



ABIOTIC: TERRA LANDSCAPE

By Syaiful Garibaldi

Cover: **#10** (detail) (2014), Acrylic and mushroom spore print, 132 x 226 cm (52 x 89 in.)
This page: **#4** (detail) (2014), Acrylic on paper, 105 x 150 cm (41 3/10 x 59 1/10 in.)



ABIOTIC TERRAH LANDSCAPE

By Syaiful Garibaldi



SYAIFUL GARIBALDI

Syaiful Aulia Garibaldi was born in 1985 in Jakarta, Indonesia. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts from Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) and currently works in Bandung, Indonesia.

Syaiful, or fondly known as Tepu, started off as a student of agriculture in university before pursuing experimental fine arts where he applies his scientific background to create a conceptual foundation for his art. Tepu's works show a remarkably strong vision of art that collides with science in a graceful manner. His creation of an immersive environment sparks from his interest in the networked and interconnected nature of ecologies, and the evocative power of microorganisms as symbols of death and decay, as well as life. An infusion of art and science transcends through Tepu's work and gives way to a new gateway of knowledge, which is illuminated within his prints and installations.

Tepu has participated in several exhibitions in Indonesia and abroad. His recent exhibitions include *Regnum Fungi* (2012), Padi Artground, Bandung, Indonesia; *Pressing*, Videoinsight® Center (2013), Turin, Italy; *Trick or Truth* (2012), Fang Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia; *Design Art: Renegotiating Boundaries* (2012), Lawangwangi, Bandung, Indonesia; and *Hybrid Project: The Butterfly Effect* (2011), Barli Museum, Bandung, Indonesia. In 2013, he was awarded Best Artworks at Bandung Contemporary Art Awards #3.

Tan Siuli is Assistant Director (Programmes) and Curator at the Singapore Art Museum where she oversees the Indonesia and Education portfolios. Her past exhibitions and projects include *FX Harsono: Testimonies*; *Classic Contemporary: Contemporary Southeast Asian Art from the Singapore Art Museum Collection*; *Chimera: Asian Contemporary Art from Private Collections*; and the Singapore Biennale 2013.

It is also worth noting that many of Garibaldi's organisms or floating world-islands are often connected to each other. This may well stem from the artist's observation of fungus (Garibaldi is a professed mycology enthusiast), which presents itself under the microscope as a network of interwoven threads, incessantly branching out. This rhizomatic structure is alluded to in Garibaldi's art, and also underpins much of his thought processes and approach to art-making.

patterns traced by the movement of bacteria in the Petri dish formed the basis of the typography for a language invented by the artist, which he calls “Terhah” (a word which means ‘ideas’ in his invented language).

That the typographical foundations of Terhah took place in a Petri dish is also apt, for the Petri dish is a visual metaphor for a place where experimentation and creation can take place. The generation of new life and fertile new ideas occurs in a space bounded by its circular frame and scrutinised from a distance; these enclosed worlds are perhaps not dissimilar to the 'frames' of art and the frames around artworks, which serve as boundaries and parameters for the teeming ideas contained within, offered up for public analysis and consideration.

ዐርቃዐሮ! ሐገራል ።
 ሕይወቴዎ ለከ ዐርቃዐሮ ለገደደዎ ለገደደዎ ለገደደዎ
 ዐርቃዐሮ! ሐገራል ።



death and decay giving rise to new life and beauty. By linking fungus to art in his work's title, Garibaldi draws out a parallel between this natural cycle and that of the art world and art history; the status quo, or what is here today, will eventually die off so that new forms can arise.

In the process of decomposing matter, fungi also spawn whole new ecologies which support the sustenance of new organisms. There is, for instance, a symbiotic relationship between fungi and termites. For his exhibition at Pearl Lam Galleries, Garibaldi proposes to present an expansive otherworld which will bring together the various strands of investigation and art-making in his practice. The creation of this immersive environment builds on the artist's interests in the networked and interconnected nature of ecologies, and the evocative power of fungi as symbols of death and decay, as well as life—in particular the mushroom, which is one of a few organisms that can live without sunlight, contrary to other life-forms and conventional assumptions about the sun's life-giving energies. The environs of this prolific fungus present a paracosm of the artist's making, an alternative world with its own unique (counter-) ecology and even language which resembles the world we know and yet runs counter to it, or perhaps, runs parallel to, but under it like a subconscious; the dark reaches in which the mushroom grows and blossoms is like the underground or unexplored substrate of the mind—fertile new terrain to mine.

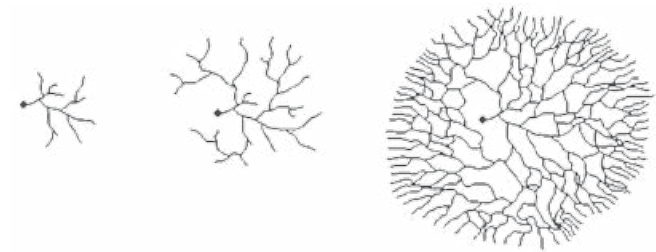
Ideas, like bacterial and fungal growth, can spread rapidly and impact other fields. A graphic representation of mycelial growth is a powerful metaphor for this interconnectedness and expansiveness; the illustration of a network as a dynamic space of constant conjunctive processes, branching out and, on occasion, bearing fruit.

It is fitting that Garibaldi observes a parallel between the way mushrooms grow and his own practice, given how his approach to art-making is

so expansive—ranging from more conventional modes of expression such as drawing and printmaking to the creation of new languages and ecosystems—as well as interdisciplinary, nourished by its cross-fertilisation with other fields of study such as agronomy, mycology, and conversations with people and enthusiasts from all walks of life, including the humble mushroom farmers of Indonesia with whom Garibaldi worked for his first solo exhibition *Regnum Fungi*, and from whom he realised the close relationship between our daily lives and various types of fungi.

The maturing art ecology in Indonesia has also supported Garibaldi's modes of working with the establishment of contemporary art spaces which present and encourage approaches to art-making beyond conventional 'schools' or disciplines and commercial agendas. The *Bandung New Emergence* series of exhibitions at Selasar Sunaryo, for instance, has consciously presented the works of 'creators' (encompassing architects, musicians and designers) rather than those solely by 'visual artists', thereby encouraging interaction between these various and varied creative communities, and positioning the Bandung art scene as a site where such encounters can take place. In Yogyakarta, a similar shift towards interdisciplinary research and co-creation may be observed: in 2013, to celebrate its 25th anniversary, Cemeti Art House organised the exhibition *Dobrak* which invited artists and social science specialists to collaborate and co-create works.

If sustained, the rhizomatic nature of the developing art ecology in Indonesia could well yield fertile new ground, as exemplified in Syaiful Garibaldi's wide-ranging explorations. Like the thread-like body of the fungus, which appears to have no beginning and no end, only an ever-expanding network of nodes and connections—the possibilities for a constantly evolving and enquiring art-making process, nourished by its interdisciplinary conjunctions and modalities—are infinite indeed.





Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #1 (2014)
Acrylic on paper, 120 x 200 cm (47 1/5 x 78 7/10 in.)

Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #2 (2014)
Acrylic on paper, 126 x 220 cm (49 3/5 x 86 3/5 in.)





Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #3 (2014)
Acrylic on paper, 132 x 223 cm (52 x 87 4/5 in.)





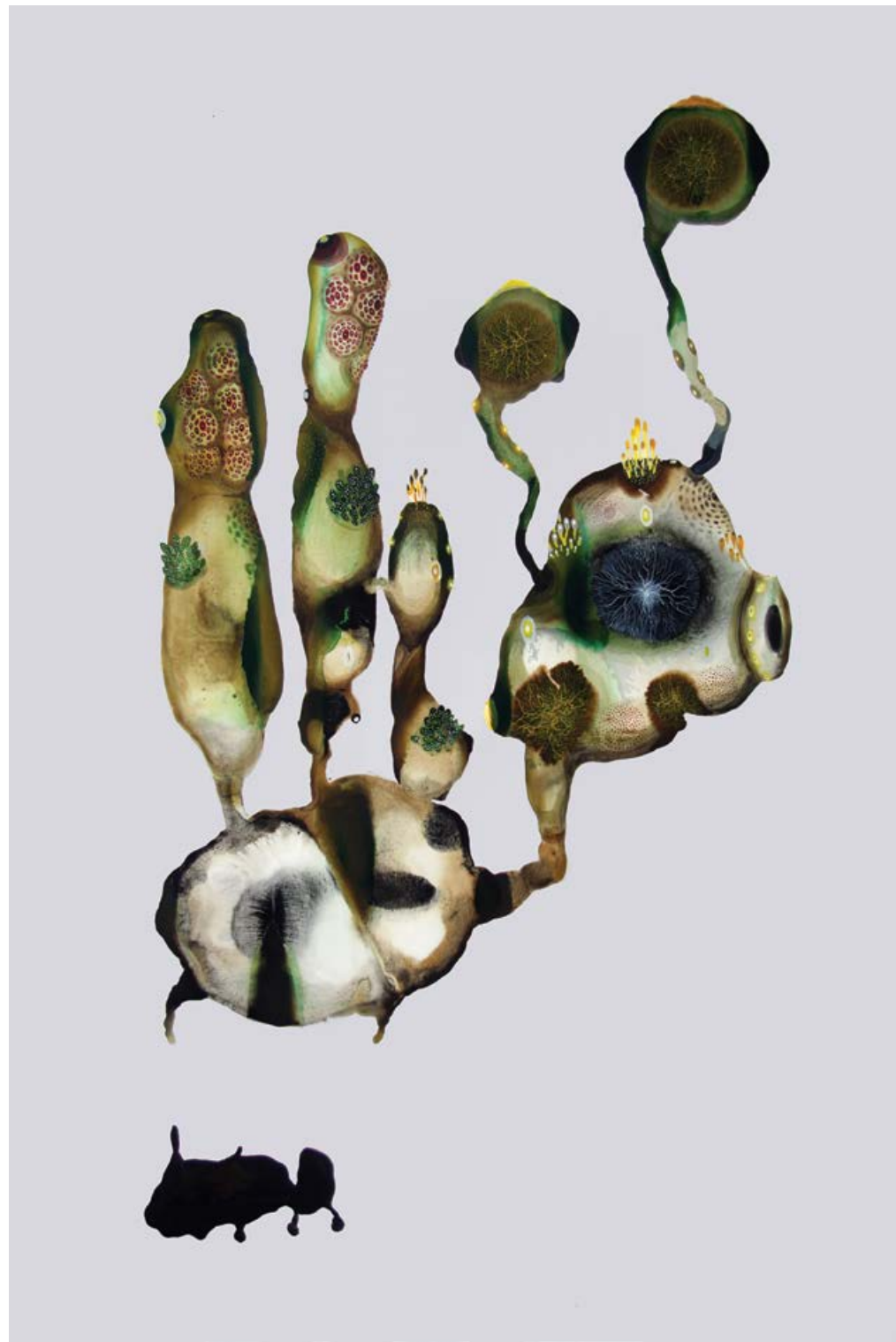
Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #4 (2014)
 Acrylic on paper, 105 x 150 cm (41 3/10 x 59 1/10 in.)



Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #5 (2014)
 Acrylic on paper, 102 x 154 cm (40 1/5 x 60 3/5 in.)

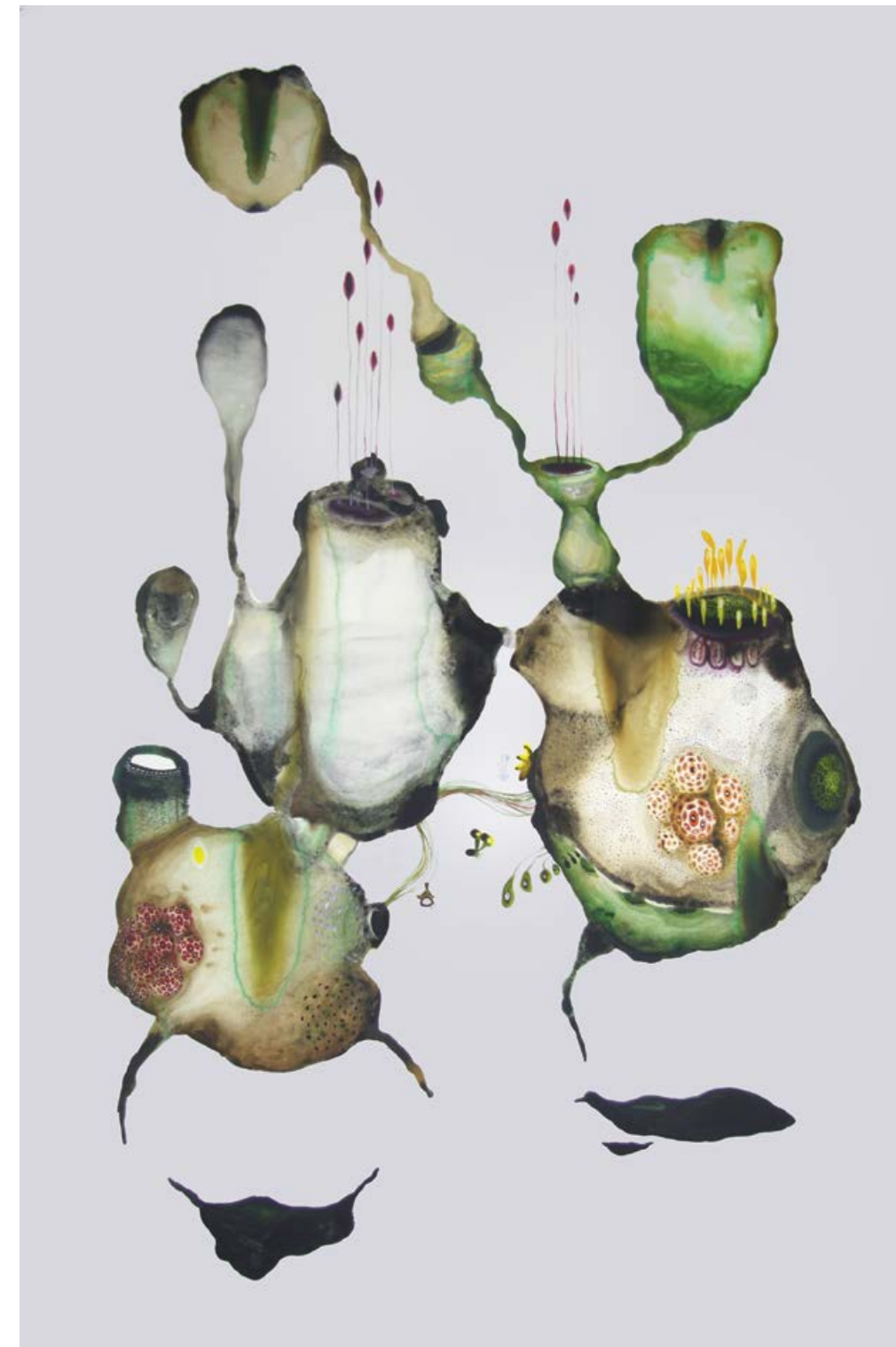
Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #6 (2014)
Acrylic on paper, 119 x 203 cm (46 9/10 x 79 9/10 in.)





Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #7 (2014)
Acrylic on paper, 152 x 105 cm (59 4/5 x 41 3/10 in.)

Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #8 (2014)
Acrylic on paper, 151 x 102 cm (59 2/5 x 40 1/5 in.)





Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #9 (2014)
Acrylic and mushroom spore print
132 x 226 cm (52 x 89 in.)

Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #10 (2014)
Acrylic and mushroom spore print
132 x 226 cm (52 x 89 in.)



Enin Supriyanto is an independent curator and writer, living and working in Jakarta, Indonesia. He has been curating exhibitions and contributing essays for various publications in Indonesia and abroad. His publications, among others, include *Indonesian Contemporary Art Now*, edited by Marc Bollandsee and Enin Supriyanto (Singapore: SNP Editions, 2007) and *Agus Suwage: Still Crazy After All These Years*, edited by Enin Supriyanto, Adeline Ooi, Beverly Yong (Yogyakarta: Studio Biru, 2010). He has curated many projects and shows involving Indonesian contemporary artist, among others, *Agus Suwage: Still Crazy After All These Years* (Jogja National Museum and Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, 2009), *Beyond The Dutch* (co-curated with Meta Knol, Utrecht Centraal Museum, The Netherlands, 2009), *Handiwirman Saputra: No Roots, No Shoots* (co-curated with Agung Hujatnikajennong, National Gallery, Jakarta 2011), and *Sip! Indonesian Art Today* (ARNDT, Berlin, Singapore 2013). He is now the Project officer of the Equator International Symposium, a parallel event of the Jogja Biennale.

New Medium, New Language

The end of 1993 saw an important momentum shift with regards to Indonesian Contemporary Art during the realisation of the Jakarta Biennale XI held at Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta. I was reminded of this particular exhibition due to two works that were composed of organic materials as their primary medium. The first work was one made by Krisna Murti, *Objects from Kampung Nagrak* (1993), which took the form of an installation and video. The main component of this installation was an arrangement of rice grains spread upon the exhibition floor and placed in a wooden *lumping* (a wooden container where rice may be processed). In a couple days, these grains began to grow and develop leaves, change form and colour, as well as undergo a visual change of the installation as a whole. The second work, *Retakan (Cracks)*, 1993, was made by Andar Manik. A vital component of this work—aside from the ceramic sculptures hung to appear like floating rocks—was the clay mud splashed on the wall. As time progressed, the mud began to dry, crack, break, and descend onto the ground.

In the past decade, the relationship between Indonesian artists with natural materials, as well as its contained organic features and properties, has continued to progress further. The House of Natural Fiber (HONF) has formed and taken advantage of bacteria as well as fermentation processes in their installation work *Intelligent Bacteria–Saccharomyces Cerevisiae*, which received the Transmediale Award in 2011. Another group, Lifepatch (also based in Jogjakarta), recently displayed an installation, *Moist Sense* (2013), that utilised plants, as well as basic

electronic gadgets which could transmit an assortment of sounds when certain degrees of humidity were reached in the plant containers.

What can be concluded from the above is that Syaiful A. Garibaldi (also known as Tepu) and the practice he has developed over these past years remains a continuation of his predecessors. In the same breath, however, he has also widened and opened new avenues of ideas and process in comparison to the past. This was evident in Tepu's last solo exhibition, *Regnum Fungi*, in Padi Artground, Bandung, 2012. In this exhibition, Tepu utilised fungi as material. His works highlighted various visual characteristics related to fungi, as well as expressed a new language similar to Esperanto he created himself called "Terhah".

These two principal components, fungi and Terhah, both express the organic disposition of his works in terms of its potential to undergo processes of development and transformation. With these two materials, Tepu enforces the notion that as a material, fungi—or more importantly: new media artistic expressions—are directly related to the need for new languages. At the same time, this language also requires a means of visual expression, a form of new alphabetical typography, which in turn is also related to the various visual cues that have been observed by Tepu through the lens of a microscope, microorganisms in a Petri dish. From these two materials, Tepu is aware that at each part of the process that determines his work's beginning and end—which later on may also break and disappear—is a process open to many possibilities of changes, which are contingent, meaning that the changes that may occur may not always follow the will or control of the artist.

This reality causes Tepu's works to shift or, even to a certain extent, erase his position as an artist. Until now, there has always been a possibility where artworks and artists cannot avoid the reality that they become interlinked referentially through those things that are personal or cultural in nature. In many cases, contemporary artworks instead choose and utilise formal aspects and materials from a variety of sources to enforce the notion that such references exist. In this way, complexities of interpretation and meaning become widened and enriched. Tepu's works instead go on an opposite trajectory. By applying fungi and Terhah, Tepu's works exist completely as the mediums of the works present. The fungi and languages he introduces also enforce the formal aspects and materiality contained within. It would be very difficult to find, if one exists, distinct personal or cultural references in these works by Tepu.

In doing so, Tepu proposes a reality where aesthetic quality, as well as artistic experience, is not only based upon the requirement of meaning in artworks. Similar to the bacteria and fungi samples present in the works in this exhibition, the aesthetic experiences in this exhibition are meant to be spatial and temporal in nature. This is similar to how Tepu himself realised a part of his works in the exhibition space itself, and not in a studio. To take this idea further, the works provide impetus to observe the world around us with more attention and detail. This is only possible if the works are released from the burden of having to express a particular message or meaning. These works invite us to observe everything carefully, akin to observing microorganisms through a microscope. Through such observatory processes, we may perhaps take an imaginary retreat to a magical world containing a plethora of fungi without having to taste the peculiar mushrooms Alice had in Wonderland.

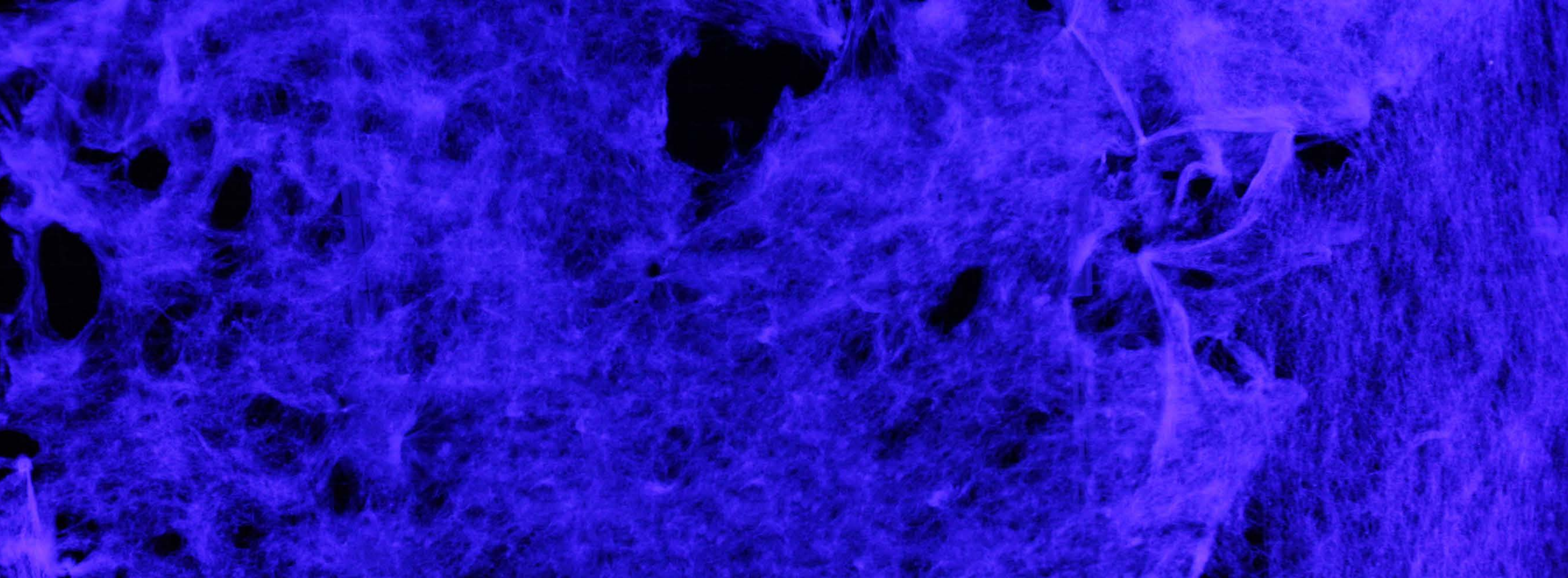
Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #11
(Typography) (2014)
Fern, moss, wire mesh







Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #12
(Inner Recesses) (2014)
Mycelium, darcon, 6 UV lights



Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #13
(Magnifier) (2014)
25 magnifying boxes, mushrooms





Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #14
(Terhah Terrain) (2014)
Fern, moss, mushrooms, orchids





SYAIFUL GARIBALDI

1985 Born in Jakarta, Indonesia

2004 Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Padjajaran (UNPAD), Bandung, Indonesia

2007 Komunitas Sahabat Kota, teaching and giving workshop for children

2010 BFA in Printmaking, Faculty of Fine Art and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Bandung, Indonesia

2012 Founded Kelas Entarmalem, Study Group of Art etc.

Present Lives and works in Bandung, West Java

Solo Exhibitions

2014 *Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape by Syaiful Garibaldi*, Pearl Lam Galleries, Singapore

2012 *Regnum Fungi*, Padi Artground, Bandung, Indonesia

Selected Group Exhibitions

2013 *Pressing*, Videoinsight® Center, Turin, Italy

Finalist Exhibition BaCAA #3 (Bandung Contemporary Art Awards), Lawangwangi, Bandung, Indonesia

2012 *Trick or Truth*, Fang Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia

Indonesian Contemporary Fiber Art #1: Mapping, Art Space:1, Jakarta, Indonesia

Design Art: Renegotiating Boundaries, Lawangwangi, Bandung, Indonesia

Wahana Extranoema, Padi Artground, Bandung, Indonesia

What Do Pictures Want?, Art Space:1, Jakarta, Indonesia

2011 *Survey #2.10*, Edwin Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia

Hybrid Project: The Butterfly Effect, Barli Museum, Bandung, Indonesia

Pameran Ilustrasi Cerpen KOMPAS, Bentara Budaya, Jakarta, Indonesia

2010 *Soedjojono dan kawan kawan*, Galeri Kita, Bandung, Indonesia

Un-segmented, Galeri Kita, Bandung, Indonesia

Manifesto, Percakapan Massa, Galeri Nasional (National Gallery of Indonesia), Jakarta, Indonesia

Bandung New Emergence 3, Selasar Sunaryo Artspace, Bandung, Indonesia

Post Historia, Building Enterprise 1, Singapore

Monoprint, Grand Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

Let’s Bounce, Vanessa Artlink, Jakarta, Indonesia

Almost White Cube, CG Fine Art, Jakarta, Indonesia

2009 *Post Mortem*, Vanesa Artlink, Jakarta, Indonesia

Inhabitant, Galeri Padi, Bandung, Indonesia

Survey #2, Edwin's Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia

Going Beyond, CMNK, Bandung, Indonesia

2008 *ParbinulaJarkuli*, Aarmuh Space, Ciburial, Bandung, Indonesia

Seni Grafis Indonesia Sekarang, Tembi Contemporary, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Zoo, Soemardja Gallery, Bandung, Indonesia

Tanda Kota, Group Exhibition Pocong Dago & ButonKultur, Jakarta, Indonesia

2007 *Scale, 15x15x15 Project*, Soemardja Gallery, Bandung, Indonesia

US/Industry, Galeri Rumah Teh, Bandung, Indonesia

2006 Triennale Seni Grafis, Bentara Budaya, Jakarta, Indonesia

Iowa Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary Miniature Prints, Iowa, USA

Exhibition and Workshop, Graphic Art, Semar Gallery, Malang, Indonesia

Ka Art Ini, UNJ, Jakarta, Indonesia

Black Hole, Drawing Exhibition, UPI Bandung, Indonesia

2005 *Self Portrait*, RuangAlternatif KGB, Bandung, Indonesia

Workshops, Projects, Seminars, Talks, Discussion

2013 Bandung Art Today, Panelist at Soemardja Roundtable Discussion

Extranoema, Wahana Extranoema: Pameran Sebagai Sebuah Performans

Workshop on Spore Print, Komunitas Growbox, Reading Light

2012 Self Portrait Mushroom Hunting and dry point experience, THR Ir H Juanda, Bandung, Indonesia

Lingkar Belajar “Urban sketch and Drypoint”, Komunitas Sahabat Kota, Bandung, Indonesia

2010 Workshop with Takao Minami (JP) New Media, Nu-Substance Festival 2010, Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia

2008 Aarmuh, Collaborative Space

2007 Chief of Re-Mural Siliwangi Program

Awards

2013 Best Artworks, Bandung Contemporary Art Awards #3

2006 Finalist of Triennale Seni Grafis 2, Bentara Budaya Jakarta, Indonesia

2005 The 2nd Winner of Mural Competition, Cihampelas Walk, Bandung, Indonesia



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This page: **Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #6** (detail) (2014)
Acrylic on paper, 120 x 200 cm (47 1/5 x 78 7/10 in.)

