

Abdul Abdullah  
Leonardiansyah Allenda  
Briony Galligan  
Arwin Hidayat  
Reko Rennie  
Uji Handoko Eko Saputro  
aka Hahan

# JOGJA CALLING



Centre for  
Contemporary  
Asian Art

Australia and Indonesia have long been curious about each other. Separated by a small stretch of the Indian Ocean, there is documentation of mutual inquisitiveness dating back to the early 18th century when Makassar trepangers (sea cucumber collectors) braved the high seas from Sulawesi to our northern coastline. More recent archeological research has uncovered a series of rock art paintings in Arnhem Land that clearly depict South-East Asian ships dating back to the 16th century. It is clear that as a nation not only do Australians have a long history of engagement with Indonesia but we have a long history of this engagement fueling creativity.

Although these cultural ties are centuries old, artistic connections and conversations over the last few decades have become increasingly more complex and overt. While this shift can be attributed to Australia's socio-political refocusing and acknowledgement of its Asia-Pacific geographical location, it also must be examined on a more personal and relational level. In 1991 Asialink expanded and developed the Australia Council for the Arts' residency program, supporting Australian artists and art facilitators to practice within Asia. Since the beginning, Indonesia, and in particular Yogyakarta, has been a mainstay of the program. Over the last few decades artists have been working in one of Indonesia's most vibrant artistic communities, developing their practice and forging new networks and friendships. These friendships inform the curatorial framework of *Jogja Calling*.

Yogyakarta - or as it is more colloquially termed, Jogja - is one of Indonesia's growing urban centres. Located in central Java it is home to a community of artists supported by a leading art school (the Indonesian Institute of the Arts), cutting edge commercial spaces such as Ark Galerie, incubating spaces like Cemeti Art House, a burgeoning affair in ArtJog, the Jogja Biennale, as well as home to artistic collectives such as Ace House and Mess56. In the last decade Jogja-based artists have found increasing success on the international stage with the likes of Eko Nugroho, Entang Wiharso, Jompet Kuswidananto and Tromarama all featuring in major museum exhibitions and fetching impressive sums commercially. A result of their success has been a heightened interest in Jogja and the recognition of the city as a critical contemporary art locale. Like London, New York or Berlin, Jogja offers the opportunity for Australian artists to work within a thriving and robust art community, expand their practice and forge new connections.

*Jogja Calling* presents three Australian artists that have spent considerable time working in Jogja over the past few years. Their practices are diverse but all underpinned by the experience of working from and within the collective creative community of Jogja. Since returning to Australia their practice has taken cues from their time in Jogja; it has altered how they approach their work, expanded their points of reference and, while not always immediately evident, has shifted their works into an alignment with their northern neighbours. Reko Rennie (b. 1974, Melbourne) was supported in 2014 by Asialink to undertake a residency at Cemeti Art House, Briony Galligan (b.1983, Hobart) arrived in Jogja in early 2012 and spent a year developing her practice and working from within the artistic community of Jogja on a self-initiated sojourn and Abdul Abdullah (b. 1986 Perth) ventured to Jogja for the first time in early 2016 supported by Arts NSW. All three artists have returned to speak of their time in Jogja with palpable fondness, reflections on an incredible productive time and continuing connec-

tions to the city.

*Jogja Calling* presents Abdullah, Galligan and Rennie's work alongside the work of three Jogja based artists; Leonardiansyah Allenda (b.1984 Banyuwangi), Arwin Hidayat (b.1983, Yogyakarta) and Uji Handoko Eko Saputro aka Hahan (b. 1983 Kebumen). These three artists are leading members of Jogja's artistic community who welcomed the Australians into the fold. They helped them track down materials, translated speeches at openings for them and, sometimes into the wee hours of the night, debated and discussed how and why they worked. They became colleagues and artistic co-conspirators. While their modes of artistic enquiry vastly differ and their practices are diverse, *Jogja Calling* presents their work together where evidence of their friendships become discernable.

Abdul Abdullah speaks with infectious enthusiasm about his time in Jogja where the boundaries of his practice were extended through the connections his new friendships afforded him. There are echoes of the work of Hahan in his 2016 Archibald Prize entry *The Cost* where he embraces the circular canvas, he also spent considerable time working within the folds of internationally acclaimed Eko Nugroho's studio where DTGMB Embroidery Art helped facilitate both *Don't Worry* and *Be Happy* included in *Jogja Calling*. However, it is the work of Arwin Hidayat who uses the tradition of batik where we can see how Abdullah's residency has clearly influenced the manner in which he approaches the contemporary through traditional practices. Hidayat is a prolific drawer and batik artist; he draws complex freehand figurative works in both pen and wax that trace spiritual and mythological histories through contemporary narratives. Hung in tandem Abdullah's embroideries and Hidayat's batiks utilise traditional techniques to examine the bubbling tensions that lie beneath the veneer of contemporary society. Their works hint at fatalistic inevitability and the futility of a society built on charades.

Like Abdullah, Reko Rennie returned to Australia with fervent appreciation for the artistic community of Jogja. His practice, which is deeply rooted in his Kamlaroi background and youth spent in the sprawling western suburbs of Melbourne, found resonance with the urban contemporary Javanese culture. In Jogja he worked closely with the community developing the *Warriors Come Out to Play* series that examines the role of the outlaw - or in this case the artistic outlaw - in society. Drawing on two 1979 films, *The Warriors* and *Mad Max*, Rennie casts himself and the local Jogja art community as moto-riding bandits.

One of the lead bandits is played by Hahan, a leading artistic figure in the contemporary art worlds of Australia and Indonesia. For more than a decade Hahan has been a fixture of the Indonesian and Australian art scenes. Hahan himself identifies so closely with Australia that he attributes his career as an artist to the organisations, curators and festivals in Australia that have consistently presented his work. Capturing this sentiment is his photographic series *Welcome Mate* created while on residency in Brisbane in 2012 supported by Contact Inc. In *Welcome Mate* Hahan distills his experience of a welcoming, inclusive Aus-

tralia into a performative embodiment placing himself at sites of debarkation for the newly arrived. He appears as a beacon of inclusiveness. While divergent in nature when placed side-by-side the work of Hahan and Rennie speak collectively of inclusiveness and the extended tendrils of friendship that exists between both Indonesia and Australia.

Leonardiansyah Allenda and Briony Galligan further muse on friendship through their works *Private Numbers* and *Door-to-door*. Both artists present kinetic works that require the participation and active engagement of the audience. The core of Allenda's work is the concept of the weight of exchange. He invites the audience to sift through objects from both Australians and Indonesians, pair them and then counter-balance them. The sheer physicality of these objects becomes indicative of the equilibrium and steadiness required in friendship. Galligan's work also employs movement with a slowly rotating 'room' enticing the viewer to move within the folds of the doors. With the flicker of text appearing and reappearing on the fabric *Door-to-door* mimics the memory of conversations where treasured snippets frame friendships. Through balance and rotation the works of Allenda and Galligan construct spaces where the exchange of language and object serve as a metaphor for cultural exchange.

*Jogja Calling* is as much an exhibition as a celebration of two decades of our most recent cultural engagement with Indonesia. Supported by organisations in both Indonesia and Australia this creative frisson has built friendships, expanded modes of practice and ensured a fervent contemporary cultural discourse has emerged that defies our watery borders.

#### LIST OF WORKS

##### Ground Floor:

Leonardiansyah Allenda, *Private Numbers*, 2016, installation; dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist.

##### First Floor (left to right from gallery entrance):

Arwin Hidayat, *Kota Hantu (City of Ghost)*, 2016, drawings; 200 x 70 cm, courtesy the artist.

Reko Rennie, *Warriors Come Out to Play*, 2014, one-channel video and installation; dimensions variable, courtesy the artist.

Uji Handoko Eko Saputro aka Hahan, *Welcome Mate*, 2012, (6) photographs, blanket, one-channel video; dimensions variable, courtesy the artist.

Reko Rennie, *Crest*, 2014, embroidery and painted aluminum, courtesy the artist.

Abdul Abdullah, *Be happy*, 2016, embroidery; 150 x 120 cm, courtesy the artist and Fehily Contemporary. Made with the assistance of DTGMB Art Embroidery.

Abdul Abdullah, *Don't worry*, 2016, embroidery; 150 x 120 cm, courtesy the artist and Fehily Contemporary. Made with the assistance of DTGMB Art Embroidery.

Briony Galligan, *Door-to-door*, 2015, installation; dimensions variable, courtesy of the artist.

Arwin Hidayat, *Roh Roh Dalam Senjata (The Spirits Inside The Weapon)*, 2016, Cotton Fabric; 200 x 110 cm and 200 x 150 cm, courtesy the artist.

#jogjacalling

# JOGJA CALLING

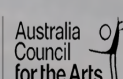
## 22 October - 17 December 2016

#### Images:

Abdul Abdullah, (Detail) *Be happy*, 2016, embroidery; 150 x 120 cm, courtesy the artist and Fehily Contemporary. Made with the assistance of DTGMB Art Embroidery.

Overleaf: Hahan, *MOUNT COOTHA*, Print On Hah3nemuhle Matte Paper, 59x86cm, 2012, from *Welcome Mate*, 2012, (6) photographs, blanket,

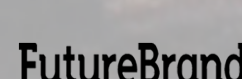
#### GOVERNMENT PARTNERS:



#### MEDIA PARTNER:



#### DESIGN PARTNER:



#### MEMBER:

