

RAMESH MARIO NITHIYENDRAN

2016 KUANDU BIENNALE
SLAYING MONSTERS

Taipei, Taiwan

CURATOR

Glenn Barkley





RAMESH

2016 KUANDU BIENNALE

SLAYING MONSTERS
Taipei, Taiwan

ARTIST

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

CURATOR

Glenn Barkley

Contents

Introduction

2

'I am a Rock - The Archipelago of Ramesh'
Glenn Barkley

4

Reflecting upon the Kuandu Biennale
Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

18

Biographies

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

19

Glenn Barkley

20

Asialink Arts

21

Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts

22

Acknowledgements

24

Introduction

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran is a contemporary artist who adopts materials and adapts it seems to something resembling a bowerbird. As these birds build elaborately decorated structures with sticks and brightly coloured objects in an attempt to attract a mate, Ramesh adds clay, paint, crockery and found ornaments to the mix. This (I assume), is not in order to attract a mate, but rather audiences and critical conversation on contemporary art practices, including the use of traditional materials in unexpected ways and combinations, faith and the treatment of 'Asian arts' within various western cultural institutions.

Launched on 30 September at the Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts in Taipei at the National University of the Arts (TNUA), Ramesh produced a considered and remarkable series of works in response to the 2016 Kuandu Biennale theme, 'Slaying Monsters'. Collaborating with curator Glenn Barkley, Ramesh resourcefully echoed his interim location by sourcing materials locally and importing his Australian aesthetics.

2016 marks the Biennale's fifth edition, where it adopts a unique structure where 10 artists + 10 curators from the Asian region respond to the theme and participate in the accompanying day long public forum 'Asian Contemporary Art Forum'. 2016 Biennale participants included: (China) Zhang Pei-li, artist + Lu Ming-Jun, curator; (Indonesia) Tromarama + Asikin Hasan; (Japan) Tsubaki Noboru + Mogi Kenichiro; (Korea) Ahn Kyuchul + Lee Dae-Hyung; (Malaysia) Samsudin Wahab + Nur Hanim; (Singapore) Lim Tzay Chuen + Lee Weng-Choy; (Vietnam) Nguyen Phoung Linh + Nguyen Nhu Huy; (Taiwan) Lu Ming-Te + Lai Ying-Ying; (Taiwan) Zhang-Xu Zhan + Gong Jow-Jiun.

According to biennale curator Professor Chu Teh-i, Director of the KdMoFA, the term "*slaying monsters in the world of video games refers to attacking and annihilating vicious monsters therein. However, slaying monsters is not only the kernel of video games but also the very source of pleasure and entertainment for players. It is also now*

an idiomatic phrase referring to surviving hardships in real work environments, which is why it has become a turn of expression drifting amid real-life and virtual experiences."

In preparation for the project, it became clear to Ramesh and Glenn that without commercial and freight constraints, this was an opportunity to experiment with a series of large scale, ephemeral unfired clay works. Responding to the biennale propositions, Ramesh undertook a 3-week residency and produced a suite of new works on-site, responding to location and theme. The result, a large site specific installation, titled '*The Archipelago of Ramesh*,' is a testament to Ramesh's commitment to the project and cooperative relationship to the Glenn as the curator.

The Archipelago of Ramesh continues Asialink Arts longstanding series of projects that survey the work of significant contemporary Australian artists in the Asian region. Our core purposes to expand opportunities for cultural exchange, and develop international capabilities for Australian artists, curators and organisations has been articulated in over 100 exhibitions and biennale projects we have produced since 1990.

It has been an absolute privilege to work with Ramesh and Glenn on the realisation of *The Archipelago of Ramesh*. I extend sincere thanks and appreciation to Ramesh for his inspiring work and challenging ideas that are a great stimulus to all involved, and look forward to the wider public reception that Ramesh's works well deserves. I extend gratitude to Glenn Barkley for his generosity and curatorial vision; Angus Gardner for abling assisting Ramesh in the production of the works in Taipei; Director Chu and Liya Wang from The Kuandu Museum of Arts; and to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for financial assistance.

Sarah Bond
Director Visual Arts, Asialink Arts

介紹：

拉姆許·馬立歐·尼堤岩德蘭是當前澳洲最具影響力，最受關注，和最為成功的年輕藝術家之一。他同策展人葛蘭·巴克利合作，響應2016年關渡雙年展的主題“打怪”，於九月三十日在坐落於台北國立藝術大學的關渡美術館展出了一系列精心打造的杰出作品。

2016年是雙年展舉辦的第五屆。這次展覽構思獨特，共有來自亞太地區的10位藝術家同10位參展人對主題做出響應，並參與了作為展覽一部分的為期一天的公共論壇“亞洲當代藝術論壇”。參展2016年雙年展的有(藝術家+策展人)：張培力+魯明軍(中國)；特拉瑪拉三人組+阿錫金·哈山(印尼)；椿昇+茂木健一郎(日本)；安奎哲+李大衡(韓國)；三蘇丁·瓦哈伯+諾爾·哈寧·穆罕默德·凱魯丁(馬來西亞)；林載春+李永財(新加坡)；阮芳伶+阮如輝(越南)；盧明德+賴瑛瑛(台灣)；張徐展+龔卓軍(台灣)。

根據雙年展的策展人，關渡美術館館長曲德益教授的講解，在電玩的世界中，“打怪”一詞意為攻擊、殲滅遊戲中的反派怪物。電玩遊戲的核心是以“打怪”這個動作所構成，而玩家的快感和遊戲性，亦是建立在“打怪”的經驗之上。在日常的流行用語中，亦常用“打怪”來表達克服現實工作環境中所經歷的“難關”，也因此，“打怪”成了遊走在現實與虛擬經驗之間的用語。“打怪”把遊戲現實化、同時亦把現實遊戲化。

在準備雙年展展品的過程中，拉姆許和葛蘭意識到在脫離商業和貨運的束縛后，他們可以有機會嘗試使用保存期較短的未烘培粘土創作一系列大型藝術。回應雙年展的提議，拉姆許開始了三周的駐館計劃並在期間創作出一系列新作品。其最終作品是一個針對展出地特點而創作的大型裝置藝術：拉姆許群島。這個創作見證了拉姆許對展出項目的投入，以及他同葛蘭作為策展人之間的默契。

拉姆許群島是我們長久以來所關注的亞洲地區杰出當代藝術家作品的延續。我們的宗旨是為澳洲藝術家、策展人，和藝術機構拓展文化交流的機會，以及拓寬其國際能力。自1990年起，我們已經舉辦了超過100屆藝術展覽和雙年展。

能夠同拉姆許和葛蘭合作展出拉姆許群島，我感到無比榮幸。拉姆許極具感召力的作品和其挑戰性的觀點對所有參與其展出的工作人員都是巨大的激勵。我對此深表感激，同時非常期待大眾對他作品的認可。同時，我還真誠感謝葛蘭·巴克利的慷慨的策展遠見；安格斯·蓋德納對拉姆許在台北的展出的協助，來自關渡美術館的曲館長和王麗雅女士，以及外交和外貿部對展覽的贊助。

莎拉·邦德Sarah Bond
視覺藝術主管, Asialink Arts

'I am a Rock - The Archipelago of Ramesh'

By Glenn Barkley

I am a rock I am an island'

The emergence of ceramics in the contemporary art world is both surprising and expected in equal measure.

Surprising as in the turn towards the machine made, the emergence of global artist 'super brands' and the emphasis on manufacturing seems to run counter to ceramics' intuitive hands-on processes.

At least in the way we consider it post modernism and the influence of quintessential Englishman and potter Bernard Leach on generations of Australian practitioners who valued authenticity and foregrounded the idea of the artist's craftsman - making your own clay, mixing your own glazes and working in concentrated solitude - above all others. Even when figures like Leach himself, who had created a proto-mechanised workshop structure, ran counter to the 'movement' this was ignored in the search for an arcane ideal that morphed into 1970s, back to earth movements. So much brown, so much wood.

The influence of various Asian ceramic traditions most notably the Mingei folk movement in Japan seemed to exemplify what the 'potter' should be - not artist but humble practitioner caught in the endless loop of making.

But this is of course a myth unto itself. The belief that a true potter should be all things is unrealistic and running counter to this history is an alternate one which pushes against the orthodoxy. In simple terms it values the handmade over the thrown, the sculptural over the functional and is expansive enough to include design and factory made production.

Practitioners such as Ken Price, Betty Woodman and Ron Nagle in the US, and Alison Britton, Grayson Perry and Richard Slee in the UK have taken clay and ceramic into the world of fine art and galleries, in distinction to the museum, and lessened the emphasis on function and production. All use the studio as a site to make *artwork* over the production of *pottery* - they all speak with that language and collectively they, and others, have primed the art community to accept ceramic as a valid 'contemporary' medium.

The next phase is the adaptation of the material as medium by artist as diverse as Ai Wei Wei to Urs Fischer. It is now a ubiquitous rather than specialised material. Coupled with this is the rapacious appetite of the art market and its horde of globe-trotting art collectors and its constant probing for the next big thing. This has seen the masters of previous generations 'rediscovered', reconsidered and with lots of stock still available to buy! It is debatable how much these collectors and the associated cohort of curators will persist with the medium into the future but clays potential for the moment seems somewhat supercharged.

"I am an island" Some sucker scrawled?

This provides some context for the work of Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran. Ramesh is arguably the most influential, visible and successful artist working with clay in Australia and the pin-up boy of the revitalisation of ceramics in Australia.

Archipelago of Ramesh places the artist right in the centre of production and was created in the time immediate prior to the Kuandu Biennale. It's title gives some indication as to the works meaning.

1 Paul Simon, *I am Rock*, 1965, Columbia Records

2 Richard Clapton, *I am an Island*, Orient Pacific Music, 1982

Australia is a collection of islands perhaps not an archipelago in the traditional sense but its culture is shaped by its island status. Being an island implies, in the beginning of the twentieth century and witnessed by the recent Brexit, a preoccupation with ideas of sovereignty and all that entails - from 'Buy Australian' to 'Stop the Boats' slogans.

The moral, social and political panic of border control and successive governments heightened rhetoric around the issue, captured most brutally eloquently by former Australian Prime Minister John Howard as 'we will decide who comes to this country and circumstances in which they come'³ has made border protection a key issue within successive electoral cycles. At the moment I write this, and concurrently while Ramesh's work is being conceptualised, another Australian Federal election campaign is taking place and border protection is again at its heart.

Australia's position as both a part of Asia and as colonial strong hold is both its strength and weakness. In Sydney, Australia's international city, the mixing of cultures is dynamic and has led to a strange melange of cultural styles within the context of the art world(s). The increasingly important role that Western Sydney plays within this situation, a population that has been made by successive and ongoing waves of migration, will only strengthen its position as cultural engine and powerhouse of ideas.

Conversely many cultural institutions still look outwards towards the old colonial powerbases of Europe and the UK. The colonial mindset still exists and frighteningly Sydney is sometimes exposed as colonial cultural outpost and the cultural capital of Great Britain, another island culture, still holds sway - strangely enough. There is a sense of

measuring against them when we should perhaps be measuring and collaborating with our closer partners.

When I was in my native place I was but a lump of clay

The line above is one often used on English slipware harvest jugs. These jugs, part of an English folk tradition which extended into the 20th century, were also a big influence on the aforementioned Bernard Leach and his first and most notable student Michael Cardew. In the context of this essay they provide a common entry point into the practice of Ramesh and the studio/production pottery movement but where the 'folk' movement is centred around truth to materials - creating and sourcing them yourself or creating glaze and clay recipes from scratch - Ramesh is a believer in the use of ready-made ceramic materials such as contemporary manufactured clay and glaze, bought in a shop ready mixed and from raw materials rather than dug from the earth.

As Ramesh himself has written:

As practitioners and consumers of creative product, we must realise what values are essential to embed within contemporary practice. Should we gravitate towards the safety and mediocrity of the orthodox, and thus continue to make cases for the relevance and necessity for things like wood fired bowls and mugs which are 'un-unique' in their form and treatment? Should we spend decades refining a glaze recipe when Cesco⁴ has produced reliable and robust products that are both affordable and easily accessed? And should we marvel at the finesses and 'technical virtuosity' of white men who produce (copy) Asian ceramic forms?⁵

3 "Liberals accused of trying to rewrite history. Australian Broadcasting Corp". Australian Broadcasting Corporation. 21 November 2001. Retrieved 22 November 2012.

4 An Australian ceramics supply company.

5 Ramesh Mario Nitheyendran *Fundamentalist Pottery vs Contemporary Art* The Journal of Australian Ceramics Vol 55 No 1 April 2016.

Ceramic technology has in a sense brought forth a new kind of folk art. Generally speaking since the 1970s with the emergence of community art and specifically socially-engaged types of practices there has been a push towards community-based workshops using ceramics as a medium. This is coupled with a general simplification in kiln technology and readily available non-toxic glazes. In recent years this has been added to by a general push toward the 'handmade' mass produced table wares. This has added a multitude of new diverse voices to the ceramic landscape – see for instance the work being produced by assisted studios in Australia - Arts Project in Melbourne being the primary example. There the work of artists such as Alan Constable, whose ceramic cameras have been shown in major public spaces such as the National Gallery of Victoria and in the US, has been brought into the so called 'mainstream' art world. Also witness the work of the Indigenous Ernabella potters creating work of powerful originality that is not overwhelmed by technical considerations – being instead direct raw and personal – 'an aesthetic of excess and an amplification of the handprint'.⁶

Ramesh's archipelago speaks of multiple fears and multiple meanings and I want to concentrate on one - the sheer joyful audacity of it. Unfired and formless, spread across the gallery space it borrows from the process art of the late 60s and the scattered exhibition methodology made famous in such exhibitions as Harald Szeeman's *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*.⁷ An exhibition where you could thoughtfully consider the idea as object whilst trying to not trip over it. Ramesh draws out the inherent humour of the conceptual display – it's a matter of having to watch where you walk.

There is also some correlation between the densely packed arena of *Live in Your head: When Attitude Becomes Form* and the shop-style aesthetic of production and studio pottery. The dense collection of objects is, not perhaps acceptable to some, but the display orthodoxy of ceramics with objects piled on top of each other cheek by jowl is an acceptable practice in both the museum and the shop.⁸

As a touchstone of controversy within the insular ceramics world Ramesh work has been described as having 'slop stacking aesthetic'.⁹ This term meant to be a derisory slur instead is an apt description and there is a bit of that but there is also refinement, when its needed, and a crafty swift intelligence that comes from a university training which now foregrounds ideas over materials – but here we have both ideas *and* materials.

The phenomena of Ramesh sitting on his island, his provocations to ceramics orthodoxy and his seemingly easy co-opting of the dialogue of contemporary art is what makes him and his work unique. It is an island rapidly being peopled by those who are turning their back on the cool, over intellectualised to the point of meaningless, contemporary art world and the very straight laced Fundamentalist ceramics community. All being interested in something that is singular and boisterous and challenging the status quo.

Like those before him, Ramesh foregrounds process in his work and the art is in the making – it is purposefully unrefined as if to show every second chance, failure and wrong step – and that's where its magic lies. It makes a space where the good manners of the pottery studio meet Richard Serra scatologically chucking lead into a corner like a baby flinging food and where things are split, spilt, slumped and smeared.

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* (1969) Kunsthalle Bern is the prime example. It was remade in Venice in 2013 for the Fondazione Prada. In 2012 the survey of Australian process, minimal and post-minimal art *Less is More: Minimal and Post-Minimal Art in Australia* (curator Sue Cramer) at Heide Museum of Modern Art caused much discussion due to the dense, trip-worthy installation. It did though, correctly I thought, replicate the original conditions of display. It was only when people got famous and egos inflated that the singular, minimal display really started to take over.



Footnotes from previous page

- 8 My exhibition *Turn Turn Turn* (2015) NAS Sydney also used this aesthetic as a way as bringing together a diversity of practice. In a review of the exhibition Craig Judd rightly points out the correlation between ceramics high profile in the 1960s and 70's and its links to current and conceptual practices: 'Many forget that it was the domestic craft revival of the 1960s and early 1970s that was the petri dish for what we now call Australian contemporary art. In technical schools (pre TAFE) around the country short courses in pottery, ikebana, printmaking and woodworking brought a new understanding of the value of the handmade, and of the positive role that fostering creativity can play in the development of the individual and the community.' <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4373/turn-turn-turn-the-studio-ceramics-tradition-at-th/> (accessed 24/6/2016)
- 9 https://m.facebook.com/groups/545862235577313?feed_ufi=comments - Bill Powell comments 10 May.



Ramesh's work is in turn: childlike, easy, quick, formless, reactive and flippant but it's also the flipside of this: smart, technical (in a way that you only really need to know what you need to know), intuitive, instinctual, robust, traditional, delicate and refined. It's these dichotomies that makes it interesting and he is smart enough to know that sitting somewhere between them is a line worth pursuing.

With its links back to Ramesh's own cultures – his Sri Lankan background, Hinduism and Catholicism, mixed with a University rather than technical training - it forges its own dynamic, a conceptual folk art if you will.

As Crook as Rookwood

From Sydney's central station we can catch a train to Lidcombe to the homeland studio of Ramesh. At Central we can think about the city as a huge complex built on the labour of brick workers who dug into the city's core to make it. It rises up, the brick pits now obliterated but which ran from Central to Chinatown where some vestiges remain. In the endless march of capital as apartments rise and fall – we peer down in to cavernous holes to see the red clay of the Sydney basin embedded within the geographical strata before it becomes strata title.

Move through the city now heading west to Lidcombe – the home of Sydney's great necropolis Rookwood and to be 'as Crook as Rookwood' in the Australian vernacular is to be very sick indeed. My grandfather is buried here probably his father too. All that time, all that rot. Once I laid turf in the cemetery as part of an assignment for a horticultural course. While the grave diggers leant on their shovels and flirted with the girls in my class they told us the soil was good here, for obvious reasons. They had divided the cemetery up into

neat cultural divisions. Maybe we live under the rubric and fantasy of multiculturalism but in death we stand divided – God will sort us out.

Clay has a visceral, sensual and direct appeal that is often at the core of any discussion of it but it is always worth reiterating as it is part of what makes it so appealing. As Ramesh puts it *'I would never describe myself as a 'ceramicist'. I'm more an artist who uses clay... I'm in that 'post-medium' school of thinking. I believe contemporary art is fundamentally about the use of materials to present ideas.'*¹⁰

As an artist who thinks deeply about what he is doing Ramesh knows that working with clay brings you into a direct conversation with the makers of the past. It also opens up history and place in a way that very few art forms do and this is a fairly predictable way to discuss it. But there is also the trap of talking directly to it rather than talking around it and its undeniable, never-ending source of potential.

Clay once made solid by fire and heat has the potential to last millennia but can be reduced back to its basic elements and used again, or discarded. Scattered, porous ephemeral. Look at the surface of his work – every part is active, every surface is worked as if to say 'something has happened here - I needed to be made'.

Ramesh has told me that when the Biennale finishes he wants the work to be returned back to clay, recycled back to where it came – maybe remoulded and reshaped by students or just to nothing – 'Dust/Dust/Dust of dust...'¹¹

We are all just particles, dust to dust, like clay, like bone, like ideas. Raw materials turned back to the earth to possibly be remade again.

¹⁰ Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran unpublished artist statement 2016.

¹¹ T.S. Eliot *Triumphal March* (1931)

我如岩石 – 拉姆許群島

葛蘭·巴克利

我如岩石 是座孤島¹

陶藝出現在當代藝術的世界中是多麼不尋常卻又是預期之內的事。

意外地，機器製造的潮流、全球藝術家如「超級品牌」般的出現、及以生產為導向的趨勢，似乎都與陶藝製作中著重直覺的手感過程背道而馳。

澳洲受到後現代主義及英國陶藝家伯納德·李奇 (Bernard Leach) 所影響的這些藝術家，重視真實性且奠定了藝術工匠的理念—自己動手練土、混合釉料、全心製作作品，視其他事為身外之物。即便李奇早期曾創造機械化工作室的架構，卻仍然重視真實，但也與1970年代神秘主義中的「回到土地運動」完全背道而馳。大量原材質的表現。

影響眾多亞洲陶瓷傳統最鉅的日本民藝運動，似乎是定義何謂「陶藝家」的例證—陶藝家非藝術家，而是在無限創作循環中的謙虛實踐者。

然而，這當然是種自我神話的概念。真正的陶藝家應該要知曉萬物的想法是不切實際的，與陶藝歷史走向南轅北轍，也正好是另一種反傳統的方式。簡而言之，陶藝重視手工甚於傳統，看重雕塑甚於功能，同時亦能具備設計感並且由工廠製造生產。

美國藝術家：肯尼斯·普萊斯 (Ken Price)、貝蒂·伍德曼 (Betty Woodman) 及榮恩·納格 (Ron Nagle) 和英國藝術家：艾莉森·布萊頓 (Alison Britton)、葛瑞森·派瑞 (Grayson Perry) 及李察·斯利 (Richard Slee) 都將陶土及陶藝帶進藝廊及美術館的世界中，並且減少了陶藝中對功能及製作的注重。他們都將工作室作為創造「藝術品」而非製造「陶器」的場所。透過此種作法他們與其他製陶藝術家一同讓藝術圈接受了陶藝，成為真正的「當代」媒材。

1 保羅·賈門,《我如岩石》,1965,哥倫比亞唱片公司。

2 理查德·克萊普頓,《我是座島》,1982,東太平洋音樂唱片公司。

接著，即是接受如艾未未及烏斯·費雪 (Urs Fischer) 將素材作為媒介的多元藝術家了。如今，陶土已是普及、非專門的素材，再加上藝術市場對於陶藝品的胃口、全球大量收藏家與市場對下個暢銷品的追求，陶藝早已見識過上個世代「重新探索」及重新思考的結果，如今倉庫裡仍然有成堆的商品可供購買！到底這些收藏家與相關策展團隊在未來是否會持續地關注陶藝仍然得商榷，但是目前為止陶藝於當代藝術的潛力似乎有些過頭了。

某個混蛋潦草地寫下 「我是座島」²

上述也為拉姆許·馬立歐·尼堤岩德蘭的作品提供了些許脈絡。拉姆許毫無疑問是澳洲以陶為媒材中最具影響力、能見度最高及最成功的藝術家，同時也是復興澳洲陶藝的重要人物。

「拉姆許群島」將藝術家權利置於生產的中心，在他的作品名稱中亦能看出創作本身的意涵。此作品創作時間剛好即是在「關渡雙年展」前。

澳洲是由一系列島嶼所組成的國家，雖然可能並不符合傳統群島的概念，但澳洲文化卻是由這種島嶼概念形塑而成。身為島嶼意味著，我們歷史由二十世紀初才開始，並見證了近期的英國脫歐事件，我們關注在主權議題上及此議題之下的所有一切，諸如：「買下澳洲人」、「停止船隻」的口號。

邊境管制的道德、社會與政治恐慌現象，加上歷屆政府對此問題討論度的提升，讓善於雄辯的澳洲前總理約翰·霍華德 (John Howard) 表示：「我們會決定誰可以進入及在何種狀況下進入這個國家。」，而邊境保護也在連續選舉週期中成為主要議題。在我寫下本文的同時，拉姆許的作品正在概念化，同時間澳洲聯邦選舉活動也在進行，邊境保護問題又再次浮上了檯面。



澳洲的地理位置處於亞洲同時又是殖民重要據點，成為了澳洲優勢與劣勢。澳洲國際都市：雪梨在文化融合的現象上活躍，在藝術領域的脈絡下創造出混雜的文化形態。於此狀態下，由一波波移民浪潮所組成的雪梨西部所扮演的角色 顯得日益重要，亦加深了雪梨作為文化思想重鎮的地位。

另一方面，許多文化機構仍向外尋求歐洲及英國的舊有殖民權力。殖民思維仍然存在，而令人害怕的是，雪梨有時會被揭露它作為大不列顛殖民文化的前哨及重鎮，奇怪的是，在上述的島嶼文化中，雪梨亦同時保有重要影響力。或許 在針對殖民思維衡量的同時，我們應該要先衡量與我們較近的合作同伴。

當我於出生之處，我僅不過是一塊陶土

我們時常可以在英式泥釉陶(slipware)豐收罐上看到上方那句話。豐收罐傳統 延續到20 世紀成為英式傳統民俗的一部分，也對前述提及的伯納德·李奇及其 首名並且最·得注意的學生麥可·卡爾圖(Michael Cardew)有著深遠影響。在此脈絡下，他們為思考拉姆許的實踐與工作室／作品陶藝運動提供了一切入 點：以真實的素材為中心的「民間運動」—自己創造、取得原料、創造釉料或 從頭找出陶土配方。拉姆許是使用現成陶土原料的信奉者，比如在商店裡購買 已混合好的現代製造的陶土、釉料和原料，而不是直接從地上挖掘出原料。

如拉姆許自己所言：

身為創意產品的實踐者和消費者，我們必須了解什麼樣的價值是 嵌入當代實踐的關鍵。我們是否該被安全及平庸的傳統所吸引，因而繼續製作實用且必要的物品，如：柴燒碗和馬克杯，這種形 狀及在處理上都「不特別」的東西？當Cesco 公司已

經能夠製造 數十載來精煉釉料配方？我們又是否該讚嘆白人細膩與「精湛技藝」下製造(仿造)出的亞洲陶藝形式？³

從某種意義上來說，陶藝技術帶來了新的民間藝術。一般來說，1970 年代後社 區藝術的出現，特別是社會參與類型的實踐，社區工作坊也以陶藝作為媒介，而窯燒技術普遍簡化以及現成無毒釉料的出現也起了推波助瀾的作用。近幾年 上述現象加上普遍潮流傾向「手工製作」而非大量生產的餐具，都為陶藝的定 位注入多元的新聲音。我們可以看到由澳洲協作工作室在墨爾本藝術計畫的作 品就是最主要例子：由藝術家艾倫·康斯塔伯(Alan Constable)創作的陶土 相機，在如維多利亞國家美術館這般重要的公共場所展覽，而其作品也在美國 被帶進所謂的「主流」藝術世界。除此之外，我們也見證了埃納貝拉族(Ernabella)的陶藝家創作出強勁且未受到技術考量影響的原創作品，保有直 接、原始與個人的風格，是種「超額美感和擴大手感」。⁴

「拉姆許群島」傳達了多重恐懼及多種意義，在此我想專注於其中一樣：純粹 大膽的喜悅。借用60 年代晚期的過程藝術(process art)模式，未燒製且無型 態的作品散落在藝術空間內，零散的展覽方式如同哈洛·史澤曼(Harald Szeemann)聲名大噪展覽的「住在你腦袋：當態度成為形式」般。讓觀眾在仔 細思考概念成為物體的同時也不被絆倒，拉姆許在概念展示中傳達了他固有的 幽默感—走路要看路。

「住在你腦袋：當態度成為形式」密密麻麻的展覽方式與工作室陶藝和商店式 美感的生產有些許相關。密集的作品或許不被某些人接受，但是傳統陶藝緊密 堆疊在一起的擺飾方式，卻能被美術館及商店所接受。⁵

3 拉姆許·馬立歐·尼堤若德蘭，《基本主義陶藝 vs 當代藝術》，〈澳洲陶藝的旅程〉，第55 卷，2016 年4 月1 日。
4 同上註。

5 我在澳洲國立藝術學院的展覽「轉轉轉」(2015) 也使用美學當作匯集多元化實踐方式。克雷格·賈德在展覽評論中正確點出陶藝在1960 和70 年代的高知名度與陶藝在現今概念實踐的關係：「許多人都忘記國內工藝在1960 與1970 年代初期的復興成了培養如今澳洲當代藝術的

搖籃。澳洲各地的技術學校(TAFE 前)都有陶藝、花道、版畫及木工短期課程，讓人們對手工的意義以及對其培育創意為個人及社群發展所扮演的正面角色有了新的了解。」
<https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4373/turn-turn-turn-the-studio-ceramics-tradition-at-th/>
取自 2016 年6 月24 日)

身為孤立陶藝世界的爭議標準，拉姆許的作品被形容為「泥漿堆疊美學」，此用語原是可笑且有汗辱的含義，卻反而成為貼切的描述，雖然仍帶嘲諷但也有稱讚的意涵。聰明如他，從學院體系訓練出來的拉姆許，如今奠定了超出原料的概念，在他的作品中，我們能見概念及原料同時存在。

如同拉姆許坐在他的小島上，他對傳統陶藝的挑釁及看似輕易地將陶藝拉進與當代藝術對話，都是讓拉姆許本人及作品如此特別的原因。這是座快速被冷酷無情的人群密集佔據的島嶼，他們對無意義的事過度理性探討、對當代藝術和刻板的基本主義陶藝團體置之不理，並對單一、喧鬧和挑戰現況的事物感到興趣。

正如前人，拉姆許強調了自身作品的過程——藝術就是過程，拉姆許特意不精緻化過程就像是要展現每個第二次的機會、失敗和錯誤般，而這也就是創作魔力的所在。這樣不精緻化的過程就如同理·賽拉(Richard Serra)在個有秩序的

陶藝工作室內粗俗地隨意拋物到每個角落並像個孩子般地亂扔食物，在此空間內事物被分裂、揮灑、陷落和胡亂塗抹。拉姆許的作品是：孩子氣、簡單、快速、無形、反動及輕率的；同時亦是聰穎、技術的(你只需知道你該知道的)、直覺、本能、健全、傳統、精美和精緻。

這種二分法正是讓拉姆許的作品如此有趣的原因，而拉姆許也相當聰明，他知道於上述二分法之間是值得他去追求的地帶。藉此連結至拉姆許自身的文化——斯里蘭卡裔、印度教及天主教背景，混合了非技術訓練的學院教育，這些背景創造出了他自己的動力，也可說是種民間藝術概念。

—如洛克伍德般彎曲—

從雪梨中央車站搭火車到利德康比(Lidcombe)，也就是拉姆許的家及工作室所在地。站在城市中央，我們能想像雪梨是座由勞工辛苦扛著磚塊所建成的巨大綜合體，這些勞工向下挖掘至城市的核心才得以打造這座城市。城市向上發展，磚礦坑洞現已被覆蓋，但從城市中央到中國城還能見到些許孔洞的殘跡遺留下來。資金不斷地挹注，公寓不斷地興建及衰敗，如從海綿狀的孔洞向下窺視，能發現雪梨盆地的紅色陶土早在房屋建造前就已鑲嵌於地層之中。

現在漸漸向西行到利德康比，雪梨大型墓地洛克伍德(Rookwood)的所在地，如洛克伍德般彎曲(As Crook as Rookwood)在澳洲俗語中是病入膏肓的意思。我的爺爺葬在此地，而他的祖父或許也在此入土為安。這麼長的時間，這麼多的腐壞。我曾因園藝課需要躺在墓地的草皮上，掘墓工人斜靠在鏟子上與我班上的女同學調情，他們說這片土地肥沃的原因再明顯不過了。墓地清楚分割了文化所在，或許我們活在規則及多元文化主義的幻想之中，但是死亡卻能將我們分開——神會將我們區分開來。

陶土有真實情感、感覺和直接吸引力，經常是任何討論陶藝的核心重點，但是其中值得一再重提的是，這也是讓陶土如此深具感染力的原因。如拉姆許所說：「我永遠不會形容自己是『陶藝家』。我頂多只是個使用陶土的藝術家……我相信『後媒介』學派的思考，我相信當代藝術從根本上是使用材料來傳達概念的。」⁶

身為一個對自己的所作所為深思熟慮的藝術家，拉姆許了解創作陶土可以讓人直接與過去的創作者溝通。創作陶土開創了歷史與場所，這也是極少藝術型態能做到的，亦是可預期的結果，直接談論陶土本質而非圍繞著陶土進行討論還是有落入陷阱的可能，但不可否認的，陶土確實有源源不絕的潛力。

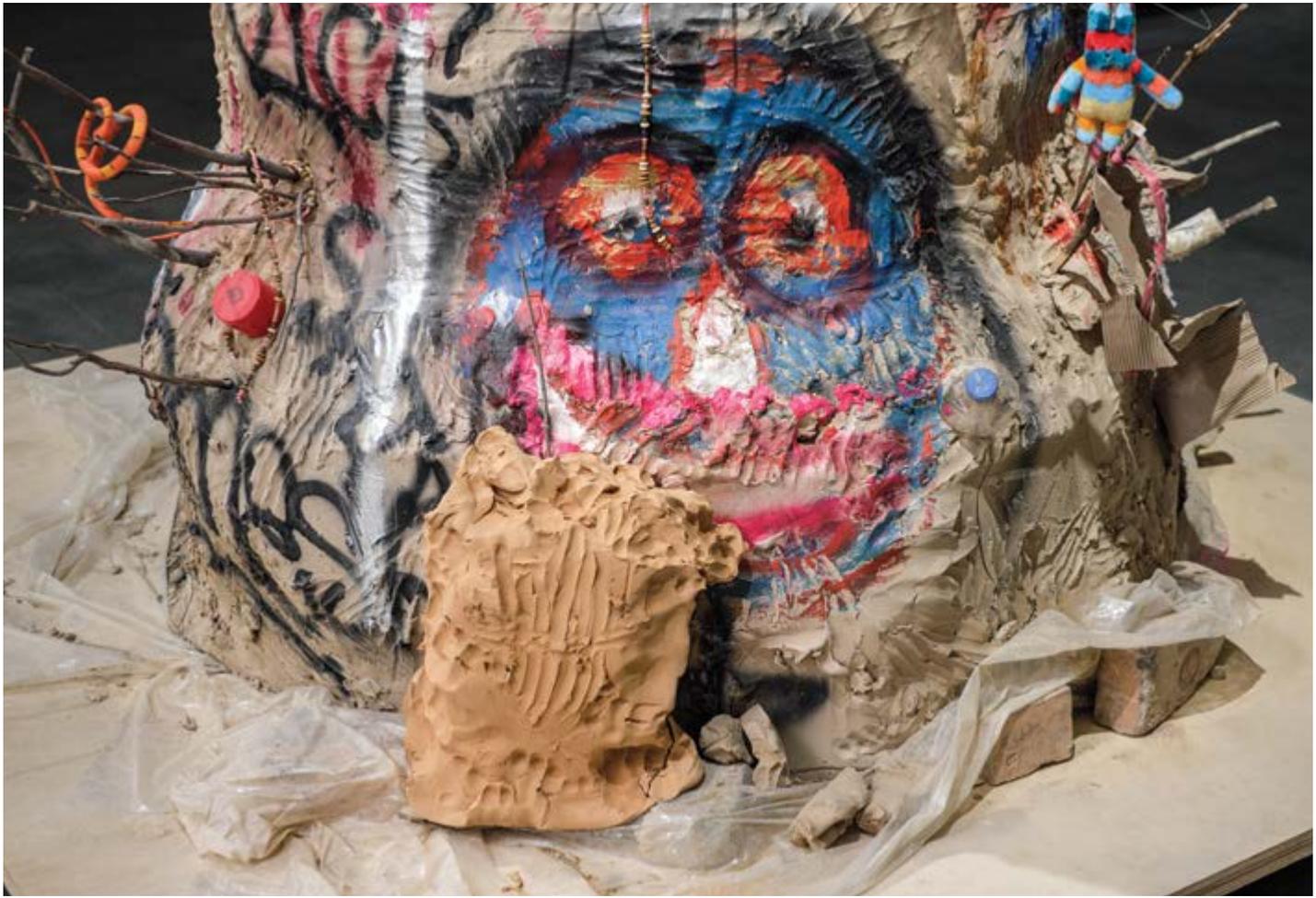
6 拉姆許·馬立歐·尼堤岩德蘭未發表藝術家聲明，2016。

陶土是由火與高溫所塑造出的紮實固體，有存在千年的潛能，但也能變回基本元素再度使用，或丟棄。看著拉姆許的作品表面，它們零散、多孔隙又短暫，每一個部分都是活躍的，每一個表面都像是在訴說著「這裡發生過一些事情— 我需要被創造。」

拉姆許告訴過我當雙年展結束時，他希望他的作品可以回歸到陶土的狀態，從哪來就回收到哪去，或許由學生重新塑造和重新塑形，或者就讓它這樣，什麼也不做— 塵土／塵土／塵土中的塵土…⁷

我們都不過只是粒子，塵歸塵，如同陶土，如同屍骨，如同意念。當原料重新回歸大地或許會有再次被利用的機會。

7 T.S.艾略特，《凱旋進行曲》，1931年。







Reflecting upon the Kuandu Biennale

By Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

As an artist, I'm often plagued with thoughts and insecurities about wastefulness, ego and excess. There are studio days that aren't exciting. Stuff breaks, machines malfunction and temperamental weather floods the studio. I sometimes question the kind of arrogance associated with making objects that may exist for thousands of years.

The time immediately prior to the Kuandu Biennale was a point in my early career where I was enjoying some kind of success and visibility. I was working on projects I was passionate about. I had just completed a monumental commission for my solo exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia and early in the year, for the Art Gallery of South Australia's 2016 Adelaide Biennial. We're talking lots of clay, electricity, manpower, storage and literally; blood, sweat and tears.

At this point, the prospect of creating an installation that would be destroyed/recycled when the exhibition ceased was liberating and exciting. I approached my install for the Kuandu Biennale with this energy. I wanted it to be ephemeral, site-responsive, crazy and disobedient. At the same time, I was distinctly aware of the fact that this opportunity would provide a meaningful context to position my work. It was a Biennale focusing upon ideas and discourses from the Asia-Pacific region. Regionally, this is the most relevant context to frame my practice.

Four tonnes of raw clay, Hello Kitty toys, wigs, rubbish, bottles, sticks, leaves, spray paint and pretty much anything I could scavenge from my immediate surrounds in Taipei were re-purposed and mashed together with efforts to create new age mud idols. These were made in Taipei two and a half weeks prior to the opening. The multi-talented Angus Gardner assisted with the production and managed to keep me in check, while Glenn Barkley's curation was encouraging and inspiring.

Our working space at the Taiwan National University of the Arts was picturesque. It was outdoors, surrounded by dense vegetation and blistering sunlight. We were graced with views of mountains and lush forests. There seemed to be something romantic about being super physical, sweating and being amongst 30+ degree heat while erecting large sculptures made from the earth. Yet, these romantic visions of the landscape seemed to transform as the first typhoon descended upon us.

We experienced three of these typhoons during the time of production. Describing these weather conditions and their effects is a complex task. I recall Glenn describing it to a friend in Australia as, "the worst weather you could possibly imagine". The wind was menacing. Stuff was flying everywhere. My cards flew out of my wallet and down a cliff. There were bugs, frogs, mosquitoes, trees falling and I distinctly remember the warnings about snakes. Angus and I seemed to always be wet. Yet, we decided to work through these conditions. A bit of heroism, bravado, anxiety and perhaps naivety contributed to this decision.

Upon reflection, these extreme weather conditions (compounded by the fact that we were in a foreign environment) influenced and directed the creative process. The mess, grit and inhibition intended for these site-specific idols were direct reflections of the earth and environment they spawned from. The wind, the mud, the big, bold gestures.

拉姆許群島作品背景

作為一個藝術家，我時常自我困擾在和浪費，自負，以及過剩有關的想法和不安全感中。在工作室裡的日子並不總是激動人心的。東西破損，機器運作失常，天氣變幻無常都時有發生。我有時會思考，藝術家要有怎樣的狂妄自大才會去制作能夠存在上千年的物品。

關渡雙年展舉辦之前恰恰是我在早期藝術生涯享有一些成功和知名度的時期。我對我所從事的創作項目抱有極大熱情。那時，我也剛剛完成了一個紀念性的創作項目。這個項目是我為在澳洲國家藝術館的個人展覽，以及早些時候在南澳藝術館舉辦的阿德萊德雙年展的個人展覽，所接手的。這類項目都牽涉到使用大量的泥土，電，人力，儲存空間，並且其間毫不誇張的參雜了許多血汗和淚水。

在這個時候，能夠創造一個展出結束之后即被摧毀回收的安裝藝術讓我充滿了自由和激動的心情。本著這樣的精神，我向關渡雙年展提出我的創作建議。我期待這個作品是暫時的，針對展出地點的，瘋狂的和循規蹈矩的。同時，我非常清楚，這個創作機會將為我的作品定位提供了一有意義的環境。這是一個重視亞太地區想法和對話的雙年展。在這個地域範圍內，這個展覽是和我的藝術時間最相關的。

為了這個項目，四噸的泥土原料，小貓你好玩具，假發，垃圾，瓶子，櫃子，樹葉，噴漆和任何能夠從我在台北居住地附近立即找到的材料都被重新利用，一起搗碎，從而可以被用來創作新時代的泥塑雕像。這些都在雙年展開始兩周半內在台北完成。多才多藝的安格斯·蓋德納在制作過程中對我鼎力相助，葛蘭·巴克利的策展對我有著巨大的鼓勵和激勵。

我們在台北國立藝術大學的工作空間風景優美。工作環境是戶外的，被茂密的植被和炎熱的陽光所環繞。從這裡，我們很幸運的可以看到遠處的山巒和茂密的叢林。在高於30度高溫之下汗流浹背的從事使用泥土建立大型雕塑的高度體力活感覺是浪漫的。然而，這個浪漫在第一次台風來襲之時便嘎然而止。

在整個創作期間，我們總共經歷了三次台風。嘗試描述這樣的天氣環境和它所帶來的後果並不簡單。我回憶葛蘭·巴克利向一個澳洲的朋友描述說：“你能夠想像到的最糟糕的天氣”。風是無情的。我們的東西被吹得七零八散。我的卡片被吹出錢包吹落懸崖。虫子，青蛙，蚊子到處都是，樹被吹到，我還清楚得記得有關蛇的警告。安格斯和我好像總是渾身濕透的。然而，我們決定在這種天氣狀況下繼續工作。做出這樣決定，我們也許很英雄，很勇敢，伴有些許焦慮，同時也很天真。

回想起來，這些極端的天氣（在身處異鄉的情況下）影響和引導了我們的創作過程。其間所經歷的混亂，決心，和局限都在這些應地而生的雕塑中反映出來。風，泥，大膽的藝術表現。

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran is a contemporary artist who lives and works in Sydney, Australia. He was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1988. His sculptural/installation practice, although primarily based in ceramics, involves a diverse range of media and references. His work is underpinned by the notion of the phallus as a signifier to social and political power. Phallic forms in the context of his figurative sculptures are a constant motif, charged with layers of meaning. He has exhibited at various spaces and contexts including the Art Gallery of South Australia's flagship exhibition, the 2016 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art. He has also exhibited at the National Gallery of Australia, the Shepparton Art Museum, The Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Artspace (Sydney) and Canberra Contemporary Art Space. In 2014, was awarded the 2014 NSW Visual Arts Fellowship (emerging) administered through Artspace and Arts NSW. In 2015, he was the winner of the 2015 Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award, Australia's richest and premier award for artists working in the medium of ceramics. His work has featured widely in various publications. Forthcoming exhibitions include a solo contemporary project at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne. Nithiyendran's work is held in various collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of South Australia, Artbank and the Shepparton Art Museum. Nithiyendran is represented by Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney | Singapore

藝術家簡介

拉姆許·馬立歐·尼堤岩德蘭 (Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran) 是在澳洲悉尼居住和創作的現代藝術家。他於1988年出生在斯里蘭卡首都科倫坡。他的雕塑和裝置藝術創作雖以使用陶瓷材料為主，但同時也廣泛使用其它媒介物和資源。他的作品建立在以生殖器作為社會和政治力量符號的基礎上。各種形態的生殖器是他富含寓意的雕塑中常見的主題，代表著不同層次的含義。尼堤岩德蘭的作品已在多處展出，其中包括南澳藝術館的旗艦展會，2016年阿德萊德澳洲藝術雙年展會。他也曾在澳洲國立藝術館，夏普頓藝術博物館，帕斯現代藝術學院，眾多畫廊，藝術空間（悉尼），和堪培拉當代藝術空間展出其作品。在2014年，他被藝術空間和新南威爾士藝術協會授予新南威爾士州視覺藝術獎學金（新興藝術家）。在2015年，他贏得了辛尼邁爾基金的澳洲陶瓷藝術獎。這個獎項這是澳洲最豐厚、最頂級的陶瓷藝術獎項。他的作品在媒體中也被廣泛報道。即將展出其作品的展會中還包括墨爾本伊安·波特藝術博物館的個人藝術展。尼堤岩德蘭的作品被多處收藏，其中包括澳洲國立藝術館，南澳藝術館，藝術銀行(Artbank)和夏普頓藝術館。他的藝術代理人是 sullivan + strumpf

Glenn Barkley

Glenn Barkley is a Sydney-based independent curator. He was previously senior curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (2008-14) and curator of the University of Wollongong Art Collection (1996-2007). Major curatorial projects include *Almanac: The Gift of Ann Lewis AO*, MCA (2009-10), *Making it New: Focus on Contemporary Australian Art*, MCA (2009), *Without Borders: Outsider Art in an Antipodean Context* (co-curated with Peter Fay), Monash University and Campbelltown Art Centre, Sydney (2008), *Australian and Korean Contemporary Art 1976-2011*, an exchange exhibition between the MCA and the NMOCA, Seoul, Korea (2011), *Volume One: MCA Collection*, MCA (2012). Recent projects include in 2015 co-curating with Lesley Harding a major retrospective of Australian artist Aleks Danko at the MCA Australia. In 2016 he was the curator of the Australian Ceramics Biennial *overundersidewaysdown*. Barkley has written extensively on Australian art and culture for magazines such as Art Monthly, Artist Profile and Art and Australia. He is co-Founder and co-Director of The Curators' Department an independent curatorial agency based in Sydney, Australia.

葛蘭·巴克利

葛蘭·巴克利是居住在悉尼的獨立策展人。他曾擔任澳洲當代藝術博物館 (MCA) 的高級策展人 (2008-2014)，以及臥龍崗大學藝術品收藏館的策展人 (1996-2007)。他的主要策展項目包括在澳洲當代藝術博物館 (MCA) 展出的年鑒：安·劉易斯的捐贈 AO (2009-10)，創新：聚焦當代澳洲藝術 (2009)，由蒙納許大學與悉尼坎貝爾鎮藝術中心展出的藝術無國界：多元環境中的外來者藝術 (與彼得·非Peter Fay共同策展) (2008)，澳洲當代藝術博物館與韓國當代藝術博物館的交流展覽：澳洲和韓國當代藝術 1976-2011，首爾，韓國 (2011)，以及在澳洲當代藝術博物館展出的第一卷：澳洲當代藝術博物館展覽 (2012)。他的最新項目包括在2015 與萊斯裡·哈丁 (Lesley Harding) 共同策劃的對澳洲藝術家阿歷克斯·當可 (Aleks Danko) 的作品回顧。這個展覽由澳洲當代藝術博物館展出。在2016年，他是澳洲陶瓷藝術雙年展，在下邊的人行道的下邊的上邊 (overundersidewaysdown) 的策館人。巴克利為《藝術月刊》，《藝術家檔案》，和《澳洲與藝術》這樣的雜誌撰寫了大量關於澳洲藝術和文化的文章。他同時還是策展局 (The Curators' Department) 的聯合創始人與總管。策展局是一個駐扎在澳洲悉尼的獨立策展人代理機構。

Asialink Arts

Asialink Arts is a program of Asialink, an initiative of The University of Melbourne and the Myer Foundation. Established more than 25 years ago, Asialink is Australia's leading centre for the promotion of public understanding and appreciation of Australia's role in the Asian region. The role of Asialink Arts is to develop opportunities for cultural exchange between Australia and Asia. Our programs aim to improve the knowledge, skills and networks of the cultural sector based on partnerships, collaboration and reciprocity. We are a key advocate for promoting policy and debate about cultural engagement with Asia, and deliver residencies, exhibitions and special projects within the region across all art forms. We explore new models and platforms for cultural engagement with Asia, develop the international capability of arts professionals and assist audiences to better understand the arts of our region.

Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts

The Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts (KdMoFA) was established in 2007 at the Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) as the first fine arts museum in Taiwan to be located within a university. The four-storey museum building, with its distinctive purpose-built design, has two levels comprising nine exhibition galleries which offer 2376 square metres of exterior and interior exhibition space. The KdMoFA runs contemporary art and design exhibitions, public forums and an international artist residency program. It also acts as a research centre for undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and learning at TNUA.

Asialink Arts

Asialink Arts 是由墨爾本大學和邁爾基金組織(Myer Foundation)創建的Asialink旗下的項目之一。Asialink 成立已超過25年。它在澳洲是促進公眾了解和重視澳洲在亞洲所扮演角色的領導中心。Asialink Arts的職責是為澳洲和亞洲地區的文化交流創造機會。我們的項目的目的是：在合作和互惠的基礎上，在文化領域提高知識、技能、和交際網絡。我們在眾多領域都是起到核心作用的倡導者。其中包括：促進與亞洲地區文化溝通的政策和辯論；提供駐館計劃；在本區域內舉辦各種藝術形式的展覽和特別項目。我們不斷探索與亞洲地區文化交流合作的新模式和平台，致力於為藝術家開發其國際影響力，以及協助大眾更好的理解區域內的藝術創作。

關渡美術館

關渡美術館(KdMoFA)2007年創立於台北國立藝術大學(TNUA)，是台灣第一座設置於大學校園內的美術館。美術館的建筑设计獨特，共有地面上四個樓層，地面下兩個樓層，擁有9個展覽廳，室內及室外的展覽空間面積共有2376公尺。關渡美術館承辦現代藝術及設計展覽，公共論壇，國際技術家駐館計劃。除此之外，它也為台北國立藝術大學本科和碩博學位的教學提供了一個研究中心。



Acknowledgments

The Archipelago of Ramesh

Artist

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

Curator

Glenn Barkley

Artist Assistant

Angus Gardner

Exhibition Manager

Sarah Bond, Asialink Arts

Publication Editor

Louise Joel, Asialink Arts

Translation

Xia Cui

Dates

30 September - 12 December
2016

Venue

Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts,
TNUA
1 Hsueh-Yuan Rd., Peitou, Taipei
112, TAIWAN

www.kdmofa.tnua.edu.tw/

Publishers

Asialink Arts

The University of Melbourne
Sidney Myer Asia Centre

The University of Melbourne
Parkville, Victoria 3010 Australia
www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/arts

First published in 2016

© 2016 Asialink Arts, the artist
and authors

Edition 500

ISBN 978 0 7340 5315 2



The exhibition has been supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body and the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Image Credits:

The Archipelago of Ramesh
(2016)

2016 Kuandu Biennale:

Slaying Monsters

Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts,
Taiwan

Photographer

Chu Chian

Images courtesy of Kuandu
Museum of Fine Arts



THE VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFT STRATEGY

THE
CURATORS'
DEPARTMENT



