



[Media Release] GLISTEN by Lisa Reihana bedazzles with art activated by nature at National Gallery Singapore's Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden

Description

Leading Aotearoa New Zealander contemporary artist Lisa Reihana makes her Southeast Asia solo debut with GLISTEN, a large-scale kinetic sculpture that playfully responds to the surrounding environment.

Be dazzled by the shimmers and soundscape of Aotearoa New Zealander contemporary artist Lisa Reihana's GLISTEN, a striking kinetic large-scale outdoor installation, adorned with patterns inspired by the rich traditions of Southeast Asian Songket and Māori Tāniko weaving. National Gallery Singapore presents Reihana's first solo presentation in Southeast Asia for the seventh edition of the Gallery's annual Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Commission Series.

GLISTEN presents a vibrant tapestry with intricate patterns that pay homage to the traditions and craft of Indigenous women weavers from Māori and Southeast Asian cultures, with the intertwining of art and nature. The three-sided sculpture reacts and responds playfully to its surrounding natural environment. With over 114,000 shimmer discs beautifully reflecting light, and with the accompanying soundscape of a wind chime, GLISTEN orchestrates a multi-sensory encounter with the artwork. Visitors of all ages are welcome to experience the celebratory and joyful nature of the artwork, inspiring a deeper appreciation of the respective cultures while prompting them to explore the connections between Southeast Asia and Aotearoa New Zealand which have existed since pre-colonial times.



Installation view, GLISTEN by Lisa Reihana, National Gallery Singapore, 2024. Image Credit – National Gallery Singapore

Lisa Reihana (Ng? Puhi, Ng?ti Hine, Ng?i T?teauru, Ng?i T?poto; b. 1964, Aotearoa New Zealand) is a multi-disciplinary artist whose diverse practice spans film, sculpture, costume, and body adornment, text and photography. Being a woman of M?ori and Welsh-English descent, Reihana has endeavoured to expand representations of Pacific and M?ori identities, knowledge, and culture, significantly influencing the development of contemporary art and M?ori art in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Drawing from her longstanding research into M?ori ancestral knowledge, materials, and costumes, Reihana also extended her research into Songket weaving for this unique commission. Reihana dives into the pre-colonial connections between the regions through the incorporation of T?niko weaving from Aotearoa New Zealand, and Malaysian Songket motifs which are found mostly in Kelantan and Terengganu. The artwork honours the traditions, labour, and pivotal roles of Songket and T?niko's

women weavers as makers, communicators, knowledge bearers, and mediators before the Asia and Pacific regions' first contact with Western culture. GLISTEN points toward the plurality of feminisms that existed in pre-colonial societies and continues to persist in Asia and Pacific regions where women provided sustenance not just for their immediate family, but for their community.

GLISTEN beckons visitors with a uniquely mesmerising experience that celebrates cultures as it responds to the surrounding natural environment. The interpretation and innovative creation of the T?niko and Malaysian Songket woven motifs by Reihana were plotted digitally in a precise manner where 114,000 shimmer discs were meticulously placed by hand to bring the patterns to life. The wind chime was handmade by collaborator Gary Hunt and the artist from repurposed materials. The shimmer discs allude to LED technology, pixels in digital images and screens, which points to Reihana's video works and her New Media practice.



Installation view of GLISTEN wall with Taʔniko patterns, National Gallery Singapore, 2024. Image C
National Gallery Singapore



Installation view of GLISTEN wall with Taʔniko patterns, National Gallery Singapore, 2024



Installation view of GLISTEN wall with Songket patterns, National Gallery Singapore, 2024. Image Credit: National Gallery Singapore



Installation view of GLISTEN wind chime, National Gallery Singapore, 2024. Image Credit – National Gallery Singapore

Lisa Reihana says, “It’s a privilege to work with National Gallery Singapore, a leading institution for Southeast Asian art and art history. Our shared focus is on deepening the understanding and expanding the representation of extraordinary textiles from both our regions. The patterns adorning GLISTEN are inspired by women weavers, I honour their stories and intricate skills. I hope visitors will be dazzled by its beauty, and to join me in celebrating the enduring legacy of Songket and T?niko weaving.”

Qinyi Lim, Curator at National Gallery Singapore, says, “It has been a pleasure working with Lisa Reihana and her collaborator, James Pinker, to present GLISTEN for this year’s Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Commission. At the Gallery, we strive to connect Southeast Asian art with broader global narratives, fostering a deeper understanding of Southeast Asia’s heritage amidst current and prescient concerns. GLISTEN beautifully embodies this mission by providing an

avenue for visitors to explore the old and new exchanges on gendered labour and traditions between Southeast Asia, Aotearoa New Zealand and further.”

The Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Commission series invites one leading artist each year to present site-specific works at the Gallery. Previous commissioned artists include Cao Fei, Sir Antony Gormley, Shilpa Gupta, Rirkrit Tiravanija and Danh Võ. The Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Commission is made possible through a generous gift from the Far East Organisation.

GLISTEN by Lisa Reihana will be on display at the Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden Gallery, Level 5, City Hall Wing at National Gallery Singapore from 14 June 2024 to 30 March 2025. Admission is free.

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