REASON 4 SEASON

10/9



11/9



12/9



13/9



Core Design Gallery

Core Design Gallery is an exclusive boutique art gallery that represents the face of Malaysian Contemporary Artists and their cutting edge artworks.

With its main philosophy of holding major shows that have critical values and museum qualities, Core Design Gallery aims to create massive awareness on the significance of Malaysia Contemporary Art through solid art management and important publications.

The gallery is committed to promoting and developing the artists to achieve international standard and global recognition for their quality artworks.

Reason 4 Season

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the artists
Ali Nurazmal Yusoff
Fauzin Mustafa
Haafiz Shahimi
Husin Hourmain
Husin Othman
Husni Osman
Raja Lope Rasydi Raja Rozlan
Shafarin Ghani
Suhaimi Fadzir

One of the **contributing writers**
Benedetta Segala

an **introduction**

Established in 2010, Core Design Gallery launched the Great Malaysia Contemporary Art (GMCA) project at the Art Expo Malaysia in 2013, with its second installation a year later. Both shows achieved considerable success, in that they successfully demonstrated to the public that contemporary Malaysian artists were more than capable of creating intriguing, provocative and high quality artworks from various genres ranging from paintings to installations and sculptures.

This year, Core Design Gallery introduces a fresh approach to the 2015 Art Expo Malaysia Plus with the Reason 4 Season exhibition. The exhibition draws inspiration from the distinct character and rhythms of the seasons caused by differences in light, as well as the transitions between seasons that portray the cycle of life from cradle to grave, all of which bring about a wide range of moods and emotions. The short display duration of the artworks can also be seen as a parallel for the fleeting, precious moments in life, in which we need to be truly present to appreciate.

In autumn, the earth begins to prepare for the long winter. Animals collect and store up food; trees become ablaze with gold, and then discard their leaves, and the mood becomes more pensive and reflective – introverted even. Sepia and earthy tones of the artworks on the first day, which evoke memories and days gone by, will attempt to capture this particular mood.

Summer, on the other hand, represents exuberant joyfulness, with long sunlight-filled days, flowers bursting into full bloom and an abundance of outdoor activities and festivals. Likewise, during the exhibition's summer-themed second day, artworks will display splashes of warm colours.

Winter can be seen as a season of opposites. In a short span of time, a serene, white-blanketed landscape can transform into a dramatic snowstorm of epic proportions. It is a time of death and rebirth, as plants and other living things drift into slumber, and yet come to life again at the end of the season. Therefore, works shown during the third day of the exhibition will be presented in colours such as black, white and grey.

As spring is a season of hope and new beginnings, artworks on the fourth and last day express the season's gentle yet optimistic atmosphere with a pastel or bright colour palette, ending the exhibition on a cheerful, upbeat tone.

Other than providing a dynamic, changing landscape to the exhibition venue, the different season-based colour schemes allow the audience to view various facets of the artists' personalities, with each artist providing their interpretation of the particular theme. Moreover, in Reason 4 Season, the artists themselves will be able to explore roads less taken – or rather, techniques and colour palettes less used.

Some artists with a *modus operandi* of striking colours show their skill in manipulating tones through greyscale hues while other artists known for their sombre palettes inject vibrant colour into their artworks. This results in an interesting show for artists and audience alike.



Suhaimi Fadzir
Ferguson: For the People
213cm x 153cm
Mixed Media Assemblage
2015



Suhaimi Fadzir
Ferguson: Hands Up, Dont Shoot
213cm x 153cm
Mixed Media Assemblage
2015

Ferguson: For the People & Ferguson: Hands Up Don't Shoot

Trained as an architect, contemporary artist Suhaimi Fadzir is renowned in the local Malaysian arts scene. Establishing his very own signature identity in his artworks, Suhaimi marries fine art principles with structural and spatial architecture, working found objects as a base or canvas for his paintings or more often than not his three dimensional visually captivating artworks. Termed as "archipaintings", Suhaimi's works are easily recognisable for their intricate and seemingly almost impossible blend of found objects into three dimensional gravity-defying and illuminating works.

Working across two countries, Malaysia and America where he maintains his studios, Suhaimi observes the lifestyles of the two distinct cultures, of the West and the East. As he travels, his artworks are often his visual journals, a cumulative documentation of his observations of the happenings around him.

Such as it is for his latest two artworks, *Ferguson: For the People* and *Ferguson: Hands Up Don't Shoot* are part of a series of three works that pays homage to the Ferguson unrest that took place in town of Ferguson, Missouri in America. Now just after its first anniversary in August 2015, the Ferguson unrest, a series of riots and protests, came about following the fatal shooting of 18 year old African American Michael Brown by a white police officer on August 9 2014. The fatal shooting was highly controversial as investigations shed light on racial stereotyping and discrimination that was long rooted within the community of Ferguson. The tragic event led to various riots, violent protests throughout the year-end of 2014 as the people made a public outcry of injustice and prejudice toward the African American community across America. Curfews were established to curb the unrest within the Ferguson community. Now a year later, demonstrations and protests were held in memory of the anniversary of the tragedy, duly acknowledging that the racial stereotyping and discrimination of the African American community remains at large.

Ferguson: For the People and *Ferguson: Hands Up Don't Shoot* are close to the heart of the artist. While attending his art show late last year, Suhaimi was a clear witness to the protest demonstrations that took place. He reflects sympathetically that this turn of events is not uncommon as conflicts and prejudicial discrimination occur beyond colour or geography. It is too commonplace, within organisations, structural hierarchies, communities and nations. Above all differences be it colour, culture or differences in opinions, it is about surviving, making a life for ourselves…about having food on the table.

Being a true Malaysian contemporary artist, Suhaimi successfully marries the East and West through *Ferguson: For the People* and *Ferguson: Hands Up Don't Shoot*. He articulately works his artwork to life, using staple kitchen items such as the traditional wok, a frying pan commonly used in the East, duly revealing his Malay cultural identity. Simultaneously, the artworks carry Western elements such as the American license plates which he shares as part of his journey. Newspaper cuttings are prevalent within the artworks, documenting the Ferguson story. Aesthetically pleasing and visually captivating, the artworks are illuminated by a single light bulb. Perhaps it is reflective of Suhaimi's wish for us to look past our differences, of our conflicts to a better future…that there is good behind every tragedy…that all is not lost.

Qithmir

Husni Osman
Qithmir
Oil, Acrylic, Texture Gel and Napheling Gel on Canvas
213cm x 122cm
2015



Drawing on his Islamic beliefs, *Qithmir* is artist Husni Osman's rendition of the legendary story of Qithmir, a loyal dog handpicked by Allah to watch over his persecuted believers. Qithmir is a story that depicts the honourable values of gratitude, honesty, loyalty and devotion. During the age where Paganism was upheld, believers of Allah were often persecuted by non-believers. To escape, six men of God fled and took refuge in a cave in the neighbouring mountains. They fell into deep sleep as Qithmir, the dog stood guard over them at the mouth of the cave. Upon waking fully rested, the men and dog found their familiar paths and villages gone only to be replaced by fresh faces and new townships…upon conversing with the locals, only then did they realise that their sleep lasted for 309 years. It was a miracle bestowed by the Almighty Allah to protect the good people from the terror and prosecution.

Husni pays homage to the loyal and respectable Qithmir as he wonders in bewilderment on the more common belief of the harm and impurity of dogs within the Muslim community. Through the legend of Qithmir, Husni considers the reasoning behind the legend against the unspoken harm of dogs in our everyday lives, speculating and possibly considers that dogs were misunderstood and painted unfavourably through the centuries that led to the current state of mind of the people. With this in mind, *Qithmir* takes on a more sombre colour tone, reflecting the resentful nature of one in the face of unfavourable events. In the recent turn of events in our country and the common social media outrage, the artist maintains hope, suggests to consider a different perspective…perhaps our embodiment of Qithmir's values by all may lead us to a better position. A better nation…

A neo-expressionist painter, Husni adopts a semi-abstract approach in this latest painting *Qithmir*. While seemingly simplistic with hints of naivety, the glow of Qithmir the dog pulls its viewers in against the marvellous blend of sombre tones that lends to the caution and tension of the time. The tones in its composition further accentuates *Qithmir* with an undeniable air of strength and perseverance.

Gha



Husin Hourmain
Gha
Acrylic on Canvas
152 cm x 122 cm
2015

In Husin Hourmain's 2013 exhibition *Awal Hurouf Asal Hurouf*, he displayed 30 depictions of Jawi calligraphic alphabets produced over the span of three years, 2009-2011 – alphabets that held special significance for him as a devout Muslim. There are, however, six other letters, appearing only in the version of the Arabic script that has been modified to suit the Malay language, which are just as significant to Husin as a Malaysian and Malay. By creating the six additional pieces and combining the two sets together, the artist finally considers the *Awal Hurouf Asal Hurouf* series to be complete, presenting a more well-rounded view of his identity.

Husin's desire to impart knowledge is demonstrated in the expressionist artwork Gha through words scribbled in the brick red background of the painting, bringing to mind his *Nota Baru* works shown in the 2014 *Soya Cincau* exhibition. He attempts to connect the letter "gha" with his initial reflections about how it relates to us as human beings. Here, Husin inscribes the word *guru*, which translates to "teacher", as well as the phrase *buku itu gedung ilmu, guru pula pewaris ilmu*, translated as "the book is the storehouse of knowledge, and teachers the heirs of knowledge", once again emphasising his personal belief on the importance of gaining knowledge.

Adapt



Ali Nurazmal Yusoff
Adapt
Oil on Canvas
137 cm x 122 cm
2015

Autumn, also known as the fall season, has often been used as inspiration for poetry by well-known poets such as William Blake, or for songs and prose. Ali Nurazmal Yusoff uses this simple concept to translate his understanding of autumn into this painting. For him, autumn represents the first stage of romance, a time when passion runs high. Deep reds and maroons, evoking the rich tones of wine and sunset, portray the allure of autumn, not just its emotional atmosphere but the colours of its environment as well.

Through *Adapt*, the viewer seems to peer at a world from behind rose-tinted glasses, similar to how a person in love is less inclined to notice the imperfections of his or her beloved during that first phase. Ali further captures the heady emotions connected with romance through his skilful technique of layering translucent colours to create the movement of figures, transitioning between realism and abstraction, both in the portrait and of the landscape at the lower portion of the painting.

The Fall of Time



Haafiz Shahimi
The Fall of Time
Pyrography print (metal rods, 90 degrees inverted burn) on Canvas
153cm x 122cm
2015

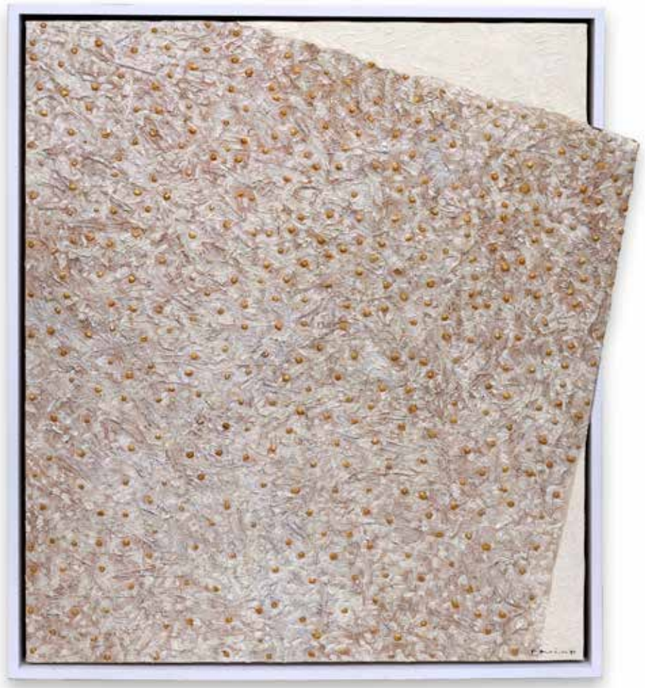
In *The Fall of Time*, Haafiz Shahimi visually expounds on the concept that timelines of our lives can be compared to a ruler, with each mark indicating a momentous juncture in life; be it a turning point in life, an unforgettable experience or a lifetime achievement. As long as there are still marks visible, one is living, much like electrocardiogram (ECG) waves that represent one's heartbeat as opposed to a flat line. The title of his artwork speaks about that moment when the marks fade away into nothingness at the end of one's life.

Here, he relates the concept of timelines with his technique of mark-making by burning metal rods into the canvas to form a portrait. It is not difficult to see the connection; we are the result of our circumstances and our responses to the situations. As we age, the lines and wrinkles that become etched onto our faces are also a result of events that take place and our interactions with others, such as deep wrinkles from worry about an illness or laugh lines from delightful conversations and jokes with loved ones.

Thus in a way, our faces also can be seen as timelines of our lives. Through his artwork, the artist also seems to ask the question: have we ever wondered what kind of portrait will we leave behind in the minds of others after our timelines, too, have drawn to a stop?

The Fall of Time demonstrates Haafiz's continued innovation of this particular aspect of his pyrography technique; the portrait's simple, elegant appearance belies the challenges involved in its creation process, such as finding ways to avoid weakening the canvas's structure even when the metal rods are burnt close to each other, or controlling the thickness of the lines by varying the duration of the burns.

White Painting



Fauzin Mustafa
White Painting
Mixed Media on Canvas
127 cm x 117 cm (with frame)
1995

Fauzin Mustafa, who is recognised for his successful mixed media practice, brings to this show the rare *White Painting* dated year 1995. There are only three artworks within the series of white paintings. His well-known *White Painting in Black Frame* for which he was awarded third prize at the prestigious Phillip Morris "Asian Art Awards" is within the collection of Aliya and Farouk Khan, followed by another piece collected by our National Art Gallery.

Truly a rare gem, the *White Painting* is built by meticulously layering cut canvas strips and little golden mounds. The nude colours give the work its simplicity and minimalistic effect without overcrowding the interesting textural surface, signifying Fauzin's signature of Malay symbolism infused with Western techniques.



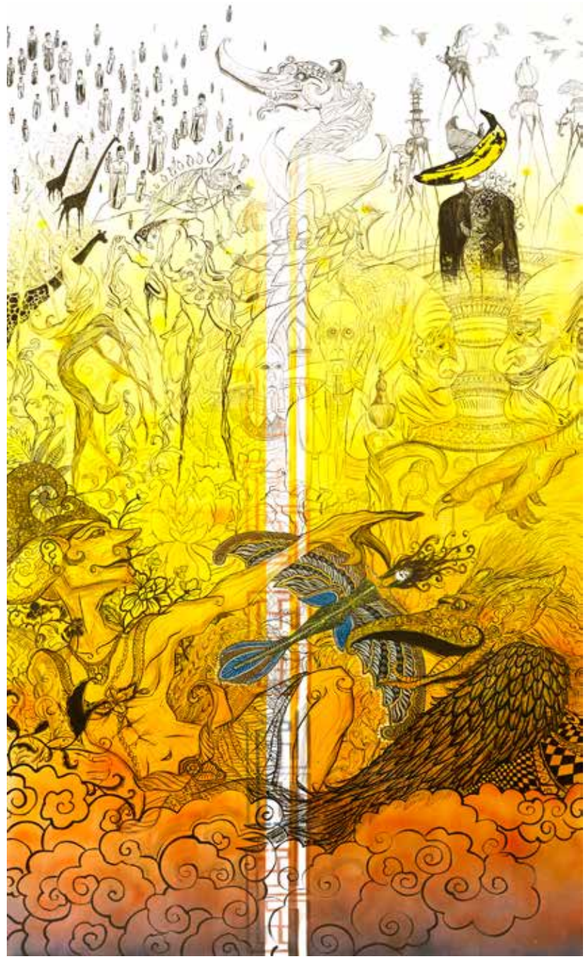
Ali Nurazmal Yusoff
Ralik
Oil on Canvas
183cm x 335cm
2015

In the age of technology, communication has become non-physical but rather interacted via a virtual sphere especially with the addiction to social media; a common phenomenon after the noughties.

"Ralik" is a common slang term often used by Malaysian northerners which roughly translates to "engrossed". In this massive work, Ali Nurazmal Yusoff subtly uses the symbolic dancing figures as a hint to this phenomenon of deteriorating human social contact. The movement of the dance becomes a lucid chant reaching a pure meditative state of oblivion, forgetting the physical presence and its reality.

After *Face Off* – an important piece where Ali broke away from his realism of figures – *Ralik* is the second piece whereby he desired to push the form of his figures into movement. The figures have become indistinct, blurred between realism and abstraction. The layers of translucency versus the opaque, depth versus surface, form versus content are now so ambiguous, yet all these will probably define the character of the artistic technique that Ali will be bringing to us in the future.

Labyrinth



Raja Lope Rasydi Raja Rozlan
Labyrinth
Acrylic, Ink and Airbrush on Canvas
214 cm x 122 cm
2015

Distinct from Raja Lope Rasydi's usual hyper-coloured figures and ultra-complete canvases, *Labyrinth* features mostly dark outlines against a warm-toned airbrushed background and a central divider. Despite its initial incomplete impression, the sketchy lines actually become the artwork's distinctive feature, revealing Raja Lope's increased confidence and breakthrough in composing scenes with minimal colour.

The composition is ordered in such a way that the lines gradually decrease in thickness and weight towards the top of the painting, adding the impression of an upward floating movement and allowing the figures space to breathe. *Labyrinth* can mean a puzzle or tangled network, in this case referring to the dryads, nymphs and fairies for which the artist is known, hidden within the floral motifs of the densely-populated canvas.

The painting also displays influences from artists like Grant Wood, Salvador Dali, Michelangelo, Vincent Van Gogh, Andy Warhol and René Magritte, with sly twists and tweaks by Raja Lope to create a localised version relevant to our Malaysian culture of today.

For example, Dali's spindly-legged elephants, also visible in Raja Lope's *Uaws II*, appear here too, this time carrying objects like keris-handles and Malay wedding accessories to represent weighty life responsibilities. Other subverted elements, like Rama and Ravana – protagonist and antagonist respectively in Indian epic poem Ramayana – replacing the characters in Michelangelo's famous Sistine Chapel ceiling scene suggest that in our contemporary society, many preconceptions might need to be rethought and approached from an alternative perspective with an open mind.

Pondok Merah



Husin Othman
Pondok Merah
Acrylic on Canvas
122cm x 122cm
2015

Talented emerging artist Husin Othman holds his childhood memories closely to his heart. Growing up in a family of eight siblings, he rekindles sweet and fond memories of his childhood, playing with his siblings, running wild in his *kampong*, always frowned upon by his mother upon his return at dusk.

The scorching and sometimes unforgiving sun in Malaysia often tantalizes our skin. Fresh from his bus ride back from school, Husin seeks refuge under a nearby phone booth, sheltering from the hot sun. As he waits in time for the connecting ride to his *kampung* home, he stands pondering as the residual heat and humidity slowly creeps in. The gleaming red booth starts to take on a more sombre tone, depicting a mood of silence and unrest. Feeling heavy and burdened, he begins to unload his burden, his schoolbag and shoes, as he tries to fend off the sweltering heat and added weight of soaked clothes. Silently, he waits for his ride…eagerly awaiting… in anticipation for the adventures with his siblings that await him.

Artist Husin Othman's skilful play of colourful tones and hues captures yet again the perfect mood of a moment in time which we often brush aside, from the brisk moment of overwhelming heat to the brief moment of relief in serene anticipation. *Pondok Merah* transports us back in time to our worry-free years, fun filled times… and in our current rush for gold and recognition, Husin brings to mind how fleeting worry-free moments such as a simple relief from the sun may be appreciated.

Pa



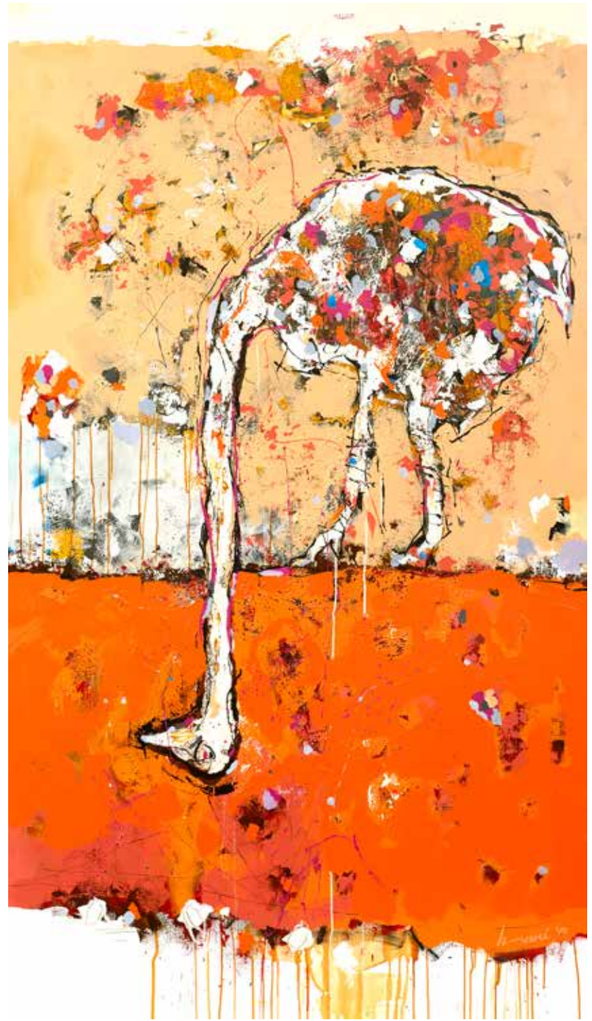
Husin Hourmain
Pa
Acrylic on Canvas
152 cm x 122 cm
2015

Originally when the Arabic writing system was introduced in the country by Muslim traders, the Arabic script taught to the locals consisted of 30 Jawi alphabets, all of which were produced by Husin Hourmain for his monumental *Awal Hurouf Asal Hurouf* series. However, throughout history, eventually six letters – *ca, pa, ga, nga, va* and *nya* – were added to the script, tailoring it to suit the language spoken and written by the local Malays.

Five years after Husin began developing the set of 30 basic Arabic calligraphy characters, he brings this stage of his artistic exploration to a close with the depiction of the remaining six letters, *Pa* being one of them. The usage of complementary colours allows the coral shades of the letter to stand out against its intensely-coloured turquoise background. Continuing from his *Nota Baru* sketches, Husin once again makes small notes about the application of the letter in normal, everyday speech, connecting the word "Pa" with "panduan" or "guidance" in Malay.

Shame Shame

Husni Osman
Shame Shame
Oil, Acrylic, Napheling Gel
and Texture Paste on Canvas
214 cm x 122 cm
2015



Sharing his intrigue of the *burung unta* (Malay for ostrich), artist Husni Osman expresses his curious admiration for the unique large bird that is flightless in nature. Though flightless unlike any other birds, the ostrich is a creature of rapid speed on land, the fastest of any other in the bird world.

A keen observer of human behaviour, artist Husni Osman offers a new twist to his artworks, providing whimsical humour through his latest artwork affectionately titled *Shame Shame*. It is common belief that ostriches bury their heads in the ground or sand in their effort to take refuge from its predators. Akin to this common belief, Husni relates this to our sometimes all-too-often wish to just disappear or be swallowed by the earth in the face of humiliation or embarrassment. Comical as it may be, all of us have experienced such situations at least once in our lifetime, or truthfully more often than we would like to admit.

Comically titled *Shame Shame*, it is a direct Malay translation for "Malu Malu", rekindling a common scenario when we were, as young children, abashedly singled out by our parents and peers whilst caught in an unfavourable position. Sharing sweet memories with his audience, *Shame Shame* is a rare work for the artist as he rarely works with solely bright pastel colours in his paintings. With "summer" as his choice of colours for this painting, Husni hints on hopefulness and optimism…where there is often blue sky after the storm.

Note to viewer: It is a misbelief that ostriches bury their heads in the ground.



Keylong

Shafarin Ghani
Keylong
Oil on Canvas
183 cm x 278 cm
2015

The latest large oil painting of Shafarin Ghani entitled *Keylong* is a synthesis of the slow decanting of a strong emotion, over time. A culminating moment of unique and rare freedom, wonder and absolute; experienced in the intimacy of the Himalayan Mountains. The one and only passage that allows us to reach elsewhere, to advance a little more into the impenetrable. This step is also as a deep listening, a kind of contradiction between excitement and repose, which extends slowly from the depth to the heights; that raises deep doubts and high principles. This depth is a state of mind, an invisible power that permeates all things.

There is a meditative attitude in the choice of colors and a mature composition where every brushstroke is vigorous and necessary. There is a secret agreement between the whispering of Leonardo's landscapes during the Renaissance and the snorting steam locomotive's speed of the revolutionary J.M.W. Turner of the late 1800s which is translated here into a completely minimal and personal key artwork of the artist. His love and deep knowledge of the refined and most delicate oil-painting technique, glazing, unique to evoke specific feelings of atmospheric deepness and delicate shades in transparency, in *Keylong* reaches its peak of expression into a formal purity unprecedented, recalling the theme of an earlier canvas in black and white, *Rohtang*.

Winter expresses the principle of life in essence. While all is quiet under the snow and a dark sky, a new cycle is preparing to start; and it's exactly what resonates inside when viewing this artwork. The essence appears and is affirmed.



UAWs II

Raja Lope Rasydi Raja Rozlan
UAWs II
Acrylic and Airbrush on Canvas
214 cm x 122 cm
2015

Winter, dreary and cold as it can be, represents light-heartedness to Raja Lope Rasydi; for him, it is a time of abundant joyous festivities. Raja Lope translates this buoyancy into *UAWs II*, whereby he uses a monotone palette of cool, airy blues to create a landscape that lacks the seriousness of stark blacks and whites.

Raja Lope expresses the fleeting touch of snow resting on the natural landscape with his airbrush technique, creating ethereal highlights and shadows. Even accidental or airbrushed elements are reshaped into graceful forms, revealing Raja Lope's trademark deliberated spontaneity.

Departing from Raja Lope's usual busy scenes, the larger portion of *UAWs II* depicts a spacious panorama, almost empty save for a mysterious solitary cyborg riding upwards upon interwoven threads of mist and cloud, recalling Raja Lope's preoccupation with aerial journeys and his longing to fly in his previous works.

Silhouettes of wau's or Malaysian moon-kites are visible in the top half of the painting, as Raja Lope zooms out on a scene first introduced in *UAWs*, a work in his 2013 solo exhibition, populated with fantastical flying creatures in the shape of the kites. This time, the *wau*'s carry an added poignancy with their connection to the logo of Malaysian Airlines and consequently, the emotional tension associated with the carrier.

Spider (On Your Shoulder)

Husni Osman
Spider (On Your Shoulder)
Oil, Acrylic, Texture Gel and
Napheling Gel on Canvas
213cm x 122cm
2015

The female form, hailed in all its glory of creation and life, becomes the subject matter for Husni Osman's latest artwork, *Spider (On Your Shoulder)*. Rekindling memories of his childhood years with his mother being his first contact with the female gender to his own personal interaction through the years, Husni marvels at the wonder, agility and versatility of females. From emotional sensitivity to powerful endurance of life to the battle within male-dominated corporate worlds to the limitless strenuous labour of childbirth, the majesty of the female gender is unequivocal.

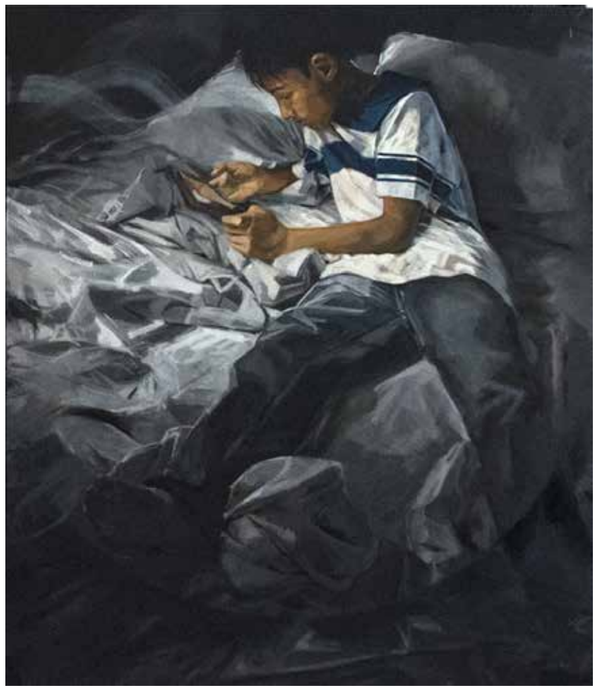
Often regarded as a pest, the spider being a poisonous predator, is commonly misunderstood as the destroyer of life. While the spider weaves its web of death for its prey, it too contributes to the cycle of life, balancing the ecosystem as a whole. The symbolism of the spider is commonly adopted across various communities and nations, representing life and death simultaneously. The spider is often regarded as a form of creative energy, carrying attributes similar to that of the female species as it creates and weaves the designs of life and fate. At the same time, various cultures too depict the spider as a trickster, weaving its web of deceit for its victims.

Notably even in Islamic history, there lies a tale of the spider that weaves its web around the mouth of a cave, in its attempt to protect Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companion from harm by his enemies. Upon seeing the cave mouth encased in the spider's web, the enemy soldiers walked on, dismissing the notion that the Prophet sought refuge in the said cave. From then on in many Muslim traditions, the spider is regarded with respect.

Herein Husni, being a devout Muslim, reveals unconsciously his Islamic beliefs whence choosing the spider as the subject for his painting. Celebrating the beautiful female, he revels at the curious similar attributes to that of the spider…bringing to mind that life is fragile. One never knows what life has in store for you...what may seem harmful might too be a blessing in disguise.



Absorb

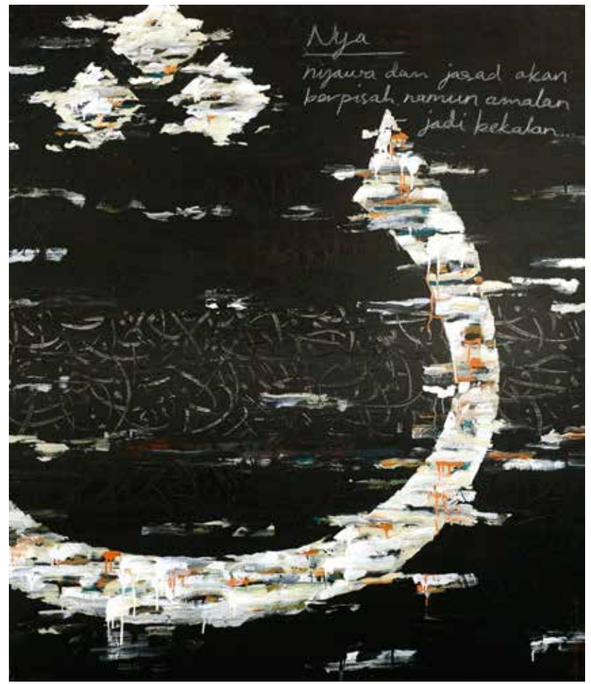


Ali Nurazmal Yusoff
Absorb
Oil on Canvas
137 cm x 122 cm
2015

Absorb is perhaps one of the last pieces before Ali Nurazmal Yusoff had a breakthrough with his new semi-abstract figures in *Face Off*. *Absorb* was produced during the earlier part of 2015 where he was still in the transition of exploring black and white paintings to understand forms of colours without using any colours except for a few spot colours.

Absorb is about the new phenomenon of our digital age where people are overly immersed in their gadgets be it on social media or even playing games. Ali Nurazmal took this observation as a social critique of the happenings of the contemporary society, thus subtly reflecting his concern towards this issue. The artwork is also related to Ali Nurazmal's earlier works such as *A for "Epal"*, which question how secure our new generation really is from negative influences – we might be able to put grilles to protect the physical safety of our houses, but it is impossible to put padlocks on our children's minds when they are exposed to the internet.

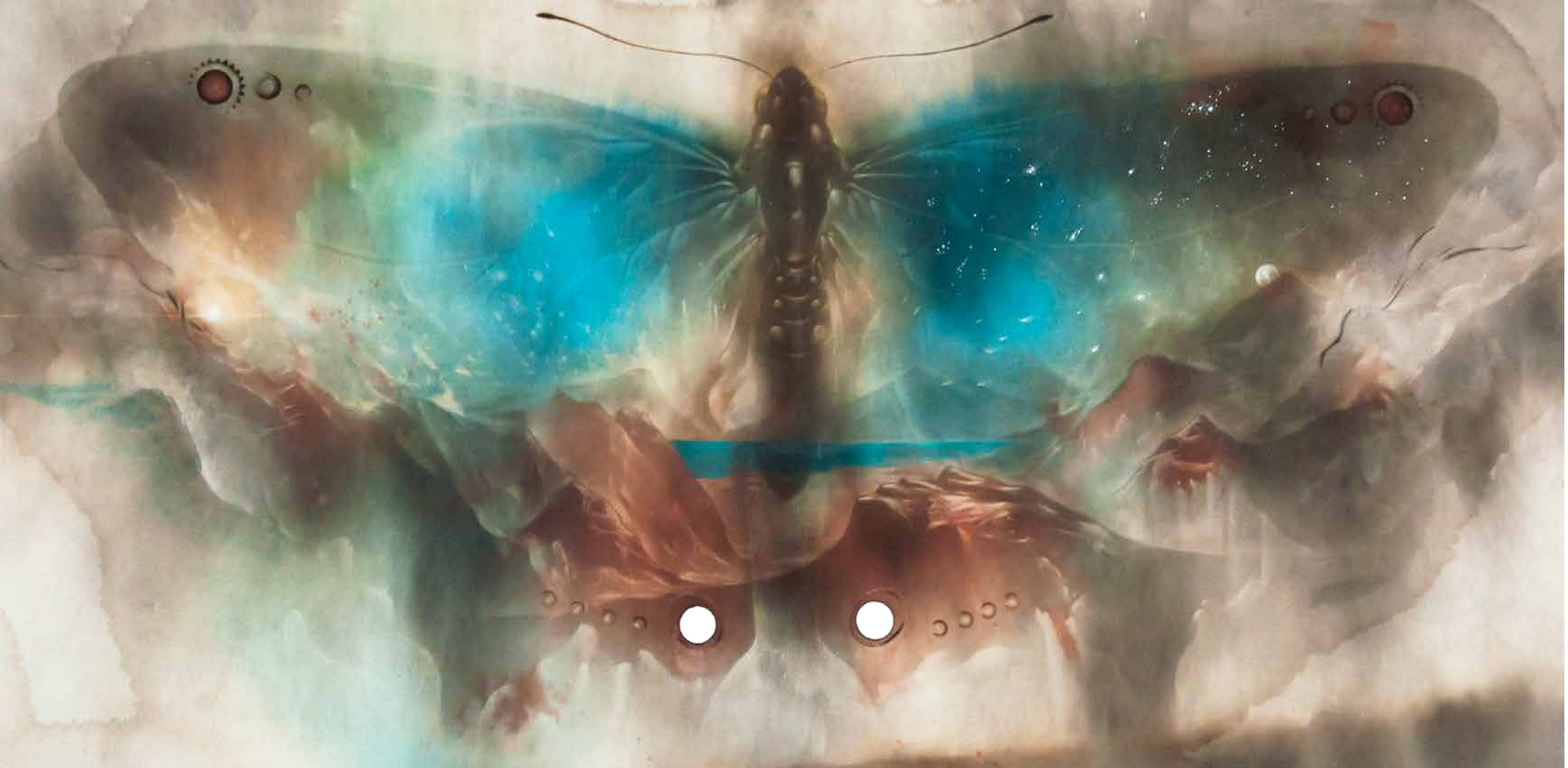
Nya



Husin Hourmain
Nya
Acrylic on Canvas
152 cm x 122 cm
2015

Like *Gha* and *Pa*, *Nya* is part of Husin Hourmain's epilogue to his 2013 *Awal Hurouf Asal Hurouf* solo, which consisted of 30 poetic calligraphy works illustrating characters in the Arabic alphabet. His most recent works in a way complete the Awal Hurouf Asal Hurouf series, by adding six letters that appear only in the localised version of the Jawi alphabet. This version accommodates the sounds of certain words only found in the Malay language, but not in original Arabic. These works are particularly meaningful to Husin as they establish his identity not only as a devoted Muslim, but as a Malay and Malaysian at heart.

Minimal colour is used in *Nya*, emphasising the textural surface of the artwork, whereby Jawi alphabets form brushstrokes that gradually build up the background of the canvas. Expressive brush daubs that are characteristically Husin, bold and less controlled, form the letter "nya". He pairs it with the pensive phrase, *nyawa dan jasad akan berpisah namun amalan jadi bekalan*, which translates loosely to mean that even when our soul and body separate after death, our deeds are what we carry with us. The black-and-white colour scheme of the painting is fittingly sombre, as if signifying darkness and life or death and rebirth.



The Tale of Gynandromorph

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Haafiz Shahimi
The Tale of Gynandromorph
Pyrography print, 90 degree Inverted Burn
& Acrylic on Canvas
122 cm x 244 cm
2015

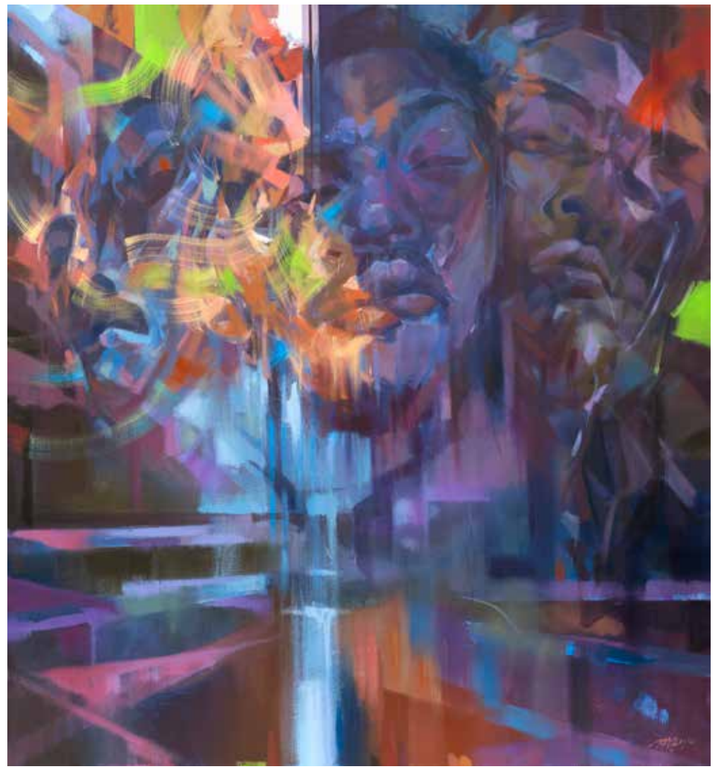
The word "gynandromorph" originates from two Greek words: "gyne" for female and "andro" for male. Accordingly, the word is used to describe an organism with both male and female characteristics, a phenomenon that can be seen in creatures like butterflies. Gynandromorphism was a source of fascination for artist Haafiz Shahimi, as he was able to observe many parallels to the situation, as well as the constant push and pull between two sides, in his daily life and surroundings.

For his new work *The Tale of Gynandromorph*, Haafiz uses the asymmetrical gynandromorph butterfly as a metaphor to symbolise the important choices we need to make in life, the freedom we have to choose, as well as the forgiveness that usually arises as a result of the decisions taken, be it from others or even towards ourselves, should any regrets occur.

Using cheerful acrylic colours evocative of the spring season and his revolutionary 90-degree burn techniques whereby different intensity of flames are used to produce layered shades on the canvas, Haafiz creates the form of a butterfly with two contrasting halves portraying day and night. Intriguingly, it was during the creation of this artwork that Haafiz discovered his ability to not just work but draw with both hands, deftly manipulating the erasers to create definition in the left and right of the image.

Through the *Tale of Gynandromorph*, Haafiz polishes his burn technique from his previous works, as can be seen in the finesse of the landscape seared onto the lower section of the canvas directly from his imagination. The landscape represents the space whereupon we pave our own lives…space to look beyond the dissonant voices and uncertainties of our present and see things on a larger scale.

Adopt



Ali Nurazmal Yusoff
Adopt
Oil on Canvas
137 cm x 122 cm
2015

Before one is able to assimilate into a new environment, surrounding or culture, the open mind of adopting and adapting to the new changes becomes essential. Ali Nurazmal Yusoff takes a symbolic approach to discuss this concept in *Adopt*.

Immersing himself in the colours of cool and misty blue, he tries to understand himself at the dawn of a new spring. The question that arises is how he as a Malaysian will adopt and adapt himself to this new environment, landscape and horizon. The movement of the faces seems to reflect a struggle yet the features on the face are calm with the hint of brightly coloured days ahead. The use of rising again after a long winter as a metaphor very much depicts the current socioeconomic and political situation in Malaysia, where it seems bleak for the society but Malaysians are known to be able to adopt and adapt for the future.



Hidup ini Bagaikan Roda

Husni Osman
Hidup ini Bagaikan Roda
Oil, Acrylic and Napheling Gel on Canvas
214 cm x 122 cm
2015

Life is a cycle of ups and downs. *Hidup ini Bagaikan Roda* is artist Husni Osman's clear and literal metaphor of life in general. The bicycle comes as a natural choice of symbol for life, symbolising progress, renewal and promising times ahead. With close scrutiny, the bicycle within the painting can be viewed as going upward towards the clear blue skies ahead or going downward to a calmer grounded lifestyle. The pace of one's life, be it fast or slow, is dependent on the pace that we drive ourselves through life, akin to the pace that one would cycle towards a designated target.

From life as a street painter to his first solo show early this year, the painting takes on bright 'spring' tones of promising times ahead. Herein artist Husni Osman reveals a glimpse into his childhood years…a bright blue bicycle that has partook a significant part of his upbringing. It is on this bright blue bicycle that his father used to send him to school during his childhood, leaving a significant impression in his own life, of the ups and downs that he experienced with his father through their cycling trips.

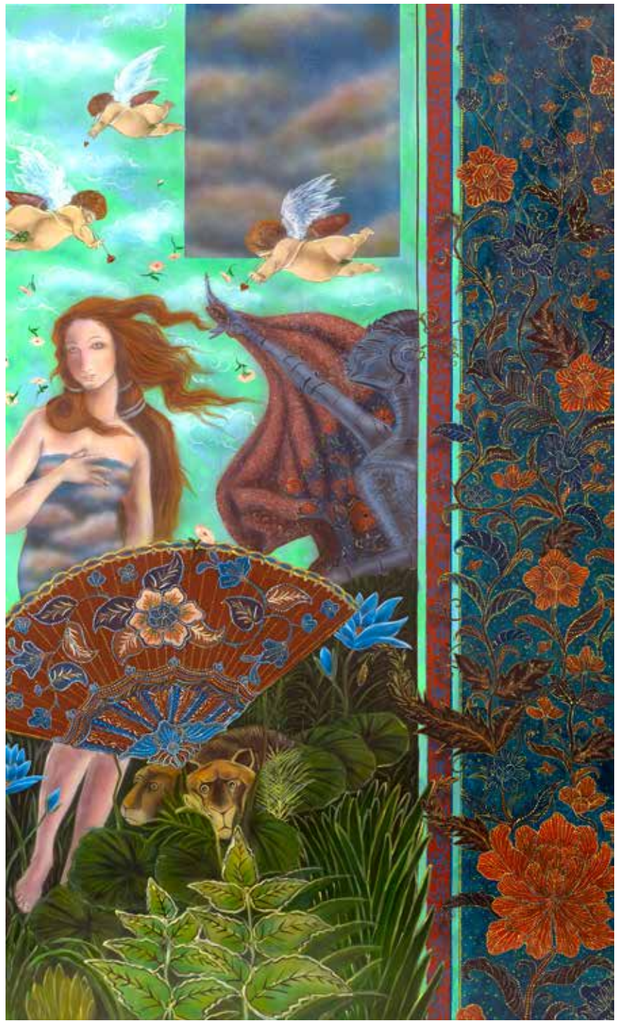
Fana II

Raja Lope Rasydi Raja Rozlan
Fana II
Acrylic and Airbrush on Canvas
214 cm x 122 cm
2015

In Raja Lope Rasydi's dreamlike *Fana II* painting for "Spring" in the Reason 4 Season exhibition, the artist uses strong complementary colours like deep turquoise and reds to emphasise the vitality of this particular season, when trees begin to lose their icy cloaks as flowers and plants begin to shoot up through the frosty blanket covering the ground.

Raja Lope's artworks mostly convey a sense of floating, and weightlessness, of a heavenly realm suspended high above ground in mid-air. This time, however, he introduces details like tropical plants and land-bound animals inspired by Henri Rousseau's *The Dream*, giving *Fana II* an unusual tone and atmosphere that differs from his other paintings. The existence of the dazed looking lions in particular reflects Raja Lope's subtle observation about one's identity; the disorientation of fitting into unfamiliar territory and worry of losing one's authenticity versus the discomfort and alienation of refusing to adapt, be it in the art industry or in life.

Nevertheless, Raja Lope's yearning for flying is not absent from the artwork; plump cherubs dance around an anime version of Sandro Botticelli's Venus, one of them peeking out mischievously from behind his blindfold, plunger in hand instead of an arrow. Raja Lope's Venus is garbed modestly in a cloudy fabric; the texture, which is repeated in a window at the top of the painting, can also be seen as the view of the sky behind cut-out portions. Like the intricate border with its batik motif, these elements add three-dimensional depth to *Fana II*, representing new explorations in the artist's techniques.



Buah Haji



Husin Othman
Buah Haji
Acrylic on Canvas
122cm x 122cm
2015

Atypical Husin Othman returns yet again with fond memories of his adolescent years. Winner of UOB Painting of the Year 2014 – Most Promising Artist of the Year, artist Husin Othman often works with a minimalist approach, with focus on whites, blacks and of shades in between. His works of frequent void spaces speaks volumes in the mood that he brings to his paintings.

Buah Haji (Malay for checkers game) offers a fresh perspective of artist Husin Othman. As he portrays his favourite weekend ritual back at his kampung home, his latest work takes on new colour tones…of vibrant greens and orange. His usually vacant works are renewed with immaculate detailing, fuelled by the variant objects common in a *kampung warung* (Malay for village café).

Buah Haji focuses on two teenage boys animatedly playing a game of checkers, innovated through the use of metal bottle tops. In the compact space of the kampung warung, an old-fashioned radio and household calendar stands in the background, adorned with a mass of found items lying around. As in the very essence of Husin Othman, he successfully re-lives the habits and lifestyle of a typical Malay community in rural areas through *Buah Haji*. His painterly skills and artistic composition is rarely found amongst young artists, where a clear bright tinge of blue and pink tones blends perfectly into the overall work.

Fractal



Shafarin Ghani
Fractal
Oil on Canvas
181 cm x 121 cm
2015

Fractal is an unusual painting by artist Shafarin Ghani. Approaching the idea of spring, the use of colours in tender shades, young and clear, sharp at times, is an element of challenge for a painter who usually communicates with dark shades. This explosive vertical and radiant composition, made of reflections, releases reinvigorating energy in all directions.

Shafarin's impression of spring is alive, bringing with it an undeniable power of rebirth and colours as a revelation after the long grey winters, understandable especially from someone like him, who paints his emotions to make it flow. The spring has an intrinsic character that is more externalised compared to autumn or winter, which are more reflective and melancholy. The painting is characterized by an upward movement as the sap in the trees, which circulates upwardly against gravity, in order to manifest life.

A fractal is an infinitely self-repeating pattern, a process that begins at precise intervals, like a chaotic dynamical system. The relations between fractals, nature and the human mind are deeper than we think, as nature produces many examples of shapes very similar to fractals. This randomness should not be underestimated, it can generate irregularities, going far beyond our expectations.



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