

# Five Emerging Indonesian Artists to Watch | COBO Social

The Indonesian contemporary art scene is one of the strongest and liveliest in Southeast Asia, both from a critical and commercial standpoint. Indonesian artists explore urban culture, history and traditions with a natural playfulness very much embedded in the national character. Those of the younger generations in particular tend to enter the art world with pre-existing international aspirations and an eye on both local life and global society. Here are five of the most interesting emerging talents to watch out for.

TEXT : Naima Morelli

IMAGES : Courtesy of the artists

## Syagini Ratna Wulan

Born in Bandung, 1979, lives and works in Bandung, Indonesia



Indonesian artist Syagini Ratna Wulan

Syagini Ratna Wulan studied fine arts at Bandung Institute of Technology and obtained her Master's degree at Goldsmith College, University of London in 2006.

The thread that runs through her work is the narrative approach. Drawing inspiration from the Surrealist movement, her installations explore human fantasies and the unconscious. While most of her art is an ironic commentary on middle-class behaviours and pop culture, the aesthetic and stylistic element in her work is always at the forefront.



"BiblioTea" (2011) by Syagini Ratna Wulan (Credit: SAM)

One of her most emblematic works is "BiblioTea" (2011), in which she invited viewers into a fake bookshop/tea house and suggested that the teas had been infused with content of the art books on display; thus one could gain knowledge simply by drinking them. The work referred to Asian scholarly traditions which associate tea with philosophical contemplation, but also to the modern culture of instant gratification and effortless enlightenment.

### Tromarama

Artists Collective formed in 2004 and is based in Bandung, Indonesia



Tromarama consists of artists Febie Babyrose (1985, Jakarta), Herbert Hans Maruli (1984, Jakarta) and Ruddy Hatumena (1984, Bahrain) and is based in Bandung, Indonesia.

Hailing from Bandung – the home city of Indonesian conceptual art – the artistic trio of Febie Babyrose (\*1985), Herbert Hans (\*1984) and Ruddy Hatumena (\*1984) joined forces as the collective Tromarama in 2004. The three artists met at the Bandung Institute of Technology and got their break producing music videos for local jazz and rock bands. When they came to understand the full potential of video, they moved into visual art.



Children enjoying the activities in Open House: Tromarama for Kids, National Gallery of Victoria

Their work spans a variety of media, from animation to sound and installation, while always maintaining a playful, tongue-in-cheek attitude. Their recent projects are based on interaction with the audience, their work for the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne being an example. Tromarama uses new technologies to transform urban life and everyday experiences into artworks.

Unanimously considered one of Indonesia's most exciting rising talents, Tromarama has held international exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Mori Art Museum (Japan), Frankfurter Kunstverein (Frankfurt), APT 7 QAGOMA (Brisbane) and Singapore Art Museum (Singapore).

### **Eddy Susanto (\*1975)**

Born in 1975, living and working in Yogyakarta



Eddy Susanto

Eddy Susanto came into the limelight in 2011, as recipient of the Second Bandung Contemporary Art Award (BaCAA) for a piece called "The Java of Dürer". This complex work was based on comparative visions of Renaissance Europe and the arrival of Islam on the island of Java.



Eddy Susanto, Samuel I of Dürer #8, 2012, Acrylic and Drawing pen on Canvas, 250 x 154,5 cm / 98,43 x 60,83 at Michael Janssen Gallery

Eddy Susanto's installation work is always based on research. His vast knowledge of both European and Asian history and his attention to philological detail are not merely conceptual. His work has a very attractive formal aspect, conveying sensuality through colours and scents (like in the series "Mata Hari" and "Sea of Spices") or surprising the viewers (in "The Java of Dürer", the print entitled "The Men's Bath" is found at close inspection to be composed of text from "The History of The Land of Java").

Eddie's work represents a harmonization of global and local identity, and is particularly relevant at a time when mutual understanding between cultures is much needed. His recent shows at Galeri Nasional Indonesia and at Gallery Michael Janssen in Singapore have proved the success of his intuitions.

### **Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina**

Two artists formed in 2010, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Lives and works in Jakarta, Indonesia.



Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina

Jakarta-based Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina are the couple behind “Urban Play”. This project consists of creating and documenting interactive experiences within the urban environment.



Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina at Asian Art Biennial 2015

When preparing new work, the artist duo cater to a specific city, responding to local problems or characteristics. In “Urban Play” they use found objects to create “interventions” in the street, challenging the citizens’ perspectives of their own city and influencing their behaviour.

Travel is an integral part of Irwan Ahmett and Tita Salina’s art and they have crafted their own lifestyle based on this idea of mobility. The artists are constantly on the move, both privately or through residencies and biennials in Asia and Europe. They have participated in events including the Singapore Biennale, Setouchi Triennale, “The Social: Encountering Photography” with the North East Photography Network in Sunderland, UK and Made in Commons at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

### **Kinez Riza (\*1989)**

Born in 1989 in Indonesia, she left Indonesia during its civil unrest in 1998 to Singapore



Indonesian artist Kinez Riza

Social and natural sciences are the main source of inspiration for artist Kinez Riza. She kicks off her projects by going on expeditions to isolated communities or ecosystems. She then works with the data she has collected through photography, video, sound and writing.



Kinez Riza, *The Twins*, 2013, Duratrans print on lightbox, 117 x 177 x 7 (framed lightbox) Edition: 4 + 2AP

While her work tends to be sleek in appearance, Kinez Riza allows the romanticism of exploration and discovery to play a big part. She conveys an emphasis on connectedness between nature and humans, distancing herself from a mere anthropological gaze. She examines how beliefs and information have been digested throughout the centuries, from our ancestors to the present day.

Kinez has exhibited internationally in galleries and at biennials and art fairs, such as Art Dubai in UAE, Unseen Photo Fair in Amsterdam, D Gallerie in Indonesia, Land Art Mongolia 360 Biennale (2014) in the Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape, the Arctic Circle Org residency programme (2013) and others, positioning herself as one of the most interesting young talents in Indonesia.

**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.