

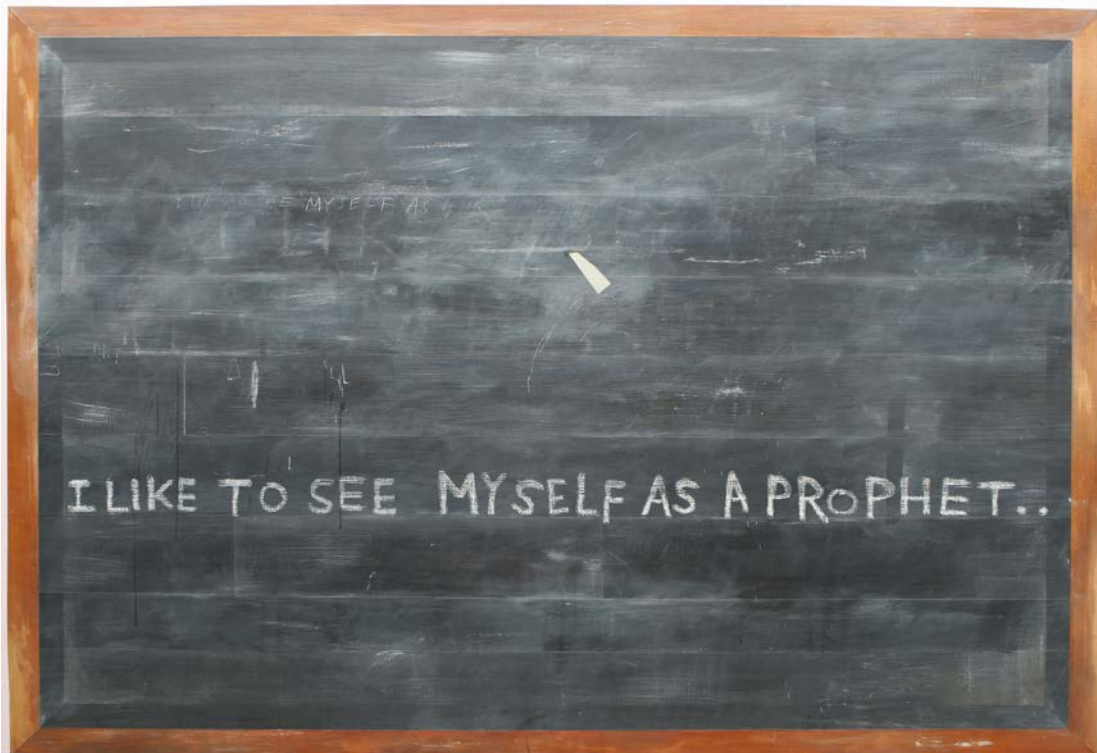
For Immediate Release

NUS MUSEUM

Gajah Gallery 

Present

Jendela: A Play of the Ordinary



Jumaldi Alfi, *Untitled 2008*, Acrylic on Canvas, 215 x 315 cm

Singapore, 4 March 2009 – NUS Museum and Gajah Gallery present the works of art collective Jendela in the first part of two major exhibitions on Indonesian contemporary art. The exhibition, *Jendela: A Play of the Ordinary*, opens at NUS Museum on 4 March 2009 and will run till 19 April 2009.

Consisting of graduates of *Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI)* in Yogyakarta, *Kelompok Seni Rupa Jendela* (Jendela Art Group) is now one of Indonesia's most prominent contemporary art collective. The meteoric rise of Jendela that began in the mid-1990s is both fascinating and confounding. Paintings, sculptures and installations produced by these artists that included Handiwirman Saputra, Jumaldi Alfi, Yusra Martunus, Rudi Mantofani and Yunizar (See Annex 1), are seemingly detached from the politically charged practices that typify Yogyakarta art. Based on observations of the everyday or mundane, the artists produce works that are visually arresting, seductive, astutely crafted, yet cool, ambiguous, distanced from such conventional gestures and themes. Contrasted against the stridency of activism, the works of Jendela also appear to some as abstract, formal, void of discernable text and empty. Should the works be regarded as a departure

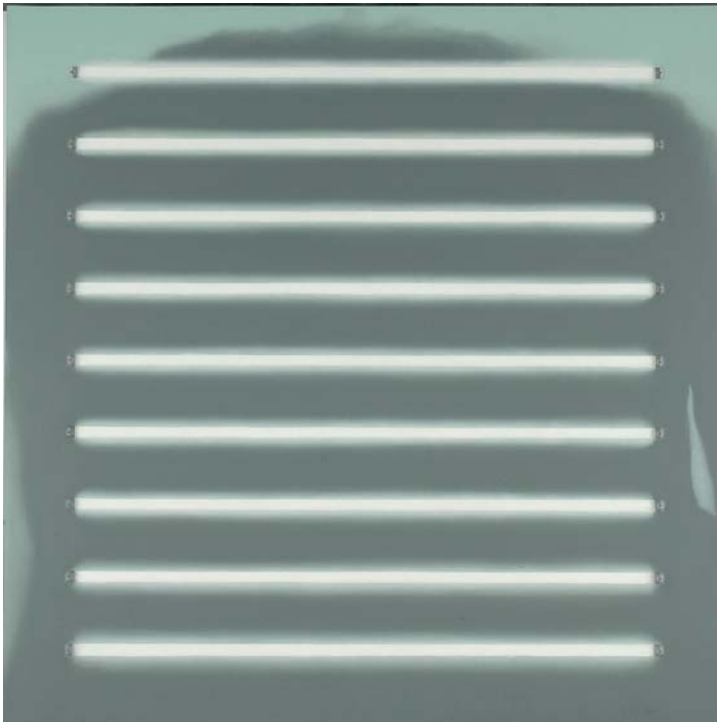
from the very spirit of social and political engagement that for so long associated to art of Yogyakarta? If so, what series of factors and conditions prompted this shift? If not, what may be said about the nature in which politics continue to be reflected through contemporary practices today? Or, should the works by Jendela continue to be regarded in dialectical terms against the incumbency of politically motivated art? And should they be seen as strategies in which meanings are released from such reductive duality of forms and the specter of expectations? To weigh these considerations, this exhibition stages an encounter with Jendela's play of the ordinary, invoking a crisis of signification, one that oscillates between irrational fascination and context.



Yunizar
Untitled 2009
Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 150 cm

Jendela first exhibited as a group in 1997. Despite a partnership that began more than a decade ago, the members of the group maintain fluid artistic relations based on individual directions and, practical inter-personal support needs. Each individual articulates position that is distinct and independent, engaging with the group to share perspectives in production and as a network of support. As a collective, the artists did not develop a manifesto to define or clarify their philosophical ideas. However, significant in their response to public discussions about them and their work is a common resistance against a reductive reading that essentialise their practices. While they all belong to a common ethnic group originating from Sumatra, they also resist commentaries that explain their practices as a response to the dominance of the Javanese culture or as an indication of the 'innateness' of their originating Minang culture in their artistic psyche. Their works often draw extreme perspectives from art critics. On one hand, their works are often seen to be nothing more than dexterous manipulation of forms and materials so as to produce sensations that are relevant to the globalised market system, alas without a signification that is contextual to allow enduring reading. On the other, the apparent 'formalist' approach is seen to be a valid response to the contriteness of the 'grand narratives' offered by mainstream Yogyakarta art which thrived on figuration and social commentary and indeed the demands of a global exhibitionary system for the culturally authentic and political. This exhibition recognises the limitations of these positions and attempts to situate them as complexities that complicate readings towards nuanced and multivaried perspectives. This is done by placing the works according to a range of themes that acknowledge their capacities to intimate towards conceptual and formal positions, such as on one hand, the tendency towards a formal purity, and on the other, intimation towards commentary and

examination of the human condition. While works are placed accordingly to their assigned theme, it must also be noted that each may function multivariably in addressing a range of perspectives.



Handiwirman Saputra
Cahaya dan Bayangan, 2005
Acrylic on Canvas, 180 x 180 cm

The exhibition is curated by Ahmad Mashadi (Head, NUS Museum) and Enin Supriyanto (Independent Curator, Indonesia). It is jointly organised by the NUS Museum and Gajah Gallery, Singapore.

Ahmad Mashadi remarks, “The emergence of the group had prompted discussions about its significance across the spectrum of the visual arts community, from critics to curators to collectors. This exhibition provides a platform to show and examine some of the important works of the group over the past years. By organizing these works along discernable themes across the various artists, I hope we are able to reflect and amplify some of the pattern of ideas we may associate the artists’ practices to. I think the audience will find that central in the artists’ thinking is the need to allow for an encounter between art and viewer that is open yet productive, perceptually driven rather than simply dependent on the sense of the familiar and recognizable typically associated to Indonesian art.”

Enin Supriyanto adds, “When we talk about the Jendela as a group, we tend to generalise the similarities of their art practice. This show will layout not only the similarities but also the difference and contrast of each member’s artistic approaches by arranging them in thematic grouping. At the same time, as the show gathers each artist’s works from different periods it will provide us with the opportunity to witness how each artist has developed, changed, and evolved over the years over the years. The NUS gallery space, as it is not a very clean rectangular space that we can easily just put all the works in, presents another opportunity for the artist and the curators to rethink the formal presentation of some works in their relation to the space. I certainly hope that the show can be seen as a complex presentation of Jendela’s art works as an installation in itself —that will give the audience a chance to enter the more or less complete ‘Jendela experience’.”

This project marks the group’s first exhibition in a major museum institution outside of Indonesia. A post exhibition catalogue will be published to mark its occasion.



Rudi Mantofani
Setelah Makan II (After Food II), 2003
Polyester Resin
70 x 30 x 40 cm



Yusra Martunus
02107, 2002
Stone, fiberglass, chrome
electroplated
30 x 60 x 40 cm

On the opening night of the exhibition *Jendela: A Play of the Ordinary*, sonic artist **Steven M Miller** will perform responding and interacting with live sounds channeled from the kinetic works of Handiwirman Saputra and elongated guitars of Rudi Mantofani (see Annex 2).

In April, the NUS Museum and Gajah Gallery will present a solo exhibition featuring the charcoal works of an emerging Indonesian contemporary artist J. Ariadhitya Prahumendra entitled *Memorize Me: J. Ariadhitya Prahumendra* (see Annex 3).

Media Enquires

For more information on the *Jendela: A Play of the Ordinary* exhibition, media interviews, gallery tours or high-resolution images, please contact

Mathilda de-Boer Lim
Assistant Director
Marketing Communications
 T: [65] 6516 6339
 E: mathilda.lim@nus.edu.sg

Tan Li-Jen
Manager
Marketing Communications
 T: [65] 6516 8841
 E: tanlijen@nus.edu.sg

Exhibition Details

Date: 4 March 2009 – April 2009

Venue: NUS Museum
 University Cultural Centre
 50 Kent Ridge Crescent
 National University of Singapore
 Singapore 119279

Opening hours: 10am – 7.30pm (Tuesdays – Saturdays)
 10am – 6pm (Sundays)
 Closed on Mondays & Public Holidays

Admission: Free

Please refer to the following annexes for more information

Annex 1 The Jendela Art Group Artists
 Annex 2 Sonic Art Performance by Steven M Miller
 Annex 3 *Memorize Me: J. Ariadhitya Prahumendra*
 Annex 4 About NUS Museum

ANNEX 1

The Jendela Art Group Artists

Handiwirman Saputra (b.1975, Bukittinggi) works with painting and sculpture and in doing so deploys a strategy that involve the study of objects – often as mundane as bits of hair, fiberglass, cotton, thread and plastic – and image. Moving from manipulated to painted objects, these elements are often enlarged and enhanced. Their new status is accompanied by a deliberate play of ambiguity. A piece of cotton, re-expressed as a diptych or triptych, is transformed into a monumental – shifting and moving against a background of empty vastness – and at times an overwhelming image of cathartic awe and sensations.

Jumaldi Alfi's (b. 1975, Lintau, Sumatra Barat) is a painter who works sequentially on a set of ideas and themes. Common among these series is the urge for immediacy through the act of drawing, marking and scribbling applied over variations of scapes, clued by way of elemental aspects such as foreground, horizon and depth. Alfi markings are feverish, shifting and ever-transforming against a tableaux that is disconcerting in its fixity and quiet monumentality. This is heightened in his drawings characterised in contrast by the proliferation of figures in various physical and mental states.

Yunizar (b. 1971, Talawi) is a painter. His works may be described by an attempt to advance his preoccupation for still-life. Bottles, potted-cactus, apples and other elements are painted singly, and later reproduced in simplified outlines, eventually multiplying exponentially as miniscule elements on a vast canvas, as crammed two-dimensional landscapes choking on its own reproductive capacity. At other times he obliterates this multiplicity, displacing it with a single figure, or a head, unsmiling, disfigured and consumed by a sense of estrangement or exile. In a distinctive series *Coretan* (Marks), lines and markings are deployed as frantic utterance – obfuscating and never declaring any form of intent. However, the sense of narrative is kept remaining in the fringes of the frame, is eternally held in anxious tension.

Rudi Mantofani (b. 1973, Padang) is a sculptor and painter, with an uncanny ability for realism and irony. His works reference the familiar but only to titillate by introducing a sense of the extraordinary or absurd – a banana sculpture splits to reveals its Javanese textile-patterned flesh, guitars with elongated frets, globe that sits deflated in an idealized landscape of lush green, a glorious blue sky juxtaposed against an artificial plastic turf. These play of contrasts and illusions challenge expectations and attitudes, urging one momentarily to suspend disbelief and weigh possibilities and implications.

Yusra Martunus (b. 1973, Padang Panjang) is a sculptor and painter. Similar to the ways in which he allows himself to be fascinated by materials and their formal qualities, his works seduce the audience by their singular celebration of materiality and the sensations they offer. Yusra uses an array of materials and industrial techniques to produce objects that surprise. At times the works' semi-liquid appearance betrays their actual material constituent. At other times, their clinical finishes mimic modern everyday consumables, but deployed to invoke a sense wonderment and reflection.

Jendela Art Group Exhibitions

- 1997 Jendela, Purna Budaya, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 1999 From a Window, Padma Hotel, Bali, Indonesia
- 2000 *Membuka Kemungkinan* (Opening Possibilities), Purna Budaya Yogyakarta and Taman Ismail Marzuki Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2002 *Estaticus Mundi*, Selasar Sunaryo Bandung and Air Art House Jakarta Pose, Museum Affandi Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 2005 *Biasa / The Ordinary*, Nadi Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2007 PEEKABOO!, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ANNEX 2

Sonic Art Performance**Steven M Miller in collaboration with Handiwirman Saputra and Rudi Mantofani**

Date and time: 4 March 2009, 7.00 pm



On the opening night of the exhibition ***Jendela: A Play of the Ordinary***, sonic artist **Steven M Miller** will perform responding and interacting with live sounds produced by the kinetic works of Handiwirman Saputra and elongated guitars of Rudi Mantofani.

Steven M Miller is an Assoc. Professor at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, NUS. He studied electronic music and composition with Ingram Marshall and Peter Randlette at The Evergreen State College in Olympia WA. He then completed an MFA in Electronic Music and Recording Media at the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College, where he studied with David Rosenboom, Larry Polansky, Maggi Payne, Anthony Braxton and William Winant. Concentration in Composition and Performance utilizing electronic media with an emphasis in interactive real-time computer music systems. In 1989-90 Miller was a Fulbright Scholar in composition, studying traditional and new music for gamelan at STSI-Surakarta (formerly Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia, now ISI - Institut Seni Indonesia - the national performing arts college) and the Pura Mangkunegaran in Surakarta, Central Java Indonesia. Miller has undertaken numerous intermedia collaborations working with a range of visual artists utilising electroacoustics and live sound processing. He had also produced and curated sonic arts festivals the latest being 12th Annual Santa Fe International Festival of Electroacoustic Music, Santa Fe New Mexico, US (2008).

ANNEX 3**Memorize Me: J. Ariadhitya Prahumendra**

NUS Museum and Gajah Gallery presents the works of J. Ariadhitya Prahumendra in the second of two major exhibitions on Indonesian contemporary art in April 2009.

Emerging from various explorations linked to conceptions of the anatomo-philosophical 'self', J. Ariadhitya Prahumendra in his most recent series dissects the seemingly monumental appeal Memorize Me. Informed mostly by the artists' biographical interests, the 13 large charcoal works present momentary petitions for recognition, constantly emphasizing on re-assessing the self in relation to what constitutes identity, religion, the moral and the social in the contemporary Indonesia. The self simultaneously becomes a subject and object of observation and study, a liminal philosophical category, developed through investigations into artifactual constituents of memory and placed conjunctive to idealizations of artistic labour and its accompanying predicaments.

ANNEX 4**About NUS Museum, an institution of NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA)**

NUS Museum is a comprehensive museum for teaching and research. It focuses on Asian regional art and culture, and seeks to create an enriching experience through its collections and exhibitions. The Museum has over 7,000 artefacts and artworks divided across four collections. The **Lee Kong Chian Collection** consists of a wide representation of Chinese materials from ancient to contemporary art; the **South and Southeast Asian Collection** holds a range of works from Indian classical sculptures to modern pieces; and the **Ng Eng Teng Collection** is a donation from the late Singapore sculptor and Cultural Medallion recipient of over 1,000 artworks. A fourth collection, the **Straits Chinese Collection**, is located at NUS' Baba House at 157 Neil Road.

NUS Museum launched the **NX Gallery** in 2006. It is conceived as a contemporary art venue to showcase emerging artistic trends in Singapore, Southeast Asia and beyond, as well as to encourage critical curatorial and museum practices. For the NUS Centre For the Arts and the NUS Museum, these aims afford an emphasis in partnerships within the University and beyond, underscored by the recognition that art and culture form a powerful nexus that connect different disciplines and institutional interests. Past exhibitions organized at the NX Gallery include *Picturing Relations: Simryn Gill and Tino Djumini* (May 2007), *Strategies Towards the Real: S. Sudjojono and Contemporary Indonesian Art* (May 2008) and *Bound For Glory: Wong Hoy Cheong* (September 2008).