

W

YEO WORKSHOP



NOOR MAHNUN (ANUM)

ARTIST



NOOR MAHNUN (b. 1964, Malaysia), also known as **ANUM**, is known for adapting the traditional technique of oil painting into a style that has been praised for its simplicity and meticulousness. Beneath their guise of naivety and delicacy are carefully crafted compositions that weave subtle psychological narratives with dark wit and emotional depth.

Born in Kelantan, Anum trained in architecture in the United States before pursuing her Master of Fine Arts in painting at Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Braunschweig, Germany in 1996. Anum was artist-in-residence at Rimbun Dahan in Klang, Selangor (2000-2001) and received a scholarship from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a printmaking course at Il Bisonte, Florence (2002-2003). During her time in Europe, she held solo shows in Florence and across Germany, and upon returning to Malaysia, became an active figure in the local art scene—not only as an artist, but also as a curator, educator, and arts manager.

Her solo exhibitions include 'ANUM', Yeo Workshop, Singapore (2025); 'September', The Back Room, Kuala Lumpur (2021); 'Disco Lombok Still Life', The Edge Galerie, Kuala Lumpur (2017).

BIOGRAPHY



2025

ASIA NOW

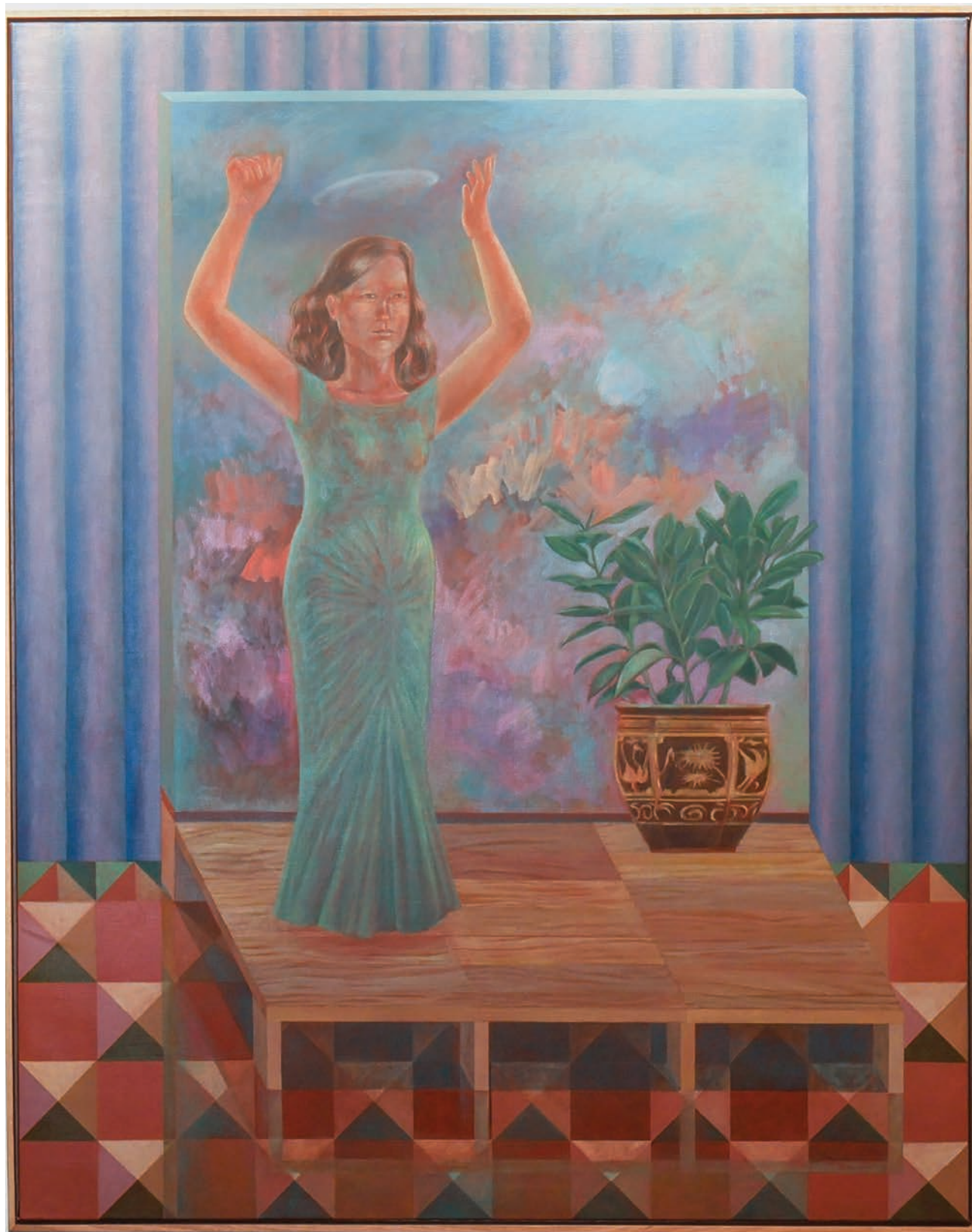
NEW PAINTINGS



An Evening, 2025
oil on linen
84 x 76 cm



Lithe, 2025
oil on linen
84 x 76 cm



Disc, 2025
oil on linen
150 x 120 cm

Anum presents new paintings for Asia NOW — the Paris Asian Art Fair 2025, now in its 11th edition. This return to Europe marks a poignant milestone for the artist, forty years since her first solo exhibition in Florence, Italy. Her figurative paintings interlace references from everyday life, popular culture and literature. These new works for the fair take inspiration from myriad forms of entertainment in music and dance, from the Bollywood movie *An Evening in Paris* (1967) to Salome's dance of the seven veils. A signature motif in her paintings is repeating patterned tiles in varying shades of cool and warm colours, as intricate tiles in the foreground of *Disc* or paired ingeniously with a still life as a diptych such as in *Slipper O / Solo* and *Duo*. With her calculated choice of colours and clever calibration of proportionality, a curious harmony exudes from these compositions.

There is often a sense of continuity and affinity across her paintings, while acknowledging art historical references in traditional European oil painting. *Disc* (2025) evolved from *Disco*, a small oil study rooted in Anum's enduring love of dancing and singing. Drawing from her memories of growing up on the east coast of Malaysia in the 1970s, where community gatherings often centred around music and performance, the painting captures a lively scene of a female figure glittering under stage lights, dancing and singing to familiar tunes from the 80s—an impression from a friend's birthday celebration that Anum vividly re-enacts. The birthday girl's green beaded, sequined dress becomes a focal point, a motif that has appeared in earlier works *Wasp* (1995) and *Killing Me Softly* (2000).

In *Lithe* (2025), Anum borrows compositional elements from *green tea* (2024) and *Limber* (2024) while revisiting an earlier landscape painting *The Infrequent Transit of Venus* (2006). The latter was inspired by Anum's visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens and the historic Melbourne Observatory. During her ten-day stay in Melbourne, the artist became captivated by the Observatory's two adjoining domed structures—the Photoheliograph House and the South Equatorial House—originally built in anticipation of the rare astronomical event known as the transit of Venus. This celestial phenomenon, observed only twice in the 19th century, symbolised humankind's desire to measure, map, and understand its place in the universe. As with much of Anum's practice, *Lithe* embodies the fluid movement between personal reflection and historical resonance, anchoring her visual language in both memory and wonder.



Slipper O / duo, 2025
oil on linen, diptych
30.5 x 61.5 cm



Slipper O is part of Anum's ongoing Orchid series, reflecting her sustained interest in botanical studies and the visual dialogue between natural forms and structured design. Positioned within a series of diptychs, these works juxtapose meticulous orchid renderings with precise geometric patterns, embodying a balance between the organic and the mathematical. This approach stems from a pivotal curatorial intervention during her 2017 exhibition *Disco Lombok Still Life* at The Edge Galerie, where her geometric abstractions were paired with still life paintings. That fusion has since evolved into a defining aspect of her practice, merging observation with abstraction in thoughtful, layered compositions.

This series of paintings explores duality and discipline by placing the delicate, organic forms of the orchid in dialogue with precise, modular geometric patterns. Through complementary color schemes and contrasting structures, the diptych creates a visual conversation that reflects both the meditative and methodical aspects of Anum's practice. These hand-rendered permutations evoke themes of perseverance and precision, highlighting the labor behind visual harmony. The work also gestures toward trompe l'oeil, inviting viewers to reflect on the constructed nature of perception, and how botanical life and geometric form can coexist within the illusionistic space of painting—where structure, light, and reality are always partly imagined.



Slipper O / Solo, 2025
oil on linen, diptych
30.5 x 61.5 cm



Syasya, 2025
oil on linen, diptych
37.5 x 75.3 cm



2025
SOLO EXHIBITION

ANUM



shijie

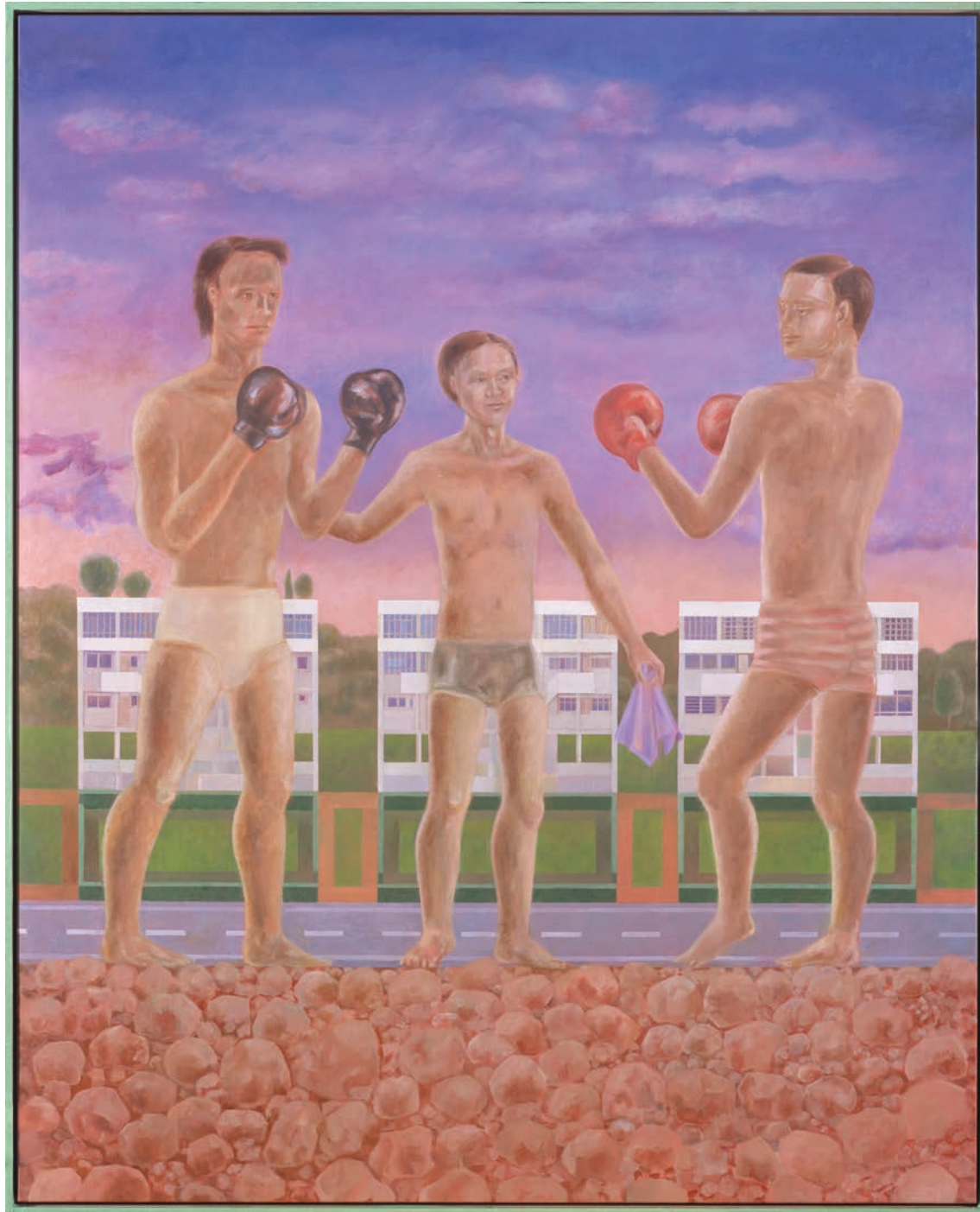


hou kun





Baju Kurung, 2025
oil on linen
120 x 150 cm



Boxers, 2025
oil on linen
150 x 120 cm

Baju Kurung, 2025

In *Baju Kurung*, Anum combines memories of past summers in Germany sewing her own summer dresses—a skill she had learnt from her grandmother, with her present interest in making her own 'baju kurung', a traditional attire in Malaysia. Developed over several iterations including earlier 2022 sketches, this painting explores themes of confinement and identity through the lens of the traditional Malay garment. With outstretched arms, Anum's figure projects a sense of surrender, teasing out the meaning of 'kurung', which translates to 'enclosed'. The contrast between the garment's fluidity and the restrictive connotations of "kurung" gestures at the tensions between freedom and confinement, tradition and agency. It becomes a visual narrative that honours women's domestic labor while subtly questioning its limits.

Boxers, 2025

Boxers intertwines personal and geographical memory, drawing inspiration from her father's love of boxing and a formative moment witnessing Muhammad Ali in Kuala Lumpur—an event marked by souvenir gloves and televised matches. Set in Anum's studio in Bukit Batong, a landslide-prone area, the painting features a tilted composition with elevated background buildings, reflecting the unstable terrain. The red soil evokes Malaysia's clay-rich roads, while the sky—based on Australian sunset photos from a friend—resembles thought bubbles, adding a contemplative layer. Visually, the work nods to Henri Rousseau's *The Football Players* through stylised anatomy, while its atmosphere recalls the psychological depth of Mamma Andersson and Edvard Munch's expressive skies.



Homework, 2024
oil on linen
80 x 120 cm



new shoes



look monkey



flower



New Shoes, 2025
oil on linen
120 x 90 cm



Slipper O, 2025
oil on linen
20.5 x 41 cm



Atlas, 2024
oil on linen
20.5 x 20.5 cm



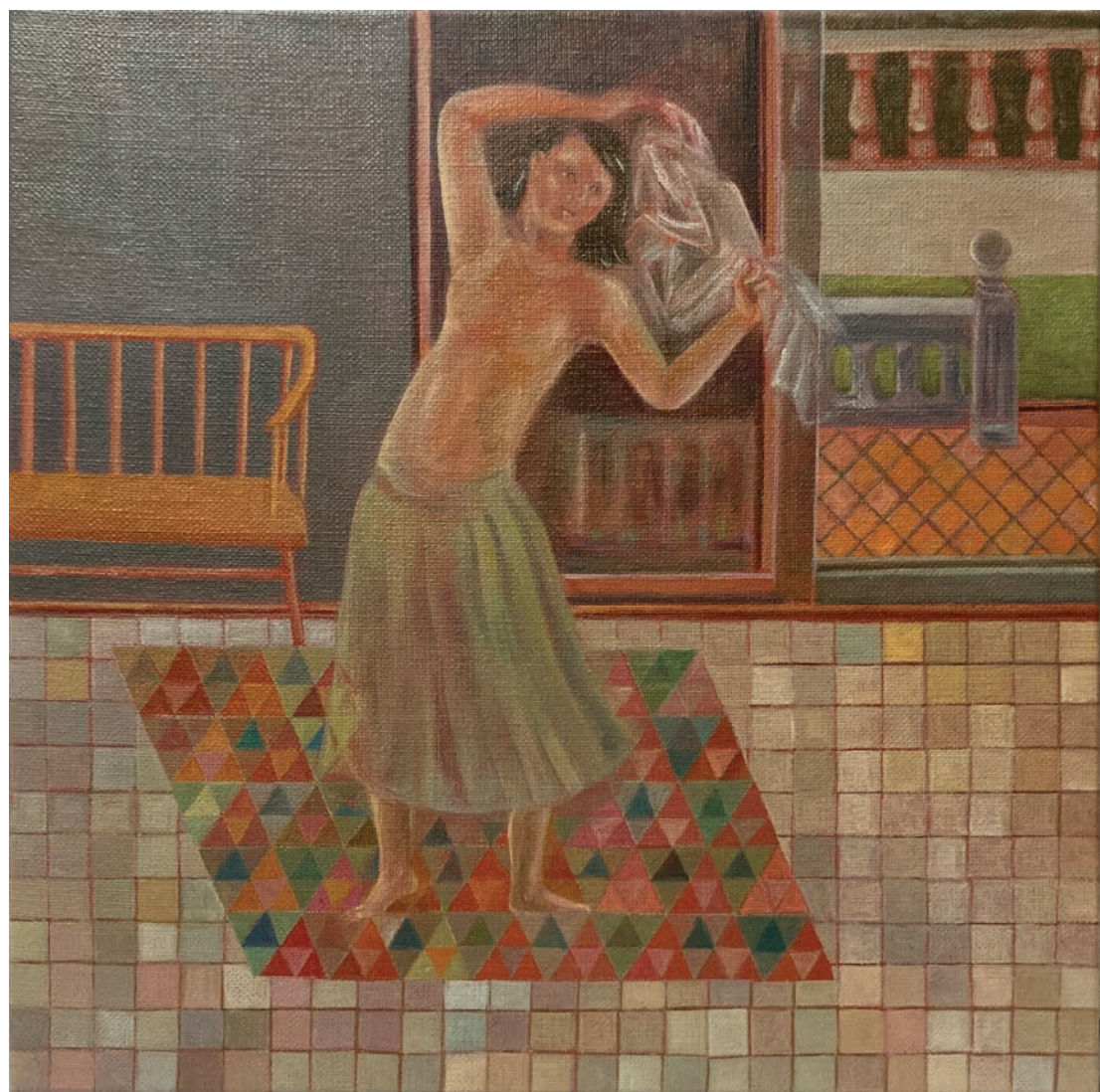
Wentletrap, 2024
oil on linen
20.5 x 20.5 cm



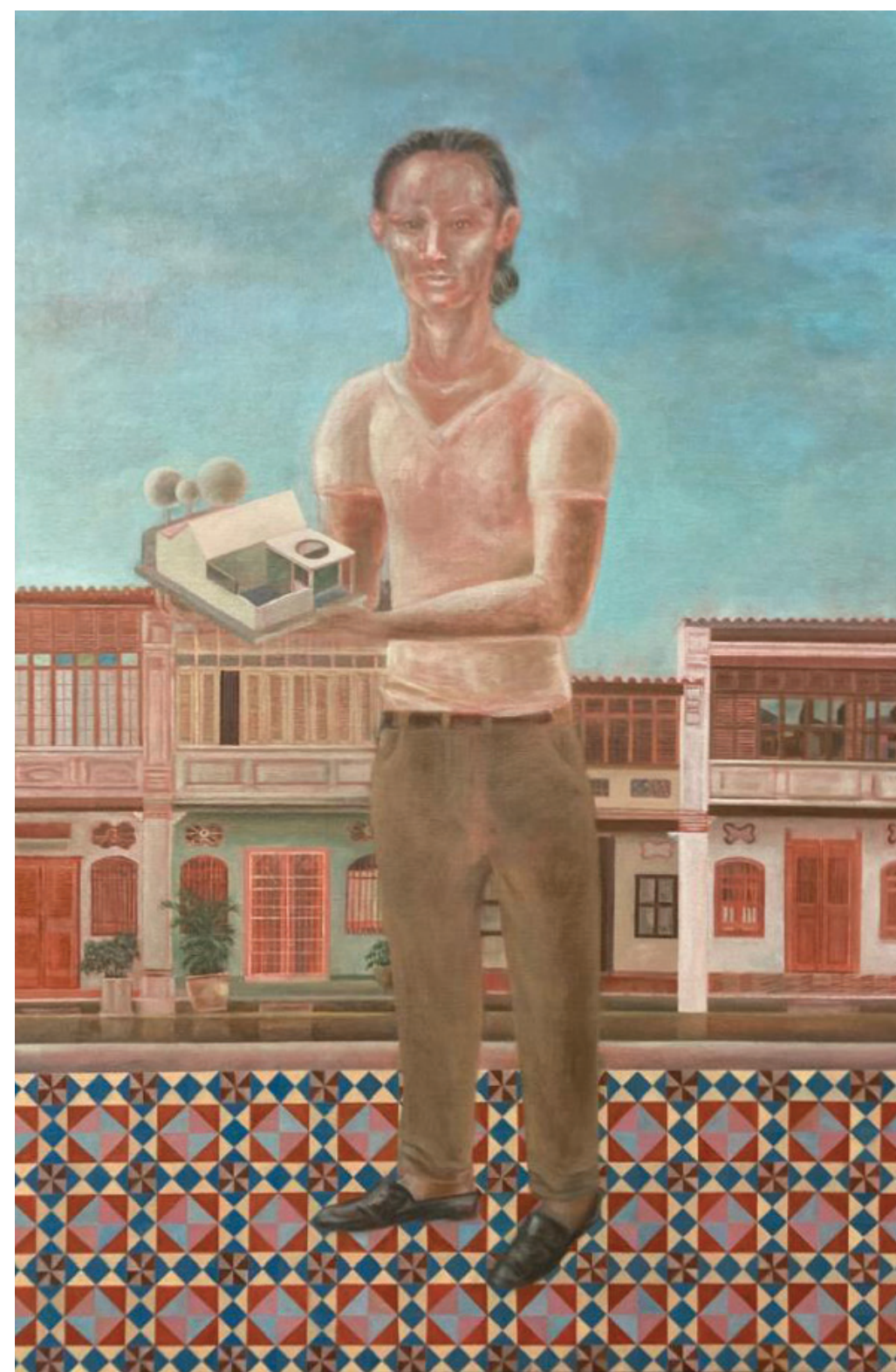
lukis rumah lukis



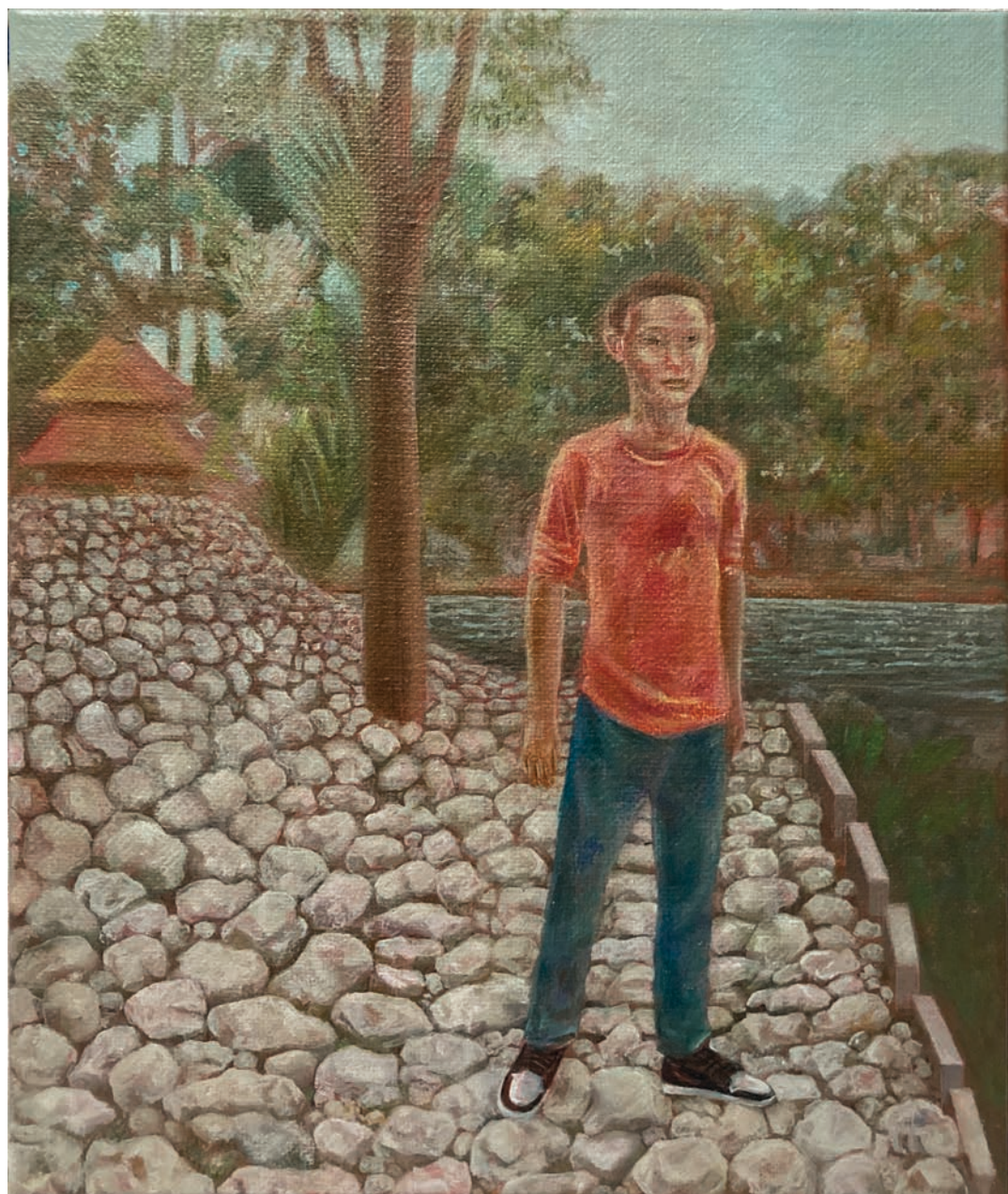
rumah lukis



An Evening, 2024
oil on linen
37.5 x 37.5 cm



Lukis Rumah Lukis, 2024
oil on linen
90 x 60 cm



New shoes, 2024
oil on linen
30.5 x 25.5 cm

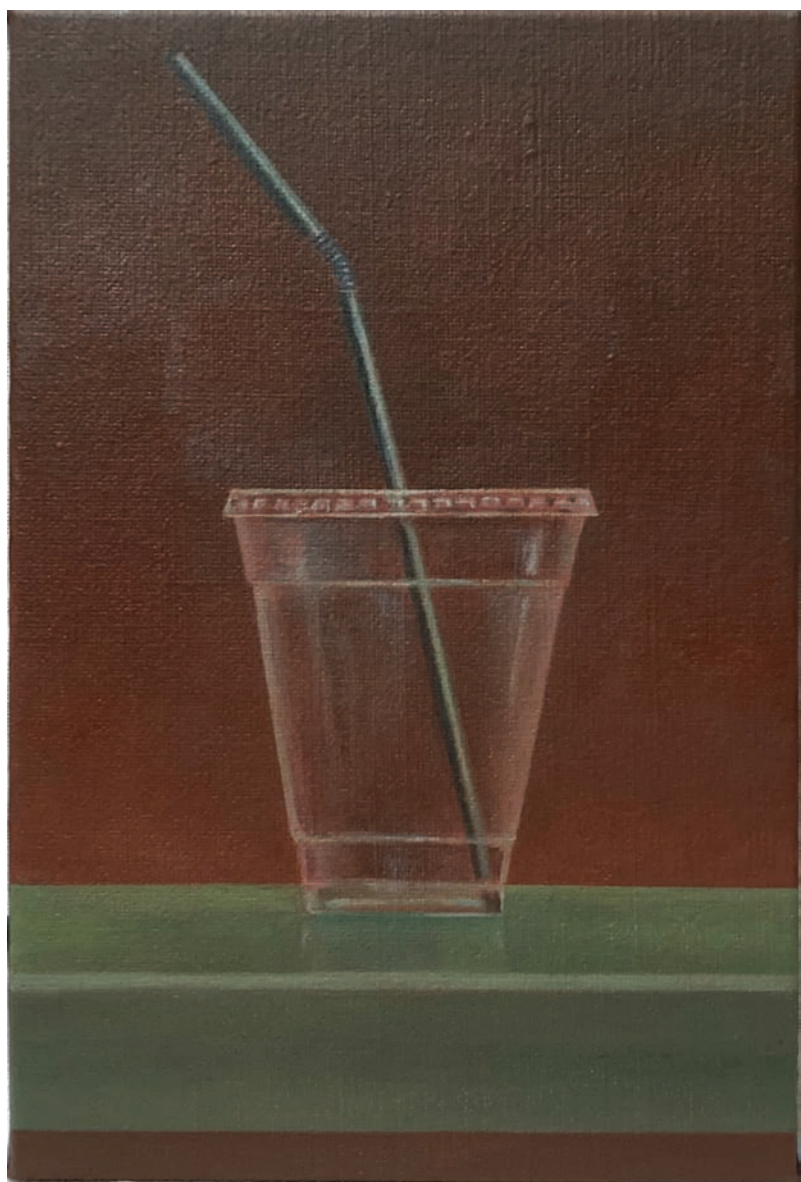


Lawn mower, 2024
oil on linen
30.5 x 30.5 cm



ritas
wendetrip

straw (pink)



Take away, 2024
oil on linen
30 x 20 cm

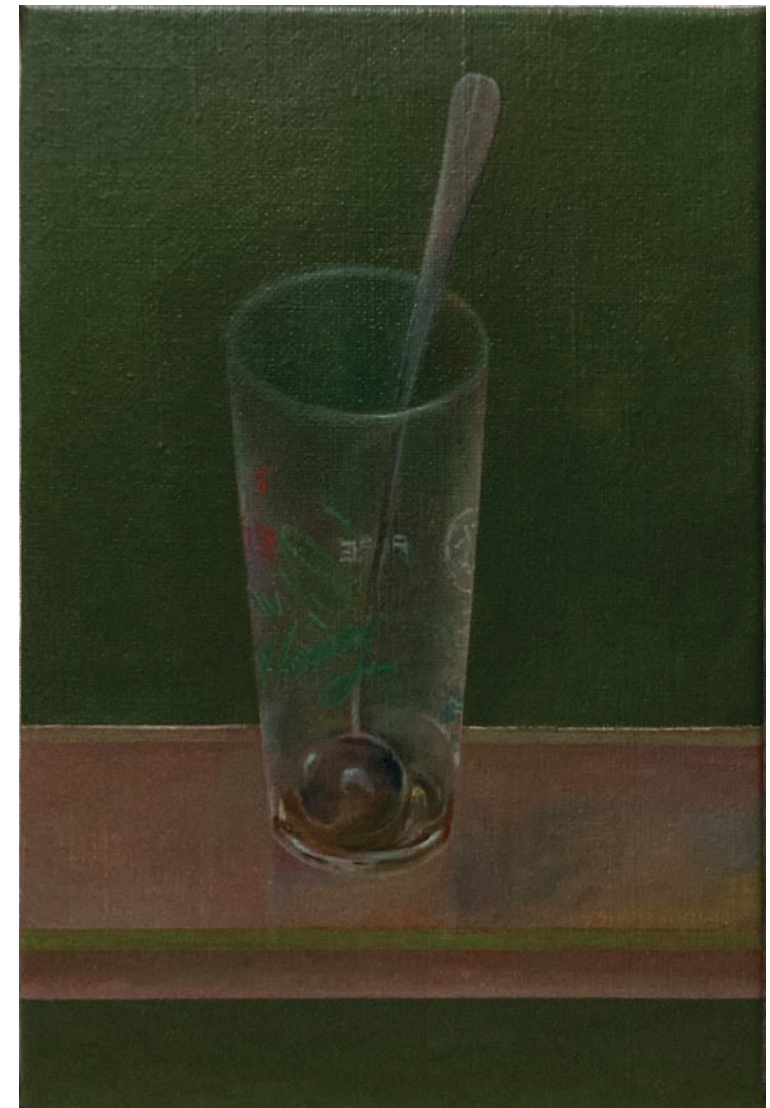




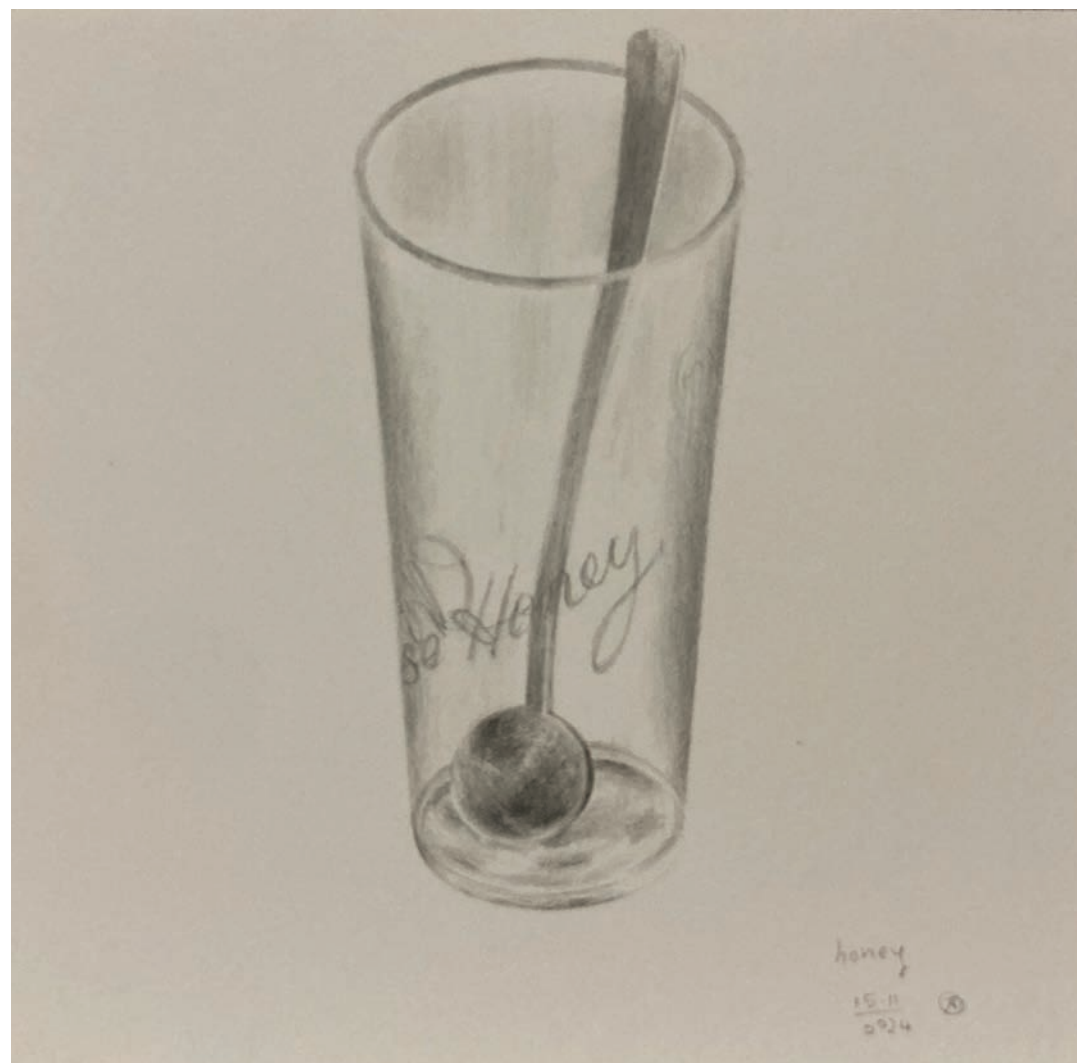
Baju kurung, 2023
watercolour and graphite on paper
31 x 41 cm



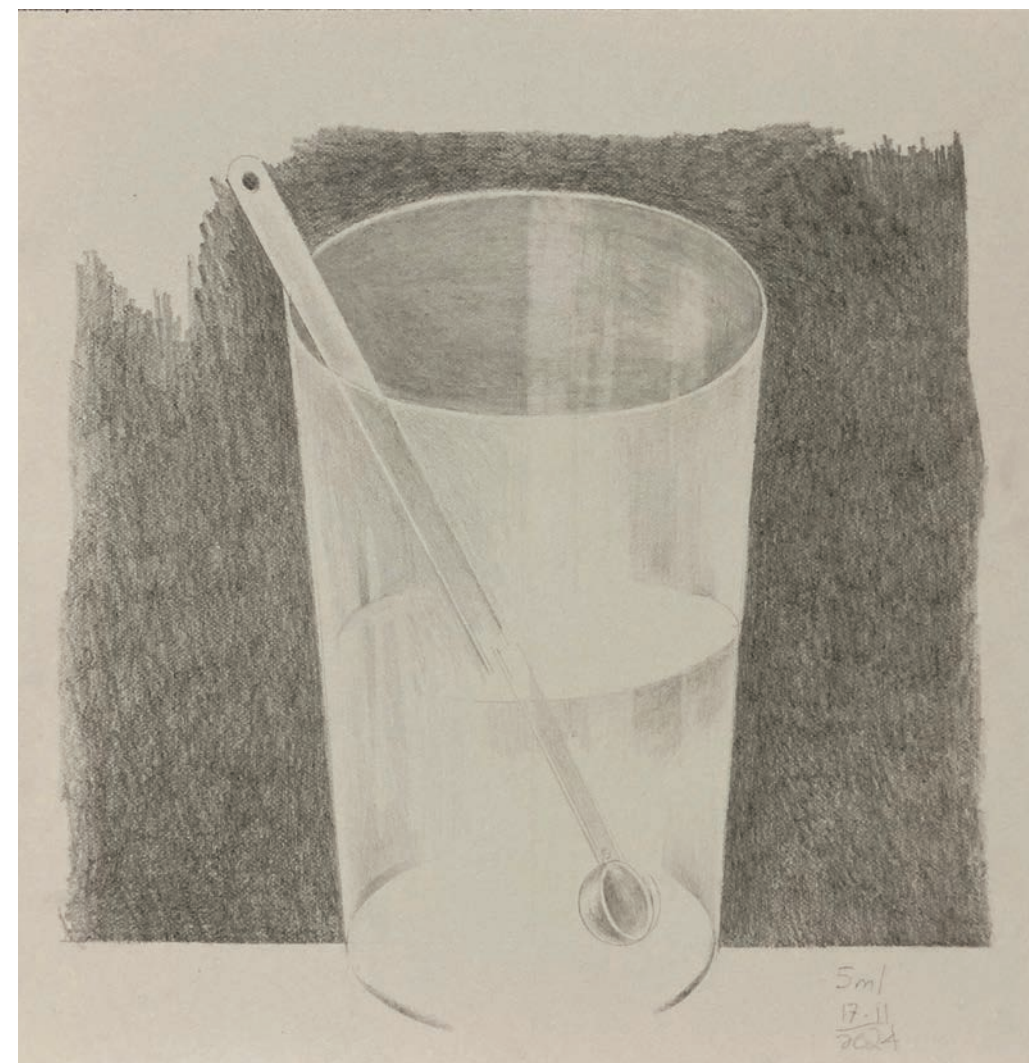
forest for homework, 2023
watercolour and graphite on paper
31 x 41 cm



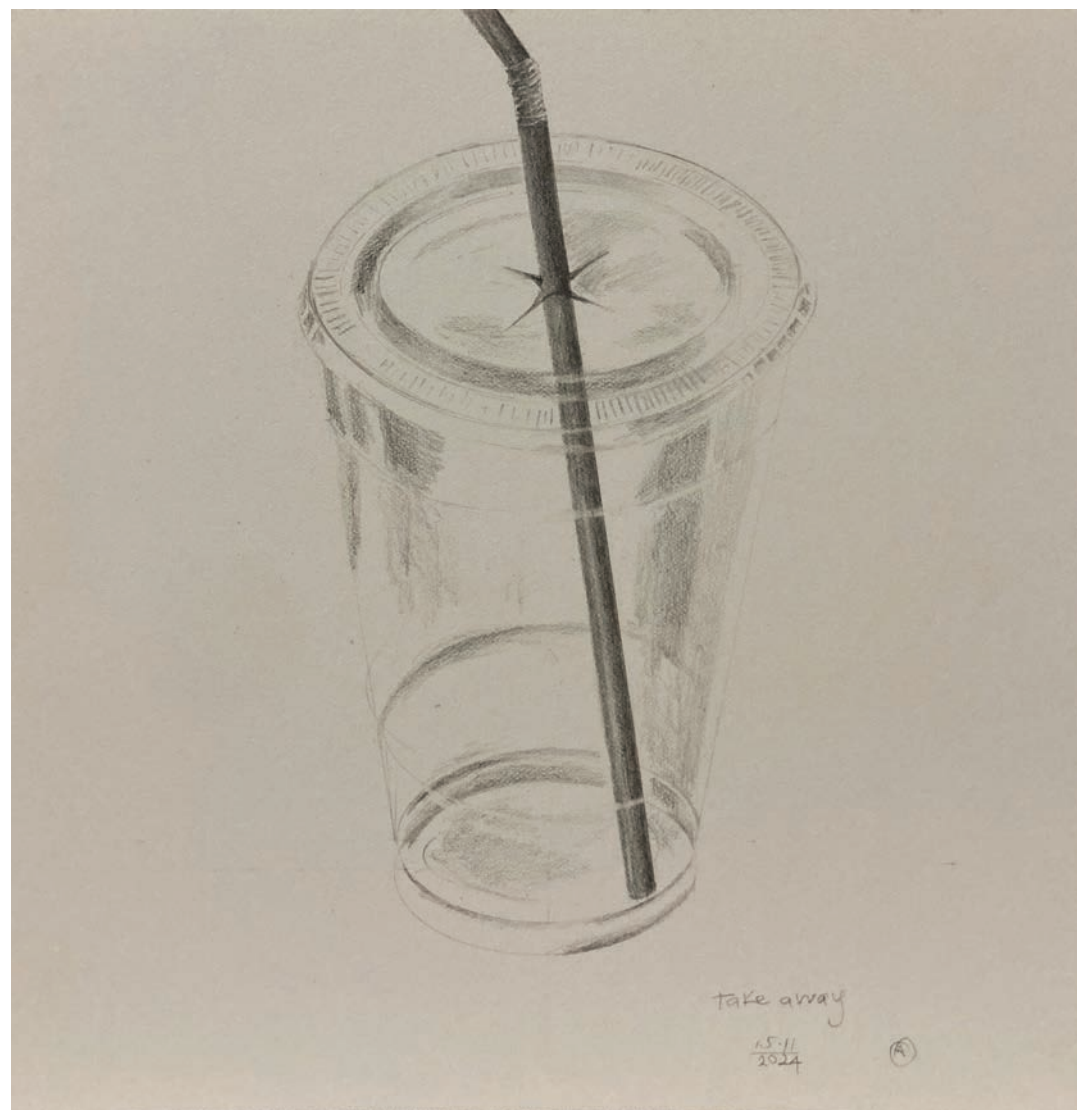
Honey, 2024
oil on linen
30 x 20 cm



honey, 2024
graphite on paper
20 x 20 cm



5ml, 2024
graphite on paper
20 x 20 cm



take away, 2024
graphite on paper
20 x 20 cm



homework, 2024
coloured pencil and graphite on paper
42 x 29.5 cm

2024



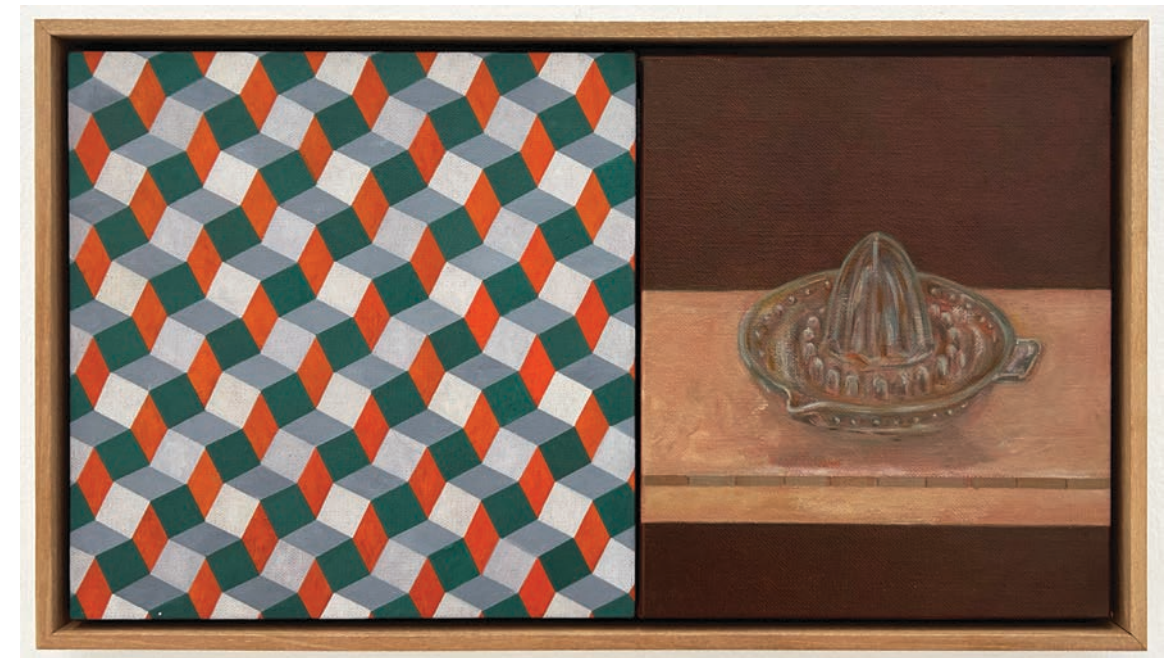
Anum's works often feature geometric patterns as a decorative element. It reveals her close attention to the infinite variety of simple motifs around us, in tiling or tessellation, which is frequently seen as background or design in the tradition of ornamentation. In this new body of work, she has developed a series of diptychs, pairing a figurative or still life panel with a corresponding pattern. Her gesture is an attempt at 'matchmaking' the subject with a repetitive design that might have subliminal connotations and is somehow related in its juxtaposition. This format also suggests a visual coherency in its considered configuration, coupling the ordinary with and the abstract.

Phalaenopsis O, 2024
oil on linen, diptych
overall 50.5 x 75 cm
50.5 x 37.5 cm (left); 50.5 x 37.5 cm (right)

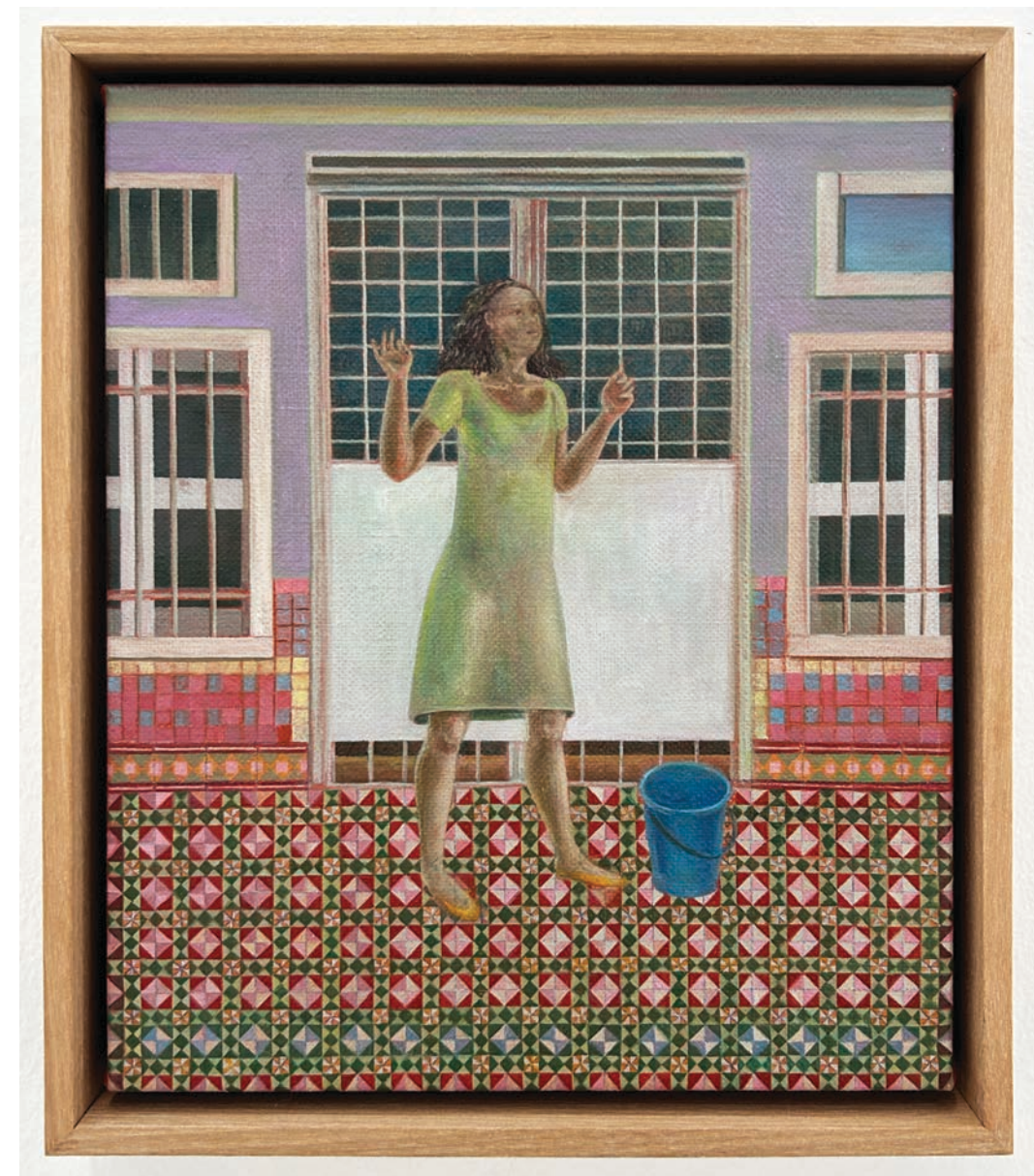
RECENT PAINTINGS



Juicer, 2024
oil on linen, diptych
overall 28.5 x 55 cm
25.5 x 20.5 cm (left); 25.5 x 30.5 cm (right)



OJ, 2024
oil on linen, diptych
overall 34 x 60 cm
30.5 x 30.5 cm (left); 30.5 x 25.5 cm (right)



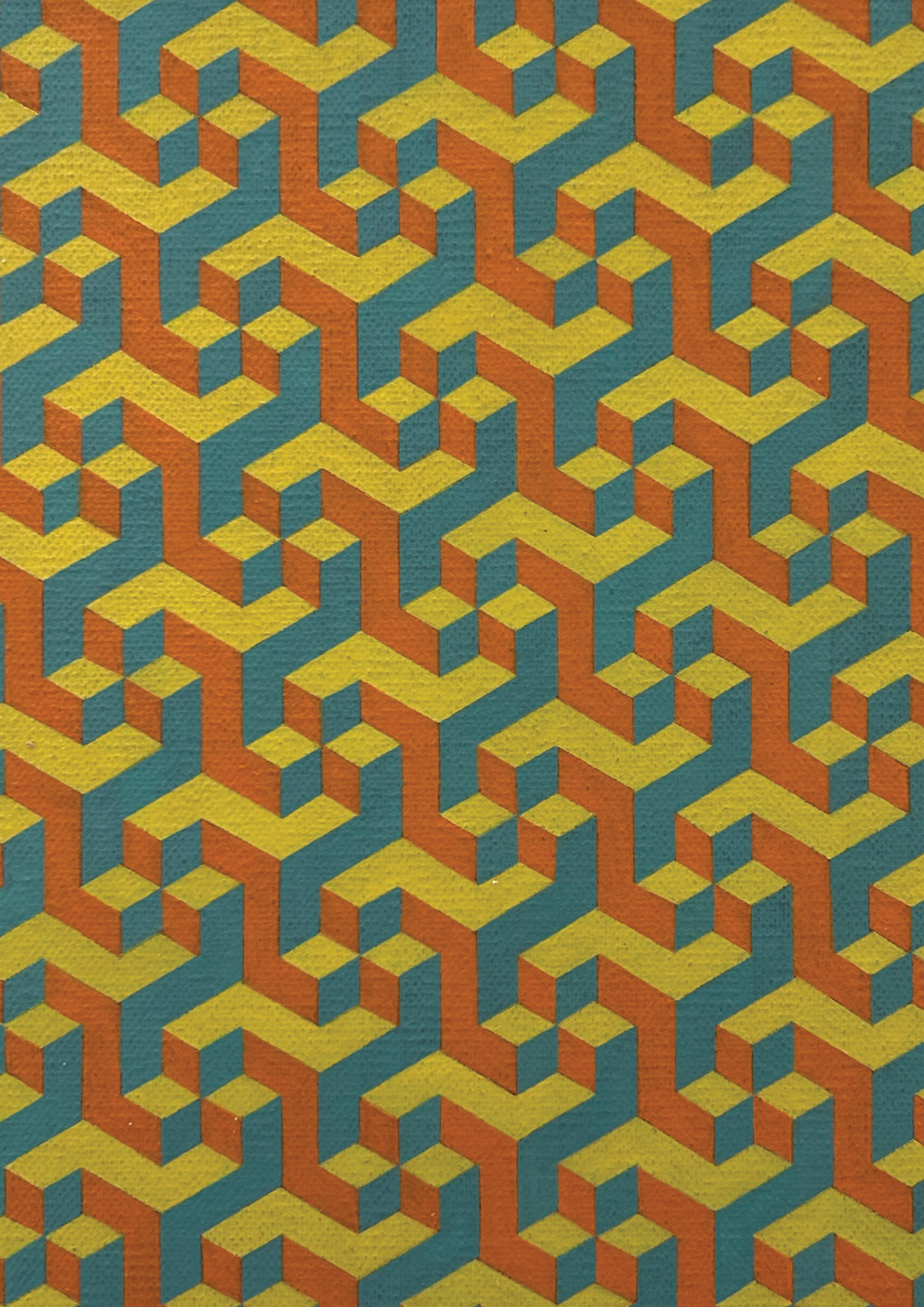
Baldi, 2024
oil on linen
30.5 x 25.5 cm
framed 33.5 x 29 cm



I Think, 2024
oil on linen
30.5 x 25.5 cm
framed 33.5 x 29 cm



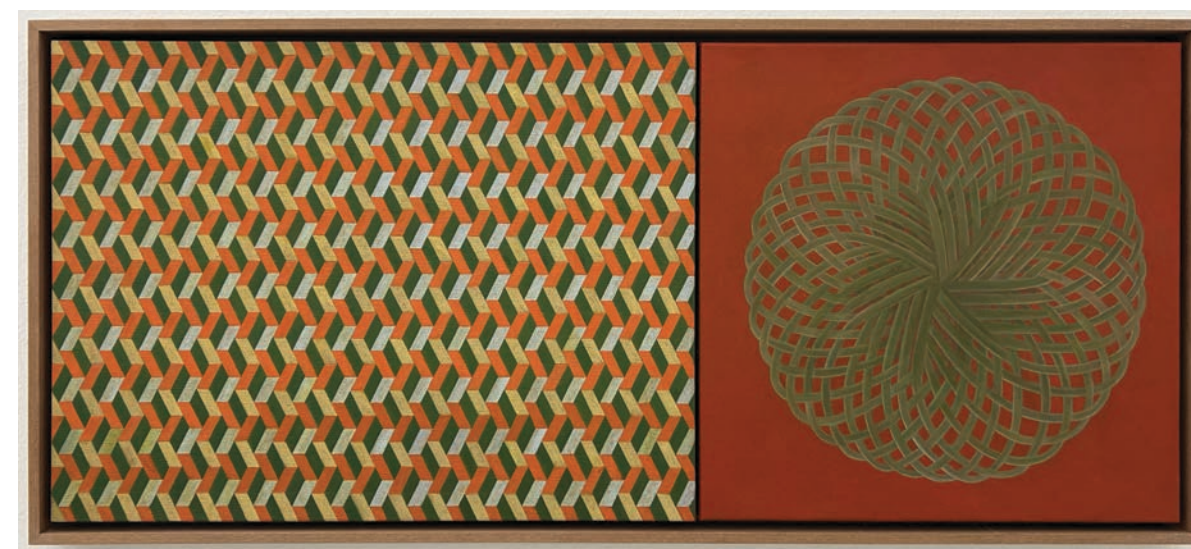
Limber, 2024
oil on linen
37.5 x 37.5 cm
framed 41 x 41 cm



Ananas, 2024
oil on linen, diptych
overall 30.5 x 56 cm
30.5 x 25.5 cm (left); 30.5 x 30.5 cm (right)



I Think, 2024
 oil on linen, diptych
 overall 30.5 x 56 cm
 30.5 x 30.5 cm (left); 30.5 x 25.5 cm (right)



Alas, 2024
 oil on linen, diptych
 overall 37.5 x 88 cm
 37.5 x 50.5 cm (left); 37.5 x 37.5 cm (right)



Tea, 2024
oil on linen
84 x 76 cm

Tea, 2024

Shophouses in Georgetown, Penang are highly eclectic in style and design. When Anum visited last August, she spent time at her friend's shophouse located within the old town centre and was immediately captivated by its ornate interiors and decor with antique Chinese furniture. She painted tea with such sentimentality, recounting the evening where they were enjoying tea and rain water began to flood slowly from the courtyard to the main hall. Like ancient illuminated manuscripts or miniature paintings, Anum's work encapsulates the architectural flourishes of a time past in elaborate and intricate detail against the deliberate softness of her figure's expression.

Green Tea, 2024

Green Tea is an amalgamation of Anum's personal memories and broader cultural motifs. It depicts her friend Leonard in a crawling position that mirrors the miniature boy under the dining table, which references Chinese porcelain figurines symbolising fertility and reminded the artist of Keith Haring's iconic radiant baby from one of her favourite t-shirts. Anum often draws from different moments in her life and composes them into a narrative that is peculiar yet compelling, inviting the viewer to ponder on every element in her paintings. The final outcome is usually achieved after multiple smaller studies of experimenting with variations—from scale of her subjects to colour and intensity. Parallels can be drawn between Anum's approach towards painting with Mughal painting from the 16th to 18th centuries, where the latter sought not for exact likeness in painting, but rather representation.



Green Tee, 2024
oil on linen
84 x 76 cm



GREEN TEA (2024) PAINTING PROCESS



Fig 1. Leonard posing

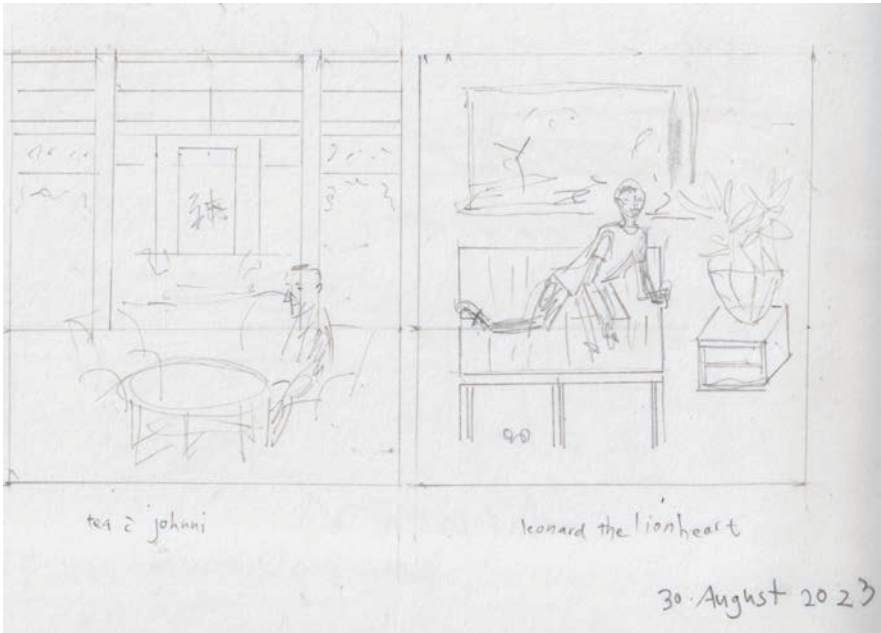


Fig 5. Composition Sketch

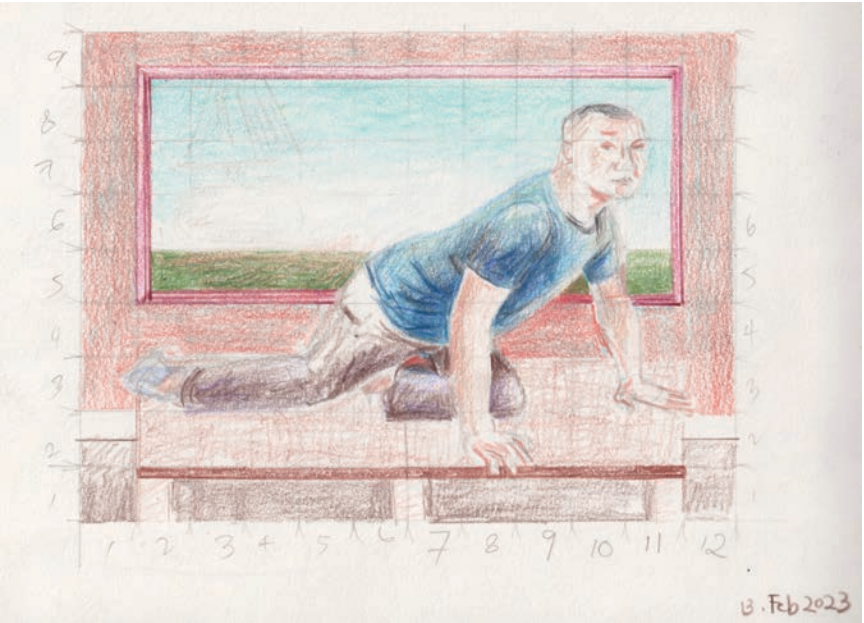


Fig 6. Sketch of Leonard posing



Fig 2. Porcelain doll from Johnni's home



Fig 3 & 4. Watercolour studies of porcelain doll



Fig 7. Composition sketch with colour



Fig 8. Imprimatura of final painting

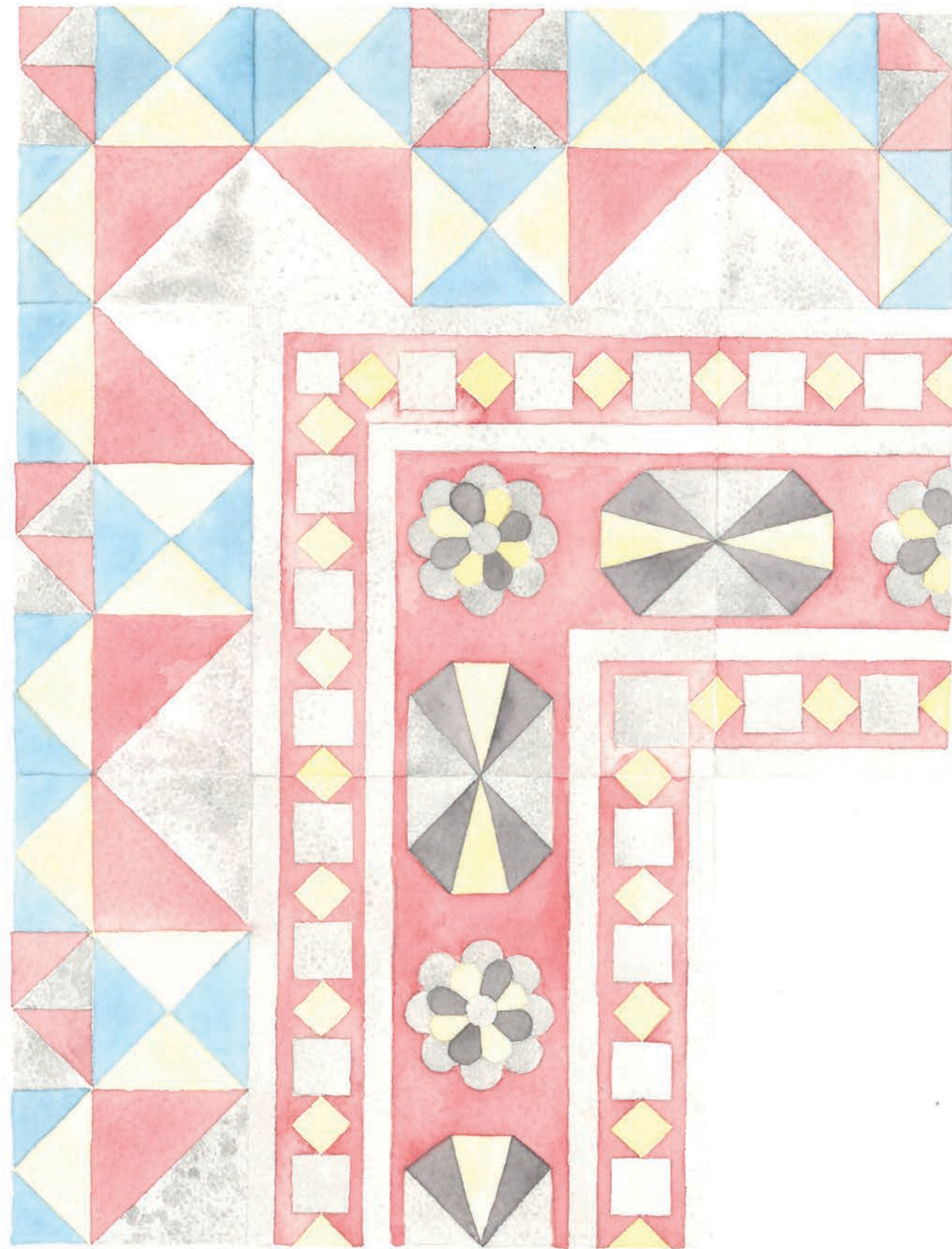


Fig 9. Oil painting study of Leonard



Fig 10. Initial inspiration for background landscape painting

2023



This series of works on paper feature fragments of broken tiles found in the homes of Anum's friends or antique shops in Penang, Malaysia. It reflects her abiding curiosity towards architecture and the structural elements of both traditional and modern surroundings. With an acute sensitivity towards colour, Anum captures these floor tiles in vibrant yet diaphanous quality, evoking the delicacy of the material and a wistful sense of passing time. These watercolours often serve as studies that she later integrates into the compositions of her canvases.

PENANG TILES SERIES



penang tiles viii, 2023
watercolour on paper
31 x 23 cm



penang tiles ii, 2023
watercolour on paper
31 x 23 cm



penang tiles xii, 2023
watercolour on paper
29.7 x 21 cm



penang tiles xiii, 2023
watercolour on paper
29.7 x 21 cm



putting tiles



xii



xi



xv



wow
volg. ii



2021

SOLO EXHIBITION



wow #1-3, 2021
watercolour on paper
20 x 20 cm each

Anum began this series of works on paper while she was delving into indigenous plants in relation to the traditional arts and culture of her home state, Kelantan. As she studied the various techniques of drawing botanical subjects — in pen, graphite, and watercolour — it became clear that botanical drawings require a certain discipline in regard to how the workplace is set up.

Reading Dave Hickey's essay 'Pontormo's Rainbow' in his book *Air Guitar: Essays on Art & Democracy* led Noor Mahnun to research Isaac Newton's *Opticks*, a book on prisms and the colours of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. With these hues in mind, she combined the seven days of the week with the seven colours to create her *Blue Monday* paintings — 'cerulean blue monday' and 'cobalt blue monday', tributes to the track by New Order.

The 'wow' triplets, on the other hand, are associated with landscape and nature, as inspired by the view from the artist's studio, which overlooks a thick and tangled growth of verdant trees and underbrush. Noor Mahnun has always wanted to paint this scenery, but the task seemed quite daunting — so many leaves! "Wow" could also be an expression of wonder, a surprise or a sigh.

SEPTEMBER



aurelin m, 2021
watercolour on paper
20 x 20 cm



light blue monday, 2021
watercolour on paper
30.5 x 45 cm



blue sky ii, 2021
watercolour on paper
20 x 20 cm



sky blue i, 2021
watercolour on paper
20 x 20 cm

2017

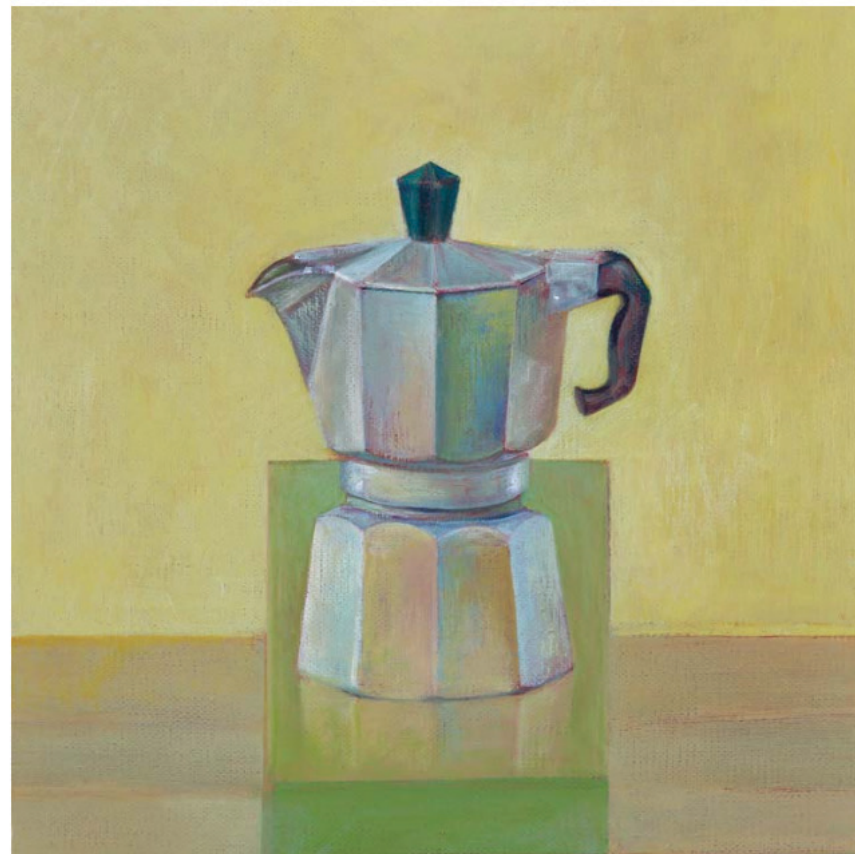
SOLO EXHIBITION



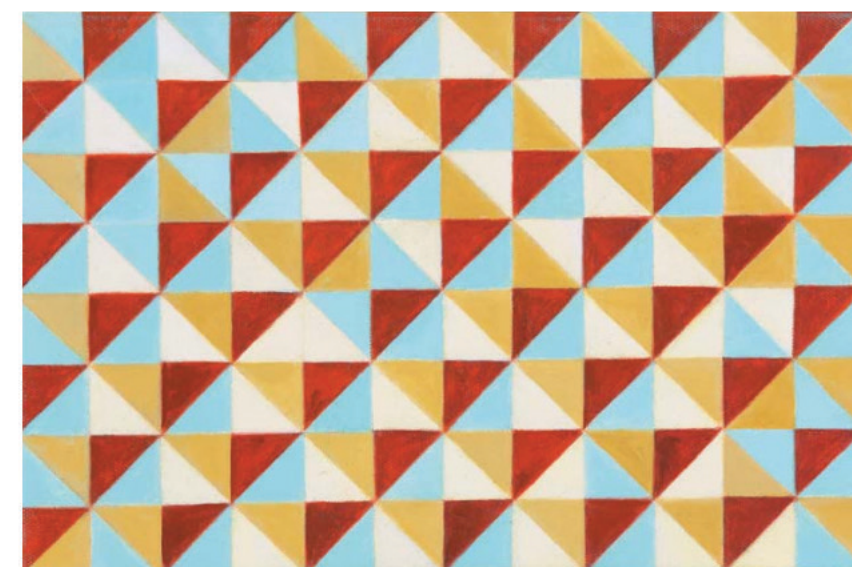
When observing Anum's paintings, on the surface they appear to be European in style - still life paintings featuring single domesticated, inanimate objects illustrated in the academic method - or figurative and portrait oil paintings that resemble the works of German painter Otto Dix (1891-1969), who fused elements of realism, allegory, and the whimsical. Except that Anum's depiction of the human figure on canvas is devoid of any emotions, focusing on physicality rather than expressiveness. Her time spent in Europe has been most influential in the development of style and characteristics.

In unravelling the context of Anum's artworks, it can be read as self-expression: an archive of memories in an attempt to eternalise selected episodes of her life. Her choice of subjects in *Disco Lombok Still Life* include the ordinary coffee moka pot; butter and steak knives; dustpan and brush; scissors; white gloves; and sunglasses. Yet, the narratives of these objects are deeply personal.

DISCO LOMBOK



Moka Pot, 2017
oil on linen, diptych
30.5 x 30.5 cm; 20 x 30 cm



A Pair of Choos, 2012
oil on linen, diptych
30.5 x 30.5 cm; 20 x 30cm



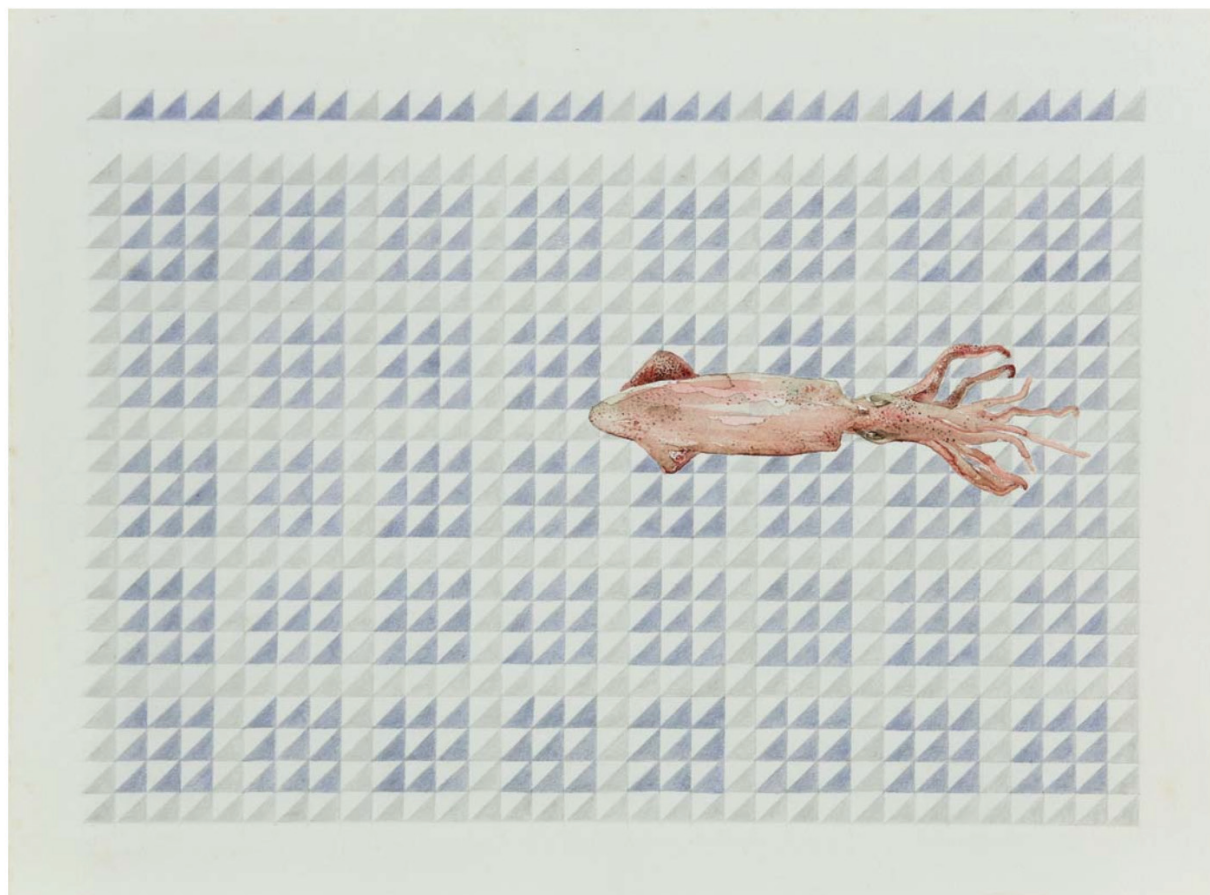
Postcard from Tumpat, 2016
oil on linen
40 x 120 cm

“The squid, against a repetitive pattern rendered in pencil works on paper; obsession started when I took part in ‘My Story, My Strength: Doodle for Change’, an exhibition in aid of WCC (Women Center for Change), Georgetown, Penang in 2015. At first, I wanted to convey the perseverance and patience of those women whose lives are affected by abuse, but in the process of doing the work, the rendering became an obsession, and I got addicted to drawing not only the cuttlefish, but the patience testing, long attention span this series demanded. I have always done patterns, but not in smaller details.

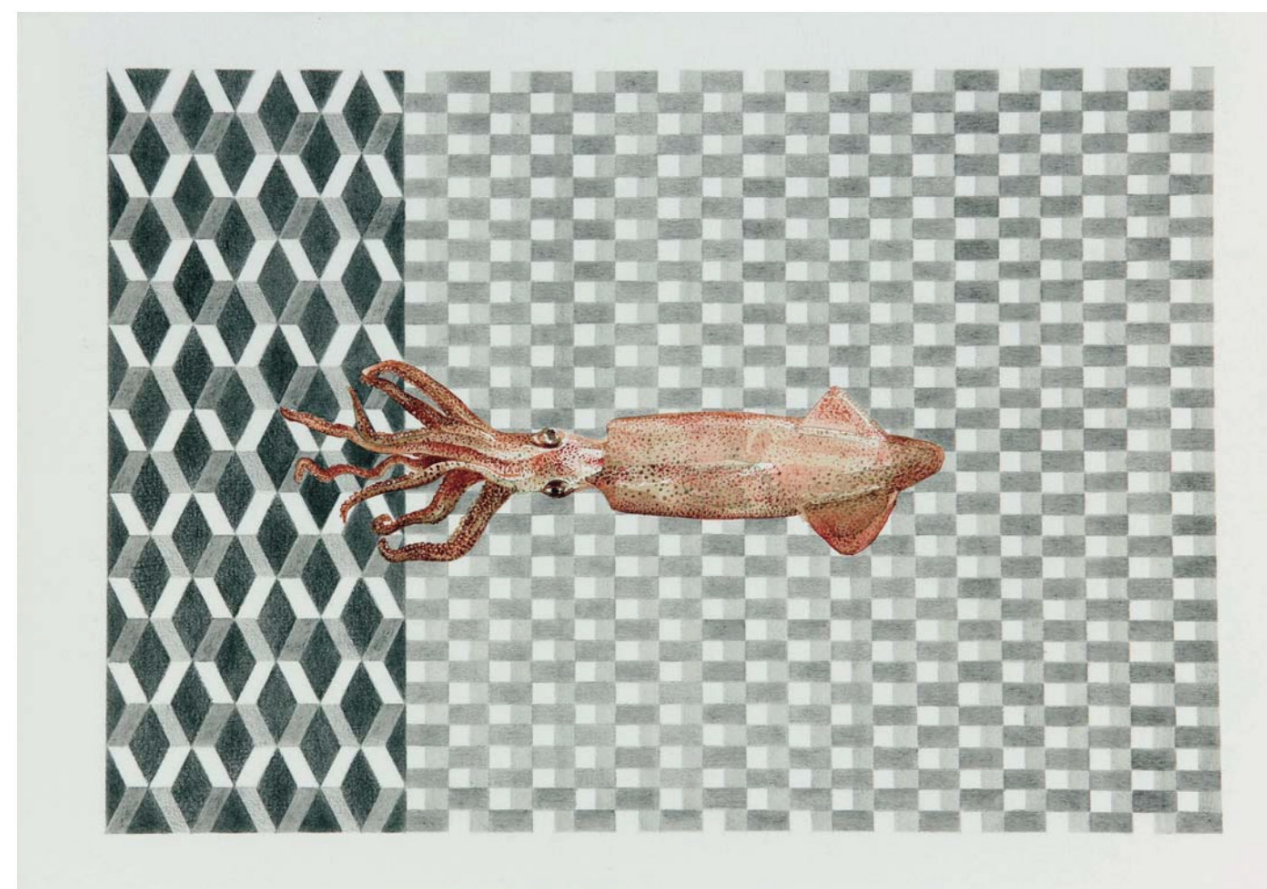
What was supposed to be an arduous and challenging task became a delightful occupation. I could go on rendering for hours. The ‘squid’ backfires, I supposed. Squid was chosen because it is languid in the way that it moves. It’s smooth, slippery. But it could also swim speedily. Passive. Aggressive. The shape, phallic, brings connotations. Being a printmaker, I have always admired Hokusai’s work and one of them featured an octopus and a woman. It is sensual, and I think sensibility is the right word to describe it.”

- Noor Mahnun (Anum)

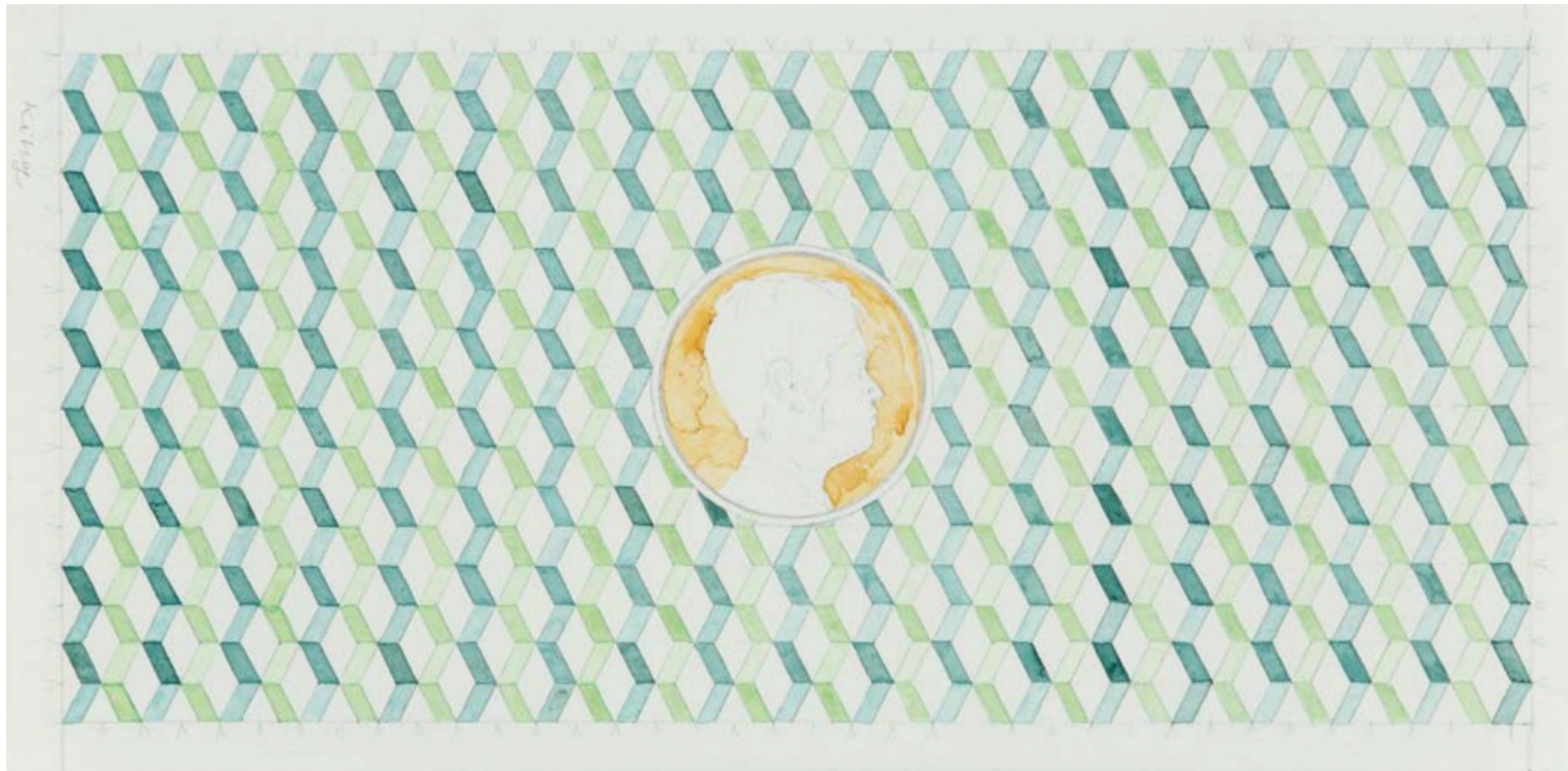




*Let your conversation be always full of
grace, seasoned with salt, 2016*
graphite and watercolour on paper
28 x 38 cm



Brown Squid 1, 2016
graphite and watercolour on paper
21 x 30 cm



King Dreaming, 2014-2016
graphite and watercolour on paper
20 x 40 cm



Frangipani, 2014
watercolour on paper
38 x 28 cm



Jambu Air, 2014
watercolour on paper
38 x 28 cm

2007 - 2020



dove



pears



imperial (red)



parrot

SOAP SERIES



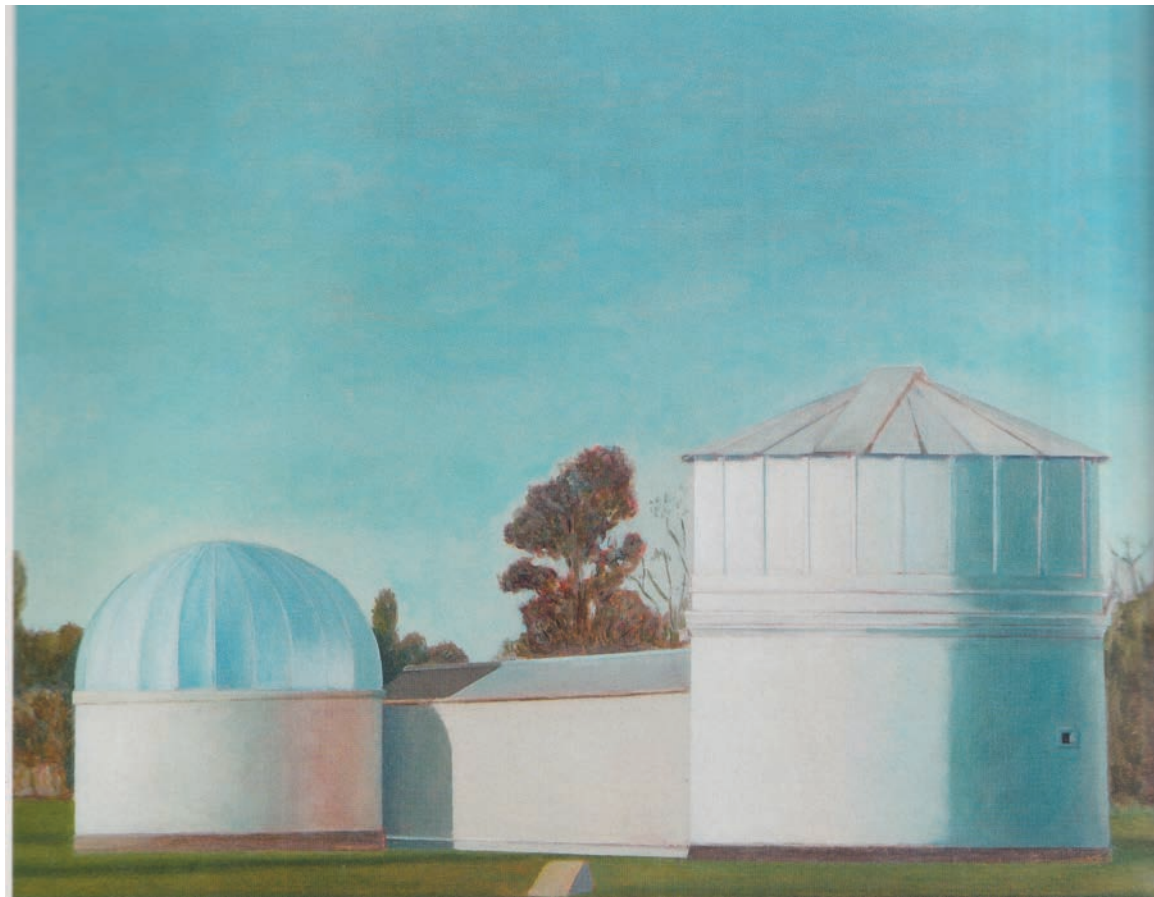
How to make soap bubbles, 2007-2017
oil on linen
50 x 95 cm



Savon, 2020
oil on linen, diptych
25 x 20 cm; 20 x 30cm



1990-2006



The Infrequent Transit of Venus, 2006
oil on canvas
94 x 73.7 cm

Noor Mahnun (Anum) studied at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig (1989-1996) in Germany under Professor Arwed Gorella and graduated with a Master's in Fine Art. In 2000 she was the Malaysian artist-in-residence at Rimbun Dahan, a year long programme which invites a Malaysian and an Australian artist to live and work on a private estate outside of Kuala Lumpur. She was awarded the Italian Government Scholarship in 2003 and studied printmaking at the International School of Print and Graphic Il Bisonte, Florence, Italy. In 2005 she was recipient of the Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur Visual Arts Residency at Gunnery Studios, Sydney, Australia.

In 2010, Anum held a two-part solo exhibition 'XXV' at NN Gallery, Ampang, Malaysia, which marked the artist's twenty-fifth year anniversary of her first solo exhibition in 1985 at Video Diva, Florence, Italy. Part I included works on paper of portraiture, still life and studies of friends in watercolours, pencil drawings and a series of etching done during the artist's printmaking course at Il Bisonte, Florence. Part II showcased a selection of her early paintings from 1994-1996.

EARLY WORKS



Girl skipping, 2002
oil on canvas
95 x 180 cm



Breakables, 2001
oil on linen



Weapons, 2001
oil on linen



Shelf, 1996
oil on canvas



Sundae, 1996
oil on canvas



Eisbecher, 1996
oil on canvas
40 x 54 cm



Fruitbowl, 1996
oil on canvas



Wasp, 1995
oil on canvas
200 x 180 cm



Night visitor, 1995
oil on canvas
125 x 100 cm



Bar Eden 1995
oil on canvas
100 x 250 cm



Dreamer, 1994
oil on canvas
125 x 100 cm



Dreamer, 1994
oil on canvas
125 x 100 cm



Am Abend, 1994
oil on linen
200 x 180 cm

SELECTED



PRESS

Malaysian Artist Anum 's painting 'Am Abend' sells for RM236,000

By Suzanna Pillay - April 29, 2018 @ 8:21pm



The auction was held at Galeri Prima at Balai Berita and attracted online bidders from 10 countries.

Sold at RM236,000, the highest bid of the day was for Malaysian artist Noor Mahnun Mohamed's painting 'Am Abend', an oil painting completed in 1993.

It was initially valued at between RM35,000 -RM60,000.

Suzanna Pillay, 'Malaysian Artist Anum's painting "Am Abend" sells for RMB 236,000', *New Straits Times*, 29 April 2018.

Tempo

Enamoured with portraits

Calendar

TODAY

KEEPING AN EYE ON BUSINESS EXHIBITION (till March 7)
Reka Gallery at the National Art Gallery is holding the first professional graphic design exhibition showcasing corporate design, life-style and entertainment, new media, brand development, packaging and retail and design crafts. Venue: 2, Jalan Temerloh, off Jalan Tun Razak, Kuala Lumpur. Call 03-4025-4990.

TOMORROW

TUESDAYS WITH THE GREG LYONS QUARTET
Head for Sugar Club every Tuesday from 9.30pm to midnight for some contemporary jazz. The band will feature Greg Lyons (saxes), Lewis Pragasan (drums), Andy Peterson (bass) and Justin Lim (piano/keyboards). Sugar Club is the old Tin Mine, to the left of the lower lobby of the Crowne Plaza Mutiara (formerly KL Hilton), Jalan Sultan Ismail, KL. Call 03-2143-0020.

WEDNESDAY

THE ALLEYCATS AT JUANITA
The Alleycats, known for its solid rendition of cover versions and its own hits, is entertaining at Juanita, a fun pub on the ground floor of Crystal Crown Hotel, Petaling Jaya. It performs on Monday to Saturday from 9.30pm onwards. Call 03-7955-3541.

THURSDAY

ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY AT BALAI SENI MAYBANK (till Feb 15)
Balai Seni Maybank in Kuala Lumpur is exhibiting Arabic calligraphy by Eyad Elisbaie. It features selected Quranic verses designed in a variety of Arabic writing methods. Venue: Maybank, Jalan Tun Perak, Kuala Lumpur. Call 03-2074-7783 or 03-2074-7785.

FRIDAY

THE NYONYA KEBAYA — A LIVING ART EXHIBITION (till Feb 20)
TV3 and Yayasan Budi Penyayang Malaysia are inviting the public to view traditional Peranakan attire at its exhibition at Petronas Art Gallery. It comprises, among others, Datin Paduka Seri Endon Mahmood's private collection of nyonya kebaya. Call 03-7726-6333 ext 5392/5148.

SATURDAY

SATURDAY ROCK FEVER AT HARDROCK CAFE
Catch Joe Fizzow of Too Phat, Radhi OAG and Teh Tarik Crew who will be appearing under Hard Rock Cafe's Saturday Rock Fever series at 3pm. Call 03-2715-5555. Venue: Hard Rock Cafe, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur.

A STYLE OF HIS OWN:
Radhi of OAG at Hard Rock Cafe's Saturday Rock Fever series

IMMORTALISED: The Anum family

Some take the form of seemingly straightforward and conventional head portraits, while larger works are painted with the subject in a scene, as in a snapshot.

The portraits, in all their staidness and variety, make the Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Braunschweig (1989-1996) in Germany and graduated with a Master's in Fine Art.

In 2000, she was the artist-in-residence at Rim-bun Dahan, a year-long programme which invites a Print and Graphic II Bisonte, Florence, in 2003.

The exhibition will be open to the public from Feb 17 to March 5 at Valentine Willie Fine Art, 1st floor, 17, Jalan Telawi 3, Bangsar Baru, Kuala Lumpur. Gallery hours are from

Shulb Talb, 'Enamoured with portraits', *New Straits Times (Tempo)*, 7 February 2007.

An eye for something extra

By J. ANU

In Noor Mahnun's surprisingly painstaking paintings, not a single brushstroke seems out of place; nor does the artist ever raise the colour or level of her palette to a tone higher than a cool and muted glazed blue.

There are no traces of modernist painting here; no stridency, obvious emotional outpouring, or fast brushwork.

Much of it is restraint, control and a quiet, totally assured and even naive elegance.

It seems Noor Mahnun has turned her back on the loaded brush heavy with pigment and the wide arm gesture that produces swaths of colour across wall-sized canvases. Instead she has opted to create minimalist and carefully defined narratives of impeccable craftsmanship.

And although some of the paintings do coincide with the 20th century penchant for the large and the dazzling, there is a compactness of image, detail and composition that immediately compels the viewer to look closer, to peer into their depths and far from out not only the mystery of their technique but also the images portrayed.

Here classical values - early Christian and Renaissance, in particular - join to make paintings that are highly serious in intent and meaning and yet, at the same time, whimsical and witty, as though the artist was amused at the world in which she finds herself.

Noor Mahnun, a native of Kelantan, has spent over 15 years in Germany where she attained her Bachelor and Masters in Fine Arts and where she carefully developed a traditional two dimensionality of form and an appreciation for a muted quality of light that renders unto these paintings a distinctly grey European flavour.

Recently, her work was seen by Angela Huijss at the Gallery Tangsi group exhibition *Of Allegory and Symbol* and it is with their support that her work is being shown at Angelucci in conjunction with the restaurant's official opening.

She has also been accepted for the Rimbun Dahan residency next year.

Most of the paintings currently on her Galeri Tangsi exhibition held at Angelucci Restaurant in Ampang (the gallery is undergoing renovations at their PAM space) are works done during her time in Germany and they reflect that influence not only as far as rendition and experience is concerned but also as far as the physical quality of the light she has chosen to capture.

Within the Malaysian art scene, Mahnun seems to fall into the growing category of careful figurative painters who are modern in every sense except that they opt for a very slow and unstaking method of painting. All of which runs counter to need for immediacy and novelty that marks contemporary



DROLL HUMOUR...
The Wasp (above) balances narrative with aesthetic device for maximum results, while 'Night Visitor' is a sparse composition that is also sensual.

At the same time, Noor Mahnun's droll humour and playfulness combined with a poignant poeticism reflect modern times albeit largely related to her time in Germany.

For example, *Night Visitor* is a sparse and still composition. The woman in it is poised in her undershirt, holding up a veil-like net to catch a moth, the night visitor. The cloth is an interesting device because it gives the painting its narrative purpose (the

catching of the moth) but, more importantly, acts as a shield to the bare upper torso of the figure.

No specifics are illustrated but it is a tremendously sensual painting, compounded by a slow rhythm that permeates the piece conveyed in the slow dance she seems to be engaged in with the moth.

It seems like a period setting, the wallpaper, the muted gloom, pearls at the edge of the fabric

device, perspective, for example, is caution thrown to the wind as far as this artist is concerned. Again, rhythm plays a part in the posture of the central figure. Suspiciously autobiographical, the protagonist is poised for action, rolled up paper in hand, eyes locked on the wasp in the scheme of things and yet she is filled with a classical mood of ennui. It is a tremendous painting, the perspectives playing a role of design rather than space.

And the artist is sensitive to balance, as seen in the way the pan and pot are strategically placed to ensure balance in the piece. Then there is the cat, which adds yet another narrative dimension to the work.

A double entendre is thereby presented, one that is quietly hilarious yet strangely disturbing, obviously sensual and incredibly chaotic.

And on other levels the artist explores issues like time, for example. In *The Wasp*, there is the girl in the centre and a hand in the right hand corner opening the door and disrupting the privacy of the room.

"That is the girl again, in the same room but at a different time," she insists. "Food, for example."

Noor Mahnun's paintings contain a mischievous quality, a gentle mockery of both herself and the world that surrounds her.

And always, what adds to the mystery within her work is always the quality of light. It blankets the painting with a cool, detached luminance that is evident throughout Noor Mahnun's paintings.

This special glow comes from within, the result of the process of painting, stroke by stroke, using thin layers of glaze which, despite a range of colour, remains monotonous at least as far as light-producing tones are concerned.

Besides these narrative/autobiographical pieces, the artists also includes some delightful and minimalist still lives in this exhibition. A sense of pure design seems to dictate the validity of works like Vessel, Pitcher and Trink Glass.

Seen in the arrangement and the repetitive motif of the tiles, the design element is compounded by an emotive response to the material of the still lives depicted. For instance, glass and water feature consistently in the works, giving them a mood of fragility as well as precariousness.

These paintings are all the more beguiling because they contain excellent craftsmanship, that is especially admirable in a genre which is fast, immediate and all too frequently shallow.

The paintings are all enjoyable because, in a but genteel way, Noor Mahnun takes the known and manipulates and presents it in a way that is both familiar and new.

At the same time, she sabotages the likelihood of strong emotion by presenting a hohum, unchanging environment that is reliable and constant like the kitchen in *The Wasp*, which can be anybody's kitchen.

The last thing on the artist's mind is the conventional use of

NEW BREW OF LATTE@8

NEW STRAITS TIMES

LIFE & TIMES

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2005



Artists Anum and Yusri talk about their craft

■ COFFEE BREAK P10 ■ TV & RADIO GUIDE P21 ■ CENTRESTAGE P14



CURRICULUM

VITAE

NOOR MAHNUN (ANUM)
b. 1964, Kelantan, Malaysia

EDUCATION

1989 – 1996	Masters in Fine Art, Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Braunschweig, Germany
1987 – 1988	Die Etage, Berlin, Germany
1982 – 1984	School of Architecture, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma
1977 – 1981	Tunku Kurshiah College, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025	ANUM, Yeo Workshop, Singapore
2021	September, The Back Room, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2017	Disco Lombok Still Life, The Edge Galerie, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia
2010	XXV Part I, NN Gallery, Ampang, Selangor, Malaysia XXV Part II, NN Gallery, Ampang, Selangor, Malaysia
2006	Looking Out, Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2005	Pictures of Me, Pictures of You, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2002	Noor Mahnun Mohamed: Solo Exhibition, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
1998	Mysteries, Angelucci, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
1997	Kunst in Treppenhaus Feldschlößchen, Braunschweig, Germany
1995	Galerie im zweiten Rang des Staatstheater, Braunschweig, Germany
1989	Sparkasse der Stadt Berlin, Germany
1985	Video Diva, Florence, Italy

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025	Holding (Space), Yeo Workshop, Singapore
2024	Storytellers: Mythic Journeys and Modern Realities, Yeo Workshop, Singapore
2023	Butterflies in My Stomach, Art and Stories, Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2022	Opening Printmaking Show, Cetak 17/HOM Art Trans, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia RHB Art with Heart 2022, Bangsar Shopping Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Ginger Biscuits, Art and Stories, Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia A Domestic Life, Cult Gallery/CIMB Artober Hotel Art Fair 2022, Element Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2021	Dunia/Akhirat, in support of Sisters in Islam (SIS), Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia This Time: Contemporary Watercolour, A_ Works of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia The Carrier Bag: Gathering as Collecting, Temu House, Petaling Jaya, Selangor
2020	RRRAWRRR!!! Maybank Women Artists Show 2020, Balai Seni Menara Mayback, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Back to Art, A+ Works of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Ready but Postponed or Cancelled, A+ Works of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Free/Bebas, in support of Sisters in Islam (SIS), Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Sesumpah/Chameleon, Fergana, Black Box, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2019	Rethinking Editions, OUR ArtProjects, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Awan & Tanah, in support of Sisters in Islam (SIS), Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Artaid19, in support of the Malaysian Aids Council, White Box, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Drawings Matter?, HOM Art Trans, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2018	Halal, Haram, in support of Sisters in Islam (SIS), Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Artaid18 Diri, in support of the Malaysian Aids Council, White Box, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2017	Locals Only, TAKSU Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Artaid17 Bebas, in support of the Malaysian Aids Council, White Box, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Hell, Heaven in support of Sisters in Islam, Cult Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2016	Secret Colours of Malaysia, a charity auction in support of Sisters in Islam, in collaboration with Editions Didier Millet, Ilham Gallery & Borders Malaysia, Ilham Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Artaid16 Love for Sale, in support of the Malaysian Aids Council, White Box, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2015	Artaid15, in support of the Malaysian Aids Council, Segaris Art Center, Publika, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

	<i>My Story, My Strength: Doodle for Change</i> , in aid of WCC (Women Center for Change), The Star Pitt Street, Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia		<i>Feed Me! An Exploration of Appetites</i> , in aid of World Wildlife Fund, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia
2014	<i>Malaysian Art Friends 2 (Selected Works from 10 Collectors)</i> , National Visual Arts Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Naked Drawing</i> , Segaris Art Center, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>The Good Malaysian Woman (Ethnicity. Religion. Politics)</i> , an exhibition in aid of AWAM (All Women's Action Society) co-organised with interpre8 Art Space, Black Box, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Flowers</i> , St. Heliers Street Gallery, The Abbotsford Convent, Victoria, Australia	2005	<i>Spirit of Wood and Other Treasures</i> , TAKSU, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Taman Sari</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia
2013	<i>M50: Selamat Hari Malaysia</i> , White Box, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Life</i> , Numthong Gallery at Aree, Bangkok, Thailand Gallery NN at Art Expo Malaysia 2013, MARTRADE Exhibition & Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>A Journey of Self Discovery</i> , Nalanda Centre, Seri Kembangan, Selangor	2004	<i>Portraits</i> , Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Paradise Lost / Paradise Found</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia <i>Sleight of Hand</i> , Darling Muse Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2012	<i>The Prayer</i> , White Box, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Skin</i> , House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Snapshots</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia	2003	<i>Urbanart 2003</i> , Melbourne, Australia <i>Mostra di Fine Anno, Il Bisonte</i> , Florence, Italy <i>Games People Play</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia <i>Il Bisonte agli Uffizi</i> , Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy
2011	<i>Here Today, Gone Tomorrow</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia	2002	<i>Painted: Southeast Asian Contemporary Artists</i> , Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Touch</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia <i>Bara Hati, Bahang Jiwa</i> , National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Laughter</i> , iPreciation Gallery, Singapore
2010	<i>Bad@MAP</i> , White Box, Publika, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Anniversary Show</i> , Pace Gallery, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia <i>Man and God</i> , Pier-2 Art Center, Taipei, Taiwan	2001	<i>Headlights</i> , Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Ilham, Galeri Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia Rimbun Dahan Artist in Residence, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia <i>Flashpoint</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia
2009	<i>F1</i> , House of Matahati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>X</i> , TAKSU, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Tanah Air</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia	2000	<i>Love on Paper</i> , Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Arang</i> , Taksu Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Water for Life</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Islamic Arts Museum, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2008	<i>Shifting Boundaries</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia <i>Bayu Timur</i> , National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia German Connection, Pelita Hati, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	1999	<i>Tangsi-Braunschweig Collaboration '99</i> , Galeri Tangsi, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Aku – Potret Diri</i> , Petronas Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2007	<i>00:15 Superstar</i> , Art for Nature in aid of WWF Malaysia, Rimbun Dahan, Selangor, Malaysia <i>Art Triangle</i> , Soka Gakkai, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>50 ways to live in Malaysia (A heartfelt view of life through the eyes of 50 Malaysian artists)</i> , Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia <i>Between Generations</i> , Asian Art Museum, University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur & Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia	1998	<i>Of Allegory and Symbols</i> , Galeri Tangsi, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2006	<i>Signed & Dated: Valentine Willie Fine Art 10th Anniversary</i> , Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	1997	<i>5x5</i> , Galerie Peters-Barenbrock, Braunschweig, Germany
		1996	<i>Meisterschüler '96</i> , BMG Halle, Braunschweig, Germany
		1995	<i>Überall</i> , Alpirsbach Galerie, Alpirsbach, Germany
		1994	<i>Werkschau Klasse Gorella</i> , Galeria der HBK Braunschweig, Germany
		1993	<i>Aufheben</i> , Alpirsbach Galerie, Alpirsbach, Germany

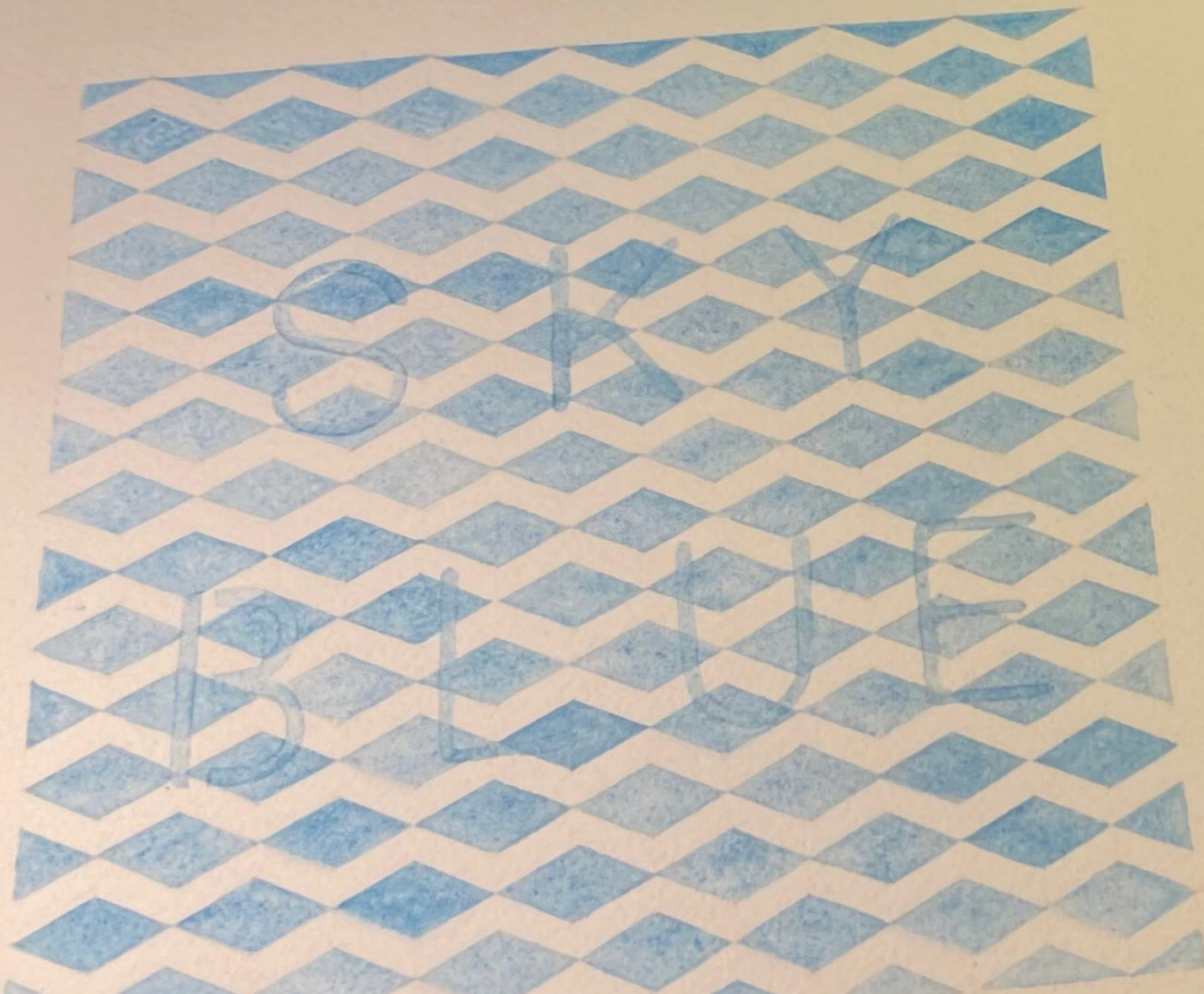
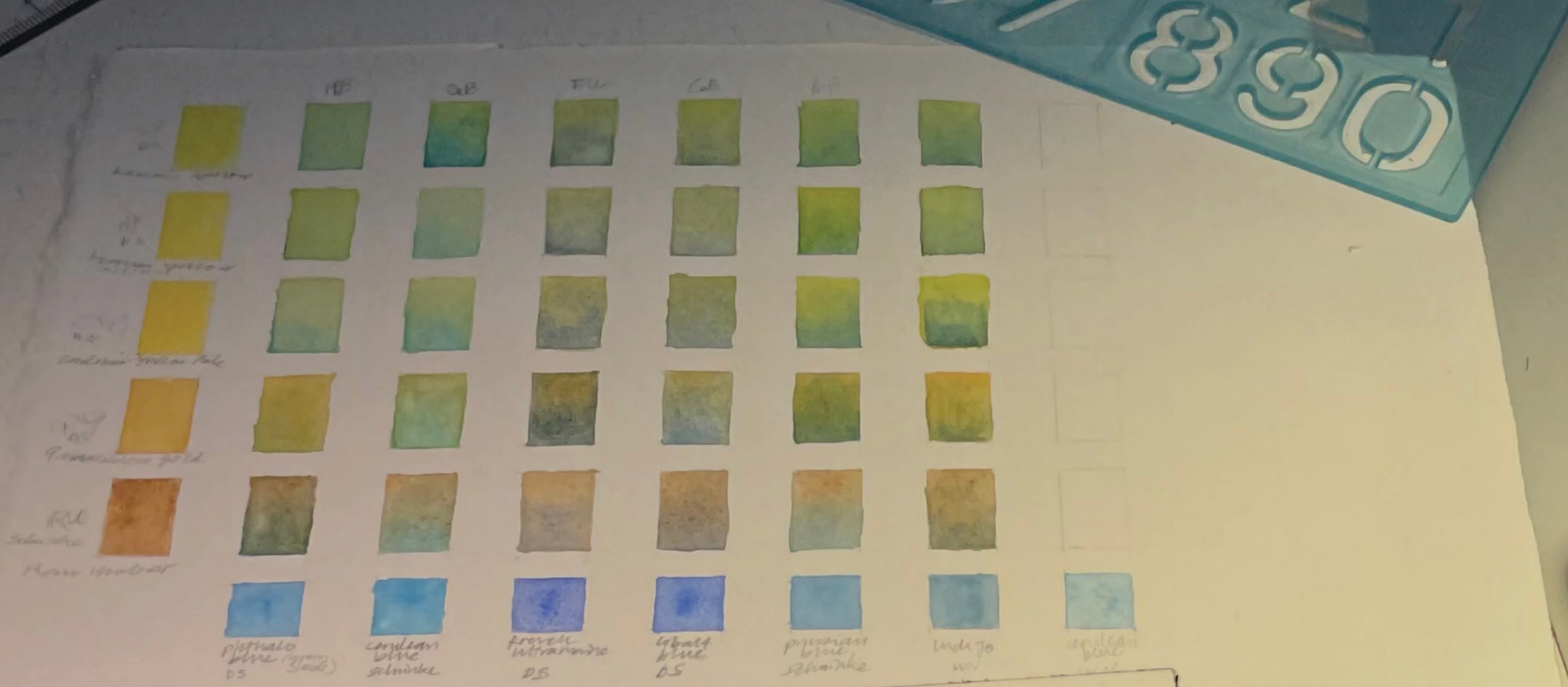
RESIDENCIES

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 2020-2021 | Cultural Economy Development Agency (CENDANA) Visual Arts Inspire Funding Programme (Cycle 1); 'Botanical Illustrations: Malay Poisons and Charm Cures (John D. Gimlette)' |
| 2012-2013 | Nippon Foundation Grant, Asian Public Intellectual, Senior Fellowship; 'Digital Archive for Printmaking' |
| 2005 | Australian High Commission (Kuala Lumpur) Visual Arts Residency at Gunnery Studios, Sydney, Australia |
| 2002-2003 | Italian Government Scholarship programme, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Printmaking course at Il Bisonte, Florence, Italy |
| 2000-2001 | Artist-in-Residence, Rimbun Dahan, Kuang, Selangor, Malaysia |

AWARDS

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2009 | Winner in Arts & Media category, Great Women of Our Time Awards, The Malaysian Women's Weekly magazine |
| 1995 | 2nd Prize Alpirsbach Galerie Competition, Alpirsbach, Germany |
| 1980 | 1st Prize sculpture competition, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia |





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