

# ABDUL ABDULLAH WITNESS

**Ames Yavuz**

**Opening** 26 October 2024, 4-7pm

**Artist Walkthrough** 26 October 2024, 5pm

**On view until** 23 November 2024

**Location** Gillman Barracks, 9 Lock Road #02-23, Singapore 108937

Ames Yavuz is pleased to announce *Witness*, Abdul Abdullah's second solo exhibition in Singapore and his sixth with the gallery.

Renowned for his work that interrogates otherness, displacement and identity, Abdullah's approach is always shifting as it is compelling, from vivid self-portraits to thought-provoking public installations and anthropomorphised caricatures.

*Witness* debuts a new series that expands on Abdullah's two critical explorations: the tensions between perception of a person or group and the realities of their lived experience; and of the boundaries and the physical, geographical, political, and spiritual metamorphoses we undergo as we journey across them.

In these works, Abdullah examines how we transpose simplified archetypal myths onto complex historical personal narratives as we peer into one's daily, internal battle with their own conflicts and competing values. Throughout his new paintings on linen and with LED, Abdullah debuts a new anthropomorphised motif: a cat sitting upon or walking beside a horse in a fantastical landscape.

Interested in the significance of cats, horses, and other domesticated animals in fiction, Abdullah explores how they have been used to represent and be placeholders for otherwise human characteristics, and in some cases, narrates for an unseen audience. As the artist explains, "I imagined these animals that often live beside us and among us as vessels for our human projections, and also witnesses to what we do. He continues, "I see

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us as both creatures, where one is the Id, and one is the Super Ego, or one is the voice of doubt or caution, and the other the force of purpose."

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

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, Abdullah has consciously expanded his practice to include a broader sense of marginalisation, and the disjuncture between perception/projection of identity and the reality of lived experience.

Identifying as a Muslim and having both Malay/Indonesian and convict/settler Australian heritage, Abdullah occupies a precarious space in the political discourse that puts him at odds with popular definitions. He sees himself as an artist working in the peripheries of a peripheral city, in a peripheral country, orbiting a world on the brink. Abdullah's works intersect between popular culture, contemporary conflicts and personal experience, renegotiating histories to create space for alternative possibilities and new conversations. Grounding his outlook with an expansive cultural geography that belies reductive boundaries of nationality, Abdullah represents a new face of emerging artists from the Asia-Pacific region.

Abdullah has exhibited internationally extensively across Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea and Germany. Recent curated exhibitions include: *The National 4: Australian Art Now*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia (2023-24); *Fairy Tales*, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Australia (2023); *Un/learning Australia*, Seoul Museum of Art, South Korea (2022); *Monster Theatres*, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia (2020). His work is collected by numerous institutions including: the National Gallery of Australia; Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (Australia); Museum of Contemporary Art (Australia); and MAMAM Contemporary Art Museum (Thailand). In 2019, he was awarded the inaugural Australian Muslim Artist Art Prize. He is also a multiple-time Archibald and Sulman Prize finalist, the most prestigious art prizes in Australia, a rarity for an artist of his years.

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# Selected Works



*Chin up face the day, 2024*  
Oil on linen  
162.5 x 137 cm

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*To go far, go together, 2024*  
Oil on linen  
162.5 x 137 cm

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# About the Gallery

Ames Yavuz embraces its diverse cultural background through a strong international focus and perspective. The gallery's vision is underpinned by robust curatorial practices that form the core of our program and foster intercultural discourse on a global scale.

Representing a wide range of multidisciplinary artists across continents, Ames Yavuz aims to challenge, inspire, and reclaim through art. The gallery provides a platform for transformative and compelling artistic voices who bring care and attention to the most urgent conversations of our time, and celebrates storytelling with authenticity, innovation and wit.

**For further information on the artist and the works, please contact:**

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