

SHALINI GANENDRA FINE ART  
presents

# Sam Thomas

## *Lost Pings*

*July 24 – September 1, 2014*



# Lost Pings

*Lost Pings* presents New Zealand artist Sam Thomas' latest foray into the study of indigenous arts practices, an area which he likens to the remote pings of lost satellite radar. The exhibition features a selection of Thomas' aluminium paintings and sculptural installations completed during his three month residency at Shalini Ganendra Fine Art. Thomas' engagement with Orang Asli communities in the Western Malaysian Peninsular has culminated in a visually striking, mixed media and mixed object exhibition, which also incorporates artistic collaboration with the Mah Meri of Pulau Carey.

In *Lost Pings* we see a continuing development of the artist's earlier aesthetics, transferred now into the context of Malaysia. The artist's past residency experiences in India and the Cook Islands have allowed him to develop many different techniques and for *Lost Pings* he has employed his knowledge of Indian embossing, seen on the back of rickshaws and motorized vehicles, to create a stretched aluminium painting medium. The final product, when combined with oil paint, is a textural surface which has the ability to hold and reflect light, producing a myriad of optical effects. Working towards a holistic exhibition, Thomas aimed to create works that spoke to each other as well as the audience. He has constructed his own light source, *Pan Cakes*, by casting local bananas from clear resin which radiate light from an internal LED light bulb, creating a luminescence that interacts with the sculptural qualities of the aluminium paintings.

Thomas has also collaborated with local workshops and craftsmen of Orang Asli origin. Having researched Malaysia's native tribes prior to his arrival, he was intrigued by the remote and dispersed nature of the tribes and how current lifestyles affected traditional culture and artistic practices. Through JAKOA, the Orang Asli affairs governmental department, Thomas obtained consent to visit the Mah Meri tribe on the island of Palau Carey where he was immersed in traditional life and introduced to Orang Asli carving. Through collaboration, Thomas has been able to obtain two Mah Meri carvings which feature in *Pan Cakes* and the title work, *Lost Ping*.

Sam Thomas' artistic concern for this exhibition has been the mortality of culture and the point when common tradition becomes dispersed to the point of endangerment. Through this exhibition, we catch glimpse of scenes, colours, textures and materials that Thomas has engaged with through a series of exotic residencies, to explain an introductory narrative of first encounters with our local and rich indigenous culture.



*Corn eating spirit*, 2014,  
Oil on aluminium, 80cm x 70cm



*Dragon fruit*, 2014,  
Oil on aluminium, 61cm x 51cm



*Snakes*, 2014,  
Oil on aluminium, 61cm x 50cm



*The Carver*, diptych, 2014  
Oil on aluminium, 80cm x 140cm



*Lost Ping*, 2014  
LED display, steel, chain, resin, plastic,  
Mah Meri carving of nyireh batu wood,  
60cm x 40cm x 20cm



*Call a Cab*, 2014

Oil on aluminium, 80cm x 70cm



*Serfs*, 2014  
Oil on aluminium, 80cm x 70cm



*Eyes*, 2014

Oil on aluminium, 60cm x 50cm



Ziggy, 2014  
Oil on aluminium, 50cm x 60cm



*Pan Cakes*, 2014

LED light, steel, oil on aluminium, resin, Mah Meri carving of nyireh batu wood, 40cm x 15cm x 40cm

# SHALINI GANENDRA FINE ART

@ Gallery Residence

Tues to Sat 11am – 7pm

No.8 Lorong 16/7B, 46350 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

+603 7932 4740    +6012 393 6669

sgfa88@gmail.com

[www.shaliniganendra.com](http://www.shaliniganendra.com)

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