



LEON  
LEONG

MAKING  
ROOM

WEI-LING GALLERY

# MAKING ROOM LEON LEONG

2 – 30 August 2025

Wei-Ling Gallery  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



‘*Making Room*’ marks the first solo presentation of Ipoh-born artist Leon Leong at Wei-Ling Gallery. Over the past decade, Leong has developed a research-driven practice shaped by sustained engagement with informal architecture, displacement, and spatial memory. This exhibition brings together works from 2017 to the present, including new pieces, offering insight into his patient and iterative approach to place.

At the main gallery space, the installation houses the miniature works within a skeletal framework that bears the imprint of time. It recalls the timber dwellings once common in Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur. Raised on slender legs and joined using “tanggam” carpentry, the structure honours indigenous craftsmanship and gestures toward *gotong-royong*, the ethic of shared labour that continues to sustain local communities. The suite of miniatures draws on the visual traditions of Indo-Persian illuminated manuscripts, compressing familial, and political narratives into layered compositions that remain deliberately open-ended.

The exhibition also includes works from ‘*Cracks in the Wall*’ and ‘*AlSYALAM: The Tree Nation*’, shaped through on-site engagement and shared conversations. In these pieces, Leong registers a clear concern for the conditions in which shelter is negotiated, as communities respond to eviction, neglect, and changing urban landscapes.

To “make room” is not to clear space. It is to acknowledge what endures. Habitation leaves behind dust, punctures, stains, joinery, and repairs, the marks of ongoing life. In this, it reflects the structures it references, always in the process of becoming.



**Making Room No. 1, 2025**  
 Oil on canvas  
 76.2cm × 50.8cm



**Making Room No. 2, 2025**  
 Oil on canvas  
 76.2cm × 50.8cm

# Stilt Houses – The Floating World of Kampung Baru

Installation view at Wei-Ling Gallery

**Stilt House No. 1, 2022**  
Wood in pigmented varnish, concrete stumps  
240cm x 368cm x 276cm



**Origin of Place, 2022**  
Gouache on paper  
29.7cm x 21cm



**To Build a Village, 2022**  
Gouache on paper  
29.7cm x 21cm



Progress of Love, 2022  
Gouache on paper  
29.7cm x 21cm



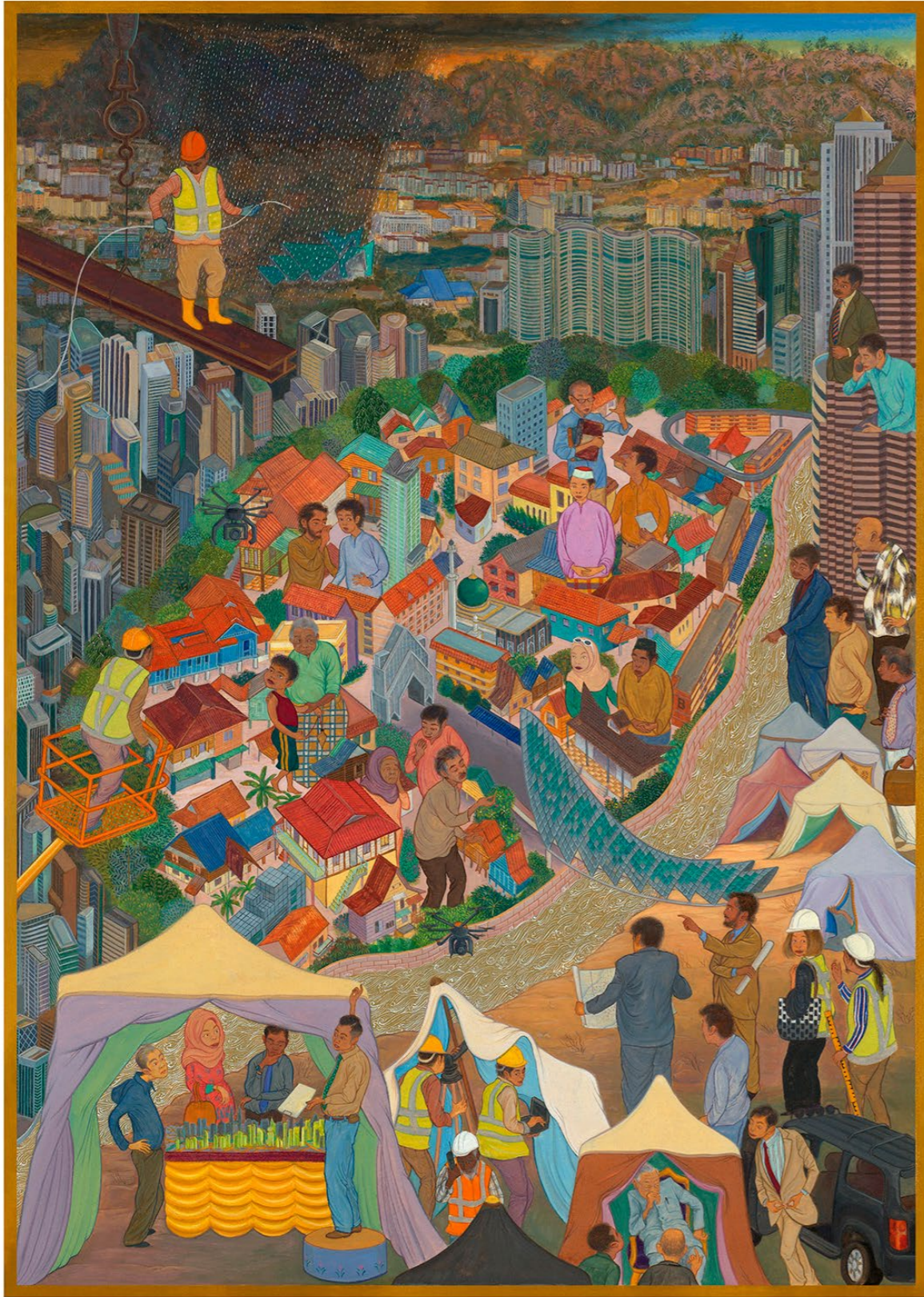
Being and Becoming, 2022  
Gouache on paper  
29.7cm x 21cm



Floating World, 2022  
Gouache on paper  
29.7cm x 21cm



Theatre of History, 2022  
Gouache on paper  
29.7cm x 21cm



Middle Way, 2022  
Gouache on paper  
29.7cm x 21cm



Video still

Making Room, 2022  
Film  
13 min 10 sec



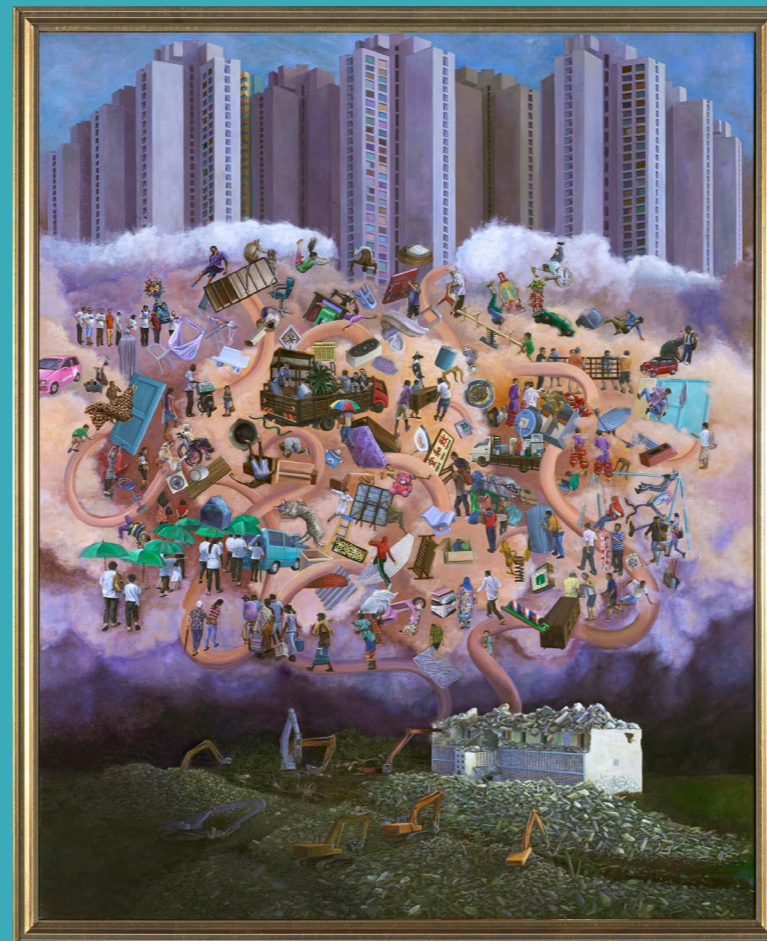
Video still

GOSTAN, 2021  
Film  
1 min 30 sec



Biography of Space: PJ Terrace House, 2022  
Oil on linen  
75cm × 115cm

# Cracks in the Wall Series



Cracks in the Wall Triptych, 2018  
Oil on canvas  
150cm x 120cm (each)

From left to right:  
A Farewell to Naga, The Departure, Drawers of Memory



**A Farewell to Naga, 2018**  
Oil on canvas  
150cm x 120cm



**The Departure**, 2018  
Oil on canvas  
150cm × 120cm



**Drawers of Memory, 2018**  
 Oil on canvas  
 150cm × 120cm



Installation view of 'Cracks in the Wall Triptych' at Wei-Ling Contemporary



Evening Routine of a Bank Programmer, 2017  
Oil on perforated board  
90cm x 120cm



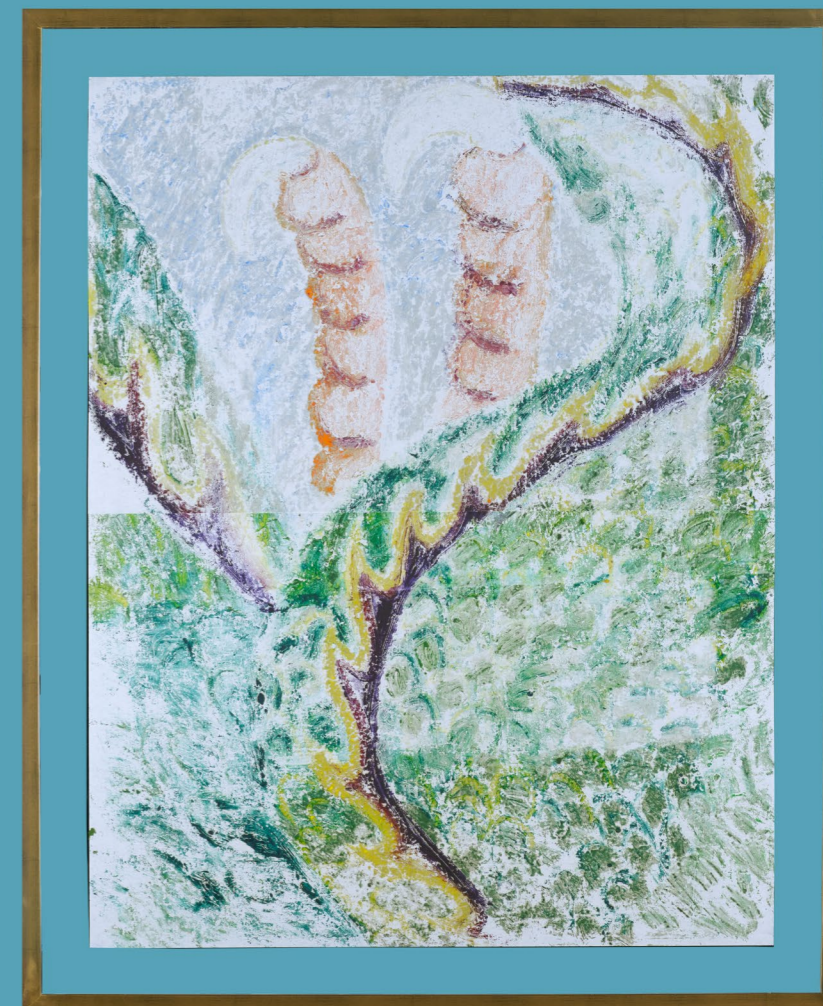
Aunt with Nephew and Niece, 2017  
Oil on perforated board  
86.5cm x 122cm



**Revealing Naga I, 2017**  
Parchment paper transfer of mural in oil stick (destroyed)  
101.6cm x 76.2cm



**Revealing Naga II, 2017**  
Parchment paper transfer of mural in oil stick (destroyed)  
101.6cm x 76.2cm



**Revealing Naga III, 2017**  
Parchment paper transfer of mural in oil stick (destroyed)  
128cm x 101.6cm



A Razak Mansion Brise Soleil Block, c. 1965  
Concrete  
23cm × 50cm × 16cm



Video still

Cracks in the Wall—Revealing Naga, 2017  
Film  
3 min 12 sec



**AISYALAM The Tree Nation No. 1, 2018**  
Oil on canvas  
122cm x 91cm



**AISYALAM The Tree Nation No. 2, 2018**  
Oil on canvas  
122cm x 91cm



**AI SYALAM The Tree Nation – Twister No. 3, 2020**  
Oil on canvas  
ø80cm



**AI SYALAM The Tree Nation – Twister No. 4, 2020**  
Oil on canvas  
ø80cm



**AI SYALAM The Tree Nation – Twister No. 5, 2020**  
Oil on canvas  
ø80cm



Installation view at Wei-Ling Contemporary

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Leon Leong (b. 1971) is a Malaysian artist and author. His work typically addresses man's interaction with the built environment and explores the broader themes of people, place, and history. It combines social critique and creative storytelling, weaving fact and fiction, documentation and memory into narratives.

His work ‘*Stilt Houses–The Floating World of Kampung Baru*’ (2022) was shown at Ilham Gallery's Triennial Ilham Art Show 2022, and then at the IX Tashkent International Biennale of Contemporary Art, where it received a special jury prize. His mixed-medium installation series ‘*Cracks in the Wall*’ (2018) was shown at the inaugural Kuala Lumpur Biennale and featured in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage 20/20 Forum.

Leon's novel, ‘*Beautiful Things*’ (2006), published by Crown Publishing Taiwan and serialized in Sin Chew Daily, was a top five finalist for the Crown World Fiction Prize. His short stories have won international accolades and included in an anthology of Malaysian fiction. In 1992, he got a Bachelor of Science in Communication from The University of Texas at Austin in the United States.

CURRICULUM VITAE

BIENNALE

- 2022 *The Floating World of Kampung Baru*, IX Tashkent International Biennale of Contemporary Art, Museum of Kamoliddin Behzod, Uzbekistan
- 2018 *Cracks in the Wall*, Kuala Lumpur Biennale, National Art Gallery, Malaysia

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *Making Room*, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2018 *Leon Leong: Cracks in the Wall*, Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2015 *Optimistic Melancholics*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2012 *Exorcising Demons*, Desa Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *GEMA*, 4th Ipoh International Art Festival, Perak, Malaysia
- 2023 *Realpolitik*, Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2022 *A Domestic Life*, Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2022 *Tukang*, e-Gallery, Multimedia University Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia
- 2022 *Tukang–Design & Craft Festival*, Galeri Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
- 2022 *ILHAM Art Show*, ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2020 *Sesumpah*, Publika Art Show 2020, Fergana Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2019 *di antara ITU & INI*, National Art Gallery, Fergana Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2015 *Eyeball Massage Fingers Exercise*, Fergana Art Space, Penang, Malaysia

TALKS

- 2022 'A Piece of Kampung: Thoughts on heritage and crafts', Galeri Shah Alam, Malaysia (Nov 27)
- 2022 'The Floating World of Kampung Baru', PAM NEXT YPLab22, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (July 13)
- 2022 'ILHAM Art Show: Artists in Conversation', ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (June 18)
- 2019 'Cracks in the Wall', UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage 20/20 Forum, Penang, Malaysia (Oct 14)
- 2019 'Razak Mansion: Cracks in the Wall', USCI University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Mar 16)
- 2018 'Azam Belas Symposium: “Cracks in the Wall”', National Art Gallery, KL, Malaysia (Feb 25)

AWARDS

- 2022 IX Tashkent International Biennale of Contemporary Art: Jury Prize
- 2022 TUKANG–The First Craftsmanship in Selangor: Winner

- 2021 G-Short International Short Film Festival: Finalist
- 2015 Malaysiaku Photography Contest: First Runner-up
- 2006 Crown International Fiction Awards: Merit Award
- 2003 ASEAN Short Fiction Awards: Second Prize
- 2001 Huazong Literary Awards (Fiction): Special Merit
- 1998 Red Ribbon Media Awards: Winner
- 1998 Shriro Horseman Print Awards (Self-promotion Category): Winner
- 1998 4A Kancil Awards (Website): Special Merit
- 1996 Shriro Horseman Print Awards (Self-promotion Category): Winner
- 1995 4A Kancil Awards (TVC Category): Silver
- 1995 4A Kancil Awards (Print Pro Bono): Special Merit
- 1995 4A Kancil Awards (Typography): Special Merit

EDUCATION

- 1999 Visiting scholar, Chinese Literature, Beijing University, China
- 1993 Photography course, New England School of Photography, Boston, MA, USA
- 1989–92 Bachelor of Science, Advertising, University of Texas at Austin, USA

SELECTED PUBLICATION

- 2022 *ILHAM Art Show*, ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2019 *Whale Watch (Novella)*, Monsoon Review Literary Magazine, Malaysia/Taiwan
- 2018 *Hidden Naga, Makcik Fashion, The Naga Boy & Mixed Rice Uncle*, National Art Gallery, Malaysia
- 2017 *KL BIENNALE 2017: Alami Belas – Beloved*, National Art Gallery, Malaysia
- 2015 *Optimistic Melancholics*, Richard Koh Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2007 *Anthology of Malaysian Short Stories*, YouRen Publishing, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2006 *Beautiful Things (Novel)*, Crown Publishing, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2003 *ASEAN Short Stories*, Lingzi Media Pte Ltd, Singapore

SELECTED NEWS

Art and Market, *Midpoint: Leon Leong – Authenticity through interdisciplinary practice*, 16 April 2023

Tatler, *Leon Leong's Stilt Houses Exhibition Explores the Floating World of Kampung Baru*, 29 Aug 2022

Malay Mail, *In ‘Stilt Houses’, artist Leon Leong explores the ‘floating world’ of Kampung Baru*, 11 June 2022

DESIGNBOOM, *Leon Leong recalls Malaysia's 1960s public housing with ‘Cracks in the Wall’*, 27 July 2019

To accompany *Making Room* by Leon Leong from 2 – 30 August 2025

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 & the artist, Leon Leong

Wei-Ling Gallery

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Designed by : Prissie Ong

Artwork photos courtesy of Leon Leong

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