

Humanities: Ben Cabrera, Ahmad Zakii Anwar & Putu Sutawijaya

Venue: Andrewshire Gallery, Los Angeles

Date: 24 October - 21 November 2009

This October, Andrewshire Gallery brings a group of Southeast Asia's most highly acclaimed painters to Los Angeles for the first time.

Southeast Asia has long been recognized by the international art community as a vital and unique hub in global contemporary art practice. In the past few years, contemporary Southeast Asian art has also rapidly gained an international following in the market.

The exhibition 'Humanities' introduces the work of Ben Cabrera, Ahmad Zakii Anwar and Putu Sutawijaya. These three artists come from three different countries and three different generations of artists, yet all have achieved broad acclaim through the Southeast Asian region, leading the way in figurative painting.

Ben Cabrera, or 'Bencab', as he is better known, is one of the youngest artists to be recognized as a National Artist of the Philippines, a rare and prestigious accolade. Born in 1942 in the Philippines, Bencab emerged as a fresh and powerful force in the Social Realist movement which dominated Filipino art in 1970s and 1980s, moving on to become one of the Philippines' most esteemed figurative artists. Ahmad Zakii Anwar was born in 1955 in Johor, Malaysia, began exhibiting in the 1990s in Malaysia, and has gone on to carve out a formidable reputation throughout the region and beyond, holding successful exhibitions in Singapore, Jakarta, Hong Kong and New York. Putu Sutawijaya, a Balinese artist based in Yogyakarta, was born in 1971, and is a leading light within a fast-rising generation of contemporary Indonesian artists.

The body has many different aspects and meanings in Southeast Asian cultures, ancient, historical and modern, which inform and enrich the practice of figurative art in the region. The exhibition 'Humanities' investigates the different ways in which three major artists explore the human body as a central theme of their artistic vision. Drawing from international, eastern and regional figurative art traditions, Bencab, Ahmad Zakii Anwar and Putu Sutawijaya have each created a powerful physical language in their painting. In their work with the human body, we find theatre and spirituality, struggle and harmony between the inner and cyclical forces of life.

Venue details:

Andrewshire Gallery

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Ben Cabrera, *Concealed & Revealed* (2009), Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48 inches



Ahmad Zakii Anwar, *Seated Figure 11* (2009), Acrylic on jute, 54 x 54 inches



Putu Sutawijaya, *Dominasi Terdominasi (Dominate Dominated)* (2009) Mixed media on canvas, 59 1/2 x 74 3/4 inches

More about the artists:



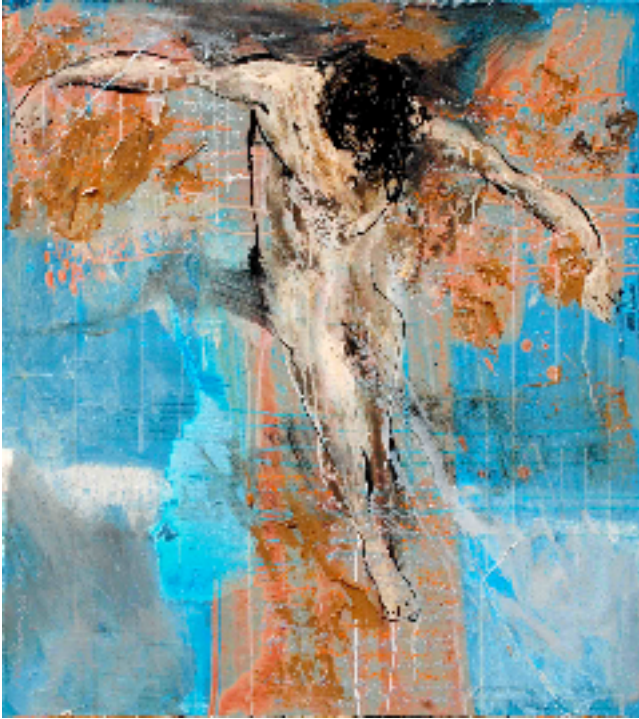
Ben Cabrera, *Golden Shower* (2009) Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 36 inches

Born in the Philippines in 1942, **Ben Cabrera** (or Bencab, as he is better known) studied Fine Art at the University of the Philippines. A prolific painter and printmaker, he has exhibited widely in the Philippines as well as in Asia, Europe, and the United States. In a career spanning four decades, he has received several major art awards and recognitions, the most recent being the Order of National Artist for Visual Arts in 2006. Acclaimed as a bold trailblazer for his earlier works addressing social and political issues, and his portrayal of Filipino heritage and identity, he is also hailed as a master of figuration and portraiture, characterized by the gestural energy and dynamism of his approach. His works have been the subject of three books, *Ben Cabrera: Etchings (1970-1980)* by Cid Reyes; *Bencab's Rock Sessions* by Eric Caruncho; and *BENCAB* by Alfred Yuson and Cid Reyes. The artist lives and works in Baguio City, where he has recently built an art museum run by the Bencab Art Foundation. Bencab received an honorary doctorate from the University of the Philippines in June 2008,



Ahmad Zakii Anwar, *Reclining Figure 4*, (2009), Acrylic on Jute, 26 x 78 inches

A graduate of the School of Art and Design, MARA Institute of Technology Malaysia, **Ahmad Zakii Anwar** (b. 1955) began his career as a graphic artist, producing some of the leading advertising graphics of his time before turning to fine art practice. Ahmad Zakii Anwar's work as an artist has been much celebrated both locally and in Southeast Asia, considered one of the most exciting and eloquent 'urban realist' artists in the region. His paintings and drawings speak of the beauty and power of the human body and spirit, of our traditional and ancient cultures, while remaining rooted in our experience of life today. Ahmad Zakii's work has been exhibited in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan and the USA. His most recent solo exhibitions include "Disclosure", a survey exhibition at Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur (2008) and "Being" at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Museum (2009). The artist resides in Johor Bahru with his wife and children.



Putu Sutawijaya, *Balance 1* (2009), Mixed media on canvas, 35 1/4 x 31 1/2 inches

Balinese-born **Putu Sutawijaya** (b. 1971) pursued his studies at the Art Faculty of the Indonesian Art Institute, Yogyakarta and graduated in 1998. Since then he has been producing works from his studio in Yogyakarta. The naked human body, faceless and androgynous, is central to Putu's works, at times a representation of the self – an expression of freedom, alienation or dislocation. In the more recent development of his work, the body, or mass of bodies, appears in motion, set within landscape and architecture. The figures belong to the broader framework of society or community echoing the practice of *pelelintangan* – the coming together of individuals in the spirit of solidarity – drawn from the artist's Balinese heritage. The artist has exhibited throughout Indonesia, as well as in London, Basel, Chicago, Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong. His most recent solo exhibition, entitled "Legacy of Sagacity" was held at the Indonesian National Gallery in Jakarta (2008). In 2007 he built Sangkring Art Space as an independent initiative to support the Yogyakarta art community.