

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Squaring the Circle

Solo exhibition by Ben Loong
Curated by Syed Muhd Hafiz
13 March – 18 April 2021



Mizuma Gallery is pleased to announce *Squaring the Circle*, a solo exhibition by Singaporean artist Ben Loong, curated by Syed Muhd Hafiz.

Squaring the Circle represents Ben Loong's latest body of works produced since the past year. Revolving around themes such as industry, craftsmanship and cartography, these works signal a shift in his artmaking, to one more focused on studio-based materials like clay and bone china. If his previous works were anything to go by, Ben has built a reputation for being an artist adept at using both conventional and unconventional materials. His acute sensitivity to these materials has also led him to reflect on their histories and our ever-increasing consumerist society.

In *Squaring the Circle*, Ben's dexterity is on display with various techniques deployed. One of them will be the technique of slip-casting liquid bone china in plaster moulds, borrowed from the factories that mass produce ceramic tableware. Stemming from the fascination with Chinese porcelain in the 16th century, the English invented a form of ceramic that could meet the insatiable appetite of the wealthy. This locally produced version eventually became affordable and flooded the homes of many. Ironically, China is now the largest producer and supplier of bone china.

While experience dictates the successful execution of these techniques, the element of chance is also a significant factor working in the studio. The ruptures that are formed during the firing process mimic the fault lines beneath the earth's surface. The cracks are akin to cartographic lines demarcating the empires of yesteryears. Ruminating on these experiences, we are offered a more nuanced understanding of Ben's artistic practice. What might be disparate materials and experiences for artmaking, comes full circle in this solo exhibition by the artist.



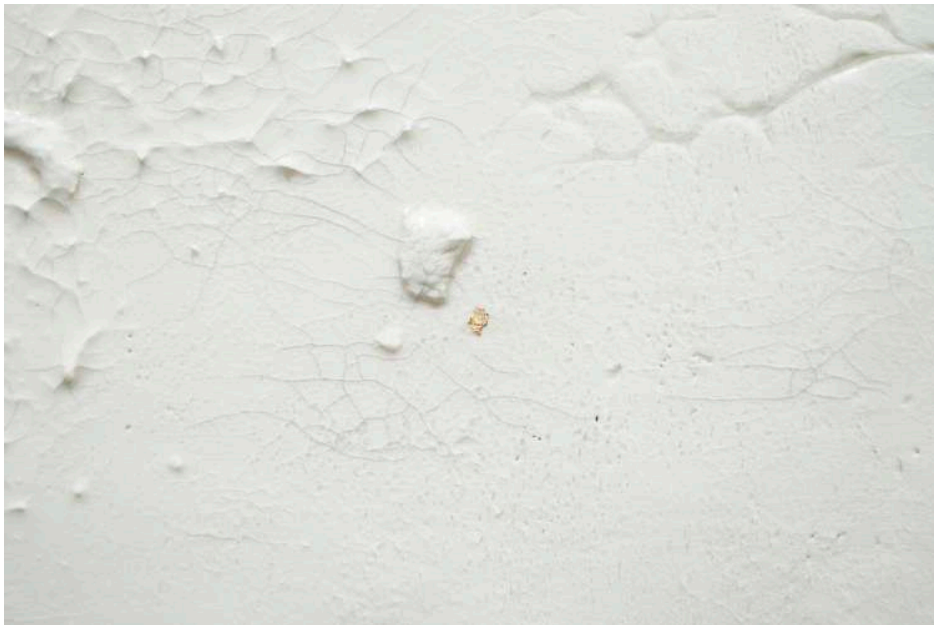
Ben Loong, *Tablet 2*, 2021, glazed stoneware, gold leaf, Chinese ink, 20.7 × 26.6 × 3.5 cm
© Ben Loong, images courtesy of the artist and Mizuma Gallery



Ben Loong, *Tablet 2 (detail)*, 2021
© Ben Loong, images courtesy of the artist and Mizuma Gallery



Ben Loong, *Tablet 4*, 2021, glazed stoneware, gold leaf, Chinese ink, 20 × 26.5 × 3 cm
© Ben Loong, images courtesy of the artist and Mizuma Gallery



Ben Loong, *Tablet 4 (detail)*, 2021
© Ben Loong, images courtesy of the artist and Mizuma Gallery

About the Artist



Ben Loong (b. 1988, Singapore) graduated with a BA (Hons) in Fine Arts from the University of the Arts London (Chelsea College of Arts), London, UK in 2014, and Diploma in Fine Arts from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore, in 2012. Ben Loong lives and works in Singapore.

About the Curator



Syed Muhd Hafiz is currently an independent curator and a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science at National University Singapore. He started out as a researcher for Singapore Art Museum in 2009 before joining National Gallery Singapore in 2012 as an assistant curator, where he co-curated the exhibitions *Iskandar Jalil: Kembara Tanah Liat* (2016) and *Between Worlds: Raden Saleh and Juan Luna* (2017). As an independent curator, Hafiz has curated exhibitions in various galleries in Singapore and Malaysia and written for private collections and art publications in Southeast Asia.

About Mizuma Gallery

Executive Director Sueo 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” opened in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to create a new platform for dialogue by supporting exchanges between East Asia and Southeast Asia. Later in 2018, “Mizuma & Kips” in New York, USA, as a shared collaboration between Mizuma Gallery from Tokyo and Singapore and Kips Gallery from New York.

About 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. Gillman Barracks’ vision is to be Asia’s destination for the presentation and discussion of international and Southeast Asian art. Today, Gillman Barracks is a place for art lovers, art collectors, and those curious about art. The cluster is a focal point of Singapore’s arts landscape, and anchors the development of visual art in the region and beyond. For more information: www.gillmanbarracks.com

Press Contacts

Theresia Irma
theresia@mizuma.sg

Mizuma Gallery
22 Lock Road #01-34
Gillman Barracks
Singapore 108939

T. +65 6570 2505
F. +65 6570 2506

Gallery hours:
Tue - Sat: 11am - 7pm
Sun: 11am - 6pm
Closed on Mondays &
Public Holidays

www.mizuma.sg
www.mizuma.shop
www.mizuma-art.co.jp

Copyright and Image Credits:

Text © Syed Muhd Hafiz and Mizuma Gallery.

© Ben Loong, images courtesy of the artist
and Mizuma Gallery.

COVID-19 update: In accordance with the current advisory from the Singapore Government, we require all visitors to check-in using SafeEntry and to wear their masks during the duration of their visit. For more information, please visit:
www.mizuma.sg/news/notice-to-visitors/