



NADIAH BAMADHAJ

DESCENT



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# DESCENT

28 September - 19 October 2016

# THE LAST THRONE

By Nadiah Bamadhaj

Artifacts and architecture of the Kratons Yogyakarta and Solo have frequently featured in my work in the last several years.<sup>1</sup> I have always been interested in how such economically and culturally ‘high’ institutions could exist alongside the detritus of poverty and hardship of the peoples of South Central Java. My work attempted to articulate this juxtaposition, making no particular reference to time or events.

But in 2015 my work began to focus on specific events within the Kraton Yogyakarta, which would ironically bring my artistic relationship with this institution to a close. With pomp and a certain amount of indecipherability Sultan Hamengkubuwono X released three royal decrees in April, May, and December of 2015. These decrees appeared to place, for the first time, a daughter in line to the throne.

As simple as it sounds, the intricacies of the decrees, their *pos ronda* interpretations, the royal sibling rivalry, *rakyat* backlash, the media coverage, and the institutionalized religious sexism that ensued, created a shit-storm quite complex.<sup>2</sup> In a rough poll demonstrated by a statistically based play called *100% Yogyakarta*, it was revealed that approximately 90% of Yogyakartaans rejected the idea of a female queen.<sup>3</sup>

From a feminist perspective I was jumping for joy. But *Long Live the Upcoming Queen* was soon dampened by the factual gossip that Sultan Hamengkubuwono X -- owner of numerous massive businesses, collector of rents and taxes on royal lands all over the region, and one of the top 150 wealthiest people in Indonesia -- clearly wanted to keep *it* within the immediate family.<sup>4</sup> Not have it go to his heir apparent brother, or champion gender equality for that matter.

But I was undeterred. I would battle these sexist forces by vigorously rubbing charcoal on scraps of paper. I would *will* this ascension through visual form, until I realized, by reaching out to other people, that there were other perspectives to be heard.

I had been to the Kraton too many times to count. But after the royal decrees, a row of courtiers, or *abdi dalem*, renowned for being absolutely loyal to the Sultan, were sitting in a line facing the palace residence, daily and in some form of rotation. My instincts could have been wrong, but there was something not quite right about this gathering. I chose to interpret this as a form of quiet protest against the Sultan’s decision, even though the tour guides hotly denied it. I documented my interpretation of this event in *Protestations of the Subservient*.

I approached a friend, a trained traditional dancer, to pose for one of my works. I had an agenda that her pose would somehow advocate a female ascension. When I asked her opinion, she held her baby on one hip and said, “I don’t care about the issue, I have nothing to do with *them*”, with a wave of her other hand. I couldn’t write it off to political naivety. Though trained in Kraton arts, how much had the Kraton impacted her daily life? I interpreted her, in a rehearsal costume, facing the chair on which the daughter of Sultan Hamengkubuwono X sat when she was made crown princess, in the drawing *The Height of Ambivalence*.

I kept poking my husband for gossip from our male dominated pos ronda. Apparently the decrees were making a mockery of the legacy of the Sultan’s father, Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, otherwise known as No.9. I waded through the entire copy of John Monfries biography of the 9th Sultan, (which certainly mythologized the latter). But the only thing that stung was the description of No.9 clinging to a Kraton pillar when he was taken away to be schooled by Dutch families at the age of four.<sup>5</sup> My son, who was four at the time, with whom I could never part, posed for the portrait of *No.9*.

The political tides of Yogyakarta turned from Kraton politics to other issues in the New Year. The US Supreme Court ruling for same-sex marriages in 2015 backfired in an anti-Western, highly nationalistic, anti-LGBT movement throughout Indonesia in 2016.<sup>6</sup> In Yogyakarta this culminated in a vicious anti-LGBT rally made up of gangsters disguised as religious zealots.<sup>7</sup> For months the city was covered in anti-LGBT posters equating marginalized sexualities with pedophilia. The Sultan, (who is also Governor), whose last decree of the 31st December 2015 invited those who didn’t agree with his decrees to ‘leave the kingdom’, was conspicuously quiet during this attack on these marginalized groups, and would be equally unprotective of other marginalized groups as 2016 went on.<sup>8</sup>

My enthusiasm for a queened throne folded into a grudging assessment on the merits of affective leadership. As the rakyat had turned their back on the Sultan’s decrees, he in turn turned his back on the most vulnerable in his kingdom. Transgender communities were the most affected, through their visibility, by the anti-LGBT movement. Already poverty stricken and vulnerable to HIV-related illnesses, Yogyakarta’s community of 300+ *waria* experienced escalated violence and a food crisis that lasted days.<sup>9</sup>

In March 2016 I became a volunteer at *Keluarga Besar Waria Yogyakarta* and found myself in the middle of a drawing series whose concept I no longer cared for.<sup>10</sup> My enthusiasm for the whole female-on-the-throne project began its descent (or ascent) into a description of the royals’ incommunicability. This descent is best demonstrated in the drawings *31st December 2015* (the date of the Sultan’s last decree) and *The Reply*.<sup>11</sup>

Conservatives may think Sultan Hamengkubuwono X’s line of descent is maligned by the fact he has no sons. To me this is quite the opposite. He is in fact spoiled for choice in who will ascend the throne, as he has five daughters to choose from. What is critical here is not gender, but a choice of leadership. Which daughter will live up to the legacy of her grandfather, demonstrate skills that will abate the social and political divisiveness caused by organized *premanism* in the city, protect the city’s natural and historical resources, listen to and promote tolerance for the sheer diversity of peoples for which Yogyakarta is truly blessed.<sup>12</sup>

Or will the Sultan choose to continue the theater of clean swept palace grounds, its gilded heirlooms and hundred year-old *batik* showcases, the *Maulud* rituals, the offerings to the Queen of the South, the choreographed traditional dances, and the occasional flash of royal weddings – which masks the decision to maintain the economic dominance of the first family at the expense of the city. If so, this may be the last throne of any positive social or political consequence in Yogyakarta.<sup>13</sup>

Nadiah Bamadhaj  
September 2016

Note

<sup>1</sup> *Kraton* or *Keraton* means royal palace. Also see Nadiah Bamadhaj, *Poised for Degradation*, Richard Koh Fine Art, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> *Pos ronda* or historically known as *gardu*, are male dominated neighborhood guard spaces used for “community defense, state policing, and surveillance”. Abidin Kusno, *Guardian of Memories: Gardu in Urban Java*, Indonesia, Volume 81, April 2006. Slamet Susanto, *Yogyakartaans reject sultan’s ‘sabda’ and ‘dhawuh’*, The Jakarta Post, May 13 2015.

<sup>3</sup> *100% Yogyakarta* was a play put on by Yogyakarta’s *Teater Garasi* and Berlin-based Rimini Protokoll. For more information on this performance please see [www.rimini-protokoll.de](http://www.rimini-protokoll.de)

<sup>4</sup> Peter Carey makes reference to revenues acquired by Sultan Hamengkubuwono I and II through land and tollgate taxation in *Changing Javanese Perceptions of the Chinese Communities in Central Java*, 1755 – 1825, Indonesia, Volume 37, April 1984. Vina A Muliana, *Daftar Terbaru 150 Orang Terkaya di Indonesia*, [bisnis.liputan6.com](http://bisnis.liputan6.com), 8 Agustus 2016.

<sup>5</sup> John Monfries, *A Prince in a Republic: The Life of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX of Yogyakarta*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015, (Page 29).

<sup>6</sup> On the ‘nationalization’ of hetero normality in Indonesia, read Hendri Yulius, *The ‘Burkini’, LGBT people and the global sex wars*, The Jakarta Post, 8 September 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Pribadi Wicaksono, *Anti-LGBT Supporters Blocks LGBT Rally in Jogjakarta Monument*, [en.tempo.co](http://en.tempo.co), 23 February 2016.

<sup>8</sup> For a survey of groups marginalised and threatened and in Yogyakarta in 2016 refer to Bambang Muryanto, *Intolerance Stains Yogya’s melting pot image*, The Jakarta Post, 19 August 2016.

<sup>9</sup> *Waria* refers to transgender women, and is the combination of words *wanita* (woman) and *pria* (man).

<sup>10</sup> *Keluarga Besar Waria Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta’s Waria Family) is a shelter and advocacy group for HIV+ waria and other HIV affected communities.

<sup>11</sup> As previously written on the 31st December 2015 Sultan Hamengkubuwono X summarized his year’s decrees by inviting those who disagreed with him to ‘leave the kingdom’. This statement directly contradicted his role as a public servant or Governor of Yogyakarta. Details of this final decree can be found in Danang Prabowo, *4 Sabda Raja Yogyakarta Akhir Tahun 2015*, [daerah.sindonews.com](http://daerah.sindonews.com), 31 Desember 2015.

<sup>12</sup> *Premanism* is taken from the word *preman*, which means Indonesian gangster. For a detailed analysis of the number of premanist groups and activities in Yogyakarta, refer to Bambang Muryanto, *Intolerance Stains Yogya’s melting pot image*, The Jakarta Post, 19 August 2016.

<sup>13</sup> There is a range of royal rituals still practiced in Yogyakarta. It is not without irony that the myth of the Queen of the South is discussed within the context of a woman ascending the throne. Various friends in Yogyakarta stated that one of the reasons why a woman could not ascend the throne is the spiritual but heterosexual relationship between each Sultan and *Nyi Roro Kidul*, the mythical queen that guards the southern ocean. The irony lies in the fact that a dominant female figure in Roro Kidul is an essential myth in the maintenance of a throne that is not allowed to be occupied by a woman.

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Hendri Yulius, *The ‘Burkini’, LGBT people and the global sex wars*, The Jakarta Post, 8 September 2016.

John Monfries, *A Prince in a Republic: The Life of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX of Yogyakarta*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015.

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Peter Carey, *Changing Javanese Perceptions of the Chinese Communities in Central Java*, 1755-1825, Indonesia, Volume 37, April 1984.

Pribadi Wicaksono, *Anti-LGBT Supporters Blocks LGBT Rally in Jogjakarta Monument*, [en.tempo.co](http://en.tempo.co), 23 February 2016.

Slamet Susanto, *Yogyakartaans reject sultan’s ‘sabda’ and ‘dhawuh’*, The Jakarta Post, 13 May 2015.

Vina A Muliana, *Daftar Terbaru 150 Orang Terkaya di Indonesia*, [bisnis.liputan6.com](http://bisnis.liputan6.com), 8 Agustus 2016.





## THE SULTAN, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE ARTIST: A TALE OF DIMMING POWER

By Elly Kent

In 1923, painter and musician Walter Spies arrived in the court of Sultan Hamengkubuwono VIII in Yogyakarta, to lead the court's European orchestra. So intrigued was he by the intricacies of the Hindic courts, he later moved to Bali where he influenced the changing face of Indonesian modern painting.<sup>1</sup> In the 1950s, seminal anthropologists Clifford and Hildred Geertz began their deep research into the sociological customs of Java and Bali; many other eminent researchers followed, and many of the dominant theories of nationalism, religion and social custom in the modern world have been based on observations of life on the densely populated islands of Indonesia. Nadiyah Bamadhaj's new series of works situates her within the realm of the ongoing appeal of Indonesia, and especially Yogyakarta, in Central Java, for intellectual and artistic endeavour. Malaysian born of (Scot) New Zealand and Arab Malaysian parentage, Bamadhaj has long occupied a space in between and on the edge of definitive cultural identities, and her work has long reflected this paradigm of liminal living. In 2002 she came to Yogyakarta as an Asian Public Intellectual Fellow, and has remained there ever since, living a few hundred metres from the walls of the palace precinct with her Javanese husband and their young son. Immersed in Yogyakartan cultural life, Bamadhaj is at once subject to and observer of the complex relationship between the residents of Yogyakarta and their Sultan, The Royal Feet, His Highness, the Most Noble Sultan Hamengkubuwono, Commander in Chief on the field of Battle, Servant of the Merciful, Lord of the Faith, Regulator of Religion, Caliph of God.<sup>2</sup> The tenth Sultan in his line, Hamengkubuwono X inherited great responsibility (and great wealth).

Hamengkubuwono IX, the current Sultan's father, set high standards in nationalism, business and progress. His reign, from 1933 to 1988, ushered Yogyakarta through Indonesia's War for Independence and eventually into the era of globalisation, earning him praise as one of the "great Sultans" in

his lineage.<sup>3</sup> This lineage, drawing down from the first sultan in the second Mataram dynasty, Panembahan Senopati in 1584, has been the subject of much anthropological study, as the structures and treaties that mandate the Sultanate's power have been retained over generations, even, paradoxically, into Indonesia's democratic republican era. This continuity in structures of power and its mandala-like reflection of the cosmos – apparently mirrored repeatedly through society from the village level down to the family and individual psyche – has been emphasised by many writers. Yet recent studies and artistic explorations have begun to question this purportedly harmonious and centralised power.<sup>4</sup>

For artists in Yogyakarta, existing within this highly symbolic, ornamented, mythologised and hierarchical society – whether they are born into it or have arrived from elsewhere – can at times represent a site of continual negotiation. Visual, performative, and literary arts are integral to the reproduction of the Sultanate's power, and many local artists, both traditional and contemporary, are deeply embedded in the fabric of that power. Yet Yogyakarta is a city of education, critical thinking, and rebellion, and the Sultanate has, since the revolution, been a fundamental part of this too. Nadiah Bamadhaj locates the works in this exhibition within the paradoxical double binds of her subjective experience as a resident of Yogyakarta.

Clifford Geertz once wrote that speaking of art demanded more than formalist abstractions, rather, recognition of its sociological and semiotic context; in Bamadhaj's work this has long been the case. Indeed, it is an abiding interest in the sociological and semiotic constructs in which power is made manifest – architecture, cityscapes, gender and religion for instance – that Bamadhaj's work enquires into.<sup>5</sup> Within these grand narratives, however, Bamadhaj foregrounds her own subjectivity, permitting herself and her audience an experience of the subject matter that is both academic and personal.

*The Misogynist's Throne I and II* emerged at the beginning of Bamadhaj's explorations of the constructions of power in the Yogyakarta Sultanate. The intricately rendered detail of the ornament of *Throne I* harkens us to the complex mythological constructions that have underpinned the power of the Sultan, since Senopati established the Islamic state of Mataram. Senopati claimed his rule had been legitimised not only by the mandate of Allah, but also by his relationship with Nyai Roro Kidul, the Queen of the South Sea, whose legendary sexual appetite permeates mythology across the island of Java and

Southeast Asia.<sup>6</sup> The throne Bamadhaj depicts here reveals a lotus blossoming in a forest, surrounded by deer and birds – symbolic of the union between Nyai Roro Kidul and the Sultan(s), which vests in him divine powers to fertilise the land. Here we see the seat of power resting on the lap of a woman whose command is both manifested and disguised through the mythologies of the patriarchal sultanate. The second throne is simpler, yet no less carefully drawn nor less symbolic: the fabric folds that envelop the Sultan's legs are decorated with the *parang rusak* (broken dagger) a pattern that is vested with mystical power and, until recently, reserved for those at the centre of power within the Palace.

These days, in Yogyakarta and beyond, the *parang rusak* pattern appears on tourist trousers, bags, tablecloths, curtains and anywhere a visitor to Yogyakarta might be tempted to take it. The mystical power of the Sultanate, characterised by Anderson as a lamp that shines brightly at the centre and recedes to the periphery, appears to be dimming.<sup>8</sup> Bamadhaj's series of works, which evolved in response to unfolding dramas in the Hamengkubuwono line in 2015-16, reflects the dimming of this light on a personal and sociological front.

In April and May 2015, Hamengkubuwono X made a series of royal decrees that paved the way for his daughter to succeed the throne. If enacted (and the Sultan himself has said he “doesn't know” if it will be) this will result in the first ever female ruler in the Hamengkubuwono line.<sup>9</sup> *In Waiting and Protestations of the Subservient* depict the complex reactions to these decrees, and particularly, what Bamadhaj reads as a complex expression of dissent from within the Sultan's own, usually loyal Palace Guards. These *abdi dalem*, whose title infers unquestioning devotion, found themselves caught between Sultan's apparent fervour for progressive change, and the very mythologies of continuity that place him on the throne. These two works evoke the passive yet firm resistance characteristic of Javanese society, where inner strength is demonstrated through external pacificity.

By mid-2015, criticism of the Sultan's appointment of his daughter as successor had reached fever pitch. Can a female take a throne that is legitimised by a hetero-normative sexual relationship with a mythological queen? Does Islam allow female queens (mythological ones seem to have passed this test)? The variations on dissent seemed endless and often mutually contradictory. In response, in December, Hamengkubuwono X issued a decree instructing those who cannot abide by his decision – which he characterised as a command

to him from the gods and ancestors – to leave the region.<sup>10</sup> This was an uncharacteristically direct decree from a Javanese perspective. Bamadhaj notes that the concept of power, or *wahyu*, in Java is eroded by overt demonstrations of authority, making the events of December 2015 an important marker in the descent of her own respect for the Sultan and his seemingly progressive outlook.

Yet the idea of the Sultan as the centre of power in Java, as the focal point for a continuity of cultural constructs that spread across society, has been called in to question before 2016. Beatty has contended that the power of the Sultanate may well be geographically restricted, describing its absence in the farther reaches of East Java, where it has long been replaced by scattered localisations of power that respond to the needs of less homogenous communities.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Suzanne Brenner has questioned the extent to which the patriarchal constructs of power centred on the male Sultan are actually reflected in the domestic and economic spheres of Javanese life. Could it be that the power of the Sultanate has little impact on the daily lives and sociological imperatives of most Javanese? *The Height of Ambivalence*, a work created in collaboration with a dancer trained in the *bedhaya* dance – intended to be performed exclusively for the Sultan in evocation of Nyai Roro Kidul – begins to answer this question. Juxtaposing an ordinary white t-shirt with highly refined dance movements, Bamadhaj depicts the dancer as at once deferential and ambivalent to the throne, which grows smaller in each depiction. As the significance of the Sultan's power wanes, so too does the significance of the ascension of a woman to the throne.

In *No. 9*, the power that is latent in the body language and perspective used in this portrait of Hamengkubuwono IX as a small boy speaks to this ambivalence too. Cited as the last of his line and the last truly charismatic ruler, it is nonetheless his legacy that currently disempowers those Yogyakartaans displaced as his successor's power over the land is eroded by the needs of the nation state and democratic rule of law.<sup>12</sup>

The final three works, illustrate the artist's own disillusionment, and eventual antipathy, as the Sultan, who is also the regional Governor, simultaneously exploited his position to quash dissent and failed to take a firm stance against increasing mob violence and public hostility to Yogyakarta's LGBTIQ community and other minorities. In *31st December 2015*, a double portrait of Hamengkubuwono X in his court and public service outfits, Bamadhaj depicts

a kind of topsy-turvy doll, ready to turn this way or that in service of his own interests. *The Reply* emerged from a similar yet more personal disappointment with the incumbent Sultana's failure to respond to a formal request for an interview, with the princess depicted with her back turned, beside a spittoon. Will the ascension of a woman to Yogyakarta's throne make any difference, *The Reply* asks? The Last Throne, depicting a pair of legs spread in a gesture of defiant discourtesy draped against yet more courtly symbolism – this time representing the wings motif that permeates Javanese symbols of power from Hindu times, through Islamisation, and into the Republic of Indonesia itself – perhaps offers the viewer an ambiguous answer.

If we take to heart the constructions of continuity in Javanese monarchic power mapped out for us by the ground-breaking work of Anderson and Geertz, recent events in the Yogyakarta royal family appear to signal not only the artists' declining respect for the Hamengkubuwono legacy, but also the descent of the throne and its potency over the people. But if we read more deeply into the history of the Javanese people's manifold relationships with the centre of power, as Bamadhaj and others have, we may discover that 'twas ever thus.

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*Elly Kent is a translator, writer, artist and PhD candidate in art theory and practice at the ANU School of Art. Her current research is focussed on participatory art practice in Indonesia and how artists combine this with their individual practices; she also explores similar realms in her own art practice. Elly has lived and worked in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, throughout her life, and this has had an abiding effect on her outlook. She was the recipient of a Prime Minister's Australia-Asia Postgraduate Award in 2012, and the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art's emerging artist award in the same year.*

Note

<sup>1</sup> Spies made a number of paintings during his time in Yogyakarta, an experience art historian’s credit with revolutionising his artistic style. His oil painting *Sekaten* (1927) depicts a fair still held today in the square north of the Sultan’s Palace.

<sup>2</sup> The official titles vested in successive sultans. Merle C. Ricklefs, “Jogya’s crowning glory,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 March 1989

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> As well as the academic studies I will refer to later, the legacy of the “Great Sultan” Hamengkubuwono I’s Giyanti Treaty with the Dutch in 1755 was the subject of a performative work titled *Restitution of 1755: Hacking Giyanti*, by Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina in 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Beverly Yong, “Not Talking to a Brick Wall and Landlocked: Architecture of Personal Space”, in *Beyond the Self: Contemporary Portraiture from Asia*, ed. Christine Clark (Canberra: National Portrait Gallery, 2012)

<sup>6</sup> Robert Wessing, “A Princess from Sunda: Some Aspects of Nyai Roro Kidul”, *Asian Folklore Studies* 56, no. 2 (1997)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 333

<sup>8</sup> Benedict R. O’G Anderson, *Language and power: exploring political cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1990)

<sup>9</sup> Matanajwa, *Sri Sultan Menjawab Seputar Polemik Sabda Raja*, *MetroTVNews.com* (Youtube,8 May 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iwgXCmsDU4>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Beatty, “Kala defanged: Managing power in Java away from the centre”, *Bijdragen tot de Taal* 168, no. 2/3 (2012)

<sup>12</sup> On the charisma of Hamengkubuwono IX, compare Ricklef’s perspective in Ricklefs, “Jogya’s crowning glory” and Geertz comments in Clifford Geertz, “Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power”, in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). On the current Sultan’s challenges with regards to land ownership and state control, see Cally Colbron, “The Sultan of development?”, *Inside Indonesia*, no. 123 (2016).

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Artworks



*The Misogynist's Throne I*  
2015  
Charcoal on paper collage  
198 x 111 cm

*The Misogynist's Throne II*  
2015  
Charcoal on paper collage  
200 x 107 cm





*In Waiting*  
2015  
Charcoal on paper collage  
146 x 120 cm



*Protestations of the Subservient*

2016

Charcoal on paper collage

117 x 272 cm



*The Height of Ambivalence*  
2016  
Charcoal on paper collage  
229 x 271 cm



No.9  
2016  
Charcoal on paper collage  
207 x 83 cm



*31st December 2015*  
2016  
Charcoal on paper collage  
237 x 93 cm



*The Reply*  
2016  
Charcoal on paper collage  
183 x 176 cm



*The Last Throne*  
2016  
Charcoal on paper collage  
165 x 165 cm



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Nadiah Bamadhaj

September 2016

# Nadiah Bamadhaj

Nadiah Bamadhaj (b. 1968, Malaysia) was initially trained as a sculptor at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand but now produces drawings, sculptures, installations and digital images. She has worked in non-governmental organizations, lectured in art, and has written on both Malaysia and Indonesia. In 2000, she began her full-time art practice and was awarded the Nippon Foundation’s Asian Public Intellectual Fellowship in 2002, electing to spend her fellowship period in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, where she currently lives with her husband and son. Her artwork continues to focus on the social intricacies of Yogyakarta’s society, using myth, architecture, and dwelling to articulate her observations.

## Education

1992 Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2016

*Descent*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2014

*Poised For Degradation*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Singapore
- 2012

*Keseragaman*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2008

*Surveillance*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2004

*enamlima sekarang (sixtyfive now)*, Galeri Lontar, Komunitas Utan Kayu, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2003

*enamlima sekarang (sixtyfive now)*, Benteng Vredeburg Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 2001

*1965 - Rebuilding Its Monuments*, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## Group Exhibitions

- 2016

*Crossing: Pushing Boudaries*, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Art Central Hong Kong 2016, Hong Kong
- 2015

*Art of ASEAN*, Bank Negara Museum and Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

*Asia Now*, Paris Asian Art Fair, Paris, France

*A Luxury We Cannot Afford*, Para Site, Hong Kong

*I am Ten*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Art Central 2015 Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Art Stage 2015, Singapore
- 2014

*Small & Medium*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

Art Taipei 2014, Taipei, Taiwan

START, with Richard Koh Fine Art, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
- 2013

*Parallax: ASEAN, Changing Landscapes, Wandering Stars*, ASEAN-Korea Contemporary

Media Art Exhibtion, ASEAN-KOREA Centre, Seoul, South Korea

*Welcome to the Jungle: Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia from the Collection of Singapore Art Museum*, Contemporary Art Museum

Kumamoto (CAMK), Kumamoto, Japan
- 2012

Art Stage Singapore 2012, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore
- 2011

*It’s Now or Never Part II*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

*Beyond the Self, Contemporary Portraiture from Asia*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Australia
- 2010

*Creative Index, The Nippon Foundation’s Asian Public Intellectual Fellowship’s 10th Anniversary*, Silverlens Gallery, Manila, Philippines

Beirut Art Fair 2010 (Menasaart), Beirut, Lebanon

*Beacons of Archipelago: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia*, Arario Gallery, Seoul, South Korea
- 2009

*Earth and Water: Mapping Art in Southeast Asia*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

*Photoquai 09: 2nd Biennale Photographic Festival*, musée duquai Branly, Paris, France

- Code Share: 5 continents, 10 biennales, 20 artists*, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania
- 2008

*Wonder*, Singapore Biennale, Singapore City Hall, Singapore

*East-South, Out of Sight, South and Southeast Asia Still and Moving Images*, Tea Pavilion, Gouangzhou Triennale, China

*The Scale of Black, Contemporary Drawings from Southeast Asia*, HT Contemporary Space, Singapore
- 2007

*Out of the Mould: The Age of Reason, 10 Malaysian Women Artists*, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

*Fetish: Object Art Project #1*, Biasa Artspace, Denpasar, Indonesia

*Selamat Datang ke (Welcome to) Malaysia: An Exhibition of Contemporary Art from Malaysia*, Gallery 4A, Sydney, Australia

*Processing the City: Art on Architecture*, The Annexe Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

*Never Mind, Video Art Exhibition*, ViaVia Café, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 2006

*Fast Futures: Asian Video Art, The Asia Society India Centre*, Little Theatre Auditorium, NCPA, Mumbai, India

*The War Must Go On*, Clockshop Billboard Series, Corner of Fairfax and Wilshire, Los Angeles, USA

*TV-TV*, Week 34, Video Art Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark

*Building Conversations: Nadiah Bamadhaj and Michael Lee*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

*Holding Up Half the Sky* by Women Artists, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

*Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: A Postcolonial Exhibition Project in Five Acts*, Act 3: Faroe Art Museum, Tórshavn, The Faroe Islands, Denmark

*Biennale Jakarta 2006*, Beyond The Limits and its Challenges, Galeri Lontar, Komunitas Utan Kayu, Indonesia

*Fast Futures: Asian Video Art*, Asian Contemporary Art Week, Rubin Museum of Art, New York, USA
- 2005

*Home Works II: A Forum on Cultural Practices*, Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts, Ashkal Alwan, Beirut, Lebanon

- Urban Culture*, CP Biennale, Museum of the Indonesian National Bank, Jakarta, Indonesia

*Media in “f”*, The 9th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, Ewha Woman’s University Campus, Seoul, South Korea
- 2004

*Flying Circus Project: 04, Seeing with Foreign Eyes*, Theatreworks, Fort Canning Park, Singapore

*Living Art: Regional Artists Respond to HIV/ AIDS*, Queen’s Gallery, XV International AIDS Conference, Bangkok, Thailand

*Gedebook, Group Fundraising Exhibition*, Kedai Kebun Forum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 2002

*Asean Art Awards*, Bali International Convention Center, Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia

*Pause*, Gwangju Biennale 2002, Exhibition, Hall 1, Gwangju, South Korea
- 2001

Philip Morris Art Awards, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

*Flashpoint*, WWF Art For Nature Fundraising Exhibition, Rimbun Dahan Gallery, Kuang, Malaysia
- 2000

*Arang*, Taksu Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## Awards

- 2004

Asian Public Intellectual Follow-Up Grant, funded by the Nippon Foundation
- 2002-03

Asian Public Intellectual Fellowship funded by the Nippon Foundation, administered by IKMAS, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia
- 2001

Juror’s Choice, Philip Morris Malaysia Art Awards
- 2000-01

Artist-in-Residence, Rimbun Dahan, Artist Residency Program, Kuang, Malaysia

## Public Collections

- Petronas Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah,
- USM Penang , Penang, Malaysia
- The National Gallery, Singapore
- Singapore Art Museum, Singapore



Richard Koh Fine Art has been in operation since 2005 and is regarded as a pioneer for introducing Southeast Asian contemporary art to Malaysia and the region. Promoting an adventurous roster of emerging and established Southeast Asian artists, the gallery regularly mounts exhibitions locally and abroad with a commitment to emerging practices and challenging media.

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