

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Tropical Hallucinations

Artists in Part 1 : **Imhathai Suwatthanasilp** (Thailand), **Kamin Lertchaiprasert** (Thailand), **M.Irfan** (Indonesia), **Tôn-Thất Minh-Nhật** (Vietnam), **Paul Kadarisman** (Indonesia), **Phan Thảo Nguyên** (Vietnam)

Co-curated by: **Lê Thiên Bảo** (Galerie BAO, Paris), **Atty Tantivit** (ATTA Gallery, Bangkok) and **Grace Samboh** (RUBANAH-Underground Hub (Jakarta))

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**Duration: 20 September - 28 October 2023**

**Vernissage 18h, 20 September**

Galerie BAQ, 15 rue Beautreillis, 75004 Paris

Public hours: 11-19h, Tuesday - Saturday

Free admission, no reservations required

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**Tropical Hallucinations** is a two-part exhibition presented in two different locations, much like islands in an archipelago – the main geo-culture of South-East Asia – geographically separate

but still closely related. Part I will take place over four weeks; Part II will be shown over four short days.

Bringing together expertise from Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia, Galerie **BAQ**, **ATTA Gallery** and **RUBANAH-Underground Hub** present 12 works in a variety of media, from painting, sculpture and video to installation and photography, exploring the diverse religious and belief landscapes of Southeast Asia.

**Paul Kadarisman's** humorous still-life arrangements leave viewers wondering whether he is trying to de-sacralise, as in the West, or celebrate animism, as in the local tradition. **Kamin Lertchaiprasert** has been quietly following his Buddhist path for more than 30 years, distilling the *emptiness* of more than 1,000 days of meditation into his writing and on paper. **Imhathai Suwatthanasilp** looks through human hair (literally!) to observe the reactions of those involved and public opinion surrounding the Southern Thai Insurgency from 2004 to the present. Meanwhile, **M. Irfan**, in praise of nature, has found a *concrete* (the artist's word) way to reconnect with it after a long journey into the deep forest. **Phan Thảo Nguyễn** uses a series of moving images in a fictional narrative to allegorise the breakdown of the relationship between humans and their environment. Drawing on his experience of growing up in a multi-religious family, **Tôn Thất Minh Nhật** cleverly uses the nature of traditional *son ta* (traditional Vietnamese lacquer) to express his reflections on the boundary between the sacred and the ordinary.

Using the *cliché* of tropical climates, often misused in many texts about *the East* from the perspective of Western travelers, the exhibition lifts the veil of exoticism to allow viewers to perceive the ongoing reality from the perspective of artists living and working there.

*Part II of the Tropical Hallucinations exhibition will take place at the **Asia Now Art Fair 2023** from **19-22 October** at the **NOW ON Pavilion**, Galerie BAQ, featuring artists **Nguyễn Thị Châu Giang** (Vietnam), **Imhathai Suwatthanasilp** (Thailand) and **Richie Nath** (Myanmar).*

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## About the artists in Part I:

### **Imhathai Suwatthanasilp** (b.1981 in Bangkok, Thailand)

She received a Bachelor's degree in Thai Arts with 2nd Class Honors, and her Master's degree in Thai Arts from Silpakorn University, Bangkok.

Since her first solo exhibition in 2008, Imhathai has developed a mode of production characterized by the use of human hair, often her own, which she weaves, crochets, embroiders, or laces into quiet, intimate two- and three-dimensional works that reflect on the nature of family ties, domestic life, the female body, and female identity.

Her works have been exhibited internationally at various major art events and venue including International Incheon Women Artists Biennale 2009, Incheon, Korea; Busan Biennale 2010, Busan, Korea; NCA Nichido Contemporary Art, 2010, Tokyo, Japan; Coreana Museum of Art, Space\*C 2011, Seoul, Korea; The Museum of Contemporary Art and Design 2011, Manila, Philippines; Singapore Art Museum 2012, Singapore; Jakarta Biennale 2017, Indonesia. She was selected for the Bangkok Art Biennale 2018. In 2019, her works were presented at the Songkhla Pavilion, Venice Biennale. She also participated in the 23rd Biennale of Sydney in 2022.

**Kamin Lertchaiprasert** (b. 1964, in Lop Buri, Thailand) completed a BFA in printmaking at Silpakorn University, Bangkok, and earned the institution's Young Artist of the Year award in 1987. That year, he moved to New York, and from 1989 to 1990, attended the city's Art Students League. During a visit to Bangkok in 1990, he became, briefly, a Buddhist monk, and remains a committed Buddhist to this day. Lertchaiprasert returned to live in Bangkok in 1992 and moved to Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 1996. Two years later, he co-founded, with Rirkrit Tiravanija, the land project (now the land foundation).

This involved the conversion of rice fields into a destination for site-specific art and architectural projects, creative residencies, and agricultural and artisanal workshops. Lertchaiprasert's interest in collaborative art led to the establishment of the 31st Century Museum of Contemporary Spirit in 2008 - an initiative inspired by his participation in the "Stimulating Cities with Art" symposium at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan. The 31st Century Museum has since collaborated with a variety of organisations and individuals, 31st Century Museum of Contemporary Spirit has presented a number of workshops, including 31st Century Museum of Contemporary Spirit in Bangkok (Land of Smiles), Poh-Chang Academy of Art, Bangkok (2018); Inner World, 31st Century Museum of Contemporary Spirit, Chiang Mai, Thailand (2013); Non-Being by Itself, The Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok (2013); Around the World, 31st Century Museum of Contemporary Spirit, Chiang Mai (2012); Water and Land, Niigata Art Festival, Niigata, Japan (2012); Kamin Lertchaiprasert—31st Century Museum of Contemporary Spirit (A Laboratory), Sullivan Galleries, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2011); Container of Cultural Station, 31st

Century Museum of Contemporary Spirit, Chiang Mai (2009) and 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan (2008).

For Lertchaiprasert, art is a ritualistic practice aimed at the achievement of a greater understanding of oneself, nature, and the world as a whole.

**M. Irfan** (b. 1972, in Bukittinggi, Sumatra, Indonesia) currently lives and works in Yogyakarta. He studied metal craft at the Indonesia Institute of Arts (ISI Jogja) and was once a founding member of Kelompok Seni Rupa Jendela (Jendela Art Group). His early paintings, from mid 1990s to mid 2000s, tend to be categorized as either abstract or minimalism. Irfan himself calls that phase of his practice as “painting the essentials”. Not solely limited to painting, he intermittently works with various media, including sculptures, objects, and constructions.

Another big body of his work experimented with various painting styles such as photorealism, op art, and cerebral formalism. Over the last few years, Irfan has been known for his highly, meticulously detailed depictions of vehicles and infrastructures of transportation (such as railway tracks, locomotives, bridges, roads, airplanes, cars, etc). These two phases of mostly two dimensional practice treat viewers as distanced-subjects that are free to generate their own means and make their own narratives from his works.

He has exhibited extensively in Indonesia, including at the National Gallery in Jakarta and internationally in Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Korea, United Kingdom, France, and the United States.

**Tôn-Thất Minh-Nhật** (b. 1982, in Huế Province, Vietnam) graduated from Huế University of Fine Arts in 2007. He is a renowned Vietnamese artist known for his unique approach to sơn ta (vietnamese traditional lacquer) technique.

Minh-Nhật's artistic journey can be divided into several key periods, each corresponding to specific collections. Initially, he followed traditional composition methods, creating polished, shiny, and deep surfaces reminiscent of what he learned in school. In the second period, he actively experiments with grinding, roughening, embossing, perforating, or burning the materials to bring out the third dimension of conventional 2-dimensional tradition of lacquer painting. This led him to the third period of his career, starting from 2008 to the present, combining flat and glossy surfaces with rough and rugged textures, aiming to maximize the idea of controlling light reflection on the painting's surface when illuminated.

After 15 years of dedication, Minh-Nhật is still fascinated by the resilience and the flexibility that sơn ta offers. He still patiently pursues his adventure to explore possibilities of sơn ta, making his name among the most potential lacquer artists in Vietnam. His work has been showed at *Hanoi Grapevine Selection*, Vietnam (2023); *Đông Chí*, MoT+++ Art space, Vietnam (2022); *Nỗ Cái Bùm Art Festival*, Hue, Vietnam (2020); *Tron Tron*, Hue Fine Art Museum, Huế, Vietnam (2015); *Quầy*, Then Collective, Huế, Vietnam (2014); *New Space Arts Foundation* (N.S.A.F.), Huế, Vietnam (2013).

**Paul Kadarisman** (b. 1974, in Jakarta, Indonesia) graduated from the Photography Department of the Jakarta Arts Institute in 2000. His photograph has been showcased in various exhibitions in Indonesia since 1998. In 2002, he had his first solo exhibition titled *Baby and Resti*, at the Japan Foundation Gallery, Jakarta. In 2005, his photo series *Pain* was published by *Fikrun Wa Fann/Art & Thought*, a Goethe Institut cultural journal. Another Asia the Noorderlicht Photo Festival exhibited Paul's photo series *Muhammad and Me* (2005). The work was then collected by the City Museum of Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. In 2007, Paul received an award from Jakarta International Photo Summit.

His photoblog, [www.totallynow.blogspot.com](http://www.totallynow.blogspot.com) was showcased in the Jakarta Biennale 2009 ARENA. Paul has also worked as Director of Photography in the films *Broken Vase*, *Red Umbrella* (2010), and *Dino* (2013).

**Phan Thảo-Nguyên** (b.1987, in Hồ Chí Minh City, Vietnam)

Trained as a painter, Thảo-Nguyên is a multimedia artist whose practice encompasses video, painting and installation. Drawing from literature, philosophy and daily life, she observes ambiguous issues in social conventions and history.

She was shortlisted for the 2019 Hugo Boss Asia Art Award and she was granted the Han Nefkens Foundation-LOOP Barcelona Video Art Production Award 2018, in collaboration with Fundació Joan Miró. In addition to her work as a multimedia artist, she is co-founder of the collective Art Labor, which explores cross disciplinary practices and develops art projects that benefit the local community. Thảo-Nguyên Phan is expanding her “theatrical fields”, including what she calls performance gestures and moving images.

Thảo-Nguyên Phan has exhibited internationally, with solo and group shows including Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, Italy (2023); Tate St Ives (2022); Kochi-Muziris Biennale, New Museum Triennial, New York, MOMENTA Biennale de l'image, Montréal (2021); WIELS, Brussels, and Chisenhale Gallery, London (2020); Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, Lyon Biennale, and Sharjah Biennial (2019); Dhaka Art Summit, and Para Site, Hong Kong (2018); Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, Ho Chi Minh City, and Nha San Collective, Hanoi (2017); and Bétonsalon (Paris, 2016), among others.

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### About the organizers:

**Galerie BAO** is a project founded by Lê Thiên-Bảo, a Vietnamese curator recognised for her longstanding commitment to Southeast Asian contemporary arts since 2016. In 2023, she co-founded Galerie BAQ at 15 rue Beautreillis - Paris, curating its programs and served as its director until October 2024.

As allies of artists, BAO acts as their trusted partner in production and development, connecting them with esteemed collections and passionate art enthusiasts.

<https://www.galeriebao.com/>

### ATTA Gallery

Founded in 2010, ATTA Gallery presents a variety of distinctive contemporary visual art, with a special focus on materiality of art, made by local and international creators. The curatorial program at ATTA Gallery aims to create dialogues between different types of contemporary visual art exhibiting together in exhibition settings, dialogues between local and international artists, as well as internal dialogues between the viewers and the pieces shown.

“ATTA” means Self or Individuality in Pali, an ancient Indian language, a notion central to the mission of ATTA Gallery to promote self-expression and individuality of artists and collectors alike.

<https://www.attagallery.com/>

### RUBANAH - Underground Hub

RUBANAH (abbreviated version of ruang bawah tanah, lit.: basement) is located in the basement of a building in the center of Jakarta’s hubbub. This space accommodates various art activities, especially exhibition or presentation of artwork. RUBANAH is a meeting space for sharing information and knowledge, a shared learning space for artists, curators, researchers, writers, or anyone interested in deepening and enriching the experience and knowledge of contemporary art.

<https://rubanahundergroundhub.art/>