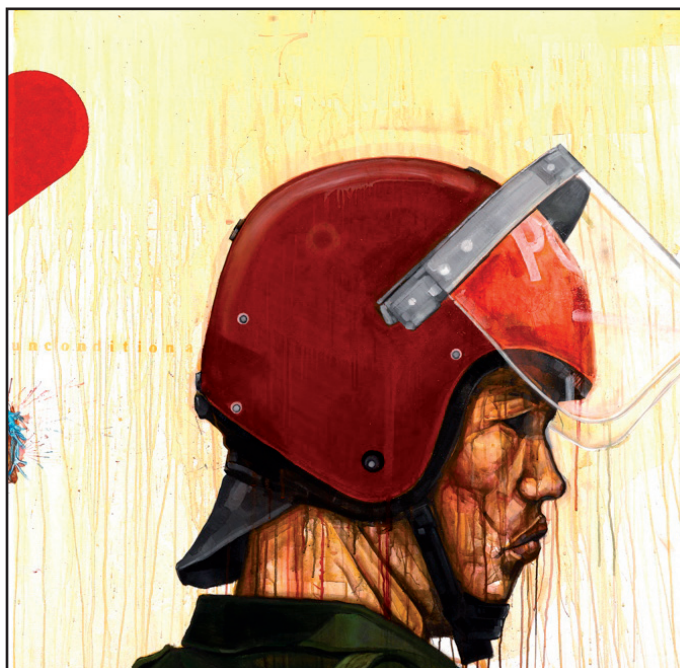


ART FOCUS

PROVISIONAL LOVE

J Anu feels that in a world that moves rapidly and is increasingly frightening, love is in no way a solution that all we – as individuals – have.



Anurendra Jegadeva's first solo exhibition since his return from Australia in 2005 – **Conditional Love, Painted Stories** – gathered about twenty hopelessly lyrical paintings on canvas with paper that encapsulate the subject of love and its conditions. The latter, deemed more interesting, takes the centre stage while love merely forms the backdrop of this sensorial journey.

J Anu (as he's commonly known) is a genius when it comes to accurately illustrating his thoughts on canvas. Yet he remains modest, unperturbed by the deluging glorifications. "I try to be as truthful as possible and I seek to understand why I am making something. I am often insecure and uncertain about the things I am saying and the way I am presenting an idea. This uncertainty keeps me on my toes, it keeps me vital," he revealed. He's always drawn to the human condition of how we interact with each other and how people with different histories co-exist in an increasingly complex world.

This exhibition is nostalgic, sentimental, conflicting and moving. The paintings do not provide the perfect escape from the pressures of everyday life. They suck you in. And you are stuck in the vast, fast mind of J Anu as he investigates interpersonal relationships. His works, a combination of figuration and symbolism, commands with its force of expression and charismatic humour. "In No Parking, I explore the very deep connections that Hindu's have with their deities (Ganesh for example is a playful congenial uncle), the stories and the humanizing of Hindu Gods. It's almost as if Ganesh is an illegal squatter who has become a favourite uncle." What he means to convey is the sense of loss, informed by the demolishing of temples in Malaysia.

Unconditional I and II shows the despaired Wan Azizah looking askance at an FRU personnel, almost summoning the government servant to look her in the eye. "These works look at the confusion



and the dreadlock that exist here right now. Hers is the love story of our generation, of whatever happens. While the FRU personnel's refers to his conviction that what he does, he does for God and country. Hence, their love is both unconditional."

Art can be a veritable medium of thought and ideology, also a probable tool of propagandizing but J Anu admits that you cannot change people or their thinking with art and

cited Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* as an example. "It was the most inspirational anti-war painting. Big deal. Look at the world! Painting is the only thing I know how to do well and am happiest at."

Conditional Love runs till September 4 at the Wei-Ling Gallery, Brickfields. 03-2260 1106