

Frieze Seoul 2026

Ames Yavuz

Booth S10, Spotlight Sector

Preview: 2 September 2026

Public days: 3-5 September 2026

Location: COEX Convention & Exhibition Center, 513 Yeongdong-daero, Gangnam District, Seoul, South Korea

Ames Yavuz is pleased to debut at Frieze Seoul with a solo booth by Myanmar-artist **Po Po**. A pioneer in conceptual art, the gallery will feature significant and never-exhibited-before works by the artist created between 1986 to 1990 that challenge accepted art modalities both historically and of the region, influenced by six decades of political struggle, isolation and censorship.

The presentation is located at the new Spotlight sector of the fair, curated by Wonseok Koh (director of Line Cultural Foundation). Spotlight showcases overlooked figures, evolving practices and significant early works by established artists in art-historical narratives beyond dominant Western canons.

A pioneer in conceptual art, artist Po Po (b. 1957, Patheingyi, Myanmar) works across performance, installation, painting and sculpture, among others. His practice is intrinsically rooted in Myanmar, its fraught history and specific struggles, but rendered through the universal register of life's fundamental questions: desire, death, power, semiotics, aesthetics, filtered through an amalgamation of Buddhist spirituality and Western philosophy. This esoteric, philosophical lens becomes a way of making the specific legible, a vehicle through which Myanmar's history is addressed, rather than obscured. In coded visual language, Po Po frames and challenges the country's socio-political landscape through an idiosyncratic interpretation of his environment.

It is impossible to quantify the sheer impact of the isolation and totalitarian rule of Myanmar on its citizens. Like so many artists of his generation, Po Po struggled with a lack of resources, direct and indirect censorship and a general societal resistance against experimental practices. Amongst the first Myanmar artists to embrace the modes and methods of conceptual art in the late-1980s, Po Po joined the notable Gangaw Village Art Group. Founded by the students and graduates of the Art Centre at the Rangoon Arts and Sciences University (now Yangon University) in 1979, the collective provided crucial support to experimental practices in Myanmar.

Our presentation at Frieze Seoul brings together three series conceptualised by the artist between 1986 to 1990.

In the *Painting for the Blind* (1986, reconstructed 2015) series, blank canvas surfaces are mottled with concave and convex dents, created by protruding nails which mimic the raised ridges of braille, in an exploration of tactility and rhythm. The negation of visual representation and heightened physicality of the canvas invites viewers to reconsider the very notion of painting. Here, the subject of the work is reframed as the physical mutations of the surface itself, challenging preconceived expectations of what a painting and representation at large should be. *Painting for the Blind* was part of Po Po's first solo exhibition, *Untitled*, in 1987, held at Myanmar Artistic Association Center, Yangon, which presented a series of works exploring both the limits and conceptual potential of painting.

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Anchoring the booth will be the significant work, *Encounter of Death* (1986) from Po Po's aforementioned 1987 show. Austere, geometric and rendered in the artist's signature graduated palette of red and black, *Encounter of Death* is a tall rectangular work, depicting what resembles a cross at its centre, headed by a skull-like form. Referencing the codification of visual and written languages, the work displays the artist's early interest and exploration of semiotics, underpinned by the consequences of the brutal political upheaval in 1980s Myanmar.

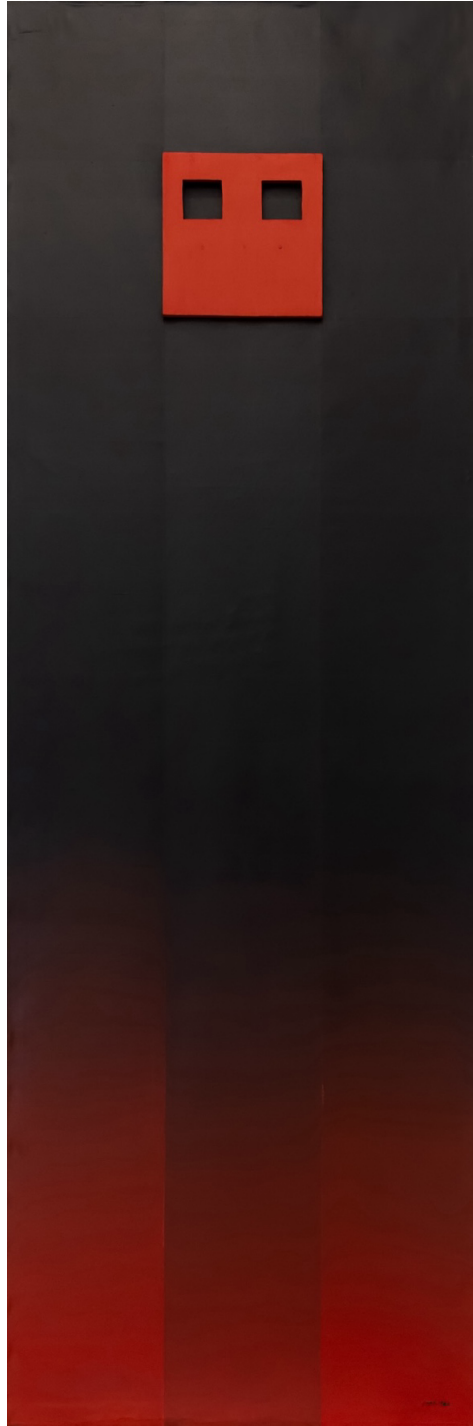
A year after his first solo show, Po Po famously declared painting "dead". This followed the 8888 Uprising in Myanmar where a nationwide wave of peaceful protests challenging the prevailing military regime was met with extreme brutality, leading to thousands of deaths. The event saw the disbanding of the Gangaw Village Art Group and left Po Po disillusioned, believing that traditional canvas was too passive of a medium, incapable of meaningfully engaging with reality. During his ten-year-long hiatus from painting and exhibiting, Po Po sketched and conceptualised numerous works on paper, forming what he calls his 'miniature paintings' which will be displayed in our booth. Created between 1990 to 1993, these small works rendered in colour pencil encapsulate his conceptual explorations throughout his decade-long hiatus.

Po Po was among the first Myanmar artists to exhibit abroad when the country briefly relaxed its border controls in the 1990s. Despite the re-tightening of restrictions in 2021, Po Po has showcased his works across major institutions in Asia-Pacific and Europe, including at the National Gallery Singapore; Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (Japan); Hangaram Art Museum (South Korea); GoEun Museum (South Korea); and House of World Cultures (Germany). He has participated in the 8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2016); Dhaka Art Summit (2016); Singapore Biennale (2013); Yokohama International Triennale of Contemporary Art (2005); Gwangju Biennale (2000); and Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (1999). Recent curated exhibitions include *Talking Objects*, Singapore Art Museum (2026); *MINIMALISM: SPACE. LIGHT. OBJECT.*, National Gallery Singapore (2018-19); *Stop Peeping*, Cement Fondu, Sydney, Australia (2019); *SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now*, Mori Art Museum, National Art Center, Tokyo, Japan (2017), and Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan (2019). His works are collected by National Gallery Singapore, Singapore Art Museum, Mori Art Museum (Japan), and MAM Contemporary Art Museum (Thailand).

Frieze Seoul marks Po Po's return to South Korea since his participation in the 2010 exhibition *Emerging Wave: ASEAN-Korea Contemporary Photo Exhibition*, GoEun Museum of Photography, Busan, and the 2000 Gwangju Biennale.

Po Po currently lives and works in Yangon, Myanmar.

Selected Works

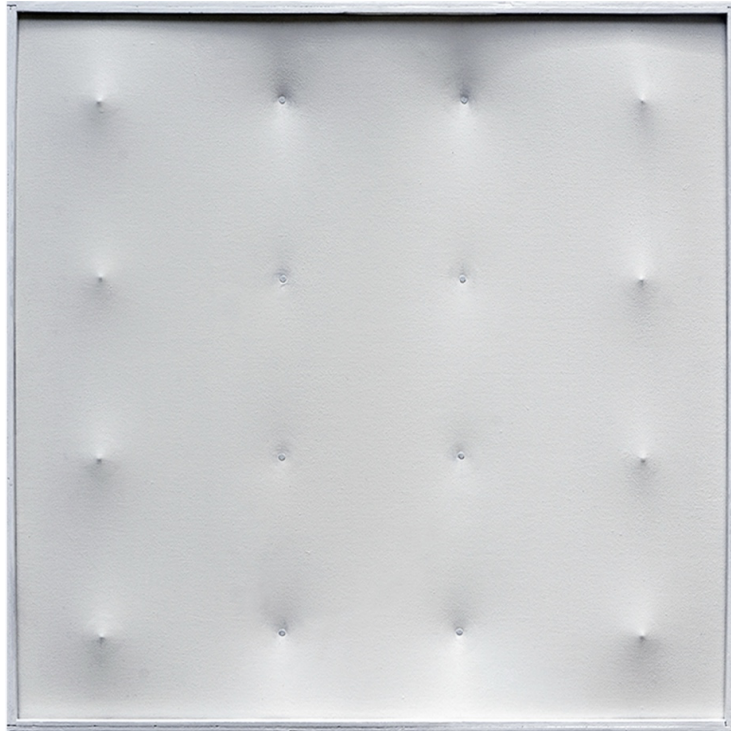


Po Po, *Encounter of Death*, 1986, Oil on canvas and mounted wood, 213.3 x 71 x 5.2 cm

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Po Po, *God*, 1988 (reconstructed 2020), Oil on canvas and mounted canvas, 91.8 x 91.8 x 7.1 cm



Po Po, *Painting for the Blind #8*, 1986 (reconstructed 2015), Oil, enamel and nail on canvas, 76.2 x 76.2 cm



Po Po, *String Quartet #3*, 1989-1991, Colour pencil on notebook paper, 11.3 x 11.3 cm (artwork)



Po Po, *Jazz Quartet #22*, 1990, Colour pencil on notebook paper, 11.4 x 11.4 cm (artwork)



Po Po, *Violin Concerto #1/3*, 1990, Colour pencil on notebook paper, 10.4 x 10.4 cm (artwork)



Po Po, *Violin Concerto #24*, 1990, Colour pencil on notebook paper, 11.2 x 11.5 cm (artwork)

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 artists and the works, please contact:
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