

a solo exhibition by

Ain



*Da
lama
dah*

1 March —
25 May 2025

Fri, Sat, Sun | 12pm—7pm
2, Argus Lane, 10200 George Town, Penang, Malaysia
blankcanvas.my
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Artist's Statement

This exhibition, *da lama dah*, is a deeply personal tribute to the artist's grandmother, Wan, who is suffering from dementia. Through this body of work, the artist reflects on the deterioration of Wan's memory, exploring the complex, emotional experience of watching a loved one slowly forget their own history. Growing up in a diasporic environment, the artist spent much of her life abroad before recently returning to Malaysia, where she settled back into her home country. This return brought with it an emotional resonance between the artist and her grandmother, as they began to share conversations about identity, memory, and the notion of 'home.'

The artist was particularly moved by Wan's longing to return 'home.' This repeated wish prompted the artist to question: *What is home?* What does it mean to create, remember, and live in a home? These questions deeply resonate with the artist's ongoing exploration of identity, particularly within the post-colonial context of Southeast Asia. As someone with a strong interest in themes surrounding identity, displacement, and memory, the artist found that the conversations with Wan were pivotal in understanding the profound relationship between one's roots and the way one is shaped by their surroundings. It became an important dialogue about who we are and what defines us.

Through this exhibition, the artist seeks to archive these moments, presenting additional ways to remember and preserve them. The ceramic plates in the exhibition are handmade from clay the artist sourced from her current backyard. This act of digging and molding the earth around her home is deeply symbolic, as the artist carefully engraves patterns and motifs from the plants surrounding both her current home and Wan's hometown in Kuantan, Pahang. Each plate is unique, fired and baked by the artist herself, serving as a tangible connection to both her own present and her grandmother's past.

The concept of these ceramic plates was inspired by the kitsch souvenir plates commonly found during holiday trips, where families immortalize their vacations through photographs printed onto the ceramic. The artist takes this familiar, almost nostalgic idea and transforms it into something more personal and reflective of her own experiences, memories, and connection to place. Despite her deep appreciation for the handmade process, the artist also incorporates laser printing in the creation of these plates. This decision was an experiment to explore how modern technology can reimagine the ancient craft of ceramics. The photographs, recently rediscovered from the artist's hometown, are laser-printed onto the ceramic plates, breathing new life into these old memories. Some of these faces are no longer remembered or recognized, yet through the laser printing, they are given another chance to be seen and exist again, much like the clay, which is handmade and shaped with care, they are reborn in a new form and space.

During the firing process of the ceramics, the artist became fascinated by the significant amount of ashes created from the materials. This unexpected byproduct led to a new line of exploration. Ash, fragile and soft like snow, yet dangerous to the lungs, intrigued the artist with its ephemeral nature. Initially, the artist experimented with ash as a glaze, but soon discovered the remarkable potential of using it as a painting medium. The artist began to materialize the oral stories passed down through her family, particularly those revolving around her grandmother, Wan. The ash paintings in this exhibition serve as a second series, focusing on the memories and stories that are interwoven with Wan's fading recollections. As Wan's memories become fragmented, the artist attempts to visualize and immortalize these jumbled, shifting stories. Whether or not they are true is less important than the fact that they exist, the act of remembering and sharing them is what holds the most value.

The crumbling, fragile quality of the ash paintings mirrors the ephemeral and evolving nature of oral histories. Just as oral stories shift with time, retold by different voices, the ash paintings reflect this transformation and fragility. The soft, fleeting texture of the ashes adds a layer of care and tenderness to the process, symbolizing the delicate preservation of these stories. Through this material, the artist finds a new way to archive and honor the oral history of her family, particularly that of her grandmother, whose memories continue to slip away with time.

da lama dah is a poignant meditation on memory, identity, and the passage of time. It is an exploration of the delicate act of remembering, of trying to hold on to what is slowly being forgotten, and an effort to preserve the stories and the spaces that shaped us.

da lama dah, a solo exhibition by Ain

1 March - 25 May 2025

12pm - 7pm (Friday, Saturday & Sunday)

Blank Canvas, 2 Argus Lane, George Town, Penang, Malaysia

Kisah Kedua Kali | Tale of the Second Time

Ash painting series

Each 15.0 × 9.8 cm

2024-2025

During the firing process of her ceramics, the artist became captivated by the ashes created as a byproduct. Intrigued by its fragile, ephemeral nature, she began experimenting with ash as a painting medium. This artwork marks the second series of her ash paintings. The resulting ash paintings reflect oral stories passed down from her family, particularly those surrounding her grandmother, Wan. As Wan's fading memories become fragmented, the artist visualizes these shifting, often distorted stories. The crumbling quality of the ash mirrors the fragility of oral histories, while its soft texture symbolizes the tender preservation of these fleeting memories. Through this medium, the artist honors her grandmother's legacy and the act of remembering.

Kisah Kedua Kali | Tale of the Second Time

#1/16, #2/16, #3/16, #4/16

(top left, top right, bottom left and bottom right)



Kisah Kedua Kali | Tale of the Second Time

#5/16



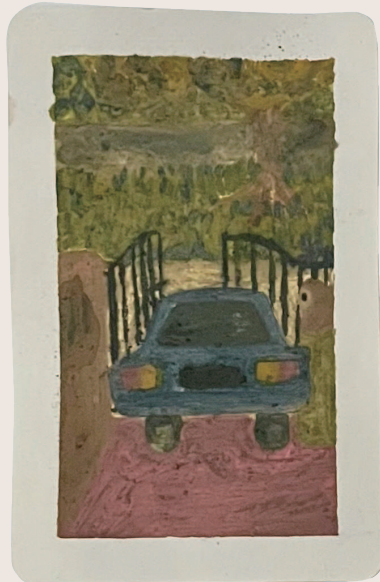
Kisah Kedua Kali | Tale of the Second Time

#6/16, #7/16



Kisah Kedua Kali | Tale of the Second Time

#8/16, #9/16, #10//16 (top left, bottom left and right)



Kisah Kedua Kali | Tale of the Second Time

#11/16, #12/16, #13/16 (left, top right and bottom right)



Kisah Kedua Kali | Tale of the Second Time

#14/16



Kisah Kedua Kali | Tale of the Second Time

#15/16



Kisah Kedua Kali | Tale of the Second Time

#16/16



Lembaran Yang Tidak Dikenali | Unfamiliar Pages

Album of Ash painting portraits

28.0 × 27.3 × 2.8cm

2024-2025

Once again, the artist uses ash as her medium, drawn to its fragile, ephemeral nature. This artwork consists of an album of ash-painted portraits of people from old photographs recently rediscovered, some of which survived or were damaged in a flood over 10 years ago. Though these faces are now unrecognizable, they remain close to the family's memories and still hold value. By painting them once more, the artist offers a fleeting moment of revival, allowing these forgotten faces to be momentarily seen again before slowly fading away. It is an act of honoring their presence, acknowledging their value, and coming to terms with the inevitable passing of time and memory.

Lembaran Yang Tidak Dikenali | Unfamiliar Pages

#1



Lembaran Yang Tidak Dikenali | Unfamiliar Pages

#2



Kerabat Tak Terlihat | Unseen Kin

Series of Ceramics (Handmade clay)

Variable dimensions

2024-2025

Inspired by kitsch souvenir plates that capture family moments, the artist revives old memories through laser-printed photographs rediscovered from her hometown, some of which survived or were damaged in a flood 10 years ago. Handmade from clay sourced from her own backyard, each plate is engraved with motifs inspired by the patterns she observes in the plants, surroundings, and architecture of both her hometown and current home. These plates reshape and reborn forgotten faces and moments, offering a new opportunity to be seen again and reminisced.

Kerabat Tak Terlihat | Unseen Kin

#1/15, #2/15, #3/15 (Left to right)



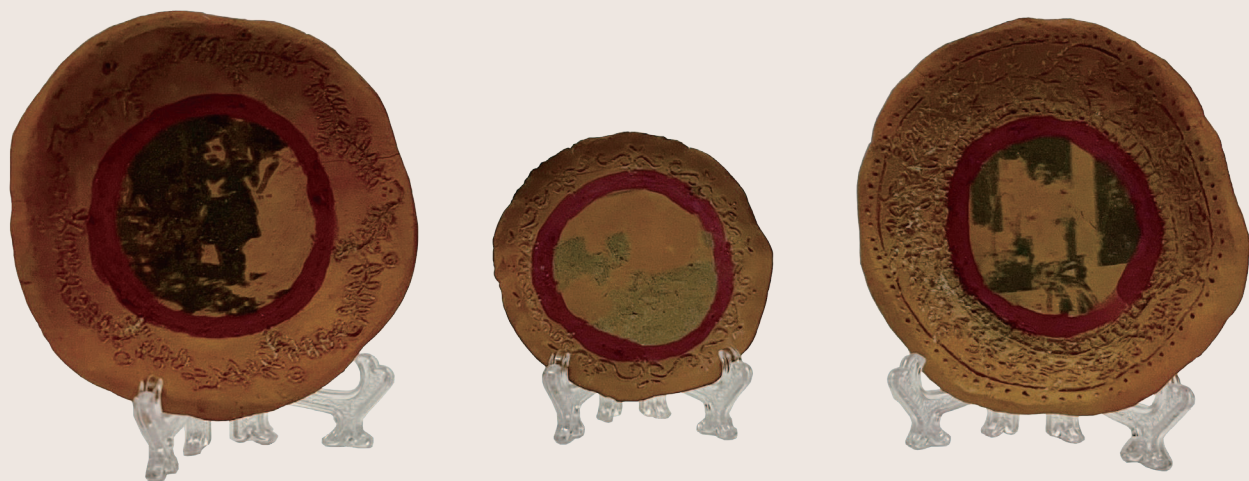
Kerabat Tak Terlihat | Unseen Kin

#4/15, #5/15, #6/15 (Left to right)



Kerabat Tak Terlihat | Unseen Kin

#7/15, #8/15, #9/15 (Left to right)



Kerabat Tak Terlihat | Unseen Kin

#10/15, #11/15, #12/15 (Left to right)



Kerabat Tak Terlihat | Unseen Kin

#13/15, #14/15, #15/15 (Left to right)



Artist

Nurul Ain Binti Nor Halim (2000), in short Ain, is an artist born in Bangkok, Thailand and raised in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan, which makes her have a diasporic identity and longing for belonging. Her practice includes videos, audio, and installations that focus on themes such as belonging, language, memories, and national and cultural identity. Her work reflects her interest in post-colonial discourses, such as cultural preservation, exoticism, craftsmanship, and archives. Besides that, she questions the position and role of artists in decolonization, with references to Aimé Césaire, “Man of Culture”, and how one embraces a post-colonial history and reconstructs itself through culture and arts.



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