

When Anu first told me about his intention to do a group of small landscape paintings I knew that the result would be spectacular as his attention to detail has always given his small works an edge and I know that landscapes have always inspired him.

He has met my expectations and more.

Finding Graceland is a brilliant body of masterfully executed gems—each with their own soul and their inimitable story to tell. As always the works are close to Anu's heart as they resonate with wonderful snippets about his view on the world intertwined with autobiographical references and are all tinged with irreverence and wit. In addition, Anu has taken his works to a new level with the encasement of the canvases within a perspex box, turning them into art objects rather than just paintings.

I am so pleased to exhibit **Finding Graceland** at Wei-Ling Contemporary for it allows us to bring into the foreground works by Anurendra Jegadeva one of the country's most important contemporary painters.

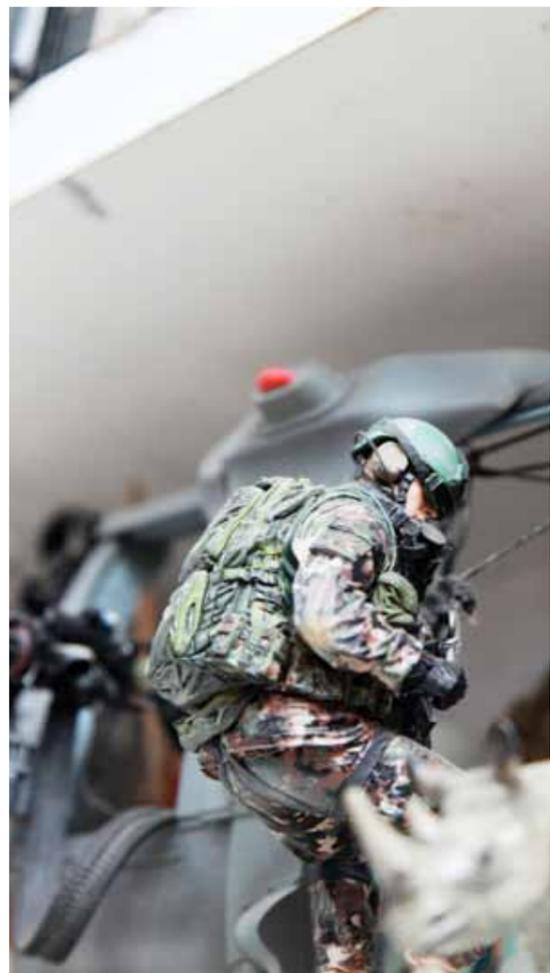
We hope that by continually bringing exhibitions of this calibre to The Gardens Mall it will allow for the general public to immerse themselves in art which is not just aesthetically pleasing but also has something to say.

Enjoy!

Lim Wei-Ling
Gallery Director
Wei-ling Gallery and Wei-Ling Contemporary
Kuala Lumpur , Malaysia
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wei-ling contemporary



Over the last three months, my father and I drove through our family's home state of Perak on a weekly basis. He regaled me with many old and new stories about his childhood, his family, his courtship with my mother, early working life and later – while working in Kuala Lumpur – described his anticipation when coming home to Perak for the holidays, with his own family in tow.

His stories awakened in me my own memories of weddings, funerals, school holidays inevitably set against the constant backdrop of an iconic Perak, resplendent with her rich histories, big traffic lights, quirky legends and particular landscapes. Four generations of stories given to me by my father, my father's father and his father's father before him.

But simply put, Finding Graceland – 22 precious rectangles of Perak in exaggerated technicolor miniature scale, ridiculous detail and liberal interpretations – is me and my father talking and listening - with Elvis playing in the background. Naturally.

- Anu

FINDING GRACELAND



Right : The artist's mother and father on their wedding day - December 10 1962 - in Teluk Intan (then Anson). Studio photo taken at Chung King Studio, no. 39, Market Street, Teluk Anson.

Before it can ever be the repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock.

- Simon Schama

One of our deepest needs is for a sense of identity and belonging and this longing is often located in our attachment to landscape and place. Landscape is not simply what we see, but a way of seeing. It is defined by our vision but interpreted with our minds and is often the repository of our personal and collective memories.

This sense of yearning permeates through “Finding Graceland”, twenty two landscape paintings by artist Anurendra Jegadeva. Set against the panoramic backdrop of Perak’s iconic landscape, from its limestone mountains to the gigantic Mercedes Benz logo which for so many years acted as a landmark to all those entering Ipoh from the south, the artist has created a series of works which at its simplest level, was inspired by his family’s long history and connections with the state.

The artist’s connections with the state of Perak go back to over a century ago. In 1898, his great grandfather left his hometown in Sri Lanka to arrive in Taiping to take up a position as chief court interpreter. Over the next three generations, Anurendra’s family continued to live and work in Perak with both his grandfather and father serving in the civil service.

While Anurendra himself was brought up in Kuala Lumpur, every school holiday his family would take the five hour drive back to Perak with the requisite stop-over at Tanjung Malim for their famous “paus.” Perak signified grandparents, uncles and aunts, weddings, funerals, circuses, indulgent nannies, freedom from school; to put it simply, Perak was home.

As an artist who is often described as a consummate storyteller, Anurendra has

frequently borrowed from the autobiographical but nowhere has this been more evident than in this particular body of work. Inspired initially by a detour down old trunk roads on a recent family trip, the artist went on to make weekly trips to Perak with his father over a six month period. “We are Perak people”, his father said and as they drove their way through the state (with Elvis playing in the background) temples, government rest houses and bends in the river became the catalyst for his father’s recounting of personal memories and family stories.

Anurendra has commemorated those weekly pilgrimages with his father in this body of work, elevating those obscure railway crossings, disused tin mines, mamak restaurants and old coffee shops – the stuff of our everyday landscapes - into significant landmarks in the artist’s retelling of his family history and in a wider sense, the history of Perak and Malaysia itself.

In “Finding Graceland” past and present, real and imagined, fact and fiction, historical and contemporary combine and collide. Under the bright blue Perak sky, generations of its people pose in technicolour glory: an elderly Indian couple, set against a background of bright yellow, clasp hands beneath the shadow of a newly-built Batu Gajah mosque; a schoolgirl stands resplendent in Adidas trainers, a descendant of those early migrants who first mined tin in Perak; the artist’s young daughter, a fourth generation Malaysian of Sri Lankan descent plays the electric guitar under the benign eye of Goddess Kuan Yin; three old men – unlikely poster children for the “One Malaysia” policy- smoke and “talk cock” in a Chinese coffee shop; a young woman clutches her rooster while the padi gently flowers behind her - all of them, indistinguishable from the landscape of the state – and in a larger sense, the country that they and their forefathers helped build.

In these works, landscape is not limited to mere geography but includes people, objects, myths, stories, concepts and words. Because all experience is contained in our memory, it is memory itself that becomes the very landscape.

The portrait of a controversially appointed Chief Minister captures something of the divisiveness and disquiet beneath the surface of the modern day Malaysian socio-political landscape but polemics are tempered here with a sense of hopefulness, even optimism. He shows us a world in which individuals can go beyond divisions created by institutions and identity politics – where a devout Hindu grandmother can make regular donations to a local mosque and where the Malaysian Islamic Party can hold sway in a Chinese -majority area.

Images of aeroplanes in flight appear in many of the paintings. The concept of arriving, of returning and the need to belong is one that has a particular resonance in the Malaysian landscape. This sense of yearning to find one’s place is echoed through the work as the artist explores his own sense of belonging as he travels through the landscape – both physical and psychological - that four generations of his family have called home.

But more than anything else, this exhibition is about family, about the ties that bind us from generation to generation. It is about that last vestige of unconditional love, the relationship between parent and child, a father and his son in all its tenuous fragility. Proving that there is still a place for emotional narrative depth in art today, Anurendra has used his family memories as a way of making history intimate and human. In doing so, he reminds us that no matter how far we travel, we can never truly leave home.

- Rahel Joseph





Old Chenderiang Road; the old narrow and winding trunk road between Tapah and Chenderiang where my father lived with his family

Limestone; a sedimentary rock composed largely of the minerals calcite and aragonite, which are different crystal forms of calcium carbonate (CaCO₃)



White Cock . oil on canvas in golden gilt frame encased in perspex box . 38cm x 79cm x 7.5cm . 2011



Rose Chan (b 1925); legendary cabaret entertainer was born Chan Wai Chang to a family of acrobats from China, famous for her Python Act.

1Malaysia ; an on-going programme designed by Malaysian Prime Minister YB Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak stressing national unity, ethnic tolerance and efficient governance





Raja Abdullah, Dato Mahrajalela and other Malay cheftains met in Teluk Intan to plot the killing of the first British Resident of Perak, J W W Birch.

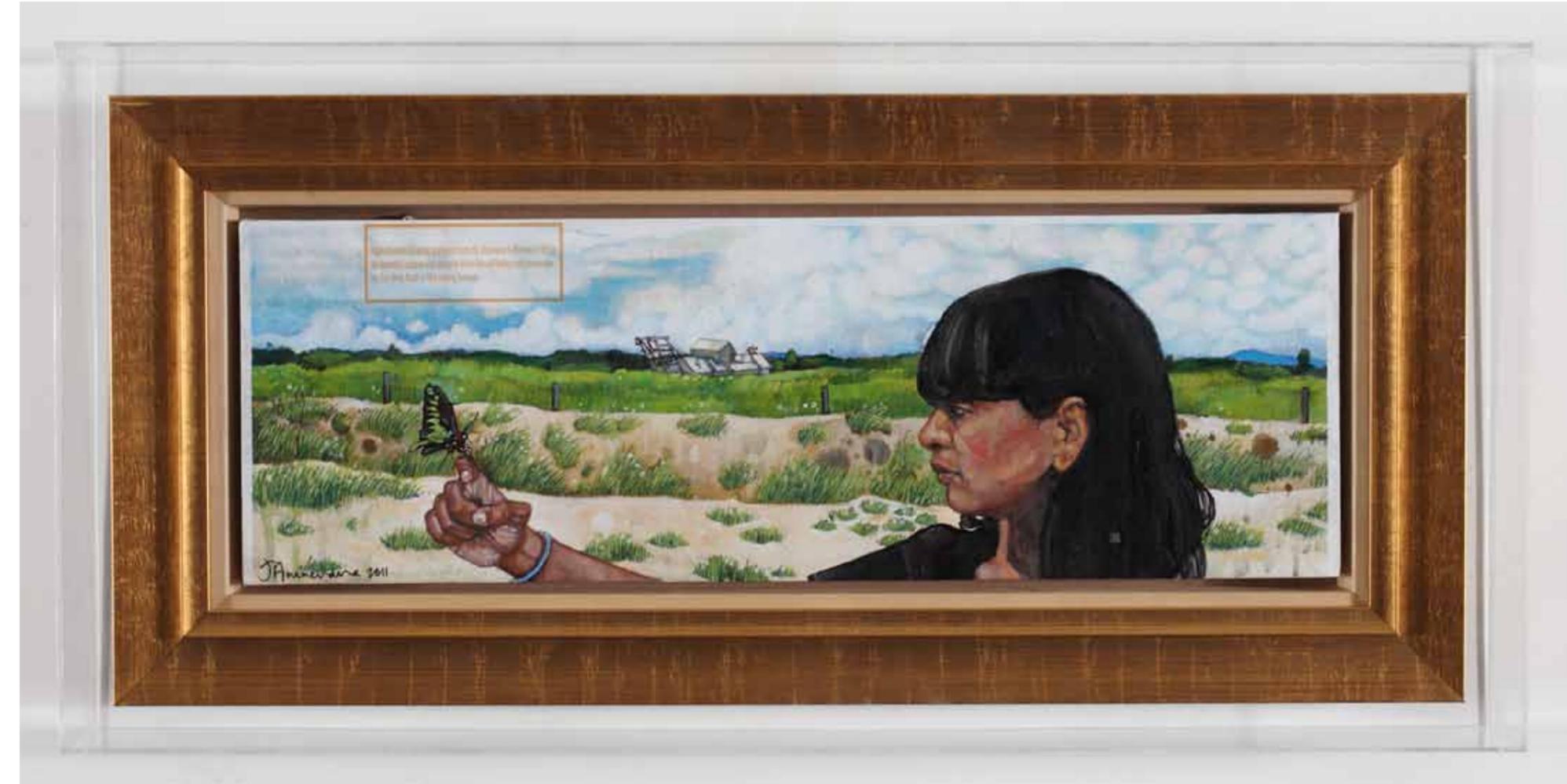
The word *mamak* is probably derived from the Tamil term for maternal uncle or maa-ma, Mamak stalls are eateries that serve roti chanai and teh tarek





PAS; Parti Islam Se-Malaysia is an Islamist political party in Malaysia and is currently headed by Dato' Seri Abdul Hadi Awang

Rajah Brooke's Birdwing: papilionic butterfly discovered in Borneo in 1855 by the legendary explorer and naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace and named after the first White Rajah of 19th century Sarawak





BitterSweet; indie band from Ipoh heavily influenced by British music. Line up includes Herri, Dinie (bass), Hafiez (guitar), Pijie (vocals) and Emai (keyboards)

Twisties; a popular crunchy corn snack available in cheese, chicken, barbecue and eventually kari flavor



Waiting for the Moon . oil on canvas in golden gilt frame encased in perspex box . 38cm x 79cm x 7.5cm . 2011



Tanjung Malim; a sleepy town, favorite rest stop during the pre-highway long haul drive between Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur. Famous for their delicious halal-pau



Appachi; my widowed paternal grandmother,
T Anggamah, who raised nine children and spoke
to me in Malay

Biawak; A member of the Varanidae family, the monitor lizard is highly intelligent and makes for a good curry



Elvis Has Left the Building . oil on canvas in golden gilt frame encased in perspex box . 38cm x 79cm x 7.5cm . 2011



The karst hills of the Kinta valley are believed to be a part of a super limestone formation that stretches from Guilin in South China, through Indochina and Thailand into Malaysia

Girl from Guilin . oil on canvas in golden gilt frame encased in perspex box . 38cm x 79cm x 7.5cm . 2011

United Malays National Organisation; UMNO is Malaysia's largest political party, a founding member of the National Front coalition which has played a dominant role in Malaysian politics since Independence



Champion . oil on canvas in golden gilt frame encased in perspex box . 38cm x 79cm x 7.5cm . 2011



Nasi Lemak; the national dish of Malaysia, rice cooked in coconut milk, accompanied by fried anchovies, peanuts, hot sambal and hard boiled egg wrapped in banana leaf

Kuan Yin; Goddess of Mercy and Compassion
revered by Taoists. Her name means 'Observing
the Sounds of the World'



Kuan Yin Blues . oil on canvas in golden gilt frame encased in perspex box . 38cm x 79cm x 7.5cm . 2011

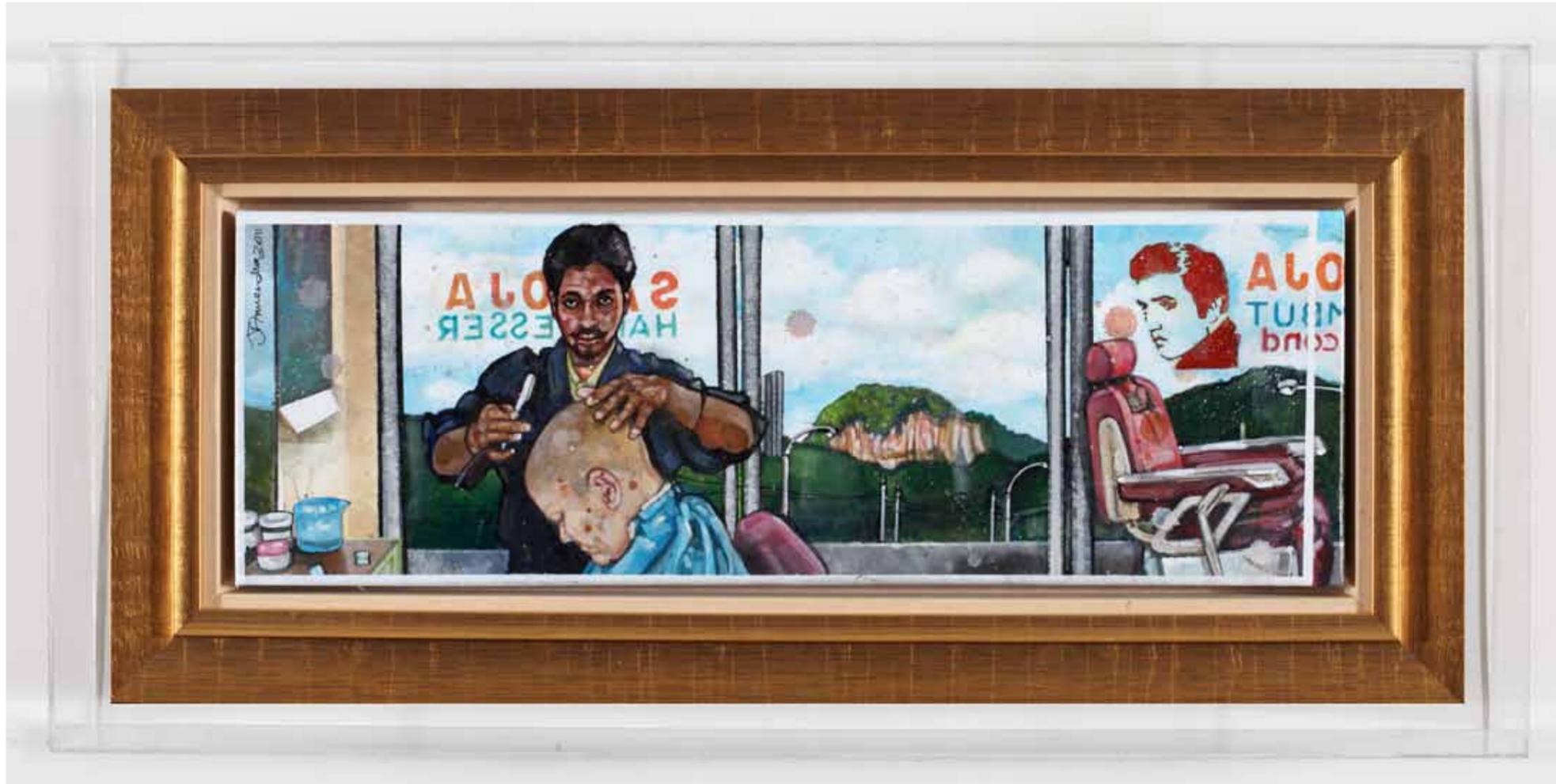


One of the oldest troupes in India, the Great Royal Circus toured internationally, traveling to Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia including Malaysia

In 1937 Amelia Earhart, landed in the Taiping airport to refuel her Lockheed Elektra during her ill-fated world flight attempt



Happily Ever After . oil on canvas in golden gilt frame encased in perspex box . 38cm x 79cm x 7.5cm . 2011



The Kings favourite food - peanut butter, banana
and bacon sandwich

But I've reason to believe, We both will be
received, in Graceland.



Train to Batu Gajah . oil on canvas in golden gilt frame encased in perspex box . 36cm x 36cm x 7.5cm . 2011

CURRICULUM VITAE

B. 1965

EDUCATION

- 2002 Master of Fine Arts, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia
- 1993 LLB (Honours), London University, London, UK
- 1986 Foundation in Art & Design, Oxford Polytechnic, Oxford, UK

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 **Finding Graceland - New Landscapes**, Wei-Ling Contemporary, KL, Malaysia
- 2010 **My God is My Truck, Heroic Portraiture from the far side of Paradise**, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
- 2008 **Conditional Love, Painted Stories by Anurendra Jegadeva**, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
- 2005 **Headresses**, Valentine Willie Fine Art, KL, Malaysia
- 2003 **Melancholic Mantras**, Valentine Willie Fine Art, KL, Malaysia
- 2001 **Migrant Adventures - People, Places Assorted Things**, Australian High Commission, KL, Malaysia
- 1999 **Women & Elections**, Grafton Street Gallery, London, UK
- 1998 **Monk Couture**, Private Gallery, Malaysia
- 1993 **A First Work**, Australian High Commission, KL, Malaysia
- 1992 **Solo**, Civic Center, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia



SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2010 **Absolut18@8**, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
- 2010 **Tiger Show**, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
- 2009 **18@8 - 1 Malaysia : Beyond The Canvas**, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
- 2008 **CIGE**, China International Gallery Exposition, China World Trade Center, Beijing, China
- 2007 **18@8 2007**, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
Malaysia @ 50, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Selamat Datang Ke Malaysia, Valentine Willie Fine Art, KL, Malaysia
Filtered, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
- 2006 **Mind, Body & Soul II**, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
Convergence - Contemporary Malaysian Art, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
Feed Me: WWF Art Exhibition, Rimbun Dahan, Ruang, Malaysia
18@8 Kuala Lumpur - Karachi, Amin Gulgee Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan in collaboration with Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
- 2005 **Mind Body & Soul**, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
18@8: Contemporary Artists From Malaysia & Beyond, Wei-Ling Gallery, KL, Malaysia
- 2004 **ADRIFT**, Platform Gallery, Melbourne Australia
Malaysian Art Now, National Art Gallery, KL, Malaysia
- 2002 **Australian High Commission Retrospective** - A Gathering of Artists 1982 - 2002, Australian High Commission, KL, Malaysia
- 2000 **Nationalism & Peace**, Galeri Petronas, KL, Malaysia
- 1999 **Experiences**, Hill-Smith Fine Art, Adelaide, Australia
- 1998 **Art & Nationalism - 40 years of Malaysian Art**, National Art Gallery, KL, Malaysia
A Decade of Malaysian Art, Brunei Gallery, SOAS, London, UK
- 1996 **Men on Women**, MIB, KL, Malaysia

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- National Art Gallery, Malaysia
- Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
- The Aliya & Farouk Khan Collection, Malaysia

