



# Photography, the New Favourite of Corporate Collectors

Besides friendly colleagues and a fair boss, the work environment and the office space in general have a great impact on the well-being of the employees, consequently affecting the success of a business. Research has repeatedly shown that displaying art in an office space has positive effects on the creativity, efficiency and productivity of the staff. Based on my experience in running ISA Art Advisory and after frequently working with corporate clients, I have noticed that art can set the mood or tone in the office.

PHOTOS BY Bagus Tri Laksono

**W**e bring art into the office not simply to surrender ourselves with more colour, but to emphasise the individual character of our workspace. With our clients, we have successfully combined art with the corporate world by organising temporary exhibitions and installing permanent sculptures and paintings in offices. Visitors can admire artworks when doing business with the company, while the employees benefit from a stimulating atmosphere.

Visual art has the power to convey values and emotions better than words, and it is a language which can be understood universally across language barriers. Art can also help express the mission and vision of the company or create an image for a brand. At ISA, we believe that everyone can and should enjoy art, therefore our aim is to bring art out in the public, directly to the people.

One of our recent corporate art programs was for Citi Indonesia's new office at Citibank Tower at SCBD in Jakarta. Citibank would like to have a fresh and lively art piece that aligns with Citi's corporate culture, therefore we suggested photography, an edgy alternative which also has more variety in terms of the theme to be selected. We came up with a concept focusing on trees, inspired by unstoppable growth, solid roots and the basic principles of Citibank. The selection of artworks presenting Indonesian sceneries and the tree as a metaphor was chosen to reflect and reinforce Citi Indonesia's corporate identity of strength and growth.

Photography is an accessible form of art, often more relatable and delivering a more literal message than other mediums, also explaining why photography is popular as corporate art in office surroundings. Surprisingly, collecting



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## art in design

photography has also proved to be a great investment, as shown by the sale of Andreas Gursky's Rhein II, which sold at \$4.3 million in 2011. The international acclaim of contemporary Indonesian photographers is a great indication of the new trend; artists such as Agan Harahap and his digitally manipulated photographs and Angki Purbandono with his scanography photos have a growing fanbase. For the recent Citibank project we also chose Indonesian photographers, including Yoppy Pieter and Alexander Thian, who is the other half of the upcoming artist collaboration The Jux Duo.

For its new location, Citibank was searching for something slightly unconventional, therefore for the hallway we created a quadryptich photo installation from Thian's low-angle tree photograph. Inspired by renowned Finnish video artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila's projected multi-channel piece, we installed Thian's photos in a mirror style to achieve a unique pattern. Thian shot the original photo in the magical scenery of Imogiri forest in Yogyakarta. Similar trees grow all over Indonesia and can be understood as a metaphor for Citibank, a well-rooted and steadily growing enterprise with branches all over the country.

Continuing with the tree theme, we chose a two-metre sculpture by Redy Rahadian to welcome guests at the reception desk. An interpretation of Rahadian's *Red Red* (2016), the steel sculpture resembles an elephant foot tree covered in red paint. When examined closer, one can see that the trunk is formed of people climbing and pushing each other to the top, reminding us that teamwork is essential for success. The higher it gets, the fewer people there are, indicating that only the very best succeed and actually reach the top.

Citibank Jakarta has the honour to be the first of our corporate clients to collect The Jux Duo's beautiful works. A collaboration between photographer Alexander Thian and multitalent Erza S.T., their concept could be described as the hedonistic traveller seen through the lens of a nomad photographer. The duo travels around the world to showcase batik fabrics by Iwan Tirta shot in historical locations and landmarks, which are used as settings for capturing the essence of Indonesian heritage and tradition in a contemporary fashion. Thian's sensitivity and way of capturing the light and movement through his lens complement Erza's lavish poses. Two



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artworks were selected for the Citibank project: *Parang Excursion* set in the Maldives with Erza posing in a luxurious batik from Iwan Tirta's collection, and *The Royal Escape* in the Sunda Kelapa Port, a perfect demonstration of the stark contrasts in Jakarta, where luxury meets the quotidian.

Finally, typical Indonesian sceneries shot by Alexander Thian and Yoppy Pieter gave the CEO's office a new atmosphere. We put a mosaic composed of nearly 200 photos of Indonesian sceneries in the CEO's office, depicting Lake Toba and the magical beauty of Pusuk Buhit to bring back memories of the CEO of where he is originated. These two locations are considered holy by the people of North Sumatra. Meanwhile, Yoppy Pieter's black and white *The Mountain Whisper* series found its home in the meeting room. A peek into the Indonesian rural life, each photo has a story to tell bringing a piece of the country's rich culture into the hectic business hub of Jakarta.

Decorating an office space is something I always enjoy enormously, as it is challenging yet extremely rewarding to achieve a result coherent with the corporate identity of the client. Keeping employees content can only benefit the work environment and the wise placement of unusual artworks can spark a conversation with potential clients. According to ISA's philosophy, the visual aspect of an office is as important as the quality of services it offers, since this can reflect and enhance a business' core values. Details do matter, therefore art and design elements can either support or transform the image of the brand. Often an impression, good or bad, can make or break the deal! 📌



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- 01 *The Royal Escape* in Citi Indonesia - Front Office's board room
- 02 *Red Red*, a sculpture by Redy Rahadian
- 03 A magical scenery of Imogiri forest in Yogyakarta by Alexander Thian in Citi Indonesia - Front Office's hallway
- 04 *Parang Excursion* in Citi Indonesia - Front Office's board room
- 05 A schematic skyline by Kendra Ahimsa in a corner of the Work Café of Citi Indonesia - General Office