



ART SG

12 - 15 JAN 2023  
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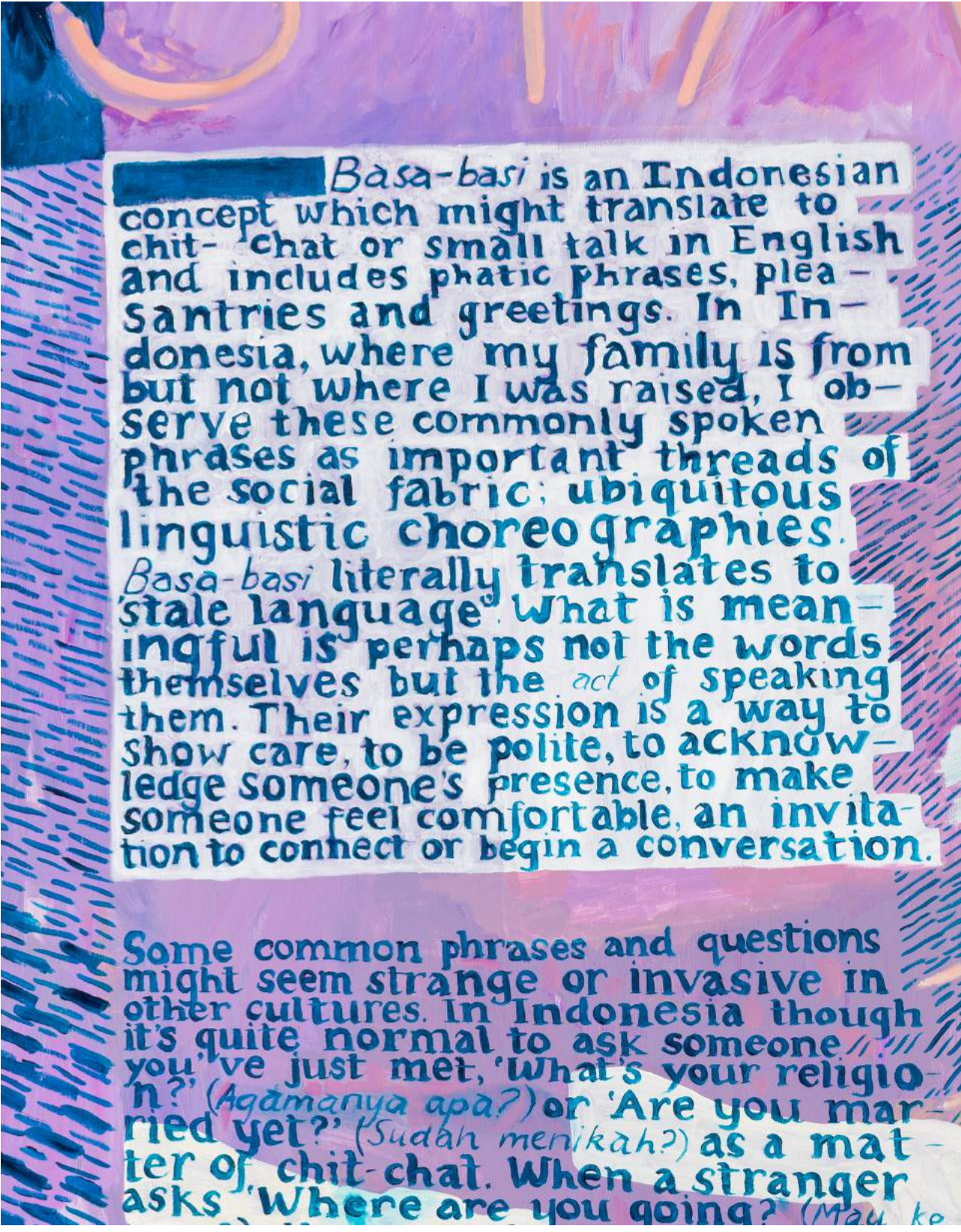


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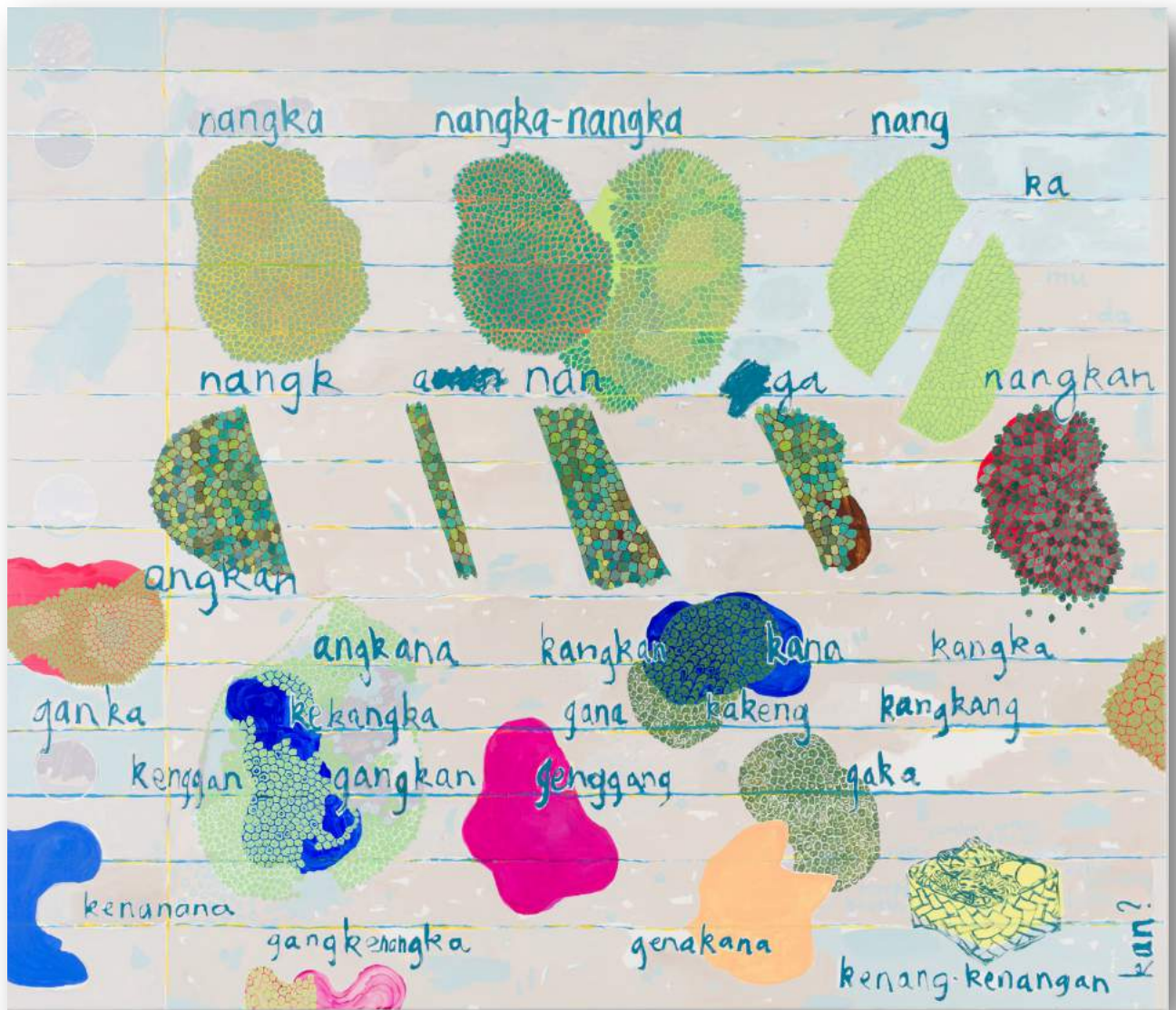


**Basa-basi** is an Indonesian concept which might translate to chit-chat or small talk in English and includes phatic phrases, pleasantries and greetings. In Indonesia, where my family is from but not where I was raised, I observe these commonly spoken phrases as important threads of the social fabric; ubiquitous linguistic choreographies.

**Basa-basi** literally translates to 'stale language'. What is meaningful is perhaps not the words themselves but the *act* of speaking them. Their expression is a way to show care, to be polite, to acknowledge someone's presence, to make someone feel comfortable, an invitation to connect or begin a conversation.

Some common phrases and questions might seem strange or invasive in other cultures. In Indonesia though it's quite normal to ask someone you've just met, 'What's your religion?' (*Agamanya apa?*) or 'Are you married yet?' (*Sudah menikah?*) as a matter of chit-chat. When a stranger asks, 'Where are you going?' (*Mau ke*





Gudeg (Khas Jogja), 2022  
acrylic on canvas  
155 x 180 cm





**Lebaran:**

*Kita duduk di pinggir tikar yang sudah penuh makanan.*

**Ratusan cemilan,**

*ribuan santapan untuk 26 tamu (26 saudara).*

*Bersalaman, saling minta maaf, makan-makan, berbasa-basi dan sudah saatnya untuk berpamitan. Kasihan adikku, dia duduk di pojok yang paling jauh dari pintu. Dia terpaksa ngicipi jalur — melalui rawon, lodeh, tiga piring buah dan tujuh macam keripik, krupuk dan kue — supaya bisa pamit dan berangkat ke rumah saudara selanjutnya.*

*Untungnya dia puasa bulan kemarin.*

**Loose translation:**

**Eid al-Fitr:**

*We sit on the edge of the mat that's already full of food.*

*Hundreds of snacks, thousands of meals, for 26 guests (26 relatives).*

*Shaking hands, asking for forgiveness, eating, chit-chatting and it's already time to say goodbye. My poor little sibling, they sit in the corner furthest from the door. They are forced to nibble their way — through rawon soup, lodeh curry, three plates of fruit and seven types of crackers, crisps and cakes — in order to say goodbye and leave to the next relatives' house.*

*Luckily they fasted last month.*

Mats for Snacks / Snack on Mats, 2022  
acrylic on canvas  
155 x 180 cm





Stale Language, 2022  
acrylic on canvas  
155 x 122 cm





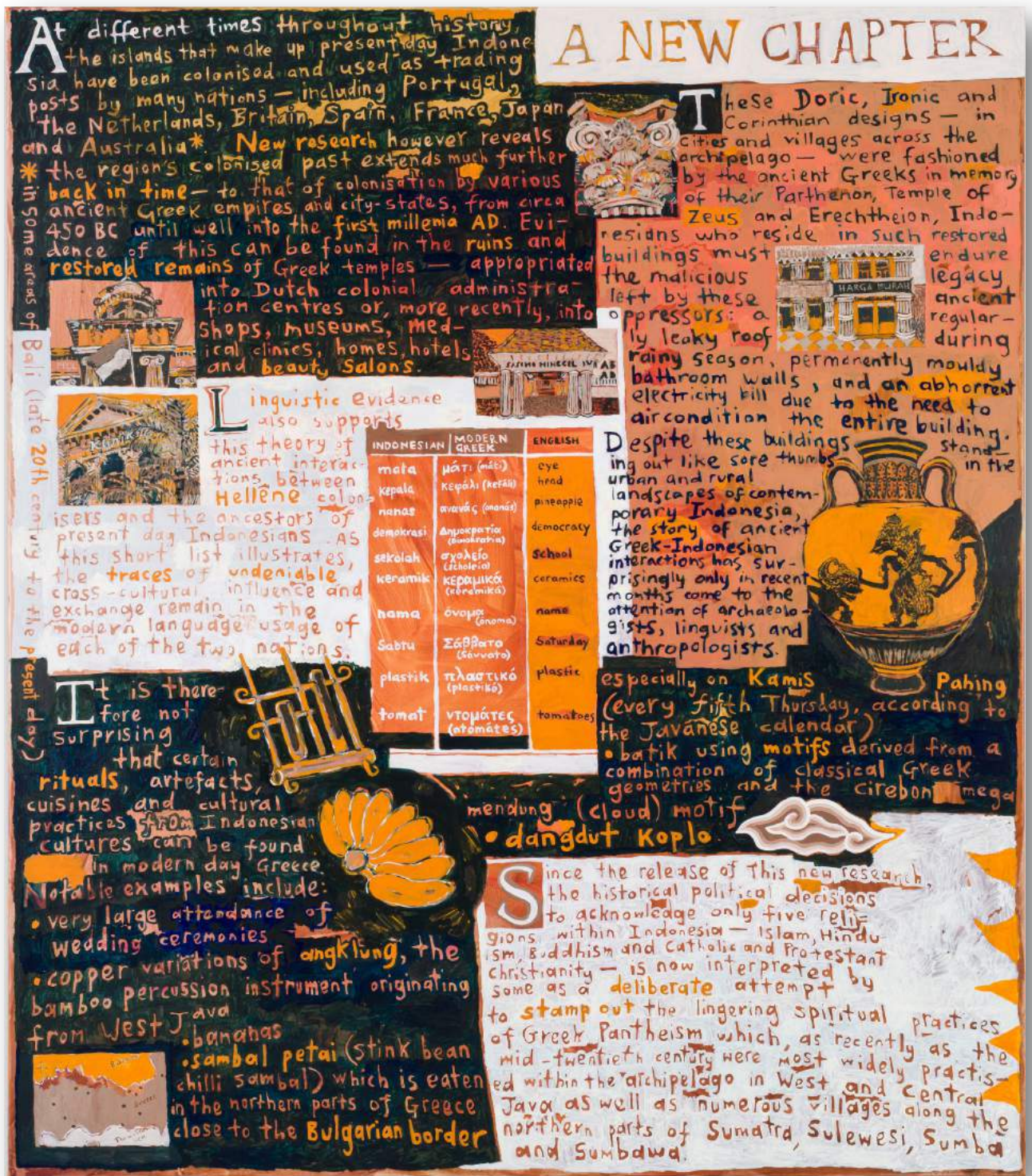
Basa Basi (Mau Ke Mana?), 2022  
acrylic on canvas  
155 x 120 cm





Basa Basi (Lagi Apa?), 2022  
 acrylic on canvas  
 180 x 155 cm





At different times throughout history, the islands that make up present day Indonesia have been colonised and used as trading posts by many nations — including Portugal, the Netherlands, Britain, Spain, France, Japan and Australia (in some areas of Bali [late twentieth-century to the present day]). New research however reveals the region's colonised past extends much further back in time — to that of colonisation by various ancient Greek empires and city-states, from circa 450 BC until well into the first millennia AD. Evidence of this can be found in the ruins and restored remains of Greek temples — appropriated into Dutch colonial administration centres or, more recently, into shops, museums, medical clinics, homes, hotels and beauty salons. (excerpt)

A New Chapter, 2022  
acrylic on canvas  
180 x 155 cm





Batas Suci, 2022  
acrylic on canvas  
155 x 120 cm

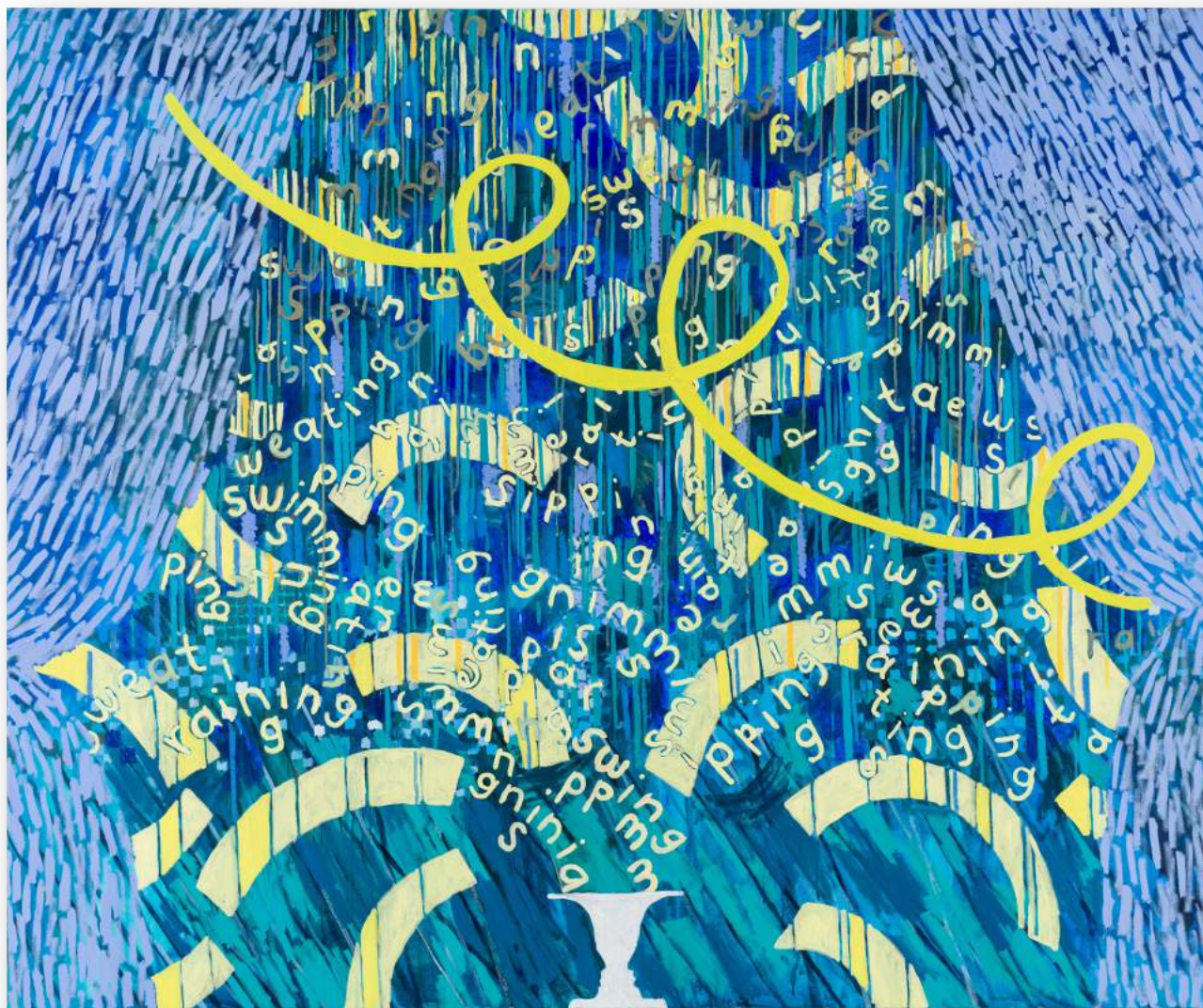




Overlooking, 2021  
 acrylic on unstretched canvas,  
 stitching, copper pipes  
 220 x 192 cm

*Tropical plants  
 overlooking  
 snowy street-  
 scapes  
 wondering  
 where the hell they are  
 and what the fuck they're doing.*





Air/Air, 2022  
acrylic on canvas  
150 x 180 cm



## Speech Acts of Ida Lawrence

Övül Ö. Durmusoglu

Language is traditionally considered to be propositional in nature and not iconic, abstracted away from any visual, spatial and motoric connotations of the corresponding experiences in the real world. The relationships between word forms and referents are largely arbitrary. Same objects may be referred with a large variation (e.g. hammer in English, martello in Italian and kakas in Hungarian), which strengthens the arbitrariness. The variations of different alphabets worldwide adds to the complex language experience. Ida Lawrence grew up mostly with English and a few phrases in Indonesian in a land where English is the official language, the language that signifies the colonisation of that land. In her work, language — spoken, written and imagined — proposes a very idiosyncratic performative agency that brings us back to J. L. Austin and his 'How to Do Things with Words' (1962) where he triggered many discussions around the non-declarative uses of language.

Lawrence's painted surfaces treat language as an image and continues to play with it alongside the depicted image. In the imageness written language becomes the mediator of proximation, intimation and intimacy at the same time that expands the depicted scene, the association; may it be a childhood memory, fragment of an object or pieces of jackfruit. The meaning doubles, triples and quadruples sometimes in the speech acts of Lawrence. On the canvas, distances in time and space between different meanings are projected and resolved; in the act of painting, Lawrence brings memories and places close. Yet that which is untranslatable remains.

Gudeg (Khas Jogja) (2022), translating to 'Jackfruit stew (Jogja speciality)', looks like an exercise notebook of a child; a particular mantra to memorise or a story in itself. Inspired by Lydia Davis' short story 'Notes during long phone conversation with mother', the artist disintegrates the word *ngangka*, jackfruit (depicted left hand corner) doubles it to make it plural, turns and twists it around into non-sensical syllables until it becomes *kenang-kenangan* (souvenirs, mementos), beside an image of Jogjakarta's speciality dish: *gudeg*, young jackfruit stew. Jogja was where she lived between 2010-2013, and frequently visited before moving to Berlin in 2019.

It is not a coincidence that Lawrence picks up a food element, which has the symbolic communicative power to bring communities together in Indonesian culture. Lawrence's further thoughts on the limits and beyond limits of communication is also present in *Mats for Snacks / Snacks on Mats* (2022) where an Eid al Fitr situation is described woven into a *tikar* carpet commonly found as permanent installations in Lawrence's relatives' living rooms, or unfolded for events and big gatherings. It is almost a *trompe l'oeil* thanks to many perspectives the artist uses, the text and images of food woven together in such a way that it is difficult to discern if things are sitting on top of a mat, or all the images are in fact a mat themselves.

How do we acquire literacy? Does being literate mean one can communicate? And is the language useful? In *Stale Language* (2022), Lawrence seems to design an introductory text about *basa-basi*, chit-chat, the particular social experience language in Indonesia. The chit-chat also creates a self reflexive space about her position to convey that experience, which bonds humans in a denser weaving. Within the painting, she notes *basa-basi* literally translates to 'stale language'. What starts as an information base statement changes density and form through the end, like a changing handwriting that hastes, hurries and wavers. The changing text form reminds one of the Rosetta Stone carved during the Hellenistic period in Egypt, where the top and middle texts are in Ancient Egyptian using hieroglyphic and Demotic scripts respectively, while the bottom is in Ancient Greek.

The playful *Basa-Basi (Mau Ke Mana?)* (2022) and *Basa-Basi (Lagi Apa?)* (2022) provides the rhythm of repetition in the tradition of *basa-basi*, chit-chat language. The questions that can be asked over and over again to familiarise can become playgrounds of displacement and replacement if one knows how to find one's way around the experience. In one, neighbouring dolphin statues inside a drained swimming pool text one another: 'Lagi apa?' ('What are you up to?') asks one, 'Mmm... tidak lagi apa-apa' ('Hmm, nothing.') replies the other. Because when there is no context of interaction and socialisation, for two fishes out of water, indeed there may not be that much to do. In the other painting, the critically endangered Bali Myna (*Leucopsar rothschildi*) bird — repeated a number of times — answers 'Ke sana', ('There') to the regularly repeated chit-chat question 'Mau ke mana?' ('Where are you going?'). The depicted scenes in both paintings that are in conversation with each other and *Stale Language* (2022), hitting on the arbitrariness of the human language and its way of socialisation that resonate in the non-human world.



A New Chapter (2022) attempts to twist the narratives of civilisation and colonisation in Indonesia by a very well-known Ancient Greek trope. This gesture parodies the way late 19th century, early 20th century pseudo archeologists projected a specific kind of ancientness into the new exoticised contexts, in the way they know best, to claim and erase the existing history. The text Lawrence brings in provides alleged evidence of Greece's colonisation of Indonesia through architectural, linguistic, and cultural 'examples' (some of which are actually true), as her way to playfully consider the narrative acts and gaps of historical storytelling. The story was inspired by the many Greek-style buildings she noticed in Indonesia and triggered a new story out of their 'out-of-placeness'. Linguistic evidence tables between Indonesian, Modern Greek and English are supplemented by archaeological 'evidence' to push the narrative further. Yet the artist is also aware there is a Batas Suci (2022), a sacred boundary around all the play. The sacred boundary physically and verbally exists on the steps of a mosque, where shoes are to be left, where the inside spiritual world is to be protected from the energies of the outside. It also signifies the culture's own self-protection and resilience mechanisms in order not to be naturalised and categorised by those that want to exoticise. The red line that continues out of the frame of the painting may continue to flow invisibly in the outer space of the painting.

Overlooking (2021) stages the current state of mind in Lawrence's life, living in Berlin, in the middle of continental Europe, far away from where she feels home. There is an inside made of tropical plants on a red background trying to relate with an outside that snows. Life brought them there, yet what are they doing there really? This is a condition not only for Lawrence but also for many artists who come from far to Berlin, where there is no sun especially in winter, to construct a new artistic life and a new network. All that is water in Air-Air (2022) opens up new possibilities and flows. Air means water in Indonesian. The acts of waters — swimming, raining, sweating, sipping — merge with each other in a disintegrated way creating a river of sounds, letters and syllables. They become a lullaby calling for a freedom in movement; which can be read as a call for new lines and forms of thinking for the artist.

'Let everything happen to you: Beauty and Terror,' Rainer Maria Rilke writes in his poem 'Go to the Limits of Your Longing' and adds 'Just keep going. No feeling is final'. The speech acts of Ida Lawrence indeed offers that space of contemplation where no feeling is final and proposes to follow an inner flow even when it is cryptic and untranslatable. Then let us allow ourselves to follow towards that place, we will all find it in different places inside and outside.

## About Övül Ö. Durmusoglu

Övül Ö. Durmusoglu is a curator, writer and educator working on constructive critiques of civilization, sustainability of intersectional futures and practices of togetherness. She co-leads Art in Discourse at Braunschweig University of Art with Dr. Ana Teixeira Pinto and works as a guest professor for gender politics and aesthetics in curating at University of Fine Arts Münster. In 2022, Övül curated two major monographic exhibitions 'Portrait of a Movement' of Boudry/Lorenz in CA2M, Madrid (which travels to Tensta Konsthall in Stockholm in spring 2023) and 'Burn and Gloom, Glow and Moon: Thousand Years of Troubled Genders' of Katrina Daschner in Kunsthalle Wien. She co-edited 'Stages' with Boudry/Lorenz, their most conclusive publication up-to-date (Spector Books, 2022) and is currently working on the first monograph of Katrina Daschner. In the past, Övül was curator for steirischer herbst festival in Graz; curator/director for YAMA public screen in Istanbul; curatorial advisor for Gülsün Karamustafa's 'Chronographia' at Hamburger Bahnhof, artistic director for the festival Sofia Contemporary 2013 titled as 'Near, Closer, Together: Exercises for a Common Ground'. She curated programs within 10th, 13th, and 14th Istanbul Biennials; coordinated and organized different programs and events at Maybe Education and Public Programs for dOCUMENTA (13). During the Covid-19 pandemic, she co-initiated the neighbourhood project 'Die Balkone: Life, Art, Pandemic and Proximity' with Joanna Warsza in Prenzlauer Berg in Berlin. They co-curated a locally and internationally well received 3rd edition for Autostrada Biennale in 2021 and continue to work together for the 4th edition taking place in the summer of 2023 in Kosovo. She contributes to magazines such as Artforum Online, Spike and Frieze and various exhibition publications.



## Ida Lawrence



Ida Lawrence (b. 1988) is a visual artist who weaves stories through her art and education projects. Her narrative paintings combine text and images and are inspired by daily observations and personal experiences. She particularly enjoys playing with the 'visual language' of painting — how images can have multiple interpretations and how the ways a painting is made can contribute to the story being told. In other projects, Ida also collaborates with visual artists, writers, musicians, film makers and dancers — most often with Woven Kolektif.

Ida is currently based in Berlin, Germany and previously was based between Sydney, Australia and Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting at the National Art School, Sydney and received First Class Honours in Sculpture in Sydney College of the Arts. Between 2010-2012 she studied dance at the Indonesian Arts Institute, Yogyakarta with the Darmasiswa Scholarship. Ida is selected as one of 10 participants out of 300 applicants to be a part of a 2022- 2023 Berlin mentoring program by international artist Angela Bulloch, Simon Denny and Willem de Rooij. At the end of the second year of the program, she will exhibit at KW Institute for Contemporary Art.

### Education

2014	Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours Class I), Sculpture/Installation major, Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney AU
2010	Darmasiswa Scholarship, Traditional Indonesian Dance Indonesian Arts Institute (ISI), Yogyakarta ID
2007	Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting major, National Art School, Sydney AU

### Solo Exhibitions (Selected)

2023	(Upcoming) Ida Lawrence, Art SG, ISA Art Gallery Singapore (12-15 January)
2022	Fermented Feelings, Solo Exhibition by Ida Lawrence, Art Jakarta Garden, ISA Art Gallery, Jakarta ID
2021	A Bird In The Grass Is Worth A Thousand Hearts, with Caitlin Hesse, Retramp Gallery, Berlin DE
2020	I Fill My Days In Other Ways, mural, StillStand initiative, Urban Spree, Berlin DE
2019	In Conversation: FX Harsono x Ida Lawrence, Fairfield City Museum & Gallery, Sydney AU The Sound of Shadows: Interactive Journey, with Bianca Gannon, ArtPlay, Melbourne AU Breathing Room, with Woven Kolektif, Cement Fondu, Sydney AU
2018	Jangan Lupa Bawa Oleh-Oleh Ya, Redbase Foundation, Yogyakarta ID

### Group Exhibitions (Selected)

2023	FLIGHT, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney AU (January-June)
2022	Talking... And Other Banana Skins, curated by Michelle Houston, Urban Nation Museum for Urban and Contemporary Art, Berlin DE (until December 2024) Titik Kumpul, Art Jakarta, ISA Art Gallery, Jakarta ID
2020	Buah Tangan, Art Jakarta, ISA Art + Design, Jakarta ID Bara: embers, with Woven Kolektif, Bankstown Arts Centre, Sydney AU INTER(SUBJECT)IVITY, ISA Art + Design, Jakarta ID
2019	looking here looking north, with Woven Kolektif, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney AU The Essayist, The Cross Art Projects, Sydney AU Brisbane & Elsewhere Art UnTriennial, Outer Space, Brisbane AU Ecologies of Being, Kudos Gallery, Sydney AU 4A A4, Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney AU
2018	ASYIK, Indonesian Arts & Culture Festival exhibition, Addison Road, Sydney AU
2017	Woven, with Woven Kolektif, Verge Gallery, Sydney AU



## Awards and Residencies

2022	Berlin Program for Artists mentorship, Berlin DE Marten Bequest Scholarship for Painting, Australia Council AU Neustart Kultur Grant, Kunstfonds, Berlin DE
2020	BBK Studio recipient, Berlin DE Best Artist nomination, with Woven Kolektif, Sydney Music, Arts & Culture Awards AU Education kit commission, 4A KIDS, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney AU
2017	Redbase Foundation residency, Yogyakarta ID
2016	Mural commission, Glebe Chamber of Commerce, Sydney AU
2015	Sapporo Tenjinyama Art Studio residency, Sapporo JP The Demountable Studio residency, Leichhardt Council, Sydney AU
2014	Mural commission, Leichhardt Council, Sydney AU
2013	Rimbun Dahan residency, Kuang MY NSW Artists' Grant, National Association for the Visual Arts AU OYEA Cross-Artform Project Grant & Mentorship with Alan Schacher, Australia Council / Articulate Project Space, Sydney AU
2012	TeMBI Rumah Budaya residency, Yogyakarta ID
2010	First Prize, Wall2Wall Leichhardt Council Mural Competition, with Caitlin Hespe, Sydney AU Finalist, Churchie National Emerging Art Exhibition, Brisbane AU Highly Commended, Hunters Hill Art Prize, Sydney AU





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