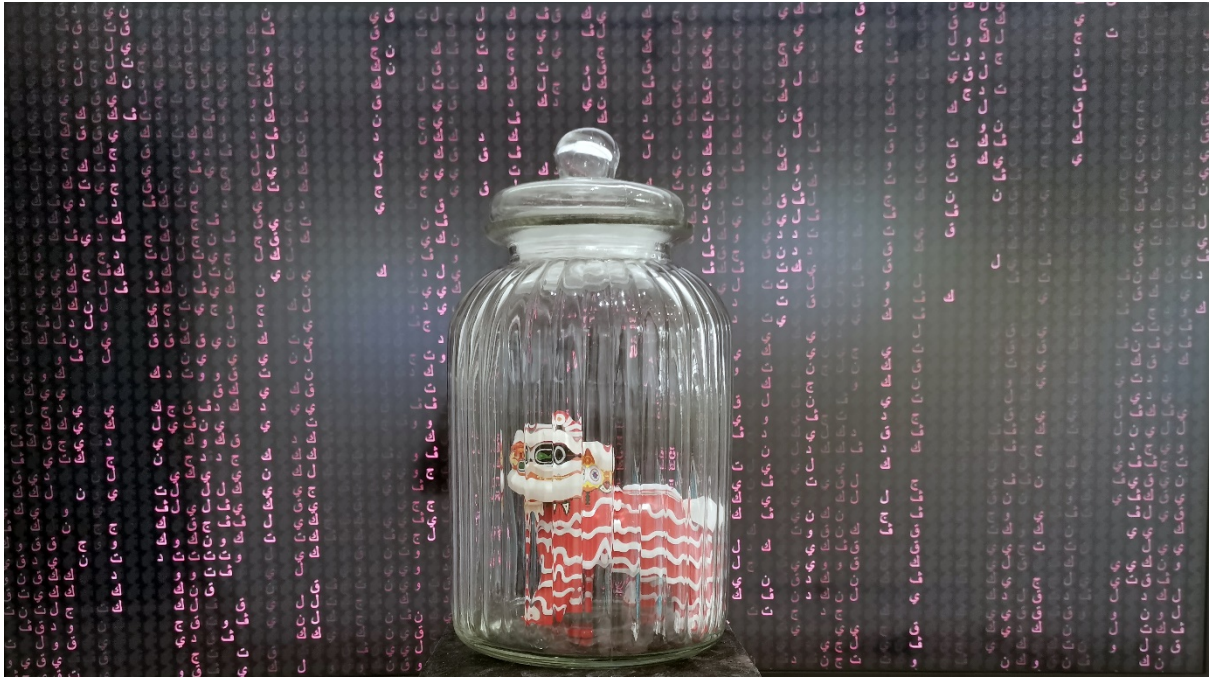


Tak Tau Chai Si



Tak Tau Chai Si reflects on the Chinese in the Nusantara region. In Baba Malay, it means that "it is foolish for someone not to be aware about his/her own position in a given situation or place". With reference to Singapore, we have heard about being surrounded by a sea of Islam. The Chinese in this region has always been in a symbiotic relationship with the inhabitants of this region. Being a region of commerce and diversity, the Nusantara experience is an experience of contact, assimilation, acculturation and migration that comes about as a result trading within the Nusantara.

The phrase "Tak Tau Chai Si" could refer to the Chinese and also to those people that interact and trade with the Chinese in the Nusantara. The work offers a point of reflection and discourse about the Chinese migration into the Nanyang.

Dara, Bini, Mati Laki (Maiden, Wife, Widow)



Set against the premise that the Nanyang and the Nusantara (the Malay World) in the Southeast Asian region is an experience of migration, acculturation, assimilation and contact, this work hopes to look at the Peranakan culture as a starting point for further discourse through the social, political and metaphysical layers of old practices/beliefs as a way to open up discourse about power and gender in a patriarchal environment across time and history.

This 3-channel work explores the 3 phases of a woman's life - as maiden, wife and widow.

Before marriage, as a maiden 'bikin tapeh/tapai' (making fermented glutinous rice) as a test of her suitability to be a wife;

During marriage, as a wife performing the 'nasi kangkang' ritual as a to make her husband 'listen' and be faithful to her - as a metaphor for the interplay of gender and power within a patriarchal system,

As a widow performing the mandi bunga (floral bath) as a cleansing ritual.

Although now ethnically identified as forming part of the larger Chinese community, the customs and rituals performed by the Chinese Peranakan community have roots in the Malay/indigenous practices and beliefs of the region.