

RALLY: Contemporary Indonesian Art Jompet Kuswidananto & Eko Nugroho

17 October 2012

NGV International | 18 October 2012 – 1 April 2013 | FREE



This summer sees the National Gallery of Victoria transformed by two contemporary artists from Yogyakarta's vibrant art scene, Jompet Kuswidananto and Eko Nugroho.

RALLY: Contemporary Indonesian Art – Jompet Kuswidananto & Eko Nugroho presents two perspectives on modern Indonesia through the works of Kuswidananto; a sound, installation, and video artist, and Nugroho; whose colourful murals, paintings and embroideries spill across the floor and walls of the NGV.

Tony Ellwood, NGV Director, said contemporary Southeast Asian artists have come to international prominence over the past decade.

“This is a unique opportunity to discover contemporary Indonesian art in Melbourne through the works of Kuswidananto and Nugroho, two acclaimed members of Indonesia’s new generation of artists.”

Both artists are on display in the contemporary art space on the ground floor at NGV International. In addition, Nugroho has utilised his street art-inspired aesthetic to create a specially-commissioned mural on the iconic NGV Waterwall and Kuswidananto’s *The Commoners*, which features nine figures playing mechanised drums, is dramatically suspended in Federation Court.

Nugroho’s works are grounded in both traditional and modern Indonesia; fusing street art and popular culture with traditional embroidery styles and Javanese shadow puppetry. His humorous yet unsettling social satires express strong comments on Indonesia’s politically-charged climate in a dynamic and lively manner, often featuring characters that draw on comic book graphics and graffiti from the streets of his hometown of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Kuswidananto creates installations and performances using musical instruments, video projection, personal computers and assorted found objects. His work combines visual and audio techniques to explore political and cultural identity, particularly about the people and history of Java. His works often adopt the forms of traditional Indonesian authority figures such as Java’s royal soldiers, clad in typical Dutch colonial costumes, to discuss the hybrid nature of Indonesian culture in its relationship to colonisation.

Kelly Gellatly, Senior Curator, Contemporary Art, NGV, said Kuswidananto and Nugroho are members of the energetic arts community of Yogyakarta.

“Like Kuswidananto and Nugroho, many artists cite Yogyakarta as a major influence on their work due to the city’s immense cultural heritage, with ancient and contemporary sitting side by side.

NGV NEWS

“Both artists grew up in post-reformation Indonesia; a period of great transition following the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998. This era saw a push within Indonesian society for a stronger democracy and more open political environment and it is this social-political commentary that appears strongly in their works, often in a playful yet powerful manner.”

Fight For Rice, an initiative started by Nugroho to assist local Yogyakarta artists in funding their art practice, has opened an exclusive pop-up shop within the NGV Shop at NGV International. Artist merchandise, including embroidered bags and patches produced in collaboration with local Yogyakarta craftspeople, and clothing, stickers and clocks are available alongside a range of zines from Indonesian comic collective Daging Tumbuh. Fight For Rice also sells limited-edition figurines based on Nugroho’s distinctive artwork characters.

RALLY will be accompanied by an illustrated ebook for the iPad, *RALLY: Contemporary Indonesian Art – Jompet Kuswidananto and Eko Nugroho*, available for free download in the iTunes Store from early November. The *RALLY* ebook is also viewable in the NGV Shop. This is the first digital publication to be produced by the NGV and it will feature rich multimedia elements, such as video and zoomable images, as well as essays on the artists.

The opening weekend of *RALLY: Contemporary Indonesian Art* will be celebrated with *RALLY at the NGV* on Saturday 20 October. From 10am to 5pm, hear Kuswidananto and Nugroho discuss their art practice and learn about Indonesian art, politics and music from special guest speakers. Kids are also invited to make their own Kuswidananto and Nugroho-inspired artworks. For the full program of events, visit ngv.vic.gov.au.

This exhibition forms part of NGV Summer, an exciting program of exhibitions and events at the NGV encouraging visitors to engage with and participate in great art over the warmer months.

RALLY: Contemporary Indonesian Art – Jompet Kuswidananto & Eko Nugroho is on display from 18 October 2012 to 1 April 2013 at NGV International, 180 St Kilda Road. Open Wed–Mon, 10am–5pm. Free entry.

-ends-

Exhibition generously supported by the Joan and Peter Clemenger Trust.

Supported by the Commonwealth through the Australia-Indonesia Institute of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Media contact:

Elisabeth Alexander: 03 8620 2347 | 0439 348 357 | elisabeth.alexander@ngv.vic.gov.au

Image caption:

Eko Nugroho

Indonesian 1977-

The Republic Needs More Semeleh 2011

installation at Ark Galerie, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2011

Courtesy of the artist and Ark Galerie

© Eko Nugroho

Find us on:

Facebook

Follow us on:

twitter