

From left clockwise around gallery

Jumaadi

Joli Jolan 2022

paper cuts, dimensions variable

© and courtesy of the artist and King Street Gallery on William, Sydney

This large artwork began during the pandemic periods of lockdown and was first included in the exhibition *Superfluous Things: Paper* at the Singapore Art Museum (2022). The project was further expanded for *The National 4* exhibition at Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney (2023) and now consists of over 300 hundred intricate white paper cut-outs presented on a painted black wall with each individual work telling its own story. Here, Jumaadi reverses traditions of shadow puppetry where a play of light creates dark forms on a lit background. The title *Joli Jolan* is derived from the Javanese term *ijol ijolan* meaning to swap, to trade and to exchange things. In this major work we can glimpse the artist's world view: a grand lexicon of migration and movement of people and things over a great expanse. Across three sections, the work considers the unbalanced exchange between humans, animals and nature. Trees and natural forms including rocks, roots and branches, as well as, bodies, agricultural animals, farming tools, ropes, chairs, carts and an assembly of characters, figures and ships – of all shapes and descriptions, are carrying things and are on the move in a mass formation. Jumaadi's figures push, pull, lift and endure labouring under perpetual forces and burden. Jumaadi focuses on representations of creative adaptation and resilience conveying the energy and strength of common people under forced displacement and their struggles amidst the difficult challenges of daily life.

Wayang

The term *wayang* derives from the Javanese word *wewayangan* meaning 'shadow' or 'imagination' with the equivalent word in Bahasa being *bayang*.¹ In modern daily usage *wayang* refers both to the Indonesian tradition of shadow puppetry which originated in Java, to the puppet itself and to the whole ritual of the puppet theatre performance including the singers, narrators and musicians.² *Wayang kulit* is the most well-known and unique form of puppetry theatre employing light and shadow. The puppets are crafted from cut buffalo hide mounted on bamboo sticks which when held up behind a piece of white cloth, with a light source, shadows are cast on the screen creating animated characters. *Wayang* performances are usually held to mark certain times of the year, important ceremonies and events such as Indonesian Independence Day. Traditionally, *wayang* is played out in a ritualised midnight to dawn performances led by an artist or spiritual leader with the audience watching from both sides of the screen. Jumaadi often employs the *wayang* tradition using buffalo hide, or more commonly found materials such as white office paper or flattened tin to create cut out artworks representing figures, characters and or elements of the natural world in transformation.

Jumaadi

Untitled 2024

white chalk drawing

© and courtesy of the artist and King Street Gallery on William, Sydney

Jumaadi

Skak 2022

synthetic polymer paint on primed unstretched calico

¹ <https://www.google.com/search?q=wayang+translate&rlz=1C1GCEBenAU977AU977&oq=wayang+translate>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wayang_kulit

© and courtesy of the artist and King Street Gallery on William, Sydney

Skak translates in Bali Bahasa to mean chess and this painting depicts a pair of figures seated at a chess board. One is a local Indonesian, and the other is dressed in the uniform of the Dutch colonial army. Together they are playing on a board made up of abundant vegetation with pieces made from nails in an exchange of resources and power. The figures are placed in a stage like setting surrounded by a frame of green mountains. Jumaadi was inspired by the Ludruk theatre of the 1930s from Surabaya, East Java, which often depicted colonial era stories as a method of political opposition through art.³ In this painting however, nature is slowly taking over with a series of tree like root forms growing through the tiled floor.

Jumaadi

***After the Forest* 2022**

synthetic polymer paint on primed unstretched calico

© and courtesy of the artist and King Street Gallery on William, Sydney

In this painting a mass migration of tree stumps has seemingly uprooted themselves and are on the move, with each tree stump brandishing a seeing eye. Jumaadi's painting considers the issue of deforestation caused by the production and export of palm oil and asks the question, who is watching while precious natural resources are moved, consumed and exhausted, and who profits from this trade?

Kamasan Painting

Jumaadi's recent paintings are inspired by the Balinese Kamasan painting tradition. This highly unique Indigenous cultural practice was the dominant form of pictorial representation in Bali until the 20th century. In this process, cotton cloth is primed and sealed with a glue paste made from rice, rubbed by hand to create a smooth surface like paper, and were then painted using natural pigments sourced from local plants and minerals. This tradition originates from the Kamasan village in East Bali that was once part of Klungklung kingdom.⁴ One of the oldest kingdoms on the island, Klungklung witnessed the flourishing of art forms, under the patronage of the royal court during the reign of the Gelgel dynasty in the 16th century.⁵ Historically, Kamasan paintings were folded and stored and were displayed to help create environments for important religious ceremonies. The subjects of Kamasan painting are usually grand religious and epic mythical stories from the Ramayana and Mahabarata depicting battle scenes and events.⁶

The Kamasan painters use the wayang style where perspective is flattened and stylised forms are arrayed across the surface in loosely connected narrative scenes. Not many paintings from this time remain but the tradition continues to be practiced and developed today. Jumaadi's paintings are likewise unstretched and pinned directly to the gallery architecture. However, his approach is more aligned with secular storytelling than spiritual mythologies. Jumaadi's paintings are meditations on more recent shared histories that links Australia, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and the legacies of our colonial histories.

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludruk>

⁴ Siobhan Campbell, Kamasan Painting at the Australian Museum and beyond, Art Monthly Australia, October 2011

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Rochard Horstman, Kamasan An Ancient Living Tradition, Indonesian Expat, Issue 167, pp. 19