

Mother Tree: New Roots

Merantau Arts Collective

September 26 - October 30, 2026

Find more at
unitpitt.ca

UNIT/PITT
2954 West 4th Ave, Vancouver

Gallery hours

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday : 12 - 5PM

Saturday : 12 - 4PM

*“Dima bumi dipijak,
di sinan langik dijunjuang”*

*Where the earth is stepped on,
there the sky is upheld*

A Minangkabau proverb on survival philosophy for Minangkabau
migrants

UNIT/PITT is pleased to present ***Mother Tree: New Roots***, a batik exhibition by the Merantau Arts Collective.

Featuring new work by the Merantau Arts Collective, *Mother Tree: New Roots* converges five emerging Nusantara artists' practices around batik as a method of contemporary sense-making, communication, and spiritual technology. Through the process of batik-making, a traditional wax-resist dyeing technique whose present form was developed primarily in West Java, the collective explores the tension of practicing and reinterpreting deeply-held cultural and philosophical traditions, without elders or direct lineages to guide them. Foregrounded by the complexities of the diasporic experience on Turtle Island, the collective considers their own relationship to colonialism, imperialism, and the legacy of late-capitalist extractionism while on stolen, unceded, and unsundered land.

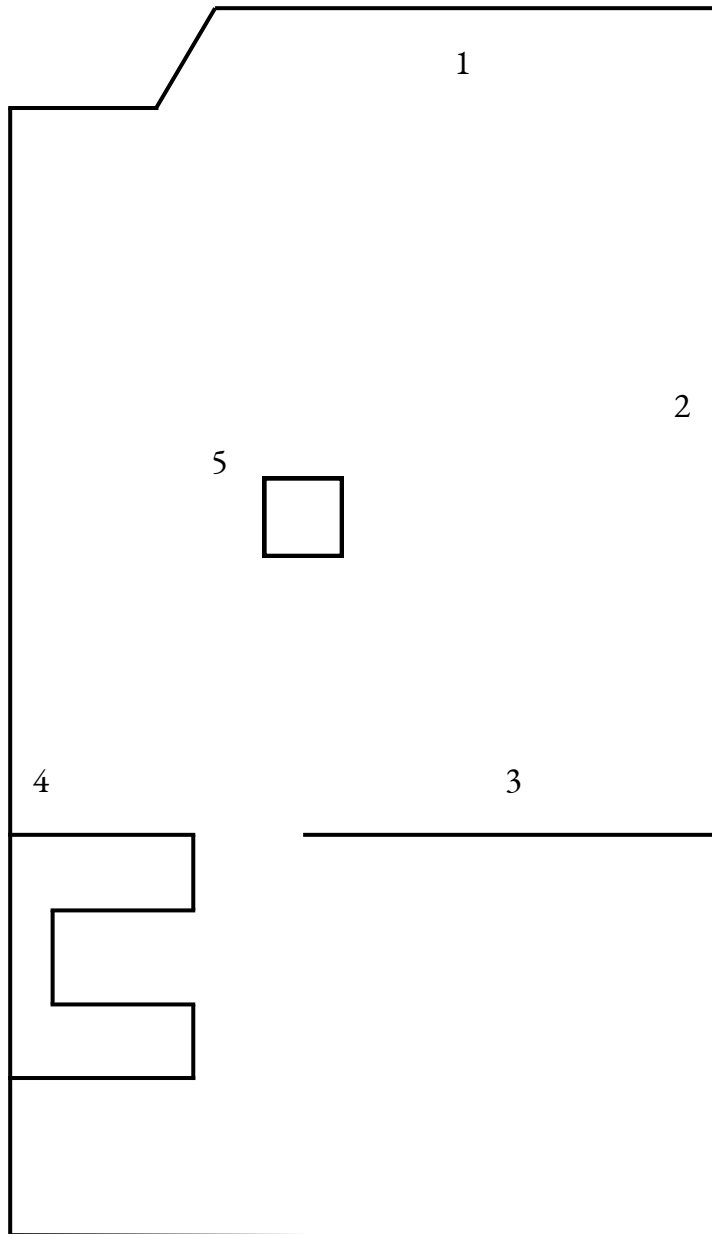
Focused on the role diasporic settlers can play in supporting Indigenous Nations to protect old growth forests, the Merantau Arts Collective worked closely with Sierra Club BC to develop an approach to batik-making centered around inter-community solidarity, close listening to the natural world, and the spiritual forces that guide these traditions.

The works presented here are not a pure reproduction of culture, but an adaptation that allows tradition to survive by growing new roots. Through *Mother Tree: New Roots*, the Merantau Arts Collective asks how a contemporary investigation into an ancient cultural technology might serve to bridge stories and teachings between the lands here and the lands we call home, without displacing the roots already deeply held.

This exhibition grew out of Sierra Club BC's Mother Tree Local Leaders Program. Designed in consultation with Tsleil-Waututh Nation, the program supports local community leaders to learn how to care for the lands and waters by learning about Tsleil-Waututh Nation's priorities as well as through participation in ceremony, workshops on Indigenous Law, land-based learning, and mentorship. Leaders are then supported in creating actionable plans to bring these teachings back to their communities and mobilize their networks.

We're grateful to the City of Vancouver, Sierra Club BC, and hua Foundation for their generous support of this project.

Gallery



1. *Mengingat Pusat Tasek Pauh Janggi*. 2026. Azlan Nur Saidy. Batik Simbut (pinecone) dyed with marigold and indigo, Batik Kawung dyed with madder root and indigo, Batik Lereng/Udan Liris (xylem cells) dyed with mangosteen and indigo, cotton fabric, bamboo from UNIT/PITT's garden, metal clothespin, wood.

2. *Habonaron do Bona*. 2026. Kira Saragih. Cotton fabric dyed with cochineal, pomegranate, and iron, bamboo from UNIT/PITT's garden, twine. Sound design by Dag Davide with field recordings from Stanley Park and gamelan recording by Ammy Kadarharutami Manggala Dewi.

3. *Turut berduka cita*. 2026. Aisha Aiman Nasution. Cotton fabric dyed with indigo, oak bark, and mangosteen, light circuit, soil from UNIT/PITT's garden, seasonal flowers (tuberose, rose, dahlia, asters), pandan leaves.

4. *Seven Transformations*. 2026. Nadia Mahamoor. Cotton fabric dyed with indigo, nylon netting.

5. *akar menjalar*. 2026. Bernarda Antony. Cotton fabric dyed with indigo, cutch, marigold, mangosteen, and onion skin, wooden frame, indigo rocks, dried marigold, oak bark, stones from UNIT/PITT's garden.

Bernarda Antony (she/her) is a Chinese-Indonesian fashion designer turned fiber artist who draws from her experience in the apparel industry to advocate for more sustainable and culturally rooted practices. Through her work with Indonesian batik, she aims to create meaningful change by honoring her heritage while promoting responsible production methods.

Through The Batik Library, she curates and designs clothing collections using batik fabric, and works closely with batik artisans in Indonesia who specialize in natural dyes.

While advocating for sustainability, Bernarda also shares batik culture through hands-on workshops in the Lower Mainland Vancouver, introducing her communities to traditional batik-making methods. In many of these settings, she finds that participants are encountering batik for the first time. This experience of guiding newcomers into the practice continues to deepen her own understanding and commitment to the craft.

Nadia Mahamoor (she/her) is a first generation Sri Lankan-Malay multi-disciplinary creator who resides on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the the x̣ʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. She has BDes degree from Emily Carr University of Art + Design, majoring in Industrial Design, and is a certified nail technician and illustrator.

Her research and illustrative work currently focuses on her identity mixed with fantastical imagery, aspects of ancestry and catharsis.

She also runs her own private nail art studio.

Aisha Aiman Nasution (dia, they/she) is an Indonesian interdisciplinary designer and artist currently based on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Their background in visual arts and industrial design has led their practice as a multidisciplinary creative across varying mediums. With a focus on cultural exploration and sustainability through design, they create through curiosity, alongside community, with care.

They graduated from Emily Carr University of Art + Design with a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Design. Currently, they work as a production assistant and fabricator with a specialty in creating custom builds to bring life and storytelling into a physical space.

Kira Saragih (she/her) is an Indonesian (Sunda-Batak-Minang) artist and arts worker based on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Her practice revolves around textiles, community-making, and friendship-building, as interconnected forms of artistic and cultural labour.

Kira organizes events and programs intended as platforms for gathering, exchange and feedback, creating spaces where friendships can bloom and ideas can cross-pollinate. Her practice extends into her work within artist-run centres, where she sees arts administration as a form of labor rooted in care and driven by the belief that how we build structures is as important as what we create. She holds a BFA from Simon Fraser University.

EVENTS

Opening Reception

September 26, 2 - 5 PM

Batik Workshops

October 3 + 17

- Session #1: 10 AM – 1 PM
- Session #2: 2 – 5 PM