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The next Berlin? Kuala Lumpur launches gallery weekend

Dealers and museums join forces to put the Malaysian capital on the art map

by GARETH HARRIS | 22 November 2016



Azliza Ayob's *Untitled Work in Progress* (2016, detail) will be on show at Rimbun Dahan arts centre, one of the Gallery Weekend participants

Following in the footsteps of Berlin, Brussels and Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur is the latest city to launch a gallery weekend in a bid to showcase its commercial and cultural offerings. Thirteen commercial galleries in the Malaysian capital are participating in the first edition of the citywide initiative, Mapping the Multidisciplinary, from 25 to 27 November.

The first edition of what will be an annual event provides a “developing platform” for visitors to explore and discover the “contrasts, controversies and extensive culture” of Malaysia, says its founder and local dealer, Shalini Ganendra. She will show works by the Malaysian artists Zac Lee and Bibi Chew during the weekend.

“We believe that this sort of exposure is important for Malaysian art to be recognised as an important component of the burgeoning south-east Asia art scene,” says Jamal Al-Idrus of the Artemis Art gallery, which is presenting works by ten Malaysian artists including Jasmine Kok and Dennis Liew (Presence, until 31 December).

Many galleries in Malaysia do not participate in international art fairs. “Certainly one of our expectations is to be able to meet new collectors, particularly those attending Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur from abroad,” Al-Idrus adds.

A wider pool of collectors “will not only benefit commercial galleries but will also motivate the growth of artists”, says Kenny Teng of G13 Gallery. His gallery’s show Carbon Copy (3-17 December) will feature works by six printmakers from Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, and will preview during the weekend.

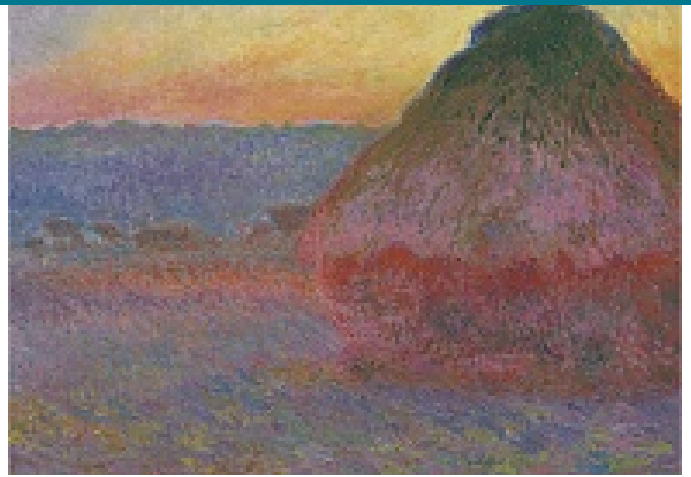
Meanwhile, NN Gallery will explore the work of the wood carvers Norhaiza Noordin and Nik Rashiddin in the exhibition Langkasuka: Sacred and Profane (25 November-3 December). A series of etchings of historic Malaysian buildings by Ilse Noor will also be on show.

The weekend programme includes curator-led tours of major museums such as the National Textile Museum and a series of talks called Luminary Pulse. Hanif Kara, an architecture professor at Harvard, and Christopher Phillips, a curator of New York’s International Center of Photography, are among the speakers.

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