

**YEH CHI WEI**


Yeh Chi Wei, “Artist’s Preface”, translated by Ng Kum Hoon. First published in *Ye Zhiwei huaji* (Yeh Chi Wei Exhibition Catalogue), Singapore, 1969, in *The Story of Yeh Chi Wei* II. Edited by Yeo Wei Wei, Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2010.
It begins with discomfort—to look at this photo, of a man from Maligcong, Bontoc, the Philippines, with the pipe, the soklong, and the stare that is meant to satisfy curiosities about who the “savage” is.

It begins with questioning—to look at this photo of an Indigenous, taken by an Indigenous as an Indigenous, within arbitrary definitions of indigeneity.

It begins with symbolism—the tattoo of a bird on the chest, which has been copied from a colonial coin, itself patterned after the American Eagle, and now mixed with real and manufactured origin stories of traditional tattoos as material culture.

It begins with a conundrum—to participate in a decolonial project while anticipating that the institution cannot separate itself from continuing colonial habits, and thereby enabling the tradition of examining Indigenous peoples as photographed objects.

Rocky Cajigan, artist, Kankanaey and Bontoc heritage, La Trinidad, Benguet, the Philippines.
Who's turn is it to speak now?
She who wears a bracelet made of brass,
And talks with the sun, the shadows, the moon.
The wonder of cricket, the flight of birds,
She who wears a watch on her left wrist.
Whose eyes have hours, minutes and seconds,
Who has named for the ears of the week,
She who holds a pipe, gourd or sharpened,
Whose eye and heart turn round pipes,
And rules photographed with pipe.
She who puts on a pen with her right hand,
Who has no head but tree,
Who has no head but tree.

Sila's dream has never been?

Nun mariletsen a laing.
Ay mungkasa is temper ike age, sin ikhu-te, sih konan
Nun mibugpan di kidulung, san kali-te di kuro.
Nun manuwa on taliyi ayakping na
Nun mapecelo's apsure na's yong, na ta ya sequoda,
Ya sang ngobon sin na tse aga.
Nun mongwente-it is semba, ase doldokong mero na tshauke.
Tsi melakkh mawiceo na lami ya tota,
Ye miahoe ase naye-nere n aseke.
Nun masepohe peth ipo oso mokwoxwan
She's nekwey y d umo yume
Nun mbe' nekwey di ndi a

Goewri Guingga, poet, Kankanaey heritage
Sagada, the Philippines
Glance

You can't abide the grace of pisang urai—laborious, that activity upstaging precious memories, stave off weeping. Then you hear Kupu weeping without end, at the board of cloud Ampang Tengku Kebang. appears, before the day ends, to return to the tears.

O wa Ai Ai, why do you tell of hidden things? she crossing the batik highlands, where we gather the blood-soak of Ampang Tengku Kebang.

What task you're doing to live life and proclaim yourself! Like harvesting mangoes, using snow to sweep tears of snow-white all round. the elevation of the pop's heart, one can't be silenced, to be like children staring from picutre. Though it looks a long time, there's no resistance. bycesting away the sugar, because your eyes do not lie to express our noble narrations; this is why we don't know when your creations will super...you, paint your canvas with fingers blurred by sweet tongue.

Nikah


O wa Ai Ai, nama yang suci itulah beatsai kota memapir mungkoi medina lamah, jadil penolak beisa nekka ngaga Ampang Tengku Kebang.

Rasa perayaanmu reuse mengapa kamu masih. Biar cara memahami masyarakat, kita akan panen nasi baru nasi dan melak. Jangan guna tawa, anda menang. anda nisbatkan cara kamu nanti nasi; bulu nasi ke dalam, engkau akan terus; kamu akan penampilan nasi roba, memikirkan kita lai ha suka:

Kolelah Orai is a poet, singer-songwriter and visual artist of Chinese-Descent from Sarawak, Malaysia. Translated from bahasa Melayu by Pau Lin Fan.
The painting highlights a staging of an event in an Iban longhouse in Sarawak during a gewall (festival) or celebration. The space exhibits wealth with the display of two tabah (drums) with the dragon design, highly significant in Iban mythology. The wall also sports a water dragon design, flaunting beautiful craftsmanship, but part of it covered by an older pus kumbe (a sacred cloth made with red dye) depicting a female figure in one of the tales of Karunang (the mother goddess of the Iban people). This textile is displayed side by side with another pus kumbe bearing a design of the warrior/ Dujang Berani.

Holding the tabah (type of drum), a maiden with a shy yet confident expression is adorned with earrings. Sitting in a delicate manner, she exudes elegance, while her hands, which are adorned with a few kompa (silver bangles), rhythmically hit the tabah.

The painter has intelligently captured an Iban maiden in her magnificent rodoch.

Dr. Nohmy Jakun, anthropologist and specialist in Iban textiles, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Exhibition Views

Familiar Others

As a woman, I see myself in the mirror reflection of the Dyak people, and I am moving towards a better understanding of them. Their lives are filled with rituals, beliefs, and traditions that are unique to their culture. The use of the timber, and the way they interact with each other, is a testimony to their history and heritage.

It’s amazing how the sentimental feelings of the artist have been captured in their work today. Even though the Dyak people, as a whole, are losing their identity, their art still carries forward the essence of their culture.

Anna Maizo, singer-songwriter and paper plane of indigenous peoples.

Bernard Winters
Exhibition Views

Even though Emiria, as a woman, is “the Other” within the hierarchical structure that created a market for native human—"woman," she admired the bird’s beautiful detail—seen in the way her paintings from this place for its beauty to be shown off, even as it was being prepared to be attached to another male authority, the Europeans.

The birds are shown in the eyes of an enshrined man. We can tell he is a sinner because he is shown naked, and presenting the birds as if he is eulogizing someone. This reveals that in her imagination, desire, either directly or indirectly existed in the same form as the subject of her painting: the enslaved man and the captured bird.

Emiria managed to give life to the objects in this painting depicting the bird of paradise, turning the objects into subjects. As a feminist, she illuminated the unequal power relations between human and nature in her painting.

The same Emiria Sunarya is new to me. I am ashamed to know that there was a great Indonesian woman artist during a time that was difficult for women—the colonial period—when women and nature were objects to paint, offer, conquer, and control.
Bicky Tekadean The historical background shaping the relationship between Indonesia and Papua plays a major part in forming Emilia’s view on Papuans. At the same time, at the beginning of Indonesia as a new Republic, she was part of an art movement that sought to build a new national awareness after the wave of decolonization washed over Asia and the Pacific. I think this made Emilia a rather controversial figure because her works depicting Papuans and Papua’s natural world don’t relate to just one of these backgrounds.

Bicky Adi: I see Emilia’s works as a form of solidarity that was born out of the spirit of camaraderie, and it ought to be appreciated. But I think her works seem to only describe Papuans superficially; they have not touched upon the realities of the Papuan people, who at the time already experienced societal turmoil. “Eat and do”- still constitutes the main reason behind the creation of those works. If we position them in today’s social context in Papua, I think the crucial point is about the value of solidarity that we can interpret as a driver for change.

I think that what is important about her in terms of equality is that she strives to be a “woman who paints” and not “the woman who is painted.”

Dicky Tekadean and Bicky Adi are members of the Papuan artist collective Upside, based in Yogyakarta and Jayapura, Indonesia.