

Are Collectors Doing the Job of the Government in Indonesia? | COBO Social



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Dr. Oei Hong Dijen, founder of OHD Museum

Art writer and curator Naima Morelli discusses the substantial role of Indonesian collectors in changing local art scene through the establishment of private museums – an act to substitute the role of local government's in the promotion of contemporary art.

TEXT : Naima Morelli

IMAGES : Courtesy of the museums

Indonesia is an exciting place to be an art collector. Many Indonesian collectors– far from being aloof Maecenas or mere investors – are rather active players in the art scene. They constantly give critical input and feedback to artists.

On top of that, in the absence of government acquiring modern and contemporary art, Indonesian collectors find themselves in a unique position. Their way of collecting cannot be just driven by their taste, but also by the necessity of putting together the art history of their own country. In this process, a handful of art patrons have established private museums, which have become a point of reference for researchers, critics and the general public. The cultural action of these museums ranges from the publication of catalogues on movements in Indonesian art, to fostering critical discussion and valorise forgotten artists. In this scenario, Indonesia's first international modern art museum MACAN has been announced for 2017 and – ça va sans dire – it's also private. It adds up to a series of private museums established by collectors. Each one of these spaces has a particular perspective which corresponds to the collector's worldview and ideas about art.

Building the Indonesian identity: OHD Museum, Magelang



OHD Museum

The OHD Museum in Magelang, Java, has been founded by collector Dr. Oei Hong Djien, a physician, tobacco expert and a business partner of the leading cigarette company Djarum. He started his collection in 1970s and in 1997 he opened the museum. He has been the first collector in Indonesia who decided to showcase the art he acquired to the public.

The OHD Museum's mission is to educate the young generations to appreciate, enjoy and preserve Indonesian art. The collection aims to represent the essence of modern and contemporary Indonesian art, thus Dr. Oei Hong Djien does not collect artists from other countries. While sometimes he has the temptation to buy art from non-Indonesian artists, he keeps his commitment to help building the Indonesia national identity through art.

He believes that collecting in Indonesia is more problematic than in other countries with an established art system. Whereas in Europe there is complete documentation about artists, in Indonesia that is lacking: "You have to learn everything by yourself."

This is why Dr. Oei Hong Djien has always been keen to meet the artists in person and to ask them questions. "Artists are the only ones with historical knowledge of what happened artistically in Indonesia. When they die everything is lost. Even if they can give me only a small fraction of the complete picture of Indonesian art history, that piece adds to the whole."

For Oei Hong Djien there is no one way of collecting. It all depends on one's own experience and knowledge. "The first thing is that you have to be passionate. You must love art." For him, the beauty of collecting is that it's a learning process that last an entire lifetime.

OHD Museum

Address: Jl. Jenggolo 14 Magelang

Opening hours: Everyday from 10am – 5pm, except Tuesday and public holidays

Current exhibition: The People in 70 Years (now till Mar 31, 2016)

Art and entrepreneurship: Ciputra Artpreneur, Jakarta



Ciputra Artpreneur

Located inside the Ciputra Artpreneur Centre, the Ciputra Museum is an art and cultural centre set up by the family of Indonesian property tycoon Ciputra. Aside from being a businessman and a collector, Dr. Ir. Ciputra has also been engaging in developing education in Indonesia, so it is not surprising that the Museum has an educational slant for deepening the knowledge of Indonesian art.

Dr. Ir. Ciputra's daughter, Rina Ciputra Sastrawinata, is also a collector and patroness of contemporary visual artists. She sponsored international exhibitions of Indonesian artists abroad, such as the "Indonesian Eye" at Saatchi Gallery in London and "Beyond the East" at the MACRO Museum in Rome.

The museum is active through exhibitions, programs, research and publications. The focus is on the development of Indonesian Art from the modernist period to today. Modern maestro Hendra Gunawan is a staple in the collection of Dr. Ir. Ciputra.

The Ciputra Museum is in communication with galleries, a theatre and multifunctional spaces, making it the perfect incubator for Indonesian *artpreneurship*. This concept, brought forward by the Ciputras, stands for those entrepreneurs committed to the cultural and intellectual development of their nation.

Ciputra Museum

Address: Ciputra World 1, Retail Podium Level 9-10, Kuningan, South Jakarta

Opening hours: Everyday except Monday, 12 – 6pm

Currently under construction*

Living up to international standards: YUZ Museum, Shanghai/Jakarta



Yuz Museum Shanghai: 余德耀美術館

Founded by Mr. Budi Tek – a Chinese-Indonesian entrepreneur, art philanthropist and collector – the YUZ Museum promotes the development of contemporary art on an international scale.

Whereas Dr. Oei Hong Djien – a Chinese-Indonesian too – decided to focus on the Indonesian identity right from the start, Mr. Budi Tek decided to go back to his Chinese roots. He started out by collecting Chinese contemporary paintings, especially those created between the early 1980s and late 1990s.

The idea for a collection opened to the public came to Mr. Budi Tek during a period of tensions against Chinese-Indonesians in Indonesia. Wanting to disprove the stereotype at the time, that Chinese people weren't cultured, he founded the Jakarta Yu Deyao Museum, with the original intention to share his collection with his friends.

Throughout the years, Mr. Budi Tek has expanded his scope beyond Asian Art to include Western Art. "I visited some privately operated museums in many countries and I continue to learn." His museum shows his view of contemporary Indonesian art as part of the wider framework of global art history.

Previously in Jakarta, the YUZ Museum re-located along the West Bund in Xuhui District in Shanghai. The 9,000 square meters space of the Shanghai YUZ Museum, once the hangar of Longhua Airport, makes it perfect for big-size installations in the YUZ collection.

Yuz Museum Shanghai: 余德耀美術館

Address: No.35 Fenggu Road, Shanghai, China

Opening hours: Mon – Fri 12 – 10pm, Sat & Sun 10am – 10pm; Fri & Sat 10pm – 12am

Upcoming Exhibition: Alberto Giacometti Retrospective (Mar 22 – July 31, 2016)

The new kid in town: MACAN



MACAN (Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara)

The new MACAN (Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara) plans to open in early 2017 in the Kebon Jeruk district of West Jakarta. It is the brainchild of Indonesian businessman and collector Haryanto Adikoesoemo.

Mr. Haryanto is the president of the chemical and energy logistics company PT AKR Corporindo, and of AKR Land Development, a luxury property developer. He started building the collection in the early 1990s, today his collection is composed of 40% Indonesian art, 35% American and Western European art, and 25% art from the greater Asian region.

The collector declared that he wanted to showcase Indonesian artists side by side with international artists. “I want this museum to help cross-pollinate exchanges with Indonesia and the world, to provide an international platform for Indonesian art and to bring international art to Indonesia.”

The willingness to integrate Indonesian art in a global framework is clear in the appointment of the museum’s curator. The MACAN will be indeed directed by Thomas J. Berghuis, previously curator of Chinese art at the NY Guggenheim Museum, who has an extensive knowledge of Indonesian art.

Naima Morelli is an art writer and curator with a focus on contemporary art from the Asia Pacific

region. She has written for ArtsHub, Art Monthly Australia, Art to Part of Culture and Escape Magazine, among others, and she is the author of “Arte Contemporanea in Indonesia, un’introduzione” a book focused on the development of contemporary art in Indonesia. As a curator, her practice revolves around creating meaningful connections between Asia, Europe and Australia.