

# Arwin Hidayat

Most known for his distinctive depictions of birds, serpents and distorted human forms, over the past few years Arwin Hidayat has received increasing attention and praise from within the local Yogyakarta art scene and the wider international art community. His artworks juxtapose everyday objects (buildings, vehicles, musical instruments, animals) alongside the explicit (phalluses and orifices). A single image in his dense batik-patterned tableaux can be a point of departure for a storyline that draws on mythology, spirituality and history to create a contemporary narrative.

While many of his Indo Pop contemporaries imbue a glossy hyper-real veneer, there is depth in Arwin's work and a note of melancholy. Perhaps it's his love of blues music seeping through, which plays in his studio at all times. Currently he is listening to traditional African blues, which Arwin describes as "strange, mystical, like a spirit that is invited to speak." However, even through his examination of societal tensions or personal anxieties, Arwin offers his critical contemporary commentary with a sense of playfulness.

Arwin's work combines local traditional techniques with contemporary popular culture. He employs the batik medium in a contemporary way. Within this exhibition, Arwin also presents a selection of works on paper that employ a batik patterning motif and comic style, and invite viewers to examine his graphic black and white drawings up close.

Born in Yogyakarta in 1983, Arwin has been drawing since childhood. As an alumnus of the Indonesian Institute of Art, Yogyakarta, Arwin has channeled his influences and

memories of childhood stories, told to him by his late father, as inspiration. Visual elements in Arwin's work are drawn from people in his village and an understanding of family as his source of power and spirit. He notes that his personal experiences influence his artistic process – things in daily life such as routine and a sense of responsibility in managing time between work, family and being a father.

Arwin exhibits extensively in Indonesia and abroad, with three solo exhibitions to date. In 2017, Kedai Kebun Forum (KKF) hosted his exhibition *Gombal*, with KKF director Agung Kurniawan noting how Arwin's batik works show the full spectrum of Indonesia's cultural complexities. He has a growing reputation in Australia, having exhibited at Sydney's 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art's exhibition *Jogja calling* in 2016 and *Art Prints Asia*, Sydney in 2014. He also spent time in Melbourne as Eko Nugroho's assistant for the installation of *RALLY: Contemporary Indonesian Art* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2012. Arwin was a finalist in the 2017 'Painting of the Year' award for the Singapore-based United Overseas Bank. He continues to gain international attention, with a display at KunstRAI Art Amsterdam in 2018 and a commission to produce new works, incorporating batik and sewing, for a 2019 group exhibition at the Asia Museum of Modern Art in Taichung, Taiwan.

Melissa Burnet Rice



top left:  
*Orang orang sakti*  
2018  
ink on paper  
70 x 50 cm

top right:  
*Perjalanan entah  
kemana* 2018  
ink on paper  
55 x 40 cm

bottom:  
*Kampungku*  
(detail) 2018  
batik on primisima  
200 x 146 cm