

SECOND EDITION

# CERAMIC

EXPRESSIONS

2018

AGNES LIM  
AIDA BINTE KHALID  
EDDIE YEE  
HAZEL NG  
HIROKO MITA  
SURIANI SURATMAN  
TAN GEK LIN

GUEST ARTIST  
DR ISKANDAR JALIL

CO-ORGANISED BY



**MULAN GALLERY**  
Contemporary Fine Art

SUPPORTED BY



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL  
SINGAPORE

JAPAN CREATIVE CENTRE 18 - 28 Aug 2018

MULAN GALLERY 31 Aug - 22 Sep 2018



FRONT COVER:

Extract from Dr Iskandar Jalil

Head Over Heels, 2018 Stoneware

In partnership with Japan Creative Centre (JCC), Embassy of Japan, Mulan Gallery proudly presents the second annual edition of Ceramic Expressions, a group exhibition series showcasing new developments in Singapore modern ceramic art. This year's edition will feature new works by Singapore-based artists Agnes Lim, Aida Binte Khalid, Eddie Yee, Hazel Ng, Hiroko Mita, Suriani Suratman and Tan Gek Lin, accompanied by guest artist and master potter Dr Iskandar Jalil. The exhibition will run from 18 August to 22 September 2018.

Founded to showcase the creativity and versatility of Singapore-based ceramicists, Ceramic Expressions seeks to foster new explorations in ceramic art, firmly placing the development of the artists in their creative journeys front and centre. These featured works include studies in new folds, styles and techniques, each fusing fire and clay, concept and creativity into a potent amalgamation and unique embodiment of a living art.

In this edition, Aida Binte Khalid reinterprets functional domestic wares into multiple permutations of visual puns and objects of desire, as Eddie Yee pays tribute to the values and universal aesthetics of folk art objects. Inspired by memories of her family garden, Suriani Suratman's works invite us to reflect on and connect with nature, as Hiroko Mita presents her own ruminations on family, feelings and nature. Tan Gek Lin's vessels are a veritable congregation of amiable anthropomorphic forms; Hazel Ng shows that her characteristic whimsy is in fine form amid tangles, twists and pods, whilst Agnes Lim's porcelain works exemplify quiet studies of difference amid repetition. Situated amongst all these is the steady stewardship of Dr Iskandar's hand, with his signature richly textured vessels.

Functionality, simplicity, nature, family, memory, tradition, values and aesthetics are some of the central themes foregrounded in these works, with explorations and expressions of the pot not only as receptacles and repositories of history, but living vessels possessing an infinite capacity for storing and sparking individual memories and feelings, and bottomless potential for inspiring endless conversations and meditations.

## M E S S A G E

Japan Creative Centre (JCC) is delighted to be able to host this unique and special group exhibition 'Ceramic Expressions 2nd Edition', following the memorable holding of last year's 'Ceramic Expressions'. This second edition features newly produced works by talented Singapore-based potters under the theme 'The Beauty of Clay'.

Although it may rather sound like a direct and simple theme, this has proven to be a great opportunity for the artists to individually interpret and highlight the splendours of how clay will play its roles in each of their exquisite works – be it through the textures, colours, and shapes.

The artists featured at this exhibition are all either long-time apprentices of Dr Iskandar Jalil or fellow collaborators. Dr Iskandar Jalil has a special relationship with Japan, where he studied the art of pottery, and has brought numerous apprentices there as part of their learning experiences. As such, it heartens us to see that these artists have chosen to showcase their talents through pottery that incorporates both Japanese aesthetic sense and Singaporean influences.

I hope that 'The Beauty of Clay' will be continued to be nurtured by the ceramicists, and that their artwork will be widely appreciated by everyone here in Singapore and beyond.

**Akiko Sugita**

Director of Japan Creative Centre (JCC)

GUEST ARTIST

DR ISKANDAR JALIL

*b. 1940, Singapore*

Dr Iskandar Jalil is widely known as Singapore's master potter and leading educator in ceramics art, with an illustrious and immensely influential teaching career spanning over four decades. Armed with two Colombo Plan scholarships, his education includes a course in textile weaving in India in 1966, and studying ceramics engineering in Japan in 1972.

In the ensuing years, Dr Iskandar has garnered an immense reputation as an outstanding ceramicist, with an influential philosophy of pottery and aesthetics centred around the idea of each potter honing their skills and identity organically and concurrently, in a lifelong pursuit of their own ethical pot – a constantly evolving living vessel imbued with one's consciousness and unique identity, enriched with moral and spiritual dimensions that are informed by and express a sense of place and time. He has been credited with shaping entire generations of pottery collectives through his work at the Malay Heritage Centre and Jalan Bahar Clay Studios and continues to do so at the helm of the Temasek Potters Studio today.

In recognition of his outstanding artistic and cultural achievements, he was conferred the country's highest cultural award, the Cultural Medallion in 1988, and the Order of the Rising Sun – Gold Rays with Rosette in 2015 by the Japanese Government. A six-month major survey of close to 200 of his works from the 1960s to the present was held at the National Gallery Singapore in 2016, with an honorary doctorate conferred by the Nanyang Technological University that same year.







## AGNES LIM

*b. 1977, Singapore*


Agnes Lim is a practicing ceramics artist at Temasek Potters. Her first encounter with clay was with Dr Iskandar Jalil in 1997 and was cemented when she began apprenticing under the master potter at Temasek Potters Studio in 2011. Since then, Lim has worked predominantly with porcelain. Her approach is greatly influenced by Dr Iskandar's progressive attitude to pottery-making, which underlines the importance of constantly pushing past the boundaries. A 2016 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale finalist, she has participated in various group exhibitions since 1997.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 Ceramic Expressions (1st Edition), Japan Creative Centre (JCC) and Mulan Gallery, Singapore
- 2016 Taiwan Ceramics Biennale, New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taiwan
- 2015 Balance in Imperfection, Japan Creative Centre (JCC), Singapore
- 2013 Shakei, The Glocal Connect Village Art Gallery, Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore  
Iskandar Jalil - A Lifelong Passion for his Craft and his Teaching, Japan Creative Centre (JCC), Singapore
- 2012 Ngee Ann 3D Art Exhibition, Ngee Ann Cultural Centre, Singapore
- 2011 Raw Interpretations, Art-2 Gallery, Singapore
- 2003 Discovery Phase, Art-2 Gallery, Singapore
- 1997 Basic Interpretation, Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore



Message in a Bottle series, 2018 Porcelain (L-R) H 30 x Ø 9 cm. H 21 x Ø 9 cm. H 10.2 x Ø 12.5 cm



*“Each clay body speaks a different language. I have learned to respect and converse with porcelain, a fussy clay body that is susceptible to collapsing and warping during the process of creation, to create finished works that I hope are able to speak for themselves. Porcelain is said to be the most difficult clay material to throw with, but it is also strong and translucent, and once fired, is likely to last a long time. I work with my hands and create works that resonate with me, by listening to the clay and molding it to the form I feel it can become. I am inspired by my travels and encounters with all walks of life, among other things.”*

*- Agnes Lim*



## AIDA BINTE KHALID

*b. 1966, Singapore*

Aida Binte Khalid first discovered the joys of pottery under the tutelage of Dr Iskandar Jalil in mid-2011. Thus, began her intriguing relationship with clay, which has continued mostly at Temasek Potters Studio to this day. She considers the process of creating each piece as a transformation of clay into an object of visual idioms. No single piece is the same – each is an exploration of form, materiality and texture, a unique work issuing from the mind and heart. The full-time design educator draws deeply from her surrounding context and everyday objects and is inspired by her conversations with the master potter. In 2015, she facilitated the Warisan Kita (Our Heritage) mural workshops at the Malay Heritage Centre and conducted a workshop in conjunction with the Iskandar Jalil: Kembara Tanah Liat (Clay Travels) retrospective exhibition at National Gallery Singapore in 2016. She holds a Bachelor's in Architecture from the National University of Singapore.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 Balance in Imperfection, Japan Creative Centre (JCC), Singapore
- 2013 Shakei, The Glocal Connect Village Art Gallery, Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore
  - Iskandar Jalil - A Lifelong Passion for his Craft and his Teaching, Japan Creative Centre (JCC), Singapore
- 2011 Raw Interpretations, Art-2 Gallery, Singapore



*"Whenever I start work on a piece, I am guided by the mantra 'Firmitas, Utilitas, Venustas' (Latin for 'Strength, Functionality and Beauty'). Coined by Vitruvius, which is recognized as the cornerstone of any successful act of 'making'. This series is an archetype of shaping the formless clay into a functional domestic ware, the teapot or coffee pot (Teko in Malay). The use of clay as a material to form, shape and create the functional ware beginning from the empirical studies in form, function and ergonomics of the teapot or coffee pot (Teko in Malay) to reinterpret its form, ergonomics, scale yet retain its basic function as a water container with visual pun."*

*- Aida Binte Khalid*



## EDDIE YEE

*b. 1953, Singapore*

Eddie Yee is a full-time potter who has had an ongoing love affair with clay over the past two decades. A participant of the Nanyang Clay Group Exhibition since 2007, he is inspired by the tactile nature of the medium and the way it speaks to him, as well as by his surroundings and people – what he calls “an imaginary bazaar of sights, sounds, feelings and moods”. His works are typically adorned with glazes that enhance and intensify the varying surfaces and textures. The natural and unpredictable effects of the glazes take on a life of their own as each piece is gas-fired, resulting in running and pooling effects that imbue his works with a characteristic liveliness of spirit and a sense of joy and spontaneity. He has participated in many group exhibitions, with a solo exhibition in 2014.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 Tou Gei 2018, Group Exhibition, Ceramic House, Singapore
- 2017 Ceramic Expressions (1st Edition), Japan Creative Centre (JCC) and Mulan Gallery, Singapore
- 2014 Back to Earth, Solo Exhibition, Pot.Potter.Pottest, Singapore
- 2013 Absolute Clay, Nanyang Clay Group 5th Exhibition, The Nanyang Clay Group, Singapore
- 2012 CULINEARTH, Tou Gei 2012, Group Exhibition, Ceramic House, Singapore
- 2011 Tou Gei 2011, Group Exhibition, Ceramic House, Singapore  
Nanyang Clay Group 4th Exhibition, The Nanyang Clay Group, Singapore
- 2009 “Qi” Nanyang Clay Group 3rd Exhibition, The Nanyang Clay Group, Singapore
- 2007 Nanyang Clay Group 2nd Exhibition, The Nanyang Clay Group, Singapore



Over a Fire, 2018 Stove - Mixed Raku Clay Cooking Pot - Stoneware White Clay H 32 x 20 x 20 cm





*“This series is inspired by folk art objects used exclusively by certain ethnic groups, which reflect the simple ways of life that prevailed in the past. Crafted by unnamed hands and of indefinite origin, these farming and fishing tools, household utensils and other objects are not only functional and utilitarian, but artistic creations representing certain fundamental values and simple truths. It is this straightforward honesty that lends them a universal appeal. Through the simple, captivating charm of glaze layers on clay surfaces, this series presents my tribute to the harmonious beauty and simplicity of folk art objects in clay.”*  
- Eddie Yee





## HAZEL NG

*b. 1968, Singapore*

Hazel Ng was introduced to pottery in 1991. This journey in pottery took a decisive turning point three years later when she began her apprenticeship under master potter Dr Iskandar Jalil. A year later, she was awarded the Third Prize in the Teawares Category in the 1995 Singapore Potters Competition. Hazel has continued to pursue pottery making at Jalan Bahar Clay Studios since 2007. She has been participating in various group exhibitions and pottery residencies abroad. She holds a diploma in Graphic Design and Advertising from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, as well as a professional diploma in Interior Design from Rhodex International.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 Molds of the Past, group exhibition with Mami Kato, Numa, Spanish and foreign potters, Zamora Museum, Spain
- 2017 Ceramic Expressions (1st Edition), Japan Creative Centre (JCC) and Mulan Gallery, Singapore
- 2015 Tribute to Local Clay: A Pottery Exhibition, Maya Gallery, Singapore
- 2013 Firing a passion: History and Pottery Practices in Singapore, Nanyang Technological University Museum, Singapore  
Shakei, The Glocal Connect Village Art Gallery, Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore  
Iskandar Jalil - A Lifelong Passion for his Craft and his Teaching, Japan Creative Centre (JCC), Singapore  
Jalan Bahar Clay Studios Gallery Open House, Dragon Kiln, Singapore
- 2008 The 6th Ngee Ann 3D Art Exhibition, Ngee Ann Cultural Centre, Singapore
- 2007 Pots, Pipes and other Pieces (in conjunction with the Singapore Art Show), National Library, Singapore
- 2001 Oneness with Nature (a Two women Show), Galerie Belvedere, Singapore
- 1997 Singapore Art 97, National Arts Council, Singapore
- 1996 Down to Earth Exhibition, Art Focus Gallery, Singapore



*"As a child living in kampong, I loved playing with mud. I didn't know it then, this has eventually played a big part in my gravitation towards the art of pottery. My inspirations derive mainly from the beauty of natural forms. My recent years of travels, and abroad workshop exchanges with the local and foreign potters have helped enriched my knowledge and deepened my skills further. Thus, the manifesto through my works."*

*- Hazel Ng*



## HIROKO MITA

*b. 1971, Japan*

Hiroko Mita counts herself blessed that she was able to learn the rudiments and techniques of pottery making under the tutelage of renowned potter Dr Iskandar Jalil. Her journey began at Jalan Bahar Clay Studios in 2006 and continued with Dr Iskandar at his Temasek Potters Studio. Her passion and devotion to pottery deepened further when she moved back to JBCS in 2012. Inspired by nature, music and the people around her, Mita's works reflect the influences of her Japanese culture, her study of fine art and graphic design in Japan and in America, as well as her life in Singapore since 1996. Indeed, the Singapore based ceramicist's choice of using local clay is her way of conveying respect to the people and the land she has called home for the last two decades. She has been an instructor for ROHEI Corporation's Artisan series since 2015, as well as a member of the Japanese Ceramic Art Foundation since 2016. Her works have been shown in Japan and Singapore. She has been commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Arts Council, National Heritage Board and Duke-NUS Medical School; and jointly participated in a mural project for NTU Lee Kong Chian School of Experimental Medicine Building and other communities.



Tailpot Palm Tree - What will we leave behind? 2018 Mixed Stoneware (Raku clay), Singapore Local clay slip H 21 x 25 x 22 cm



#### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 19th Japan Ceramic Art Foundation, The National Art Center, Tokyo  
Singapore Stories, Mulan Gallery, Singapore
- 2017 Ceramic Expressions (1st Edition), Japan Creative Centre (JCC) and  
Mulan Gallery, Singapore  
18th Japan Ceramic Art Foundation, The National Art Center, Tokyo  
Trans (Form), Maya Gallery (Singapore Contemporary Art), Singapore  
Prologue Singapore and Tokoname Ceramic Art Exchange 2017,  
Jalan Bahar Clay Studios, Singapore
- 2016 Qi@art Sculpture & Installation Art Show, Telok Kurau Studios Gallery,  
Singapore  
17th Japan Ceramic Art Foundation, The National Art Center, Tokyo
- 2015 16th Japan Ceramic Art Foundation, The National Art Center, Tokyo  
Balance In Imperfection, Temasek Potters, Japan Creative Centre (JCC),  
Singapore  
Tribute to Local Clay: A Pottery Exhibition, Organised by Maya  
Gallery, Singapore
- 2014 International Chawan Expo-Singapore, Ngee Ann Cultural Center,  
Singapore
- 2013 Firing a Passion: History & Pottery Practices of Singapore, NTU  
Museum, Singapore  
Shakei, The Glocal Connect Village Art Gallery, Temasek Polytechnic,  
Singapore  
Iskandar Jalil - A Lifelong Passion for His Craft and His Teaching, JCC,  
Singapore  
14th Japan Ceramic Art Foundation, The National Art Center, Tokyo  
Jalan Bahar Clay Studios Gallery Open House, JBCS Gallery, Singapore
- 2011 Raw Interpretations, Art-2 Gallery, Singapore  
7th Ngee Ann 3D Art Exhibition, Ngee Ann Cultural Centre, Singapore



*“Like human beings, different clays and raw materials have different and unique characteristics of their own, and I enjoy getting to know each and every one of them in the process of creation. I have great appreciation and respect for the experience of those who have built up, during all their years on this Earth, a deep knowledge of and wisdom in pottery-making. This series of works in part explores the spirit and philosophy of wabi-sabi, the Japanese aesthetic that embraces the beauty in all that is ephemeral and impermanent. When our time comes, what will we leave behind?”*

*- Hiroko Mita*

Hug Mei (Series of 6), 2018 Terracotta Crank Clay H 34-42 x Ø 8-11.5 cm



## SURIANI SURATMAN

*b. 1959, Singapore*

Suriani Suratman discovered her passion for pottery when she started taking classes in 2001 at the Centre for the Arts at the National University of Singapore under the tutelage of Dr Iskandar Jalil, whom she has continued to study with. She works out of Jalan Bahar Clay Studios and has been holding pottery classes since 2005. Her works have been commissioned by the Singapore International Foundation, National Heritage Board and Patron of Heritage Awards, among others. In addition, she has co-created three public art works in Singapore: Warisan Kita (Our Heritage, 2015) at the Malay Heritage Centre; Apollo's Dream (2016) at the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine at Nanyang Technological University; and Flows and Contours (2017) at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore. Her first solo exhibition, Alam, was held in 2013, and she has also participated in multiple group exhibitions in Singapore and Hong Kong.

*"I enjoy transforming a lump of clay into various forms, whether on the wheel or by hand-building. I enjoy working with different types of raku clay because the coarseness of the clay gives texture to the organic forms I create. It is important for me to always follow my intuition and to be spontaneous. What I like most is when people are drawn to my works for personal reasons, be it the glaze or the form that perhaps helps to trigger their memories, or that somehow resonates with what they are feeling. This hopefully turns into a starting point for a conversation and a journey of reflection. These two series are inspired by memories of being in my family's garden, of moments sitting under a tree, enjoying the tranquility and lush surroundings."*

*- Suriani Suratman*



In Bloom (Series of 3), 2018 Buff And White Raku Clay H 31-37.5 x Ø 13-21 cm

#### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 Tanah Air Homeland Ahmad Abu Bakar + Suriani Suratman, The Private Museum, Singapore
- 2015 Tribute to Local Clay: A Pottery Exhibition, Maya Gallery, Singapore
- 2013 Alam – A pottery exhibition by Suriani Suratman, Solo Exhibition, ART2 Gallery, Singapore
- Firing a passion: History and Pottery Practices in Singapore, NTU Museum, Singapore
- Shakei, The Global Connect Village Art Gallery, Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore
- Iskandar Jalil - A Lifelong Passion for his Craft and his Teaching, JCC, Singapore
- Bank Art Fair, Maya Gallery (Island Shangri-La), Hong Kong
- Encore!, Maya Gallery, Singapore
- 2008 Inspirations from Kampung Glam, Malay Heritage Centre, Singapore
- 2007 Pots, Pipes and other Pieces (in conjunction with the Singapore Art Show), National Library, Singapore
- 2006 Starting with Clay... , ART2 Gallery, Singapore
- 3rd Ngee Ann 3D Art Exhibition, Ngee Ann Cultural Centre, Singapore
- Jalan Bahar Clay Studios Gallery Official Opening, Singapore
- 2005 Ceramivity – The Third Statement, National University Singapore, Centre for the Arts, Singapore
- 2nd Ngee Ann 3D Art Exhibition, Ngee Ann Cultural Centre, Singapore



## TAN GEK LIN

*b. 1969, Singapore*


Tan Gek Lin is a practicing ceramics artist whose attraction to all things handcrafted started when she was a child. Her interest in pottery took root when she attended an evening pottery course while studying in England in 1997. Upon her return to Singapore, she continued her pottery journey by taking lessons from master potter Dr Iskandar Jalil. She has participated in various group exhibitions, with a solo exhibition *Show + Tell* held in 2013. Her works have been commissioned by the National Heritage Board and Economic Development Board, among others.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 Ceramic Expressions (1st Edition), Japan Creative Centre (JCC) and Mulan Gallery, Singapore
- 2015 Balance in Imperfection, Japan Creative Centre (JCC), Singapore
- 2013 *Show + Tell* (a Solo Exhibition), Littered with Books, Singapore Shakei, The Global Connect Village Art Gallery, Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore
- 2011 Raw Interpretations, Art-2 Gallery, Singapore
- 2010 Feel, an inaugural feature exhibition, Art-2 Gallery, Singapore
- 2008 Inspiration from Kampong Glam, Malay Heritage Centre, Singapore
- 2007 Pots, Pipes and other Pieces, in conjunction with the Singapore Art Show, National Library, Singapore
- 2006 Starting with Clay, Art-2 Gallery, Singapore  
Jalan Bahar Clay Studios Gallery Official Opening, Singapore
- 2005 Ceramivity – The Third Statement, National University Singapore, Centre for the Arts, Singapore
- 2003 Discovery Phase, Art-2 Gallery, Singapore



Preserve Series, 2018 White Raku H 23.26 x Ø 16.20 cm



*"I am fascinated by how terms used in pottery are so often synonymous with that of the human form such as the neck, the lip, the body. These inspire me in my work with clay. Forms and shapes captivate me. One might on occasion detect the form of a foot in the clouds, for example, or the form of a fish tail among the foliage. Just as one might discern such shapes whilst freely taking in nature, I would like others to be able to interact with my works with the same serendipity, through their own senses and emotions, thoughts and reflections."*

- Tan Gek Lin



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Agnes Lim  
Aida Binte Khalid  
Eddie Yee  
Hazel Ng  
Hiroko Mita  
Suriani Suratman  
Tan Gek Lin

Guest Artist  
Dr Iskandar Jalil

Editorial  
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Photography  
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