

Towards the front of the gallery lies a series of stone photographic sculptures and volcanic rocks with images imprinted on selected facets. The images are selected partly to harmonise with the textures and colours of the rocks. They are also specific subject matters: a representation of an ancient marsh, a forest, and excavated soil, all of which relate to stages of the area's geological history. Teh visited a Resor Dago Pakar construction site with Ikhram, who found deposits of clay and raw coal. Ikhram speculated the possibility that the area had been a marsh thousands of years ago. The area has been a plantation amongst surrounding forests till recent years before being acquired by resorts developer Resor Dago Pakar. Extracted from the outcropped site, the rocks now bear anachronic imageries of their previous envinrons.



After Monument: Imprinting Geological Traces 3
2019
photographic imprint on found rock
18 x 39 x 16 cm

When I asked Teh about her motivation to make artworks, she mentioned "learning" from nature through conversations, research and art-making. This learning process took up a significant time of her residency, as she consulted activists and experts, went on site visits and accumulated information in Bandung before she began her material explorations in the studio. A majority of the research and scouting trips were conducted around the vicinity of Selasar Sunaryo Art Space in northern Bandung with the help of local research collaborator I Made Ananta.

Teh's installation piece *After Monument: Aquiver of Time*, consists of a H-beam structure imprinted with a photographic image, with its base buried in a layer of soil. The beam itself is a piece of rusted iron with its top part cut at an angle. It was sourced second-hand from Jatayu Technical Market and welded on a base. The photograph printed on the beam shows a rocky surface with some stray vines and leaves, reminiscent of a cliffside. It is in fact a section of the Dutch Cave from Taman Hutan Raya in northern Bandung. The cave was an early 1900s military bunker constructed by the Dutch for the storage of weapons and prisoners, hollowed out from a large igneous breccia rock outcrop. The mineral structure of the igneous breccia was deemed suitable for constructing man-made caves due to its fairly rigid and stable nature, as well as its ease to be hollowed out and shaped. Teh's residency coincided with the rainy season; on the day the image was captured, the porous rock cave was inundated and continuously dripped water. The image imprinted upon the rusty beam captures weathering marks of water dripping down the rock face.

Teh consulted and collaborated with geologist Rinaldi Ikhram, who once explained that volcanic rocks commonly found in the area, such as the igneous breccia, play an important role due to

Rock is material to make with, it is also a testament of the passing of geological time. Ikhram once noted that the role of a geologist is to tell stories that are beyond the brief period of Anthropocene, stories constructed through rigorous research that serve to deepen our understanding of a place. Teh's interaction and learning from Ikhram spurs her questioning and interpretation of the local geology, lending her art practice permeable to Ikhram's scientific discipline.

Interdisciplinary collaborations in Art and other fields have been increasingly prevalent. In this case, the collaboration between Teh, geologist Ikhram and local research collaborator Ananta seek to establish a common ground between Art, Geology and the urbanisation of Bandung. Modern Art gained autonomy through distinction and dissociation from



After Monument: Stasis (detail)
2019
photographic imprint on found rock with iron off-cuts
28 x 61.6 x 4 cm

Mountain Pass: Negotiating Ambivalence
A solo exhibition by Zen Teh, curated by Hera
13 July - 10 August 2019

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Images: © Zen Teh, photo by Adi
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MIZUMA GALLERY

Executive Director Sueo Mizuma established
Mizuma Art Gallery in Tokyo in 1994. Since
its opening in Gillman Barracks, Singapore
in 2012, the gallery aims for the promotion
of East Asian artists in the region as well as
the introduction of Southeast Asian artists
to the international art scene. In 2014,
the artist residency space "Rumah Kijang
Mizuma" opened in Yogyakarta, Indonesia,
to create a new platform for dialogue by
supporting exchanges between East Asian
and Southeast Asian artists. In 2018, a
new gallery space, "Mizuma, Kips & Wada
Art" opened in New York, USA, as a shared
collaboration between Mizuma Gallery from
Tokyo and Singapore, Kips Gallery from New
York, and Wada Garou from Tokyo.

Mizuma Gallery features the works of
Japanese artists including Aida Makoto,
Aiko Miyanaga, Amano Yoshitaka, Ikeda
Manabu, Tenmyouya Hisashi, and Yamaguchi
Akira. Moreover, it showcases the works of
renown East Asian artists such as Ai Weiwei,
Du Kun, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Ken + Julia
Yonetani, and Zhao Zhao. The gallery also
features the creations of prominent and
emerging artists from the region including
Agan Harahap, Albert Yonathan Setyawan,
Angki Purbandono, Entang Wiharso, Gilang
Fradika, Heri Dono, indieguerillas, Made
Wianta, Mark Justiniani, Nasirun, Robert
Zhao Renhui, and Zen Teh. Mizuma Gallery
participates annually in international art
fairs including Art Basel Hong Kong and The
Armory Show, New York.

GILLMAN BARRACKS

Set in a former military barracks dating back to
1936 and surrounded by lush tropical greenery,
the Gillman Barracks visual arts cluster was
launched in September 2012. Jointly developed
by government agencies, the Singapore Economic
Development Board (EDB), the National
Arts Council (NAC) and the JTC Corporation
(JTC), Gillman Barracks' vision is to be Asia's
destination for the presentation and discussion of
international and Southeast Asian art.
For more information, please visit
www.gillmanbarracks.com



After Monument: Precipice 3
2019
found stone, iron off-cuts
11.5 x 12 x 7 cm

the everyday, as the white cube gallery
space reinforces the unique status of
art through isolating it and making it
the sole object of focus. Ever since the
formalisation of the white cube gallery
space, generations of artists have since
reacted in rebellion to re-join art with its
context and its social reality. Teh's work
with her collaborators can be seen
in the same light.

During her period of residency, Teh
attempted to understand Bandung as
both subject and context, navigating
the slippery slopes of her status as an
outsider. While in Bandung, I had a
conversation with Teh about her soil
installation *After Monument: Mountain
Pass* in one of the galleries of Selasar
Sunaryo Art Space. The work was
made up of soil from Resor Dago Pakar
construction site piled impressively
between two display walls, eventually
this work was not able to be shipped to
Singapore due to custom restrictions.
Resor Dago Pakar construction site is the
largest project currently being developed
in Dago Pakar. In Teh's installation,
gold trimmings trace outlines of the
mound which was partially terraced.

Teh talked about how the flowing
gold lines represent the flow of water,
but also refer to a certain fluidity in
how developers skirt around building
regulations in Dago area. On the surface,
there are currently strict regulations
on the percentage of building coverage
ratios allowed in a Dago land parcel². As
Northern Bandung is a water catchment
area, overbuilding and covering surfaces
with concrete will cause rain water to
flow southwards, thus increasing the
potential for floods. Ironically, there are
loopholes, both within the convoluted
writing of the regulations itself, as well
as in the tentative implementation and
reinforcement of these regulations.
Developers and associated businesses
are able to devise creative solutions to
undermine the restrictions which were
initially mooted towards the greater good
of Bandung and its residents; intentions
for long term sustainability do not
translate as readily as material gains
in the near future.

Geographer David Harvey eloquently
surmised about the inherent advantage
of capitalist collective will, as well as the
necessity of translation for alternative



After Monument: Mountain Pass
2019
soil, gold leaf
dimensions variable

² For more details, see: Gubernur Jawa Barat, *Pedoman Pengendalian Kawasan Bandung Utara Sebagai Kawasan Strategis Provinsi Jawa Barat*, http://dih.jabarprov.go.id/home/Detail/Produk_Hukum/7180.html, (accessed July 2019).

collective movements: "Without
translation, collective forms of action
become impossible. All potential for an
alternative politics disappear. The fluid
ability of capitalists and their agents to

translate among themselves using the
basic languages of money, commodity,
and property (backed, where necessary,
with the theoretical language of
reductionist economics) is one of their
towering class strengths. Any insurgent
oppositional movement must do this just
as well if not better."³

In recent years, changes to the
climate and the natural environment
are undeniable. Despite this, a real
alternative to liberal capitalism, seems
inconceivable—a crisis for both the
environment and man's imagination.
The potential of art as activism does
not necessarily lie in its ability to create
changes upfront, but in its potential
to develop a language that translates,
whether to inspire understanding, to
challenge, to subvert or to imagine an
alternative present and future.

- Hera

After Monument: The Currency of Land
2019
gold leaf on found rock
16.5 x 22 x 7.5 cm

³ David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 245.

About the Curator



Hera (b. 1988, Indonesia) is a researcher working in
the expanded field of art and design. She is currently
pursuing an MA (Research) in Spaces of the Curatorial,
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She
is also a recipient of the NTU-NHB grant from the
National Heritage Board Singapore for her research on
the history of exhibitions in Singapore. Prior to that,
Hera worked as a designer for a museum planning
and design firm. Some of the projects she has worked
on include the design of permanent and temporary
exhibitions in institutions such as Asian Civilisations
Museum, and the Former Ford Factory. Hera lives and
works in Singapore.

Mountain Pass: Negotiating Ambivalence
A solo exhibition by Zen Teh

During a casual meeting at the Bangkok
University Gallery, Thai curator Ark
Fongsmut put forth the following
question to me and Zen Teh, "Why
do so many artists in Singapore make
works about nature?" There were some
names that immediately came to our
minds: Robert Zhao's photographs
and museum displays that explore
scientific classification and its narrative
that questions the conception of
"truth"; Ang Song Nian's photographic
documentations and installations on the
theme of landscape and human invasion;
Jason Lim, Grace Tan, Ang Soo Koon too
have created significant bodies of works
that deal reflexively around the notion of
"nature"... and perhaps the list of artists
will go on longer.

Whether or not this qualifies as
statistically "many", Ark's question
presents us with a provocative
supposition: Is there really something
about Singapore that prompts her
artists to produce works about nature?
In this case what is Singapore being
compared with? Thailand? Southeast
Asia? However, at some point addressing
these questions could seem Sisyphian,
because their underlying generalisation
prompts even more questions concerning
our understanding of *nature*, a word
whose meaning encompasses a vast
milieu, and whose conception is culturally
and geographically specific¹. Travel
accentuates this semantic plurality—a
recurring motif in *Mountain Pass*,
which was initially staged in Selasar

Sunaryo Art Space as a culmination of
Zen Teh's two-month residency
in Bandung, Indonesia.

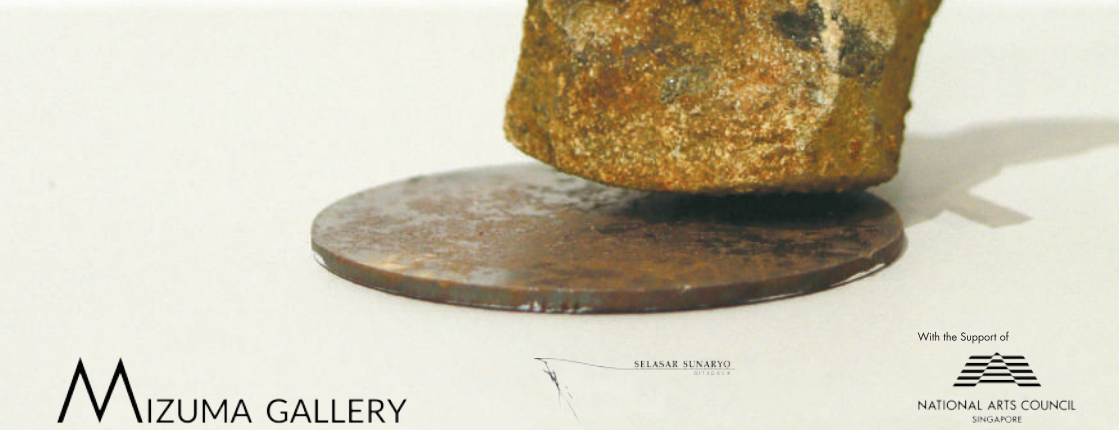
Mountain Pass: Negotiating Ambivalence,
currently staged in Mizuma Gallery at
Gillman Barracks, Singapore; consists
of mixed media installations,
stone and metal assemblages and
photographic sculptures. Throughout
the variety of expressive mediums,
Teh's mastery of photography and
photographic printing is the cornerstone
of her artistic articulation.



After Monument: Imprinting Geological Traces 1
2019
photographic imprint on found rock
16 x 17.5 x 14 cm

¹ Consider perhaps "nature" from English language in comparison to its Bahasa Indonesia counterpart "alam". While the former is a concept that is dually distinct from human activities, the latter is closer to the notions of "environment" and "universe".

MIZUMA GALLERY





ZEN TEH

Born in Singapore, 1988
Lives and works in Singapore

Education

2011 Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography and Digital Imaging, School of Art, Design and Media, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Solo Exhibitions

- 2019 *Mountain Pass: Negotiating Ambivalence*, Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia and Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2018 *Garden State Palimpsest*, ARTIST+RUN, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2017 *Vestiges: Tracing Urban-nature*, Alliance Française de Singapour, Singapore
- 2015 *Sensing States: Healing Spaces*, Art Science Museum, Singapore
- 2014 *Calls for a New Natural Order*, 2902 Gallery, Singapore

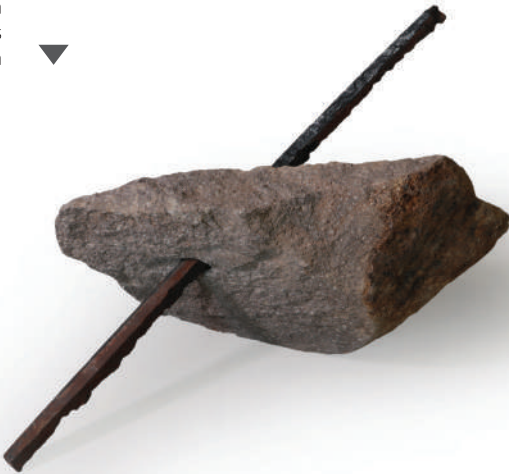
Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2019 *Mediated Realities*, Jendela (Visual Arts Space), Esplanade–Theatres on the Bay, Singapore (commissioned artwork)
- 2018 *From the Archives*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- OH! Emerald Hill*, OH! Open House, Singapore
- Folkloristics*, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore
- 2017 *Empirical Atlas*, Pearl Lam Galleries, Singapore
- Super/Natural*, Yogya Art Lab, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- Good OH! Holland Village*, OH! Open House, Singapore
- 2016 *In Silence*, Pearl Lam Galleries, Singapore
- Project Deng Zi*, Art Outreach, Singapore
- 2015 *Becoming of Age - NOISE Alumni Exhibition*, Nila Galeri and Foothills Fort Canning, Singapore



After Monument: Intrusion 1
2019
photographic imprint on found rock with iron off-cuts
33 x 52 x 21 cm

After Monument: Intrusion 2
2019
photographic imprint on found rock with iron off-cuts
22 x 34 x 27 cm



After Monument: Imprinting Geological Traces 2
2019
photographic imprint on found rock
36 x 33.5 x 17 cm



After Monument: Unearthing 1
2019
found stone, cement
10 x 17 x 5 cm

After Monument: Precipice 2
2019
found stone, iron off-cuts
15 x 16 x 11 cm



After Monument: Precipice 1
2019
found stone, iron off-cuts
15 x 25 x 9 cm

After Monument: Unearthing 2
2019
found stone, cement
13 x 25 x 15 cm

After Monument: Stasis
2019
photographic imprint on found rock with iron off-cuts
28 x 61.6 x 4 cm



After Monument: Aquifer of Time
2019
photographic imprint on used H-beam iron pillar, volcanic soil, and video installation
dimensions variable
(installation view: *Mountain Pass: Negotiating Ambivalence*, Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia, 2019)



MOUNTAIN PASS:

Negotiating Ambivalence

- 6th Dali International Photography Festival, Dali, China
- The Days We Wander/Wonder*, DECK by 2902 Gallery, Singapore
- The 3rd ArtBridge Chiang Rai Art Exhibition: Tribute To Thawan Duchanee*, ArtBridge Gallery, Chiang Rai, Thailand
- Artist Resource Platform*, The Lab, Centre of Contemporary Art, Singapore
- The Art Incubator 5: From When We Last Met*, Project Space, LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore
- 2013 *Exposure 2013 Exhibition*, See I Exhibition Space, Long Island City, New York, United States
- 2nd ArtBridge Chiang Rai Art Exhibition*, ArtBridge Gallery, Chiang Rai, Thailand
- Bright Lights*, Galerie Steph and BOTOS, Scotts Square, Singapore
- SPOT ART*, ARTrium@MICA, Singapore
- ASEAN Youth Camp 2013 Exhibition*, National Museum of Singapore, Singapore
- The Apprenticeship Programme (TAP)*, SAM at 8Q, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
- 2012 *Earth Messages: Perspectives from Environmental Artists*, NTU Innovation Centre Gallery, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Awards

- 2019 Finalist, IMPART AWARDS 2019, Singapore
- 2017 Winner, 7th France + Singapore Photographic Arts Award, Singapore
- 2014 Finalist, Hariban Awards, Benrido Collotype Atelier, Kyoto, Japan
- 2011 Honourable Mention, Adobe Design Achievement Awards, United States
- Silver Award (Photography), Crowbar Awards, Association of Accredited Advertsing Agents, Singapore
- 2005 Highly Commended, 24th UOB Painting of the Year, Singapore

Residencies

- 2018-19 Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia
- 2013 The Art Incubator, Angkrit Gallery, Chiang Rai, Thailand

Public Collections

Singapore Art Museum, Singapore