

Solo Exhibition

TAG UMIBAIZURAH MAHIR@ISMAIL

Foreword



For me, one of the most exciting things about running a gallery is in seeing an artist break new ground in their practice -to be exhilarated by how the artist has breathed new life into their artform, presenting a new trajectory that is familiar yet refreshing, that continually surprises and keeps us all wondering what is to come next?

For the artist, I know that stomping on new ground and continually finding doors to open, is a long and exhausting process but it is something which all artists need to go through in order to find and stay true to themselves and their art. Those who continually seek and allow the journey to take its own natural course ,who are not restricted or held back by what society expects of them and throw caution to the wind are the ones who continually find fulfillment in their works-and us in theirs. And Fulfillment is what you will experience in TAG-Umibaizurah Mahir's second solo exhibition, as the wonderment and delight she had in discovering herself through the making of this body of work is almost contagious.

Umibaizurah Mahir has truly come into her own as one of Malaysia's leading contemporary artists-she has blossomed and matured into an artist who prioritizes her art practice and development over and above everything else. This is evidenced in the wonderful path that her work has taken her, where she has neither lost sight of where she came from nor stagnated in the comfort of the familiar, but has continued to grow and change steadily in the fear of losing the buzz that comes from discovering something new. Her approach is fun, fresh and unexpected and in a short span of time she has successfully transported ceramics from a traditional, staid form into a sexy, contemporary statement which is hip and very now, all along the way, continuing to perfect her technique and presentation.

Be charmed and delighted by TAG for it is just the beginning of what will definitely be an interesting and intriguing journey, that will continue to surprise us all along the way.

Lim Wei-Ling

Gallery Director

Wei-Ling Gallery and Wei-Ling Contemporary

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

February 2012

Curatorial Essay

by Noor Mahnun Mohamed

The modern world with its secular leanings may well mock religion and its validity as a positive factor in human development. But it is true to say that religion does institutionalise in people a special brand and hierarchy of respect of a kind that is not to be found in other areas of human activities. Of course, this particularly religious brand of respect affects those adepts of the religion broadly considered as being believers. Respect or repulsion for categories of people, places or phenomena varies according to each religion. Thus we find Hindus harbouring special respect for cows, Muslims lack of respect for pigs and dogs, Buddhists' veneration for remote and wild places. Since the so-called "enlightenment" Judeo-Christians' respect has been focussed on "science" and "reason" in slavish unison with secularists, while respect for other phenomena and features of creation is often discarded as superstition.

In the Muslim hierarchy of revelation (i.e. spiritual development) the first tradition (sunnah) is that of Adam. The sunnah of Adam is common to all three of the monotheist traditions, and has similar manifestations in other religions. This sunnah or tradition is variously referred to as the knowledge of right and wrong. It can be said that the tradition of the right hand and the left hand is of the sunnah of Adam. Modern man in common with people of all religions as well as with indigenous peoples offers the right hand in greeting rather than the left hand. This is no modern convention or mere etiquette, exclusive to "civilized" or "developed" peoples but dates common tradition of Adam and a primordial part of man's psyche. But it is without doubt the Muslims who are most meticulous in keeping to its strictures. The reasons are not only a question of ritual honour but also concern the more practical considerations of hygiene. Even the well known biblical exhortation "let not the right hand know what the left hand does" tends to have lost its precise and practical meaning for Christians, whereas it is strictly adhered to by Muslims and daily ritualized in the obligatory act of ablution. It is well known to Muslims that without ablution the obligatory five prayers are deemed invalid.

Part of the perceived function of (any) religion is to relate man to his own destiny and to the cosmos from the beginning of creation to its end transcending the scope of his own individual life span. It is true that since some five centuries mankind has by science and reason vastly increased his knowledge of the Cosmos and indeed of many of the functions of life in its multifarious forms on the planet. But it seems to be endemic that as functional knowledge of the creation has increased, respect for it has diminished. Perhaps, as a well known saying implies, familiarity with its intimate workings has bred contempt. Indeed often "scientific" knowledge of the functions of life forms and natural phenomena has only served to intensify their exploitation. By the time the scientific community has realised the damage done to the environment, the processes of exploitation have advanced too far to a point where conservation or readjusting the balance has become difficult if not impossible.

Such is public confidence in scientific solutions for all matters that, inevitably, to correct matters yet more scientific remedies are investigated and deployed and the cycle is perpetuated. Environmental balance has by now been so shattered until the entire world with its resources and bounties spiral out of control as species are lost, entire landscapes destroyed, climates irreparably altered and sustainable human life itself is threatened in so many places all over the planet. Wars between nations with ever more destructive weapons have added to the devastation caused by man's war against the environment. With global warming and other symptoms of environmental balance it is the very survival of the planet and life on it that is in question.

Islam and the Muslims have their share and duty towards mankind as a whole for the protection of the environment, and to draw attention towards the dangers caused by its destruction. Indeed Islam has as re indeed therein ways and means whereby in a last hope for humanity we may well discover just in time the wherewithal of revival and survival of the planet and its multifarious species. Before the

public and managerial applications of Islam are destroyed together with the environment by the dominant secular world and to regain the esteem of humanity. For the world now gasps desperately for solutions to the imbalances in the environment caused by centuries of abuse and tyranny. Clear guidance and unequivocal action is indeed the true nature of Khilafah. To remind humanity of the Unity (and inter-connectibility) of Allah's creation is of the veritable essence of Tawhid.

The continued destruction of nature is a mirror image of man's moral and spiritual degradation. The conservation of Nature is a matter of spiritual reconstruction for mankind. Continued insouciance of this awareness will result in the destruction not only of man's environment but also of man himself. As the destruction continues it is high time that we remembered the Original Garden, hopefully before it is too late. Thus the intentions and the method must be founded on a spiritual bedrock of certainty. As Sayyed Hossain Nasr says, "It is nature as Allah's primordial creation that will have the final servenvironment but also of man himself. As the destruction continues it is high time that we remembered the Original Garden, hopefully before it is too late. Thus the intentions and the method must be founded on a spiritual bedrock of certainty. As Sayyed.



I regard clay as a vehicle for communication between religion, people and across cultures. For me, it provides a means for evaluating our place in our time'.

...To further understand the layers and complexities in the work of Umibaizurah Mahir, we need to consider its presentation. For her shoes and boots she has turned to the semiotics of the museum case as a vehicle for displaying ethnographic or precious objects. Part human, part synthetic, each shoe is individual and rarified and, yet, they work against the convention of the perfect specimen as flawed hybrids. Presented in odd pairs, Umi's footwear sits on velvet platforms with ornate gilded frames. Their status is immediately elevated - valued. It is a curious parallel to the elevation of the store display and its fabrication of desire in Western constructs of consumer society. In Umibaizurah's second series we witness the same desire to charge the object with meaning through its physical elevation. The repetition of the object is in sync with the premise of mass production, and its towering glory is an affirmation of consumer desire. To echo Foucault's quote, our understanding of the modern experience is a reflection on its very transformation, its very mode of being. In this context I find Umi's totem particularly interesting as a form. The totem pole is synonymous with indigenous cultures. It has a racial-ethnic expression that monumentalizes the existence of a people's culture within a particular place. By titling her column after the subdivision where the two artists live, Puncak Alam Totem Pole (2010) it is an adroit reading of that re-engineered landscape; the quintessential 'mixing pot' of past foresters, new settlers different cultures and religions abutted side-by-side. Furthermore Umi has returned to toys to build her totem: the toy a symbol for the child, and the child a symbol for the future. It goes full circle. Tiang Sen, as we have discussed, is the support column of a traditional kampong home. Umi usurps that role with her strange hybrids as a symbol of hope for the future. For her these pieces are about renewal - stepping forward -reaching higher. And to underscore the sentiment, her Totem is displayed upon a concrete platform. It is emphatic in its statement.

(Extract from interview by GINA FAIRLEY - Freelance writer Regional Contributing Editor, Asian Art News+World Sculpture News SEA Contributor, Art Monthly Australia Ernst & Young Asean Art Outreach : Tiang Seri. Ernst & Young Solutions LLP, Singapore. 2010.)

Park, Namhee
(Chief Curator): "Contemporary Craft, NOW & HERE",
essay for the Cheongju International Craft Biennial 2011.



'EL' Mascot # 1
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 98cm x 20cm x 21cm



'EL' Mascot # 2-5
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 98cm x 20cm x 21cm



'Doogie' Mascot # 1
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 98cm x 20cm x 21cm



'Doogie' Mascot # 2-5
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 98cm x 20cm x 21cm



Q # 1
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 117cm x 27cm x 18cm



Q # 3
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 117cm x 27cm x 18cm



Q # 3
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 117cm x 27cm x 18cm



Q # 4
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 117cm x 27cm x 18cm



Q # 5
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 117cm x 27cm x 18cm

Working is akin to being in love where one needs to have the ability to recognise, approach, to trust, like and to accept it. To get into the mood I need to have a good atmosphere and an ideal environment so that all will be fantastic and beautiful. I do everything with so much love coming from the heart. I hope to be forever blessed with inspiration to continue working. Insyaallah. - Umibaizurah Mahir@Ismail





The Genius # 1-2
2010 - 2012 • Porcelain & mixed media on wood stand • 139cm x 33cm x 33cm

The Genius # 3-4
2010 - 2012 • Porcelain & mixed media on wood stand • 130cm x 33cm x 33cm



The Genius # 5-6
2010 - 2012 • Porcelain & mixed media on wood stand • 149cm x 33cm x 33cm

The Genius # 7-8
2010 - 2012 • Porcelain & mixed media on wood stand • 139cm x 33cm x 33cm



The Genius # 9-10
2010 - 2012 • Porcelain & mixed media on wood stand • 139cm x 33cm x 33cm

The Genius # 11-12
2010 - 2012 • Porcelain & mixed media on wood stand • 139cm x 33cm x 33cm

UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG05
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA

UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG05
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA

SMART GADGET
UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG06
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA

SMART GADGET
UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG06
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA

SMART GADGET
UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG07
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA

SMART GADGET
UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG07
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA

SMART GADGET
UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG08
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA

SMART GADGET
UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG08
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA

SMART GADGET
UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG09
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA

SMART GADGET
UMIBAIZURAH MAHIRISMAIL
MODEL : TAG YEAR : 2012 SERIAL NO : SG09
MEDIUM : PORCELAIN & MIXED MEDIA



Smart Gadget # 1-2
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 3-4
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 5-6
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 7-8
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 9-10
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 11-12
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm

Smart Gadget # 13-14
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 15-16
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 17-18
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm





Smart Gadget # 19-20
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 21-22
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm





Smart Gadget # 23-24
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm

Smart Gadget # 25-26
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 27-28
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm



Smart Gadget # 29-30
2012 • Porcelain & mixed media • 68.5cm x 43cm x 19cm





Pinky Doogie
2012 • Acrylic on canvas • 244cm x 244cm



Baby EL
2012 • Acrylic on canvas • 244cm x 244cm



AWARDS

2010 • Top under 40. Prestige Malaysia. Poised For Power 2010. Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia. 2007 • Top 10 Winners. The Young Contemporaries '06. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia. • Consolation, Mekar Citra 2007. Galeri Shah Alam, Selangor. Malaysia. • 2005 National Arts Council Arts Grant. Singapore. 2004 • Grant for IWCAT workshop awarded by the MARA (UiTM), Selangor. Malaysia. • Top Five Winners. Clay Sculpture. Collaboration with Children, Tokoname City Culture Hall, Tokoname. Aichi, Japan. 1998 - 2001 • Scholarship Award - Degree Ceramics, Yayasan Pelajaran Johor, Malaysia. 1999 • First Prize, Johor Art Competition '99, Yayasan Warisan Johor, Johor Bahru. Johor. Malaysia. • Finalist, Nokia Arts Awards – Asia Pacific, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Honourable Mention, Philip Morris Malaysian of Art Awards '99, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia. 1998 • Dean's List (Ceramics), School of Art & Design, MARA University of Technology, Shah Alam, Selangor. Malaysia. 1995 • Consolation Award, National Day's, Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

2012 • TAG. Wei-Ling Contemporary. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. 2009 • Hybrid. Wei-Ling Gallery. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS:

2011 • World Travel Market 2011, EXCEL London • Cheongju International Craft Biennale 2011. Korea. • Refreshingly Different. TAKSU, Bali. Indonesia. • The Malaysian Rice Plates Project, Convention Centre. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Manifestasi Merdeka. National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Cage / Uncage. Wei-Ling Contemporary. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Woman and Their Lanscap. Pace Gallery, Selangor, Malaysia. • LOCALS ONLY! TAKSU, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Rogue Wave. Fringe Project Art stage, TAKSU, Singapore. 2010 • "The Young Contemporaries '10, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Two Man Show. Ernst & Young, Singapore. • Survivor. Art For Nature. Rimbun Dahan. Selangor. Malaysia. • Paperworks: Marks and Trails of Artistic Minds. Chandan Gallery, Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia. • Thou Art Women: 2010 World Expo Shanghai, China. • Five. Jyugaoka Gallery. Tokyo. Japan. • Boleh!. Taksu Singapore. • 3 Men Show. Azabujuban Gallery, Tokyo, Japan. • Tanah Timur. Kyoueigama gallery, Tokoname Japan. • TAKSU Singapore's New Space Opening, Taksu Singapore. 2009 • Jakarta Contemporary Ceramic Biennale #1, North Art Space. Jakarta, Indonesia. • Tanah Timur. Residency Exhibition. Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Contemporary Malaysia Art. Gallery Archana, Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia. • Malaysia Services Exhibition 2009 (MSE 2009). Dubai United Arab Emirates. • The Contemporary Ceramic Asia Ceramic Network 09. Penang State Art Gallery, Penang. • Asia Ceramics Network 08, Cyber & Catalog Exhibition. Seoul, Korea. 2008 • Cabinet. Valentine Wille Fine Art. Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia. • Vice and Versus 18@8. Wei Ling Gallery. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Emerging Asia. 2008 Asia Arts Network. KEPCO Gallery Seoul, Korea. • Art Triangle 2008, Sokka Gakkai Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Shifting Boundaries. Art For Nature. Rimbun Dahan. Selangor. Malaysia • Mind, Body, and Soul. Wei Ling Gallery. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • Out Of The Mould – The Age Of Statement. Malmo Art Museum, Sweden.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC COLLECTION: CONSULATE GENERAL of MALAYSIA, Songkhla, Thailand. • MUZIUM & GALERI TUANKU FAUZIAH. UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA. Malaysia. • NATIONAL ART GALLERY, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. • ASIA ARTS NETWORK, Seoul, Korea. • PETRONAS GALLERY, KLCC Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia • ALIYA & FAROUK KHAN COLLECTION, Malaysia • KT. LIM & GRACE. Malaysia & Australia. • FATIMAH & PAKHARUDDIN SULAIMAN, Malaysia • DR. STEVE & ROSEMARY WONG. Malaysia • DATO' SRI ABDUL AZIM MOHD. ZABIDI, Malaysia. • IWCAT-THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP OF CERAMIC ART IN TOKONAME, Japan • YAYASAN WARISAN JOHOR, Johor, Malaysia • MARA University of Technology, Selangor. Malaysia.

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