



*Pioneering the Creative.*

# Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur 2020

REVIEW

26<sup>th</sup> November- 6<sup>th</sup> December



# Pivoting in 2020

## GWKL's 2020 Pivot and Vital Dynamic

GWKL's 2020 programme continued to present rich offerings of contemporary, heritage, design and architecture – anchored by education and outreach. Celebrating the fifth edition in a year of phenomenal creative challenges, GWKL pivoted into the virtual with increased focus on digital platforms and responding to popular request, extended duration of the marquee to 10 days (November 26th to December 6<sup>th</sup>).

Through impetus for *“Pioneering the Creative”*, GWKL has established a robust platform that is accessible to all and celebrates cultural difference. As a city wide platform, GWKL is inclusive and expansive, fostering appreciation, connections to various creatives (including to contemporary art practise, craft, heritage, architecture) – all to build memorable recognition, understanding and exchange. Now, virtual programming gives added endurance and influence.

GWKL 2020 offered the Luminary Forum to again bridge disciplines and cultures, audiences and experts. The Recommended feature highlighted some of the best venues/ and resources for exhibitions and programming in this city. With the unusual social restrictions, many galleries opted for digital exhibitions and virtual tours, though a number continues with physical opening by appointment.

Through *“Pioneering the Creative”* and *“Mapping the Multi-discipline”*, GWKL provides platform for creative discourse and visual appreciation. As we look back at this year of challenge and adaptation, GWKL 2020 has considered and encouragingly addressed some of the pervasive global uncertainties and their impact on cultural development. The marquee reinforces that art and culture are imperative components of society, and a testament to the reality that culture IS the pivot to recovery.<sup>1</sup>

Datin Shalini Ganendra  
Founder, GWKL

<sup>1</sup>David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament. (emphasis added.)

# GWKL 2020 Recommendations

## Institutions

- Islamic Art Museum Malaysia
- Ilham Gallery
- National Art Gallery, Malaysia (Virtual)
- National Textile Museum
- Badan Warisan Heritage Society
- National Museum, Malaysia
- Maybank Foundation- Virtual Exhibition, T.I.G.E.R Core Values
- Bank Negara Galleries

## Galleries and Projects

- REXKL
- ARTEMIS GALLERY
- A+ WORKS OF ART
- Badan Warisan Heritage Society
- KL City Art Gallery
- Fergana Art
- G13
- Ihsan Modernist Prints
- Me. Reka Makerspace
- Malaysia Design Archive
- NN Gallery
- Rimbun Dahan
- SC Shekar Photography
- Taksu Gallery
- Rumah Lukis Gallery
- Wei Ling Contemporary
- Zhan Art Space
- Women Photographers Malaysia



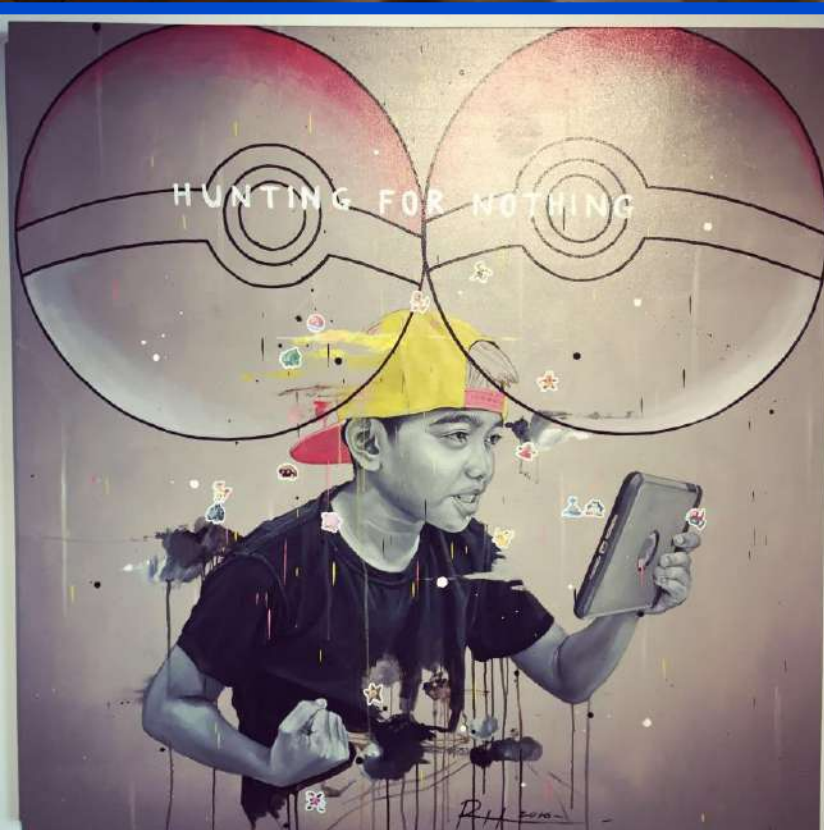
# Institutions



Images: Badan Warisan Heritage; Shalini Ganendra Advisory; Petronas Gallery; Ilham Gallery

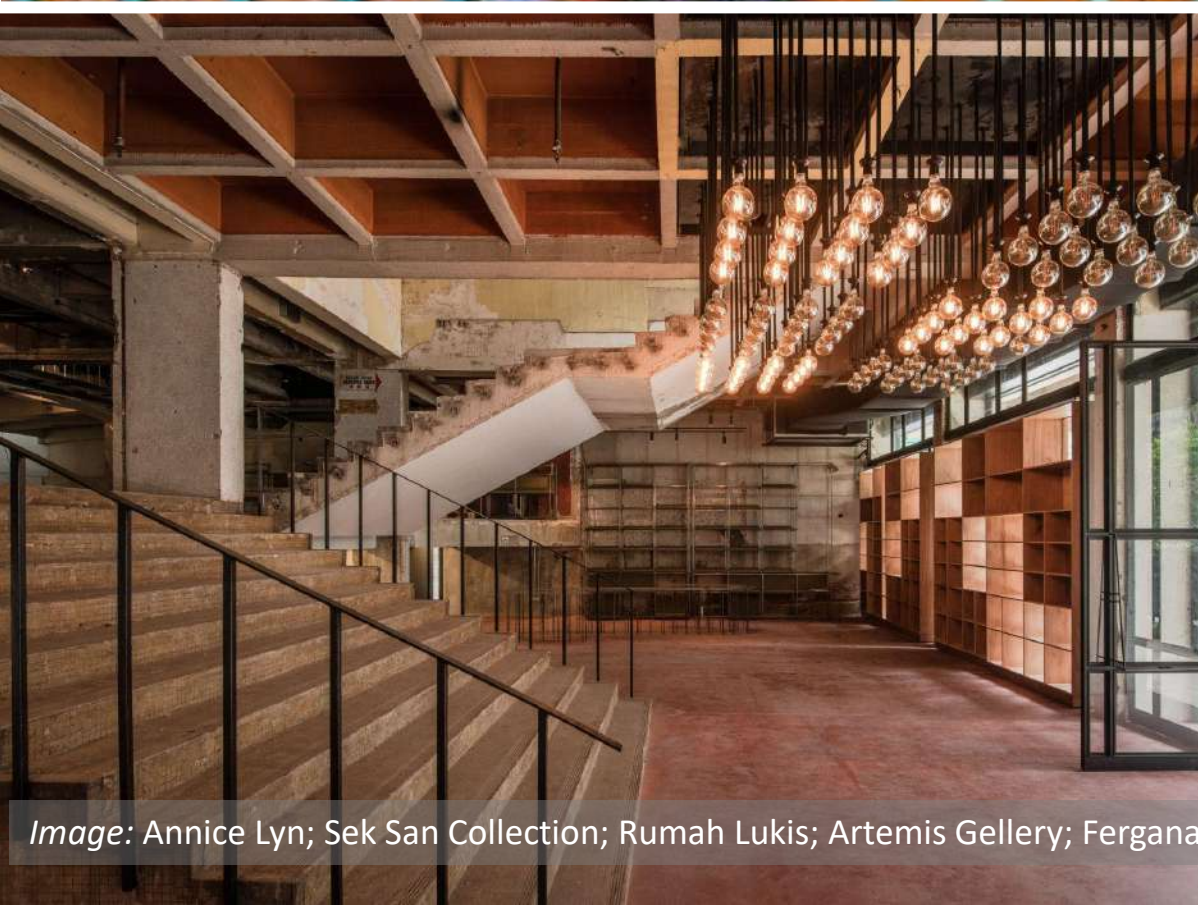
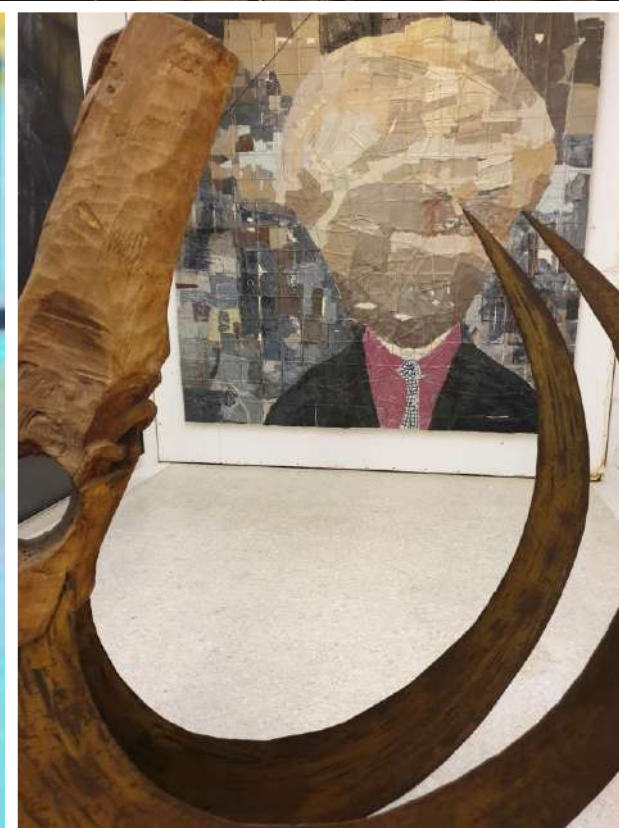


# Institutions



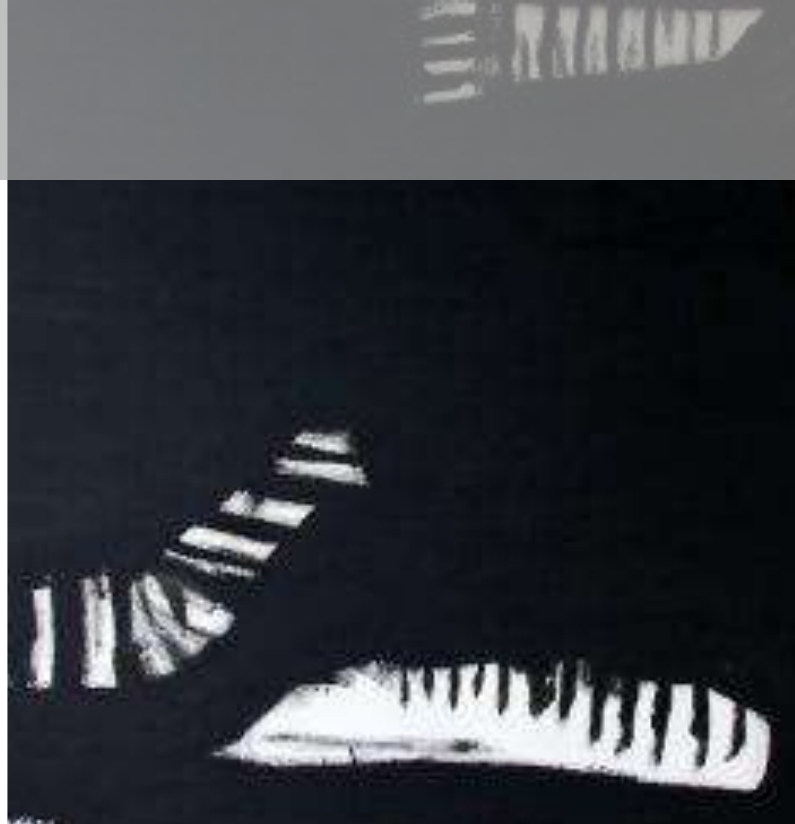


# Galleries & Projects





# Galleries & Projects



Images: Ruma Lukis; Ihsan Modern Prints; Zhan Art Space; Richard Koh Fine Art; Woman Photographers NN Gallery; Rimbun Dahan



GWKL 2020

2020

# Luminary Forums

*GWKL 2020 embraced the opportunity offered through this year's challenges to create a formidable and accessible digital presence that enabled extended participation in the Luminary Forums and other GWKL recommended content to local and international guests - virtually.*

*Full house where everyone had a front row view.*





# Luminary Forum I

Nov 28, 5—7pm



BALANCING  
*the* BIENNIALS



# Luminary I

## Balancing the Biennials

Speaker:

Patrick Flores, *Curator, Singapore Biennale 2019 / Venice Biennale 2022*

Moderator:

Emelia Ong, *Artist & Writer*

Renowned curator, Patrick Flores spoke to the theme through the presentation “True to Scale: Curating in Cycles” with discussion later moderated by Emelia Ong. Flores opined that biennials should be “*attempts to navigate the ecology of contemporary art that is marked not by continents but by archipelagos and mangroves*”, advocating for plural and worldly trajectories as means to signify precarity and vulnerability by including voices that are outside the traditional realm of art. He reviewed methodologies related to the development of the 2019 Singapore Biennale which included performance art, as well as other mediums. He also gave a preview into the developing project for the Taiwan Pavilion of Venice Biennale 2022 for which he is curator, and feature works by Sakuliu Pavavaljung, rooted in the life of the indigenous Taiwan people.

Saturday, November 28<sup>th</sup> 5pm - 7pm



# Luminary Forum II

Nov 29, 10am—12pm



RECONNECTING  
—MUSEUMS,  
CREATING,  
& EVENTS



# Luminary II

## Reconnecting- Museums, Creating and Events

Speakers:

Wanda Nanibush, *Curator of Indigenous Art, Art Gallery Ontario*

Leeza Ahmady, *Asia Contemporary Art, New York*

Elias Yamani Ismail, *Artist (Malaysian)*

Moderator:

Iqbal Abdul Rahim, *Curator and designer*

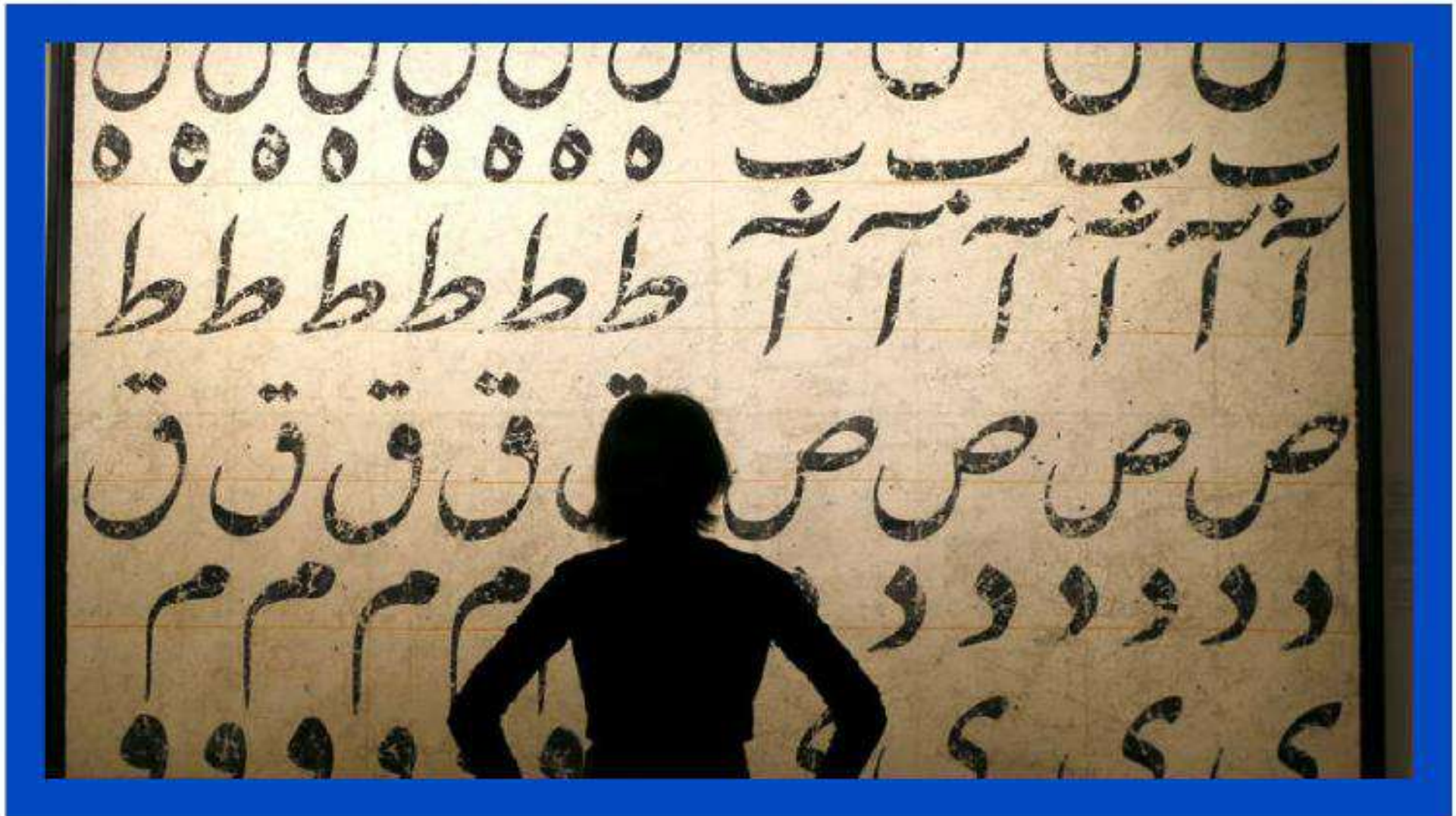
Wanda Nanibush, the first Indigenous Arts Curator of Art Gallery of Ontario and Leeza Ahmady, Director of Asia Contemporary Art Week in New York zoomed in to join Malaysian artist, Elias Yamani Ismail in presentations followed by dynamic discussions covering their respective practices, moderated by Iqbal Abdul Rahim. Ismail discussed his Bricolage art practice, which utilises a diverse range of found materials, referring to concepts of extraction and density in the urban built environment. Ahmady followed with a presentation about cultural connectivity and the shared Asian aesthetic traditions identifiable even without prior interaction or knowledge about each other. Finally, Nanibush, presented her thoughts about curating during this pandemic, complimented by the powerful and recent calls for racial justice through discussion of five artworks to elaborate on the responsibility that cultural workers have to marginalised communities.

Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup> 10am - 12pm



# Luminary Forum III

Nov 29, 5—7pm



COLLECTING &  
CURATING —  
WAYS of SEEING



# Luminary III

## Curating and Collecting- Ways of Seeing

Speakers:

Edward Gibbs, *Chairman and Head of Department, Middle East and India, London Sotheby's*

Shabbir Hussain Mustafa, *Senior Curator, National Gallery Singapore and Singapore Art Museum*

Aaron Seeto, *Director, Museum MACAN, Jakarta*

Moderator:

Ernesto Pujazon, *Educator & Artist*

Edward Gibbs, Chairman of Sotheby's Islamic Art Department, joined Shabbir Hussain Mustafa, Senior Curator of National Gallery Singapore and Singapore Art Museum, and Aaron Seeto, Director of Museum MACAN with moderator Ernesto Pujazon, artist and educator. Gibbs began the conversation discussing Sotheby's impressive pivot to the livestreaming realm and expressed the hybrid auction having virtual and physical components as presenting opportunity rather than retrenchment. Sotheby's landmark world auctions allow for a less intimidating and more inclusive experience, as they facilitated the simultaneous participation of three continents. Mustafa continued with a discussion of past and future exhibitions at National Gallery Singapore, the Gallery's goals in building connections and perspectives, and the role private collectors played to realise these goals. Seeto had a rather different approach, discussing the limitations of the 'new normal'. Considering the lack of internet accessibility in many regions of Indonesia, where Museum MACAN is based, Seeto explained how MACAN approached the reconstruction of their systems, producing downloadable materials for easy access and continuing engagement.

Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 5pm - 7pm



# Luminary Forum IV

Saturday, Dec 5th, 5—7pm



YOUNG  
COLLECTORS  
& NEW  
COLLECTIONS



# Luminary IV

## Young Collectors and New Collections

Speakers:

Yeoh Xin Yi, Suleyman Azhari and Othman Mirzan

Moderator:

Lienne Loy

The final luminary session featured distinct collecting practises of 3 young collectors: Yeoh Xin Yi, Othman Mirzan and Suleyman Azhari. Each discussed collecting history, works in their respective collections, motivations for and considerations when collecting. They shared concerns over limitations presented by the new normal that often prevented gallery visits, but at the same time offered opportunity for new collectors otherwise intimidated by traditional gallery and auction dynamics. Predictably, the presentations were followed by active audience engagement with numerous questions on what to collect; investment considerations and promotion of Malaysian artist.

Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 5pm - 7pm



2020

# Luminaries



Patrick Flores

*Curator, Singapore Biennale 2019  
Venice Biennale 2022*



Edward Gibbs

*Sotheby's , Chairman and Head of  
Middle East and India, London*



Wanda Nanibush

*Curator of Indigenous Art  
Art Gallery Ontario*



Aaron Seeto

*Director, Museum MACAN  
Jakarta*

*“It was enlightening and inspiring to be a part of GWKL. The new connections to Indigenous artists working in the region is exciting for future programming possibilities. Bringing First Nations art to GWKL was important to create more knowledge on art practices globally and encourage local artists in their vision.”*

**Wanda Nanibush,** Curator of Indigenous Art, Art Gallery of Ontario



2020

# Luminaries



**Shabbir Hussain Mustafa**

*Senior Curator, National Gallery Singapore  
and Singapore Art Museum*



**Leeza Ahmady**

*Asia Contemporary Art  
New York*



**Elias Yamani Ismail**

*Artist  
Malaysia*

*“GWKL is an engaging platform where convergence of ideas meet. It crosses borders which helps us to understand our communality as well as our arts practice.”*

**Elias Yamani Ismail**, Malaysian Artist





**Patrick Flores**

*Curator, Singapore Biennale 2019/ Venice Biennale 2022*

Patrick Flores is Professor of Art Studies at the University of the Philippines and curator of Vargas Museum in Manila. He was Artistic Director of Singapore Biennale 2019 and has been appointed curator of the Taiwan Pavilion for Venice Biennale in 2022. He curated South by Southeast and the Philippine Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015, co-curated Under Construction: New Dimensions in Asian Art in 2000 and the Gwangju Biennale (Position Papers) in 2008. In 1999, Flores was Visiting Fellow at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and an Asian Public Intellectuals Fellow in 2004. He was a grantee of the Asian Cultural Council, an Advisory Board member of the exhibition The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds after 1989 (2011), member of the Guggenheim Museum's Asian Art Council (2011 and 2014), and a Guest Scholar of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles in 2014. Flores has also written, convened and published extensively.

Edward Gibbs joined Sotheby's in 2003. He advises private, corporate and institutional collectors across Europe, North Africa, The Middle East, South Asia and throughout the Muslim world. He oversees three major auction categories: Arts of the Islamic World, Art of Imperial India and Contemporary Arab, Iranian and Turkish Art. Edward's career exemplifies his passion for Islamic Art, which began in 1988 with a visit to Al-Andalus and the Great Mosque of Cordova. Prior to joining Sotheby's, he served for seven years as lecturer in Islamic Art at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London, where he set up the innovative Foundation Course in Islamic and Asian Art with Sotheby's Institute of Art. In 1997, he was invited by the British Council to co-curate the exhibition Traditions of Respect: Britain & Islamic Cultures to mark the 50th anniversary of the independence of India and Pakistan. The exhibition was opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in Lahore and New Delhi.



**Edward Gibbs**

*Sotheby's, Chairman and Head Middle East and India, London*



**Wanda Nanibush**

*Curator of Indigenous Art  
Art Gallery Ontario*

Wanda Nanibush is Curator of Indigenous Art at Art Gallery of Ontario. She holds a Master in Visual Arts from the University of Toronto, where she has taught graduate courses. Along with her curatorial work, she was an Aboriginal Arts Officer at the Ontario Arts Council, Executive Director of ANDPVA and strategic planning for CCA. Hailed by New York Times as 'one of the most powerful voices for Indigenous culture in the North American art world', she has curated Karoo Ashevak (2019), Rebecca Belmore Facing the Monumental (2018), Js McLean for Indigenous & Canadian Art (2018), Rita Letendre, Fire & Light (2017), and Toronto: Tributes + Tributaries, 1971—1989 (2016). As the author of 'Violence No More: The Rise of Indigenous Women', Nanibush has published widely in various other magazines, books and journals. Wanda Nanibush is an Anishinaabe-kwe image and word warrior, curator and community organizer from Beausoleil First Nation.





**Aaron Seeto**

*Director, Museum MACAN, Jakarta*

The Director of Museum MACAN, Aaron Seeto, has a vast experience working to advance the goals of contemporary arts organisations and curating significant exhibitions of artists from the Asia and Pacific regions. Seeto was formerly Curatorial Manager of Asian and Pacific Art, at Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane, Australia where he led the curatorial team at the eighth Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT8) in 2015. For eight years prior, he was the Director of Sydney's ground-breaking 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.

Born and raised in Afghanistan and based in New York, Leeza Ahmady is noted for curating large-scale multidisciplinary exhibitions, artistic collaborations, and experimental educational forums. Since 2005, she has directed Asia Contemporary Art Forum (ACAF) aka Asia Contemporary Art Week — a curatorial and educational platform through which she brings together leading US and Asia-based institutions and galleries to present cutting-edge exhibitions and dialogues with over 3000 presented artists. In 2014, Ahmady launched FIELD MEETING art forum, critically acclaimed for staging newly commissioned performances, lecture-performances, and pop-up projects by over 250 artists, curators, and other creative minds in 6 iterations at notable New York venues. Ahmady was a member of the Agents / Curatorial Team for the prestigious international exhibition DOCUMENTA (13) (2010-2012) and has presented numerous exhibitions and public programs at other local and international institutions including Venice Biennale, Istanbul Biennale, MoMA, Art Basel, and many others. She has contributed texts to publications such as Flash Art, ArtAsiaPacific, Ocula, Ibraaz, Creative Time Reports, Manifesta Journal, and more.



**Leeza Ahmady**

*Asia Contemporary Art  
New York*



**Shabbir Hussain Mustafa**

*Senior Curator, National Gallery Singapore and  
Singapore Art Museum*

Shabbir Hussain Mustafa is Senior Curator at the National Gallery Singapore and Singapore Art Museum. At the Gallery, he oversees Between Declaration and Dreams, a multi-year exhibition surveying Southeast Asian perspectives from the 19th century to present. In 2017, Mustafa received the DAAD Artist-in-Berlin Award for his curatorial work. His curatorial projects include Sea State: Charles Lim Yi Yong for the Singapore Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale, The Sunwise Turn, a meditation on Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy at the Dhaka Art Summit in 2018, and Ahmad Fuad Osman: At the End of the Day Even Art is Not Important (1990-2019) at Balai Seni Negara. He co-curated Suddenly Turning Visible: Art and Architecture in Southeast Asia (1969-1989) and Latiff Mohidin: Pago Pago (1960-1969), an exhibition first held at the Centre Pompidou and later at the Ilham Gallery and National Gallery Singapore.





**Elias Yamani Ismail**

*Artist, Malaysian*

Elias Yamani Ismail is a Malaysian artist, with degrees from UiTM, Lim Kok Wing University College of Creative Design and Multimedia, and Universiti Sains Malaysia. In 2008, he founded Satu: Creative Collective which supports, promotes and creates a platform for visual arts programmes. It also initiated several programmes under segments titled Nuqtah, Transit, and Saloran Seni: Malaysian Visual Arts Channel. Driven by his vision to make art accessible to the public, he would later go on to establish an NGO known as Pertubuhan Pengkarya Seni Kuala Lumpur dan Selangor (Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Artists Organization) and PJ Arts and Culture Centre. Yamani is also a researcher; he is currently carrying out comparative research on visual arts, thinking processes and practice, mainly in a Malaysian context. His works have been acquired by institutions all over Malaysia, as well as private local and foreign collectors from Japan, Canada, Germany, and Australia. He and his recently features in publication *“Living Art: The Inspired Lives of 14 Malaysian Artists and their Art Practise”*.

*“Art curating is not about creating themes and concepts but creating environments that stimulate new or even difficult conversations about our contemporary world through art.*

*GWKL is a great platform that enables diverse actors from the art ecology to connect and learn from one another.”*

**Emelia Ong,** Artist and Author of *“Living Art: The Inspired Lives of 14 Malaysian Artists and their Art Practice”*



# Young Collectors



Yeoh Xin Yi



Suleyman Azhari



Othman Mirzan

*“What an interesting discussion about some of the immediate challenges we are facing, it’s always great to connect with colleagues around the world and at this moment it is important for us to share experiences and viewpoints. Let’s hope we can meet in person, again soon!”*

**Aaron Seeto**, Director, Museum MACAN



# Young Collectors



Yeoh Xin Yi

Xin Yi is an avid arts enthusiast, from pursuing arts as an interest, to being a collector, and proponent in the Malaysian art scene as a co-founder in passion project Sembilan Art Residency Program. She is most interested in discovering new artists, mediums and progressive ideas that reflect imaginative interpretations of current issues. Her recent collections include works of structural paper forms, print on aluminium, mixed medium collages, recycled and works of other natural organic media.

On returning to Southeast Asia, Suleyman Azhari joined The Artling, an online gallery and Art Advisory located in Singapore and Shanghai. He enjoys collecting Outsider Art, and works from emerging contemporary artists. Currently, Azhari is working on The Artling's upcoming business-to-business tool that will transform the way industry professionals source for art, as well as working on introducing a Street Art section to the Artling.



Suleyman Azhari



Othman Mirzan

Having acquired an appreciation for the arts from his parents, Othman began assembling a small contemporary collection during his time in the US, focusing on regional American contemporary street artists. Now in Asia, Othman is looking to expand his focus to Southeast Asian artists, with a particular interest in modern interpretations of traditional Southeast Asian mediums.



2020

# Moderators



Dr. Emelia Ong



Ernesto Pujazon



Iqbal Abdul Rahim



Lienne Loy

*“Since its inception in 2016, GWKL has emerged as an important platform for critical dialogues on modern and contemporary art in Southeast Asia. At a moment in time when much of the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, GWKL has staked a claim for solidarity amongst peers by enabling conversations that attempt to make sense of this new world that has been thrust upon us.”*

**Shabbir Hussain Mustafa**, Senior Curator, National Gallery Singapore and Singapore Art Museum



# Moderators



Dr. Emelia Ong

Emelia Ong is the author of 'Living Art: The Inspired Lives of 14 Malaysian Artists and their Art Practice', which featured the diversity of art practice in Malaysia. After completing her PhD at University Sains Malaysia, in which she examined Sino-Malayan identities in modern Malayan art, she became Senior Lecturer in Art History at the Cultural Centre, University Malaya. Her research interests include modern and contemporary art in Malaysia and Southeast Asia, focusing on the formal aspects of the Nanyang art style and artistic creation as identity making in the context of nationalism. She currently paints full-time, producing process-driven abstract works. Ong hopes to produce more books on art, teach art history and create art every day.

Ernesto Pujazon was the former Head of School for Taylor's Design School, Taylor's University, from 2014 to 2019. He is currently Senior Lecturer in the Foundation in Design programme while pursuing his PhD at University Technology MARA, titled 'Application of the Western Interpretation of Perspectives and Elementary Space, in Malaysian Visual Arts'. A graduate from The Autonomous National Fine Arts School of Lima, Pujazon is also an artist; he favours subtle colours with thin layering of washes, giving the impression that his enormous canvases are large watercolour works. His use of icons dominates the canvas, creating an instant impact on the viewer. The viewer is drawn in, subsequently realising that these paintings work in two distinct levels.



Ernesto Pujazon



Iqbal Abdul Rahim

With an interest and involvement in the Malaysian arts and crafts world spanning over three decades, Iqbal Rahim played a major role in the setting up of the Central Bank of Malaysia's Museum and Art Gallery where he was the Creative Producer charged with putting together the content of the five-gallery museum. A graduate of Modern Languages from the University of Leeds and a Chef from Le Cordon Bleu, his career has included award winning stints in advertising, running cafes and restaurants, curating and procuring artwork for public and private collections and writing on art for catalogues and Malaysian newspapers.





Lienne Loy

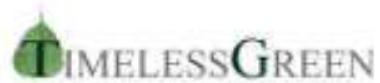
Lienne Loy is a curator facilitating exhibitions in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She has assisted in exhibitions that have brought artists and curators from the Southeast Asia region into the country. Bridging together art professionals of a wide scope of exposures and points in their careers; from emerging to mid-career artists, curators, writers and speakers. Along with exhibitions, Lienne has participated in publications writing about issues and events within the Southeast Asian art world. Lienne graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, with a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree, with a focus in curatorial studies and exhibition design. Prior to moving back to Malaysia, she started her career gaining experience in art institutions and galleries in the USA. Lienne is continuously developing her personal writing practice and is working to progress with future exhibitions highlighting the potential of young and emerging artists within Southeast Asia.

*“Like all art worlds seeking to enhance their ecologies, the Malaysian cultural scene needs a platform like GWKL to bring creative agents of various persuasions together to see art and to talk about it. This is no easy task as the field is dynamic and always in flux and that there are always tough questions to ask and tougher responses to keep. This situation is, however, needed to keep the community on its toes or at the edge, as it were, to find a stance or a tilt towards reaching out to more contexts of reception and practices. What I notice is that there is a desire and demand for discourse as there is a lively curiosity to crack the oftentimes arcane codes of the curatorial and the contemporary. This is a good sign, because it conquers cynicism and dichotomies, and encourages an ever-alert responsibility, as well as a vigorous generosity, of both public and practitioner.”*

**Patrick Flores**, Curator, Singapore Biennale 2019 and Venice Biennale 2022

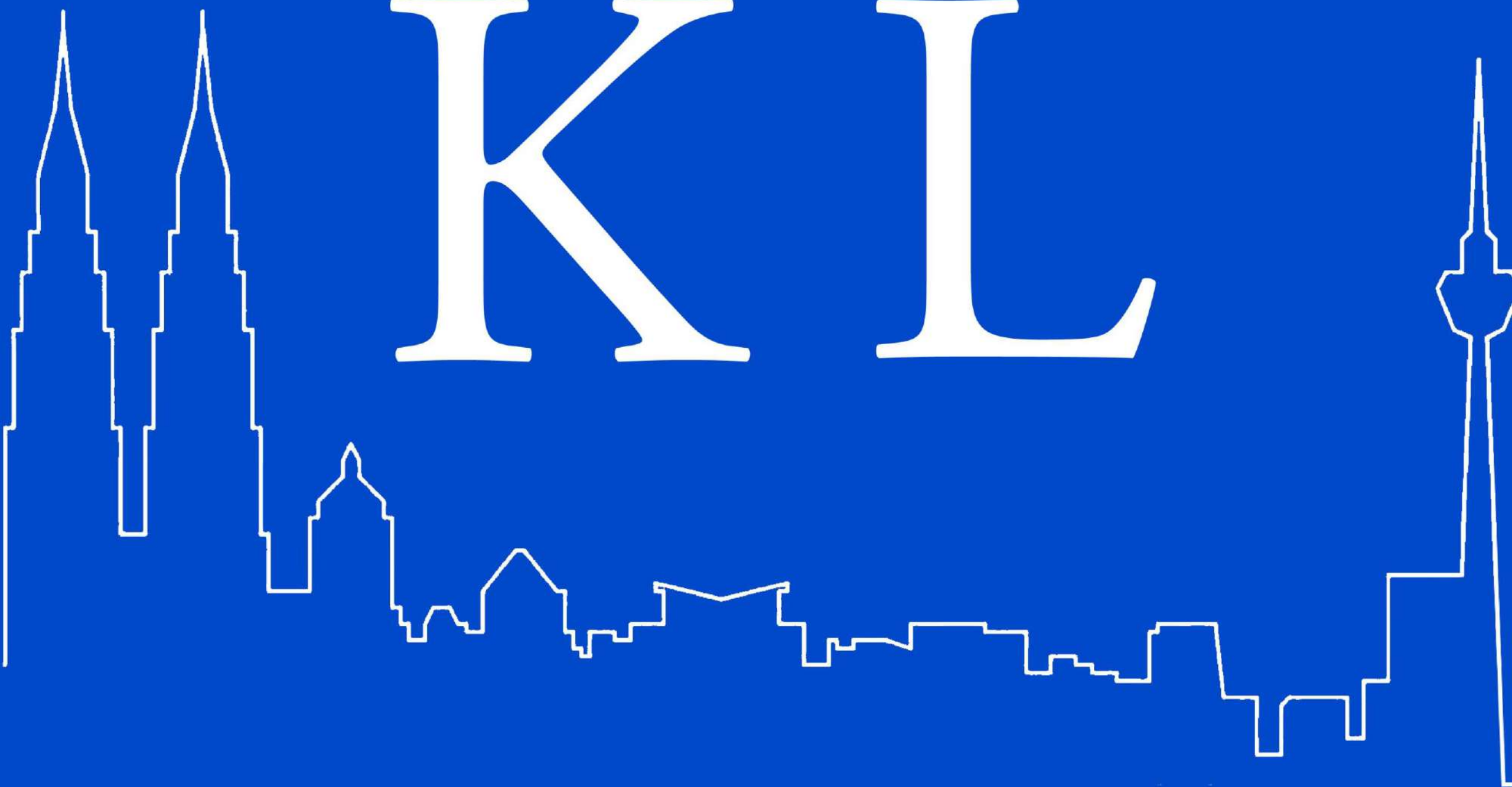


# Partners





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