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PRESS RELEASE

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ART FAIR | ART DUBAI

Solo presentation: MARYANTO

Bawwaba | Hall 3 | Booth G10

Preview: 1 - 2 March, 2 - 9pm (by invitation only)

Public days: 3 - 4 March, 2 - 9pm; 5 March, 12 - 6pm



Maryanto, *When The Trees Fall*, 2023, Acrylic on Canvas, 150 x 200 cm

Yeo Workshop is pleased to present new works by **Maryanto** (Indonesia) at Art Dubai, Bawwaba, curated by Vipash Purichanont. Expanding on his past research into various areas of exploitation in Indonesia such as volcanic sand mining around Mount Merapi and oil dredging in Wonocolo, East Java, Maryanto continues to bring attention to environmental issues in the country. This time, he sheds light on the rampant development of palm oil plantations in South Kalimantan and the gradual encroachment of its forests as a result. At the same time, he touches on the themes of transmigration, ownership, and capitalism. While Maryanto does not set out to frame his practice as environmental activism, his works can be considered as aspirational: bringing public awareness to issues that he is otherwise not able to change on his own.



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From surveying historical accounts to a trip down to South Kalimantan and interacting with the locals there, Maryanto traces how the region fell prey to palm oil and mining industries since the 1970s, leaving indigenous tribes battling to claim autonomy over their land and protect these forests in present-day. The indigenous community in Kalimantan depend on the forests for their livelihoods, including harvesting essential ingredients for medicine and traditional rituals. Yet the growth of palm oil industries leading to unrestrained deforestation has disrupted much of their customs and ways of living. For instance, a traditional ceremony called Belian is performed for the purpose of healing the village, honouring ancestors, and seeking blessings for the environment. Lasting from one to six days, it involves collecting 100 types of plants, leaves, and roots from the forests as offerings, which is becoming increasingly difficult to assemble as forests are cleared.

These deeply urgent yet often unreported environmental concerns are brought to bear in Maryanto's black and white paintings. In which, he undermines the romantic language of traditional landscape painting to examine socio-political structures in the physical spaces that he depicts. They act as a subversive reference on historical books published during the colonial period, where the Dutch Indies had used the natural landscapes to promote the beauty of Indonesia as propaganda. Beyond his monochromatic paintings, Maryanto also taps on other mediums in this presentation to convey the unbridled impingement of the natural environment in the region. *Palm Oil District* (2023) comprises 11 embroidered crests that bring attention to the provinces in South Kalimantan that were once revered for its lush landscapes but have now been taken over by palm oil plantations. Featuring the original emblems with motifs often symbolising prosperity and environmental protection, the work recalls an ideology that now feels distant.

This solo presentation acknowledges the sobering reality of South Kalimantan's depleting forests and uncovers stories of unspoken truths within these deeply political spaces. Underpinning these works is a profound understanding of the ongoing struggle of these indigenous people to protect their ancestral lands, which not only means protecting the environment, but also preserving the traditions of customs of indigenous culture. Maryanto's works can be considered as an archive that reflects the history of these landscapes through time – once idyllic spaces that have been corrupted by systems of power – while protesting its imminent future.



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Artist Biography

MARYANTO (b.1977, Indonesia) is an Indonesian artist who creates black and white paintings and installations that examine socio-political structures through the depiction of landscapes. His work often explores the impact of technological development, industrialization, pollution, and resource exploitation on the natural world.

Maryanto graduated from the Faculty of Fine Art, Indonesia Institute of the Art, Yogyakarta in 2005, and completed a residency at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam in 2013. Maryanto has presented solo exhibitions at Yeo Workshop, Singapore (2017 and 2015); Art Basel Hong Kong, Discoveries Section (2016); the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam; ArtAffairs, Amsterdam; and Heden, Den Haag (2013). He has also recently participated in notable group exhibitions at the Koganei Art Spot Chateau, Tokyo (2018); the Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide; the Asia Culture Centre, Gwangju; the Bozar Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels (2017); the Singapore Art Museum, Singapore (2015); and the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, Amsterdam (2013). Maryanto has also been featured at international biennials such as the 2nd Industrial Biennale, Labin, Croatia (2018); the Setouchi Triennale, Naoshima, Japan (2016); the Jakarta and Jogja Biennales, Indonesia (2015); and the Moscow Biennale, Moscow, Russia (2013). Maryanto lives and works in Yogyakarta.

About the gallery

Yeo Workshop is a gallery committed to contemporary art in Singapore. In recent years, the gallery is focused on bringing greater prominence to local artists with several Singaporean artists joining the roster.

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About Art Dubai

Founded in 2007, Art Dubai is the Middle East's leading international art fair. Over the past 16 years, Art Dubai has cemented its role in being a major catalyst in the local, regional and international conversations on art from the Middle East and surrounding region (MENASA – Middle East, North Africa & South Asia), and putting art from these territories onto the global map. Meaning 'gateway' in Arabic, *Bawwaba* exclusively features artworks made in the past year or specifically for Art Dubai, and comprises solo presentations by artists hailing from across the Global South. Art Dubai Bawwaba 2023 is curated by Vipash Purichanont, independent curator and lecturer at Silpakorn University.

Fair Dates

Wednesday, 1 March, 2-9 pm (by invitation only)
Thursday, 2 March, 2-9 pm (by invitation only)
Friday, 3 March, 2-9 pm
Saturday, 4 March, 2-9 pm
Sunday, 5 March, 12-6 pm

Fair Address

Madinat Jumeirah Conference & Events Centre
King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud St
Al Sufouh 1
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

For more information about the fair and ticketing, please visit www.artdubai.ae.