

# ENTWINE

Maybank Women Eco-Weavers  
meet Southeast Asian Artists











## Contents

12	Foreword by Shahril Azuar Jimin
18	Introduction: <i>Maybank Women Eco-Weavers Programme</i>
22	Curatorial Notes by Khairuddin Hori
26	Travelogue by Deborah Lim
34	<i>Maybank Women Eco-Weavers</i> Country Partner: Cambodia Artist Feature: Lugas Syllabus Artist Feature: Ubatsat Sutta
46	<i>Maybank Women Eco-Weavers</i> Country Partner: Indonesia Artist Feature: Shahrul Jamili Artist Feature: Sharon Chin
58	<i>Maybank Women Eco-Weavers</i> Country Partner: Laos Artist Feature: Sheryo
66	<i>Maybank Women Eco-Weavers</i> Country Partner: Malaysia Artist Feature: Lyle Buencamino
74	Process of Silk-Weaving
76	Maybank Foundation Pillars
77	Credits & Acknowledgements





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## Maybank Women Eco-Weavers meet Southeast Asian Artists



21 August –  
8 September 2019  
National Museum of Singapore

### Artists

**Lugas Syllabus**

Indonesia

**Lyle Buencamino**

The Philippines

**Shahrul Jamili**

Malaysia

**Sharon Chin**

Malaysia

**Sheryo**

Singapore

**Ubatsat Sutta**

Thailand

### Weaving Centres

**Lao Sericulture Co. Ltd. (Mulberries)**

**Laos**

Xiengkhouang Province

**Penenun Dampingan ASPPUK**

**Indonesia**

East Lombok, Central Lombok, Sawahlunto &

Tanah Datar

**Color Silk (Cambodia)**

**Cambodia**

Takeo Province & Siem Reap

**Tanoti Crafts**

**Malaysia**

Kuching

*Maybank Women Eco-Weavers* supports women weavers from poor and marginalised communities with the aim of reviving and sustaining traditional weaving practices in ASEAN countries. The ancient art of textile weaving cuts across borders of the 10 member nations of ASEAN. These textiles are works of art that represent the heritage of their respective countries, yet the women weavers who sustain the traditional crafts often struggle to survive in modern times.

Titled *Entwine*, this exhibition is a meeting of traditional craft and contemporary art. Showcased here are artworks by six Southeast Asian contemporary artists invited (since 2018) to interact and be inspired by *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers* through short residencies at the various weaving centres across the region. While the women in this programme receive access to training, capacity-building and microfinance, which helps them and their families to become economically independent, the artists are afforded invaluable and first-hand access to the preservation of a living culture.

The *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers* programme is currently active in East and Central Lombok and West Sumatra in Indonesia, Sarawak in Malaysia, Xiengkhouang Province in Laos and Siem Reap and Takeo Province in Cambodia.

#HopeEntwined

#maybank #maybankfoundation #maybankecoweavers

### Curator

Khairuddin Hori

### Project Manager

Deborah Lim

### Graphic Design

Muhammad Izdi

### Augmented Reality (AR)

Eugene Soh

### Exhibition Design

Chan + Hori Contemporary



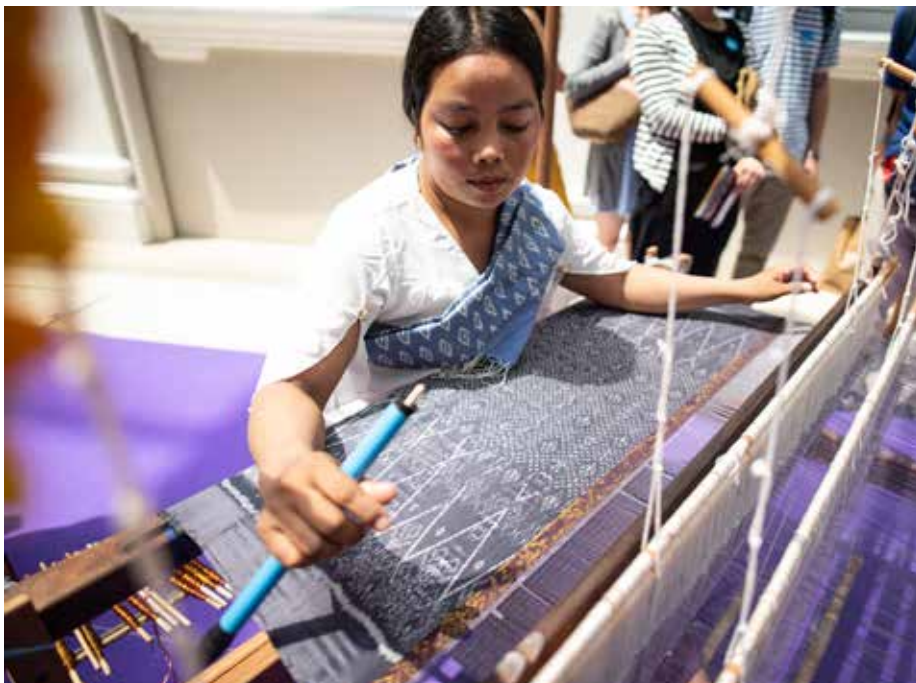
Partner

Venue Supporter









# ENTWINE

Maybank Women Eco-Weavers meet Southeast Asian Artists

The **GRID + HILL DESIGN** is inspired by the architecture of Menara Maybank, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The **LINES** represent weaving.

The **EARTH TONE** represents engagement with traditions and sustainability.

The **GOLD/ORANGE** at the peak represents excellence and Maybank's corporate colour.

The **SUBTITLE** denotes the collaboration between Maybank Foundation, Artisans/Weavers and Contemporary Artists.



“Working with our on-the-ground local partners, I have seen levels of poverty that we rarely see in today’s modern world. Despite the adversities, I am amazed at the dedication and tenacity of our partners, weavers, farmers and community leaders who want to keep this heritage alive. For me to be a part of this is truly humbling.”

**Ahmad Hilmi Hashim**

**Project Manager, Maybank Women Eco-Weavers Programme**



## Foreword

### Shahril Azuar Jimin

CEO of Maybank Foundation

As a strong advocate for community empowerment, Maybank Foundation, as the corporate responsibility arm of the Maybank Group, works towards empowering communities by creating sustainable livelihoods and support systems. Driven by the belief that financial inclusion is a powerful enabler for economic growth, we are committed to developing effective and affordable solutions that address issues of financial and social exclusion regionally. Combine that with our passion for arts and culture, sustained with a long history of support for artists, photographers, graphic designers and writers, and you get *Entwine: Maybank Women Eco-Weavers meet Southeast Asian Artists*.

*Maybank Women Eco-Weavers* is one of Maybank Foundation’s flagship programmes designed to promote commonalities in ASEAN countries by enriching and promoting traditional woven textiles in a sustainable manner for women in various communities, in becoming economically independent whilst advocating financial inclusion. In the process, we hope this programme will truly help preserve, sustain and promote the art and heritage of beautiful hand-woven textiles in Southeast Asia.

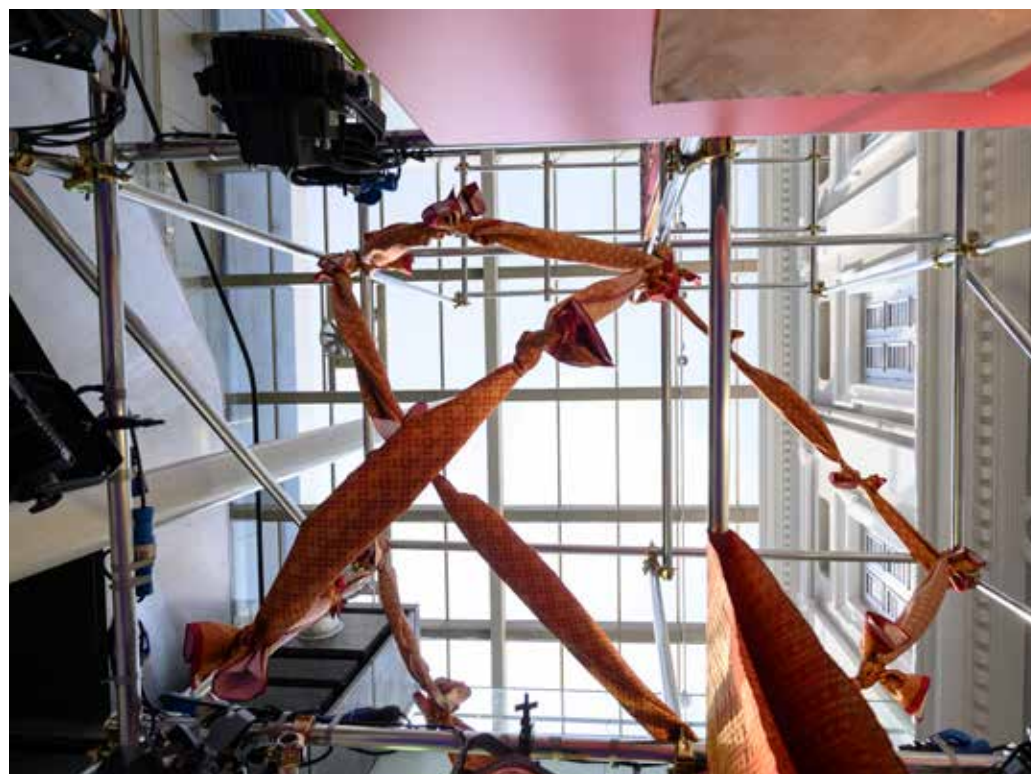
As the programme grew into the four countries of Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Malaysia, we wanted to make it as ASEAN-centric as possible, keeping true to Maybank’s regional aspirations. Despite not having any weaving practices, we felt there was an opportunity to bring Singapore into the equation by including it as a potential convergence point for exhibitions and research. Hence, we started talking to the National Arts Council of Singapore, who introduced us to Chan + Hori Contemporary which has the aim to provoke, challenge and stimulate the Singapore and Southeast Asian community through diverse and inclusive events connecting contemporary art with our everyday lives.

We felt that resonated very well with our programme aspirations, and from there we collaborated with our initial *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers* exhibition in 2018 at our Maybank Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur, leading to this *Entwine* exhibition supported by the National Museum of Singapore from 21 August to 8 September 2019. Curated by Khairuddin Hori, this exhibition is truly a celebration of regional arts and culture, not just of the fine weaving products from four countries but also artworks by six artists-in-residence.

Beyond being a celebration of the arts, this exhibition honours the arduous journey of this small group of artisans. In their own quest to preserve their heritage, they have succeeded through hard work and creativity, to lead a life of meaning and dignity. For that, we thank the National Arts Council, National Heritage Board, National Museum of Singapore, and all our partners who have made *Entwine: Maybank Women Eco-Weavers meet Southeast Asian Artists* a reality.

Thank you,  
Shahril Azuar Jimin  
CEO of Maybank Foundation

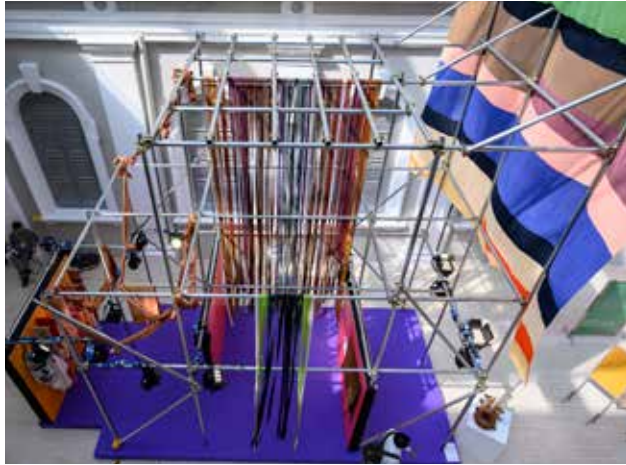




**“Economic empowerment and financial inclusion are two of Maybank’s focus areas for corporate responsibility, in line with our mission of humanising financial services. As the corporate responsibility arm of Maybank, the Maybank Foundation often seeks causes that could cut across different communities across the ASEAN region and which could be turned into tangible programmes that help beneficiaries become economically independent.”**

**Shahril Azuar Jimin,  
CEO of Maybank Foundation**







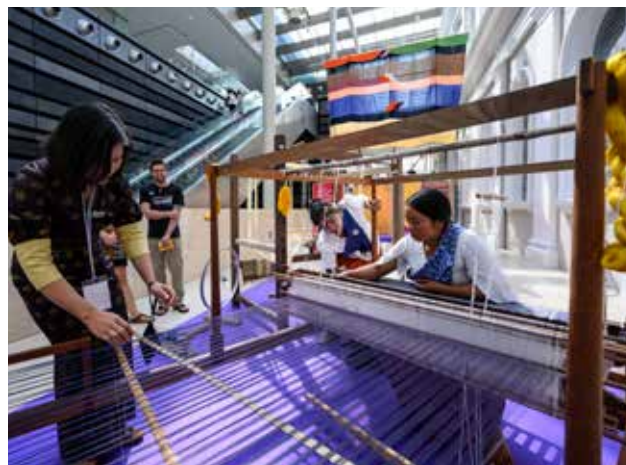
## Introduction

The *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers* programme promotes and enhances **traditional** textiles globally in a **sustainable** manner, whilst creating **economic independence** and **financial inclusion** for women weavers across the ASEAN region.

Today, about six out of ten of the world's poorest people are women. Female economic empowerment comprises the opening of businesses, building of credit and participation in the economy. Such practices reduce poverty at an individual and family level, and boost economic development at a national and global level.

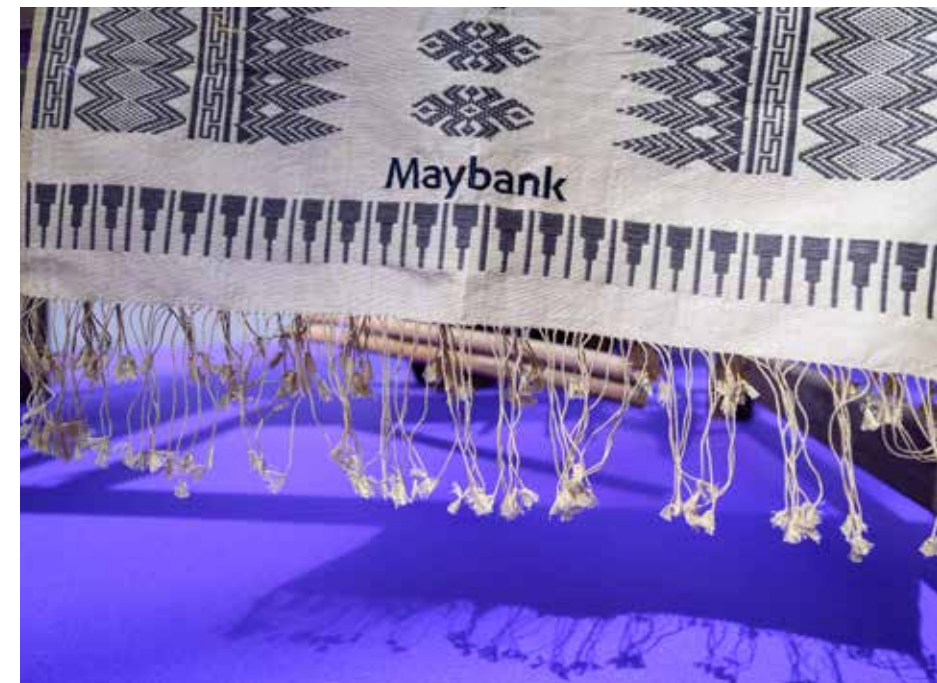
Identifying new talent, training, capacity-building and microfinancing to support the sustainable development of women entrepreneurs are all facets of the *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers* programme. The initiative promotes environmentally-friendly practices and the production of naturally-dyed and hand-woven fabrics. It also contributes towards a preservation of the ASEAN cultural heritage, as well as ASEAN awareness and a sense of community.

Launched in March 2016, the programme has currently been implemented in Indonesia, Cambodia and Laos, in partnership with local organisations, to provide an ecosystem for the sustained development of weaving crafts within the region.



## *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers Programme*

Following on from the 2018 launch of the *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers* exhibition at Menara Maybank in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Chan + Hori Contemporary and the Maybank Foundation have launched an exhibition titled *Entwine: Maybank Women Eco-Weavers meet Southeast Asian Artists* from 21 August to 8 September 2019. Four artists - Sheryo (Singapore), Sharon Chin (Malaysia), Lyle Buencamino (The Philippines) and Ubatsat Sutta (Thailand) were invited on week-long artist residencies to create artworks in response to their encounters and experiences with weaving communities in Laos, Malaysia, Cambodia and Indonesia. These artworks are showcased alongside traditional fabrics created by the women weavers themselves.









## Curatorial Notes

It has become more apparent to me whilst working on this second edition of the *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers* exhibition that my role is that of a facilitator, more than that of a curator. Introductions, mediations, and negotiating the intricate exchanges between institutions and corporate entities, artists and artisans, and objects with the public, were all part of the scope. There was much choreography before we arrived at the eventual public display of these dialogues, encapsulated in what you see as **Entwine**.

We started off in 2018 with the rudimentary idea of design - sending two contemporary artists on a voyage; Malaysian Shahrul Jamili Miskon to Maybank's weaving centre in Sawahlunto, West Sumatra, Indonesia and Indonesian Lugas Syllabus to Takeo Province in Cambodia with the premise of designing new patterns with, and for, the weavers. Little did we imagine the complications of how this seemingly straightforward idea would unveil the unseen and mathematical technicalities of traditional silk and cotton weaving. As simple-minded novices dealing with this ancient knowledge, we were reminded of how we have taken the history and artistry of the cloth we wear daily for granted. We quickly realised that imposing new and artistic translations not only disrupt an otherwise systematic process, but also how the patterns on the textiles produced by our weavers today sustain a timeless knowledge of design and cultural symbols dating back hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

In 2019, we invited four more artists to the project - Filipino Lyle Buencamino, Malaysian Sharon Chin, Singaporean Sheryo and Thai Ubatsat Sutta. At the Maybank weaving centres of Xiengkhouang Province in Laos, Takeo Province in Cambodia, East Lombok in Indonesia and Kuching in Malaysian Borneo, each artist entered into a short residency, immersing themselves in the culture and knowledge of the weavers. Each artist embarked on their residencies seeking to be inspired and informed, and to deliver an artwork based on their exchanges with the weavers for our exhibition.



## Khai Hori

Curator, *Entwine*



Ubatsat Sutta designed a 4-metre banner using textiles made by the weavers at Takeo Province depicting colour schemes of the carriages of the Thai-Cambodian railway that only resumed service in June 2019 after 45 years of stoppage due to a Communist takeover. Sharon Chin, inspired by the story and patterns of *Sari Menanti* ("Sari is waiting") from East Lombok commissioned 40 weavers to weave their own signature pattern on strips measuring 4 metres x 2 centimetres each, an odd size inspired by a bridge near the Lenek Lauk village where the weavers are. Sharon's design responds to the social situation of Lombok where men typically leave their wives and family for extended periods of time to find work in Malaysia. Sheryo, our Brooklyn-based Singapore artist appropriated one of the many ingenious inventions of Laotian master weaver, Kommaly Chanthavong, to create a working spinning wheel made of Suar wood with *naga* (serpent) motifs. And, lastly, Lyle Buencamino extended the essence of his approach in oil painting by making an escape rope with facsimiles based on the ornate *songket* of the Ranee of Sarawak - also known as Sylvia Leonora Brett, an English aristocrat who became the consort to Sir Charles Vyner de Windt Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak.

With more engagements between artists and weavers and future travelling exhibitions in various countries and cities in Southeast Asia planned, *Entwine*, our collective relationship as curators, artists, artisans, institutions and corporations is set to continue its journey of sharing and discoveries. Seemingly modest, the language and artistry of traditional Southeast Asian weaving is as contemporary and layered, if not more, than those of our artists. It is in them both that we locate our identities as dwellers of the Malay Archipelago, both old and new.







## Travelogue

Textiles paved the way for technology. It is an odd correlation, yet, when one observes the workings of a loom, it seems perfectly natural. Within a simple wooden frame, designs are broken down into numbered sequences of threads. This set-up requires symmetry and complete mathematical precision. Once a loom is set, a time-consuming process begins - the throwing of a shuttle to and fro, threads woven together into varied forms of *songket* and scarves. According to Vanntha Ngorn, the founder of *Color Silk (Cambodia)*, a single metre of fabric takes one day to weave.

Weaving is an age-old tradition that has been passed down for generations in Southeast Asia. When the *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers Programme* was launched in 2016, the Maybank Foundation sourced for partners in these communities in a bid to support sustainability, the livelihoods of women and ensure the preservation of living cultural heritage. The needs of each country were different - a training centre was built in Takeo Province, Cambodia, to equip younger generations of women with weaving skills. Upon graduation, they would receive a loom in their homes which allowed them to continue earning an income from sales of their woven fabrics. A hostel was built in Xiengkhouang Province, Laos, to reduce the fatigue of weavers travelling for up to two days from their homes to the *Lao Sericulture Co. Ltd. (Mulberries)* farm.

Chan + Hori Contemporary began a collaboration with the Maybank Foundation in 2018. At the time, we saw the infinite possibilities of pairing Southeast Asian artists with artisans of weaving. Most of the artists had never worked with textiles before and the notion of creating an intricate fabric from scratch was completely new. Shahrul Jamili and Lugas Syllabus were invited to design fabrics for the weavers to produce, during their week-long artist residencies in Padang, Indonesia and Takeo Province, Cambodia. Despite language barriers, we were welcomed into the weavers' homes and communities, relating backgrounds and experiences with each other as best we could. On my last day in Indonesia, I hold dear a poignant memory. Around 30 women had gathered in a single house to meet Shahrul and I for a sharing session on art and weaving. Some of them had travelled for around two hours to reach us, persisting through rain and mountainous terrain, as it was rare for them to have overseas guests. We shared laughter and stories for a whole afternoon, chewing on sugarcane stems and snakefruit grown in the compound.

From these exchanges, the weavers cemented the idea that fabrics could be considered artworks; while the artists pushed the boundaries of traditional motifs with contemporary designs. There were challenges, with woven motifs designed in a grid - as opposed to the fluid and curved lines of artist sketches. Yet, when the limited-edition textiles of silk and cotton were exhibited at Menara Maybank in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, they truly embodied a meaningful dialogue across cultures and borders.

## Deborah Lim

Project Manager, *Entwine*



In 2019, four more artists joined the fold. Sheryo visited Xiengkhouang Province in Laos, a location that boasted the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the *Plain of Jars*. While viewing over 330 monumental sandstone-carved jars was a sublime experience, we were reminded of the ravages of war - as the surface of the ground was littered with craters from bombing missions that took place from the mid-60's to the early 70's. The *Lao Sericulture Co. Ltd. (Mulberries)* farmland was rejuvenated by Madam Kommaly and her team, who transformed the land into lush and fertile areas to grow mulberry trees - with cut leaves providing sustenance for silkworms. Sharon Chin went to Lenek Lauk village in Lombok, Indonesia, while Ubatsat Sutta spent time in Takeo Province in Cambodia. On our visit to *Tanoti Crafts* in Kuching, Sarawak, Lyle Buencamino and I watched weavers masterfully create *songket Sarawak* - where both sides of a fabric bore patterns that were perfect replicas of each other. For the *Entwine* exhibition this year, each artist responded to their experiences with the weaving communities - through sculpture, installations and collaborations with the weavers themselves.

Six trips within Southeast Asia and two years later, I continue to be astounded by the detail, creativity and labor that make up weaving - a process lodged in history and dating back to the Neolithic era. With increased exchanges between artists and artisans and an infusion of contemporary designs, art may just be the secret to a modern revival of weaving.















# Maybank Women Eco-Weavers Country Partner: Cambodia

## Takeo Province Siem Reap

The Maybank Silk Weaving Training Centre in Takeo Province works to promote traditional Cambodian textiles globally in a sustainable manner, while creating business opportunities for underprivileged women. Partnering *Color Silk (Cambodia)*, trainees are taught to weave, and are offered financial incentives and tools to help them and their families become economically independent. Maybank supports a sericulture (cultivation of silkworms to produce silk) programme to plant mulberry trees, essential for silk thread production. As of June 2019, the centre in Takeo Province has trained 151 weavers and there are 304 farmers planting over 42,000 mulberry trees. A new training centre was launched in Siem Reap in July 2019 with 12 new trainees and 20 new farmers.









How would you describe this experience of visiting weaving communities on an artist residency for the *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers (MWEW) Exhibition*?

**This is a very good programme, both for the artists and the weavers. There were some challenges - not only in the artistic process of creating works, but also in the connection between the artists and weavers and considering how to present the works in public without just settling for a decorative display. There are many philosophies behind the process of weaving that are reflected through different motifs and colour symbolisms. The experience provided a chance for artists to use their creativity and staying with the local community allowed for a very natural and open atmosphere - allowing insight into the overall weaving process.**



**Artist Feature:**  
**Lugas Syllabus (b. 1987, Indonesia)**  
Residency: Takeo Province, Cambodia (2018)



Drawing references from his experience in Takeo Province, Cambodia, Lugas Syllabus used a main motif of padi fields and rice to illustrate the power of agriculture in Southeast Asia and a feeling of hope contained within the harvest. As an additional motif, he brought stars into the design, connecting his Sumatran culture with Cambodian culture and signifying the joint effort of people across these two areas working together under the same set of stars.

Lugas Syllabus was most recently featured in ArtJog MMXIX, Indonesia, *Arts in Common* (2019) with an installation titled *Berbatas tapi Tak Terbatas*. He will participate in *Polyphony, Southeast Asia* at The Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Arts (AMNUA) in November 2019.





Limited edition silk textiles (collaboration with weavers from Takeo Province, Cambodia)  
2018  
Woven fabrics  
Dimensions variable





How would you describe this experience of visiting weaving communities on an artist residency for the *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers (MWEW) Exhibition*?

**This residency programme is a meaningful starting point for future projects, where there could be collaborations between artists and artisans within other villages and local communities. From this experience, I've reflected on my perceptions about re-using products in our everyday lives, especially in view of the mass production of clothes and practices that put the environment at risk and cause global warming. This has encouraged me to join a growing group of individuals and programmes, who have begun using leftover fabrics for recycling purposes.**



**Artist Feature:**  
**Ubatsat Sutta (b. 1980, Thailand)**  
Residency: Takeo Province, Cambodia (2019)



By Royal Decree of King Rama VI in 1919, a boundary for the construction of a Royal Railway was established between the borders of Thailand and Cambodia. The first train crossed the border in 1955 from Aranyaprathet (Thailand) to Poipet (Cambodia). Subsequently closed in 1975, the rail line was re-opened once more in 2019. Ubatsat Sutta reflects different evolutions of the railway in this artwork, with colour palettes that represent paint jobs of carriages and key stations along the track. Four train carriages are stacked atop each other, sewn together with recycled fabrics of 100% cotton by weavers in Takeo Province, Cambodia.

Ubatsat Sutta is currently reading his PhD in Buddhism at Mahachulalongkorn University in Thailand. His solo exhibition, *Sox Stars*, took place at the CMU Art Centre in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 2019.





*Harry the Train Song*  
2019  
Cotton  
400 cm x 500 cm





## Maybank Women Eco-Weavers Country Partner: Indonesia

East Lombok (West Nusa Tenggara)

Central Lombok (West Nusa Tenggara)

Sawahlunto (West Sumatera)

Tanah Datar (West Sumatera)

In Indonesia, Maybank Foundation partners with *Asosiasi Pendamping Perempuan Usaha Kecil (ASPPUK)*, an umbrella network comprising 54 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are spread across 20 of Indonesia's 34 provinces. The role of ASPPUK is to develop and nurture women in managing small and micro-businesses. Since 2016, ASPPUK has worked with 400 women weavers in four weaving training centres in Lombok & Western Sumatera, Indonesia. Within Indonesia, the *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers Programme* has adopted a micro-financing approach and provides training to help weavers become economically-independent.









How can artists and artisans work together more closely?  
Is there a benefit to this?

**The artist and artisan should collaborate in a complementary manner, where none is superior to the other. For instance, while the artist may give input on contextual aspects, the artisan should be given space for ornamental elements. This is similar to how the artisan is free to limit the materials and the artist is free to decide on the format of a work. The partnership should go beyond a negotiation between a gallery and a flea market. It should aim to honour the artistry and humility of both parties.**



**Artist Feature:**  
**Shahrul Jamili (b. 1978, Malaysia)**  
Residency: Padang, Sawahlunto, Indonesia (2018)



With an artistic practice based upon geometric patterns, Shahrul designed a fabric for weavers in Padang, Sawahlunto, to weave on the premise of “anti-symmetry”. The overall design appears symmetrical through an optical illusion – it is a combination of non-symmetrical motifs, and the images of two prints from his previous works. Other designs local to the Sawahlunto region such as the triangle, rhombus and hexagon were added into the general pattern.

Shahrul Jamili graduated with a Master of Arts (Islamic and Other Civilisations) from the International Institute of Islamic Thoughts and Civilisation (ISTAC) in 2013 and Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Surrey Institute of Arts in the United Kingdom in 2003. His solo exhibition, *METALANGUAGE*, took place at Chan + Hori Contemporary, Singapore, in 2017.





Limited edition cotton textiles  
(collaboration with weavers from Sawahlunto, Sumatra)  
2018  
Woven fabrics  
Dimensions variable





How do you view weaving and has your opinion of weaving changed?

I've always loved textiles. I think weaving holds the story of human civilisation. In our region, weaving holds the history of human migration: the flows of commerce and culture over the centuries. It's an unbroken thread to our past, and could show us how we should move forward. My time in Lombok showed me that weaving is the most subtle of arts, that you have to learn to read a piece of cloth the way you might a painting. At the same time, it's the most practical of arts! You can use it to wrap a baby, keep warm at night, or earn enough money to support your own independence.



**Artist Feature:**  
**Sharon Chin (b. 1980, Malaysia)**  
Residency: East Lombok, Indonesia (2019)



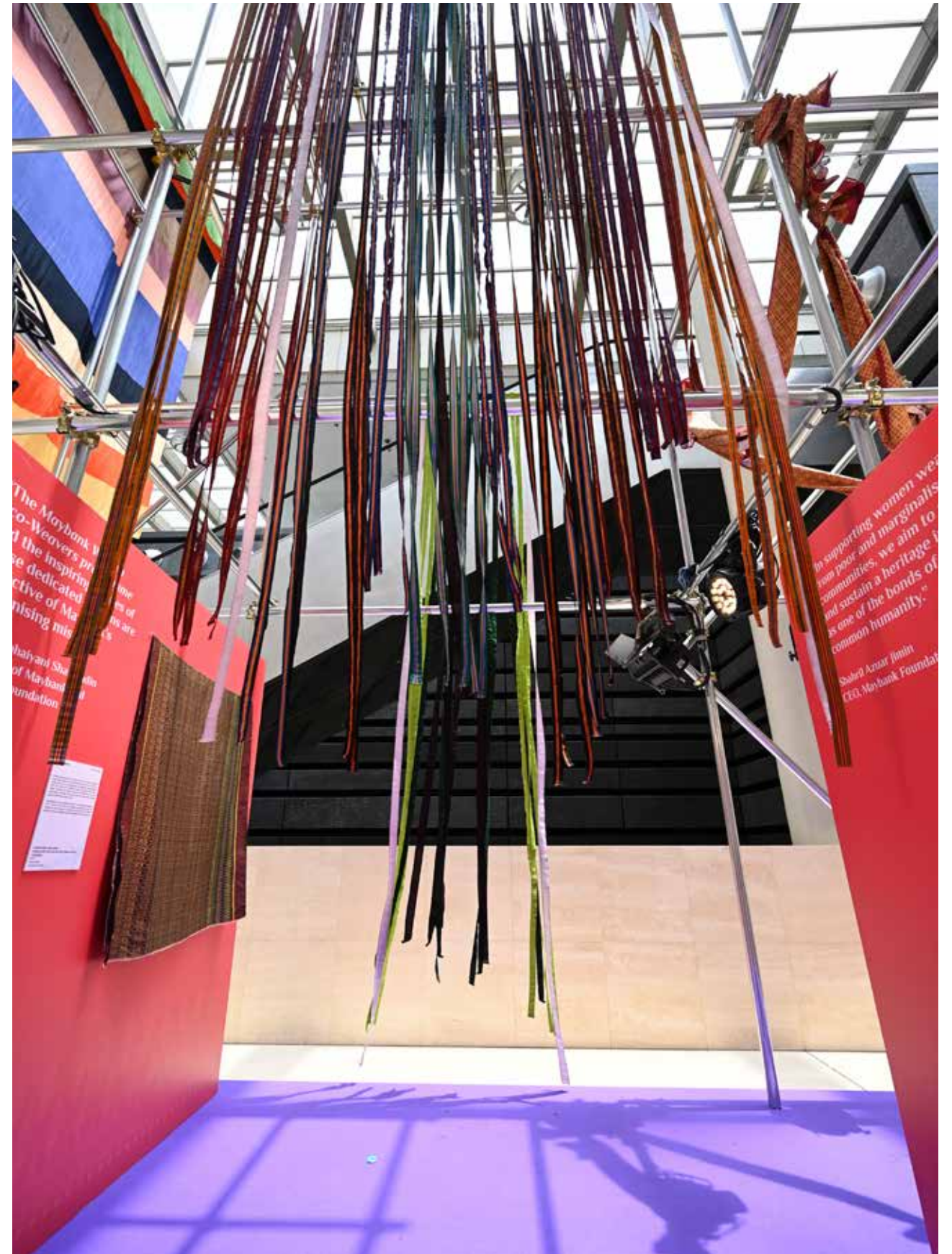
Following her visit to Lenek Lauk village in Lombok, Indonesia, Sharon Chin invited 40 individual women weavers to create a collaborative artwork of 240 woven strips arranged into abstract shapes. The motifs, colours and materials were decided by each woman, accompanied by their names and titles which provide hints to the stories behind their weaving. Traditionally viewed as women's work, weaving is seen to be simple decoration but, in truth, it holds many layers of meaning. The creation of negative space, with gaps in the hanging arrangement, also represents the invisible labour of women.

Sharon Chin will participate in the upcoming 2019 Singapore Biennale, *Every Step in the Right Direction*, and her *Local Flora, Patterns* (2017) installation is held in the collection of the Singapore Art Museum.





Yang Tersirat dan Tersurat  
(Kolaborasi dengan Ibu-Ibu Desa Lenek Lauk)  
2019  
Woven cloth strips  
2 cm x 400 cm each, 240 strips in total





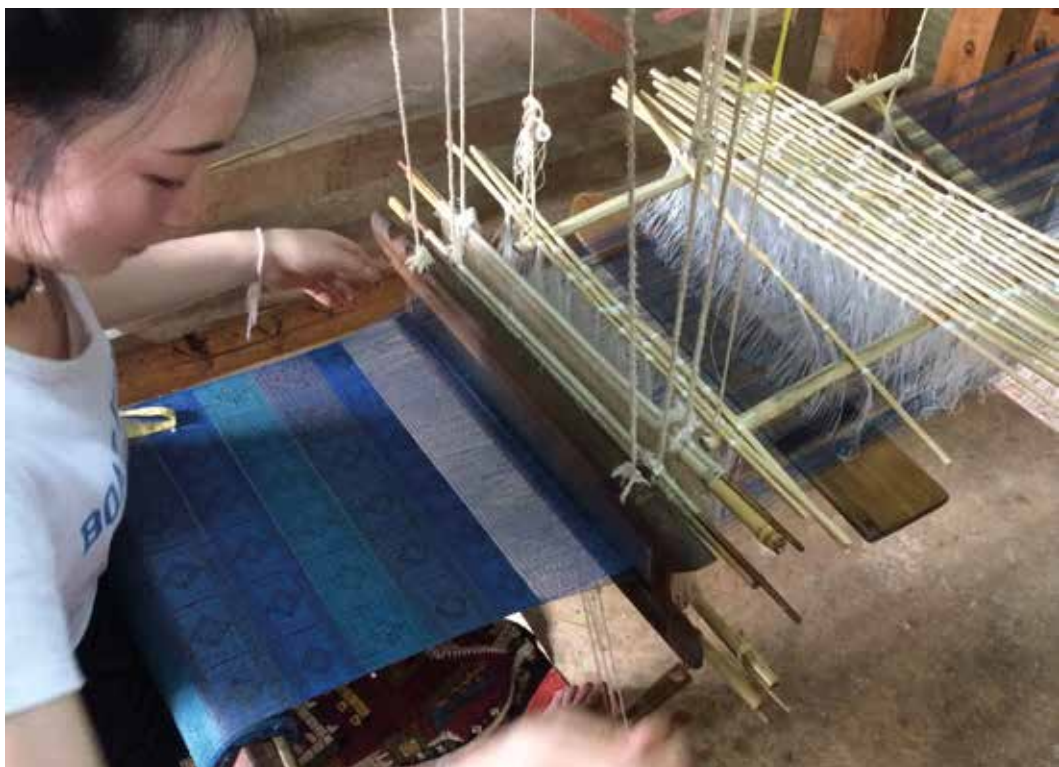
## Maybank Women Eco-Weavers Country Partner: Laos

### Xiengkhouang Province

In Laos, as of end-2018, the Maybank Foundation has supported the training of 30 new weavers, with 50 farmers planting more than 6,000 mulberry trees. *Mulberries* was founded by Madam Kommaly Chanthavong, a recipient of the 2015 Ramon Magsaysay award - in recognition of her integrity, courage and transformational leadership. In Laos, the Maybank Foundation has supported the training of 30 new weavers and 50 mulberry farmers and also built a hostel specially designed by Malaysian architect Johann Nawawi inspired by the prehistoric UNESCO-listed World Heritage, megalithic *Plain of Jars* site nearby. This hostel, completed in August 2018, was launched by the Maybank Group Chairman in October 2018. This hostel cuts the usual travel time of up to two days to and from the trainees' homes to the farm to attend the 15-day on-site training sessions.









How can artists and artisans work together more closely?  
Is there a benefit to this?

**Yes, there is definitely a benefit to this, in so many ways!**

For the artisans, sustainability and support from the outside is a benefit and, for the artists, I can't even begin to say how valuable this exchange is. I almost feel that this is the most exciting and interesting way to experience a culture and to be able to learn from these amazing artisans and to firsthand witness that sort of talent and skill is truly humbling.

Outside of work, a real relationship is formed despite language barriers.

It's these experiences that inspire the artworks and go on to leave invaluable memories and stories for both the artists and the artisans.

Artisans and artists learn through and from each other's processes to form their own working language.



**Artist Feature:**  
**Sheryo (b. 1984, Singapore)**  
Residency: Xiengkhouang Province, Laos (2019)



The *Naga Wheel* is a re-interpretation of a silk-spinning wheel from the *Lao Sericulture Co. Ltd (Mulberries)* weaving centre. Madam Kommaly shared stories of her legacy with Sheryo, leading the artist to inject her own signature twist into a silk-spinning apparatus, with the "Naga" holding strong symbolism in Laotian culture, and created in collaboration with Wayan Swastika from Indonesia. Silkworm cocoons are placed into a pot of boiling water that loosens the raw silk so that it can be reeled into a single thread by a spinning wheel at the top of the apparatus.

Sheryo was part of the *Art from the Streets* exhibition at the ArtScience Museum in Singapore (2018) and mentioned in *Women on the Walls 2013* and *Coney Island Art Walls 2015* by Jeffrey Deitch.





*Naga Wheel*  
2019  
Hand-carved suar wood  
60 cm x 45 cm x 45 cm





## Maybank Women Eco-Weavers Country Partner: Malaysia

### Kuching, Sarawak

*Tanoti Crafts* is *Maybank Women Eco-Weavers'* most recent partner from Sarawak, Malaysia. *Tanoti* is a congregation of Sarawakian women weavers and artisans dedicated to the production, promotion and proliferation of hand-crafted fabrics. This continuously-growing community of craftswomen had its origins in a research and development workshop set up by a foundation established by Her Royal Highness the Queen of Malaysia in 2008, the Yayasan Tuanku Nur Zahirah. *Tanoti* aims to improve the lives and livelihoods of womenfolk and rural communities through the ancient art of *songket* weaving, while updating it with a feel for the contemporary.









Did learning about the weaving process affect how you designed/created your artwork for this show?

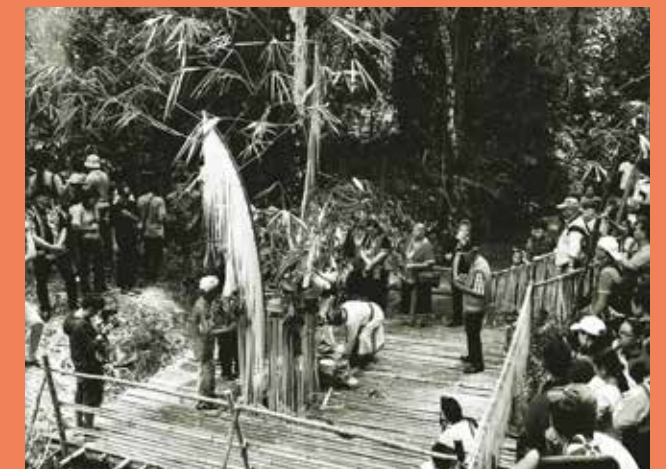
In the beginning I was just thinking about tying fabrics together to create an “escape rope”. The idea developed into tying the expensive *songket* together to create the rope that was to be 30 metres long, but there just weren’t enough surplus *songket* available. It was actually Jackie, the Creative Director of *Tanoti*, that gave me the idea of digitally printing the pattern on fabric. We scanned a portion of the *songket* that was to be printed and my wife helped me to digitally stitch the scan together to create the final image. I think that, ultimately, digitally printing the image made sense to me as an approach when I saw how the *songket* patterns were made horizontally, line by line. If you think about it, that’s the same way a printer head renders the image as well. It’s just that the printer does it with ink and exponentially faster. In the end, I did end up thinking about the process of weaving instead of just the fabrics, but more of a metaphorical kind of weaving. I was weaving my ideas from these specific interactions, anecdotes and coincidences into an object that encapsulated my brief but meaningful experience in Kuching.



## Artist Feature:

Lyle Buencamino (b. 1978, The Philippines)

Residency: Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia (2019)



Responsibility is a quality that is constantly elevated but, although we strive for ideals, we need to deal with the realities of our own capabilities every day. The notion of escape is common, it is always easier to avoid risks than to take them.

During his visit to the *Tanoti Crafts* showroom in Kuching, Sarawak, Lyle Buencamino encountered an ornate *songket* Sarawak pattern - a replica of a fabric woven for the Ranee of Kuching, Margaret Brooke. He made a digitally-printed copy of this replica, twice removed from the original piece. Through a simple gesture of knotting fabrics together, Lyle presents an imagined remnant of an “escape rope” from the scaffolding structure to the floor.

Lyle Buencamino was a recipient of the prestigious Ateneo Art Award, where he embarked on a residency at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia, in 2007.





*Escape from Kuching/Escape to Kuching*  
2019  
Digital print on fabric  
Approx. 3000 cm x 50 cm





## Process of Silk-Weaving



**1** The process begins with silkworms feeding on mulberry leaves. The silkworms take one month to grow and develop.



**3** The cocoons are placed into boiling water. Once taken out of the water, a dissecting needle is used to start picking up the strands. This is how the cocoon is loosened so it can be unwound in one continuous thread which is then collected into skeins. The process is called "reeling."



**2** The silkworm spins a cocoon of silk threads around itself within three days. The cocoon will be collected and the silk thread outside and inside the cocoon unwound by the weavers.



**4** The silk thread collected from the reeling process is placed on a swift for winding onto bobbins. Spinning requires great concentration in order to obtain a regular and twisted thread by hand. Silk is spun, slowly gathering into a thicker, larger thread.



**5** The bobbins are inserted into shuttles, which are used on traditional wooden looms to weave the final product.

Silk or cotton threads are stretched out on the loom and woven by hand. The process can take between one and three months depending on the complexity of the design.



**6** The final product comes in varieties of designs. The refined process and endeavours of talented weavers and artisans help to preserve the silk tradition.



## Maybank Foundation Pillars

### Education

Children and youth must have access to education and the opportunity to fulfil their potential. We invest in education through scholarships, financial literacy, and school programmes.

### Community Empowerment

Our community empowerment efforts are centred on creating sustainable livelihoods and support systems. As we expand regionally, we are committed to developing effective and affordable solutions that tackle issues of financial and social exclusion. Our interventions are driven by the belief that financial inclusion is a powerful enabler for economic growth.

### Arts and Culture

We promote the artistic creativity of our youths and regional artists. Our own showcase of Arts and Culture is through our *Balai Seni Art Series*.

### Environmental Diversity

We help protect our planet's diversity for future generations by supporting conservation efforts in Southeast Asia. Protection and conservation of the environment enables genuine sustainable development.

### Healthy Living

We promote community and compassion.

### Disaster Relief

Mobilising our employees together with our partners in disaster situations locally, and regionally.

## Credits & Acknowledgements



The Maybank Foundation has been the strategic driver and main implementer of Maybank Group's community programmes since it was inaugurated in 2010, in conjunction with the Group's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Foundation's mandate is to create positive, long-term impacts in communities in the markets where Maybank operates. It strives to identify programmes that will have the most tangible and sustainable results.

The focus of the Foundation is to enhance quality of life for all, irrespective of race, gender, or creed with an emphasis on the poor and marginalised. This is done through strategic partnerships with local stakeholders and NGOs. In all six areas, namely Education, Community Empowerment, Arts and Culture, Environmental Diversity, Healthy Living, and Disaster Relief, and in every country, we focus our activities and our funding on creating meaningful, measurable, and sustainable impacts that differentiate us from our competitors and complement our long-term aspiration to humanise financial services.



Chan + Hori Contemporary aims to provoke, challenge and stimulate the Singapore and Southeast Asian community and inclusive events connecting contemporary art with our everyday lives. Artistic vision and a high quality of engagement with public audience lies at the core of its mission.

Encouraging curatorial experimentation and discussion platforms, Chan + Hori highlights both processes and ideas. Dedicated to both emerging and established artists, it is also open to exploring different disciplines and artistic expressions aside from visual arts, such as performance and fashion.

In addition to Chan + Hori's strong focus on building sustainable relationships with international public and private collections, the gallery provides a professional infrastructure for its exclusive artists to support their careers in all relevant aspects - including regular exhibitions, management of large-scale productions, overseas opportunities and collaborations with institutions.









*Entwine: Maybank Women Eco-Weavers  
meet Southeast Asian Artists*

21 August - 8 September 2019  
National Museum of Singapore