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2012-01-03

INDONESIAN ART IN LONDON: Indonesia's Crouching Tigers and Hidden Dragons

Godfrey Barker

INDONESIA suffers from a surfeit of pretty girls. They are on the beach, they are on the walls, they don't wear too much and Londoners visiting the first-ever commercial show of Indonesian Art in Mayfair in November 2011 must have expected to see a roomful of them. So the value of One East Asia International Art Management's exhibition, staged two months after *Indonesian Eye* at the Saatchi Gallery, was to present a quite new perspective on what is happening in art in Southeast Asia. It fascinated viewers.

Those girls are a cliché – much banged out in paint over the last century for tourists – but suddenly, in *Indonesia's Crouching Tigers and Hidden Dragons*, curated by

Vivienne Lawes, Daniel Komala and Santy Saptari, art from the archipelago looked very different.

It revealed a new maturity in Indonesian art, a voice of its own and a sense that the country has subjects important to its own culture that are also universal.

Westerners have watched China engage with the wider world since 1979, its artists from the Stars and Scar groups abandoning the 1200-year-old *Wen Yen* landscape with mountains, trees and waterfalls for democracy and red-hot social and political subjects. India, more hesitantly, has taken the same road, as have also a half dozen Arab countries between Morocco and Pakistan.

But Southeast Asia has seemed a haven of tradition – its artists obsessed with village scenes, sacred dances, temples and postcard landscapes in saturated hues. It all looked back to the Mooi Indie ('Beautiful Indies') style of the early 20th century, an idealised Golden Age that never was. A few native Indonesians worked as eagerly on this nostalgia as did the Europeans who started it – Walter Spies, W G Hofker, Mayeur de Merpres to the fore. It was an art of high technique but it was classic Orientalism: it gazed through rose-tinted spectacles. It was Poussin's Arcadia moved to the East.

It was also an art made mainly for Western consumption – most of all for the Dutch colonizers of Indonesia.

One East Asia took London viewers through the history of Indonesian fine art from Raden Saleh's romanticised *Hermit in a Mountainous* of 1838 through Hofker's pouting Balinese nudes to the Bandung and Jogjakarta Schools in 2011. It was strikingly clear that much Indonesian art was made in service of the Western buyer – much, though not all, because exceptions to this rule were paraded in Mayfair in the pioneers of Indonesian native painting Hendra Gunawan (1918-83) and Sudjojono (1913-86).

Are Indonesian painters still slaves to Western taste? "With every passing year, less and less," says Viv Lawes.



HIGHLIGHTS

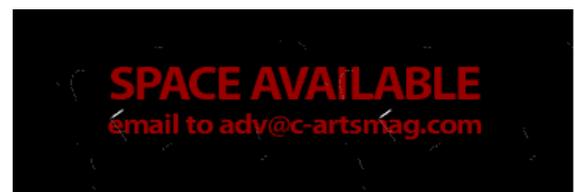
2011-03-30

Van Gogh's masterpieces come alive at Marina Bay Sands' ArtScience Museum

Van Gogh Alive – the Exhibition set to open on 16 April 2011

Singapore (30 March 2011) In commemoration of Van Gogh's birth date today, the ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands announced that it will host the world touring premiere of *Van Gogh Alive – the Exhibition*. Visitors will get to experience Vincent Van Gogh's art work come alive in an exhibition that will combine the

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“The point of this show was to introduce something new to British art lovers,” she adds. “British viewers are open-minded, they look at Asian art as keenly as at anything else. Britain has a very broad taste. There are huge Asian art collections dating back 150 years and more Asian art dealers in the square mile of Mayfair and St James’s than anywhere in the world.

“But Chinese art, which has won attention in Britain for its tinsel, its froth, its public relations, its high prices and its technical excellence, has an agenda which is largely inward-looking. The problems it raises are deeply Chinese. By contrast Indonesia in the 21st century seems to be more international in its interests.”

And in support of that the Lawes exhibition shows on the walls of Mayfair Maria Indria Sari’s mixed media *Rush Hours* and Yunizar’s *Composition of Empty Bottles*. “Maria looks at an exhausted mother and the conflicts of career and motherhood. Her subject is instantly recognizable whatever your country of origin,” the curator says. Lawes also praises the formalist patterns and harmonious spacing of Yunizar. “His pictures have a calmness, an objectivity that crosses cultural boundaries. It’s easy for British viewers to respond to them”.

Other outward-looking artists, suggests Daniel Komala, Chairman of One East Asia, include Ay Tjoe Christine, Pramuhendra and R.E. Hartanto. “They speak of local issues in the context of worldwide issues. Hartanta reflects the colors of fear, Pramuhendra paints the fading of memories and family ties and Ay Tjoe’s concerns are the power of greed and consumerism”.

Indonesia’s international subjects include feminism, violence, overpopulation and Ancient versus Modern. There is focus too on fat capitalists holding wads of banknotes and on the moral condition of the world’s financial class. Nyoman Masriadi (not in this show) has a ghastly gallery of capitalist caricatures. He is the Indonesian artist who has made the biggest impact on the international contemporary market, the first to hit US\$1 million at auction. *The Man from Bantul* sold at Sotheby’s Hong Kong in October 2008 for \$1,000,725, still a record for any contemporary Indonesian painting.

The market has picked up speed since then. Ay Tjoe Christine has gone from US\$3,000-5,000 to US\$150,000-200,000 in 18 months. “She’s Indonesia’s Tracy Emin in my opinion”, says Komala.

Some critics have worried that as the money flows in, Indonesian artists have become too interested in the market. Jean Cocteau in the October 2011 *C-ARTS* worried that “brutal international capitalism” will influence artists’ choices. The highest risk is that innovation will be sacrificed to the production line and the God of Money. Indonesia is already the target of New York dealers who see it as the next quick buck market in Contemporary Art – China has already become a mature market, too expensive for quick profit. Will Indonesia become like Dashanzi, east of Beijing, with its vast factory output of pictures for the West?

The cause for alarm is that if financial success and repetition means more to the artist than original work, trouble lies ahead.

It matters in the long run if the artist ignores the opinions of critics and scholars. If the art is shallow and made for the market, it will sooner or later collapse like a castle built on sand. Art’s true foundations are proper academic study. Suwarno Wisetrotomo of the Indonesian Art Institute, Jogjakarta writes: “it is essential that output is discussed, explained and responded to critically in order that artists [...] are able to study Indonesian art within a clear framework.”

Viv Lawes wants Indonesian artists to talk to critics, academics and artists abroad. She wants them to travel to get fresh ideas and wants British students to study Southeast Asian art in UK universities.

Her Mayfair exhibition was dedicated to the World Traders Company, a City of London livery company that promotes international relations, travel and trade. Mei Sim Lai, the Company’s Master – and the first Chinese person to hold this position in the long history of the City – made the keynote address at the opening. Charles Humfrey, former British ambassador to Indonesia, gave the Vote of Thanks.

Caption:

I Gusti Ngurah Udiantara
I Am Beautiful Therefore I Exist, 2011
Aluminium plates
110 x 110 x 50 cm

Courtesy of One East Asia

Godfrey Barker is a British journalist, author and art advisor. He is the arts correspondent for The Evening Standard and a contributing editor of the paper’s magazine. He broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and 4, for BBC TV and for the BBC World Service

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moncler donna (2012-01-11)

“Dal momento che il pianeta Well Known Moncler Marca mantenere quasi mania stile ogni anno. Moncler è la rinomata fascia alta outerwear Quale marca ha creato una tendenza piumino nel mondo della moda. Moncler ha sempre mantenuto al passo con le ultime tecnologie e rimasto fedele alle origini ITS ITS senza compromettere lo stile degno pista. Moncler e vestiti non erano più commercializzato solo alla sport invernali e del settore è diventato più un oggetto di moda così come la gente è piaciuto il design elegante e la praticità del loro trucco. Dal momento che il

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marchio italiano diventato di proprietà, I SUOI ??ha aumentato fortemente la moda di uscita e si colloca ora Produrre è delle donne di giubbotti Moncler. **moncler piumini** Questo ti terrà caldo e di moda questo inverno. E 'più nuovo stile di Moncler. Sauvage Moncler di un altro nuovo prodotto che articoli di lusso il più alto del mondo è molto calda e molto leggero, con uno stile unico e un'eleganza lussuosa, mostrano il fascino femminile e ottenuto elegante. Con gli stivali alti o stivaletti, You Will Be The maggior parte delle donne alla moda e belle il bianco della neve. Moncler fare un gran caldo, asciutto e confortevole e, soprattutto, ciò significa che si concentrano sul divertimento sulle piste, come il tempo che vuoi. Giacca nera marne lana trapuntato aster 'da Moncler con collo a imbuto, nero ad alta lucentezza cappuccio staccabile, chiusura zip frontale e tasche Due zip frontale. La giacca trapuntata con cuciture decorative è orizzontale e un emblema di design sulla manica. Moncler Moda Giacche **moncler uomo** sono appositamente realizzati per le giornate fresche, è molto felice di indossarlo nei giorni freddi. è A giubbotti Moncler per produttore marchio professionale. Questo tipo di donna Moncler 2011 Modello è l'ultima popolare, stile unico e molto di moda. Quando si indossano giacche alla moda in inverno, non si può rompere il timbro di dotato di personalità notevole. Progettato dal classico screpolature marcia occidentale indossato da cowboy in origine avrebbero dovuto proteggere la loro eredità Quando passeggiate a cavallo, attraverso pennello. **moncler donna** Ora bikers per proteggere la loro eredità da detriti stradali calci alto e il calore prodotto dal motore motociclistico."

qiu (2012-0 1-11)

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