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Crossing Place

Saskia Pintelon, Gayan Prageeth, Pakkiyarajah Pushpakanthan, Chandraguptha Thenuwara, Priyantha Udagedara, Jagath Weerasinghe

APRIL 20 – JUNE 1, 2019

OPENING RECEPTION: APRIL 20 | 6 PM - 8 PM

At a time when contemporary art from Southeast Asia enjoys increasing global attention, Baik Art is pleased to present *Crossing Place*, a unique exploration of contemporary art from Sri Lanka. The exhibition, mounted in collaboration with Saskia Fernando Gallery in Colombo, highlights works by renowned Sri Lankan artists Jagath Weerasinghe, Saskia Pintelon, Gayan Prageeth, Pakkiyarajah Pushpakanthan, Chandraguptha Thenuwara, and Priyantha Udagedara. The exhibition focuses on these artists' distinct narratives and creative approaches as they work to absorb the social and political turmoil caused by the Sri Lankan Civil War of 1983-2009. This exhibition will be on display from April 20, 2019, through June 1, 2019. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2019, from 6 pm – 8 pm.

Jagath Weerasinghe, a key player in the Colombo Biennial and co-founder of the experimental Theertha Artist Collective, is one of the most significant artists working in Sri Lanka today. His expressive, neo-romantic paintings reflect on the island's painful history and articulate the horrors of political violence, displacement, and national genocide. Belgium-born Saskia Pintelon is at heart, a figurative painter who periodically leans into abstraction and text-based work. Her collages play on ideas of the monstrous and surreal, using montage to explore age, beauty, gender, love, isolation, loneliness and the balance between the public and private. Chandraguptha Thenuwara's abstract works address political violence and corruption, representing the malfunctioning of society as jagged, pixelated lines, or "glitches," on canvas. He is the inventor of Barrelism, an art form that appropriated the ubiquitous gates, barrels, road blocks, and walls that had been painted in camouflage by the military establishments.

The paintings of Priyantha Udagedara, one of Sri Lanka's most exciting young artists, contrast natural beauty inspired by local environments with subtle allegorical representations of the grotesque; a duality that pervades creative expression throughout contemporary Sri Lankan art. The mood of Pakkiyarajah Pushpakanthan's work is equally raw and unsettling, drawing inspiration from his first-hand experiences of violence and war. By exploring indelible memories of death, disappearance, and torture, Pakkiyarajah lays bare the painful realities of the past so that people can grieve, heal, and move on. Gayan Prageeth combines intricate acrylic painting with fine ink drawings on rice paper and canvas, illustrating the turmoil of civil war through installation and geometric symbolism. His enigmatic works reflect not only recent Sri Lankan history, but also the current state of many countries around the world. *Crossing Place: Contemporary Art from Sri Lanka* aims to shed light on the country's burgeoning art scene as its citizens move towards peace, equal rights and civil unity. Works within the main gallery further allude to discourses around orientalism, forms of self-expression, grief, and the pursuit of inalienable civil liberties.

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