Beyond the self: Contemporary portraiture from Asia
Acknowledgements

Beyond the self: Contemporary portraiture from Asia
is a National Portrait Gallery touring exhibition

Education Resource written by John Neylon, art writer and curator

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Cover image: Alwar BALASUBRAMANIAM, Gravity (detail), 2009 fibreglass, wood and acrylic, 61 x 58.4 x 10.2 cm
Beyond the self: Contemporary portraiture from Asia

Education briefing notes

About this Education Resource
This Education Resource is published to accompany the exhibition

Beyond the self: Contemporary portraiture from Asia
Friday 3 August – Sunday 30 September 2012
Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art

This Education Resource is designed to support learning outcomes and teaching programs associated with viewing the exhibition Beyond the self: Contemporary portraiture from Asia by:

- Providing information about selected artists
- Providing information about key works
- Challenging students to engage with the works and the exhibition’s themes
- Identifying ways in which the exhibition can be used as a curriculum resource
- Providing strategies for exhibition viewing, as well as pre- and post-visit research

It may be used in conjunction with a visit to the exhibition or as a pre-visit or post-visit resource.

Year level
This Resource is primarily designed to be used by secondary to senior secondary visual art teachers and students. Components can be adapted for use by upper primary and tertiary students.
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See List of Works in this Education Resource for a full list of participating artists and their works. All artists have extensive profiles on the Beyond the self website: http://www.portrait.gov.au/site/exhibition_subsite_beyondtheself.php
Curatorial perspectives*

The curator of *Beyond the self: Contemporary portraiture from Asia* is Christine Clark, Exhibitions Manager at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Clark is an arts administrator and curator with many years experience in Asia-Pacific contemporary art projects. While working at the Queensland Art Gallery she was extensively involved in the first three Asia-Pacific Triennial exhibitions in 1993, 1996 and 1999. She has curated and managed numerous other projects involving contemporary art from the Asia-Pacific region.

As a frequent visitor to the region and observer of the ‘art boom’ which has characterised the emergence of contemporary visual art within market economies (such as in Indonesia), Clark was in a unique position, as an ‘outsider’ with ‘insider’ knowledge, to track emerging trends. One in particular captured her attention – the dominance of portraiture, and self-portraiture in particular, in the work of many artists. The fact that some of these artists were prominent figures within the regional art scene and powerful attractors for emerging generations of younger artists has meant that this trend has consolidated.

Clark explains that understanding the role and meaning of portraiture within a South and South East Asian context requires letting go of Western European models and secular traditions which have tended to see portraiture being about capturing a likeness or a symbol of political and economic status. For Clark the interest in developing the exhibition lay in the way the selected artists are treating portraiture as a means to not only speak about themselves but also to explore and ‘express larger concerns’.

A number of these concerns are embedded within *Beyond the self* works and include: environmental pollution, the impact of urbanisation on traditional life, the status of women in public life, the treatment of cultural minorities, nationalism and individualism versus mass conformity.

As Clark explains in her online introduction:

‘Participating artists are interested in re-describing individual and collective viewpoints within their specific historical and cultural landscapes. Interests in redefining the local and questioning the self run parallel to changes in contemporary society and the inexorable shifts in cultures in this age of instantaneous electronic communication and a converging world economy. The contemporary worlds of the artists involve global awareness and mobility along with altered economic and technological possibilities. These redefinitions of the “personalised local” manifest in sophisticated responses to this homogenising moment in history.’

(see full text in *Beyond the self* website)

Why the title ‘Beyond the self’?

Clark states that, ‘All the artists in *Beyond the self* engage us by using their “selves” – their individual personas or those of close family – to speak of this “beyond”, of larger explorations that may signal historical or cultural transformations. In the history of representation across cultures, depictions of self have been tied to both an outward reflection and internal mediation. The deft manoeuvrings of the artists in this exhibition seek to embrace these states, but also to extend them, in their rendering of the self-image they work in a space of imaginative intervention and the reinvention of the self.’

Clark adds, ‘Invention, exploration, precarious potentiality, tinged with intrigue: these are the ideas conjured in my mind as I think of being “in the beyond”. By “the beyond” I want to invoke a space devoid of boundaries, offering perspectives that uses distance as a means of intersecting with the present’.

She acknowledges that ‘the beyond’ (particularly when associated with the portrait) is a ‘slippery’ concept, particularly if trying to see portraiture through a prism of Western European constructs.

In putting this to one side and better understanding the contexts in which the *Beyond the self* works have been made, there are no short cuts. It does help to have some working knowledge of the political, social and cultural histories of countries such as India, Indonesia, Thailand or Malaysia for the central reason that most of the *Beyond the self* artists are engaged with aspects of these histories or traditions (and their legacies) within their practices.

* Text based on Christine Clark’s exhibition introduction (and associated essay) and conversation between author and Clark, June 2012
But in stressing that the works are layered (i.e. go beyond or deeper) the best research strategy is to approach each body of work on its respective merits, to observe its visual features and obvious iconography, then using various resources including the Beyond the self National Portrait Gallery resource and this Education Resource to build sufficient background information to determine what and how much additional contextual material needs to be accessed.

Through such a process it will then become more obvious and meaningful to explore, for example, wayang shadow puppetry (see Nugroho), the migration of individuals and communities from within Asia to Australia (see Qureshi and Reamillo), Jose Rizal and the birth of the modern Philippines nation (see Reamillo), the enduring ancient Sanskrit epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (see Pushpamala), Mughal miniature traditions (see Qureshi), colonial and post-colonial history (see Harsano, Pahlasari, and Rawanchaikul) and the impact of urbanisation and industrialisation (see Bhalla, Bamadhaj and Upadhayay).

Through this process it will become possible to move beyond neat classifications of art and artists into bundles such as ‘Indian’, ‘Thai’ or ‘Indonesian’ and appreciate that these works are amalgams and windows on, as Clark states, ‘interlocking entities that constitute a rich mosaic of cultures’, one in which contemporary change is in constant dialogue with the past and with living traditions.

From a curatorial perspective this line of thinking opens up not only possibility of meaningful engagement with contemporary Asian art but also of re-imagining cultural and historical landscapes.

As Clark summarises, ‘The artists in Beyond the self largely operate in spaces of imaginative invention and intervention. Through their personal perspectives and redefinitions of various cultural and historical landscapes the artists attempt to alter the audiences’ customary parameters – probing, pushing and extending imaginations. They offer alternative ways of operating in and imagining our world and suggest a future of undefined possibilities. Writer Homi Bhabha, describing internationalism, suggests that “the … space ‘beyond’ becomes a space of intervention in the here and now”. The artists in this exhibition create work that reflects that intervention into the here and now, to explore beyond the self.’
Focus artists

The following twelve artists have been selected for focus research on the basis of demonstrating a diversity of ideas, styles and uses of media in exploring the exhibition's themes. The organisation of research under the headings of: Artist Statements, Perspectives, Work, Framing Questions and Research could be used as a template for exploring any of the works in the exhibition.

These units have been resourced by the interpretive material (including video interviews with selected artists) on the National Portrait Gallery’s Beyond the self website. It is recommended that this site be accessed and used in conjunction with this online Education Resource.


There are extended profiles for all nineteen artists in the exhibition on this website. Most are well documented through personal websites and other internet-access sources including YouTube, gallery and general media reporting. Samples of these resources are included in the Focus research profiles.
1 Alwar Balasubramaniam

b. 1971, Tamil Nadu, Southern India. Lives and works in Bangalore, India

*Gravity*, 2009, fibreglass, wood and acrylic, 61 x 58.4 x 10.2 cm
*Orifice*, 2008, laser-burnt marks on paper on the same place of body orifices and screen print, 47 x 61 cm
*Silent sound*, 2009, fibreglass, wood and acrylic, 45.7 x 45.7 x 4.4 cm

**Artist statement**

His primary preoccupation is with metaphysics. ‘Previous works were about perception, now my art is about what really exists’ Bala explains. In an almost Buddhist gesture, he tracks the dissolution of individuality, its voyage into a deeper reality. Like footprints in the snow, Bala’s (invariably) white-on-white artworks are reminders of presence because they gesture to what is absent. ‘The self disappears in my work. I am not casting myself, just the outside of my body; where my body is not, is where it could be’.

*From Lifting the painted veil, Alwar Balasubramaniam, Zehra Jumabhoy, Steven and Elena Heinz Scholar at The Courtauld Institute of Art, London. (See full text Beyond the self website)*

**Perspectives**

Alwar Balasubramaniam’s sculptures, prints and installations challenge our perceptions while creating forms for the invisible and the intangible. His work challenges our experiences and preconceptions of the physical environment and tests our ability to perceive the hidden by giving mass to the ephemeral. He has frequently employed his own body as the medium by making casts of his face, hands and full body to negotiate the boundaries of self and within oneself.

*(Beyond the self website)*

Seeing is believing. In Alwar Balasubramaniam’s case, seeing and believing are two separate acts, depending on your discernment and perception. His prints, paintings, and sculptures, with their constant plays on the visible and invisible, illusion and certainty, challenge notions of the real and the unreal. Walk into a Balasubramaniam exhibition and you will be confronted by a surreal world where walls are pulled like fabric by disembodied hands, where a figure of the artist sits with his head buried deep in the wall, where angels emerge as if by magic from blocks of stone and sculptures dissolve into nothingness.

*Alwar Balasubramaniam: Uncharted Territories, Minhazz Majumdar: www.talwargallery.com/html/inpress/dec08sm.htm*

**Work**

This work (*Orifice*) was happened as a result of a conversation with my students in Cornell where I was teaching… So what I did, I just lie down on the big scanner, so once the whole body is scanned where ever I’m having contact with the outside world, you know, the in and out, like the ears or the eyes or inside the mouth, you know. So similarly, now all orifices in the body, you know, wherever those parts are, on this canvas we just marked them, made the marks on the paper. So the work is nothing but the exact same points where the in and out disconnected. I was exploring the invisible inner space like, for example, the space between the object and the shadow, the way it fall casting this ways or the path of the light or other things.

*From video transcript (Beyond the self website), Christine Clark talks to the artist*

Just as *Orifice* gestures to the gaps in the self, Bala's other offerings document the telltale signs of its departure. In two versions of *Gravity* 2008 and 2009 we see fibreglass casts of the artist – well, almost. White fibreglass mock-ups of Bala’s features emerge unassumingly through white walls. We feel as if we are witnessing a subtle ghostly visitation. But, just as we think we have glimpsed his face and shoulders, taking slow shape before our eyes in *Gravity* 2009, we blink and lose our bearings: Bala seems to dissolve back into the sea of white from whence he came. Meanwhile, in *Gravity* 2008 the artist’s head appears to be encased in a snowy fold of canvas, its white weight tugging Bala towards the floor.

*From Lifting the painted veil, Alwar Balasubramaniam on searching endlessly… Zehra Jumabhoy, Steven and Elena Heinz Scholar at The Courtauld Institute of Art, London. (Beyond the self website)*
Each form and its multiple shadows share their own camaraderie with the element of light. With some appearing darker and deeper than others, the notion of transcendental infinity is also established.

Deepak Talwar of Talwar Gallery, Delhi and New York

Framing questions and research

- The artist has stated that ‘Previous works were about perception, now my art is about what really exists’. To what extent does this comment apply to the works by this artist in the exhibition?
- ‘He has frequently employed his own body as the medium by making casts of his face, hands and full body to negotiate the boundaries of self and within oneself.’ Why do you think this comment (from the Beyond the self website) makes a distinction between ‘self’ and ‘within oneself’?
- It has been stated that ‘the artist’s quest is to enable viewers to become aware, even infinitesimally, of the subjectivity of their perceptions and realise that a whole world exists beyond the seen.’* If this is so, can you identify aspects of the works that support this?


- The artist has commented that ‘The visual is just a by-product. The really important thing is the invisible’. What methods does the artist use to communicate this idea?
- ‘Balasubramaniam’s deceptively simple sculptures and installations pose more questions than answers.’ Does this comment (by Minhazz Majumdar) relate to your own reading of this artist’s work?
- There are other works in the Beyond the self exhibition that feature or incorporate parts of the body. Can you see any common purpose in this?

Further resources

Video interview (Beyond the self website), Christine Clark talks to the artist.
See also http://www.saffronart.com/artist/artistprofile.aspx?artistid=547

Gravity, 2009, fibreglass, wood and acrylic, 61 x 58.4 x 10.2 cm
2 Nadiah Bamadhaj

b. 1968, Malaysia. Lives and works in Yogyakarta

*Not talking to a brick wall*, 2006, single channel colour video, 5 minutes 43 seconds

*Landlocked*, 2008, charcoal on paper collage, 188 x 127 cm

**Artist statement**

Like history, architecture is a state enterprise, built and produced at certain periods to exemplify the visions of its producer. Like history, too, architecture is further marked by the personal memory of its viewer.

My selection of buildings is based on my personal memory of those sites and their corresponding political periods. In my readings of these architectural sites I see ironies and incongruities of these forms in relation to my readings of history. I therefore compress time between these forms and their past by placing them in selected old photographs. My selection of the photographs is based less on the intent of the photographer and the historical event, but more on my own personal memory and interpretation of the image.

In the compression of architectural form and historical event a new interpretation can be made of both elements.

CP Biennale 2005 website, artist’s statement regarding **Taking It Personally**, (digital video)


**Perspectives**

From her initial training in sculpture, she (Nadiah Bamadhaj) has expanded her practice to include video, drawing and installation. An academic and writer, with strong intellectual influences, she is often driven by a sense of social justice and is conscious of the way in which the state relates to its constituents, particularly through constructions of architecture and monument. Bamadhaj’s work is often strongly critical of the political and social machinery that drives communal direction. Bamadhaj’s practice is informed by her unstable position in terms of geographic origin and her personal interest in regional human rights.

*Beyond the self* website

In Nadiah Bamadhaj’s work, the notion of person is inextricably tied to notions of place. Over the past decade, her practice has been motivated by a strong personal interest in political events and social phenomena that have shaped or affected her identity and outlook, expressed through varied interpretations of their geohistorical positioning. It seeks some truth or reason behind the posturings and assumptions offered up to ‘local’ and ‘global’ audiences alike as a gloss on the historical and contemporary reality of her regional nexus, incorporating Malaysia, where she was born and grew up; Singapore, the long-time seat of her paternal family history; and Indonesia, a site of traumatic violence that she has chosen as a current base.

From *Not talking to a brick wall* and *Landlocked: Architectures of personal space*, Beverly Yong, Director of RogueArt. (See full text *Beyond the self* website)

The *Surveillance* series is a collection of works on paper that represents a continuation of artist Nadiah Bamadhaj’s exploration into architecture and built environments. Drawing primarily from her experiences living in Kuala Lumpur, the drawings explore the idea that architecture acts as a form of surveillance.

In this body of work, the artist argues that architecture, or built environments have the potential to shape and control the body, its movements, and in turn, the identity/ies located within this surrounding… The challenging nature of the figure in these drawings places *Surveillance* as a critique rather than a description of these built environments.

http://www.vwfa.net/kl/exhibitionDetail.php?eid=77

Overall, the works are explorations of urban and national terrain through maps conjured by the artist to highlight the arbitrariness of mapping in shaping our individual identities. They take liberties with geographic precision, but expose a wealth of underlying issues.

Indeed, on the most basic level, maps function as formidable tools in presenting our identity: We draw maps to direct others to our homes; colonial powers mapped territories in uniformed colours to signify strength; charted lines divide us from our neighbours, marking both sovereignty and separateness from one another.

Nadiah Bamadhaj's art practice is predicated on a lifelong engagement with the political and historical forces that have shaped our cultural identities. This new body of work continues from her previous series investigating how built environments in Malaysia contribute to the practice and maintenance of state power. She argues that these are not neutral spaces and that they have moulded the population into specific groups, based on religion and ethnicity, so that the population fits into fixed and readily identifiable subjects in the multi-cultural rhetoric commonly understood as our ‘national’ identity.

Adopting the concept of surveillance, the artist zones into specific localities, in the guise of a sociologist or anthropologist, mapping the complex racial and religious ideologies that attend our different built environments. Each suburban estate is associated with a symbolic representation of a particular aspect of ‘national’ identity, shaped by local terrain.


_Landlocked_, 2008, charcoal on paper collage, 188 x 127 cm
Work

Landlocked forms part of a larger body of collaged drawings shown in the 2008 exhibition Surveillance, which sets out to examine the politicisation of habitat in contemporary Malaysia. Based on the artist’s own experience of living in the suburbs of the central Klang Valley, and her research in social geography, the works in Surveillance investigate ideas of architecture and town planning as an expression of political strategies to contain social and political behaviour. The design of suburban housing and location in this context is seen to regulate the daily life and preferences (for convenience and stability) of citizens, facilitating their control by the state.

In Landlocked, the topography of a Klang Valley suburb is integrated into the artist’s self portrait, its regular rows of townhouses laid as tattoos on her upper arm. The charcoal on paper collage of landscape and skin emphasises the tactility and texture of this ‘mapped’ experience, its emotional presence in a cold strategic context.

From Not talking to a brick wall and Landlocked: Architectures of personal space, Beverly Yong, Director of RogueArt. (See full text Beyond the self website)

Framing questions and research

- Beverly Yong has stated that ‘Subjectivity in Nadiah’s practice is dialectic – the personal is clearly a space of competing agendas of political, historical, religious, ethnic and sexual identity. Where her own image appears, it is always as both object and objectifier, pawn and chess player, as a reflexive strategy that tries to understand the self as a political, social, historical subject.’ (Beyond the self website essay)

- Apply this reading to your own interpretation of Landlocked. Does this help you to understand why the artist has depicted herself in this way?

- A central idea underlying this series of work is that architecture and town planning are influenced by political interests. Investigate this idea and decide for yourself how it is explored in Bamadhaj’s work.

- These aerial and panoramic surveys of the broad and ever shifting transformation that development has wrought upon the Malaysian terrain reveal a nation grappling with the dark side of its post-colonial modernity and progress.* Understanding this statement may involve researching the political and social history of modern Malaysia.

  *Valentine Willie Fine Art website

- Think about Yong’s observation about the tactile and textured qualities of Landlocked and the emotional contradiction it creates with the central focus of the work. Discuss this aspect of the work with someone else.

- Why do you think the artist chose the title of ‘Surveillance’ for this series of works?

- Has the artist’s methodology in building an image by layering given you an idea to try in your studio work?

Further resources

Exhibition opening remarks by Rimbun Dahan:
http://www.rimbundahan.org/art/artists/nadiah_bamadhaj/
3 Atul Bhalla

b. 1964, New Delhi, India

Submerged again, 2005, archival pigment print, diptych, 114 x 170 cm

I was not waving but drowning II, 2005, archival pigment print, 30.5 x 45.7 cm

Artist statement

Water being the repository of myth, history and meaning has been our only deliverer, mythically and metaphorically. My work is an attempt to connect histories; those that are being constantly made, and others, which are constantly threatened or are being pushed under. I chose to connect recent historical sites, which are on the verge of being forgotten and/or covered over, within sight of inner Shanghai, as a ‘Listener’: to water, to streams, canals, wells, locks, harbours, rivers, etc. I seek to discern all the untold stories, tales, and myths that remain untold and to witness what may/may not be allowed.

West Heavens: http://westheavens.net/en/artist/atul-bhalla/

Perspectives

He (Atul Bhalla) frequently combines photography, installation, sculpture, video, painting and performance to question the human relationship with the natural and constructed environment…

Bhalla’s work often invites audiences to engage directly with otherwise overlooked elements of urban and metropolitan spaces, in particular water courses, in his home town, New Delhi, and those he visits during the course of international exhibitions and residencies.

(Beyond the self website)

Engaged with the shared environmental and ethical concerns of a new generation, Atul Bhalla is a conceptual artist who examines this new generation’s relationship to water and its cultural meaning. Concerned with issues of relentless urbanisation, he examines how historical as well as colonial and post-colonial urban planning and administrative policies, or lack thereof, define the manner in which the city meets water.

http://westheavens.net/en/artist/atul-bhalla/

Atul Bhalla also uses photographs and location, but in a diametrically opposed way. For a number of years now, his work has focused on the river Yamuna and the streets of Old Delhi; the two are linked not just by their proximity but through the artist’s preoccupation with the theme of water. Traditional drinking fountains and water vendors; ritual prayers offered in the river; pump houses built along the bank; and the incursive, smoggy urbanscape have featured in his sculptures, installations and photographs.


Over the past ten years, Atul Bhalla has built up an impressive body of work that encompasses drawings, sculptures, videos, installations, performances and public interventions. Despite this formal versatility, however, he is best known for his photographs, most often presented as photo-series which create narratives that can be, in turn, enigmatic, poetic, lyrical, disturbing and visceral.

From Beyond the self, Khavita Singh, Associate Professor at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. (See full text Beyond the self website)

Work

Indian artist Atul Bhalla in 2005 took a series of fourteen digital pigment photographs depicting the artist’s gradual descent into the Yamuna River and formed a poignant montage on the spirituality and environmental degradation of the water revered by Indian Hindus. The prints are based on the poem Not Waving but Drowning (1957) by English poet Stevie Smith.

The photographs of Bhalla were taken in lagatpuri, near New Delhi, where the Yamuna is the most polluted and dangerous to swim in. I Was Not Waving but Drowning juxtaposes the believed spirituality of water with the harsh reality of how the river is treated environmentally.
In the first photograph of the montage, Bhalla’s eyes are open and he has a serene look on his face, despite the filthiness of the water that surrounds him. His eyes gradually close over the next two photographs, and as the photos continue more and more of his facial features are lost to the disconcertingly opaque water.


There are many layers to this piece, but one interpretation is that through these photographs Bhalla stresses that we are not only losing the environment to pollution, but we are losing ourselves. The Yamuna is an integral part of Hinduism, and thus its desecration challenges the Hindu identity and the role of water in Indian thought.

Framing questions and further research

- There are many layers to this piece, but one interpretation is that through these photographs Bhalla stresses that we are not only losing the environment to pollution, but we are losing ourselves.*
  Consider how this interpretation applies to Bhalla’s work.

- The observer can also find hope in Bhalla’s work. *I was not waving but drowning II* reveals that, in spite of pollution, man and nature are ultimately in it together. This knowledge will hopefully steer people in the right direction, promoting spiritual reverence for nature.*
  Do you share this sense of hope when looking at these works?

- Does the fact that the artist is performing within his own work influence your interpretation in any way?
- Consider experimenting in your own studio work by creating a series of sequenced photographs which track a central event of idea.

- Bhalla describes his practice as an attempt to understand water, the way he perceives it, feels it, drinks it, swims in it and sinks in it. His personal negotiation of water provides a stage from which to address larger political issues concerning bodies of water and the urban environment.* From your research into this topic compare Bhalla’s approach to exploring environmental issues with that of another artist.
  *Vahedra gallery exhibition review: http://www.prohelvetia.in/104.0.html?&no_cache=1&L=0&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1359&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=98&cHash=022802d291

Further resources


This site includes biographical details and gallery of images. http://sepiaye.com/atul-bhalla

This Skoda Prize for Contemporary Art website contains extensive references to other water-based work by the artist. http://www.theskodaprize.com/2010/longlist-2010/bhalla-atul.html

See also:
http://sepiaye.com/atul-bhalla
http://taigh-chearsabhagh.org/taighc_events/atul-bhalla-artists-talk/
4 Nikhil Chopra

b. 1974, Calcutta, India. Lives and works in Mumbai

Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing series, 2010
(see List of Works for full details)

Artist statement
My performances may be seen as a form of storytelling that intermingles familial histories, personal narrative and everyday life. The process of performing is a means to access, excavate, extract and present them. Autobiography is one place I know where to begin from. All urgencies, desires, knowledge, emotions, expressions, stem from that place that I am rooted in. My sense of identity is deeply connected to my sense of location in time and space.

http://www.nikhilchopra.net/home/?page_id=65

Of the act of documentation through drawing, Chopra says,
I think drawing or making maps or taking photographs or making images of something … [is] … an act of claiming ownership over it. My take on it is to reclaim a certain kind of history, to return, in fact, (to) this orientalist discussion about the Western traveller coming to the East and making documents and taking them back home. I want to be the oriental, perhaps, that comes to the West and makes drawings … And makes chronicles and perhaps goes back home to India with … documentation of that.

Interview with Nikhil Chopra by Tom Dodson, New York City, 9 November 2009
http://champsnotchumps.org/episode_3/transcript

Perspectives
His practice brings together narrative, costume, theatre and drawing in a spectacle that implicates the viewer in the performance. His themes draw on history and memory, collective consciousness is explored through personal and familial references. His characters are part autobiography, part nostalgia and part social commentary.

Beyond the self website

Work
For ninety-six hours in May 2009, artist Nikhil Chopra, performing the character of Yog Raj Chitrakar, resided at Les Brigittines, a baroque chapel in Brussels, recently converted to a theatre. He left this abode every morning, traversing the city and scaling Galgenberg Hill to reach the imposing Palais de Justice/Justitiepaleis, a vantage point that offers sweeping vistas of the Belgian capital. Chitrakar covered his canvas with charcoal drawings of the city's panorama, distinctly divided into two halves, indicative of the divisions between the French and Flemish-speaking populations that inhabit it. Evenings were spent back at the chapel sewing these two halves together, producing a dramatic, 16 metre long backdrop for Yog Raj's final pose as a Greek goddess – an allusion to the neoclassical influences on the city's identity and built environment (Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing VI).

Rattanamol Johal, Postgraduate at The Courtauld Institute of Art, London
(See full text Beyond the self website)

Framing questions and further research
- The artist has stated that ‘My sense of identity is deeply connected to my sense of location in time and space’. How does the artist explore this in the video?
- There is a moment in the video when the action occurring in the park coincides with the interior space of the gallery. What significance does this moment have within the total video?
- The strategy of making a video about a performance that involves making the acting within a drawing may create confusion about the artist's intention or the work's meaning. Do you think that this matters?
- There are other works in the exhibition in which artists adopt or become different characters. See if you can find them and compare some to better understand why this strategy has been used.
- In terms of the exhibition's theme do you think this is an effective strategy to explore a sense of self?
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Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing X (Part I, 13:00), Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing series, 2010
digital photograph on archival paper, 73.7 x 110.5 cm, costumes by Loise Braganza, photography by Vinita Agarwal
image courtesy the artist and Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai

From left: Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory Drawing IX Part 1, 2009
digital photograph on archival paper, costumes by Loise Braganza, photography by Tina Lange
Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory Drawing VI (16:00), 2010
digital photograph on archival paper, costumes by Tabsheer Zutshi, photography by Shivani Gupta
Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory Drawing VI (17:30), 2010
digital photograph on archival paper, costumes by Tabsheer Zutshi, photography by Shivani Gupta
Images courtesy of the artist and Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai
5 Alfredo Esquillo Jr

b. 1972, Manila, Philippines. Lives and works in Manila

*Alab ng puso* (Fire in the heart), 2010, oil on rubber painting, wheelchair, wood, lacquer paint, rubber, cyanoacrylate, stainless steel, wheels, mirror, lights, leather, motorcycle battery, speakers and stereo, 92 x 175 x 87.5 cm

**Artist statement**

See Christine Clark interview with the artist on *Beyond the self* website.

**Perspectives**

Alfredo Esquillo Jr majored in painting at University of Santo Thomas. Since then painting has remained the mainstay of his practice, even being incorporated into his more recent works that could best be described as assemblages or installations. Early in his career Esquillo was heavily influenced by ‘magic realist’ artists and Filipino social realists, but as his practice has developed he has broadened his themes to more politicised examinations of the contemporary and historical experiences of his nation. His technical prowess is evident in crafted realist paintings that often appropriate imagery from religious iconography, historical documentation and popular culture.

Esquillo’s recent work has imagined the journey of the Filipino nation, from serial colonisation and exploitation to a more hopeful future. His works examine individual, social, historical and communal identities, re-imagining familiar representations to question how these viewpoints are constructed. Esquillo continues to live and work in Manila, while exhibiting throughout the Philippines and internationally.

*Beyond the self* website

The multi-awarded painter expresses a passion for content in his themes, leaning more towards social realities. He views his works as more personal, using symbolism in the gestures and overall context of his subject. His style remains largely influenced by an earlier attachment to the Magic Realists, although his themes have reflected preferences to the introspective dealing more with life’s meaning and pondering on the essence of existence.

Artist CV notes http://alfredoesquillo.com/

**Work**

The following article (*Snippets from the Manila Art Scene* http://manilaartblogger.wordpress.com/2010/06/14/alfredo-esquillo-jr-throws-bato-bato-sa-langit/) contains descriptions and images of several of Esquillo’s ‘jeepney’ sculptures. See the following extract:

In the series of paintings which he calls Tragicomedy, Alfredo Esquillo Jr displays his more surrealist bent. For these works, he makes repeated use of an image he christens as the wheelchair-jeepney. A product of his imagination, he paints this as a jeepney’s dashboard without an engine. Instead, the large wheels of the wheelchair appear to mechanically power the hybrid vehicle. Through the years, Esquillo has employed this in several of his pieces: on its own in *Third World*, pushed around in circles by several buffoons in *Survivor*, carrying a load of cartons in *Lipat-Bahay*. He uses the wheelchair-jeepney as a device to underscore the hobbled and disabled state we Pinoys find ourselves unable to shake off, the legacy of repeated missteps by our political leadership. Another conveyance that we see repeatedly in his tragicomedies is the double-faced jeepney, two jeepney dashboards facing opposite directions. Esquillo has used this as a metaphor for the Philippines’ lack of progress. The state has two drivers pulling it in opposite directions.

This YouTube clip includes images of *Alab ng Puso*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UljPdQ_GICA

Alfredo made a stereoscopic artwork, *Trip to Heaven*, modelled after a jeepney, a carry-all bus in the Philippines. He used a bicycle and a cart to build the frame and decorated its sides and roof with a ‘banig painting’ (woven paintings), in which he used Christian illustrations and photos of Filipinos living in Fukuoka City. Since this work required more labour than he originally expected; many volunteers helped him.
Right before he went back to the Philippines, he held a performance called *Trip to Heaven* in the Culture Gallery. The theme of the performance was about sinful believers who were looking for a path to heaven. He assembled scattered parts to complete the jeepney, and then drove it into a wall made of empty cans.


**Framing questions and research**

- Various artists have used the car as a social or political metaphor. What does your research tell you about this?

- The jeepney as a trope is a contentious one, having been appropriated many times by artists and the state as an emblem of Filipino ingenuity. It has been exalted as an invention par excellence, a tribute to the ebullience of folk art and the resilience of the Filipino spirit that thrives amid adversity.

  *Extract from ‘Materiel’, Patrick D Flores, Professor of Art Studies and Curator, Vargas Museum of the University of the Philippines. (See Beyond the self website for full essay).*

  Does this information about the jeepney as a national emblem help to explain the work?

- Imagine this work without sound effects. Do you think this would change its meaning in any way?

- Do you know of any Australian designs that have become national emblems or icons?

  Consider making a work of art which makes some comment about this.

**Further research**

See *Beyond the self* website which has an extensive gallery of Esquillo works: [http://alfredoesquillo.com/](http://alfredoesquillo.com/)

YouTube clip of Esquillo exhibition *Kalooban Narratives*: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2plcpStBbkU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2plcpStBbkU)


Pushpamala N.

Born 1956, Bangalore, India

*Abduction* series, 2009

(see List of Works for full details)

**Perspectives**

Pushpamala N.'s photographic works are usually created as series, some the artist refers to as projects, others as ‘photo-romances’. Pushpamala uses her own body to perform different roles in these series, which draw from the imagery of popular culture, mythology and historical references from India and elsewhere, using humour, wit and a sharp critical gaze to look at contemporary society.

Pushpamala’s performative photography and videos sometimes function as a kind of installation, where the exhibit may resemble a film or theatre museum or even a movie theatre. She conceives, researches, scripts and designs the *mise-en-scenes*, working with photographers or photo studios to produce the work where her friends may play supporting roles, or offer their places as locations, which also function as hidden ‘jokes’. She has also made experimental short films that play with film genres.

(Beyond the self website)

Pushpamala N. is known for incorporating popular culture into her photographic work. The artist has adopted various trendy personas, historic figures and ironic roles as vehicles for her examination of issues of gender, location and history. The comic aspect of her work carries a particularly sharp edge in her photo-based installations and projections, exposing cultural and gender stereotyping while exploring the complex terrain of contemporary urban life in India.


Bangalore based Pushpamala N. is a photo and video performance artist who is the subject of her own compositions. In this series of works, the artist explores photography as a tool of ethnographic documentation and humorously challenges the authenticity of the photographic image. Created in collaboration with photographer Clare Arni, *The Ethnographic Series* draws attention to the choreographed stylistics of early anthropological studies, enacting and thereby transforming stereotypes of women. Dressing in period costume, Pushpamala refashions these stereotypes to subvert and critique the forensic classification of humanity. The strength of *The Ethnographic Series* lies in Pushpamala’s wit in reconstructing such scenes and playfully deconstructing them, acting both as subject and object to the camera.

http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/artists/pushpamala_n.htm

The work

In the ‘Wilderness’ chapter of the Indian epic *Ramayana*, Sita, the pinnacle of feminine virtue, yields briefly to temptation and is abducted by Ravana. Pushpamala seizes this moment and elaborates on it, playing the role of Rama’s demure wife swept away by the demon. High action unfolds in meticulously designed tableaux, recalling the proscenium-framed settings of late 19th and 20th century Parsi and Kannada theatres.

From *Abduction/Paharana*, Ajay Sinha, Professor of Art History and Film Studies, Mount Holyoke College, United States. (See full text Beyond the self website).

*The Passion* explores the characters of three women from the Ramayana as archetypal figures. Set in fantasy environments, fateful incidents from the epic are played out on a spectacular stage in both still photographs and videos, with elaborate costuming and lighting to create powerful atmospheres. Pushpamala refers to various genres of image-making in her works, resulting in richly layered hybrids with multiple references. Many of the works in the exhibition refer to theatre stills from the early 20th century, while others use early cinema as their models. The artist is always the central protagonist in these dramas and the works function as documents of performances, as critiques of representational constructions, and as oblique self-portraits.

Framing questions and research

- Some of Pushpamala's methodology is very similar to that used by Nikhil Chopra (also in Beyond the self). Locate the video by Chopra and decide if both artists are exploring a similar set of ideas.

- The models in the Abduction series are acting out various mythological scenes. Research the various video interviews and media features on the artist to find out more about the artist's reasons for using this strategy.

- It has been commented that Pushpamala is using the past to comment on the present. Analyse one of the works from the Abduction series from this perspective.

- Consider creating a photographic series, which involves using models (such as friends) to act out various scenarios, which critique social values and traditions.

- Do you observe elements of wit and playfulness in these images?

Further research

www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNvAqktHI_I


7 days in Delhi #5 – Pushpamala N. Vimeo video interview by Miriam Nielsen: http://vimeo.com/29087233
Eko Nugroho

b. 1977, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Fake is possible*, 2010, machine embroidered rayon thread on fabric backing, 256 x 156 cm

*Keep the balance*, 2010, machine embroidered rayon thread on fabric backing, 157 x 160 cm

**Artist statement**

See Christine Clark interview with the artist Beyond the self website.

**Perspectives**

Eko Nugroho entered the art scene at the height of Reformasi. Working across disciplines and sites, making public murals, paintings and drawings, and exploring other media and forms such as embroidery, artist’s books, comics, video animation and contemporary wayang kulit (shadow puppets) either on his own or collaboratively, Eko’s optimism and can-do attitude embodies the ethos of this period.

Like his peers of the ‘2000 Generation’, Eko appropriated, reinvented and subverted the ‘look’ of popular culture that inundates his media-saturated surroundings to address the experiences of his daily encounters in a newly reformed society. Merging ‘high art’ with popular and street culture, Eko has emerged as one of the most popular and accessible interpreters of contemporary Indonesian experience.

From The Balancing Act, Adeline Ooi, Co-founder of RogueArt. (See full text Beyond the self website).

The Art Gallery of South Australia presents (18 November 2011 – 9 January 2012) The Eko Chamber: Recent works by Eko Nugroho, two suites of large embroidered wall hangings by contemporary Indonesian artist Eko Nugroho… The works included in The Eko Chamber epitomise the eclectic nature of Nugroho’s practice which is influenced as much by wayang kulit (shadow puppet theatre) as comic books and graffiti on the streets of his hometown of Yogyakarta.

Eko Nugroho’s work evokes a sense of play while simultaneously confronting the challenges of contemporary life in his country. This is best illustrated by his polychromatic embroidered works from 2011 which combine hybrid cartoon creatures depicted in day-glow colours and slogans in Indonesian.


**Work**

In *Keep the balance*, the metaphorical plate implies the grey areas of living, that life is ultimately a balancing act as we struggle to keep in check the inner forces at work within ourselves. Extending beyond the self, the balancing act in this image can also be read within a broader context as the precariousness of negotiating the tensions between differing ideologies or communities that share a single body or similar origins.

Adeline Ooi, (Beyond the self website)

The wayang puppets… are transformations of Eko Nugroho’s comic figures which have long been adopted as the main aesthetic base of his work. Peculiar figures such as the stone-headed man, diamond-hearted man and pincer-handed man, are common in his paintings, drawings and embroideries.


**Framing questions and research**

- The Post-Suharto era in Indonesia began with the fall of Suharto in 1998. Since then Indonesia has been in a period of transition. This era has been called the period of Reform (Indonesian: ‘Reformasi’). Research this period to better understand how Eko’s work can be interpreted within this context.

- Who am I? What am I? Where am I going? Why do we do the things we do? Questions about humanity’s existence and contradictory and ironic nature, our frivolity and dysfunctions,
and the absurdity of life in general are addressed through an ‘alter-’, comic-inspired universe populated by hybrid-aliens and bizarre narratives.* With reference to Nugroho’s works what do you think this statement means?

*From ‘The Balancing Act’, Adeline Ooi, (Beyond the self website)

- A number of Nugroho’s figures wear masks or headgear that can be read in different ways – perhaps as concealment or protection. How do you read them?
- The following website outlines the close relationship between the artist’s work and wayang (Javanese shadow puppets). Investigate this connection: http://ekonugroho.or.id/index.php?page=artwork&cat=Shadow%20Puppet%20Project
- Can cartoon-like images really be taken seriously or should they just be regarded as entertainment?

Further research
Nugroho is extensively referenced online. Here is a sample of recommended sites.
This site provides a comprehensive introduction to the diversity of the artist’s work:
http://ekonugroho-samart.tumblr.com/post/17862973663/temoin-hybride-musee-dart-de-la-ville-de
See also:
http://www.mam.paris.fr/fr/expositions/eko-nugroho
http://ekonugroho-samart.tumblr.com/
http://ekonugroho.or.id/index.php?page=artworks&id=152

Keep the balance, 2010, machine embroidered rayon thread on fabric backing, 157 x 160 cm
8 Nusra Latif Qureshi

b. 1973, Pakistan. Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia

Did you come here to find history?, 2009, edition 3/3, digital print on clear film, 70 x 870 cm

Red silks (I, II, IV, V), 2007, digital print on paper, 40 x 30 cm

Artist statement
See Christine Clark interview with the artist Beyond the self website.

Perspectives
Nusra Latif Qureshi originally trained in the traditional art of Mughal miniature (musaviri) paintings. Exquisitely detailed and executed with technical perfection, Qureshi’s works are contemporary responses to this ancient craft. She layers appropriated imagery from colonial photography, patterns from Middle Eastern textiles or the Arts and Crafts movement, silhouettes and botanical paintings; these elements combine to comprise the backgrounds and foregrounds of isolated female figures.

Moving to Australia for postgraduate study in 2001, Qureshi’s position as a migrant woman in Australian society has added new layers to her explorations as she continues to push the conventional boundaries of her art form.

From Reflective Looking: An expanded notion of self in the work of Nusra Latif Qureshi, Hammad Nasar, Curatorial Director of Green Cardamom. (See full text Beyond the self website).

Qureshi is recognised as an important member of a generation of Pakistani artists who have revived and innovated the traditional art of Mughal miniature painting. Her works feature motifs from the past, ideas from the present, and techniques from both, often on small, sparingly painted surfaces. The historical symbolism of the female figure has been a central theme in her work. Her paintings reveal a complex engagement with stereotypes, and present history as a collection of overlapping fragments, rearranged to construct new narratives… By depicting figures painted in ghostly outlines she maps history’s erasures and in this way Qureshi questions recorded historical truths.


Work
Did you come here to find history? – a nearly nine-metre long digital print on transparent film – was produced for the 53rd Venice Biennale. The artist worked with passport photographs of herself, a nineteenth-century Indian photograph of a young acrobat (who bears an uncanny resemblance to Qureshi) and portraits from both Mughal miniatures and by Venetian painters from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. She superimposes the faces, aligning them at the eyes and so playing with the idea of engaging the viewer’s gaze – images are appropriated and transformed, obscuring, refusing, flexing or sometimes magnifying their original meaning.

Hammad Nasar, Curatorial Director of Green Cardamom, London. (See full text Beyond the self website).

Qureshi has frequently used the lone female figure as the subject of her work, often inserting it in dialogue with well-known (and usually male dominated) examples of Mughal miniatures. At times, the figure is merely an outline or a collaged cut-out – a ghostly annotation to earlier instances of female invisibility. Although not consciously ‘self portraits’, her painted female figures often function as stand-ins for her own subjectivity… The two works (or rather bodies of work) in this exhibition mark a distinct new step in her practice, using the same passport photograph of herself as an integral part of both compositions. In the Red silks series of digital prints, she creates digital photomontages incorporating her passport photo, Victorian era dresses, paintings of flowers, exercises in classical calligraphy and other seemingly orientalist ornamentation. The prints are variations on a tightly controlled visual theme built from these same basic components, and when shown together, hint at the process of constructing identity.

Hammad Nasar, Beyond the self website.
Her usually small and often sparingly painted surfaces are teeming with layers of imagery from the past, meanings from the present and methods from both. She encourages us to distinguish between what was and what remains; viewing history as a collection of fragments constantly rearranged to construct new narratives.


**Framing questions and research**

- Research Mughal miniature (musaviri) painting. How different is this tradition from European conventions of portraiture?
- Over the past fifteen years Nusra Latif Qureshi has worked extensively with the tropes and language of Indo-Persian miniature and Company painting, and nineteenth century conventions of portrait photography, to explore the politics of representation in art history. There are other artists in this exhibition who visit or refer to the past for a variety of reasons. See if you can find them.
- Comparisons have been made between the uses of portraiture in different societies to construct images of corporate power. Can you find any such references in the work?
- Qureshi’s work is quite different to others in the exhibition in that it is difficult to take in at a single glance. As a viewer you have to ‘perform’ by walking along it. As you do so do you notice anything about the way your eyes are reading the images?
- Can you find the artist in this work? Would it matter if she were ‘missing’?
9 Navin Rawanchaikul

b. 1971, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Lives and works Chiang Mai and Fukuoka, Japan

*Navins of Bollywood*, 2006, single channel colour video, 10 minutes 34 seconds
*Navins of Bollywood*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 170 cm
*Mission Navinland*, 2011, painted fibreglass and mixed media on round plinth, 225 x 200 x 200 cm
*From Pak-kun to Mari (January 25, 2011)*, 2011, giclée print on archival fine-art matte paper, 21 x 29.7 cm

**Artist statement**

The relation between the public and the private is very important and I always try to integrate this relation in my art. People are integral parts of the work; they participate in the work rather than just viewing it; the work is an actual event that takes place in everyday life.


**Perspectives**

Navin Rawanchaikul has built his practice around explorations of the transient nature of identity in a globalised world, and draws much of his material from his own experiences. Born in 1971 to Hindu-Punjabi parents who migrated to Thailand during Partition, Navin was born and raised in Chiang Mai. He now divides his time between Thailand and Japan, where his wife originates from. Encompassing sculpture, video, painting, installation, photography and performance, Rawanchaikul’s practice is nonetheless grounded in interaction and collaboration with communities, both real and imagined.

*Beyond the self* website

The artist is best known for dynamic art practices that involve direct public interventions, social commentary, and an innovative style of integrating community or individual experiences into eccentric fictional tales featuring recurring characters. His oeuvre has grown to encompass a broad array of media including performances, billboards, films, comics, games, merchandises and cocktails, and he has even formed his own party, the Navin Party that aims to bring together fellow Navins from different parts of the world.

Thavibu Gallery profile (includes images of other Navin billboards): [http://www.thavibu.com/thailand/navin_rawanchaikul/THA3600.htm](http://www.thavibu.com/thailand/navin_rawanchaikul/THA3600.htm)

**Work**

Navin Rawanchaikul has largely lived his life as the ‘other’, first through birth and then choice. Born of Hindu Punjabi parentage in the Northern Thai city of Chiang Mai, from very early in life he has been aware of and negotiated his position as insider/outsider, as a ‘khaek’, within his own society… However, in Rawanchaikul’s case straddling a number of worlds and being culturally ‘other’ has been advantageous. It has provided a particular acuity in artistic observation coupled with a seemingly unquenchable thirst for investigative storytelling around culture, history and identity. It may also explain his ease of manner when negotiating disparate communities and the ensuing participatory interventions, and his uncanny ability to become immersed in elaborate autobiographical narratives about identity that merge social history with fantastical worlds.

Within these varied epic narratives Rawanchaikul invariably plays the lead. The self underpins all the imaginative, seemingly eccentric, exploratory journeys with autobiography and self-representation ever obvious and self-realisation continually explored.

Christine Clark, *The many selves of Navin Rawanchaikul*. (See full text *Beyond the self* website).

In the context of the above statements consider the diversity of work within Navin’s *Beyond the self* installation: the billboard creating an impression of the ‘Navin Story’, the two sculptures communicating hysterical joy at holding a passport to ‘Navin World’ and the video promoting the artist as a super-celebrity.
Framing questions and research

- By asking the question ‘who am I?’ Rawanchaikul explores and exploits his own image to bring people together and inspire meaningful dialogues on the nature of art and society, looking at others as a way, in part, of seeing himself more clearly. Does this observation by Christine Clark match your own interpretation of Navin’s work?

- The flag held by the girl holds a clue to the work’s message. Can you decipher what it means?

- The video deliberately uses visual and dramatic clichés commonly found in television advertising. See how may you can identify and consider reasons why the artist has done this.

- Navin’s works are not the only ones in Beyond the self to deliberately refer to or use cinematic imagery or conventions. See if you can find other examples and consider why the artists have used this strategy.

- Research the topic of ‘outsiders’ within society (such as Australia) using art (or other art forms such as writing or standup comedy) to explore this.

Further research

10 Alwin Reamillo

b. 1964, Manila, Philippines. Currently divides time between Perth and Manila

Ang Retabla Rizalista (Relikaryo ni Arnulfo Tikb-ang) The Rizalian Retablo (Reliquary by Arnulfo Tikb-ang), 2011, mixed media with found objects on constructed box, 146 x 83.25 x 22.75 cm

At iba pang melikaryo (And other reliquaries), 2011, mixed media on found and constructed objects, dimensions variable

Artist statement

A great number of my conceptual works deal with building collaborative sculptures that allow movement, dialogue and exchange in different cultural contexts and meeting and engaging with people. I guess you could say that I like the sense of anticipation and uncertainty in encountering the unknown. And the various challenges and, perhaps quite unexpected realisations that come about as I am forced to adapt to the communities and contexts I find myself within.

Asia Art Archive website, Susan Acret speaks with Alwin Reamillo about his collaborative works and social sculptures, his life and ideas.http://www.aaa.org.hk/newsletter_detail.aspx?newsletter_id=54

Perspectives

His practice has an improvisational and experimental approach that intersects between mixed media, painting, sculpture, installation, shadow puppetry and performance that often makes use of found and sought materials. After migrating to Australia in 1995, he became interested in ideas about memory, mobility, exchange, collaboration and the experience of moving back and forth between different cultures, examining how these interactions can change ways of thinking. Through immersive exploration of intertwined themes of colonisation, migration and globalisation of culture, Reamillo has collaborated with community groups through workshops in regional Australia and overseas, creating a number of participatory ‘social sculptures’ in the form of ‘vehicles/vessels/crafts’ created in response to local contexts and histories.

Beyond the self website

Work

Ideas of travel, migration or movement are reflected in my play on the relationships of meaning generated in terms such as craft, or vessel, or vehicle. Craft referring to a process of making a creative form of some sort, but also referring to sea/water vessels. I create works that are vessels, vehicles, or crafts, fusing these literal meanings or states with these alternative references. The art-cars or helicopters are vehicles, quite literally in the form they take, but also become vessels of culture, and projects that mobilise communities, becoming vessels of change.


As Reamillo explains, ‘For me, Rizal’s face on the matchbox is a kind of trivialisation – his significance reduced to a common day kitchen implement is far removed from the ideas that he represents. Most know Rizal as a matchbox, similar to his face on the now devalued one peso coin.’

The mixing of metaphors and moving from one frame of reference to another is clearly evident in Ang retabla Rizalista (Relikaryo ni Arnulfo Tikb-ang) The Rizalian Retablo (Reliquary by Arnulfo Tikb-ang), the sculptural wall retablo included in the exhibition. Presenting one of his pseudo autobiographical selves as the maker, a kind of anti-hero, Reamillo incorporates a number of recurrent metaphor-laden motifs in this work, notably the matchbox, crab and piano. The crab appears as part of the artist’s formal self portrait and again in the reliquary, and in addition to referencing personal memories is used to denote the beach, as the first site of colonial contact, as well referencing ‘crab mentality’. From ‘Jose Rizal though the gaze of Alwin Reamillo’, Christine Clark. (See full text Beyond the self website).

Framing questions and research

- Consider the artist’s use of visual metaphor (e.g. ‘crab mentality’) Does this offer you any ideas to incorporate into your studio work?
- Alwin Reamillo uses his self-image to explore the personal but moreover he applies this image to pose questions about the other – be this Rizal or the Philippines. The absent portrait exhorts the viewer to reconsider an all too familiar iconic image, and this absence replaced by a satirical and
absurd presence helps the viewer to rethink the person, Jose Rizal, his life and contemporary legacy. How does this comment by Christine Clark match with your interpretation of Reamillo’s work?

- All nations have prominent figures (such as Jose Rizal) that in time become targets for satire and historical re-evaluation. Consider making an artwork that interprets an Australian historical character in a similar way.

- The artist has stated that he incorporates collective action (involving voluntary group work) into what he calls ‘social sculpture’. Read through the Asia Art Archive interview (see ‘Further Research’) to get an idea of what this means.

- The German artist Joseph Beuys was an early influence on Reamillo’s development as an artist. Research this artist to better understand this influence.

- The work’s title includes reference to a ‘retablo’. Research what this term means and consider if this information alters your interpretation of the work in any way.

Further research

Asia Art Archive website: Susan Acret speaks with Alwin Reamillo about his collaborative works and social sculptures, his life and ideas.

Art Radar Asia media release: Reamillo’s Helicopter project touring Australia in 2009

ABC Darwin radio interview: Reamillo talks about his Thuringowa Helicopter Project on display as part of the Darwin Festival.
11 Agus Suwage

b. 1959, Purworejo, Central Java, Indonesia. Lives and works in Yogyakarta

Asuceleng (Dog-boar), 2010, platinum porcelain, 34 x 27 x 23 cm
Man of the year #4, 2011, oil, silver leaf on galvanised zinc, found objects, 690 x 340 cm
Meleleh (Melt), 2011, wax, resin, galvanised zinc, 37 x 30 x 26 cm

Artist statement
My inspiration comes from multiple sources. In the beginning stages of my career, everything was very personal. All my explorations revolved around religion, sociopolitical themes and humanitarian work. I am very attached to my work. Nowadays, I derive inspiration from my deep, sincere thoughts and personal questions. It is like personal therapy where I try to expand and build upon what comes across my mind. It is a method I follow to get away, re-analyse and think things through.

From the information that surrounds my daily life, I am able to see and read things meticulously. I have my own perception; hence, I want to react in my own way. Creating or producing artwork resembles therapy. In a more universal and spiritual approach, reflecting on the very essence of my personal issues gives way to self-therapy. I analyse things through self-introspection. I know that at the end of the day, I will apply everything I learn back to myself.

Whiteboard Journal interview with the artist: http://whiteboardjournal.com/features/roundtable/interview-with-agus-suwage.html

Perspectives
With Suwage, the self portraits he presents are a combination between the reflection of the ‘self’ and the contrivance about the ‘self’, as he relies on the camera to record a variety of his poses and facial expressions, before transforming these visual records into drawings or paintings. Agus Suwage uses this procedure because in reality the narratives that he develops in his works – albeit invariably having a personal aspect – are in fact related to his stance and views about the different social issues around him. He once stated that ‘in order to be critical toward others, I opt to first be critical toward myself’.

Enin Supriyanto, Director of Langgeng Art Foundation, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
(See full text Beyond the self website).

Eventually Suwage decided to abandon his career in graphic design to concentrate on his art practice, which has from its earliest stages included a strong focus on self portraiture. By the mid-1990s he was becoming well-known in Indonesia and internationally for his provocative drawings, installations, paintings and assemblages, which incorporate popular culture and religious imagery, and examinations of the relationship between human and animal.

Beyond the self website

Suwage’s themes have always ranged from the curious to the perverse, merging personal concerns with societal obsession through self-portraiture and familiar pop-culture imagery. Past works have incorporated images appropriated from the Abu Ghraib torture photos, famous portraits of well-known artists and political figures, and his own head being drilled into by an electric screwdriver, wearing only a slight expression of discomfort. The overriding theme in all this seems to be foregrounding what will make the viewer most uncomfortable, taking on the things we find it difficult to discuss.


Work
The main visual element of these works (Man of the year series) reveals Agus Suwage’s head lying on the floor, pierced by a sharp object in the form of a star. The artist, however, does not seem to be in pain. Instead, he is ‘grinning’ blithely. As we consider the title, we can presume that the series comments on the development in the Indonesian art market that can rapidly propel an artist into celebrity status as the prices of his or her works skyrocket. The artist might take different routes: feeling tortured as he or she becomes the target of the market that treats the works merely as commodities, or enjoying the fame and ensuing prosperity. Or, the artist might also take a carefree attitude and accept the conditions.

From Beyond the Self, Beyond the Portrait, Enin Supriyanto, Director of Langgeng Art Foundation, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. (See full text Beyond the self website).
In the video conversation between Suwage and Christine Clark (Beyond the self website) the artist comments that the work Man of the year references the boom in the Indonesian art market of three years ago. The star symbolises the super-star status of certain artists caught up in the hype. For Suwage there is a price to be paid for this – a burden so heavy that it’s painful. This perspective also applies to the image of a head translated into a moneybox. The symbolic message of a head filled with money is ambiguous.

Framing questions and research

- With Suwage, the self-portraits he presents are a combination between the reflection of the ‘self’ and the contrivance about the ‘self’, as he relies on the camera to record a variety of his poses and facial expressions, before transforming these visual records into drawings or paintings.

Enin Supriyanto, Beyond the self website.
Consider using this methodology within your own work to transform ‘yourself’ into something more iconic.

- The artist has commented that ‘Nevertheless, it is my very nature that if things became uncomfortable and cause more anxiety, I will fight it and overcome my fear. I always rebel and push myself forward. I always rebel and push myself forward’. Can you identify elements of this in his work? Does this apply to your attitude to making art?

- The animals that appear in Suwage’s work, particularly the pig and the dog, the artist regards as personal totems. His Chinese zodiac animal is in fact the pig, which Suwage regards and both a cute and smart creature. Can you find examples of other artist’s work in which the depiction and treatment of animals can be considered to be self-portraiture?

Enin Supriyanto has suggested that there is a difference between Suwage’s self-portraiture and his exploration of self. Read this writer’s essay (Beyond the self website) with this idea in mind and see if you can see this distinction in the works.

- Interpretations of Suwage’s work emphasise that the artist leaves the viewer in a state of uncertainty – between celebrating life and despair. What messages do you get from the artist’s imagery?

Further research

See Christine Clark interview with the artist Beyond the self website.

This site contains extensive background information and images: http://www.agusuwage.com/

This site contains images of Suwage working on Man of the year: http://sweet-station.com/blog/2012/04/agus-suwage/
12 Hema Upadhyay

b. 1972, Baroda, India. Lives and works in Mumbai, India

Ladki number 1, 2001, gouache, dry pastels, acrylic and photographs on Arches paper, 91 x 122 cm
Pedestrian, 2009, vinyl cutout, 200 x 287.5 cm

Artist statement
I like to tell any stories, whether real or imaginative. These are even reflections of one's phobias, shortcomings. The recurring theme in my work is autobiographical. In addition, it is the cathartic factor that becomes the reason to take these objects and convert their ability. Yes… my work is cathartic in process.


Perspectives
Upadhyay's work often addresses issues related to migration, especially the experiences of those living in urban communities. Dislocation and nostalgia are reflected in images that are often built through repetition of key motifs. Her own self-image, houses, matchsticks and cockroaches have formed the basis of different projects. Upadhyay's experiences of migration, and that of her antecedents, have inspired a large body of autobiographical work, including a collaborative crochet project with her mother titled Mum-ny. Other works have foregrounded the experiences of communities that dwell in the vast slums of Mumbai, using tropes of popular and advertising culture, such as hoardings, to explore the disjunction between the projected image of a glamorous metropolis and the reality of daily life for millions of poverty-stricken residents.

From Beyond the self website essay, Amrita Gupta Singh Program Director, Mohile Parikh Center, Mumbai

Baroda born and Mumbai based Hema Upadhyay uses photography and sculptural installations to explore notions of personal identity, dislocation, nostalgia and gender… Upadhyay draws on her own personal and family history of migration to express her concerns and this is expressed through the way she portrays herself in her works. The upturned slums reference the repercussions and socio-economic inequalities that emerge as a hidden consequence of the relentless tide of urban development in the city.

http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/artists/hema_upadhyay.htm

Having experienced a journey paralleling that of the hordes who arrive in Bombay seeking work each year, the artist became a self-aware agent for the anonymous urban migrant. In her renderings of displacement, Upadhyay privileges her own impressions of the urban landscape and the performative gesture.

Beth Citron: http://i1.exhibit-e.com/naturemorte/56484219.pdf

Work
Pedestrian Size 2010 is a site-specific installation which is comprised of vinyl stickers in the shape of the artist’s own body-shadow in everyday gestures and postures that morph into a decorative carpet on the floor. Upadhyay plays with optical illusions through the creation of a pattern of great beauty used in domestic settings while jerking the spectator into the realisation that little human bodies occupy its spaces. She emulates the life of the office-goer in Bombay who struggles within the chaos of the everyday, who jostles, shouts and smiles in the sweat and heat, who gets erased and fragmented in the process of achieving his/her desired dreams in the city.

In contrast, her desires and fears, ambitions and struggles in the maximum city are represented in Ladki number 1 2001, where the ladder almost becomes an architectural sublime thrusting itself into an ethereal blue sky, the terrace being the liminal sign between the body and the city. The life of the migrant and the dislocated body in the urban archipelago is symbolised through the autobiographical lens of the artist, raising existential dilemmas of whom does the city belong to, amidst such explosive demographic shifts.

From Beyond the self website essay, Amrita Gupta Singh, Program Director, Mohile Parikh Center, Mumbai
Framing questions and research

- Repeating images of self is a device used by the artist. Why do you think the artist has done this?
- Amrita Gupta Singh observes that the artist combines critical enquiry with a sense of irony, pathos and sense of play. Can you identify any of these elements within either work?
- When Amrita Gupta Singh talks about the work Pedestrian Size as emulating ‘the life of the office-goer in Bombay who struggles within the chaos of the everyday, who jostles, shouts and smiles in the sweat and heat, who gets erased and fragmented in the process of achieving his/her desired dreams in the city’, can you see any connection between this statement and the original placement (on the floor) of the work?
- Why the title Pedestrian Size? Consider inventing some visual symbols that represent who you are – not just how you look but also what your true self really is. Compose these symbols within a work in such a way that people will want to spend time getting to know more about you.

Further research


[http://www.thehindu.com/arts/art/article2798853.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/arts/art/article2798853.ece)
3 Exploring the exhibition: Themes

Exploring the exhibition extends beyond looking at individual artist’s work to identifying and considering relationships between any works in the exhibition. An effective way to do this is to see Beyond the self as an exhibition made up of groups of works with similar thematic links. Deciding on which themes are relevant to any exhibition is a personal process. Here are a number of suggested themes. As you explore the exhibition you may identify additional or alternative themes.

Identity and self

Who am I? What defines us as a community or cultural group? Where do we belong? Is identity something decided by others or by myself? Is it fixed or can it be changed? These are some of the central questions raised by a number of Beyond the self works.

Consider:

- Navin Rawanchaikul’s ‘invention’ of Navin World as a place in which all ‘mis-placed’ persons can be citizens.
- The way in which Vivan Sundaram’s photographs blend different generations to suggest that ultimately everyone is a composite or reflection of family history.
- Pushpamala N.’s referencing of archival theatre and cinematic tropes to question the role of stereotyping in defining gender identity.
- Agus Suwage’s use of assemblage to signify a sense of identity being fragmented by fame and mortality.
- Nadiah Bamadhaj’s imagery, which integrates self with the city to question underlying assumptions about cultural identity.
- Alfredo Esquillo’s ‘jeepney’ as a symbol of Philippines national identity – unpacked.
- Nikhil Chopra’s peripatetic artist adopting different identities as he wanders the globe.
- The ‘gender-bending’ revelations of Tejal Shah’s videos.
- The use of self-portraiture and inclusion of self-images within a number of Beyond the self works to build metaphors about the individual within wider society.

Post-colonial perspectives, tradition and change

‘Post-colonial’ is a broad term which encompasses political and social developments within once-colonised societies. A keynote of these developments has been a re-emphasis on (or reconstruction of) indigenous cultural identity. But whose identity? In all communities and countries represented in Beyond the self (and elsewhere) there is ongoing debate about determinations of national identity. Different cultural and regional groups, and minorities might subscribe to the idea of a single nationhood but are determined that their discrete cultural histories and living cultures be recognised, respected and protected. In a number of Beyond the self works this factor is the driving force behind their production.

Consider:

- Navin Rawanchaikul’s playful advocacy for people like him – who don’t fit conventional cultural identikits.
- Nadiah Bamadhaj’s concern about urban planning creating cultural and economic ghettos.
- The layering within Herra Pahlasari’s multi-media unpacking of an iconic portrait revealing some truths about social conventions and master narratives.
- Atul Bhalla’s complex contradictions involving honouring sacred traditions while foregrounding contemporary environmental consequences.
- Alfredo Esquillo’s mock tribute to a national hero implying a sensed need to engage with history from a contemporary perspective.
- Hema Upadhyay’s anxiety about mass urbanisation expressed through satire.
Humour and satire

Humour is prevalent throughout the Beyond the self exhibition. It takes various forms according to the intention of the artists to amuse, mock, satirise, subvert or offend. In most cases it is a weapon, which often succeeds where brute force and blunt comments fail. Research into the individual circumstances of the artists as well as broader social and political contexts will assist in understanding just why and how some artists have given humour a central role to play.

Consider:
- The over-blown melodramas acted out in Pushpamala N.’s Abduction series – which may look comical to contemporary eyes – but make their point in terms of exposing gender stereotyping and its lingering legacies
- Alfredo Esquillo’s playful hybridisation of a national icon (jeepney) and an emblem of disability (wheelchair)
- The absurdity of Nikhil Chopra’s projects, which involve immense effort towards uncertain ends
- Navin Rawanchaikul use of satire to expose what he sees as the nonsense of cultural stereotyping

Materiality

The term ‘materiality’ refers to the role that the materials used to compose the work, plays in delivering some sense of meaning or significance. The modern era foregrounded this aspect of art making to the point where the choice of materials and their tactile and symbolic properties became part of the ‘package’ in terms of setting up and delivering meanings or simply making emphatic statements. The increasing use of ‘found objects’ and materials (such as industrial or mass consumer domestic materials and ware) accelerated this process. Today artists draw on a rich contemporary tradition in which the use of such materials or items such as fat, rubber, furniture, industrial fasteners, clothing, off cuts, toys, clay, timber, fur or water is often read as being significant and perhaps central to the work’s intent.

Consider:
- The tactile and textural qualities of Nadiah Bamadhaj’s Landlocked used to interrogate the contradiction between individualism and corporate control
- Inventive play involving found materials in works by Alfredo Esquillo and Agus Suwage
- The surface slickness of Nusra Qureshi’s photo-frieze, which implies a blending of differences and time
- The clinical whiteness of Alwar Balasubramanian’s Silent sound body casts which diverts attention to the cast shadows, which convey an inner secret
Planning a successful group visit to *Beyond the self*

If planning to bring a group to this exhibition – BOOK NOW.
Numbers are restricted in some video projection areas. Booked groups will have priority, scheduled entry to the exhibition.

**To book:**
- Telephone number 08 8302 0870
All bookings will be confirmed by email with the supervising teacher/lecturer/group organiser.

**Year Level**
The Resource is designed to be used by secondary – senior secondary and tertiary visual art students.

**Pre-exhibition**
**Background briefing**
Inform the students about the origins and content of the exhibition.
Refer to the Background Briefing notes this Education Resource.
Visit selected artists’ websites.

**In the exhibition**
On arrival your group will be met and welcomed by a member of the Samstag Art Museum staff.
Organise group as smaller, independent viewing groups (recommended) and task these groups before dispersing within the exhibition. To facilitate structured viewing consider using the ‘Get Started’ research activities included in this Education Resource.
Before groups disperse remind students of the usual gallery viewing protocols (such as being aware of others using the space) and to stress the nature of viewing this kind of exhibition which will require students to spend reflective time with works, immersing themselves within viewing experiences of up to 15 minutes or more.
This session will likely involve students being involved in some group and individual analysis and response. Scribing is optional but will be useful for on-site reporting and post-visit research.
A suggestion is that students in this session try two things: engage with the work of an individual artist and with one of the exhibition’s themes.
For this to happen it would be useful if the students had access to the Education Resource prior to visiting the exhibition. This could allow students to make thematic selections before arrival.

**Post visit**
Post-exhibition options primarily consist of sharing and analysing the information gathered during the exhibition visit. This information might be:
- Information gathered on-site
- Individual opinions (shared)
- Different task or theme groups reporting findings
5 Get Started

In-exhibition engagement activities
The following tasks are designed to support/initiate structured viewing and engagement for students in the exhibition. They can be undertaken in any order and are suitable for individual and small group work. Implicit in some tasks is the idea that students or groups will report findings and discuss works with others.
Scribing is not necessary to undertake these activities but some of these tasks could involve scribing to support on-going post-visit work.

Think about
When you find yourself wanting to look at some works in particular is this because the image or subject is interesting? Has the artist’s technique or way of interpreting the subject added to your interest in any way?
Is there a particular work in this exhibition that contains or is saying things that you agree with or disagree with strongly? Talk to someone else in your group about your response.
Is there a particular work in this exhibition, which raises more questions than any other work?
What kinds of questions does this work raise? Compare and discuss your findings with others.

First and last impressions
What did you think about when you first came into the exhibition and looked around?
Was there any work in particular you wanted to return to and look at again?
Are there any reasons for this?
Is there a work in this exhibition that you think you will find hard to forget? Why?
Is there one work here, which has challenged you in any way? Look at it again before you leave and consider why this is so.
Before leaving check out the exhibition one more time to see if there’s an idea or technique in a work that you could try when you get back to school

Easy?
Which work was the easiest and which work was the hardest to make – and why?

Analysis and response (individual work/s)
Choose any work that attracts your attention and apply any or all of the following questions:
- Could this idea have been better expressed in a different way?
- Can you see any kind of connection between this kind of art and others you know about?
- What do you think this work is about or might be saying?
- Has this given you an idea for something you could make as part of your art studies?
- Select one work that appeals in some way and tell someone else your reasons for your selection.

Analysis and response (the exhibition)
Write a review of the exhibition, which explores the links or relationships between the works.
Choose one of the themes suggested in this Education Resource and review the exhibition from this perspective.
Are there other themes (not identified in this Education Resource) that could apply to this selection of work?
Compare two or more works which appear to be exploring similar ideas in different ways.
6 Further research: Resources

- All Beyond the self artists have extensive online profiles varying from extended biographies and professional profiles, media articles and interviews and academic essays. Some have dedicated artist or gallery websites, which provide valuable background briefing. These sites are referenced in the artists’ profiles (Section 2 ‘Exploring the Works’).
- Remember that the exhibition is extensively documented on the National Portrait Gallery website: http://www.portrait.gov.au/site/exhibition_subsite_beyondtheself.php

7 List of works

**Alwar Balasubramaniam**

*Orifice*, 2008  
Laser-burnt marks on paper on the same place of body orifices and screen print 47 x 61 cm (each of 2)  
Courtesy Talwar Gallery, New York/ New Delhi

*Gravity*, 2009  
fibreglass, wood and acrylic 61 x 58.4 x 10.2 cm  
Courtesy Talwar Gallery, New York/ New Delhi

*Silent sound*, 2009  
fibreglass, wood and acrylic 45.7 x 45.7 x 4.4 cm  
Courtesy Talwar Gallery, New York/ New Delhi

**Nadiah Bamadhaj**

*Not talking to a brick wall*, 2006  
single channel colour video 5 minutes 43 seconds  
Courtesy the artist

*Landlocked*, 2008  
charcoal on paper collage 188 x 127 cm  
Courtesy Dr Steve Wong Kang Shen, Kuala Lumpur

**Atul Bhalla**

*Submerged again*, 2005  
archival pigment print diptych 114 x 170 cm (each of 2)  
Collection of the artist

*I was not waving but drowning II*, 2005  
archival pigment print 30.5 x 45.7 cm (each of 14)  
Collection of the artist

**Nikhil Chopra**

*Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing V (Part II)*, 2010  
digital photograph on archival paper 59.7 x 89.5 cm  
Costumes by Tabasheer Zutshi  
Photograph by Tina Lange  
Image courtesy the artist and Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai

*Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing VI (16:00)*, 2010  
digital photograph on archival paper 59.7 x 39.6 cm  
Costumes by Tabasheer Zutshi  
Photograph by Shivani Gupta  
Image courtesy the artist and Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai

*Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing VI (17:30)*, 2010  
digital photograph on archival paper 57.9 x 89.5 cm  
Costumes by Tabasheer Zutshi  
Photograph by Shivani Gupta  
Image courtesy the artist and Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai

*Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing VI (18:00)*, 2010  
digital photograph on archival paper 57.9 x 89.5 cm  
Costumes by Tabasheer Zutshi  
Photograph by Shivani Gupta  
Image courtesy the artist and Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai
Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing VIII (Day 18), 2010
digital photograph on archival paper
57.9 x 89.5 cm
Costumes by Tabasheer Zutshi
Photograph by Tina Lange
Image courtesy the artist
and Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai

Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing X (Part I, 13:00), 2010
digital photograph on archival paper
73.7 x 110.5 cm
Costumes by Loise Braganza
Photograph by Vinita Agarwal
Image courtesy the artist
and Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai

Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory drawing V (Part I), 2010
video with sound
9 minutes 28 seconds
Costumes by Tabasheer Zutshi
Video by Lisa Cazzato-Vieyra,
Serpentine Gallery, London
Courtesy the artist and Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai

S Teddy D
Refining the line, 2011
found copper piping
Dimensions variable
 Courtesy the artist

Alfredo Esquillo Jr.
Alab ng puso (Fire in the heart), 2010
oil on rubber painting, wheelchair, wood, lacquer paint, rubber, cyanoacrylate, stainless steel, wheels, mirror, lights, leather, motorcycle battery, speakers and stereo
92 x 175 x 87.5 cm
Artist collection/courtesy Tin-aw Art Management Inc., Manila

FX Harsono
Tubuhku adalah lahan (My body as a field), 2002
photo-etching on paper
57 x 126 cm
Courtesy the artist

Jose Legaspi
Untitled, 2010
Pastel on paper
100 x 70 cm
Image courtesy the artist
and The Drawing Room, Manila

Untitled, 2011
pastel on paper
100 x 70 cm
Image courtesy the artist
and The Drawing Room, Manila

Pushpamala N.
Abduction/The Pond, 2009
© Pushpamala N.
giclée print, 101.6 x 152.4 cm
Photograph by Clay Kelton
Cast: Pushpamala N. and Suresh Jayaram
Bangalore
Edition of 6+1 AP, exhibition print
Courtesy the artist and Nature Morte,
New Delhi

Abduction/The Forest, 2009
© Pushpamala N.
giclée print
101.6 x 152.4 cm
Photograph by Clay Kelton
Cast: Pushpamala N. and Suresh Jayaram
Bangalore
Edition of 6+1 AP
Courtesy the artist and Nature Morte,
New Delhi

Abduction/Capture, 2009
© Pushpamala N.
giclée print
101.6 x 152.4 cm
Photograph by Clay Kelton
Cast: Pushpamala N. and Suresh Jayaram
Bangalore
Edition of 6+1 AP, exhibition print
Courtesy the artist and Nature Morte,
New Delhi

Abduction/The Battle on the Ground, 2009
© Pushpamala N.
giclée print
101.6 x 152.4 cm
Photograph by Clay Kelton
Cast: Pushpamala N. and Suresh Jayaram
Bangalore
Edition of 6+1 AP
Courtesy the artist and Nature Morte,
New Delhi
Beyond the self: Contemporary portraiture from Asia

Abduction / The Cloud Battle, 2009
© Pushpamala N.
giclée print
101.6 x 152.4 cm
Photograph by Clay Kelton
Cast: Pushpamala N. and Suresh Jayaram
Bangalore
Edition of 6+1 AP
Courtesy the artist and Nature Morte, New Delhi

Abduction / Nightmare (Odalisque), 2009
© Pushpamala N.
giclée print
101.6 x 152.4 cm
Photograph by Clay Kelton
Cast: Pushpamala N. and Suresh Jayaram
Bangalore
Edition of 6+1 AP
Courtesy the artist and Nature Morte, New Delhi

Eko Nugroho
Fake is possible, 2010
machine embroidered rayon thread on fabric backing
256 x 156 cm
Photograph by Dwi Oblo
Image courtesy the artist

Keep the balance, 2010
machine embroidered rayon thread on fabric backing
157 x 160 cm
Photograph by Dwi Oblo
Image courtesy the artist

Herra Pahlasari
Potret diri di depan kelambu terbuka
(Self-portrait before the open mosquito net), 2009
pigment print on Hahnemühle Leonardo canvas
120 x 120 cm
Courtesy the artist

Imagining Adhesi / Miryam (A pose before of the open mosquito net), 2009–11
single channel colour video
4 minutes 13 seconds
Courtesy the artist

Di depan kelambu terbuka
(Before the open mosquito net), 1939
oil on board
Soekarno Collection

Nusra Latif Qureshi
Did you come here to find history?, 2009
digital print on clear film
70 x 870 cm
Courtesy the artist and Green Cardamom, London

Red silks (I, II, IV, V), 2007
digital print on paper
40 x 30 cm (each of 4)
Courtesy the artist and Green Cardamom, London

Navin Rawanchaikul
Navins of Bollywood, 2006
single channel colour video
10 minutes 34 seconds
Courtesy the artist
and Navin Production Co., Ltd

Navins of Bollywood, 2007
acrylic on canvas
120 x 170 cm
Courtesy the artist
and Navin Production Co., Ltd

Mission Navinland, 2011
painted fibreglass and mixed media on round plinth
225 x 200 x 200 cm
Photograph by Suwat Supachavinswad
Courtesy the artist
and Navin Production Co., Ltd

From Pak-kun to Mari (January 25, 2011),
2011
giclée print on archival fine-art matte paper
21 x 29.7 cm (each of 4)
Courtesy the artist
and Navin Production Co., Ltd

Alwin Reamillo
Ang Retabla Rizalist (Relikaryo ni Arnulfo Tikb-ang)
The Rizalian Retablo (Reliquary by Arnulfo Tikb-ang), 2011
mixed media with found objects on constructed box
146 x 83.25 x 22.75 cm
Courtesy the Paulino and Hetty Que Collection, Manila

At iba pang melikaryo (And other reliquaries), 2011
mixed media on found and constructed objects
Dimensions variable
B. Gasera (Lamp)
K. Piano Fortissimo
D. Rizal/Billy Tea Kangaroo Matchbox
E. Ear-o-copter
G. Tutubing Posporo (Matchbox
Dragonfly)
Collection of the artist

Tejal Shah
Trans-, 2004 – 05
In collaboration with Marco Paulo Rolla
dual channel video installation
12 minutes, colour, sound
Image courtesy the artist and Project 88,
Mumbai

Vivan Sundaram
Father – daughter, 2001
from the series Re-take of Amrita
digital photomontage
48.3 x 35.6 cm
(Umrao Singh, Simla, mid-1940s; Amrita,
Simla, 1937)
Courtesy the artist

Preening, 2001
from the series Re-take of Amrita
digital photomontage
38.1 x 53.3 cm
(Marie Antoinette, Lahore, 1912; Umrao
Singh, 1904)
Courtesy the artist

Self as Tahitian, 2001
from the series Re-take of Amrita
digital photomontage
55.9 x 30.5 cm
(Amrita, Hungary, 1938 photo, Victor
Egan; Self-portrait as Tahitian, detail,
1934, by Amrita Sher-Gil)
Courtesy the artist

Bourgeois family: Mirror frieze, 2001
from the series Re-take of Amrita
digital photomontage
38.1 x 66 cm
(From left: Indira, Paris, 1930; Umrao
Singh and Vivian, Simla, 1946; Marie
Antoinette, Lahore, 1912; Small earring,
1893, Georg Hendrik Breitner; Amrita,
Simla, 1937; Amrita, Budapest, 1938,
photo, Victor Egan)
Courtesy the artist

Style, 2001
from the series Re-take of Amrita
digital photomontage
55.9 x 25.9 cm
(Indira, Simla, 1937; Portrait of sister,
1936, by Amrita Sher-Gil)
Courtesy the artist

Remembering the past, looking to the future,
2001
from the series Re-take of Amrita
digital photomontage
38.1 x 53.3 cm
(Umrao Singh, Paris, early 1930s; Amrita,
Bombay, 1936, photo, Karl Khandalavala;
Marie Antoinette, Lahore, 1912; Indira,
Paris, 1931)
Courtesy the artist

Sisters with 'two girls', 2001
from the series Re-take of Amrita
digital photomontage
38.1 x 31 cm
(Amrita, Simla, 1937; Indira, Simla, early 1940s,
Two girls, detail, 1939, by Amrita Sher-Gil)
Courtesy the artist

Ghost, 2001
from the series Re-take of Amrita
digital photomontage
38.1 x 37.6 cm
(Umrao Singh, Simla, mid 1940s;
Marie Antoinette, Simla, mid 1940s)
Courtesy the artist

Melati Suryodarmo
Pass to converse, 2003
single channel colour video
20 minutes 40 seconds
Courtesy the artist

Agus Suwage
Asuceleng (Dog-boar), 2010
platinum porcelain
34 x 27 x 23 cm
Courtesy the artist

Man of the year #4, 2011
oil, silver leaf on galvanised zinc,
found objects
690 x 340 cm
Courtesy the artist

Meleleh (Melt), 2011
Wax, resin, galvanised zinc
37 x 30 x 26 cm
Courtesy the artist

Hema Upadhyay
Ladki number 1, 2001
gouache, dry pastels, acrylic
and photographs on Arches paper
91 x 122 cm
Courtesy the artist

Pedestrian, 2009
vinyl cutout
200 x 287.5 cm
Courtesy the artist