

Press Release

S.E.A Focus Curated – *hyper-horizon*

Jimmy Ong

Exhibition Period	22 - 31 January 2021
Vernissage*	Wednesday, 20 January 5 – 9:30pm
VIP Preview*	Thursday, 21 January, 1 – 8pm
Public Days	Friday, 22 – Sunday, 31 January, 1 - 8pm
Venue	Tanjong Pagar Distripark 39 Keppel Rd #01-05 Singapore 089065
S.E.A. Focus VIP	Young Collectors' Series: In Conversation Wyn-Lyn Tan and Stephanie Fong Thursday, 28 January, 6:30 – 7:30PM [Fully Subscribed] FOST Gallery

* By invitation only

About the Presentation

FOST Gallery is delighted to present works by Jimmy Ong for *hyper-horizon*.

The *Raffles Trophies* series is a result of Ong's on-going research into Sir Stamford Raffles' time in Java and broader post-colonial issues, seen through the long lens of history and his own lived experiences. The subject matter and composition are influenced by *memento mori* paintings in the Western canon of art history, which aimed to remind the viewer of mortality and the fragility of human life.

Ong's drawings of livestock (chickens), fruits (dragon fruits, soursop) and flora (ginger flowers) found in domestic village kitchens are juxtaposed against luxurious colonial-era furniture. The jarring placement of ordinary food ingredients found in local markets with objects of conspicuous consumption can be seen as a metaphor of the divide between the locals and the colonials; or the contrast between the natural and the constructed.

In *Ayam Sirsak, Raffles Trophies*, the chair depicted is in the collection of the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore. It is catalogued as the 'Raffles Chair' because it was a type of chair prevalent during Raffles' brief rule as Lieutenant-Governor over Java, from 1811 to 1816. It is not connected to Raffles personally but the choice was deliberate in this context. In *Buat Naga, Raffles Trophies*, Ong based it on a Regency occasional table in an auction catalogue.

Ong usually draws from life, but only the natural objects in this series were drawn so, the furniture was referenced from photographs. Therefore although all real, the objects did not exist in the same realm of reality at the time of drawing, the compositions were entirely conjured in Ong's mind. In fact, the perspective of the table surface has been skewed in order to show the Sanskrit inscription.

The text on each of the drawings are quoted from a section from Raffles' *History of Java*, listing out the ethics of an ideal Javanese man, originally translated from Sanskrit.

In the same presentation, an aluminium lantern, composed of ordinary kitchen cookware, is laid on its side, echoing the domesticity of the objects in the drawings. Light spills from punctured holes forming patterns, Sanskrit script and the phrase "I AM OK", which can also be read "I AMOK". "Amok" is derived from Javanese (*amuk*) and it means to behave wildly out of control or frenziedly. It was used by early Western travellers to Asia (sometimes with derogatory connotations) to describe local soldiers when apparently facing inevitable defeat, suddenly burst into a frenzy of violence which so startled their enemies that it either delivered victory or at least ensured what the soldiers considered an honourable death. These two vastly different meanings of the same phrase, changed only by inserting a space between two different letters, illustrates how perspectives and meanings can change so easily, but more importantly these two states of being can reside in the same person.

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/Education
/Advisory



About the Artist

Jimmy Ong (b. 1964, Singapore) graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, USA in 1992, and is regarded as one of the pre-eminent artists of his generation.

Since the 1980s, Ong has been recognised for his monumental figurative charcoal works on paper. His drawings often focus on traditional Confucian philosophical themes like filial piety, ancestral worship, his own complex familial relationships and struggles with accepted gender identities and roles. In recent years, he has started to explore historical political figures and events, focusing on the colonial history of Southeast Asia.

He has exhibited extensively locally and internationally. His artworks are in the permanent collections of the National University Of Singapore Museum and the National Gallery Singapore, Deutsche Bank AG, amongst other private and corporate collections.

Ong currently works between Yogyakarta and Singapore. He is represented by FOST Gallery in Singapore.

Selected Images


Ayam Sirsak, Raffles Trophies
2018
Charcoal on paper
H152 x W124 cm



Buat Naga, Raffles Trophies
2018
Charcoal on paper
H212 x W126.5 cm



AMOK
2019
Aluminium with light
H45 x W120 x D45 cm (artwork)
L180 cm (chain)
Edition 1 of 3

Location FOST Gallery
1 Lock Road
#01-02, Gillman Barracks
Singapore 108932

MRT Labrador Park

Bus Opposite Alexandra Point: 51, 57, 61, 93, 97, 97e, 100, 166, 175, 963 or 963e

Gallery Hours Tue–Sat: 11am–7pm
Sun: 11am–6pm

Mon/Pub Hol: Open by appointment

Admission Free

Visitor Registration www.fostgallery.as.me/schedule.php

Enquiries Call +65 6694 3080 or e-mail info@fostgallery.com
