



Art Stage Singapore 2017
Southeast Asia Forum

For those who believe, no proof is necessary.
For those who don't believe, no proof is possible.
56/200

Ivan Lam (b.1975)

Over the years Ivan Lam has never ceased to grow, develop, innovate, evolve and take risks in his career as an artist. He epitomizes the essence of a true artist, someone who is willing to push boundaries and experiment in his quest to keep taking his art practice to the next level, which is why Ivan Lam has made a name for himself as one of Malaysia's leading contemporary artists. In the year 2015, Wei-Ling Contemporary held a comprehensive survey documenting twenty years of Ivan Lam, which allowed audiences to – for the first time – witness his artistic journey through the form of an exhibition entitled *Ivan Lam: TWENTY*.

It is hard to categorise Ivan Lam in terms of visual style, as his works span a variety of mediums and ideas which are inspired by popular culture, autobiography, current affairs and every day vistas. Over the years his experience has allowed him to become a maestro of his medium – painstakingly applying layers of colour upon colour with acrylic paint and resin so meticulously that the final product almost looks as if it was machine-made and therein lies the dichotomy. Every layer that has been imbued into his work is not just a layer of acrylic and resin, but also represents many underlying layers of meaning. In Ivan Lam's practice, the concept of duality has been continuously present throughout his journey as an artist. The "push and pull" between what is present and what is absent, between black and white, between the seen and unseen, between the past and the present, between what is said and what is meant, between male and female, between young and old, between love and hate, between conditional and unconditional love.

Ivan Lam's work has been exhibited worldwide and has featured at international exhibitions, art fairs and auctions. In 2003, he won the Philip Morris Malaysian Art Award and in 2006, he was amongst the top 10 finalists at the Sovereign Art Prize. In 2007 he attained his Masters in International Contemporary Art and Design Practice from the University of East London, UK. His works can be found in the collections of The National Visual Art Gallery of Malaysia, Galeri Petronas, Catlin Re Collection and Merrill Lynch amongst many others. Ivan Lam participated in the Directional Forces Residency in Artholl, Berdrug-Hau, Germany in 2012. In May 2013, Ivan Lam's participation in Art Basel Hong Kong with the exhibition COMA – Compendium of Malaysian Art marked the first time for a Malaysian artist to be presented on such an important platform. He is also the only Malaysian artist to have been commissioned by Louis Vuitton to make a painting for their collection. Most recently, Ivan Lam made his debut in Volta New York 2016, again being the only artist from Malaysia and has been invited to create a project for the Karachi Biennale 2017.



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Vending Art Artist's Statement

“The eco-system of the art world is organic and is constantly evolving, so why would the artwork remain the same? And with that notion, this is what happens after the artworks are collected from artists from around the region. Each work will be sealed within a perspex box, and each of them will be carefully placed inside a working vending machine. This would shift the boundary of its definition from art to commodity. The vending machine inherently vends products for consumption. Now it vends art. At the same time by it being in a vending machine it totally bypasses the need for middlemen. Or operators that sell art. And when you put the vending machine in the art fair it will be subverted and turned into a covert art object/installation. So the boundaries of what it is, are constantly being negotiated. Where its meaning is percolated from one set of definitions to another. The creation must be separated from the creator. The self is negated by the plurality of solutions of representation to a single perfect problem. The choice to make this project all-inclusive stems from the idea that all artists are equal with the same stature, creed, age and raison d'être. After all, art is art and it's subjective. All are equally invited, represented and paid the same amount of money for their work which are all of the same size. This non-hierarchical approach rocks the fundamental status quo: that art only exists within the closed loop of elitism. But all this shifts when the artwork is presented and shoehorned in one of the biggest art fairs in the region. Therefore the boundary between the elite and the common is blurred. The art fair in itself is a larger-than-life vending machine. This project mimics or makes a mockery of the very institution that it represents. This project constantly reminds us of what is its value and what it is valued for. This project takes sides and camps, this project divides as much as it wants to unite. This project is all-inclusive, yet exclusive. This project is a reflection of the times we live in. As much as it tells us about what we are, it also subliminally tells us what we are not. “