

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Old Soul | The New Universe

Solo Exhibition by Ari Bayuaji

Curated by Hermanto Soerjanto

11 January – 16 March 2025

Vernissage: Saturday, 11 January 2025, 4pm – 7pm

Artist Talk: Saturday, 18 January 2025, 3pm – 5pm



Mizuma Gallery is pleased to announce *The Old Soul | The New Universe*, a solo exhibition by Ari Bayuaji, curated by Hermanto Soerjanto. The exhibition presents new works from the artist, from his mesmerising woven textiles to mixed media installations, made primarily using found or ready-made objects.

In an era where “art could be anything and anything could be art”, use of media and technique in art practice gives us the liberty to explore beyond the conventional. It has become not just a tool in manifesting ideas for artists, but rather they also have their own voice, identity, and statement.

Ari Bayuaji is an artist who recognizes the media he uses beyond its functional nature, as he treats the media as part of his artistic language and ideology. In his series ‘Weaving the Ocean’, he worked hand in hand with the community in Sanur where their economy was heavily impacted by the pandemic. With the help of these local communities in Sanur, Ari collected plastic ropes discarded from ships and fishing boats along the Sanur beach, processed them into plastic strings and, with the help of Ibu Desak, a weaver who lost her job in a traditional textile shop along the street of Sanur, weaved the plastic strings into artworks. This entire artistic process and choice of media is Ari’s artistic statement in relation to social and economic issues, cultural and tradition issues, and of course, environmental issues. The beauty in the artistic process of Ari’s ‘Weaving the Ocean’ series goes beyond the beauty of the artworks.

In Ari’s work we can see how tradition, culture, and history collide naturally in a contemporary manner through the use of ready-made objects or materials. He uses the voice, identity, and statement of his media to narrate contemporary issues, and in a way, he shares the stage with the media he uses. His works have become a dialogue between him and the media or material that he chooses.

The Old Soul | The New Universe, a solo exhibition by Ari Bayuaji, will run from 11 January to 16 March 2025 at Mizuma Gallery, 22 Lock Road #01-34 Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108939. The gallery will open from 11am-7pm on Tuesdays to Saturdays, and 11am-6pm on Sundays. The gallery will be closed on Mondays and Public Holidays. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, 11 January 2025 from 4pm to 7pm. In conjunction with Singapore Art Week, an Artist Talk will be held on Saturday, 18 January 2025 from 3pm to 5pm. The exhibition, reception, and artist talk session are free and are open for public. To confirm your attendance, kindly RSVP at info@mizuma.sg. A digital publication featuring images of the artworks and a text by Hermanto Soerjanto will be available.

About the Artist



Ari Bayuaji (b. 1975, Mojokerto, Indonesia) graduated as a civil engineer and worked in Indonesia before deciding to move to Canada permanently in 2005. Once in Montreal, he studied Fine Arts at Concordia University from 2005 to 2010 and now divides his time between Montreal and Bali. The artist is known mainly for his art installations that incorporate the use of found and ready-made objects he collects from various parts of the world, thereby exposing himself to the 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 Bayuaji has taken part in numerous artist-in-residency programs in Canada, France, the Netherlands, Indonesia, and Singapore. The artist's work has been exhibited in major solo exhibitions in Singapore, Taipei (Taiwan), Ste-Alvère (France), Dusseldorf (Germany), Rotterdam and The Hague (The Netherlands), and Yogyakarta (Indonesia).

ARTIST STATEMENT

"The materiality of objects is very important in my art practices. This fundamental interest has led me to being more curious with the history of objects originating from different parts of the world. Over the centuries, objects have been circulated throughout the world, from one place to another and for many reasons, in much the same way that human beings are displaced from one part of the world to another.

I moved to Canada in 2005 to study Fine Arts at Concordia University in Montreal. However, in 2010 after five years of fine art studies, I chose to leave school with only two classes left to receive my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. As an Asian art student, I could not see my future in Canada at that time because, although Asian, my work is not "Chinese" enough to represent Asian culture according to the 'tick box' in their definition of diversity. This was of course very disappointing but, on the other hand, I then challenged myself to draw upon aspects of "Asian Cultures" that are actually quite similar to traditions of Western cultures that survive even to this day, such as weaving, hand-made musical instruments, and even ink! Using the theme of how objects have been circulated throughout the world in my proposal, I was accepted as the artist in residence at Impressions Artist in Residency of Montreal Museum of Fine Art with the support of Montreal Arts and Council in 2017. It gives me pleasure to say that I am an 'artist', not an 'Asian artist'.

I have been consistent in my practice of using found and ready-made objects as the materials of my artwork. Often enough, I completely "destroy" a found object, transforming it into new material so much so that often the viewer can't determine the original form or function of the object. A perfect example of this are the plastic fishermen's ropes that were unravelled to become coloured plastic threads that were woven with cotton threads to create my works in my 'Weaving the Ocean' series.

However, I do also keep the original form of the ready-made objects and use them as the medium for my painting or drawing. For example, in my solo exhibition at Mizuma Gallery, I employ antique brass gongs as the medium for my painting works, which also act as wall sculptures. The material is old, but the “content” as a work of art is completely new. The drawing and paintings on the surface of the gongs represent how I visualize the music and the vibrations broadcasted by the gongs when it is struck and played. The gong is just the medium, the painting is a pure abstraction.

There are some paintings in the exhibition that are works on canvas. This was an opportunity for me to explore Chinese ink as a “ready-made” material. I challenged myself to produce ink painting that was completely different from traditional Chinese or Japanese ink painting that I have observed to often be very light and flowy, and depicting landscape, human, birds, animal or trees. My ink painting technique is, however, very different from this traditional ink painting technique. I dropped lots of ink on the surface of the canvas and allowed the ink to dry before adding another layer and repeating these steps until it reached the desired thickness. By these means, I could create abstract paintings depicting “the underwater depths of an ocean” or “distant outer space”.

It is very important for me as a contemporary artist to give a new soul to any materials and mediums I use by injecting emotion inspired by the places and time we are living in at this very moment.”

-- Ari Bayuaji, 2024



LEFT:

Ari Bayuaji, Golden Universe, 2024,
bronze, gold leaf, acrylic paint, Ø 72 × 13 cm
© Ari Bayuaji, courtesy of the artist and Mizuma Gallery

RIGHT:

Ari Bayuaji, In Search of My Ancestors #6, 2017-2022,
Chinese ink and acrylic paint on canvas,
45.5 × 35 × 4 cm (unframed), 50 × 40 × 6 cm (framed)
© Ari Bayuaji, courtesy of the artist and Mizuma Gallery





LEFT:

Ari Bayuaji, *Jade Mountain*, 2023,
woven plastic threads and cotton threads,
semi-precious stone beads,
188 × 113 cm © Ari Bayuaji, courtesy of
the artist and Mizuma Gallery

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. From 2018 to 2023, “Mizuma & Kips” opened 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

About Singapore Art Week

As Singapore's pinnacle visual arts season, Singapore Art Week (SAW) represents the vibrant and diverse visual arts ecosystem. The ten-day event will see more than 100 events by the local and international visual arts community. Audiences can look forward to a dynamic line-up of programmes and arts experiences at our museums, galleries, independent art spaces and public spaces, and participate in enriching discussions, talks, walks and tours across the island and online. SAW, a celebration of Singapore's visual arts landscape, is an annual event organised by the National Arts Council (NAC).

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Mizuma Gallery

22 Lock Road #01-34
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Gallery hours:
Tue-Sat: 11am-7pm
Sun: 11am-6pm
Closed on Mondays & Public Holidays

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Part of
SAW
SINGAPORE ART WEEK