

Pengantin Baru (Newlyweds)

Azzah Sultan

Jan. 9 - Feb. 8, 2025

Opening Event Thursday Jan. 9th, 5 - 8pm

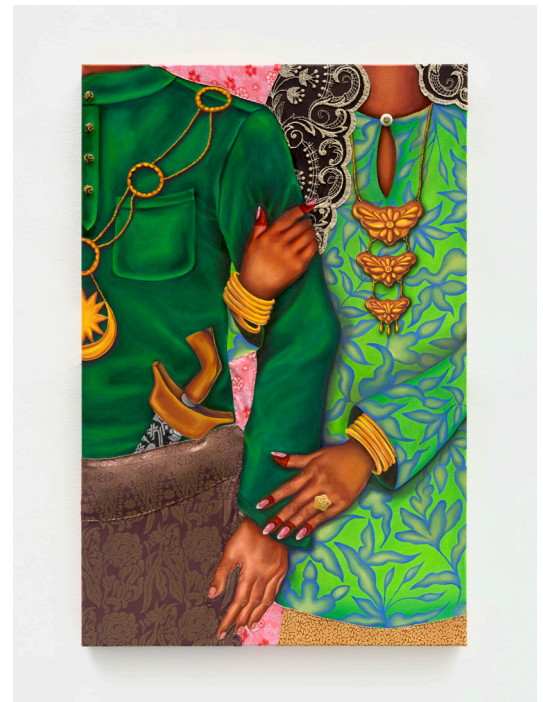
168 Suffolk St.

New York, NY 10002

www.trotterandsholer.com

Wednesday to Saturday: 12:00 - 6:00pm

Monday and Tuesday by appointment



Trotter&Sholer is pleased to present *Pengantin Baru (Newlyweds)*, our third solo exhibition by **Azzah Sultan**. Sultan's new body of work explores physical objects that possess value, both monetary and cultural. Her work explores *Peranakan* Jewelry, which stems from Southeast Asia, and its significance in weddings and as objects of nostalgia. The value of gold and precious stones is often assumed, but by combing through her family's wedding albums, and reflecting on the role these objects have played in many important rituals and life changes, Sultan is alluding to the broader questions of material culture.

Sultan renders these objects in oil paint, bringing the conversation of material culture into the realm of fine art. As an unmarried woman, the cultural significance of many jewelry pieces and their connection to her heritage are complex. Sultan also notes how in Southeast Asian culture, jewelry has intergenerational importance. Passing jewelry from a mother to a daughter is an act of love and can help to create some financial stability for her. This is often done at the time of a young woman's wedding. For Sultan, this resonates. She notes, "This work hits very close to me, being an unmarried woman and living away from my home country, every piece of jewelry that is passed down to me is a reminder of my status and living independently."

The cultural significance of jewelry in Malaysian and Southeast Asian culture is further evidenced in its treatment of folklore and cultural norms. For example, she notes, "Traditionally, *Peranakan* women were discouraged from wearing their hair loose. Wearing one's hair loose invited comparisons to the *Pontianak*, a local version of the female vampire, whose hair flowed wildly. Using a *Cucuk Sanggul* (hairpin) was a way to be seen as civilized."

Women's jewelry is often treated as an extravagance and mere adornment, however, through painting these objects, making them the subject of portraits, Sultan asserts that these items in all of their femininity are consequential pieces of material culture. The further implication is that women's experiences, and significantly the experiences of Southeast Asian women are of cultural consequence.

Pengantin Baru (Newlyweds) will be on view at 168 Suffolk Street, New York, NY through Feb. 8, 2025.

@sitisultan @trotterandsholer

Press inquires: jenna@trotterandsholer.com

trotter&sholer