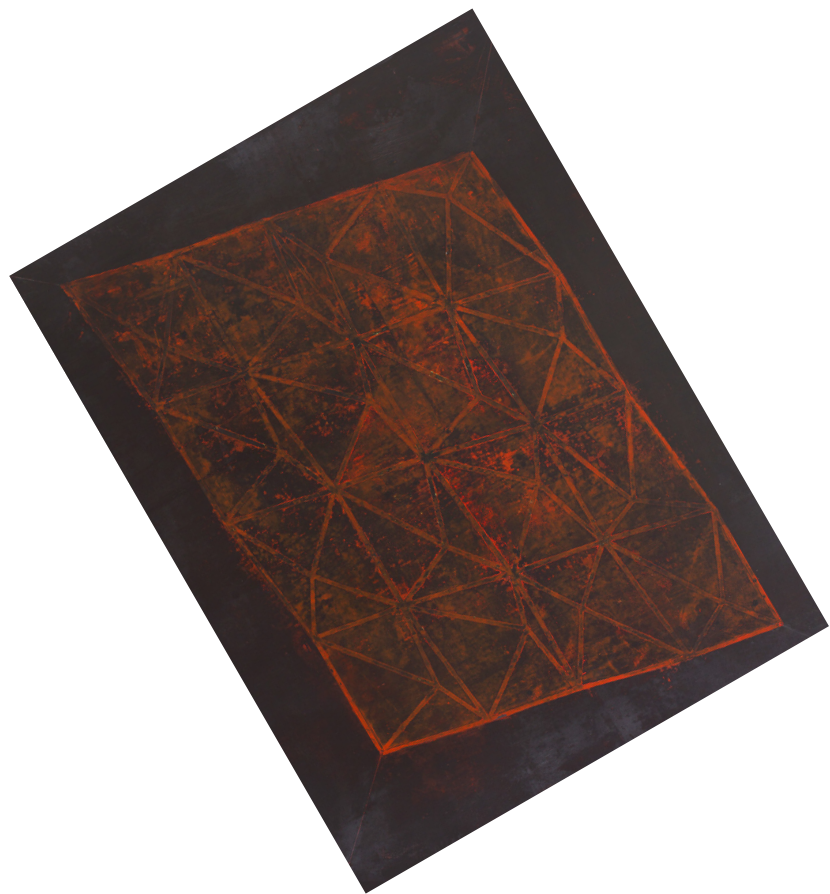


An abstract painting featuring a dense, textured composition of brushstrokes. The color palette is dominated by shades of pink, magenta, and light purple, interspersed with vibrant yellow and orange. Dark, almost black, lines and strokes are scattered throughout, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is one of intense energy and complex visual rhythm.

Sabri Idrus
Recovery Plan



Recovery Plan.
150 x200 cm. Acrylic on canvas

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Foreword

Jasdeep Sandhu

I first met Sabri in 2008, I was fascinated by his unorthodox, geometric style of art. Beyond his lines however, I recognized the intellectual depth of his artwork; an affinity for philosophical discourse akin to Sumatran artists like Nashar, yet undeniably pertinent to the present and future, such as the work of the Jendela group. Sabri mentioned to me that though his work, his aim was to essentially break down the barriers and bridge the gap between fine art, urbanism, architecture and visual culture. In describing his seemingly divergent themes, he emphasized the subliminal ideal of synthesis. While it struck me as rather profound back in 2008, over the years I believe I have come to understand exactly what Sabri meant.

Sabri's art has remained in flux with the evolution of the ideas that inspire him. His philosophy of synergistic artistic development has led to collaborations with architects, and urban planners.

As reflected in Sabri's works this interaction has proven to be extremely successful. By pushing conventional boundaries to the furthest possible extent, he continues to reinvent his material communication through his art-making process. This is most prevalent in Sabri's latest series of works. Defining Sabri's work in words is an elusive task: he is constantly subverting paradigms, challenging the order of lines and shifting perspectives whilst drawing forth a deeper dimension within the layered ideas that bring order to chaos and unity to divergence. Never have I met an artist who studies the linear geometry of art to as great an extent as Sabri Idrus.

Many thanks to Hafiz Amirrol, Sabri's wife Ana, and the skyscraper himself, Sabri Idrus. Thanks to Sabri, abstract art in Malaysia and the region is being redefined and brought to uncharted heights.

Recovery Plan: Foundational Works by Sabri Idrus

By Paula Tin Nyo

In the large scale mixed media works of his ambitious solo exhibition “Recovery Plan,” Sabri Idrus has drawn the blueprints and poured the concrete for the impending developed nation of Malaysia. In a country where contemporary painters invariably create figurative work, Sabri is known as the iconoclast abstract painter of Malaysia. In actuality, the position taken by Sabri defines “realism” in its most empirical sense, in that his works insert their own physicality as “durable objects” - connecting the current moment of art making in Malaysia with its Islamic roots.

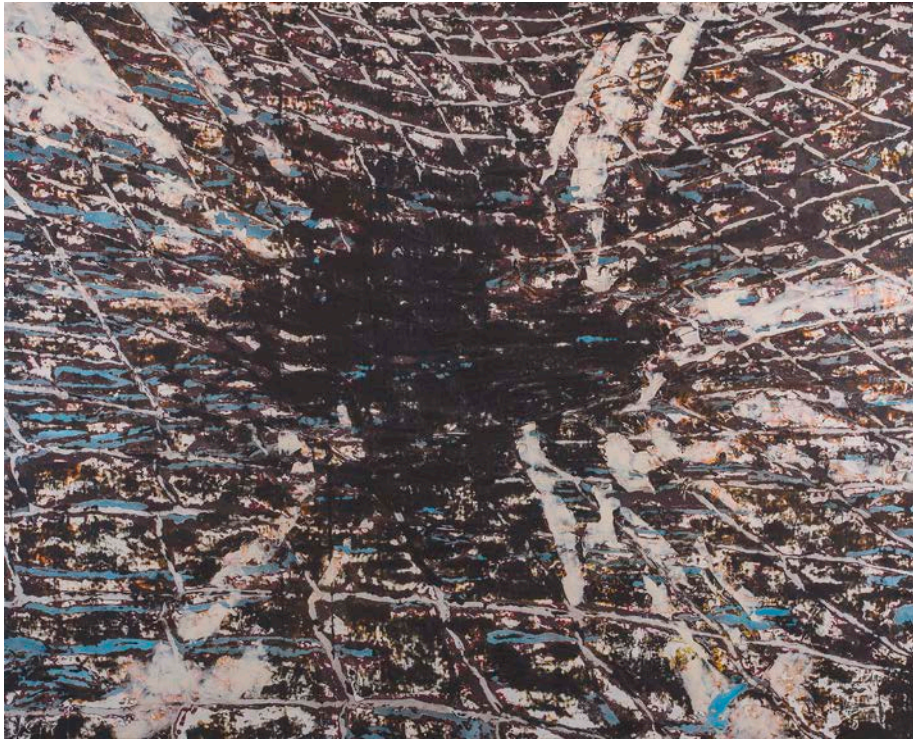
Sabri is not a flippant dreamer and thus is not content with casting pebbles and watching the ripple-effect of his throw; he is a stone maker, who like Hephaestus, must pound iron in the dark solitude of his mountain to create durable aesthetic statements. He builds his paintings through a laborious process of layering acrylics, latex, and industrial materials, watching how they chemically infuse to create texture, luminosity and decay”. “Flux,” aptly named, is a visual recording of elemental movement, much like the great canyons of the world derive their grandeur from monumental changes in geologic history. The beauty of Sabri’s

surfaces is not to be discounted - there is an unmistakable authenticity to their brutal sensuality, as stones are worn smooth and polished by water, or earth is parched and cracked from the lack thereof.

In “Recovery Plan,” Sabri markedly disconnects his signature ground from its geometries. Some of the works, like “Serkap” and “Massing”, impose the human mental construct of a geometric drawing onto the materiality of the paint itself - creating a juxtaposition of nature and intellect, form and line. These works conjure the tension inherent within human experience, between the “hereness”

of the physical world and the simultaneous construct of it by the mind.

Analytical attempts to relate Sabri’s work to his Malaysian contemporaries have often considered these geometric form drawings as the artist’s interpretation of figurative investigation, and his textured paintings thus treated as landscapes. In this context, the ground and the drawings can be considered a confrontation of two perspectives and a call to a transcendental experience. However, to evaluate his work as such overlooks Sabri’s primary impetus and concerns, and the full scope of his ambition as a Malaysian artist.



Centrum. 160 x 200 cm. Acrylic on canvas

Sabri Idrus removes himself from the imprinted identity of Orientalia to which the artists of so many countries colonized by the West have succumbed. His investigation is not about illusion and the concomitant fascination held historically by Western art with the Renaissance perspective, which obsesses over parodying the illusion of our mundane world. Instead, Sabri is involved primarily in earth-making and, secondarily, in engaging the analytical process of articulating our mental constructs. To relegate his work to mere landscape and figure dismisses the wealth of a much older and loftier artistic and philosophical heritage from which he draws.

Traditional Islamic art, by religious decree, excluded figurative representations altogether according to the prohibition in the hadith and underscored by the prophet Muhammed, who considered representations of prophets or of Allah idolatry. As a result, Islamic art instead explored the states of consciousness and the spiritual relationship between human and Allah. These complex visual maps took on complex geometries and were interpreted in diverse mediums including ink on paper, textile, ceramics, tile and the hallowed architectural spaces of such institutions as the Hagia Sophia.

This juxtaposition of the conceptual and the concrete is inherent in philosophical Sufism, and the tension therein was yoked to the very nation-making of Malaysia by the pioneering Muslim philosopher Syed Muhammad al Naquib bin Ali al-Attas. Al-Attas maintained the primacy, as it were, of “wujud”: concrete or direct experience. This philosophical stance was al-Attas’ response to the consequences of the prime positioning of analytical discourse and reasoning (mahiyah) over direct experience by the Essentialists, the intellectual faction of Sufism. His position maintained that this was a dangerous hierarchy, as it led man away from nature and even to his subjugation and destruction of it.



Massing. 160 x 200 cm. Acrylic on canvas



Confabulate. 170 x 200 cm. Acrylic on canvas

In “Recovery Plan,” Sabri insists on the viewer’s direct experience of his work as a “thing in itself.” His foundational mixed media works defy digital reproduction and are indeed degraded by it. Each work has been forged by his human hands, and their labors are only inherent when directly experienced, as when one swims up to a massive boulder in a river eddy and climbs onto its warm smoothness for rest.

This Wittgensteinian ontology is fundamental to Sabri's process. There is a decency that one senses in the presence of his works in "Recovery Plan" – that the arduous process of its fabrication humbled the artist in his effort to birth a new durable object into the world. In the words of Wittgenstein, "the object is simple." Markedly gone in this new oeuvre is the massive smoothness of his earlier works, such as "Bekas," exhibited at Art Stage Singapore 2015, which appeared as if it were made by the same forces that create the opaque sheen of an ostrich egg. The recognizable smoothness of his works once afforded rest and, perhaps for Sabri, a sense of peace that he now finds illusory. So too, the domination of the geometric form on the relatively smooth surface of the ground has become tenuous, at best.



Three Point (Antara Series), 2012
179cm x 229cm
Acrylic and oil on canvas



Maneuver. 160 x 200 cm. Acrylic on canvas



Dominate. 170 x 200 cm. Acrylic on canvas



Serkap. 170 x 200 cm. Acrylic on canvas

Instead these new works are deliberately degraded and furrowed with differing integrations of geometric line drawings. In “Dispossession,” geometry is furtively sketched into the surface build-up, almost to relegate the analytical to a secondary position. The relation of the materiality of the mediums and their conglomeration creates the “thingness” or presence of “Serkap” and the fine figurative geometry that evokes fishing traps, urban grids, figures and other mental constructs appear floating in this ground, as a ghost or a figment of the imagination.

In “Dominate”, the tension between the durable object of the painting itself (wujud) and the analytical statement of geometry (mahiyah) is undeniable. With its title, one could argue that this work presents the danger of considering mental constructs as reality and imposing them in a disconnected way on the very ground of real experience. This divide is a telling metaphor for the precarious identity of a developing nation such as Malaysia. The sheer amount of mental strategy and planning required to propel Malaysia’s status into the future bears the danger of irrelevancy to daily life of its people.

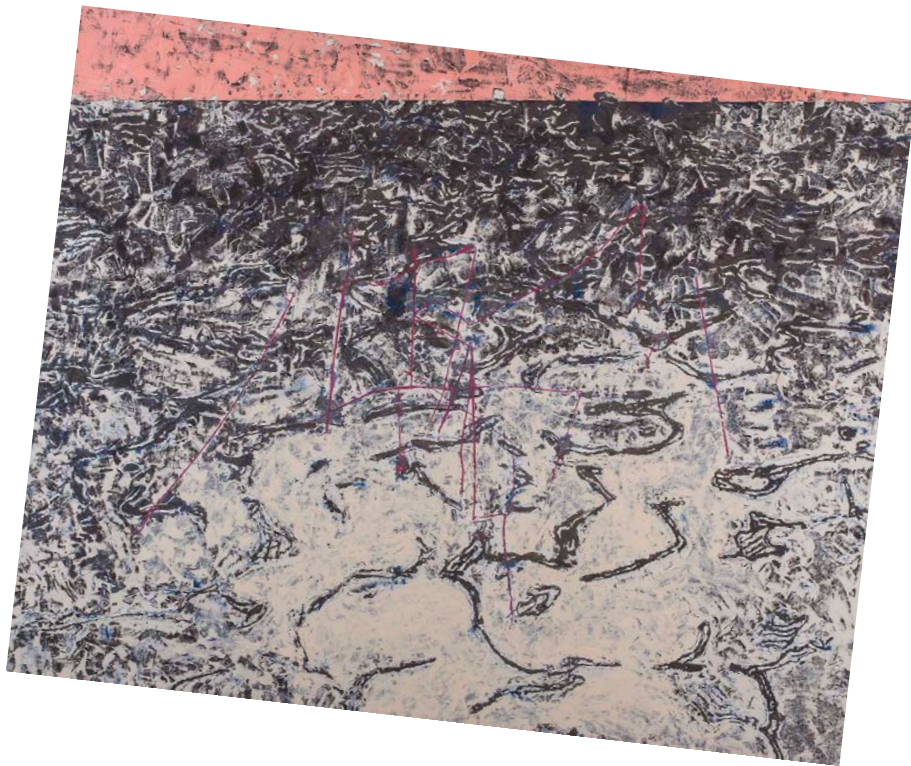


Drained (Disruptive Nature Series), 2014
183cm x 229cm
Ink, industrial paint & plaster on canvas

However, there is an undeniable emotionality to the body of works that comprise “Recovery Plan.” By its definition, recovery is an arduous process and an undeniably human one - not a lofty creation of a supreme deity or nature. In the presence of the works in “Recovery Plan,” we sense the hardships in the mark making and foundation building by Sabri’s hands and body, as both artist and laborer. There is a sublime beauty to the buildup and degradation of mediums that inspires a compassionate love of the thing itself, as one might love one’s mother’s wrinkles or sagging breasts and, as one might approach the planet earth now with a soft affection, because of its very precariousness and our role in its present state.



Hanyut. 160 x 200 cm. Acrylic on canvas



Dispossession. 160 x 200 cm. Acrylic on canvas

Spending time in the shadow of Sabri's large-scale works, one will experience the ground surfaces, an opalescence evocative of the refraction of light penetrating through waves and its reflection on sand. The furrows in the paint will jog one's own experiential memories of rock formations, cobble-stoned streets, crevices in brick walls and so on. Above all, Sabri strives for the primacy of experience, in all its chaotic sensuality, movement and presence. Indeed, it is not a Roman street he is depicting, it is the human experience of walking on and through all and any of the hand-hewn and decrepit streets in the world or being flooded by the light, feel and awareness of inhabiting the ephemeral meeting of sky and sea.

"Recovery Plan" as a body of work insists our human connection to the earth and articulates the disconnectedness inherent in our condition. As such, it is a personal statement by an artist, at once both highly critical and obsessed with materiality. As artist and laborer of Malaysia, Sabri Idrus has forged a physical, aesthetic and conceptual statement of a nation about to undergo massive change. In this way, each work behaves as a hammer pounding our feet to the ground, even as lofty plans would give us flight.

CV

Sabri Idrus. [Mohd Sabri b. Ahmad Idrus] Kedah 30 December 1971
Lives and works in Selangor, Malaysia.

Education

1995 - 1997 | Fine Art Studies, Universiti Institut Teknologi Mara, Malaysia (UITM), Malaysia

1990 - 1991 | Diploma In Graphic Design -Mensa Design School, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Residencies and Awards

2015-2016 | Transart Institute, Summer Residency, Berlin & Winter Residency, The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York.

2014 | Malaysia Open Show, Juror's Award. National Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2013- 2014 | 19th Rimbum Dahan, Malaysia –Australia Visual Arts Residency, Kuang, Selangor, Malaysia.

2013 | Artist in Residence: University of Technology and Life Sciences in Bydgoszcz, Poland.

2011 | UOB Art Award – Special Mention

2010 | Artist In Residence, Hegarbudhi Community, Bandung, Indonesia

2009 | Artist In Residence Poland – University Of Arts, Poznan, Poland

2004 | BMS04/The Young Contemporary Art Award (Painting Category).National Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Solo Exhibitions

2015 | RECOVERY PLAN. Gajah Gallery, Singapore

2012 | ANTARA. Taksu Gallery, Singapore

2010 | MUFAKAT: SPACE FOR THE PUBLIC. The Painting Garage, Bandung, Indonesia

2010 | MASA SERIES: A REDUCTION PROCESS. Taksu Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2009 | IN TRANSIT. MALAYSIA-POLAND . Aula Gallery, University of Arts Poznan, Poland

2008 | MYDOMAIN. Ahmad Zakii Anwar's Gallery At The Back of The House. Johor Bahru, Malaysia

2006 | KERONCONG SERIES: A NEW FORM OF PHYSICAL LISTENING. Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2004 | BANGAU OH BANGAU. Balai Berita NST. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2004 | LOREK-LOREK. THE CREATION OF LINES. Townhouse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

1999 | THE SEARCH OF THE UNCERTAINTIES. The Painting Hall, Selangor, Malaysia

Art Fairs

2016 | Art Basel 2016, Hong Kong with Gajah Gallery (Singapore)

Art Fair Philippines, with Gajah Gallery (Singapore)

Singapore Art Stage 2015, with Gajah Gallery (Singapore)

2015 | Bazaar Art Jakarta, with Gajah Gallery (Singapore)

Art Basel 2015, Hong Kong with Gajah Gallery. Singapore

Singapore Art Stage 2015, with Gajah Gallery. Singapore

2014 | Singapore Art Fair 2014. Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre, Singapore with Artemis Gallery, Publika, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Malaysia Art Expo. MATRADE Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with Segaris Art Gallery, Publika, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Public & Private Collection

Central Bank of Malaysia, Malaysia.
National Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Khazanah Nasional, Malaysia.
Ministry of Finance, Malaysia.
Galeri PETRONAS, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Prince Court Medical Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
PETRONAS University of Technology, Tronoh, Malaysia.
University Of Arts, Poznan, Poland.
University of Technology and Life Sciences, Bydgoszcz, Poland.
Muzeum Ziemi Pyzdreskiej, Pyzdry, Poland.
University College Shahputra, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia.
Embassy of Poland, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.
Hijas Kasturi Associates @ Rimbum Dahan Gallery, Selangor, Malaysia.
Grand Hyatt, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Westin, Singapore.



Selected Group Exhibitions (Curated)

2015 Transart Institute: Loose Affair, Somos Project Space, Kottbusser Damm 95, Berlin, Germany.	UTP STANZA, University of Technology and Life Sciences , Bydgoszcz, Poland.	A Meter Perspective. HOM Art Trans, Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2016 Tabik (Salute) Jerry Show. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	2000 BMS 2000 (The Young Contemporary Show). National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur.	92' Open Show, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
A Gathering of Past Winners: UOB Painting of the Year, Malaysia, Curate, Seni Mont Kiara Kuala Lumpur.	2012 DUA: Sabri Idrus & Tony Twigg. Taksu, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Boleh!. Taksu Gallery, Singapore	The Investor. Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	1999 Phillip Morris, ASEAN Art Awards Show. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	1991 The Young Contemporary Show. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Prudential Eye Zone, Art Science Museum, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore	Peninsular & Islands, Taksu, Singapore	Combines! A Tribute to Rauschenberg. Taksu Gallery, Singapore	Malaysian Expressions .National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	1995 Phillip Morris. ASEAN Art Awards Show. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	One World No War Exhibition, '91, City Hall, Kuala Lumpur
2014 Eye Zone, Start Art Fair 2014, Saatchi Gallery, London.	1 meter Diameter. HOM Art Trans. Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2009 Himpunan Tetap. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	18@8, Kuala Lumpur-Karachi. Wei-Ling Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan	95' PPM Annual Show, Galeri Petronas, Petronas Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur.	Question Of Identity, National, '91, Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia Open Show 2014, National Visual Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2011 JAGA. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Malaysia-Poland Cultural & art exchange. Pyzdry & Lagow, Poland	2015 18@8 Malaysian Artist, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	Alternative Printmaking, Galeri Petronas, Petronas Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur.	The Open Show '91, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Prudential Malaysia Eye, White Box, Publika, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Figure in Paint. Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Malaysia-Poland Cultural & art exchange. Shalini Ganendra Fine Art, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia	Print In Malaysia-British in Print. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	Urban Visio, 1995, Concorde Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.	1990 The Open Show, '90. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia–Australia Visual Arts Residency, Disruptive Nature: Sabri Idrus (Malaysia) + Habitat: Sean Cordeiro & Claire Healy (Australia), Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Selangor, Malaysia	Locals only. Taksu gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Beyond Canvas. Wei Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2004 BMS 2004 (The Young Contemporary Show), National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur.	1994 The Young Contemporary Show. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	Inspirasi 94, Maybank Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
ReimagineNation: Love, Vision and Hope, Galeri Chandan, Publika , Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	40 x 100. HOM Art Trans, Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2008 Susur Masa. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2003 Phillip Morris, ASEAN Art Awards Show, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	ALAMI 2003, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur.	Asian Art Workshop. BELUM. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur
2013 Water: A group exhibition by Sabri Idrus, Budi Agung Kuswara, Jigger Cruz & I Made Arya Palguna. Taksu, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2010 Bakat Muda Sezaman (The Young Contemporary). National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2007 18@8. Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2002 Malaysia Open Show. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur	Mac World Expo, Singapore.	1993 Shah Alam Boat Show. Galeri Shah Alam
	Antara Bahan Campuran. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Between Generations:50 Years Across modern Art inMalaysia. Asian Art Museum, University of Malaya, Selangor and Muzium & Galeri Tuanku Fauziah, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2001 Phillip Morris, ASEAN Art Awards Show. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur		Earth Day Exhibition. Central Market, Kuala Lumpur
	Locals only!. Taksu gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia				1992 Nature Art Camp, '92, Bukit Cerakah, Selangor

Thank You

Hafiz Amirrol

Norhana Yunos

Azhar Ariff

Zaim Teh

Adib Teh

Waie Teh

Staffs of Gajah Gallery

Recovery Plan

A Solo Exhibition

12-22 June 2015

Gajah Gallery

Singapore

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Sabri Idrus' (1971) works are already collected by some of the leading collectors in the region. He has been gaining international recognition and was a success at the recent Art Basel Hong Kong and Art Fair Philippines. He has a penchant of making pictures appear, vanish, and intermix; shaping the relationship and the possibility of inter-expression unendingly evolving. Temptation to Symbolism is natural in his work, moving from an argumentative clash to imaginary is the attributes of his works that utilizes modern materials and method for expression. The artist recognizes the basic idea of relations between making, seeing and saying.

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Biography

Paula Tin Nyo, a native of Myanmar and a graduate of Yale University, is a third generation artist and writer from the premiere media family in post-colonial Burma. As one of the intellectual and artistic diaspora now returning to Myanmar after four decades of its isolation, she founded Yone Arts International Foundation (YAIF) through which she contributes her robust background in cultural education, writing and media ethics to bridging the global art community.

Since the suspension of US trade sanctions, Ms. Tin Nyo has made over a dozen trips to Myanmar to personally meet artists from her homeland in their private studios and select artwork to exhibit to the international community. Ms. Tin Nyo's expertise is in creating global diversity in new private art collections, as well as restructuring

established art collections to reflect emerging international artists.

Paula Tin Nyo was the staff art critic for Artweek, City Paper and served as editor of Film Arts Foundation. She has provided writing and curatorial services for The Oakland Museum and the Yale University Art Gallery, as well as private galleries throughout the USA. Ms. Tin Nyo has appeared as guest speaker for Art Basel Miami, Yale University, National University of Singapore, Jacaranda Arts and periodically lectures in Yangon on various subjects of contemporary art.

Yone Arts' current curatorial projects include "The New Face of Buddha," a traveling exhibition and "Myanmar in the Making," a book in collaboration with Skira publishing house of Milan, both scheduled for 2017.

Flux. 170 x 200 cm.
Acrylic on canvas

