

KENYALANG CIRCUS * KENYALANG CIRCUS * KENYALANG CIRCUS



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MARCOS KUEH

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KENYALANG CIRCUS

NATIONAL ART GALLERY

MALAYSIA



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Stroom
Den Haag



RONMANDOS

KENYALANG CIRCUS * KENYALANG CIRCUS * KENYALANG CIRCUS

"Kenyalang Circus" ialah satu siri karya tekstil berwarna-warni dan *fluorescent* yang dihasilkan dengan mesin tenun industri oleh Marcos Kueh, seorang artis grafik dan tekstil muda dari Malaysia. Siri ini melihat Marcos bergelut dengan soalan-soalan mendalam mengenai identitinya sebagai seorang Cina-Malaysia dari Borneo yang tinggal di kalangan orang Eropah di Belanda. Kebanyakan daripada imej-imej dalam siri ini diambil daripada imej-imej Malaysia dan Borneo, digabungkan dengan imej-imej kasar iklan jalanan, logo jenama multinasional dan benang *fluorescent*—menyindir cara kepelbagaian budaya Borneo yang dierotik dan disalah fahami oleh sebahagian masyarakat Barat dan Semenanjung Malaysia juga.

Sekilas pandang, poster dan papan iklan tenunan berwarna-warni dan besar kelihatan seperti sebuah perhimpunan makhluk-makhluk tropika untuk sambutan upacara budaya yang pelik. Melihat kali kedua, penonton barangkali akan menyedari bahawa semua makhluk dibingkai dalam poster oleh jenama "Kenyalang Circus," untuk dijual sebagai hiburan. Dalam karya seperti *Woven Poster #06: Money Minded*, *Woven Poster #07: Exotic Hospitality*, dan *Woven Poster #08: Primitive Performance*, Marcos mempersoalkan niat manusia di Borneo apabila mereka mengenakan kostum tradisional dan bekerja dalam industri hospitaliti. Apabila mereka melakukan ritual penuaian, adakah mereka masih melakukannya untuk tuhan, atau adakah untuk tatapan pelancong?

Dalam butiran karya *Woven Poster #9a: Homo Savagius Obedius* dan *Woven Poster #9b: Homo Maiden Exotica*, makhluk-makhluk tersebut memakai pakaian seragam yang menggambarkan pekerjaan mereka sebagai pekerja kilang atau pembersih untuk syarikat asing. Bagi Marcos, penjajahan tidak selalu bersifat ganas atau nyata; sebaliknya, ia meresap secara halus dalam kehidupan seharian. Dengan melihat kami sebagai makhluk dari tanah yang eksotik lebih mudah diakses, isu sosial akan sentiasa menjadi sekunder kepada kilauan berwarna-warni yang menonjolkan identiti kami sebagai orang Borneo.

Dalam garis pemikiran yang sama, makhluk yang digambarkan dalam karya *Woven Poster #10: Homo Servantis Erotis* berada di antara tuhan dan raksasa. Oleh kerana status sosioekonomi, ramai orang Asia Tenggara pergi ke negara maju dan bekerja sambil. Selalunya pendatang dilihat sebagai perosak yang menimbulkan masalah dan merampas pekerjaan. Namun begitu, kita semua mempunyai akar budaya dan layak mendapat belas kasihan untuk dilihat sebagai anak tuhan juga.

Koleksi karya yang akhir ialah *Woven Billboard: Ibu Pertiwiku*. Dipamerkan seperti air terjun dengan mengambil inspirasi daripada kepercayaan suku Dayak yang menceritakan tentang nenek moyang mereka yang tinggal di syurga, dan hanya turun ke dunia melalui air terjun. Nenek moyang melihat dari atas ketika kita sedang menguruskan urusan sendiri—menyelesaikan segala kekacauan dan kelucuan dalam kehidupan nyata.

"Kenyalang Circus" telah menjelajah dalam pelbagai versi persembahan di seluruh dunia—dari Paris ke New York. Pada Disember 2024, "Circus" akhirnya tiba di Malaysia, dan akan menyambut kemeriahan tahun baharu 2025 bersama khalayak di tanah air.

“Kenyalang Circus” is a series of colourful, fluorescent textile works made with industrial weaving machines by Marcos Kueh, a young graphic and textile artist from Malaysia. The series sees Marcos grappling with searing questions over his identity as a Chinese-Malaysian from Borneo living among Europeans in The Netherlands. Many of the imagery in the series draws from Malaysian and Bornean imagery, coupled with the crude imagery of street advertisements, multinational brand logos, and fluorescent threads—saturizing the way that the diverse cultures of Borneo are eroticized and misunderstood by Westerners and Peninsula Malaysians alike.

At first glance, the colourful and massive woven posters and billboards might allude to the gathering of creatures of the tropics for a ceremonious celebration of a bizarre culture. But on second glance, the viewer might realize that all the beings are framed within the poster by the “Kenyalang Circus” branding to be sold as entertainment. In *Woven Poster #06: Money Minded*, *Woven Poster #07: Exotic Hospitality*, and *Woven Poster #08: Primitive Performance*, Marcos questions the intention of the humans of Borneo when we put ourselves in traditional costumes and work in the industry of hospitality. When we perform our harvest rituals, do we still do it for the Gods, or are we doing it for the eyes of tourists?

In the details of *Woven Poster #9a: Homo Savagius Obedius* and *Woven Poster #9b: Homo Maiden Exotica*, the creatures are wearing uniforms that hint towards the creature’s employment as factory workers or cleaners for foreign companies. Colonization in the lived experience of Marcos is not always violent and obvious; rather, it silently interstates itself in the very mundane situations of our day-to-day. Because seeing us as creatures from an exotic land is more accessible, our social issues would always be secondary to the colourful, mystical sheen that forefronts our identities as Bornean’s.

In the same line of thought, the creature depicted in *Woven Poster #10: Homo Servantis Erotis* is in between a God and a monster. Because of our socioeconomic status, many Southeast Asians travel to developed countries and work odd jobs. More often than not, immigrants are seen as monsters here to cause trouble and take away jobs. It is too easy to forget that even with cleaners, we all have our cultural roots and deserve compassion to be seen as children of God, too.

The finale of the collection is *Woven Billboard: Ibu Pertiwiku*. Displayed like a waterfall, the inspiration comes from the belief of many Dayak tribes that talk about our ancestors living in heaven, only coming down to visit the early realms through the waterfalls. Our ancestors watch from above as we do our own business, figuring out the chaos and clownery here in the living realms.

“The Kenyalang Circus” has travelled in different iterations and arrangements worldwide, from Paris to New York. In December 2024, the Circus finally made it to Malaysia, where it will vibrantly welcome the new year of 2025 with the public back home.

Marcos Kueh
KENYALANG CIRCUS

2024
 Recycled Polyester Yarns, Cotton,
 Mohair and Viscose

Artis Artist
 Marcos Kueh

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 TextielLab, Tilburg
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 The Back Room, Kuala Lumpur

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 Marcos Kueh

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