

Artwork: Yeo Chee Kiong

# Paper Trails Between Lion and Swan

*Paper Trails Between Lion and Swan* (Phase 2) is the second of a two-phase collaborative exhibition curated by Harrison W. See, Desmond Mah and Yeo Chee Kiong featuring six artists from Singapore and six from Perth/Boorloo.

**Opening** 6.30pm, Sat 8 June 2024  
**Opening remarks** by Mayor Hannah Fitzhardinge,  
City of Fremantle

**Artist Talks** 10.30am, Sat 15 June 2024  
**Exhibition** 9 - 23 June 2024 | Wed-Sun 10.00am to 4.00pm  
**Old Customs House (Artsource)**  
8 Phillimore Street, Fremantle (corner of Cliff St & Phillimore St), WA

**Singapore**  
Chee Kiong Yeo  
Ezzam Rahman  
Nhawfal Juma'at  
Terry Wee  
Xiao Chang Xin  
Yen Peng Tan

**Perth/Boorloo**  
Deborah Worthy-Collins  
Desmond Mah  
Di Cubitt  
Harrison W. See  
Kelsey Ashe  
Sarah Thornton-Smith



**artsource**



## Curatorial Statement

*Paper Trails Between Lion and Swan* (or *Paper Trails* for short) is a two-phase curated exhibition featuring 12 artists working with paper and textiles, with 6 artists from Singapore and 6 from Perth. We begin our co-authored curatorial statement by respectfully acknowledging the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of Australia. Specifically, we acknowledge the Noongar people as the traditional custodians of the unceded land on which Perth was colonised, and pay respect to the Noongar peoples' enduring culture of tens of thousands of years and the leadership of their elders past and present. Lastly, we recognise 'Boorloo' as the Noongar name for the Perth region and will use 'Perth/Boorloo' in this statement.

At a glance, Singapore and Perth/Boorloo appear to be categorically different cities: the former (population  $\approx$  6 million) is the densely populated gateway between the Global North and South, and the latter (population  $\approx$  2 million) is one of the most isolated major cities in the world. However, there are significant similarities beyond a shared time zone. The two histories of these coastal and culturally diverse port cities are intersected by British colonisation. On the unceded lands of Whadjuk country, Perth was colonised as the 'Swan River Settlement' in 1829, while Singapore was claimed as a port for Britain's East India Company in 1819— 'Singapore', the anglicisation of 'Singapura' as derived from the Sanskrit word for 'Lion city' (or 'Lion fortress'); while the 'Swan River' was named by Dutch explorers for its black swans unique to the area, before the settlement was renamed 'Perth' by British settler leaders after the Scottish town they had connections to.

Within an Asia-Pacific context, attempts to renegotiate colonial histories are complex. Even when adopting the term 'Perth/Boorloo' out of acknowledgement and respect, it potentially reinscribes not only a hierarchy of English over Noongar, but a binary of coloniser/colonised. Further, these dualistic terms potentially exclude non-European cultural communities from Australia's colonial histories. The regrettable legacy of the White Australia Policy notwithstanding, records reveal that as early as 1818—a year before the Swan River Settlement was colonised on the west coast—a man from Guangzhou immigrated to Australia's east coast<sup>1</sup>, which begs the question, how might Asian diaspora fit into Australia's attempts at reconciling its colonial history? More recently, it is evident

by the Trumpian Sinophobic sentiment during COVID-19, that in times of crises it is far too easy to resort to the problematic simplicity of 'us' versus 'them' thinking, and a tendency to reinscribe binaries of opposition like East-vs-West that neglect the nuance of forward-thinking contemporary cultural exchange.

In 2024, as we approach the midpoint between the 200-years since Perth/Boorloo and Singapore's aforementioned encounters with British imperialism—2019 and 2029 respectfully—an opportunity presents itself to negotiate new intersections between these cities of Lion and Swan. Further, the choice of materials for *Paper Trails* is intentional and symbolic. Paper was used by the British Empire to invoke deeds, certificates, propaganda, and letters as instruments of identity, division, authority, and ownership. Textiles were used for flags, banners and uniforms, as well as the sails of ships that facilitated the expansion of trade, influence, and military conquest. There is a sense of irony in using these symbolically loaded materials to think beyond a settler-colonial present; however, as artists know, it is through the handling of materials that new and unfamiliar meanings can be inscribed to old and familiar ways of knowing and being. The exhibition does not intend to condemn nor celebrate the British colonialism, its feats and injustices are deeply woven into the Asia-Pacific region. Rather, *Paper Trails* is an invitation for the artists and their audience to question and imagine new ways of approaching the challenges and opportunities of cultural hybridity, transnationalism, and multiculturalism.

We conclude by thanking the *Paper Trails* artists and the support of SCULPTURE 2052 during the Singapore phase of the exhibition, and Artsource WA during the Perth/Boorloo phase. We also thank The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) and the National Arts Council of Singapore for their support and funding. Lastly, we encourage readers to engage with the artists' voices through their artworks, as well as their statements and biographies on the proceeding pages.

Harrison W. See, Desmond Mah and Yeo Chee Kiong  
(Co-curators of *Paper Trails Between Lion and Swan*)

<sup>1</sup>Sahni, N. (2017). Mak Sai Ying aka John Shying. The City of Parramatta Council's Research and Collection Services. <https://historyandheritage.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/people/mak-sai-ying-aka-john-shying><sup>2</sup>





Yeo Chee Kiong (2024), *Overprint Land* (detail). 3D printed PLA, Video, printed stamps and tempora powders. Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the Artist.



# Chee Kiong Yeo

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## Biography

Yeo Chee Kiong (b. 1970) is a contemporary sculptor and installation artist who is fascinated with the language and spatial relationship between object, space and authorship. His work destabilises the familiar notions of spatial proportions and perspectives, whilst examining the human conditions in the construction of an extended surreal world. As an alumnus of the Glasgow School of Art (UK) and the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Singapore), his list of conferred awards and commendations include the NAFA Distinguished Alumni Medal for his outstanding achievement in Singapore art scene (2016), SG50 Commemorative Public Sculpture Competition, National Museum of Singapore (2015), JTC Green Core Public Sculpture Open Call (2014), the LTA Downtown Line Art Competition, ExpoStation (2012), Legacy Sculpture for Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Village Sculpture Competition, Grand prize for the APB Foundation Signature Art Prize (2008), NAC Young Artist Award (2006), 14th Asian Artists Award, VSC Fellowships (2006 – 2007), Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts 68th Founder's Day Commendation Award (2006) and Grand prize for the 2nd CDL Singapore Sculpture Award (2005). Yeo was also short-listed as one of the 25 outstanding finalists amongst a total of 574 international entries whilst participating in the International Competition for Young Sculptors in Milan, Italy in 2006.

## Statement

The “\*Overprint Stamp Project” revisits the changing of sovereignty during the Japanese occupation and the post WWII British Military Administration (BMA Malaya) through the administrative overprint gesture on a “1.3in by 1.8in printed chalk paper”. The advent of digital technology has both threatened the 180 years old philately's existence and sparked its new imagination towards the digital age.

A series of 3D printed low relief **Overprint Land** will be produced based on a selected historical stamp design during the British Settlement Era. It will be integrated with the QR Codes as the fundamental graphic pattern to imagine a futuristic stamp design as both the digital tokens and physical collector items. Through the exploration of the classical stamp printing process on paper, in combination with 3D Printing and laser marking, it is an experimental project in search of our personal message of the post-colonial era with digital tools.

\*Overprint

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overprint>

*An overprint is an additional layer of text or graphics added to the face of a postage or revenue stamp, postal stationery, banknote or ticket after it has been printed.[2][3] Post offices most often use overprints for internal administrative purposes such as accounting but they are also employed in public mail. Well-recognized varieties include commemorative overprints which are produced for their public appeal and command significant interest in the field of philately.[4]*



Deborah Worthy-Collins (2023), *Laphet/to receive with one hand* (detail). Teabags, thread, and cotton. Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the Artist.

# Deborah Worthy-Collins

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## Biography

Deborah Worthy-Collins is an interdisciplinary artist based in Boorloo (Perth) with a Bachelor of Visual Arts from Edith Cowan University. Her studio practice is process-based, exploring themes of life cycle, connection, identity, and healing. Worthy-Collins has participated in several group exhibitions in Western Australia, an exhibition in Singapore, and a solo exhibition in 2020. She has exhibited at venues, including Spectrum Project Space ECU, PS Art Fremantle, The Lobby Swanbourne, Ellenbrook Arts Centre and Moore Building Fremantle — with an upcoming exhibition at the Rockingham Arts Centre in July 2024. In 2018, Worthy-Collins was featured in Athena Magazine, and in 2019, she was the featured artist in Precious HK Magazine's Biannual Art Exchange; her work has been reviewed by Seesaw magazine and Dispatch Review Perth. Worthy-Collins facilitates creative workshops for children and adults and has many years' experiences working with people with disabilities. She completed a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Western Australia in 2023 and aims to explore how art can facilitate social change and community engagement.

## Statement

Deborah Worthy-Collins' installation explores the global significance of tea, transcending continents and symbolising cultural transformation. Once a privilege reserved for royalty, tea has evolved into a symbol of accessibility across all social classes, grappling with the impacts of Western colonisation and capitalist commodification.

*Laphet/To Receive with One Hand* draws inspiration from 11<sup>th</sup> century Myanmar folklore, where tea seeds were gifted during a royal tour. Laphet, derived from 'La Ta Phet' meaning 'one hand', has become integral to Myanmar's identity, spanning diplomacy, justice, marriage, rituals, and friendships across social classes. The artist, reflecting on her Anglo-Burmese heritage, explores power dynamics and cultural shifts.

Worthy-Collins employs tea bags as symbols of convenience, unfolding and stitching them as an act of resistance. Grounded in tea's ancient origins, her work delves into the interplay of tradition, identity, and transformation. Stemming from her daily routine, the artwork becomes a ritual inviting introspection, offering a space for wholeness amidst the threads of colonisation's harm juxtaposed with healing and reconnection rituals in a persistently harmful system.





Ezzam Rahman (2024), *sesal* (detail). Artist's hair, anti-inflammatory plaster, repurposed leather, adhesive, epoxy resin on canvas board. 15 x 10cm x a series of 20 panels. Image courtesy of the Artist.

# Ezzam Rahman

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## Biography

Ezzam Rahman (b.1981, Singapore) graduated with an MA Fine Arts from Goldsmiths University of London in 2017, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fine Arts from the University of Huddersfield in 2010, and was formally trained as a sculptor from LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts. He has participated, initiated, organized and co-curated numerous local and international group art exhibitions, events, and festivals. Ezzam lectures in LASALLE College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Singapore, UAS. He was awarded a joint winner of the Grand Prize for the President's Young Talents 2015 and the People's Choice Award by the Singapore Art Museum. In 2016, Ezzam was awarded the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award by Yayasan Mendaki and the prestigious Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council, Singapore. In 2021, Ezzam was awarded the Most Promising Award; photography category for PULSE Awards, Thailand and served The Substation, an independent arts company as the artistic director. In 2023 Ezzam was invited by the National Institute of Education NIE, Singapore for their NIE Visiting Artist Programme and was the artistic director appointed by Plus Collaboratives for the National Arts Council's launch event of NAC Our SG Arts Plan (2023 – 2027).

## Statement

Currently Ezzam is working on, researching, and focusing on borrowed and colonized languages by relearning Jawi, the Arabic alphabet or writing system used for Malay or related languages. Jawi was developed from the advent of Islam in the Maritime Southeast Asia, supplanting the earlier Brahmic scripts used during Hindu-Buddhist era. The ensuing trade expansions and the spread of Islam to other areas of Southeast Asia from the 15<sup>th</sup> century had brought the Jawi alphabet beyond the traditional Malay speaking world. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jawi remained as the standard script of the Malay language. The use of Jawi heralded the birth of traditional Malay literature, when it was featured prominently in the royal correspondences, religious texts, and literary publications. With the arrival of Western influence through colonization and education, Jawi was relegated to scripts for religious education, with the Malay language eventually adopting the Latin alphabet called Rumi in general usage. In *sesal*, Ezzam created a short fictitious monologue of the Malay ruler, Sultan Hussein after he signed the agreement Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with the British that granted the East India Company exclusive rights to open a trading post. This internal monologue reflects on the Sultan's self-inner doubt and turmoil. *sesal* which means 'remorse' in English and in this artwork Ezzam wanted the audience to imagine themselves in the Sultan's position and question themselves what would have they done, offering a space for wholeness amidst the threads of colonization's harm juxtaposed with healing and reflection.





Desmond Mah (2023), *The road-kill I saw leaving Koorabup (Denmark, Western Australia) and later in my mind* (detail). Acrylic paint, mixed media, print, xuan paper, bamboo. 16 x 86 x 40cm. Image courtesy of the Artist.



# Desmond Mah

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## Biography

Desmond Mah (b. 1974, Singapore) resides in Boorloo/Perth, having migrated during his teenage years. With a BA Hons in Painting from Loughborough University, UK (1998) and LASALLE College, Singapore (1997), Mah transitioned to art in 2017 after working in art education and horticulture. His diverse cultural heritage, spanning China (potentially Hui ethnicity), Taiwan's Kinmen Islands, and Singapore, informs his exploration of cultural hybridity, fluid identity, and Asian diasporic experiences. Mah employs a unique line mark-making style, his 'migrant language', influenced by his horticulturist background. Notable achievements include the E.SUN Bank Special Selection Prize (Taiwan, 2022) and the Southern Buoy Studios Portrait Prize (Australia, 2021). Mah has participated in exhibitions, residencies, grants, and commissions, including Red Gate Residency in Beijing (2018) and Fremantle Arts Centre (2023), and his solo exhibition at Art Seasons (Singapore, 2023) and an upcoming show at Mossenson Galleries (Australia, 2024). Mah's work is part of Judith Neilson's private collection.

## Statement

In the Chinese classic text, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, the fox is depicted as a malevolent spirit that devours humans. Encountering a dead European red fox both excites and frightens me as a Chinese-Australian. This introduced species, a sentinel of British colonisation and an apex predator in a foreign land, has ravaged native wildlife and reshaped the Australian landscape irreversibly. Ironically, foxes inadvertently curbed other introduced invasive species like rats, rabbits, and cats.

The playful re-imagining of the fox as a 'thug' fosters this sense of irony, prompts viewpoints on the complexities of colonisation and its consequences, and the roles of predator, invader and saviour.



Nhawfal Juma'at (2024), *An Inquisition into the Void Century* (sculptural installation). Paper mâché, tin foil, woven wire mesh, LED strips. 100 x 70 x 40cm. Image courtesy of the Artist

## Biography

Nhawfal Juma'at lives and works in Singapore. He received his Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Fine Art from Loughborough University.

Nhawfal has exhibited extensively in Singapore in group exhibitions, erected public installations and in recent years, embarked on a curatorial role with his recent project, Bridging Through the Age: An Intergenerational Collaborative Exhibition (2022) and Pneuma: Of Spirituality in a Contemporary Age (2020) in conjunction with Singapore Art Week 2022 and 2020 and have also curated Landscapes of Our Mind (2018), a form of advocacy for mental wellness, showcasing the works of beneficiaries from Club HEAL.

Nhawfal crafts conceptually-driven artworks that traverse various mediums with an eclectic approach. His creations are deeply intertwined with his immediate surroundings, drawing inspiration from everyday occurrences, such as nature observations, personal experiences, and interpersonal dynamics. These moments, often overlooked in their original context, serve as the catalyst for his artistic expression.

## Statement

*An Inquisition into the Void Century* offers a speculative inquiry inspired by the lost ancient relic, Singapore Stone. The Singapore Stone: re-discovered in June 1819 and was blown up in 1843 to widen the mouth of Singapore River was considered to contain information about Singapura's ancient past and possibly insights into a world left unknown; a world that was left into obscurity and ruins during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

Adopting the irony of materiality: weight (as importance towards discovering and understanding a proto-colonial past/history) and permanence (socio-cultural meta monuments: with, across or after); the series of sculptures would be a representation of what Singapore Stone could have contained; a spectrum of curiosities such as holding the secrets of a covenant, an expression of love or maybe, it could simply be a recipe.





Di Cubitt (2023), *Remnants and Ghosts* (detail). Oil on paper. 36 x 106cm. Image courtesy of the Artist.



## Biography

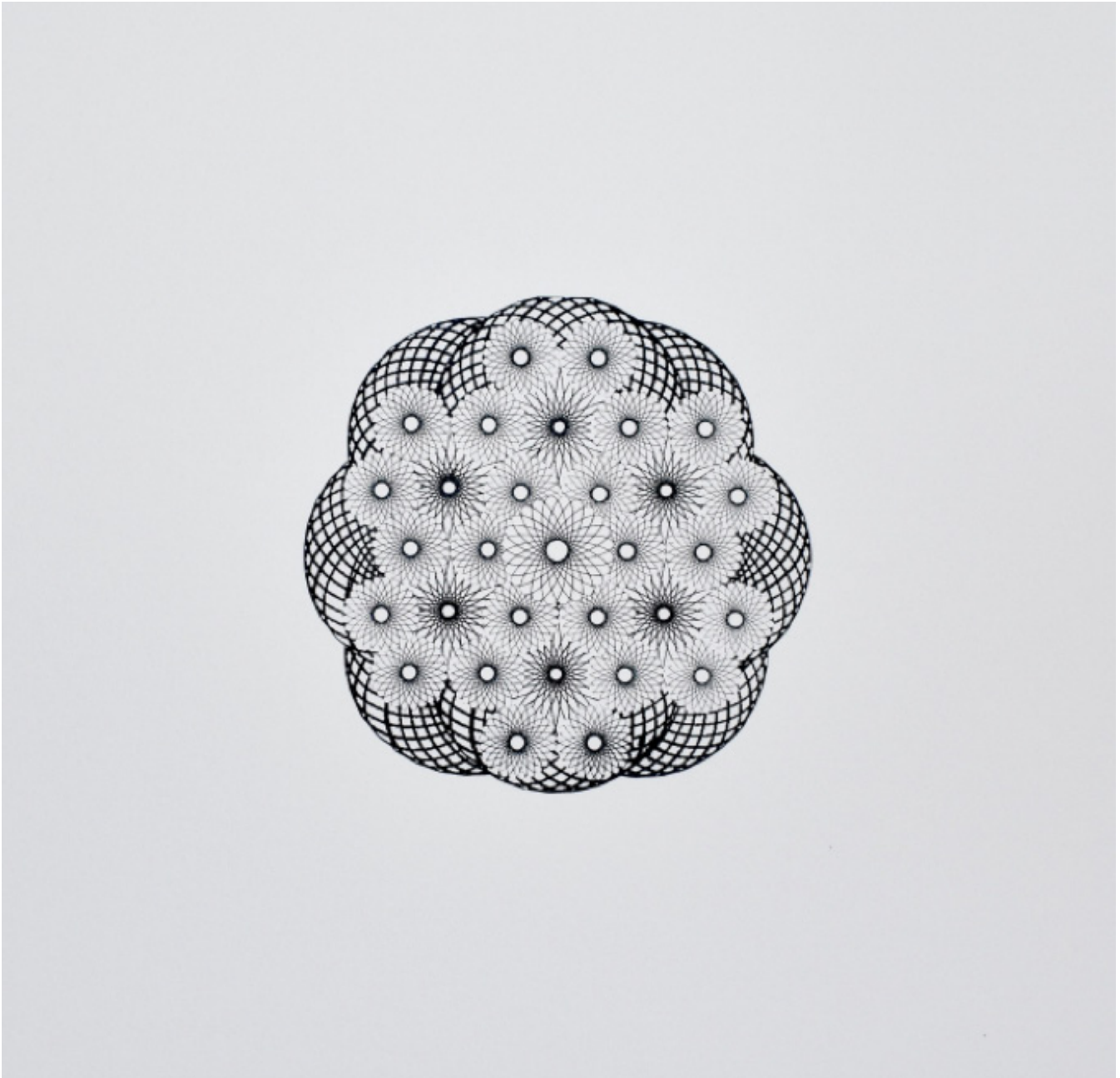
Born in Malaysia, Di Cubitt grew up in the UK before migrating to Australia. She has lived and worked in Perth since 1990, graduating from Curtin University with a BA (Hons) Visual Arts in 2007. Alongside her art practice, Cubitt currently works as a Lecturer (Drawing) at Curtin University. She has held 5 solo exhibitions, taken part in over 50 group shows, and is a recipient of several Art awards. Her work is held in several collections including Curtin University, St John of God and she is represented in Perth by Stala Contemporary.

Cubitt's art practice explores ideas about the natural world and our interactions with it, in particular the concept of landscape as a place for meditating on themes concerning continual change. Within this framework, she is interested in the influence of memory, myth and imagination on our perception of place. By revisiting the same locations time and again over many years, Cubitt observes and maps the changes in the landscape, a witness to the continual cycle of life and death, responding to these interactions through her paintings and drawings.

## Statement

Maps, plans, drawings and sketches were all invaluable tools of the colonialists as they moved across the globe; symbols of ownership, demarcating borders, permissions needed to cross lines and to enter spaces. The paper map has always had a fascination for me, exploring different realms and sparking imaginative journeys that inspired my travels from London, across South East Asia to Australia. Maps are also the starting point for ***Remnants and Ghosts*** created for *Paper Trails* and are buried within the layers of the painting. Comparing maps of Perth and Singapore from early European settlement shows the changing shape of the landscapes since colonisation, the results of altered landscapes and shorelines due to reclamation and development. ***Remnants and Ghosts*** is an exploration of what was, what remains, and what efforts are being made to repair the damage. Responding to vanishing wetland areas in Perth and Singapore, this work imagines a landscape that unites aspects of the two places in one frame, creating a new topography that speaks to the changing nature of co-existence.

Dwarfed by the surrounding buildings and far inland from the expanded coastline, the lighthouse stands in the green space of Fort Canning hill, so important and powerful in its day, now so insignificant and useless. The hill is like an archaeological map, layering the history of colonial rule in its contours with that of the ancient Malay rulers. It was here the treaty was signed with the Sultan of Singapore that handed the island to the British in 1824, and in 1942 in an underground bunker the decision was made by the British to surrender to the next would-be colonisers. In 2024, from a distant viewing point the remaining colonial buildings disappear beneath the surrounding trees as if they seek to restore and reclaim the hill.



Terry Wee (2024), *A Dollar for the Straits* (installation). Screen print on paper. 70 x 50cm. Image courtesy of the Artist.



## Biography

Terry Wee (b.1988, Singapore) is an inter-disciplinary visual artist who graduated from both LASALLE College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Diploma & Degree in Fine Arts) in 2009 and 2015. Terry has a deep interest in abstraction and administrative work as a form of design. He sees these two as a love/hate relationship that co-exist within the same space where order and chaos meets. His interdisciplinary practice in painting/printmaking/digital drawings and paper sculptures allow him to explore various forms of abstraction on different platforms. He is currently working as an artisan/educator in his recent formed art collective — *thefoolishtribe*.

## Statement

Terry Wee explored and researched on the motifs and narratives behind Singapore's banknotes since the early 1900 "Straits Settlement Dollar" to mid 1900 "Malaya Dollar". He is particularly interested in the early 1900 banknotes and its transition for its early historical context of the British Colony, with its relationship to other existing Malay States before that which was the Straits settlement. During this period, the transformation and identity of these regions' economical images were largely influenced by the British Colonial system, which eventually demonetised other countries' existing influences of trade by having its own system of trade within the region, including Singapore.

Terry revisits the imagery of the British arrival and their first impressions printed on notes as a starting point of Singapore's first issued notes known as the "Straits Settlement Dollar". In 1939, it was replaced by the Malaya Dollar which features more of the Malayan States and Singapore as the main office. Both placements are in different coat of arms, representing different states and Guilloche patterns which inter-connects the different states. Terry would like to draw out the ripple effect and its familiar motifs of these states and its common interest together with the British Colony whilst unravelling the importance of Malaya as an important destination for the Maritime Silk route.



Harrison W. See (2023-2024), *Valley of Coasts and Beasts* (detail). Archival print on synthetic fibre (380 gsm). 138 x 103cm.  
Image courtesy of the Artist.

# Harrison W. See

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## Biography

Harrison W. See (b. 1990) is an artist, researcher, and emerging curator interested in allegorical landscapes as a means to explore cultural divergence and plurality—juxtaposing historical symbolisms with videogame tropes. See has undertaken 7 solo shows, 5 artist residencies, 3 curatorial projects and 8 collaborative exhibitions in WA and Asia, as well as participated in multiple group exhibitions. Originally an industrial designer, See completed his Bachelor of Visual Arts at Edith Cowan University (ECU) in 2015 after receiving the Louise Macfie Painting Prize. In 2016, he was awarded a New Colombo Plan (NPC) scholarship that funded his honours research in Shanghai; after receiving 1st class honours, See extended his NPC funding and returned to China for a 3-month artist’s residency in Xiamen. In 2019, See returned to ECU after being awarded a Research Training Program Scholarship and completed his practice-led PhD on dialogic cross-cultural collaboration. See is currently a researcher and tutor at ECU, while working from his studio at the artist-run initiative — Holmes Studio Collective.

## Statement

See’s artwork for *Paper Trails* is an allegorical response to the geographical and historical intersections between the numerous sea-bound cities of the Asia-Pacific region. The flow and erosion of water are explored as metaphors for the movement of culture and influence made possible by seas, rivers and oceans. Through an integration of videogame tropes and graphic devices, See imagines a discordant scene reflecting the pluralistic, and at times incommensurate, nature of cross-cultural spaces. It is the juxtaposition of videogame aesthetics with the materialities of textiles—specifically, banners, flags and tapestries—through which See depicts a tense duality of two horsemen. Neither horseman represents a particular culture; however, their duality is analogous to dualistic metanarratives, such as the East-vs-West binary, that often oversimplify past (and present) cross-cultural interactivity. Although these two figures dominate the landscape, the landscape simultaneously envelopes them in a constellation of subtler localised storytelling. While parts of this constellation corroborate the horsemen’s dominance, others serve as alternative, or even contradictory counternarratives.





Xin Xiao Chang (2024), *A Tapestry of Colonial Threads* (detail). Acrylic on 150gsm paper. 24 x 22cm. Image courtesy of the Artist.

## **Biography**

With a foundation in interior architecture and applied arts, Xin's multidisciplinary expertise extends seamlessly into her artistic endeavours encompassing ceramics, installations, sculptures, and meticulously crafted media. Her artworks grace private and corporate collections worldwide.

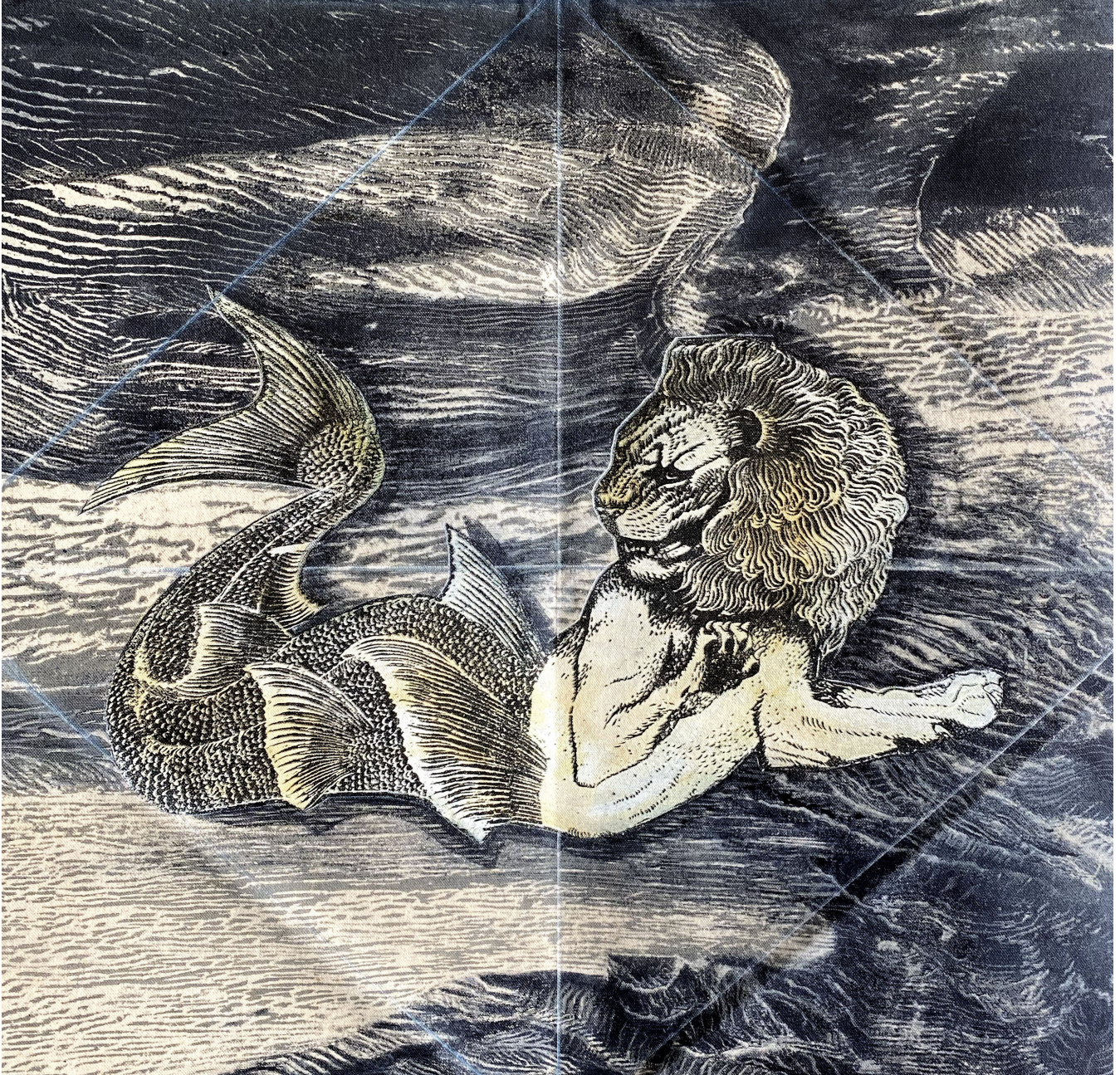
Infused with a charming blend of humour and playfulness, Xin's artistic voice echoes the vibrant tapestry of Singaporean culture. Beyond her studio, she actively contributes to the arts scene. As a Sculpture Society (Singapore) committee member since 2014, she orchestrates events, curates exhibitions, and fosters global artistic exchange.

Simultaneously, Xin channels her passion for education and talent development. She lectures and leads initiatives at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), University of the Arts Singapore (UAS), while maintaining her dynamic artistic practice. Currently pursuing a Master of Science (MSc) in Applied Gerontology at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Xin envisions bridging the arts and ageing sectors, leveraging design's transformative power to enhance social care through a multidisciplinary approach.

## **Statement**

*A Tapestry of Colonial Threads* explores the lasting impact of colonialism on Singapore and Australia, inviting viewers to reflect on shared history and memory. Chinese characters arranged in a quilt-like pattern pay homage to tradition while symbolising the post-colonial decline of the Chinese language. Aboriginal prints intertwined within the quilt highlight the indigenous struggle against displacement, drawing parallels to the experiences of indigenous Australians. The artwork confronts viewers with the realities of colonial intervention, showcasing the decline of Chinese language and culture in Singapore and the ongoing marginalisation of Aboriginal communities in Australia. Through this juxtaposition, the installation serves as a poignant reminder of the complex legacies of colonialism, including the fragmentation of language and identity and the marginalisation of indigenous voices.





Kelsey Ashe (2023), *Orihon Codex of the Flame, Shell, Swan and Mer-Lion* (detail). Screen printed origami folding concertina scroll. Canvas, paper and silk, botanical inks indigo, myrolaban, wax. 140 x 300 x 0.2cm [when open]. Image courtesy of the Artist.



# Kelsey Ashe

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## Biography

Kelsey Ashe is a contemporary artist and writer whose aesthetic draws from themes within Austral-Asian inter-cultural studies, constructed mythologies and ficto-critical narrative. Grounded in motifs of the Antipodean landscape, Ashe seeks to comprehend the hidden, mysterious, and deeply powerful sense of the sublime within landscape and our earthly and human relationship to it. Ashe has a Doctorate in Philosophy (PhD Art) which directs a depth of knowledge into contemplative works that examine both harmonious and difficult moments of cultural collision. Ashe has studied Japanese Aesthetic Philosophy and traditional print making techniques which direct a depth of contemplation into the work. Story-telling is central to Ashe's practice-led research, which traverses print, textiles and film. Ashe exhibits regularly nationally and internationally. Ashe surveys cultural identity drawn from her Celtic convict and migratory ancestry and from the Austral-Asian basin she calls home – (the vast geographical region that sweeps from Polynesia to Aotearoa (New Zealand) across the land mass of Tasmania and Australia to Asia and Japan). Exploring the universal symbology of cultures, both ancient and modern, Ashe seeks resonances from previous era's; sensing traces of stories or symbols of place, to perceive perceptions or concerns for contemporary culture.

## Statement

In the age of the 'Archival turn' Ashe delves into allegorical, symbolic and mythological narratives, to subvert, intervene or disrupt the colonial archive and to contemplate both harmonious and difficult moments of cultural collision. *The Orihon Codex of the Flame, Shell, Swan and Mer-Lion* is a contemporary form of Origami and Scroll making, where the printed mountains and valleys of the folded origami hint at the complex dimension of relations across the vast Austral-Asian geographic basin. In depicting the Mer-Lion and the Swan amongst the Shell, Fire, and a geometric grid, the work asks the viewer to consider their own projections and understandings of the multiple social, geographic and symbolic links between the Republic of Singapore and the city of Perth in Western Australia.



Tan Yen Peng (2019), *Counter-Part* (installation). Laser prints on walls. Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the Artist.

# Yen Peng Tan

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## Biography

Tan Yen Peng was born in Singapore and studied in the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (1993), Birmingham University of Art and Design (1998), and Edinburgh College of Art (2004). She is currently pursuing a PhD from the National Taiwan University of the Arts, and is focused on investigating the interplay between personal memory images, collective memory, and the archive within a digital-urban environment. Her artworks explore these themes with an autobiographical approach, often employing low-res images printed with common commercial machines as a way of articulating the prevalence of free images and their performative potentials.

## Statement

In her work for the Paper Trails exhibition, Yen Peng expands her ongoing exploration of personal and collective memory. She utilises freely available images discovered through open-ended searches within the vast digital archives of the internet. Leveraging power of current image search technology, she identifies intriguing visual or semantic connections between nostalgic images from the Singapore and Fremantle/Perth online archives. The artist is particularly interested in the “poor images” readily found online and their democratic potency capable of transcending usual narrative and documented histories. Through a process of digital excavation and juxtaposition, she aims to establish a unique “spatial-temporal imagination” which allows for the re-establishing or unveiling of narratives that might have disappeared or been diminished within the context of official records. By using common laser prints on paper and framing them, Yen Peng brings these “poor images” out of the digital realm and into the physical world. This act challenges “controlled” access and allows the images to exist outside the confines of digital platforms and algorithms that dictate visibility.





Sarah Thornton-Smith (2023-2024), *Heartlines* (detail). Etching inks on hosho paper. Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the Artist.

# Sarah Thornton-Smith

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## Biography

Arriving from Singapore in her teens, Sarah Thornton-Smith was struck by the quality of the light here in Boorloo-Perth which contrasted with her formative experience of light-bound by tropical lushness. Thornton-Smith's art practice gravitates towards the search for patterns found in nature, particularly in the way colour surfaces, interacts and make connections with one another and its surrounds. She is interested in how colours influence, direct and appeal to the experiences and how perception plays a part in formulating our cultural environment. Driven by observation, ensuing playful intuitive processes, and seduced by the infinite attributes of light/colour in the compositions, the resulting work can generate a sense of intimacy by slowing-the-eye, ephemerality in the gift of the moment and connection with the beauty of forms. Being raised in a Malay-Chinese household and crossed between Eastern and Western cultures, the experience has contributed unwittingly to an ongoing enquiry of connections.

Her work can be found in private and public collections such as the Kerry Stokes Art Collection, St John of God Art Collection and various other shires' or cities' art collections.

## Statement

Presenting an installation of sculptural foldings in a repeated pattern, Sarah Thornton-Smith's *Heartlines* hold in its intent an expression of diasporic disintegration and an acculturation of a new sense of what it means to be home. With her Malay-Chinese Singaporean heritage, and exposure to Western culture as she grows up in Boorloo-Perth, the work aims to track her assimilation and adoption of the influences of her surroundings using the Australian landscape and flora as her inspiration. Motifs resembling structural aspects of Australian flora such as the banksia and colours of the landscape imbue *Heartlines* with a layered infusion of colours, forms, and patterns by using monoprinting on translucent hosho paper. Recalling lengths of textiles of batik sarongs and kain lepas of her family heirlooms, the motifs and patterns capture vignettes of stories, culture, and societal implications. Repeated foldings subconsciously mimicking the structure of banksia, and the visible tracing of lines incorporated throughout each folding make symbolic connections between Perth and Singapore, revealing cultural hybridity illuminating the interplay between identity, heritage, culture, and landscape.





Artwork: Deborah Worthy-Collins

# Paper Trails Between Lion and Swan

*Paper Trails Between Lion and Swan* (Phase 1) is the first of a two-phase collaborative exhibition curated by Harrison W. See, Desmond Mah and Yeo Chee Kiong featuring six artists from Singapore and six from Perth/Boorloo.

**Opening** 7.00pm, Wed 17 January 2024  
**Opening remarks** by H.E Allstar Cox, Australian High Commissioner to Singapore

**Artist Talks** 8.00pm, Wed 17 January 2024  
**Exhibition** 18 Jan - 25 Feb 2024 | Wed-Sun 10.00am to 4.00pm  
**SCULPTURE2052**  
#03-16, Primz Bizbhub, 21 Woodlands Close, S737854, Singapore

**Singapore**  
Chee Kiong Yeo  
Ezzam Rahman  
Nhawfal Juma'at  
Terry Wee  
Xiao Chang Xin  
Yen Peng Tan

**Perth/Boorloo**  
Deborah Worthy-Collins  
Desmond Mah  
Di Cubitt  
Harrison W. See  
Kelsey Ashe  
Sarah Thornton-Smith



artsource



Department of  
Local Government, Sport  
and Cultural Industries