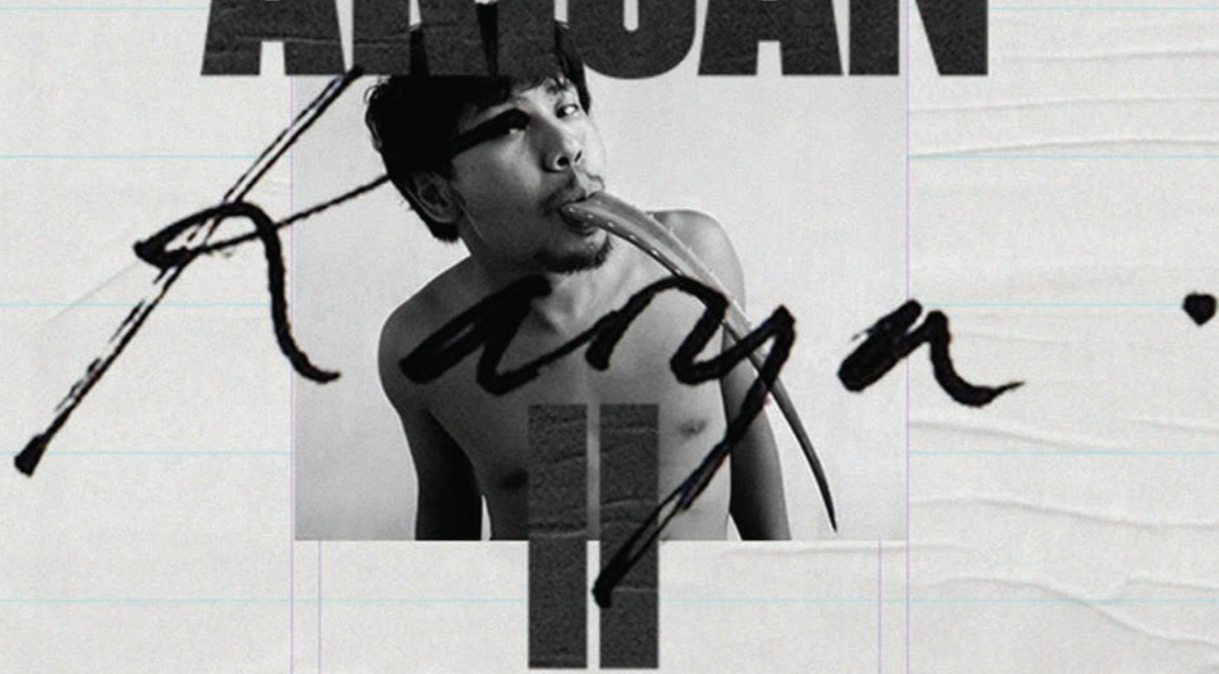


SAVE THE DATE ARISAN



25 JUNI~1 JULI 2020



Clockwise from opposite page: Museum MACAN's call for all Indonesia-based artists to join in its "Arisan Karya"; the three-dimensional renditions of "Islamic Art: The Gift of Looking Inwards" virtual exhibition at Art@WTC

We Art Together

Indonesia's art industry takes to the virtual spaces for an altogether new form of and meaning behind each piece and exhibition

By Deborah Iskandar

Who would've guessed that you could visit a sculpture park in Bandung, art fairs in Jakarta, New York and Hong Kong, or celebrate Eid al-Fitr with an Islamic art exhibition all from your couch? When the Indonesian government announced a large-scale social distancing restriction, Jakarta residents swiftly adapted to the idea of staying at home to

flatten the Covid-19 pandemic's curve. Though some companies and institutions took a big hit, the art industry is one of the industries to suffer the most.

However, it's also among those not to be silenced even by a global pandemic. Art galleries have begun to take over digital platforms, such as Instagram Live, as a form of expression and idea-sharing to

discuss how the art world handles the current situation and what could be done better. This platform has also proven to be a suitable substitute for artist talks and lectures when physical interaction in close quarters is not possible.

This is the first year that almost all major religious holidays in the country were celebrated at home from Nyepi to Easter, Vesak Day and Eid Al-Fitr. When the pandemic started, Moslems all over the world and in Indonesia were just about to start the Holy Month of Ramadan. In celebration of the Holy Month, each year ISA Art and Design and Jakarta Land usually showcases Islamic art. Due to the large-scale social restriction, PT Jakarta Land, which operates the World Trade Center building, chose to prioritise the public's safety by switching recent exhibition

to a virtual tour on its website.

Entitled "Islamic Art: The Gift of Looking Inwards", the exhibition posed self-inquisitive questions about how one reflects and interprets faith in the context of today's society. The artworks in this exhibition expressed Islam's cultural and religious values that are experienced in the day to day reality of life in Indonesia as created by prominent and emerging contemporary artists such as Arahmaiani, A.D. Pirous, Agus Baqul, Yogie Ginanjar, Mujahidin Nurrahman, Patriot Mukmin and Rispul. ISA Art and Design and Jakarta Land chose to visualise the exhibition through a digital 3D rendition of the actual exhibition space, with viewing rooms have the strongest reference towards the real physical spaces. Galleries, fairs and museums that

choose to move into virtual-reality viewing rooms enjoy the perks of being able to preserve most of its traditional art-viewing experience.

The trend continues in Indonesia in which online viewing rooms are the popular choice among art spaces of different scales. Owned by the renowned Indonesian sculptor Nyoman Nuarta, NuArt Sculpture Park had added a virtual tour feature on its webpage. "Kita Hari Ini" is an exhibition curated by the artist, Nala Nandana and Octavian Rega, in which around 100 artists were exhibited in an online gallery at The Cube Virtual Art Space. Komunitas Salihara, a local arts centre in South Jakarta, also launched its Stay (Art) Home performance series and posted past events for online viewings. The series is done in support not only of local visual artists, but also performances in

the form of poetry readings, jazz concerts as well as performance art.

MACAN Museum's platform (Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara), on the other hand, adopted a very creative initiative with its "Arisan Karya" programme to support many artists during this pandemic. This is an open call to any artists based in the country to submit their works with 103 artists chosen for each round. Tickets are sold at Rp1mil each, an equal of US\$65, and buyers will receive an artwork through an online raffle at MACAN's Instagram Live at @museummacan and @shopatmacan_id.

Collectors and supporters now have a rare chance to acquire a work by leading Indonesian artists, an up-and-coming, or a yet-to-be-discovered star. Some artists who have pledged support for the platform include Melati Suryodarmo, Tisna Sanjaya, Saleh Husein, Agus Suwage and Ika Vantiani. The June raffle tickets were sold out mere minutes after the registration, and MACAN has recreated this programme from June 25 to July 1 before the museum reopens.

Indonesia's two home-grown art fairs, Art Moments and Art Jakarta, have cancelled this year's editions, but continues to support the galleries that were to exhibit by distributing catalogues through emails to collectors and database. All these efforts reflect the collective resilience and love of the art world ultimately drives all collectors and enthusiasts alike to see, learn and support art in a new way. In these times of hardship, N.H.Kleinbaum's famed quote from "Dead Poets Society" is all the more apt:

"We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion. And medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for."