

MFAFP

MAYBANK FOUNDATION ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME



FORM BEFORE FUSION

In partnership with:

kakiseni

Humanising
Financial Services



Maybank

FORM BEFORE FUSION

8 - 24 January 2025

**Balai Seni Maybank,
Menara Maybank**

Presented by:



Curated by:

fakizeni ✱

Foreword by Izlyn Ramli

Head, Group Corporate Affairs Maybank &
CEO of Maybank Foundation.



Welcome to the Maybank Foundation Artist Fellowship Programme (MFAFP) 2024 Exhibition, an inspiring showcase that celebrates the exceptional creativity and unwavering dedication of young and emerging artists from across ASEAN.

Since its inception in 2023, this programme has empowered talented individuals to refine their craft, expand their professional horizons, and gain meaningful insights into the dynamic world of art. This initiative not only highlights the artistic potentials within ASEAN but also serves as a stepping stone for participants to make a lasting impact on the regional and global art scenes.

The successful completion of MFAFP 2024's incubation programme brought together 11 emerging art practitioners from six ASEAN countries for an immersive eight-day experience in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. By providing entrepreneurial skills training and artistic mentorship, the programme fostered both the creative

and professional growth of these emerging artists.

Participants were further enriched by educational visits to museums, cultural landmarks, and historical sites, offering them a unique opportunity to draw inspiration from the region's rich heritage. Through these efforts, the programme serves as a comprehensive platform that empowers artistic expression, strengthens cultural ties, and amplifies voices that reflect the diversity and vibrancy of the ASEAN region.

This initiative is part of the Balai Seni Art Series (BSAS), Maybank Foundation's core Art and Culture programme for cultivating artistic talent, which has been enriching the cultural landscape since 1988. Over the past three decades, BSAS has influenced the lives of over 840 local and international artists through 36 thematic exhibitions held both physically and virtually. By providing a vital platform for emerging, young, and established artists, BSAS fosters skill development, showcases creativity, and facilitates meaningful community engagement. This enduring legacy sets the foundation for initiatives like MFAFP, which exemplify the power of art to connect people and inspire transformation.

As Malaysia prepares for its ASEAN 2025 Chairmanship, Maybank Foundation as the social impact arm of Maybank Group reaffirms its

commitment to supporting regional cooperation and cultural exchange through all of its social impact pillars, namely empowering education, environmental diversity, and community empowerment, which includes arts and culture.

Programmes like MFAFP under the BSAS initiative exemplify our aspiration to position Malaysia as a vibrant hub for creativity and innovation, reflecting ASEAN's unity in diversity. By empowering artists and amplifying cultural dialogue, we aim to strengthen ASEAN's shared identity while showcasing the region's creative brilliance on a global stage. By identifying and nurturing impactful projects with measurable outcomes, we reaffirm our belief in the transformative power of art and culture to inspire positive change and strengthen communities.

This year's MFAFP exhibition, themed "Form Before Fusion," is a profound tribute to the journeys of ASEAN artists. It highlights the essential foundations of artistic practice—the distinct identities, traditions, and perspectives that form the bedrock of their creativity—before blending into a harmonious collective expression. By emphasising participation as practice, the exhibition underscores the value of process over product, where collaboration, engagement, and shared experiences are as vital as the final creation. This celebration of organic growth reaffirms our commitment to nurturing artistic development, fostering cross-border connections, and amplifying the unifying power of art.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to Kakiseni, whose expertise, dedication, and vision have been instrumental in the success of MFAFP 2024 and its

Cohort 2 exhibition. Their thoughtful curation, unwavering support, and commitment to amplifying the voices of ASEAN artists have enriched this programme's cultural impact. Kakiseni's partnership has been pivotal in bringing our shared vision to life with exceptional care and excellence.

Finally, I extend my deepest appreciation to the artists and contributors whose creativity, passion, and hard work have shaped this extraordinary journey. Your artistic brilliance not only enhances the exhibition but also aligns seamlessly with the Maybank Foundation's mission of creating a sustainable, lasting impact. Thank you for making MFAFP 2024 a testament to the enduring power of art, to inspire and transform lives.

#MaybankFoundation
#EmpoweringCommunitiesAcrossASEAN
#Maybank4ASEAN

About Balai Seni Maybank

Established in 1988, Balai Seni Maybank stands as a beacon of Malaysia's cultural and artistic heritage, fostering creativity and cultural discourse. Nestled within the Maybank's headquarters, Menara Maybank in Kuala Lumpur, this gallery embodies Maybank's enduring commitment to art and culture, serving as a platform for artists to showcase their talents, engage with the public, and inspire change through art.

As the heart of Maybank Foundation's Art and Culture programmes, Balai Seni has spearheaded the Balai Seni Art Series (BSAS), a key initiative that celebrates artistic diversity and inclusivity. Over three decades, BSAS has enriched the cultural landscape by organising 36 thematic exhibitions, including those commemorating International Women's Day, Merdeka and Malaysia Day, and World Peace Day. These exhibitions, curated in collaboration with esteemed local and regional institutions, have spotlighted over 840 artists from Malaysia and beyond, offering them a stage to share their masterpieces across various art forms.

In its mission to promote accessibility, BSAS has expanded its reach through virtual exhibitions, ensuring art is enjoyed by a wider audience. This initiative also extends its impact through programmes like the MyTIGER Values Art Competition & Exhibition, engaging over 2,200 student participants and addressing key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through art.

Balai Seni's efforts are further amplified by the Maybank Foundation Artist Fellowship Programme (MFAFP), launched in 2023. This fellowship is dedicated to empowering emerging artists from the ASEAN region by providing mentorship, resources, and opportunities to showcase their works and elevate these artists onto the international art stage while nurturing them as socially conscious cultural ambassadors and thought leaders.

Through these multifaceted initiatives, Balai Seni continues to cultivate a vibrant art community, enrich cultural narratives, and champion social values, solidifying its role as a cornerstone of Malaysia's artistic evolution.

Form Before Fusion –

An Exhibition Celebrating ASEAN
Emerging Artists of the Maybank Foundation
Artist Fellowship Programme 2024

“Form Before Fusion” underscores the value of preserving and celebrating the unique essence of each artist’s creative identity before integrating it with others.

This approach champions the richness and individuality of Southeast Asia’s diverse art forms, honouring the personal depth and cultural heritage each artist brings. The theme embodies the idea of participation as practice, viewing art not merely as a finished product but as an evolving journey.

Artists engaged in a communal process of sharing, learning, and shaping ideas, fostering an environment where their experiences, skills, and traditions could grow organically.

This emphasis on nurturing independent artistic identities ensures that when their practices converge, the fusion emerges as a meaningful, intentional dialogue rather than a mere blending, transcending into artworks that resonate with both individuality and collective harmony.

Maybank Foundation Artist Fellowship Programme (MFAFP) 2024 Artists

Noutnapha Soydala

Dancer-Choreographer, Laos

Xuân-Hạ

Artist, Community Arts Worker, Vietnam

Syamimi Razali

Professional Songket Weaver, Malaysia

Lim Tong Xin (Tong)

Fine Artist, Malaysia

Zaw Thu Rein Tun @ Nyi Pu

Photographer, Filmmaker and Artist, Myanmar

Kyaw Min Htet

Artist, Myanmar

Gandhi Eka

Artist and Illustrator, Indonesia

Ryan Andrew

Visual artists and Photographer, Indonesia

Rhaz Oriente

Contemporary Artist, Philippines

Orland Espinosa

Visual Artist, Printmaker and Sculptor, Philippines

Roan Alvarez

Visual Artist, Philippines

#EmpoweringCommunitiesAcrossASEAN



Day 2

Noutnapha Soydala
Dancer-Choreographer, Laos



Noutnapha is a 34-year-old Lao dancer and choreographer from the Fanglao Dance Company in Vientiane. She began learning traditional Lao dance at age six and discovered contemporary dance in 2006 through a workshop with Lao-French choreographer Olé Khamchanla.

Since 2008, she has toured annually in France for cultural exchange and performed in Cambodia, Thailand, South Korea, Japan and Laos.

In 2013, Noutnapha co-founded the Fanglao Dance Company to promote contemporary dance and foster international artistic collaboration. Her first solo work, *Kip (2016)*, and the acclaimed production *Phuying* have toured globally, including at the NDA Festival (South Korea) and Festival Tokyo (Japan).

Noutnapha's extensive residencies include Cité internationale des arts (France), SEA Choreolab (Malaysia), and Mekong Culture Hub (Taiwan).

She collaborates across disciplines, working with puppetry, photography, painting and theatre. Recent works include *Earthing with Company Siga (2023)* and *Process Init for Korea National Contemporary Dance (2024)*.

A portrait of a woman, Xuân-Hạ, shown from the chest up in profile, looking towards the right. She is wearing a black headscarf with white patterns and a black, long-sleeved, high-collared garment. Her hair is braided. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The lighting is soft, highlighting her features.

Xuân-Hạ

*Artist, Community Arts
Worker, Vietnam*

Based in Da Nang-Quang Nam, Xuân-Hạ is an artist and community art worker whose practice delves into micro-histories and marginalised narratives often excluded from dominant discourses.

The 31-year-old's research explores socio-cultural transformations, migratory patterns and ecological consequences, with a focus on indigenous communities' shifting identities and the fragility of cultural continuity.

Using a multidisciplinary approach, including video, installation, conceptual art and community-oriented practices, Xuân-Hạ transforms personal experiences into compelling visual narratives. Her work creates discursive spaces to examine identity fluidity, the impermanence of place and environmental and social upheaval.

A pivotal figure in Vietnam's art scene, Xuân-Hạ co-founded Chaosdowntown Cháo (HCMC, 2015–2019) and currently serves as the founder and artistic director of A Sông (Da Nang, 2019–present). Through these initiatives, she fosters critical engagement with social issues and nurtures emerging artists, building a dynamic platform for artistic discourse in Central Vietnam.



Syamimi Razali
*Professional Songket
Weaver, Malaysia*

Syamimi Razali, 33, is a professional songket weaver from Tanah Putih, Serian, Sarawak, with over 15 years of experience in traditional weaving.

Passionate about her craft, she aims to inspire young adults to explore the art of songket weaving and to foster a deeper appreciation for this rich cultural heritage.

Since 2012, Syamimi has been a dedicated weaver for Tanoti, an organisation devoted to preserving Malaysia's artisanal crafts and empowering local communities, particularly women in Sarawak. Tanoti promotes the production of traditional crafts, ensuring these skills are passed down to future generations while raising awareness of Malaysia's heritage on an international stage.

With her extensive expertise in traditional songket weaving, Syamimi now serves as a mentor to young weavers through the Maybank Women Eco-Weavers (MWEW) programme, an initiative championed by Maybank Foundation.





#EmpoweringCommunitiesAcrossASEAN

Doy 2

Born in Kajang, Selangor, 23-year-old Lim Tong Xin, known as Tong, is a multidisciplinary fine artist celebrated for her innovative and emotionally evocative works.



Lim Tong Xin (Tong)
Fine Artist, Malaysia

A graduate of the Malaysian Institute of Art with a Diploma in Fine Art (2022), Tong employs an intuitive approach, often starting her creations directly on canvas. Her work incorporates unconventional materials, reflecting her belief that art exists even in the mundane.

Tong's compositions are distinguished by bold contrasts, vibrant colours and intricate patterns, exploring the interplay between chaos and beauty. Through spontaneous lines and structured forms, her art mirrors the complexities of human emotion and experience.

She has earned numerous accolades, including the Grand Prize at the 2021 Bakat Mahasiswa competition, recognition as a Top 13 finalist in the 2022 Malaysia Emerging Artist Award, and awards in the MR DIY Art Competitions, such as the CEO Award (2024) and Creative Artist Award (2023).

Zaw Thu Rein Tun @ Nyi Pu

*Photographer, Filmmaker and
Artist, Myanmar*

Born in Sittwe, Rakhine State, Zaw Thu Rein Tun (Nyi Pu) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work spans photography, filmmaking and art. After studying law at Dagon University, Yangon (2001–2004), the 45-year-old then work as a photojournalist in 2013 and was invited to exhibit his photographic works at 7000 Padauk, a contemporary art space in Yangon.

In 2016, Nyi Pu began The Torchlight Art Project, a portrait photography series, and co-founded the Oh La La Art Gallery and Children's Drawing Space in Ngapali Beach, Rakhine State. His first solo exhibition, TorchLight, was held at Ananda Art Space, Yangon, in 2023. In 2024, he participated in an artists' response exhibition, Burma to Myanmar, organised by the British Council Myanmar and the British Museum.

Nyi Pu's filmography includes *On Hteedan Road (2013)* and *Song of the Trishaw (2020)*. He continues to create, explore and inspire from Yangon.







Day 4

Kyaw Min Htet, a 24-year-old Chiang Mai-based Burmese artist, has forged a bold path in contemporary art through photography, sculpture, and installation. His works confront socio-political issues, explore identity, and reflect on impermanence, often challenging boundaries and expectations.

Notable pieces include *The Flesh of Children is Bitter. The Flesh of a Dog is Sweet* (2023), a searing critique of the Myanmar Junta's violence, and *When Monarchs Die, Do They Really Go to Heaven?* (2023), a meditation on the transience of power within Burmese monarchy. As a queer artist, *When Do You Think We Will Meet Again?* (2023) captures fleeting digital connections.

Htet's experimental works, such as *Memory Fountain* (2022), with its moss-covered jacket and flowing water, symbolise addiction and renewal, while *Odeiktha* (2024) merges neon technology and religious iconography.

Kyaw Min Htet
Artist, Myanmar

A daring voice in Myanmar's art scene, Kyaw Min Htet's innovative approach marks him as a compelling artist to watch.





Gandhi Eka

Artist and Illustrator, Indonesia

Gandhi Eka, 37, is an Indonesia-based artist whose practice spans fine arts disciplines, focusing on drawing and comics while also exploring other diverse mediums. A graduate of the Master of Fine Arts programme at Fakultas Seni Rupa dan Desain Institut Teknologi Bandung (FSRD ITB), Gandhi is actively engaged in creating works for both domestic and international audiences.

His recent research delves into prehistoric techniques, using natural materials such as soil, egg whites, sap, animal blood and leaves to replicate ancient art methods. Inspired by the durability of early human creations, he incorporates these approaches into contemporary works, adapting them to modern environmental contexts.

In this fellowship programme, Gandhi uses natural materials from Malaysia and Indonesia – such as soil, roots, and sap – to create works that emphasise recycling and reusing. Central to his project is the crow, symbolising resilience and adaptation in urban environments, which challenges human-centric views of urban ecosystems and redefines coexistence with wildlife.



Ryan Andrew

Visual artists and Photographer, Indonesia

Ryan Andrew, 33, is a visual artist and photographer based in Jakarta, Indonesia. He earned a bachelor's degree in business finance from Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia, in 2013, then decided to pursue his passion for visual communication at Lasalle College Jakarta, in 2018.

Andrew's work delves into the unique essence of his subjects, capturing their authenticity, *resilience* and vulnerabilities through various visual languages and often incorporating deeply personal stories. His photographic practice focuses on themes of gender fluidity, intimacy and identity, which eventually led him to community-oriented narratives. For him, these encounters serve as a reminder of the meaning of home, warmth and the profound connections that come from shared lives.

In addition to his commercial work, Andrew amplifies the voices of underprivileged groups in Indonesia, fostering visibility and advocating for inclusion. He uses his work as a platform to challenge perspectives, celebrate diversity and inspire meaningful conversations about identity and belonging.



Rhaz Oriente

Contemporary Artist, Philippines

Based in Manila, Rhazel Oriente is a multidisciplinary artist whose work examines humanness, memory and existence. Through installations, mixed media and non-traditional materials, she uses materiality as a reflective tool, engaging with the emotions and experiences that define the human condition.

A Fine Arts graduate from Far Eastern University, the 32-year-old has exhibited extensively across the Philippines, with her work featured in publications such as BusinessWorld, Cartellino, and Spot.ph. Her recent curatorial projects delve into identity and individuality, combining traditional and unconventional media while drawing inspiration from conceptual and minimalist art movements.

Site-specificity is central to her practice, exploring how art interacts with viewers and its surrounding space. Oriente creates immersive, open-ended experiences, prompting audiences to reflect on profound existential questions. Her thoughtful approach to material and process cements her place as an influential voice in contemporary Filipino art.





#EmpoweringCommunitiesAcrossASEAN

Day 6

Day 7



Orland Espinosa

Visual Artist, Printmaker and Sculptor, Philippines

Born in Bacolod City, Jun Orland Espinosa is a 28-year-old Filipino visual artist, printmaker, sculptor and art organiser currently based in Iloilo City. His practice explores the intersection of human experience, perception and reality through symbolic engravings on multilayered acrylic and sculpted hardwood. Espinosa's works invite viewers to reflect on the complexities of existence and the multifaceted interpretations of reality.

He has received several prestigious awards, including the 2023 Philippine Art Award (Regional Winner) and the Metrobank Art and Design Excellence (MADE) Award. Espinosa was also a finalist in the Don Papa Rum Painting Competition and won second place in the 2017 Shell National Student Art Competition in the Philippines.

His solo exhibitions include *Beyond Senses* (2023) and *Signos* (2021), both held at Eskinita Art Farm. Espinosa further honed his craft through residencies at Eskinita Art Farm in Batangas and Linangan Art Residency in Alfonso, Cavite, in 2023.



Roan Alvarez

Visual Artist, Philippines



Born in 1995, Roan Alvarez, 29, is a Filipino visual artist specialising in intermedia and transmedia. Her innovative practice examines the sociopolitical effects of technology on identity, self-presentation and culture through physical computing. Incorporating light-emitting



A 2015 graduate of the College of Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines Diliman (cum laude, major in Painting), Alvarez has showcased her work in numerous exhibitions, including Art Fair Philippines, Pinto Art Museum and Finale Art File. Recent highlights include *~workflow~* (2024) at *Sampaguita Projects and Mouth Words, Muster Murmurs* (2023) at Finale Art File.

Beyond her studio, Alvarez leads workshops and artist talks, such as *The Art of Freeform Circuit Sculpture* (2023), demonstrating her commitment to advancing contemporary art practices in the Philippines.

technologies, microcontrollers, sensors and other electronic components, Alvarez creates interactive works that invite audiences to engage in narratives about human-technology relationships.

Maybank Foundation Artist Fellowship Programme (MFAFP) 2024 Experts

- Abdul Shakir, Co-Founder of Filamen
- Amerrudin Bin Ahmad, Director General of Balai Seni Visual Negara
- Azman Sap, Head of Pusat Kraf Orang Asli Sungai Bumbun
- Bilqis Hijjas, Director of Rimbun Dahan
- Dennis Lee, Co-Founder & CEO of CloudJoi
- James Han, Han The Craftsman
- John Ang, Malay Songket Collector
- Lem Tee Sin, Artist & Founder of Bumbung Klang
- Lostgens', Contemporary Art Space
- Low Ngai Yuen, President of Kakiseni
- Mohd Azrul Amin Bin Arshad, Curator of Collection Branch, Balai Seni Visual Negara
- Pamela Tan, Artist & Founder of Poh Sin Studio
- Raziman Sarbini, Programme Director & Senior Lecturer Bachelor of Performing Arts, Taylor's University
- Roshafiq Roslee, Senior Producer for Hauntu
- Snow Ng, Curator & Selection Panelist
- William Koong, Artist & Founder of Ghetto Playground
- Yap Sau Bin, Curator & Selection Panelist



#EmpoweringCommunitiesAcrossASEAN

Day 8

For more information about Maybank Foundation and its social impact initiatives, visit www.maybankfoundation.com

