

Masterpieces from the National Art Gallery of Malaysia

Selected and Introduced by
Redza Piyadasa



BALAI SENI LUKIS NEGARA

Jailani Abu Hassan

Himpun

1988

Acrylic on canvas

122cm x 152cm

Born: 1963

Education:

1981 - School of Art & Design,
University Technology MARA
(UiTM), Shah Alam

1986 - Slade School of Fine Art,
London

1994 - Pratt Institute, New York City

Jailani Abu Hassan was trained at the ITM School of Art and Design and the Slade School of Fine Art in London. His Neo-Expressionist paintings are usually filled with objects and things which are central to the Malay way of life and these things can include every day utilitarian objects, environmental plant forms and fruits that have special meanings to the race. He also includes traditional art forms that feature in the Malay societal contexts. They are usually placed side by side and are rendered in a vigorous, expressive manner that reveals the artist's primary interest in the art of drawing as the main aesthetic criteria in the construction of his art works. The artist uses the brush to "draw" out his forms which are, in turn, filled with bold colours and textures, all suggesting a hurriedly executed mode of execution that is immediate and seemingly impulsive. The underpinnings of this kind of approach can be traced back to the gestural approaches of abstract expressionism, only that in this case, one recognises the images depicted and the contexts to which they belong.

Himpun is a good example of the artist's approach. It is also an approach, like that of so many expressionistic artists, centred in a highly personalised mode of treatment, emphasising emotive, gestural qualities. The depicted objects in the painting are brought together and usually exist side by side on a neutral white ground. The forms float against this neutral ground, emphasising figure/ground relationships. The actual act of painting, executed vigorously and spontaneously, reveals the artist's technical dexterity and accomplished draftsmanship.

