

PRESS RELEASE

2 SEPTEMBER 2022

ROH announces its participation at the inaugural edition of Frieze Seoul 2022

ROH is pleased to share its participation at Frieze Seoul 2022, its inaugural edition, exhibiting a site-specific, research-based installation by Bagus Pandega and Kei Imazu, two of the gallery's represented artists.

Bagus Pandega (b. 1985, Jakarta, Indonesia) and Kei Imazu (b.1980, Yamaguchi, Japan) focus on kinetic multimedia installations and painting respectively, and they reside in Bandung, Indonesia. Despite building further their own distinctive aesthetic languages, the two artists have been building a body of collaborative work as well that delves into the relationships between ecological and sociopolitical histories of their surrounding environments. In the case of their presentation at Frieze Seoul, they draw reference from the local colloquialism *Tanah Air*, literally translated as "land and water", but metaphorically as the entire archipelago of Indonesia.

This new body of work is based on research upon the Lusi Isle on the coast of Sidoarjo, East Java. The name Lusi is portmanteau for *Lumpur Sidoarjo* (Sidoarjo Mud), a 94-hectare island that was formed due to the largest recorded mud volcano spillage in recorded history. In 2006, the first hot mud eruption occurred from a natural gas well at Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, which has not ceased until now and has been declared a national disaster. The mud has since then continued flowing into the Porong River, resulting in the shallowing of the riverbed and has gradually formed the Lusi isle. The eruption has displaced thousands of people in the surrounding villages and communities, as well as causing billions of dollars worth of damage to infrastructure, property, and ecology. The mineral content of both water currents and soil topographies surrounding the site have been altered in an intractable manner.

In a series of interviews with a local shrimp farmer, they discovered that local aquaculture farmers have found means to recover their livelihoods through innovations in ecological harvesting strategies by planting mangrove plantations in select locations to filter the water from the mineral impurities and sediment caused by the Lusi disaster. The mangrove plantations have also allowed for the possibilities of a new ecosystem involving mangrove crabs, fin fish, and clams. Whenever the water becomes overflowed by the mud once again, the crabs and other lifeforms begin to die and float around the mangrove roots, signaling the farmers to fix the possibly broken embankment. The clams also act as biological water indicators and are also cultivated to filter and absorb hazardous materials from the water. The development of these strategies, alongside other indigenous responses, are made possible and have been kept intact by the local communities of aquaculture farmers, all working collaboratively to help each other adapt and survive.

Based on their observations, Imazu has developed a new body of work consisting of *When Facing the Mud (Response of Shrimp Farmers in Sidoarjo)* (2022), an expansive diptych depicting an aerial view of Lusi and its mudflow towards the ocean, as well as the geographical locations of mines and strata of soil that depict layers of time in its topography. Imazu's painting places in juxtaposition with each other a map of the Porong Regency with scenes from a shrimp farmer's personal narrative and biological cycles putting in picture the silvofishery system. To further illustrate life after the disaster, Imazu shows *When Facing the Mud (Putra)* (2022), a two-channel video projection on a pair of silkscreen that present their conversations with a local shrimp farmer. Imazu has also developed a number of intimately scaled paintings to further express more quotidian textures pertaining to the interviewed farmer and his daily cycle of life.

In conversation, Pandega has developed *Cycle* (2022), a complex DIY 3D-printing machine that utilizes mud samples taken directly from Lusi Isle as a medium and prints sculptures throughout the duration of the presentation in a constant cycle based on the mud. *Cycle* prints architectural structures constantly based on a decrepit house Pandega came across as he visited Lusi. Every day, *Cycle* will be constructing the mud house repeatedly, then destroyed repeatedly, in a continuous manner.

In addition to the constantly house-building 3D-printed machine, Pandega will also show *Grey Pool* (2022), a sculptural visualization of the mud spillage. An aerial mapping of the affected area made out of Plexiglass is attached to a mist machine representing the continuity of the mud spillage today.

In both the works of Imazu and Pandega, destruction and regeneration are not binary concepts that interject upon each other, but instead form necessary conditions by which the other exists. The emphasis on the project, therefore, is not so much as critique towards manmade disasters or the Anthropocene, but rather in relation to our capacity to be resilient and adaptive to the ever-changing.

ROH

About ROH

ROH is a gallery initiated in 2014 that aims to serve the Indonesian art ecosystem by building a consistent local program, while simultaneously fostering a broader, borderless dialogue. ROH has played a more nomadic role in the past couple of years while building its new permanent space, exploring unconventional presentations for artists in dynamic temporal settings and situations. In 2022, ROH has moved into its new permanent space in Jalan Surabaya 66, Jakarta, carefully reconsidering a colonial mid-century house into a flexible space for contemporary art.

For further information, please reach out to info@rohprojects.net.

About Frieze Seoul

Frieze Seoul is a new international art fair by the team behind premium art fairs such as Frieze London, Frieze Masters, Frieze New York and Frieze Los Angeles. It will take place from September 2-5, 2022. Patrick Lee is the Director of Frieze Seoul. Featuring over 110 of the most influential art galleries from across Asia and beyond, with a primary focus on contemporary art, the fair will be supplemented by a Frieze Masters section dedicated to art from antiquity through to the 20th century. Focus Asia, the section of the fair dedicated to galleries aged 12 years or younger will feature 10 of the most groundbreaking emerging galleries from the continent.

For the latest updates on Frieze Seoul, follow [@friezeofficial](#) on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook and sign up to our newsletter.

Location and date

ROH
Focus Asia
Hall C, Booth F9
COEX Mall

VIP Preview (by invitation only):
2 September, 14:00 - 20:00
3 - 4 September, 11:00 - 13:00

Public Days:
3 - 4 September, 13:00 - 19:30
5 September, 11:00 - 17:00

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