

SIGNS, SYMBOLS, STORIES

June 9 - August 1, 2014

Signs, Symbols, Stories brings together a diverse group of works that explore the interrelationship between word and image across a wide variety of media – painting, drawing, sculpture, textiles, photography, and video. In some works, the graphic quality of letters, words, and blocks of text is highlighted – the way they interact with other motifs to construct a visual landscape. In other cases, written language is used as one element of a montage of symbolic forms to construct a narrative, much as in silent film. Many of the artists make use of texts to comment directly on specific issues of personal identity, cultural conventions, and political or religious concerns – while at the same time using these words to complicate, subvert, or recontextualize the visual imagery in their artworks. They investigate the interconnectedness between language and visual imagery in the creation of meaning, and the ways that multiple layers of interpretation can coexist in a single artwork. In some cases, while actual words do not appear in the artwork, the artist creates his own iconic form that embodies a concept or specific thing, often indicated by the title of the work. The exhibition itself is constructed like a patchwork quilt, incorporating disparate elements, forms, and materials, each work playing off the next, its different textures and approaches sometimes clashing but often bringing out new shadings of meaning in its neighbor.

The following is information about each of the works in the exhibition, listed in clockwise order starting from the entrance.



Arahmaiani

Born 1961 in Bandung, Indonesia. Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Jawi

2013

acrylic on canvas

55 x 47 in. (140 x 119 cm)

This painting is from a series based on letters in the Arabic script, in which the artist focuses on the letter's graphic qualities, evoking the long tradition of Islamic calligraphy.



Tiffany Chung

Born 1969 in Danang, Vietnam. Lives and works in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), Vietnam.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992 - 1995 Ethnic Cleansing Campaign & 1997 SFOR Troop Deployment

2012

micropigment ink, gel ink, and oil marker on vellum and paper

43 x 27 ½ in. (110 x 70 cm)

Part of a series exploring the legacy of historical traumas and the way they are imbedded in the landscape, this work shows a map of Bosnia indicating various ethnic divisions and conflicts, along with the names of countries contributing peacekeeping forces.



Yee I-Lann

Born 1971 in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Lives and works in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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 in. (63 x 63 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 AP



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 in. (63 x 63 cm)

edition of 8 + 2 AP

These two phototgraphs are from *Picturing Power*, a series of collages using colonial-era photographs from Southeast Asia, addressing the way language, technology, and systems of education and classification were intertwined in the colonial system, and continue to operate in present day constructions of identity.



Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook

Born 1957 in Trad, Thailand. Lives and works in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Village and Elsewhere: Artemesia Gentileschi's Judith Beheading Holofernes, Jeff Koons' Untitled, and Thai Villagers

2011

digital pigment print

28 x 41 in. (71 x 104 cm)

The photograph relates to the artist's video series in which a Thai Buddhist monk in a small temple in northern Thailand uses these two Western artworks to deliver a sermon on Buddhist principles.



Arahmaiani

Born 1961 in Bandung, Indonesia. Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Lingga-Yoni

2013

acrylic and rice paper on canvas

55 x 47 in. (140 x 119 cm)

This work reflects the the dual heritage of the artist, and of Javanese culture in general, with contemporary Islamic beliefs overlaying prior Hindu-Buddhist-Animist traditions.

Text at top: "nature is a book" — Indonesian language, Malay-Arabic script.

Text at bottom: "courageous, honest in fulfilling his duty, leader of mankind, his excellency Purnawarman" — Sanskrit language, Palawa script, from an ancient inscription.



Jimmy Ong

Born 1964 in Singapore. Lives and works in Vermont and Singapore.

I M 01 (I Am Nought One)

2008

charcoal on paper

11 ½ x 15 ½ in. (29 x 40 cm)

I M 02 (I Am Nought Two)

2008

charcoal on paper

15 ½ x 11 ½ in. (40 x 29 cm)

These two drawings reflect the artist's ongoing focus on gender identities. These forms, combining male and female, reflect the dualities within each person.



Tracey Moffatt

Born 1960 in Brisbane, Australia.

Scarred for Life II: Brother was Mother 1983

1999

offset print

31 1/2 x 23 1/2 in. (80 x 60 cm)

This photograph is from a series based on the traumas of childhood, featuring elaborately staged incidents that recall different events that made a strong impression on a fictional cast of characters.



FX Harsono

Born 1949 in Blitar (East Java), Indonesia. Lives and works in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Screen Shot from Writing in the Rain #6

2011

acrylic on canvas

59 x 29 1/2 in. (150 x 75 cm)

This triptych is part of a series based on a video work by the artist, a member of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese community, in which he writes his name in Chinese characters, something forbidden during the Suharto regime (1967-1998).



Manuel Ocampo

Born 1965 in Quezon City, Philippines. Lives and works in Manila, Philippines.

Nocturnal Emissions of the Limpid Gaze

2012

oil on canvas

46 1/2 x 33 in. (118 x 84 cm)

The slogan at the bottom refers to the title of a recent exhibition in which the artist looked back on his 20-year career with a mixture of irony and dry, often scatological humor.



Ronald Ventura

Born 1973 in Manila, Philippines. Lives and works in Manila.

Black Cloud

2013

fiberglass, resin and charcoal

23 x 14 x 28 in. (58 x 36 x 71 cm)

The work relates to the artist's upcoming exhibition at our gallery, the theme of which is based on the flagellation rituals commemorating the Stations of the Cross that continue to take place in the Philippines. The image of Christ bearing the cross is here conflated with fantastical elements influenced by Japanese *manga*.



Pinaree Sanpitak

Born 1961 in Bangkok, Thailand. Lives and works in Bangkok.

Kaw Gra-shao - Blue

2012

printed cotton, Thai Kaw Gra - shao blouse, embroidery

39 1/2 x 29 in. (101 x 74 cm)

The title, which literally means "basket" or "carriage," refers to a type of Thai blouse used casually at home, a child's version of which is actually incorporated into the work. To many, it is a nostalgic symbol of local traditions, intimately associated with the woman's body.



Sopheap Pich

Born 1971 in Battambang, Cambodia. Lives and works in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Jayavarman VII

2007

rattan, wire, burlap, and glass

20 x 22 ½ x 12 ¼ in. (51 x 57 x 31 cm)

The title of the work refers to one of Cambodia's greatest kings (reigned c. 1181-1218), known as a builder of cities and hospitals. The form is based on a mold used to make a cast bronze sculpture of the king, incorporating glass cupping bowls still used in traditional medicine.



Agus Suwage

Born 1959 in Purworejo (Central Java), Indonesia. Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Death Is Certain, Life Is Not

2012

oil, silver leaf and bitumen on zinc and aluminum

48 ¼ x 34 ¼ x 1 ¼ in. (123 x 87 x 3 cm)

This work is based on Javanese puppets and contemporary tattoo designs; the inscription refers to the cycle of life and death, influenced by concepts from Java's pre-Islamic Hindu-Buddhist culture.



Jakkai Siributr

Born 1969 in Bangkok, Thailand. Lives and works in Bangkok.

Health

2011

sequins, embroidery, hand stitching on canvas

41 ¼ x 41 ¼ in. (105 x 105 cm)

The text's translation is "one will die anyway," referring to the Buddhist notion of the impermanence of things; no matter how much we want to live, we cannot escape death.

IN THE VIDEO ROOM:



Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook

Born 1957 in Trad, Thailand. Lives and works in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The Treachery of the Moon

2012

single channel video

12:37 min.

edition of 7

In this video, commissioned for dOCUMENTA (13), the artist watches, with her beloved dogs, a video montage of scenes from Thai soap operas interspersed with footage of political protests in her native Thailand. The work was recently included in the exhibition *No Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2013) and the Asia Society, Hong Kong (2014).