

YEE I-Lann

Yee I-Lann (b.1971, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice encompasses photomedia, textiles, collaborative weaving, video, and installation. Drawing on archival research, her works center on the complex geopolitical history of archipelagic Southeast Asia and their continuing impact on contemporary social experiences. Her works engage with themes of colonial history, decolonization, neocolonialism, globalization, cultural resilience, and belonging, while critically unpacking the “notions of power and who has power in storytelling”. With acuity and wit, her works foreground counter-narratives and marginalized histories that challenge dominant representations. Since returning to her hometown of Sabah in 2017, Yee has been developing collaborative mat (tikar in Malay) weaving projects with sea and land-based communities in the region. Working with indigenous materials and techniques, she employs the woven mat as a medium, method and philosophy. Emphasizing shared authorship and collective making, she seeks to create a space for dialogue and exchange.

Yee’s recent solo exhibitions took place at Kunstmuseum Thun (2025), Singapore Art Museum (2024), Berkley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive (2024), Minneapolis Institute of Art (2022), and CHAT (Hong Kong, 2021). She has also exhibited at Guggenheim (New York, 2026), He Art Museum (Shunde, 2026), KADIST (Paris, 2025), Hood Museum (Hanover, 2025), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam, 2024), National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Seoul, 2024), Barbican Art Gallery (London, 2024), “The Spirits of Maritime Crossing” presented by Bangkok Art Foundation as a Collateral Event at the 60th Venice Biennale (Venice, 2024), Seoul Museum of Art (Seoul, 2023), NGV Triennial (Melbourne, 2023), Gwangju Biennale (2023), National Gallery of Victoria (Melbourne, 2023), New Taipei City Art Museum (2023), Mori Art Museum (Tokyo, 2023 and 2017), National Gallery Singapore (Singapore, 2022), Istanbul Biennial (2022), Aichi Triennale (2022), and Asia Pacific Triennial (Brisbane, 2021 & 1999), among others.

Yee currently lives and works in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2025 “Yee I-Lann: paths of the wind weave shadows bare bones of a mat”, Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts Qatar, Doha, Qatar
“Yee I-Lann: Mansau-Ansau”, Kunstmuseum Thun, Thun, Switzerland

2024 “Yee I-Lann: Mansau-Ansau”, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
“Art Wall / Yee I-Lann: TIKAR/MEJA/PLASTIK”, Berkley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, USA

2023 “Yee I-Lann & Collaborators: Borneo Heart in Kuala Lumpur 2023”, including:

- “Share the Mat!”, The Zhongshan Building, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- “TIKAR/MEJA”, The Back Room, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- “Tamu Tanah & Air”, The Godown Arts Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- “Allom! Amatai! Allom!: photomedia essays by Yee I-Lann”, A+ Works of Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 - “lift the tikar!”, ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 - “Balai Bikin”, Rumah Lukis, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2022 “At the Roof of the Mouth”, Silverlens, New York, USA
 “Yee I-Lann: Picturing Power”, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, USA
- 2021 “Yee I-Lann: Until We Hug Again”, CHAT, Hong Kong
 “Yee I-Lann & Collaborators: Borneo Heart”, Sabah International Convention Centre, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia
- 2019 “ZIGAZIG ah!”, Silverlens, Manila, the Philippines
 “Through Rose-Coloured Glasses”, NorthPark Center, Dallas, USA
- 2016 “Yee I-Lann: 2005-2016”, Ayala Museum, Manila, the Philippines
 “Like the Banana Tree At The Gate”, MSAC Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
 “Like The Banana Tree At The Gate”, Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York, USA
- 2014 “Tabled”, Silverlens, Singapore
 “Yee I-Lann: Picturing Power”, Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York, USA
- 2011 “Fluid World”, MSAC Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan
 “Fluid World”, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia
- 2010 “Boogeyman”, Black Box, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2008 “Sulu Stories”, Kathmandu Gallery, Bangkok, Thailand
 “Kinabalu”, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide, Australia
- 2003 “Horizon”, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2002 “Malaysiana: New Works by Yee I-Lann & Sidney Tan”, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2000 “Goldfish & Football: Yee I-Lann & Yusof Majid”, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 “Conversations with Tea”, Scapular Gallery Nomad, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1997 “Con+Fuse: Yee I-Lann & Khamal Hamdan”, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1992 “Contemporary Photography: Yee I-Lann & Sally Foster”, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide, Australia

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2026 “Soft Borders”, Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong

- "TANAHAIR: Navigating Asianness from Malaysia", Asia University Museum of Modern Art, Taichung, Taiwan
 "Threads of Kinship", He Art Museum, Shunde, China
- 2025 "Threads of Kinship", KADIST Paris, Paris, France
 "The Tongue to Them", Artspace Aotearoa, Auckland, New Zealand; travelling to Hastings Art Gallery, Hastings, New Zealand
 "JENDELA", Sabah Art Gallery, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia
 "Your Ears Later Will Know to Listen", Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK
 "Transfer", The University of Sunshine Coast Art Gallery, Queensland, Australia
 "Hair tied together, embodied we speak / Pinagtaling buhok, kinatawang bigkas", Calle Wright, Manila, the Philippines
 "Weaving as Method", Hood Museum, Hanover, USA
 "12th Enku Grand Award Exhibition", Museum of Fine Arts, Gifu, Japan
 "The Eye and The Tiger", OH! Open House, Singapore
- 2024 Anteprema x CHAT Contemporary Textile Art Prize 2024, CHAT, Hong Kong
 "BOOM BOOM BANG: Play & Parody in 1990s K.L.", ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 "Prospect.6: The Future is Present, The Harbinger is Home", New Orleans, USA
 "Connecting Bodies: Asian Women Artists", National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea
 "EMAP x Frieze Film 2024", Ewha Womans University, Seoul, South Korea
 "A Heart That Weaves Banana Leaves", KF ASEAN Culture House, Busan, South Korea
 "BAYU SENI", Sabah Art Gallery, Imago Mall, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia
 "Harmony and Contrast: Honouring the Past, Celebrating the Present, Shaping a Vibrant Future", Galeri Khazanah, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 "CHAT 5th Anniversary: Factory of Tomorrow", CHAT, Hong Kong
 "The Spirits of Maritime Crossing", Bangkok Art Foundation, a Collateral Event of the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy
 "Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art", Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
 "Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art", Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK
 "Markers: Silverlens@20", Silverlens, Manila, the Philippines
 "Translations: Afro-Asian Poetics", Institutum, Gillman Barracks, Singapore
- 2023 "The Part in the Story Where Our Accumulating Dust Becomes a Mountain", Seoul Museum of Art (SeMA), Seoul, South Korea
 "NGV Triennial 2023", National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
 "Interweaving Travelers", New Taipei City Art Museum, Taipei, Taiwan
 "Jogja Fotografis Festival 2023", Yogyakarta, Indonesia
 "One that includes myth", Goodman Gallery, London, UK
 "14th Gwangju Biennale: Soft and weak like water", Gwangju, Korea
 "Indigo Waves and Other Stories", Savvy Contemporary, Berlin, Germany
 "World Classroom", Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
 "Re-Materialized: The Stuff That Matters", kaufmann repetto, Milan, Italy
- 2022 "Living Pictures: Photography in Southeast Asia", National Gallery Singapore, Singapore
 "CHAOS : CALM, Bangkok Art Biennale 2022", Bangkok, Thailand
 "by a thread", Apsara Studio, London, UK

- 17th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey
 "To A Faraway Friend: Beyond Afro-Southeast Asian Affinities", ASEAN Culture House, Busan, South Korea
 "STILL ALIVE: Aichi Triennale 2022", Aichi Arts Center, Nagoya, Japan
 "Shifting Orientations Manila - Cast but One Shadow: Afro Southeast Asian Affinities", Vargas Museum, Quezon City, Philippines
 "Aqua Paradiso", Asia Culture Centre, Gwangju, Korea
 "For the House; Against the House: Life Imitates Art", Gillman Barracks, Singapore
- 2021 "Collection Exhibition 2: BLUE", 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan
 10th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT10), Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane, Australia
 "Art and Environmental Struggle", Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA
 "Art Histories of a Forever War: Modernism Between Space and Home", Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan
 "As We Were", Seed Art Space, Singapore
 Indian Ocean Craft Triennial: "Curiosity & Rituals of The Everyday", John Curtin Gallery, Perth, Australia
 "Substructures: Total Landscaping", Warehouse421, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
 "In Our Best Interests: Afro-Southeast Asian Affinities during a Cold War", ADM Gallery, Singapore
- 2020 "Encounter", Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, South Korea
 "The Consciousness Flows Within", Asia University Museum of Modern Art, Taichung City, Taiwan
 "2020 Asia Project – Looking for Another Family", National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea
 "Love In The Time of Covid-19", GAG Projects, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide, Australia
- 2019 "The Body Politic and the Body", ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 "Asian Art Biennial: The Strangers from beyond the Mountain and the Sea", National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung City, Taiwan
 "An Opera For Animals", Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, China; Para Site, Hong Kong
 "Sunshower: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980 to Now", Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
 "Tikar Gergasi", Tun Sakaran Museum, Lepa Regatta, Sabah, Malaysia
 "Rethinking Editions", OUR Art Projects, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2018 "Pillars of Sabah", Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia
 "Shared Coordinates", Silverlens, The Arts House, Singapore
 "The Horizon is Just an Illusion: New Thoughts on Landscape", OUR Art Projects, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2017 "Sunshower: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now", Mori Art Museum & National Art Center, Tokyo, Japan; Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

- "Glorious: earthly pleasures and heavenly realms", Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
- "Di Mana (where are) Young", Malaysia National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- "Converging Voices: Gender and Identity", Hofstra University Museum, Hempstead, USA
- "Outcasts: Women in the Wilderness", Wave Hill, Bronx, New York, USA
- "MAM Collection 004: Imagining the Unknown Stories", Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- "Translación", Inaugural Exhibition, Silverlens, Manila, the Philippines
- 2016 "Artist and Empire: (En)countering Colonial Legacies", National Gallery Singapore, Singapore
- "BODY/PLAY/POLITICS", Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama, Japan
- "Yinchuan Biennale: For an Image, Faster Than Light", Museum of Contemporary Art Yinchuan, Yinchuan, China
- "Era Mahathir", ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- "The Road Not Taken Ch.2", Mind Set Art Center, Taipei, Taiwan
- "Love Me In My Batik", Modern Batik Art from Malaysia and Beyond, ILHAM Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2015 "Sous la Lune / Beneath the moon", Institute of Contemporary Art, Singapore
- "Jakarta Biennale 2015", Jakarta, Indonesia
- "Open Sea: Artists from Singapore and South East Asia", Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France
- "On Sweat, Paper, Porcelain", Hessel Museum Center, New York, USA
- 2014 "Away From The Long Night", Mind Set Art Center, Taipei, Taiwan
- "Afterimage: Contemporary Photography from Southeast Asia", Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
- "Daegu Photo Biennale 2014: Origins, Memories & Parodies", Daegu, South Korea
- "THE ROVING EYE: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia", Arter, Istanbul, Turkey
- "Finding your place in the world: Asian Photomedia", National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia
- 2013 "Suspended Histories", Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- "The (Post) Colonial Photostudio", Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, UK
- "You are the company in which you keep", Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, UK
- "Art of Memory: Contemporary Textile Expressions", Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok, Thailand
- "Welcome to the Jungle: Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia", Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama, Japan
- "Kuala Lumpur Triennial: Barricade", MAPKL, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2012 "Encounter: The Royal Academy in Asia", Institute of Contemporary Art, Royal Academy in association with Fortune Cookie Projects & Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, Singapore
- "Women In-Between: Asian Women Artists 1984-2012", Fukuoka Asian art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

- 2011 "Medi(t)ation: 2011 Asian Art Biennial", National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan
 "Territories of the Real and Unreal", Langgeng Art Foundation, Jogjakarta, Indonesia
 "Inner Voices", 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan
 "Negotiating Home, History and Nation: Two decades of contemporary art in Southeast Asia 1991 – 2011", Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
- 2010 "Daegu Photo Biennale", Asia Spectrum, Daegu Culture & Arts Center, Daegu, South Korea
- 2009 "RE_view", National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
 "Littoral drift: Nadiyah Bamadhaj, Tejal Shah, Krisna Murti, Yee I-Lann, Ricky Maynard, Simryn Gill", UTS Gallery, Sydney, Australia
 "CUT09: Figure (New Photography from Southeast Asia) a touring show to Valentine Willie Fine Art: Kuala Lumpur & Singapore", Manila Contemporary, Manila, the Philippines
- 2007 "Independence Project", Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne; Australia
 "Out of the Mould", Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 "New Nature", Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Palmerston North, New Zealand
 "Thermocline of Art: New Asian Waves", ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe, Germany
- 2006 "1st Singapore Biennale 2006: Belief", City Hall, Singapore
 "Holding Up Half the Sky – Malaysian Women Artists", National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 "Contemporary Commonwealth", National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
 "Common Ground", Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
 "History and Beyond: Malaysian Photography from 1900 to the Present Day", National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
 "Jejak Langkah", National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2005 "Art ConneXions", a touring exhibition by the Goethe-Institute, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Art Pavilion, Manila, the Philippines; Australian Center for Photography, Sydney, Australia; RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, Australia; Museum Nasional Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia; Fine Art Museum, Hanoi, Vietnam; Ifa Gallery, Stuttgart & Berlin, Germany
- 2004 "Malaysian Art NOW", National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2002 "Identities – Who We Are", National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2000 "Asia in Australia: Beyond Orientalism", Global Arts Link, Queensland, Australia
 "L'art dans le monde", Paris-Musees, Paris, France
 "Rupa Malaysia", National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 1999 The 3rd Asia-Pacific Arts Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane, Australia
- 1998 “re/form: art law justice”, Griffith University and other venues, Queensland, Australia
- 1996 “Malaysian Contemporary Photography”, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1994 “Knowing the Sensorium”, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia
“And Four Come Home”, Sabah State Art Gallery, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

Residencies & Awards

- 2025 12th Enku Grand Award, The Museum of Fine Arts, Gifu, Japan
- 2024 ANTEPRIMA x CHAT Contemporary Textile Art Prize, CHAT, Hong Kong
- 2022 British Library Resonations Sound Archive Artist Residency, UK
- 2015 NTU CCA (Center for Contemporary Art) Residencies Cycle-1, Singapore
- 2012 Colonial Photography Workshop, Langgeng Art Foundation with Dr Alexander Supartono, Yogyakarta, Japan
- 2005 Goethe Institute Art ConneXions, Manila, Palawan, Sulu Sea, the Philippines
- 2003 Australian High Commission Visual Artist Residency Award (Malaysia), The Gunnery Studios, Sydney, Australia

Collections

- 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan
- Bank Negara Collection, Malaysia
- Cornell University Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, USA
- Galeri Khazanah, Malaysia
- Galeri PETRONAS, Malaysia
- Griffith University Art Collection, Australia
- Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- Hood Museum, Dartmouth College, USA
- ILHAM Gallery, Malaysia
- KADIST Collection, France
- Minneapolis Institute of Art, USA
- Mori Art Museum, Japan
- National Art Gallery Malaysia, Malaysia
- National Gallery of Australia, Australia
- National Gallery of Victoria, Australia
- National Gallery Singapore, Singapore
- New Taipei City Art Museum, Taiwan
- Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Australia

Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Australia
RC Culture and Arts Foundation, Taiwan
Sabah Art Gallery, Malaysia
Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Australia
Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, USA
Tate Modern, UK
Taoyuan Museum of Fine Arts, Taiwan
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA
UBS Art Collection, UK
Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia