

SEVEN PRINCESSES DESCENDING TO GARDEN.



Seven Princesses Descending to Garden

A solo exhibition by Tetriana Ahmed Fauzi

ABOUT US

Established in 2010 with years of experience in arts management, Core Design Gallery is committed to its principle venture in representing Malaysian Contemporary Art.

The gallery is passionate in promoting and developing emerging, mid-career as well as blue-chip artists in order to catapult Malaysian contemporary art into achieving worldwide recognition for its critical and artistic values in various platforms.

Our approach is centred on the philosophy of a strategic documentation system as we believe in stimulating cultural discourses within the art community, regionally and internationally.

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All artworks images are courtesy of Richard Koh Fine Art and Tetriana Ahmed Fauzi
Artist profile picture is courtesy of Tetriana Ahmed Fauzi
Writer profile picture is courtesy of Dr. Johan Awang bin Othman

First published in Malaysia in 2022
Core Design Gallery Sdn Bhd 87, Jalan SS15/2A Subang Jaya 47500 Selangor, Malaysia
<http://malaysiacontemporaryart.coredesigngallery.com>

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Imagined Myth and Legendary Girls

One of the predominant ideas developing in Tetriana's artistic mindset is her interest in the approach to her artworks as being "crafty" or involving the methods of "craftiness". The genesis of this crafty paradigm is her early education years of finding alternatives to commercially available clothes through tailoring her own clothes that she confessed as a norm commonly associated with the feminine. This approach of the "crafty" is instilled from her earlier years of being influenced by her father, a formally trained graphic designer and illustrator. Amongst the many exposures, Grimm Brothers and German narratives, especially the dark ones, have impressed a lasting impression on her growth. And being into science fiction and fantasy has a lasting impact on her in the sense that they are generally associated with escapism. The allure to transcending reality owes its impression to her interest in folklores that in turn is connected to nature. This affinity to folklores and nature, in general, is also reflected by Tetriana's developing love for living on Penang Island, which for her is laidback and closer to nature.

Tetiana intentionally attempt at breaking away from her formal training as a fine artist, which took almost ten years. This rupture is a desire to move away from the habits of mind that emphasised a practice-based approach framed within the academic attitudes and values cantering on Western or Eurocentric skilled-based artistic exercises. This distancing from the academic influenced ideals has affected her artworks in terms of stressing more on being premised on messages that are mostly personal emphasising on social situations rather than the political. Her growth and formation as an artist owes much to an interest in developing artworks that are based on found objects or materials.

This manner of practice somehow manifests in the current works being exhibited. Although canvases are used as the primary material, their layerings and being carefully folded together in some manner recalls Tetiana's earlier experiences of piecing closely of found objects. One major mainspring of inspiration has been her husband, an artist, whose personal and distinctive artistic ideas have been appropriated into her works. Throughout a close working relationship with her husband, she has borrowed his ideas and the approach to sketching. Likewise, he too adopted her earlier focus on the use of watercolour and the notion of painting.

Examples of earlier works draw on inspiration from her husband's approach of predominantly drip acrylic paintings who in turn adopted Tetiana's practice of water-coloured illustrations and drawing. There are early illustrations that formed part of a planned book project of illustrations of coloured non-fictional plants. Although this project was abandoned long ago, however, its painterly approach can still be discerned amongst the works in this exhibition, which can be seen on how

Tetiana applies the acrylic. The use of acrylic on canvas on every one of the works exhibited correlates closely with the idea of acrylic as material. Tetiana recollects, by way of the marble-like textured effect of the acrylic as a symbolic representation, the melting of icing of a birthday cake under a hot sun in the past.

Texture in this instant serves as a surface signification referencing a memory of a birthday cake. This play with textures, colours within the framework of a relief format is what Tetiana inscribes in these collections of works as an "expanded painting abstraction". The approach to the process of presenting texture as the materiality of the acrylic is thought of as expressionistic painterly techniques, which uses the procedures of drips, splatters, and what Tetiana terms as a "crafty flair". The materiality of these crafts also is a metaphor of Tetiana's interest in the folklore and yearning for nature, which can be seen in her self composed story connected to the theme and title "Seven Princesses Descending to a Garden".

She explains that the princesses refer to "ordinary girls who grow up to become legends". These characters allude to what the artist calls the "traditional Malay philosophy of personification". Although the idea of princesses and myths or legends seem to give the impression of something relating to the ancient world, however, Tetiana thinks otherwise. The princesses reference refers to contemporary girls and characters or people living in the present moment who Tetiana knows. This kind of association attests to her fascination with creating characters.

In this personal world of myth-making, a mountain named Gunung Bintang is part of the worlding of Tetiana's mythic world, which enforces further a

sense of depth that goes beyond a direct sensorial experience or preconceived messages that are already composed as an artist statement. The reference to a mountain in Tetiana's personal myth reflects what is usually associated with the sacred and the ancient pagan beliefs. However, Tetiana does not directly portray the figure of this imagined mountain. In general, this self-composed myth of the seven princesses by the artist reflects both a fictionalised Malay myth and her own personalised story. In this case, the private or the personal is intimately linked to the idea of being a Malay legend. This exhibition, compared to her previous ones, relies heavily on the invention of a myth and an affinity with folklores that contains the creation of characters within a story, thus, showing Tetiana's interest "to tell a story".

The number 7 referring to the total number of the major works exhibited is based on the Islamic's and the Malay culture's close association with odd numbers. And hence, this numerological association also determined the symbolic relevance of the total number of 7 princesses and siblings that is imagined as the "seven enigmatic princesses". Even though the other thirteen small works inscribed as numbered Camopetal are merely supplementary and do not have any significant meanings, nonetheless, they seem to echo the larger pieces just as if portraying seeds or new buds waiting to fully bloom and grow.

The connection to people by way of abstraction of girls as legends or myth within the meanings embedded in the artworks is also connected to the idea of plants. Tetiana considers floras in general as a metaphor for people. This fascination with seeing the world in terms of its metaphoric associations with people as characters or

plants can be attributed to her attraction towards the works of Ilse Noor; a German artist residing in Malaysia. As such, Tetiana has expressed her admiration for Ilse Noor's illustrations that permeates with highly imaginative characters and their consequent narrative appearance. An admiration that would expose Tetiana's artistic kinship with Ilse Noor.

It is intended that the audience feel the characters within an imagined story. Although the references are associated with the idea of myths or folklore, however, Tetiana expressed that the ties to the notion of Malay legends are merely a private idea and should not be taken too literally. As a whole, the works should be experienced as a contemporary phenomenon.

It is interesting to note that Tetiana points to the "feminine force" in respect to her works. This allusion to femininity can be seen through her associating the works with princesses or contemporary girls who become legends. Yet she expressed not being inclined towards feminist politics. At the same time, the titles of the works, particularly the larger pieces, tell of a different conceptualisation. A closer look into these titles, one can perceive them as making allusions to the senses, emotions, the mind, and the somatic. For instance, I'm Listening, Look Into My Eyes, and Glance And Turn This Way suggesting the senses; Love is the Secret Ingredient referring to the emotions; Take This Moment To Ponder and I Dreamed Of You Last Night imply the mind, and Keep It Close To Your Body alludes to the somatic. In general, these subtle associations with the senses, emotions, the mind, and the somatic can be further distilled and contextualised within the psychoanalytic to mean either the conscious or the unconscious. The former is as a reference to the senses and somatic, whereas the

latter to the mind. The theme of love derived from the title *Love is the Secret Ingredient* suggests being both the unconscious and conscious, since it has been thought that the idea of love, either towards the self or the other can be associated with the conscious and unconscious respectively.

Tetiana plans to further develop her ongoing exploration with several ideas mainly relating to the concepts of personification, anthropomorphising objects, and craftiness as art. Her most recent realisation of the notion of the “generative pattern” process and algorithm-generated patterns have made a strong impression on her thinking habits towards making artworks. Another inherent habit that she has been paying more attention to is exploring her personal and natural attraction to symmetrical generative patterns, which has become an important part of her works. This inclination towards the symmetrical can be attributed to her perceiving it as a calming, non-active, meditative, and pacifying feeling. Supplementing this calming mindset akin to passivity, Tetiana continues to explore making art in terms of process as action. Hence, the simultaneity of non-active and being active can be seen as a process complementing one another.

Even though the experience of craftiness, modern myth, fictionalised characters, acrylic textures, folds of canvases, the florals, the faunas, the trace of a memory of a melting birthday cake that conflates amongst these artworks are close to the artist, nonetheless, these reliefs like artworks should be felt and confronted beyond Tetiana's imagination, which in turn can be owned by way of each individual's way of perceiving and reading of these artworks.

written by Dr. Johan Awang Othman

I want to tell a story through expanded painting abstraction. The story unfolds from the daily lives of seven ordinary girls transforming into seven mythical princesses with enigma and beauty that grows into legend. It is a story of sorcery and fable, of bewitched villagers and how magical camouflage creates whimsical commotion and in the end, saves an innocent soul. The characters come from my own invented stories based on childhood reading, old folk tales, and movie plots. I recreated the characters from the story as amalgamated floral-inspired in forms of expanded painting which focus on texture, colour and undulating relief format. Each painting is created from the story and characteristics of the seven enigmatic princesses. How the story is received and interpreted does not matter. Colour, forms and textures are meant to be a visual feast to the eyes, derived from nature-inspired texture and also fabric-related nuances such as pattern, ruffles, frivolous details, drape, ombres, and contrasting and matching colour that fits well with the organic form.

Borrowing from traditional Malay philosophy of personification in the form of botanical reference and using the western derive method of expanded painting, it is a fusion of principle and method. The method is accomplished with the use of a symmetrical generative pattern inspired by nature which is also scientifically inclined. It is in parallel with the background story that was created for the work. Whilst the story is folk-inspired, part of the situation and concern is current. Constructing patterns from this never-ending flow of technique can be calming and addictive. The eclectic nature of the fusion is exotic and methodical with a fiction inclination.

Studio method of making involves expressionistic painterly techniques of drips, splatter, and crafty flair such as pattern making, cutting, folding and layering which can be both masculine and feminine in reference. The feminine aesthetic is the driving force that exudes from all inch and part of the work. However, the femininity aspect is not to be undermined as petty and frivolous. The endowment and exhilaration of the feminine force is not merely glacial beauty to be adored and worshipped but also acknowledged and dignified respectfully.

Making artwork can be a form of escapism, and so does with stories. Creative exploration conjure calming sensation, and colour and painterly activities alleviate the troubles of the mind. We watch, read, create and imagine stories that take us away from our daily lives into a wondrous realm and for some moments, these combined activities brought joy and ecstasy.

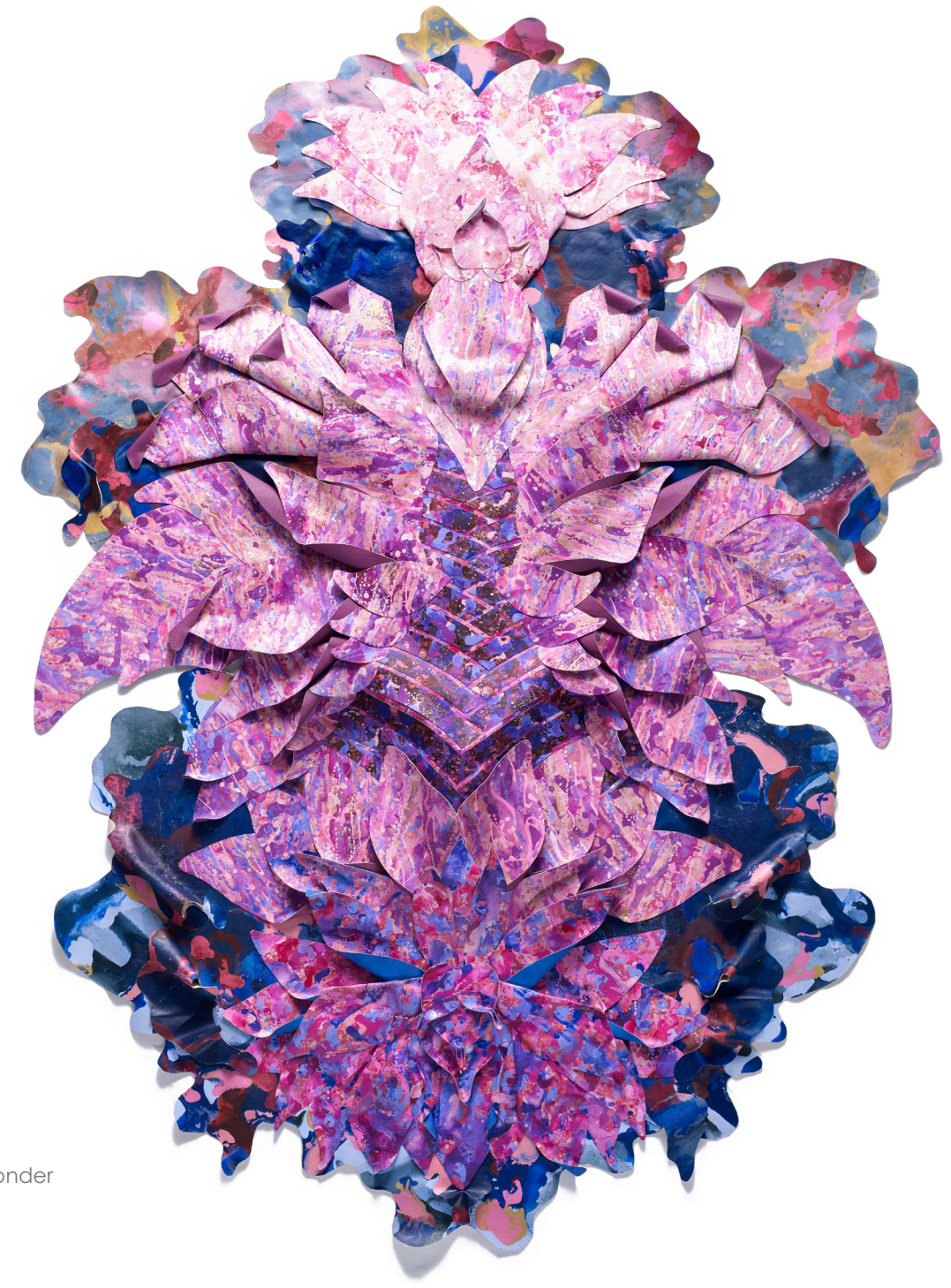
Tetiana Ahmed Fauzi
Penang, December 2021

Look Into My Eyes
Acrylic on canvas
180 x 134 cm
2021





Love Is The Secret Ingredient
Acrylic on canvas
160 x 143 cm
2021



Take This Moment To Ponder
Acrylic on canvas
177 x 134 cm
2021



I'm Listening
Acrylic on canvas
170 x 125 cm
2021



I Dreamed Of You Last Night
Acrylic on canvas
179 x 172 cm
2021



Keep It Close To Your Body
Acrylic on canvas
139 x 127 cm
2021



Glance And Turn This Way
Acrylic on canvas
173 x 148 cm
2021



Camopetal 1
Acrylic on canvas
51 x 46 cm
2021



Camopetal 2
Acrylic on canvas
51 x 42 cm
2021



Camopetal 3
Acrylic on canvas
49 x 46 cm
2021



Camopetal 4
Acrylic on canvas
51 x 40 cm
2021



From left to right:

Camopetal 5
Acrylic on canvas
53 x 45 cm
2021

Camopetal 6
Acrylic on canvas
53 x 44 cm
2021

Camopetal 7
Acrylic on canvas
47 x 42 cm
2021



From right to left:

Camopetal 8
Acrylic on canvas
47 x 45 cm
2021



Camopetal 9
Acrylic on canvas
41 x 44 cm
2021



Camopetal 10
Acrylic on canvas
41 x 38 cm
2021



From left to right:

Camopetal 11
Acrylic on canvas
43 x 41 cm
2021

Camopetal 12
Acrylic on canvas
40 x 32 cm
2021

Camopetal 13
Acrylic on canvas
42 x 33 cm
2021

Tetiana Ahmed Fauzi

b. 1979, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tetiana's creative practices are presented in myriad form of art which includes mixed media installation, digital prints, paintings and drawings. She is interested in femal aesthetic with crafty workmanship and embellishment. Her creative practice progresses from the materiality of acrylic medium, exploration of craft and textured material to floral motif on fabric. In her practice, she marries the beguiling characteristic of medium such as acrylic pigments on canvas, fabrics, beads and other forms with drawing and painting elements in installation format. Tetiana have always been fascinated with floral form in botanical sense, herbal properties and fantasy aspect. Her artistic method in developing flora base generative pattern and appropriating botany with other subjects and in reference to figure are borrowed from traditional Malay art philosophy.



Dr. Johan Awang bin Othman

Johan Awang Bin Othman pursued his undergraduate education at Oberlin Conservatory of Music graduating in 1997 with a major in music composition and in 1999 he graduated from Yale University with a Masters of Music in composition. In 2015 he obtained his PhD in Art History and Theory from Universiti Sains Malaysia. His past scholarly research and papers which range from music and cultural studies, sound/image constitution in film, and gender/image signification, includes: *"Constructing Gender in the Performance of 'Bermulanya Di Sini... Kedah Tua'"* (2019), *"The Soundscape of 'Bermulanya Di Sini... Kedah Tua'"* (2019), *"Inscribing the Rohingya By Way Of Writing And Reading Its Particular/Universal Movement"* (2018), *"Images and Historiography As Paradox of Marking and Sustaining the Voice of the Subaltern: The Rani of Sirmur, the Suicide and the Mutant"* (2017), *"Can Medea Speak? Tracing Euripides' Medea's Complex Performative Gendering in Her Speech from the Outside in the Outside"* (2016), *"Performing a Negotiation of the Borders between the Academia, Industry and Community"* (2016), *"Constituting Gender, Locating the Body"* (2015) *"The Body as Agency of Imaginary Gendering: Re-imagining Medea's Gender Formation and Positioning"* (ICHSC 2011), *"Privileging the Absence in Claire Denis's 'Vers Nancy'"* (2nd PACIA 2011), and *"Cultural Decentralization Within A Post-Colonial Territory: Movements in Malaysia's Musical Culture"* (Wacana Seni 2002). His most recent research work involves a study of the culture of traditional Malay boats of Terengganu. He currently teaches music and art theory in the School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia since 1999.





penjana
Pelan Jana Semula Ekonomi Negara