

Indonesian Art

DEBORAH ISKANDAR DELVES INTO THE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN ARTISTS IN THE NATION'S ART AND IDENTITY

Tomen's role in art history has been shrouded in anonymity, confined sidelined in many cultures, including Indonesia. We know of Raden Saleh, the Javanese Nobleman turned Father of Indonesian painting, or S. Sudjojono, the father of Indonesian Modern Art. But how much do we know of the role Indonesian female artists played in defining and revolutionising the Indonesian art identity?

When talking about Indonesian art identity, Emiria Soenassa should be one of the first names that comes to mind, but sadly, the art public often forgets her. The Tidore Princess

was part of a group of artists that lived and worked around the period of our nation's in- ity of Slipi, Jakarta. The city sadly took down in the realm of craft and kitsch, dependence. She was active in Persagi, one of the sculpture in 1987 because of a flyover road the earliest artist groups in this nation, which reconstruction. She has contributed signifiactively sought the Indonesian art identity. cantly to Indonesian art development as a se-Contextually, the inception of PERSAGI and nior lecturer in ITB until 2003, and through her other organisations became evidence of the public sculptures found all across Indonesia. rising of Indonesian Nationalism. Her depic-

rather than downwards or to the side, as seen in one of her artworks, entitled "Potret Wanita Tua" (Portrait of an Old Lady).

Rita Widagdo Wizzeman was one of the three founders of the first academic sculpture tertiary education course in Indonesia. The field of study was realised in 1946 via the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design of the Bandung Institute of Technology. Her sculptures became one of Bandung's sculptural formalism's first proponents amidst the many expressive or realistic sculpture styles. During the Indonesian development era, the Jakarta regional government commissioned her to create a monumental sculpture titled "Dinamika dan Gerak" (Dynamism and Movement) in 1974 in the vicin-

tion of Nusantara females extend beyond the Another prominent sculptor in Indonesia is stereotypical Balinese dancer and Java-centric Dolorosa Sinaga. Dolorosa Sinaga graduated subject matters. Her paintings are ethno- from Institut Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Art Ingraphical. She depicted individuals, social stitute) in 1977 and continued her studies at situations, cultures, and everyday life from St. Martin's School of Art, London. While Rita diverse Indonesian ethnic groups, from Day- Widagdo Wizzeman expresses beauty through aknese to Papuan. Her paintings' models ap- form and balance, Dolorosa, in the words of pear dignified and powerful, staring straight Alexander Supartono, "anatomises deepest



feelings and loudest protests in sculptural ance and dedication, this once guerilla project mind, soul, triumph and agony it carries. Dolorosa currently sits as a Dean of the Jakarta Art Institute and a representative of the Indonesian Ministry of Culture. Her contributions are immeasurable both in the realm of activism and art.

Arahmaiani calls for justice and balance regarding environmental and gender issues. She believes that both matters are closely inthe early 1980s. "Kecelakaan I" (1981) marked of farming practices and waste management in the Tibetan plateau. Through her persever-

language as body, form and matter." Her done in one of the most disputed regions in sculptures devoutly tells about the body – the China has finally gained the government's attention and support. Arahmaiani has created a platform for, not only young female artists, but also environmental activists, traditional communities, and feminists.

I GAK Murniasih is one of the biggest inspirations for feminist art in Indonesia. Unlike Widagdo, Arahmaiani, or Dolorosa, she never Gallery's new space. For more information rereceived formal art training and came from a garding this exhibition, other art projects, artseverely underprivileged family. But maybe works and featured artist/s information, visit tertwined. Arahmaiani began performing in this unique and modest background is what www.isaartanddesign.com. makes her work so pure, honest, and brave. one of her earliest performance art oeuvres in Many categorise her style as a derivation of Indonesia. She is heavily influenced by thePengosekan style, popularised by her mentor atre, Jeprut performance art style, and Joseph Putu Dewa Mokoh. However, one must ac-Beuys' concept of social sculpture in many of knowledge that her paintings' formal quality her performance and installation works. One and subject matters are far more fantastical of her most extended ongoing projects is an and surrealistic as compared to other Penenvironmental intervention via a revolution gosekan-style paintings. Murni took her tragic life story, a marginalisation that many Indonesian women share, and turned it into an

expression of passion. Despite her early death, her works continue to inspire many younger female artists to search for freedom of expression and equality.

In March, ISA Art and Design will be having an exhibition featuring senior, mid-career and emerging Indonesian female artists in celebration of International Women's Day, ISA Gallery's anniversary, and the inauguration of ISA

- Arahmaiani, I Love You (after Joseph Beuys' Social Sculpture), 2009, Photo Credit Photo courtesy of ADM Gallery
- 2. Dolorosa Sinaga, Madonna II, 2006, Photo Credit: Photo courtesy of Dolorosa Sinaga
- Dolorosa Sinaga, General Have You Read A Book Of Love, Photo Credit: Photo courtesy of Dolorosa Sinaga