

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

For Immediate Release

CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA

Private view: 18 June 2012, 6-8pm

Running Dates: 19 June– 4 August 2012

This exhibition is held in collaboration with Matthias Arndt.

Ben Brown Fine Arts, London, is proud to present *Contemporary Indonesia*, a group exhibition of Indonesia's most seminal and talented artists. The artistic production and innovation emanating from Indonesia, one of the most culturally and religiously diverse countries in the world, is staggering. In the last two decades, Indonesia has experienced major political change and globalization, resulting in more provocative, challenging and critical work from its artists. While Indonesia has always had a rich artistic tradition, with many artists forming collaboratives and exhibition spaces on the islands of Java and Bali in particular, it is only the last two decades that the market and audience for their work have expanded globally. The artists included in this exhibition are FX Harsono, Nyoman Masriadi, Eko Nugroho, J. Ariadhitya Pramuhendra, Agus Suwage, Ugo Untoro, Entang Wiharso and Yunizar.

FX Harsono (born 1949) is known for critically addressing Indonesian political and social issues and is particularly interested in notions of self-identity. Born in the village of Blitar to Chinese-Indonesian parents, Harsono reflects upon the history and injustices of Chinese-Indonesian minorities in his powerful body of work, which includes painting, installations and videos. His latest works focus on writing his Chinese name, in response to a series of laws President Suharto enacted during his regime (1967-1998) that restricted the practice of Chinese customs and religion to private domains and forced Chinese-Indonesians to change their names to Indonesian-sounding names.

Nyoman Masriadi (born 1973) is celebrated for his highly detailed, humorous, iconic portraits often depicting monumental, superhuman figures. While his paintings are rooted in Indonesian cultural history, he presents very contemporary subject matter taken from global popular culture, offering his own wry, ironic social commentary. His paintings are superbly executed, exemplifying his formal training as a painter at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta, while his figures exude a sculptural and heroic quality.

Eko Nugroho (born 1977) began his career as a local street artist and is now exhibited internationally to great acclaim. Influenced by graffiti, global popular culture and Javanese culture, the artist playfully creates imaginary figures and animated worlds in media including embroidery, sculpture, murals, works on paper, video, comic books and *wayang* (Javanese shadow puppets).

J. Ariadhitya Pramuhendra (born 1984) constantly explores issues of self-identity in his work, addressing notions of ethnicity, religion and family. Pramuhendra creates hauntingly striking charcoal drawings often based on photographs from his childhood and typically inserts himself into his works. He also creates elaborate installations that include his charcoal drawings and canvases as well as banal and burnt objects.

Agus Suwage (born 1959) is another artist who is interested in self-portraiture as a means to explore sensitive cultural and social issues. Suwage is intrigued by notions of transience and death, his works often depicting *vanitas*. Suwage began his career as a graphic designer, having studied at the prestigious Bandung Institute of Technology. He works in a variety of media including painting, drawing, sculpture and installation.

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Ugo Untoro (born 1970) is an unconventional, outspoken and complex artist interested in issues of identity, death and Indonesian contemporary culture. Untoro's body of work includes works on paper, paintings, installations and poetry. Recently, tragically deformed horse skeletons have figured in his drawings and installations.

Entang Wiharso (born 1967) explores Indonesian socio-political issues through an intimate examination of human relationships, traditions and psyche. His highly detailed and fantastical works often depict corporeal oddities and connect man with nature. He works in a variety of media, from extremely narrative drawings to elaborate installations.

Yunizar (born 1971) creates enigmatic, obsessive works which encompass a wide visual vocabulary of mythical creatures, scribbles and poetry that is highly personal and mystical. A member of the Jendela group, one of Indonesia's most renowned art collectives, Yunizar fills his canvases with his unique, frenetic, haphazard imagery that is at once coded and extremely evocative.

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