

Basel's Back, Baby

With the fair back to its pre-pandemic scale, we scour the 243 galleries from 40 countries and give you our picks of the most exciting emerging artists both from Asia and of Asian descent

By Aaina Bhargava

Art Basel Hong Kong is the commercial event with the best selection of Asian art in the region, and this year, now that the Swiss-owned show has resumed its pre-pandemic scale, there's even more art to look out for. The fair's Insights section is curated with Asian art in mind, while the Discoveries section features exciting new and young emerging talent. Interest in Asian art, from both the region and the diaspora, has been growing among both institutions and collectors around the world.

Here are eight artists from across the continent or of Asian descent whose work we recommend you look out for.



Fiza Khatri's *Gajra* (2022).
Opposite page, from left:
 Nawin Nuthong's *Smiling Map* (2024); Antonia Kuo's *Centrifuge* (2023); Jantsankhorol Erdenebayar's *Hat-Trick* (2023)

FIZA KHATRI

Jhaveri Contemporary, Booth 1C39



Mumbai-based gallery Jhaveri Contemporary is set to showcase an immersive installation

of paintings, drawings, and sculptures by Connecticut-based Pakistani artist Fiza Khatri, the first time her works will be shown in Hong Kong. The artist is known for her intimate drawings and portraits that depict both singular and multigure scenes inspired from observation and imagined

scenarios that the artist longs to inhabit, and are often informed by her experiences in feminist and queer advocacy in Pakistan. These portraits surround the centrepiece of the booth, a seven-panel painting, *Beloved* (2024), in which traditional floral garlands that have significant cultural implications—they mark ceremonious occasions such as weddings and funerals—spell out the work's title. The word "beloved" is commonly used in Sufi songs and poetry; Khatri uses this poetic connection to highlight the association between beauty and the sacred.

IMAGE COURTESY OF FIZA KHATRI AND JHAVERI CONTEMPORARY

NAWIN NUTHONG

Bangkok CityCity, Booth 1C41

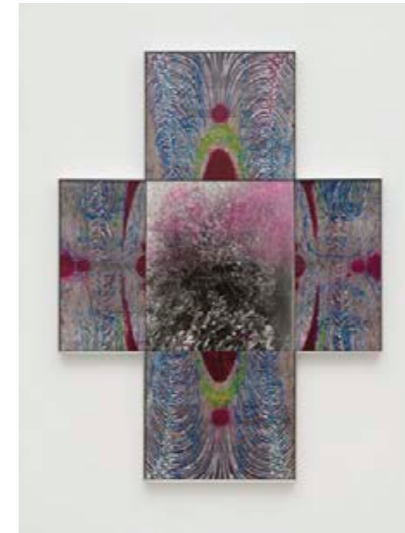


For *Culture is Flux*, his new body of work to be presented at Art Basel Hong Kong, Thai artist

Nawin Nuthong takes the Cold War and nuclear arms race as a point of departure, exploring their impact on countries other than the superpowers involved. The collection spans a wide range of media including paintings, hand-pulled screen-print on paper and aluminium canvases, sculptures and video works. Consistent with his practice, the works pulls from pop cultural references such as video games, films and comics, as well as myths and legends.

The title of the presentation was conceived while thinking about our current cultural climate: Nuthong probes the ethics of how history is recorded, and questions how commercialisation shapes our culture, specifically in regard to how tourist consumption has commodified authentic practices, rituals and artefacts.

IMAGES COURTESY OF NAWIN NUTHONG AND BANGKOK CITYCITY (SMILING MAP); COURTESY OF ANTONIA KUO AND CHAPTER NY (CENTRIFUGE); COURTESY OF JANTSANKHOROL ERDENEBAYAR AND FLOWERS GALLERY (HAT-TRICK)



JANTSANKHOROL ERDENEBAYAR

Flowers Gallery, Booth 3D23



The presentation by Mongolian artist Jantsankhorol Erdenebayar, who goes by Jansta,

is one of the most anticipated presentations of the fair. The sculptor is set to present his body of work *Middle Child* at Flowers Gallery. Drawing from his heritage, Erdenebayar uses Mongolian folklore, proverbs, and his own ancestral ties and personal beliefs to create assemblage-like sculptures that hint at medieval relics, with

ANTONIA KUO

Chapter NY, Booth 1C29



Taiwanese American artist Antonia Kuo is best known for her photochemical paintings, employing

processes unique to her practice in which she layers photochemistry—chemical reactions caused by light—and dyes on light-sensitive silver gelatin paper. Her work merges painting and photography to yield an aesthetic influenced in part by her Taiwanese mother's Chinese ink painting practice.

At the fair, Chapter NY will showcase *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand*, a multimedia presentation featuring a series of multipanel wall works and two sculptures on artist-fabricated plinths. The multi-panel wall pieces represent a new hybrid body of work in which Kuo's photochemical paintings merge with silver gelatin photographs, mounted sculptural reliefs and powder-coated aluminium panels to create multipart compositions that intrinsically document change and reveal transformation. Kuo's sculptures mimic elements of machinery and serve as recordings of lost forms.



their raw, rustic aesthetic. He uses found, often natural objects from the local landscape, such as goat horn and discarded wood—items that reference nomadic culture and highlight issues of mass consumption and the scarcity of resources facing an increasingly globalised Mongolian economy and society. Fun fact: Erdenebayar hails from an artistic lineage: he represented Mongolia at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019, while his mother, Munkhtsetseg Jalkhaajav (Mugi), followed suit in 2022.

YONA LEE

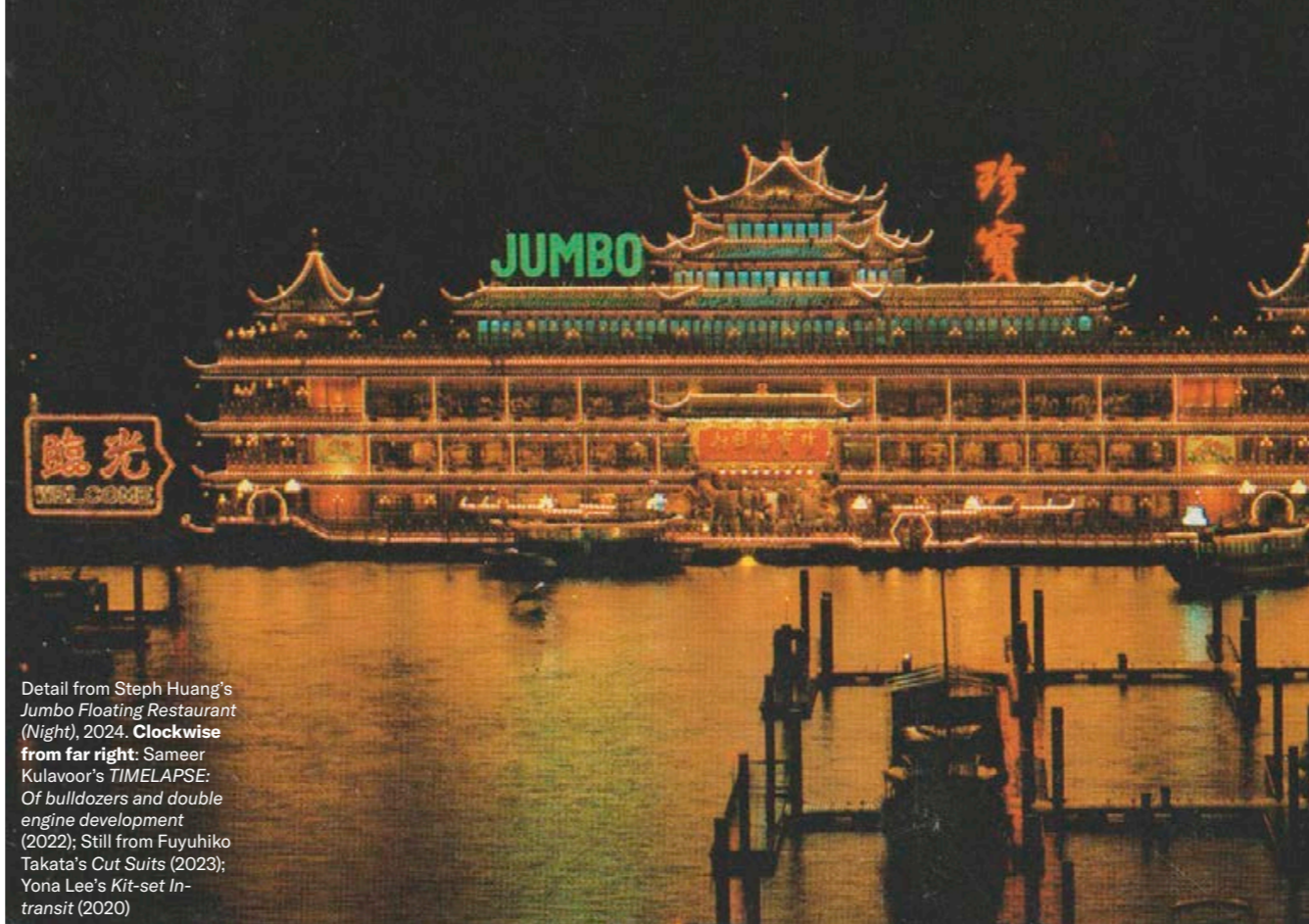
Fine Arts Sydney, Booth 1C45



Basel newcomer Fine Arts, Sydney is set to present a large new sculpture by Auckland-based South Korean artist Yona Lee. Lee is known for the range of scales she works in: her sculptural installations occupy everything from tabletops to entire museum spaces. They are typically composed of unique combinations

of quotidian objects such as lamps, tables and chairs.

Although ambiguous in interpretation, Lee's works share a domestic aesthetic consistency that references urban infrastructure and public, commercial and domestic space, questioning the boundaries between public and private spheres. Her work for Art Basel Hong Kong, *In Transit* (2024), will function as both a sculpture and social space, and is composed of electric lights, a clock, a daybed, a mop, a sun umbrella, a bench, a table and chairs.



Detail from Steph Huang's *Jumbo Floating Restaurant (Night)*, 2024. **Clockwise from far right:** Sameer Kulavoor's *TIMELAPSE: Of bulldozers and double engine development* (2022); Still from Fuyuhiko Takata's *Cut Suits* (2023); Yona Lee's *Kit-set In-transit* (2020)



Cut Suits is its sequel: further probing the concept of toxic masculinity, it features six businessmen snipping away at each other's suits, ironically recalling Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1964), an iconic performance and feminist work of art. A butterfly-scissors sculpture that features in the first film will also be on view at the booth.

IMAGES COURTESY OF YONA LEE AND FINE ARTS SYDNEY (KIT-SET IN-TRANSIT); COURTESY OF FUYUHIKO TAKATA AND WAITINGROOM (CUT SUITS)

FUYUHIKO TAKATA

Waitingroom, Booth 1C43



Japanese gallery Waitingroom presents solo booth exhibition *Cut Pieces*, featuring video works by Tokyo-based artist Fuyuhiko Takata. The aesthetics and narratives of his cinematic works evoke myths, fairytales and fantasy worlds, all the while recalling and referencing significant art historical figures, ranging from Yoko Ono to Marcel Duchamp. He transforms his apartment into intricate homemade sets, and directs, narrates and even acts in the films himself. Through his work,

he strives to playfully question established notions of gender, identity, power, nation and sexuality in both contemporary Japanese society and the world at large.

Two of the artist's most recent works, *The Butterfly Dream* (2022) and *Cut Suits* (2023), will be shown at the booth: the former was inspired by *The Dream of a Butterfly*, the famed episode in Chinese classic text *Zhuangzi*, in which the protagonist dreams he is a butterfly, leading him to question his usual reality. In his version, Takata creates a scene in which a mythical hybrid butterfly-chimera creature snips away at a sleeping young man's clothing, questioning the rigid, conventional idea of masculinity.

STEPH HUANG

Public Gallery, Booth 1C37



London-based Taiwanese artist Steph Huang will be showcasing a solo presentation at Public Gallery's booth, featuring a nostalgic installation consisting of glass-blown, wooden and metal sculptures with plenty of Hong Kong references that are sure to resonate locally. The installation sets the scene of a generic Asian restaurant-marketplace, and features works such as a set of wooden panel paintings, within which are found postcards from the 1970s depicting the now closed and capsized Jumbo Kingdom restaurant, and a freestanding metal basin filled with copper fortune cookies, inscribed with the text "The Fortune You Seek Is In Another Cookie". The body of work builds on the artist's solo exhibitions at Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art (2022) and the Taipei Fine Arts Museum (2022), focusing on spaces ranging from restaurants and marketplaces to gambling dens, and exploring the intersection of traditional and colonial legacies. Huang worked as a chef for a few years and has a particular interest in food culture

IMAGES COURTESY OF STEPH HUANG AND PUBLIC GALLERY (JUMBO FLOATING RESTAURANT); COURTESY OF SAMEER KULAVOOR AND TARQ GALLERY (TIMELAPSE)

and histories. In taking restaurants like Jumbo Kingdom as sites of inquiry, she examines how certain objects and symbols prevalent in the food industry carry visual and material narratives of nationalism and ideology.

SAMEER KULAVOOR

Tarq, Booth 1C47



Mumbai-based gallery Tarq is set to showcase artist Sameer Kulavoor's works at the fair this year, building upon *Edifice Complex*, the artist's 2023 solo show at the gallery. Inspired by witnessing India's rapid urban transformation since the 1990s, resulting from economic liberalisation and the internet boom, the artist explores his deep connection with cities and their multilayered identities, exploring the theme of hyper-development in megacities like Mumbai, including in this presentation—which

will undoubtedly resonate with Hongkongers.

The artist is known for his series of progressive drawings accompanied by videos which come together to form moving images that recall flipbooks. Through this combination, Kulavoor reveals the transient and temporal nature of contemporary urban structures and charts the evolution of architecture.

Two large-scale works form the booth's centrepiece. *Timelapses* (2022) consists of sequential drawings that reflect Kulavoor's refined understanding of colour and materiality while providing a perspective on the aforementioned short-lived, transformative nature inherent to contemporary architecture. With *That Escalated Fast* (2023) and *Burning Bridges* (2023), Kulavoor draws parallels between the persisting architectural evolution and progress, and probes how most Asian cities are plagued by overpopulation and constant redevelopment.

