Yoshitaka, Tenmyouya Hisashi, Ikeda Manabu, Aiko Miyanaga, and Yamaguchi Akira. Moreover, it has showcased the work of renown East Asian artists such as Ken and Julia Yonetani, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Susan Philipsz, Ai Weiwei, and Du Kun. The gallery also organises exhibitions featuring the creations of Indonesia's forerunner artists including Heri Dono, Nasirun, Made Wianta, indieguerillas, Albert Yonathan Setyawan, Agan Harahap, Agung Prabowo, and Angki Purbandono. Mizuma Gallery also participates yearly in Art Basel Hong Kong and The Armory Show, New York.

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