

ROH

PRESS RELEASE

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ROH is delighted to share with you our upcoming exhibition, *Warna Hidup*, a solo exhibition by Oototol.

Jakarta, March 2026 - ROH is delighted to share with you our upcoming exhibition *Warna Hidup*, a solo exhibition by Oototol.

Marking Oototol's first solo exhibition in Jakarta, this two-venue presentation captures the pluralism that defined the late Balinese artist's approach. Working in Chinese ink with bamboo pens and brushes, Oototol (b.?-2009) developed a consistent practice within a constellation of practitioners in Bali known familiarly as Murni, Mokoh, Mondo, whose formal affinities register across his works. Often framed within these influences, this presentation focuses rather on an engagement with Oototol's contributions with his singular vision.

The exhibition's title, *Warna Hidup*, in Indonesian meaning "the colour of life", may not be literally traced in Oototol's works as necessitated by the exclusively monochromatic lens of his ink. But it is rather about his creative misreadings that give colour to the everyday and transgressive, the infectious quality of his way of seeing that touches every corner of the everyday to the mythical. The military uniformed self-portrait, recurring across the paintings, is at once part of Oototol's social fabric yet distinct in fashion and identity. The same figure in the same attire, clones into different contexts, different encounters, until what is meant to signify control instead reveals an extraordinary plasticity.

It is tempting to speak of Oototol's practice in terms of subversion or critique, of how he seemed to debase a common symbol of power, or else how that same power seems to absorb life into its logic, even in its own mockery. But such readings risk domesticating what is genuinely strange and unassimilable in the work. In a present where such iconography has become inseparable from competing visions of political futurity, it is worth exploring what Oototol was leaving behind that we have not yet been able to process, and what demands his work continue to place on us who seek to understand them today.

With essay contributions by Hera Chan, Roger Nelson and Ibrahim Soetomo
And public programming by Putu Sridiniari.

In partnership with Komunitas Salihara.

Follow the gallery's Instagram account @rohprojects and @ komunitas_salihara for further updates on operational hours and public program announcements.

OOTOTOL

(b. ? - 2009)

Oototol was born as Dewa Raram in the village of Pengosekan, south of Ubud in Bali and home to many traditional painters from the pre-war Pita Maha school of painting. Amidst this environment, Oototol developed a radical visual language that strayed from convention, combining raw brushwork, unusual formats, and a predominate focus on the figure of the soldier depicted in variously quotidian and transgressive scenarios.

Oototol's early life was embedded in the conditions of Bali under Japanese Occupation, and his original name "Raram" was an onomatopoeic reference to the sounds of war planes in the skies. His enduring fascination with the soldier was said to have arrived later with his interest in the speeches of Sukarno, Indonesia's first president, and stories of national heroes and generals. A coincidental discovery of the works of late Balinese artist I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih "Murni" absorbed Oototol into a dialogic group of artists including Murni, Dewa Putu Mokoh, and Edmondo "Mondo" Zanolini. Under Murni and Mondo's guidance, Oototol experimented with black Chinese ink on canvas using bamboo pens and brushes. His paintings often bear the physical marks of the conditions in which he worked - creases and folds produced by his habit of working directly on canvas on the ground of Murni's studio.

In reflecting upon Oototol's work, we recognize an organic fusion of diverse cultural and artistic elements that preserves and contemporizes the Balinese identity. Oototol himself may never have deliberately sought to create a particular stylistic approach, but his oeuvre provides a nuanced bridge, blending tradition with an approach that saw no limit to what painting and its subject matter could offer about the most trivial and interior aspects of the human experience.

ROH

ROH is a space for contemporary art that concentrates on the support of artistic and curatorial practices that push the envelope of what is possible, where experimentation is encouraged and actively responsive to its architectural context in Jakarta, Indonesia. For more than a decade, ROH has served the Southeast Asian art ecosystem and has worked towards a broader, borderless dialogue through its engagement with artists from Indonesia and beyond.

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

KOMUNITAS SALIHARA ART CENTER

Komunitas Salihara Arts Center is a privately owned arts center that was founded on 2008, and is located in the Pejaten area of Pasar Minggu in South Jakarta. The community is home to a theatre space and a gallery, and is also a place in which various art events, lectures and discussion can be held.

For further information, please reach out to info@salihara.org.

Tuesday - Sunday, 11:00 -19:00

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