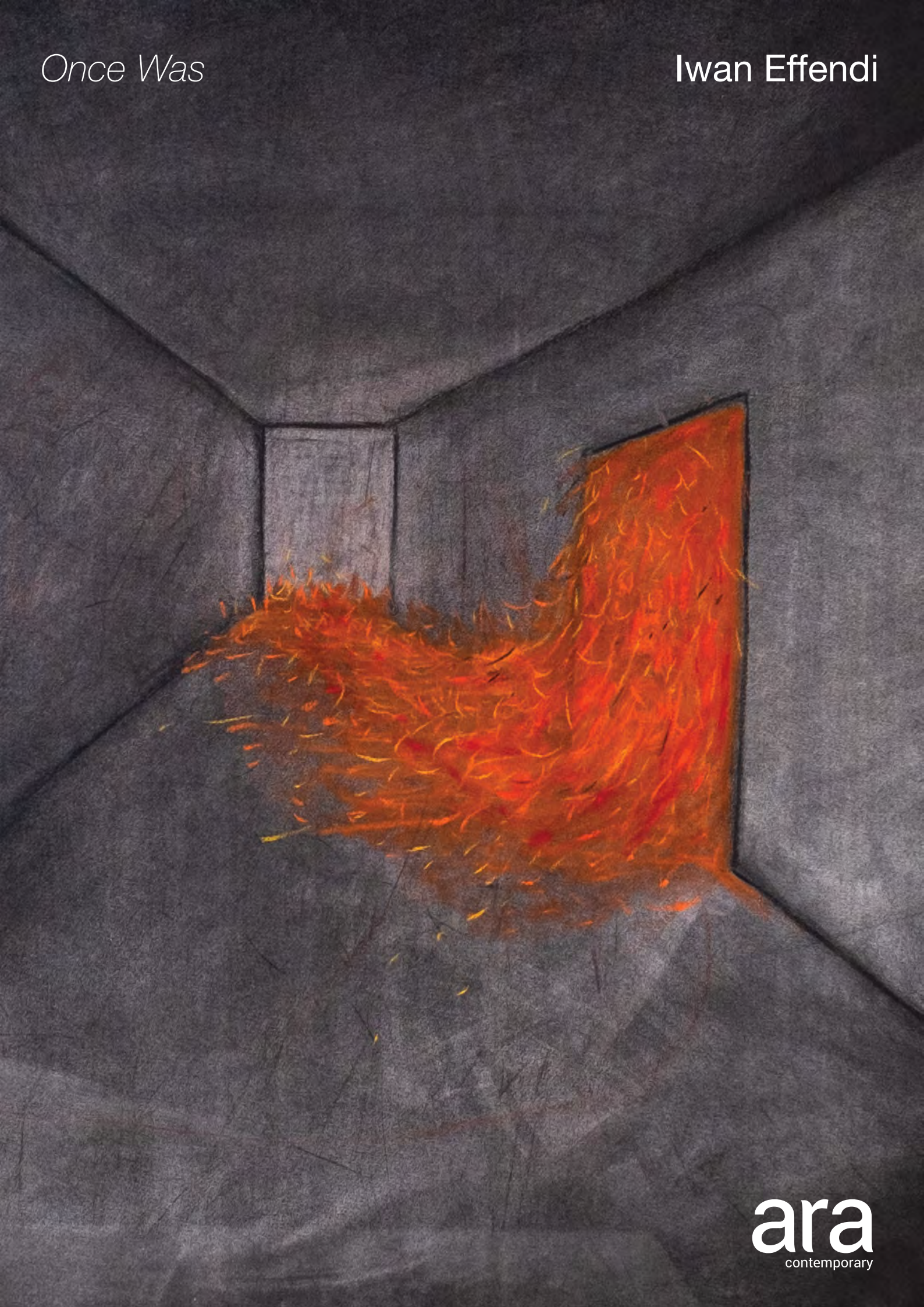


Once Was

Iwan Effendi



About the Artist



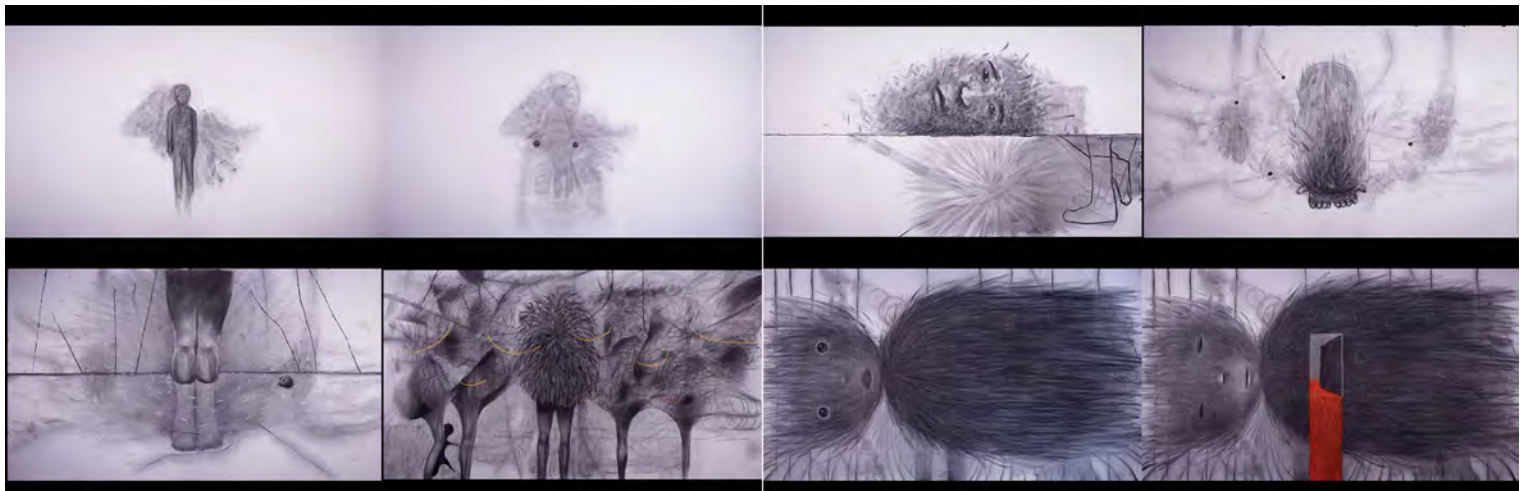
As the Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director of Yogyakarta's Papermoon Puppet Theatre, Iwan Effendi brings puppet characters to life with their narratives and emotions. His artistic practice spans puppet-making, painting, drawing, and performance, all grounded in a fascination with the memories and stories that each puppet embodies, even when their expressions remain static. This approach invites the viewers to have the authority to interpret it, and by doing so, they find reflections of themselves in the puppets.

His solo exhibitions to date include *articulate*, Mizuma Gallery Tokyo Japan (2024); *preload* at Mizuma Gallery Singapore (2023); *Daydreaming Face* at Ruci Art, Jakarta (2021); *DRAWING withdrawing* (2020) and *Face to Face* at Mizuma Gallery, Singapore (2019); *Eye of the Messenger* at Yavuz Gallery, Singapore (2011); and *Two Shoes for Dancing* at Valentine Willie Fine Art (Project Room), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2009). Iwan has also participated in group exhibitions in Bulgaria, Singapore, Australia, The Netherlands, the Philippines, France, Japan, the USA, and Mexico. He has undertaken residencies with the Museum of Art in Kochi, Japan (2015); Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia (2014); and Asian Cultural Council in New York, USA (2009-10) researching puppetry, visual, and performance arts.

Once Was continues Iwan Effendi's artistic practice, which draws from his background as a puppeteer, incorporating both the core principles and the emotional resonance of puppetry. Upon viewing, the exhibition highlights the contrast between stillness and movement, showcasing a series of moving images, paintings, and drawings on paper. Effendi focuses on the memory of the presence, as the works on paper record traces of the existence and movements of his moving image work, which are erased and redrawn repeatedly. As a result, those imprints suggest that these movements have left a lasting mark—something tangible, yet still connected to the action itself. Beyond the subjects depicted, Effendi is equally interested in the traces left behind by the layered history of action, seen as an ongoing dialogue between permanence and impermanence, the visible and the invisible. Each iteration builds upon the last, not to cover it, but to coexist.

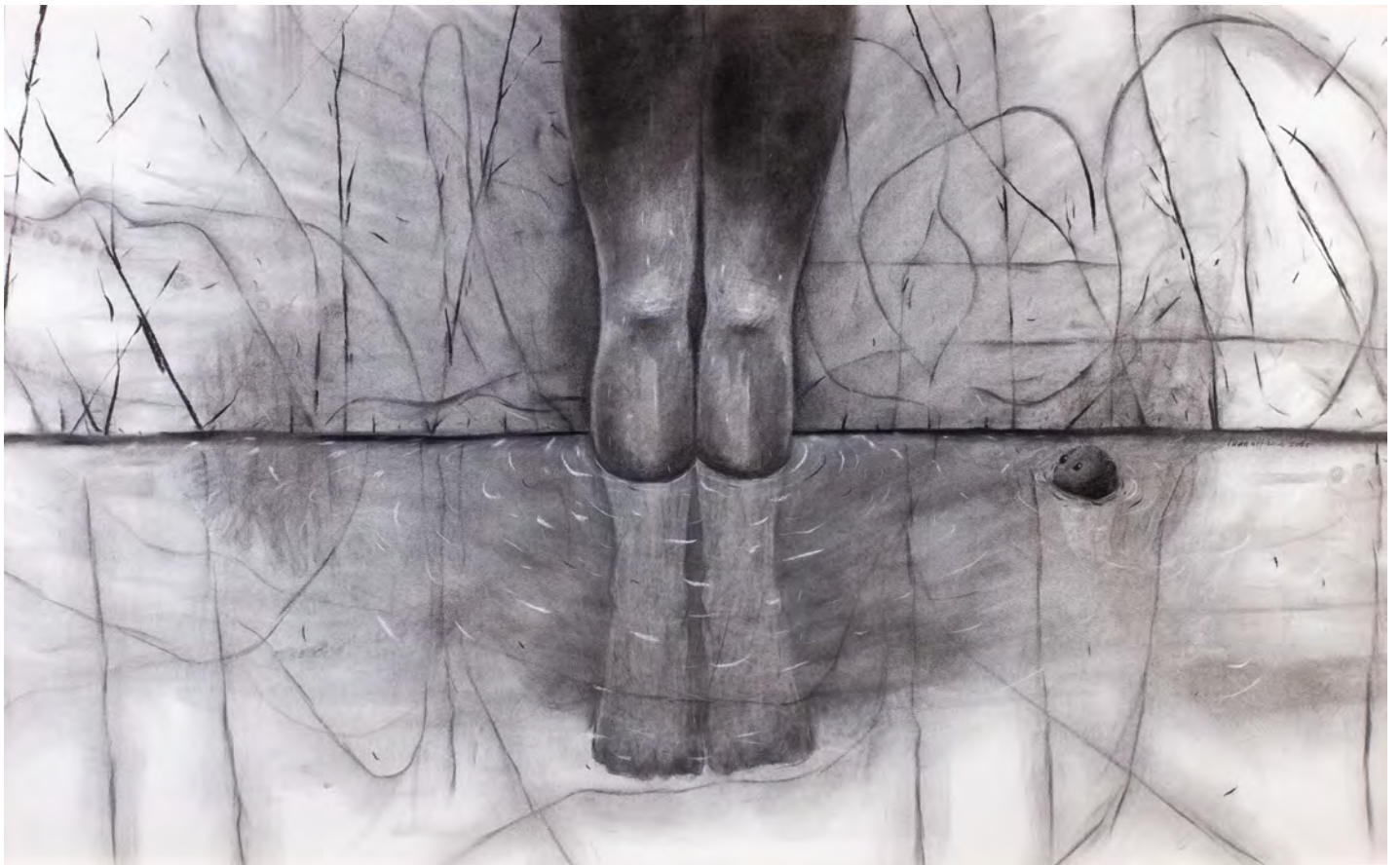
'Sometimes a sheet of paper will end up as a grey mess after drawings have happened and then been erased and erased and erased'

- William Kentridge



wanting to hold, needing to let go, 2025
 single-channel animated video
 6 minutes 35 seconds
 edition of 3 + 1AP

video preview available upon request



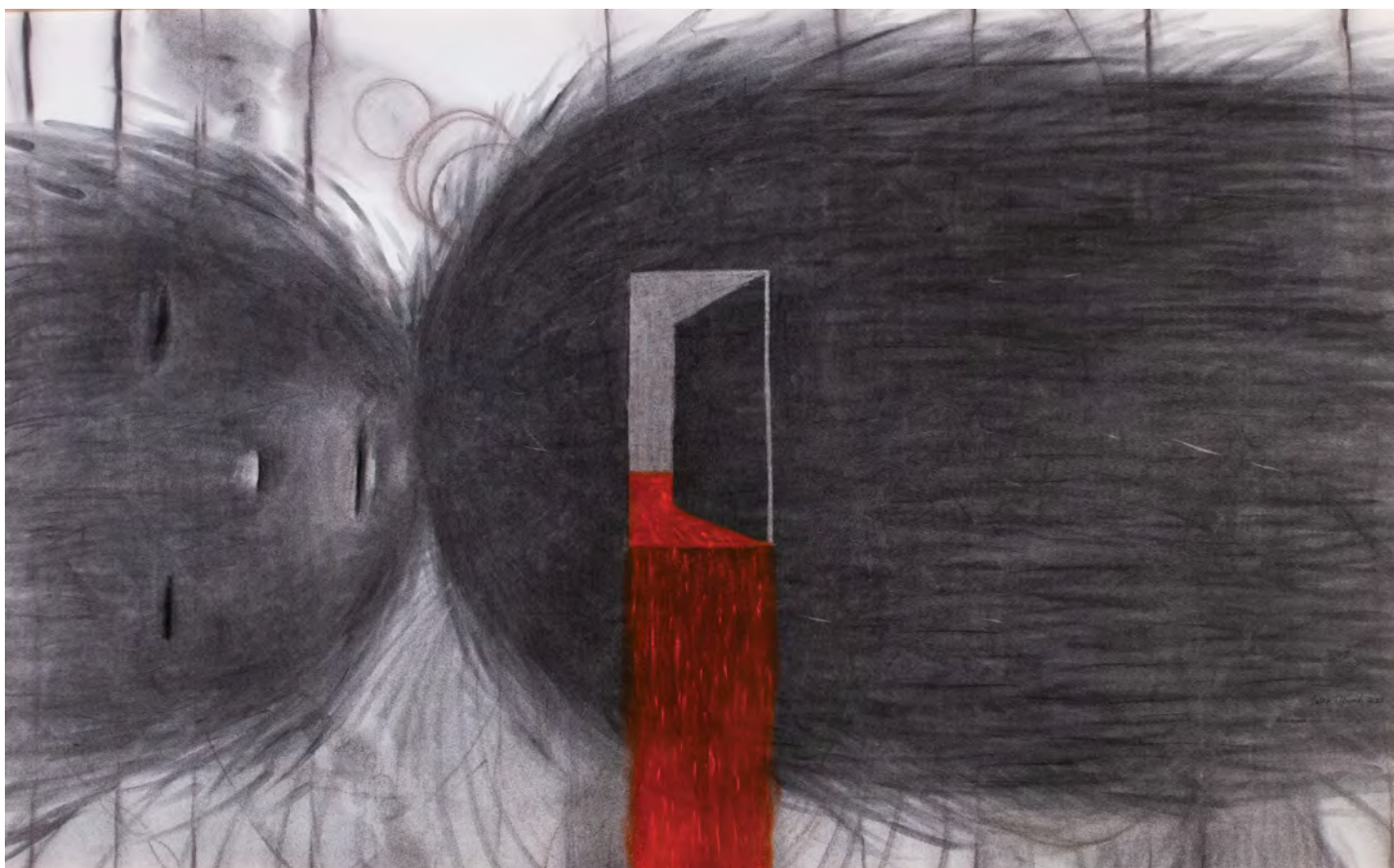
submerged, 2025
75 x 122 cm (unframed)
charcoal and softpastel on paper



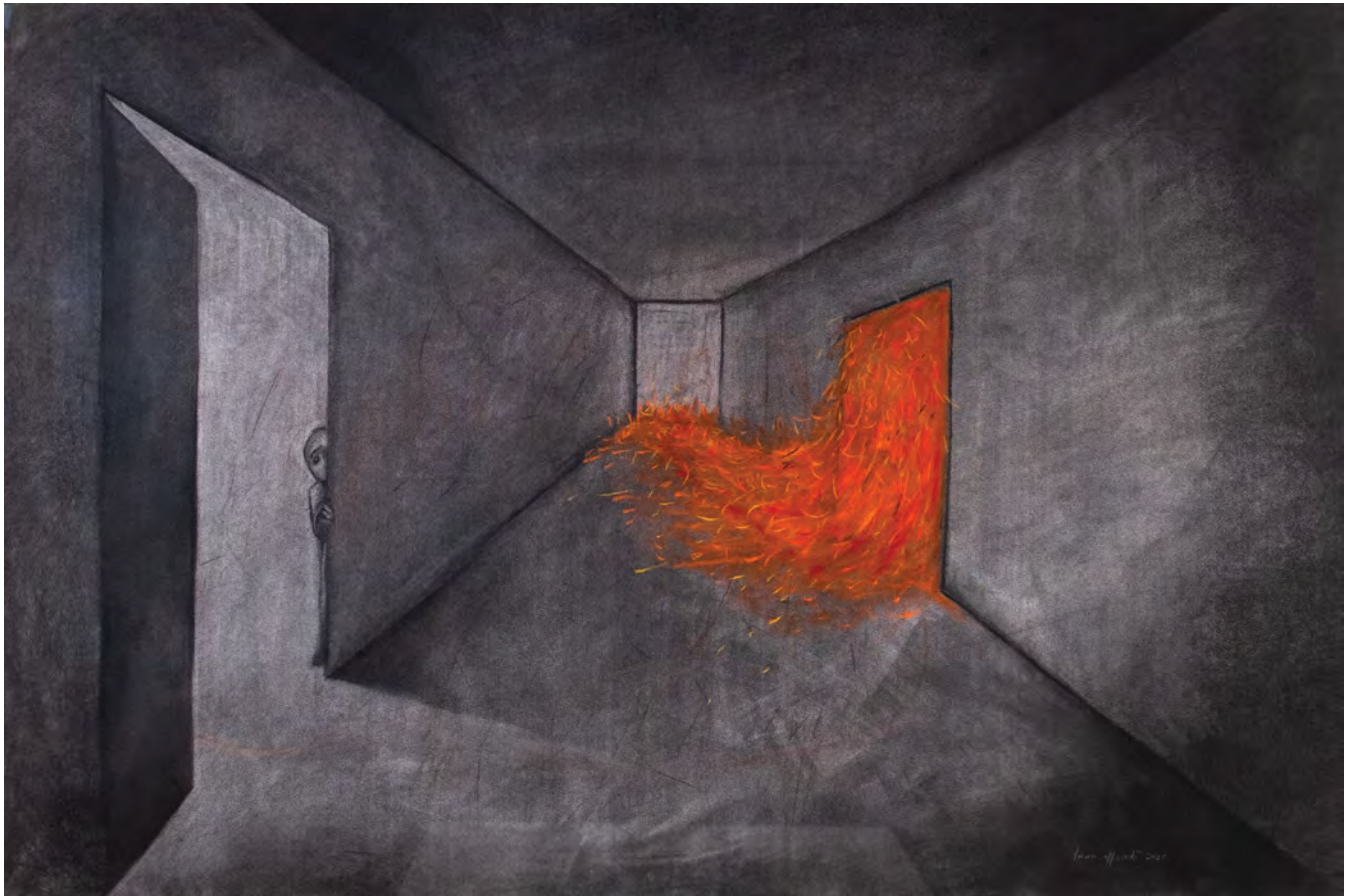
scenery, 2025
75 x 122 cm (unframed)
charcoal and softpastel on paper



memory, 2025
75 x 122 cm (unframed)
charcoal and softpastel on paper



heart, 2025
75 x 122 cm (unframed)
charcoal and softpastel on paper



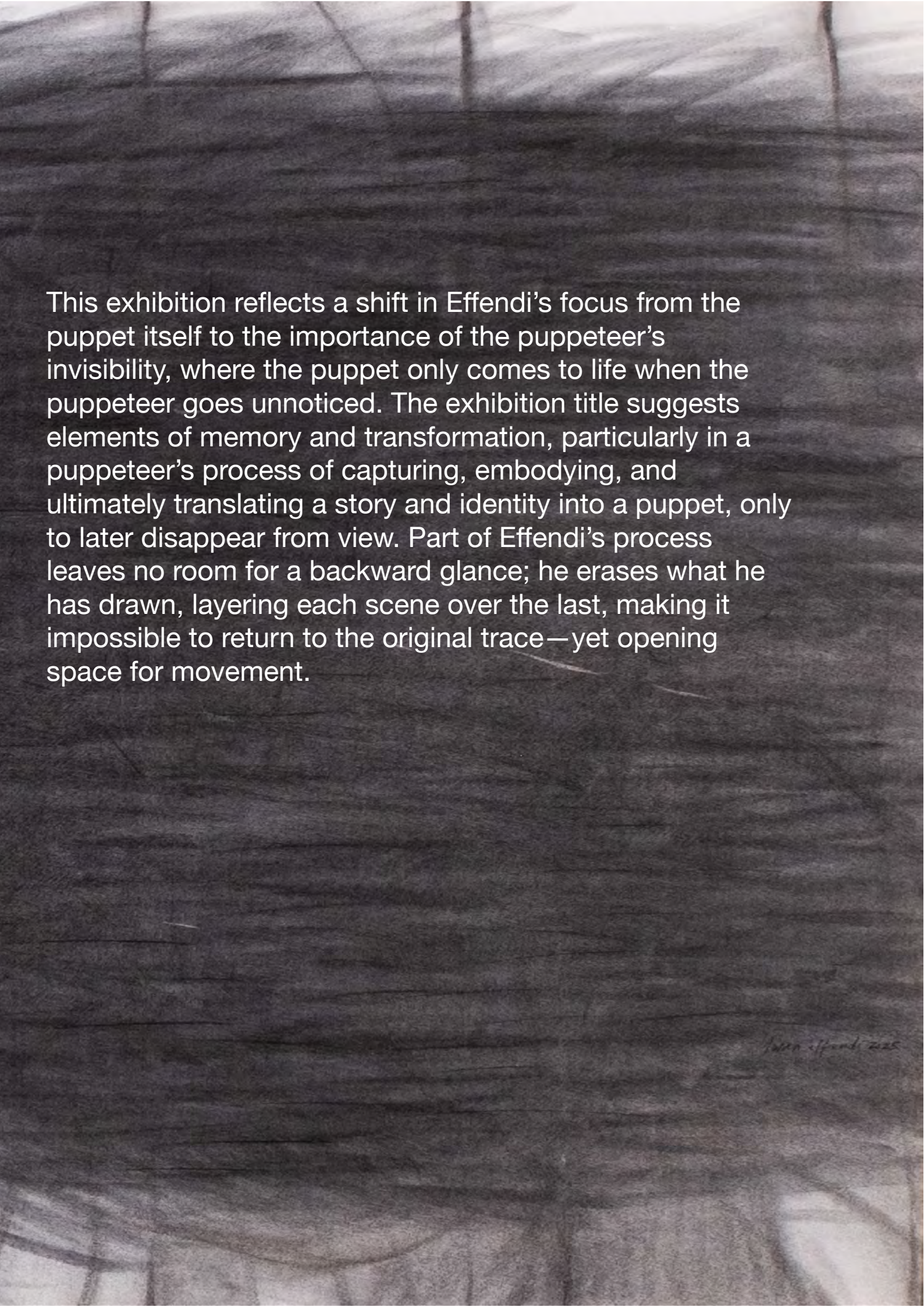
empty space, 2025
75 x 122 cm (unframed)
charcoal and softpastel on paper



dialog, 2025
75 x 122 cm (unframed)
charcoal and softpastel on paper



bystander, 2025
75 x 122 cm (unframed)
charcoal and softpastel on paper



This exhibition reflects a shift in Effendi's focus from the puppet itself to the importance of the puppeteer's invisibility, where the puppet only comes to life when the puppeteer goes unnoticed. The exhibition title suggests elements of memory and transformation, particularly in a puppeteer's process of capturing, embodying, and ultimately translating a story and identity into a puppet, only to later disappear from view. Part of Effendi's process leaves no room for a backward glance; he erases what he has drawn, layering each scene over the last, making it impossible to return to the original trace—yet opening space for movement.

Amr Effendi 2025



manipulate, 2025
130 x 160 cm
charcoal, softpastel, and acrylic spray on canvas



squeeze, 2025
70.5 x 150 cm
charcoal, pigment, softpastel, and acrylic spray on canvas



cast no shadow, 2025
150 x 150 cm
charcoal and softpastel on canvas



half, 2025
90 x 165 cm
charcoal and softpastel on canvas



sequences, 2025
93 x 170 cm
charcoal, softpastel, and acrylic spray on canvas

His works on canvas, *Contact Point*, capture the subtle interplay between motion and memory made possible through touch. It references how a puppet gains life and identity once it is touched and moved by the puppeteer—an experience echoed in human interaction.



contact point #6, 2025
37 x 75 cm
softpastel on canvas



contact point #1, 2025
 62 x 75 cm
 softpastel on canvas



contact point #3, 2025
 40 x 50 cm
 softpastel on canvas



contact point #2, 2025
37 x 75 cm
softpastel on canvas



contact point #7, 2025
75 x 37 cm
softpastel on canvas



contact point #4, 2025
47 x 70 cm
softpastel on canvas



contact point #5, 2025
62 x 75 cm
softpastel on canvas

Effendi concludes with a series of self-portraits, in which he transforms himself into objects and animals as a conversation between movement and stillness, the animate and the inanimate — mirroring the relationship between puppeteer and puppet. At its core, *Once Was* is the language of memory: it implies something that once existed, but has since transformed, thus emphasizing an unseen process and the act of being unseen itself.



chair, 2025
45.5 x 40 cm
charcoal, pigment, and
softpastel on canvas



bird, 2025
45.5 x 40 cm
charcoal, pigment, and
softpastel on canvas



book, 2025
45.5 x 40 cm
charcoal, pigment, and
softpastel on canvas



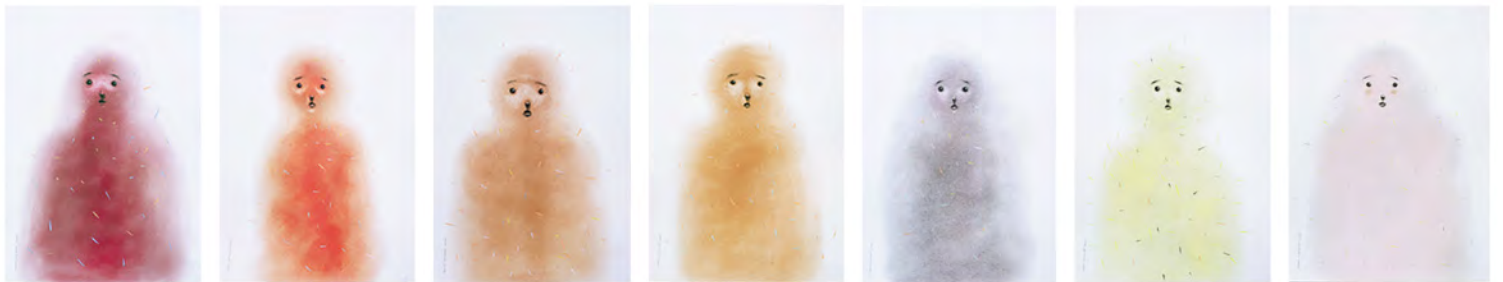
dog, 2025
45.5 x 40 cm
charcoal, pigment, and
softpastel on canvas



tree, 2025
45.5 x 40 cm
charcoal, pigment, and
softpastel on canvas



mantis, 2025
45.5 x 40 cm
charcoal, pigment, and
softpastel on canvas



how to disappear completely , 2025
29.7 x 21 cm each (7 pieces)
pigment, softpastel, and charcoal on paper

CV

Iwan Effendi

b. 1979

Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *Once Was*, ara contemporary, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2024 *articulate*, Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 2023 *preload*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2021 *Daydreaming Face*, RUCI Art Space, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2020 *DRAWING withdrawing*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2019 *Face to Face*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2014 *Dia and His Secrets*, feat. Papermoon Puppet Theatre, Bazaar Art Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2013 *Finding Lunang*, feat. Papermoon Puppet Theatre, ARTJOG13, Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 2011 *Eye of The Messenger*, Yavuz Gallery, Singapore
- 2010 *Mwathirika*, feat. Papermoon Puppet Theatre, Tembi Contemporary, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 2009 *Two Shoes for Dancing*, Valentine Willie Fine Art (Project Room), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *We Begin with Everything*, ara contemporary, Jakarta, Indonesia
- The Paper Menagerie*, ISA Art Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2024 *Sandiya Tirta Gunung*, Tirta Gunung Art Space. Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- Salon et Cetera*, Ace House Collective, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- ICAD by the Bay*, Indonesia Design District, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Tidak Apa Apa*, Gallery Yolcha, Osaka, Japan
- NOW*, Ruci Art, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2023 *Beneath the Layers*, BALK Art, Jakarta, Indonesia
- wARTa #3*, Jogja Gallery, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 2022 *Distrik Seni Sesi 2: Berkelanjutan!*, Distrik Seni X Sarinah, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Broken White Project: Parallel Margins*, Vinyl On Vinyl, Makati, Philippines
- ARTJOG MMXXII: Arts in Common - Expanding Awareness*, Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- wARTa #2*, Jogja Gallery, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- Salone del Sneakers*, C on Temporary, Bandung, Indonesia
- S.E.A Focus*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2021 *How are we doing?*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- Broken White Project #4*, Ace House Collective, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- S.E.A Focus*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2020 *Jumping the Shadow*, Sapar Contemporary, New York, United States
- 2019 *Eastern Rhythms*, History Museum of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria
- INTENTION, PLEASE!*, Edwin's Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2018 *REDRAW III: UGAHARI*, Edwin's Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Folkloristics*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2017 *Carte Blanche*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore

- 2015 *REVITALISASI MUSEUM WIDAYAT*, Museum H Widayat, Magelang, Indonesia
ARTJOG 8: Infinity in Flux, Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
BETWIXT AND BETWEEN, Lir Space, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- 2014 *Neo Iconoclas*, Langgeng Gallery, Magelang, Indonesia
Jeforah, Kota Lama, Jakarta, Indonesia
ARTJOG 2014: Legacies of Power, Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Anachron -Light in Winter Festival, Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia
ReDraw, Edwin's Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2013 *Print Parade: Grafis Minggiran*, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Made in Commons, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

SELECTED RESIDENCIES

- 2015 Hide and Seek, Museum of Art, Kōchi, Japan
- 2014 Light in Winter Festival, Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia
- 2012 AIR Koganecho, Yokohama, Japan
Manila Contemporary, Manila, Philippines
- 2011 Y-Fest, Circus of Life, Esplanade, Singapore
- 2010 Y-Fest, Esplanade, Singapore
- 2009 - 2010 Asian Cultural Council, New York, United States

COLLECTIONS

Tumurun Museum, Indonesia



ara comes from the abbreviation of the founders' names: Arlin, Ramadanti, Chandra. Beyond that, the word holds a layered meaning that aligns with the gallery's philosophy. In Sanskrit, *ara* means a place of shelter, adaptability, and consideration of others. These values are at the heart of ara contemporary, shaping its role in the arts community. The gallery's focus will center on artists, from emerging to established, whose practices engage with the context of Southeast Asia, exploring the connections between immediacy and global discourse. Founded with the mission to thoughtfully advocate for Southeast Asian artists, ara contemporary aims to serve as a dynamic platform for dialogue and collaboration and to contribute to the burgeoning art scene in the region and beyond.

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