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CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY IN ASIA



PRESTIGE

YEE I-LANN

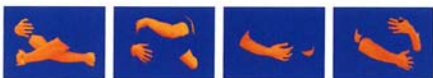
'The photography studio, and the photographers that worked at them, with the passing of time have become a very special kind of archivist or documenter of socio-cultural heritage. The intimacy of these photographs have an integral innocence, "authentic" histrionics. They explore ideas of identity and place, aspiration and desire; a reflective sentimentality punctuates our act of seeing, it leaps across time and cultures and makes commentary about our here and now. The haunting power and quality of these collective photographs lives again in our own personal experience. The blanketing mass of studio photographs allows us to see or imagine a community and creates a social billboard of ourselves – who we were and who we are.'



"THROUGH ROSE COLOURED GLASSES" IN COLLABORATION WITH PAKARD PHOTO STUDIO, 2002



THE SUN WILL RISE IN THE EAST AND DELIVER US FROM THIS LONG NIGHT, 2012



established the Silverlens Foundation, to award grants annually to local artists working in the photographic medium. She is also concerned with the extensive but little known history of photography in the Philippines and incorporated some of these vintage images in her *Moro series* (2008), which also featured some of her father's work. She continues to live and work in Manila.

MES 56 is an artist collective established on 28th February 2002. It is still active today, emphasising the exploratory approach to contemporary photography, both in theory and practice, conceptually and contextually; its purpose is to develop the sphere of discourse of contemporary photography in Indonesia. Ruang MES 56 runs several initiatives: exhibitions, artist-in-residence programmes, workshops and archiving. All of these programs are carried out by self-financing and with the support from several donors. All of the programmes aim to empower the pop-culture society in Indonesia. Ruang MES 56 are Aderi Pungki, Andri William Abud, Anang Saptoto, Angki Purbandono, Akiq AW, Edwin Dolly Roseno, Danie I Satyagraha, Di to Yuwono, Doni Maulistya, Jim Alen Abel, Seto Hariwibowo, Wimo Ambala Bayang, Wok The Rock and Yudha Kusuma Fehung.

WAWI NAVARROZA was born in 1979 in Manila, the Philippines. She studied at De La Salle University, the International Center of Photography, New York and the Istituto Europeo di Design, Madrid. She curates and works with installation as well as photography. She is also the singer in the post punk band The Late Isabel. Early work, such as series of tableau vivant photographs, where she herself posed as Frida Kahlo — an artist many South East Asian artists feel a kinship for — was concerned with issues of identity. Not Today was staged from internet news photos of the aftermath of the massacre in Maguindanao, Philippines in November in which over fifty people (mostly women and media reporters) were killed in an election-related ambush. It is, she writes, 'a commentary on photography and the way we receive images, I've made the work in a way that it's going to be shown multi-channel (art/mass media/commerce): exhibited in the gallery and simultaneously as a public billboard in Manila in March as an advocacy against election-related violence, supported by a commercial company.' Recently she has been more focused on landscape and its representation. She lives and works in Manila.

ANGKI PURBANDONO was born in 1971 in Cepiring, near Semarang, Indonesia. He studied at Institut Seni Indonesia, Yogyakarta (Institute of Fine Art). He was a co-founder of the collective

Mes 56. Subsequently he began to exhibit more widely. For him Yogyakarta is the most representative town of Indonesia: it is where tradition and modernity collide. He wanders the streets photographing dead animals, crazy people or people window shopping. Since 2006 he has also made scanograms, which unlike his photographs of dead animals or wandering vagrants are very popular in the market. He is also making an archive of anonymous photographs made in Yogyakarta and intends to make a museum for them called Anonymous House. 'Photography's enemy,' he remarks, 'is rigidity, that is, fixed rules about how photography should be done.' Like other members of Mes 56 he continues to experiment. He continues to live and work in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

MANIT SRIWANICHPOOM was born in 1961 in Bangkok, Thailand. He studied at Faculty of Fine Arts, Srinakharinwat University. He works as artist, curator, lecturer and social activist. He founded Katmandu gallery as an exhibition venue and meeting place for photographers in Bangkok. Best known for his Pink Man series (1997-) he has also made many portraits and other photographic work. His abiding concern as photographer and activist is to, firstly, chart the effect of capitalism on Thai society; secondly, protest against the frequent brutality of the government. *The Bloodless War of 1997* restaged famous war photographs but the victims now carried shopping bags. The Pink Man began the same year processing through the new malls of Bangkok, time travelling to atrocities by the army and right-wingers, touring the globe. Always complacent to Thais his pink suit represents vulgarity and emptiness. In *Waiting for the King* (2006) most of the crowd wear yellow, the colour of Monday and the revered King Bhumibol's birthday. In a country with frequent military coups and unstable governments he represents stability. Sriwanichpoom lives and works in Bangkok.

YEE I-LANN was born in 1971 in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. She studied visual arts at the University of South Australia, Adelaide and art direction at University of Sydney. She has worked for many years as an art director for films as well as making art. Mainly working with photographs she explores the problematic issues of "Malaysian-ness": race, history, religion, corruption. Particular concerns are the dispossession of her native Sabah by illegal logging and agri-business, the loss of its traditional culture, and the punitive legislation throughout Malaysia against interracial marriages and against homosexuality. Some recent works have seen her combine digital photography with the traditional material of batik in large compositions. Other work has been about recovering lost histories of communities — often work-

ing with a community to gather and exhibit photographs. Photographs for her are a way to re-imagine neglected or repressed pasts, both communal and individual. She lives and works in Kuala Lumpur.

ZHAO RENHUI was born in 1983 in Singapore. He studied photography at Camberwell College of Arts and the London College of Communication. Early in his career he was an animal rights activist. Frequently he often exhibits under the aegis of the Institute of Critical Zoologists and, on occasion, under varying pseudonyms. 'The search for wildlife', he notes, 'is also the search for authenticity and for the truth. It can be religious. We constantly seek to impose meaning onto our relationship to the natural world.' But in his work the observed and the imaginatively constructed are mixed together, so that his work becomes not so much scientific as about science, taxonomy and its desire for control. Exhibitions may include not only photographs but books, manuscripts and objects such as bird traps and taxidermied specimens - all the paraphernalia of zoological expeditions and field study. He lives and works in Singapore and London.