NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

DALAM SOUTHEAST ASIA

THE NEGLECTED DIMENSION

The Neglected Dimension offers an insight into a moment in Southeast Asian modern art when a group of artists from the city of Bandung, Indonesia reimagined Arabic calligraphic writing. At the heart of this effort was an art school at Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), which stood at the forefront of experimentations with forms of Islamic spirituality and abstraction. This move occurred as its artists engaged with the language of modern art through their formal training at ITB as painters and printmakers, their extensive travels to Western Europe and North America and their careful studies of the rich material traditions of Southeast Asia. In this way, Bandung with its new approach to modern art played a pivotal role in realising what this exhibition terms as "calligraphic abstraction."

Four artists are featured in this exhibition: Ahmad Sadali (1924–1987), A.D. Pirous (b. 1932), Haryadi Suadi (1938–2016) and Arahmaiani (b. 1962). They represent three generations of artistic training at ITB, as well as distinct approaches to calligraphic abstraction that reflect changing values, identities and conventions in Indonesia from the 1970s to the present. Together, their works highlight how they interacted with global conventions in modern art, evolving ideas around Islamic spirituality, feminist activism and the experience of being Muslim in Indonesia.

The phrase, "The Neglected Dimension", is borrowed from an essay by writer Sanento Yuliman who called for a reconsideration of the neglected position of Islamic spirituality in the development of modern art in Indonesia.

THE NEGLECTED DIMENSION
AHMAD SADALI, A.D. PIRIOUS, NASYADI SUADI AND ARAHMAIANI

CONTENTS

Dalam Southeast Asia 4
by Shabbir Hussain Mustafa

The Neglected Dimension—Calligraphy, Abstraction, and Performativity in Modern and Contemporary Indonesia 14
by Anissa Rahadiningtyas

Artworks
—Ahmad Sadali 35
—A.D. Pirous 37
—Haryadi Suadi 44
—Arahmaiani 52

Timeline 54
Exhibition Views 55
Acknowledgements 62
Credits 64

DALAM SOUTHEAST ASIA

by Shabbir Hussain Mustafa

[PREFACE]

Originally authored on 15 July 2021, additional notes are added each time a new project is initiated at Dalam Southeast Asia; these notes are dated accordingly.

It has become almost clichéd to introduce yet another "project space" within the confines of the modern art museum, considering how the model has proliferated globally in the past decade.[1] How did we, in such a short period of time, reach this point of self-referential superabundance? What do these "project spaces" offer? What concerns do they speak to? Several claim to offer insights into lesser studied or suppressed stories within the experience of modern art; or at least begin to acknowledge the silences inhabiting exhibitionary projects due to social prejudice, caused by historical and contemporary biases. Many "project spaces" seek to generate narratives through case studies gathered under a shared curatorial thematic. Some even push the envelope of the modern by resuscitating non-Western cultural objects, which are often bereft of "authorship" (at least in terms of how traditionalist streams of art history register the creator), in innovative ways. Many of these objects had entered museum collections in the former metropoles and colonies via the insults of colonialism. Another approach emphasises engaging contemporary artists who are at the forefront of innovations in their field. These contemporary artists investigate museum collections as a means of bridging the silences of the past with the urgencies of the present. As museums become more willing to interrogate themselves on aesthetic and political grounds, some have even begun to facilitate "takeovers" of their "project spaces" by constituents linked to social justice movements.

No matter the approach, the resulting exhibits are positioned within the modern museum's ongoing attempts at remaining agile in its programming. They also harness the recent upsurge in decolonising narratives, staking a claim for the legitimacy of subaltern knowledge systems. The impulse appears to be the same across varied contexts: curators and museum professionals around the world are no longer able to shy away from addressing inequalities, including that of gender, ethnicity, and sexuality, and are beginning to recognise the need to be more open to self-critique. Just as the "white cube" proliferated across the world as a method for display in the modern museum of the 1960s and 1970s, the "project space" now replicates on a planetary level. It is part of our collective moment, wherein artists, curators, publics, and other museum constituents are putting forward a set of shared ethical paradigms for a knowledge base that seeks to guarantee shared access and exposure. The "project space" is a node in this constellation of change.

The aim of Dalam Southeast Asia (the National Gallery Singapore's "project space" located within its long-term display, *Between Declarations and Dreams: Art of Southeast Asia since the 19th Century* is to contribute to this moment of self-reflexivity from the vantage point of territorial Southeast Asia. By inviting curators at the Gallery to devise questions and then develop strategies to address them, Dalam Southeast Asia argues for lesser-known narratives. By directly questioning the ways in which the modern art of Southeast Asia is displayed and written about, Dalam Southeast Asia aspires to recalibrate what a long-term collections-based display is, and what it may seek to achieve.

S. Mohdir
DALAM
1975
Acrylic on canvas,
92 x 66 cm
Collection of National
Gallery Singapore

"*Dalam*" is a Malay word meaning "'inside." It is used in everyday parlance to invite someone to enter a place or room. The word also carries esoteric undertones suggesting the "deep," "within" or "interior," pointing towards that aspect of the Self which is perceptible but also yet to be revealed. The word has been adopted by several artists. Simryn Gill's celebrated suite of 260 photographs depicting the interiors of Malaysian homes, titled *Dalam* (2001), offers insights into the visual phenomenon that is the contemporary living room—a place where one seeks refuge from the vagaries of everyday life, but which is also built up part by part as an expression of one's relationship with popular culture. Likewise, "*Dalam*" is the title of a painting from 1975 by S. Mohdir that surveys the depths of the ocean. The work is a description of perception, whether directed outwards or inwards, as it announces the indelible realisation that modern man is merely a speck in the universe. Gill and Mohdir remind us that art is not separate from reflexivity, and reflexivity is not separate from art.

Since its inauguration in 2015, *Between Declarations and Dreams* has been an attempt at generating an ideal sort of "provincialism" that refuses to submit to the homogenising effects of the Euro-American master narrative of art. The long-term exhibition features almost 400 works of Southeast Asian art ranging from the mid-19th century to the present, and an evolving curatorium has been systematically "rotating" over 100 works every year.[2] In this pursuit, the display has sought to develop its own distinctive capacities (drawing on crucial primary research and fieldwork conducted by the curatorium across Asia, Western

Europe, the United States, and elsewhere) for shaping what is now a shared story of global modernism. In this way, *Between Declarations and Dreams* lays claim to the Euro-American canon and its futures. Curating from this vantage point allow us to strive for decolonising modernism's structures; as a result, allowing for multiple anachronistic worlds to thrive.

The idea of a project space at National Gallery Singapore has been with me for some time. It emerged from three key concerns, discerned from years of sustaining a unique long-term display that focuses on the geographical region of Southeast Asia. Although the concerns I outline below are specific to the Gallery, they may apply to any major collecting institution with a focus on the non-West.

Firstly, we have too often relied on art history to establish the legitimacy of narratives before including them in *Between Declarations and Dreams*. Whilst it may be wiser for curators to follow the art historians hypothesising as a prelude to display, Dalam Southeast Asia seeks to present works in a format that is first and foremost "contingent on display," i.e., presenting bodies of work that have not received sustained art historical attention, so that the exhibition becomes a realm for generating perspectives on artistic processes and their relationship with burgeoning concerns in society. In this way, the modern in Southeast Asia registers its relevance to the present, and our collective efforts to forge a future art history that is diverse. This potential is unlocked by suggesting that the process of display—alongside public dialogues, careful captioning, and copious compilations of curatorial notes—is an extension of the didactic role of the museum. Dalam Southeast Asia is thus a

rehearsal for a forthcoming art history, and those that experience the exhibition are its first readers.

Secondly, we need to begin challenging the very narratives we have set up since 2015 within the galleries that make up the chronological display of *Between Declarations and Dreams*, and actively resist the singularising effects of such a canon-building venture. By exploring dilemmas and silences that have governed the ability of curators to narrate stories within modern museums, Dalam Southeast Asia seeks to contribute to a more inclusive but "uneven" narrative of modern Southeast Asian art, one which remains a work in progress. In this way, Dalam Southeast Asia aspires to enable our publics to recognise that the stories we offer ought to be understood as contingent and open to revision with the passage of time. This process will need to be undertaken with care, because we also do not want to be seen as turning to the margins as a convenient way to access narratives without fully unravelling the problems of the centre. After all, it is the task of each new generation to revise the narratives that have been handed down by actively addressing the exclusionary practices of the past.

Thirdly, it has become increasingly important to stand outside the vending machine of art. This is a demand being made not by curators and museum professionals, but by publics around the world: that museums become responsive to and reflect the concerns of the communities they seek to serve. Increasingly, museums are being challenged to represent diverse voices, reduce carbon footprints, adopt digital interfaces, and claim a place for themselves as providing essential goods for everyday consumption. As a result, it has become imperative to produce an interior space (*dalam*) that talks about how curated

projects can engage with this trajectory. What does "curating" collections-based displays mean today? In this pursuit, Dalam Southeast Asia prototypes the small format exhibition that testbeds speculative approaches to curatorial research and exhibition design. For instance, the curators developing the various exhibitions have not only engaged artists or artist's estates in conversations but also consulted a range of constituents to fill gaps in the production of cultural meaning. Curators must actively ask how their work in the field should and must have broader implications. With each exhibition, the hope is to devise more responsive approaches for the display of modern art within the museum.

To reiterate: The inauguration of Dalam Southeast Asia marks a significant turning point in the Gallery's curatorial efforts to display, acquire and stimulate public dialogues around the dilemmas confronting the modern art of Southeast Asia. By locating Dalam Southeast Asia strategically within the framework of *Between Declarations and Dreams*, we seek to balance the familiar vocabularies with the lesser known, generate public and semi-public conversations, and perhaps create new values around the growing awareness that whatever power museums have is granted to them by the constituents they depend on to do their work.

Shabbir Hussain Mustafa
National Gallery Singapore
15 July 2021

Exhibition view of *The Tailors and Mannequins: Chen Cheng Mei and You Khin*, 2021.

Postscript 1, 15 July 2022—On Curatorial Responsibility

It has been a year since we launched Dalam Southeast Asia. During this time, the project space has enabled the curatorium at the Gallery to engage with the challenges that were identified at the outset, ranging from the ability to develop newer sets of ethical paradigms that enable more inclusive measures for accessing art, to allowing the "curatorial" to act as a space for hypothesising an art history that is yet to come. The inaugural exhibition, *The Tailors and the Mannequins: Chen Cheng Mei and You Khin*, which ran from 29 October 2021 to 12 June 2022, generated turns that paid homage to the incredible lives both artists led and the array of materials and objects they left behind. *The Tailors and the Mannequins* re-emphasised the role modern art museums must (and will continue to) play in facilitating the circulation of stories that have yet to receive sustained art historical attention. This was achieved through the tireless work of Roger Nelson—my colleague and curator of the show—in engaging the artists and their estates alongside a series of specialists in a number of wide-ranging conversations that not only enabled gaps to be filled in a meaningful manner but also initiated the public into a vast realm of associated histories that pertain to forced migration and the ability of the Southeast Asian artist to display their art in environments where infrastructure was still in the midst of being formed.

Moreover, the exhibition pointed to the manifold lateral links between Southeast Asia and other regions across the decolonising world (collectively known as the Global South), including in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and beyond. As this process unfolded in the lead up to and during the exhibition via a series of public conversations, it became possible to reflect upon the sovereignty that curators (and by extension public art institutions) continue to exercise over the artworks they display, especially when curatorial enchantment actively seeks meaning within the painting's subject matter but also beyond the boundaries of the artwork, whereby circulation and distribution is seen as an endearing facet of how one may consume the work of art today, in our time. This means that the authorial agendas of the artwork may be sublimated into a demonstration of contemporaneity, whereby the curator acts as an agent who resides within and at the edge of the culture that delivers the subject matter and context for the art. As the different Dalam Southeast Asia projects unfold, it will be pertinent to maintain notes on how this phenomenon unfolds and the techniques each curator develops to enhance accountability for the way artworks, materials, archival traces, and most importantly the stories we are entrusted with are used.

—

To access curatorial texts and programmes associated with *The Tailors and the Mannequins*, please visit: **https://www.nationalgallery.sg/southeastasia-dalam-tailors-mannequins**

Exhibition view of *Familiar Others*, 2022, showing Rocky Cajigan's response printed alongside a photograph by Eduardo Masferré titled *Young Man* (1953).

Postscript 2, 15 July 2023—On Curatorial Transmission

The second exhibition at *Dalam Southeast Asia* raised a range of questions on "curatorial transmissions," especially in relation to the presentation of Southeast Asian modern art. With *Familiar Others: Emiria Sunassa, Eduardo Masferré and Yeh Chi Wei, 1940s–1970s*, curated by my colleague Phoebe Scott, the thorny issue of "Otherness" and who can carry the burden of its representation in light of postcolonial thought came to the fore. As part of the exhibitionary form and narrative, Scott engaged a range of interlocutor-respondents from communities said to be represented in the artworks to respond to the paintings, photographs and archival matter on display. Common practice suggests that these messages—highlighting "potential issues" that have emerged in relation to modes of representation as ethical, philosophical and social conventions have shifted over time—be included in the catalogue, discussed in public programmes, or relegated to the bottom of artwork labels. Instead, *Familiar Others* placed these messages—often critical and working in tandem—front and centre alongside the artworks, suggesting that the didactic and educative function of the art institution be challenged by an overstaging of concerns that can now, potentially, reveal a range of issues related to the messaging of modern Southeast Asian art. I would like to speak to one such pressing matter: the "collectivism" suggested through such an experience of modern art.

From the outset, the curatorial intent of *Dalam Southeast Asia* has been about challenging the prevalent modes of presentation within the art institution. This concern has emerged from a movement taking place across museums as they seek to convert their largely white cube-led narratives (which emphasise the autonomy of the modern artwork) into sites of active public engagement. In this new mode, quiet contemplation is an option but not necessarily the norm—so much so that the beholder is now assumedly a talkative agent, socially engaged and culturally conscious. The underlying curatorial assumption is to generate an exhibitionary mode that offers a critical insight into the historical and present conditions from which pictures emerge. For *Familiar Others*, the artworks are immersed into such a collective ethos of introspection through a range of poetic and essay fragments generated by external agents other than the curators, effectively calling into question any suggestion of the museum as an impartial mediator of perspectives. How such an awareness can be sustained, enhanced, and made productive remains to be seen. For the moment, I offer this observation: We seem to be moving towards a curatorial constructivism whereby the museum's transcendental promise is being carefully reconstituted by the urge for an inclusive social order promoting collective interaction and a sense of community. This constructivism is premised upon a growing public awareness, at times driven by forces beyond museum workers, that the art institution and its narratives, no matter how naturalistic and certain they appear, are merely historical constructions. It is now, as the saying goes, a matter of time.

—

To access curatorial texts and programmes associated with *Familiar Others*, please visit: **https://www.nationalgallery.sg/southeastasia-dalam-familiar-others**

NOTES

1 Examples of "project spaces" located within major European and American museums includes the following: (i) Stedelijk Turns, which is a room within the Dutch museum's collections display (commonly known as Stedelijk Base). Stedelijk Turns features "new discoveries, commissions, and acquisitions" that have a direct impact on the museum's collection. (ii) Salle Focus, which the Musée National d'Art Moderne maintains within the Centre Pompidou's long-term displays. It is meant to present lesser-studied figures within the story of modernism and host contemporary art interventions. (iii) *Minor Histories*, an exhibitionary and discursive programme by the Van Abbe Museum, which features "pieces from the collection that have received less attention over the years, as well as recent acquisitions that uniquely represent the times, we live in."

In Singapore, the NUS Museum hosts *preproom | things that may or may not happen*, an experimental project platform that features artworks, cultural objects, and archives as they are being accessioned, reworked or revised in relation to the museum's extensive historical collections of art. The Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, which does not maintain an extensive collection, has hosted MAM Projects, a gallery that attracts similar inquiries. The NTU Centre for Contemporary Art in Singapore carved out The Lab, the Centre's "space for introducing research in process and as an open studio for activation."

Another recent shift in this genre of space building is the "experimental project lab," which attempts to bridge visual art with debates in advanced technologies. The LACMA runs The Art + Technology Lab, a joint initiative with Hyundai, YouTube, SNAP Inc and SpaceX for exploring the convergence of art and technology. Similarly, MoMA's Creativity Lab hosts The People's Studio, where "visitors can learn about and experiment with artists' strategies that rely on exchange, shared reflection, and collaboration."

2 The inaugural hang in 2015 of *Between Declarations and Dreams: Art of Southeast Asia since the 19th Century* was developed by Cheng Jia Yun, Clarissa Chikiamco, Horikawa Lisa, Phoebe Scott, Syed Muhammad Hafiz, and Adele Tan. Since 2016, the curatorium has also included Goh Sze Ying, Qinyi Lim, Shujuan Lim, Anisha Menon, Roger Nelson, Shabbir Hussain Mustafa, Melinda Susanto, and Charmaine Toh. Alongside extensive efforts at surveying the Southeast Asian collections and developing detailed captions, the curatorium has actively sought key long-term loans from institutional and private lenders to address gaps in the chronological displays. For instance, a highlighted gap has been the mid-19th century displays, which has benefited from generous loans of works by Raden Saleh and Juan Luna from the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Lopez Memorial Museum respectively.

THE NEGLECTED DIMENSION— CALLIGRAPHY, ABSTRACTION, AND PERFORMATIVITY IN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA

by Anissa Rahadiningtyas

Introduction

At the first national Islamic calligraphic exhibition in Indonesia in 1979, Ahmad Sadali (1924–1987), an artist and Muslim intellectual, wrote a preface highlighting how calligraphy was emerging as an expression of modern art. Sadali was the chair of this state-supported exhibition, which invited 28 artists to show their works. This included prominent modern artists such as Affandi (1907–1990) and Fadjar Sidik (1930–2004), and others like A.D. Pirous (b. 1932) and Haryadi Suadi (1938–2016). As noted by Sadali in the preface to the catalogue, the exhibition celebrated the "rebirth" of Islamic art and culture in Indonesia through calligraphic expression, an aspect of the region's Islamic religiosity and history that Sadali argued has been *neglected*.[1] In an article commemorating the passing of Sadali in 1987, prominent Indonesian art critic Sanento Yuliman (1941–1992) rearticulates Sadali's reflection, referring to the artistic and material manifestations of religion and religiosity as "*dimensi yang tersisihkan*" (the neglected dimension) in the development of modern and contemporary art in Indonesia.[2]

If Sadali introduced modern calligraphic expressions to Indonesian audiences, celebrating the rebirth of Islamic aesthetics from the "neglected dimension" in 1979; *The Neglected Dimension* (2023) by the National Gallery Singapore extends the same spirit by calling attention to the significant moments when modern and contemporary artists in the region began to reimagine the potentialities of Arabic and Jawi scripts. At the same time, *The Neglected Dimension* highlights the importance of artists associated with the artistic training in Bandung, one of the key sites where the practice and discourse of "modern and contemporary Islamic art" began to develop through experimentations with Islamic/Arabic calligraphy and forms of abstraction. Bandung and Indonesia are certainly not the only sites in Southeast Asia where this has occurred. Artists like Syed Ahmad Jamal (1929–2011) and Ahmad Khalid Yusof (1934–1997), amongst others, have also worked with calligraphic expressions in the Malaysian context since the early 1960s. As Iftikhar Dadi has observed, the varied experimentations with calligraphy that place the scriptural tradition of Islam in its modern form occur across geographical and temporal borders.[3] "Calligraphic modernism," to borrow Dadi's term for this mid-20th century phenomenon, defies the newly emerging nation-state borders of decolonising countries and points to a larger form of affiliation—whether it be of formal aesthetics or religious visual tradition—that is inherently transnational.

Dadi charted a broader constellation of calligraphic modernism, focusing on the developments that took place between 1955 to 1975 in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.[4] While artists from these regions were mostly unaware of each other's practices, the sociopolitical contexts of decolonisation and nascent nationalism, as well as critical engagements with metropolitan modernism and cosmopolitanism, underline these parallel developments.[5] A similar impetus towards a modern reimagination of calligraphic forms took place in Southeast Asia, a region that has been overlooked in the broader discussion of calligraphic modernism. In Southeast Asia, artists began to engage in critical dialogues with international modernist languages of representation, which they had encountered

during their colonial artistic trainings and subsequent travels and studies to the metropoles. The newly-independent nation-states across Southeast Asia, along with the important position of the region—particularly Bandung—in the international movement of political liberation of the "Third World" also served as the stage for artists' efforts to create a "new aesthetic of decolonisation."[6]

The Neglected Dimension represents the first step in developing a more comprehensive research trajectory for artworks, archives and artistic projects relating to Islamic aesthetics in modern and contemporary Southeast Asia. The exhibition features four artists associated with the art training institution in Bandung: Ahmad Sadali (1924–1987), A.D. Pirous (b. 1932), Haryadi Suadi (1938–2016) and Arahmaiani (b. 1962). Formerly known as the *Universitaire Leergang voor de Opleiding van Tekenleraren* (University Courses for the Education of Art Teachers), the institution was established in 1947 by the Dutch colonial government during the turbulent period of the Indonesian Revolution (1945–1950). As part of the first generation of students at the school, Ahmad Sadali received direct training from Dutch teachers Simon Admiraal (1903–1992) and Marinus Nicolaas (Ries) Mulder (1909–1973).[7] Through the modern art history course, the two teachers directly introduced the formal language of international modernism using the works of European artists—such as the post-impressionist paintings of Paul Cézanne to the scientific cubism and abstraction of Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Jacques Villon. After graduating, Sadali was immediately appointed as a lecturer to teach the method and language of abstraction to his colleagues and students, including Pirous, Suadi, and much later, Arahmaiani.

For Sadali and Pirous, modernist abstraction enabled and facilitated artistic expression—informed by the artists' religious experiences—in the form of calligraphic abstraction. Calligraphic abstraction can be simply defined as a synthesis between modernist abstraction and Islamic calligraphic writing, be it Qur'anic or non-Qur'anic. One can also expand its definition by foregrounding the idea that

1

2

1
Ahmad Sadali
SKYLINE OF NEW YORK
1957
Oil on canvas, 47 x 75 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

2
Ries Mulder
KERK VAN BANDOENG (CHURCH IN BANDUNG)
1958
Oil on canvas

the practice of calligraphy does not have to conform to the established conventions, rules, and functions that have developed for centuries across the Islamic world. Calligraphy in this "modern" sense collides with artists' modernist aesthetics and their renewed and expanded concerns to not only render religious verses in a contemplative manner but also to utilise Arabic script beyond the realm of the religious to bring attention to current social, political, and environmental issues. For artists like Sadali and Pirous, calligraphy and abstraction as methods of knowing exemplify the modern attitude in Islam of activating the Qur'anic verses as the source of knowledge in new ways. Such methods serve as ways to find the essence or "Truth" of the physical and metaphysical worlds. Therefore, calligraphic abstraction exemplifies what Sadali expresses as the fruitful negotiation between Islam and modern science and technology—a manifestation of the artist's conviction in the congeniality between abstract art and Islam.

On the other hand, the works of Haryadi Suadi and Arahmaiani negotiate modernism and Islam in ways that neither reference the Qur'anic revelations as a source for calligraphic writing nor mediate them through the Western language of abstraction. Suadi's and Arahmaiani's works inhabit the porousness of boundaries in Islamic practices and are informed by the persistence of localised, practice-based understandings of Islam. By uncovering new possibilities for expressions of modernity and religiosity, their

artworks potentially disrupt the prominence of calligraphic abstraction as propositioned by Sadali and Pirous and expand the categorical definition of "calligraphic modernism" as introduced by Dadi.

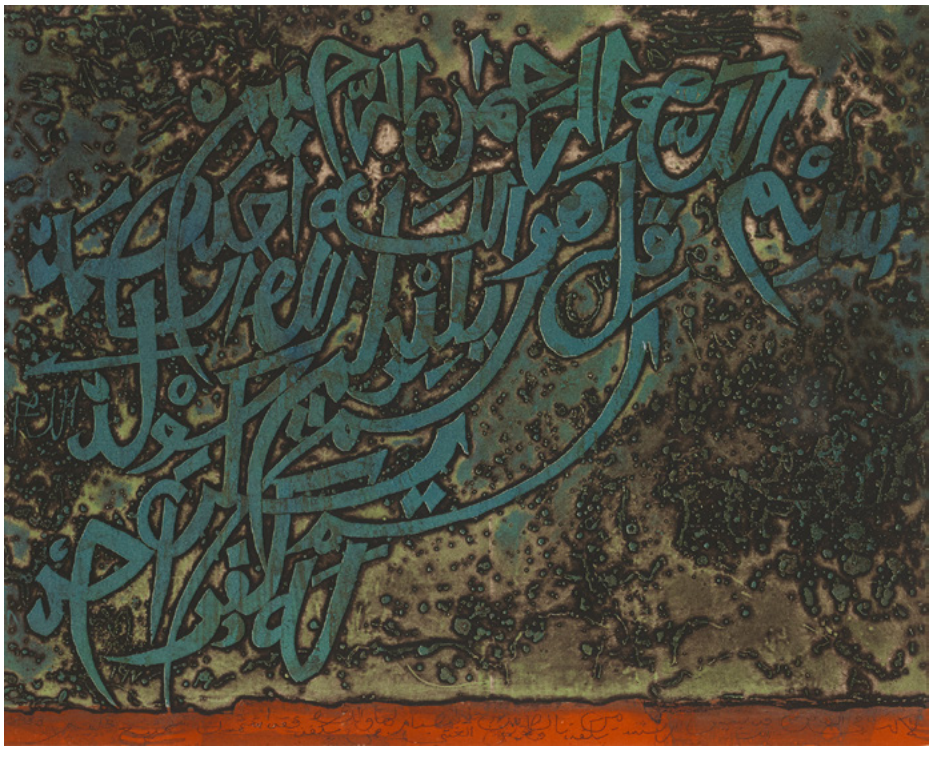
From Script to Abstraction[8]

3
Ahmad Sadali
LUKISAN (PAINTING)
1966
Oil on canvas,
99.3 x 80.7 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

A.D. Pirous recalls when Sadali began experimenting with incorporating calligraphic writing into his paintings in Bandung in the early 1960s.[9] According to Pirous, Sadali was the first artist to do so in Indonesia, even before Pirous exhibited his calligraphic paintings and prints for the first times at the Chase Manhattan Bank in 1972 and 1976 after he returned from his studies in the United States (US).[10] Sadali's 1966 painting *Lukisan* (fig. 3) in the National Gallery Singapore collection corroborates Pirous's memory of Sadali's. The work was created in the same year that saw the rise of Bandung artists and its formalist aesthetics in the Indonesian exhibitionary space.[11] *Lukisan*, or "painting," is an effort by the artist to translate painting for an Indonesian context—it also attempts to make universal the essentialist notion of painting and its supremacy as a medium of abstract modernism; the latter was advocated for by proponents of abstract art in New York between the 1940s and 1950s. After graduating from the art school in Bandung, Sadali studied in New York in the late 1950s at Columbia University and joined the Art Students League. His encounters with New York avant-garde works at the time likely prompted him to delve into color field painting. He began to adopt a more painterly approach to abstraction as shown in his 1960 painting, *Banyuwangi* (fig. 4), which saw him gradually liberating his colours from the confinement of rigid shapes and lines that he learned from Ries Mulder.

On *Lukisan*'s largely abstract field of colors, Sadali has thinly incised Arabic letters— perhaps drawn from the Qur'anic verse—across the yellow and white brushstrokes on the upper part of the painting.[12] While one can make out the letters, it is somewhat difficult to read as the letters show no clear diacritics, while other letters are stripped down

4



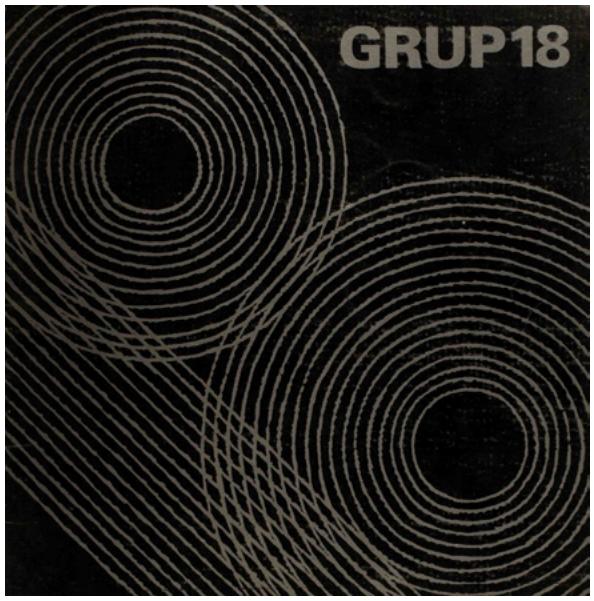
5

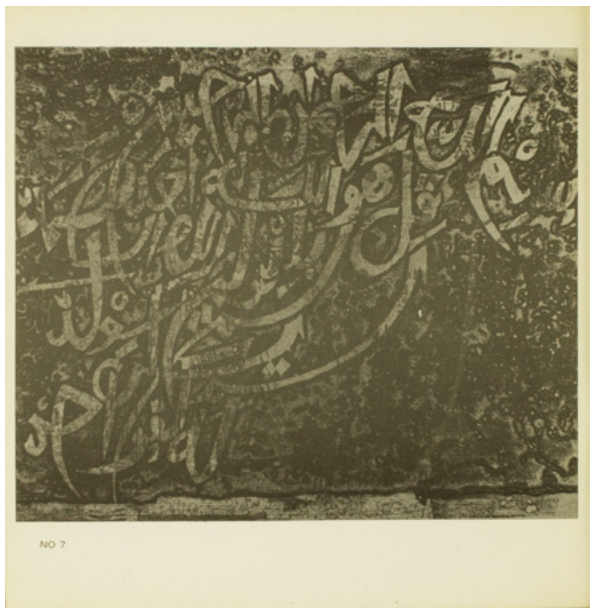
4
Ahmad Sadali
BANYUWANGI
1960
Oil on canvas
Collection of the Indonesian Heritage Agency

5
A.D. Pirous
SURA IKHLAS
1970
Color etching on paper, 40 x 50 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

to their essential form. There is a crude quality to Sadali's writing—the characters are less refined, more hidden, and have been dissolved in the expressiveness of Sadali's brushwork and the heavy layers of textures and irregular shapes that form the painting's horizon. One must get closer to the painting to see the writing clearly, prompting an intimate moment of contemplation. It is perhaps apt that Pirous considers Sadali's calligraphy as "spiritual graffiti," which is conspicuously written as a profound contemplation of Sadali's religiosity.[13]

Sadali's subtle approach to calligraphic writing contrasts with Pirous's method of boldly highlighting its expressive quality. One example is the 1970 *Sura Ikhlas* (fig. 5), a work that can be considered a turning point for Pirous. It was the first calligraphic print work that Pirous produced during his two-year fellowship, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, to study printmaking at the Rochester Institute of Technology from 1969 to 1971. Kenneth George notes how Pirous's turn to calligraphy was inspired by his encounter with works displayed at the Islamic Art gallery at the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York. Looking at objects adorned with calligraphic writings from Persia, North Africa and the Middle East brought Pirous back to his childhood intimacy with Arabic and Jawi scripts, calligraphy, religious-inspired tales—and most importantly—the Islamic visual traditions of Aceh.





6
GRUP 18
Reproduction of the catalogue of the exhibition of Bandung artists at Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta, 18 – 27 August 1971.

Sura Ikhlas shows a rich contrast in textures and colours: there are dynamic calligraphic lines, and a spontaneous, textural quality resulting from the acid used during the printing process, as well as Pirous's handwriting of a line from the chapter Sura Al-Baqarah at the bottom of the composition. However, the heart of the print is the verses from "Sura Ikhlas", a chapter concerned with the oneness of God and surrendering to the preeminent One. This work is Pirous's pledge to work from his heart and put Islam at the center of Indonesia's and the world's modern art.

Sura Ikhlas was first exhibited in Indonesia in the *Grup 18* exhibition at Dewan Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Arts Council) in 1971, which featured eighteen artists affiliated with the art school in Bandung, including Ahmad Sadali and Haryadi Suadi. The title of the exhibition represents the growing number of artists affiliated with the school, a number that had increased from eleven in 1954, 1958 and 1966 to eighteen by 1971. The 1954 exhibition that introduced the eleven Bandung artists at Balai Budaya Jakarta (Jakarta Arts Hall) might be the most well-noted and contentious of these groups shows. The cubist-inspired paintings on display drew criticism stating that and the development of art in Bandung had become *kunstmatig* (Dutch for "artificial") and unnatural.[14] Trisno Soemardjo, a prominent art critic in the 1950s, wrote that art in Bandung was "*mengabdi Laboratorium Barat*" ("in the service of the Western Laboratory"). Soemardjo argued that Western languages of representation could not capture the soul and experience of being Indonesian. Ever since this exhibition, art from Bandung has been positioned as the antithesis of the more "Indonesian" works created by artists in Yogyakarta. Exacerbated by Cold War politics, this polarisation of Bandung and Yogyakarta—between "Westernism" and "Indonesianism"—was driven by the political contestations between rival claimants who disagreed on what could be considered as the modern and authentic national identity for post-independence Indonesia.[15]

This debate came to a head towards the end of the 1950s when the Old Order regime under President Sukarno aligned

more closely with communist and socialist forces. Art in Bandung was considered the "heir" of Western art styles taught by Dutch imperialists, and artists like Sadali and Pirous were forced to retreat behind the academic walls of the school, particularly from 1960 onwards.[16] When the Cold War in Indonesia practically ended with the repression and annihilation of the left-leaning and communist factions in Indonesian politics, the New Order regime under President Soeharto began to emerge, and artists in Bandung celebrated newfound artistic freedom with the 1966 exhibition. The exhibition became a turning point in the history of Indonesian modern art and soon after, Bandung artists began to dominate the artistic and cultural scenes.

In *Grup 18*, Pirous's *Sura Ikhlas* was exhibited alongside Suadi's *Kaligrafi* (fig. 7). The latter is an exploration of different calligraphic forms: from delicate lines that loosely reference the fluid and thin incisions of undulating Arabic script and to thick textured lines that seem to draw from pictorial scripts. The two works by Pirous and Suadi set up a contrast between the legible and the illegible, between a calligraphic work that highlights Qur'anic messages and their meanings to instill reflection, and one that complicates and obfuscates the imperative of classical calligraphic texts in meaning-making. This tension between the legible and the illegible fuels ongoing discussions about the "proper" expression of modern Islamic art in Indonesia.

Kenneth George also identifies this tension within Pirous's calligraphic practice.[17] Two of the works that Pirous created after *Sura Ikhlas* focus on exploring the expressive qualities of calligraphic forms. One is *Epitaph IV* (fig. 8), which exemplifies Pirous's return to Acehnese visuality—the work mirrors the textural quality of the inscribed tombstones known as *Batu Aceh* in Islamic Southeast Asia. Many early Islamic tombstones in north Sumatra and the northern Javanese coast are inscribed with detailed and dated epitaphs, offering historical evidence on early Islamic Southeast Asia.[18] The upper half of the composition displays mostly legible inscriptions, bearing the utterance of *tawhid* (Islamic expression of the oneness of God), while the

7
Haryadi Suadi
KALIGRAFI
(CALLIGRAPHY)
1971
Woodcut print on paper,
81.5 x 72 cm
Collection of National
Gallery Singapore

8
A.D. Pirous
EPITAPH IV
1972
Marble paste and oil
paint on canvas,
165 x 115 cm
Collection of National
Gallery Singapore

9
A.D. Pirous
TULISAN MERAH
(RED WRITING)
1974
Marble paste and
acrylic paint on canvas,
107 x 82 cm
Collection of National
Gallery Singapore

remaining inscriptions merely resemble Arabic script and are illegible. *Tulisan Merah* (Red Writing) (fig. 9) takes this a step further by stripping the script of any inherent meaning. In this painting, the key compositional element is the contrast between the smooth, flat red field and the highly textured cluster of writings.

7

8

9

Confronted with criticism from the *ulamas* (religious authority) for manipulating a script that many in Indonesia superficially perceive to be sacred, Pirous's works from

10
A.D. Pirous
YA RABB DENGARKANLAH KAMI IV (OH GOD, PLEASE LISTEN TO US IV)
1991
Marble paste, gold leaves and acrylic paint on canvas, 196 x 150 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore
2022-00929

1975 onwards exhibited renewed effort to present "proper" calligraphy, adhering to the expectation of classical calligraphic works. His later works, such as *Surat Isra II: Penghormatan kepada Bunda* (Sura Isra II: Homage to My Mother) (1983), *Subuh* (Dawn) (1980), and *Ya Rabb Dengarkanlah Kami* (Oh God, Please Listen to Us) (1991), demonstrate what George terms as "Qur'anic aesthetics." In these works, Qur'anic verses "enjoy special focus; scriptural clarity and immutability, and an emphasis on moral reflection and vision usually prevail over self-expressiveness".[19] Pirous believes that his paintings should reflect his responsibility as a good Muslim to be useful to others and that they should balance both aesthetic and ethical pleasure.

Between the Sacred and the Illegible

During the 1980s and 1990s, the canonical imagination of modern Islamic art largely centered around artists whose works demonstrate Qur'anic aesthetics, like Sadali, Pirous, and several others from outside of Bandung. State- and privately-sponsored exhibitions of calligraphy after the inaugural Islamic calligraphy exhibition of 1979 further solidified the canon of modern Islamic art as consisting of works by artists who presented legible renditions of Qur'anic calligraphy. Works that did not fit this category, such as those by Suadi, were often left out of the canon. Suadi's illegible calligraphy points towards other Islamic textual and visual sources: the Islamic talismanic images and texts known locally in Cirebonese and Malay contexts as *isim* and *rajah*, which may or may not have conformed to the established idea of being "Islamic" in Indonesia at the time. Suadi's exploration of abstraction also deviated from Western-centric methods and looked towards local technologies, methods and languages of representation that developed in Cirebon and Java, such as glass paintings, shadow puppets, batik, isim and rajah.

Suadi was born and raised in Cirebon, a port city on the northern coast of Java. He went to study interior design in Bandung in 1959 and transitioned to printmaking in 1964

when the studio was opened by Mochtar Apin (1903–1994).[20] Much like Meulaboh in Aceh, where Pirous was born, Cirebon is a historical and active port city in the Indian Ocean. As a crucial hub within intra-Asian trade networks, Cirebon's position was even more prominent than Meulaboh's in the circulation of spices, textiles and porcelain. The long history of trades and movements of objects, ideas, and images made Cirebon a site of convergence: it absorbed and fashioned foreign cultural forms (Hindu, Buddhist and Islam) into items with distinct Cirebonese characteristics through the long process of translation and transculturation. Suadi's composites of Cirebonese motifs, materiality and subject matters—particularly in his glass painting works—are material examples of the long history of the Indian Ocean and intra-Asian trades in Cirebon and Java.

When Suadi began working with woodcut prints in the mid-1960s, he came across the *hanga* works of a prominent Japanese printmaker, Shikō Munakata (1903–1975).[21] The expressive and imperfect woodcut lines of varying widths and textures in Suadi's pieces, as well as the figural motives, demonstrate how deeply Suadi engaged with Munakata's works. This engagement extended beyond aesthetics as he also looked upon Munakata's positioning as a Japanese artist in the mid-20th century. Munakata's *hanga* woodblock prints represent the generation of artists working during Japan's prewar period in the early 20th century as he returned to Japanese aesthetics and employed the visuality and philosophies of Buddhism, Shintō and animism.[22] Through Munakata, Suadi found a way to articulate his critical standpoint against the imposition of Western discourse on Indonesian modern art: he returned to local aesthetics, which was perceived as contrary to being "modern" at the time by many of his colleagues and art critics. However, I argue that it is precisely Suadi's rejection of the (Western) modernist tradition—that he had received as part of his artistic training in Bandung—that makes his works and artistic positionality modern.

Dua Wanita dan Isim (Two Women and Isim) (fig. 11) juxtaposes the feminine figures with calligraphic writing and expressive

11
Haryadi Suadi
DUA WANITA DAN ISIM
(TWO WOMEN AND ISIM)
1979
Woodcut print on paper
Collection of National
Gallery Singapore

lines, an approach that Munakata also utilised. The Munakata-esque faces in the center of the composition are delineated with simple outlines, while their anthropomorphic bodies are intertwined with, surrounded with, and made up of calligraphic brushstrokes constructed out of the supple and curvilinear lines of Arabic script. Amidst the illegible text below the seated bodies, the Arabic letter *wāw* (و) is distinctly written.

The print is one of several works by Suadi that uses the term "isim" in its title, referencing the long tradition of Islamic talismanic writings and objects found in Cirebonese and Javanese cultures. "Isim" in Cirebonese translates to Indonesian as "*nama Tuhan yang dipakai sebagai doa*" ("God's names used for prayers")[23] or "*kata-kata yang digunakan untuk mencegah penyakit*" ("words used to prevent illnesses"),[24] while "rajah" is widely used in the Indonesian and Malay language to denote "writings and images used for talismanic purposes; lines on palms; and images on bodies made by sharp tools; tattoo."[25] Used almost interchangeably, isim and rajah designate inscriptions, drawings of mythical creatures and geometric designs made on different objects and surfaces to render them as protective, divinatory, and healing devices with magical properties.[26] Talismanic writings are often traditionally difficult to read: the text is intentionally hidden or obscured to guarantee their efficacy. Therefore, the juxtaposition of illegible writings, abstracted figures and sacred talismanic motifs in Suadi's works profoundly complicates the notion of the *sacred* and, furthermore, the notion of the "Islamic." Such imagery pervades many of Suadi's works and is particularly evident in Suadi's paintings in this exhibition, such as *Buroq* (1986), *Phrenology* (1986) and *Untitled* (2001).

Suadi is also widely recognised in Indonesia for his role in popularising glass painting as a form of modern artistic practice from 1975 onwards. He learned glass painting from a young Cirebonese glass painter named Rastika (1942–2014) as a method of "returning" to local aesthetics and artmaking practices. In addition to studying the techniques, Suadi also learned the cosmological diagrams, symbols and images

12
Haryadi Suadi
BUROQ (THE BURAQ)
1986
Enamel paint on reverse glass painting, 83.5 x 79.5 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

used in Cirebonese glass painting. Many of these elements are said to have been invented by Sufi masters in Cirebon as sacred pictorial manifestations of Sufi doctrines, passed down through generations of glass painters and makers. For this reason, glass painting as a medium contains traces of spiritual and talismanic functions related to Sufi devotional practices, particularly in Cirebon.

Performing Hopes and Collaborative Projects of Reparation

Performativity in calligraphic writing is inherent in many of Sadali's, Pirous', and Suadi's works featured in this exhibition. The lines in calligraphic writing embody the movements of the hand and, perhaps, channel the spiritual *getaran* (Indonesian for "vibration") and *nafas* (Indonesian for "breath, soul, spirit") that informed the artists and the making of the works.[27] The work *Crossing Point* by Arahmaiani in this exhibition conceivably encompasses another layer of performativity: the work features flags made of variously coloured fabrics—sewn with colourful Jawi letters and phrases—that have been used as objects of performance. I argue that the calligraphic letters in *Crossing Point* have the capability to elicit ritual and performative actions similar to how an illumination in religious manuscripts also prompts contemplative or ritual responses.

Crossing Point is one of many iterations of *Proyek Bendera* (Flag Project), a work first developed in 2006 from Arahmaiani's collaboration with local communities and students at Pesantren Amumarta, one of the oldest Qur'anic schools in Yogyakarta, following a devastating earthquake that same year. The project has travelled widely and the artist has collaborated with various communities in Yogyakarta, Germany, Singapore, Japan and Tibet, amongst others, to address social, political, religious and environmental issues. In this exhibition, *Crossing Point* is presented alongside documentation of other works by Arahmaiani, including *Stitching the Wound* and *I LOVE YOU*. These videos highlight the artist's preoccupation with this

particular mode of performance from 2006 onwards. The installation of colourful Jawi flags contains words such as ترسنا ("*tresna*,",love in Javanese/Balinese), خوخور ("*jujur*," honest in Indonesian), عقل ("'*aql*," intellect in Arabic; reason and intellect in Indonesian), ماوت ("*mawt*," death in Arabic and Indonesian), جنانا ("*jñāna*," knowledge in Sanskrit), and اوماه ("*omah*," house, hoe in Javanese), and several others. These words suggest notions of impermanence of the physical world, as well as the importance of a sense of belonging, love, and local knowledge and wisdom.

Arahmaiani's preoccupation with Jawi script emerged early on in her career with her painting *Lingga-Yoni* (1993) which, along with her other installation works, sparked accusations of blasphemy from a reactionary and fundamentalist Muslim group during her 1994 solo exhibition at Studio Oncor in Jakarta. The juxtaposition of Jawi writing with sacred pre-Islamic iconography of the *lingga* and *yoni* was regarded as profane, resulting in a death threat against Arahmaini that forced her to flee Indonesia for Australia. Since then, Arahmaiani has been moving from one place to another to live, work and engage with diverse communities.

The use of words from various origins demonstrates the flexibility of Jawi, a permutation of the Arabic script prevalent across many parts of Islamic Southeast Asia. Jawi was gradually pushed to the margins of modernity after the introduction of the Latin script through the colonial education system during the late-19th and early-20th centuries across the British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies. The continual erasure of Jawi in modern Southeast Asia led to the loss of the collective memories and knowledge systems, and a sense of connectedness between the Muslim communities across the Indo-Malay Archipelago. Furthermore, it exacerbated the already tenuous relationship that Muslim communities in the region had with Arabic script, as its use was increasingly confined to the realm of the religious and the sacred. In 2019, Mulaika Hijjas notes how Jawi became the site of identitarian and religious politics in Malaysia due to the fact that the script had become synonymous with Islam and "Malayness."[28]

By inscribing flags with Jawi words and concepts from diverse socio-cultural origins for *Crossing Point* and many of her other installations and performances, Arahamaiani liberates the script from its purported religious associations and political uses. By employing Jawi in this way, Arahmaiani hopes to showcase the script's capacity to facilitate transcultural and trans-religious dialogues amongst different communities. Arahmaiani elaborates:

> The main topic of my work is cultural dialogue between the Islamic world and the rest of the world within the context of today's consumer society. My idea is to re-think the economic-politic-social and cultural system through community-based art-projects. My installations and performances examine power relations and their dynamics while also focusing on the situation, condition, rights and responsibilities of minorities. This is an on-going project involving different communities in different parts of the world. The project's main goal is to bring people of different cultural and social backgrounds together, encouraging them to share, exchange, work in collaboration and see each other's view-point so that each can better understand the other. The project also addresses current issues experienced on a more personal level by community members. The work aims to find solutions to problems using the values of democratic thinking and by approaching issues from alternative and sometimes critical perspectives.[29]

Arahmaiani adds that the use of Jawi to articulate concerns, hopes and local wisdom of different communities also serve to carry out a reparative project for the harmful image of Islam circulated in global, Western-centric media.[30]

Conclusion

The Neglected Dimension presents the different aesthetics and ethical negotiations undertaken by artists in Indonesia through their explorations of calligraphy, abstraction and performance. The works of Sadali and Pirous have been

critical in framing the discourse on modern Islamic art—and their practices of calligraphic abstraction are also often regarded as the most appropriate expressions of modern Islamic art in Indonesia and the region. On the other hand, Suadi's and Arahmaiani's works deconstruct and redefine the boundaries of the "modern" and the "Islamic" by foregrounding localised forms and understandings of Islam in Southeast Asia; their works challenge superficial and stereotypical representations and imaginings of Islam in global media. The diverse approaches to questions of modernity and religiosity proposed by these four artists expand and complicate both the expressions of modernity and the genealogies of modernism in Southeast Asia.

NOTES

1 Ahmad Sadali, "Prawacana," in *Pameran Kaligrafi Nasional*, ed. Muzammil Basyuni (Semarang: P.T. Sagittarius Offset, 1979), 3-4.
2 Sanento Yuliman, "Dimensi yang Tersisihkan," *Perspektif: Berkala Seni Rupa dan Desain*, January–February 1988, 16-17.
3 Iftikhar Dadi, "Rethinking Calligraphic Modernism," in *Discrepant Abstraction*, ed. Kobena Mercer (London: Institute of International Visual Arts; Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 95.
4 Dadi, "Rethinking Calligraphic Modernism," 94-114; Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
5 Dadi, "Rethinking Calligraphic Modernism," 95.
6 Dadi, "Rethinking Calligraphic Modernism," 96.
7 The first generation of students in Bandung who enrolled in the school between 1948 and 1953 include Angkama Setiadipradja (1913–1984), Mochtar Apin (1923–1994), Srihadi Soedarsono (1931–2021), Sudjoko (1928–2006), Popo Iskandar (1927–2000), Eddie Kartasubarna (b. 1923) and But Muchtar (1930–1993).
8 *From Script to Abstraction* is part of the title of one of the exhibitions that introduced Indonesian modern and contemporary art to an international audience. Organised by The Royal Society of Fine Arts in Amman, Jordan in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia, it took place from December 1996 to January 1997. The exhibition largely showed the works of Bandung artists, including artists who worked with calligraphic expression and different forms of abstraction. Furthermore, the exhibition articulated the continued primacy of Bandung artists and calligraphic abstraction in the development of modern Indonesian art during the final years of the New Order period in the 1990s.
9 A.D. Pirous, interview with the author, February 2018.
10 A.D. Pirous, interview with the author, February 2018.
11 Kenneth M. George and Mamannoor, *A.D. Pirous: Vision, Faith, and A Journey in Indonesian Art, 1955-2002* (Bandung: Yayasan Serambi Pirous, 2002), 50; Susan Helen-Ingham, "Powerlines: Alternative Art and Infrastructures in Indonesia in the 1990s" (Dissertation, University of New South Wales, 2007), 61.
12 It is rather difficult to make out the writing, but Zulfadhli Hilmi, who worked closely on this painting with Eugene Tan for the 2016 *Reframing Modernism* exhibition in Singapore, identified the writing as a quote from the Qur'anic chapter, Al-Baqarah verse 255. See Eugene Tan,"Ahmad Sadali," in *Reframing Modernism: Paintings from Southeast Asia, Europe, and Beyond*, eds. Sarah Lee and Sara Siew (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2016), 236,-237.
13 A.D. Pirous, interview with the author, February 2018.
14 Trisno Soemardjo, "Bandung Mengabdi Laboratorium Barat," *Siasat*, December 1954, republished in *Seni Rupa Indonesia dalam Kritik dan Esai*, eds. Bambang Bujono and Wicaksono Adi (Jakarta: Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 2012), 131-133.

15 Claire Holt cites the observation of an Indonesian observer who remarked that without Bandung, "... Jogja's 'Indonesianism' might never have been formulated. Jogja's quest for 'nationalism in art,' he thought, was less a positive conviction and more a reaction to the intellectualism and estheticism of the Bandung painters, to the unmistakable influence of a Dutch teacher, a reaction, in fact, to Bandung's westernism." Claire Holt, *Art In Indonesia: Continuities and Change* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), 238. Similar political contestations occurred in many newly independent nations in Southeast Asia. Tony Day and Maya Liem's volume on the cultural expressions in Southeast Asia during the Cold War period provides a comparative lens by including essays from scholars on the development of art in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, and Malaya. See Tony Day and Maya Ht. Liem, eds., *Cultures at War: The Cold War and Cultural Expression in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2010).

16 Correspondence between But Muchtar and Claire Holt, May 24, 1967. Claire Holt papers, #14-27-2648. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

17 George and Mamannoor, *A.D. Pirous*.

18 See Daniel Perret, "Some Reflections on Ancient Islamic Tombstones Known as *Batu Aceh* in the Malay World," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 35, no. 103 (June 2008): 313-340; and Elizabeth Lambourn, "Tombstones, Texts, and Typologies: Seeing Sources for the Early History of Islam in Southeast Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 51 (2008): 252-286.

19 George and Mamannoor, *A.D. Pirous*, 60.

20 Mochtar Apin (1923–1994), alongside Ahmad Sadali, is a member of the first generation of Bandung artists. In addition to painting, Apin is also recognised for his printmaking practice. In 1947, Apin and Baharudin Mara Sutan created several prints for a print album to commemorate Indonesian independence. The albums were distributed to several countries, including the Netherlands. It currently resides at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, while another edition can be found in the collection of the National Gallery Singapore.

21 *Hanga*, a word that translates to "block/plate picture" or "printed picture," became a concept reflecting Japanese modernity and emphasis on individual creativity in the early twentieth century. Shikõ Munakata began to work with woodblock print in the late 1920s and '30s when Japanese Creative Prints, or *sōsaku hanga*, often shortened as *hanga*, emerged as a distinct category of modern and creative art in Japan. Munakata's works represent the development of hanga in the 1930s and '50s.

22 Oliver Statler, "Shikō Munakata," in *The Woodblock and the Artists: The Life and Work of Shikō Munakata*, ed. Munemichi

Yanagi (Japan: Kodansha International Ltd, 1991), 11-17.

23 T.D. Sudjana, *Kamus Bahasa Cirebon* (Bandung: Humaniora, 2005), 117.

24 "Arti Kata Isim dalam Kamus Bahasa Jawa-Indonesia," Lambeturah.id, 12 August 2021, https://lambeturah.id/arti-kata-isim-dalam-kamus-bahasa-jawa-indonesia/.

25 "Rajah," Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, accessed 3 February 2022, https://kbbi.web.id/rajah.

26 For more details on Islamic talismans in Malay context, see Farouk Yahya, *Divination in Malay Illustrated Manuscripts*, 2016.

27 The terms "*getaran*" and "*nafas*" are often used by artists, art critics, curators and writers discussing artworks and the practice of modern Islamic art in Indonesia from the 1970s onwards in essays and reviews in exhibition catalogues and periodicals. The two terms often refer to the infusion of spirituality and devotional feelings in the works of artists who worked with calligraphic abstraction. The word "*getaran*" in this context implies a subtle vibration that can only be felt when one is fully immersed in deep contemplation to feel the Divine presence. The term "*nafas*" in its active form "*bernafaskan*" has been used since the 1950s in discussions and manifestos relating to Islamic art(s) and literature (Prawira 1956; Kratz 1986). In 1991, "*bernafaskan*" was foregrounded in the state-approved slogan for the 1991 *Festival Istiqlal*, "*Festival Kebudayaan yang Bernafaskan Islam*" (Festival of Indonesian Culture that Breathes Islam). *Nafas* in this slogan implies the idea of "breathing in" or incorporating something external, outside of the body, into the self, in an instrumental way.

28 Mulaika Hijjas, "Jawi: Identity and Controversy," *New Mandala*, 20 July 2021, https://www.newmandala.org/jawi-identity-and-controversy/.

29 Arahmaiani, "Artist's Statement," 2010.

30 Arahmaiani, in conversation with the author, March 2018.

Cited References

"Arti Kata Isim dalam Kamus Bahasa Jawa-Indonesia," *lambeturah.id*, 12 August 2021, https://lambeturah.id/arti-kata-isim-dalam-kamus-bahasa-jawa-indonesia/.

"Rajah," *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, accessed 3 February 2022, https://kbbi.web.id/rajah.

Arahmaiani. 2010. "Artist's Statement." Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Bruinessen, Martin van & Julia Day Howell (eds.). 2007. *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*. London: I.B. Taurus.

Dadi, Iftikhar. 2006. "Rethinking Calligraphic Modernism." In *Discrepant Abstraction*, edited by Kobena Mercer, 94-115. London: Institute of International Visual Arts: Cambridge. Massachusetts: MIT Press.

_____. 2010. *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Day, Tony and Maya Ht. Liem. 2010. *Cultures at War: The Cold War and Cultural Expression in Southeast Asia*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications.

George, Kenneth M. and Mamannoor. 2002. *A.D. Pirous: Vision, Faith, and A Journey in Indonesian Art, 1955-2002*. Bandung, Indonesia: Yayasan Serambi Pirous.

Helen-Ingham, Susan. 2007. "Powerlines: Alternative Art and Infrastructures in Indonesia in the 1990s." Dissertation, University of New South Wales.

Holt, Claire. 1967. *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

_____. Claire Holt Papers, #14-27-2648. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

Kratz, E.U. 1986. "Islamic Attitudes towards Modern Indonesian Literature." In *Cultural Contact and Textual Interpretations*, edited by C.D. Grijns and S.O. Robson, 60-93. Dordrecht, Holland; Cinnaminson, USA: Floris Publication.

Lambourn, Elizabeth. 2008. "Tombstones, Texts, and Typologies: Seeing Sources for the Early History of Islam in Southeast Asia." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, no. 51: 252-286.

Perret, Daniel. 2007. "Some Reflections on Ancient Islamic Tombstones Known as Batu Aceh in the Malay World." *Indonesia and the Malay World*, vol. 35, issue 103: 313-340.

Prawira, Ch. 1956. "Tjita Islam dan Kesenian Nasional." *Hikmah*, no. 41: 18-19.

Sadali, Ahmad. 1979. "*Prawacana*." In *Pameran Kaligrafi Nasional*, edited by Ahmad Sadali, Joop Ave, and H.M. Muzammil Basyuni. Jakarta: P.T. Sagittarius Offset.

Samuel, Jerōme. 2008. "Haryadi Suadi et la peinture sous verre: Un art populaire au service des academies." *Archipel* no. 76: 99-126.

_____. 2017. "À la recherche des ateliers perdus. Peinture sous verre et production en série à Java." *Archipel: Études interdisciplinaires sur le monde insulinden*, vol. 94: 143-169.

Soemardjo, Trisno. 1954. "*Bandung Mengabdi Laboratorium Barat*." *Siasat*, 5 December 1954.

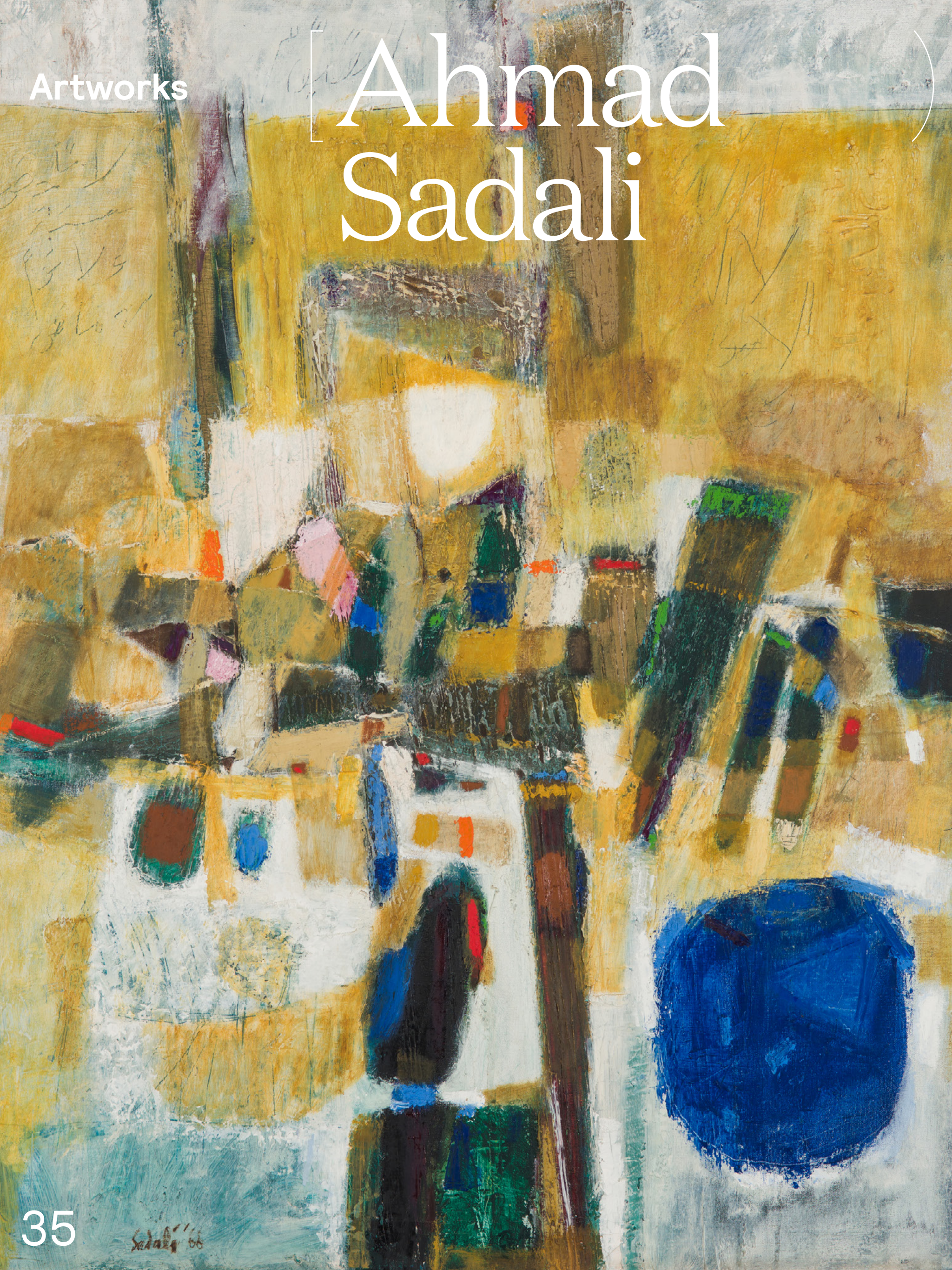
Statler, Oliver. 1991. "Shikō Munakata." In *The Woodblock and the Artists: The Life and Work of Shikō Munakata*, edited by Munemichi Yanagi, 11-17. Japan: Kodansha International Ltd.

Tan, Eugene. 2016. "Reframing Representation: Abstraction and Modernism in Southeast Asia." In *Reframing Modernism: Paintings from Southeast Asia, Europe, and Beyond*, edited by Sarah Lee and Sara Siew, 183-238. Singapore: National Gallery Singapore.

Yahya, Farouk. 2016. *Magic and Divination in Malay Illustrated Manuscripts*. Oxford: Barakat; Leiden: Brill.

Yuliman, Sanento. 1988. "Dimensi yang Tersisihkan." *Perspektif: Dwibulanan Berkala Seni Rupa dan Desain*, no. 1: 16-17.

Ahmad Sadali



Ahmad Sadali
LUKISAN
1966
Oil on canvas,
99.5 × 81 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Lukisan—which means "painting" in English—is an example of Ahmad Sadali's early experimentation with calligraphy and modernist abstraction. Within an abstract field of colours dominated by yellows, lies a dark blue orb in the lower right corner. In the top left corner of the painting is Arabic writing that has been inscribed by the artist, almost hidden amidst the expressive brushwork and heavy layers of paint.

Sadali painted Lukisan after studying in the United States and exhibiting his work in Europe and South America. His paintings after this period feature textures and colours that break free of the rigid lines and cubist structures of his earlier work.

A.D. Pirous

A.D. Pirous
SURA IKHLAS
1970
Colour etching on paper,
40 × 50 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Experiments with etching and incorporating calligraphic forms was central to A.D. Pirous's practice. This etching of the "Sura Ikhlas" verse from the Qur'an—an important passage about the oneness of God and the surrender of the self to the preeminent One—is a prime example of his methods. Most of the surface is covered with calligraphic writing, featuring defined lines set against a textured background created using acid during the printing process. The bottom of the etching is coloured a deep red, with a line from "Sura Al-Baqarah," the second chapter in the Qur'an, written on it.

After graduating from art school in Bandung, where he studied under Ahmad Sadali, Pirous received a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation to study printmaking at the Rochester Institute of Technology. During his time in the US, he visited the Islamic Art Gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he was reminded of the Arabic scripts, calligraphy and Islamic visual traditions that he had encountered during his childhood.

A.D. Pirous

TULISAN MERAH (RED WRITING)

1974

Marble paste and acrylic paint on canvas, 107 × 82 cm

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

In *Tulisan Merah*, textured calligraphic writing is contrasted with smooth and even strokes of red. Clusters of calligraphic writings float unevenly on the top part of the composition, accentuated by a smooth layer of purple in the top right corner.

Tulisan Merah was made during a period when A.D. Pirous primarily experimented with the expressive and formal qualities of Arabic calligraphy. Unlike his later works that showcase legible Qur'anic calligraphy, the inscriptions on *Tulisan Merah* do not form any readable phrases and only have some visual similarities to Arabic script. Consequently, the painting is free from the pressure of producing deeper textual meaning.

A.D. Pirous

EPITAPH IV

1972

Marble paste and oil paint on canvas, 165 × 115 cm

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

After encountering Islamic art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, A.D. Pirous delved into researching various Acehnese visual and material traditions. *Epitaph IV* is inspired by *Batu Aceh*, which are Islamic tombstones from north Sumatra and north Java inscribed with detailed epitaphs that offered historical evidence of Islam's spread in Southeast Asia.

In this work, Pirous replicated the textural quality of *Batu Aceh*. Some writing on the upper part of the epitaph, including the word *tawhid* (an Islamic expression of the oneness of God), is legible, while the rest of the inscriptions only bear a similarity to Arabic script and do not form any recognisable words.

A.D. Pirous

YA RABB, DENGARKANLAH KAMI IV (OH GOD, PLEASE LISTEN TO US IV)

1991

Marble paste, gold leaves and acrylic paint on canvas, 196 × 150 cm

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Ya Rabb, Dengarkanlah Kami IV is the last in a series of four paintings that bear the same title. Painted in 1991, they were all first exhibited in the largest exhibition of modern Islamic art, the 1991 *Festival Istiqlal* in Jakarta, Indonesia.

This large painting showcases A.D. Pirous's mastery of Qur'anic calligraphy. The diptych features verses from two Qur'anic chapters, "Sura Ash-Shu'arā" ("The Poets") on the left and "Sura Al-Kahf" ("The Cave") on the right. Set on layers of pulverised marble paste and daubs of contrasting colours, the verses highlight Pirous's prayers for God's graces and mercy. The composition resembles both a stained-glass window and a leaf from an Islamic manuscript, inviting viewers to look, read and contemplate.

Inscription:

رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

O our Sustainer! Bestow on us grace from Thyself, and endow us, whatever our [outward] condition, with consciousness of what is right! (Sura Al-Kahf 18:10)

وَٱجْعَل لِّى لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِى ٱلْـَٔاخِرِينَ
وَٱجْعَلْنِى مِن وَرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ ٱلنَّعِيمِ

Bless me with honourable mention among later generations.
Make me one of those awarded the Garden of Bliss.
(Sura Ash-Shu'arā 26:84–85)

A.D. Pirous

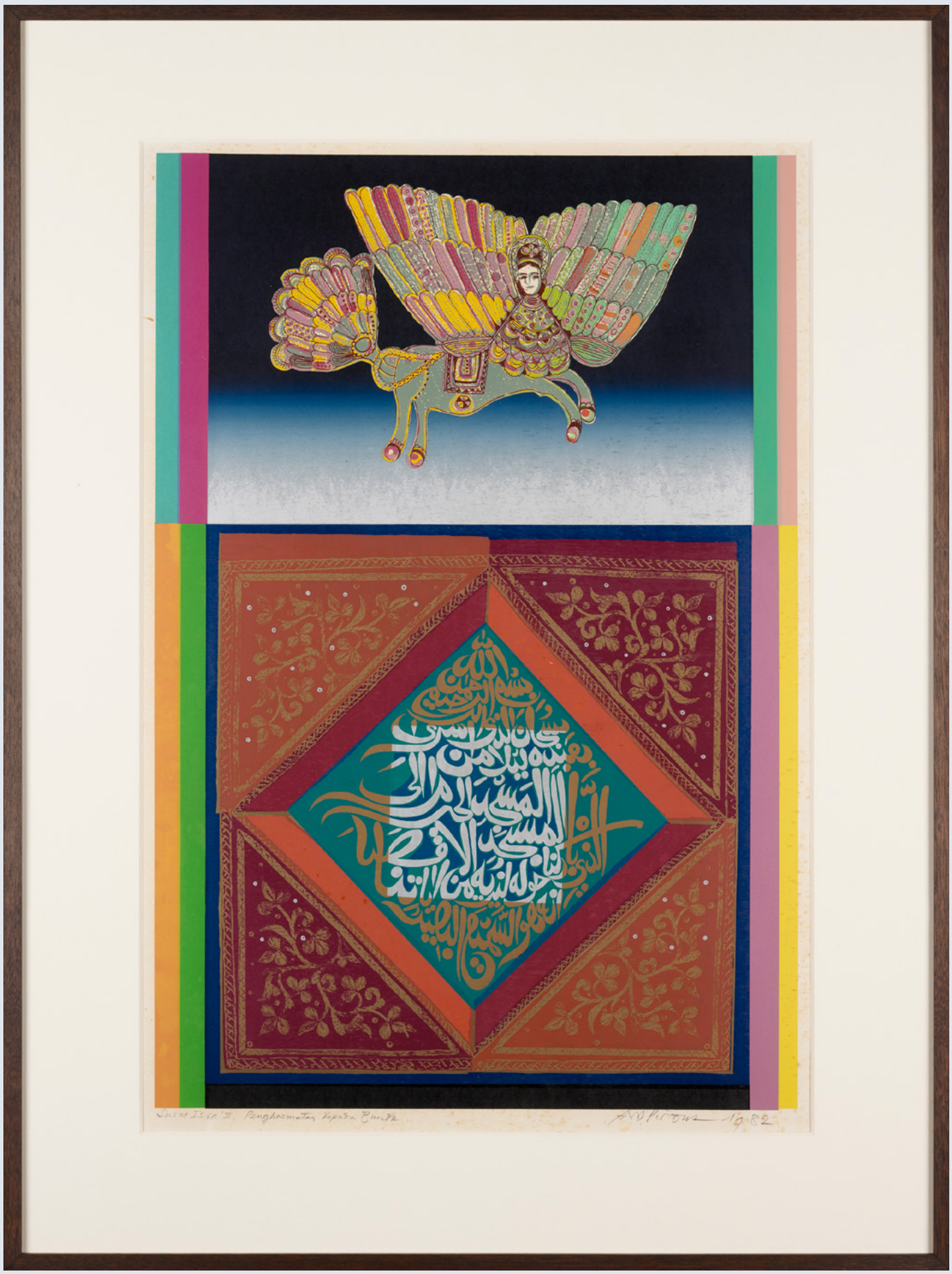
SURAT ISRA II: PENGHORMATAN KEPADA BUNDA (SURA ISRA II: HOMAGE TO MY MOTHER)

1982

Silkscreen print on paper, 82 × 56 cm

Artist's proof

Collection of National Gallery Singapore



A.D. Pirous

SUBUH / DOA VIII (DAWN / PRAYER VIII)

1980

Silkscreen print on paper, 70 × 50 cm

Edition 3/70

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Subuh / Doa VIII showcases A.D. Pirous's mastery in producing a smooth gradation of colours, from a deep turquoise down to the hazy white on the horizon. Transparent drops of dew dot the daw sky, adding to the peaceful morning air. This technique is also present in several of Pirous's other silkscreens, including *Sura Isra II: Homage to My Mother*. Stylised Qur'anic calligraphy is written on the bottom half of the composition, with one section inscribed with a Qur'anic passage from "Sura Al-Kahf."

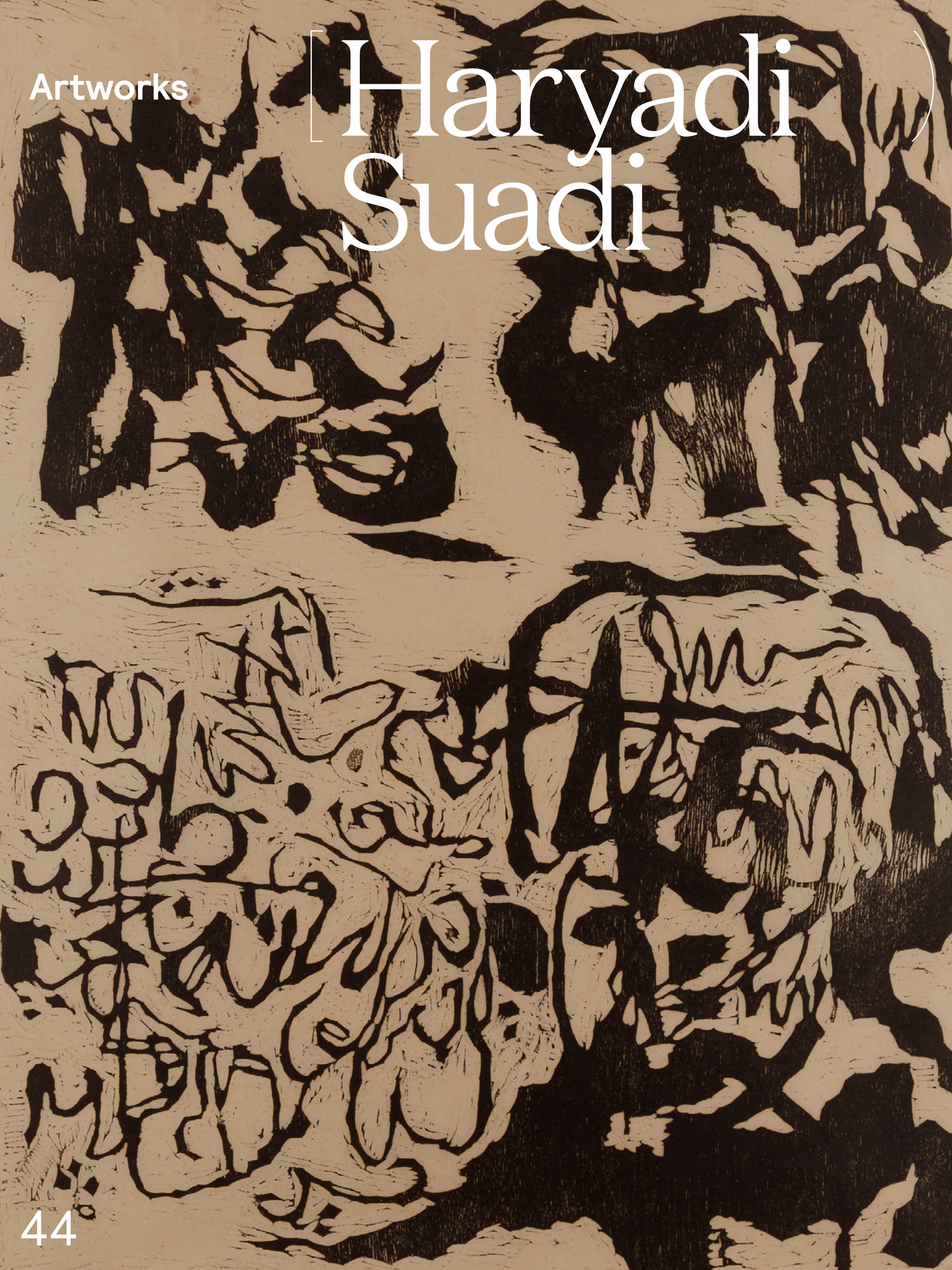
In 1973, Pirous and his colleagues at the art school in Bandung founded design firm Decenta (Design Centre Association) to meet the increased demand for commissioned works in new buildings. Using the profit, they built a gallery and a printmaking studio to facilitate experimental art exhibitions and art-making practices. This was where Pirous began experimenting with silkscreen printing.

Inscription:

رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

O our Sustainer! Bestow on us grace from Thyself, and endow us, whatever our [outward] condition, with consciousness of what is right!
(Sura Al-Kahf 18:10)

Haryadi Suadi



Haryadi Suadi

PHRENOLOGY

1986

Enamel paint on reverse glass painting,
72 × 62 cm

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

In this glass painting, Haryadi Suadi has drawn various abstracted forms inspired by phrenology—a pseudoscience developed in Europe that claims a person's psychological attributes can be determined from the shape of their skull—Chinese medicinal diagrams and Islamic talismanic symbols.

The painting features figures with round, white faces that look like *topeng* (masks) and transparent bodies with organs and line diagrams resembling acupressure points in Chinese medicine. They are juxtaposed with drawings of hands inscribed with illegible writings and crudely drawn golden scribbles. The sun and the crescent moon—symbols of prayers often used in Cirebonese glass paintings—appear at the top of painting, and below them is a sequence of upside-down symbols that resemble Arabic letters.

Suadi's abstracted depictions of these seemingly random symbols and writings may reflect his penchant for collecting. Together, they represent the diverse knowledge systems, beliefs and signs that make up the cultural backdrop of port cities like Cirebon in West Java, where Suadi grew up.

Haryadi Suadi

KALIGRAFI (CALLIGRAPHY)

1971

Woodcut print on paper, 81.5 × 72 cm

Edition 3/25

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Kaligrafi showcases Haryadi Suadi's early experimentation with various calligraphic forms. The woodcut print loosely resembles the fluid and thin writing associated with Arabic script, alongside thick textured lines similar to Chinese or Japanese scripts. The simple composition also evokes the rapid flow of brushes and irregular strokes in Chinese ink paintings.

Suadi produced several woodcut prints that present these speculative and highly abstracted calligraphic forms that convey no textual meaning. Instead, they are meant to highlight the expressive and performative qualities of calligraphy.

Haryadi Suadi

DUA WANITA DAN ISIM (TWO WOMEN AND ISIM)

1979

Woodcut print on paper, 63 × 53 cm

Edition 2/25

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Dua Wanita dan Isim is one of Haryadi Suadi's strongest print works, highlighting his experimentation with writing and anthropomorphic bodies. Visually, his woodcut works are inspired by the works of well-known Japanese printmaker Shikō Munakata, who helped elevate woodblock prints (known as *hanga*) as a modern art form in mid-20th century Japan.

As the title suggests, the print depicts two feminine forms with strings of calligraphic *isim* wrapped around them. *Isim* is the local term in Cirebon—and possibly other parts of Java—for Islamic talismanic writings and objects with protective and healing qualities. Below the two forms are a small round shape and a series of three triangular shapes, all inscribed with and surrounded by illegible writing. One of the few characters that can be distinguished is the Arabic letter و (*wāw*). The print also features a calligram—a calligraphic design that forms a particular shape, usually animals or figurative images—often found in Islamic talismanic objects and manuscripts in the Indo-Malay Archipelago.

While Suadi certainly did not intend to create a sacred talisman, the presence of the calligram and calligraphic writing show his preoccupation with replicating the sacredness of Islamic talismanic objects through illegibility and abstraction.

Haryadi Suadi

BUROQ (THE BURAQ)

1986

Enamel paint on reverse glass painting,
83.5 × 79.5 cm

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Haryadi Suadi
UNTITLED
2001
Acrylic on canvas,
196 × 152 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Haryadi Suadi

KALIGRAFI DALAM SEGITIGA (CALLIGRAPHY IN A TRIANGLE)

1996

Silkscreen print on paper, 62 × 52 cm

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

Kaligrafi dalam Segitiga features Haryadi Suadi's experimentation with the expressivity of the calligraphic form using a silkscreen print. This print presents illegible writing derived from Arabic script, forming diagrammatic structures of a large triangle in the centre that expands to smaller triangular forms within and beyond it. The Arabic letter و (*wāw*) is repeated and is the most recognisable form in this print. The diagrammatic structure also references Suadi's fascination with Islamic talismanic writings that often employ diagrams and formulas.

Haryadi Suadi

POTRET DIRI (SELF PORTRAIT)

1986

Woodcut print on paper, 72 × 62 cm

Edition 3/25

Collection of National Gallery Singapore

In *Potret Diri*, Haryadi Suadi juxtaposes text with an anthropomorphic body through undulating calligraphic lines inscribed all over the print. The composition of this work closely resembles another work, *Dua Wanita dan Isim*, with the figure representing Suadi raising his left hand as if to greet the viewer. Suadi frequently incorporates *isim* or Islamic talismanic writing, incising calligraphy on woodblock and making prints on paper of varying thicknesses and textures to create calligraphic forms that are highly expressive.

Many of Suadi's prints and glass paintings exude a sense of crudeness and simplicity, inspired by the amateur and imperfect lines and forms in the sketches of *wayang* (shadow puppet) stories by local Cirebonese *dalang* (puppeteers), as well as those in the prints of Shikō Munakata.

[Arahmaiani)

Arahmaiani

CROSSING POINT

2011

14 flags, video

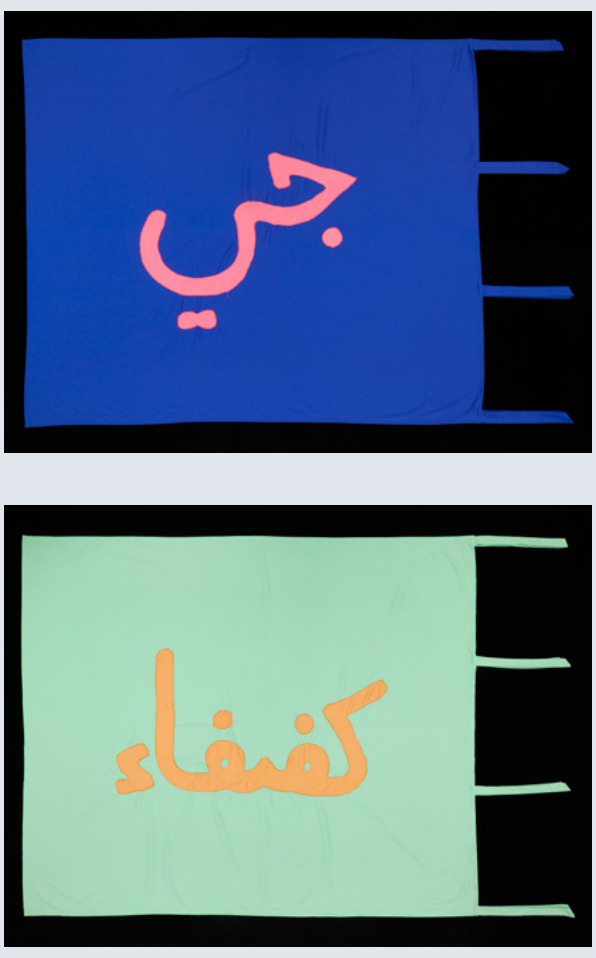
Video: single-channel, aspect ratio, colour and sound (stereo), 5 min 38 sec

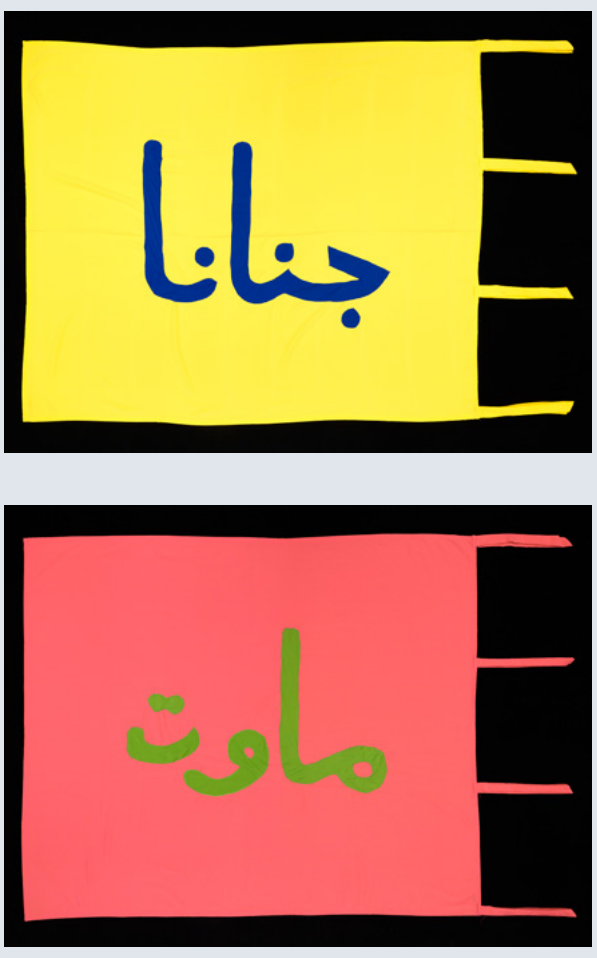
Flags: 200 × 200 cm each (12 pieces), 200 × 300 cm each (2 pieces)

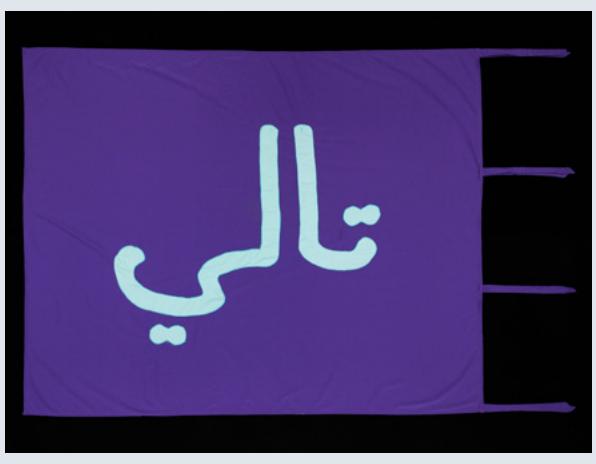
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

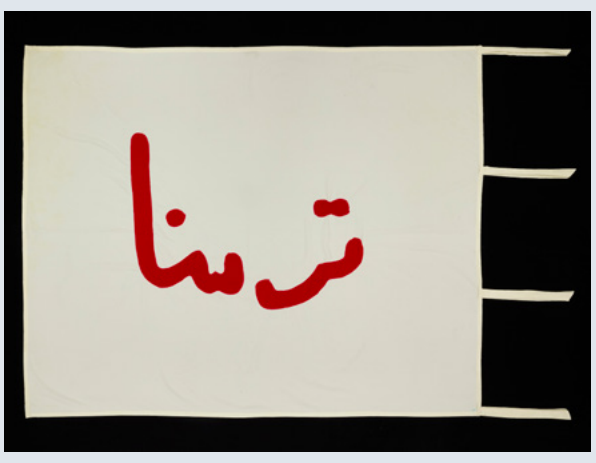
The flags used in the performance and installation carry words and concepts written in the Jawi script, a permutation of Arabic script used to write local languages in the Indo-Malay Archipelago since Islam spread in the region from at least the thirteenth century onwards. However, the words on the flags come from languages outside those spoken or written in the archipelago.

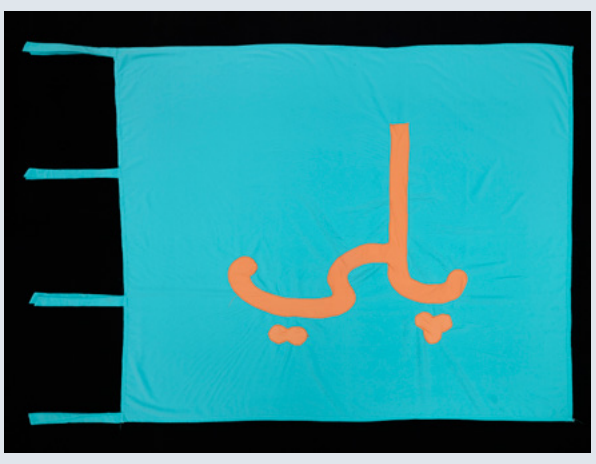
جنانا	jnāna (Sanskrit: knowledge)
جي	jai (Thai: heart)
ماوت	māwt (Arabic: death)
كفنفاء	kapayapaan (Tagalog: freedom)
تالي	talay (Thai: sea)
جوجور	jujur (Indonesian: honest)
اوماه	omah (Javanese: house/home)
عقل	‘aql (Arabic: intellect, ratio)
كتروعان	katarungan (Tagalog: fairness; justice)
ترسنا	tresna (Javanese/Balinese: love)
بكت	bakti (Indonesian: devotion)
پلي	nyali (Indonesian: gut; courage)

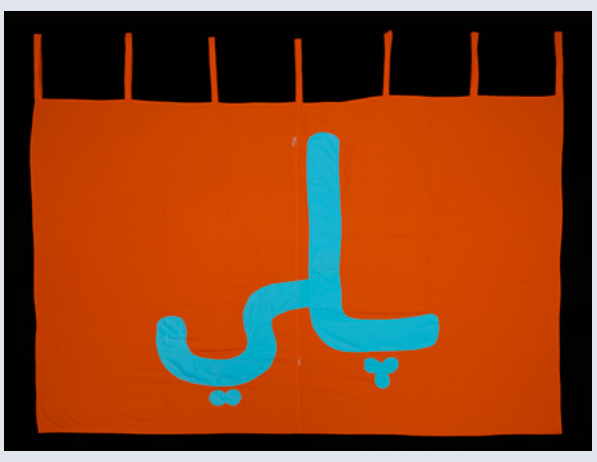












1964
Tunku Abdul Rahman is Prime Minister, Tun Razak is Deputy Prime Minister.

1964–1965
Tunku Abdul Rahman is Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tun Razak is Minister for Negotiating, Having Charge of Matters Arising Out of Indonesian Confrontation and in charge of Information and Broadcasting.

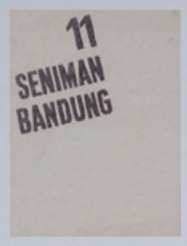
1964–1965
Pemuda joins Tunku Abdul Rahman and the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Subandrio, in a meeting in Bangkok to discuss the ending of the military-backed coup plotting against President Sukarno and the Indonesian government and promote the Indonesian Communist Party.

1964–1965
Pemuda joins Tunku Abdul Rahman and the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Subandrio, in a meeting in Bangkok to discuss the military-backed coup plotting against President Sukarno and the Indonesian government and promote the Indonesian Communist Party.

1965
Tun Razak (Malaysia) and **Tun Sri Lanang** (Singapore) are appointed to the Cabinet of Malaysia

عقل
ترسنا

The third exhibition of *11 Bandung Artists* opens at Jakarta Culture Hall. **Sadali** and **Pirous** are amongst the artists featured. This exhibition is considered to be the turning point in Indonesian modern art history, as Bandung artists began to dominate the country's artistic and cultural scenes. **Sadali's** calligraphic painting *Lukisan* is one of the paintings included in this exhibition.



Exhibition catalogue for *11 Seniman Bandung* (11 Bandung Artists), Balai Budaya Jakarta (Jakarta Cultural Hall), Indonesia, 13–22 December 1966

Courtesy of A.D. Pirous and Serambi Pirous

1967

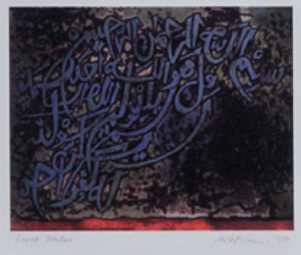
Soeharto is sworn in as the new President of Indonesia.

1969

Pameran Seni Rupa Seniman Bandung (Art Exhibition of Bandung Artists) is held to introduce the "progress and achievement" of the Seni Rupa Bandung. Sponsored by the Indonesia-America Institute which had just resumed activities in Jakarta the year before, the exhibition features seven young faculty members, including Erna G. Pirous (b. 1941), **Haryadi Suadi**, Imam Bukhori (b. 1939), Rustam Arief (b. 1931), Sanento Yuliman (1941–1992), T. Sutanto (b. 1941) and Umi Dahlan (1941–2009).

Sadali participates in several exhibitions in the UK, Switzerland, and the X Biennale de Sao Paulo in Brazil.

Pirous receives a two-year fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation to study printmaking and graphic design at the Rochester Institute of Technology, New York. During this period, he visits the Islamic Art Gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and becomes inspired to explore Islamic visual materials rooted in his Acehnese background.



A.D. Pirous
Sura Ikhlas
1971
Color etching on paper, 40 × 50 cm, Edition 8/10
Collection of National Gallery Singapore

The print *Sura Ikhlas* (1970) is the earliest manifestation of **Pirous's** preoccupation with Islamic/Quranic calligraphy.

Suadi graduates from the Printmaking Studio in Bandung.

1970

Suadi is appointed as a lecturer to teach printmaking at Seni Rupa ITB, where he stays until his retirement in 2004.

Sadali holds his first solo exhibition at the Goethe-Institut in Jakarta. His works are also featured in *Indonesian Painting Exhibition* at Church Center in New York City, which is sponsored by the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs.

Sadali serves as the chair and senior designer of the Design Center for the Indonesian Pavilion at Osaka Expo '70, creating a mural titled *Prelude* on one of the pavilion walls. **Suadi** is also a member of **Sadali's** team of designers. The Indonesian Pavilion presents a small survey titled *Modern Indonesian Art*, displaying works by Affandi, Sudjojono, Edhi Sunarso, Hendra Gunawan, **Sadali**, But Muchtar, Srihadi Soedarsono, **Pirous** and **Suadi** amongst others.

Photographic documentation by Haryadi Suadi at the Indonesian Pavilion, Expo Osaka 1970, Japan by the artist.

Courtesy of Haryadi Suadi family

While working for the Expo, **Suadi** produces a linocut print book titled *Hari Ini Kita Berdua* (Today We Are Together). Featuring poems in both Indonesian and Japanese, the book is published in September 1970.

Haryadi Suadi
Hari Ini Kita Berdua (Today We Are Together)
1970
Print book of linocuts on paper
Courtesy of Haryadi Suadi family

Suadi is awarded Best Woodcut Print at *The 23rd Sozo Bijutsu Exhibition* at the Osaka Municipal Museum of Art (now Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts), Japan.

1971

The *Grup 18* (Group 18) exhibition at Jakarta Arts Council celebrates the development of Seni Rupa Bandung and its artists. The exhibition features both older and young faculty members, including **Sadali**, **Pirous** and **Suadi**. **Pirous** exhibits *Sura Ikhlas*, and **Suadi** shows his woodcut print *Kaligrafi I*.

Exhibition catalogue for *Grup 18* (Group 18), Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta, Indonesia, 18–27 August 1971
Collection of National Gallery Singapore Library & Archives
D-115-MA1-12

Supported by the John D. Rockefeller III Fund, **Sadali** visits various art training and educational institutions in Mexico, the US and Europe.

1972

Sadali holds two solo exhibitions in Jakarta, one at Galeri Cipta at Taman Ismail Marzuki and another at the Chase Manhattan Bank. The latter is co-sponsored by Alexander Papadimitriou, one of the most prominent art collectors in Indonesia.

Exhibition catalogue for *Paintings by Ahmad Sadali*, a show for Chase Manhattan's Art Programme at Chase Manhattan Bank, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1970.

Courtesy of A.D. Pirous and Serambi Pirous

Upon his return to Indonesia, **Pirous** stages *The Islamic Calligraphic Painting Exhibition*, his first solo show that highlights a series of calligraphic paintings at the Chase Manhattan Bank in Jakarta.

Pirous participates in *Pameran Besar Seni Lukis Indonesia* (The Great Exhibition of Indonesian Paintings) organised by the Jakarta Arts Council.

Exhibition catalogue for *Paintings by A.D. Pirous*, a show for Chase Manhattan's Art Programme at Chase Manhattan Bank, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1972.

Courtesy of A.D. Pirous and Serambi Pirous

1973

A year after **Sadali** and **Pirous's** solo exhibitions at the Chase Manhattan Bank as part of the bank's art programme, **Suadi** exhibits his woodcut prints for the same programme.

1975

Several students at Seni Rupa ITB, including Jim Supangkat, join forces with students at the Indonesian Academy of Fine Art (ASRI) to hold the exhibition *Pameran Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia* (Indonesian New Art Exhibition) at Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta. Known collectively as the Indonesian New Art Movement (GSRBI), this group of artists launched a manifesto and hold several exhibitions in 1975, 1979 and 1987.

The manifesto and a selection of works by GSRBI artists can be viewed at the UOB Southeast Asia Gallery, at Level 4 of the Supreme Court Wing.

In the mid-1970s, **Suadi** meets with the Cirebonese glass painter, Rastika, and begins to produce glass paintings. *Frenologia* is one of **Suadi's** earliest glass paintings by the artist that is still in the family collection.

Haryadi Suadi
Frenologia (Phrenology)
1975, Enamel paint on reverse glass painting, 33 × 30 cm
Courtesy of Haryadi Suadi's family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

National Gallery Singapore wishes to thank the following individuals and organisations, including those who did not wish to be named, for their generous support of the exhibition:

ARTWORK LENDERS (ARCHIVAL MATERIALS)
A.D. Pirous
Haryadi Suadi

SPECIAL THANKS
United Overseas Bank

Arahmaiani
Michael Binuko and Kemas Indra Bisma
Dr Alexandra Dalferro
Dr Kenneth M. George
Dr A. Rikrik Kusmara
Merry Mariam, Radi Arwinda, and Risa Astrini
A.D. Pirous and Erna G. Pirous
Adi Rahmatullah
Ravi Salim and family
Dr Jérôme Samuel

EXHIBITION TEAM

PROJECT DIRECTOR
Horikawa Lisa

CURATOR
Anissa Rahadiningtyas

CURATORIAL FACILITATOR, DALAM SOUTHEAST ASIA
Shabbir Hussain Mustafa

ARTWORK & EXHIBITION MANAGEMENT
Leon Ang
Sebastian Chun
Hafiz Bin Osman
Mariko Hirano
Yvette Lai
Maria Del Mar Cusso Solano
Muhamad Wafa
Poi Shi Hui
Shanelle Theo
Aaron Yuri Tay
Thong Ming Woei

and all our colleagues at the Heritage Conservation Centre

EXHIBITION DESIGN AND FABRICATION
SPACELogic Pte Ltd

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT
Kong Yin Ying
Lam Yong Ling
Wong Jia Min
Melissa Wong

CURATORIAL PROGRAMMES
Erica Lai
Joleen Loh

LEARNING
Hisyam Nasser
Rachel Oh

LIBRARY & ARCHIVES
Andy Koh
Muhammad Faisal

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
Rachel Tan
Yeo Yu Ting

PROGRAMMES
Dee Chia
Maria Khoo Joseph

and the entire team at National Gallery Singapore.

١٨٦
الكفه

IMAGE CREDITS

Pages 3, 55–63: Image credit: Joseph Nair, Memphis West Pictures

Pages 6, 36, 40, 53: Image courtesy of National Heritage Board, Singapore.

Page 13. A.D. Pirous. *Subuh/ Doa VIII* (Dawn / Prayer VIII) (1980). Silkscreen print on paper, 70 x 50 cm, edition 3/70. Collection of National Gallery Singapore. © A.D. Pirous. Image courtesy of National Heritage Board, Singapore.

Page 35. Detail of *Lukisan* (Painting) (1966) by Ahmad Sadali. Oil on canvas, 99.5 x 81 cm. Collection of National Gallery Singapore. Image courtesy of National Heritage Board, Singapore.

Page 37. Detail of *Tulisan Merah* (Red Writing) (1974) by A.D. Pirous. Marble paste and acrylic paint on canvas, 107 x 82 cm. Collection of National Gallery Singapore. © A.D. Pirous. Image courtesy of National Heritage Board, Singapore.

Page 38–39, 41–43. © A.D. Pirous. Image courtesy of National Heritage Board, Singapore.

Page 44. Detail of *Kaligrafi* (Calligraphy) (1971) by Haryadi Suadi. Woodcut print on paper, 81.5 x 72 cm, edition 3/25. Collection of National Gallery Singapore. © Haryadi Suadi Family. Image: Cornell University Library Digital Collection – Bandung Artist Collection, courtesy of Michael Binuko Sri Herawan.

Pages 45–51. © Haryadi Suadi Family. Image: Cornell University Library Digital Collection – Bandung Artist Collection, courtesy of Michael Binuko Sri Herawan

Page 52. Detail of one of 14 flags from *Crossing Point* (2011) by Arahmaiani. 14 flags and video. Collection of National Gallery Singapore. Image courtesy of National Heritage Board, Singapore.

Page 65. Haryadi Suadi. *Buroq* (The Buraq). 1986. Enamel paint on reverse glass painting, 83.5 x 79.5 cm. Collection of National Gallery Singapore. © Haryadi Suadi Family. Image: Cornell University Library Digital Collection – Bandung Artist Collection, courtesy of Michael Binuko Sri Herawan.

CURATORIAL ESSAY

Figs. 1, 3, 5, 8–10. Image courtesy of National Heritage Board, Singapore.

Fig. 2. "1958 Kerk van Bandung" by Paulbrugman is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 on Wikimedia Commons.

Fig. 6. © A.D. Pirous. Image courtesy of National Heritage Board, Singapore. Fig. 6. Collection of National Gallery Singapore Library & Archives, RC-I15-MA1-12.

Figs. 7, 11, 12. © Haryadi Suadi Family. Image: Cornell University Library Digital Collection – Bandung Artist Collection, courtesy of Michael Binuko Sri Herawan.

TIMELINE

1924, 1978
© Ravi Ahmad Salim. Image courtesy of Ahmad Sadali's family.

1932
Photograph by Anissa Rahadiningtyas

1938, 1966 (below), 1970, 1975, 1979, 1991, 1996
© Haryadi Suadi Family. Image courtesy of Haryadi Suadi Family,

1947
Collection of the Nationaal Museum van Wereledculturen, TM-10002363.

1954
© Ravi Ahmad Salim, © Adi Rahmatullah. Image courtesy of Ahmad Sadali's family.

1965
Kroch Library Asia Collection, Cornell University

1966 (top), 1972, 1976, 1983
Image courtesy of A.D. Pirous and Serambi Pirous

1969, 1982
Collection of National Gallery Singapore. Image courtesy of National Heritage Board, Singapore.

1971
Collection of National Gallery Singapore Library & Archives, RC-I15-MA1-12.

1982
Image courtesy of A.D. Pirous

1985
© Sanento Yuliman's Family. Image courtesy of A.D. Pirous and Serambi Pirous.

1991
© Haryadi Suadi. Image: Cornell University Library Digital Collection – Bandung Artist Collection, courtesy of Michael Binuko Sri Herawan.

1994, 2022
©Arahmainani. Image courtesy of Arahmaiani.

2006
Image courtesy of The James H.W. Thompson Foundation, Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok, Thailand

Published in conjunction with *The Neglected Dimension* (7 July 2023–25 February 2024), an exhibition organised by National Gallery Singapore at Dalam Southeast Asia in the UOB Southeast Asia Gallery.

© 2023 National Gallery Singapore

Copyright of the content in this publication may also reside in persons and entities other than, and in addition to, the Gallery. The Gallery seeks to share our artworks with as many people as we can. We are fully committed to respecting the intellectual property rights of others and always use our best efforts to obtain permission for artwork images used. Please contact us at **content@nationalgallery.sg** should you have any queries.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without prior permission of the copyright holders.

Published in 2023

Please direct all enquiries to the publisher at:

National Gallery Singapore
1 St Andrew's Road, #01-01
Singapore 178957

AUTHOR
Anissa Rahadiningtyas

MANAGING EDITOR
Ong Zhen Min

PROJECT EDITOR
Melissa Wong

SPECIAL THANKS
Lam Yong Ling, Shabbir Hussain Mustafa, Wong Jia Min

—
Designed by MAKE Design

—
National Library Board, Singapore
Cataloguing in Publication Data

Name(s): Rahadiningtyas, Anissa, contributor. | National Gallery Singapore, organizer, publisher.

Title: The neglected dimension / author, Anissa Rahadiningtyas.
Other Title(s): Dalam Southeast Asia.

Description: Singapore : National Gallery Singapore, 2023.
Identifier(s): ISBN 978-981-18-7701-8 (PDF)

Subject(s): LCSH: Islamic art--Indonesia--Exhibitions. | Calligraphy, Arabic--Indonesia--Exhibitions. | Art, Abstract--Indonesia--Exhibitions. | Art, Indonesian--Exhibitions.

Classification: DDC 709.598--dc23

DALAM
SOUTHEAST
ASIA