

MIZUMA GALLERY

ALEXANDER SEBASTIANUS

ARI BAYUAJI

DAWN NG

EZZAM RAHMAN

KANCHANA GUPTA

WIDI PANGESTU

CURATED BY HERMANTO SOERJANTO

PAINTING

BEYOND

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Beyond Painting

Text by Hermanto Soerjanto

Based on my observations, there has been no new developments in art after the emergence of Pop Art. In my opinion, art movements after Pop Art mainly brought different points of view of what already existed. Take for example Minimalism, which was predominantly abstract art with a new artistic value that focused on brutal, geometric shapes, muted colours, and anonymity. Another example was the Postmodernism art movement that sought to contradict some aspects of Modernism, and became the embryo of the birth of Contemporary art.

Nevertheless, they have paved the way for the emergence of a new art platform that is more liberal in its use of media, techniques, and materials in art creation, and its welcoming influence of the diverse global culture and locality, that is known as Contemporary art. This has been exemplified through a 1989 exhibition held in Paris' Centre Pompidou, titled *Magiciens de la Terre*, where among other works, a big circular painting made from mud by Richard Long was displayed alongside traditional paintings made from soil by the Yuendumu (aboriginal community in Australia). This exhibition opened up a new era in the development of global art.

Empowered by the advancement of technology, our modern world has provided art with limitless possibilities to grow. We can witness this in the works of artists such as TeamLab and Refik Anadol who employ computer technology and big data science as their main media of art; Olafur Eliasson who uses various elements such as light, ice blocks, and tinted glass in the creation of his artworks; and Tomás Saraceno with his use of life spiders and spider webs. I truly think that now art can be anything and anything can be art.

In Southeast Asia, where the culture of production is more prominent in our day-to-day life, we are not as advanced with the invention of high technology and/or science. While we see artists who utilise technology in their works, in my opinion, our level of high-tech development in art is not yet ready to compete in the global scene.

There are, however, some Southeast Asian artists who revisit conventional art mediums as well as their traditional and cultural roots, bringing their knowledge and making them relevant in contemporary culture. This is clearly evident in the works of **Alexander Sebastianus**, who employs traditional weaving techniques to create artworks that relate to the contemporary art scene. He is a master weaver himself, with an education in Anthropology and a Postgraduate in Fine Art. This exhibition presents his series of works entitled *Waktu Adalah Api Yang Kubakar (Time is the Fire I've Burned)*, textiles created using traditional techniques, containing motifs that are far from traditional. Conventionally, traditional woven textile depicts a repetitive motif that connotes meanings, but in Sebastianus' works, he created blurred images of light or fire in motion. At a glance, they look like photographs of fire taken from a moving vehicle.

Another artist in this show who also employs traditional weaving techniques is **Ari Bayuaji**, and his motivation in adopting weaving as his method of creation is completely different from Sebastianus. Since he got stranded in Bali due to the Covid-19 virus outbreak in early 2020, he has been actively working with the community in Sanur who was economically impacted by the pandemic, giving them access to some income by participating in the community art project that he founded, called *Weaving the Ocean*. It is an art project that connects environment, art, and community empowerment. The process begins with collecting nylon ropes scattered along the Sanur beach, washing them, unfurling them into thin nylon strings, connecting them to form longer strings, and rolling them. The strings would then be composed by Ari according to the colours, and finally, they would be ready to be woven by Ibu Desak. It is quite a long process, and it is impossible for Ari to work alone without the help of the community. *Weaving the Ocean* has gained attention and recognition internationally, in Thailand, Canada, Taiwan, Indonesia, as well as Singapore. In one of his works presented in this exhibition, *What My Father Told Me About Sanur Beach of Bali*, Ari incorporates old seascape paintings from Sanur typically meant for tourist consumption into his work, as a means to build connection with the history of Sanur as a major tourist destination in the past, and how Bali and its people have built their local economy mainly by selling the beauty of its land, art, and culture.

Another artist working with a unique medium is multi-disciplinary artist **Ezzam Rahman**. His works are mostly auto-biographical, looking into the

self and identity while he navigates his day-to-day as a Southeast Asian, Malay, Muslim, cis male, queer, minority body living in Singapore. In his series presented in this exhibition, entitled *let it be known to you that i am trying*, Ezzam created flower-like sculptures made from the dry calluses of his own feet, displayed inside bell jars. His choice of material represents the idea of 'withering', a play on the word 'Melayu' when translated directly to English, referring to his own identity as a Melayu.

In his other work, *i am*, Ezzam carved out the word **ملايو** / 'Melayu' in Jawi from two pieces of skin he harvested. By highlighting this word on used anti-inflammatory plasters that are usually produced in beige colour closest to skin tone, Ezzam questions the idea of inclusivity beyond the colour of one's skin.

To me, the beauty of Ezzam Rahman's work not only lies in the mesmerising shape of his artworks, but mainly in the relation between the idea behind his works and the media he employed to execute them.

Dawn Ng, Kanchana Gupta, and Widi Pangestu use conventional art materials but with a different awareness and point of view.

Dawn Ng's main body of works from the series *Into Air* are time-lapse video, photography, and residue painting of blocks of frozen pigments. The former two mediums capture the process of the ice block disintegrating as it melts, uncovering the layers of colours inside, as seen in her video work, *Avalanche II*. As we look further into its visual beauty, what interests me the most is how she uses the method of camera surveillance to translate time into visuals. I found that in her works we no longer recognize time by numerical measures of minutes or seconds, but by visual events. In our daily life, we subconsciously point out time through key events and milestones, such as "Do you remember the moment when the girl kissed the boy?" We don't address a window of time by the numbers of hours, minutes, or seconds, but by a memory of that event. That is exactly what happens in Dawn Ng's works, as she translates time into a visual experience.

What happens after the colourful block of ice completely melts? The residue of colours will remain on the surface where the ice block was set and shot. Subsequently, the liquid will evaporate into air, leaving behind a beautiful mark of colours as seen in her work, *Avalanche II Bleed Painting*.

As a painter, **Kanchana Gupta** chooses acrylic paint as her main media, but she does not treat it in the conventional way of applying the paint directly onto canvases to form a composition. Instead, she uses the paint as her canvases by laying them onto a piece of jute, letting it dry, and later peeling off those individual layers, subsequently stacking them together. The cracks and the imperfection of those paint layers of different colours develop into beautiful abstract works, as we can see through her works *Edges and Residues 24 - Violet Red, Alizarin Crimson, Payne's Grey and Prussian Blue on White and Lavender Purple*, and *Edges and Residues 25 - Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, Payne's Grey and Bright Blue on Steel Blue and White*.

Widi Pangestu is a young artist based in Yogyakarta who utilises paper as his main medium. In contrast to Kanchana, who removed the role of the surface that holds her paint, Widi focuses on the surface itself – the everyday material of paper. His process begins by taking paper back to its pulp form, then sculpting it to create three-dimensional abstract works. It is a process similar to making papier mâché, but the result of Widi's are abstract sculptural forms that expose the material's composition and texture, as seen in his two works, *4220* and *Perforated 2401*.

I think in the past, there had been too many techniques and materials that were excluded from art practices. Many of them were considered as craft or ethnographic objects, such as hand-woven textile, batik technique, papier mâché, wood carving, even film and photography were not considered as fine art in the beginning. I view contemporary art more as an ideology rather than an art movement, which gives a more liberal understanding and explanation about art and art creations, and it embraces diversity rather than forcing uniformity. In my opinion, with this notion, art has a limitless opportunity to grow, along with the growth of human civilization.



Hermanto Soerjanto
Curator

Hermanto Soerjanto (b. 1970, Indonesia) went to Palin School of Arts & Design in Singapore and Akademi Teknik Desain Interior (ATDI) in Jakarta, Indonesia, before joining Cipta Citra advertising agency in 1994. Since then, he has built his career in the field of advertising and currently holds a position at Pantarei Communications as Chief Creative Officer. As an art collector, Hermanto is familiar with Indonesian artists, having spent much time conversing with them and visiting their studios. In 2008, he established GARIS Artspace, an art gallery in Jakarta showcasing works by contemporary Indonesian artists, where he organises and curates the exhibitions on a regular basis. To date, Hermanto has organised several exhibitions, most notably *Ethnicity Now*, a group exhibition at Galeri Nasional Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia (2010); and *Unveiling Fundamentals in Contemporary Art Through Asia* at OHD Museum, Magelang, Indonesia (2015). His strong knowledge and dedicated passion to the arts has been recognised by Benesse Art Site Naoshima, Japan who appointed him as their first International Ambassador in 2019. Hermanto Soerjanto lives and works in Jakarta, Indonesia.



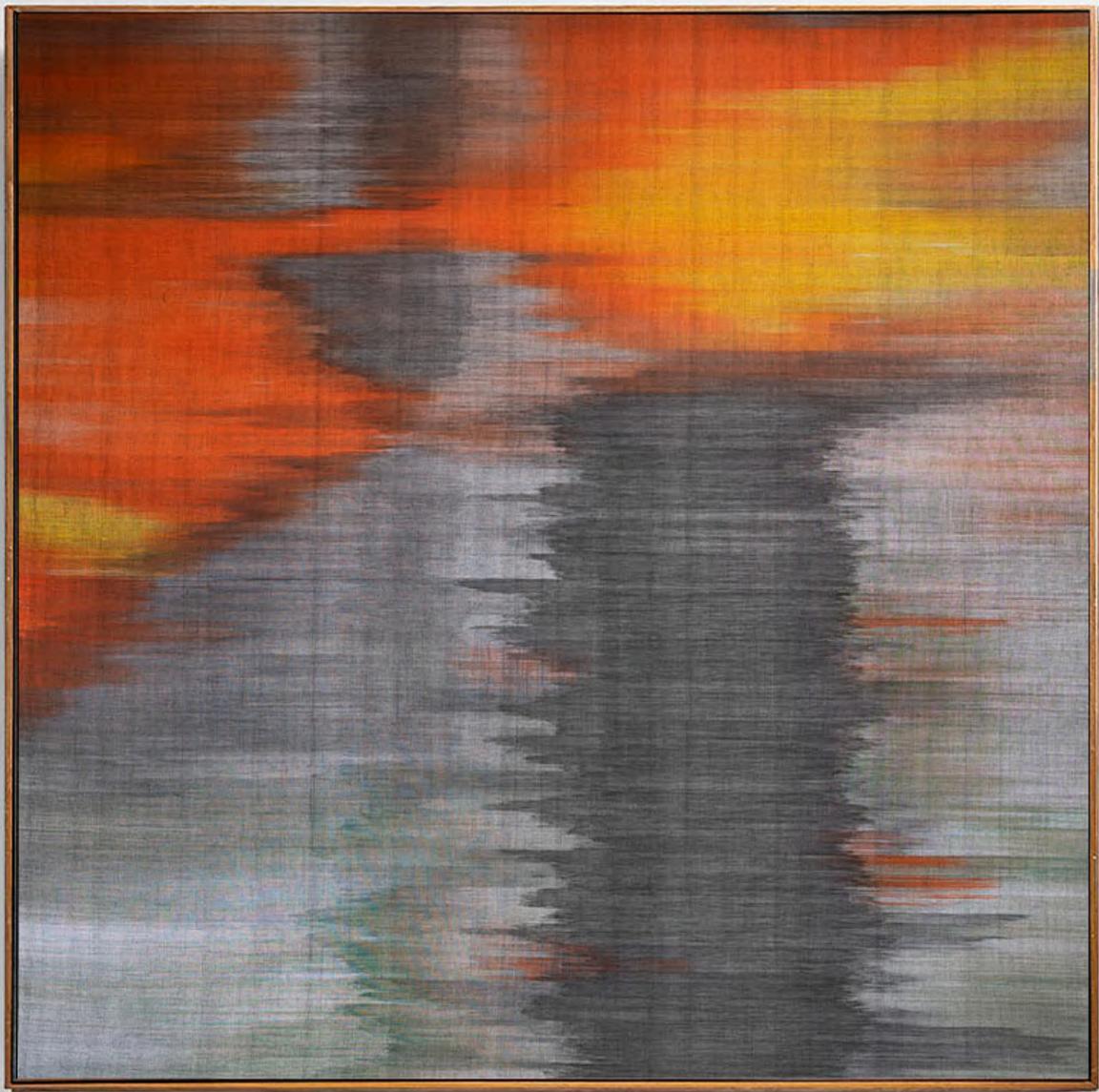


Alexander Sebastianus
Artist

Alexander Sebastianus (b. 1995, East Java, Indonesia) graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Fine Arts 3D) from the Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Boston, USA in 2018. Alexander uses experiential ethnographic re/search as a prominent intertwining mode of existence. His works explore the decontextualization of material cultures and how it is perceived, understood and ritualised in practice. Prior to his comparative art studies, Alexander was an apprentice for a Javanese master weaver, in East Java. His exhibitions include *ABDI ALAM pt. I* at Omah Budoyo, ISA Art and Design, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2021); *Interwoven: A weavers recalling of time* at Art Agenda, Jakarta, Indonesia (2020); and *Dari (Coming froms)* at DMC 103 | Boston, USA (2018), amongst others. Alexander has undertaken residencies at Monson Arts, Maine, USA (2018) and Haystack Mountain School of Craft, Maine, USA (2017). He was awarded the William Daley Award for Excellence in Art History and Craft (2017); and the Massachusetts College of Art & Design: Fiber Arts Departmental Honors (2018). Alexander Sebastianus lives and works in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he works as a textile craft school developer and ethnographer at Rumah Sukkha Citta.



Alexander Sebastianus
Cahaya Membelakangi Waktu, 2022
handwoven ikat dyed cotton, framed on teak wood
100 × 36 × 4.5 cm



Alexander Sebastianus
Melarikan Saat Karena, 2022
handwoven ikat dyed cotton, framed on teak wood
100 × 100 × 4.5 cm



Alexander Sebastianus
Tanpa Menyadari Semua, Semua Yang Kubakar Lepas, 2022 (top)
handwoven ikat dyed cotton, framed on teak wood
100 × 210 × 4.5 cm

Tanpa Menyadari Semua, Semua Yang Kubakar Lepas (details - bottom)





Ari Bayuaji
Artist

Ari Bayuaji (b. 1975, Mojokerto, Indonesia) graduated in Fine Arts from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada in 2010 after migrating to Canada in 2005. Ari is known mainly for his art installations that incorporate the use of found and ready-made objects collected from various parts of the world, allowing him to be exposed to different cultural traditions. He is an expert in conveying aspects of daily life within a culture as his works often expose the overlooked artistic value in everyday life expressed through objects and places and their roles within a society. Ari has held major solo exhibitions in Singapore; Taipei, Taiwan; Ste-Alvère, France; Dusseldorf, Germany; Rotterdam and The Hague, The Netherlands; and Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He has undertaken residencies in Contemporary Art International Symposium, Baie-Saint-Paul QC Canada (2018); La Residence d'Artiste La Fondation Agnes B. Paris, 'Yves de la Tour d'Auvergne', Sainte-Alvere, Sainte-Alvère, France (2017); and Kunsthal Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2017); amongst others. His works are in the collections of Musée des Beaux Arts de Montréal, Montreal, Canada, and Musée National du Québec, Québec City, Canada. Ari Bayuaji lives and works between Montreal, Canada and Bali, Indonesia.

Ari Bayuaji
The Ancestor's Traces, 2022
wooden paddle, plastic ropes,
ceramic shards
300 × 30 × 15 cm





Ari Bayuaji
The Future, 2022
wood, plastic ropes,
found plastic toys, burnt plastic
250 × 70 × 20 cm



Ari Bayuaji
The Garden by the Beach, 2022
woven plastic and cotton threads, wooden rods
180 × 130 cm



Ari Bayuaji
The Mangrove Forest in Mertasari, 2022
woven plastic and cotton threads, wooden rods
190 × 120 cm



Ari Bayuaji
What My Father Told Me About Sanur Beach of Bali, 2022
woven plastic and cotton threads, vintage paintings
426 × 180 cm





Dawn Ng
Artist

Dawn Ng (b. 1982, Singapore) graduated in 2005 with a Magna cum Laude in Studio Art and English at Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA; and the UCL Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK. Dawn is a multi-disciplinary visual artist, who has worked across a breadth of mediums, motives and scale, including sculpture, photography, light, film, collage, painting and large scale installations. Her practice deals with time, memory and the ephemeral. Often characterized by lyricism and a nuanced use of colour, Dawn's work has been acquired by the Singapore Art Museum, and exhibited at the Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, and the Lille3000 art festival, France. She has had solos in Art Basel Hong Kong and the Art Paris Art Fair, and shown in Sydney, Shanghai, Jakarta and New York. In 2016, Dawn was commissioned by the Hermes Foundation to inaugurate their Singapore gallery with a solo installation, and was also part of the Jeju Biennale, Korea in 2017. In 2019, Dawn was commissioned to fill a wing of the Art Science Museum for their *Floating Utopias* exhibition, and opened a commissioned solo at the Asian Civilisations Museum in 2020. Dawn Ng lives and works in Singapore.



Dawn Ng
Avalanche II, 2022
single channel 4K video
25min 6sec
edition of 5 + 1 AP

Click on the link below to view the video
<https://vimeo.com/722442099>



Dawn Ng

Sun's Setting and Suddenly You are in Love with Everything, 2022

acrylic paint, dye, ink on wood

130 × 240 cm (unframed); 141 x 251 x 5.5 cm (framed)





Ezzam Rahman
Artist

Ezzam Rahman (b. 1981, Singapore) graduated with a Masters of Arts, Fine Arts from Goldsmiths, University of London, LASALLE College of the Arts (2017). He is a multi-disciplinary artist known for his interest in the body and the use of common, easily accessible, yet unconventional media in his art practice. Working across sculpture, installation, digital and performance, he creates works that are often time-based and ephemeral, aiming to pique viewers' thoughts on the themes of body politics, impermanence, traces, and abjection. As a performance artist, Ezzam has performed extensively both regionally and internationally. His exhibitions include *is there any way i can be in your arms tonight*, SAMMMM, Singapore Art Museum Mini Mobile Museum (2019/20); *i will leave a light on for you*, OH! Open House, Singapore (2019); *The Senses; Breathe between Excess and Deficiency*, Myungju Art Center, Gangneung, Gangwon Province, South Korea (2022), amongst others. His accolades include Most Promising Award, Photography Category for PULSE Awards, Thailand (2021); Joint Grand Prize for the President's Young Talents, Singapore Art Museum (2015). Ezzam Rahman lives and works in Singapore, where he serves as the Artistic Director of The Substation.



Ezzam Rahman

i am, 2022

artist's skin and hair, used anti-inflammatory plaster,
adhesive, epoxy resin on canvas

20.5 × 25.5 × 2 cm

Ezzam Rahman

let it be known to you that i am trying - 1, 2022

artist's skin, used anti-inflammatory plaster, threaded wire, ball bearing, porcelain bowl, adhesive, epoxy resin, glass cloche, and LED light box
51 × 35 × 35 cm



Ezzam Rahman

let it be known to you that i am trying - 2, 2022

artist's skin, used anti-inflammatory plaster, threaded wire, ball bearing, porcelain bowl, adhesive, epoxy resin, glass cloche, and LED light box
51 × 35 × 35 cm



Ezzam Rahman

let it be known to you that i am trying - 3, 2022

artist's skin, used anti-inflammatory plaster, threaded wire, ball bearing, porcelain bowl, adhesive, epoxy resin, glass cloche, and LED light box
51 × 35 × 35 cm







Kanchana Gupta
Artist

Originally from India, Kanchana Gupta (b. 1974) currently lives and works in Singapore. She received an MA in Fine Arts from LASALLE College of Arts, Singapore in 2016, where she was the recipient of the Dr. Winston Oh Travel Research Award. Kanchana's ongoing fascination with the materiality of paint has seen her investigate the physicality of the medium in her two-dimensional works, mixed media, and more recently through her sculptural installations. Her practice has been described as a process driven exploration of and in response to, urban environments. The pressures of unprecedented migrations, rapid urbanisations and overwhelming globalisation are expressed through the extreme manual and industrial duress that she subjects her medium to. Her works have been featured in numerous exhibitions locally and internationally, including three solo shows in Singapore. Her work was recently included in *The Sceneries and Portraits of an Era - Featuring the Asia Collection of Benesse Art Site Naoshima* at the Fukutake House Asian Gallery, Shodoshima, Japan.



Kanchana Gupta

Edges and Residues 24 - Violet Red, Alizarin Crimson, Payne's Grey and Prussian Blue on White and Lavender Purple, 2022

stacked oil paint skins burnt and stripped off jute and mounted on wooden structure

160 × 125 × 4 cm

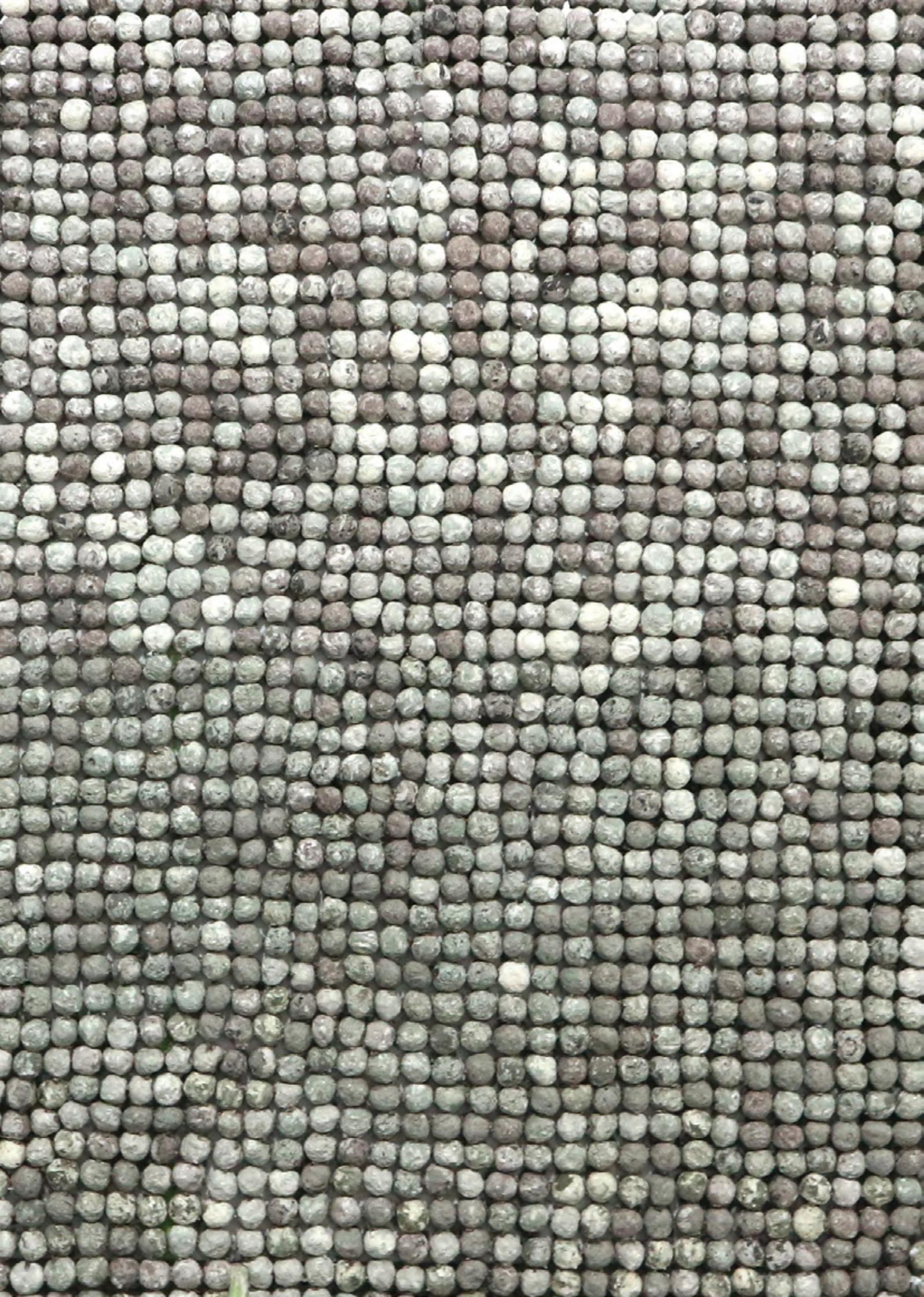


Kanchana Gupta

Edges and Residues 25 - Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, Payne's Grey and Bright Blue on Steel Blue and White, 2022

stacked oil paint skins burnt and stripped off jute and mounted on wooden structure

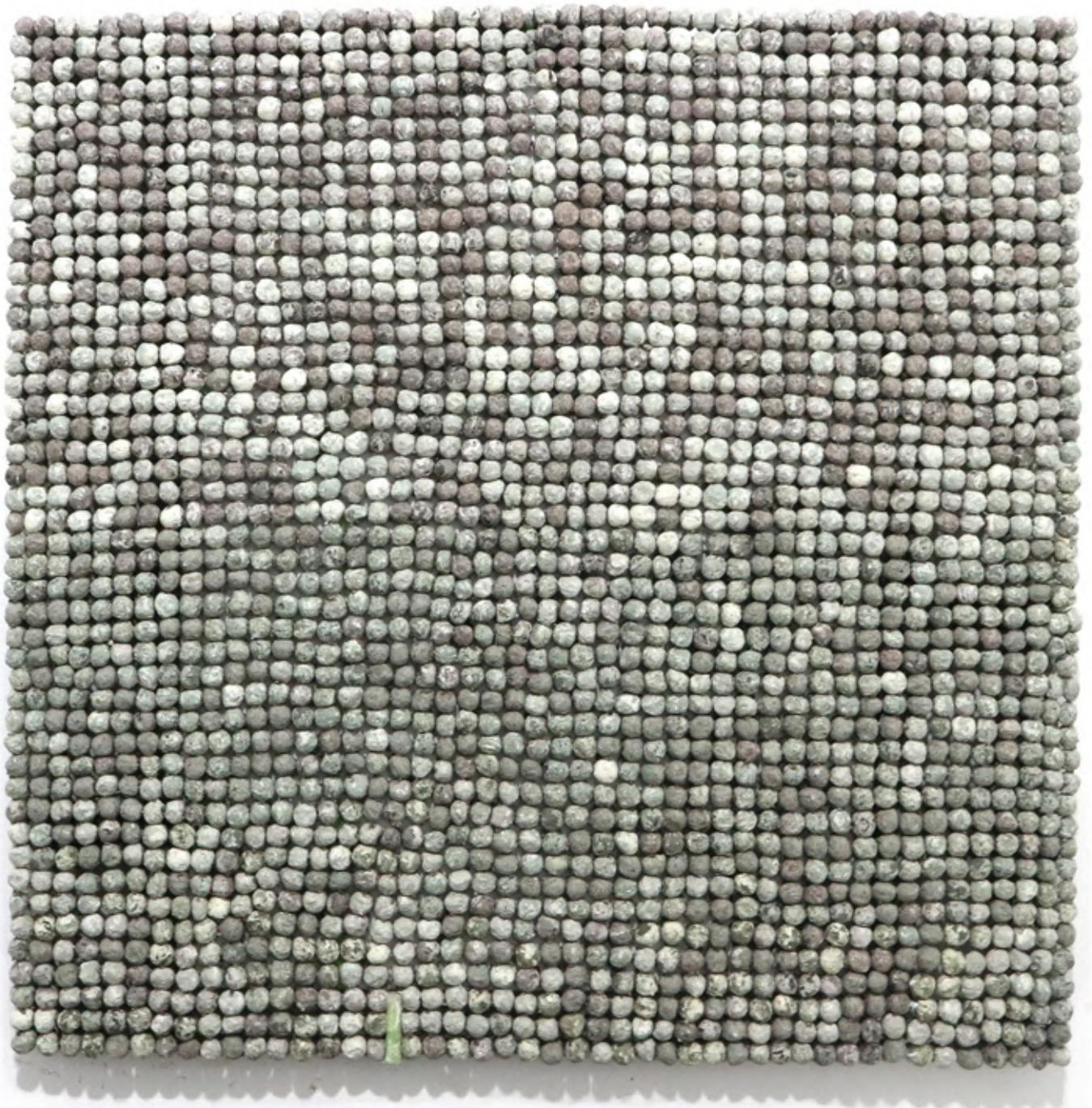
125 × 85 × 4 cm





Widi Pangestu
Artist

Widi Pangestu (b. 1993, Bandung, Indonesia) graduated with a Bachelor in Fine Arts (Painting) from the Indonesia Institute of Arts (ISI), Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2021. Mainly working with the paper medium, Widi's experimentations take place inside the spectrum of material-crafting, focusing on the image-making, object-making, and the details of the experimentation process as a work of artistic research. It explores the possibilities in material-crafting through different traditional (manual) preferences, while colliding them with rhetorical experiences encountered during the process. Widi works are then presented to emphasise how human relations are carried out through the transformation of paper materials. The biomorphic quality in the work and the fragility it presents are a form of intersection between organic principles and the practice of an industrial society. His notable exhibitions include *Making Sense of Sense Making* at Ace House, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2021); *Everything in Between* at Indonesia Contemporary Art Network (ICAN), Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2017), among others. Widi was a Finalist in the 39th UOB Painting of the Year competition in 2019. Widi Pangestu lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

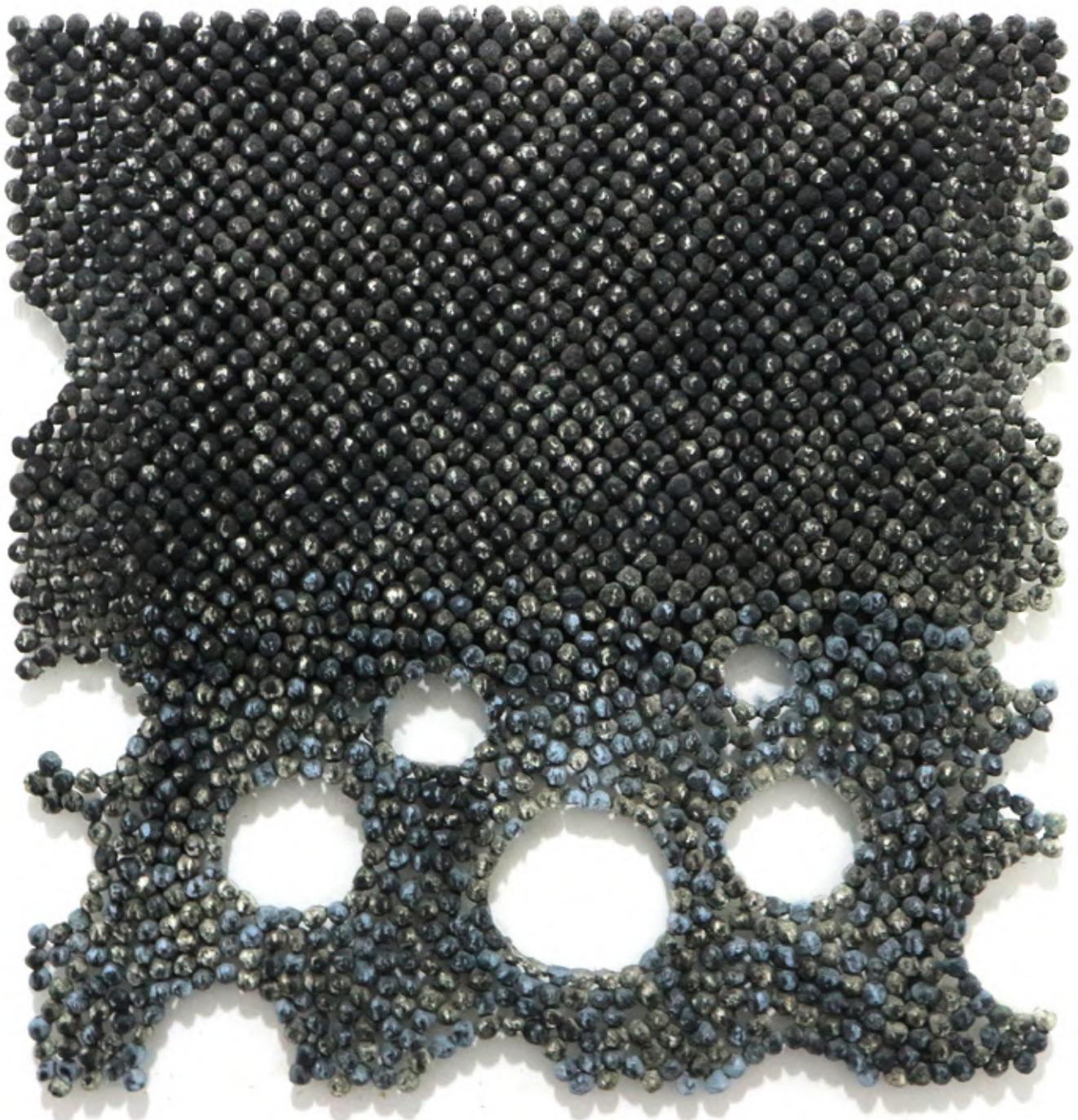


Widi Pangestu

4220, 2022

pigmented handmade abaca, agave sisalana, cotton paper

94 × 94 × 4 cm



Widi Pangestu

Perforated 2401, 2022

pigmented handmade abaca, agave sisalana, cotton paper, charcoal

94 × 94 × 2 cm

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” 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, Ari Bayuaji, Ashley Yeo, Ben Loong, Budi Agung Kuswara, Entang Wiharso, Gilang Fradika, Heri Dono, I Made Djirna, indieguerillas, Iwan Effendi, Kemalezedine, Made Wianta, Mark Justiniani, Nasirun, and Robert Zhao Renhui.

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.

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