

# Dear Friends

Welcome to the second edition of the Tasneem Gallery Newsletter.

In this edition we include the essay by the Spanish journalist Xavier Vidal-Folch, deputy editor of the newspaper El País and president of the World Editors Forum, entitled *Htein Lin, from imprisonment to fusion*, reproduced here from the catalogue of the exhibition at Tasneem Gallery: Missing Asia – Observing Europe by the Burmese artist Htein Lin. We are pleased to present an exclusive interview by Deborah Drowe with Jane Upton, an international executive coach, who we would like to introduce as a fledgling collector belonging to a growing group of female executives and professionals interested in collecting art.

The other sections give information on events held this year and upcoming events. This has been an excellent year for Tasneem Gallery, in which we have continued our exchange programmes and collaborated with professionals from a wide range of fields such as pedagogy, cultural tourism and communications; from various parts of the world including Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, Senegal, Ghana, Peru, Burma, Great Britain, France, Switzerland and Cuba.

We wish you a pleasant summer and will continue to inform you of upcoming events.

Tasneem Gallery Team

Calle Castellnou 51, Les Tres Torres 08017 Barcelona, España Tel: +34 93 252 3578 info@tasneemgallery.com

www.tasneemgallery.com

# CONTENTS

## PAST EVENTS

3 - 5

### EXHIBITIONS:

**MISSING ASIA-OBSERVING EUROPE**  
19 November 2009 to 16 January 2010.

**ANTIPERSONNEL 1:1**  
17 February – 31 March 2010.

**CREATION – PROCREATION - and The Loss of Innocence**  
6 May - 30 June 2010.

**I SEE YOU**  
6 July – 6 October 2010.

### ART FAIRS:

**ARTBYGENÉVE**  
28 April - 2 May 2010.

## EXPERIENCE - ART

6 - 7

Jane Upton, International Executive Coach and fledgling art collector talks to Deborah Rowe about her foray into the world of art collecting.

## EVENTS FORTHCOMING

7 - 9

### EXHIBITIONS:

**VISIONS FROM THE NEW WORLD**  
Collective Exhibition of Contemporary African Art  
curated by Godfried Donkor  
20 October - 31 December 2010.

**A RETROSPECTIVE OF THE JAZZ MUSICIAN PETER IND - A COMPLETE ARTIST**  
15 January – 28 February 2011.

**"WHY DONT YOU TAKE ME IN YOURS ARMS AND CARRY ME OUT OF THIS LONLEY PLACE"**  
April- May 2011.

**COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION OF PERUVIAN ART**  
curated by Miguel Lopéz and in collaboration with ARA-CARI (Intelligent Travel Design)  
Rescheduled for September-October 2011.

## REVIEW - ART

10 - 12

**HTEIN LIN, FROM IMPRISONMENT TO FUSION,**  
By Xavier Vidal-Folch

## OTHERS NEWS

13 - 14

**YOICHI TANABE**  
FIRST URAL INDUSTRIAL BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART 2010.

**LUIS GÓMEZ AND ERNESTO LEAL**  
PARTICIPATE IN PORTUGAL ARTE 10.

**RAPHAËL DALLAPORTA**  
RECEIVES THE 2010 INFINITY AWARD.

**HTIEN LIN**  
INVITED ARTIST AT M1 SINGAPORE FRINGE FESTIVAL  
2010 ART AND LAW, FROM 13TH TO 24TH JANUARY, 2010.

# PAST EVENTS

## EXHIBITIONS



Opening night of *Missing Asia- Observing Europe* at Tasneem Gallery.

### MISSING ASIA-OBSERVING EUROPE

Htein Lin

19 November 2009 to 16 January 2010.

Missing Asia-Observing Europe was the first solo exhibition of the Burmese artist Htein Lin at Tasneem Gallery. This event was held in conjunction with a talk on November 18th given by the artist at the bookshop Librería Altair ([www.altair.es](http://www.altair.es)), which was moderated by Albert Padrol, founder of Altair. The artist spoke of his experiences as a political prisoner in Burma, where he was held in various prisons over a period of six and a half years. The talk was accompanied by pictures of the artwork he did in prison using smuggled materials and whatever he could find. His "prison work" was shown at Asia House in London 2008 and due to its documentary value is housed in the archives of the Institute of International Social History in Amsterdam.

Should you desire further information or to see pictures of his work from that period please contact us.

Htein Lin's exhibition at Tasneem Gallery comprised eighteen paintings in



Opening night of *Missing Asia- Observing Europe* at Tasneem Gallery.

acrylic on canvas and cotton, in which the artist reflects his incredible life experiences, political events in Burma, his deep Buddhist faith and artistic journey over recent years and his view of Europe and Asia as an Asian artist currently living in Europe.

We have had the honour to include an essay written especially for the catalogue by the Spanish journalist Xavier Vidal-Folch, deputy editor of the newspaper *El País* and president of the World Editors Forum. Vidal-Folch describes his impressions of the work by Htein Lin in our gallery. You can find this article, reproduced in full in the section REVIEW ART. ■



Htein Lin, next to Albert Padrol, during his talk at Altair bookstore

### ANTIPERSONNEL 1:1

Raphaël Dallaporta

17 February – 31 March 2010.

In his exhibition *Antipersonnel 1.1*, the French photographer Raphaël Dallaporta addresses the issues of the production, distribution and use of anti-personnel mines presenting in our society. The exhibition was held at Tasneem Gallery in February and March 2010 in collaboration with Imaginaid Galerie in Geneva. Perhaps the power and beauty of this amazing exhibition is best described in the words of the well-known photographer of Magnum Agency, Martin Parr:

«One of photography's great strength is its ability to catalogue and record the world in which we live. The simplicity and clarity that photography offers has both commercial and artistic possibilities.

In more recent years there has been a trend towards documentary photographers isolating one particular aspect of society and exploring this in great detail. Dallaporta presents the most chilling example of this genre by photographing antipersonnel landmines. These strange ugly objects also have a certain disturbing beauty to them. We hear about the damage that landmines inflict on innocent victims long after the purpose of their planting has lapsed. They of course are hidden underground before exploding.

I had never seen a landmine in real life or in a photograph until discovering Dallaporta's images. It was a revelation. We now learn that hundreds of types of



Raphaël Dallaporta. *Antipersonnel 1:1*

landmines exist and the variety of design, appearance, shape and design is incredible. Because Dallaporta has photographed these objects in the way an advertising photographer might render a shampoo bottle, he glorifies these objects and yet appears totally neutral in his approach. It is a most clever trick, so much so that we hardly notice he has done it».

The exhibition was very popular and we organised five groups of guided tours for the Amics del Museu, a Catalan based organisation whose members are keen followers of art. This exhibition is still on tour in Europe. From Tasneem Gallery, it moved on to the Fotohof Gallery in Salzburg, Austria where it was shown from 23 April to 5 June 2010. It is currently showing at the Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne from 18 June to 25 July.

Tasneem Gallery is still promoting the work of this artist, if you are interested in further information about Dallaporta's work or wish to purchase an edition of one of the artworks, please contact us. ■

## CREATION – PROCREATION and The Loss of Innocence

Participating artists: Godfried Donkor, Wiz Kudoor, Nalini Malini, Eugenio Merino, Joan Miró, Jazz Pasay, Anthony Pilley and Wu Xiaohai  
6th May to 30th June 2010.

Creation is a loaded term. In the book of Genesis, a concept we call God creates our very existence,... in our current world as people and ancient nations try to make sense of their lives, Bob Marley wails "in this great future you can't forget your past...so dry your tears I say". Each generation creates its myths and realities. As children we are told stories of incredible creativeness only to discover as we grow older that they were perhaps just fairy stories. As adults we respond to yet more stories. Cavafy writes "And now what shall become of us without any barbarians/ Those people were some kind of solution". Yet humans ability to create something out of nothing, art if you will, rather than just procreate is argued by some, to perhaps be our one redeeming quality.

With these eight artists the Tasneem Gallery curatorial team explores the many facets of the notion that is creation. It does not offer high conceptualization with co-current esoteric marginalization of the viewer. Rather it attempts to engage us by at one level responding to our ideals of creation whilst at the same time leaving us with a disquieting feeling of questioning that idea. But all within the framework of an aesthetic ideal and emotional effect. ■



Opening night of the exhibition *Creation-Procreation and The loss of Innocence* at Tasneem Gallery



Ablade Glover. *Open Market*, 2008. Oil on canvas, 122 x 152 cm

## I SEE YOU

Participating artists:  
Ablade Glover, Robert  
Go and Jazz Pasay  
6 July - 6 October 2010.

Through three different moments: paintings of Ghanaian landscape by Ablade Glover, the photography exhibition Homefront on Sri Lanka by Robert Go and the analysis of the dark side of Javanese mysticism (Kejawen) in Indonesia by Jazz Pasay, we are shown an unprejudiced view of everyday life in different regions, revealing the hidden, less obvious and lesser known stories of these places. ■



Robert Go. *Sworn*, 2005.  
Digital photography, 50 x 63 cm



Jazz Pasay.  
*Tenang / Calm II*, 2008  
Acrylic on canvas  
100 x 80 cm

## ART FAIRS



Tasneem Gallery's cocktail party at artbygenève

## ARTBYGENÈVE

28 April - 2 May 2010.

The international contemporary art fair in Geneva has been running for 18 years, and is held in Palexpo simultaneously with the International Book and Press Fair. Its latest edition has been renamed ARTBYGENEVE, and has undergone a makeover led by its artistic director Christopher Bollman and the Organisation Committee of Palexpo headed by Roger Pfund.

There are four new sections this year: **artbyfoundation** with a selection of artists and groups of artists presented by the Visual Arts Foundation; **artbymedia** with a special emphasis on the press, publishers of art books and bookshops; **artbymuseum**: an area dedicated to foundations, museums and institutions; and lastly **artbygalleries**: including galleries chosen for the quality of their works. Tasneem Gallery participated in this section with the work of: Ablade Glover, Wiz Kudwor, Yoichi Tanabe, Htein Lin and Jazz Pasay. ■



General view of Tasneem Gallery stand at artbygenève

# EXPERIENCE - ART

*Jane Upton, International Executive Coach and fledgling art collector talks to Deborah Rowe about her foray into the world of art collecting.*

**How long have you been collecting art and what made you start?**

I wouldn't call myself a collector just yet. This is a new experience for me and I have been inspired and supported by Tasneem in my journey so far.

**How did you discover Tasneem Gallery?**

I originally met Tasneem Salam, who owns the Gallery, through events at the British Chambers of Commerce (Barcelona). We got on very well, she invited me to an exhibition at the Gallery and I went out of curiosity at first. Tasneem really helped me take my first steps into art collecting. To start with I felt unsure what to look for, what I should know about art, or how I was even supposed to evaluate the artwork.

**What made you connect with the Gallery and become a client?**

The Gallery has a wonderful energy. Tasneem makes everyone feel welcome and she makes it so easy to engage and relax with the art. She's not interested in *just* selling art. For her it's not just about the sale. Of course she wants to sell the pieces for her artists but she also wants everything to be right for her customers.

**What does it feel like to experience art in your everyday environment, rather than in a gallery or museum? Does it add anything special to your life beyond the decorative?**

The very first artwork I bought was a huge piece by Chelsea Divine. It wasn't the kind of thing I would have normally bought. It was a strong piece in contrasting gold and rust which was reminiscent of the industrial landscapes from my university days in



Jane Upton at home in front of a painting by Chelsea Davine. Photo by Gareth Llyod-Evans

the north of England. It was a completely new departure for me and my initial concern was whether or not it would fit in with my decor and what I would do if I didn't like it after 6 months. I was used to buying prints but this felt very different. Original pieces have a unique energy and they seem to affect the room in a different way. When I took the Chelsea piece into my living room it had a huge impact on the space. It entirely changed the energy in the room.

I wasn't sure immediately about the second piece that I considered – a beautiful artwork by Jazz Pasay called *Ursa Mayor* – Tasneem picked it out from her private collection for me to look at because she thought it suited me. I'm an executive coach and I help people find the strength to move forward through their leadership issues. Jazz's piece blurs the edges between the soft and the strong and Tasneem felt there would be a connection for me. She was so sure that she suggested I take it home and try it out in a few places to see how I felt about it – if I didn't like it then she would take it away. As it was she was right. It's another huge piece that I have decided to buy.

Both artworks are subtle and powerful. I like art that is elegant but which still makes a strong statement.

**Do you have any views about the role of gallery owners and art dealers in advising new collectors?**

Tasneem's approach is to welcome you into the Gallery, to invite you to exhibitions. She has a wonderfully gentle way of doing things which I really appreciate. She chooses her artists very carefully. She has a connection with them which means she can give customers a very open explanation of her artists, their art, and her perspective on it. She draws a path between the artwork which is easy for customers to follow.

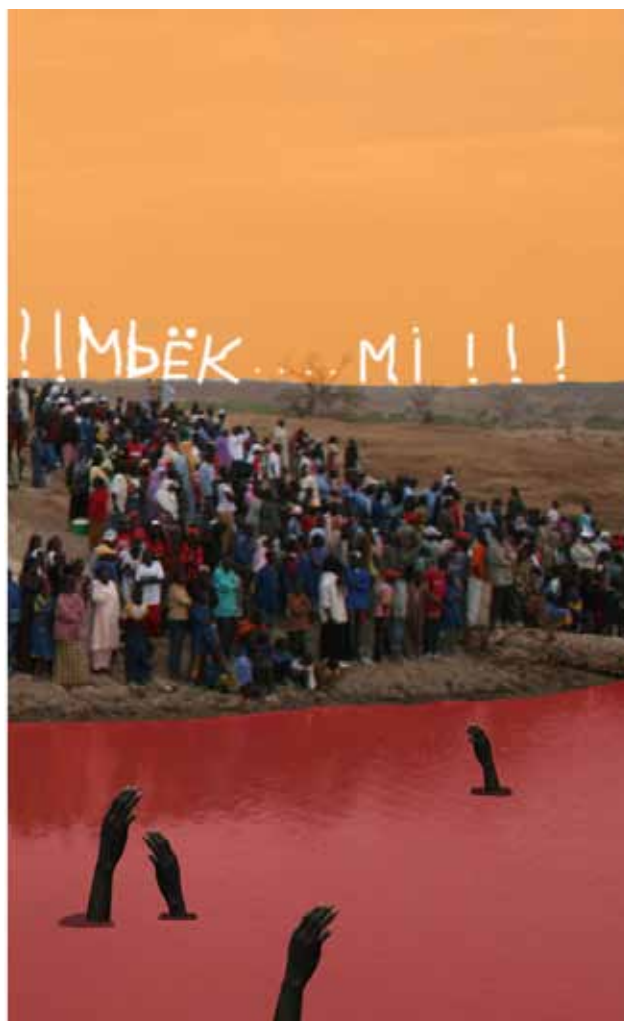
I'm still at the stage where the art has to fit in, to some extent, with my decor but I can see that changing. I like some pieces in the Gallery but I couldn't live with them in my personal space. Tasneem is gently opening my eyes to art and she is allowing me the time and space to make my own discoveries.

I trust Tasneem's judgement. She says herself that she would never sell a piece that is not technically good. She only works with serious artists and she in turn is serious about helping them develop professionally. From an investment point of view that is important and at this stage I can't judge those things for myself but I am learning. I'm open to the experience, and the fun of it, and with Tasneem's help I plan to expand my collection – in a small way. ■

*Deborah Rowe, is a freelance writer and principal consultant at Sheba Marketing (London, UK)*

## EVENTS FORTHCOMING

### EXHIBITIONS



Pape Seydi Samba. *Echos Rouges du Pays No 1*, 2008. Digital Photography, 90 x 107 cm

### VISIONS FROM THE NEW WORLD

Collective Exhibition of Contemporary African Art  
curated by Godfried Donkor

20 October - 31 December 2010.

Emheyo Bahabba (Embah) from Trinidad and Tobago, and Pape Seydi Samba from Senegal, are two examples of the new visions in the practice of contemporary art in Africa. One is a painter, sculptor and poet, and the other works mainly with a camera and digital media, yet their work embraces a similar arena. As Godfried Donkor, curator of the exhibition tells us, "...they have a legitimate link to Barcelona in that they function in the same worlds Christopher Columbus reported on after returning from his first voyage, they are from the unknown, a place to be imagined, a world that did not



Emheyo Bahabba (Embah), Installation view in White Columns solo exhibition, New York, 2007

exist until it was “discovered”, a world in fact not unlike our own world with its aspirations, its dreams and aesthetics”.

The exhibition looks at the debate on “the place” of the African continent in the current world order and the role of the African diaspora in understanding and portraying this continent. Questions such as: What is contemporary Africa? What is contemporary African art? Is African art in debt to Europe, depending on her for its development? These are some of the questions that the Ghanaian artist and curator Godfried Donkor addresses by choosing and comparing works by the artists Emheyo Bahabba (Embah) and Pape Seydi Samba.

#### About Godfried Donkor

Godfried Donkor is a Ghanaian artist and curator, who lives and works in London. Donkor has held several solo exhibitions since 1995 in Belgium, France, Germany, Ghana, Senegal, Switzerland, South Africa, United Kingdom and the USA. He has participated in several biennales such as Dakar (1998), Salamanca (2003), Venice (2001), Havana(2000), and collective exhibitions such as “Pin Up”, Tate Modern (2003/4), “Around the World in 80 days”, ICA, (2006), and in Austria, Belgium, Ghana, Luxembourg, Mexico, Norway, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the USA. His recent projects include: Story of a London township, Space, (2009); Whitworth art gallery, Manchester, (2009); Olympians and Muses, Afronova gallery, Johannesburg (2009); 2010 ARCO Madrid, Afronova gallery.

Godfried studied at the Escola Massana, Centre d’Art y Disseny in Barcelona and also holds a Masters Degree in Contemporary African Art from SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), University of London. ■



Peter in his studio with recent paintings

## A RETROSPECTIVE OF THE JAZZ MUSICIAN PETER IND - A COMPLETE ARTIST

15 January – 28 February 2011.

Tasneem Gallery will present a retrospective exhibition of the work by the English musician Peter Ind. Peter has had an exceptional career in the world of jazz and has played with renowned musicians like Lennie Tristano, Lee Konitz, Buddy Rich, Joe Puma and Warne Marsh. But his contribution to the arts and culture encompasses much more than just his work as a jazz musician, he is also a wonderful painter.

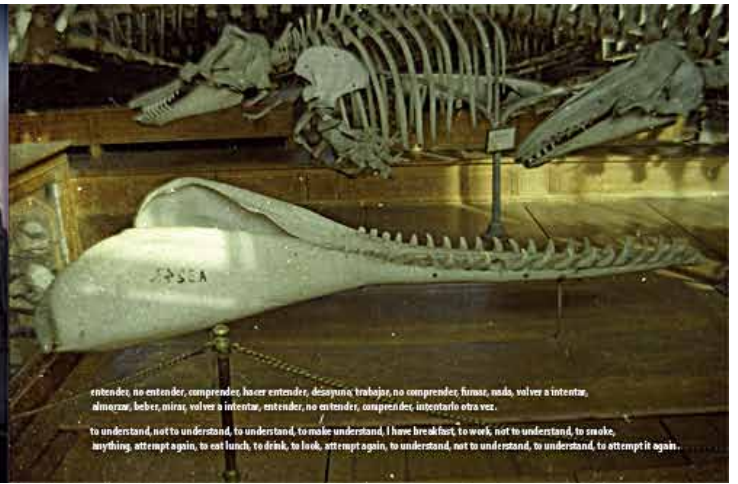
The exhibition is dedicated to his artistic career, looking not only at his paintings, but also at his work as a musician, his work as an experimental and innovative sound engineer, as well as his time with his record label *Wave*, founded in London in 1967. Not to mention his time as founder/owner of *Bass Clef* jazz club in Hoxton Square, one of the most popular venues in London during the 80’s and 90’s. We could say that it was really Peter who discovered Hoxton Square. In conjunction



with this exhibition there will be several jazz concerts, with Peter Ind himself as well as guest artists, which will take place in Tasneem Gallery and music clubs in Barcelona. ■

Peter Ind playing the double bass





Luis Gómez. From the *Series Solitary Life*, 2006. Digital print, Dimensions variable.

## “WHY DONT YOU TAKE ME IN YOURS ARMS AND CARRY ME OUT OF THIS LONLEY PLACE”

April- May 2011.

This poignant phrase take from Joseph Conrad’s *Victory* and quoted by James Baldwin in *Another Country* sets the mood for this collective exploring the issues of isolation and non-belonging. The exhibition will be curated by the Tasneem Gallery team. One of the participating artists will be Luis Gómez, the others will be announced soon. ■



Margarita Checa. *La nave del olvido*, 2002. Wood of Pumaquiro, Olive tree, Mahogany 2.04x0.86x0.70 mts

## COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION OF PERUVIAN ART

curated by Miguel Lopéz and in collaboration with ARACARI (Intelligent Travel Design).

As a continuation of our area based and collaborative projects, in September and October 2011 we will present a new project with a focus on contemporary Peru, which we will explore with a collective of current Peruvian art. This initiative is curated by Miguel López, researcher, critic and independent curator based in Peru. It will be carried out in collaboration with ARACARI Inte-

lligent Travel Design ([www.aracari.com](http://www.aracari.com)). An associated event was the talk given by Marisol Mosquera, founder and CEO of ARACARI, entitled *Mystery and History: Peruvian Art Today* at the Instituto Cervantes in London on 26 May 2010. The exact theme and list of participating artists will be announced very soon.

### About Miguel López

Miguel López: Researcher and independent curator. He is co-author of *“Post-Ilusiones. Nuevas Visiones. Arte crítico en Lima (1980-2006)”* (Lima, Fundación Wiese, 2007). Co-curator of *“Subversive Practices. Art under Conditions of Political Repression. 60s-80s / South America / Europe”* (WKV Stuttgart, 2009); *“Arte Nuevo y la Vanguardia. Disidencia, experimentación visual y transformación cultural”* (Lima, Sala LMQG y RPB, 2008); *“La Persistencia de lo efímero. Orígenes del no-objetualismo peruano: ambientaciones / happenings / arte conceptual (1965-1975)”* (Lima, CCE, 2007); among others. He has been a member of the directive team of *Salas de Miraflores* and *Oficina de Artes Visuales*. Was also a member of *La Culpable* (2006-2008). He has collaborated with the magazines *Ramona*, *Artecontexto* and *Afterall*. Miguel completed the Independent Studies Programme (PEI) at the Museu d’Art Contemporani in Barcelona (2008-2009), and is part of la *Red Conceptualismos del Sur*. He is currently working on a project in Utrecht exploring Peruvian art in the 70’s and 80’s. ■



José Tola. *La solista viuda*, 2006. 150 x 340 cm (diptych). Oil on fabric

# REVIEW - ART

## HTEIN LIN, FROM IMPRISONMENT TO FUSION

by Xavier Vidal-Folch

Reproduced in full from the catalogue of the exhibition *Missing Asia, Observing Europe*.

Visitors to this exhibition will be dazzled by the colour.

They will be seduced by the multicoloured movement of people, buildings and fetishes.

They will be intrigued by the Buddhas, some solemn, some ironic, and the diffused pagodas scattered around natural hideaways, wrestling in well-known urban locations on the European continent.

The unrepentant onlooker will be bowled over by the joke, laid out like a puzzle or *collage*, among masterpieces of the most sacred western art and the naive, dense geometrism of Asian roots.

Both the vocational discoverer as well as the occasional prowler will be amazed by the amalgam of time and space, squeezed in Htein Lin's work.

What time? The time of temples and silence; the time of civic rage stitched in saffrons; the time of the old and of the new.

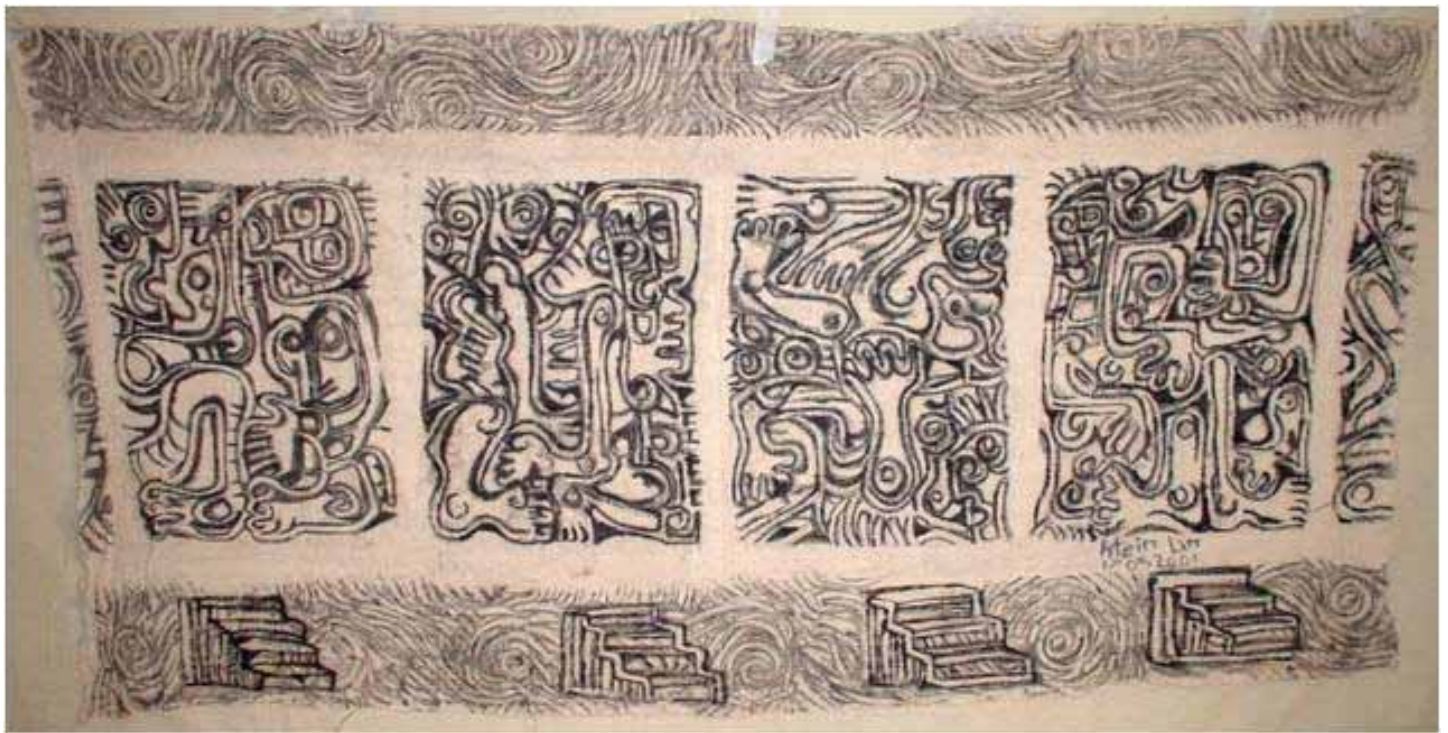
What space? A look at all the spaces, especially the starting point, that is Burma, and the point of arrival, Europe. Thus, our artist reinvents the same journey, in reverse, that was undertaken by the great avant-garde artists a century ago, with the art and the people of Africa, their masks and their Cubist eyes; or with that of the South Seas, their skins and mysterious sensuality. He cuts up, disintegrates, recomposes. He merges. It is not in vain that the title of the show refers to his nostalgia for his homeland and the discovery of his land of destination: *Missing Asia, Observing Europe*. He misses Asia, from a sensitivity that includes a touch of the European. He observes Europe, providing strictly Burmese clues and motives to this task.

Locals or simple lovers of all that is Catalan will find an additional first-class surprise: *How do you find Barcelona?*



Htein Lin. *How do you find Venice?*, 2009. Acrylic and collage on canvas, 92 x 92 cm

This piece (the first of the two with this name) is without a doubt the most authentic which includes all of the above. On a sea blue background, *Miró* and the Mediterranean, it shows picture postcard, tourist sights, a scene suitable for a commercial film by Woody Allen. But here they dance, are in movement, they make contortions and intermix, on a chart of broken geometry, both harmonious and asymmetrical. Like streets and bends, the eyes, kites and the stars of the painter of the *Constel.lacions* move around; interspersed with traffic signs; buses that seem to have been borrowed from South America; cut-up ceramic dragons and *trencadís*. To the heat of this zigzagging fervour and whisps of citizens, in the centre of the picture is the synthesis of the drama: the terrified bull from Picasso's *Guernica* and Dalí's ineffable picnic elephant, balancing on the pinnacles of the four towers of Gaudí's almost-Cathedral (the original ones, not those found in the new school of imposters that produces series of *mazinger-Zs*) and on the injured udder of a victim of the un-Civil War. These animals/fetishes look down on soft watches and statues, walk in front of the chimneys/soldiers of the modernist genius, a metal-like backdrop. Placed between the trembling stones, trapped, they continue to gallop; dressed in whites and greys, that so greatly contrast with the surrounding polychrome of hard colours, they proclaim a mobile, changing identity, open and multi-form, made of superpositions, as Amin Maalouf wanted, because now not even the stones are identical to each other, nor can they be so. To culminate what is implied and to link the fusions, the Shwedagon Pagoda rides on the elephant's back: yes, like a puff of



An example of Htein Lin's paintings during his time in prison

air or an idea. Like a young Buddha, it blesses the city from the top of the Agbar tower/suppository, and the monks appear, vertical like caryatids, climbing the battlements of the giant eggs of the Theatre-Museum in Figueres.

Those familiar with Htein Lin's earlier work will find this collection, now on show at the daring Tasneem Gallery, doubly emotional. Because they will find the same artist, but also a completely different one. Where now there is expansion, there was introversion. Where now there is civic affirmation, there was a dying resistance to despotism. Where now there is serene plenitude, there was suffering.

The bulk (230 pieces) of the earlier work of this Burmese artist (Mezaligon, 1966), who was also a performer, a comedy actor in plays and the driving force behind dozens of film and video initiatives, was produced clandestinely in the most horrible prisons of the Burmese military dictatorship. Prisoner number 000235 spent more than six years in three prisons (1998-2004), for conspiring in favour of democracy, sentenced without any evidence, so that in the end he had to be released. In the meantime, he told himself that "an artist can be imprisoned, but not his art". He decided to continue painting, as an absolute necessity and as a means of survival, of withstanding the humiliations and torture. Therefore he did not have time "to get bored or to get depressed".

Htein Lin's prison pieces, which were all the rage a few years back in Asia House in London and which are stored and protected in the International Institute

of Social History in Amsterdam are basically pieces of material. Not stretched, or framed. They are strips of sheets, pieces of uniform or of *longyi* (the traditional Burmese cloth used as trousers or as a skirt, swimming costume or rucksack), threadbare, uneven, acquired from prison mates or bought off prison guards who were then bribed to get them out. As it was impossible to obtain paintbrushes, he painted with knives, syringes, the tops of toothpaste tubes, chopsticks or anything else available. He dried them, ironed them and hid them under the bamboo base of his straw mattress. *Arte Povera*, necessarily.

At the intersection of what is abstract and what is figurative, this impressive work, which disturbs and silences the spectator like a story by Primo Levi, relates the horror, suffering and desperation of the prisoners, their hunger and malnutrition, the humiliations to which they were subjected, and how they could not look their cellmates in the eye. Social realism? Perhaps, but in any case, it is interspersed with poetry about everyday life, rough and moving. That is to say, Art, worried about the techniques used (scarce and rudimentary), the colours (expressionist), the innovations (of framing, of angle). Htein Lin never intended to make "political art", but the motive and the vocation of his pieces from this period are a testimony and a denunciation that are undeniably political. From the wider meaning of politics, not that which is concerned with its instruments or policies. A politics which reacts against the lack of freedom and holds out against its kidnappers. Above all, in them there beats a civic commitment to the moral survival of specific humanity, in other words, of each of those who were imprisoned.

This is why the artist wanted to keep this compact work together; this is why he handed it over to the Burmese archive in Amsterdam. Because he is moved by remembering that these paintings in fact “belong to the prisoners; I was simply their instrument”.

This same driving force, although now released from its own chains, as Htein Lin lives in London (where he has formed a wonderful family), continues to form part of his work, although it does not monopolise it, though now it is expressed in other textures and in an extraordinary vibrant palette which is more hopeful and not at all gloomy. *Did you miss the Saffron Revolution?* is a main piece in this Barcelona exhibition. A large piece of work (100 x 100 cms), it pays homage to the first protagonists of the last revolution against the military dictatorship, the Buddhist monks who were brutally repressed two years ago now. The underlying, but also highly explicit, tension on the canvas is in radical contrast. On the one hand, the solemn format (as the rebellion was solemn; nuclear, in the background; rhythmic, in form); the geometric placing of the monks (which brings to mind Christian/mediaeval frescoes); its transversal alignment (which symbolises the very nature of the protest movement, not at all interventionist); the primitive sketching of their faces combined with the thick stroke of the bodies, a mere hint: all this appeals to austerity, gravity, transcendence, to a dimension of almost funeral-like, almost heavenly stillness. On the other hand, the range of warm colours and their repeated combination; the individual/mass relationship; the ribbons that organise and disorganise the demonstrators; and its approximately kinetic layout all spell out a convincing *hymn to happiness*, this time composed in acrylic paint.

Civic effort, then. Political in as much as metapolitical. Political, through solidarity. It also flourishes in other pieces of work in this collection, those that came out of the havoc wrought in Burma by Cyclone Nargis, which in May 2008 killed 146,000, leaving thousands of people missing, by a sudden famine and a clear disagreement between the authorities of the military dictatorship and the international organisations. Htein Lin again takes up some of the approaches and techniques of his prison period. Here (*Nargis 3*, *Nargis 4*), the agonising, desperate bodies, like twisted iron rebelling and seasoned with contrasting austere, alarmist colour, learnt in his fight against pain and in the mastery of one of his favourite artists, Pablo Picasso. There, (*Nargis 2*), the geometric contrast, squares and circles in almost perfect formation, are in opposition: the extreme need versus the resources that do not arrive, the silent protest and the order of the *rule and command* as the only, inefficient response. Other demonstrations of faithfulness to a people and to a population do not reach this serious overtone, but the delicate, irenist assumption of the geography and

history by its author, and contributor. In the case of the exquisite daytime image of an Asian city, or of the works that ooze with melancholy for his country or for the city of Mandalay, where he was imprisoned and where he started his series of paintings. Significantly, the most stentorian horror has mostly disappeared from this city. It is being replaced by dark figures that meditate under the overwhelming image of the Mahamuni Buddha. It has been displaced by the awnings of the local market, by the trees. In fact, the horror has decreased, but the testimonies of his old prison mates in hell-cells are maintained there, in the lower part of the picture, as it should be.

Together with these tribulations that come from Asia, our artist's work has been applied - and how! - to what he has learned from his life in Europe. The vehicle of his art runs on both rails, driven by the ambitious desire to merge. Earlier, I said that his view of Barcelona is probably the most fluid distillate of all the life and pictorial structure of Htein Lin, at least according to what is included in the suggestive exhibition. We will have to subtract from this statement the native passion of the chronicler, as well as the fact that the Catalan capital is one of the few cities in the world which exudes a kind of urban patriotism, a fairly inoffensive virus that irremediably attacks those born in it as well as its other residents, whether permanent or temporary.

Maybe what happens in his vision of Barcelona is transferable to his notes on other European cities, whose impressions come to be reflected in a series that is like the other side of the coin, an oriental-filled version of the series on Burma. So, what happens? That in his delight in learning, in soaking up the local artists, in digesting the forms and the dreams of each of the various citizenships, be they those of London, Belfast, Amsterdam or Venice, the Burmese artist becomes infected. Therefore, for example, his Venetian impression, while that of an Asian, connects, even from far off, with the prism that the 18th-century *vedute* produced; it links up with the highly detailed density of Byzantine art, on whose appropriation the Republican serenity of the canals was so notable; and yet it takes on and reverberates the conspicuous colours of Giovanni Bellini and the ordered and ornamented *impedimenta* of Vittore Carpaccio. The artist can unfold, and in fact expands, under the influence of Canaletto and of the gilding masters of Saint Mark. He embarks and ventures to the breath of Miró and Picasso, of Gaudí and Dalí. He certainly paints like a Catalan, like a European, that is the good ones. He certainly neither wants, nor is he able, to hide the fact that he is a great artist, a Burmese artist. ■

© Xavier Vidal Folch  
© Tasneem Gallery

Translated by Julia Samuel



General view of the Architector Gallery , Ekaterinburg

## YOICHI TANABE FIRST URAL INDUSTRIAL BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART 2010.

The National Centre of Contemporary Art in Ekaterinburg, ([www.ncca.ru](http://www.ncca.ru)) has been working on the cultural programme “Ural Factories: Industries of meanings” since 2008. The project is in response to the global movement to convert industrial areas into places for art. The idea reworks industrial modernity, uniquely linking contemporary art and the region of the Urals – the industrial heart of Russia. The continuation and logical evolution of this programme has led to the first Biennale of Contemporary Art in the Urals, established by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, which is to be held from 9 September to 10 October 2010. The team of curators include Ekaterina Degot, Cosmin Costinas, David Riff and Alisa Prudnikova.

This event interprets industrial environments and atmospheres as places of change and transformation, places with their own manufacturing processes in which the raw material is altered and it is possible to turn it into a new product. Here the “means of production” might be more ephemeral materials: light, sound and the intangible. Tasneem Gallery will participate in the parallel programme of this Biennale with the exhibition *Machines & Magnolias* by Yoichi Tanabe at the ARCHITECTOR GALLERY in St. Malisheva 6, Yekaterinburg.

## LUIS GÓMEZ AND ERNESTO LEAL PARTICIPATE IN PORTUGAL ARTE 10.

Portugal Arte 10 will be inaugurated on 16 July 2010 in Lisbon and surrounding cities. This new biannual art exhibition features a wide programme of public sculptures and installations and was conceived by its artistic director Stefan Simchowicz and its president Miguel Carvalho. Two artists recently signed up by Tasneem Gallery: Luis Gómez and Ernesto Leal are part of the Cuban exhibition *Serendipity*

The event hosts a variety of curatorial platforms and includes the participation of curators, writers, artists, designers and architects from various parts of the world such as Fred Hoffmann, Paul Young, Lauri Firshenberg, Sharon Johnston, Mark Lee, Johannes Van

We are pleased to announce that Tasneem Gallery now represents the Cuban artists Luis Gómez and Ernesto Leal

We would also like to inform you that they are both taking part in Portugal Arte 10, July-August 2010.

Ernesto Leal *El fragmento eliminado* Video instalación, 2006

Luis Gómez *Alas de escorpión*, Video, 2005

**TASNEEM GALLERY**  
Carrer Castellnou 81, Lloc Tros, Torroja  
08017 Barcelona, España - Tel: +34 93 252 2078  
info@tasneemgallery.com - www.tasneemgallery.com

**PORTUGAL ARTE 10 • EDP**  
[www.portugalarte.org](http://www.portugalarte.org)

Der Beek, Dan Nadel, Cesar Garcia, Juan Delgado Calzadilla, Elvia Rosa Castro, Nelson Herrera Ysla and Garth Weiser.

**RAPHAËL DALLAPORTA**  
RECEIVES THE 2010 INFINITY AWARD.

Raphaël Dallaporta was awarded with the 2010 Infinity Award by the International Centre of Photography (ICP), New York, USA ([www.icp.org](http://www.icp.org)), in the young photographer category. ICP's Infinity Awards were inaugurated in 1985 "to bring public attention to outstanding achievements in photography by honouring individuals with distinguished careers in the field and by identifying future luminaries."

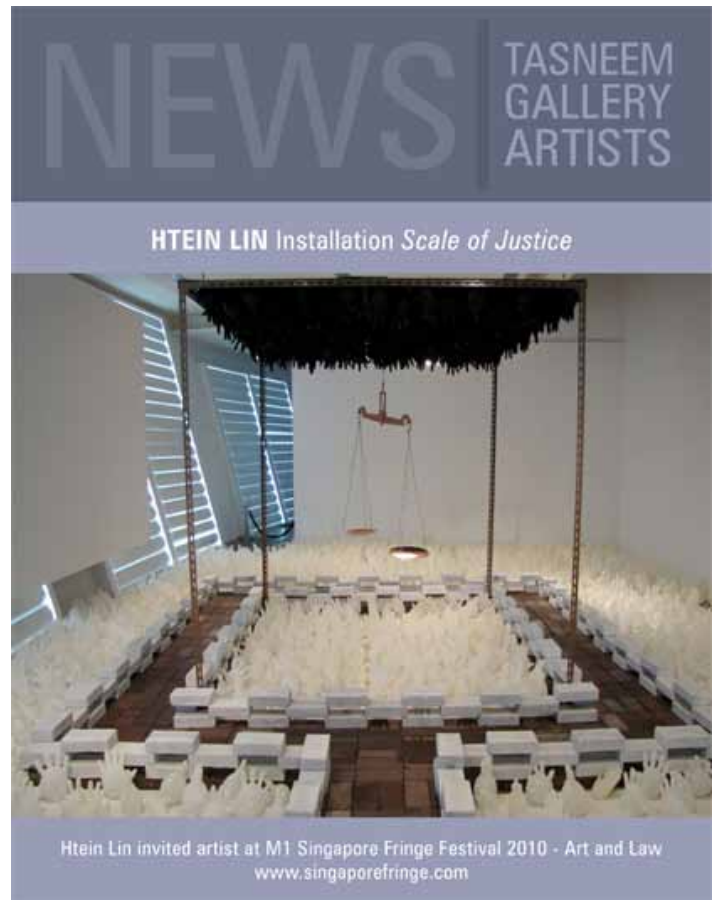


Raphaël Dallaporta. *Antipersonnel 1:1*

**HTEIN LIN**

INVITED ARTIST AT M1 SINGAPORE FRINGE FESTIVAL 2010- ART AND LAW, FROM 13TH TO 24TH JANUARY, 2010.

Htein Lin Installation *Scale of justice*, 2010



Htein Lin invited artist at M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2010 - Art and Law  
[www.singaporefringe.com](http://www.singaporefringe.com)