

PICTURING POWER



YEE I-LANN

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FOREWORD

TYLER ROLLINS

Tyler Rollins Fine Art is pleased to present *Picturing Power*, the first solo exhibition in the United States for Yee I-Lann. Widely considered to be among Malaysia's leading contemporary artists, Yee works primarily in photo-media, often engaging with archipelagic Southeast Asia's turbulent history and addressing, with wit and humanity, the socio-political impact of current politics, neo-colonialism, and globalization.

The exhibition will focus on three recent series: *Picturing Power* (2013), eight digital collages referencing the history of photography as it relates to the development of colonialism in Southeast Asia and its contemporary legacy; *The sun will rise in the East and deliver us from this long night* (2012), a photographic installation of neon-colored Braille-like motifs of embracing couples that can be read as an attempt to disarm the past; and *TABLED* (2013), a series of ceramic dinner plates inspired by traditional blue-and-white china but printed with photographic images of ordinary people, developed for the group exhibition, *Suspended Histories*, curated by Thomas Berghuis at the Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2013 – 2014).

Born in 1971 in Sabah, Malaysia, Yee received her BA in Visual Arts from the University of South Australia, Adelaide, in 1993, and lives and works in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Her work has been widely exhibited in museums and international biennials, including: the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane, Australia (1999); *Contemporary Commonwealth*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2006); the Singapore Biennale (2006); *Independence Project*, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2007); *Thermocline of Art: New Asian Waves*, ZKM I Museum of Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe, Germany (2007); *New Nature*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand (2007); the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, Fukuoka, Japan (2009); *Welcome to the Jungle: Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia*, Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan (2013); *Suspended Histories*, Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2013); and *The (Post) Colonial Photostudio*, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, United Kingdom (2013). In 2011, *Fluid World*, a solo exhibition of her work, was presented at the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia. She was a member of the curatorial team for the 2013 Singapore Biennale.



VIEW OF THE INSTALLATION AT TYLER ROLLINS FINE ART



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PICTURING POWER

Picturing Power, a series of eight images, looks into the depiction of power through the lens of archived colonial-era photographs from Southeast Asia, primarily found in the collection of the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam. By “un-fixing” elements from a multitude of existing photographs, this work hopes to re-view the partnership between photography (as a mechanism in the construction of ideas and identities), and social or political power. Visually, the works evoke the context of colonial Southeast Asia and the development of ways of seeing and conceptualizing the “native,” but their concerns extend to the present day and ongoing issues of domination and exploitation of indigenous peoples. The series adopts a speculative photomontage, textual, and spatial approach to generate readings, to tease out other narratives that are occluded from dominant viewpoints, and to build a contemporary discourse on control, domination, and power.



Picturing Power: Wherein one surreptitiously performs reconnaissance to collect views and freeze points of view to be reflective of one's own kind

2013

Giclée print on Hahnemüle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Fine Art, 310 gsm 100% cotton rag paper

25 x 71 inches (63 x 180 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs



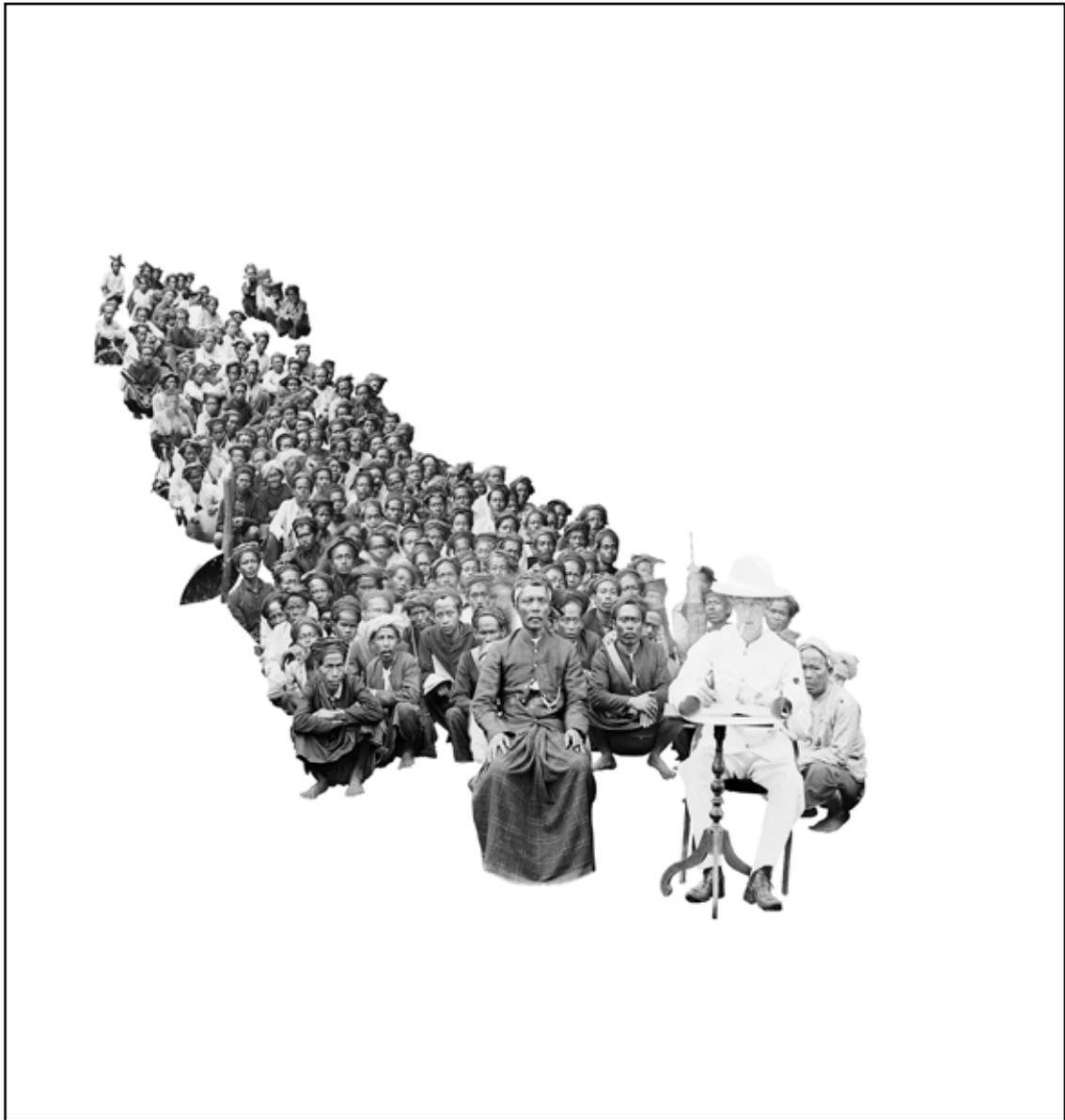
Picturing Power: Wherein one, in the name of knowledge, measures everything, gives it a name and publicizes this thereby claiming it

2013

Giclée print on Hahnemüle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Fine Art, 310 gsm 100% cotton rag paper

25 x 71 inches (63 x 180 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs



Picturing Power: Wherein one nods with political sympathy and says I understand you better than you understand yourself, I'm just here to help you help yourself

2013

Giclée print on Hahnemüle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Fine Art, 310 gsm 100% cotton rag paper

25 x 25 inches (63 x 63 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs



Picturing Power: Wherein one tables an indexical record of data-turned-assets and rules like the boss you now say that you are

2013

Giclée print on Hahnemüle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Fine Art, 310 gsm 100% cotton rag paper

25 x 71 inches (63 x 180 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs



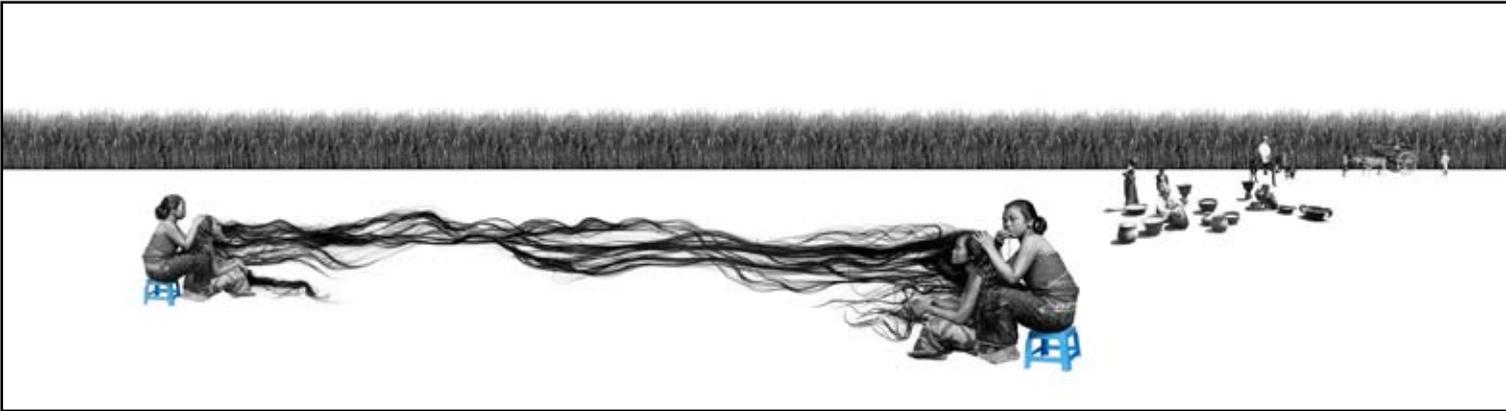
Picturing Power: Wherein one claims the hearts and the minds of the innocent and gives them the knowledge that is to be learnt

2013

Giclée print on Hahnemüle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Fine Art, 310 gsm 100% cotton rag paper

25 x 25 inches (63 x 63 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs



*Picturing Power: Wherein one cultivates cultural codes, the noble endeavors of mankind
and thereby puts them in their place*

2013

Giclée print on Hahnemüle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Fine Art, 310 gsm 100% cotton rag
paper

25 x 71 inches (63 x 180 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs



Picturing Power: Wherein one hands over the ways of seeing loot, land and labor and thereby builds complicity in the exculpation; you are now partners in crime
2013

Giclée print on Hahnemüle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Fine Art, 310 gsm 100% cotton rag paper

25 x 25 inches (63 x 63 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs



Picturing Power: Wherein one's legacy comes full circle and posits that you too can exploit and subjugate and fluff yourself up in a splendid game of one's own jolly adventure

2013

Giclée print on Hahnemüle Photo Rag Ultra Smooth Fine Art, 310 gsm 100% cotton rag paper

25 x 35^{1/2} inches (63 x 90 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs

TABLED

TABLED was commissioned for the exhibition *Suspended Histories*, curated by Thomas Berghuis at the Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam (2013 - 2014), where it was on display in the dining room of the house, still owned by the family of Willem van Loon, founder of the Dutch East-India Company. The artist has created a set of dinner plates using the traditional blue-on-white color scheme of Delft or Chinese export porcelain, but instead of depicting scenes of the exotic East, she uses images of today's urbanites – businessmen, students, street vendors, political operatives – from the streets of Malaysia and Indonesia, symbolically bringing them “back to the table” (one thinks in particular of the conference tables or dining tables in the homes of the elite, such as Willem van Loon, where decisions were made that determined the destinies of many subject peoples, a process still going on today in different forms).



TABLED

2013

50 ceramic rimmed flat plates with digital decal and back stamps

11 in. (28 cm) diameter

edition of 5 + 2 APs



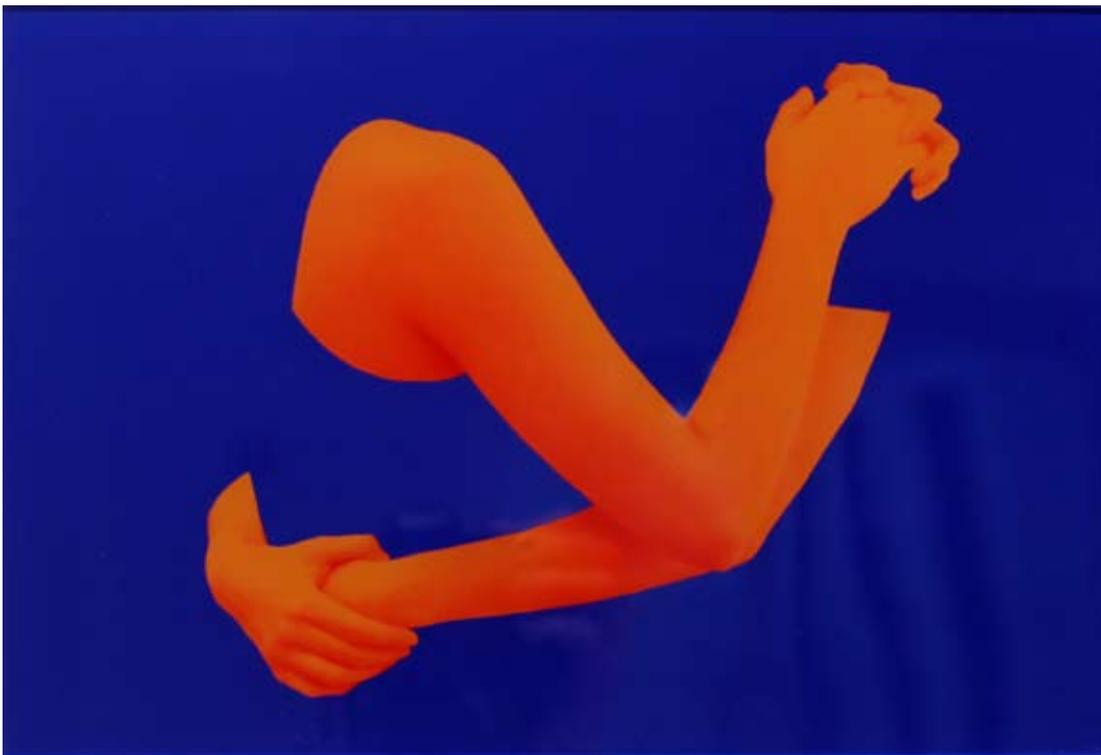
THE SUN WILL RISE IN THE EAST AND DELIVER US FROM THIS LONG NIGHT

The sun will rise in the East and deliver us from this long night is a photographic installation of neon-colored Braille-like motifs of embracing couples, their arms forming shapes that suggest the letters in the words of the work's title. The formations and shapes conjure memories of linguistic coding, messaging, or perhaps maps of islands. The title is that of a personal mantra that the artist often says to herself when in great frustration with Malaysian politics, especially with regards to the fraught political relationship between peninsular Malaysia and the typically subordinated eastern provinces of Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo. With a Facebook appeal, the artist gathered images from throughout Malaysia of embracing figures – whether romantic couples or friends or family is unclear, as are other familiar categories such as gender, class, and ethnicity. Their simple body language of can be read as an attempt to disarm the heavy discourse of propaganda and ideology.



The sun will rise in the East and deliver us from this long night
2012

digital C type print on metallic paper mounted onto black PVC
an installation of 52 photographs: each 8 x 11 in. (21 x 29 cm)
edition of 3 + 1 APs



HORIZON SERIES

The exhibition features two of the seventeen photographs from the *Horizon* series. *Horizon Series: Horizon* provides a visual and thematic grounding to the gallery space. With this image, the artist grapples with the horizon line itself, which is the basic organizing principle of her photo-collage works, including *Picturing Power*. The horizon line grounds the ideas and themes of the works, setting the collaged elements into place. It suggests perhaps the restrictive power of ideological constructs but also of the freedom that order can give. *Horizon* forms the background for the 16 other photographs in the *Horizon Series*, including *Horizon Series: Flat*, with its superimposed images of public housing blocks and mysterious origami figures.



Top: *Horizon Series: Horizon*

2003

black and white digital print on Kodak Endura paper

36 x 72 inches (91 x 183 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs

Bottom: *Horizon Series: Flat*

2003

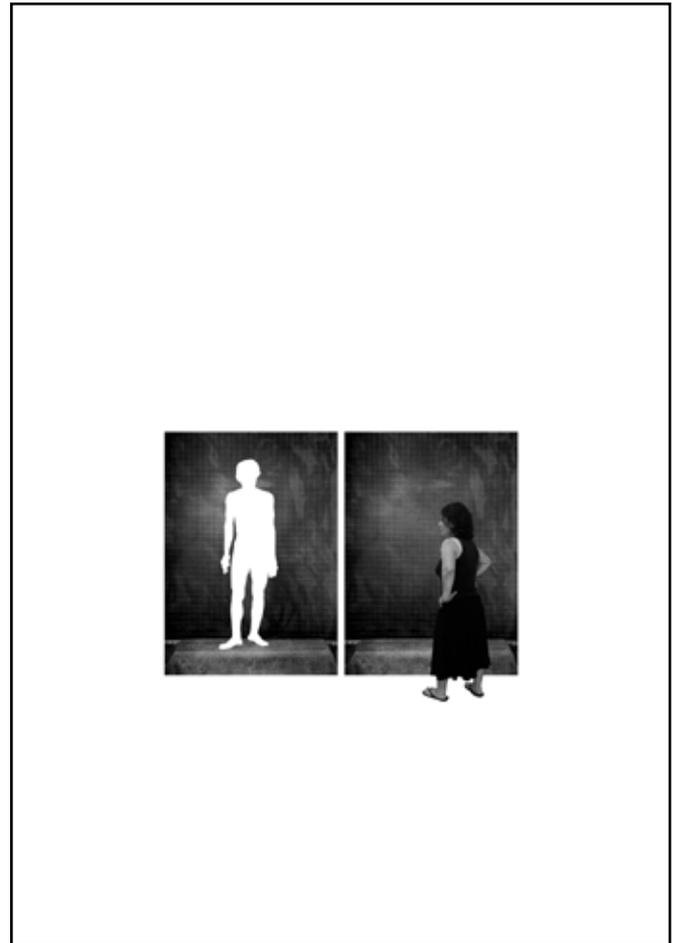
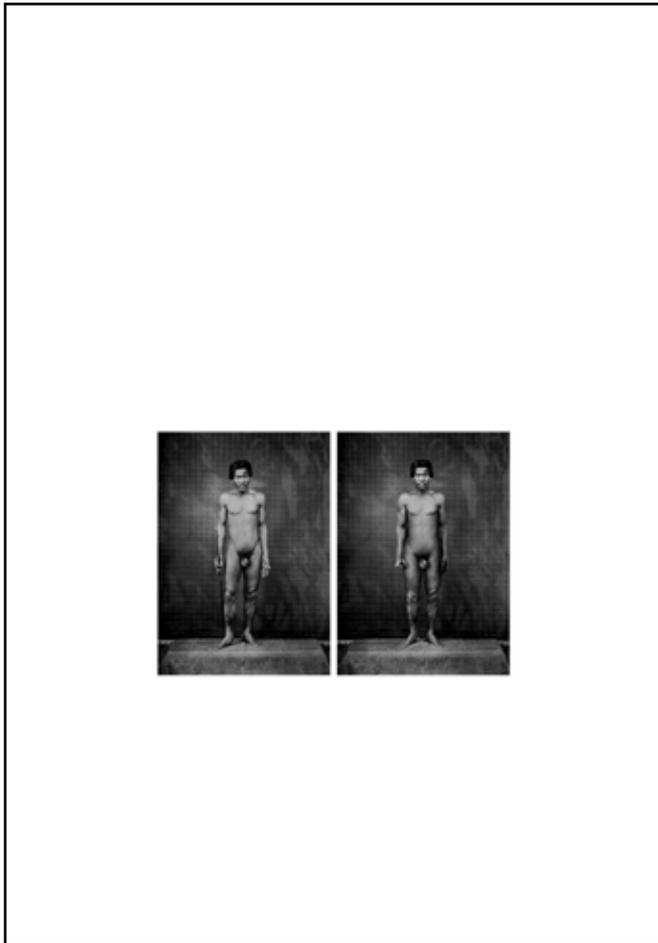
black and white digital print on Kodak Endura paper

18 x 72 inches (46 x 183 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 APs

STUDY OF LAMPREY'S MALAYAN MALE I & II

For *Study of Lamprey's Malayan Male I & II*, the artist has appropriated an 1868-69 ethnographic photograph by John Lamprey, *Front View of a Malayan Male*, the original carbon print of which now resides at the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in London. This image from a colonized past speaks of the gaze, of power, and the racial or ethnic "other." The artist explores how the meaning of this image changes in a post-colonial context as she inserts herself into the picture, meeting the gaze of the anonymous man. Yee says that, "bracketed by our conversation, he stands straight, answers back and exits, leaving a memory of his presence and experience in our time – when Malaysian society is particularly obsessed with framing, measuring, indexing identities and subjugating its populace to notions of racial supremacy and otherness."



Study of Lamprey's Malayan Male I & II
2009

black and white digital print on Kodak Endura paper
diptych, each 23 ¹/₂ x 16 ¹/₂ inches (60 x 42 cm)
edition of 8 + 2 APs

YEE I-LANN

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY



EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

1993
BA, Visual Arts, University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2014
Picturing Power, Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York, NY, USA.

2011
Fluid World, MSAC Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan.
Fluid World, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia.

2010
Boogeyman, Black Box, MAP, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

2008
Sulu Stories, Kathmandu Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand.
Kinabalu, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide, Australia.

2003
Horizon, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

2001
BUY (a labDNA project), Substation Gallery, Singapore.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013
Suspended Histories, Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
Helutrans Collectors Series: Southeast Asia/Contemporary, ArtSpace@Helutrans, Singapore.
The (Post) Colonial Photostudio, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, United Kingdom.
You Are the Company in which You Keep, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, United Kingdom.
Gerai CCEP1M MalaysiaKu, Jalan Bangkung Malaysia Day Street Celebration, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Jalan Bangkung Malaysia Day Street Celebration, Jalan Bangkung, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Noorderlicht Photofestival 2013, Old Sugar Factory, Groningen, The Netherlands.
M50: Hari Malaysia 50th Anniversary, MAP @ Publika, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Walk in Asia II, Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo, Japan.
Art of Memory: Contemporary Textile Expressions, Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok, Thailand.
CONVERGENCE: Allegories of the Malaysian Landscape, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Absurd/clity, National Visual Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
ArtJog'13: Maritime Culture, Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
Welcome to the Jungle: Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia, Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan.
Art For Grabs, Annexe Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Kuala Lumpur Triennale: Barricade, MAPKL @ Publika, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Women In Between: Asian Women Artists 1984-2012, Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Tochigi, Japan.
Artissima: International Fair of Contemporary Art: Present Future Section, Turin, Italy.

2012
Kembara Jiwa - The Traveling Soul, Selasar Sunaryo, Bandung, Taman Budaya, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Marcel Duchamp in Southeast Asia, Equator Art Projects, Singapore.

Encounter: The Royal Academy in Asia, Institute of Contemporary Art, A Royal Academy exhibition in association with Fortune Cookie Projects and the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, LaSalle College of the Arts, Singapore.

Post-Colonial Photo Studio: An exhibition about photography and post-colonial legacy, Action Field Kodra 2012, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Women In Between: Asian Women Artists 1984-2012, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan.

Waktu dan Ketika, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Wawasan 2020: The Malaysian Dream, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Singapore.

Credit Suisse: Innovation In Art Series the Collectors Show: Chimera Asian Contemporary Art from Private Collections, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore.

2011
Meditation: 2011 Asian Art Biennial, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan.

Territories of the Real and Unreal, Langgeng Art Foundation, Jogjakarta, Indonesia.

Inner Voices, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan.

Tanah Ayer: Malaysian Stories from the Land, Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia.

Negotiating Home, History and Nation: Two decades of contemporary art in Southeast Asia 1991 - 2011, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore.

A Tribute to Photography, Primo Marella Gallery, Milan, Italy.

2010
Daegu Photo Biennale, Asia Spectrum, Daegu Culture & Arts Center, Daegu, South Korea.
A Private Collection, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Singapore.

2009
RE_VIEW, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.
4th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale 2009 (FT4) Live and Let Live: Creators of Tomorrow, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan.

Dojima River Biennale 2009 Reflection: The World Through Art, Dojima River Forum, Osaka, Japan.

Magnetic Power: ASEAN-Korea Contemporary Photography & Media Art Exhibition, Hanbyukwon Gallery, Seoul, South Korea.

A New Wave of Responsive Images, Contemporary Malaysian Photography: Tokyo Month of Photography, Nikon Ginza Gallery, Tokyo, Japan.

Paradise is Elsewhere, Ifa Gallery: Stuttgart & Berlin, Germany.

CUT09: Figure (New Photography from Southeast Asia) a touring show to Valentine Willie Fine Art: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia & Singapore; Manila Contemporary, Manila, the Philippines.

2008
Independence Project, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur; Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, Australia.
Headlights, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
space / spacing, Galeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia.

2007
Out of the Mould, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
New Nature, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
Thermocline of Art: New Asian Waves, ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe, Germany.

Between Generations: 50 Years Across Modern Art in Malaysia, Asian Art Museum, University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah, Universiti Sains, Malaysia.
Selamat Datang Ke Malaysia, Gallery 4A, Sydney, Australia; Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Air Asia: Selected Works From The Noorderlicht Photofestival, Langhans Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic.
Independent Project: Contemporary Spaces in Malaysia and Australia, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

2006

1st Singapore Biennale 2006 Belief, Singapore.
Another Asia: Photographs from South and Southeast Asia, Noorderlicht photofestival, Leewarden, The Netherlands.
Holding Up Half the Sky – Malaysian Women Artists, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Contemporary Commonwealth, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.
Common Ground, Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.
History and Beyond: Malaysian Photography from 1900 to the Present Day, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Jejak Langkah, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Art ConneXions, a touring exhibition by the Goethe-Institute, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Art Pavilion, Manila, the Philippines; Australian Center for Photography, Sydney, Australia; RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, Australia; Museum National Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia; Fine Art Museum, Hanoi, Vietnam; Ifa Gallery, Stuttgart & Berlin, Germany.

2005

Art ConneXions, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, Australia.
Art ConneXions, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney, Australia.
You Are Here, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Art ConneXions, Valentine Willie Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

2004

Malaysian Art NOW, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
ART ± 1000, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
SEMANGET: Artists for Theatre, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Portraits, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

2003

Der Rest der Welt, Neuffer Am Park, Pirmasens, Germany.
Things We Believe II, Pruss & Ochs Gallery, Berlin, Germany.

2002

Malaysian: New Works by Yee I-Lann & Sidney Tan, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Identities – Who We Are, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

2000

Goldfish & Football: Yee I-Lann & Yusof Majid, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Asia in Australia: Beyond Orientalism, Global Arts Link, Queensland, Australia.
L'art dans le monde, Paris-Musees, Paris, France.
Rupa Malaysia, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1999

Through Our Eyes: Contemporary Malaysian Women Artists, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
The Third Asia-Pacific Arts Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia.

1998

re/form: art law justice, Griffith University and other venues, Queensland, Australia.
space bar installation curated by LabDNA, NN Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1997

Con + Fuse: Yee I-Lann & Kamal Sabran, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1996

Malaysian Contemporary Photography, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1994

Knowing the Sensorium, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia.
And Four Come Home, Sabah State Art Gallery, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

1992

Contemporary Photography: Yee I-Lann & Sally Foster, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide, Australia.

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Griffith University, Queensland, Australia.
Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan.
National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.
Petronas Art Collection, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland, Australia.
Sabah Art Gallery, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.
Singapore Art Museum, Singapore.
UBS Art Collection, New York, USA.
Universiti Sains, Pulau Penang, Malaysia.

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YEE I-LANN

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