

The logo for Tyler Rollins Fine Art, featuring the name 'TYLER ROLLINS' in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font with a grid-like texture, and 'FINE ART' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it, all set against a dark brown background.**TALES FROM WOUNDED-LAND****EKO NUGROHO + WEDHAR RIYADI**

This exhibition features two of Indonesia's leading younger artists, Eko Nugroho and Wedhar Riyadi. They are part of the "2000 Generation" that came to maturity during the period of violent upheaval and reform that occurred in the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the subsequent fall of the Suharto regime and the transition to democracy in Indonesia. Although Nugroho and Riyadi have exhibited widely, their works have so far been rarely seen in the United States. *Tales from Wounded-Land* marks their first New York gallery exhibition.

In contrast to the artists of the generation just before them, many of whom became deeply involved in the political activism of the student and youth movements of the late 1990s, Nugroho and Riyadi base their work in daily personal experiences rather than political activism. For that reason, their artworks always leave a space for satirical commentary or passing impressions of the origins of the socio-political issues they observe in daily life. In order to achieve this they employ the visual language they most favor and are most familiar with – that of drawings, comics, cartoons, and animation. Even so, this does not mean that their works lack a powerful socio-political dimension. Nugroho and Riyadi are firmly engaged with the culture of their time. With *Tales from Wounded-Land*, they make a pointed commentary about the current state of politics and society in contemporary Indonesia, a period in which the newly democratic country is going through great transformation.

For this exhibition, Nugroho presents a major new work, *Human Religion*, a series of three related canvases that address the role of religion in contemporary Indonesia, a topic much in the news in recent years. The central figure in *Human Religion #2* is shown in a traditional shirt worn by Muslim men in Indonesia; he holds a diamond, symbolizing wealth, while tucked in his pocket is a pair of scissors, suggesting the half-hidden threat of violence. Embroidered plus and minus signs indicate the binary opposites of good and evil, right and wrong, that are essential components of religious dogma. In the flanking canvases, *Human Religion #1* illustrates the dominance of animal passions in human nature, while *Human Religion #3* shows a figure turning away from a mirror, which represents his incapacity to reflect on his own actions, and pointing accusingly towards others.

A vigorous critique of Indonesian society also marks the paintings that Riyadi exhibits in the exhibition. With these works, he creates strange, rather macabre fantasy worlds populated by figures that are at once playful and disturbing. Using comic book styles, he comments on the condition of contemporary youth culture and the contradictions between modernity and tradition in Indonesia.

Both Nugroho and Riyadi take the absurd and banal elements of their daily existence and channel them in an intensely personal manner into their art. The works they exhibit in *Tales from Wounded-Land* reflect the crisis of life in Indonesia today, pointing out some of the problems facing the country while also indicating, through their imagination and active engagement, a cultural vibrancy that offers hope for the future.

Exhibition:

Dates: May 14 – July 25, 2009

Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

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