

27  
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2016  
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FEBRUARY  
2017

**SINGAPORE  
BIENNALE  
2016**

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A  
PRESENCE  
OF  
PASTS

AN  
ATLAS  
OF  
MIRRORS

**MADE DJIRNA**  
INDONESIA

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*Melampaui Batas  
(Beyond Boundaries),  
2016*

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EDUCATION KIT

ARTIST FOLIOS

# MADE DJIRNA

*Melampai Batas (Beyond Boundaries), 2016*



## THE ARTIST

Made Djirna (b. 1957, Bali, Indonesia) grew up in a world of Balinese spirits, dances and shadow play's heroes and villains. He first painted in the style of the nearby village of Penestanan, then was educated at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta, where he picked up the spirit and techniques of modern painting. After returning to Bali, he became a well-known painter. Since the mid-2000s, his practice has moved towards the exploration of installations that raise questions about and seek to bring back to life – freed of their stiff, traditional patterns – the spiritual forces of his Balinese environment. Djirna's art has been exhibited widely in Indonesia, Singapore, Australia, Canada and the United States. He lives and works in Bali, Indonesia.

## THE IDEA

Djirna is known for his expressive paintings. In his spare time he also creates experimental works using found materials, reshaping these into enigmatic objects which fill his artist studio. His work explores concepts and understandings about interiorities and outward form; the physical and spiritual; the microcosm and macrocosm. He says: 'All of my work is a process that goes hand in hand with the demands of my soul. It is essentially a spiritual process taking visible, pictorial shape.' Through his work he examines the concept of separation in different ways. The boat symbolises the refusal of boundaries. Not only does the vessel journey across oceans, in Bali it is believed to carry the soul of the dead to its ancestral abode, crossing physical and spiritual realms. The tree sculpture is made from discarded wood that had been washed up on the beach and reassembled into a new form by the artist. The tree symbolises how physical as well as cultural elements from different parts of the world somehow combine, as if by accident, to become something new.

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# MADE DJIRNA

*Melampai Batas (Beyond Boundaries), 2016*



Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum

## THE ARTWORK

Antique boat, terracotta and found materials

Dimensions variable

Collection of the Artist

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# OBSERVE AND DISCOVER

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1. Walk around the space. What are the items you can see that make up this installation?
2. What do you notice about the materials, size and placements of the objects here? Describe them in detail.
3. Look closely at the palm-sized figures. Do you think they represent human beings? What material has the artist used to create these figures? Why do you think the artist has used this material? What other materials would you use?
4. The artist says that his work is a process that goes hand in hand with the demands of his soul, and that it is essentially a spiritual process that takes a visible, pictorial shape. What are some of the words that come to your mind when you think of 'soul' and 'spiritual process'?
5. The exhibited work examines the concept of separation in different ways. The boat symbolises physical and spiritual separation. Read the artwork caption to find out more about the background of the artist. Discuss in a small group the different meanings of the boat in this installation.

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

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- A. Djirna uses wood that had been washed up on the beach to create a tree. He combines different pieces of wood. Try using a natural material to create your own sculpture. Think of materials you can find in the park or even at the beach. Why have you chosen this material and what does it say about you?
- B. At school or at home research Bali and Balinese culture, in particular its rituals, ceremonies and respect for the spiritual world. Note the differences between Balinese culture and local Singapore culture. Having found out about Balinese culture, how do you know feel about Djirna's work? Do you interpret it differently? Have you found a new or different appreciation for the work? Share your thoughts with a classmate.

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## FIND OUT MORE

### ARTWORK

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The Artling. *I Made Djirna*.

Retrieved September 15, 2016, from  
<https://theartling.com/artists/i-made-djirna>

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<http://www.tonyrakaartgallery.com/contemporary-art/artist-made-djirna.php>

### INTERVIEW

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Indonesia through stamps. *Art and cultural strategy interview with Putu Suasta*.

Retrieved September 15, 2016, from  
<http://indonesiathroughstamps.com/art-and-cultural-strategy-interview-with-putu-suasta>

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# 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.

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# ABOUT THE ZONES

## NINE CONCEPTUAL ZONES

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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

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- 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.

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## 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](mailto:enquiries@singaporeartmuseum.sg)

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