



Image: Simryn GILL, *Untitled*, 1999, from an ongoing series of gouaches on National Geographic pages from the 1970s, gouache on magazine page, 25.5 x 17.8 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Breenspace, Sydney and Tracy Williams Ltd, New York, © the artist



SAMSTAG
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Media Release

Simryn Gill: Gathering featured new exhibition at the Samstag Museum of Art

Opening 7 August, the Samstag Museum presents the work of leading Sydney-based Malaysian artist Simryn Gill with a solo exhibition focused around new works and selected pieces from the early 1990s to the present, some produced for exhibitions and others never intended as art works. Together, they offer an insight into Gill's artistic processes and her interest in art-making as an active engagement with the world.

The exhibition *Simryn Gill: Gathering* is organised and toured by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and includes photography, objects, collections, books and text works by this internationally renowned artist.

Born in Singapore in 1959, Gill lives and works in Sydney and Port Dickson, Malaysia. She has exhibited widely throughout Australia and internationally, including documenta 12, Kassel (2007), the Singapore Biennale (2006), the Biennale of Sydney (2002 and 2008), the São Paulo Biennial (2004) and the Venice Biennale (1999). Her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Tate Modern, London and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC (both 2006).

The exhibition, curated by Russell Storer, Curator of Contemporary Asian Art, Queensland Art Gallery, explores the artist's pursuit of meaning through the reinterpretation or alteration of existing objects, the photographing of specific locations, and the forming of collections, Gill contemplates how ideas and meanings are communicated between people, objects, and sites.

Gill's practice considers how we might experience place as an intersection of personal and collective histories and geographies. In making the photographic work *May 2006*, for example, the artist took more than 800 photographs over a month of walks around her neighbourhood, using a roll of film a day. The film stock had recently been discontinued and was nearing its expiry date; Gill's work recorded the passing of a particular material as well as documented the artist's deepening connection to her locality.

Another work featured in the MCA exhibition, *Run* (2006), is a series of photographs recording Gill's visit to the Indonesian island of Pulau Run. Once a centre for the lucrative nutmeg trade, the island was exchanged between the British and the Dutch for Manhattan in 1667. The photographs question how history may occupy a particular site, and the ability of photographs to capture the essence of a place. *Garland* (2006) consists of objects collected on the beaches of Port Dickson and



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islands off Singapore over a number of years. Having been reshaped by the sea and sand, the objects take on almost organic forms as they become part of the local beachscape. Placed on the floor of the gallery, the work encourages visitors to hold, touch, and rearrange the fragments, inviting new processes of transformation and discovery.

Gathering also includes two book-based works, *32 Volumes* (2006) and *Paper Boats* (2009). *32 Volumes* features a complete set of the Time-Life World Library series from the 1960s, in which the artist has removed all of the text, leaving only the photographs, focusing our attention on how images have been used to represent the world, as well as encouraging different readings of them. *Paper Boats* invites audiences to interact with a set of Encyclopaedia Britannica, by tearing a selected page and using the sheet to make an origami boat. Dating from the iconic year 1968, the books, like *32 Volumes*, convey an attempt at comprehensiveness that may be fixed in their time, yet are offered up by Gill for rethinking and reworking.

Specifically for the Samstag Museum, Gill will be presenting a new photographic series from her time spent living in Adelaide, titled *A long time between drinks* (2005–2009).

A book, co-published by the MCA and Walther König, will accompany the exhibition. This is the first major monograph to be produced on Gill's work, and extends the discussion of her practice beyond the scope of this exhibition. The book features a rich selection of images from the early 1990s to the present, as well as essays by Tate Modern curator Jessica Morgan, renowned anthropologist Michael Taussig, and exhibition curator Russell Storer.

On **Saturday 8 August at 2pm** artist Simryn Gill in conversation with exhibition curator Russell Storer at the Samstag Museum Gallery 1, followed by drinks to launch the exhibition. Please RSVP 08 8302 0871 or samstagmuseum@unisa.edu.au. All welcome.

Exhibition hours: Tuesday to Friday 11–5pm, Sunday 2–5pm or by appointment.
Exhibition continues until 30 October 2009.

For further information about the *Simryn Gill: Gathering* exhibition and talk, contact Erica Green on 08 8302 0870 or visit unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum