

PRESS RELEASE

Idols and Icons: new photography from Asia & the Middle East

Curated by lola Lenzi

Saturday 25 June – Sunday 17 August 2011

Following on from Yavuz Fine Art's successful inaugural photography show *Open Frame: recent landscape photography from China* in June 2010, the gallery launches ***Idols and Icons: new photography from Southeast Asia & the Middle East*** this coming June. A group show featuring artists such as Nge Lay from Myanmar, Manit Sriwanichpoom, Ampannee and Maitree Siriboon from Thailand, Shadi Ghadirian and Morvarid from Iran and Pinar Yolacan and Lale Tara from Turkey. The series featured are either recent or specifically commissioned for the exhibition.

The exhibition concept is developed around the exploration of the building and meaning of icons. The curator is particularly interested in the shifting significance of icons, as well as the faith, often irrational, that people have in the protection that an idol or amulet is deemed to confer. The art will also probe the relevance of cultural icons, some series examining the surreal, disconnected aspect of iconic rituals opposed to their deeper, sacred meaning. How does one view ancient cultural institutions that survive in appearance, but perhaps not in essence, particularly in contexts that seem to negate them? How do audiences reconcile the outer appearance of people, things and phenomena, and a possibly contradictory inner core?

Spotlighting emblems that form part of our everyday, and sometimes positioning them incongruously in altered environments, the 12 artists included in ***Idols and Icons*** use playful, ironic and sometimes disturbing formal languages to translate their ideas. Though hailing from diverse cultures and regions, and using diverging expressive strategies, the photographers coming together in this exhibition, show how photography, through its inherently ambiguous presentation of reality, is the ideal medium for the illumination of questions revolving around the ubiquitous icon.

The exhibition curator, **lola Lenzi**, is a Singapore-based researcher and critic specialising in Southeast Asian contemporary art. She has curated exhibitions in Singapore, Jakarta, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, and conceptualised the recent blockbuster *Negotiating Home, History and Nation: two decades of contemporary art in Southeast Asia 1991-2011* put up at the Singapore Art Museum.

In conjunction with ***Idols and Icons***, Yavuz Fine Art will present a round-table discussion about contemporary Asian and Middle Eastern photography moderated by lola Lenzi, including some selected artists from the show. The public is invited to attend and participate in the question and answer session on Saturday, 25 June 2011 at 3pm.

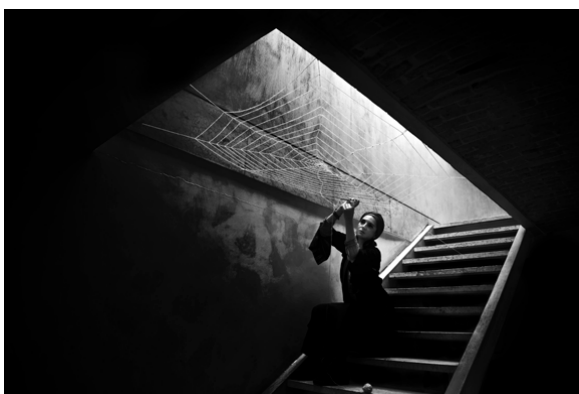
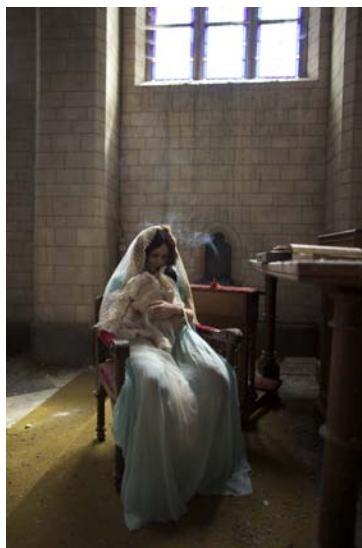
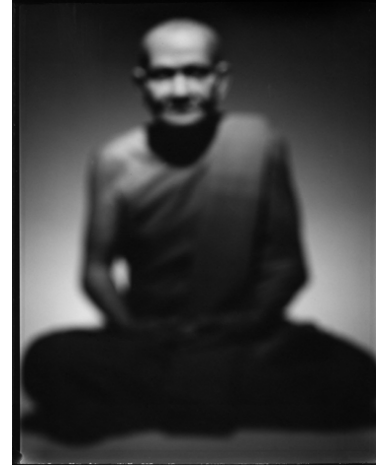
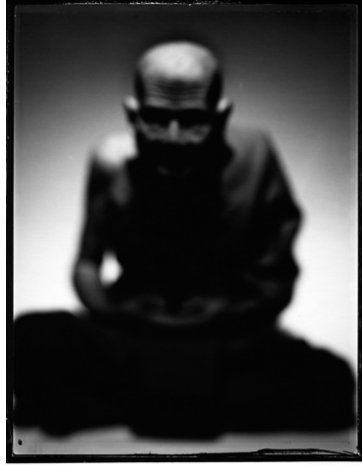
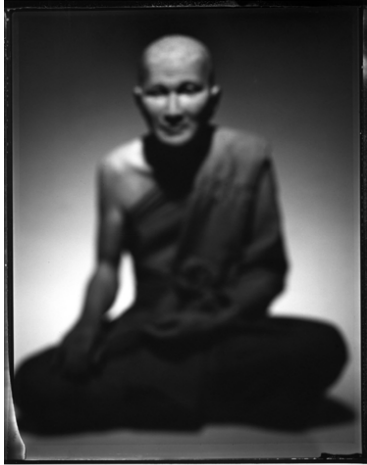
The opening reception for *Idols and Icons: new photography from Asia & the Middle East* in the presence of some of the artists will be held on Friday, 24 June 2011 from 7 – 9pm at 51 Waterloo Street, #03-01.

YAVUZ FINE ART

51 Waterloo Street, #03-01, Singapore 187969
Hours: Wed-Sat: 10am-7pm, Sun: 1pm-5pm
Mon/Tue & Public Holidays by appointment only

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Top: Manit Sriwanichpoom, Masters, 2009, gelatin silver print
Middle: Lale Tara, Innocent Surrogates, 2010, C-Print
Bottom: Shadi Ghadirian, Miss Bufferfly, 2011, C-Print

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Top: Nge Lay, Female Identity, 2009

Middle: Maitree Siriboon, Dream of Beyond, 2010, C-Print

Bottom: Pinar Yolacan, Maria, 2007, C-Print