

ara contemporary Presents *Hypnagogia | Tracing Time* by Albert Yonathan Setyawan

Jakarta, 2026 – ara contemporary is pleased to present *Hypnagogia | Tracing Time*, a solo exhibition by Albert Yonathan Setyawan, an Indonesian artist based in Tokyo, Japan, who represented the Indonesian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2013. Continuing the discourse of his previous solo exhibitions at Jogja National Museum (2023) and Tumurun Museum (2024), the exhibition explores questions of existence within time and space through terracotta, drawing, and video works shaped by repetition, material process, and meditative gestures.

A meditative quality permeates Albert's practice, evident not only in the physical works themselves, but also in the repetitive and labor-intensive processes through which they are made. Since 2018, Albert has worked exclusively with terracotta, a material he considers closely tied to his cultural and geographical roots. Long associated with domestic objects across Indonesia's pottery traditions, terracotta carries both bodily and historical resonance within his practice. Through clay, Albert reflects on philosophical questions surrounding time, being, and existence.

Central to the exhibition is Albert's ongoing engagement with repetition through slip-casting, a technique widely associated with industrial production and replication. In his practice, however, repetition moves beyond efficiency and exact reproduction. Instead, repeated actions gradually transform the form itself, tracing the tension between permanence and change, precision and erosion, presence and disappearance.

This exploration is embodied in *Annica*, a body of work consisting of over 250 terracotta pieces replicated through slip-casting using a single mould. As each cast gradually loses detail and definition through repeated use, the work reflects on transformation, and at the same time, showcases the record of time through material presence. *Annica* becomes an observation of all things changing around us. Through the body of work *Hypnagogia*, Albert further explores the theme of change through modular compositions derived from architectural and interior spaces. Repeated geometric forms are assembled into fragmented spatial arrangements inspired by the rapid development of urban cityscapes over time, eventually losing coherence. The exhibition also features *Squaring the Circle - Circling the Square*, a three-channel video work documenting Albert's repeated attempts to transform a cube into a sphere and vice versa. The repeated failure highlights the collapse of ideal systems when subjected to repetition, expansion, and time.

Through these works, *Hypnagogia | Tracing Time* ultimately reflects on the nature of existence in facing the impossibility of escaping time and space.

About the Artist



Concerned with repetitions—how we form patterns in daily life—and the materiality and genealogy of clay in a cultural context, Albert Yonathan Setyawan has built an artistic practice in contemporary ceramic art while also translating his conceptual ideas into various mediums such as drawing, multi-media installation, performance, and video documentation. In his ceramic works, the objects that are used to form one specific pattern may look similar and identical to one another. However, on closer inspection, some slight variations and differences can be seen in each one as a result of cleaning and carving each of the individual objects by hand after casting. Yonathan looks into the ‘meditative’ quality that can be achieved through the repetition of form or action.

Setyawan represented Indonesia at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. He has also participated in major group exhibitions such as SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now at Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2017); and Contemporary Worlds: Indonesia at the National Gallery of Australia, ACT Canberra, Australia (2019). Recent solo exhibitions include Transitory Nature of Earthly Joy, Tumurun Museum, Solo, Indonesia (2024); Capturing Silence, Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2024); and Speaking in Tongues, Mind Set Art Center, Taipei, Taiwan (2022). His works are in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia; Mori Art Museum, Japan; Museum of Modern Ceramic Art, Japan; OHD Museum, Indonesia; Singapore Art Museum, Singapore; Tumurun Museum, Indonesia, amongst other notable institutions.

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.

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