

PearlLam Galleries

Shanghai

Beyond Image and Dreams:

GATOT PUJIARTO solo exhibition

Exhibition Dates 7 September–1 November, 2019 Monday–Sunday, 10:30am–7pm

Venue Pearl Lam Galleries, 181 Middle Jiangxi Road, G/F, Shanghai, China 200002

Shanghai—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present *Beyond Image and Dreams*, the first solo exhibition of works by Indonesian artist Gatot Pujiarto (b. 1970) in mainland China. Expanding upon his narrative of revealing overlooked realities in everyday life, Pujiarto's new body of work further emphasizes imminent issues in contemporary life, especially environmental destruction. The title *Beyond Image and Dreams* conveys both a sense of hope and caution towards the future of mankind, expressing the universality of the artist's concerns, as well as his unique approach of transforming trivial matters, weirdness, and abnormalities into a new truth and reality that awaits discovering.

Pujiarto was born in 1970 in Malang, East Java in Indonesia, far away from art centres like Bandung and Yogyakarta. Being an outsider of mainstream art, he works in an intuitive manner and bases his practice mostly on personal reflections on the happenings around him or from his memories, dreams, and emotions that deeply haunt his mind. Tactile in nature and expressive in spirit, Pujiarto's works feature fabric as their main medium; he creates textured images that stand out in Indonesian contemporary art.

The artist's works often feature figures or situations. He adds texture by pasting, patching, layering, tearing, binding, and creating patterns with fabric. Pujiarto also uses rough and spontaneous brushstrokes and dripping paint, and he plays with the deformation of forms to channel unseen scenarios related to a specific theme or perspective. His works are infused with what he describes as "the wild and chaotic circumstances of the inner mind".

The exhibition highlights a new series of large-scale tapestry works, including *Diseased Earth I* (2018) and *Diseased Earth II* (2019) that respond to the decaying state of our planet due to a lack of environmental awareness. Shattered or desolate, greenish or pale, the two works portray the artist's imaginary visions of the common world. Meanwhile, the six-metre-long *Frost* (2019) was inspired by the unusual emergence of frost in Indonesia due to extreme temperature drops. The artist applied two layers of fabric for texture, with the canvas sometimes showing in between. *Below Zero Degrees Celsius* (2019) further dramatizes weather anomalies with white fabric rolls protruding from all over the image, expressing the sensation of a freezing landscape.

Other featured paintings reflect Pujiarto's concerns about communities and society, as well as his thoughts on life itself. *Hurt Communities* (2019) warns how marginalized youths can be ticking time bombs if they are not given enough care. In the painting, the contour of a figure is formed through thickly treated fabrics with interspersed broken holes that reveal the bottom layer, merging the figure with its surroundings and background. *The World Is Spinning* (2019) comes out of the artist's concern for younger generations; more specifically, it warns of the problematic use of drugs and alcohol. In some of his works, Pujiarto adds scribbled text to contextualize the narrative. *Moksha* (2015) is an abstract work inspired by an enlightened spiritual experience together with the disappearance of the body in ancient Javanese beliefs.

Like Basquiat and Picasso, Pujiarto incorporates a strong element of primitivism in his works, as he depicts distorted, fragmented, simplified figures that are reminiscent of styles from ancient civilizations. However, Pujiarto's works are more similar to Basquiat's in that they juxtapose the old and contemporary. Indonesia has a rich history in traditional sculptures and masks, which can still be found embedded within its rapidly developing cityscapes. Pujiarto's portraits are incredibly stylized, resembling primitive masks and ancient humanoid figures, as he exaggerates the most basic features like the eyes, nose, mouth, jaw. By doing away with the subtleties of the face and body, his works burst with raw and uninhibited emotion.

The artist's early works also consisted of collage. Before discovering the use of fabric as a medium, he worked with magazine pages, which he would combine and draw on with acrylic paint. And upon his adoption of fabric and textile manipulation, Pujiarto's incorporation of collage allowed for a sense of storytelling through layered sequences. Similar to Rauschenberg, Pujiarto depicts the events of everyday life by using collage to construct compositions of detailed narratives in a sophisticated manner. However, Pujiarto's work also draws upon the strong cultural heritage of Indonesian textiles, widely known for Batik. This medium enriches the works' cultural roots and grounds them within his day-to-day life, while creating a lavish multi-layered visual feast for the eyes.

About Gatot Pujiarto

Gatot Pujiarto was born in 1970 in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. He graduated from the Department of Fine Art and Design at IKIP Malang in 1995. Currently, the artist lives and works in Malang.

Pujiarto's works explore abnormalities, weirdness, and tragedy. They are inspired by uncommon events or occurrences in everyday life, including stories heard from friends, TV shows, and the news. His works amuse and provoke audiences to reinterpret daily stories as a new reality, to enjoy them through evoking new emotions. The visual sensation in his works is combined with the unique textures that are created by pasting, patching, layering, tearing, binding, and by making fabric patterns.

The artist utilizes a distinctive collage and weathering technique on fabric, which is either applied on canvas or installed in the form of a tapestry. The bare threads and weave of cloth are revealed for his viewers' scrutiny. The broken cloth acts as a metaphor for the distress of man's action upon nature: negative, confused, and counterproductive to the overarching aim of world harmony. Bare tendrils accumulate to form the skeletal structure of the original cloth, reminding us through nostalgia of what it was originally.

Pujiarto's work has been widely exhibited throughout Indonesia and internationally. Selected exhibitions include *Stitching Stories* (2016), Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong SOHO; *Masquerade of Life* (2015), Pearl Lam Galleries, Singapore; *Shout—Indonesian Contemporary Art* (2014), Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma, Rome, Italy; *Jatim Art Now* (2012), National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia; and *Indonesian Contemporary Fiber Art* (2012), ArtOne New Museum, Jakarta, Indonesia.

About Pearl Lam Galleries

Founded by Pearl Lam, Pearl Lam Galleries is a driving force within Asia's contemporary art scene. With over 20 years of experience exhibiting Asian and Western art and design, it is one of the leading and most established contemporary art galleries to be launched out of China.

Playing a vital role in stimulating international dialogue on Chinese and Asian contemporary art, the Galleries is dedicated to championing artists who re-evaluate and challenge perceptions of cultural practice from the region. The Galleries in Hong Kong and Shanghai collaborate with renowned curators, each presenting distinct programming from major solo exhibitions, special projects and installations to conceptually rigorous group shows. Based on the philosophy of Chinese literati where art forms have no hierarchy, Pearl Lam Galleries is dedicated to breaking down boundaries between different disciplines, with a unique gallery model committed to encouraging cross-cultural exchange.

Pearl Lam Galleries represents an increasingly influential roster of contemporary artists. Chinese artists such as Su Xiaobai and Zhu Jinshi, who synthesize Chinese sensibilities with an international visual language, are presented internationally with work now included in major private and public collections worldwide. The Galleries has also introduced leading international artists, including Leonardo Drew and Yinka Shonibare CBE, to markets in the region, providing opportunities for new audiences in Asia to encounter their work. Pearl Lam Galleries encourages international artists to create new work that engages specifically with the region, collaborating to produce thought-provoking, culturally relevant work.

Press Enquiries

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