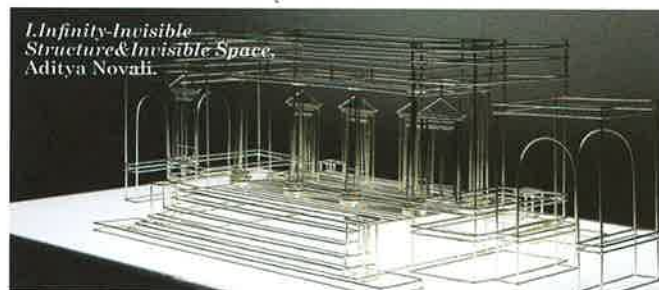


# THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY COLLECTORS

## WINNING ELEVEN

With more than 20 years of being immersed in the Indonesian art world, *Art Republik* writer CARLA BIANPOEN picks out 11 Indonesian artists to watch (in first name alphabetical order). It is important to note that these artists were not chosen based on their market orientations, but instead, artists whose works reveal creative, in-depth thought and innovative ideas that include the dynamic cultural development in our societies amidst a global transition.



**ADITYA NOVALI** (b. 1978), outstandingly in-depth, innovative. Relentless exploration of material, from rotatable paintings to intricate works using various materials at the same time. Participated in CP Biennale 2005: Urban Culture, and awarded the Bandung Contemporary Art Award in 2011.

*Notable works:* Mooi Indie series; Unity in Diversity, New God series, The Wall:Asian (Un)Real Estate project, and Indoscape A Geo History.



*Lack of proper infrastructure in Indonesia's art world has given rise to local collectors playing the game of thrones. Art Republik ventures into The Emerald of the Equator to discover more.*  
by CARLA BIANPOEN

Indonesian collectors are a unique breed. Today, they herald as a vital force keeping the world of art thriving. Passionate, art-loving, chauvinistically collecting and most importantly, caring for every artists' well-being; these core values, which was left behind by Indonesia's first and foremost collector, and first President of Indonesia, **SOEKARNO**, are instilled in every Indonesian art collector and now continues on as an enduring legacy.

In 2007, Agus Dermawan, a passionate observer, curator and author of over 80 books, estimated the number of collectors at 1000, of which he abstracted 188 names. Of these 188, he abstracted ten as the most influential and another ten as the biggest collectors, some of which, have been active

until today. The growing attention now given to Indonesian art is largely due to collectors as patrons and 'ambassadors' filling the gap of inadequate infrastructure from the Indonesian government such as national museums and art institutions.

Second only to Soekarno who displayed his collection in the Palace to share with the public, the 75 year-old art collector **DR. OEI HONG DJIEN** (OHD for short) early on held 'open house' for anyone interested in Indonesian art collected during a period of more than three decades. He then followed with the establishment of the OHD museum in Magelang in Central Java. Here, foreign researchers, museum directors, and curators could

find a comprehensive source on modern Indonesian art and art history. Close to many of the Yogyakarta artists, he has dedicated a major part of his life to assisting and promoting their creativity, furthermore taking the time to know every little story in their lives and artistic process. He also became an art instigator to a generation of tobacco dealers in Magelang, inspiring Magelang city festival with his exploding enthusiasm for the arts. Later on, as life would have it, OHD was inevitably involved in his family's tobacco business after his father passed away. Then when it was time to pass it on to his son, he stepped down, and is still very involved in art. Today, he is regarded as the most knowledgeable person in the world about Indonesian art and artists. "I was not aware I was a collector until people called me that," he says.

In Jakarta, **DEDDY KUSUMA** (age 73) is known for his hospitality to all those who wish to

see his collection of works by Indonesian, Chinese and Western artists. Trained as an architect in Beijing, his affection for Chinese contemporary art comes naturally, but his collection of Indonesian modern and contemporary art comes from a sense of national pride, while most of his western collection consists of exceptional works from the world's greatest masters. Dedy Kusuma is usually attracted to works that are eye-catching. "I like the ones that look peculiar or that strike me at first sight", he says. An evening at his incredible home is always a blast – a feat of sumptuous dinner in the garden, followed by an interesting presentation of Indonesian art and artists, then an exchange of thoughts and ideas with artists, curators and art friends. A tangible impact he has had on the Indonesian art scene is from his stint at Art Paris+Guests where he introduced the works of over 20 artists, thus resulting in ensuing interest that flowed in from Europe to Indonesia.

Another prominent collector



Opposite page: Group photo of Carla (far right) and some of the Indonesian collectors.

This page, clockwise from top left: The first President of Indonesia, Soekarno; Dr. Oei Hong Djien.



**ALBERT YONATHAN** (b. 1983), ceramics as medium for contemporary art, relationship between human beings and natural world, geometric configurations of spiritually imbued ceramic objects. Showed at the 55th Venice Biennale, Indonesia National Pavillion. Currently pursuing his PhD in Kyoto.

*Notable works:* I Am A Bird Am I?, Anthropomorphic Monuments of Isolation, and Cosmic Labyrinth: The Silent Path.





Clockwise from top left: Deddy Kusuma (with French Minister of Culture); Paula Dewijanti; Rudy Akili.



in Jakarta is **RUDY AKILI** (age 67), who is the owner of Smailing Tours. Rudy started to seriously collect art in the late 1990s, and has now a collection of a variety of modern art including Chinese and Indonesian. He opened the Akili Museum in 2006 along with the Akili Museum Award – an award which is given to hopeful Indonesian artists to study at the prestigious Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing. In collecting, Rudy ponders every work, not only for its professional execution, but more so for the artist's thought and concern at the time of creation. Lately, he has been collecting contemporary art by emerging Indonesian artists. He wants his museum to be a centre for research, with

works reflecting the evolution of genres along a specific time frame.

Meanwhile, a very different kind of collectors has emerged in the past decade, particularly in Jakarta. They have grown to be a compelling presence who will potentially maintain the legacy of Indonesian collectors. Aged anywhere between 35 and 55 years, they are well-educated, intellectual and analytical, well-travelled, and frequent visitors of art fairs and museums worldwide. They even hold regular art discussions over dinner, which they call 'artlovers dinner'. And for the first time in Indonesia, they've inspired a rise of avid female collectors. Also, their main focus is Indonesian contemporary art, though they're beginning to venture elsewhere. "Indonesian



Above, from top to bottom: *Banana's Soldier*; *Condom and Earth*. Angki Purbandono.

**ANGKI PURBANDONO** (b. 1971), challenging stereotypes, reinvention of camera through scanner and pioneer of scanography in Indonesia. Co-founder of Mes56, Yogyakarta. Transforms passive lives of inmates in penitentiary for drug offenders to active art creators.

*Notable works: Japanese Soldier and Fish, Brush, Ancestors, and the Swimmers.*



Clockwise from top: Tom Tandio; Natasha Sidharta; Wiyu Wahono.

art is getting too expensive," says one collector, "for the same sum of money I could easily get a work by Ming Wong."

The new breed, mostly educated abroad, keep abreast of art development in the world, and while they religiously keep a keen eye on the auction houses, they tend not to be driven by 'love at first sight'. **PAULA DEWIJANTI**, for instance, would research on the artist first: his/her behavior, consistency, seriousness of thought and work, before evaluating an art work for eventual purchase. For **NATASHA SIDHARTA**, however, the content of the works is important; Interested in issues of women in Islam, geopolitics and the meaning of life, she is mostly interested in works that has issues she can relate to and offer her a space to find herself. **TOM TANDIO** often looks at

works that are made by artists of his age; "I feel they talk about the same issues I struggle with", he once said.

Leaning more towards art theories and research, **WIYU WAHONO** looks for zeitgeist and elements denoting the contemporary in a work, such as identity politics, cultural hybridity, vanishing boundaries or the provocative. Above all he would seek works that would likely stand the change of a century. Passionate about art, he has designed his office like an art space, where a comprehensive collection of contemporary Indonesian art can be viewed, by appointment only of course. Wiyu has also come to be one of the most knowledgeable, and also more outspoken individuals in the Indonesian art world. Not surprisingly, this has evoked the ire of those who have other ways of thinking and consider him a newcomer who likes to show off. But his concern



# **ARAHMAIANI FEISAL**

(b. 1961), activist artist for human rights, justice, equality, plurality, against any kind of violence, repression, discrimination. Involvement with communities from Yogyakarta to Bangkok, to Tibet. Critical essayist, poet, and lecturer in Germany. Showed at the Indonesia Pavillion at 50th Venice Biennale.

*Notable works: Stitching the Wound, Lingga-Yoni, and Pollution of the Mind.*



Clockwise from top row, left: Arif Suherman; Nicholas Tan; Indra Leonardi; Sigit Santoso.



for a positive development of Indonesian art and collecting is genuine. Others, who are more accepting and willing to learn, have unintentionally grown from timid, young collectors, to become powerful voices themselves.

Other supporters of the new genres in the arts such as digital, photography, scanography, video and multi-media art, include **ARIF SUHERMAN, NICHOLAS TAN, SIGIT SANTOSO, INDRA LEONARDI**, the collectors couples **WENDY IRWAN & PAUL SUTRISNO**, and **LINA KOSWARA & SUNARTO TINOR**. It is also important to note that this new breed were brought together some ten years ago by Wiyu Wahono, and today, all of them take the time to support young artists in Indonesia just like their predecessors did so the art cycle will carry on. However, some, like Wiyu for instance, have been taken aback by the increasing arrogance shown by some of the

young artists. Disappointed on several occasions, he declares "I will now take a distance and only look at the works."

Finally, a class apart, and dubbed the 'mother of all artists', is **DR MELANI W SETIAWAN**. Her collection is one that is very emotionally driven, and are neatly arranged in her private display room, like a mother who loves the works of all her children. Aged 67, she belongs in the same group as the three aforementioned collectors. She, too, is a formidable ambassador, regularly attending art events and networking into the farthest corners of the world. But as she is a bridge between the senior and the younger generation, she tends to spend more time with the young, gradually immersing in their circuit of attention. Perhaps it is her motherly instincts that draw her to them. Not surprisingly, it is here that many young artists find their voices in the art world. ■



This page, top to bottom: collectors couple Wendy Irwan & Paul Sutrisno; Dr Melani W Setiawan; collectors couple Lina Koswara & Sunarto Tinor

#### ENTANG WIHARSO

(b. 1967), peculiar artistic language, alternative process of art creation, blurs boundaries between East and West, the archaic and the present time. Participated in the Indonesia pavilion for 52nd and 55th Venice Biennale.

*Notable works: Untold Stories, Love Me or Die, The Indonesian: no time to hide, and Temple of Hope Hit by a Bus.*



#### IRWAN AHMETT

(b. 1975), playful, with undercurrents of deep thought, intervention into stalled state of mind. Residencies all over the world. Performs live interventions in public spaces worldwide. Participated with his wife at the Singapore Biennale 2013.

*Notable works: Graffiti on History (a ten year project exploring strategies between artists and collectors), and Under the Shadow.*



#### MELATI SURYODARMO

(b. 1969), a long-duration performance artist, who seeks to develop new structures of attitude through experience and feelings of the 'world inside her', psyche and body. Organized a yearly international performance art event and recently set up a Laboratory for Performance art in her home town in Central Java. Participated in the 50th Venice Biennale and Manifesta 7, the European Biennale.

*Notable works: Exergie - Butter Dance, I Love You, and Alienation of the Stone.*



#### SYAIFUL AULIA GARIBALDI

(b. 1985), alternative medium to explore life, death and decay. Morphs science with art, using micro organisms. Alternative alphabet and dictionary. Awarded Bandung Contemporary Art Award 2013.

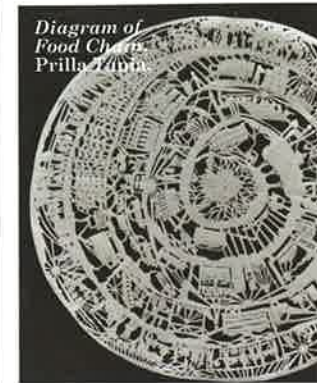
*Notable works: Abiogenesis-Terhah Landscape, Interstitial Entities, and Interstitial Organisms.*



#### TINTIN WULIA

(b. 1972), PhD in Visual Art, BA Architecture and Music. Focuses on borders, including global issues of race, discrimination, migration, emigration and immigration. Participated in the 4th Moscow Biennale and the 9th Gwanju Biennale. Was recently appointed Australia Council for the Arts Creative Australia Fellow 2014-2015, is currently in a series of residency in North America, supported by Arts Queensland Individual Fund.

*Notable works: Re (collection) of Togetherness, Nous Ne Notons pas les Fleurs, Microstudy for Wanton.*



#### PRILLA TANIA

(b. 1979), works marked by unusual simplicity of techniques but delving deep into the basic truths and issues of human concern in today's world. Consistently highlights the minutiae in daily life, believes that it is seemingly trivial things in daily life that potentially form the basis of greater problems of global significance. Pushing boundaries between the flexible and the inflexible, cutting edge media art and the

visuals of craft works. Stop motion video animation, paper and paper cut works, patch and needle works on fabric. Since 2001, has participated in yearly joint exhibitions, and has had 7 solo exhibitions to date.

*Notable works: Stop motion animation My Neighbor's Mango, Harvesting the Moon, Space within Time series, Food Chain Diagram, paper cut, and video installation Makan (Me) Makan (Eating and Be Eaten).*



#### TITARUBI

(b.1968), explores the boundaries of human dignity with large sculptures and charcoal drawings that linger between accusation and awareness-raising. An activist in real life, her art works also strife against injustice and repression of any kind. Participated in CP Biennale: Urban Culture 2005, and The Indonesia Pavillion in the 55th Venice Biennale.

*Notable works: Bayang2 Maha Kecil, Bodyscape, Surrounding David, The Shadow of Surrender and Unbearable Darkness.* ■