

Peripheries

Abdul Abdullah & Abdul-Rahman Abdullah

Exhibition dates: 28 November to 19 December 2020
Location: Yavuz Gallery Sydney
86 George Street, Redfern, NSW 2016 Australia

Yavuz Gallery Sydney is proud to present *Peripheries*, the first iteration of two reciprocal exhibitions by brothers Abdul Abdullah and Abdul-Rahman Abdullah.

Peripheries is the first exhibition in which the Abdullah brothers join forces to formally respond to each other's work. These two complementary statements come together to form an incisive dialogue about our current local and global state of affairs, specifically the changing perceptions of centrality and the peripheral in the context of 2020. A global reinforcement of hard borders and legislated isolation has created a redacted experience of the world around us, defined by its limitations.

Abdul Abdullah's new body of work is an explosion of references and styles on the canvas' surface. His signature white lines are overlaid on realistically painted backgrounds – seascapes and cloudscares – denoting movement between physical locations. In a time when travel is impossible for most, these memories of travel help us to reflect on what it means to move over these invisible borders and boundaries, acting as metaphors for our own personal obstacles in life.

Reinterpreted through his white cartoon-like line, the imagery Abdul Abdullah uses comes from a variety of digital ephemera that he describes as “a visual archive of personal and cultural memory”. Within the series *What's mine is yours*, his cartoon figures are engaged in acts of fighting – with all the violence of a children's cartoon. This brand of familial wrestling feels fitting within this exhibition shared by the brothers.

Abdul-Rahman Abdullah's wooden sculptures of wrapped and covered canvases punctuate the space, poetically anchoring the exhibition into the here and now. The surface of the paintings, where content is redacted and forms are shrouded within their wooden forms, are dormant, lying in wait for the moment they will be unveiled. As we too are bound to our homes, these sculptures take comfort from their context of calm domesticity. For some, isolation has forced life to slow down, and shifted priorities to appreciate time spent at home with family.

Centred within the gallery space is a wooden sculpture of a goat, tethered to his chain. Based on Abdul-Rahman Abdullah's pet goat Trevor, it must be noted that the goat is one of the oldest domesticated species of animal, used for their milk, meat and fur. Trevor's comfortable lifestyle comes at the cost of his freedom. Does he know (or even care) what is lacking, when he knows his next meal is coming at the *Same time tomorrow?* The limits of his world are clearly defined, yet he is safe, still, content.

As the final exhibition to Yavuz Gallery's 2020 program in Sydney, *Peripheries* presents significant work from two of our leading contemporary Australian artists and a rare opportunity to see their work side by side.

Abdul-Rahman Abdullah is presented in association with Moore Contemporary. This exhibition has been produced with the support of the WA Dept of Local Govt, Sports & Cultural Industries (DLGSC).

The pair will show the counterpart in their hometown, Perth, at Moore Contemporary in 2021.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

As a seventh-generation Muslim Australian of mixed ethnicity who grew up in suburban Perth (an 'outsider amongst outsiders'), **Abdul Abdullah's** (b. 1986) multi-disciplinary practice is motivated by a longstanding concern on the complex feelings of displacement and alienation associated with histories of diaspora and migration. Providing a voice to these rarely told topics, he creates carefully crafted political commentaries that speak of the 'Other' and the experiences of marginalised communities. While the fraught dynamic of Muslim experiences have provided the initial framework, Abdul Abdullah

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has consciously expanded his practice to include a broader sense of marginalisation. Intersecting between popular culture, contemporary conflicts and personal experience, his recent works renegotiate histories and create space for alternative possibilities and new conversations. Grounding his outlook with an expansive cultural geography that belies reductive boundaries of nationality, Abdul Abdullah represents a new face of emerging artists from the Asia Pacific region. He is collected by institutions including the National Gallery of Australia; Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (Australia); Museum of Contemporary Art (Australia); and MALLAM Contemporary Art Museum (Thailand). In 2019, he was awarded the inaugural Australian Muslim Artist Art Prize. He is also a five-time Archibald Prize finalist and five-time Sulman Prize finalist.

Abdul-Rahman Abdullah (b. 1977) is an Australian artist whose practice explores the different ways that memory can inhabit and emerge from familial spaces. Drawing on the narrative capacity of animal archetypes, crafted objects and the human presence, Abdul-Rahman Abdullah aims to articulate physical dialogues between the natural world, identity and the agency of culture. Working primarily in sculpture and installation, his work has been described as magic realism, creating poetic interventions with the built environment. Living and working in rural Western Australia, he provides unique perspectives across intersecting communities, foregrounding shared understandings of individual identity and new mythologies in a cross-cultural context. He graduated from Curtin University of Technology with a BFA in 2012. In recent years he has exhibited work at a variety of cultural institutes and art galleries including the Museum of Contemporary Art (Australia); Australian Centre for Contemporary Art; Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (Australia); Art Gallery of South Australia, Art Gallery of Western Australia; Art Gallery of New South Wales (Australia); Newcastle Art Gallery (Australia) and Pataka Art + Museum (New Zealand). He is a current board member of the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (Australia).

For inquiries and more information, please contact:

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Selected Images



Abdul Abdullah, *What's mine is yours 3*, 2020 oil on linen, 86 x 66 cm

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Abdul Abdullah, *What's mine is yours 5*, 2020 oil on linen, 86 x 66 cm



Abdul-Rahman Abdullah, *Same time tomorrow*, 2020, painted wood, horn, leather collar, chain, 60 x 110 x 150 cm



Abdul-Rahman Abdullah, *Another time, another place*, 2020, painted wood, 160 x 105 x 15 cm

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