

HAMIDI HADI

TREMBLING IN SILENCE

6 - 27 APRIL 2024





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Wei-Ling Gallery is pleased to present '*Trembling in Silence*', the ninth solo exhibition by Malaysian artist Hamidi Hadi. This latest show explores the human experience, charting shifts in awareness and sentiments elicited by the artist's recent encounters with anxiety amid these troubling times.

The thematic resonance between '*Trembling in Silence*' and Hamidi's previous solo exhibition in 2021, titled '*Saring II: Sublimity*', is evident in the artist's exploration of internal struggles and external influences. In '*Saring II: Sublimity*', Hamidi depicted moments of quiet strength and acceptance amidst adversity, showcasing a willingness to surrender to forces beyond his control.

In this body of work, the artist continues to grapple with these themes but with a heightened sense of vulnerability. The isolation brought about by the pandemic allowed Hamidi to confront his anxieties head-on, resulting in a raw essence of human fragility. '*Trembling in Silence*' displays an explosive energy, reflecting societal upheaval and cognitive dissonance while exploring ongoing global conflicts, evoking a pervasive sense of helplessness.

Hamidi incorporates tapestries and carpets adorned with motifs from the Middle East, using charcoal to deliberately burn and mark distinct holes in the fabric. Through this technique, he probes into fractured homelands and their historical significance, bearing witness to lost souls and vanishing legacies. This change in trajectory reflects Hamidi's personal experience of detachment from ordinary life. Consistent with his artistic approach of utilising natural pigments and minerals to depict nature, the incorporation of these new materials resonates with themes of cultural identity, displacement and the struggle for survival in chaos.

*"I stumbled upon some words from Rumi, 'Ego as a veil between humans and God', in which he speaks of the ego as a curtain between people and God. It felt like encountering something significant in my artistic journey, a moment of introspection. The inner feelings that I may not always notice shift from one emotion to another spontaneously, coincidentally, and sometimes unexpectedly."* - Hamidi Hadi

This is Hamidi's attempt to untangle a knot, fundamentally serving as both an inspiration and a response to his two innate states: his existence amidst the tranquil space of nature and his confrontation with the realities of human life. It is a perfect example of the artist's own '*Trembling in Silence*'.

Written by Amanda Ariawan | Edited by Valencia Winata

Hamidi Hadi's artistic journey is deeply rooted in his relationship with nature, a connection that has evolved and deepened over the years. From his early series *Indelible Marking* (2005) to his recent exploration in *Trembling in Silence* (2024), nature has been a constant source of ideas for him. However, unlike his previous works that sought to show peace and balance, *Trembling in Silence* is a body of work that embraces chaos and unpredictable reality.

The artist initially made the work in response to his intimate struggles, yet along the making he found himself deeply impacted by the unfolding events that shape the reality we live in today. His reflections on the violence taking place in various places in the world gradually led the work towards a new direction, which delves into the exploration between art and society. "*This tumultuous space gives rise to a myriad of emotions, including sadness, anxiety, instability, confusion, fear, love, and hope,*" stated the artist. The title of the show becomes a perfect reflection of this state; devastated yet unable to act, trembling but in silence...

*Trembling in Silence* comprises three distinct series and a participative work, each utilising different mediums and techniques. Firstly, the oil paintings likely serve as a visual manifestation of the artist's emotional turbulence. Secondly, the sculptures, crafted from wire mesh and paper pulp, aim to remember the tragedy. The third exploration lies in the incorporation of readymades as an exploration of vulnerability and simultaneously as a form of protest. In addition, the exhibition held at Wei-Ling Gallery in April 2024 invites viewers to convey their own messages in view of the tragedy.

i.

The overall characteristic of Hamidi's new paintings sees a dramatic change, with aggressive strokes that convey emotional intensity and drive. They are a combination between sombre tones and lighter ones, as Hamidi's attempt to portray dark times while still maintaining hope. Indeed, these expressive works were first driven by the artist's internal struggles as he faced personal issues. However, since the rise of attacks towards Palestinians from the end of 2023, the artist's focus has greatly shifted. Hamidi constantly engaged with news surrounding the genocide – and as he grappled with feelings of helplessness and despair, he began channeling his emotions into this series.

The river near Hamidi's semi-outdoor studio, Sungai Lata Ulu Kongor, which streams from Bubu mountain to Padang Rengas in Perak, Malaysia, holds a special significance for Hamidi, serving as both a source of comfort and introspection. During the pandemic, it served as his getaway from the limiting walls of his own home, giving birth to the series of paintings *Saring II: Sublimity* (2021). In *Trembling in Silence*, the river takes on a new role, that is, as a "studio" where he makes his works, rather than merely as a place for contemplation. Taking his painting tools into nature, Hamidi would lay his canvas on large riverstones before pressing his brush against the surface of the canvas, which inevitably creates textures in the final result.



## ii.

Upon finishing the paintings, Hamidi sensed an imminent need to delve deeper. While news reports often reduce tragedies to statistics, it was the images of human suffering and the desperate search for loved ones under the rubble; that strongly moved him. The artist seeks to portray the psychological dimensions of the tragedy, and the fragility of the human condition, through a new series that explores familiar materials and techniques.

The unique process, which the artist introduced in his earlier series *Saring* (2019), involved mixing primarily shredded paper with water, followed by dipping the wire mesh into the mixture. As it is lifted out of the mixture, only the pulps of the paper would stay on the mesh and set to dry as part of the piece, leaving the excess water behind. Through *Saring*, Hamidi meant to let go of all the matters that no longer served him well. This time around Hamidi did not seek to forget, rather put forward the act of remembering. As Milan Kundera once wrote, "*The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.*"

Drowned in social media reportages about the genocide, the artist observed public sentiment towards the issue and found intrigue in the comments left by individuals on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. To Hamidi, these voices that support Palestinians demonstrate humanity's ongoing ability for empathy. Finding a glimpse of optimism, Hamidi printed these comments on paper, processed them into a paper pulp mixture as he did for *Saring*, and reperformed the act of filtering with it. These words become unreadable as they undergo a transformation of form, now embedded permanently in the paintings as a symbol of remembering.

Contrasting the balanced and orderly nature of *Saring*, the new paintings and sculptures in the new wire mesh series appear contorted, echoing the tumultuous, unpredictable, and chaotic nature of the reality that they represent.

## iii.

The course continues as Hamidi explores a new technique, this time involving ready-mades, which are oriental rugs and bakhour charcoal. Oriental rugs, steeped in centuries of tradition and craftsmanship, carry within them the echoes of a bygone era, embodying the cultural heritage of their origins. Through the act of burning these rugs using charcoal, Hamidi confronts the spectre of destruction and loss, both on a personal and collective level. The burns serve as a reminder of the fragility of human existence and the transience of culture in the face of conflict. The charred yet enduring rug, which withstands despite attempts to destroy it, invites viewers to consider the resilient nature of Palestinian people in protecting their identity amidst oppression.

To a certain extent, the work bears resonance with Joseph Beuys' *I Like America and America Likes Me* (1974). Beuys, a German artist renowned for his avant-garde performances and installations, often employed unconventional materials and actions to provoke thought and challenge established norms. The said performance took place in a New York gallery, in which the artist, wrapped in felt, spent several days confined in the gallery space with a wild coyote. Despite the coyote's representation as an aggressive predator by settlers, Beuys viewed it as America's spirit animal, embodying its resilience. The work was one example of what he called "social sculptures," actions intended to change society for the better.

Both Beuys and Hamidi utilise their chosen materials and actions as symbols of protest and transformation, urging viewers to reconsider their perspectives in the face of injustices. They invite viewers to confront complex issues of identity, society, and the human condition through processes that the artists experience themselves.

#### iv.

To complete the three series, Hamidi introduces an interactive dimension to the exhibition, extending an invitation to the audience to participate in a collective act of expression. Attendees are encouraged to write messages of solidarity, hope, or protest on white balloons, which are then inflated and added to the installation. With each new participant, the installation grows, becoming a tangible manifestation of collective consciousness and shared humanity. Entitled *Trampled Bodies* (2024), the work creates a space for dialogue and engagement, inviting viewers to actively participate in the ongoing discourse surrounding the reality.

As Hamidi navigates the complexities of conflicts through this new body of work, his reflections underscore the role of creative expression in forming a collective understanding. His works confront the emotional weight of the conflict, inviting viewers to look beyond numbers and delve into its human dimensions. This artistic journey has all in all opened up Hamidi's take on the relevance of art at times of crisis. As he concluded this chapter, *"Art is a free tool in expressing feelings, voices and views. Within this disturbing atmosphere, it continuously raises awareness and consciousness towards the tragedy of other humans' lives."*

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Amanda Ariawan is an art curator, writer, and cultural worker. She obtained her Master's in Contemporary Art Exhibition Production from Université de Lille 3, France, with research that examined the local, global, and identity issues within Asian contemporary art. Since then, her roles in the arts have varied from curating, art writing, gallery management, and cultural programming. Through her work, she hopes to amplify the voices of Southeast Asian artists.









*In the name of.....*

2024

Charcoal and burnt on tapestry

178.5cm x 120cm





*Absence of Love*

2024

Charcoal and burnt on tapestry

175cm x 116.5cm

(NFS: ARTIST COLLECTION)





*Witness*

2024

Charcoal and burnt, coloured on tapestry

185cm x 121cm



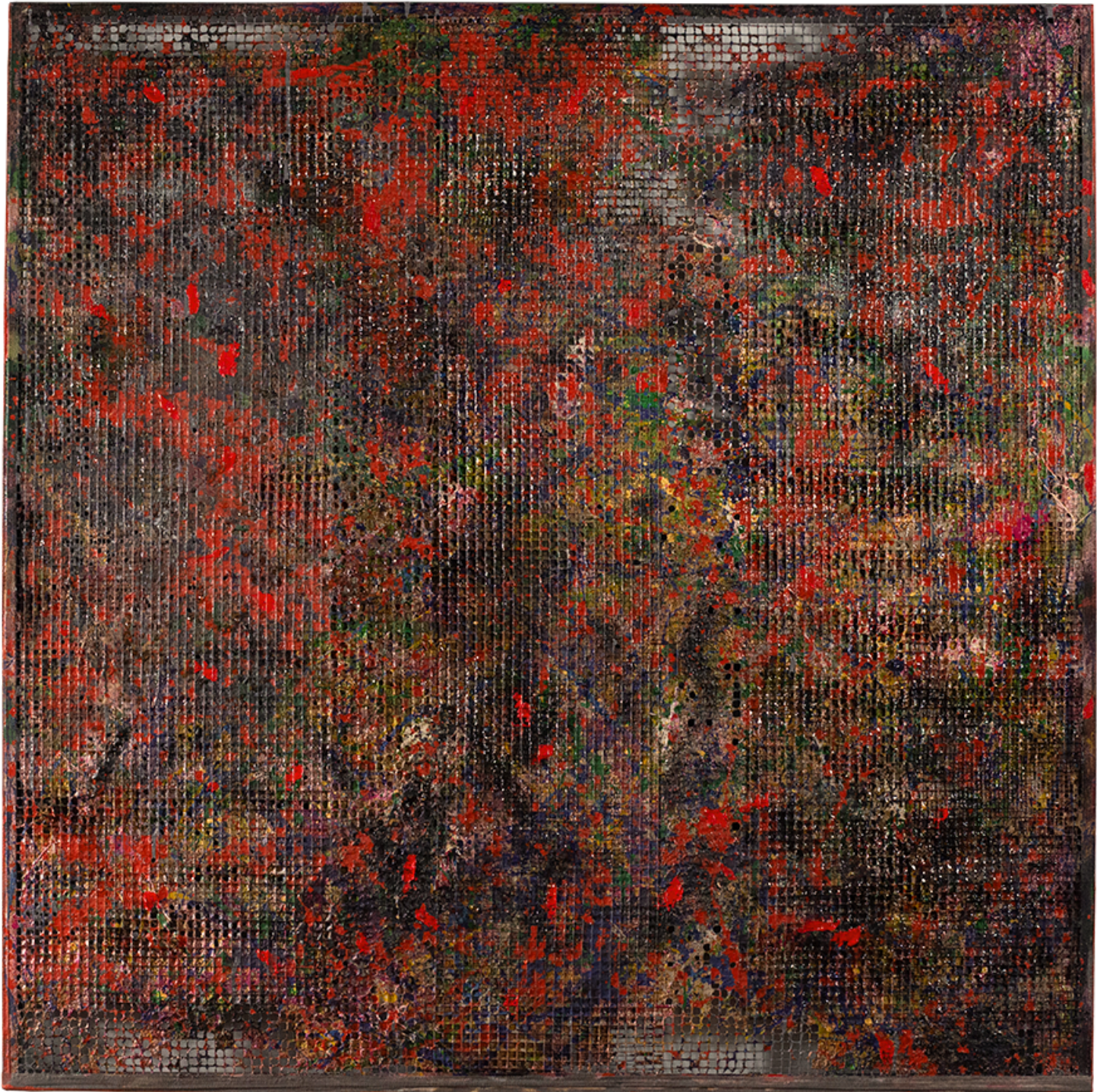


*Innocent Land of Love*  
2024  
Charcoal and burnt on tapestry  
191cm x 119cm









*Rubble*  
2023  
Mixed media  
158cm x 158cm





Close up of '*Rubble*' (2023)





*Rubble II*  
2023  
Mixed media  
158cm x 158cm





Close up of *'Rubble II'* (2023)





*Broken Tears*  
2023  
Mixed media  
157cm x 96cm





*Heartbreak*  
2023  
Oil on canvas  
140cm x 120cm





*Pohon Kehidupan Yang Dibakar Hangus*  
2023  
Burnt wood charcoal on canvas  
138cm x 158cm





*Suffocate*  
2023  
Mixed media  
62cm x 62cm





Close up of *'Trampled Bodies'* (2024)





*Trampled Bodies*

2024

Mild steel, paper, waste debris materials, Air breath balloon

Variable dimensions



'*Trampled Bodies*' by Hamidi Hadi is an installation that explores the resilient essence of humanity, encapsulating the aspirations, hopes and dreams of people during challenging times. It reflects the struggle of these individuals whose dreams and aspirations may become obscured or fade away over time through the gradual deflation of balloons. Each balloon contains written hopes and wishes by each person, symbolising the collective breath of humanity.

Hamidi encourages visitors to actively engage with the artwork by inviting them to become participants. Upon entering, visitors are given the opportunity to select a balloon of their choice, inscribe their hopes and dreams onto it, and then contribute it to the installation. They are then encouraged to breathe life into their balloon creation before tying it off, symbolizing their personal investment in the collective spirit of the artwork.







Installation at Wei-Ling Gallery, Brickfields





HAMIDI HADI (B. 1971)

Hamidi Hadi is regarded as one of the most prominent abstract artists of his generation, and is well-known for his experimental and explorative use of material. Over the years, his practice has formally migrated from pictorial representation of the objective world, into abstraction and the synthesis of complex materials and methods, to describe his emotional and spiritual responses to the world.

He investigates the natural phenomenon of the world and uses this in his imaginary landscapes, through the application of industrial paint, resin, wax, linseed oil and charcoal in layers, allowing gravity and movement, to create surface tension. As we contemplate his abstract works, we begin to connect the reference points that give us clues to the artist's inner landscape, and his contemplation of his place in the world.

Hamidi Hadi received the UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia) - Bronze Award, Established Artist Category in 2018, the Bank Negara's Kijang Award in 2004 and the Philip Morris ASEAN Biennale Art Award in 2000. His works have also been collected by both public and private institutions and corporations. Amongst them are the Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur, Setia Berhad, and the National Art Gallery of Malaysia. He has exhibited extensively both within Malaysia and on international platforms, with exhibitions in Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, China, the Philippines and the United Kingdom.



## **EDUCATION**

- 2019 PhD Art History, University of Malaya, Malaysia
- 2002 MA Art & Design Network (Painting), University of Wolverhampton, Midlands, UK
- 2001 Wolverhampton College, Northampton West, Wolverhampton, UK
- 2000 Bachelor of Arts, School of Art & Design, MARA (UiTM), Shah Alam, Malaysia
- 1995 Diploma in Art & Design (Fine Art), UiTM, Shah Alam, Malaysia

## **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2024 Trembling in Silence, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2021 Saring II: Sublimity, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2019 Saring, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2016 Dari Langit dan Bumi, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2014 BALAM, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2012 Antara, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2009 Timang-Timbang, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2007 Alun, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2005 Indelible Markings, Townhouse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2023 CIMB ARTOBER - ART & SOUL, MITEC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2023 HansaeYes24 Foundation International Culture Exchange Exhibition "Embrace Malaysia, Insa Art Center, Seoul, Korea
- 2022 Art Jakarta 2022, JCC Senayan, Indonesia
- A Paradigm Shift - Reflecting on Twenty Years of The Malaysian Art Scene, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Abstraction Now!, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- WLG IGNITE, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Art Expo Malaysia 2022, GMBB, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2021 100 Pieces: Art for All, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2019 18@18 Turning Points, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2018 Patriots: By Malaysians for Malaysians, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Teh Tarik with The Flag, curated by Wei-Ling Gallery, in association with The National Art Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2017 Art Stage Jakarta 2017, Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Sotheby's Auction (Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Paintings), 3rd April 2017, Hong Kong Convention Centre, Hong Kong
- 18@18 RIGHT HERE! RIGHT NOW!, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2016 Art Stage Jakarta 2016, Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Art Expo Malaysia 2016, Matrade, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



- 2015 18@8 Heirlooms, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 SUARA RASA, Segaris Art Center, Solaris, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Art Expo Malaysia 2015, Matrade, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2014 Ho Mia, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2013 18@8 Mirror, Mirror on the wall, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2012 18@8: KUL-SIN, ION Art, Singapore  
 18@8: KUL-SIN, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Kembara Jiwa; The Travelling Soul, Galeri Chandran @ Publika, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Kembara Jiwa; The Travelling Soul, Selasar Sunaryo, Bandung, Indonesia  
 Kembara Jiwa; The Travelling Soul, Taman Budaya, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
 Timeless, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Kami Respon, Galeri FSSR UiTM Perak, Perak, Malaysia  
 Transit-A4, House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2011 THE 8th Asia Fiber Art (AFA 2011), Galeri UiTM Perak, Perak, Malaysia  
 1Malaysia Art Festival 2011, KL Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Malaysian Rice Plates Project, Wei-Ling Gallery and Ministry of Tourism, KL Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2010 Absolut 18@8, Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Matahati & Friends, House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Celebrate Malaysia, Petronas Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Malaysia Artists: NEW OBJECT(IONS), Petronas Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2009 The 24th Asian International Art Exhibition, Balai Seni Lukis, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2008 Mind, Body & Soul III, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Treasure Box, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Art Triangle Malaysia-Philippines-Indonesia, Soka Gakkai, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 TENGGARA - Recent Paintings from Malaysia, Indonesia & Philippines, Novas, Gallery, Liverpool, United Kingdom  
 The 23rd Asian International Art Exhibition, University Art Museum Guangzhou, China  
 Heart to Heart - Asian International Art Show, YUGE Gallery, Guangzhou, China
- 2007 The 9th International Seminar & Art Exhibition, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok, Thailand  
 The Force of Nature, Darling Muse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Kami III, Museum Negeri Pulau Penang, Malaysia
- 2006 18@8: Kuala Lumpur - Karachi, The Amin Gulgee Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan, in collaboration with Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
 Malaysia - Poland Art Exchange Workshop, UiTM Shah Alam Gallery, Malaysia
- 2005 Malaysia - Japan Art Exchange Workshop, Gallery Seni, UiTM Perak, Malaysia
- 2004 Kami II, Shah Alam Gallery, Malaysia  
 Imajan, Taman Warisan Gallery, Malaysia



- 2003 3 Men & A Woman, Shah Alam Gallery & Pelita Hati Gallery, Malaysia
- 2002 MA Show, University of Wolverhampton, Midlands, UK
- 2000 Phillip Morris ASEAN Art Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Singapore  
Phillip Morris ASEAN Art Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Malaysia
- 1999 Malam Puisi, KOSOVO, Dewan Bandaraya, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia  
Pekan Seni Ipoh IV, Dewan Bandaran, Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia  
Shah Alam Open Art Exhibition, Shah Alam Gallery, Malaysia
- 1998 Pekan Seni Ipoh III, Dewan Bandaran, Ipoh, Malaysia
- 1997 Malaysian Drawing, National Art Gallery, Malaysia  
Bakat Muda Sezaman, National Art Gallery, Malaysia
- 1996 Young Contemporaries, National Art Gallery, Malaysia  
National Day Art Competition, National Art Gallery, Malaysia  
Islamic Fibre Art, Pengucapan Islam Dalam Kesenian, Petronas Gallery, Malaysia  
New Artist, Petronas Gallery, Malaysia
- 1995 Degree Show, KSSR Gallery, ITM Shah Alam, Malaysia  
Alternative Print, Petronas Gallery, Malaysia  
ILHAM Diploma Collection, Petronas Gallery, Malaysia
- 1994 Kenyir Ecofest, Kenyir, Terengganu, Malaysia
- 1993 Cactus Drawing Exhibition And Exhibition, Bukit Cahaya, Shah Alam, Malaysia

## **AWARDS**

- 2018 UOB Painting of the Year (Malaysia) - Bronze Award, Established Artist Category, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2004 Bakat Muda Sezaman (Finalist), Balai Seni Lukis Negara, Malaysia  
Seni Kijang Bank Negara Malaysia Award, (Consolation Prize), Balai Seni Bank Negara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2000 Top 5 Winners, Phillip Morris  
ASEAN Biennale Art Award, Malaysia  
Consolation Prize, Prize Morris  
ASEAN Art Award 2000, Singapore  
Artist Interaction, Formula Malaysia  
Art Competition, Malaysia
- 1996 Honorable Mention, Phillip Morris  
ASEAN Biennale Art Award, Malaysia
- 1995 Deans Listm School of Art & Design, MARA (UiTM), Malaysia
- 1994 Consolation Prize, Kenyir Eco-Fest 94'  
International Art Competition, Malaysia



## **PUBLIC COLLECTIONS**

National Art Gallery, Malaysia

Galeri Petronas, Malaysia

Aliya & Farouk Khan Collection, Malaysia

Parkroyal Hotel, Malaysia

Wong & Partners, Malaysia

Grand Hyatt, Kuala Lumpur

Element Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

S P Setia



To accompany the exhibition entitled '*Trembling in Silence*' by Hamidi Hadi from 6 April - 27 April 2024

### **Gallery Information**

Free Admission for visitors with appointments.

Walk-ins permitted upon registration, otherwise a RM10 fee will be imposed. (Applicable to individuals aged 12 years and above.)

**Operating Hours:** 10 AM – 6 PM (Tuesday to Friday), 10 AM – 5 PM (Saturday)

**Closed:** Sundays, Mondays, and Public Holidays

### **Image Courtesy**

Wei-Ling Gallery & Hamidi Hadi

### **Wei-Ling Gallery**

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DESIGNED BY	Prissie Ong
IMAGE COURTESY	Wei-Ling Gallery & Hamidi Hadi
PHOTOGRAPHED BY	Phng Kheng Hwa
FRONT COVER IMAGE	<b><i>In the name of.....</i></b> (2024) (Close up)

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