



ART & CULTURE

# Jakarta's newly revamped US Embassy incorporates green concept, local cultures



JESSICHA VALENTINA  
THE JAKARTA POST

Jakarta / Sun, March 17, 2019 / 06:01 am



Phase 1 of renovation of the United States Embassy in Jakarta is complete.

A group of journalists, including those from The Jakarta Post, was invited Thursday to get a sneak peak of the facility located on Jl. Medan Merdeka Selatan, Central Jakarta. At the front of the compound are intricate metal threads that resemble woven fabrics. The metal exterior blocks sunlight while paying homage to Indonesian culture. Designed by New York-based architectural firm Davis Brody Bond and Arlington-based firm Page South-erland Page as the architect of record, the new building will utilize all available resources and minimize its impact on the environment. "One of the things we really wanted to take into consideration was our impact on the environment and how we could be a more efficient and responsible partner to our host country, Indonesia," said Alexia Branch, the embassy's deputy press attaché.

Branch mentioned that there were several energy-saving features in the building, such as automatic shades to block sunlight and a water catchment system. The former works to minimize the impact of heat from sunlight, resulting in what is expected to be a decreased use of the AC system. The water catchment system reuses wastewater and storm water. The technology helps save around 30 percent of energy when compared with conventional buildings. With regard to Indonesian culture, the facility features a plethora of artwork made by local artists, such as batik designer Iwan Tirta and Balinese artist Sintia Tantra. One of the most interesting pieces is a replica of an Iwan Tirta batik located on the ground floor. Featuring a combination of the American bald eagle and parang rusak motifs, the batik reflects cooperation between the two countries.

Moreover, the building also showcases artwork by American artists who were inspired by Indonesia, such the "Confluence (Our Changing Seas V)", a marine-themed installation by San Francisco-born ceramist Courtney Mattison, and an orangutan sculpture by Daisy Youngblood. Following the completion of phase 1, the embassy is currently working on phase 2, which includes a heritage building. The site is being reconstructed based on its original architecture, which is deemed important as it was where Indonesian delegations held negotiations with the Dutch prior to the transfer of sovereignty on Dec. 27, 1949.