

# MOLASSES

AGUNG "AGUGN" PRABOWO

## THE BEAUTY OF BEING

Since the beginning of his artistic journey, Agugn has been inspired by the many great things around him, the experiences that he went through, and the recollection of his childhood memories. All these are processed and poured into his works, through the technique of manual print, usually linocut print on handmade paper.

Inspirations from his personal life are not literally visualized in his linocut prints. We can usually find certain visual elements like subtle male silhouettes, vessels made of plants, fictional creatures, as well as other organic and geometric objects.

Agugn finds joy in the process of printmaking. One of his interest is in playing with the authenticity of reproduction or editions. Almost all of his works are in edition, they are not unique like paintings or other artworks.

In this solo exhibition, he still engages inspirations from his personal point of view. For Agugn, his life has been filled with blessings for which he is grateful. Going through its ups and downs, he finds imperfection to be the perfect truth, change to be the only one that is eternal, and that happiness is not complete without a little sadness.

Perhaps, Agugn had chosen his lens from which he sees the world with everything in it. He observes that everything is interrelated, and that no experience is wasted if we look for the silver lining. Like the philosophy of molasses, which he regards as true in his process of artmaking and in his life to this day.

Living in a village as a child, Agugn was surrounded by nature. His father's hobby was farming, and one of the plants he cultivated was sugar cane. Chewing on a stalk of sugarcane was often a family activity done together when everyone gathered. When Agugn had his first taste of molasses last year, when he was ill, not only that he was inspired by its taste and usefulness, but also the relationship between his childhood memory of the sweet taste, and his circumstances at that time.

At that time, Agugn suffered a high fever for 24 days, which only subsided if he kept taking his medication. As little was known on his condition, Agugn tried various traditional and herbal medications, including blackstrap molasses.

Molasses is a by-product from the sugar crystallization process of refining sugarcane, which contains glucose, fructose, and various organic acids. There are many usages of molasses in everyday life, mainly for the production of ethanol, monosodium glutamate (MSG), and as a component in animal feed. Even though some sources claim that molasses is better than sugar crystals especially for diabetics, excessive consumption can be equally as harmful.

The concept of molasses in Agugn's work represents both the sweet side and the dark side of the life of a human being. Sometimes, with our belief that we human beings are superior to others, we become too lulled by the sweet taste. At the same time, we do not know that something tastes sweet, if we do not possess the knowledge of the other tastes as the basis of comparison. This



▲ Left to Right: Kundika 10 - 15, 2017, ceramics, 28 x 20 x 10 cm each

is interesting because on the one hand, we are expected to investigate all possibilities in order to produce the best outcome, while on the other hand, we know that we are not perfect and we do not possess the knowledge of everything. We must be able to understand and to accept this contradiction, though at the same time, we must continue to do the best of our ability.

This uncertainty triggered Agugn to pay closer attention to the relationships between the random activities and thoughts in his

daily life, because we humans are only a small part of this enormous relationship that we have yet to fully comprehend.

*Sekarputri Sidhiawati (Puti)*

\* This writing is the result of my observation of Agugn, and is based on our sporadic and brief discussions since the beginning of this project.

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 + 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, Angki Purbandono, Agan Harahap and Agung Prabowo. Mizuma Gallery also participates yearly in Art Stage Singapore, Jakarta and Art Basel Hong Kong.

MIZUMA GALLERY

# MOLASSES

AGUNG "AGUGN" PRABOWO

25 February - 26 March 2017



MIZUMA GALLERY



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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 11 international art galleries, three restaurants, as well as the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) Singapore. For more information, please visit [www.gillmanbarracks.com](http://www.gillmanbarracks.com)



▲ **Self-measurements**, 2016.  
linocut print on handmade recycled paper, 49 frames,  
30 x 32 cm each (hexagonal), edition 1/3 + 1AP



▲ **Samadhi (Contemplation)**, 2017  
linocut reduction print on handmade  
recycled paper, 85 x 85 cm, edition 1/3 + 1AP



▲ **Prata Kanta (The Morning Lovers)**, 2017  
linocut reduction print on handmade recycled  
paper, 244 x 122 cm, edition 1/3 + 1AP



▶ **Top to Bottom :**  
*The Jar Full of Lines and Dots*, 2017  
*The Jar Full of Faces*, 2017  
*The Jar Full of Unfinished Thoughts*, 2017  
*The Jar Full of Dust*, 2017  
*The Jar Full of Stars*, 2017

left (black): linocut relief print on handmade recycled  
paper, right (gold): linocut intaglio print on handmade  
abaca paper, 2 frames, 60 x 45 cm each,  
edition 1/3 + 1AP



▲ **Lara Branta (Fall in Love)**, 2017  
linocut reduction print on handmade recycled paper, 127 x 137 cm, edition 1/3 + 1AP

▼ **Narta Kanta (The Dancing Lovers)**, 2017,  
linocut print on handmade recycled paper, 91 x 175 cm, edition 1/3 + 1AP

