



building whisperer

JEFFREY WANDLY

“When I work it’s a spontaneity where I let gravity and a natural order flow.”

JEFFREY WANDLY

COVER

Koon Seng Road, Katong

Ink, acrylic on canvas
200 x 100 cm
2016

building whisperer

JEFFREY WANDLY

January 21 – 24, 2016
Singapore Contemporary

Maya
GALLERY

FOREWORD

Maya Gallery is pleased to present *Building Whisperer*, a solo exhibition by Singapore architect and artist Jeffrey Wandly.

One of the most challenging tasks for a gallerist is to organise a solo exhibition of a loved one, especially when the artist is her partner, husband and father of her children. Despite having our own professional careers, Jeffrey and I co-founded Maya Gallery out of a passion for the arts. Within four years, we managed to learn the dynamics and intricacies of running a gallery, from the creative and design process, management and administrative aspects, accounting, funding, marketing, advertising, and everything else in between. Behind any beautiful art display is a team of dedicated individuals – gallery founders, curators, writers, photographers, interns and assistants. Sometimes, one may take on a few, or all of these roles simultaneously. This responsibility is quite heavy on anyone or any couple working together, but our shared love for the arts, the love and support from our families, and a commitment to serve the community, helps make it all the more rewarding.

Many have asked Jeffrey how he makes time to create art when he is also the gallery co-founder, project management professional and family man? Being in the highly stressed building and construction industry can either be a boon or bane for the artist. For Jeffrey, his artistic development has progressed with his career; he is passionate about creating art as much as he is when managing his development projects. His relationship with buildings, and how he communicates it on canvas, is as intense as a human one. The answer lies in making time for each and every aspect of life. As per German aviator Dieter F. Uchtdorf who said, "The desire to create is one of the deepest yearnings of the human soul."

We are grateful to Pamela Ng for unravelling more about Jeffrey's psyche, and his thoughts on Singapore's architectural heritage, through her excellent writing in this catalogue.

We hope you will enjoy and appreciate the showcase, and take back with you a renewed sense of our heritage, as seen from the eyes of an artist and architect.

MASTURAH SHA'ARI

Co-founder, Director
Maya Gallery

Blair Road, Tanjong Pagar I

Ink, acrylic on canvas
120 x 120 cm
2016



building whisperer

Jeffrey Wandly's Conversations with Buildings

PAMELA NG
Art Writer

The language of buildings is not known by many. We pass by these structures that house our lives and mark our spaces with little thought or respect. For artist and architect Jeffrey Wandly, there is more than just a reverence, there lives a vital, irresistible connection, "I love everything about a building, from conception to construction, each nut and bolt; how every part is made, I have touched every single piece of material and smelt the dirt at construction sites."

This deep level of involvement has bred an innate familiarity in Jeffrey for the built environment. He sees buildings as living beings who provide more than a sense of space. Their facades, pipes, infrastructure and systems all function together, mirroring the nerves and cells of the human body.

David Bartlett, Vice President of Smarter Buildings, IBM Software Group, suggests using concepts of biomimicry to listen to buildings through their network of interdependent technology to understand how to make more intelligent, energy-efficient buildings. David's 'physiology of buildings' likens the building's heating and cooling systems to the human respiratory system, the sensors, computer monitoring and other instrumentation making up the building's nervous system and the musculoskeletal system providing form, support, stability and movement to the building. Just like the human body, all the systems are interconnected and affect one another.

Jeffrey's connection with buildings bears similar concepts of it being a living organism, but with a purer knowing that taps on something more primal and ancient in the human spirit. To him, buildings are not just sterile, man-made creations, they form part of the cosmos and have their own energies and memories. Buildings want to tell Jeffrey their stories and he is open and conscious to understand and recognise a building's call to explore it. Walking into and moving around the building, Jeffrey intuitively knows what the buildings want to emote, in this spiritual dialogue between concrete and flesh.

Jeffrey has amassed a following and his collectors were the ones who named him "Building Whisperer" because they connect to the conversations he has with buildings and they recognise the soul of the buildings through his works. In their 2007 book *Architectural Voices: Listening to Old Buildings*, authors David Littlefield and Saskia Lewis believe that buildings are "...deeply human creations – built by people for people; they come to embody the dreams, imaginings and stories that take place within them."

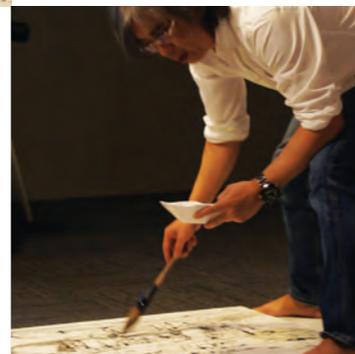
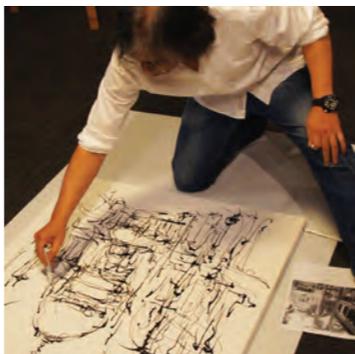
In his first solo exhibition in Busan, Korea, Jeffrey explored the idea of man's connection with buildings of worship across East Asia and Southeast Asia. Jeffrey visited each of these different houses of devotion. He hoped to bring universal awareness – that we are all connected to something larger and to some extent, irregardless of your faith, the basic principle is to be a good human being. This extends to embracing a more inclusive view of spirituality and faith where you respect all people for their beliefs without being judgemental.

In his second solo exhibition, this time at the Singapore Contemporary Art Fair 2015, he hopes to show the connection Singaporeans, its visitors and residents, have with the built environment and in turn, how they contribute to an archive of memories in the iconic buildings around Singapore.

Man's connection with land is not a new concept but rather a forgotten one. The Aboriginal people of Australia have a symbiotic relationship with the lands and waters of their home territories and this living cultural knowledge is passed down from generation to generation. In Muslim tradition, *doa selamat* or prayers for well-wishes, are performed when entering a new abode. Javanese princes long used monuments and architecture as their earthly monuments of glory and bridges to the spiritual world. In traditional Indonesian houses, different ethnic groups use architecture as markers of ethnicity.

Jeffrey travels overseas often to look at architecture and the built environment. After his conversation with a building, he sketches and photographs its details. The important thing for him is capturing the moment with the building in his intuition, letting it guide him to paint it in his studio in Emily Hill in Singapore. As he paints on the floor in his studio, the stories and the relationship continues. Jeffrey is known for his distinctive style of fluid paint strokes created by pouring and swirling ink directly from the bottle. His affinity for music and nature enables him to find music in the environment, even in silence. On Emily Hill, amidst the sounds of birds, raindrops, squirrels, Jeffrey listens mostly to jazz and classical music. Just like an orchestra score where the notes and lines all connect to form a composition, his paintings dance with their own frequency and energy, not unlike sound waves.

Jeffrey likes the connection of painting on the floor. This connection with the ground is the feeling of rootedness and being one with Mother Nature. "When I work it's a spontaneity where I let gravity and a natural order flow." Jeffrey prefers to let the medium take an organic, natural life of its own. When he paints, he is one with the medium, building structure and canvas. He does not merely recollect a past memory; he travels back and continues the conversation with the building as if he was actually physically present again.



JAMEEL ART PRIZE 2015
Artist Talk & Demo
National Library Board

Jeffrey didn't always paint buildings; born at the cusp of Singapore's independence in 1964, he started out as a child painting portraits. Jeffrey's parents came from West Sumatra in Indonesia, and his father, Wandly Yazid, is a well known musician, composer and arranger for Malay film music in the 40's through to the 60's. He is fondly remembered as Pak Wandly for his important contributions to the film and music industry in Singapore and Malaysia, including his composition of *Gurindam Jiwa*. Pak Wandly also painted in watercolour as a hobby. To connect his children to their Indonesian hometown and blood ties there, he came up with the ingenious idea of Jeffrey and his siblings drawing their relatives' portraits based on photographs he shared with them.

As the children drew with pencil, Pak Wandly would tell them stories and the best portrait was rewarded with chocolate. In fact, since young, Jeffrey's family has preferred to hand-make Hari Raya cards for their extended family. If Jeffrey could not find paper, he would doodle on a spot on the wall under his bed.

In 1976 when they were asked to move out of their *kampung* or village at Jalan Ladang, near Kampung Eunus, the resettlement was all done in a rush and they forgot to collect Jeffrey's artworks from a cupboard in the living room. Jeffrey was devastated as this body of work disappeared into

the ground together with his childhood home and a condominium had sprung up in its place. Even though the banyan tree still stands, he felt lost and trapped in the Housing Development Board (HDB) flats. Perhaps his painting of buildings was spurred on from this trauma of moving out of the *kampung* and more recently from moving out of Maya Gallery's first location in historic Kampong Gelam. With each new painting, he is reclaiming the losses and re-creating new stories so the buildings live on in a shared memory. Older buildings have always spoken to Jeffrey more as the histories, heritage, culture and stories within them resonate deeply with him.

The Singapore places he has chosen to paint in *The Building Whisperer* are potentially ephemeral, as they may not last for long to give way to Singapore's rapid expansion for more homes, roads and malls. Jeffrey extends this philosophy to his own children. Whenever they go overseas, he encourages them to make sketches of their surroundings as he strongly believes that through art you learn about culture and people, "You build relationships through art."

On the shifting sands of fast-paced metropolitan Singapore, Jeffrey Wandly is capturing a visual diary of the past filled with intimate portraits of the energy and vitality of the places we have inhabited. The buildings he paints mark the sense of place, time and heritage in Singapore's collective memory and physical experience. This documentation of our visual heritage is crucial, even as a younger generation of Singaporeans bury their heads in technology and race towards modernisation. Jeffrey's works invite you to look, stop and reflect on your surroundings and philosophies of life because to move ahead, one must know where one came from.



Blair Road, Tanjong Pagar III
Ink, acrylic on canvas
120 x 120 cm
2016

Blair Road, Tanjong Pagar II
Ink, acrylic on canvas
120 x 120 cm
2016



Kampong Gelam II

Ink, acrylic on canvas
200 x 95 cm
2015



Wendy Wandy 2016

Koon Seng Road, Katong

Ink, acrylic on canvas
200 x 100 cm
2016

Joo Chiat Road, Katong

Ink, acrylic on canvas
200 x 100 cm
2016



Wendy Wandy 2016



Mackenzie Rd, Little India

Ink, acrylic on canvas
200 x 70 cm
2016

Festive Little India

Ink, acrylic on canvas
140 x 95 cm
2016



Hanoi Opera House I, Vietnam

Ink, acrylic on canvas
90 x 60 cm
2015

Hanoi Opera House II, Vietnam

Ink, acrylic on canvas
60 x 90 cm
2015



Hanoi Railway Station I, Vietnam

Ink, acrylic on canvas
90 x 60 cm
2015

Hanoi Railway Station II, Vietnam

Ink, acrylic on canvas
60 x 90 cm
2015



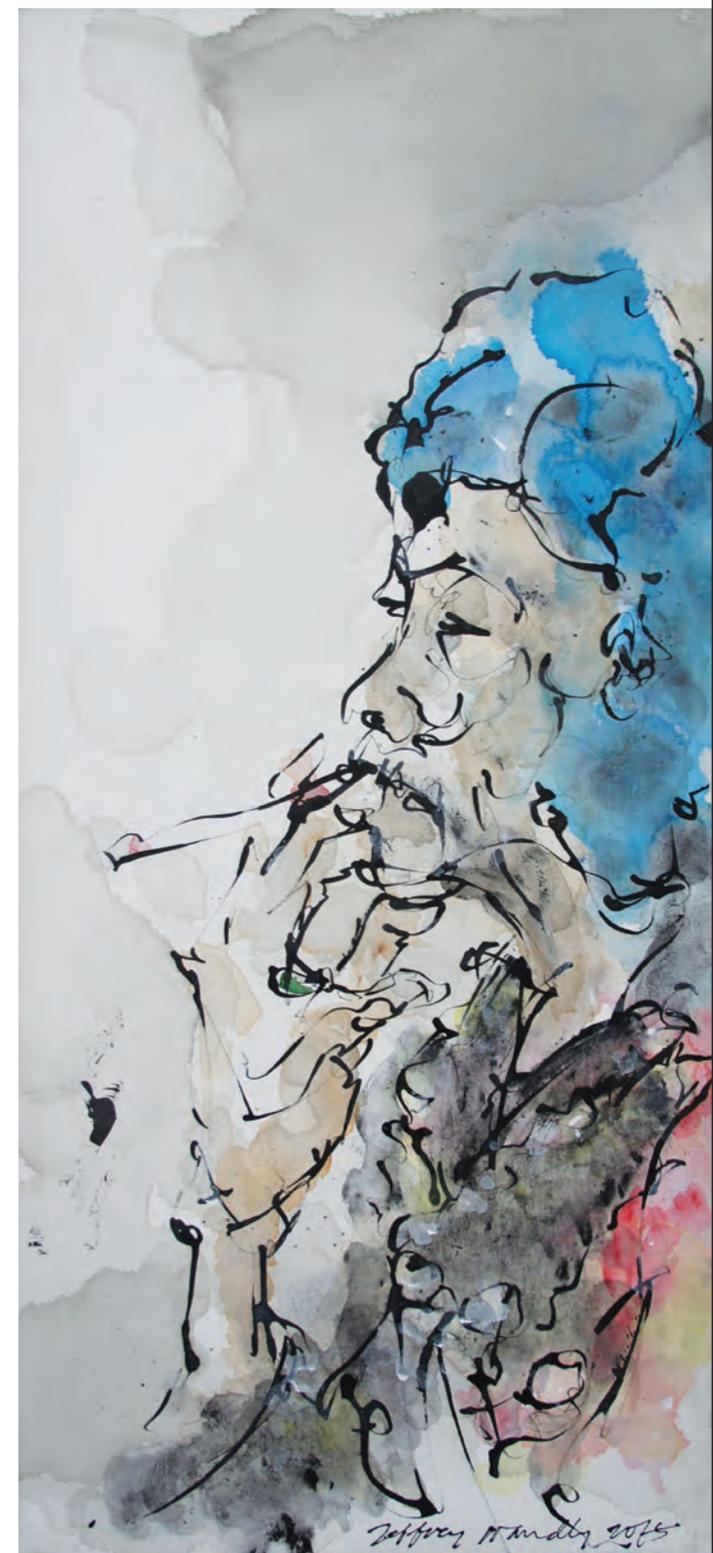


Bundo (Mother)
Ink, acrylic on canvas
60 x 80 cm
2015

Datuk Maringgi (Clan Head)
Ink, acrylic on canvas
60 x 80 cm
2015



Bundo Kandung (Clan Headwoman)
Ink, acrylic on canvas
50 x 110 cm
2015



Ninik Mamak (Village Elder)
Ink, acrylic on canvas
50 x 110 cm
2015



Jeffrey Wandly

Jeffrey Wandly was born in Singapore and grew up with a love for drawing, learning, music and the outdoors. His childhood years were spent at his family home at Kampong Eunus, Singapore. At the age of 16, he became the school band conductor and leader, and Merit recipient at the Singapore Tourism Board's Sacres Sculptor Competition (1980). He also came in third (Seniors) at the Takashimaya National Student Painting Competition (1992). As the top Malay tertiary student, Jeffrey received the MENDAKI Excellence Award (1993) and the Architecture Angullia Scholarship (1987-89, 91-92). Though he has built a career as an architect and project management professional, his love for the arts never waned, further inspired by his late father, music composer, arranger and musician Hj Wandly Yazid, who also painted landscapes in watercolour.

Jeffrey started painting seriously in 2008, and has since exhibited in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Korea. He is known for his works on heritage landmarks, and paints in his own distinctive style of intuitive and fluid strokes. He is also the co-founder of Maya Gallery.

EDUCATION

- 2003 Masters of Project Management, Queensland University of Technology
- 1993 Bachelor of Architecture (Honours), National University of Singapore
- 1990 BA (Architecture Studies), National University of Singapore
- 1984 Architectural Diploma, Singapore Polytechnic

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 Building Whisperer, with Maya Gallery, at Singapore Contemporary
- 2014 Poetry of the Soul, with Maya Gallery, Artshow Busan, South Korea

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 Figuratively Speaking, Maya Gallery, Singapore
Idyllic Landscapes, Maya Gallery, Singapore
CHAIRITY Arts & Design Against Cancer, Red Dot Museum and Maya Gallery, Singapore
Affordable Art Fair (Spring), with Maya Gallery, Singapore
Three Islands, Jawi House, Penang, Malaysia
- 2014 Büffel Art Project - Exhibition & Auction, with Maya Gallery, ION Art Gallery, Singapore
Contemporary 2014 APAD's Art Exhibition, National Library Gallery
Affordable Art Fair (May Edition), with Maya Gallery, Singapore
3.50 Charity Gala, by UN Women Singapore, W Hotel, Sentosa Cove, Singapore
Singapore Heritage Collection, Maya Gallery, Singapore
Singapore Art Week 2014 - An exhibition by APAD, Aliwal Art Centre
- 2013 Heyokah Art House Grand Opening, Heyokah Art House, Ubud, Bali, Indonesia
From the Heart, BALI ACT, Artomorrow Artspace, Bali
Moving On, by APAD, The Substation, Singapore
Bank Art Fair, with Maya Gallery, Hong Kong
éncore! Maya Gallery's 1st Anniversary, Maya Gallery, Singapore
- 2012 Asia Contemporary Art Fair, with Maya Gallery, Luxe Art Museum, Singapore
From the Heart, Maya Gallery Opening Exhibition
Celebrate Heritage, Maya Gallery, Singapore
Maya+Barrack, Maya Gallery, Singapore
Charity Art Auction, LCCS 10th Anniversary, Ritz-Carlton, Singapore
The Journey, Maya Gallery, Singapore
Ridzwan Dzafir Scholarship Art Auction, MENDAKI 30th Anniversary, Shangri-La, Singapore
- 2011 Contemporary 2011 APAD's Art Exhibition, National Library Gallery
'Seeing is Believing' Charity Auction, by Standard Chartered
Art Expo Malaysia, MaTrade Atrium, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
One Soul, Two Voices, Malay Heritage Centre
- 1992 Takashimaya National Student Painting Competition, 3rd Prize (Seniors), Singapore
- 1980 Sacres Sculptor Competition, Certificate of Merit, Singapore Tourist Promotion Board
- 1970s Children's Painting Competition, Siglap Community Centre

ART TALKS

- 2015 Artist Talk & Demo, Jameel Prize 3, National Library Board, Singapore
- 2013 Facilitator, Art Conversations, Singapura Chantek by Idris Ali

AWARDS

- 1980 Sacres Sculptor Competition, Certificate of Merit, Singapore
- 1987-89 Architecture Angullia Scholarship
- 1991-92 Architecture Angullia Scholarship
- 1992 Takashimaya National Student Painting Competition, 3rd Prize (Seniors), Singapore
- 1992-94 Certificate of Commendation, Rag & Flag, Sheares Hall, NUS
- 1993 Excellence Award MENDAKI (Anugerah Cemerlang MENDAKI - Top Malay tertiary student in Spore)

MEMBERSHIP

- Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) - Associate Member
- Singapore Art Society - Member
- Composers and Authors Society of S'pore (COMPASS) - Member
- Association of Artists of Various Resources (APAD) - Member & Artist

MENTORSHIP

- Guest Critic, School of Design and The Environment, Singapore Polytechnic
- Mentor, Project Protégé, MENDAKI

Blair Road, Tanjong Pagar IV

Ink, acrylic on canvas
100 x 120 cm
2016



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This catalog is published on the occasion of the solo exhibition:

BUILDING WHISPERER
Jeffrey Wandly

Singapore Contemporary
Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre, Booth A08

January 21 – 24, 2016

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Masturah Sha'ari

printing Unique Colour Separation, Singapore



MAYA GALLERY

Dedicated to the promotion of contemporary art by Singapore artists, Maya Gallery started with a passion in the arts, and a keen sense of design and architecture. Originally opened in the historic district of Kampong Gelam in 2012, the gallery moved in 2015 to Ubi, an industrial estate historically known for its high concentration of automotive businesses and factories. Now a commercial hub combining the old and new – design, media and a hotbed of entrepreneurial activities, Maya Gallery aims to add more of the arts, culture and heritage into the area through its curated exhibitions, programmes, art and design consultancy, and community projects.

Maya Gallery has exhibited in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Korea through participation at international art fairs and gallery collaborations. It is a member of the Art Galleries Association Singapore (AGAS) and was awarded Favourite Recommended Art Gallery at the Expat Living Reader Awards 2014.

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Maya
GALLERY

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Tue to Sat 11 am to 6 pm
Closed on public holidays

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January 21, Singapore



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