Segerak VIII UTOPIA

YUSOF GHANI

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15 Years of Segerak

Galeri Prima Kuala Lumpur

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Merafak Sembah Menjunjung Kasih



His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah Ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al-Maghfur-Lah The Sultan of Perak Darul Ridzuan

> Her Royal Highness Tuanku Zara Salim The Raja Permaisuri of Perak Darul Ridzuan

> > for officiating Segerak VIII Utopia on August 8, 2019 at Galeri Prima







MY SEGERAK JOURNEY By Yusof Ghani

Segerak has allowed me to explore the human figure as a symbol of life, which I transform into abstract statements to depict humanity's contrasting realities of struggle and victory, aggression and celebration, realism and fantasy.

Observations from my own experiences, travels and heritage are the source of energy, movement and tension which I capture through a combined expression of drawing and painting.

The social commentary has come to a conclusion: the realization that time and space don't matter, and that human reality and aspirations are the same, and are driven by the desire of building a better future.



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Segerak VIII - Freedom 51cm x 51cm Acrylic on canvas 2018

PREFACE

It is indeed a great honour for us to pen this note to extend our gratitude to His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah Ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al-Maghfur-Lah, The Sultan of Perak Darul Ridzuan for graciously officiating Segerak VIII – Utopia.

Our gratitude to Her Royal Highness Tuanku Zara Salim, The Raja Permaisuri of Perak Darul Ridzuan as well for graciously taking time to attend the opening night.

It is a pleasure for us to exhibit the last series of *Segerak VIII* which features 30 masterpieces by the renowned Malaysian artist Yusof Ghani.

In 1981, Yusof Ghani, who was 31, took formal studies in art for his BFA at the George Mason University in the United States. He graduated with a MFA from Catholic University Washington in 1983. Prior to this, he worked in an art-related job for 10 years before lecturing at the Mara Institute of Technology (UiTM).

As an artist, he has electrified the art scene with his series like *Tari*, *Topeng*, *Wayang*, *Hijau*, *Segerak*, *Biring*, *Wajah* and *Ombak*.

Tari, painted some 30 years ago, is among the most sought-after series due to its rarity, scarcity and energetic strokes.

Segerak was first introduced in 2004. Since then, it has evolved into various episodes — *Segerak II, III, IV, V, VI, VII.* Some of the *Segerak* series were shown abroad, for e.g. in London, Madrid, Hong Kong and now the final episode, *Segerak VIII*: Utopia will be held here at Galeri Prima.

The word Utopia is defined as an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect and ideal. In *Segerak VIII*, the movements of the figures are well captured.

Some think that the figures are better defined than *Tari*, certainly with more swift and deft motions, if not gestures. The idea, expressed on the canvas, depicts events that take place simultaneously around the world.

A million thanks to all who have contributed directly or indirectly to the success of this exhibition.

Enjoy the show!

Azlynn Aziz, Sim Polenn, WinSon Loh

Galeri Prima, Curate Henry Butcher, Pinkguy Gallery Organisers

FOREWORD

A series that originated in 2002 and which saw the return of the human figure as the focal point of Yusof Ghani's artistic expression comes to its glorious culmination in 2019 with Utopia. "The social commentary is now complete," says the artist.

As a series, *Segerak* is all about energy, emotion and synchronized movement. It has evolved with time, but it remains true to the fundamental belief that human needs, wants, emotions and desires are a singular force that drives humanity and that transcends place and time.

This book is a tribute to the artist's relentless dedication to his craft, an attempt to compile and document the many aspects of *Segerak's* 15 years of existence and an introduction to the new chapter in Yusof Ghani's artistic journey.

TAPAK





Segerak – Motion, Emotion, Evolution

By Claudia Cadena

Yusof Ghani has always regarded the human figure and humanitarian issues as critical and essential to his artistic creations. Inspired by his travels to many places around the world, and after appreciating the way people live and interact with each other, irrespective of their heritage, cultural backgrounds, social and economic stature or political affiliations, Yusof wanted to express his realization that dreams, aspirations and realities were all the same. He understood that opportunity, timing and the surrounding environment were the only differentiating factors between societies and individuals.

Segerak revolves around the common thread of humanity, social activity and movement. It evokes the evolution of mankind and the simple understanding of the immensity of commonality of wants and beliefs. Ultimately, we are all the same, and the expression of a reality, an emotion or a situation can be undertaken regardless of time and place. An invisible and imperceptible commonality - the dream for a better life - elevates everyone to the same level of idealism, which he calls Utopia, and which symbolizes the ultimate state of humanity within his *Segerak* series.

"I use the figures as a symbol of life and transform them into abstract statements to illustrate my perceived reality. The undisputed source of generative imagery is the figures: they are irregular, distorted and configurated images, translating into energized compositions. These figures transcend into new forms, changed with driving energy, expressing movement and dynamism," says Yusof Ghani.

Each *Segerak* series brings to life a specific reality, mood and undertone which is carefully displayed through the thoughtful arrangement of human figures interacting with each other, exuding expression and emotion. Space is unnecessary and irrelevant. Time does not exist.

There are, however, distinctive characteristics in each series. At the beginning, Yusof Ghani used his recollection of movies to depict imagery in a more concrete and defined way. However, with time, imagery begins to fade and his imagination takes over, allowing for emphasis to be placed on other artistic aspects. Colour has been a predominant feature in this series, and it changes as a manifestation of the different realities and emotions the series intends to portray. Brown evokes conflict and revolution. Red and orange signify celebration. Blue portrays memories and relaxation.

The use of charcoal within Yusof Ghani's *Segerak* series is notable and evolutionary. During the first years, charcoal was used to define the figures and create the tension within them. With time, this significantly reduces, giving way to the use of a multitude of colours intersected by charcoal, thus decreasing the tension and augmenting the interrelationship within figures. Perhaps this is the most significant evolution in the mood of the creations, from confrontation and revolution towards a more positive, celebratory and utopian world. Music added yet another dimension to these series. A collaboration between Yusof Ghani, composer Kunci Demak, singer songwriter Nomad and singer Dayah Bakar brought to life a painting and a song – Lebih Dari Terindah. "A painter and a composer both want to express God's love in their respective art form. It is a sojourn of soul-searching for us as artists. It is a privilege to be a conduit for such expression," say Yusof Ghani and Kunci Demak.



Lebih Dari Terindah, 180cm x 180cm, oil on jute, 2016.



Yusof Ghani with Nomad on his right and Dayah Bakar on his left.

The artist's own evolution and personal experiences have a significant influence on the paintings. "With age and experience, there is a liberation of the mind and spontaneity takes over, allowing a more intuitive expression and figurative interactions in my paintings. There has been an evolution from restraint towards fluidity," says the artist.

Watching the artist undertake his craft is nothing less than exhilarating, magical and mystical. All his senses are drawn into his creations. He goes into a different dimension where nothing else matters. An urge to move in rhythm using paint, brushes and even his own hands takes centre stage, and time no longer exists. The energy that is required to express emotions and movement is such that his entire body flows in unison. "There is a sense of enjoyment whenever I am creating a painting. There is a never-ending enthusiasm that compels me to go on painting until it is done. Nothing else around me matters. There is total immersion into the painting," says the artist.

15 YEARS of SEGERAK

2004 - 2019

SEGERAK I



Book Exhibition Publisher Year : Segerak : ArtCase Gallery, Kuala Lumpur : Utusan Publications and Distributors Sdn. Bhd, Kuala Lumpur : 2004 After taking a break from depicting the figures and having experimented with other subject matters like masks (*Topeng*) and landscapes (*Hijau*), Yusof Ghani made the decision to return to the exploration of the human figure. This was how *Segerak* came into existence.

Yusof Ghani experiments with painted surfaces that are accentuated with drawn charcoal lines. He attempts to merge the disciplines of painting and drawing into a new creative experiment. The interaction between figure, form, colour and movement creates an abundance of textured surfaces. Whether working, walking or running, the figures illustrate not only the rapid movement of a body in space, but also a sense of spiritual struggle.

Apart from recording motion and emotion in his paintings, he incorporates momentous messages about issues concerning humanity. The struggle and social criticism are depicted as positive and negative aspects of life. He names some of his first paintings with titles that evoke popular movies and TV shows of the time, allowing the audience to relate the paintings to other forms of art.



Rush Hour 122cm x 104cm Oil on canvas 2003

SEGERAK II



Catalogue Exhibition Publisher Year : Segerak II - Recent Paintings : TAPAK, Shah Alam : TAPAK, Shah Alam : 2005 The intensity of movement, energy and desire to express the figures in a larger dimension drives the artist to increase the size of the canvas. In addition, the number of figures depicted in each painting increases from a few to half a dozen or more. The focus is on the painted figures, which are erratic and loose, using a limited colour palette of two or three complementary or contrasting colours, creating harmony. The figures are strongly defined through the use of charcoal, which provides rich texture to the drawings, and makes them the centre of attention in each painting.

In contrast to the defined centre-staged figure forms, some of his paintings uses an opposite angle. He creates the surrounding environment and spaces for the figures to inhabit. The arena or space is created through the use of bold patches of red that sweep across the hazy, awkwardly and uncomfortably positioned figures, which are generally depicted with their arms flowing and their necks and faces tilted upwards. Charcoal is strongly used to accentuate the sense of struggle and restlessness within the figures.



Segerak II - Rasuk 201cm x 213cm Oil on canvas 2005

SEGERAK III



Catalogue: Segerak IIIExhibition: Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala LumpurPublisher: Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala LumpurYear: 2006

Many monochromatic paintings emerge, with a marked difference in the emotional intensity of the figures. They seem lighter, docile and smaller in size, perhaps as a result of the artist's focus on the actual drawings and the application of new techniques and resources. Chalk, ink, pastel, oils and acrylic are featured alongside the customary charcoal, giving the opportunity to feature lines and contours much more prominently. New surfaces like jute and linen provide the artist with the opportunity to bring about a new sense of texture to the paintings.

The artist achieves a high level of comfort with the *Segerak* figures at this stage, and is able to freely translate them in a figurative manner directly from his imagination. He no longer uses any external reference to derive their form.

It is at this stage that fluid patches of splashed colours begin to emerge over the figures and backgrounds alike. Loose paint drips comfortably, adding an additional element of tension, resistance and abandonment which characterise many of the human struggles.

Sketches are an integral element of *Segerak III*. They are treated as finished work and not as the traditional drawing precursor component of a painting. The artist intends to give his drawings the same stature, importance and prominence that paintings enjoy. This is his way of pushing the art boundaries and demonstrating that art is limitless and generous. Charcoal becomes the sole medium of expression, devoid of any accompanying paint. He achieves volume, shadow, texture, movement, expression and emotion in the same manner that he is able to achieve through the use of a wide colour palette.



Segerak III - Pursuit IV 134cm x 203cm Oil & charcoal on linen 2005



Segerak III - Bait 122cm x 92cm Charcoal on linen 2004



Segerak III - Silat I 120cm x 90cm Oil & acrylic on linen 2005



Segerak III - Kickers 127cm x 96cm Oil, bitumen, chalk & charcoal on canvas 2005



Segerak III - Nightwalkers I 125cm x 110cm Chalk & charcoal on canvas 2005

SEGERAK IV



Book: Segerak IVExhibition: Rotunda Square, Hong KongPublisher: The Gallery @ Star Hill, Kuala LumpurYear: 2008

The artist's visit to Hong Kong in 2006 has a deep influence in his creations, as he witnesses the bustling and chaotic atmosphere and the way its energetic people seamlessly move around. This reinforces his artistic inspiration and focus on the human figure. He goes to capture actions, emotions, struggles and triumphs of daily life in unassuming ways, contrasting with a restlessness depicted by the loose lines which often move with a certain velocity.

The figures are painted from a wide variety of contrasting angles and positions. It is the juxtaposition of movement and time within the single dimension of the canvas. This requires for anyone appreciating the painting to interact with it, to immerse themselves into the portrayed reality and interpret the outcome from their own perspective. The artist successfully draws the observer into becoming an integral participant while appreciating and interpreting the painting.

The same painting can mean many things and this is intoxicating. It opens a new frontier to the imagination as mixed emotions, interpretations, points of view have the potential to collide and bring to life further possibilities and opportunities. The artist creates engaging creations that make observers reflect on their own reality.



Segerak IV - The Seige 203cm x 212cm Oil on jute 2007

Segerak IV - Guardians 168cm x 152cm Oil on jute 2007



Segerak IV - Paradigm 148cm x 229cm Oil on canvas 2007

SEGERAK V



Catalogue	: Segerak V - Uprising
Exhibition	: Art Expo, Kuala Lumpur
Publisher	: TAPAK, Shah Alam
Year	: 2014

The artist's constant reflections around humanity's evolution continue to be the driving force of his paintings. In *Segerak V*, he explores the never-ending aspirations that drive humankind's desire to improve mind and self. There is an evident departure from the negative struggles and an initiation of what is considered the pinnacle of existence – progress and enlightment.

The use of form and light to depict positive movements and energy are characteristic of *Segerak V – Uprising*. The artist uses primarily oil and charcoal in fairly consistent and singular colour tones to give focus and attention to the changes in mood.

He delves into progress and enlightment, and also focuses on what should always be the anchor of future developments – tradition and culture. Yusof Ghani always highlights aspects of his Malay culture, and how modernisation is challenging its status quo within society. Without departing from his characteristic style containing movement, energy and form, he gives center stage to the "silat" (self-defense) warrior, as the messenger of his social commentary around preservation of tradition. This again emphasizes the change in mood towards a more positive mental and physical attitude.



Segerak V - Uprising #16 127cm x 127cm Oil on canvas 2014



Segerak V - Uprising #18 127cm x 127cm Oil on canvas 2014



Segerak V - Controversy 183cm x 239cm Oil on canvas 2014

SEGERAK VI



Book: Segerak VI - Transcendent FiguresExhibition: Asia House Gallery, LondonPublisher: TAPAK, Shah AlamYear: 2017

The artist chooses to leave a mostly plain background to allow the figure to play center stage in the paintings. The use of colour allows for the emergence of volume and light. The social commentary of his inquisitive mind revolves around the desire to understand what compels humanity to a higher state of mind and body within a given space. He explores the duality and coexistence of the individual's knowledge, experiences and faith in contrast to the communal forces and rhythm.

Global inter-connectivity has resulted in humanity's hunger for further understanding of the universe and the knowledge to make sense of it. With this hunger for progress comes futuristic expressions. The artist, however, refuses to ignore the past and traditions, and draws inspiration from ancient figures and sculptures which up to today adorn some of the most majestic world heritage sites like the ancient Angkor Wat. Shadow puppets come alive through the puppet master's ability to relate folktales, and they inspire the master. Moving forward requires respect and understanding for the past, and this is what the transcendent figures signify.

This is perhaps the one time in which faces emerge with some level of detail within the paintings, signifying the need to define an identify in order to move forward. Even when movement and energy are still strongly present within the painting, it is the intellectual struggle to understand the world in which we live that is most significant.

A wide range of colour palette is used and freedom of expression is at its peak. Aggression, frustration and self-doubt can be clearly observed in the many lines which are at times drawn in an irregular manner. This is the depiction of the collective mind's struggle in search of identify.




Segerak VI - Art of War 230cm x 370cm Oil on canvas 2015



Segerak VI - Transcendent II 142cm x 193cm Oil on canvas 2016

SEGERAK VII



Book Exhibition Publisher Year : Segerak VII - Bandera - The Spirit of Celebration : Galeria BAT Alberto Cornejo, Madrid : TAPAK, Shah Alam : 2018 Bandera is a Spanish word that signifies flag or banner. The "Bandera" represents the spirit of celebration, an act of doing something special for an important occasion in a festive atmosphere. It marks a joyous moment, whether individually or collectively.

The artist plays with a wide range of rich colours to emphasise the joyous and celebratory feeling of the occasion. It is an explosion of energy, movement and happiness. He wants to be the driving force behind the changes in society's perspective. From the constant focus and obsession on daily struggles and sufferings, he wants to inspire us to move away from this emotional state into a celebratory mood.

He also abandons the individuality of feelings, emotions and draws attention to a communal and global perspective. He wants us to realise the importance of participating, getting involved and identifying the beauty, goodness and positivity in everything we have and do, instead of drawing from the negative which will ultimately destroy the spirit and the community.

The duality of emotions is constantly present and available for us to draw energy from his paintings. The characteristic bold abstract strokes converge with an intentional creation of subtle human faces and figures in constant movement and interaction with each other. This energy in movement is accentuated through the use of bright colours that are present in different manners. At times it is very clearly defined in the background, and at times as part of the figure itself, which showcases the mood and emotions that are being conveyed. Every painting is a conversation, a dance, a celebration, an opportunity to lift the spirit. Charcoal does not play a prominent place in these paintings. It is used as a complimentary element to define the figures instead of being the driving force of the imagery.



Segerak VII - Victory I 153cm x 153cm Oil on canvas 2017





Parade 229cm x 366cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2017

Collection of Datuk Che Mokhtar Che Ali



Fiesta II 244cm x 244cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2017

SEGERAK VIII



Book: Segerak VIII - UtopiaExhibition: Galeri Prima, Kuala LumpurPublisher: The New Straits Times Press (M) BerhadYear: 2019

The final *Segerak* is the most virtuous yet! It comes full circle to being aspirational and inspired on the desire for perfection and idealistic pursuits. Humanity aspires to be free from evil and negativity. It constantly strives to be and become better, more advanced, ever-lasting and it all starts with a dream.

The artist wants fantasy and reality to be one and the same. Happiness, fulfillment and contentment come together to impart their effect on humanity. Space and time are irrelevant. What matters is the state of mind and the presence of the highest level of aspirational positive emotions.

In a single painting, the artist portrays dualities which are expressed by contrast of colours, emotions or opposing movements. There is hardly any charcoal which signifies the seeming abandonment of drawing over the dominance of painting, which in itself signifies the contrasting realities.

The singularity of figure reappears, leaving mostly behind the need to depict multiple individuals within the painting. A single figure is able to express the fullness of emotions, all converging into a positive finale.

SEGERAK VIII UTOPIA



Segerak VIII - Utopia - Sign of Happiness I 228cm x 366cm Oil on canvas 2018





Segerak VIII - Utopia - Sign of Happiness II 183cm x 183cm Oil on jute 2018



Segerak VIII - Utopia - Sign of Happiness III 183cm x 183cm Oil on jute 2018



Segerak VIII - Avengers I 152cm x 152cm Oil on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Avengers II 152cm x 152cm Oil on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Sovereignty II 152cm x 122cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Trendsetters 152cm x 122cm Oil on canvas

2018



Segerak VIII - Frontiers I 122cm x 122cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Frontiers II 122cm x 122cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Gateway 122cm x 122cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Glad Tiding I 122cm x 122cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Glad Tiding II 122cm x 122cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Steadfast I 122cm x 122cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Steadfast II 122cm x 122cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Sovereignty I 122cm x 122cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Champion 123cm x 92cm Mixed media on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Virtuous II 92cm x 92cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Revival I 92cm x 92cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Sublime II 92cm x 92cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Adjourment 102cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Supreme I 102cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Supreme II 102cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Jubilant I 102cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018


Segerak VIII - Solitude I 102cm x 71cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Jubilant II 96cm x 71cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Solitude II 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Revival II 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Sublime I 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Grandee I 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Grandee II 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018

Utopia - An Artist's Rendition Of An Ideal World

By Prof. Dr. Habibah Ashari

INTRODUCTION

Utopia. The word conjures up a myriad of hopeful and sometimes fanciful images. For some, the word calls up an ideal place...an island, a state...where everything and everyone functions at a perfectionist optimum. To others, the word conjures up something which is impossible....a dream...a fiction. The term utopia, which describes a fictional island society in the south Atlantic Ocean off the coast of South America, was coined from Greek by Sir Thomas More for his 1516 book *Utopia*.

Utopia is derived from the Greek prefix "ou-" (oú), meaning "not", and topos ($\tau \circ \pi \circ \varsigma$), "place", with the suffix -iā (-ía) that is typical of toponyms; hence the name literally means "nowhere", denoting its fictionality. In early modern English, utopia was spelled "utopie" and is pronounced exactly as eutopia, meaning "good place". Thus, "utopia" popularly carries the connotation of some place good, some ideal system.

Although More coined the word "utopia" to describe his imaginary island, it was Plato who first and most famously generated it in the *Republic*, one of his best-known works which is very influential world-wide, both intellectually and historically. The *Republic* recorded the Socratic dialogue in which the conversation revolves around justice, a just government, a just leader and the training of just leaders. It was said that Socrates did not do any writing in his lifetime; most of his writings were the records of his students, such as Plato and Xenophon.

A realistic, and disillusioning interpretation of utopia, one that appeals to the modern mind, is Bertrand Russell's discussion in his seminal work, *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945). He identified Books 1 to 5 of the Republic as an attempt to define justice, the description of an ideal community (eutopia) and the education of its Guardians. Russell, however, was sharply critical of Plato. Russell said, "Plato possessed the art to dress up illiberal suggestions in such a way that they deceived future ages, which admired the *Republic* without ever becoming aware of what was involved in its proposals. It has always been correct to praise Plato, but not to understand him." When asked what Plato's *Republic* will achieve, we get an answer that is rather humdrum. "It will achieve success in wars against roughly equal populations, and it will secure a livelihood for a certain small number of people. It will almost certainly produce no art or science, because of its rigidity; in this respect, as in others, it will be like Sparta" (2012).

An inevitable corollary to utopia is the concept of dystopia: of conflict between thehaves and the have-nots, the poor and the rich, the weak and the strong, war and peace, stability and instability, conflict and concord. In dystopia, society is characterised by human misery, squalour, oppression, disease and over-crowding, and in Russell's words of one of the three passions he struggled with, "the unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind" (2012).

Thus, the utopia/dystopia dyad is the inevitable clash and compromise between the high-flying ideal and the earth-bound reality which Yusof seeks to portray in this finale of the *Segerak* series, Utopia.

SEGERAK - Genesis and Evolution of Segerak

Segerak, an odyssey which began in 2002, depicts an evolutionary journey for Yusof, perhaps a transformation, a maturing of the man as an artist, or the artist as a man. It is an organic transformation that begun when the artist had just turned 50, an age when a man or a woman begins to feel mortality as palpable, in the same way you feel your fingers when your hand closes. You have left your forties, thirties and twenties behind, and you begin to look into the shortening future...your fifties, sixties, seventies, and the questions begin pressing on you relentlessly: Who are you? What's your role in life? Are you on the plus or minus side of the Ledger?

The immediacy of these questions fills Segerak with energy, emotions and synchronised movement. *Segerak* has evolved with time but, according to Yusof, it has remained true to the fundamental belief that human needs, wants, emotions and desires are a singular force that drives humanity and that transcends place and time, while taking expression through time and place. Hence, the term *Segerak*, literally translated as One Movement. There is an eye-startling, mind-shaking, heart-thrilling multiplicity of colours, emotions and opposing movements in the paintings. It is where artistic imagination merges with reality. But there is a 'oneness' to this merging of fantasy and reality, and colours and strokes.

In all the *Segerak* series, the human figure exists. The figures, drawn in charcoal against a glorious riot of colours, are depicted in motion, in flight, and in space. They usually evoke a Promethean struggle...shadowy dark figures rising menacingly out of the orangeish hues, reminiscent of the *Segerak* collection in Uprising. These shadowy figures in struggle or in flight are distinctive in the earlier *Segerak* series. But the later *Segerak* series, especially *Bandera*, celebrates the multi-culturality of humankind with its riotous colours of red, yellow and orange.

Yusof derives inspiration for his painting from his experiences, his cultural heritage, and from all his travels, where his keen eyes observe different people and different cultures in relation to one another. In his own words, *Segerak* has allowed him to explore the human figure as a symbol of life, which he then transforms into abstract statements to depict humanity's contrasting realities of struggle and victory, aggression and celebration, realism and fantasy.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ARTIST

Segerak is an organising principle, a "blueprint" and a culminating point for Yusof's artistic development since 2002. It depicts a journey for Yusof, perhaps a transformation, an evolution, a maturing of the man as an artist, or the artist as a man. As noted before, *Segerak* coincided with Yusof's arrival at the age of 50, a "tipping point" in which urgency and immediacy replace the spacious nonchalance of youth. As a result of this organic transformation, one begins asking the fundamental questions with pressing urgency. Thus, Yusof waxes philosophical in his utopian journey. He continues to ask himself, Why did God make me an artist? What is my role in society, in life? What have I contributed? And the two perennial questions that have haunted man since time immemorial: Who am I? How do I express this thing that I am?

In this collection, the colour blue dominates. Blue communicates harmony, calmness, stillness, peace. In the earlier *Segerak* series, blue is juxtaposed with red takes over, red is fire, red energises, red reverberates. But in *Utopia*, the colour blue takes centre stage; blue is calm, cool, serene, peaceful, sentimental and meditative. Blue creates a loving ambience. Blue is the mother colour; blue creates its own space; blue and red become violet, blue and yellow become green. Even the technique of painting displays "bluish" traits. Yusof's strokes are more flowing and less aggressive. He doesn't jump at his canvas with vigour as he did in his younger days. His strokes are also more harmonious and meditative. They flow continuously like a gentle breeze on a warm hazy afternoon.

Whilst Yusof likes to experiment with different mediums, he typically uses oil on canvas and jute. He differentiates oil on canvas from oil on jute. He now likes to experiment with jute. To him, jute is stronger and can take the pounding from his strokes. Jute is more receptive to his strokes; he can use opaque on jute. While before, his brushworks were strong, his strokes now are mellower and more measured. He seems to have more control over the layers of colours which convey his feelings, whether the feelings are of uprising, rebellion or celebratory like in his earlier *Segerak* pieces or something more calm, flowy and peaceful as in *Utopia*.

Yusof carries on a continuous dialogue with his canvas. He allows his immediate reaction and the element of chance to play an important role in his creations. He believes that the element of chance reduces inhibition. The mixture of colours and strokes is immediate, but he will let go if the painting does not work. He is not confined to one stroke or one element...he paints over his mistakes and creates anew.

In painting, decision-making is important. To Yusof, creating a work of art is akin to problem-solving: How to get good balance, achieve cohesion of colours, strokes, composition, line, form and use of space. However famous he has become, to Yusof, experience and practice are important. He says painting involves a lot of practice. There are elements of adding and deleting of colours, strokes, lines. The entire process is an accumulation of activities, minds, thoughts; indeed, layers and layers of activities. He also imagines a sense of the outcomes of each piece; sometimes he follows and sees a picture of the end product, but sometimes he fights it. He is constantly dancing in front of the canvas. Therefore, one sees Yusof having a dialogue and dancing in front of the canvas. Yusof is passionate about the search for justice, for balance and fairness for all mankind. His paintings both whisper and shout one fundamental message: the hope that one day we can live free from fear and crime, that wealth and power can be equitably distributed, that harmony can prevail amongst people of various faiths, creed and colour, and that we can create a perfect society from chaos.

To achieve these aims, we must first have the right perspective. The artist points. Looks. While singers, like Sting who rails against human trafficking and misery in his song *Inshallah*, Yusof wants to highlight these conflicts in the context of visual art. He wants to create awareness and seeks to play a major role in conflict-resolution through his latest *Segerak* series, *Utopia*. While other artists like John Sabraw creates awareness of environmental pollution through his toxic art series From Acid to Art, Yusof creates his Utopia by constantly using the myriad hues of blue to evoke peace, fairness and justice for humankind, to help the powerless against the powerful, to create balance between the rich and the poor, and to help the weak against the strong. There is vibrancy in the conception and execution of his paintings.

CONCLUSION

Plato was suspicious of artists. In 350BC, he said that art was a copy of a copy of a form. For him, art has gone through so many stages: art as imitation, art as expression, art as rebellion, art as uprising, and art as social commentary, to name a few. To Yusof, art is the rendition of the artist's nature, of self, of a journey of self-discovery. It is also an expression of his fervent hope and aspirations for a just world, a world where balance is the fulcrum - balance in the distribution of wealth, of power - so that the world can strive for utopia, however impossible it might seem to achieve.

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Prof. Dr. Habibah Ashari PhD CYT XIV Tun Abdul Razak Chair Ohio University 2011-2014 Professor of Education UiTM 1979-2017

COLLECTOR'S COMMENTARY

THE ESSENCE OF YUSOF GHANI

by Zain Azahari, Kuala Lumpur

I have known Yusof Ghani for many years and am privileged not only to have been able to collect a number of his works from as early as the 1980s but also to have opened some of his exhibitions in Kuala Lumpur. For as long as I've known him, Yusof has bristled with social conscience and it is only natural, therefore, that his paintings are endowed with a strong narrative flavour which often revolves around the theme of "protest". A deep-rooted resistance to injustice and abuse of power has blessed Yusof Ghani with a subliminal energy which comes to the fore in his unique and brilliant art. I found that I could empathise with his commentary on social conflict in the artist's *Tari* (Dance) series where he portrayed human behaviour in a blur of forceful strokes, lines and movements as the struggle between figures in the canvas spoke of a wider global conflict. It occurred to me at that time that an abstract communication of his message was even more powerful than any figurative illustration precisely because it requires analysis and scrutiny of the correlation between the artist's work and his thoughts.

Segerak, to me, was a natural progression from Yusof's *Protest* and *Tari* works. In this series, an older Yusof Ghani reveals a more mellow approach to the theme of movement but it is a misconception that *Segerak* constitutes a departure from the previous narrative approach of his art. On the contrary, the essence of Yusof Ghani reveals itself once more in this series as he continues to explore human interaction and social activity. I think it would be impossible for Yusof Ghani to paint without meaning or emotion and, as ever, I find that the works in *Segerak* are replete with both.

The 2007 *Segerak* painting which I acquired directly from Yusof is one of my favourites. In it, his vibrant strokes and absolute command of the canvas are again in evidence. The collaboration of yellow, brown, black and muted red tones are a feast for the eyes as three figures display a range of movements with the figure on the left conceding prominence in favour of a central figure which almost floats across the canvas whilst the direction of a more peripheral figure at the top of the canvas appears to indicate a reluctance to participate in the conflict of the two main protagonists. I have spent many hours looking at this magnificent piece of art which encapsulates the very best of Yusof Ghani.

For all his skill, pre-eminence and popularity as an artist, I am always impressed by the humility of the man behind the paintings. Yusof remains extremely mindful of his humble beginnings, his early struggles as an artist and the relationships which he had established with collectors long before he achieved any real measure of success. To me, it is this humble disposition which prevents Yusof Ghani from taking his success for granted and ensures that we can all continue to look forward to art which will speak to us from the heart of this exceptional artist.

YUSOF GHANI

by Dato' Seri Kalimullah Hassan, Kuala Lumpur

Many years ago, I saw an appealing piece of art in the window of an art gallery and knew I had to buy it. I knew it was a Yusof Ghani piece but at that time, I was not familiar enough with his works, save for his celebrated *Siri Tari* series, of which I had several sketches.

The gallery owner said Yusof had sent the artwork for framing. I offered to buy it. The owner later introduced me to Yusof, and I became the owner of an 8ft by 6ft *Ombak*.

When my only son married and moved to his own apartment, I gifted him the *Ombak*, as he had a wall large enough to hang it. Some of my other paintings, by very prominent artists present and departed, hang on the other walls but Yusof's *Ombak* is in the living room and the first thing that visitors to the apartment see as they enter.

That painting has been featured in Yusof's book and a year ago, the same gallery owner who facilitated the sale asked me whether I would sell the piece for almost twice what I paid for it.

I told him I'd ask my son as it now belonged to him. And when I did, this is what my son said: "Pa, I like the painting. All my friends like it. I don't want to part with it."

Like my son, that's how I enjoy my paintings ... by liking what pleases my eyes.

I wouldn't know how to wax lyrical about the way he blends his colours, or the fineness of his brush strokes. I wouldn't be able to say what it is about the composition that strikes me; or comment on his artistic procedures or reflect on his skills and use of different media or his perceptual skills, aesthetic criteria and specialized vocabulary.

Certainly, I have read many articles written by well-known critics and art connoisseurs about many artists, including Yusof. But try as I may, I find difficulty grasping the meaning behind so many of these words. Therefore, I stick to what I know — my own feelings when I see a piece of art. If it pleases my eye and makes me happy to see it every day, then I will try and acquire it if I can afford it.

Over the years, we have managed to pick up many of Yusof's paintings and these adorn the walls of our homes and my office. It has brought us much joy and we are grateful.

15 YEARS AND 8 INSTALMENTS OF SEGERAK. 1 LEGEND, YUSOF GHANI.

by Datuk Che Mokhtar Che Ali, Kuala Lumpur

A full circle has come around and it has truly been an incredible journey. Hundreds of works have made their way through the studio of Yusof Ghani and displayed throughout the world, in public galleries and private collections alike, as part of *Segerak*.

How very apt that this final instalment should be themed Utopia. The construct of a societal or community ideal, perfection, is no more a fitting end to the '*Segerak*' series that it deserves. Building a utopia is no different than creating art. Because it is an ideal, the beauty of it is that there are no rules, no structure, with only a blank canvas to arrange the blocks as you see fit. Nothing would be existing to dictate the confines of the lines to be drawn, the colours and the shapes that are to inhibit the grounds of the canvas.

Of course, in an ideal world, everything lasts forever, but the harsh reality that we must all face one day in life is that all things, the good or the bad, must eventually come to an end. For 15 years, we have had the immeasurable fortune to have been a part of this journey of *Segerak*. As we prepare to move to the next chapter of Yusof Ghani and his love affair with the canvas, there is no adjective in the English language that could justifiably describe his greatness and his genius.

Many of us are good in doing the things that we do. But most of us are good with what we are familiar with. We fall back on our experience and similar encounters with the past. So too with Yusof. And then some. With artists, there is always that theme, that colour scheme which makes an appearance time and time again. Series after series, canvas after canvas, from the first painting to the one thousandth. Never deviating. Always within the boundaries of comfort. This is where Yusof is different from the rest, and what makes him the living legend that he is today and will always be.

With *Segerak*, he has moved across the colour palette throughout the years. The fiery red and yellow, the earthly greens and the basic noir of black and white. With each theme, Yusof has been able to put his defining stamp on each piece of canvas that has passed through his studio. Taking on different themes throughout the journey, Yusof has told this particular chapter with such deft skill that it has left those in the presence of the artworks making up each Segerak series at a loss for words.

Goodbye is never a pleasant word, even more so if you have had nothing but pleasure in the time you spent together. The last 15 years of *Segerak* has been unforgettable and will forever remain a cherished memory in all of our hearts. However, as pained as we are to say goodbye, it only means that we get to be blown away by Yusof's brilliance in a different domain. Without a doubt, there is so much more within Yusof that he is so eager to show to the world. With even less doubt, the world is looking forward to it. An artist for the generation, inspiring so many before and after him, there is only one Yusof Ghani. It is a privilege to have been able and to be able to enjoy his genius for all this time and more, but more an honour to have had him as a friend. There has been nothing but warmth exuding from Yusof with every encounter and we can only count our blessings to have lived in this time. Yusof Ghani always has with time to greet you with a smile, no matter if you are an esteemed collector or a budding student of the arts. His unbridled humility makes him even greater.

Like the coolness that comes when night greets the day, the cooler spectrum of colours splashing across the canvas for Utopia. It is the perfect signal that today has come to an end and it is time to look forward to tomorrow. One can only imagine what waits for us beyond this chapter but with absolute certainty, it will be another great chapter in the Yusof Ghani story. I know that it is one that is far from being finished. For now, all I can do is stand back in awe and give my deepest gratitude that I have been able to enjoy this for all this time and more.

Here's to a brilliant 15 years of *Segerak* and the genius behind it all, Yusof Ghani. May you continue to inspire and astound many and more for years to come.

Datuk Che Mokhtar bin Che Ali is the founder of Che Mokhtar & Ling, having been a practising lawyer for more than 30 years following his service as a Magistrate and subsequently as Deputy Public Prosecutor. He is also a director in Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd and Danajamin Nasional Berhad.

SEGERAK – POETRY IN MOTION

by Rajiv Vijayanathan, Kuala Lumpur

"People call me the painter of dancers, but I really wish to capture movement itself." — Edgar Degas

The goal of capturing movement has captivated some of the greatest artists throughout the ages with none less than Degas professing his preoccupation with it. Maybe it is the sheer difficulty of portraying not just the human body but the moving form which has challenged artists over the years or perhaps it is the inherent dynamism of movement which persuades a more compelling composition.

Following his celebrated *Siri Tari*, in *Segerak*, Yusof Ghani introduced an evolving palette of themes and nuances through his interpretation and reinterpretation of the human form to provide a social commentary on the countervailing forces of good and evil in the world and also to simply record his observation of activity in daily life.

While art is most commonly pigeonholed into the categories of abstract and figurative art, the work of Yusof Ghani uniquely straddles both those styles thus allowing him to accommodate the sensibilities of those who might favour either of those forms over the other. Nevertheless, the artist is widely recognised as one of Malaysia's leading exponents of abstract expressionism and in his paintings we bear witness to the unconstrained articulation of his personal emotion and the voice of his deepest soul. As the great American abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock once said, "I want to express my feelings, not illustrate them." That is exactly what Yusof Ghani has achieved in this series of exquisite paintings.

Segerak provides the artist with a fertile landscape to give free rein to his feelings. We see figures darting in and out of the shadows, into light, some liberated from the confines of restraint while others still struggle to break free. His compositions inevitably transcend the literal and often communicate his views on the present or hopes for the future.

Having initially completed a vibrant piece titled Ascendence III in 2017 for the Bandera exhibition in Madrid (Segerak VII), Yusof was drawn to revisit this 106cm x 76cm painting which I subsequently acquired from him following Malaysia's 14th General Elections. As he put it :

"*Bandera* means 'flag' in Spanish and symbolizes the spirit of celebration. I enhanced this painting in May 2018 to celebrate the historic GE 14 result on 9th May 2018. I absolutely love this painting which is one of my favourite *Segerak* pieces."

In the painting, the insinuation of charcoal and chalk figures penetrates a swell of red, blue and yellow energy created by the surrounding brush strokes, giving birth to a purity of motion which is at the heart of the Segerak series. It is as if the separate figures on the canvas are vying for position or perhaps the painting records the different movements of a single person to denote personal rather than social conflict. Although the piece is not big, or perhaps precisely because it isn't, Yusof's favour for the painting lies partly in the fact that he has managed to capture a clarity, range and sheer tension of movement that would normally be found on a much larger canvas. That he has achieved the same effect on a smaller scale speaks volumes for the piece, the real worth of this painting for me is that it perfectly represents not only the most spontaneous depiction of Yusof Ghani's inner self but also his unquestionable genius as a master of abstract expressionism.

The success and longevity of the *Segerak* series, which now enters its eighth edition, has its roots in the artist's enduring passion for the theme of movement, the innate ability of his art to act as a visual metaphor for personal and social conflict, and the humility of his acknowledgement that there is always more to learn. Although we might imagine that his mastery of the moving form has now reached its peak, I have found that Yusof's unrelenting exploration of the *Segerak* theme and his endearing adherence to the philosophy that it should evolve continuously has marked out the series not only as one of his most accomplished oeuvres but also one of the broadest and most influential series of works in the history of Malaysian art. Yet that is only a fragment of the generous legacy that this iconic artist will leave behind for generations of art lovers to come. There is no doubt in my mind that Yusof Ghani has firmly established his place in the pantheon of our country's finest artists.

MY SEGERAK JOURNEY WITH THE MAESTRO

by C. Viknesh Nambiar, Kuala Lumpur

Over the last 15 years, the title *Segerak* and the name Yusof Ghani have been synonymous with each other. Now in its 8th edition with Utopia, it closes with a bang, marking the completion of a stunning series of national significance. I am privileged to know this great man, friend and maestro, and to have experienced the journey of *Segerak* with him over the past few years.

Yusof Ghani is a fine, humble and down-to-earth gentleman. Despite the status and limelight that he justifiably enjoys as one of Malaysia's most prominent artists, he is deeply rooted to his humble beginnings and to the core values that he firmly upholds. He is a good listener, continuously strives to improve himself and is always receptive to constructive feedback. He is also extremely passionate about developing the local art scene and has invested much time, effort and money in upskilling junior artists and showcasing their talents to a wider audience. Above all, he uses art as a platform to connect and inspire people.

As an artist, Yusof Ghani has a very deep connection with his paintings, each of them weaving a story and reflecting his observations, experiences and emotions. The colours, strokes, figures and movements are a visually eloquent expression of messages which he shares with his audience or questions which he poses to provoke their own conclusions.

I treasure my relationship with Yusof Ghani, not only as an art collector but also, more importantly, as a friend. After spending many hours at his studio, I have come to know him as an individual and to understand the message that he hopes to convey through his magnificent paintings.

If you have witnessed Yusof Ghani at work, as I have, it is impossible not to be moved and inspired by the passion and pride that he applies to every one of his pieces. One of my latest acquisitions, titled *Pursuit V*, a rare charcoal painting, is no exception. The marriage of monochromatic tones and energetic movement is a perfect example of how the artist breathes life into art. I had the privilege of experiencing the evolution of this painting, which started out as a simple sketch under the patient and watchful eye of The Maestro. One fine day, while I was watching him work on the sketch and marvelling at his exquisite attention to detail, he told me, "this is going to be a great piece!". By then, I could already feel the energy and tension within the figures. When I saw the completed work, I was left speechless and gratefully succumbed to the inevitability that I would have to own this exceptional painting. The rest, as they say, is history or perhaps, more accurately, MyStory!

As I was feeling nostalgic about the *Segerak* chapter coming to an end, having derived so much artistic pleasure from the series over the years, I noticed in the artist's studio a vibrant painting which featured agile, bold and strong movements. He looked at me with a smile and said, "this is the future". In an instant, I realised that I had just enjoyed a sneak preview of Yusof Ghani's new series, but I do not wish to steal his thunder by letting the cat out of the bag. Suffice to say, I am no longer daunted by the reality that the incomparable *Segerak* series has reached its conclusion. Instead, I eagerly await the arrival of a new series which is sure to mesmerise us all over again.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH A MALAYSIAN MASTER

by Ivan & Tiffany, Singapore

Over a decade ago, my wife Tiffany and I encountered and was enamoured by the art of Malaysian Master Yusof Ghani, in particular his *Series Topeng* (Masks series). Alas, we failed in our endeavours to acquire that one-curated collection of some 12 Topengs which was a private collection.

Our art affair with Yusof Ghani has blossom into full-blown epic proportions since then. We are now hoarding a treasure trove of Yusof Ghani's works from *Series Topeng* (Mask), *Segerak* (Conflict), *Biring* (Cockfighting), *Ombak* (Waves) and *Segerak* redux. There are the earlier seminal works of Yusof Ghani like *Wayang* (Theatre), *Tari* (Dance) and *Hijau* (Green) that are beyond our means or reach.

Why are we so fixated with Yusof Ghani, the man and his art? Over 5 years ago, we had the privilege of a private meeting with Yusof Ghani and a review of his work studio and gallery. The Man exudes an aura of humanity, compassion for the environment and an innate passion of expression of these qualities rarely found in one person. One will inexorably be immediately drawn to this unassuming and dignified gentleman with the unequal abilities and mental strength to draw you into his unique world of art and life.

Art in Yusof Ghani's hands and mind will invite you into his amazing world of aesthetics and ethics. The soulful yet dramatic imagery of Yusof Ghani's art will resonate with all who has the privilege to stand before them. In Yusof Ghani's hands, abstract images turn into reality and the colour and flow of his paint strokes bring life and dimensions to what would otherwise be plain vanilla. One will inexorably and immediately be drawn to this unassuming and dignified gentleman with the unequalled ability and mental strength to invite you into his unique world of art and life.

ART OF YUSOF GHANI

by Lee Warner, United Kingdom

Despite having lived in Malaysia for the last 25 years, I am a relative novice to Malaysian art. Nevertheless, the first time I saw Yusof Ghani's art, I was immediately drawn to the colourful, abstract impressionist work. On auction, I was lucky enough to acquire a *Siri Tari IV*, painted in 1990. It possesses a fluidity with large, sweeping brush strokes, reflecting a bold outpouring of emotion and energy; colours flow in a melee of human movement, the different shapes and angles melding together beautifully.

Yusof Ghani's unique style in the *Siri Tari* series blends colours and shapes into dancelike movements, pleasing to the eye but which also allow your mind to drift and consider the different images reflected within the piece. Only Yusof will be able to describe what he truly sees and how the painting speaks to him but to an art collector/ voyeur, it presents a visual euphony of positive energy and joy.

Having now had the privilege to meet Yusof several times, I find him charming, engaging and as entertaining as his artwork. Through the platform of his work, he has shown me how he also gives back to the community to support and develop Malaysian art and artists, both locally and to a wider global audience. We are all the richer for his contributions.

SEGERAK VIII

by Rick Jason Bok, Kuala Lumpur

"The painting has a life of its own....." Jackson Pollock.

These few words by Jackson Pollock echo in me as I look at Yusof Ghani's *Segerak*. As a young collector, I was deeply honoured when Pak Yusof asked me to write my thoughts about his masterpieces in honour of *Segerak VIII Utopia*.

As a young man growing up in the 80s, I was part of the Generation X era where creativity and cultural influence were the centre of gravity affecting music and arts. The abstract expressionism movement was at its peak and I grew up reading about the established and the upcoming artist, both taking the art scene by storm. Fast forward to today, and these artists from that movement have become legends, icon and national treasures! Yusof Ghani is one of the iconic artists from that era.

I first came across Pak Yusof's *Siri Tari* in the late 80s and was amazed by the colours and figurative-movements displayed on canvas. It was as if the painting was alive! Fast forward to 2018, I now have the opportunity to not only collect but also to spend time to get to know the man who created these masterpieces.

My art collection is often based on these principles.

First, "The Story". Each masterpiece has its story. To understand from the creator's perspective, one has to ask the reasons behind why these masterpiece were created. When Pak Yusof shared with me the story and reasons behind *Segerak*, I immediately related it back to my understanding of the paintings and how I am connected to it. *Segerak VIII* to me exist in a different realm where these figures represent the various aspect human expressions in a world where purity and innocence rule. In other words, utopia.

Second, "The Creativity". Creativity in arts is like a gush of water that flows directly from the source (i.e. artist) to the canvas. The canvas becomes the medium that communicates to all, especially "the Collectors". Creativity in an artist's world is like a river that flows out to the ocean. It never stops! When an artist maestro paints, each painting is unique. There are no two same painting. Pak Yusof's creativity is unlimited! When I look at the various unique masterpieces he produces, many times I find myself matching each canvases to a pair or trios, sometimes even a quartet! Put the canvases next to each other and you get a storyboard!

Third, "The strokes and colours". Abstract expressionism to me is a movement that is spontaneous, full of emotions and combination of colours and formations. It's like listening to music of different genres. Pak Yusof's strokes are genius, spontaneous and rich with emotions that are defined by the different background colours. These colours give life to the figures in each of the *Segerak* paintings while the strokes give out the emotions. Each individual will have a different perspective to *Segerak*. For me, I see them dancing with emotions each time I look at those paintings hanging on my walls! One does not need to look hard into these abstract masterpieces because even with a naked eye, you will have a story to tell.

I am very grateful to be able to own a few of these masterpieces but, most of all, I am honoured to know the maestro up close and personal. It's a friendship I will always cherish and treasure.

Thank you, Pak Yusof, for the treasures you have created and entrusted upon us as collectors for safe keeping.



Segerak VIII - Sanctuary I 92cm x 92cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018

Collection of C. Viknesh Nambiar & Claudia Cadena



Segerak VIII - Sanctuary II 92cm x 92cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018

Collection of C. Viknesh Nambiar & Claudia Cadena



Segerak VIII - Etiquette 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018

Collection of C. Viknesh Nambiar & Claudia Cadena



Segerak VIII - Dignity I 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Dignity II 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Meditation I 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Meditation II 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Nobles I 88cm x 74cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Nobles II 86cm x 73cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Virtuous I 86cm x 73cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Paramount I 96cm x 71cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Paramount II 96cm x 71cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018



Segerak VIII - Aristocrate 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018


Segerak VIII - Ministry I 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018

Collection of Rick Jason Bok



Segerak VIII - Ministry II 86cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018

Collection of Rick Jason Bok



Segerak VIII - Contender 92cm x 76cm Oil & charcoal on canvas 2018

Collection of Lee Warner



Segerak VIII - Pursuit V 122cm x 92cm Charcoal on linen 2017

Collection of C. Viknesh Nambiar & Claudia Cadena



Segerak VIII - Untitled 104cm x 92cm Charcoal on linen 2018

Private Collection



Segerak VIII - Indulgement 122cm x 92cm Charcoal on linen 2018

Private Collection

YUSOF GHANI BIOGRAPHY

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Yusof Ghani

b. 1950

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 SEGERAK VIII UTOPIA Galeri Prima, Kuala Lumpur
- 2018 SEGERAK VII BANDERA Spirit of Celebration Galería BAT Alberto Cornejo, Madrid, Spain
- 2017 SEGERAK VI TRANSCENDENT FIGURES Asia House Gallery, London
- 2015 **TOTEM "Mystic of The Malay Culture"** Berlin, Germany
- 2014 **OMBAK "BREATH OF LIFE"** Museum and Art Gallery, Bank Negara Malaysia
 - **CAPTURED MOMENT** Embassy of Malaysia, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
- 2013 **TOPENG DUA** Chan Hampe Gallery, Raffles, Singapore
- 2011 **TAMAN** Puncak Art Gallery, Shah Alam, Malaysia
- 2010 **WAJAH II** Galeri Nasional, Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2009 WAJAH Richmond Art and Cultural Center, Vancouver, Canada
- 2008 SEGERAK IV The Rotunda, Exchange Square, Hong Kong
- 2007 **BIRING** Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2006 SEGERAK III Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2005 **SEGERAK II** TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia
- 2004 SEGERAK Art Case Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 - **SEVEN MASTERPIECES FROM TARI TO HIJAU** Elm Quay Fine Arts, Micasa, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2002 **HIJAU 1998 2002** Petronas Gallery, KLCC Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 - TARI DRAWING 1993-1996 Elm Quay Fine Arts, Micasa, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

EDUCATION

- 1983 MASTER OF FINE ART (PAINTING) Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
- 1981 **BACHELOR OF FINE ART (GRAPHIC ART)** George Mason University, Virginia, U.S.A.
- 2001 **TOPENG CLASSIC WORK ON PAPER 1995-1997** Elm Quay Fine Arts, Micasa, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 - HIJAU RENIK Art Case Galleries, City Square, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2000 HIJAU RHYTHM OF NATURE Art Case Galleries, City Square, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 - HIJAU RHYTHM OF NATURE Artfolio Gallery, Singapore
- 1999 **TOPENG UNVEILS** Elm Quay Fine Arts, Micasa, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1998 **WAYANG II** Artfolio Gallery, Singapore
- 1997 **WAYANG** Galeri Citra, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

TOPENG - WAYANG Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, U.S.A.

- 1996 WORK ON PAPER III Maybank Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 - **TOPENG III** Takashimaya Gallery, Singapore
- 1995 **TOPENG II** Galeri Citra, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1994 WORK ON PAPER Galeri Shah Alam, Shah Alam, Malaysia
- 1993 **TOPENG** Galeri Citra, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1992 **WORK ON PAPER** Galeriwan, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1989 **TARI** Galeri Citra, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1984 **PROTEST** Anton Gallery, Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
- 1983 **SIRI TARI** Slavia Regina, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 SHAH ALAM BIENNALE - 2nd EDITION TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia

> **INVENTING ABSTRACTION III** TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia

- 2017 **INVENTING ABSTRACTION II KELAHIRAN** TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia
- 2016 SHAH ALAM BIENNALE 1st EDITION TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia
- 2015 **GANDINGAN** TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia

SHARED PASSION "ART OF YUSOF GHANI" The EDGE Galerie, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

KALAM IV TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia

2014 **DUALITY II - YUSOF GHANI & ATIQAH YUSOF** Kuzminki Park, Moscow, Rusia

> **DESTINATION II** Museum of Fine Art, Hanoi, Vietnam

2013 ART EXCHANGE Mulae Art Gallery, Seoul, South Korea

2012 LINK - JAPAN, HOLLAND, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA Tokoh Museum, Johor Bahru, Malaysia

EARTH

Puncak Art Gallery, Shah Alam, Malaysia

MALAYSIA - VIETNAM CONTEMPORARY

Hanoi Museum of Fine Art, Hanoi, Vietnam

2011 KALAM III

Puncak Art Gallery, Shah Alam, Malaysia

2010 **TIGER SHOW** Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

> **SPICES** Pace Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

KALAM Galeri Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2009 KALAM : THE IMPRESSIONS OF CALLIGRAPHY Chandan Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

> STARHILL SCULPTURE FESTIVAL Starhill Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 2008 WARNA : THE MALAYSIAN CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION IN HONG KONG Hong Kong National Library, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong
 - WARNA : THE MALAYSIAN CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION IN HONG KONG Malaysia Building, Wanchai, Hong Kong
- 2007 **TRIPTYCH OF MINDS** The Gallery @ Starhill, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2006 **MIND, BODY and SOUL** Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

18@8 Kuala Lumpur - Karachi Amin Gulgee Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan

- 2003 MALAYSIA -THAILAND Contemporary Art RCK Tower, Bangkok, Thailand
- 2002 **JEJAK KEMBALI** Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

IMAJAN MALAYSIA

Maybank Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2001 **ARUS** Sun Jin Gallery, Singapore

2000 LIGHT & REFLECTION

Art Case Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, London, Kensington, San Francisco and New York

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1999 **V'SPARTIO** Artfolio Gallery, Singapore

> MALAYSIAN ART Atrium Gallery, London, United Kingdom

ASIAN PAINTING Earl Lu Gallery, Singapore

1998 **RUPA MALAYSIA** Brunei Gallery, London, United Kingdom

> **CONTEMPORARY MALAYSIA ART** Abu Dhabi Cultural Art Center, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PICTURES Christies International, Singapore

- 1997 **INAUGURAL EXHIBITION** Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, U.S.A.
- 1996 A CELEBRATION OF NATURE Petronas Gallery, KLCC Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1995 **PAPER CURTAIN** Atrium Gallery, Singapore

1994 **8th TRIENNALE** India Museum of Modern Art, New Delhi, India

> **GETARAN JIWA** Museum of Antropology, Madrid, Spain

- 1993 **IMPRESSION of NUSANTARA** Ginza Pocket Park Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 1992 **ISLAMIC ART** National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1991 **TRIPTYCH OF MIND** Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
- 1990 **TITIAN 3** National Art Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
- 1989 **INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION & WORKSHOP** Kuching Civic Center, Kuching, Malaysia
- 1988 **CONTEMPORARY PAINTINGS OF MALAYSIA** Pasific Asia Museum, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL ART FESTIVAL Saddam Art Center, Baghdad, Iraq

1984 **ARTIST CALL** Gallery Intae, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

AWARDS

1985 **MAJOR** UNICEF Art Asia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

> **MINOR** PNB Art Competition, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

1981 **MOST CREATIVE PROJECT (GRAPHIC ART)** George Mason University, Virginia, U.S.A.

> **Dr. BURT ARMANDA SCHOLARSHIP** George Mason University, Virginia, U.S.A.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

AMERADA HESS Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ANTON GALLERY Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

ARTFOLIO GALLERY Singapore

ASCOT Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

BANK NEGARA Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

BASF Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

CCM Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

CHANGI AIRPORT Singapore

CONCORDE HOTEL Shah Alam, Malaysia

DIGI TELECOMMUNICATION Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

EARL LU GALLERY Singapore

EQUATORIAL HOTEL Penang / Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

GALERI CITRA Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

GALERI SHAH ALAM Shah Alam, Malaysia

GALERI NASIONAL JAKARTA Indonesia

HEI TECH VILLAGE Subang Jaya, Malaysia

HIJJAS KASTURI & ASSOCIATES Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia **ISTANA MESTIKA** Shah Alam, Malaysia

ISTANA NEGARA Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

JENKINS JOHNSON GALLERY San Francisco, U.S.A.

KWAP Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

KELAB DARUL EHSAN Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

KUMPULAN UTUSAN Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

MALAYAN BANKING Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

MALAYSIA MINING CORPORATION Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

MALAYSIAN AIRLINES Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

MTC Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

NATIONAL ART GALLERY Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ORIENTAL BANK Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

PAREMBA Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

PERBADANAN NASIONAL BERHAD Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

PETRONAS REFINERY Melaka, Malaysia

PETRONAS KLCC Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

SAPURA HOLDING Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia **SHERATON HOTEL** Subang Jaya, Malaysia

SILTERRA CORPORATION Malaysia

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM Singapore

SPANCO CORPORATION Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

SOUTHERN BANK Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

STANDARD CHARTERED BANK Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

STATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Kuching, Malaysia

TOKYO GAS Tokyo, Japan

UMW TOYOTA Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

UNILEVER Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

WISMA PUTRA Putrajaya, Malaysia

YOUTH CENTER Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

YTL CORPORATION Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ZAIN & CO. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

BIBLIOGRAPHY, CATALOGUES & PERIODICALS

2015 TOTEM "Mystic of The Malay Culture" 1998 Berlin, Germany Exhibition Catalogue. GANDINGAN TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia Exhibition Catalogue. 2014 CAPTURED MOMENT Embassy of Malaysia, Washington, D.C., U.S.A. Exhibition Catalogue. **DUALITY II - YUSOF GHANI & ATIOAH YUSOF** Kuzminki Park, Moscow, Rusia Exhibition Catalogue. **DESTINATION II** Museum of Fine Art, Hanoi, Vietnam Exhibition Catalogue. 2012 EARTH Puncak Art Gallery, Shah Alam, Malaysia Exhibition Catalogue. 2011 **TAMAN** Puncak Art Gallery, Shah Alam, Malaysia Exhibition Catalogue. KALAM III Puncak Art Gallery, Shah Alam, Malaysia Exhibition Catalogue. 2010 KALAM Galeri Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Exhibition Catalogue. 2006 18@8 Kuala Lumpur - Karachi Wei-Ling Gallery / Amin Gulgee Gallery Exhibition Catalogue by Li-En Chong. SEGERAK III Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Exhibition Catalogue by Lim Wei-Ling. 2002 MAN OF ART by Keith Leong, Art Corridor, September / October. YUSOF GHANI, HIJAU - RHYTHM OF NATURE Art Case Galleries Exhibition Catalogue by Mohamad Khalil Amran. YUSOF GHANI, HIJAU - RHYTHM OF NATURE II

Artfolio Gallery Exhibition Catalogue by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dzul Haimi Md Zain. 998 **RUPA MALAYSIA - CONTEMPORARY MALAYSIAN ART** by Redza Piyadasa, National Art Gallery /

SOUTH EAST ASIAN PICTURES Christie's International Singapore. *Auction Catalogue, May 18.*

Brunei Art Gallery, London.

TREASURE OF RAINFOREST A Malaysian Art Experience, Malaysia Timber Council, September.

1996 WAITING FOR THE DUST TO SETTLE Asian Art News, September / October.

> **THE MASK MAN** Sun Magazine, April 12.

- 1995 **THE MASK OF YUSOF GHANI** Yusof Ghani Topeng II, Galeri Citra. *Exhibition Catalogue.*
- 1993 LOOKING FOR A NEW DIRECTION by Karim Raslan, Asian Art News, January / February.

TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE VISION, THE IDEAS OF MALAYSIAN ART SINCE 1980 edited by T K Sabapathy, pg. 79 - 80, Vision & Idea : Relooking Modern Malaysia Art.

IMPRESSION OF NUSANTARA Contemporary Malaysian Art Exhibition.

Catalogue essay by Ginza Pocket Park, Tokyo, Japan

1992 **STOKING THE FIRE OF ART** Yusof Ghani : Painting, Drawings & Installation Works. *New Sunday Times, August 30.*

1989 **SIRI TARI** Essay by Hijjas Kasturi. *Exhibition Catalogue.*

1987 **TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF MALAYSIAN ART** National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia *Exhibition Catalogue.*

RESEARCH AND SEMINARS

- 2002 **SEAMEO SPAFA** Workshop on Public Art : Purpose, Promotion and Persuasion. Bangkok.
- 2001 SEAMEO SPAFA Seminar on Socio-Cultural Analysis and Interpretation of SEA Folkfore. Yogyakarta.
- 1998 **SINGAPORE ART FESTIVAL** Lecture, Slide Presentation and Exhibition.

BOOKS

- 2019 **SEGERAK VIII UTOPIA** The New Straits Times Press (M) Berhad, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2018 SEGERAK VII BANDERA Spirit of Celebration TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia
- 2017 SEGERAK VI TRANSCENDENT FIGURES TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia
- 2015 SHARED PASSION "ART OF YUSOF GHANI"
 from the Datuk Seri Kalimullah Hassan Collection & Yusof Ghani Collection.
 The Edge Communications, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2014 **OMBAK "BREATH OF LIFE"** Bank Negara Museum and Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2010 **WAJAH** TAPAK, Shah Alam, Malaysia
- 2008 SEGERAK IV The Gallery @ Star Hill, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

SPECIAL APPEARANCE

- 2018 **RENDEZVOUS YUSOF GHANI** A documentary by TRT World, Turkish TV Production.
- 2017 SOFEAROSE X YUSOF GHANI Art to Wear project by Sofearose.
- 2017 **The Studio Visit Prof. Yusof Ghani** Persatuan Seni Rupa Malaysia / PeRUPA.TV
- 2016 **SEGERAK LEBIH DARI TERINDAH** Collaboration in the videoclip "*Lebih Dari Terindah*". A song by Kunci Demak, performed by Nomad & Dayah Bakar.

- 2008 **BIRING** Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2004 **SEGERAK** Utusan Publications and Distributors Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2002 HIJAU Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1999 CAKERAWALA NUSANTARA Poetry & Art (Antology of Poems & Paintings) Maybank, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1997 **YUSOF GHANI : DRAWINGS** Rusli Hashim Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1996 YUSOF GHANI : SIRI TARI TOPENG Rusli Hashim Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1996 **SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART** Reoder Publications, Australia

REVIEWS

2018	CELEBRATING LIFE THROUGH ART The Edge, John Lim, March 4.
2017	Global Citizen: Yusof Ghani Going Places Magazine, Richard, July 26.
2006	THE PASSION OF AN ANGRY MAN The Star, Lim Chia Ying, March 4.
	SPIRIT SHOW The Star, Li-en Chong, March 5.
	1+FIGURES New Straits Times, Loke Poh Lin, March 7.
2003	YUSOF GHANI'S SEVEN MASTERPIECES FROM TARI TO HIJAU The Star, May 22.
2002	FURY UNLEASHED New Straits Times, July 9.
2001	WINDOW TO YUSOF GHANI'S ARTISTIC WORKING The Star, S. Vinotha, April 17.
2000	GREEN MAN The Malay Mail, Wilson Henry, August 25.
	NATURE IN FULL FORCE New Straits Times, Ooi Kok Chuen, September 15.
	MAKING AN ARTISTIC STATEMENT The Star, Victor Chin, September 10.
1999	UNVEILING THE WORK OF YUSOF GHANI The Star, Salina Khalid, July 10.

1997 WAYANG ON SHOW The Sun, Michelle Woo, October 9.

REVEILLING IN COLOUR & DRAMA

Sunday Star, J. Anu, September 28.

1996 **YUSOF PAINTS A TRIBAL STATEMENT** New Straits Times, Sharmin Varghese, March 17.

GROTESQUE INTERPRETATION OF MASK AS OBJECTS OF WORSHIP Singapore Straits Times, Swie Wong, March 23.

1995 **YUSOF UNVEILING THE MASK** The Star, Shahrin Shamsuddin, August 27.

> **EXPRESSIONS FROM THE HEART** The Edge, Sharmin Varghese, August 21.

THE MASK MAN The Sun Magazine, Y A Ghani, April 12.

- 1994 **YUSOF'S INTO UNMASKING HYPOCRISY** New Straits Times, Zieman, May 3.
- 1993 **THE MASK OF IRONY** The Star, Briggite Rozario, July 28.
- 1992 **STOKING THE FIRE OF ART** New Straits Times, Ooi Kok Chuen, August 30.

PUTTING THE MESSAGE ON PAPER The Star, Briggite Rozario, August 24.

- 1991 **REVELATIONS OF THE MIND** Singapore Straits Times, T K Sabapathy, August 23.
- 1990 **PROTEST IN ART** New Straits Times, Ooi Kok Chuen, January 21.
- 1989 **YUSOF GHANI WORLD OF CHAOS** New Straits Times, Ooi Kok Chuen, March 12.

A POWERFUL VISUAL EXPERIENCE The Star, Victor Chin, March 12.

1984 **THE HAUNTING** The Washington Post, Jo Ann Lewis, August 12.

* This statement is true when it is written. Any relevant (last / recent) information that is not included in this statement may be used as long as it is verified. This is because there is information that is not updated because of the inevitable factors.



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