



Education Folio  
Melati Suryodarmo  
Indonesia

**How to use this folio**

This education folio contains information about the featured artists in the Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize 2014, their artworks as well as artistic processes, giving visitors a better understanding and appreciation of the artworks displayed.

Questions and activities found at the back of the folio are meant for visitors to have a deeper engagement with each of the finalist artworks. The questions can be used for discussions when looking at the particular artwork, while the suggested activities are designed for educators or parents to explore with their students or children for further engagement beyond the museum visit.

The suggested reading and viewing lists also provide more information about the artist's practice, artwork themes and related ideas or issues, which are aimed at helping educators and readers make interesting and relevant connections to matters in their daily life.

## Introduction

The Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation Signature Art Prize is a premier juried prize inaugurated by the Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation and the Singapore Art Museum in 2008. It is a hallmark of distinction awarded to artists whose artworks represent a significant development in contemporary visual art in the Asia Pacific region.

A triennial competition, the APB Foundation Signature Art Prize seeks to highlight new developments in the visual arts, stimulate lively public discussion and critical debate, and provide a cross-cultural exhibition platform for established practitioners and significant emerging artists alike. Aimed at recognising the single most outstanding contemporary visual artwork produced in the preceding three years, the competition is open to all visual artworks, regardless of medium, subject matter and size.

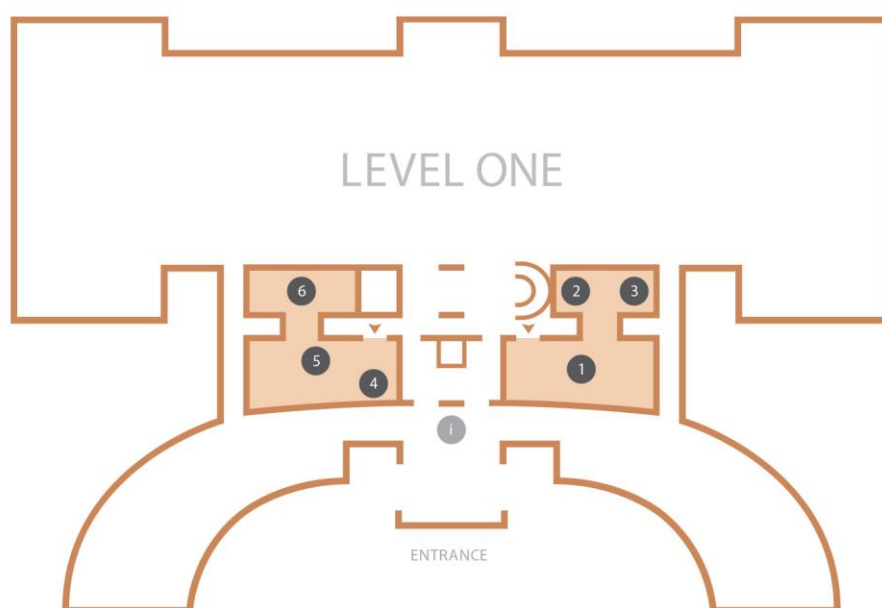
The inaugural edition in 2008 focused only on 12 countries: Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, and received a total of 34 nominations. The APB Foundation Signature Art Prize soon expanded its focus in 2011 to reach the entire Asia Pacific region, including 130 artworks from 23 Asia Pacific countries and territories. Nominations were received from new countries and territories including Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Brunei, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Australia and other Oceania and Pacific islands. The 2014 edition includes nominations from all previous countries and territories, including a nomination from new entrant, Hong Kong.

Nominators from across the region with a wide range of specialties and backgrounds are specially invited to nominate specific artworks – instead of artists – that had been aesthetically, culturally and socially significant in their particular art scenes in the past three years. A diverse panel of distinguished judges, who mostly hail from the Asia-Pacific region, are also selected specially to evaluate the nominations, shortlist the finalists, and decide on the key award-winning works in the APB Foundation Signature Art Prize exhibition

All nominated works are assessed on a set of criteria: the strength of the idea and concept; creative and interesting use of medium and material; technique, expression and form; artistic insight and interpretation, and imagination and originality. The Grand Prize and two Juror's Choice Awards are chosen by the international jury of art experts, critics and curators, while the People's Choice Award will go to the artist whose work garners the most number of public votes.

The APB Foundation Signature Art Prize is a recognition of distinction and significance in artistic practice, presenting the best of contemporary art in the Asia-Pacific region.

## Exhibition map



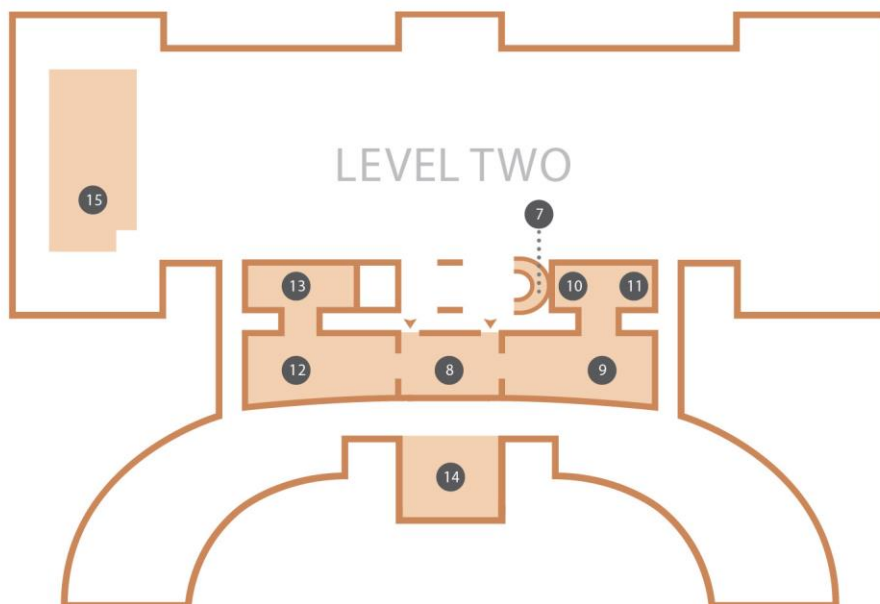
### LEVEL ONE

- 1 Nguyen Trinh Thi
- 2 Robert Zhao Renhui
- 3 Owen Leong
- 4 Farida Batool
- 5 Peng Wei
- 6 Yao Jui-Chung  
+ Lost Society  
Document (LSD)

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## Exhibition map



### LEVEL TWO

- 7 Liu Jianhua
- 8 Choe U-Ram
- 9 Go Watanabe
- 10 Lisa Reihana
- 11 Naeem Mohaiemen
- 12 Arin Rungjang
- 13 Ranbir Kaleka
- 14 Melati Suryodarmo
- 15 Ho Tzu Nven

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**Artwork*****I'm a Ghost in My Own House***

Melati Suryodarmo

2012

Performance, video performance, charcoal, and stone grinding table

Variable dimensions

Collection of the Artist

*Image courtesy of the Artist*

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## About the artwork and artistic process

*I'm a Ghost in My Own House* is a durational performance by Indonesian artist Melati Suryodarmo that is documented as a video work as well. Previously performed at the Lawangwangi Arts and Creative Space, Bandung, Indonesia in 2012, we are witness to the event through the video work, where we see Suryodarmo, in a white dress, crushing and grinding hundreds of kilograms of charcoal on a stone grinding table for a period of 12 hours. After the performance, the **implements** used, also called performance relics, are left behind as an installation.

The artwork was born from Suryodarmo's interest in the **philosophy** and physical processes involved in creating charcoal. Derived by burning the wood of a living tree, charcoal is itself a life-giving natural resource that is necessary for daily living in many parts of Asia. Conversely, fire is also able to burn things down to ashes. *I'm a Ghost in My Own House* is an exploration of the symbolism behind this cycle of life.

The relentless grinding of charcoal in the video performance also works to communicate a sense of loss. For 12 hours, charcoal is ground down to dust, reducing its potential to generate energy and at the same time, building up tension within the viewer, who witnesses and so experiences by proxy the sheer physicality of the performance. As Suryodarmo says, "The charcoal process can represent my thoughts and psychological state, **charred** by a system and of course by my personal events... My thoughts that have been charred by the system, if they pass through the processes of **liberation**, **catharsis**, or death, perhaps they will grow again into something new."

## About the artist

Melati Suryodarmo (b. 1969, Surakarta, Indonesia) holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations Studies from Universitas Padjadjaran Bandung, Indonesia. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts and the Postgraduate Program (Meisterschule) in Performance Art at the Hochschule fuer Bildende Kuenste, Braunschweig, Germany. Suryodarmo also studied under renowned Butoh dancer, Anzu Furukawa and acclaimed performance artist, Marina Abramovic.

Suryodarmo is known for her highly physical, time-based performances, using her body as a theatrical canvas. She has performed widely all over the world, in New York, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Singapore, Sydney and Indonesia, with notable participation in the Venice Biennale Dance Festival (2007), eBent 07 festival in Barcelona (2007), Accione 06 in Madrid (2006), and the 15th International Electronic Art Festival – Video Brasil, Sao Paolo, Brasil (2005). Since 2007, she has been the organiser of an annual Performance Art Laboratory Project for the Padepokan Lemah Putih Solo, Indonesia.



## Discussion and suggested activities

### Questions for discussion

- What is the main material used in this artwork? What do you think it symbolizes? Can you identify other uses for this material in your daily life?
- Watch the video performance and observe the artist. What do her expressions and body language tell you about how she feels while grinding the charcoal? How does this make you feel as a viewer?
- The artist is dressed in a clean white dress at the beginning of the performance. As the performance progresses, the white dress becomes increasingly blackened by the charcoal dust. What might this be symbolic of?
- The performance lasts for a duration of 12 hours and involves a great deal of endurance from the artist. Why do you think the artist has chosen such a long duration for her performance piece? How might a shorter duration of 1 to 2 hours differ from this 12 hour performance?
- Consider the title of the artwork. What or who does the word “ghost” refer to? What are your reasons for making this deduction?
- The artwork consists of the actual 12-hour long live performance, the installation, and the video documentation of the performance itself. How might the use of different mediums influence the viewer’s understanding and experience of the overall work? Why are these different mediums necessary in this work?

### Suggested activities

- *I’m a Ghost in My Own House* is an artwork that seeks to express the artist’s feeling of displacement and of losing the meaning of home. What is your definition of home and how important is this to you? Document the objects, actions or emotions that define your idea of home through photographs or videos and share them with your friends!
- Do some research on durational performance art. What is the longest and shortest performance art pieces ever performed? Why is time an important element for these performance art pieces?

## **Glossary**

### **Implements**

Tools, utensils, or other pieces of equipment that are used for particular purposes.

### **Philosophy**

The rational investigation of the truths and principles of being, knowledge, or conduct. The direct translation from the Greek means 'the love of wisdom'.

### **Charred**

To be burnt or be burned partially, especially so as to blacken the surface of any material.

### **Liberation**

The act of setting someone free from imprisonment, slavery, or oppression; release.

### **Catharsis**

The process of releasing, and thereby providing relief from, strong or repressed emotions.

## Further reading and viewing

### Artist's Website

<http://www.melatisuryodarmo.com/>

### Book on performance art

*Performing the body/performing the text* edited by Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson. Available [here](#).

### Book on performance art

*This is performance art* by Mel Brimfield. Available [here](#).

### Interview with Melati Suryodarmo by the National Portrait Gallery

*Beyond the self* by Hendro Wiyanto. Available [here](#).

### Video introducing the History of Performance Art

*Unlock art: Frank Skinner gives a lesson in performance art* by The Guardian. Available [here](#).