

Artist Jimmy ONG 王文清

Born 1964; Singapore
Works Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Artwork Information

Description



Title
Year
Medium
Dimensions

AMOK
2019
Aluminum with light
approx. H45 x W120 x D45 cm (artwork)
W180 cm (chain)

Edition
Perforated
Exhibited

1 of 3
"Amok" (in Sanskrit); "I AM OK YOU ARE OK"
S.E.A. Focus Curated: *hyper-horizon*, Singapore, 22-31 Jan 2021
In its Place, FOST Gallery, Singapore, 20 Sep-10 Nov 2019

About the Artwork

A lantern, composing of aluminium 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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Title
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Ayam Sirsak, Raffles Trophies
2018

Charcoal on paper
H150 x W117.5 cm (artwork)
H164 x W131.5 cm (frame)

“The most formidable enemy of man is his own conscience, which always bring [sic] his own crimes before his Eyes, without him leaving the means of avoiding it.”
S.E.A. Focus Curated: *hyper-horizon*, Singapore, 22-31 Jan 2021
In its Place, FOST Gallery, Singapore, 20 Sep-10 Nov 2019

About the Artwork

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 aims to remind the viewer of mortality and the fragility of human life. Ong's drawings of livestock, fruits, and flora 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 colonisers; 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.

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Exhibited

Buat Naga, Raffles Trophies
2018

Charcoal on paper
H211 x W127.5 cm (artwork)
H225 x W141.5 cm (frame)

“Riches only stand to torment the mind of man, & sometimes even to death, they are therefore with justice, disregarded and despised.”

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