



ANGEL

It happened one Saturday morning when I went to the famous flea market of Lorong Kulit in Penang, nearby the block of apartments where I lived for a long time. There I saw a couple of broken angels lying on the floor - a man was selling them but no person showed interest. I approached the place to have a close look at the objects, which were cement and polyester-cast, a standard work of modeling, so the man offered them to me for a cut price because of their condition. He told me that the angels fell down from his motorbike by accident - since I know how to repair cast pieces and know how to do modeling and carving, I purchased and then took them to my place for serious repair work. I did it smoothly - the present angel was the worst damaged of the pair - I did spend quite a lot of time joining the broken pieces and re-modeling the shape with a polymer substance. At the end I applied an ivory quality primer suitable for polyester and smoothed the rough surface of the repairs, after I applied gold leaf to give them some spiritual character; at the end I was satisfied with the work so much that I used both angels as a component of my last installation of my trilogy of installations "The Muse is not Available". Afterwards I used this angel as a particular icon of my guardian angel so I hanged on him a piece of silver-made small devil that I did a long time ago - when I was involved in jewellery making - which in a way represents me and it has a more complicated story than the angels but I think cannot I explain this at the present.

FATHERS & MOTHERS

Ahmad Fuad Osman

Artist: his mother's wedding songket, rescued from the debris of a hometown flood

Brief thoughts on my mom, a candle in the night.

1956.

Baling, Kedah.

My mom got married at the age of 16. My dad was 23.

I was born 13 years later, in 1969, the last of 6 siblings.

Fast forward, 2003.

I went back to my hometown on the breaking news of the big flood that swept through my village that claimed a few lives and swept a few houses away. My dad, my mom and my second brother were trapped on the roof of our house for a couple of hours. Raining. Cold. Blackout. Total darkness, and the sound, it was nothing else but the sound, like a thunderstorm, according to my mom, and obviously the scariest moment that she had ever experienced in her life. From time to time they could hear a few houses around them creaking, dislocated and torn to pieces. They could just pray and hope until they were finally rescued by a group of people around 2am.



After 2 days, the flood was gone, but it left behind a lot of damage. It took us several days to clean up all the mess in our house and it was during one of those days, while digging up some debris from the caking mud under an old broken cupboard in one of the rooms, I came across some almost unrecognizable items of clothing made of songket. I picked up and cleaned them a bit, showed them to my mom and to my disbelief, she said they were her wedding costume. This was what she wore when she married my dad some 53 years back and all this while I never knew that she still had it kept somewhere, until that day.

As an artist, I was very pleased, and treasured that moment of discovering some small detail of my family background. It would probably mean nothing to some other people but to me, it is very important to have this, to keep it, for none other reason than my own personal history and memory of my mom (and my dad). It also serves as one constant reminder to me about time - that it is unstoppable, so fast in fact and pretty short.

2009.

My dad is 76 and my mom is 69, and I myself am already going to be 40. Looking at it in a slightly philosophical way, life is just a gust of wind...

Ahmad Fuad Osman

9.30am, 30th May 2009, Flora Damansara, KL

FATHERS & MOTHERS

Huzir Sulaiman

Playwright: his famous father's shoes; a homage from a son

These are my father's shoes.

I ordered them for him online. They're from England, from a company called Herring Shoes, a 43-year-old family business that has its private label range made in Northampton, the heart of English shoemaking, by Loake, a 129-year-old family business.

My Dad has broad feet and has always had trouble finding shoes that are at once classical, comfortable and handsome. So a few years ago I decided to start keeping an eye out for things that would suit him.

He was a bit reluctant to wear them at first, I think, because they were a little tighter than his other shoes. But they seem to have broken in nicely. Now he wears them quite often, my Mum says.

Although I am slightly taller than my father he has always been a much bigger man: stout, burly, and broader in the shoulder – a legacy of his rugby playing days at Penang Free School.



My father is a lawyer. I grew up listening to him and my Mum (who is a law professor) discuss cases and legal arguments and ideas of justice at the dinner table. That world has always fascinated me. But at 17 I decided not to study law.

I do know my Dad is proud of me and of my work in the arts. My Mum told me once that she thought he had wanted to study Literature at University, but his family had steered him into Law. So perhaps in some ways he lives vicariously through me.

These days, the work he does has truly national significance. I don't think I can say the same about what I do, no matter how proud he may be of me.

Anyway, these are the cap-toed brogues I gave him. My father wears a UK size 10.5G. Me, I wear a size 9.5E - smaller and narrower.

So I can literally never fill my father's shoes.

FATHERS & MOTHERS

Sharon Chin

Artist (mapper of the internal, the private political), art critic: a small bagful of stones from Jerusalem, collected by a friend's parents; a story of stones by Zedeck Siew

Stones from a Pilgrimage (By Zedeck Siew)

Late last year my parents spent two weeks in parts of modern Judea, with a day's stopover in Amman, as part of a church-organised tour. Such tours, typically hosted by the more evangelical congregations, happen several times annually. As we don't have diplomatic ties with the state of Israel, I imagine some hoops had to be hula-ed through; apparently you go on such visits with a special pass, similar to the ones Muslims get for the Hajj. "Apply as pilgrimage one," my mother told me.

My parents being my parents, they had to communicate the cost: "Around 10,000 for each of us!" my mother said. As she filled me with more details of their planned trip I managed to muster some interest; before they left, I instructed my father to bring home for me some earth from the Holy Land.

My parents watched the Wailing Wall, prayed at the Garden of Olives and Golgotha, and scaled Masada's ruins of besieged life. They made observations about modern Palestinian politics - "In Bethlehem they only allow Arab tour guides," my mother said - and religion - "There are these extreme orthodox Jews, who study the Torah full-time," my father revealed. "The Israel state pays for their family's support."



When they came back they had two plastic bags full of stones for me. These they had picked up by-the-by, on their travels, scooping up a rock and wrapping it in a serviette from the hotel's buffet breakfast. On some my mother noted where they were from, scrawling "Mt Carmel" or "Sea of Galilee" in ball-point. Some were smooth, rounded down by centuries of the elements; others were porous, seemingly rotting.

"Their country is full of stones," my mother said. "Everywhere stones only, even by the seaside."

Some weren't even rocks at all, but pieces of ceramic. According to my father, they had visited an ancient pottery workshop, and there were mounds of broken stuff just lying around. Either my father is a felon, pilfering archaeological detritus, or he picked up pieces from someone's broken roof. Maybe both.

My parents are getting older; they are, therefore, quite religious. Their two-week sojourn is probably their last, most significant one abroad. I doubt they will visit Jerusalem again - nor would they want to. Isn't the purpose of a pilgrimage, after all, to visit a place weighed down by History or Significance, feel what that weight is like in the air you breathe - then return to more welcoming, less important climes?

My parent's stones have gathered significance to me, over time. Sometimes, I imagine bringing back stones of my own, of strange shapes and sizes, stones that say "Rantau Panjang" or "Sapporo" or "Sea of Serenity".

OLD FRIENDS

Nur Hanim Khairuddin

Artist, curator, writer, publisher, plays and sings:
acoustic guitar, stickered with memorabilia



SOUL MATE

This guitar has been with me for 25 years now. It has witnessed so many happy, sad and memorable occasions in my life. Together, we have travelled far, from Johor Bahru to London to Penang to Kuala Lumpur to Ipoh. It has been my most genuine companion since the first day we touched, forever allowing me to express my emotions in such a melodious manner. At times, it resonates a melancholic magical wave that reminds me of my late father - the first owner.

OLD FRIENDS

Hasnul Jamal Saidon

Artist, museum and gallery director, curator,
would-have-been rock star: electric guitar, bit
knocked about (he played Nur Hanim's guitar on
opening night)



GUITAR SOLO

The guitar reflects the musical or aural side of me. Other than the visual I register things aurally. Everything has ITS OWN sound note, its OWN distinct frequency or sound vibes. I even register sound when I look at artworks. Everyone has his or her own unique sound note, timbre, pitch, tone, melody and rhythm.

OLD FRIENDS

Hayati Mokhtar

Artist (surveyor of time, place): a broken table, a broken teapot, a broken mortar & pestle, a cracked cup, a cracked clock; sewn together with needle and thread



Attachments

Broken table, broken picnic stool, broken teapot, broken mortar & pestle, cracked cup, cracked clock, torn sheet, needle & thread

A WAY OF LIFE

Yee I-Lann

Artist (suturing narratives of landscape, culture high and mass, history, piracy), art director, &

Joe Kidd

Musician, composer (granddaddy of the underground punk scene): Ricecooker T-Shirt (The Ricecooker: the one-stop outlet for DIY/indie culture, Joe's place);

6 local punk bands brandished on baju melayu, outfits of reinvention

Bukan Budaya Kita



SACRIFICE, LACUNAE:

We thank the exhibitors for entrusting us with their special possessions. We know in many cases they leave something of a gap in the familiar environment, akin to that dent in the pillow where her head used to lay.