

PRESS RELEASE

18 MAY 2024

ROH presents two concurrent solo exhibitions by Agus Suwage, entitled *Ziggurat*, and Nadya Jiwa, entitled *sadar*.

Jakarta, May 2024 - ROH is pleased to present *Ziggurat* and *sadar*, two concurrent solo exhibitions respectively showing the works of Agus Suwage (b. 1959, Purworejo) in Gallery Orange and Nadya Jiwa (b. 1994, Braunschweig) in Gallery Apple. This is the first solo exhibition of both artists with the gallery.

In *Ziggurat*, Agus Suwage presents as the foundation of the exhibition, *Monumen Ego (Monument to Ego)* a towering 5.5 meter high monolithic sculptural installation built through constructing rectangular structures made with zinc panels, which he has been accustomed to utilizing for many of his works in the past, as well as its accompanying studies, 12 works on paper that depict the artist's self-portrait in scale and relation to the sculpture in various permutations. A golden emulsion of sorts seems to be flowing upon "*Monumen Ego (Monument to Ego)*" dripping down below, further accentuated by the illumination of a single fluorescent lamp. This gold pigment then appears to breach the confines of the installation and becomes a base material for Suwage to have then developed a new body of luminous works that interweave his familiar tobacco juice with gold leaf.

In an interview with the artist, Suwage has expressed his interest in the utilization of gold as a symbol of "glorification", or at least the ornamentation of a certain feature the artist intends to accentuate. The artist also sees gold like a "fire, or a wound", and this allows the viewer to understand the dripping golden pigment on the upper surface of the installation as dripping blood. Whereas initially gold was utilized in the sculptural installation as a symbol of hubris and pride and therefore to be avoided, the works on paper that contain tobacco juice and gold leaf seem to consider the idea of gold in a different light altogether.

This series of compositions seem to investigate lines, gradations, in contrast with shimmering gold leaf in order to create startling appositions of imagery at once luminous in terms of its rumination on meditation and transcendence, as well as references to the art historical canon Suwage finds himself very much influenced by. Gold is now a symbol for tolerance, to speak towards the artist's own support towards feminism, exemplified through Frida Kahlo's personal journey, or bodily wounds taken once again from Christian references corresponding to the crucifixion, that we all experience in life in more ways than one. Gold acts also as a bridge between the artist and Joseph Beuys, stirring the notion that "every human being is an artist", afforded their correspondingly equal dignity and value, as well as creative potential. Gold is as well a metaphor for the transcendental—in the work "*Moksa*"—as providing a bridge by which one may float away from the ground in death onto a higher state of being. Gold also becomes pertinent to meditation in being cognitively as well as emotionally affective to one's own universe.

In *sadar*, ROH has compiled a number of paintings made in the past few years by Nadya Jiwa that contain certain thematic as well as aesthetic considerations that have never been shown together in one presentation previously. Explained in the essay by Alia Swastika, the title *sadar (awareness)*

becomes a spark towards seeing how artistic practices contain complex processes associated with awareness as well as perceptions regarding reality: how Nadya is able to consider those things that appear and do not appear, as well as things that exist within the realm of the intangible.

Nadya Jiwa comes from a generation of artists who has experienced firsthand the overflowing of visual exposure as an indirect consequence of digital progress and emergent technologies. Raised by a family of artists herself, Jiwa's early exposure to the art world may have led her to begin questioning the purpose and significance of art in contemporary society since she was young. In *sadar*, Nadya expresses a certain sensitivity as well as sensibility that seem shaped by her own multiple layers of complex identity: as a woman, as a Sundanese, as a part of her current generation with its corresponding complexity, as well as an artist who sees reality in a different light.

Jiwa molds her interrelationship to daily narratives and references from pop culture, such as in story books from her childhood, songs, film and the such. A number of her works derive inspiration from the industry of pop culture, such as television series that have become quite well-known, so that visual cues may be present for the viewer to understand the work. Other works depart from local narratives that exist within layers of mythology and ancestral stories, such as in *Cipamali* and *Dayang Sumbi*. In her search for meaning in local myths and legends such as these, Nadya Jiwa indeed expresses how the traces of spirituality in communities are highly contingent upon their own attitudes towards mythologies.

"Nadya Jiwa's artwork, in my view, presents an opportunity to reconsider the subjectivity of an artist in interpreting a certain phenomenon or situation and by extension open up space for others to connect their own interpretations from the vantage point of their own knowledge and emotions. There exists a space, or void, in which things that are alien and unknown, unnamed, as well as invisible lives which appear haphazardly. Nadya Jiwa confronts us with narratives we might ourselves tend to steer clear away from. How can we imagine our emotions, or internal worlds, as expressed upon a canvas? And how does the examination of such feelings have implications upon a greater social praxis?" - Alia Swastika

Ziggurat and *sadar* are open by invitation on 18 May 2024 and to the public starting on 22 May 2024 to 23 June 2024. The gallery will be closed on Monday, Tuesday, and Public Holiday. Follow the gallery's Instagram account @rohprojects or reach out to info@rohprojects.net for further updates on operational hours and announcements of public programs.

AGUS SUWAGE

B. 1959, Purworejo, Indonesia

Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Agus Suwage is one of South East Asia's most celebrated artists who works through many different mediums to investigate the many notions of identity, whether from the point of view of the sociopolitical, the national, or the religious, from the unique vantage point of his own multifaceted upbringing. Suwage's own mixed Chinese-Javanese heritage, and his experience as a Christian convert to Islam, have informed his approach to cultural pluralism and religious syncretism. The specter of violence recurs in many of his works, creating a somber mood that is leavened by humor and an irreverent spirit of self-mockery and irony. Suwage is uncannily adept at utilizing watercolor in combination with tobacco juice on paper to delicately showcase a sensitivity to the medium, balancing color, line, and drawing, to create startling juxtapositions of images that are at once bright and almost satirical, with insinuations of much darker, multilayered meaning that resonates more universally.

Agus Suwage has participated in exhibitions in various notable exhibitions and institutions around the globe. His most recent exhibition was a mid-career survey, *The Theater of Me at Museum MACAN*, Jakarta, Indonesia (2022). Selected solo exhibitions include *Room of Mine* at Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York, USA (2017); ◀◀|||▶▶ at Nadi Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia (2014); *Cycle No. 3* at ARNDT Contemporary Art, Berlin Germany (2013); *CIRCL3* at Singapore Tyler Print Institute Gallery, Singapore (2009); *Beauty in the Dark* at Avanthay Contemporary Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland (2008); *Pause / Re-play* at Soemardja Gallery, Bandung Institute of Technology, Bandung, Indonesia (2005); *Playing the Fool* at Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2004); and *Ough...Nguik!!* at the National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia (2003). Selected group exhibitions include *SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now* at Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung Taiwan (2019) and National Art Center and Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2017); *+63 +62* at Silverlens Gallery, Manila, Philippines (2019); *Terra Incognita* at Hilger Brotkunsthalle, Vienna, Austria (2017); *After Utopia* at the Singapore Art Museum, Singapore (2015); *#FAMILYFRIENDS* at ROH Projects, Jakarta, Indonesia (2015); *SIP! Indonesian Art Today* at ARNDT, Singapore and ARNDT, Berlin, Germany (2013); *The Golden Age* at Ark Galerie, Jakarta (2009), Indonesia; *Neo-Nation* at Biennale Yogyakarta IX at Jogja National Museum, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2007); *Thermocline of Art* at New Asian Waves, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany (2007); *Masa Lalu Masa Lupa* at Cemeti Art House, Yogyakarta, Indonesia (2006); *Urban/Culture* at the 2nd CP Biennale, Bank Indonesia Museum, Jakarta, Indonesia; and the 3rd Gwangju Biennale: *Man and Space*, Gwangju, South Korea (2000).

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NADYA JIWA

B. 1994, Braunschweig, Germany
Lives and works in Bandung, Indonesia

Nadya Jiwa precipitates impressions as well as images that form in her work. Consuming information, human nature is presented in conjunction with a certain composition of reality through thin movements and strokes that may at once be derived from more cognitive considerations, while departing from intuition. Symbolism is deftly interweaved in Jiwa's paintings and drawings in an attempt to distill a cacophony of interactions, information exchange, as well as development of her external world. It is as if she attempts to share a certain sensibility of personal knowledge and impression that approaches more spiritual considerations, impressions that are at once clear and yet uncanny, and of truths that seem devoid of meaning and yet linger.

Jiwa received her Bachelor in Arts from the Bandung Institute of Technology with a concentration in painting. Selected exhibitions include solo presentation *Khayal | Chimeric* with ROH at Liste Showtime (2021); duo presentation with Rizal N. Ramadhan, Batang Mati, *Cendawan Tumbuh* at Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, Bandung, Indonesia (2022). Her group exhibitions include Art Basel Hong Kong with ROH, Hong Kong (2023); Art Collaboration Kyoto with ROH, Kyoto, Japan (2022); Art Jakarta Virtual with ROH (2020-2021); S.E.A. Focus with ROH at Gillman Barracks, Singapore (2020); *Jauh Tak Antara, Sepilihan Karya 20 Perupa Bandung* at NuArt Sculpture Park, Bandung, Indonesia (2018); *Getok Tular #2: Spacing Out (Lamunanku...)* at Omni Space, Bandung, Indonesia (2018); 15x15x15 at Galeri Soemardja, Bandung, Indonesia (2016); *Smile is the Answer* by Catalyst Art Shop Jakarta & Kopi Keliling at Local Fest 4.0, Grand Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia (2015); *Lunch Time!* at Kanal Art Space, Jakarta, Indonesia (2013); and *Apa Saja dan di Mana Saja* Woodcut Exhibition at Galeri Soemardja, Bandung, Indonesia (2013). Nadya Jiwa is the Silver Winner of the UOB Painting of the Year, Emerging Artist Category in 2019.

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ROH is a gallery initiated in 2014 that aims to serve the Indonesian art ecosystem by building a consistent local program, while simultaneously fostering a broader, borderless dialogue. ROH has played a more nomadic role in the past couple of years while building its new permanent space, exploring unconventional presentations for artists in dynamic temporal settings and situations. In 2022, ROH has moved into its new permanent space in Jalan Surabaya 66, Jakarta, carefully reconsidering a colonial mid-century house into a flexible space for contemporary art.

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For further information, please reach out to info@rohprojects.net.

Wednesday - Friday, 13:00 - 19:00

Saturday - Sunday, 11:00 - 19:00

Closed Monday, Tuesday and public holiday

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