

EXHIBITORS OF THE PERSONAL; MYTH & VOYEURISM

Our mothers tell us not to air our dirty laundry in public. The only people that get to exhibit the paraphernalia of their personal lives are royalty, past Southeast Asian premiers and their first ladies, and very very famous celebrities, often only after death.

We are fascinated somehow by the private lives behind public faces, perhaps by the possibility of either the ordinary or the bizarre behind the mythic persona. As voyeurs we may seek to satisfy our hunger for strangeness, or tear down hierarchical myths, or even some form of complicity.

In the Sultan of Yogyakarta's Palace Museum, we are given a privileged view of the royal quotidian - I remember a pair of kitchen mitts, a hockey stick, reflecting the homely and populist pastimes of a ruler. The people of the Philippines have access to the spectacle of Imelda Marcos' famous shoe collection. Possessions can betray, but also take on the persona, reinstate the myth of their possessors.

Artists, writers, musicians, designers are exhibitionists of a special calibre, their work is to create objects, images, personae, strategies, worlds, to externalise. An artist's or a writer's persona and work inhabit an ambiguous space between the real and the illusory. Here, a brief curtain is drawn open on their everyday, on some of the physical things that mean the most to the creative minds in our midst.

Their exhibits confess, project, deflect, explain, share.

**A CATALOGUE OF
SENTIMENTAL VALUES**

CONVERSATIONS

Liew Kwai Fei

Artist (painter, always breaking down the process of painting), intellectual, technician: a book given by an artist-writer-friend of his critical writings on Malaysian art; a t-shirt given by his girlfriend on 'false dichotomy'



The landscape of the Malaysian art scene is often very hazy: visually polluted by over-sized commercial billboards, road signage built by the government becomes too insignificant to notice, and seemingly points to nowhere.

This little yellow book offers a different entry point to the Malaysian art scene's landscape. In contrast to the highways built by the government, this is a small pathway discovered by Chang Hwang.

The highways were built in a linear design, functioning merely as a means for people to get to their destination faster whereas a pathway forces a traveler to slow down, as they have to read the signs along the way. If not, they might get lost, as Chang Hwang's pathway is not of a linear design and it sometimes offers travelers various junctions to choose from, not necessarily leading them to their destination. It is a real adventure!

In comparison to the ugly, monotonous and stereotypical sort of view along the common highways, a pathway offers more surprise in terms of views and landscapes. This gives inspiration for those who have lived too long in this boring concrete jungle.

'Bon Voyage.'

CONVERSATIONS

Ng Sek San

Landscape architect, art

collector: a chair, designed by a colleague, crafted
by a friend, misappropriated as his own; an ode



this object is about my friend ah fook
ah fook is a welder and more than that
i have collaborated with ah fook for more than 10 years
ah fook has help me actualised a lot of the objects and projects which i
became known for
i would not be able to get to where i am without ah fook

ah fook cannot read or speak english
ah fook cannot read chinese either
ah fook is rather illiterate
but ah fook is extremely clever and intelligent
and a great problem solver

ah fook is a fantastic metal worker
and a sculptor at heart
this rabbit chair is made by ah fook
and i got the credit
in fact it was designed and drawn by my colleague lee wern ching
i merely talked about it and pointed at it
when it was still an autoCAD drawing on the computer screen

ah fook is a good friend
and this is his chair

CONVERSATIONS

Wong Hoy Cheong, artist (working across media), educator, sometime activist, curator, writer: his coffee-makers, memorabilia from the last election campaign, to inspire chit-chat, blah-blah



HABIT

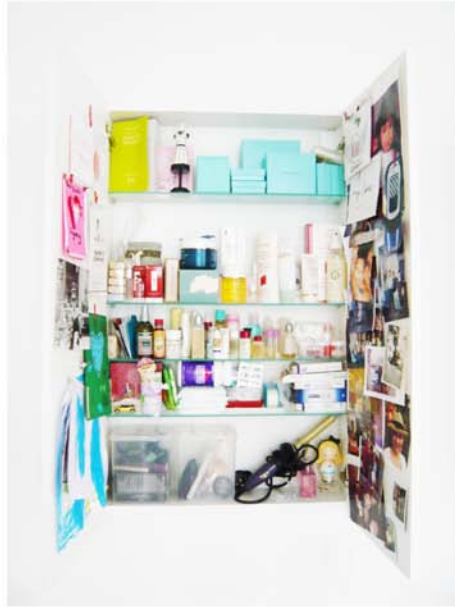
Jaslana Amir

Fashion designer, buyer, wife, mother
&

Jalaini Abu Hassan

Artist (painter), husband, father:

The contents of her bathroom
cabinet, and the contents of his (with some other
prized bric-a-brac)



SECURITY

Rina Matsui

Designer (accessories): a holster, sleepmate from childhood, and its case, lovingly embroidered by her own hand with pictures of other things she loves



My most precious personal belongings are my cultural identity and my memories. One of my favourite things in the world is Sleep. Combine those elements and you have:

an Embroidered Bolster case.

I feel that the bolster is a pillow synonymous with Malaysian culture. Every single Malaysian person whatever their race, has had a bolster at least once in their life, I think!

WORKMATE

Lim Oon Soon

Graphic designer: blue Staedler pencils with black tips - HB to 8B, as a table sculpture of interlocking elements



WORKMATE

Ahmad Zakii Anwar

**Artist (painter): his favourite lucky workpants,
laundered, stained with the residues of years of
painting**



MUSE

Wong Perng Fey

Artist (painter): inside a plastic biscuit container, a glass jar holding the carcasses of a dragonfly and a cricket, a small jack-in-the-box toy; their painted portraits



PLAYTHING

Askandar Unglehrt

Artist (surrealist, in art, and life), collector: half a rocking toy, taken off the wall by the front door, kept from the termites - half a rocking toy his family could not afford him after the Second World War, in Germany



PLAYTHING

Chang Yoong Chia

Artist (painter, maker of small objects from found things, sometime quilt-embroiderer of the dead), his plastic toys collected since childhood, in a dense mass on his painting stool, throwing the shadow of a boy's face on an empty wall



PLAYTHING

Sharaad Kuttan

Writer, intellectual, educator, artist (emerging,
experimenter): an inflated dragon, male, a surrogate



Nga Pyien - A China-made plastic blow-up Welsh dragon. It's low maintenance, requiring only the occasional blow-up. It starts as a nameless gift from a friend and artist, Ray Langenbach, who returned from his trip to Wales with a Welsh flag and the blow up dragon. Another spur to talk, to add to 06 years of conversation. It sits quietly in the corner of my room until another friend comes to stay. Naing Lin Aung names the dragon after his native Burmese tongue. He doesn't tell me what the words mean. After he leaves Nga Pyien is a constant reminder to me of his absence. Later I learn "nga pyien" are the words to admonish a lazy little boy. I first thought it was a reference to me. But he tells me its a reference to himself. Emotions condense around Nga Pyien.

FANTASY

Imaya Wong

Graphic designer, font-fanatic. a vodka bottle in sequins, an advertising campaign, blocks of movable type. A sculpture of letters that make up words, around another vodka bottle



'Absolut Imaya' is my interpretation of the original Absolut Masquerade bottle (in red).

It is made of more than 1,000 pieces of metal letter blocks.

The idea of creating an Absolut icon from my collection of movable (metal) types was inspired by the many fascinating Absolut Vodka brand advertisement designs.

Some of my favourite ads are Absolut Maeda, Absolut Amaze, Absolut Bangkok, Absolut Hirst and Absolut Obsession.

I have always been fascinated by these ancient modular forms (of mass communication) and I have always wanted to collect a full set of (Helvetica) letter blocks. Sometime early this year, when I was at a printer's place in Melaka, I learnt that he had sold two cabinets of letter blocks.

However, the printer was very proud to show me his collection of old letter press printing machines. I later found out that his friend wanted to sell a full cabinet of letter blocks too, and I had managed to offer to buy it for a fraction of price. I was very lucky, and now I have thousand pieces of the letter blocks sitting at my house (and am thinking about what to do with them).

OBSESSION

Rachel Ng

Director RogueArt, our resident Yellow Pages, one of us, doesn't smoke anything, doesn't drink caffeine or alcohol: does have a collection of pigs - piggy banks, slit-eyed red Korean pigs, plastic and furry pink, silent, snorting, and oinking



OBSESSION

Su-Ann Wong

Graphic designer, restaurateur: two personal collections, filled with warm sentiments. Dolphins have been friends since childhood; postcards picked up everywhere, received from the corners of the world



ACCESS

Chuah Chong Yong

Artist (on the meanings and processes of building and erosion): his phone, SIM card intact, and the empty boxes of phones lost



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ACCESS

Roslisam Ismail (Ise)

Artist (itinerant and gregarious soul, Parking Project tour guide): a magical key to open doors to where we want to go



ACCESS

Yap Sau Bin

Artist (mapper, art scene investigator), educator: a bathroom classified ad inviting you to come drive around in his old car, and come see an old bookcase, restored



I drive a 1979 yellow Toyota Corona. It has been in my family since 1980, I was six then. If you like, we could meet up and go for a drive.

We could visit my place too, check out this white book shelf I took from my father, now stuffed with books and other things.

I tripped off the fake wood cover and painted it white. I suppose it's not about the shelf, but the corner it occupies, and the blank stares I always have while looking at it/them.

Ya please call me, and we take it from there.

Saubin 0166843062

ACCESS

Vincent Leong

Artist (saboteur, never took to pencil or paint),
python-keeper: a set of keys to a
special place



ANGELS & GODS

Anurendra Jegadeva

Artist (teller of stories), writer, curator, husband,
father: a Kerala altar box, a mobile pulpit for a
roving preacher; a Christian wife, the beloved, a
pair of Hindu priests dressed as Krishna God of Love



ANGELS & GODS

Ricardo Chavez Tovar

**Artist (from Mexico, many years in Penang): two
angels - one broken, rescued and restored, another
around its neck, crafted by his own hand in silver,
pierced and bleeding**



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

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



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



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.