

# SCENE STILL SIZZLES AFTER ART STAGE

A week after the main event, Singapore Art Week has plenty to offer, with a third art fair and great gallery shows. BY HELMI YUSOF

**Singapore Contemporary, from now till Sunday at Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre**

FEELING slightly fatigued by the barrage of visual arts? Nothing like a third art fair to perk you up. Singapore Contemporary art fair opens to the public this Friday and promises fresh perspectives from its 91 international exhibitors.

If anything, its special focus on Latin America should draw strong interest. The region's art has been a growth area in the market for some time, with names like Fernando Botero, Vik Muniz and Gabriel Orozco drawing top dollar.

With Singapore Contemporary being a mid-priced art fair, the biggest Latin American name here is Pablo Atchugarry who ranks somewhere between 10 and 20 on the list of best-selling Latin American artists, and whose exquisitely pleated marble sculptures are going for upwards of \$360,000 at Peruvian gallery Enlace Contemporary Art.

Douwe Cramer, the co-founder of the fair, says: "We think South American art holds an appeal for collectors in South-east Asia, because of its strong artistic traditions that combine vivid colours with accessible themes such as family life and the countryside."

The artists are emerging, mid-ca-

reer and established ones from across Latin America, including Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Cuba, Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

The fair is also throwing the spotlight on photography. Its Photo17 section is a curated showcase of works by Daido Moriyama (featured last year at the Singapore International Photography Festival), Roberto Dutesco, Toshio Shibata, Sakiko Nomura, Eiffel Chong and other well-known and emerging shutterbugs.

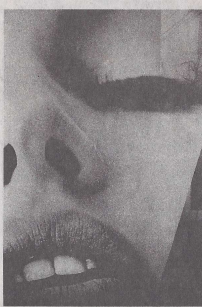
At least three galleries that participated in the premier art fair Art Stage Singapore last week are also showing at Singapore Contemporary. But the galleries, namely Richard Koh Fine Art, Taksu and Intersections Gallery, are focusing only on photography for this fair.

Meanwhile, the mixed sales reports coming out of Art Stage last week have not yet dampened the hopes of Mr Cramer.

Though his fair comes at the tail-end of Singapore Art Week, he says that several overseas collectors who came for Art Stage have either stayed on in or are returning to Singapore for the fair.

Last year, Singapore Contemporary's inaugural edition attracted 16,000 visitors – less than half of Art Stage's 40,500 visitors.

However, this year, Art Stage saw its own numbers fall by 18 per cent to



**Eros Or Something Not Eros** by Daido Moriyama is featured at Singapore Contemporary's Photo17, the first curated platform dedicated to photography.

33,200 due to weaker market conditions.

Meanwhile, Singapore Contemporary has managed to increase its exhibitor numbers from 65 to 91.

Mr Cramer adds: "We've been getting 50,000 visits to our website a month, many of which are from Singapore and Malaysia. We'll find out by the end of Sunday if that has translated into buying sentiment."



**Place of Meditation**, a painting by William Pinillos, is one of the highlights of Singapore Contemporary's segment on Latin American Voices. PHOTOS: SINGAPORE CONTEMPORARY

**hyP3-y-lu5 by Indiguerillas at Mizuma Gallery, Gillman Barracks, from now till Feb 19**

INDONESIAN art's most famous contemporary duo, Indiguerillas, has fashioned an unlikely exhibition at Mizuma Gallery. Long associated with paintings, sculptures and installations that comment on urban culture, artists Santi Ariestiyowanti and Miko Bawono have ventured into clothing design with cult designer Lulu Lutfi Labibi.

Part of Mizuma Gallery now looks like a fashion boutique with racks of shorts, bottoms, socks and shoes. Most have been created from used clothes found in second-hand stores or discarded textiles from factories in Indonesia. Of course, at the hands of these three artists, nothing looks like it's made from unwanted materials. The kimono-like jackets with their elaborate sleeves and the baggy "uncle pants" turned tube tops look bespoke. The icon-laden shoes and trippy socks are just too cute.

Santi, the female half of Indiguerillas, says: "We were driven by the idea that contemporary urban lifestyles accrue too much trash. Perfectly wearable clothes are thrown away when they're no longer on trend. Shoes get discarded when



**Indiguerillas, in collaboration with Lulu Lutfi Labibi, has created trendy pieces out of discarded clothing belonging to Singaporeans and adorned them on bodies of all shapes and sizes.** PHOTO: HELMI YUSOF

there's a chip on their surfaces."

The trio labels its efforts to recast castoffs not as recycling but "upcycling" – "making the old better than ever", says Santi who favours common streetwear sold in Yogyakarta where she and her partner are based. Ironically, many of the used clothing they found in *awul-awul* (thrift stores) and "upcycled" into runway-ready pieces originate from Singapore. Last Friday, the trio held a fashion parade at Gillman Barracks titled *Datang Untuk Kembali (Arriving to Return)*, dryly referencing the two-way journey of the clothes. The models they selected were men and

women of various shapes, sizes and ages, including a young professional fashion model, the mature art collector Melani Setiawan and the larger-than-life drag performer Becca D'Bus.

Explains Lulu, the designer: "We want to inspire everyone watching the fashion parade to remake their own clothes instead of throwing them away. All it requires are basic cutting-and-sewing skills and a bit of ingenuity – and, with that, you can do your bit to reduce waste."

While there, check out also Chun Kai Qun's solo exhibition at FOST and Thein Lin's exhibition at Yavuz Gallery (see page 23)

**Singapore Biennale 2016 Affiliate Projects, at Lasalle's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICAS) and DECK**

YOU may have already caught the Singapore Biennale at its main venues. But its Affiliate Projects are certainly worth a visit before they close at the end of the month.

Four of the five projects are located close to each other: the independent photography space DECK is showing Ang Song Nian's *Hanging Heavy On My Eyes* (pictured, right) and Robert Zhao Renhui's *The Natural History Of An Island*.

A stone's throw away, Lasalle's Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICAS) is showing Boedi Widjaja's *Black – Hut* as well as a group show titled *The World Precedes The Eye*.

At Ang's show, the walls are lined by 12 groups of silver gelatin paper (used for printing photographs). There are 28 to 31 pieces of such paper in each group, corresponding to the number of days in each month of 2016.

Each paper appears in different hues of grey, which in turn corresponds to the PM2.5 reading in Singapore of a particular day – the higher the reading, the greyer the paper. With the PM2.5 reading being some-

thing of an obsession in the sometimes haze-struck Singapore, Ang's work manages to encapsulate a collective human experience in a compellingly minimalist way.

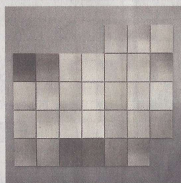
Two floors up from Ang's show is an even more arresting exhibition. Zhao, whose practice centres on the natural environment and man's impact on it, has transformed an entire room into a historian's study, with walls lined with pictures of Singapore over a 100-year time frame.

It's never clear, however, if these images are authentic. Zhao typically merges genuine historical material with made-up images, giving rise to the question of what is genuine or illusory, and what in fact constitutes Singapore's real history.

Over at Lasalle's ICAS, another work mines history in a more personal way. Widjaja, a Singapore artist born in Indonesia and whose grandfather hailed from China, explores the issues of migration, assimilation and integration through a massive architectural work.

The entire gallery has been reorientated by four new walls that "cut" through its current space to present a dramatically new configuration. Widjaja's walls shape-shift from coarse earth-caked blocks into anonymous-looking metal gates – a reification of his and his grandfather's migration experiences from China to Indonesia to Singapore. The accompanying soundtrack of distorted *gamelan* music complicates the subtext.

The fourth and final project is the group exhibition by nine artists from around the Asia-Pacific region. The works exploring matter include – Matt



Hinkley's tiny resin sculptures artfully strewn across the floor, Zeyno Pekinli's funny collection of "cheat sheets" created by Turkish students on various subjects, and Firenze Lai's understated paintings and drawings, filled with elusive narratives.

While there, check out also Objectif's exhibition *Fantasy Islands* at 155 Middle Road, a five-minute walk from Lasalle and DECK

## ART ALL AROUND YOU

Here are some highlights of the 16 new public artworks spread over Gillman Barracks



Street artists Sheryo+Yok (Singapore/Australia) playfully reimagine the kampong house for today.



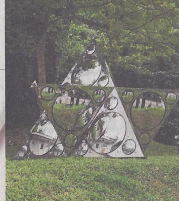
Shahrul Jamili Miskin (Malaysia) comments on politics around the world with this sculpture of a fist made out of steel rulers.



The trademark violent figures of Cleon Peterson (US) square off on the walls of Block 7, Lock Road.



Walk into the mock-up "gallery" of Benedetto Bufalino (France), created around the main signage of Gillman Barracks, accessible to the public for the first time.



Kirsten Berg (Australia) contemplates the fractal nature of being with this extraterrestrial-looking sculpture.



Stephanie J Burt's (Singapore) minimalist sculpture reinterprets the nursery rhyme: "I'm a little teapot / Short and stout..."

PHOTOS: NAC, HELMI YUSOF