

**singapore
biennale
2025**

**pure
intention**



ARTIST FOLIO

(For Educators)

Hyphen —

**SECONDARY/
TERTIARY:**

History

Visual Arts

THE ARTISTS

- Art can be created by an individual, a collective of artists or communities working towards a shared goal.
- The artwork, *Tokoh-tokoh, pengabdian, dan peradaban* (Figures, dedications and civilisations) by Hyphen — came out of a workshop that brought together a multigenerational group of artistic and cultural practitioners.
- Displayed at Singapore Art Museum's Gallery 1, this exhibit features dioramas of assembled miniature figurines that address significant historical events, including colonialism and conflict.
 - Hyphen —
Hyphen — is a research initiative co-initiated in 2011 by Ratna Mufida, Pitra Hutomo and Grace Samboh as a sustainable conversational space for aesthetic practices. They were joined by Akmalia Rizqita “Chita” and Rachel K. Surijata in 2020; and Ruhaeni Intan and Andri Setiawan in 2023. The initiative aims to position curiosity and wellbeing at the centre of artistic practices.
 - Griya Seni Hj. Kustiyah Edhi Sunarso
A museum established in 2015, it houses artworks, photographs and documents belonging to sculptor Edhi Sunarso (1932–2016) and painter Kustiyah (1935–2012).

THE ARTISTS

- Tom Nicholson

Tom Nicholson is an artist who works span across different media, including drawing, sculpture, installation, sound and performance. His work explores the visual languages of politics and propaganda.

- Ary "Jimged" Sendy

Jimged is an artist and filmmaker who records and observes urban life. He exposes and challenges power relations present in society through the perspectives of social sciences, politics, geography and history.

- Aufa Ariaputra

Aufa is a sound recordist, founder of Soundroll and member of That's Rocketfeller.

- Nasikin

Nasikin Ahmad is a sculptor and founder of Telo Studio, an art studio in Yogyakarta.

- Omar Aryarindra

Omar Aryarindra is a film producer and director from Indonesia.

- They were joined by collaborators and speakers who contributed to this artwork.

- Speakers: Anusapati, JJ Rizal, Ita Fatia Nadia, Grace Samboh, Riksa Afiaty and Veronika Kusumaryati.

THE ARTIST

- Sculptors: Telo Studio and Andrea Gani Hidayat, Audya Amalia, Dirga Yudhistira Indrajaya, Faiha Maghrista, Huda Lil Musttaqim, Prisman Nazara, Qomari Hidayatulloh, Shinta Dwi Amalia, Yuseva Ayu Nourmalinda Deassy Afsari and Yusrani Saskia.
 - Crew: Bangun Wahyudianto, Davis Aji Putra K, Fita Retno S., Herry Christanto, Jimmy Aprilio Pratama, M. Revaldi Nur Putra, Munadi Alianto, Raihana Ghaniya, Salman Hanief and Titis Sekar.
 - Acknowledgements: Henry Moore, Dana Indonesiana and the Singapore Art Museum.
-

THE ARTWORK



Exhibition view of Hyphen — 's *Tokoh-tokoh, pengabdian, dan peradaban* (Figures, dedications and civilisations) (2025), as part of Singapore Biennale 2025: *pure intention*. Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum.

Sesudah banjir itu: No. 44 (When the flood is over: No. 44)
2025

Installation comprising 157 dolls (cast-resin figurines) on a table; two HD videos in colour; a second set of dolls for *Diorama No. 44* along with their moulds, stored at Griya Seni Hj.

Kustiyah Edhi Sunarso

Singapore Biennale 2025 Commission

THE ARTWORK

- *When the flood is over* is an ongoing endeavour by Hyphen — to conserve and question the history of nation building.
- This artwork is a citizen-led initiative where the artists, collaborators and speakers participated in an eight-day workshop held in Griya Seni Hj. Kustiyah Edhi Sunarso (Kustiyah Edhi Sunarso Art House).
 - It is inspired by diorama number 44, *The Liberation of Irian Jaya*, one of the 51 dioramas created by Edhi Sunarso.
 - Edhi Sunarso was commissioned by the first President of Indonesia, President Sukarno, to create 48 dioramas on the history of Indonesia. It is housed in the National History Museum (Museum Sejarah Nasional) in the National Monument of Indonesia (Monumen Nasional, also known as Monas).
 - The museum was built with 52 domes, with 48 dioramas each housed in a dome. Four domes were intentionally left empty for Indonesia's future history. Three dioramas were added when the second President Suharto came into power, which culminated in a total of 51 dioramas currently displayed in the museum.
 - Led by sculptor Nasikin, the workshop focuses on the recreation of the diorama by hand and also discusses its contested history. The invited speakers have either lived through the period or are experts on the topic.

THE ARTWORK

- This artwork is a multi-media installation made up of:
 - 157 sculptures on the plywood table
 - The sculptures represent the people present during the historical event.
 - The original diorama is presented in a dome, where the view is limited to a frontal perspective. In the foreground, Sunarso created bigger sculptures of people; in the background, the sculptures are smaller.
 - The placement of the figurines is different from the diorama, where they are arranged in groups.
 - Two high-definition videos in colour
 - The first video, playing on a screen leaning against the plywood board outside Gallery 1, shows the moulds of 157 sculptures.
 - The second video, playing on a screen leaning against the plywood board inside Gallery 1, shows 157 unpainted sculptures.
 - Both videos show the sculptures set against a blue screen. Blue or green screens are used in post-production which allows video editors to add visual effects or impose a background. The artists employ this technique to allude to the ease with which history can be altered.

DID YOU KNOW?

- West Irian, currently known as West Papua, was a colony of the Netherlands.
- It is now a province of Indonesia.

ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS

PRE-VISIT:

- The original *Diorama No. 44. The Liberation of Irian* can be viewed digitally on [Google Arts and Culture](#).
- Below is a timeline of the history of West Irian to help you understand the context of the artwork.
 - West Papua, formerly known as West Irian or West New Guinea, was colonized by the Netherlands in 1898.
 - After Indonesian gained independence from the Dutch in 1949, it sought to integrate all former Dutch colonies in Asia Pacific.
 - West Papua had gained independence in 1961, with the presence of the [New York Agreement](#), the administration of West Papua was transferred to Indonesia in May 1963.
- You may read up on the [historical events](#) that took place in Indonesia.

ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS

DURING YOUR VISIT:

- Compare the two videos from the artwork. What are their similarities and differences?
- Look at this artwork in relation to current modern and contemporary artworks. Why do you think Hyphen — chose to showcase them together?

	Modern Artworks	Contemporary Artworks
Comparison 1	Anusapati (b. 1957, Indonesia) <i>Single Object</i> . c. 1994–1996 Durian wood Collection of Singapore Art Museum	Julian Abraham “Togar” (b. 1987, Indonesia) <i>Drummer’s gonna drum #0</i> 2023 Digital video (black-and-white, sound) 7 min 59 sec Edition 5 + 1 AP Collection of the artist
Comparison 2	Emiria Sunassa (b. 1894, Indonesia) <i>Bahaya belakang kembang terate</i> (Danger lurking behind the lotus), c. 1941–1946 Oil on plywood Collection of National Gallery Singapore	Presiden Tidore (b. 1991, Indonesia) <i>Koleksi tenun</i> (Collection of weavings) Since 2010 Self-made, gifts and loans of textiles from the Nusantara archipelago Collection of the artist

POST VISIT:

- Everyone has a part to play in history. As authors of our history, what implications arise when a historical event is retold? How does this make you feel and why?
- Think about the most significant event you have witnessed in Singapore. Discuss with your partner.
 - Which other events did you and your partner think of?
 - Why did you choose this event?
 - Did you and your partner have different feelings or understanding about the event? Why?

Thinking routine: Values, Identities, Actions

- After looking at the history of Indonesia and West Irian, turn your attention to focus on Singapore. Hyphen — and the curators have decided to site a selection of modern artworks about Singapore that are created in the 1950s – 1970s.
- During this period, there were many fires that claimed lives and destroyed many kampong houses in Singapore. Learn more about the [fires that took place in Singapore](#).
- Many artists have created artworks in response to the fires, and the devastation brought about by the disaster.
 - What values do the artworks invite us to think about?
 - Who are the artists speaking up for?
 - What do you think the artists hope to encourage through their artworks?
- The history you know might be incomplete.
 - Do you think it is important to relook at history? Why?
 - Do you think it is important to get a full picture of the past? Why?

FIND OUT MORE:

ARTIST

- Hyphen —, “When the Flood Is over,” 2022. *Hyphen* —, accessed 12 September 2025, [https://hyphen.web.id/index.php/When_the_flood_is_over#When_the_flood_is_over: No. 44](https://hyphen.web.id/index.php/When_the_flood_is_over#When_the_flood_is_over:No.44).
- Griya Seni Hj.Kustiyah Edhi Sunarso, “kus.griyaseni,” accessed 12 September 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/kus.griyaseni/>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Nicholson, Tom, Grace Samboh, and Edhi Sunarso. (2015). "Towards Figures of Dedication, and a Flood (2015)." *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia 1*, no. 1 (2017): 221-30, accessed 12 September 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sen.2017.0009>
- United Nations Peacekeeping. “Background, West New Guinea – UNSF,” *United Nations Peacekeeping*, accessed 12 September 2025. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/unsfbackgr.html>
- “No. 6311 INDONESIA and NETHERLANDS Agreement (with annex) concerning West New Guinea (West Irian). Signed at the Headquarters of the United Nations, New York, on 15 August 1962,” Indonesia, the Netherlands, 15 August 1962, accessed 12 September 2025. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20437/volume-437-i-6311-english.pdf>
- Katharine E. McGregor, “Representing the Indonesian Past: The National Monument History Museum from Guided Democracy to the New Order,” *Indonesia Vol. 75* (2003-04), accessed 12 September 2025. <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/b23d8005-aabb-4ce4-85ce-69361c02716a/content#:~:text=In%20the%20case%20of%20Museum,values%2C%20the%20values%20of%20Pancasila>
- Sculpture Centre, “Julian Abraham “Togar”: Too good to be OK”, *Sculpture Centre*, accessed 12 September 2025. https://www.sculpture-center.org/files/Togar_Gallery_Guide_spreads_1_.pdf