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AUGUST IS FOR ART

August was a busy time for the Indonesian art world—for the first time Jakarta experienced two major art fairs in one month.

BY DEBORAH ISKANDAR

Another highlight was the exhibition of selected paintings from the Presidential Palace, entitled 17 / 71 “The Brushstrokes of The Struggle for Independence.” It was comprised of 28 works, beautifully presented from President Soekarno’s collection—including Raden Saleh’s masterpiece, “The Arrest of Prince Diponegoro.” This one-month exhibition shows signs of change from the government to improve the art scene. Hopefully there will be a permanent installation, and more paintings can be shown.

PT Jakarta Land has art in public spaces, such as the “Lost and Found” exhibition



at the World Trade Center II. Supported by the British Council, and curated by my firm ISA Art Advisory, the collection featured works by six Indonesian artists. Last month we covered the “War of the Art Fairs” between Bazaar Art Jakarta and Art Stage, held two weeks apart. Some were concerned that Jakarta couldn’t support two fairs. However, the art world is changing, galleries are now giving way to





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Raden Saleh's masterpiece, "The Arrest of Prince Diponegoro"; Affandi's "The Human Face" at Art Stage Jakarta 2016; Syagini "Untitled"; The works of Sinta Tantra Arin Dwiheartanto and Kate Bright at the "Lost and Found" exhibition.

art fairs. These fairs play a crucial role, as collectors, critics, curators and enthusiasts can compare artworks from around the world under one roof.


Art Stage, new to Jakarta, launched August 5 at Gandaria City. It was a curated, elegant environment that included a special Affandi exhibition, a great opportunity to see a museum quality exhibition by a father of modern Indonesian art. Participating galleries included international names, such as Pearl Lam and Galerie Perrotin, and Singapore favorites, such as Gajah Gallery.

Six Indonesian art collectors had a special exhibit to display key pieces. Art Stage was very strategic—its board of patrons included esteemed collectors and young collectors. These heavy hitters helped promote the fair, leading to it being "art world centric." Art Stage drew over 15,000 visitors, including some elite ones. Most galleries said they sold well, so it was deemed a success.

Bazaar Art had a more casual vibe, selling merchandise and more affordable presentations. Skateboards and tennis shoes from young artists were auctioned to benefit the Yayasan Seni Rupa. Bazaar Art also had a special fundraiser for Yayasan Mitra Museum Jakarta where a 16-meter work of art was sold for approximately Rp 80

million. The funds will be used to improve Jakarta museums.

Bazaar Art and Art Stage had different crowds. Bazaar Art included many of the same Indonesian galleries as Art Stage, but also younger, hip galleries selling more affordable pieces. With MRA group's marketing might, combined with a central location, the event drew 35,000 over four days, including many new to the art world. Bazaar reported total sales of Rp 104 billion, showing a strong market.

Therefore, both fairs did well, and the true winners were the collectors. Having so much art in one month is unprecedented in Jakarta. As Art Stage will return in August 2017 and Bazaar is traditionally at the end of August, this month will be one for the arts. 



Deborah Iskandar is the founder and Principal of ISA Advisory, which advises clients on buying and selling art, and building collections. An expert on Indonesian and international art, she has more than 20 years of experience in Southeast Asia, heading both Sotheby's and Christie's Indonesia during her career before establishing ISA Art Advisory in 2013. She is also the founder of Indonesian Luxury, the definitive online resource for Indonesian's looking to acquire, build and style their luxury homes.