



ABIOTIC GENESIS:  
TERHAH  
LANDSCAPE

By Syaiful Garibaldi



Cover: **#10** (detail) (2014), Acrylic and mushroom spore print, 132 x 226 cm (52 x 89 in.)  
This page: **#4** (detail) (2014), Acrylic on paper, 105 x 150 cm (41 3/10 x 59 1/10 in.)



# ABIOTIC GENESIS: TERHAH LANDSCAPE

By Syaiful Garibaldi

## SYAIFUL GARIBALDI

Syaiful Aulia Garibaldi was born in 1985 in Jakarta, Indonesia. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts from Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) and currently works in Bandung, Indonesia.

Syaiful, or fondly known as Tepu, started off as a student of agriculture in university before pursuing experimental fine arts where he applies his scientific background to create a conceptual foundation for his art. Tepu's works show a remarkably strong vision of art that collides with science in a graceful manner. His creation of an immersive environment sparks from his interest in the networked and interconnected nature of ecologies, and the evocative power of microorganisms as symbols of death and decay, as well as life. An infusion of art and science transcends through Tepu's work and gives way to a new gateway of knowledge, which is illuminated within his prints and installations.

Tepu has participated in several exhibitions in Indonesia and abroad. His recent exhibitions include *Regnum Fungi* (2012), Padi Artground, Bandung, Indonesia; *Pressing*, Videoin sight® Center (2013), Turin, Italy; *Trick or Truth* (2012), Fang Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia; *Design Art: Renegotiating Boundaries* (2012), Lawangwangi, Bandung, Indonesia; and *Hybrid Project: The Butterfly Effect* (2011), Barli Museum, Bandung, Indonesia. In 2013, he was awarded Best Artworks at Bandung Contemporary Art Awards #3.

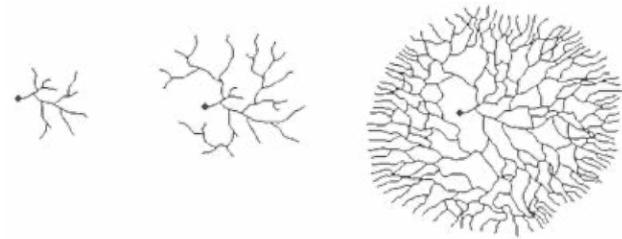


death and decay giving rise to new life and beauty. By linking fungus to art in his work's title, Garibaldi draws out a parallel between this natural cycle and that of the art world and art history; the status quo, or what is here today, will eventually die off so that new forms can arise.

In the process of decomposing matter, fungi also spawn whole new ecologies which support the sustenance of new organisms. There is, for instance, a symbiotic relationship between fungi and termites. For his exhibition at Pearl Lam Galleries, Garibaldi proposes to present an expansive otherworld which will bring together the various strands of investigation and art-making in his practice. The creation of this immersive environment builds on the artist's interests in the networked and interconnected nature of ecologies, and the evocative power of fungi as symbols of death and decay, as well as life—in particular the mushroom, which is one of a few organisms that can live without sunlight, contrary to other life-forms and conventional assumptions about the sun's life-giving energies. The environs of this prolific fungus present a paracosm of the artist's making, an alternative world with its own unique (counter-) ecology and even language which resembles the world we know and yet runs counter to it, or perhaps, runs parallel to, but under it like a subconscious; the dark reaches in which the mushroom grows and blossoms is like the underground or unexplored substrate of the mind—fertile new terrain to mine.

Ideas, like bacterial and fungal growth, can spread rapidly and impact other fields. A graphic representation of mycelial growth is a powerful metaphor for this interconnectedness and expansiveness; the illustration of a network as a dynamic space of constant conjunctive processes, branching out and, on occasion, bearing fruit.

It is fitting that Garibaldi observes a parallel between the way mushrooms grow and his own practice, given how his approach to art-making is



so expansive—ranging from more conventional modes of expression such as drawing and printmaking to the creation of new languages and ecosystems—as well as interdisciplinary, nourished by its cross-fertilisation with other fields of study such as agronomy, mycology, and conversations with people and enthusiasts from all walks of life, including the humble mushroom farmers of Indonesia with whom Garibaldi worked for his first solo exhibition *Regnum Fungi*, and from whom he realised the close relationship between our daily lives and various types of fungi.

The maturing art ecology in Indonesia has also supported Garibaldi's modes of working with the establishment of contemporary art spaces which present and encourage approaches to art-making beyond conventional 'schools' or disciplines and commercial agendas. The *Bandung New Emergence* series of exhibitions at Selasar Sunaryo, for instance, has consciously presented the works of 'creators' (encompassing architects, musicians and designers) rather than those solely by 'visual artists', thereby encouraging interaction between these various and varied creative communities, and positioning the Bandung art scene as a site where such encounters can take place. In Yogyakarta, a similar shift towards interdisciplinary research and co-creation may be observed: in 2013, to celebrate its 25th anniversary, Cemeti Art House organised the exhibition *Dobrak* which invited artists and social science specialists to collaborate and co-create works.

If sustained, the rhizomatic nature of the developing art ecology in Indonesia could well yield fertile new ground, as exemplified in Syaiful Garibaldi's wide-ranging explorations. Like the thread-like body of the fungus, which appears to have no beginning and no end, only an ever-expanding network of nodes and connections—the possibilities for a constantly evolving and enquiring art-making process, nourished by its interdisciplinary conjunctions and modalities—are infinite indeed.





**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #1** (2014)  
Acrylic on paper, 120 x 200 cm (47 1/5 x 78 7/10 in.)

**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #2** (2014)  
Acrylic on paper, 126 x 220 cm (49 3/5 x 86 3/5 in.)





**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #3** (2014)  
Acrylic on paper, 132 x 223 cm (52 x 87 4/5 in.)





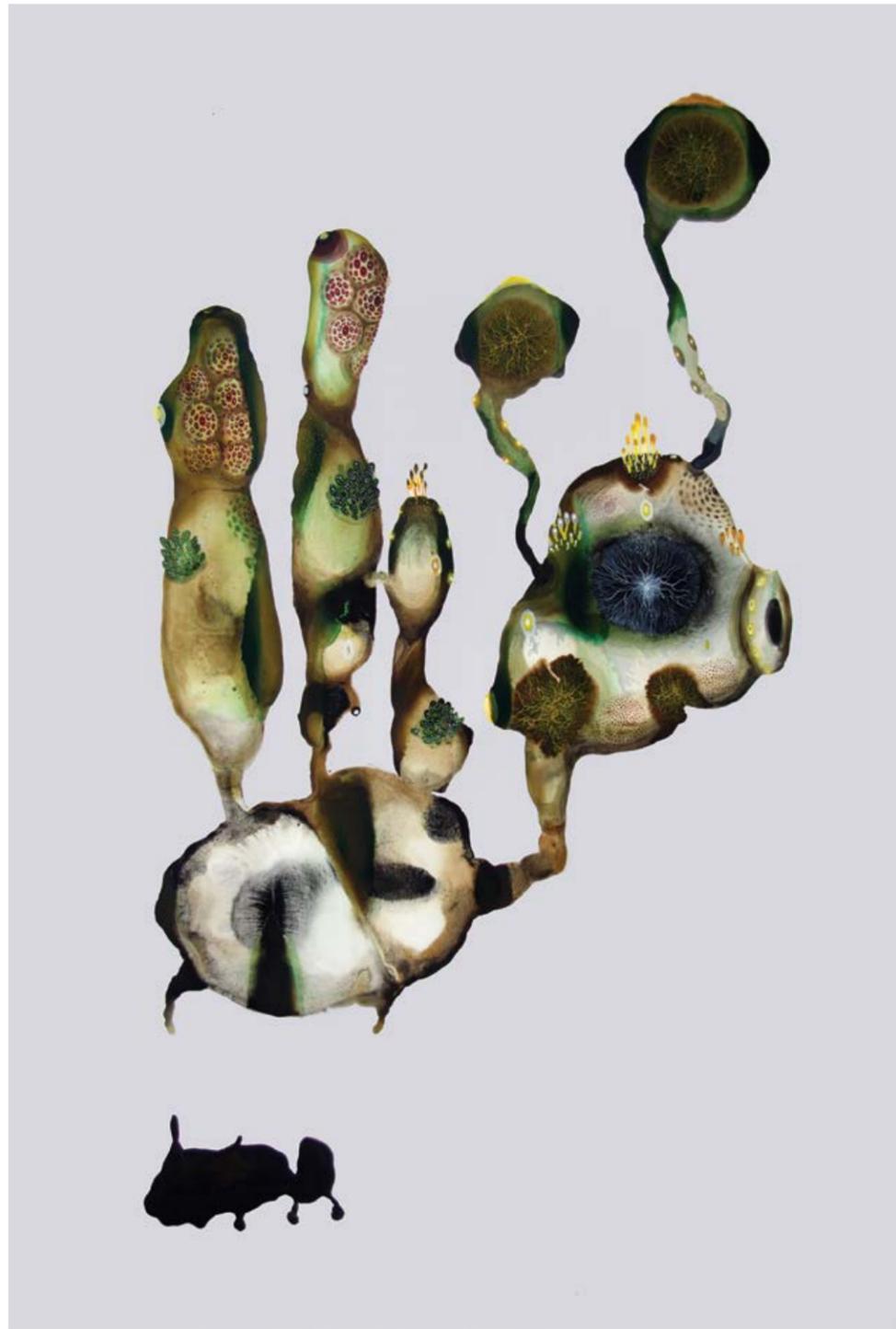
**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #4** (2014)  
Acrylic on paper, 105 x 150 cm (41 3/10 x 59 1/10 in.)



**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #5** (2014)  
Acrylic on paper, 102 x 154 cm (40 1/5 x 60 3/5 in.)

**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #6** (2014)  
Acrylic on paper, 119 x 203 cm (46 9/10 x 79 9/10 in.)





**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #7** (2014)  
Acrylic on paper, 152 x 105 cm (59 4/5 x 41 3/10 in.)

**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #8** (2014)  
Acrylic on paper, 151 x 102 cm (59 2/5 x 40 1/5 in.)





**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #9** (2014)

Acrylic and mushroom spore print  
132 x 226 cm (52 x 89 in.)

**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #10** (2014)  
Acrylic and mushroom spore print  
132 x 226 cm (52 x 89 in.)



**Enin Supriyanto** is an independent curator and writer, living and working in Jakarta, Indonesia. He has been curating exhibitions and contributing essays for various publications in Indonesia and abroad. His publications, among others, include *Indonesian Contemporary Art Now*, edited by Marc Bollandsee and Enin Supriyanto (Singapore: SNP Editions, 2007) and *Agus Suwage: Still Crazy After All These Years*, edited by Enin Supriyanto, Adeline Ooi, Beverly Yong (Yogyakarta: Studio Biru, 2010). He has curated many projects and shows involving Indonesian contemporary artist, among others, *Agus Suwage: Still Crazy After All These Years* (Jogja National Museum and Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, 2009), *Beyond The Dutch* (co-curated with Meta Knol, Utrecht Centraal Museum, The Netherlands, 2009), *Handiwirman Saputra: No Roots, No Shoots* (co-curated with Agung Hujatnikajennong, National Gallery, Jakarta 2011), and *Sip! Indonesian Art Today* (ARNDT, Berlin, Singapore 2013). He is now the Project officer of the Equator International Symposium, a parallel event of the Jogja Biennale.

## New Medium, New Language

The end of 1993 saw an important momentum shift with regards to Indonesian Contemporary Art during the realisation of the Jakarta Biennale XI held at Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta. I was reminded of this particular exhibition due to two works that were composed of organic materials as their primary medium. The first work was one made by Krisna Murti, *Objects from Kampung Nagrak* (1993), which took the form of an installation and video. The main component of this installation was an arrangement of rice grains spread upon the exhibition floor and placed in a wooden *lumping* (a wooden container where rice may be processed). In a couple days, these grains began to grow and develop leaves, change form and colour, as well as undergo a visual change of the installation as a whole. The second work, *Retakan (Cracks)*, 1993, was made by Andar Manik. A vital component of this work—aside from the ceramic sculptures hung to appear like floating rocks—was the clay mud splashed on the wall. As time progressed, the mud began to dry, crack, break, and descend onto the ground.

In the past decade, the relationship between Indonesian artists with natural materials, as well as its contained organic features and properties, has continued to progress further. The House of Natural Fiber (HONF) has formed and taken advantage of bacteria as well as fermentation processes in their installation work *Intelligent Bacteria–Saccharomyces Cerevisiae*, which received the Transmediale Award in 2011. Another group, Lifepatch (also based in Jogjakarta), recently displayed an installation, *Moist Sense* (2013), that utilised plants, as well as basic

electronic gadgets which could transmit an assortment of sounds when certain degrees of humidity were reached in the plant containers.

What can be concluded from the above is that Syaiful A. Garibaldi (also known as Tepu) and the practice he has developed over these past years remains a continuation of his predecessors. In the same breath, however, he has also widened and opened new avenues of ideas and process in comparison to the past. This was evident in Tepu's last solo exhibition, *Regnum Fungi*, in Padi Artground, Bandung, 2012. In this exhibition, Tepu utilised fungi as material. His works highlighted various visual characteristics related to fungi, as well as expressed a new language similar to Esperanto he created himself called "Terhah".

These two principal components, fungi and Terhah, both express the organic disposition of his works in terms of its potential to undergo processes of development and transformation. With these two materials, Tepu enforces the notion that as a material, fungi—or more importantly: new media artistic expressions—are directly related to the need for new languages. At the same time, this language also requires a means of visual expression, a form of new alphabetical typography, which in turn is also related to the various visual cues that have been observed by Tepu through the lens of a microscope, microorganisms in a Petri dish. From these two materials, Tepu is aware that at each part of the process that determines his work's beginning and end—which later on may also break and disappear—is a process open to many possibilities of changes, which are contingent, meaning that the changes that may occur may not always follow the will or control of the artist.

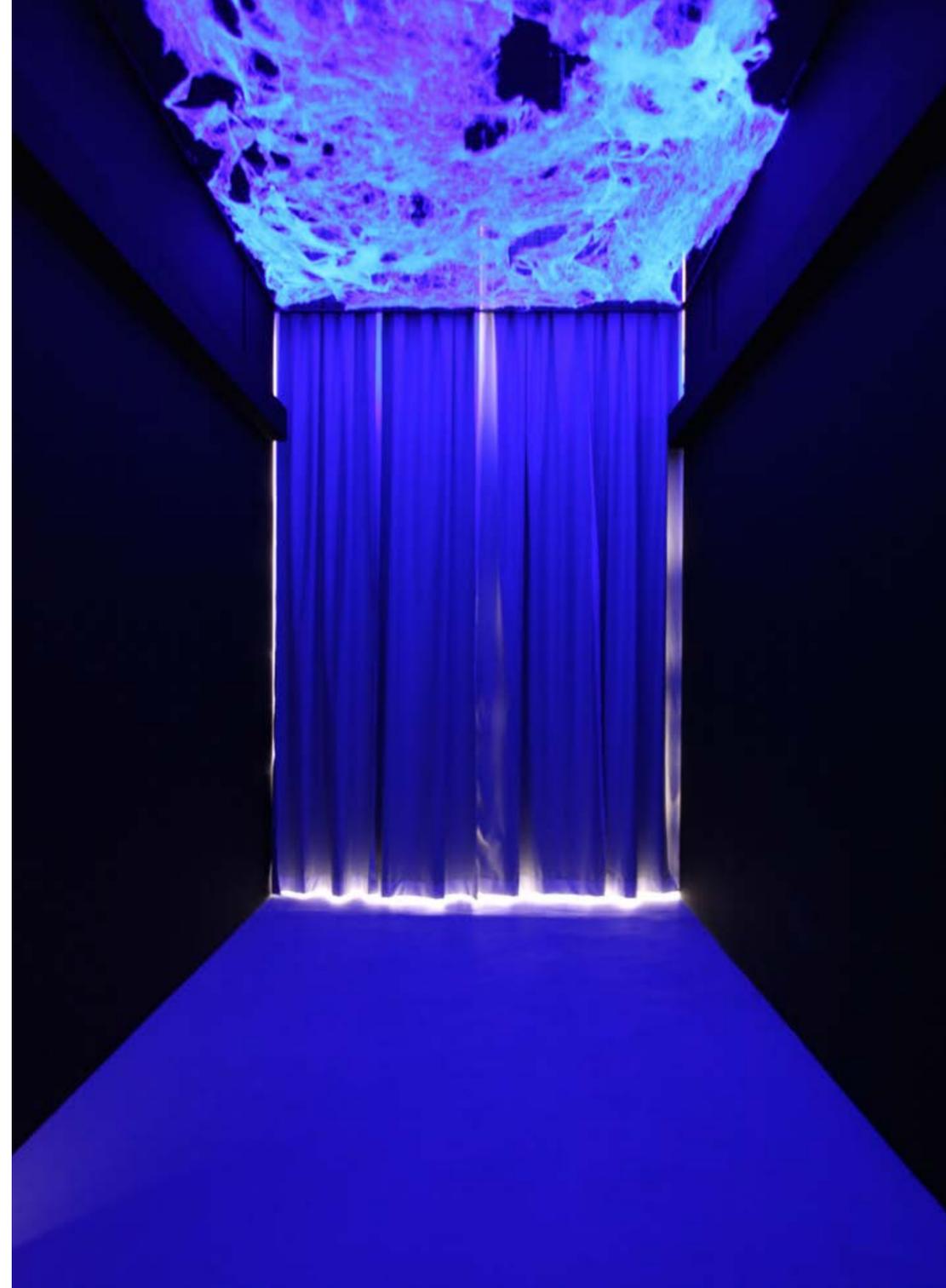
This reality causes Tepu's works to shift or, even to a certain extent, erase his position as an artist. Until now, there has always been a possibility where artworks and artists cannot avoid the reality that they become interlinked referentially through those things that are personal or cultural in nature. In many cases, contemporary artworks instead choose and utilise formal aspects and materials from a variety of sources to enforce the notion that such references exist. In this way, complexities of interpretation and meaning become widened and enriched. Tepu's works instead go on an opposite trajectory. By applying fungi and Terhah, Tepu's works exist completely as the mediums of the works present. The fungi and languages he introduces also enforce the formal aspects and materiality contained within. It would be very difficult to find, if one exists, distinct personal or cultural references in these works by Tepu.

In doing so, Tepu proposes a reality where aesthetic quality, as well as artistic experience, is not only based upon the requirement of meaning in artworks. Similar to the bacteria and fungi samples present in the works in this exhibition, the aesthetic experiences in this exhibition are meant to be spatial and temporal in nature. This is similar to how Tepu himself realised a part of his works in the exhibition space itself, and not in a studio. To take this idea further, the works provide impetus to observe the world around us with more attention and detail. This is only possible if the works are released from the burden of having to express a particular message or meaning. These works invite us to observe everything carefully, akin to observing microorganisms through a microscope. Through such observatory processes, we may perhaps take an imaginary retreat to a magical world containing a plethora of fungi without having to taste the peculiar mushrooms Alice had in Wonderland.

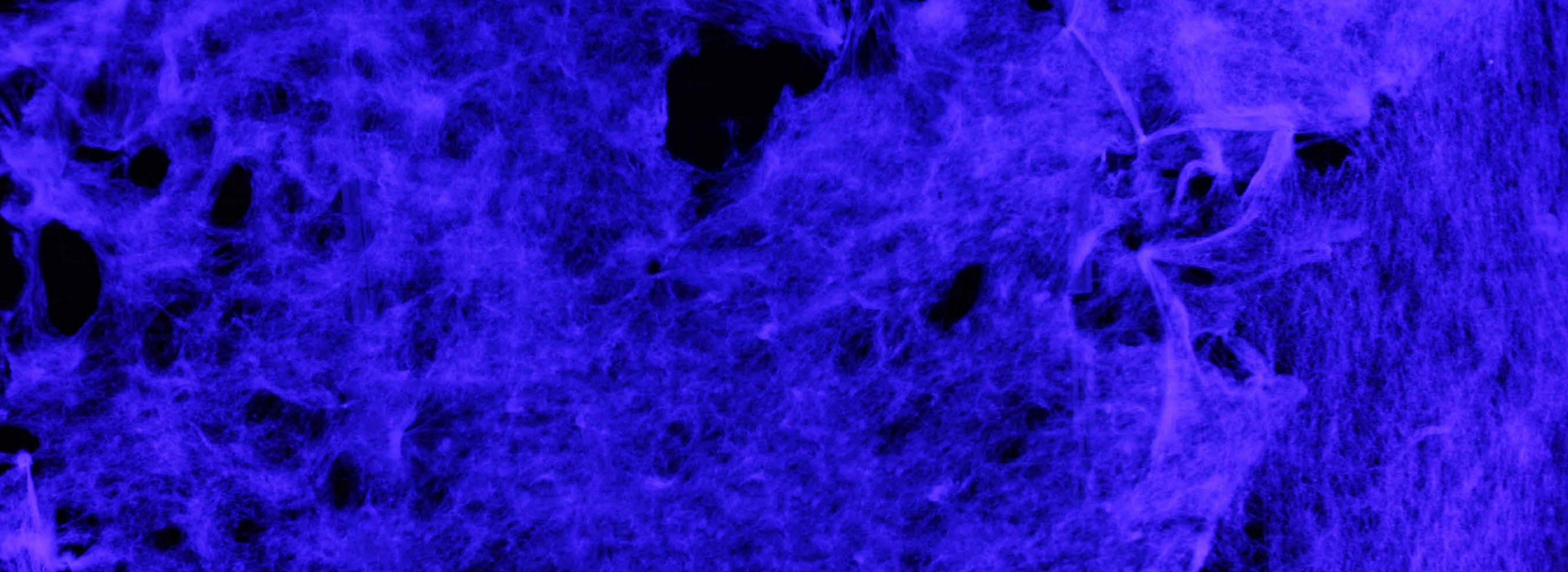
**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #11**  
(Typography) (2014)  
Fern, moss, wire mesh



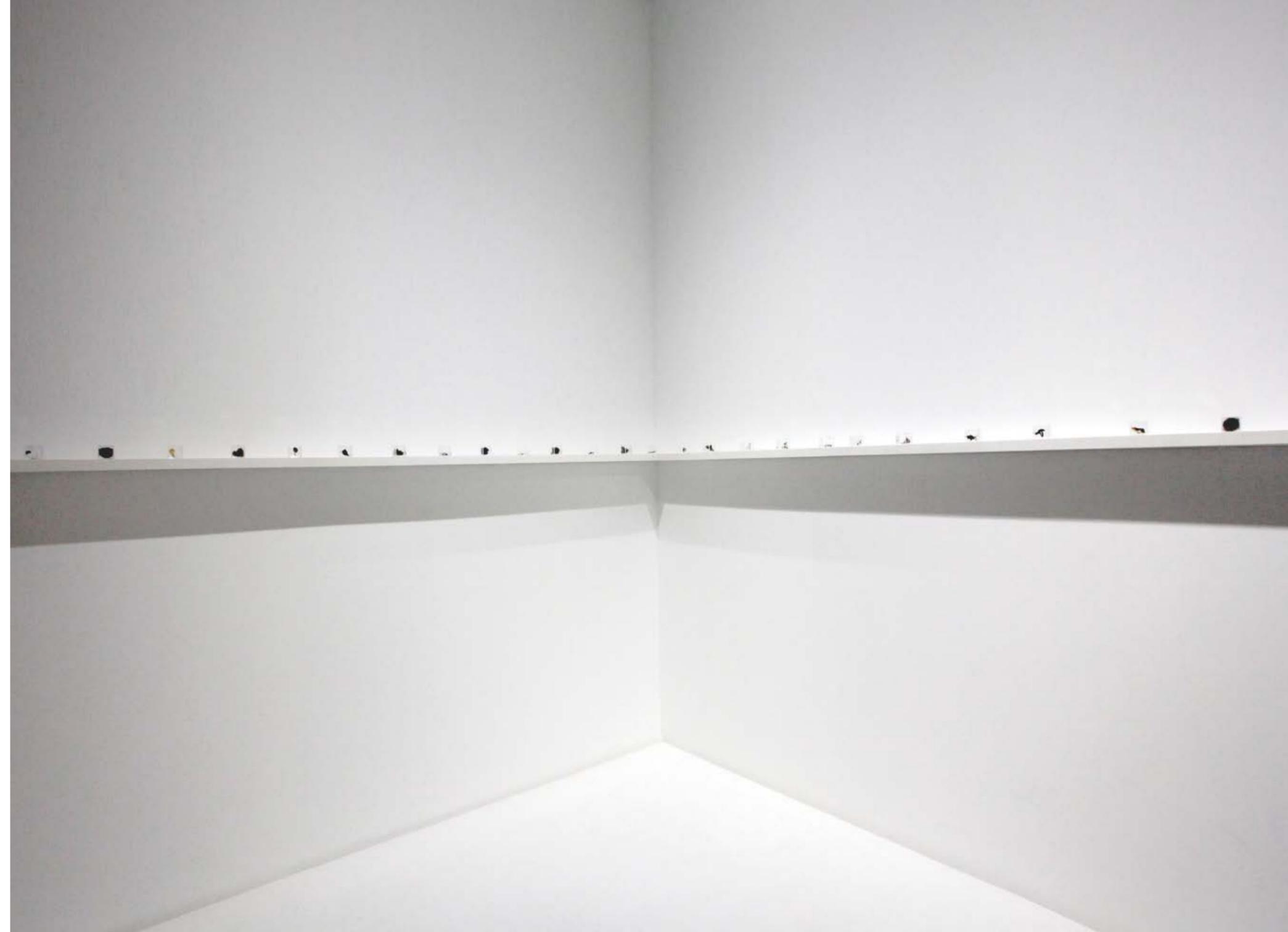




**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #12**  
(Inner Recesses) (2014)  
Mycelium, darcon, 6 UV lights



**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #13**  
(Magnifier) (2014)  
25 magnifying boxes, mushrooms





**Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape #14**  
(Terhah Terrain) (2014)  
Fern, moss, mushrooms, orchids





# SYAIFUL GARIBALDI

1985 Born in Jakarta, Indonesia  
2004 Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Padjajaran (UNPAD), Bandung, Indonesia  
2007 Komunitas Sahabat Kota, teaching and giving workshop for children  
2010 BFA in Printmaking, Faculty of Fine Art and Design, Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Bandung, Indonesia  
2012 Founded Kelas Entarmalem, Study Group of Art etc.  
Present Lives and works in Bandung, West Java

## Solo Exhibitions

2014 *Abiogenesis: Terhah Landscape by Syaiful Garibaldi*, Pearl Lam Galleries, Singapore  
2012 *Regnum Fungi*, Padi Artground, Bandung, Indonesia

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2013 *Pressing*, Videoinsight® Center, Turin, Italy  
Finalist Exhibition BaCAA #3 (Bandung Contemporary Art Awards), Lawangwangi, Bandung, Indonesia

2012 *Trick or Truth*, Fang Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia  
*Indonesian Contemporary Fiber Art #1: Mapping*, Art Space:1, Jakarta, Indonesia  
*Design Art: Renegotiating Boundaries*, Lawangwangi, Bandung, Indonesia  
*Wahana Extranoema*, Padi Artground, Bandung, Indonesia  
*What Do Pictures Want?*, Art Space:1, Jakarta, Indonesia  
2011 *Survey #2.10*, Edwin Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia  
*Hybrid Project: The Butterfly Effect*, Barli Museum, Bandung, Indonesia  
*Pameran Ilustrasi Cerpen KOMPAS*, Bentara Budaya, Jakarta, Indonesia

2010 *Soedjojono dan kawan kawan*, Galeri Kita, Bandung, Indonesia  
*Un-segmented*, Galeri Kita, Bandung, Indonesia  
*Manifesto*, Percakapan Massa, Galeri Nasional (National Gallery of Indonesia), Jakarta, Indonesia  
*Bandung New Emergence 3*, Selasar Sunaryo Artspace, Bandung, Indonesia  
*Post Historia*, Building Enterprise 1, Singapore  
*Monoprint*, Grand Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia  
*Let's Bounce*, Vanessa Artlink, Jakarta, Indonesia

*Almost White Cube*, CG Fine Art, Jakarta, Indonesia  
2009 *Post Mortem*, Vanesa Artlink, Jakarta, Indonesia  
*Inhabitant*, Galeri Padi, Bandung, Indonesia  
*Survey #2*, Edwin's Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia  
*Going Beyond*, CMNK, Bandung, Indonesia  
2008 *ParbinulaJarkuli*, Aarmuh Space, Ciburial, Bandung, Indonesia  
*Seni Grafis Indonesia Sekarang*, Tembi Contemporary, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
*Zoo*, Soemardja Gallery, Bandung, Indonesia  
*Tanda Kota*, Group Exhibition Pocong Dago & ButonKultur, Jakarta, Indonesia  
2007 *Scale, 15x15x15 Project*, Soemardja Gallery, Bandung, Indonesia  
*US/Industry*, Galeri Rumah Teh, Bandung, Indonesia  
2006 Triennale Seni Grafis, Bentara Budaya, Jakarta, Indonesia  
Iowa Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary Miniature Prints, Iowa, USA  
Exhibition and Workshop, Graphic Art, Semar Gallery, Malang, Indonesia  
*Ka Art Ini*, UNJ, Jakarta, Indonesia  
*Black Hole*, Drawing Exhibition, UPI Bandung, Indonesia  
2005 *Self Portrait*, RuangAlternatif KGB, Bandung, Indonesia

## Workshops, Projects, Seminars, Talks, Discussion

2013 Bandung Art Today, Panelist at Soemardja Roundtable Discussion  
Extranoema, Wahana Extranoema: Pameran Sebagai Sebuah Performans  
Workshop on Spore Print, Komunitas Growbox, Reading Light  
2012 Self Portrait Mushroom Hunting and dry point experience,  
THR Ir H Juanda, Bandung, Indonesia  
Lingkar Belajar "Urban sketch and Drypoint", Komunitas Sahabat Kota, Bandung, Indonesia  
2010 Workshop with Takao Minami (JP) New Media, Nu-Substance Festival 2010, Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia  
2008 Aarmuh, Collaborative Space  
2007 Chief of Re-Mural Siliwangi Program

## Awards

2013 Best Artworks, Bandung Contemporary Art Awards #3  
2006 Finalist of Triennale Seni Grafis 2, Bentara Budaya Jakarta, Indonesia  
2005 The 2nd Winner of Mural Competition, Cihampelas Walk, Bandung, Indonesia



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