

ara contemporary Presents Wedhar Riyadi's Solo Exhibition *In Between Stillness*

Jakarta, 2025 - Wedhar Riyadi's latest series, *Tabletop Diaries*, celebrates the overlooked and mundane aspects of human life, emerging from his quiet observations during the isolation of the pandemic. Riyadi painted arrangements of inanimate domestic objects, echoing the tradition of still life paintings, but the objects he depicted were clay replicas. These reproductions are not intended to replicate; they are reduced to monochrome without any labels or characteristics, allowing the objects to reveal their meanings through the viewer by reflecting the spiritual principle that meaning arises in silence and emptiness.

Tabletop Diaries continues Riyadi's ongoing exploration of opposing contexts within a single composition, the natural and artificial, where, in his previous works, he painted portraits adorned with elements of comical characters. Traditionally, still-life paintings reveal the impermanence of human existence through the ephemerality of objects such as bitten fruit, wilting flowers, and man-made arrangements. Similarly, in Riyadi's works, the trace of human presence is felt in the pinched surfaces of the clay forms. The traces of touch, wear, stains, scratches, and patina become layers of history, markers that these objects once lived. Clay, or soil, in this case, has long symbolized both the creation and the end of life.

The blinding vibrancy of the backgrounds and lighting introduces a sense of artificiality. This tension between the natural and the synthetic, coexisting within the same composition, invites us to consider whether we instinctively privilege the natural over the man-made, or perhaps the reverse.

About the Artist

Wedhar Riyadi is part of a group of Indonesian artists whose work is deeply influenced by the era of change, which saw the fall of the Suharto regime, the subsequent transition to democracy, and the growing influence of popular culture on local entertainment. His latest series, *Tabletop Diaries*, depicts arrangements of domestic objects made from clay, referencing the still-life paintings of the 16th century, which often explore themes of life and the passage of time, as well as the association of clay or soil with both the origin and the end of human life.

He has exhibited widely in Asia, Australia, Europe and USA. He participated in the 9th, 10th, and 11th edition of *ARTJOG* (2016, 2017, 2018) and in *the 7th Asia Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art* (2012). In addition to numerous private collections worldwide, his works are included in the collections of the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Australia; National Gallery of Victoria, Australia; Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art, Australia; and Tumurun Museum, Indonesia.

About ara contemporary

Established in 2025, the gallery's name ara comes from the abbreviation of the founders' names: Arlin, Ramadanti, Chandra. Beyond that, the word holds a layered meaning that aligns with the gallery's philosophy. In Sanskrit, ara means a place of shelter, adaptability, and consideration of others. These values are at the heart of ara contemporary, shaping its role in the arts community.

The gallery's focus will center on artists, from emerging to established, whose practices engage with the context of Southeast Asia, exploring the connections between immediacy and global discourse. Founded with the mission to thoughtfully advocate for Southeast Asian artists, ara contemporary aims to serve as a dynamic platform for dialogue and collaboration and to contribute to the burgeoning art scene in the region and beyond.

In Between Stillness by Wedhar Riyadi
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