

## UNVEILED TODAY

### Pavilion of the Republic of Indonesia at the 56<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition - la Biennale di Venezia

**Heri Dono: *Voyage - Trokomod***  
Arsenale, Tese delle Vergini, May 9 – November 22, 2015



Both images: Heri Dono, *Voyage - Trokomod*, Venice Biennale 2015, © Luciano Romano

May 6, 2015 - The Indonesia National Pavilion is proud to present *Voyage —Trokomod* at la Biennale di Venezia. Heri Dono, one of Indonesia's most well known and internationally active contemporary artists, has created a site-specific work for the 56th International Art Exhibition that combines a Trojan horse—a figure that repeatedly occurs in his works—with Indonesia's famed giant lizard, the Komodo dragon. With this mythic hybrid the artist aims to ironically counter-attack traditional Western notions of the East, while exploring Indonesia's place and his own in the world. "*Trokomod*," he notes, "is like an ancient animal made futuristic. It comes out of the part of the world that is not traditionally recognised as a leader in artistic endeavour." Now, he suggests, "is the time to speak up."

The curatorial theme of the 2015 Indonesia Pavilion ingeniously corresponds with the theme proposed by the Biennale artistic director Okwui Enwezor: *All the World's Futures*. *Voyage —Trokomod* invites viewers to rethink the relationship between globalization and local culture—historically, socially and politically—and at the same time to make a fresh appraisal of the relationship of art and artists to the current state of things.

"Contemporary art is an important tool of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy," Commissioner Sapta Nirwandar observes. "It helps to introduce Indonesia to the world."

"There's a new spirit in Indonesia today," says Restu Kusumaningrum, director of Bumi Purnati Indonesia and co-producer of the Indonesia National Pavilion. "Cognizant of our history and culture, we are at the same time moving forward and going global—with a new president, we are confident. Heri Dono is a strong, creative artist, who looks forward while critically considering the past and the present."

Heri Dono, who was born in Jakarta in 1960, was arguably the first contemporary Indonesian artist of his generation to break into the global art scene in the early 1990s. Since then, the Jogjakarta-based artist has achieved iconic status abroad and at home, participating in 27 international biennales and triennials. His works—which are heavily influenced by his deep knowledge of animation, cartoons and *wayang* (Javanese puppet theatre)—mix fantastical and incongruous images with socio-political commentary. “Artists have a moral responsibility to add to the global conversation, and inspire people with awareness of what is going on in their environment and in the world at large,” the artist says.

Ethnographic imaging is an important aspect of Heri Dono’s work, notes Carla Bianpoen, an artistic adviser. “Unlike an ethnographic museum which traditionally displays ‘exotic’ cultures from a Western point of view, Heri Dono switches roles showing Western icons as we perceive them.”

Inside the beast, the artist creates a vision of soft power, with the use of pliant materials like rattan and canvas batik, covered with symbols of the world’s religions denoting a hope for peaceful religious pluralism. Asmudjo Jono Irianto, one of the artistic advisers for the pavilion, says: “*Voyage —Trokomod...* intertwines history, myth and legends. It can be an entry point to understand Indonesia’s current position.”

The Indonesia National Pavilion has been produced by Bumi Purnati Indonesia, in conjunction with Milan-based Change Performing Arts, and supported by the Ministry of Tourism Republic of Indonesia, Ministry of Education and Culture Republic of Indonesia, as well as Prince Street Capital Management, Yuz Foundation and Friends of Venice Biennale.

#### **Credits**

*Title: Voyage-Trokomod*

*Commissioner* Sapta Nirwandar

*Deputy Commissioner* Soedarmadji J.H. Damais

*Curators* Carla Bianpoen, Restu Imansari Kusumaningrum, Asmudjo Jono Irianto

*Scientific Committee* Elisabetta di Mambro, Franco Laera, Watie Moerany

*Exhibitor* Heri Dono

*Producers / Organizers* Bumi Purnati Indonesia and Change Performing Arts, Milan

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*Venue* Arsenale, Tese delle Vergini

*Media Partner* L’Officiel Indonesia

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Facebook: [Indonesia Venice](#)

Twitter: [@IndonesiaVenice](#)

Website: [www.indonesiavenice.com](http://www.indonesiavenice.com)

Hashtag: #TrojanKomodo #Trokomod

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