

27
OCTOBER
2016
—
26
FEBRUARY
2017

**SINGAPORE
BIENNALE
2016**

A
PRESENCE
OF
PASTS

AN
ATLAS
OF
MIRRORS

AGAN HARAHAP
INDONESIA

Mardijker Photo Studio,
2015

27
OCTOBER
2016
-
26
FEBRUARY
2017

SINGAPORE
BIENNALE
2016

ATLAS

AN

OF

MIRRORS

EDUCATION KIT

ARTIST FOLIOS

A
PRESENCE
OF
PASTS

1

AGAN HARAHAAP

Mardijker Photo Studio, 2015



THE ARTIST

Agan Harahap (b. 1980, Jakarta, Indonesia), began his career as a painter and illustrator when he was a graphic design student at STDI (Design and Art College) in Bandung, Indonesia. After graduating in 2005, he moved to Jakarta, where he worked as a digital imaging artist, then as a photographer for the Indonesian music publication, *Trax Magazine*. In 2008, he was a finalist for the Indonesian Art Award. A year later, he held his first solo exhibition at MES 56 in Yogyakarta and participated in other photography exhibitions. He became a full-time artist in 2011. His works combine fantasy and reality to present satire or parodies of human life. He has exhibited in Southeast Asia, South Korea, Japan, Australia, Portugal and Colombia. He lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

THE IDEA

The artist merges colonial past with postcolonial present in his *Mardijker Photo Studio*, a fictive collection of portraits of the Mardijker community. The Mardijkers were descendants of Portuguese slaves, many of mixed ancestry, who settled down in port-cities such as Batavia (present-day Jakarta). In *Mardijker Photo Studio*, the artist has collaged archival photographs, so that Europeans are seen wearing 'native' dress and 'native' subjects are dressed in European fashions, thus mixing up and destabilizing identities and social hierarchies. The artist often shares his artwork from series such as the *Mardijker Photo Studio* through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter using the name *Sejarah_X (History X)*. Harahap has almost ten thousand followers. This online interaction reveals the existence of a wide range of awareness of and attitudes to colonial history; some are totally deceived by the fictive images, while others believe the colonial past to be less important than it really is.

27
OCTOBER
2016
-
26
FEBRUARY
2017

SINGAPORE
BIENNALE
2016

ATLAS

AN

OF

MIRRORS

EDUCATION KIT

ARTIST FOLIOS

A
PRESENCE
OF
PASTS

2

AGAN HARAHAAP

Mardijker Photo Studio, 2015



Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum

THE ARTWORK

Installation with framed photographs
(digital C print on paper)
Various dimensions
Collections of Axton Salim and the Artist

27
OCTOBER
2016
-
26
FEBRUARY
2017

SINGAPORE
BIENNALE
2016



AGAN HARAHAP

Mardijker Photo Studio,
2015

A
PRESENCE
OF
PASTS

3

OBSERVE AND DISCOVER

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Take your time to look at the variety of photographs on display. What do you think this artwork is about? How did you come up with that explanation?
2. Look closely at 4 to 5 portrait photographs of the *Mardijker Photo Studio*. What can you see or recognise in the photos? What interests you most about these photographs? Think of at least 2 to 3 words that immediately come to mind when you look at the photos. Are there any photographs that stood out for you? Why so?
3. Imagine telling a friend about these photos over the phone. How would you describe the *Mardijker Photo Studio*?
4. The artist has created these photos by editing portrait photos from the colonial archive. The *Mardijker Photo Studio* displays the 'facts' of history that have been modified by the artist. Why do you think the artist has chosen to use this method and what do you think he is hoping to achieve?
5. Harahap's work is a reminder of how easily the public can be manipulated. Can you elaborate on this briefly in 2-3 sentences?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- A. One of the issues explored in *Mardijker Photo Studio* is the importance of (cultural) identity. The artist sees the situation of the Mardijkers as analogous to that of present-day Indonesians who have to negotiate an all-pervasive 'global' culture. Thinking of your own cultural identity, how do these photos relate to issues that concern you? What actions can you take to ensure aspects of your cultural identity will not get lost? Write a short essay outlining your ideas.
- B. The artist uses social media to share his artwork. He has almost ten thousand followers. How do you think his images are received on social media? How does it differ from viewing them here in the Singapore Art Museum? Do you think social media is a good platform for sharing and viewing art? What makes you say so?
- C. Think of a subject that is important to you. It could be anything from the environment, food, film or fashion. Using magazines, newspapers, books and so on, cut out images, photos, texts, drawings etc. to create a small display. Edit its content by cutting and pasting to create a new, unique version. What decisions did you make when creating these new images? How do these decisions affect the content of the images? Show the edited images to a friend or classmate. How well was it received?

27
OCTOBER
2016
-
26
FEBRUARY
2017

SINGAPORE
BIENNALE
2016



AGAN HARAHAP

Mardijker Photo Studio,
2015

A
PRESENCE
OF
PASTS

4

FIND OUT MORE

ARTWORK

Wired. *Too bad these celebrities aren't really in Indonesian jails.* Retrieved September 15, 2016, from <https://www.wired.com/2015/06/agan-harahap-and-justice-for-all>

Slate. *Superheroes at Super Moments in History.* Retrieved September 15, 2016, from http://www.slate.com/blogs/ behold/2013/01/30/agan_harahap_using_superheroes_to_create_a_superhistory_photos.html

TOYIB DeviantArt. *Agan Harahap.* Retrieved September 15, 2016, from <http://toyib.deviantart.com>

Lensculture. *Agan Harahap.* Retrieved from September 15, 2016, from <https://www.lensculture.com/aganharahap>

Behance. Retrieved September 15, 2016, from <https://www.behance.net/aganharahap>

Melman and the hippo. Retrieved September 15, 2016, from <http://melmanandthehippo.blogspot.sg>

INTERVIEW

DaMan. *Interview with Agan Harahap, the man who hung out with Rihanna.* Retrieved September 15, 2016, from <http://daman.co.id/interview-with-agan-harahap-the-man-who-hung-out-with-rihanna/>

27
OCTOBER
2016
-
26
FEBRUARY
2017

SINGAPORE
BIENNALE
2016



EDUCATION KIT

ARTIST FOLIOS

ABOUT SINGAPORE BIENNALE 2016

AN ATLAS OF MIRRORS
AT ONCE, MANY WORLDS

FROM WHERE WE ARE,
HOW DO WE PICTURE THE WORLD —
AND OURSELVES?

Humankind has always devised ways of seeing beyond sight. Two such instruments are the map and the mirror, which make visible more than just physical terrains. While the atlas – a book of maps – locates where we are and charts where we want to go, the mirror shows us to ourselves, sometimes unreliably, and in curious ways.

Through an exploration of the literal and metaphorical characteristics of atlas and mirror, *An Atlas of Mirrors* reveals artistic perspectives that arise from our migratory, intertwining histories and cultures, particularly in Southeast, East and South Asia.

A
PRESENCE
OF
PASTS

5



SINGAPOREARTMUSEUM.SG/SINGAPOREBIENNALE



SINGAPOREARTMUSEUM # SINGAPOREBIENNALE

27
OCTOBER
2016
-
26
FEBRUARY
2017

SINGAPORE
BIENNALE
2016



EDUCATION KIT

ARTIST FOLIOS

ABOUT THE ZONES

NINE CONCEPTUAL ZONES

The main title of the Biennale is woven through nine 'conceptual zones', or subthemes, which locate each artwork in particular curatorial contexts. These zones shape the flow of the Biennale experience, like chapters in a book or sections in a poem. Like the title - 'An Atlas of Mirrors' - which is built on the relationship between a collective noun ("an atlas" as the collective noun) and what is being thought of 'collectively' ("mirrors"), these zones are conceptually themed along specific collective nouns and what they hold together for contemplation and experience. Artworks located within each zone resonate on many levels, and at the same time, all nine zones coincide, intertwine and reflect each other along the conceptual continuum of 'An Atlas of Mirrors' as a whole.

Each zone represents concepts, ideas and ways of seeing as explored in the 58 artworks and projects.

A PRESENCE OF PASTS

- CULTURAL & COLONIAL LEGACIES
- BELIEFS
- COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Haunted by the past and pregnant with the future, the present is preoccupied. As shoals of shivery metal fish materialise out of a Malay folktale, and a ghostly fabric 'cast' of a centuries-old Korean gate from a family home hovers, spectral gold-hooded figures row out of a gallery wall in charred Indonesian longboats, and the walls between worlds thin. Nothing is really lost: lest we forget, lest we be forgotten - we touch the past and the past touches us in return.

Retrospection reveals the present as a thoroughfare where all realms coincide and are mirrored - where the personal nudges collective memory; the seen implies the unseen; legacy evokes loss and forgetting.

A
PRESENCE
OF
PASTS



27
OCTOBER
2016
-
26
FEBRUARY
2017

SINGAPORE
BIENNALE
2016



EDUCATION KIT

ARTIST FOLIOS

FOR MORE INFORMATION

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

71 Bras Basah Road
Singapore 189555

Opening Hours

Saturdays to Thursdays: 10am - 7pm
Fridays: 10am - 9pm

Enquiries

Phone: +65 65899 580
Email: enquiries@singaporeartmuseum.sg

STAY UPDATED

[www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/
SingaporeBiennale](http://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/SingaporeBiennale)

[www.facebook.com/
singaporeartmuseum](http://www.facebook.com/singaporeartmuseum)

[www.instagram.com/
singaporeartmuseum](http://www.instagram.com/singaporeartmuseum)

www.youtube.com/samtelly

ORGANISED BY



COMMISSIONED BY



SUPPORTED BY



A
PRESENCE
OF
PASTS

7

© 2016 Singapore Art Museum | © 2016 Individual contributors
All works are © the artists unless otherwise stated. Information correct at the time of publication. All rights reserved.