

MEDIA RELEASE

Monyet Gila: Episode One – The Episode with the Crazy Monkey
Shaun Gladwell and Adri Valery Wens
March 11 – April 23, 2016



Adri Valery Wens, *The Wanara (Triptych L-R Subali, Hanoman, Sugriwa)* 2015. Pigment on silver rag paper. Courtesy the artist.

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art presents the first iteration of an ongoing exhibition project by Adri Valery Wens and Shaun Gladwell, curated by Natalie King and Mikala Tai.

Monyet Gila: Episode One – The Episode with the Crazy Monkey investigates the role that narrative plays in contemporary culture. The artists consider their projects as separate works, installed in parallel to allow for moments of intersection as each excavates and reappraises epic narratives.

Indonesian, Sydney-based artist, **Adri Valery Wens** focuses on cultural stories of Hindu-Javanese origin, specifically the Wayang Orang (Human Puppet) performance based on two foundation epics - the Mahabharata (the story of the great Bharata Dynasty) and the Ramayana (the story of Rama's Journey).

Wens delves into the complexity and tensions of his cultural background through a series of photographic depictions of himself 'performing' characters within these epic narratives. Staged in Jakarta, dressed in elaborate costumes and theatrical makeup, the images translate the philosophical, political, poetic, performance and re-performance content of the epic stories through the genre of self-portraiture.

Australian-born, London-based artist **Shaun Gladwell's** video artwork explores the popular Japanese television drama *Monkey*, based on the Chinese novel *Journey to the West* by Wu Cheng'en. Considered a cult classic, the program incorporated Taoist and Buddhist Philosophy, which had a great influence on Gladwell. The artist's work looks to re-cast the role of Tripitaka – a young Buddhist Monk. The actress who originally played the monk, Masako Natsume, died in 1985 and Gladwell's project acts as homage to Natsume's portrayal of the character.

Curator **Natalie King** said, "*I am thrilled to be co-curating an exhibition with Mikala Tai that interrogates the retrieval of narratives intertwined with performing selves in new work by Shaun*

Gladwell and Adri Valery Wens. The synergies and confluences between these inter-generational artists has resulted in an open and evolving conversation amongst all artists and curators.”

The collaboration of Gladwell and Wens illustrates how traditional epics and long loved narratives remain a determining factor in the creation of the contemporary self.



Adri Valery Wens, *Rahwana on Jalan Kalilio No. 15, Senen* (2016), pigment on silver rag paper. Courtesy the artist.



Shaun Gladwell, *Tripitaka* (2015-16). Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Melbourne, Analix Forever Geneva and Mark Moore, Los Angeles.

A media preview of *Monyet Gila* will be held at 4A on Thursday March 10, 4:30pm. RSVP: joanna@creative-asia.net

The artists and curators will be available for interview and photo opportunities. Please direct media enquiries to: Joanna Bayndrian, joanna@creative-asia.net +61405933896 or Jessica Kostera, jessica.kostera@4a.com.au +61450 063 997



EXHIBITION OPENING: Thursday March 10, 6 – 8pm

MEDIA PREVIEW: Thursday March 10, 4:30pm

EXHIBITION DATES: March 11 – April 23

VENUE: 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, 181 – 187 Hay St, Sydney NSW

4A OPENING HOURS: Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 6pm, closed on public holidays

MORE UPCOMING 4A PROGRAMS:

February 10, 6:30pm - *Cinema Alley at Golden Age Cinema and Bar*

February 20, 11am - *One Hundred and One Names in Tofu*, family workshop at the Chinese Garden of Friendship, Darling Harbour

March 7, 6pm - *4A Art Quiz* at the Bearded Tit, part of the Art Month program

FULL DETAILS: www.4a.com.au

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Shaun Gladwell (b. 1972 Sydney) is an Australian-born, London-based artist. He completed Associate Research at Goldsmiths College, London in 2001 and has since undertaken numerous international residencies and commissions. He has exhibited prodigiously in Europe, North and South America, and in the Asia Pacific Region. In 2011, Gladwell had major survey exhibitions at the SCHUNCK* museum in Heerlen, The Netherlands and at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Connecticut, USA as part of the Matrix Exhibition Series. His exhibition, *Shaun Gladwell: Stereo Sequences*, at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Melbourne was the first in a series of major commissions by the institution. He also held a solo exhibition, *Riding with Death: Redux* at Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney. His work featured in significant group exhibitions, including: *The Power of Doubt*, curated by Hou Hanru, Museo Colecciones ICO, Madrid, 2011; *Paradise Lost*, Istanbul Museum of Art, 2011; *Southern Panoramas*, 17th International Contemporary Art Festival SESC_Videobrasil, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2011; and the John Kaldor Family Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2011. Shaun Gladwell represented Australia at the 53rd Venice Biennale and travelled to Afghanistan as the official Australian War Artist in 2009. A two-part project was exhibited across two sites with Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation featuring a major new commission *The Lacrima Chair* and UNSW Galleries presenting *Collection+: Shaun Gladwell* in 2015. He exhibited in the group exhibition *Face to Face* at the Perth International Art Festival 2016. His work is held in significant public and private collections nationally and internationally, including: Wadsworth Atheneum, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; the Progressive Art Collection, USA; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

Adri Valery Wens (b. 1974 Jakarta) is an Indonesian, Sydney-based artist. Wens completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Art and Design UNSW (previously COFA) in 2012. His first solo show was at MOP Projects in 2012, titled *Cinta Mati* (Crazy Love). He was shortlisted in several Australian Art Prizes, including the Josephine Ulrich and Win Schubert Photography Award 2015 (acquired), Fisher's Ghost Art Award 2014, Redlands Konica Minolta Art Prize 2013 (highly commended), Josephine Ulrich and Win Schubert Photography Award 2012, Fisher's Ghost Art Prize 2009.

ABOUT 4A

From early beginnings as an independent space on Sussex St incorporated in 1996 to its present location on Hay St in Sydney's Chinatown, 4A has come a long way to being recognised as one of Australia's foremost contemporary art organisations. 4A is committed to creating opportunities for artists, developing platforms to exhibit and encouraging critical discussion along the way. 4A is known both within Australia and internationally as an authority on the contemporary art from the Asia Pacific Region.