

For Immediate Release

NUS Museum presents



SINGAPORE, 26 August 2013 – *Archiving Apin: Works and Documents from the Mochtar Apin Collection* revisits the thoughts and practice of Mochtar Apin as artist and teacher through a selection of sketches, prints, and paintings, coupled by documents and materials lodged in the house of the late artist in Bandung, Indonesia. Dr Susie Lingham, Director of Singapore Art Museum, will officially open the exhibition on 30 August 2013 at the NUS Museum. The exhibition runs from 31 August to 29 September 2013.

Archiving Apin is a project consisting of three exhibitions on the late Mochtar Apin (1923 – 1994), taking place from August to October 2013 at three locations, NUS Museum (National University of Singapore), Galeri Soemardja (Institut Teknologi Bandung, ITB) and Edwin's Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia. The exhibition is organised in partnership with the Apin family.



Burung dan Air 8-9, Mochtar Apin, Block Print, 1976

Who was Mochtar Apin?

Known as a major figure of Indonesian modern art, in particular his association with post-War developments in Bandung, Apin's encounters with art began early in his life. In the early 1940s, still in high school and as the youngest member, he joined PERSAGI (Persatuan Ahli Gambar Indonesia) and later *Keimin Bunka Shidoso*, a cultural centre established during the Japanese occupation, to broaden his interest in painting but at the same time was invariably weaned into the charged question of modernity, national identity, and the artistic independence. Following the end of the Japanese occupation and the inception of Indonesia's struggle for independence from the Dutch, Apin, together with his brother Rivai Apin, Chairil Anwar, Asrul Sani and Baharuddin Mara Sutan and others founded the *Gelanggang Group*. In 1946, the group had earlier issued a manifesto entitled *Surat Kepercayaan Gelanggang* which declares: "We are the legal heir of the World Culture and we shall continue with it with our own way".

In 1948, Apin enrolled at the Technical Faculty, *Universitas Indonesia* (renamed as Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) in 1959) where he became affiliated to Ries Mulder, one of the founders of the school. In 1951 he travelled on a scholarship to study at the *Kunstnijverheidsschool*, the Netherlands and later in 1953, at the *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts*, Paris. Apin returned to Bandung in 1958 and joined the teaching staff of his former Faculty, a year before Mulder left Indonesia. His last retrospective was held in 1988 in Bandung and Jakarta, four years after he was conferred a professorship by ITB.

Archiving Apin

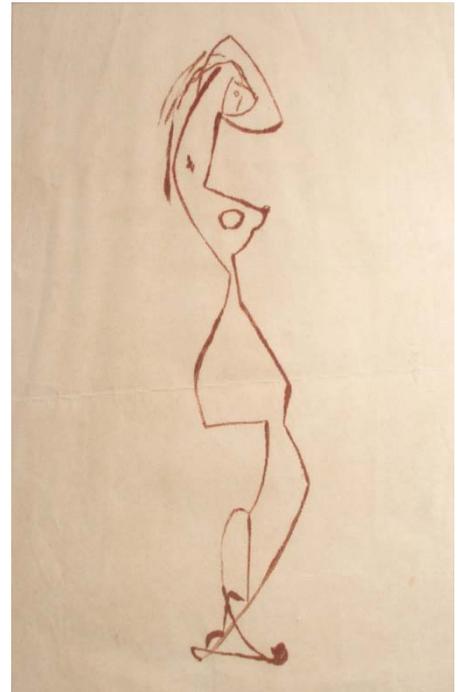
The exhibition title *Archiving Apin* undertakes the task of developing an art historical understanding on Apin as dynamic and ongoing, necessitating the work in uncovering the artist's experiences, evolving perspectives and the underpinnings that sustain his approaches as artist and teacher. The title also signals the curatorial approaches for NUS and ITB which aim to provide encounters that are layered and open-ended, reliant on fluid connections between artworks, objects and texts.

Over 40 works consisting of sketches, prints, paintings and some of Apin's personal effects – drawn from his home in Bandung - are included in this exhibition. In bringing the different elements together, the house of the late Apin is positioned centrally to point towards, or perhaps dramatise, the very encounters taking place and the interjections that may occur within, the confines of the time-space collapse.

The late Apin's house is located at Jalan Tamansari, Bandung, a home that he occupied after his marriage in the early 1950s.

Since Apin's passing in 1994, his widow Ibu Sien Apin and daughters Karina, Marella and Arleti have continued to maintain the house and its contents. The task is undertaken diligently, with an entire mezzanine floor dedicated to house materials once belonging to Apin. An array of objects, prints and artworks and traditional crafts collected by Apin are dotted throughout the room. Books collected by Apin since the 1950s, on subjects ranging from art to design, photography, film, literature and politics line the walls. In an adjoining room, books frequently referenced by Apin are shelved separately from others, as if to seek and affirm the essence of his thoughts. These materials combine and interweave as a repository almost impenetrable in its quantity and multiple layering. It proposes a contraction of time and space, of periods, events and places, disjointed if not for the very man that experienced them.

The exhibition also introduces two texts written by the artist. The first is "A Personal Experience of the 1950s" (*Suatu Pengalaman Pribadi di Tahun Lima Puluhan*, 1992), a reflection of his early years in Jakarta, Bandung and Paris, remarkable by his defense of modernism as a universal expression. In his view, adoptions of Western approaches are to be seen as inevitable outcomes of the longstanding interaction between the cultures of the West and the Orient, and once grounded on the ideas that informed such approaches, artists in Indonesia need to regard the question of cultural authenticity as opened outcomes that aptly locate Indonesian art "within the times" (Mochtar Apin, "Suatu Pengalaman Pribadi di Tahun Lima Puluhan", in *Paris-Jakarta 1950-1960* (Jakarta: Panitia Paris-Jakarta, 1992), 52). The second text written by the artist was originally delivered as a lecture in the occasion of his investiture as Professor at the ITB in 1985. In line with his later essay, the lengthy "The Role of Art in Technology" (*Peran Seni Terhadap Teknologi*) positions art making as an independent activity, and developing alongside with technology and 'rational' knowledge, providing a necessary ethical and moral balance.

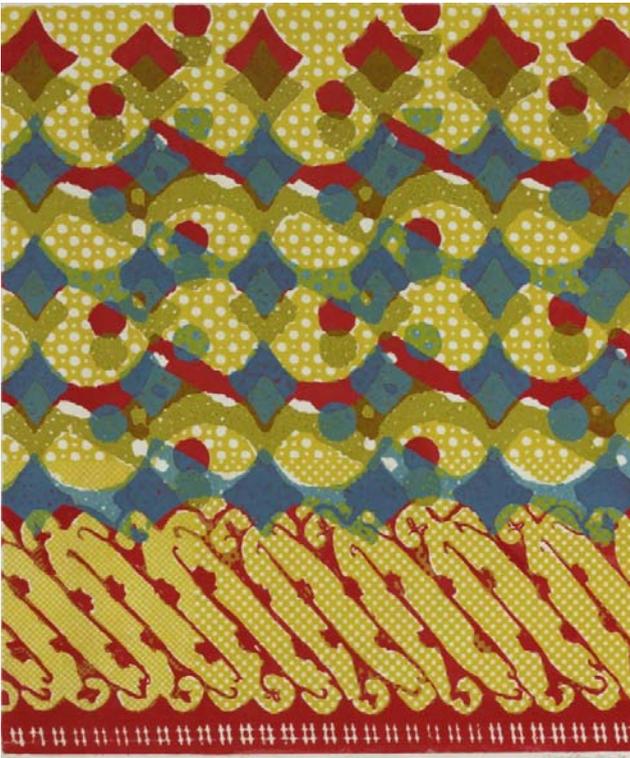


Wanita Berdiri, Mochtar Apin, Charcoal.

Collectively, the three exhibitions taking place in Singapore, Bandung and Jakarta, form a modest insight into Apin, a participant of the revolution, an artist, a cultural intellect and a teacher.



Suasana Rindang (Pemandangan),
Mochtar Apin, Acrylic on Canvas, 1969



Batik Variant 1-34, Mochtar Apin, Silkscreen, 1971.

Apin first exhibited in Singapore in 1978 when he was invited to participate in an exhibition held in conjunction with the arts festival. According to Ahmad Mashadi, Head, NUS Museum, "Mochtar Apin had been exhibiting regularly across Asia since the late 1970s. He was last represented in an important traveling exhibition, *Cubism in Asia: Unbounded Dialogues* organised by the Japan Foundation in 2004, which crucially discussed Asian artists' approaches to modern ideas."

Commenting on the current exhibitions planned for Singapore, Bandung and Jakarta, Aminudin TH Siregar, Director of Galeri Soemardja, ITB, remarked, "the exhibition of works by Mochtar Apin and related archival materials is an important step in building an appreciation of the artist and his role in the development of Indonesian modern art, and the discussions surrounding it."

Credits

Curators: Ahmad Mashadi and Aminudin TH Siregar

Opening Night

Guest-of-honour: Dr Susie Lingham, Director of Singapore Art Museum

Date: Fri, 30 Aug 2013

Time: 7pm

Venue: NUS Museum

Please RSVP to 6516 8817 or museum@nus.edu.sg by 29 Aug 2013

Enquiries

For more information on the exhibition, media interviews, publications, gallery tours or high-resolution images, contact:

Trina Bong

Assistant Manager

NUS Museum

T: (65) 6516 4170

E: trinabong@nus.edu.sg

Exhibition Details:

Exhibition period: 31 Aug 2013 – 29 Sep 2013

Venue: NUS Museum
University Cultural Centre
50 Kent Ridge Crescent
National University of Singapore
Singapore 119279

Opening hours: 10am – 7.30pm (Tuesdays – Saturdays)
10 am – 6pm (Sundays)
Closed on Mondays and Public Holidays

Admission: Free

About NUS Museum

NUS Museum is a comprehensive Museum for teaching and research. It focuses on Asian regional art and culture, and seeks to create an enriching experience through its collections and exhibitions. The Museum has over 8,000 artefacts and artworks divided across four collections. The **Lee Kong Chian Collection** consists of a wide representation of Chinese materials from ancient to contemporary art, the **South and Southeast Asian Collection** holds a range of works from Indian classical sculptures to modern pieces; and the **Ng Eng Teng Collection** is a donation from the late Singapore sculptor and Cultural Medallion recipient of over 1,000 artworks. A fourth collection, the **Straits Chinese Collection**, is located at NUS Baba House at 157 Neil Road.

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