



## Worcester Art Museum Welcomes Arahmaiani Feisal and Nguyễn Phương Linh for Southeast Asian Artist-in-Residence Program

Pioneering Artists Bring Their Ongoing Explorations of Culture and Identity to Central Massachusetts



Worcester, MA—August 31, 2023—The Worcester Art Museum announces the arrival of two artists, Arahmaiani Feisal and Nguyễn Phương Linh, as part of the return of the Museum's [Southeast Asian Artist-in-Residence](#) program. For six weeks, the artists will work within the Museum and throughout the Worcester area, creating and engaging directly with Museum visitors and surrounding local communities.

The Southeast Asian Artist-in-Residence program at the Worcester Art Museum was founded in 2018 in collaboration with the Indochina Arts Partnership and the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts. Active for two years before the COVID-19 pandemic caused a pause, the program invites artists who live and work in Southeast Asia to come to Worcester to convene with communities and explore local issues through art. With cultural exchange at its core, the program allows the Museum to serve as a platform for world-renowned artists to work with communities on a direct level to generate and share ideas. During their time here, artists work within the Museum's Higgins Education Wing studio spaces and galleries, meet with local artists, and immerse themselves in aspects of Worcester life that interest them. Through a variety of public programs—including open studio hours for Museum visitors to learn more about their work—the residency creates an immersive experience that highlights creativity and connection.

"We are incredibly fortunate to be able to work with Arahmaiani Feisal and Nguyễn Phương Linh, two artists working at the forefront of their respective fields to explore humanity through art," said Samantha Cataldo, the Museum's Associate Curator of

Contemporary Art. "They are the perfect pair to resume our Southeast Asian Artist-in-Residence program, an evolving project that demonstrates how art takes up a central space in every community, allowing us to examine and defy cultural boundaries. I cannot wait to see what Arahmaiani and Linh work on during their stay."

**Arahmaiani Feisal** is one of Indonesia's most influential and respected contemporary artists. She is known around the world for her powerful and provocative commentaries on social, political, and cultural issues. Her work has grappled with contemporary politics; violence, particularly towards women; female discrimination; critique of capital; the female body; and her own identity, which although Muslim, still mediates between Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and animist beliefs. Known professionally as Arahmaiani, she has been practicing her artistic approach through the mediums of performance art, video, installation, drawing, and painting since the early 1980s.

**Nguyễn Phương Linh** is an internationally recognized artist, having exhibited her work across Asia, Europe, and the United States. Her multidisciplinary practice spans installation, sculpture, and video. In her art, she explores geographic cultural shift, traditional roots, and fragmented history in Vietnam—a complex nexus of ethnicities, religions, and cultural and geo-political influences. Her works contemplate the visible/invisible truth, form, and time, to convey a pervasive sense of dislocation and the ephemeral. In 2011, Phương Linh co-founded and co-directed the Nha San Collective, a group of young artists dedicated to pushing the boundaries of expression in Vietnam as well as supporting other young artists in the community. She is based in Hanoi, Vietnam.

As part of this year's Southeast Asian Artist-in-Residence program, the Museum will host several opportunities for visitors to meet Arahmaiani and Linh and get a rare chance to see artists in their creative spaces. Events include:

**[Open Studio](#)**

**August 27, September 3, September 10**

**Noon–2 pm**

**Free**

On select days, Arahmaiani and Linh are opening their studios for visitors to explore and meet them. Museum admission is not required to enter the Higgins Education Wing.

**[After Hours: Summer Sendoff Party](#)**

**September 20**

**6–8 pm**

**Free, tickets available [here](#)**

Join the artists for an evening celebrating community and contemporary art. A culmination of the Southeast Asian Artist-in-Residence program, this party is an opportunity to embrace the final days of summer while coming face-to-face with

world-renowned artists as they complete their six-week experience in Worcester. The evening will include the debut of a new performance piece by Arahmaiani Faisal.

The Southeast Asian Artist-in-Residence program is one of several revived and new projects the Museum is prioritizing to revitalize its contemporary art program, starting with the hiring of Cataldo in 2022. The Museum's renewed commitment to the art of our time, with an emphasis on forging relationships with living artists, allows visitors to more deeply engage with global art throughout history and provides a throughline to centuries of thinkers and creators who were ahead of their time.

This program is supported in part by the IAP Fund at WAM and a grant from the Worcester Arts Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Support for 2023 artist housing provided in part by Homewood Suites by Hilton Worcester.



### **About the Worcester Art Museum**

The Worcester Art Museum creates transformative programs and exhibitions, drawing on its exceptional collection of art. Dating from 3000 BCE to the present, these works provide the foundation for a focus on audience engagement, connecting visitors of all ages and abilities with inspiring art and demonstrating its enduring relevance to daily life. Creative initiatives—including pioneering collaborative programs with local schools, fresh approaches to exhibition design and in-gallery teaching, and a long history of studio class instruction—offer opportunities for diverse audiences to experience art and learn both from and with artists.

The Worcester Art Museum, located at 55 Salisbury Street in Worcester, MA, is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10am to 4pm. For information on admission and discounts, visit <https://www.worcesterart.org/information/hours-and-admission>. On the first Sunday of each month, admission is free for everyone. Museum parking is free.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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Images (left-right):

Portrait of Arahmaiani Feisal, courtesy of the artist.

Portrait of Nguyễn Phương Linh, courtesy of the artist.