

Nagoya Culture Promotion Unit Bilateral Visual Art Exhibition: Nagoya x Penang

Penang
Branch

20 Feb (Sat) — 7 Mar (Sun)

Opening Hours 12:00–18:00 | Closed on Monday | Free admission.
29 Lebuh Melayu, 10100 George Town Penang

Artists Nagoya Head Office | Yuji Kinoshita, D. D. (Arika Someya + Tetsu Imamura), Asuka Miyata, Takuya Yamashita
Penang Branch | Tetriana Ahmed Fauzi, Forrest Wong, Hoo Fan Chon

Exhibition to open subject to MCO conditions with strict adherence to SOP, please follow our social media accounts (<https://www.facebook.com/NAGOYAXPENANG/>) for updates

名古屋 × ペナン同時開催展：名古屋文化発信局「ペナン支部」



Forrest Wong

Asuka Miyata

Yuji Kinoshita

Hoo Fan Chon

D. D. (Arika Someya + Tetsu Imamura)

Tetriana Ahmed Fauzi

Takuya Yamashita



NAGOYA
CULTURE
PROMOTION
UNIT

JAPAN FOUNDATION
KUALA LUMPUR



Minatomachi
Art
Museum
MAT.
Nagoya

港まちづくり協議会
JOINT COMMITTEE OF PORT TOWN

seasun



名古屋文化発信局

NAGOYA CULTURE PROMOTION UNIT

Greetings from the Organiser

“How well do you know Nagoya?”

The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur was established in 1989 as the Japan Foundation’s branch office, and has been the hub for cultural exchange between Japan and Malaysia, as well as Southeast Asia. In the field of the arts, it has organised events to mutually introduce Japanese and Malaysian artworks and artists, and to develop young Malaysian talents.

Traditionally our projects are designed on the assumption that there would be movement of people, but since last year we have been forced to do a major rethink and embarked on a process of trial and error to find an alternative. This project was planned in light of the singular situation we find ourselves in at this time. It required artists in Malaysia and Japan to communicate online, conduct research on the history and culture of Nagoya, and produce works that resulted from it offline. On top of everything, the time allotment was just 2 months. To all the curators and artists who agreed to sign on for this audacious project, we extend our deepest gratitude. To our visitors of our exhibition, I hope you will enjoy their wholehearted efforts as they grappled with this totally new circumstance.

I’d like to conclude with the fervent wish that the pandemic will soon be brought under control, but that the network created by the people in this project will continue to flourish.

Seiya Shimada
Director, The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur

Curatorial Statement

An artist residency program typically allows practitioners to travel from their home city to a foreign city to experience different cultural stimuli, to participate in social and cultural events hosted by local organizers, or to be in an environment where they can focus on making work. Oftentimes, they have to learn different cultural nuances, speak in foreign tongues, and sometimes act as an inevitable cultural ambassador. This project was initially blueprinted as an inter-cities cultural exchange residency program, it was remodelled as a bilateral visual art exhibition between Nagoya and George Town, Penang as a response to the new norm brought by the pandemic with traveling restrictions and physical social distancing.

Historically, both Nagoya and George Town are port cities with palpable cultural diversity. Other than facilitating the trading of commercial goods, ports are also porous cultural spaces for constant negotiations between foreign nationals, immigrants, new settlers, and locals. Such interactions have brought forth changes in the use of language, cuisine, fashion, custom, etc, giving forms to new hybrid cultures that are distinctive to port cities. Both cities have since been exploring ways to reinvent and rebrand themselves to stay competitive in the global market.

The Nagoya Culture Promotion Unit (NCPU) is a bilateral visual art exhibition with Nagoya as the headquarters and Penang as a branch that drew inspiration from the states’ branding exercise in shaping its city’s identity while promoting its uniqueness. Premised on this curatorial framework, a group of six sets of artists from Penang and Nagoya was invited to re-imagine their relationships with Nagoya either as a cultural hub, city of residence, its art ecosystem, or a constructed commercial brand; to subvert the popular stereotypical image of the city or to form a personal connection with the city.

Forrest Wong collaborated with Yuji Kinoshita by putting together a pamphlet with a map based on Wong’s memories of Nagoya during his brief visit in 2020 and Kinoshita’s introduction to the lesser-explored parts of the city. This map will eventually be activated through their performative actions. Tetriana Ahmed Fauzi who had never been to Nagoya focused on her personal retail experience at the Malaysian textile company called ‘Nagoya Textiles’. Hoo Fan Chon responded to the generic tourist image of the famous Nagoya castle’s Shachihoko. Asuka Miyata together with her senior knitting club members re-envisioned a set of souvenirs that are relevant to the city’s socio-cultural past. Takuya Yamashita chose to celebrate Nagoya hip-hop culture and the eccentric character of the Nagoya art scene. Last but not least, D. D. (Arika Someya and Tetsu Imamura) studied the aesthetic and rationale behind the hostile architecture within the city.

This project took the form of a pseudo-governmental agency to speculate and observe the mechanics of the culture promotion process through the lens of the artists. Collectively, they provide us with an array of self-critical and introspective views of the city by the local artists and the further-romanticized image of Nagoya by the foreign artists.

Hoo Fan Chon
Curator of NCPU Penang exhibition

Organiser

The Japan Foundation, Kuala Lumpur

In cooperation with

SEASUN, Minato Machizukuri Council, Assemblage NAGOYA Executive Committee

Acknowledgement

NCPU Penang Branch

Queen Lee, Tan Lay Heong, Koe Cheng Gaik

Muhammad Anif bin Mohd Robi (USM), Muhammad Zulhairi bin Abd Aziz (USM),
Syamsulbahri bin Hasin (USM)

NCPU Nagoya Head Office

Minatomachi Art Table, Nagoya (MAT)
Shinya Aota, Yuri Yoshida, Asaka Yamaguchi

Coordinator – Kazue Suzuki (SEASUN)
Designer – Tan RuYi (Tan & Kimura Press)

*The production of artworks by Japanese artists are supported by Nagoya City Preparatory Committee for Arts Council.

Mud-chihoko on Komtar

A Proposal for Nagoya Municipal Diplomatic Gift to George Town, Penang

Installation: Digital prints, woodcarving, dimension variable, 2021

Deriving from multiple origins—such as the ancient Vedic hybrid creature, Makara, and the mythical dragon depicted in Chinese roof decorations, Chiwen (螭吻) – the Shachihoko (鯱) is arguably one of the most recognisable cultural symbols of Nagoya. It featured in the 1873 Vienna International Exposition as a representation not only of Nagoya, but also of Japan as a whole. The Shachihoko, a fabled fish with a leonine head and a tail pointing skyward, were frequently used as roof ornaments in the Edo period and found atop castles, tower gates, and samurai homes. This creature is believed to have the ability to ward off evil spirits and prevent fire hazards. As an attempt to study the making of a cultural symbol, my work conceptualizes the custom of municipal diplomatic gift by Nagoya city to George Town, Penang, in the form of an ornamental add-on proposal featuring mudskippers on the roof of Komtar, Penang's iconic multicomplex high-rise.

Nagoya Textile Sarong Set

Hand silk screen printed fabric and digital prints on paper, dimension variable, 2021

Like many consumer goods, we often accept the marketed cultural lineage at face value. This work intends to look into the speculative origin and the cultural branding exercise of the Nagoya Textile company, a textile retailer which once provided Japanese-inspired design in Malaysia. A set of sarongs for men and women wrapped in furoshiki complete with instructions on how to wear them was created as the company's souvenirs to commemorate its presumed Japanese root. Furoshiki is a type of traditional Japanese wrapping cloth to transport goods. Other than being used as garments, sarong was also used to wrap clothes in the past. The design of furoshiki cloth is an amalgamation of the Nagoya Textile company logo and the shape of kimono worn with Nagoya obi belt; and the motif on both sarongs derived from Bakau Api-api Jambu plant (*Avicennia marina*), an abundant species of mangrove plant in Penang.

4uto-c0rrec4

Pamphlets, drawings, in situ performance(s), video, 2021

4uto-c0rrec4 is a performative collaboration between Forrest Wong (Penang, Malaysia) and Yuji Kinoshita (Nagoya, Japan) based on the idea of mapmaking and miscommunication. In the early stage of this project, both artists conversed mainly by using emojis with auto-correction due to the language barrier. However, these pre-design pictorial expressions and automated AI assistance are not always friendly to non-native English speakers and non-euro-American users. Their communications have often led to light-hearted mistranslations, and sometimes misunderstandings. Through this way of communicating, both of the artists have put together a map of Nagoya port city based on Forrest's memories of Nagoya of his brief visit last year and Yuji's guide to the lesser-explored parts of the city. This pamphlet with customised emojis serves as a personalized guide for the artists to carry out their performative actions while navigating through their cultural differences. (Forrest Wong)

It was decided that I would research about Nagoya with a friend based across the ocean. The problem was, I'm not good at English and can barely communicate. After several attempts, I began to kind of understand what the words meant and have a clue but there were still lots of mistakes. I had always thought that communication and jangle had a similar structure. Jangle is a word derived from Hindi and refers to a forest or woods around a residential area that is so thick that you cannot enter. I sense something similar in the relationships between people, just like a wall between residents in a housing area.

And oddly this friend's name was "Forrest." What an unusual coincidence, I thought. (Yuji Kinoshita)

Hoo Fan Chon

He was born in 1982, Selangor, and currently resides in George Town, Penang. He was the co-founder and a member of an art collective – Run Amok Gallery (2012-2017). He completed his BA in Photography at the London College of Communication in 2010. He was selected as one of the Japan Foundation Asia Center Curators' Workshop (2015-2017) participants and took part in No Man's Land Residency Project – Nusantara Archive in Taiwan (2017-2018). He participated in the 3rd edition of Makassar Biennale and had his first solo exhibition – 'Biro Kaji Visual George Town' in Malaysia in 2019. Recently, he co-curated 'Bayangnya itu Timbul Tenggelam - Photographic Cultures in Malaysia' exhibition at the Ilham Gallery, Kuala Lumpur.

Acknowledgement:

Fablab Hamamatsu TAKE-SPACE, 3D modelling: Darrel Chia; Printing: Chroma Art Studio; Tan Zi Hao (academic reference), Hitomi Inoue, Aichi Gakuin University

Tetrianah Ahmed Fauzi

She was born in 1979, and currently resides in Penang. She graduated with a Bachelor of Honours in Fine Art from UiTM (2002). Followed by an MA in Drawing at Camberwell College of Art (2008) and Professional Doctorate in Fine Art from University of East London (2012). She teaches drawing and painting at School of the Arts, USM. Tetrianah's creative practices are presented in a myriad form of art which includes mixed media installation, digital prints, paintings and drawings.

Acknowledgement:

Nagoya Textile, Zamree Mohd, Azmal Dirty Donuts, Yeh, Nor Fatimah Yusof, Putri Intan Sari

Forrest Wong

He was born in 1990, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, and currently resides in George Town, Penang. He completed his BA in Sculpture at the ISI Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2018. In 2016, he co-initiated a collaborative art project called 'art hub-P(art)Y LAB'. He was one of the finalists of 'Bakat Muda Sezaman' organised by the Balai Seni Visual Negara, Malaysia (2019) and in the same year, participated in the Setouchi Triennale, Japan with his art project 'THANK UFO'. He had his solo exhibition 'Pass By' in Malaysia (2018) and his work was featured in the 'Collecting Storytelling, Contemporary art from Indonesia' group show, at Synesthesia Art Gallery, Brooklyn, New York (2019).

Yuji Kinoshita

Born in 1994 in Nara and currently based in Nagoya, Aichi. His solo exhibition consists of "Metamorphose" (Art Space & Cafe Barrack, Aichi, 2019), while his group exhibitions consist of "CLA" - Aichi Triennale University of Arts Collaborative Project, 'U 27 Professional Development Program Summer Academy 2019 "2052: A Space Odyssey"' (Art Lab Aichi / Aichi), "Lagrangian Point - Telepathy -" (Gallery PARC, Kyoto, 2019) and "Extended Perception - Human Expressions and Media Art Exhibition" (Aichi University of Art Museum, Aichi, 2018).

Acknowledgement:

Ceramic Garden Eminent Asia Sdn.Bhd, Nagoya Convention & Visitors Bureau, Printing: GReliable, Videographer: Khok Soon, Howard Tan

Life is a Carnival*

Customised plywood-screen, digital prints, video, 2021

At this exhibition we will be making an imaginary company, "Reform B." We find it interesting that in Hostile Design there is this relationship between a paradoxical request for something inconvenient and actually designing it. "Reform B" proposes paradoxical renovations. It also accepts commissions. There is noisy music, crazy or angry art but irrational architecture is rare. There will be a visual presentation of these paradoxical renovations and the corresponding well-known sights of Nagoya. It will highlight the commonalities they contain within. One of them, the "Descending Stairs" in Nagoya will be produced as the "Wall that May or May not Exist" in Penang.

*Coincidentally, while shooting at the Osu shopping district the song, "Life is a Carnival," was playing.

Souvenir from Minato

String of pennants, audio recording, 2021

The scenery around the port as described by the townspeople and the energy related factories continues to change. Together with the people who live in this city, the memories of the scenery and the verbalized changes were recorded on pennants. "If port were to make a souvenir" was the starting point of this art work, and through my research I discovered that energy related factories were an integral part of everyday life. After a coke factory in the port district stopped production in 1997, there has been a thermal power plant that runs on natural gas since 1998 and a sludge fuel facility. The natural gas is imported from Malaysia as well, and arrives at Nagoya Port by ship. It is after all the leading Japanese port by cargo volume. The energy related factories which change with the times have trumpeted their CO2 reduction and recycling capabilities.

Pennant: a triangular flag. Used by ships, American universities, and in sports. It became established as a souvenir, a practice unique to Japan but is rarely seen nowadays. It suited the boastful aspect of tourism and was valued as a symbol of where one had been.

TOKONA-X

Hamonoya-san

Clay sculptures, projectors, 2021

I will introduce 2 heroes at Nagoya Culture Promotion Unit and its Penang branch. The statue in the exhibition area and sculpture rendered by the projector will tell the story of their accomplishments.

The first hero is "TOKONA-X," the great rapper who is the pride of Nagoya. Having died prematurely at age 26 in 2004, he has now become a legend in the Japanese hip hop scene. The music video "TOKONA 2020 GT" that is used as the main material is a sampling of "TOKONA 2000 GT" released in 1997 by ILLMARIACHI, a unit he formed with the DJ and track maker, HAZU. In 2020 by SPACE DUST CLUB, which is led by DJ RYOW, remixed it to its current beat whilst leaving the rapping by TOKONA-X untouched. Many places and buildings in Nagoya appear in the lyrics, entwined with episodes and images associated with them. The rapper who was 19 at the time introduced the glittering nightlife of Nagoya. It is an emotional music video in which DJ RYOW cruises the sights in the lyrics in TOKONA-X's favorite car, a HUMMER H2. TOKONA-X's 3 dog tags engraved "TX" swaying in the car also contributes to the mood.

The second hero is Hamonoya-san, an art collector residing in Nagoya. "Hamonoya-san" is his nickname. Everyone calls him that because he runs a knife shop. In this piece, I asked him about the history of Nagoya's contemporary arts after having observed it for more than 25 years. In the episode extracted from the more than 2-hour interview, museums, galleries, owners, collectors, and famous artists of Nagoya are mentioned like an avalanche. And I attached images of the various artworks around his statue. Hamonoya-san who is always at the openings of museums and art galleries. He is ever ready to share interesting little morsels of about the art world. Here is the priceless talk by the art loving, always passionate (but sometimes dubious) uncle.

D. D.

(Tetsu Imamura + Arika Someya)

Artist Unit

Since 2011, the artist unit D.D. comprising of key members Tetsu Imamura and Arika Someya, has produced wandering, experience – based structures like "Outside is Bigger than Inside" with its special structure or others in which a narrative fiction draws out something that's lurking within. Their key works consist of "Day Eye, Night Eye" (A Roundabout Trip, Nagoya City Arts Museum, 2014) and "48-Hour Project" (Humour and Flight, Okazaki Mindscape Museum, Aichi, 2013).

Acknowledgement:
Hiroko Otsubo

Asuka Miyata

Born in 1985 in Aichi Prefecture, and currently lives in Mie Prefecture. With the concept of "making almost anything with a household knitting machine," she creates works that incorporate the ambiguity and coincidence of memory. She planned and is currently managing the Minatomachi Handicraft Club, which forms a community through handicraft culture. Her works both in Japan and abroad includes "Walking in Textiles" (Aichi, 2018), "Creative Reuse of Art" (Tokyo, 2017), and "Minatomachi Handicraft Club" (ongoing) (Aichi, 2017).

Acknowledgement:
Nagoya Waterworks & Sewerage Bureau SORAMI Sludge Recycling Center

Takuya Yamashita

Born in 1985 in Mie Prefecture, and currently lives in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture. His solo shows consist of "Bear and Probably Indian and Mayor or Policeman and Back, and other" (VOU GALLERY, Kyoto, 2020), and "Manta Ray" (Art Center, ongoing, Tokyo, 2020), while his group shows consist of "From the Museum Collection 2020: Third Period." (Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Aichi, 2020), "In a Time to be Great Thinkers" (Talion Gallery, Tokyo, 2020, participated as ONTAYAMA) and "When It Waxes and Wanes" (vbkö, Vienna, 2020, participated as ONTAYAMA).

Acknowledgement:
DJ RYOW, ILLMARIACHI (TOKONA-X, HAZU), MS Record, Inc, DREAM TEAM MUSIC