

Counting Silence, Filling Space, Weaving Conversation

A solo exhibition of Paul Nickson

July 16th 2022 – August 7th 2022

Gallery Hours: Friday to Sunday, 12pm – 7pm

Curated by Amanda Ariawan and Yap Sau Bin

Paul Nickson Atia continues his meditative method as seen in his second solo exhibition *Form(s) of Prayers* (2019) through a durational project that once again puts him alone in the face of the canvases on which he paints a myriad of squares. Over a hundred of them, each unique piece measuring one square feet, numbered chronologically, will be presented in the space of Rissim Contemporary - this time tempting viewers to engage by counting the squares, comparing patterns, and imagining configurations.

Ritual is the way the artist treats painting, whereby it is considered as a personal and sacred act, simultaneously artistic. The process embodies devotion; starting with priming canvases, carefully drawing lines to form even grids, and, using a single brush, applying Chinese ink in various levels of thickness, with intricate patterns manifesting. Akin to one's communication with the divine, it is an experience that is silent and leaves others with nothing more than abstract traces. Imprints of the artist's self-reflection, in which he absorbedly recounted his worships, as well as blessings and sins of a life lived.

Atia's delving into the idea of obsession dates back to his early practice of line drawing, which served him as a visual language to express his fascination with cityscapes. Those lines were perhaps the roots of what formed his grids today, in which obsession is evident in the way he repeatedly fills empty spaces with canvas and proceeds consistently from one canvas to another. Putting forward this *modus operandi* in the current *Counting Silence* series, the artist sees no end to his process, with time being the only limit of production. Thus, the number of works that will end up filling the walls of the exhibition space shall be determined somewhat by the artist's adherence to the ritual he committed to. Arrayed on the walls, visitors are made responsible for the final verdict of the artist's journey. Was he consistent throughout? Has he done enough to call the series finished? What repeating patterns are there?

Finding it crucial to create dialogues as mean to extend from the artist's personal relationship with the series, the exhibition setting explored by the curators involve the amalgamation of multiple conversations. Taking various keywords as points of departure, exchanges of thoughts will take place between the artist and curators over a course of time. Extracts of the conversation will be presented subtly, anonymously, and in an aleatory manner below artworks, almost like whispers that will permeate and challenge the silence which imbues the gallery space.

Selected words will also be part of a manual that the artist intends to make available for visitors and collectors, to whom the artist decided to trust the artworks' autonomy. *Counting Silence* is the first body of work by the artist that accentuates and affirms his vision of modularity in paintings. Intersecting Bauhaus concept with his own adaptive choice of form, the manual will present several illustrated configurations of how the paintings in this series may be displayed. Curated compositions will also be displayed in the gallery - stimulating limitless possibilities of how these works could occupy the space we are in, and speculation of Atia's vision to come.

RISSIM CONTEMPORARY

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Paul Nickson Atia (b. 1992, Sarawak; lives and works in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) is a young artist from Malaysia. His main interest lies in converging theories and conceptual framework of arts, architecture, history, anthropology, culture, the geopolitics and identities in contemporary art practice and narratives. His solo exhibition FORM(S) OF PRAYER(S) in 2019, explored the concept of prayers through the use of repetitive elements in his works. The series is manifested as questions and tribute over the act of paying respect towards concepts of prayers - the reaffirmation of faith or formation of new faith.

In 2021, he exhibited in a group show "May, We...", May 13 1969" under Japan Foundation KL (JFKL) Curatorial Workshop and Mentorship Program to explore the current generation's perspective on the racial riot that was known as the darkest day for Malaysia. Paul presented a performative-based installation work that conceptually tackled the incident through the act of cleansing and the purpose of the responsibility to study the sufferings by offering the washing of the visitor's feet.

Paul holds a degree in architecture- practicing and teaching locally for several years before turning his artistic pursuit towards drawings, paintings, and art installations. His most recent exhibition was with Gajah Gallery, Singapore (2022) and will be taking part in the Rimbun Dahan Residency (2022).

Rissim Contemporary is a contemporary art gallery located in Kuala Lumpur, with a focus on exhibiting new and emerging Malaysian artists. Established in 2019, the gallery strives to not only introduce new names to the Malaysian art scene but nurture a new audience of young collectors.

Rissim Contemporary is located at:

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