

Dadang Christanto FX Harsono Ken Matsubara Lawrence Abu Hamdan
Sean Lean Suzann Victor Wei Leng Tay

**AND THE
INVADER'S
FEAR OF
MEMORIES**

And the invader's fear of memories

9 July - 10 August 2024

Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Wei-Ling Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of the international show, **“And the invader’s fear of memories”** curated by Line Dalile. It features seven contemporary artists: **Dadang Christanto** (Indonesia), **FX Harsono** (Indonesia), **Ken Matsubara** (Japan), **Lawrence Abu Hamdan** (Jordan), **Sean Lean** (Malaysia), **Suzann Victor** (Singapore), and **Wei Leng Tay** (Singapore).

In his poem ‘On This Land’, Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish writes of the invader’s fear of memories. Departing from this sentence, the exhibition becomes a space to explore how personal memory can be a threatening weapon to oppressive regimes. Although memory is often talked about in terms of its subjectivity and malleability, it is precisely in that softness that memory finds its strength to shape historical narratives. The stories we choose to tell about the past shape our collective ways of being, both socially and politically.

But memory is also a burden. What we collectively choose to forget is just as vital as what we collectively choose to remember. For centuries, artists have functioned as important historians and guardians of memory, who work to revive forgotten testimonies. Unlike historians, however, who often speak with unwavering authority despite their deep knowledge of the malleability of history, artists seek to cultivate a conversation about the dynamic interplay between personal recollections and the broader societal memory, encouraging the audience to challenge, reinterpret, and actively contribute to the ongoing narrative of our collective histories.

In this exhibition, artists disrupt the conventional dominance of linear narratives in our comprehension of the past, introducing alternative perspectives that defy established frameworks and unveil silenced histories. Through their endeavors, these creators metamorphose into historians and storytellers, crafting narratives that illuminate the multiplicity of truth and the subjective nature of historical interpretation. With distinct works ranging from installations to multimedia, sculptures, and photography, the artists featured explore their own depository of memory, untangling threads that link individual experiences to shared histories. Their works are important juncture points that amplify the many silenced voices in the historical archive.

DADANG CHRISTANTO



Close-up of *MISSING* at Wei-Ling Gallery

Dadang Christanto

MISSING

Acrylic and charcoal on canvas

90cm (h) x 80cm (w) each

2018

MISSING (2018) comprises 110 acrylic and charcoal imagined portraits of the 1965 victims of the Indonesian Mass Killings. Shown here are 54 of the 110 portraits. Dadang Christanto's friend knew a news photographer colleague who somehow managed to access and produce photos of those who had been captured and tortured between 1965-1966 in Tegal. The Tegal Province Administration office, where they worked, was the "chambre noir" where he would develop the photos. Knowing this, Dadang Christanto always wondered if his father was among those in the photos. Unfortunately, the photographer has since passed away. Although Dadang Christanto has not found these photographic archives, his curiosity led him to keep searching, and in doing so, this body of work materialised.

The tragedy — a sort of exposed wound that has never healed — continues to inform the artist's works. From graphic, stylised paintings with recurrent references to disembodied heads crying tears of blood to monumental installations with life-sized repetitive figures cast in various materials, his art is inspired by loss and disappearance. His site-specific installations and performances act as memorials to victims of violence in all its forms.



Installation view of 'MISSING' at Wei-Ling Gallery

FX HARSONO



Close-up of 'Shadow of Identity' at Wei-Ling Gallery

FX Harsono

Shadow of Identity

Steel, wood, electric candle, LED light box, photo print, plastic, paper, LED running text

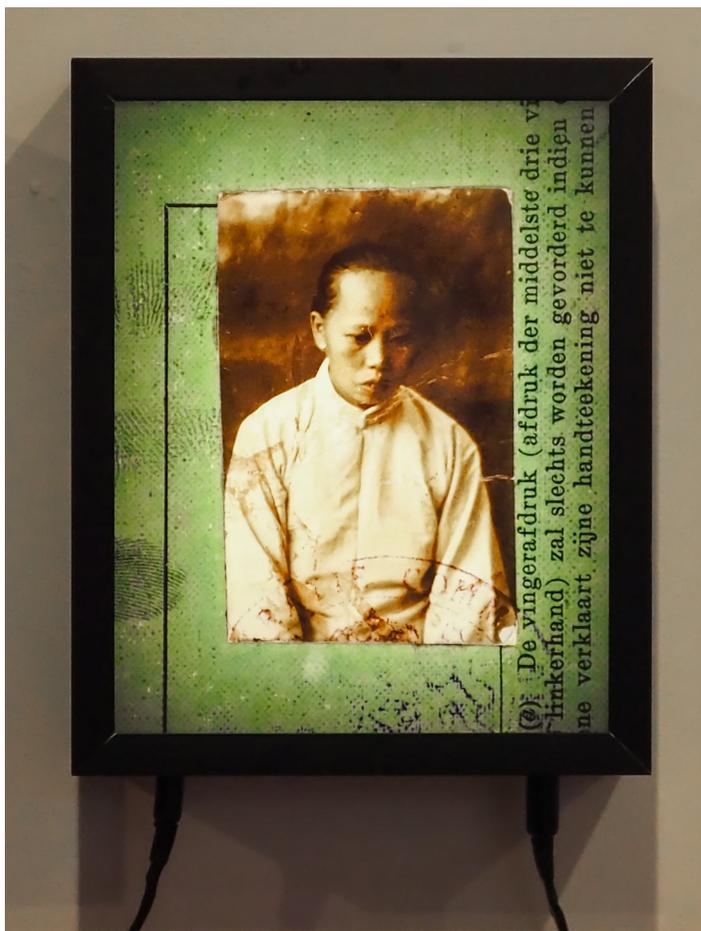
220cm x 180cm x 35cm

2024

Identity is based on the culture of a nation. Culture develops according to the dynamics of various life challenges. When people move from one region or country to another, culture always accompanies their move. The culture they bring will assimilate with the local culture, creating a new identity, which is then called a hybrid culture. However, when power imposes its will for political purposes, restrictions and discrimination occur. This is where human rights violations happen to minority communities who should be able to develop their own culture and identity independently



Installation view of 'Shadow of Identity' at Wei-Ling Gallery



Close-up of *'Shadow of Identity'* at Wei-Ling Gallery

KEN MATSUBARA



Close-up 'Repetition - Book, Oura Tenshudo Church' of at Wei-Ling Gallery

Ken Matsubara

Artwork 1

Repetition - Book, Ofunato Elementary School

Antique music stand, book, video. 47cm x 30cm

Movie 5'08" loop.

ed.2/10

2014

The figure in the center of the back row is a friend of mine from the fourth grade. The elementary school is located in the Tōhoku region of Japan, facing the coastline, and its elevated ground served as an emergency evacuation shelter. Despite being a designated evacuation area, the Tōhoku Tsunami on March 11, 2011, reached the first floor of the campus building effortlessly. Fortunately, the students were evacuated safely to a higher elevation, resulting in no casualties. My friend's house, located near the coastline, was completely engulfed by the tsunami, and the photo album, along with the rest of the house, was lost. However, this particular photograph was safely kept by his relative and is one of the few remaining pictures from his childhood. The nearby photo studio was destroyed in the same manner as my friend's house, and the only remaining studio left in the area was in a hotel. Photographs recovered after the tsunami were restored and reproduced at the studio inside the hotel, drawing many people's attention as they searched for their lost photographs. This act of people placing great value on photographs, even after losing their houses and furniture, led me to rethink and appreciate the value of photographs' ability to preserve qualitative memories. The film depicts a reflecting image of the school campus in the pool left after the tsunami.



OFUNATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



OFUNATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1964, Ofunato City, Japan



OFUNATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
24 March 2014, Ofunato City, Japan

Artwork 2

Repetition - Book, Oura Tenshudo Church

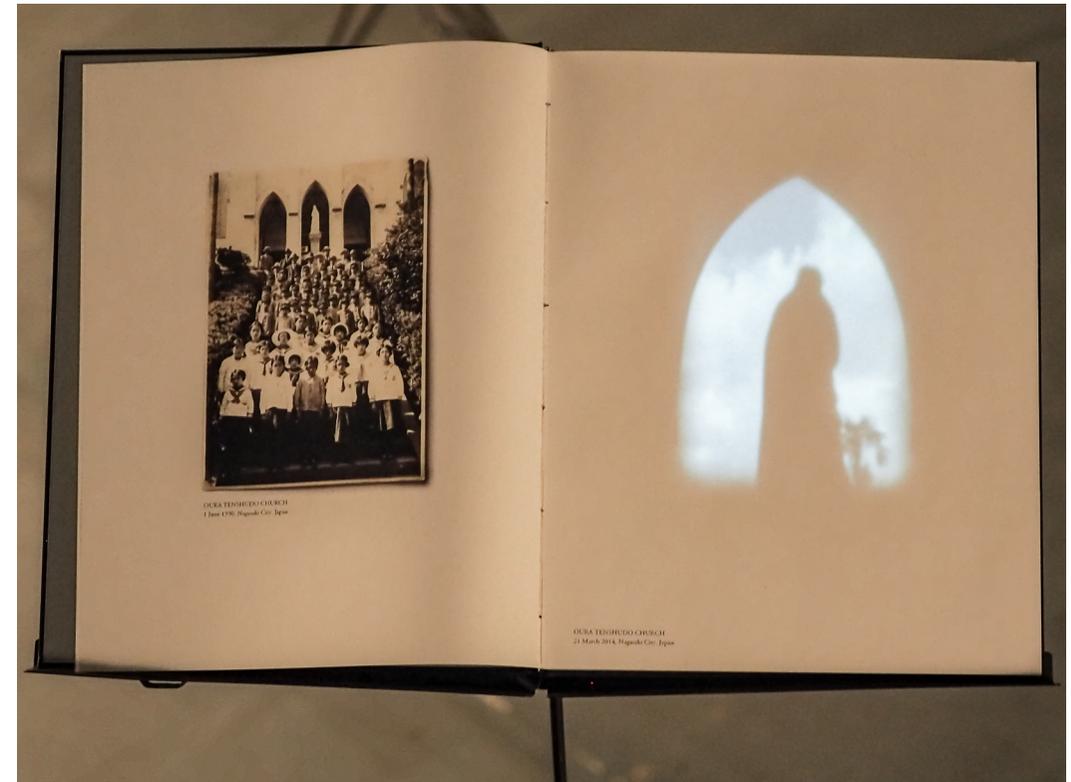
Antique music stand, book, video. 47cm x 30cm

Movie 1'12" loop.

ed.3/10

2014

This photograph shows a class of junior high school students on a field trip to the Oura Tenshudo Church in Nagasaki, with "1 June 1930" written on the back. The Oura Tenshudo Church was constructed in 1865 in honor of the Twenty-six Martyrs of Japan. In 1597, when Christianity was forbidden in Japan, twenty-six practitioners (including four Spanish, one Portuguese, and one Mexican) were seized and executed. Soon after the construction of the church, led by a French Catholic priest, many "Hidden Christians" throughout the nation gathered, and a statue of the Virgin Mary was sent from France in honor of the martyrs. Nagasaki became a victim of the atomic bomb on August 9, 1945. Fortunately, due to its unique geographical location, the Oura Tenshudo Church was not destroyed. However, the Virgin Mary must have witnessed the devastating flash on that day.



OURA TENSHUDO CHURCH



OURA TENSHUDO CHURCH
1 June 1930, Nagasaki City, Japan



OURA TENSHUDO CHURCH
21 March 2014, Nagasaki City, Japan

Artwork 3

Repetition - Book, Meiji Shrine

Antique music stand, book, video. 47cm x 30cm

Movie 15'14" loop.

ed.2/10

2014

The Meiji Shrine is a monumental shrine dedicated to honoring the Meiji Emperor and Empress of Japan. The figure in the photograph, most likely accompanied by his business colleagues, holds a flag in his hand, perhaps for a celebration or preparation for war. The picture depicts their special occasion at the shrine in honoring the deity. The main shrine was destroyed during World War II (1939–45) but was reconstructed shortly after. The film shows the water basin used for purifying the mind and spirit before visiting the main shrine.



MEIJI SHRINE



MEIJI SHRINE
Tokyo, Japan



MEIJI SHRINE
18 February 2014, Tokyo, Japan

Artwork 4

Repetition - Book, Eiffel Tower

Antique music stand, book, video. 47cm x 30cm

Movie 4'07" loop.

ed.2/10

2014

This photograph shows a man together with three women posing in front of the Eiffel Tower. There was a puddle of water remaining from the previous day's rain at the same location where the four figures were standing. The wind rippled the image of the Eiffel Tower reflected in the puddle from the occasional rain.



EIFFEL TOWER



EIFFEL TOWER
Paris, France



EIFFEL TOWER
28 January 2014, Paris, France

Artwork 5

Repetition - Book, Coney Island

Antique music stand, book, video. 47cm x 30cm

Movie 20'05" loop.

ed.4/10

2014

This photograph has "Coney Island" handwritten with "JULY 1959" printed on the side. During its most flourishing era, Coney Island was one of the largest leisure spots for the people of New York. Though not as prosperous as during its prime, the wooden roller coasters are still present to this day.



CONEY ISLAND



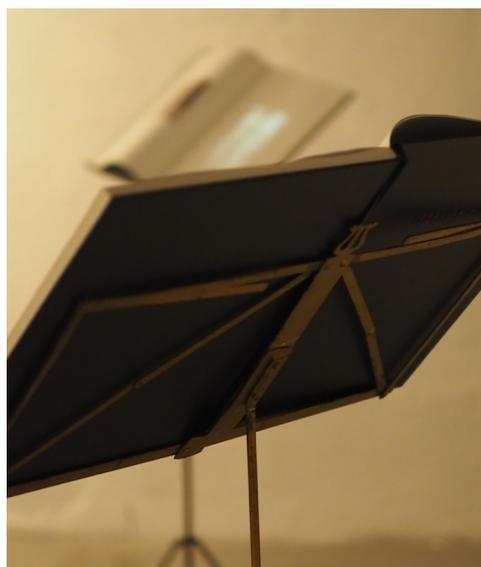
CONEY ISLAND
July 1959, Brooklyn, USA



CONEY ISLAND
7 March 2014, Brooklyn, USA



Installation view of *'Repetition - Book'* (2014) at Wei-Ling Contemporary



Close-ups of *'Repetition - Book'* (2014) at Wei-Ling Contemporary

Artwork 6

The Sleeping Water - Mekong Delta

Dome glass. video 15cm x 30.5cm

Movie 30'05" loop.

2011

This work shows five Vietnamese children in the Mekong River Delta, floating up as if ascending to the heavens like angels. This work is dedicated to the children who died during the Vietnam War (1954–75). I believe there are many memories and much history in this country at the border between Western and Asian cultures.



Installation view of *'The Sleeping Water - Mekong Delta'* at Wei-Ling Contemporary

Close-ups of *'The Sleeping Water - Mekong Delta'* at Wei-Ling Contemporary

LAWRENCE ABU HAMDAN



Close-up of *'Once Removed'* at Wei-Ling Contemporary

Lawrence Abu Hamdan

Once Removed

Two-channel video, colour, sound

28 minutes

2019

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Edition 3/5

Once Removed (2019) is an audiovisual installation that acts as a portrait of the time-traveling life and work of Bassel Abi Chahine, a thirty-one-year-old writer and historian who has managed to obtain the single most comprehensive inventory of extremely rare objects, photographs, and interviews associated with the PLA (People's Liberation Army) and the PSP (Progressive Socialist Party), socialist militias led by Walid Joumblatt during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90). In amassing this archive, Abi Chahine taught himself how to identify all manner of military equipment, including every pattern of camouflage and the origin of every AK-47, whether Bulgarian, Polish, Soviet, or Chinese. His obsessive and unprecedented research and analysis was initially undertaken to find materials that could reconstitute what he describes as flashbacks and unexplainable memories from a previous life. He came to realise that his lucid and personal memories of the war are due to the fact that he is the reincarnation of a soldier named Youssef Fouad al-Jowhary, who died in Aley, Lebanon, on February 26, 1984, at age sixteen.

Since the end of the war, details pertaining to sectarian conflicts in Lebanon have been suppressed in the interest of national security, so as not to incite further tensions between formerly warring parties. Therefore, for Abi Chahine's generation, very little is known (or can be verified) about what happened during the conflict. Yet former PLA soldiers and commanders felt at ease confiding in Abi Chahine because they believed him to be the reincarnation of one of their comrades. Abi Chahine is a man living in two times, straddling the divide between the generation who experienced the war and those who live in the ineffable shadow it casts.

This video was commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE (2019).



Installation view of *'Once Removed'* at Wei-Ling Contemporary

WEI LENG TAY



Close-up of '*Untitled (cousins and relatives)*' at Wei-Ling Contemporary

Wei Leng Tay

From left to right:

Artwork 1

Untitled (bench by the sea)

Archival Pigment Print

30cm x 40cm

2022

Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3)

Artwork 2

Untitled (cousins and relatives)

Archival Pigment Print

45cm x 60cm

2022

Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#3/3)

Artwork 3

Untitled (city grid from the sky)

Archival Pigment Print

67.23cm x 100cm

2022

Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3)



Installation view at Wei-Ling Gallery

These three works, re-photographs of photographic slides made with a digital microscope, are from a constellation of works that began with a bag of family slides from the late 1960s to 70s, mostly taken by the artist's parents. The slides depict a coming-of-age, through a migratory path through Australia, Malaysia and Singapore. While earlier bodies of work in this constellation consider and depict how geography and history are imprinted into the slides over time, here, the works' own making enters the image, surfacing the processuality of meaning-making that is embedded. They also mediate aspects of nostalgia that are deeply coded in these old photographs, through colour, technological abstraction and surface. Through these modes, they expand upon systems and grids that seem to dictate ways of being and looking, and also present opportunities for novel ways of looking forward, and remembering.

In visualising the aesthetics of their making, these works might seek to rationalise and address what is often emotionally uploaded, nostalgic, and affects us in ways sometimes unfathomable. At the same time, they create a space for looking, and projecting, between abstraction and nostalgia.



Artwork 1

Untitled (bench by the sea)

Archival Pigment Print

30cm x 40cm

2022

Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3)



Artwork 2

Untitled (cousins and relatives)

Archival Pigment Print

45cm x 60cm

2022

Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#3/3)



Artwork 3

Untitled (city grid from the sky)

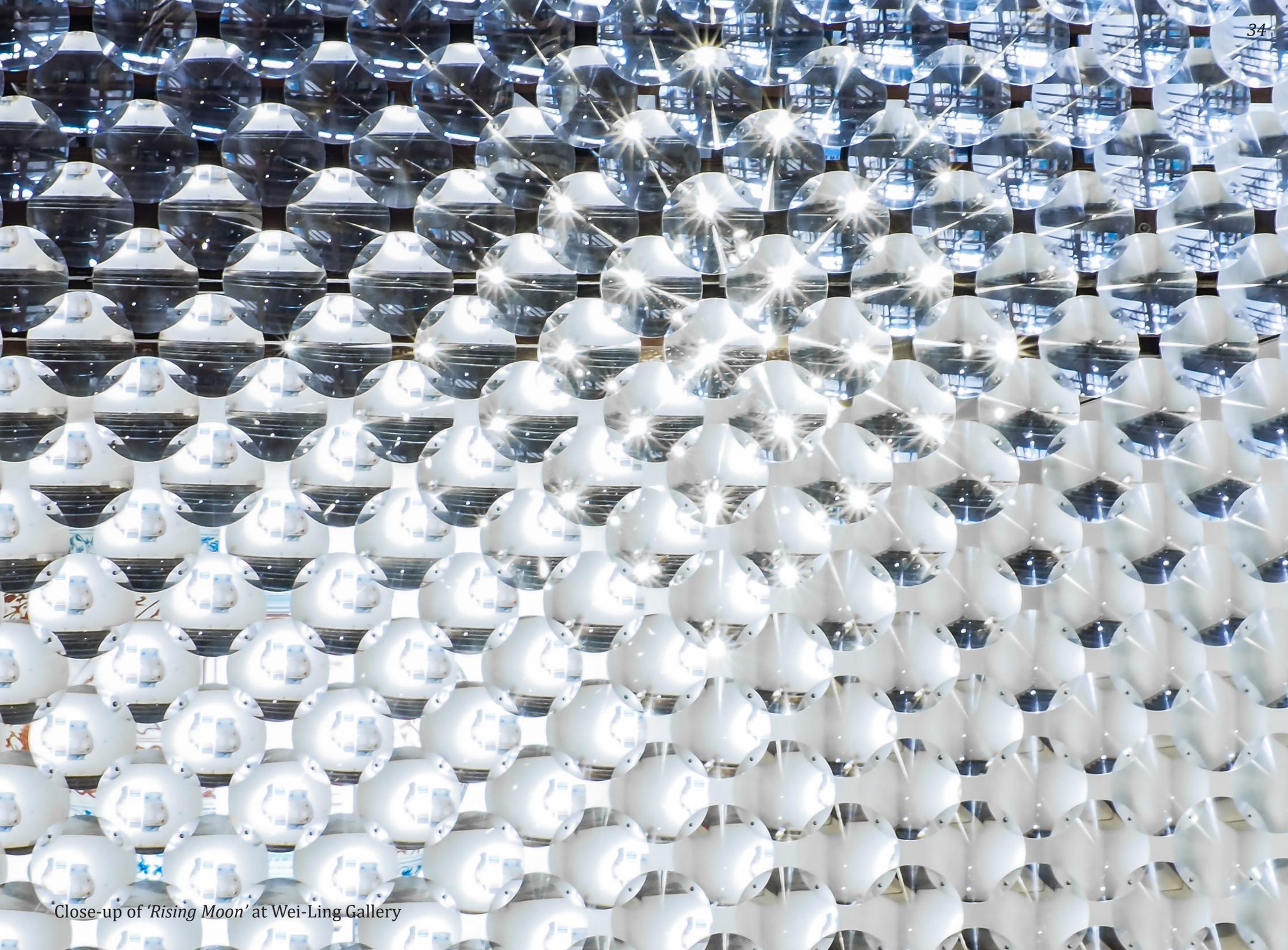
Archival Pigment Print

67.23cm x 100cm

2022

Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (#1/3)

SUZANN VICTOR



Close-up of 'Rising Moon' at Wei-Ling Gallery

Suzann Victor

Rising Moon

Fresnel Lenses, Nuts and Bolts

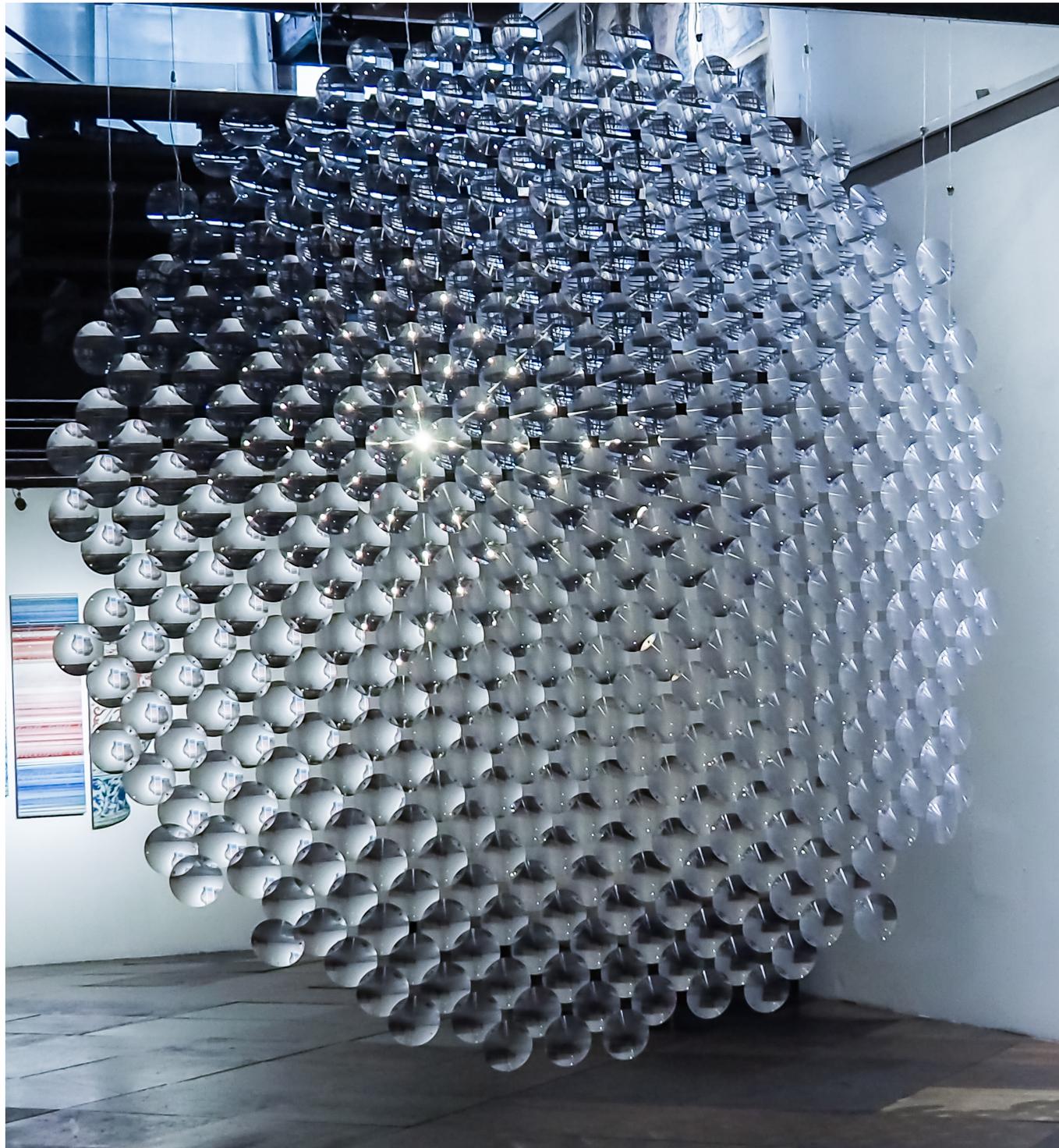
300cm x 300cm

2019

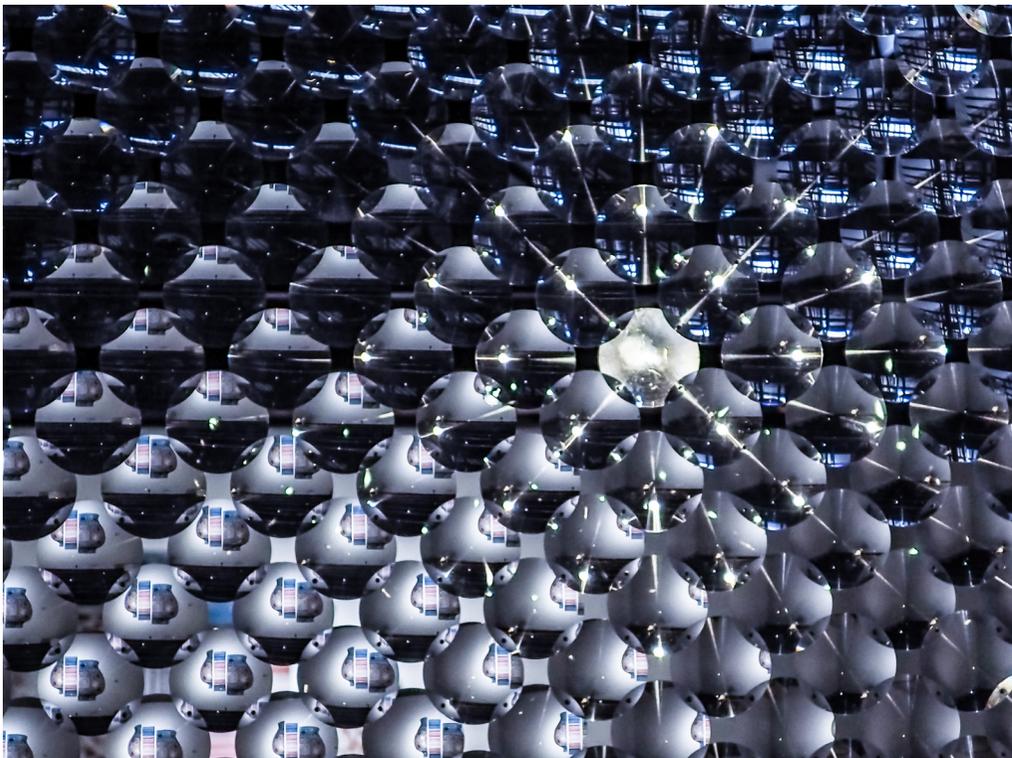
Refracting light into a spectrum of colours, the work affords multiple alternative views of its environment, and encourages the viewer to see the space and its contents anew through the scintillating perceptual effects of the lens material. Random details are magnified, dissected and dislodged, coalescing only as a dynamic atlas of ever-shifting boundaries that leaves unconnected fragments open to morph, blend and collide as the viewer adjusts vantage point.

As an optical interface, the lenses become a contradictory medium that obscures while also bringing the image into focus - contingent always upon the viewer's position and angle of observation. Locating what has slipped away from view seems only to rouse the kinetically-engaged viewer, who far from striking a pose of contemplative stillness, ends up extending, retracting, bending, leaning or elevating the body to hunt and seek what eluded their initial observation.

Such discontinuous ways of seeing at the cost and in isolation from the whole produces an optical decomposition, a pictorial landscape kaleidoscopically cut up by the lenses - turning order into disjuncture, flatness into depth, the singular into the multiple, and the static image into the kinetic.

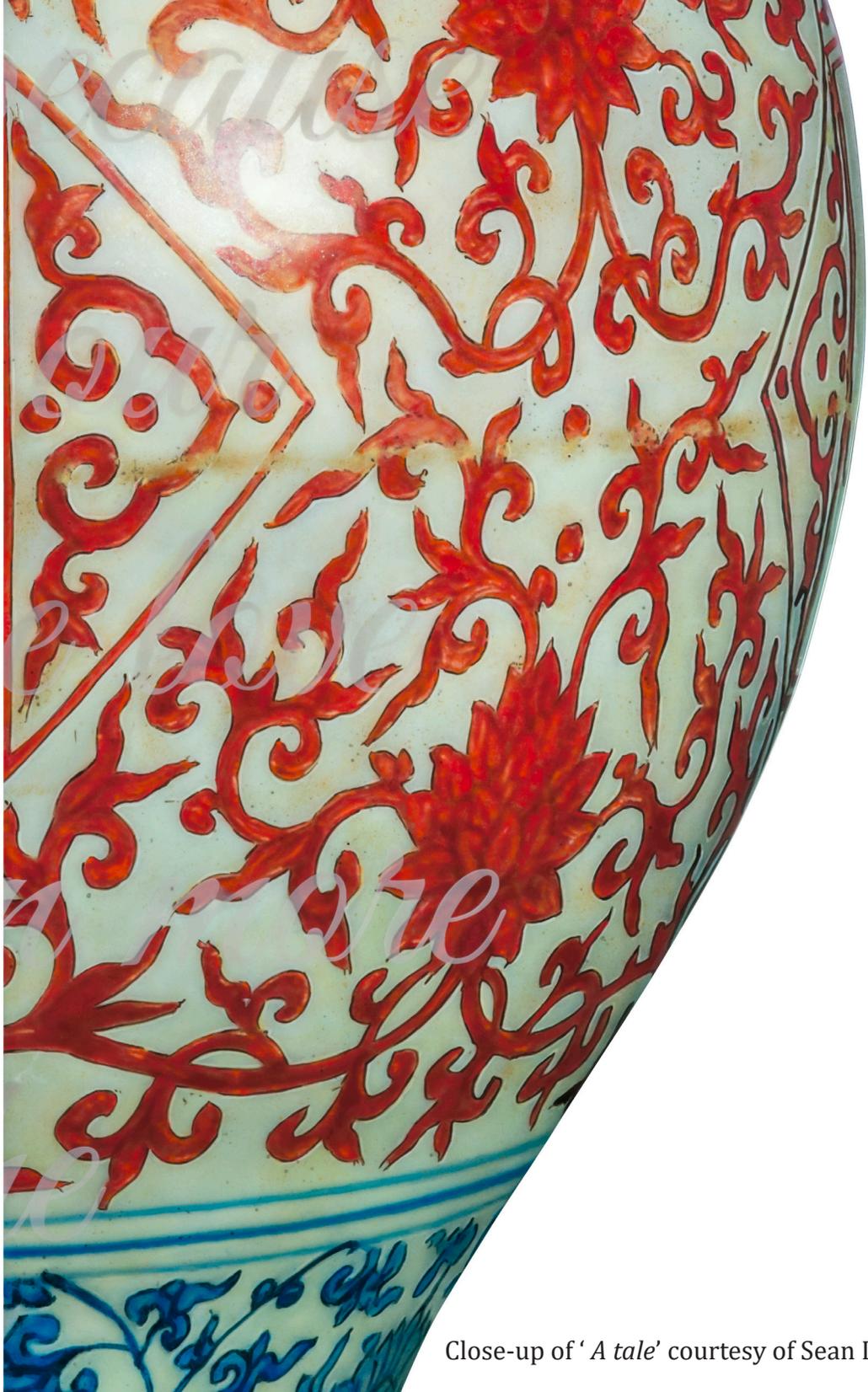
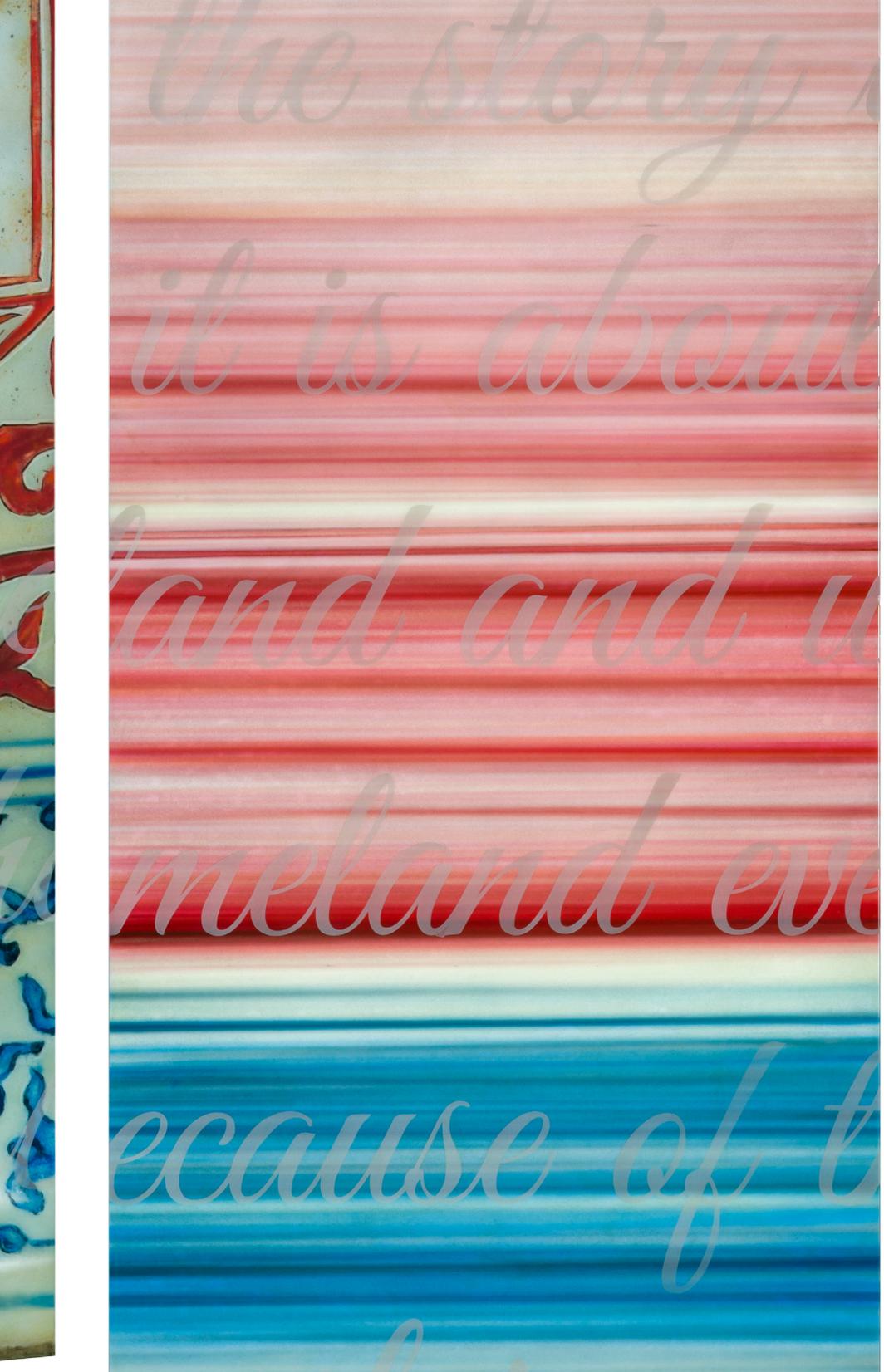


Installation view of *'Rising Moon'* at Wei-Ling Gallery



Close-up and top view of 'Rising Moon' at Wei-Ling Gallery

SEAN LEAN



Close-up of 'A tale' courtesy of Sean Lean

Sean Lean

A tale (Refaat Alareer)

Automotive paint on aluminium

144cm x 158cm

2024

“Sometimes a homeland becomes a tale. We love the story because it is about our homeland and we love our homeland even more because of the story.”

– Refaat Alareer

Refaat Alareer was a prominent Palestinian scholar, writer, and professor at the Islamic University of Gaza. He played a crucial role in Gaza’s literary community, co-founding the “We Are Not Numbers” project. This initiative provided writing workshops for young Palestinians to share their experiences and stories. Alareer was renowned for his poetry and writings that illuminated the struggles and resilience of the Palestinian people.

Tragically, on December 6, 2023, Alareer, along with his brother, sister, and four nephews, was killed by an Israeli airstrike in northern Gaza during the Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip. According to the Euro-Med Monitor, Alareer appeared to have been deliberately targeted, as the strike “surgically bombed out the entire building,” following weeks of “death threats that Refaat received online and by phone from Israeli accounts.” On April 26, 2024, his eldest daughter and newborn grandchild were also killed by an Israeli airstrike on their home in Gaza City.



Image of 'A tale' courtesy of Sean Lean

To accompany the international exhibition entitled '**And the invader's fear of memories**' by **Dadang Christanto, FX Harsono, Ken Matsubara, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Sean Lean, Suzann Victor, and Wei Leng Tay** from **9 July to 10 August 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 & Dadang Christanto, FX Harsono, Ken Matsubara, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Sean Lean, Suzann Victor, and Wei Leng Tay

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