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Progressive Disintegrations
 (Chua Chye Teck, Marc Gloede,
 Hilmi Johandi and Wei Leng Tay
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 with guest artist Tanatchai Bandasak
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[im]print stands as the latest artistic endeavour from the Singapore art collective, **Progressive Disintegrations**. Marking their inaugural international collaboration, the collective partners with Thai artist Tanatchai Bandasak, whose conversation with members of Progressive Disintegrations first began during a residency in Singapore in 2019, and the Bangkok art space STORAGE.

Rooted in the building's historical context, this collaborative venture gives rise to an exhibition wherein the essence of print takes centre stage. STORAGE, situated within a former printing press in Bangkok, becomes the focal point of this exploration. Building upon **Progressive Disintegrations'** prior project in Singapore which examined the concept of the White Cube and the collective's deep interest with the unique spatial configurations of exhibition sites, this exhibition project dives into the intricate layers of printing and imprinting. Individually and collectively, members of **Progressive Disintegrations** delve into diverse aspects of the printing process, exploring the idea of print through various mediums such as photography, painting, installation, woodblock prints, performance, and published materials.

Together with guest artist Tanatchai Bandasak, the group contemplates how the site's history and the artists' individual practices can intertwine, giving rise to a project that melds architectural inquiry, memory, relational dynamics, and cultural exchange, all through an expansive lens of printed art forms.

This exhibition at STORAGE is the sixth presentation of resultant works, and invites the audience to spatially experience the outcome of this process and the correspondences and echoes in the works. The fifth iteration of the collaboration – a book installation (a wooden box with 5 layers) developed prior to the exhibition – can be seen right in the entrance to the exhibition.

When we think about a printed exhibition publication and its relationship to a corresponding exhibition, a temporal structure is often introduced in which the publication is necessarily a follow-up that occurs only after the exhibition is realised. For **[im]print**, the artists wanted to reverse this timeline and conceptualise a book project that would serve as a starting point for the project and all further developments, rather than being the end result. In this way, the above-mentioned book became an initial meeting point for individual ideas and experimentation with aesthetic strategies. This idea of establishing a book as a platform for initial experimentation was not just tied to the individual practices, but also allowed for thinking about ways to collaborate and correspondences between methods of working.



We are thinking a lot about how we install objects in space. The layouts of the shows are not a coincidence. And the same goes for the books – there is a very clear resonance between book and exhibition space. The blank page echoes the blank door. There is a connection, a trace, an imprint.

There is this interesting relation between walking and reading. For me, this somehow connects to the traditional Thai meditation practice of walking. To me this work is not so much about reading, it is more a deconstruction of...

...the text that becomes a line and a meditation.
Lines and shapes interest me a lot.





So, what you have here are the remains of a photograph, where I sanded down the image until you can no longer tell what it is you are looking at. And instead, you begin to see the material, the paper, and remnants of a process that has happened.





We ask: What is a print?

But also: What leaves an imprint on us? A house? A book?
A process that leaves a mark? What will later shape our
ways of doing things?



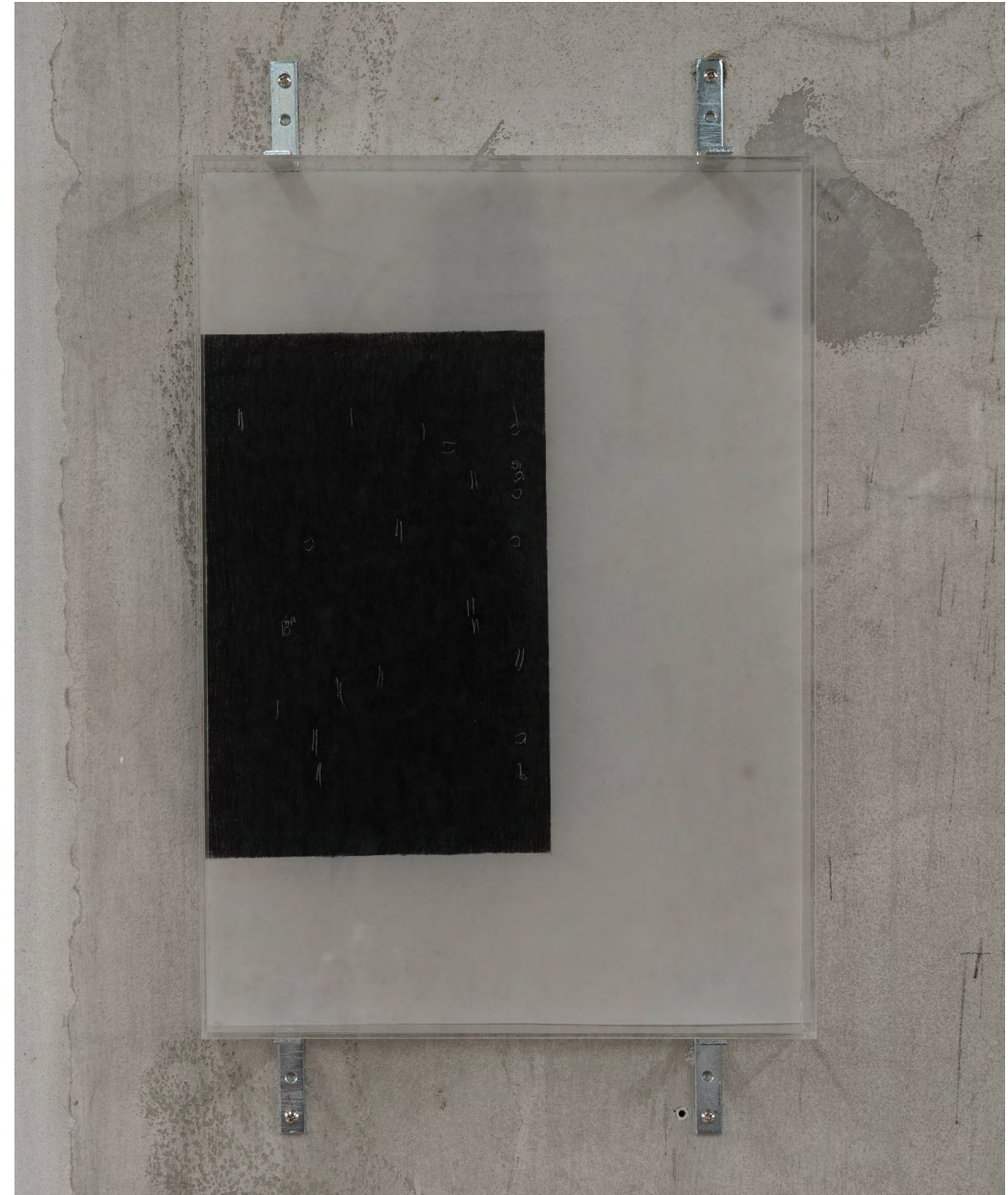








These specific marks of the proofreader; this labour that is so essential. Because these are the eyes that change the outcome. They impact how things really look in the end and how things read.





เหลือ

กด

ความก้าวหน้า การสลายตัว





I wanted to make a connection between printing / body pressure and this reverse idea that this house shapes ideas and shapes us and leaves an imprint on us.

I take these architectural fragments - all these walls, pillars, ceilings - and bring them together into one single frame. Based on this collage, a sort of mental image starts to come together.



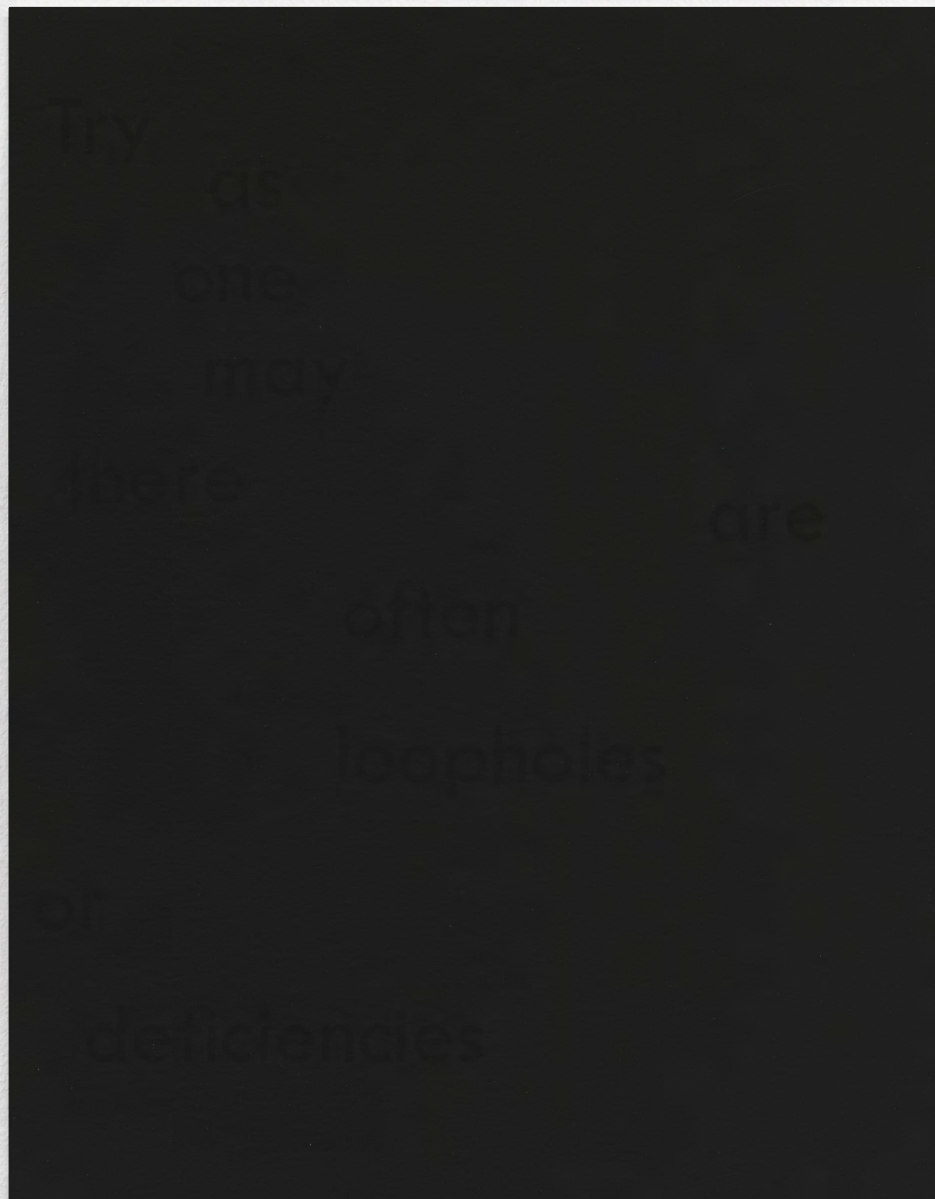












When we started, we were thinking about what had been produced in this house. What became of the printing press that was here for such a long time?

In my process of making I find unpredictable moments, accidents. Moments when something unexpected happens and I'm able to discover the potential of this accident.

The idea of showing this process of printing itself.
What it entails.
What kind of physical labour it requires.
What kind of smells or what kind of colours are related
to this – that was quite relevant.



I remember when I was asked if I had any tattoos. I had none, but for a long time, I could imagine myself getting one, back when the world felt new. Yet, even now, I struggle to come up with anything that I would be happy to have. From basic visual elements, motifs, to words, I cannot seem to narrow down what I would want permanently etched onto my aging skin. Words, especially, are difficult for me to consider. They last until the body decomposes, yet they are constantly changing. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow – things can be different, the meaning of words change. Perhaps by next Thursday, this very text will hold a different meaning altogether.

Skins and surfaces are what we normally imagine printing to be about. However [im]print, an exhibition by artist collective **Progressive Disintegrations**, may be about what lies beneath the surface; perhaps the skeleton, meat, and everything in between. The exhibition explores the philosophy of printing while investigating the history of the exhibition space, in this instance its prior role as a print house. I remember stepping on print marks of some publications that had been permanently embedded in the floor. They seem to have been there since the days when the print house was operational more than twenty years ago. These permanent prints on the floor will endure while the body – the actual building – decays.

Apart from sounding like chickens clucking, ‘books’ is ancient mediums that formally began as clay tablets, progressed to papyrus scrolls, evolved into bound codices, and eventually transitioned to modern printed forms. Books has undergone numerous transformations, initially to accommodate more words, images, and ideas. It would have been frustrating when one could not fit the whole coconut chicken hotpot recipe on one tablet. To be fair, it is possible to fit said recipe on a half tablet easily, but let us entertain the hypothesis for a bit here. What if we could share the recipe with others? Books are perhaps close

to something democratic. Affordable printed books inspire and enable us to create our own interpretation, whether it be a recipe for scallion-oil noodles topped with boiled pork dumplings drizzled with Sichuan peppercorn oil, or something else, for instance.

Returning to the topic of the exhibition, what initially grabbed my interest was the book, the so-called exhibition book titled **BOOK/BOX, 2023**. It took the shape of a five-layered wooden box filled with artistic contributions from the participating artists. Despite the hierarchical constraints of its structure, everything within is arranged in a seemingly random manner, creating an orderly chaos ready to be activated by the readers. A book inherently carries a sense of the past; it requires completion before it can be read and comprehended. Creating the exhibition book prior to conceptualising the actual exhibition may seem like an unconventional approach, but to me, it underlines the significance of this book as the central component. It represents the entirety of the exhibition contained within – a condensed version that holds essential value, regardless of what it may be called.

Things have to be seen from different angles; the visible information and its absence may transmit simultaneously, perhaps in the same glance. Hilmi Johandi achieves this through his **Placemaking** series of paintings, creating beautiful structural images that organically blend the building’s structure as skin and bones, revealing both the inside and outside simultaneously. The sources Hilmi draws upon include archives from the print house and traces found on the internet, creating a connection between archival memories and the recent state of the space. Hilmi’s approach to painting involves the addition of layers, which shares similarities with the methodical process of printing.

Printing usually reflects the process of layering, with colours added one upon another, filling in blanks, or

overlapping, depending on the printing method. Could removing material layers be considered reverse printing? Or is it adding another layer by subtracting the previous one? The concepts of adding and subtracting can be confusing, as both result in the creation of a new and different layer of imagery. Let my brain compute a bit here, by removing a surface, while simultaneously adding more. Could it be that it is not just about erasing images, but also about explicitly revealing the nature of the material? Could that process be called de-printing? Wei Leng Tay's works deal with their own process of image-making. The meanings of historical images intertwine with the processes of photography, printing, re-photography, reprinting, and resurfacing. Through precise abstraction, the viewer's perception of the image shifts from its pure original meaning to a comprehension of the combined meaning of the image-making and its image.

The notion of time: the expanded sense of time and precise moments are seen in Chua Chye Teck's works **Reading 1** and **Reading 2**. Utilising an extended duration of time in the meditative process, Chye Teck employed the old form of letter-press printing plates to arrange a representation of a text passage he found in the English edition of a Thai book. The work is simultaneously introspective and external, capturing both the artist's act of arranging and the viewer's act of reading a continuous passage without any spacing on the metal floor. This concept echoes the notion of being present, corresponding to the teachings found in the book Chye Teck had selected. In another piece, a different passage is rhythmically conveyed through black words against a black background, nearly invisible without attentive observation. This work was created in a dark room, where during the development process, deliberate alterations were made to halt the image from fully developing. The precise moment of time plays a significant role in the creation of this piece, contrasting with the expanded time devoted to the other work. Despite the

differences, both works convey an almost invisible stream of words, equally asking for the viewer's closest attention.

Words can be translated back and forth in different languages, and one word can have multiple meanings, just as many words can convey a single concept. Marc Gloede's works explore the fluctuation of meaning through the context of printing. His ambiguous work on paper deals with various subjects related to printing, ranging from paying homage to Lee Wen's Yellow Man to addressing political themes associated with the medium. One work that particularly stands out to me is the print of a large punctuation mark (.), which occupies the blank space on a piece of paper. I am saying here that it is a punctuation mark (.), but it might as well be a motif of a hole or a silhouette of the moon; I would not have known. This piece was part of his artistic contribution to the **BOOK/BOX, 2023** exhibition book mentioned earlier. Additionally, Marc did a live performance by using the building as a printing press on his body, prompting us to question the distinction between the body and the medium. It raises the question: which is acting as the press: the building or the body?

Pressing is the most common method in printing technology, from letterpress to photograms. Let us set aside light-related printing technologies for now. Pressing covers various aspects, from leaving marks to immobilising other objects. **||, 2023** by Tanatchai Bandasak, comprises found objects--items that were once part of something else and served a different purpose, such as a piece of concrete, a rock, or a wooden branch. These objects, commonly found in urban landscapes, were sometimes used as immobilisers, temporarily holding other things in place. Tanatchai collected and arranged these objects in the exhibition, pressing them against one another to create an art piece that invite reflection on their actions, significance, and the invisible imprints they leave behind. Tanatchai always underlines the invisible, as seen in the work **5/364, 2023**,

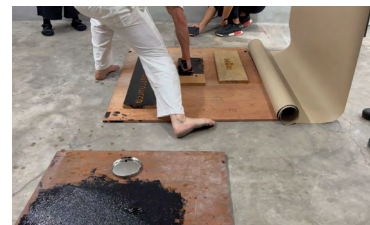
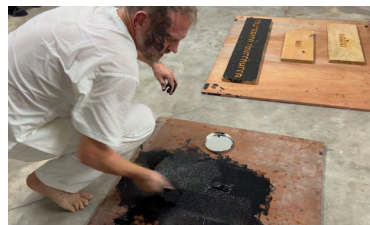
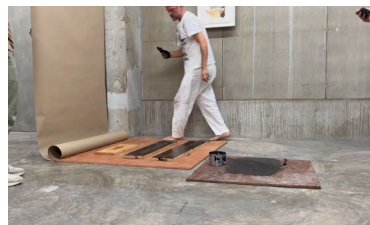
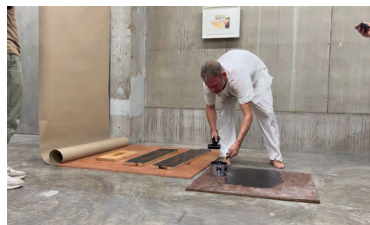
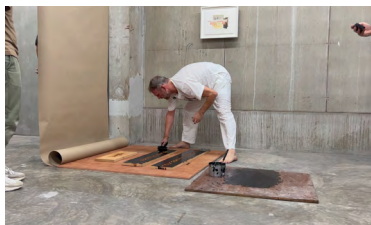
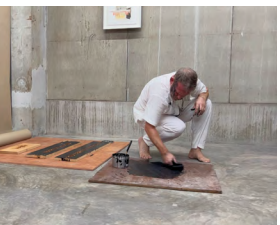
which is a drawing of a printed page on tracing paper, leaving only proofreading marks visible as voids against a black drawing. Proofreading is considered essential invisible labour in the printing process, intended to ensure error-free reading experiences. While errors are evident in this very text due to the absence of a professional proofreader on my end, perhaps these errors serve as a reminder of our gratitude for all invisible labours across various fields of work. Everything falls into order as we will it to be.

Honestly, I initially did not intend to write about individual works in the exhibition as seen here, as I felt there were already statements fulfilling that purpose. My aim was to reflect on and contemplate the exhibition after its conclusion. Nevertheless, I find myself unintentionally drawn into detailing the obvious like an idiot. If I were to rewrite this, I would instead tell the story of a chicken that continues clucking after being fed; I apologise for the digression. What you have in your hands now might seem

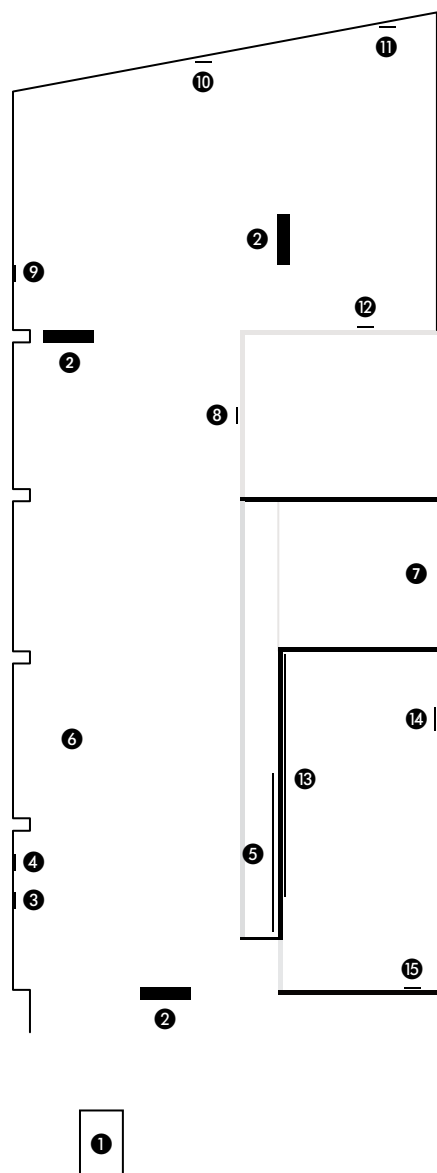
unnecessary, given that the exhibition book has already materialised. However, its purpose was not for distribution; rather, it was meant to be admired as an object of art in itself. As an audience member, I would be happy to have a PDF version of the **BOOK/BOX**, and perhaps in a random order. Since everything has gone digital these days, the way we perceive things might as well have changed, not necessarily for better or worse. Let us reconsider the book you are holding in your hands as a token of the entire exhibition process, recording more details about the exhibition in a book form. Alright, well, it is essentially another book. I must apologise for any incoherence in my writing. I have been writing this text while under the influence of painkillers, while thinking about a tattoo I recently noticed on the left arm of someone who said, “We are all decaying; what will be left are memories and a mere few pages of paper.” Honestly, I am not entirely sure what that means.

Sathit Sattarasart

Video Stills



So there are always these fundamental key points for us: to have the individual process and this collective creative process of bringing things together. In a way, we can say that the layouts of the exhibitions are always the collective moment when we all come together and create the rhythm of the exhibitions. This means not only understanding how the works relate to the space, but also how the works actually speak to each other within the space.



①
p. 4, Cover
Progressive Disintegrations
& Tanatchai Bandasak
BOOK/BOX, 2023
Various materials
16 x 73 x 38 cm

②
p. 4-5, 12, 18,
20, 25, 32, 50-51
Marc Gloede
UNDER PRESSURE, 2023
Performative process &
3 woodblock prints, 7 wood
blocks Dimensions variable

③
p. 4, 12
Wei Leng Tay
Untitled (Chinese opera show,
Hua Lamphong, December 2009,
photographed with a Mamiya RZ67
camera on Fujifilm FP-100C
instant film. Rephotographed
with a Sony mirrorless camera
in 2023 and printed on cotton
rag. Sanded.), 2023
Archival pigment print
42 x 59.4 cm

④
p. 4, 10, 12
Wei Leng Tay
Untitled (Alleyway, Hua
Lamphong, December 2009,
photographed with a Mamiya RZ67
camera on Fujifilm FP-100C
instant film. Rephotographed
with a Sony mirrorless camera
in 2023 and printed on cotton
rag. Sanded.), 2023
Archival pigment print
42 x 59.4 cm

⑤
p. 5, 6-7, 8-9
Chua Chye Teck
Reading 1, 2023 Steel
400 cm

⑥
p. 4, 12, 14-15
Tanatchai Bandasak
I I, 2023
Concretes, limestones, bricks,
asphalt, woods
Dimensions variable

⑦
p. 17
Wei Leng Tay
Untitled (Chuanpin Printing
Press, Phra Sumen, 1978,
photograph from the estate
of the family. Rephotographed
with an iPhone by the family
in 2023. Printed on cotton
rag. Sanded. Projected), 2023
Archival pigment print and wall
projection
42 x 59.4 cm (print)
Dimensions variable (projection)

⑧
p. 16, 19
Hilmi Johandi
Placemaking #1, 2023
Oil on linen
50.3 x 65.3 cm

⑨
p. 20-21
Hilmi Johandi
Placemaking #5, 2023
Collage and watercolour on paper
30 x 38 cm

⑩
p. 18, 21, 23, 24
Tanatchai Bandasak
5/384, 2023
Granite/charcoal pencil on
tracing paper
29.7 x 42 cm

⑪
p. 24, 28-29, 30-31
Hilmi Johandi
Placemaking #4, 2023
Oil on linen
32.6 x 45.5 cm

⑫
p. 25, 26-27
Wei Leng Tay
Untitled (A home, Hua Lamphong,
December 2009, photographed
with a Mamiya RZ67 camera on
Fujifilm FP-100C instant film.
Rephotographed with a Sony
mirrorless camera in 2023
and printed on cotton rag.
Sanded.), 2023
Archival pigment print
42 x 59.4 cm

⑬
p. 38, 40
Chua Chye Teck
Reading 2, 2023
Gelatin silver prints
27.9 x 35.5 cm (each)

⑭
p. 34, 39
Hilmi Johandi
Placemaking #3, 2023
Oil on linen
66.3 x 76.2 cm

⑮
p. 35, 37
Hilmi Johandi
Placemaking #2, 2023
Oil on linen
50.5 x 30.5 cm

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S T O R A G E

