

JALAINI ABU HASSAN (JAI)

BANGSAWAN KEBANGSAAN



Bangsawan Melayu, 2010, acrylic and bitumen on canvas, 54 x 54 in.



Tales of the Heroes, 2010, acrylic and bitumen on canvas, 54 x 72 in.

Tyler Rollins Fine Art is pleased to present *Bangsawan Kebangsaan*, a solo exhibition of new works by Jalaini Abu Hassan, taking place from April 28 – June 10, 2011. Jai, as he is also known, is one of Malaysia's most highly respected contemporary artists. He returns to New York this spring for his first US solo exhibition in over ten years, comprising a new body of mixed media works on canvas and paper.

Malaysia has a dynamic and diverse contemporary art scene, which is still little known in the United States. Jai's exhibition will give American audiences a rare opportunity for an in-depth viewing of the work of one of Malaysia's leading contemporary artists. The exhibition's title refers to a form of Malay popular opera (*Bangsawan*) and the notion of the national (*Kebangsaan*) – something like a "National Operetta." During its heyday from the 1920s through the '60s, *Bangsawan* combined Malay and Western styles, along with Indian and Chinese influences, and featured colorful, often satiric stories and stock characters such as the prince, shaman, and beautiful maiden. Jai remembers these performances as a main source of entertainment in the Malay village where he grew up in the 1960s and '70s. Like the *Bangsawan* operas, Jai's show puns on ideas of cultural framing, political drama, and the artist on stage. In a sense Jai's exhibition also constitutes a play about the artist's own oeuvre, as themes and characters from his earlier works reappear here, as if to be introduced to New York audiences in a special performance.

Jai's work is infused with references to traditional Malay life and culture while being actively engaged in contemporary developments in Malaysia's rapidly changing society. His work is also informed by an international perspective and cosmopolitan outlook, the product of extensive graduate training abroad. Jai received an MA from the Slade School of Fine Art in London and an MFA from the Pratt Institute in New York. It was while living in New York City that he first began to paint with bitumen, which has since become one of his principal media. Since his first solo show in London in 1987, his work has appeared in almost sixty exhibitions in Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America. He remains fascinated by the power of iconic imagery, whether traditional or contemporary, and by the process of making the art object – as he restlessly pushes the boundaries of drawing and painting.

EXHIBITION DATES: April 28 – June 10, 2011

OPENING RECEPTION: Thursday, April 28, 6 – 8:30 pm