

December 2022

**The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka
opens Rotation 3 of ‘Encounters’**

The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka (MMCA Sri Lanka) opens Rotation 3 of its exhibition titled ‘Encounters’ today (8 December 2022). The public can view the exhibition until 19 March 2023, at the museum premises inside Crescat Boulevard, Colombo . Curated by Sharmini Pereira, Chief Curator, MMCA Sri Lanka and Sandev Handy, Curator, MMCA Sri Lanka, ‘Encounters’ opened on 11 February 2022 and will close to the public on 19 March 2022. Entrance to the exhibition is free.

‘Encounters’ Rotation 3 introduces two new displays with artworks by A. Mark (1933–2000), George Keyt (1901–1993), Nelun Harasgama (b. 1959), and Janani Cooray (b. 1974). With a focus on clothing, one of the new displays looks at how garments, beyond their functionality, can convey information about class, professional status, gender, and nationality. The display brings together a startling juxtaposition between a painting titled ‘Kandyan Bride’ (1951) by George Keyt and a barbed wire costume worn as part of a performance titled ‘Osariya’ (2015) by performance artist Janani Cooray. Both works highlight the historical relationships between clothing and social identity, inviting audiences to compare and contrast the different ways in which the Kandyan sari or ‘osariya’ is viewed in Sri Lanka.

“My hope is that this display aids us in re-considering George Keyt and the political reverberations embedded in his paintings; particularly in his depiction of women. As recently seen by the public outcry on the clothing standards required of female state employees, this encounter may lead us to not only re-consider Keyt, but to further question the role clothing itself has played in crafting a national identity,” noted Handy.

Groundfloor, Crescat Boulevard
89 Galle Road
Colombo 03

Registered Address:
117 Sir Chittampalam A. Gardiner Mawatha
Colombo 02
Sri Lanka

info@mmca-srilanka.org
www.mmca-srilanka.org

The second new display to open on 8 December is also prompted by a George Keyt painting, but turns attention to a topic of a spiritual nature. Here, George Keyt's 1949 painting titled 'The Offering' is placed in a conversation with three artworks that explore representations of the crucifixion. This display includes works by Nelun Harasgama and A. Mark, with the addition of another George Keyt who also painted the subject of the crucifixion.

Pereira, Chief Curator, MMCA Sri Lanka said, "Showing George Keyt's 'The Offering' alongside crucifixion-based works by two contemporary artists are exactly the kinds of provocations between artworks we wanted to create in 'Encounters'. As the first exhibition in Sri Lanka to publicly exhibit individual paintings by George Keyt, 'Encounters' begins the task of dismantling outdated art history or 'connoisseurship' that has not addressed his actual artworks. We hope our approach will encourage a more critically engaged discussion about Keyt and other artists of his generation."

A new line up of free public programmes accompanies Rotation 3 of 'Encounters' to engage the public with the artworks on display. These include weekly gallery talks with artists, workshops with professionals, and exhibition tours with the museum's curators and Visitor Educators.

'Encounters' is generously supported by the European Union and the Goethe Institut, with the additional support of Fairfirst Insurance and Nilu's Construction and Engineering. The radio partners for 'Encounters' are Lite 87, Rhythm World, and TNL Now.

For more information on the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Sri Lanka, visit www.mmca-srilanka.org or follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/mmcasrilanka and Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/mmcasrilanka/> for updates.