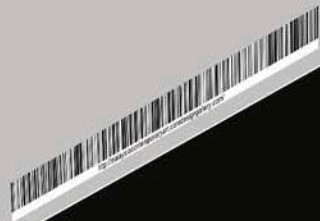


**SOYA
GINGKAU**

EXTREME



Soya Cincau Extreme

PROJECT TEAM

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About Us

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 Malaysian 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.

Soya Cincau Extreme: Introduction

In 2014, Core Design Gallery introduced *Soya Cincau* as a thematic show, bringing to the fore various monochromatic black and white artworks. *Soya Cincau* was a deliberate decision in its choice of artists that came from different backgrounds, integrating their styles into a contemporary form of abstraction.

From figurative to abstract paintings to three-dimensional artworks like sculptures and installations, *Soya Cincau* has culminated into an exhibition that highlights the theme exceptionally. The exhibition called attention to the use of different mediums that accentuate the artists' own interpretations in understanding their subjects, packed with its intriguing depictions of two-dimensional forms and remarkable understanding of utilizing gallery spaces with installation pieces.

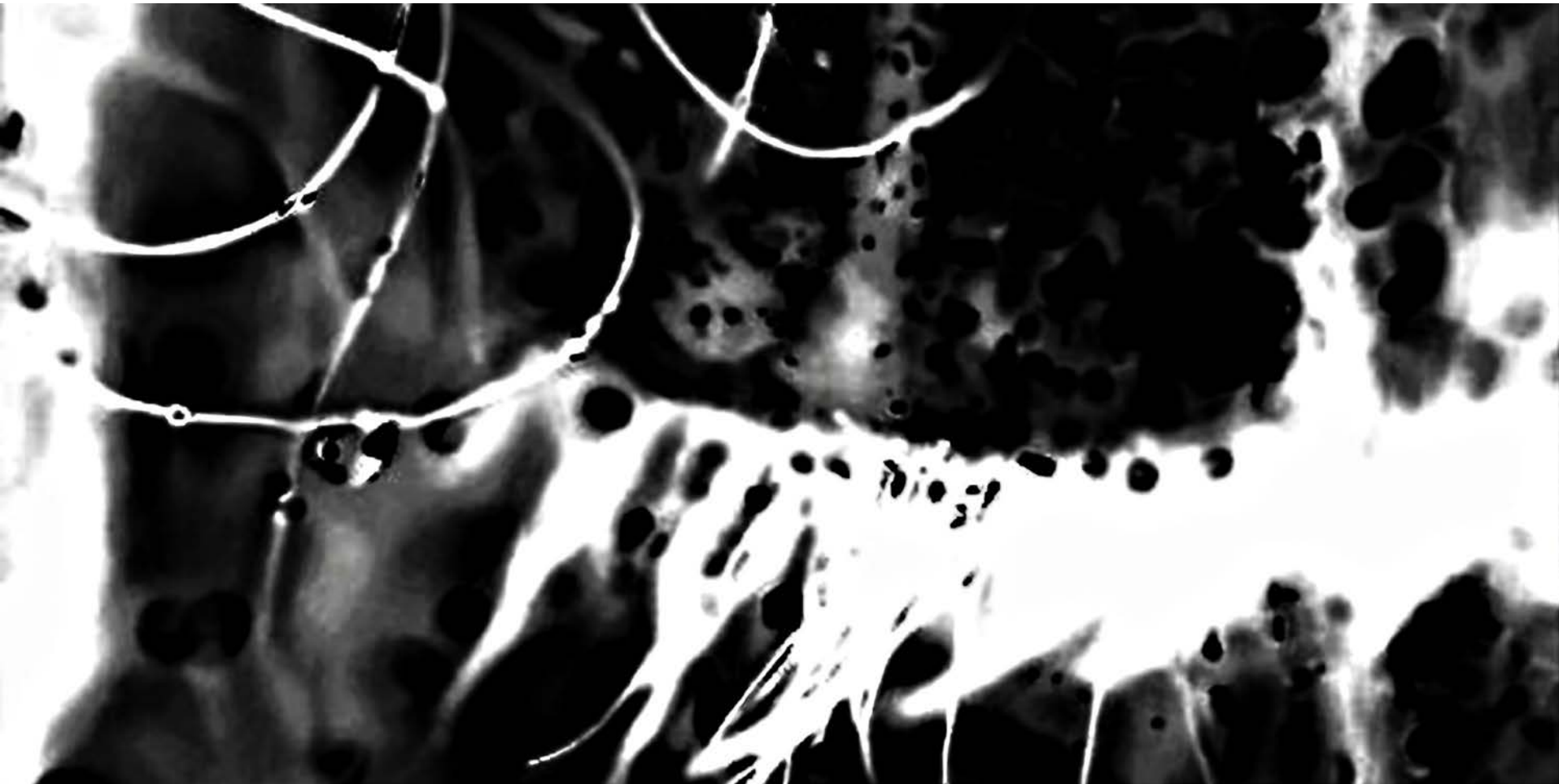
Now, eight years later, resurgence of the same theme is now continued with new additions of artists to start the year with, *Soya Cincau: Extreme*. Previously, *Soya Cincau* exhibition visually underscores the unconventional use of mediums whereas *Soya Cincau: Extreme* could be said to be closely similar in concept, albeit heavier in context. In a way, it is not really a call back to the past exhibition. However, the idea remains intact — prioritizing the distinctive black and white into an art contemporary understanding, especially in a time of seemingly unending pandemic.

With the pandemic still looming without a hint of abating anytime soon, artists are anticipating repetitive cycles of going back into a reclusive state.

In addition, there is a burgeoning worry that the world would have to adjust to living in an endemic era, consequently imposing the changing of thoughts and working processes for these artists. Thus, in *Soya Cincau: Extreme*, the extreme itself is dictated by the nuance of different contexts perceived through the artists' worldview.

To start, black and white is often associated with the concept of balance. Attached to the balance, follows the contradictory nature of how the colors itself behave by coalescing into each other. There is the use of black and white to determine tonal and values, of perceiving the presence of darkness by the absence of light, and of immediate understanding that one could not exist without the other. The role of black and white has always been emphasized regardless of how it is applied in everyday life; be it within cultural identities, philosophical debates, or even more aptly, in arts and designs.

To rebalance the vibrancy of colors that has been showcased quite persistently in local art scene in the past few years, Core Design Gallery decided to start fresh again with this timeless monochromatic concept, offering a realistic view of what it means for artists to work within limitation again — be it in terms of unceasing pandemic life, or exploiting black and white colors to the extreme.



Winter Sleep
Charcoal on Canvas
61 cm x 122cm
2022

Ain Rahman has been consistent in her works of art when it comes to black and white. Considering her previous works that largely delved into monochromatic visuals, she becomes quite the expert into understanding how these two colours work. To most, it might seem like an obsessive tendency but to Ain, without any remorse she continues to develop her realistic drawings unwaveringly. In a niche fashion, Ain continuously attempt to render her own microscopic black and white self portraits that later becomes a metaphysical context whenever Ain enveloping her way of working and processing her surroundings.

In *Winter Sleep*, Ain expresses her thoughts of reverting back to a calmer pace of creating works when she was still a student. The zoomed-in image of her close eyelids signify her desire to rest and reset, to let the year end and a new year starts with a refreshing and perhaps hopeful perspective. Entering a new beginning feels like a closure all at once, and Ain emphasized that gracefully.

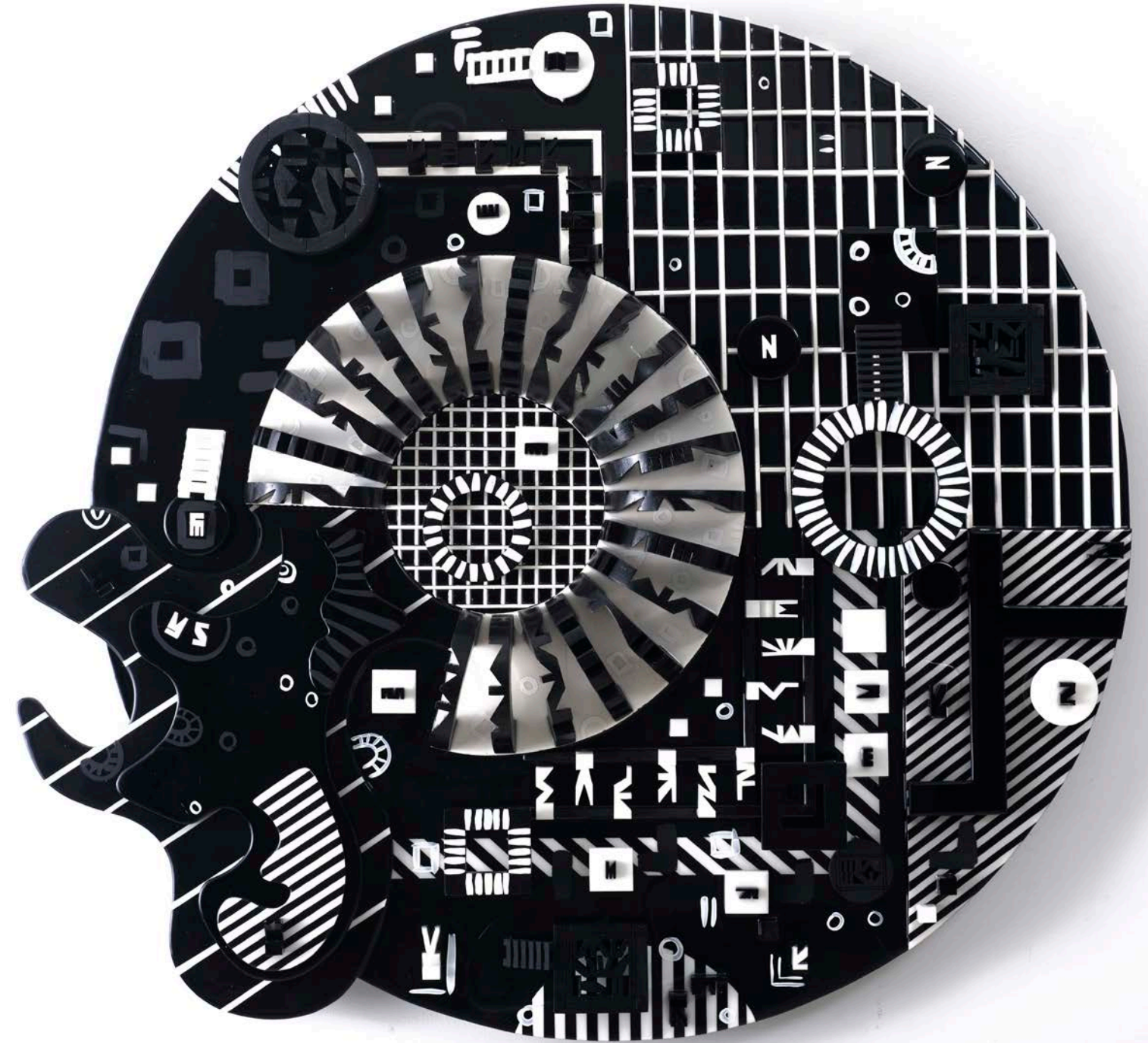
This deep yearning is not something one would simply refute, on account that everyone at the moment might have the overwhelming urge to take a respite in a time when prolonged seclusions become entirely too oppressive to handle.

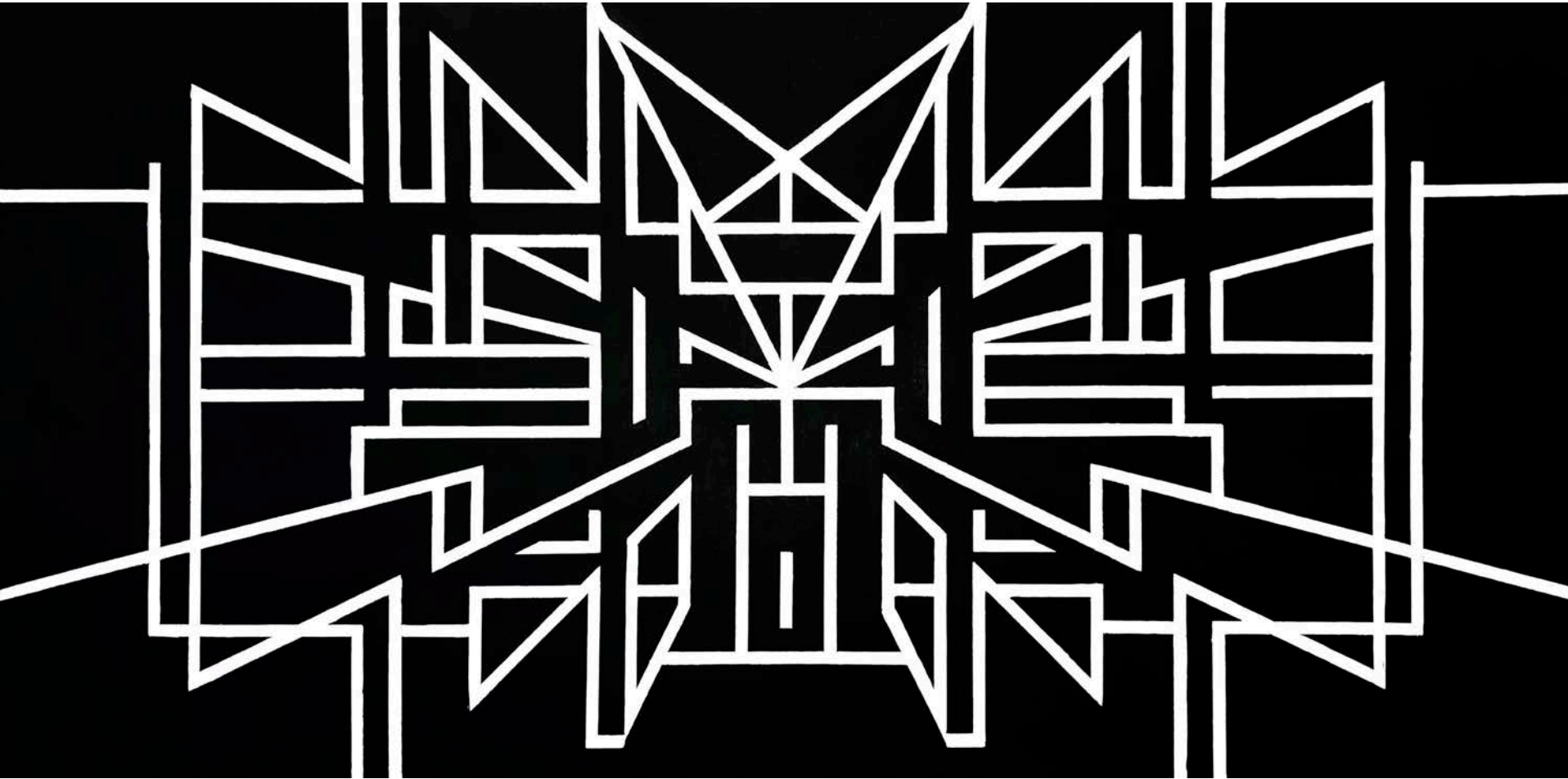
Anniketyni Madian

After several years of exploring and composing her materials, Anniketyni Madian comes back with her latest rendition *TES AMPUNKA #1* a mixture of epoxy resin (solid cast) and mixed hardwoods. Deriving from her well-known background of culture and heritage in Sarawak, Anniketyni took the advantage to share her visual of the ibanese longhouses. Commonly, the ibanese families stayed together for generations in which the whole villagers are settle under one roof. Depicting the compositional part of the traditional longhouses, Anniketyni divides her artwork into a few sections such as the common room, long veranda (ruai) - a place for the community to gather around, the porch - for their daily activities and bedrooms.

Visually, Anniketyni relates these composition with the organic and inorganic shapes that she personally inclined together with her pua kumbu motifs. Anniketyni patronize each of her motifs on small chunk of woods that is cut accordingly to her situated patterns and meticulously arranged based on the measurement provided at her artwork. Moreover, most of the miniature parts of the longhouses are scrutinised carefully to maintain the balanced compositions. Also, Anniketyni has her way of pouring resin as such layers of depth and colours are solely depending by the method itself. This positive outlook by Anniketyni has brought her to reach another intricate level of conceptual and the maturity of technical process developments.

TES AMPUNKA #1
Epoxy Resin (Solid Cast) and
Mixed Hardwood
122cm (Diameter)
2021





404
Acrylic on Canvas
61cm x 122cm
2022

There is a quick recognition of style when it comes to Falil Johari's work. Her interest lies in envisioning the concept of space with her designative white lines, a configuration that is arranged into a one-point perspective visual. An acknowledgement to the infamous minimalist Frank Stella with his black paintings, Falil uses the chance of black and white theme to mimic the idea in her own contemporary way.

She reflected on a multitude of things regarding space when pandemic strikes in the year 2020 — be it in terms of physical space or mental space. She adhered to the fact that while both are detrimental to a person's sanity, especially in a time of isolation, but one significant space seems to be left unattended and that is cyberspace.

Titled 404, Falil is referring to the state of website error, whereupon visiting said website we are most likely unable to access anything. It indicates a browser that can communicate depending on the server, but the server is unable to find what was requested. Typically, when a user attempts to follow a broken or dead link, it would direct them to a 404 error page.

When social media was at its peak during the reclusive times of pandemic, internet traffic was, and still is, at its most rampant — a phenomenon we would unlikely have observed had it not been for the pandemic. Her interest with cyberspace comes from her excessive usage of social media in order to perceive her immediate, then unattainable, outside surroundings. This is where she thought of an error of a website where accesses are blocked, similar to living in a pandemic, even if she could find purchases in these pseudo-space.

Haafiz Shahimi

Harum Bunga Syurga
Rusted Chemical Wash, Plasma Cut
on Metal, Pyrography Print, Acrylic
and Remazol on Jute
Finished with 2k Gloss Paint
188cm x 188cm (with frame)
2021

There is an unmistakable fascination that comes with understanding religions and its history as the piece unfolds itself. Haafiz explained concisely that *Harum Bunga Syurga* refers to Hajarú al Aswad, a black stone that is considered as an Islamic relic venerated by the Muslims since its first appearance that dates back to the time of Adam and Eve. Physically, it appears to be a fragmented dark rock that has since then been cemented together, framed into a silver cast by the corner of the Kaaba.

Believes to be prophetic and descended from heaven, the black stone was initially white in color. Haafiz allegorized this with the white metal plate that is placed on the centre of the painting, conceiving to the Hajarú al Aswad's original color. Unusually lacking realistic imagery, this painting denotes a deliberate influence on Haafiz as he learned about Islamic art. Interestingly in the painting, the interspersing stars demonstrates the aspect of cosmology that is heavily used in Islamic art. It congregates an understanding of non-representational images with the exception of floral forms that is usually found in arabesque patterns, which is one of the two images that is found on the metal plate.

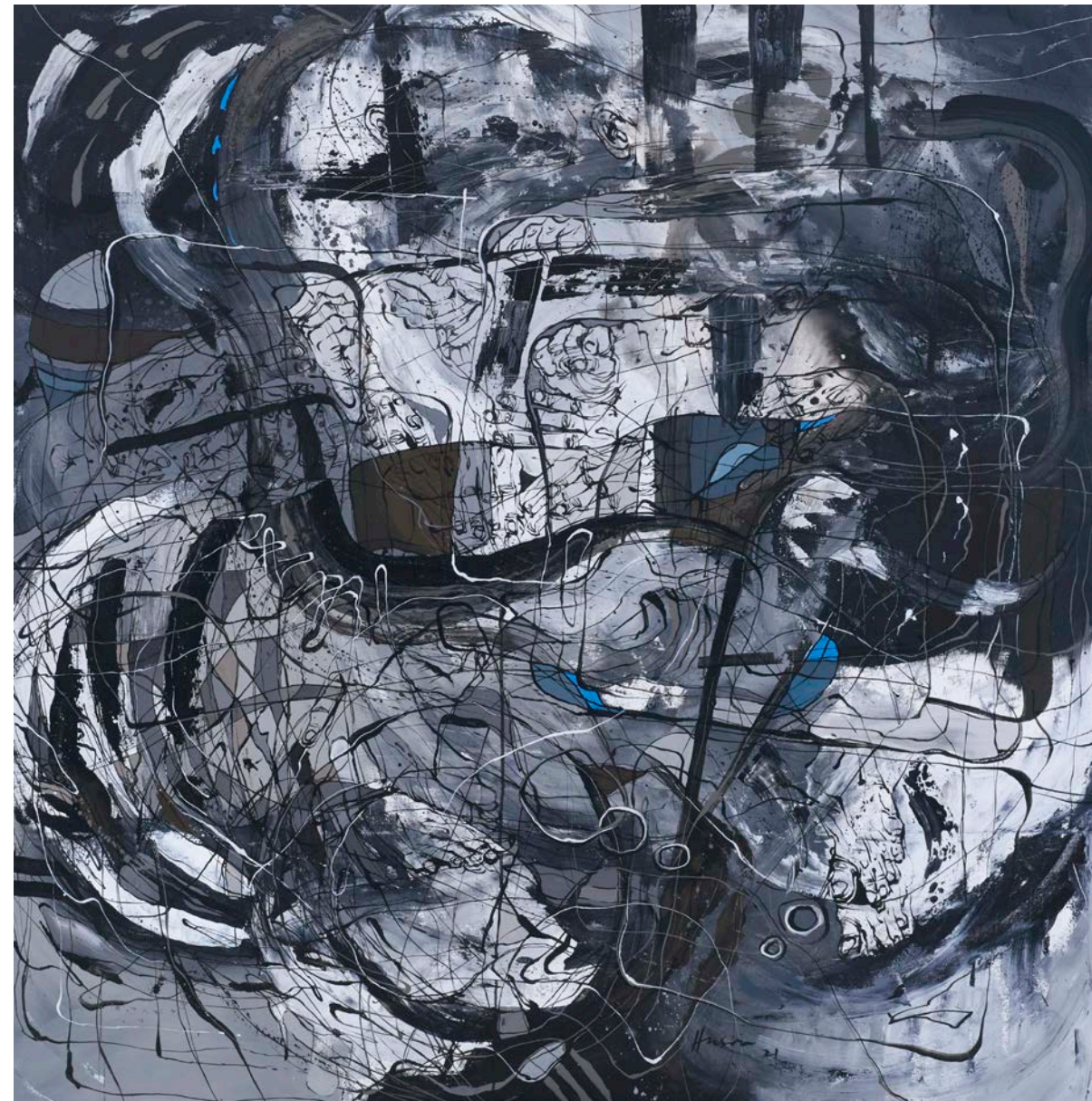
Something to note here is his recent attempt of 'painting' on a metal plate. Never foregoing the most integral part of his working process which is pyrography, Haafiz ventures into another complex

method of producing unconventional painting. His pyrography technique of burnt leaves visibly scattered, strategically encircling the metal plate as if to reenact the act of *tawaf*, one of the ritual during the *hajj* that requires the pilgrims to circle the Kaaba. Obscure, thin lines can be seen painted diagonally across the background and into each corners.

Haafiz illustrates this to resemble a topography of a pyramid, signifying the four corners of the Kaaba as the painting further highlight the canvas itself that measures to six by six feet, implying somewhat aptly the square shape of the Kaaba.

Distinctively, the painting is striking in its cool tones as opposed to his more fiery and bold colors. Prophet Muhammad SAW decreed that 'Children are like a piece of white cloths (born in a state of fitrah) and it is the responsibility of the parents to color them.' Haafiz subtly used this narration as the background of his painting to convey his deep seeded desire of trying to understand that mankind has its own set of flaws that we cannot deny and prevent, but for how we shaped the children according to how we want them to be, it also should apply to us in being a better person ourselves.





Left to Right:

Ambiguity I and II
Acrylic on Canvas
153cm x 153cm each
2021

In the past, Husin was known for the knack of drawing in painting, monopolizing the idle use of dry mediums like charcoal onto a wet surface such as acrylic or oil. Regardless of approach, Husin proves himself to be talented in reversing the original purpose of certain tools to convey an understanding of how materials can be reworked.

With a strong visual accompanying his nimble use of dry and wet mediums, it is no wonder that Husin's storytelling of the Malaysian people becomes quite ironic in a pandemic era that puts a halt of rich social interactions. Observing current events diligently, Husin reflects on the idea resulting from living in a quarantine phase as he processed his shifting worldview accompanied by his revered kampung surroundings. In **Ambiguity I** and **II**, Husin employs ambiguity intensely, removing clear, realistic images to imply the absence of the people that he usually sees.

It becomes increasingly important for Husin to record events, whether spontaneously or not. In an abstracted way, Husin impresses on the idea of warranted freedom ensued from the pandemic as a duly commentary of unforeseen circumstances. There is no 'aftermath' that he can conclude, as the future is still vague and impossible to comprehend, let alone live in.

Md Fadli Yusoff

Wasiat Buat Diri, translates as *A Will to Self*, is a piece of work that seeks open mind contemplation. Md Fadli Yusoff is evidently inclined to share religious thoughts for the audience to interpret. Borrowing verses from the Quran, as in this case - the surah Al Baqarah: verse 17-21. Fadli relates the verses as to describe his perception of the current world.

When the first phase of pandemic was announced, the hardships were constantly talked and many difficult decisions were made in order to resolve this unexpected predicament. Adapting to a new normal was never been easy for several communities as the choices are made carefully to avoid any undefined and dangerous consequences. But through Fadli's observation, he sees this as a path that divided us regardless choices that have been made.

In Fadli's latest piece, he stylized a portraiture into an expressive abstraction work of art. Adding rough brushstrokes to instill an impression of turbulence and he reaffirms the usage of word passages in white contrast which fences the vague figure that seems to reflect another sense of disquietude. In some way, Fadli is encouraging people to read the passages and understand the meaning behind the situation that at first might be unfortunate, but serves as a reminder and guidance for a better future prospect.

Wasiat Buat Diri
Acrylic on Canvas
153cm x 123cm
2021





Tracing back to his first solo *I Am Po Oi*, the idea of salvaging the remaining woods of an old *Minangkabau* houses was quite a sentimental approach as he was constantly reminded of where he came from. Focusing on the textures and his waving forms, Po Oi continues to work on iconographic subjects in which he diverts closely into his spirituality. Standing tall with his two pieces of monumental jawi series, *Aliff - Aku Antara Putih dan Hitam I* and *II*, Po Oi seep into his understanding of jawi that interprets the relation between black and white/ good and bad/ pure and evil/ light and darkness.

The three dimensional form of *Aliff* was so prominently huge as it was produce in nine feet tall and Po Oi has the capability to reconfigure the whole compositional textures that eventually helps the presentation looking quite apt and grand. Undeniably, Po Oi's maturity of processmaking from his solo exhibition has granted him a stepping stone to explore and experiment these unique forms of traditional motifs also to gain him confidence in continuing the traditional prospect of his family's legacy.

Left to Right:

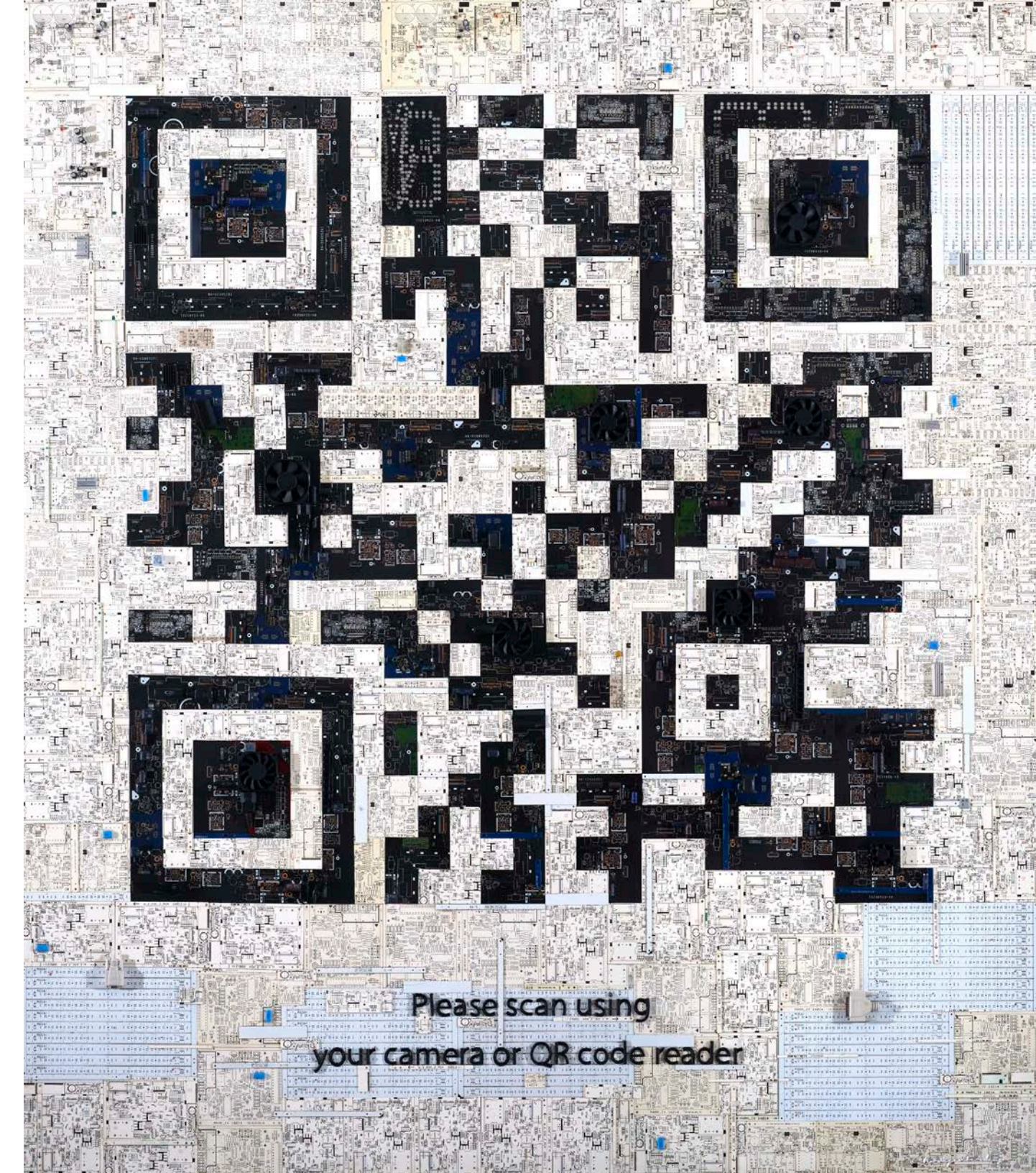
Aliff - Aku Antara Putih dan Hitam I and II
Discarded Wood and Resin Relief
Assemblages
271 cm x 76cm each (2 Panels)
2021

Nor Tijan Firdaus

NorTijan Firdaus is known for her 'painterly' sculpture in her own manner. An avid mastery of e-waste, Tijan uses the precision of her techniques to portray her well known series such as *Guernica After Pablo Picasso 1937*, *After Pago Pago 1966* and others. Since then, her line of studies have brought her to recreate minimalistic form of objects which later Tijan explores the nearest approach, a barcode. Showcasing in *Red Dot* exhibition, Tijan produces a possible scanned barcode or *Just Scan It* as a starting point of her interactive sculpture.

With her latest artwork *The AFK Code*, Tijan recreate the QR code as a documentation to reflect the usage of digital sentiment throughout the pandemic times. This QR code functions not just merely performative but to scan and observe the working data that indirectly connects to a website which Tijan wittily connects her QR code to the AFK Collections website. In a sense, Tijan was proposing the audience widely to venture more on arts or simply to lead them into loving arts.

The AFK Code
E-Waste on Wood coated
with 2k Epoxy Resin
214cm x 184cm
2021





Familiar Faces
Acrylic Silkscreen and Acrylic
Glass on Canvas
126cm x 126cm
2021

Syahmi recently had his first successful solo show, *Boundary: Dream & Survival*, in the first year of the pandemic despite the restriction of movement control order. Scrutinising his past works, Syahmi relies on forming a hybrid of artworks between printmaking and painting. With a focus on his personal lives and closely packed studio environment, it is unsurprising to see him produce an individualistic work with similar concept in this exhibition.

Notwithstanding, *Familiar Faces* seems to provoke a bit of debatable response. A Ringgit Malaysia banknote can be seen quite visibly through the acrylic glass despite how dark it is overcasted with black hue. The use of black acrylic glass to hide images of banknote's surface inside is perhaps a subtle nod towards an ongoing issue Syahmi has been struggling about during the pandemic.

A distinguished symbol that it is similar to that of a popular culture icon, one must wonder of the propensity that money can bring into our lives. Money is a constant issue, whether pandemic happens or not. Almost instantly we are programmed to consider our lives according to how we spend our money. To Syahmi, money

is an issue that young artists constantly have a considerable effort in making, not to mention saving.

Artists that solely rely on art making becomes burdened when pandemic happens as revenue is hard to achieve without actively joining exhibitions. Even artists that has made themselves known were sorely affected and it is not without unfathomable reason. *Familiar Faces* perhaps marks Syahmi's understanding of what money truly entails in an artist's life, resorting to miscellaneous means of income that could have devastate their lives, were they to underestimate in using it.



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