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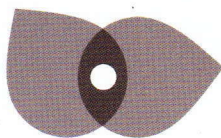
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# KHIN ZAW LATT



Street Stories #17, 2013. Acrylic on canvas, 122cm X 92cm



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**BURMESE ARTISTS SOE SOE AND KHIN ZAW LATT MIGHT BE BROTHERS BY BLOOD, BUT EACH STAND TALL HAVING CARVED OUT THEIR OWN UNIQUE OEUVRES.**  
**BY TYEN FONG**

# Cut From The Same Cloth

# 118

Soe Soe and Khin Zaw Latt, born 1967 and 1980 respectively, grew up in a family of artists in Myanmar – their father was a pianist and their mother a Myanmar traditional dancer. Their parents nurtured both brothers' talents, cultivating the disposition of self-expression through art and supported their aspirations in becoming full-time artists. At the age of 18, Soe Soe devoted his life to painting and became a full-time artist. Khin Zaw Latt, also known as KZL, followed in his elder brother's footsteps and pursued painting at the University of Culture in Yangon from 1998 to 2002. After graduating, he toured Asia in search of inspiration for his paintings.

Soe Soe's work has been featured prominently in his home country, and as far abroad as the UK and USA. At the Myanmar Contemporary Art Exhibition in 2003, he placed amongst the top 30 of 296 artists. He is by no means a single-trick pony. As a mark of his increasing relevance to the Burmese art scene, his work was exhibited again the following year at the same exhibition. These successes led to the founding of his personal gallery, the Wahso gallery, in Yangon.

KZL has also added similar artistic credentials to his name. At the age of twenty, his expertise amassed the attention of art critics, which bagged him the second prize at the Myanmar Youth Art Contest in 2000. After graduation, armed with a painting degree, he became a



rising star in the arts scene, winning Honourable Mention in 2004 and a first prize in 2008 at the Myanmar Contemporary Art Award. His artistic endeavours have found a charitable outlet through the founding of Bamboo Art School, a school for poor children in a village 30km from Yangon. Eminent arts reviewer Nicolai Hartvig listed KZL as one of the five Burmese artists to watch in the Blouin Arts Auction. With a collection housed and spread over nearly all continents, it is hard not to acknowledge his authority as a leading Burmese artist. His works are exhibited at his own gallery, the KZL Art Gallery, in Yangon.

The two brothers have curated many solo exhibitions and joint exhibitions in recent years. These include the 'Two Burmese Brothers' art exhibition in Belgium, Nepal, Hong Kong and USA; 'Vision of Myanmar' in New York; and 'To Tranquillity' in Hong Kong. One however should not regard them as a singular entity, but artists in their own right. Most recently, Soe Soe has been featured at the Chelsea Art Fair, London and the Cologne Fine Art Fair, Cologne, while KZL has had works showcased at Art Basel Miami.

KZL's series in 'Street Stories', a new exhibition organised and curated by Intersections Gallery Singapore, is made up of variants of muted and monochromatic colours, each faceless person almost indistinguishable from the next. Within the crowd, lighter shades of colour fall upon figures of children, drawing the eye to the focal point of each piece – the depiction of poverty of children who are playing in the street instead of being at school, and economic burden shouldered by the anonymous throng in a nation on the path of development. This emphasis is the essence of KZL's work.

Contemporary Burmese art showcased beyond its shores usually address sensitive socio-political issues. Despite this trend, KZL and Soe Soe's works are uncharacteristically non-political. They break out of the mould. 'Street Stories' goes beyond the macro concerns of a country mired in political change to a greater fundamental level – that of daily life.


For many Asian communities, streets are the centre of human activity – it is where goods are exchanged, and where connections are forged. It is ephemeral with the potential for permanence. This liveliness and the dynamic changes on common ground are brilliantly captured in Soe Soe's art pieces. Highly textured paintings are a feature of his repertoire. Strong and pure hues dominate his colour palette, which express the intensity of light in tropical climates. Known for his bold experimentation with new media, techniques and compositions, Soe Soe's series in 'Street Stories' is somewhat less flashy, but no less mesmerising. Looking at his paintings is like



**This page, from top to bottom: Rain #7 (detailed view), Soe Soe; Street Story (detailed view), Khin Zaw Latt.**

**Facing page, from left to right: Portraits of Khin Zaw Latt and Soe Soe.**

looking through a foggy windscreen at the streetscape on a rainy day. It is this fuzzy framing of the city, its sense of misshapen fluidity taken from a dry vantage point, that inspires Soe Soe's work. Such a method also serves to blur the faces of people depicted, which raise questions as to whether anonymity is becoming a social trend.

The artist brothers represent the increasingly mobile and well-travelled generation of Burmese ambassadors. Their works are personal and heartfelt and represents their aspirations for people of Myanmar. A walk in the gallery with these two veterans will immerse you for hours in a vibrant and constantly changing streetscape. 'Street Stories' will be open to public from 14 January to 28 February 2016, at Intersections Gallery, Singapore. 

For more information, please visit  
[www.intersections.com.sg](http://www.intersections.com.sg)

