

16 APRIL - 22 MAY 2022



Staging Conflict
Hacking Diversity

SOLO

EXHIBITION

by

GILANG FRADIKA

MIZUMA GALLERY

Collage and Liminality

Notes on the reading
of a series of works
by Gilang Fradika

by **Hendra Himawan**

COLLAGE

The practice of collage is an important gateway to Gilang Fradika's creative process. In this context, collage is interpreted as a process of selecting objects, blending images, and utilising layering to build fragments and visual dramatics. Collage is also understood as a series of work to process the configuration of objects and symbolic forms in a surreal manner, and to develop them for artistic needs as well as symbolic representations of factual events. The multi-layered and overlapping objects and signs imply the burden of knowledge and experience as a model and method: to elevate aesthetic experiences, construct ideas, discover artistic tactics, and appreciate the creative process itself. Like a collage, the configuration of objects and signs in Gilang's paintings is a strategy he employed for putting together a series of knowledge and life experiences. Although the visualisation of the objects appears to be imaginative, these works literally 'traverse' the real world.

Conceptually, the practice of collaging is a *de facto* metaphor for postmodern ontology which manifests in the hybridity of visual arts and the practice of Remix culture that is dense with pluralism and multiplicity. Collage provides a democratic space for diverse cultural expressions by placing sources of knowledge in a balanced and equitable composition. On the other hand, this integral practice of hybridity has the ability to hide traces of the object's origin through a value-free play of symbols.

Since those early beginnings, collage has been adapted by all kinds of artists working in two and three dimensions, as well as in time-based media such as film, video, and digital processes, with varying degrees of cultural critique.¹ Born from the artistic practice of Cubism, collage became a method of finding a form of representation that allows the audience to feel a *trompe l'esprit*—some kind of ontological oddity.² Collage went on

¹ Green, J. R. (2000, May). p. 3.

² Brockelman, T. P. (2001). pp. 117-118.

to be a conceptual tool supporting the discourse of existentialism in the Surrealist and Pop era, but was increasingly political in the 'ironic' Dadaist era. Collage then became a medium for mainstream criticism of world wars through the intersection between politics, economics and art.³

Philosophically, collage offers the idea of 'borderlands epistemology'⁴ which emphasises its ability to value the distinctive understandings of various cultural forms, and deliberately forms a meeting space for various experiences, modes, and knowledge systems. The key to the politicisation of collage is this contradiction: combining two different objects or more to create new experiences and meanings. The meaning created in the collage varies too, depending on its constituting signs. Each sign has its own historicity, and when combined, they create layers of meaning within the collage. This totality of meanings fundamentally undermines the narrative structure. This is one of many distinctive characteristics of the postcolonial cultural theory paradigm.

Likewise with the idea of objects Gilang presented in his work. He combined various signs from his lengthy experiences and sources of knowledge he encountered along the way as a reference for his work, whether overarching narratives in art history or virtual information trajectories in everyday life. The absence of harmony in Gilang's work often leads to the discovery of contradictions. His collage is both poetic and political, framed by a critical attitude about the brevity of time and the speed of technology, a post-colonial view of the world⁵ and how such a view is represented on canvas. Thus, by juxtaposing the signs, we can see the immensity of the field of interpretation, interdisciplinary themes, as well as the 'intersection of multiple discourses'.⁶ Through the overlapping of the objects he painted, between the real and the imaginary, between logical and intuitive, Gilang's visual practice reinforces the important

proposition of collage as a cross-border practice with epistemological implications: *'The borders here are not really fixed. Our minds must be as ready to move as capital is, to trace its paths and to imagine alternative destinations'*.⁷

LIMINALITY

Discussions regarding 'boundaries' is a contemporary issue that emerges in post-colonial Asia. The problem of boundaries is not only present in the realm of geography, but also of identity. In catastrophism, Gilang's works traverse the binary narrative of the individual struggle over identity and the excessive behaviour. He presents the canvas as an image of a "border-crossing" meeting, where the hybrid of identity moves in various cultural spaces.⁸ These spaces provide opportunities for diverse individuals and conditions to meet, regardless of the boundaries of their essence. In the hands of Gilang, collage has become a genius medium to produce a new language of expression for a dynamic identity. In his paintings, Gilang depicts chaotic individual gestures, strange objects, imaginary landscapes, ambiguous moments, and awkward fragments of everyday events. Melancholic narratives unfold from these dramatic scenes, such as the question of existence, celebration of tragedy, precarious position and society, ambiguity of time and conditions, or escapism which has become a tradition.

Gilang interprets the reality of life and his experience as an individual who consciously threads in the liminal space, and keeping himself distanced. This way, he often uncovers camouflaged individual subjects, or collective mimicry, to construct identity in cultural spaces that are dense with power structures. Through his observations, he also finds himself at the convergence of two seemingly contradictory values – tradition and modern. This intersection possesses a unique network of values and knowledge, insofar as they contribute significantly to the birth of collective identity and

³ Hoffman, K. (1989). pp. 1-37.

⁴ Harding, S. (1996). pp. 15-26.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Brockelman, T. P. (2001). p. 2.

⁷ Mohanty, C. T. (2003). p. 251.

⁸ Homi K Bhabha. (1994). p.36.

wisdom. For example, in Gilang's works that raise issues of collective and local beliefs, rich with ritual symbols and interpretation of values, we see that identity is not something that is inherent, but is in fact a series of processes that continue to grow and to be reflected in his works.

Translating these ideas to canvas, Gilang simultaneously uses the image of symbols and their values, and overlaps them between objective facts, representations, imaginations, and associations that arise, to display the extent of fact in this liminal space. Within the liminal space, Gilang's works are not limited by any value and essence. He conveys ideas as well as embeds memories, summarises and questions at the same time, dismisses conclusions and creates possibilities. His paintings encourage us to explore each overlapping object, symbol, and fragment, and discover new, layered meanings. In turn, Gilang's works encourage bodily experience and the experience of viewing, as explained by Gestalt principles, that we are able to understand a work while simultaneously uncovering the elements of its constituting objects and constructing new meanings each time.

STAGING

For artists, point of view is crucial in understanding the phenomenon of massive cross-culturalism. Geographical setting can determine how we absorb our knowledge, and how emotions give birth to expression. Gilang deliberately employs local thinking for reading the global phenomenon and all the dualities that arise. Instead of guiding and judging, he decided to put on stage every contradiction, *staging conflict - hacking diversity*. Generally, we always strive to create a harmonious relationship between discourse and practice, idealism and market, individual and collective, local and global, which on many levels are often contradicted. The local gesture played by Gilang is: imagine a meeting between the above relations in the form of an

equal and balanced exchange of values through the acknowledgment of each other's potential. He realised that the challenge for local artists seemed to be in the openness in accepting different ideas. In addition, he underlined the importance of learning to understand the situation and the position of each component in the art scene, along with their varying visions and ideologies. When differences and disagreements are considered as opposites, and turning away is a tactical option, any agreement taken is but a sheath to reduce conflict. At this point, aspiration for agreement and togetherness has become a utopia. Therefore, staging differences is an important strategy to see the reciprocal relationship, to see possible exchanges, and to unravel potential conflicts between the two parties. At that point, we will have to be able to accept criticism when dealing with conflict.

The idea of 'staging' is raised by Gilang in the visual landscape of his painting. Contradictory fragments along with the gesture of the performative subject were chosen to present the narrative of the work to make it more alive. Stage and performativity are two terms that often take place in our lives but we are rarely conscious of them, and Gilang cleverly uses them as his artistic choices. The visuality of the stage is depicted as in traditional art performances (shadow puppet, traditional plays, et cetera), and the performativity of the actors as the subjects in it. Such are the fragments and the dramatics that appear in Gilang's works. These two things also coincide with his background of agricultural society, where identity problems manifest in the grey areas of attitudes and daily behaviour. And the philosophical values of tradition often become a catharsis for exhibiting these ambiguities of identity.

PRESENCE AND ABSENCE

Gilang's works are immersive. Memory and experience work on a less personal level, but they are able to capture nuances and retain certain

moments of specific cultural or historical events. These moments are remembered through a network of objects that is closer to a visual index rather than just symbols or icons in the semiotic tradition. Through indexicality, Gilang's paintings offer the viewer a chance to examine objects that represent other ideas that may have otherwise been ignored. In his works, he concealed several figures or objects that significantly shape our interpretation of his paintings. By having them hidden, he implies that there are other voices, views, or experiences which are often overlooked. The incompleteness offered by collage allows the artist to embed autobiographical features into his works, encouraging the audience to be collaboratively involved in interpreting them. This tactic can be understood as a critical self-awareness of the artist's power over the work, as well as an experimental space for the viewer's interpretation.

The traces identified in Gilang's works are, to some extent, related to the themes of 'loss' and 'absence'. Loss is a mental experience of the absence of an object, whereas absence is *'the state of being away, not present' whilst presence is defined not only as 'the factor state of being present' but also 'something felt or imagined to be present'*.⁹ In this context, experience plays a significant role in defining absence. Often, it brings the audience in a state of perception that 'something' is missing. A simple analogy that we can use is; if the experience requires physical presence, then absence is very much dependent on moments and memories. This shows that the human physical and mental experience is very significant. The mental experience specifically refers to the liminal space, where the threshold is the human experience itself, and nothing exists beyond that. Thus, as Gilang's mode of operation, collage is not only interwoven with the composition of objects and images, but also a series of life experiences that can be traced through a series of signs in his paintings.

The physical experience of viewing the work

⁹ The Chambers English Dictionary. 7th edn. (1990). Edinburgh: W & R Chambers Ltd.

along with the mental experience of dealing with the 'absence' of signs in Gilang's paintings actually provide us the opportunity to enter the liminal space to derive a personal, poetic, and sentimental meaning from reality. By allowing each sign to find its own interpretation, Gilang's work acts as a catharsis that leads us to explore the reality of the many crossroads in life that we have to choose and face.

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Hendra Himawan (born 1985 in Surakarta, Indonesia) is an art curator and writer who works predominantly with young artists to conduct studies related to artistic research-based methods of art creation. He actively organises various exhibitions since 2009, through his role as the curator of Sangkring Art Space (2010-2012), co-curator of the *Biennale Jogja XIII: Hacking Conflict* (2015) and *Biennale Jogja XIV: STAGE OF HOPELESSNESS* (2017) and the curator of *Festival Kesenian Yogyakarta* (2018-2019). Himawan was involved in various artist exchange programs and collaborative art work between Indonesia and Malaysia (2015 - 2020), and since 2021, he has been a member of the research team for the artist incubator program *Broken White Project* at Ace House Collective, Yogyakarta. Hendra Himawan lives and works between Yogyakarta and Surakarta, Indonesia, where he also serves as a lecturer at the Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts and Design (FSRD), ISI Surakarta, Indonesia.

ARTIST



Gilang Fradika

Born in Majenang, Indonesia, 1988
Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

EDUCATION

2012
BFA in Graphic Arts, Department of Fine Arts, Yogyakarta State University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022
Staging Conflict, Hacking Diversity, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore

2019
(UN)COVER, RUCI Art Space, Jakarta, Indonesia

2015
A Long Way & Secret Garden, Dgtmb Versus Project, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021
wARTa, Jogja Gallery, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Broken White Project #6, Ace House, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2020
RASA, Alila Seminyak, Bali, Indonesia
ARTJOG: RESILIENCE, Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2019
INTENTION, PLEASE!, Edwin's Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia
Hopes & Dialogues in Rumah Kijang Mizuma, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore

2018
REDRAW III: UGAHARI, Edwin's Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia
Enlightenment, ART|JOG|11, Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
The Primacy of Seeing, Semarang Contemporary Art Gallery, Semarang, Indonesia
Folkloristics, Mizuma Gallery, Singapore

2017
Changing Perspective, ART|JOG|10, Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
FAUX UTOPIA – LIVING LAB VOL. I, Green Art Space, Greenhost Boutique Hotel, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Gotak –Gatuk-Petuk, Gallery Raos, Kota Batu, Indonesia

2016
*SURVIVE DAY, SURVIVE!*Garage, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Art Expo Malaysia 10th Edition, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Pameran Besar Seni Rupa #4, Taman Budaya Sulawesi Utara, Manado, Indonesia
NASI CAMPUR, TAKSU Gallery, Bali, Indonesia
Keep on fire #2, SURVIVE!Garage, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Etching, Share, Fun, Jogja Contemporary, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Rebel behel, Green House Hotel, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
ETSA PROJECT#1, Asmara Art & Coffee Shop, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2015
OSMOSIS, TAKSU Gallery, Bali, Indonesia
Pameran POSKAD SG50, Gillman Barracks, Singapore
Keep on fire, SURVIVE!Garage, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2014
Performance on OHP Lelagu #12, Penghujan, Kedai Kebun Forum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Camouflage: Under Constellation, Lir Space, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
SENGKETA, Kukomikan Versus project#3, SURVIVE!Garage, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
CUT & RE-MIX, FKY26, Jogja Gallery, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Merayakan Agar-Agar, Dgtmb Versus Project, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

AWARDS

2014 2nd Winner – Sketch Contest, Festival Heritage Yogyakarta, Indonesia

RESIDENCIES

2018 Rumah Kijang Mizuma, Yogyakarta, Indonesia



ARTWORKS



Dalam Barisan Ratib
2022
oil on canvas
200 × 300 cm

ARTWORKS



Melawat Desember
2021
oil on canvas
150 x 200 cm

ARTWORKS



Durma
2021
oil on canvas
149 × 240 cm



Monolog (Percakapan Siasat)
2022
oil on canvas
200 x 200 cm

ARTWORKS



Kindap
2021
oil on canvas
diptych, each panel 145 × 120 cm

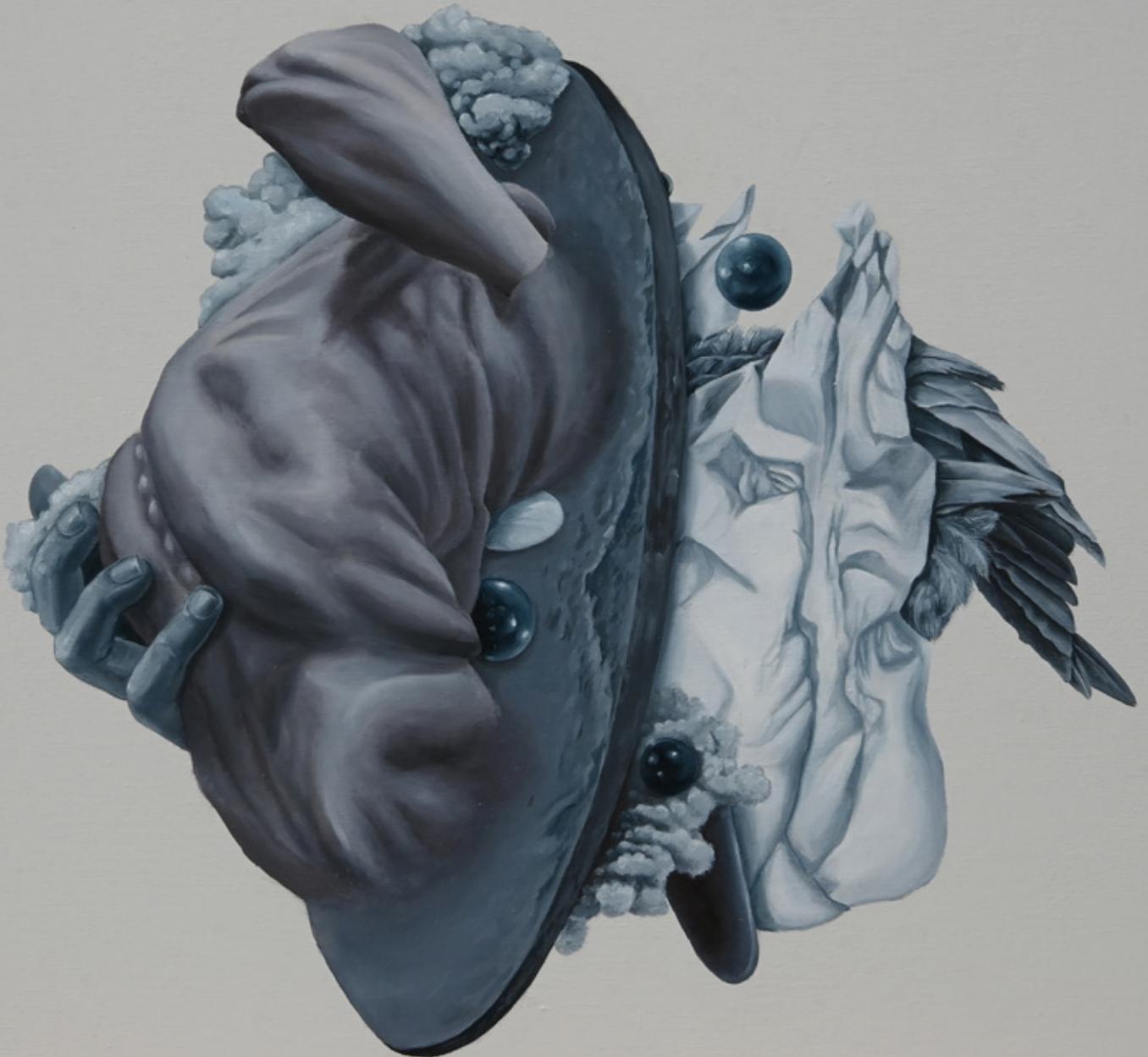


Raih / Ruah
2022
oil on canvas
88 × 75 cm

ARTWORKS



Skin to Skin #2
2021
oil on canvas
50 × 50 cm



Skin to Skin #3
2021
oil on canvas
50 × 50 cm

ARTWORKS



*Bagian dari suatu keseluruhan
(index visual 2017-2018)
2021
acrylic on canvas
approximately 245 x 70 cm
(20 x 20 cm each, total of 30 pieces)*



The Gift – Collect
2021
acrylic and oil on canvas
122 × 95 cm



The Gift – Cage
2021
acrylic and oil on canvas
122 × 95 cm



The Gift – Conflux
2021
acrylic and oil on canvas
122 × 95 cm



The Gift – Count
2021
acrylic and oil on canvas
122 × 95 cm



The Gift – Cultivate
2021
acrylic and oil on canvas
122 × 95 cm

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. From 2014 to 2019, the artist residency space “Rumah Kijang Mizuma” operated in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, providing a new platform for dialogue by supporting exchanges between East Asia and Southeast Asia. In 2018, a new gallery space, “Mizuma & Kips” in New York, USA, as a shared collaboration between Mizuma Gallery from Tokyo and Singapore, and Kips Gallery from New York.

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, Iwan Effendi, Made Wianta, Mark Justiniani, Nasirun, Budi Agung Kuswara, Robert Zhao Renhui, Ashley Yeo, and Ben Loong. Mizuma Gallery participates annually in international art fairs including Art Basel Hong Kong and The Armory Show New York, promoting Asian artists on an international scale.

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. Gillman Barracks’ vision is to be Asia’s destination for the presentation and discussion of international and Southeast Asian art. Today, Gillman Barracks is a place for art lovers, art collectors, and those curious about art. The cluster is a focal point of Singapore’s arts landscape, and anchors the development of visual art in the region and beyond. For more information: www.gillmanbarracks.com

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Sun: 11am - 6pm
Closed on Mondays and
Public Holidays

[Facebook.com/mizumagallery](https://www.facebook.com/mizumagallery)
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Mizuma Sueo

GENERAL MANAGER
Fredy Chandra

GALLERY MANAGER
Theresia Irma

PROJECT EXECUTIVE
Marsha Tan

DESIGN
Raissa Ali

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