

Press release

Marcos Kueh: Smooth Sailing, 一路順風



Detail from Marcos Kueh, 'Smooth Sailing', (2025)

Courtesy of the artist

25 October 2025 – 11 January 2026

esea contemporary, Manchester

Preview: 24 October 2025, 6–8 PM

esea contemporary is pleased to present *Smooth Sailing, 一路順風*, the first institutional solo exhibition by Marcos Kueh – an award-winning artist from Sarawak, Borneo Malaysia, known for his richly layered textile works. This exhibition marks a pivotal development in Kueh's practice, introducing new materials and processes while deepening his ongoing exploration of cross-cultural histories, diasporic identity, and collective memory.



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Developed during his recent residency with esea contemporary, *Smooth Sailing*, 一路順風 explores the realities and afterlives of migration in search of a better future. The exhibition's title draws from the Chinese phrase 一路順風 (yī lù shùn fēng), which literally means 'may the wind be smooth along your entire journey.' It is often used as a parting blessing, conveying hopes for safety, ease, and favourable conditions ahead – particularly for those embarking on uncertain paths. Kueh reflects on this phrase through both personal and historical lenses: his own experiences as a diasporic Chinese Malaysian from Borneo who migrated to Europe and now lives and works in the Netherlands, and broader histories of the textile industry, labour movements, and displacement. Anchored in textile and sculptural language, the exhibition considers how cultural memory and moral frameworks endure – or unravel – across shifting geographies.

In the main gallery, visitors will encounter *Smooth Sailing* 一路順風 – a major new immersive installation. This large-scale tableau features a ship sail and broken mast run aground alongside a kinetic sculpture, evoking themes of endurance and migration. Co-commissioned by esea contemporary, the Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile (CHAT), Hong Kong SAR, and Manchester Metropolitan University, with lead support from the Mondriaan Fund and the Henry Moore Foundation, this ambitious new work draws on research conducted at the People's History Museum and the internationally renowned textile collection of The Whitworth in Manchester.

The exhibition also features a new iteration of Kueh's *Three Contemporary Prosperities*, which reimagines the traditional Chinese deities Fú 福, Lù 祿, Shòu 壽 – celestial embodiments of Fortune, Prosperity, and Longevity – as hyper-contemporary figures: The Brilliant Billionaire, The Perfect Celebrity, and The Immortal Elder. Presented in the Communal Project Space, this woven work is updated each time it is shown, reflecting on how ideals of a 'good life' are shaped by shifting societal desires. As these avatars evolve – a millionaire becomes a billionaire, an influencer becomes a celebrity – the work prompts viewers to consider how contemporary society interprets and chases these age-old aspirations in an age of digital spectacle and economic precarity.

"The work came from a desire to reflect on my state of being as a Chinese-passing, non-European working in textile factories in the Netherlands. During my residency at esea contemporary, I encountered the writings of Ocean Vuong and was struck by his idea of 'circumstantial labour' – how, more often than not, we find ourselves in places and situations beyond our control."



The popular ethos of the 'American dream' promises opportunity and freedom through hard work and determination, regardless of background. 'Smooth Sailing, 一路順風' reflects on the weight of that dream from the perspective of the stranded and abandoned, whose vessel towards upward mobility has long since been wrecked. Deserted by fate, hidden deep within the factory grounds, the spirit still labours to find meaning amidst the chaos, in order to carry on."

— Marcos Kueh

"It has been so meaningful to accompany Marcos on this journey, from his residency with us in Manchester through to the making of 'Smooth Sailing, 一路順風'. Witnessing the way he works has been a privilege — approaching archival traces and industrial remnants with patient sensitivity, attuned to the emotions and lived experiences that echo through them. From labour union certificates to textile fragments now housed in local museum collections, he draws out the personal within larger histories, opening space for stories that might otherwise remain silent."

— Jo-Lene Ong, Curator, esea contemporary

The public programme accompanying the exhibition includes an artist talk presented in partnership with Asia Triennial Manchester 6 and organised by Manchester Metropolitan University. Taking place during the Triennial's opening week on 3rd November 2025, the event will bring together artistic and curatorial voices around themes of migration, memory, and materiality.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Press Contact

For press enquiries, high-resolution images, or interview requests, please contact:

Jenny Stewart, press@eseacontemporary.org

Exhibition Details

Title: *Marcos Kueh: Smooth Sailing, 一路順風*

Dates: 25 October 2025 – 11 January 2026

Preview: 24 October 2025, 6–8 PM

Venue: esea contemporary, 13 Thomas Street, Manchester, M4 1EU, United Kingdom

Admission: Free

Artistic Direction: Xiaowen Zhu

Curation: Jo-Lene Ong



Associate Curator: Julia Jiang

Opening Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM | Sunday, 12 – 5 PM | Closed Mondays and Bank Holidays

Marcos Kueh is an artist from Sarawak, Borneo Malaysia, currently living and working in the Netherlands. His practice centres on textiles as a medium for storytelling, drawing from Borneo's ancestral weaving traditions to explore themes of identity, labour, and globalisation.

Growing up in a post-colonial developing country, Kueh has long been engaged with questions of identity and how Malaysia is perceived – whether through colonial depictions in museums or stylised narratives in tourism advertising. His work seeks to reconcile these representations with his lived experience growing up in Borneo, navigating the pressures of modernity and globalisation. He uses weaving to encode contemporary legends from everyday life, just as the ancestors of Borneo did with their dreams and stories before the arrival of written alphabets from the West.

Kueh holds a Bachelor's in Graphic and Textile Design from the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, completed in 2022. That same year, he was awarded the Ron Mandos Young Blood Award, and in 2023 he was named Young Designer of the Year by the Dutch Design Awards. His works are held in the collections of Museum Voorlinden and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions include Manifesta 15 in Barcelona; Kunstinstituut Melly in Rotterdam; The Backroom, Kuala Lumpur; and the National Art Gallery Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur.

esea contemporary is the UK's only non-profit art centre specialising in presenting and platforming artists and art practices that identify with and are informed by East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) cultural backgrounds. Situated in an award-winning building in the heart of Manchester, home to one of the largest East Asian populations in the UK, esea contemporary has been a hub for cross-cultural exchange since its inauguration as a community-oriented visual arts festival in 1986. esea contemporary aims to increase the visibility of contemporary art practices from the East and Southeast Asian communities and their diasporas. It is a site for forward-thinking art programmes that, beyond exhibitions, also include commissions, research, residencies, publishing, and a wide range of vibrant public events. esea contemporary values creativity, compassion, interconnectedness, and collectivity in implementing its mission.

The Henry Moore Foundation was founded by the sculptor Henry Moore and his family in 1977 to encourage public appreciation of the visual arts. Today the Foundation supports innovative sculpture projects through its grants programme, devises an imaginative programme of



exhibitions and research worldwide, and preserves the legacy of Moore himself: one of the great sculptors of the 20th century, who did so much to bring the art form to a wider audience.

This exhibition is generously supported by the Mondriaan Fund, Henry Moore Foundation, Galerie Ron Mandos, Manchester Metropolitan University, Centre for Heritage, Arts and Textile (CHAT), Hong Kong SAR, Arts Council England, and Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

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新闻稿

郭晟邦：《一路顺风》



郭晟邦，《一帆风顺》，2025（局部）

艺术家惠允

2025 年 10 月 25 日 – 2026 年 1 月 11 日

英国曼彻斯特，esea contemporary

预展：2025 年 10 月 24 日，下午 6 点至 8 点

esea contemporary 荣幸呈现《Smooth Sailing 一路顺风》，这是来自马来西亚婆罗洲砂拉越的获奖艺术家郭晟邦首个机构个展。郭晟邦以层次丰厚、叙事感强烈的纺织作品广受关注。本次展览既

是其创作实践的重要里程碑，亦在媒材与工艺上开拓新方向，同时更深入地探讨跨文化历史、离散身份与集体记忆等议题。

《一路顺风》创作于郭晟邦近期在 esea contemporary 的驻地期间，展览探讨迁徙的现实处境与延续影响，关注人们在追寻更美好未来过程中所承载的希望与不确定。展览标题取自中文成语“一路顺风”，字面意为“愿你一路顺风”，常作为临别祝福，寄托对平安、顺遂与前路有利条件的期许——尤以献给即将踏上未知旅途的人。郭晟邦以个人与历史的双重视角回应这一语汇：既源自他作为婆罗洲华裔马来西亚人、远赴欧洲在荷兰工作生活的离散经历，也关乎更广泛的纺织工业、劳工运动与流离迁徙的历史。展览通过纺织与雕塑性的语言探问：在不断变动的地理与社会语境中，文化记忆与道德框架如何得以延续，或逐渐解体。

在主展厅中，观众将邂逅《一路顺风》——一件全新的大型沉浸式装置作品。这一宏大的雕塑性场景由一面饱经风霜的船帆、一根镌刻文字的桅杆，以及一台动态的刺绣机构成，唤起人们对坚韧与迁徙主题的思考。由 esea contemporary、香港特别行政区六厂纺织文化艺术馆（CHAT）及曼彻斯特城市大学联合委任，并获得荷兰蒙德里安基金会及亨利·摩尔基金会的主要支持。该雄心勃勃的新作汲取了艺术家在曼彻斯特人民历史博物馆及享誉国际的惠特沃斯美术馆纺织藏品中所进行的研究成果，展开对历史、材料与叙事的全新探索与表达。

展览同时呈现了郭晟邦的新作《三件当代福祉》的最新版本。在这一系列中，艺术家将中国传统的三位神祇——福、禄、寿，分别象征福运、富贵与长寿——重新想象为高度当代的化身：光辉的亿万富翁、完美的名流、以及不朽的长者。作品在公共项目空间展出，并在每次呈现时进行更新，藉此反思“美好生活”的理想如何在不断变化的社会欲望中被塑造。当这些化身随时代演进——百万富翁变为亿万富翁，网络红人成为明星——作品也引导观众思考：在数字景观与经济不稳定的当下，社会如何重新诠释并追逐这些古老的愿景。

“这件作品源于我对自身处境的反思——作为一个外表被视为华人、非欧洲人，在荷兰的纺织工厂工作时所体会到的状态。在 esea contemporary 的驻地期间，我读到了王鸥行的著作，并深受他提出的‘偶然性劳作’（*circumstantial labour*，指因环境处境所迫而产生的劳动状态）这一概念触动——它揭示了我们往往身处于超出自身掌控的环境与处境之中。

‘美国梦’的流行信条宣称：无论出身如何，只要通过勤奋与意志，便可获得机遇与自由。而《一路顺风》则试图从那些被搁浅与遗弃者的视角，反思这一梦想的沉重负担——他们驶向向上流动的



船只早已破碎。命运抛弃之下，幽微的灵魂仍在工厂深处劳作，于混乱之中寻找意义，只为继续前行。”

—— 郭晟邦

“能够陪伴郭晟邦完成这一段旅程，对机构而言极具意义——从他在曼彻斯特的驻地，到《一路顺风》的创作过程。见证他工作的方式是一种殊荣——他以耐心与敏锐，触及档案的痕迹与工业的遗存，体察其中回荡的情感与生命经验。从工会证书到如今收藏于地方博物馆的纺织碎片，他总能在宏大的历史叙事中提炼出个体的痕迹，为那些或将被湮没的故事开辟出被听见的空间。”

—— 王裕玲，esea contemporary 策展人

展览同期将推出公共项目，其中包括与第六届曼彻斯特亚洲三年展（Asia Triennial Manchester 6）合作、由曼彻斯特城市大学（Manchester Metropolitan University）组织的艺术家对话。该活动将在三年展开幕周（2025 年 11 月 3 日）举行，汇聚艺术家与策展界的声音，共同探讨迁徙、记忆与物质性等主题。

—— 完 ——

编辑须知

媒体联络

如需媒体查询、高清图片或采访请求，请联系：

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展览信息

标题：郭晟邦（Marcos Kueh）：《Smooth Sailing 一路顺风》

日期：2025 年 10 月 25 日 – 2026 年 1 月 11 日

预展：2025 年 10 月 24 日，下午 6 点至 8 点

地点：esea contemporary，13 Thomas Street，曼彻斯特，M4 1EU，英国

入场：免费

艺术总监：朱晓闻 (Xiaowen Zhu)

策展人：王裕玲 (Jo-Lene Ong)



助理策展人：姜来 (Julia Jiang)

开放时间：周二至周六 上午 10 点 - 下午 5 点 | 周日 中午 12 点 - 下午 5 点 | 周一及法定节假日
闭馆

郭晟邦 (Marcos Kuch) 来自马来西亚婆罗洲砂拉越，现生活和工作于荷兰。他的创作以纺织为叙事媒介，从婆罗洲的祖辈织造传统汲取灵感，探讨身份、劳动与全球化等主题。

成长于后殖民的发展中国家，郭晟邦长期关注身份认同与外界如何看待马来西亚——无论是通过博物馆中的殖民描绘，还是旅游广告中的程式化叙事。他的作品试图将这些外部再现与自身在婆罗洲成长的生活经验相互对照，在现代化与全球化的压力下寻找平衡。他以编织记录当代日常生活中的“新传奇”，如同婆罗洲的先辈在西方文字传入之前，以梦境与故事为经纬来编织叙事。

郭晟邦于 2022 年毕业于海牙皇家艺术学院 (Royal Academy of Art, The Hague)，获平面与纺织设计学士学位。同年，他荣获朗·曼多斯青年新锐奖 (Ron Mandos Young Blood Award)；2023 年则被荷兰设计奖 (Dutch Design Awards) 评为“年度青年设计师”。其作品被荷兰福尔林登美术馆 (Museum Voorlinden) 及阿姆斯特丹市立博物馆 (Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam) 等机构收藏。近期展览包括：巴塞罗那第十五届宣言展 (Manifesta 15)、鹿特丹梅利艺术中心 (Kunstinstituut Melly)、吉隆坡 The Backroom，以及马来西亚国家美术馆。

esea contemporary 是英国唯一一家专注于呈现并支持具有东亚及东南亚 (ESEA) 文化背景、或受其影响的艺术家与艺术实践的非营利艺术中心。esea contemporary 坐落于曼彻斯特市中心一座屡获殊荣的建筑中，所在城市拥有英国规模最大的东亚族群之一。自 1986 年以社区导向的视觉艺术节创立以来，esea contemporary 一直是跨文化交流的重要枢纽。

esea contemporary 致力于提升东亚与东南亚社群及其离散群体的当代艺术实践的能见度。除展览外，机构还推动包括委任创作、研究、驻地、出版及多样公共项目在内的前瞻性艺术计划。esea contemporary 在实践使命时，始终秉持创造力、同理心、互联性与集体性的价值。

亨利·摩尔基金会由雕塑家亨利·摩尔及其家人于 1977 年创立，旨在促进公众对视觉艺术的理解与欣赏。如今，基金会通过其资助项目支持创新性的雕塑实践，策划富有想象力的全球展览与研究项目，并致力于传承摩尔本人这一 20 世纪最重要的雕塑家之一的艺术遗产，他为将雕塑艺术带向更广泛的公众作出了巨大贡献。



本次展览由荷兰蒙德里安基金会、亨利·摩尔基金会、Ron Mandos 画廊、曼彻斯特城市大学、香港特别行政区六厂纺织文化艺术馆（CHAT）、英格兰艺术委员会及大曼彻斯特联合管理局慷慨支持。

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