



# Living Legacy

If an art collection is a reflection of one's true personality, one can tell that **Deddy Kusuma** is a gentleman of passion from his extensive collection

BY DEBORAH ISKANDAR

**Like the man he is**, real estate tycoon Deddy Kusuma hosted an extravagant dinner soirée on August 31 at his home in South Jakarta to celebrate his continuous support of Indonesian art. The event also served as a tribute to Kusuma's extensive art collection, which he has passionately been amassing for more than three decades.

The dinner was held as part of the VIP programme of the newly structured Art Jakarta art fair, which has successfully established itself as one of the hubs of contemporary art in Southeast Asia. As one of the Chairmen of the Board of



Patrons of Art Jakarta, Kusuma displayed more than 200 pieces of artwork from his private collection that he has steadily acquired since the early '80s.

Numerous key figures, collectors, and connoisseurs of the local and international art scenes were in attendance at the party. Besides the artworks, they were also entertained by traditional dance performances and musical numbers. The celebration allowed art enthusiasts to celebrate a successful year in art with the 11th edition of Art Jakarta, as well as revel in Kusuma's living legacy.

His own recollections of the night allow Kusuma to reflect on the high levels of interest and engagement among the guests regarding the performances that took place during the celebration. Many gave exceptional compliments about his family performances honouring their remarkable contributions towards art and the creative industries. Other performances included renowned traditional dances such as the Balinese Kecak dance, as well as more modern and contemporary dances.

"These events and performances provide a wider spectrum of spice and taste to the event, whereas just having an art exhibition at my house wouldn't complete the guests' entertainment," said Kusuma in an exclusive interview. "It was a night where everyone celebrated culture and creativity as curated by our team of creative people."

On top of that, Kusuma's estate was embellished with video mappings created by his team. From his garden walls to the mango trees that flourish across the poolside, mapped art was projected onto surfaces and decoratively enlivened the outdoor spaces. Kusuma's inspiration to integrate video mapping came about through his experience of recent events and the coming of a new era of art that takes advantage of new media. Images of Kusuma and his family were also projected onto mango and banana trees and other parts of the exterior during his welcoming speech. A section of the garden saw the roof covered down to the ground onto which a waterfall was projected, adding a more natural accent.

Kusuma was inspired to reflect the structure and ambience of his house, which is generously surrounded by trees and other flourishing plants, while the architectural structure of his domain reflected that of timeless and tranquil tropical resorts. This may also be the start of a new collection of new media and video art as it changed the sensory experience of the dinner. Known for his trademark hairstyle and oversized tinted glasses, Kusuma is a permanent fixture at various art fairs, both in Indonesia and abroad. His contribution towards the local art scene has been a fruitful one. But art collecting has

become a hobby and lifelong love affair for Kusuma. One can simply ascertain that the epitome of living with art is not an alternate, but it is the actual reality, upon entering his home.

His art collection comprises some of the most prominent names in Indonesian art, including Umi Dachlan, Hendra Gunawan, Sudjojono, and Affandi, among others. The contemporary art pieces that he owns also express his personality as a man of many and great tastes. From the works of Masriadi, which he first purchased in 1998, to the works of Handiwirman Saputra, Jumaldi Alfi, and Ronald Manulang, Kusuma not only focuses on Indonesian artists, he also owns artwork by international artists, such as Chinese artist Wang Yidong, a respected member of the Beijing Academy of Painting and a trustee of the China Artist Association.

However, his collection does not stop there. Kusuma's garden is home to myriad sculptures. An exquisite reclining lady by Fernando Botero lounges profoundly in the foreground by the swimming pool. She adds a whimsical feeling with the bow in her hair. The artwork is pleasantly complemented by a colossal stainless wall relief sculpture by Entang Wiharso titled *Untitled Text*, which is strikingly placed across the garden. The relief is inspired by traditional Javanese mysticism and ideology.

The two sculptures are accompanied by the *freezing red boys* by Chen Wenling. The shivering figures are placed inside the swimming pool, which adds life to them, like animation. Walking through the garden, there are three Yani Mariani sculptural figures that rise up like the palm trees that tower next to them, creating an area of peace and tranquillity.

As Kusuma continues to pursue his love affair with art, he has also focused his time on promoting Indonesian art and artists to the world. His new passion is to educate the younger generation to appreciate and collect art. As the ultimate host, everyone is welcome to enjoy art together with him. His relaxed demeanour, dedication, and openness to the local art community has resulted in him being the respected man that he is today. 🌟