



# 4A

## 15th Jakarta Biennale showcases Australia-Indonesia artistic collaboration

The artistic dialogue between Indonesia and Australia was highlighted this month with the successful launch of 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art's *Vertical Villages: Level Up* installation at the 15th Jakarta Biennale.

4A, Australia's leading Asian Australian contemporary art organisation, has a long history of artistic collaboration with Indonesia. For over 18 years, 4A has continually fostered artistic and community ties between Australia and Asia, this time using their Indonesian experience and networks to mount the ambitious cross-cultural project that is showing at the 15th Jakarta Biennale, until the end of next week.

4A's Director, Aaron Seeto said of the *Vertical Villages – Level Up* project;

'It is a timely demonstration of the real value of long-term, cross-cultural engagement, and people to people links, in maintaining ongoing regional dialogue.'

*Vertical Villages: Level Up* is the second phase of a collaboration between 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Jakarta based art collective ruangrupa ArtLab and Sydney based artist Keg de Souza. Earlier this year ruangrupa and De Souza were artists-in-residence at 4A, during which they investigated the experiences of international students living in Sydney's CBD.

The socially engaged project draws on links between Sydney and Jakarta, and shared experiences of a diverse group of students and teachers from international schools and residential developments in Jakarta, as well as Indonesian students living in Australia. The resulting installations examine the role that education has played in increasing mobility and status within the region.

Project Curator Toby Chapman said:

'*Vertical Villages: Level Up* worked closely with expatriate communities and students from various international schools in Jakarta to initiate a dialogue regarding the role of education in the region. Our research was able to elucidate how tertiary education fosters long-term relationships between Sydney and Jakarta.'

Says Seeto;

'4A, and other Australian arts organisations focusing on Asia, play a critical role in sustaining cross-cultural engagement and fostering connections at the grass roots level.'

**Vertical Villages: Level Up is supported by the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australia International Cultural Council, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australia Indonesia Council, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.**



CENTRE FOR  
CONTEMPORARY  
ASIAN ART

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4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art is an initiative of the Asian Australian Artists Association Inc. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body; the NSW Government through Arts NSW and the City of Sydney. Champions: Kerr and Judith Neilson; Patrons: Daniel and Lyndell Droga; Geoff Ainsworth AM, Grasshopper Bar, Johnson Pilton Walker, John Lam-Po-Tang, Dr Gene Sherman AM and Brian Sherman AM, VisAsia, Adrian Williams; Benefactors: AMP Foundation; Andrew Cameron, ARNDT Fine Art, ARTCELL, Brooke and Steve Aitken, Richard Funston and Kiong Lee, Simon Mordant AO and Catriona Mordant, Vicky Olsson, Lisa Paulsen, Dr Dick Quan, Julia Champtaloup and Andrew Rothery, The Sky Foundation, Lucy Hughes Turnbull AO; Friends: Luisa Catanzaro, Ari and Lisa Droga, Choi Ropihia Figuera, Julian and Stephanie Grose, Tonee Holley Knowles and James Knowles, Annette Larkin, Akira and Tomoko Nakayama, Susan Nathan, The Sky Foundation, Becky Sparks and James Roland, Victoria Taylor, Anna Waldmann, Dr John Yu AC. Media Partner: Vault Magazine.

## About Vertical Villages

*Vertical Villages: Level Up* is the second phase of the collaboration between ruangrupa ArtLab, Keg de Souza and 4A, presented at the 15th Jakarta Biennale 2013. *Vertical Villages: Level Up* is based on the theme of the 15th Jakarta Biennale, 'siasat' - translated as 'tactics' - which unpacks the strategies individuals and communities apply to navigate and negotiate the urban environment of Jakarta.

As a continuation of the research in Sydney, *Vertical Villages: Level Up* investigates the spatial and social experiences of students who attend international or private schools in Jakarta, many of whom will migrate to Australia for a tertiary education. Over the last twenty years a number of political and economic factors have led to the rise of a middle class in Jakarta. This development, alongside an influx of expatriate living in the city have influenced spatial changes in Jakarta, including new high-rise and gated community developments as well as over 120 international schools and private colleges

*Level Up* investigates the nature of these enclaves and the role that education has come to play in people's desire for increased mobility and status. The artists engaged with a diverse group of students and teachers from international schools to garner information about what an international educational involves. A number of Indonesian students currently studying in Australia were also interviewed as a means of creating connections between lived experiences of Jakarta and Sydney.

*Vertical Villages: Level Up* was the only project with an Australian participating artist at the main biennale venue.

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### GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



Australian Government



This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

*Vertical Villages* is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia International Cultural Council, an initiative of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



An Australian Government Initiative



*Vertical Villages* is supported by the Commonwealth through the Australia-Indonesia Institute of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



*Vertical Villages* is Supported by the Council of the City of Sydney.

### SPONSORS

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## About 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art is an authority on contemporary art from the Asia-Pacific region. 4A is a pioneer organisation established in 1996 at the outset of the international development of this field.

Our exhibitions, educational workshops, residencies and support of young artists positions Australia as part of a critical discussion reflective of the many shifts towards Asia that are occurring throughout all levels of society. Our perspective is unique, it speaks globally about the cultural, economic and social transformations occurring in the region, whilst also considering Australia's unique culture, history and social make-up that has occurred through migration.

We believe that Asian cultural thinking will have an important impact on the future. 4A's aim is to ensure contemporary visual art plays a central role in understanding the dynamic relationship between Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Importantly it creates real opportunities and pathways for Australian art in the region.

We work with significant Asian artists and at the same time we support some of the youngest and emerging. 4A is adventurous, ambitious and relevant both nationally and internationally, through contemporary art, we tell a story that is relevant to our time.



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