



PORT
unity thru arts



**59. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte**
Eventi Collaterali

Pera + Flora + Fauna

The Story of Indigenusness and the Ownership of History

Collateral Event of the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

23 April -27 November 2022, Archivi della Misericordia, Venice, Italy

10 March 2022, Kuala Lumpur – People of Remarkable Talents (PORT), an arts and culture agency under the Perak State Government, with support from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and the National Art Gallery Malaysia, announces its commission of the exhibition *Pera + Flora + Fauna*, as an official Collateral Event at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. PORT is honoured to present at this prestigious international art event, the artists and artworks that have been inspired by the rich histories and context of the state of Perak, Malaysia.

Pera + Flora + Fauna engages with the discourse around how indigenusness and nature are affected by mainstream cultural attitudes of industrialised nations, the very nations contributing to existing environmental problems. This leads us to question, can aesthetic thinking support the conservation and restoration of nature or indigenous rights and ways of life? Can indigenous populations across the globe challenge the mainstream documented (art) history written by the non-indigenous? Can indigenous populations achieve the liberty to collectively claim “their own history and narratives”, antagonising the dominant discourse? *Pera + Flora + Fauna* intends to address these questions drawing on different perspectives of man, nature, and their interrelation.

Pera + Flora + Fauna will take place at Archivi della Misericordia in Cannaregio, Venice; commissioned by Nur Hanim Mohamed Khairuddin, General Manager of PORT, and curated by appointed lead curators Amir Zainorin and Khaled Ramadan, and associate curators Camilla Boemio and Annie Jael Kwan.

The exhibition features Malaysian artists and collectives, and an Italian artist, from multiple disciplines ranging across performance, film, sound, sculpture, and new media. The artists are Azizan Paiman (MY), Kamal Sabran (MY), Kapallorek Artspace (MY), Kim Ng (MY), Projek Rabak (MY), Saiful Razman (MY) and Stefano Cagol (ITA).

The curatorial team intersects across diverse expertise and contexts of practice. Amir Zainorin is a Denmark-based Malaysian artist, curator, and co-founder of interdisciplinary artist association Jambatan, while Lebanese born Khaled Ramadan is a curator, art historian, filmmaker and cultural writer who works in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Ramadan curated Maldives Pavilion at the 55th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia and co-curated Manifesta 8, Murcia, Spain.

The team includes associate curators Camilla Boemio and Annie Jael Kwan; Boemio has published extensively on issues of indigeneity in relation with the climate crisis, and her curatorial research is focused on the ethics of ecology, while Kwan is an independent curator and researcher whose work at Asia-Art-Activism and Asia Forum refocuses on "Asia/s" as a lens for alternative histories and perspectives when exploring critical contemporary themes and practices. The team is advised by Alfredo Cramerotti, the president of IKT and the director of MOSTYN, Wales.

“We invited seven artists, art collectives and contributors to *Pera + Flora + Fauna* with the intention to present a different narrative and an aesthetic experience that builds upon research, knowledge, and participation,” said lead curators Zainorin and Ramadan. “This project is meant to re-imagine nature and Indigenously in relation to ethics and aesthetics, questioning who owns nature and who owns Indigenous history.”

YB Dato’ Nolee Ashilin Dato’ Mohamed Radzi, the State of Perak’s Chairman for Housing, Local Government and Tourism committee and member of the board of directors of PORT, further added, “The State of Perak is dense with its diverse flora, fauna, historical and cultural assets. Their essences are explored and aesthetically presented through this fascinating exhibition. The fact that this project is accepted by the main curator of the biennale has made us very proud.”

In conjunction with the exhibition, the discourse expands through a forum where invited panellists Henry Meyric Hughes, Dorian Batycka, Ong Jo-Lene and Alfredo Cramerotti, along with the curators and artists, will share their observations and interpretations around the concept of *Ownership of Nature and History*; attempting to contextualise the notion of the natural and the historic and why it cannot be independent of the intellectual, artistic, emotional, and technological resources available to us in the industrialised world. In addition, there will be three on-site performances by the artists; one which explores sound and body movement to heal the internal psychic and spiritual body based on Malay traditional healing rituals; the others inviting the audience to engage with the ongoing contest between capitalist driven narratives of extractivism towards land and indigenous peoples, and the agency and creative resilience of indigenous communities in sharing their histories and holistic principles of coexistence with nature.

“It is our hope that *Pera + Flora + Fauna* will become a gentle reminder for both artists and the audience to ponder and contemplate the importance of sustaining a sense of respect among living beings,” Nur Hanim emphasised.

Director General of National Art Gallery Malaysia Mr Amerrudin Ahmed states, “The effort made by PORT and their appointed curatorial team to present our own contemporary works at this world class event is a huge achievement for the Malaysian visual art world. On behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, the National Art Gallery is very glad to be able to support this great initiative.”

Several other agencies and private entities have lent their support for the realization of this project. PORT, the organiser, wishes to thank Art Events, Tourism Malaysia, Tourism Perak, UOB Malaysia, George Town Festival 2022, RogueArt, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Danish Arts Foundation, MUSE Science Museum of Trento, Autonomous Province of Trento, Laterna Magica Museum, Chamber of Public Secrets and Jambatan.

***Pera + Flora + Fauna* exhibition will open to public from 23 April to 27 November 2022**
***20,21 & 22 April 2022 – Programmes for accredited press and/or guests with invitation only**

Venue: Archivi della Misericordia,
Campo de l'Abazia, 3549 Cannaregio,
Venezia

Openings:
Curators' talk and press opening - 21st April, 5:30 PM
Dignitaries and official inauguration - 22nd April, 7:00 PM

Forum:
Pera + Flora + Fauna: The Ownership of Indigenoussness and the Social Construction of Nature –
*22nd April 2022, 5:30 PM

Panellists: Henry Meyric Hughes, Honoree president AICA, UK, Alfredo Cramerotti director of MOSTYN
Wales and curators Camilla Boemio and Annie Jael Kwan.

Moderator: Art writer and curator, Dorian Batycka.

Performance:
"Sseggar Angin: The Healing Art Project" by Kamal Sabran in collaboration with Aida Redza –
*21st & 22nd April 2022, 4:20 PM

"We the Mengkuang" by Projek Rabak – 23rd April 2022, 4:20 PM

"The Human Status, Indigenous Me-We" by Stefano Cagol, Dorian Batycka, David Lopez, Ronnie Bahari
& Yahya Torek – *22nd, 23rd & 24th April 2022, 3.00 PM - 4:00 PM

For more information on *Pera + Flora + Fauna*, visit: <http://portipoh.com.my/>

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