

# COCK HEAD AND OTHER STORIES

Sherman Ong

12 - 27 October 19

Opening Reception  
3pm, 12 October 2019

Guest Speaker  
Dr. Bridget Tracy Tan  
Director, Institute of Southeast  
Asian Arts & Art Galleries,  
Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts,  
Singapore



SUMA ORIENTALIS



I was reading a book about the ancient art of shapeshifting  
when a stray cat came into my garden  
with a dead moth in its jaws.

By definition, shapeshifter refers to a person or being  
with the ability to change their physical form at will.  
This idea of a shapeshifter is prevalent  
in many of the ancient cultures around the world.

I wondered if the cat had killed the moth.  
I didn't want to let its life be in vain.  
So I decided to make a pact with the cat.  
I offered it the new book I was reading  
in exchange for the dead moth.

The cat looked at me in the eyes.  
I wondered if we had met before.  
The exchange was quick but deliberate.  
I felt a sense of déjà vu.

The cat left behind something more than just a moth.  
I wondered if the cat had caught a shapeshifter.

I read in the news that there was an abundance of moths,  
which might interfere with our daily lives,  
much like the politicians in the country.  
I wondered if they are all shapeshifters.

I brushed aside that thought  
and carried on with my reading  
as peacefully as possible.  
I wondered if I could shapeshift.  
It was déjà vu all over again.

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Shapeshifter, 2014,  
60.5x49cm, 48x68cm, 58x48cm, 58x48cm, 58x48cm,  
Archival Print of Digital Photography, Edition of 6

## COCK HEAD AND OTHER STORIES

Cock Head and Other Stories ", the title to Sherman Ong's latest and first solo exhibition in his own motherland, examines the progressive state of our new Malaysia which happens after the May 9th general elections last year which saw an entirely new government replacing the old .

It is a delightful take on non-rescript events that recurses the socio-political landscape of Malaysia Baru ~ events which has permanently earned a space in the memory of the faithful trolls and sadly earns its awful integrity in the history of faux pas.

In his unique delivery of scripted punchlines and casual metaphors, Sherman, delivers his own narrative through his careful interpolation of photography, audio-visuals and embellishments of found objects into one-of-a-kind comical installations as he drives home his disgust by embedding them into his art.

After all, Sherman, whose art has taken

him around the world and garner him many international awards and representations in many biennales, is very much a Malacca-born Peranakan, who did not forgo his citizenship which he holds onto dearly till today.

In other stories, Sherman revisits the story and lives of the Vietnamese boat people whom because of unrest happening in their homeland at one time, many were forced to flee. As political changes dealt its deadly blow, as many as 600.00 lives perished into the unknown. From those who survived the ordeal, many were displaced all over the world, but as for those who repatriated, new lives began. Rising with the monsoon, Sherman captures their beginnings, like old seeds being replanted, shaped by ardent memories. These images takes on their happy times thereafter.



### ***Detail***

Kendak, 2019, Dimension Variable,  
Installation





**Installation  
View**  
Kendak, 2019,  
Dimension  
Variable,  
Installation



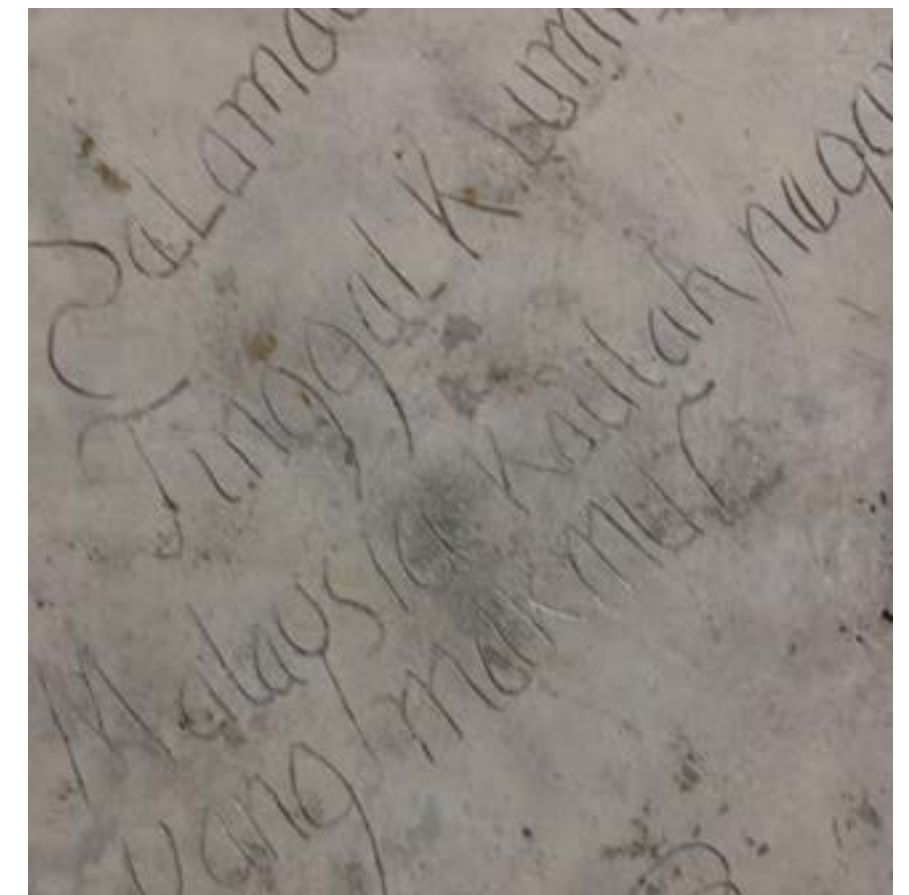
**Installation View**  
Malaysia Di Hujung Tanduk, 2019, Dimension Variable,  
Installation





Untuk Tikus Berdasi, 2019,  
Dimension Variable, Installation with Audio





**Installation View**  
 Zakar Naik, 2019, Dimension Variable,  
 Installation with Audio and Video

## MONSOON - THE MECHANICS OF RAIN, MOBILITY AND INTERVENTION

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The word 'monsoon' comes from an Arabic word 'Mausim' which describes a seasonal shifting of wind directions. The monsoons govern life in most parts of Southeast Asia, determining the profitable months of beach resorts and the agriculture calendar of farmers throughout the region. The landscape changes and human mobility is affected during the monsoons, but this intervention also creates a seasonal shifting in mindsets and psyches of the people as they go about negotiating this transient watery terrain. The sudden, heavy downpours have turned the region into one of the water-rich areas of the world but without the proper means of harvesting rainwater, the region still suffers from water-related problems.

This series contemplates the impact of the monsoons and its intervention on human mobility, the landscape and the psyche of the inhabitants of Hanoi. Taken through a moving van with the windows wound up, the images offer another way of looking at the urban landscape through the intervention of water, wind and glass.



Monsoon #6, 2005, 30x45cm,  
Archival Print of Digital Photography





(Left to Right)

Monsoon #24, 2005, 30x45cm

Monsoon #5, 2005, 30x45cm

Monsoon #2, 2005, 30x45cm

Archival Print of Digital Photography





Monsoon #11, 2005, 30x20cm,  
Archival Print of Digital Photography





(Left to Right)

Monsoon #7, 2005, 40x26.5cm

Monsoon #26, 2005, 30x20cm

Monsoon #25, 2005, 40x26.5cm

Monsoon #23, 2005, 30x20cm

Archival Print of Digital Photography





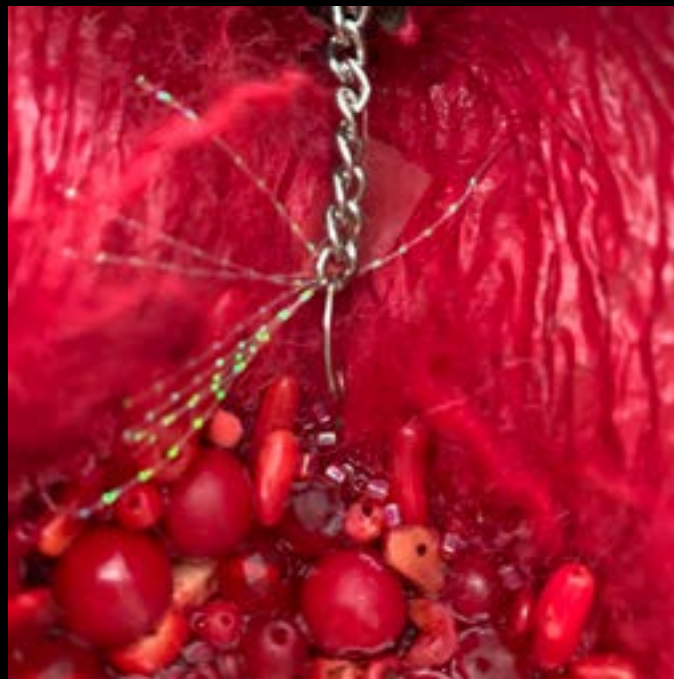
(Left to Right)

Monsoon #3, 2005, 40x60cm

Monsoon #10, 2005, 40x60cm

Monsoon #12, 2005, 40x60cm

Archival Print of Digital Photography



***Detail***  
Bukak Ke?, 2019,  
Dimension Variable, Installation



***Installation View***

Menunggu Hang Tuah Masuk Melamar, 2019,  
Dimension Variable, Installation



## HANOIHAIKU

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I am interested in the idea of imperfection, in delicate, transition and its relationship quiet, nuanced moments. with the memory of the past, the changing of values, the passing of tradition and the aspirations of a different reality. I am keen to explore this idea through the social/private spaces within an evolving urban environment like Hanoi.

This series is presented like a visual Haiku. Intentionally left untitled, the juxtaposition of images produces their own narratives, temporal connections, and is open to many interpretations infused with the personal experiences of individual viewers. Similar to the Japanese Haiku, they are observations in its purest form, distilled into a simple gesture, a moment of reflection, a point in a continuum, touching on the beauty of

### ***Detail***

HanoiHaiku: Mannequin, 2006, 60x120cm,  
Archival Print of Digital Photography







HanoiHaiku: Mannequin, 2006, 60x120cm,  
Archival Print of Digital Photography



HanoiHaiku: Gathering, 2006, 60x120cm,  
Archival Print of Digital Photography



HanoiHaiku: Titanic, 2006, 60x120cm,  
Archival Print of Digital Photography





HanoiHaiku: Peacock, 2006, 60x120cm,  
Archival Print of Digital Photography



HanoiHaiku: River, 2006, 60x120cm,  
Archival Print of Digital Photography





2016	2009
Sovereign Asian Art Award (Top 30 Finalist), Hong Kong	Forget Africa Commission, Rotterdam International Film Festival, Netherlands
2015	
Prudential Eye Awards (Photography), Singapore	2007 Fukuoka Asian Art Museum Artist Residency Award, Fukuoka, Japan
2013	
Honorable Jury Mention (Motherland), 18th Contemporary Art Festival Videobrasil, Brazil	2005 Special Jury Prize (Exodus), Independent Film & Video Awards, Hong Kong, China
2011	
Nominated for the APB-Singapore Art Museum SignatureArtPrize, Singapore	2005 ArtConnexions: Goethe-Institut Artist Residency Award, Singapore
2010	
ICON de Martell Cordon Bleu Photography Award, Singapore	2004 Best Experimental Film (Exodus), Int'l Panorama of Independent Filmmakers, Greece
2010	
Hubert Bals Fund (Script Development), Netherlands	2004 Special Jury Prize (Exodus), Malaysian Video Awards, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2009	
Special Mention(Ming Wong Singapore Pavilion) Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy	2004 Special Festival Prize (Exodus), La Cittadella del Corto Short Film Festival, Italy
2009	
Best Screenplay (Hashi), Singapore Film Awards, Singapore	2002 Best Documentary (The Ground I Stand), Malaysian Video Awards, Malaysia

RESIDENCIES, EXHIBITIONS, COMMISIONS

RESIDENCIES

2005 Goethe Institute Art  
Connexions Residency, Hanoi,  
Vietnam

2007 Fukuoka Asian Art Museum,  
Japan

2009 Rotterdam Film Festival  
Forget Africa Residency, Dar  
Es Salaam, Tanzania

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2018 Nusantara, The Apothea @  
Suma Orientalis, Malaysia

2014 Spurious Stories from the  
Land and Water, Art Plural  
Gallery, Singapore

2010 Ticket Seller, Sikkema  
Jenkins & Co., New York, USA

2009 Sherman Ong, Contemporary  
Art Centre of South Australia,  
Australia

2008 Hanoi Monogatari (Hanoi  
Story), Zeit Foto Salon, Tokyo,  
Japan

2008 HanoiHaiku: Month of  
Photography Asia,  
2902 Gallery, Singapore

2007 Missing You, Fukuoka Art  
Asian Museum, Fukuoka,  
Japan

2006 HanoiHaiku, Angkor  
Photography Festival,  
Siem Reap, Cambodia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 Storytelling in Southeast  
Asian Film, Nanyang  
Academy of Fine Arts,  
Singapore

2018 Beyond Bliss, Bangkok Art  
Biennale, Bangkok Art  
& Cultural Centre, Thailand

2018 Now Here Once Again, Yeosu  
International Art Festival,  
Seoul, Korea

2018 Amek Gambar, Peranakan  
Museum, Singapore

2017 Sunshower, Contemporary  
Art from South East Asia,  
National Art Centre Tokyo,  
Japan

2017 Move on Asia 2017\_Mobilized  
Representation, Alternative  
Space Loop, Seoul, Korea

2017 Joined by the Crown, George  
Town Festival, Penang,  
Malaysia

2017 Art of Things — Actors,  
Singapore Open Media Art  
Festival, Seoul, South Korea

2016 South East Asia Platform, Art  
Stage, Singapore

2016 Sovereign Asian Art Award  
(Top 30 Finalist), Hong Kong

2016 The City of Homeless, Arko  
Art Centre, Seoul, Korea

2016 Yin Chuan Biennale, Yin  
Chuan, China

2015 Prudential Eye Awards, Art  
Science Museum, Singapore

2015 Open Seas, Museum of  
Contemporary Art Lyon,  
France

2015 Singapore en France SG50,  
Cinematheque Francaise,  
Paris, France

2015 Mind the Gap: Mapping the  
Other, National Library,  
Singapore

2015 Dreams: Moving Images,  
M+ Hong Kong

2015 Rendez-vous with the  
Museum of Contemporary  
Art Lyon, ICA, Singapore

2015 Flooding in the Time of  
Drought, Centre for  
Contemporary Art Centre,  
Singapore

2014 Daegu Photo Biennale, Korea

2014 Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale,  
Fukuoka, Japan

2014 Lost in Landscape, MART  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
of Trento and Rovereto, Italy

2013 Asia Pacific Triennial of  
Contemporary Art (Cinema),  
Gallery of Modern Art,  
Brisbane, Australia.

2013 Cinema Encounters:  
Sherman Ong, Casa Asia,  
Barcelona & Madrid, Spain

2013 18th Contemporary Art  
Festival Videobrasil,  
Sao Paulo, Brazil

2012 Little Sun by Olafur Eliasson,  
Tate Modern, London, United  
Kingdom

2012 Asia Serendipity, Teatro  
Fernando Gomez, Photo  
Espana Madrid, Spain

2012 Cross-Scape, GoEun Museum  
of Photography, Busan, Korea

2011 Unseen: Cinema of the 21st  
Century, Queensland  
Art Gallery, Australia

2011 Changwon Asian Art Festival,  
Sungsan Arts Hall, Changwon,  
Korea

2011 17th International  
Contemporary Art Festival  
Videobrasil, Sao Paulo, Brazil

2011 Cross-Scape, Seoul &  
Jeonbuk Kumho Museum of  
Art, Jeonju, Korea

2010 Malaysia-Singapore Cinema,  
Centre Pompidou, Paris,  
France

2010 Nanjing Biennale, Jiangsu Art  
Museum, Nanjing, China

2010 Rainbow Asia, Hangaram  
Museum, Seoul Art Centre,  
Seoul, South Korea

2009 Ming Wong:Life of Imitation,  
Singapore Pavilion, Venice  
Biennale, Venice, Italy

2009 Code Share:10 Biennales, 20  
Artists, Contemporary Art  
Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania

2009 Fluid Zone:Jakarta Biennale,  
National Gallery, Jakarta,  
Indonesia

COMMISSIONS

2011 I Want to Remember,  
commissioned by Singapore  
Arts Festival

2010 When The End of Winter is  
Almost Spring, commissioned  
by Singapore Arts Festival

2010 Memories of a Burning  
Tree, commissioned by  
Rotterdam International Film  
Festival, Forget Africa  
Programme, Netherlands

2011 Banjir Kemarau | Flooding  
in the Time of Drought,  
commissioned by Singapore  
Biennale Nominated for  
the APB-Singapore Art  
Museum Signature Art  
Prize 2011

2009 3 works on Cinema (Ticket  
Seller, Poster Painter and  
Collector), commissioned  
by Tang Fu Kuen, curator for  
Singapore Pavilion Jury  
Special Mention in Venice  
Biennale 2009

2006 HDB Housing Project,  
commissioned by the  
National Museum Singapore

2003 Exodus – Wanita Yang  
Berlari commissioned by the  
Indonesian Contemporary  
Dance Centre

2002 60s Now, commissioned by  
the Singapore Art Museum



Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan  
Singapore Art Museum, Singapore  
Seoul Art Centre, Korea  
Malaysia-Singapore Collection, National University of Singapore



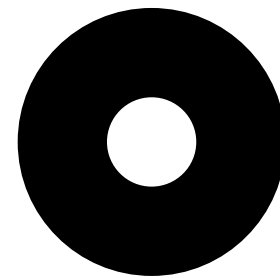
***Stills***

Nusantara: The Seas Will Sing And The Wind Will Carry Us,  
2010-2018, Dimension Variable, Video



*Detail*  
Tak Tau Chai Si, 2019,  
Dimension Variable, Installation with Video





**S U M A   O R I E N T A L I S**

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