

Press Release

“THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION” Painting Exhibition from collections of the National Gallery of Indonesia and the State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow

The idea of this exhibition came after reading an article about an exhibition in Russia that featured a number of paintings made in the 1950s to 1960s by famous Indonesian artists. After going through a warm communication between the two countries, Indonesia and Russia, the **Painting Exhibition of the National Gallery of Indonesia and the Museum of Eastern Art, Moscow**, entitled **“the Period of Transition”** is realized.

Curated by Asikin Hasan, Sudjud Dartanto, and Teguh Margono, this exhibition presents the theme “the Period of Transition” as a depiction of the transitional period captured from works of art. Asikin Hasan revealed in his curatorial introduction that the paintings have shifted from time to time. In the colonial period, paintings generally depicted the beauty of landscapes that built a common narrative of the Indies’ nature: calm, serene, and peaceful. Those paintings were later known as *Mooi Indie*. Times have changed, ways of looking at reality have shifted. Paintings with the orientation of natural beauty began to be abandoned and shifted to people's daily lives. Drawing on the powerlessness of the “ordinary people” in the midst of harsh socio-economic struggles pummeled by the blows of modern life. “The fondness for populist narratives was getting stronger, especially in the post-independence era. At the same time, decision-makers and political party officials were placing arts and culture as well as popular jargon as a way to get votes,” said Asikin.

According to Asikin, In the Period of Transition, we see not only the types of paintings that change their appearance, but political parties also play their opportunist songs; influencing, persuading, and propagating people to support their projects and ideological interests. They created branch organizations to reach the farthest voices. “The artists were carried away in many factions and groups. Some even entered the political arena,” said Asikin. Everything just flowed together, and stopped after the bloodiest event of 1965. Everything in the name of the people was scattered. “Paintings and other kinds of artworks were burned, destroyed, smuggled, and some survived in the hands of a number of collectors,” he continued.

The paintings displayed in this exhibition are post-independence portraits, which depict portraits of ordinary people from various perspectives. These works were created by notable Indonesian artists in the period of the 1950s to 1960s, the early period of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, marking the early stages of Indonesian art

development. That is one of the important values of this exhibition as a historical artifact that completes the timeline of the art journey in Indonesia.

There are 62 paintings in this exhibition. 24 of them are from the collections of the National Gallery of Indonesia and 38 are from the State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow. Even more special, some of the works from the collection of the State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow, have undergone restoration so that they are in good condition. The works are prepared in an offline process, but are presented online to the public. Original works from the collections of the National Gallery of Indonesia and reproductions (physical replicas) of the collections of the State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow are displayed at the exhibition hall of the National Gallery of Indonesia. The works and the atmosphere of the exhibition space were recorded so that data-based exhibition materials and space experiences were produced and then presented online on <https://galnasonline.id/>. From this exhibition, art lovers will not only get information or data related to the paintings, but also can enjoy these artworks in an interactive virtual exhibition with a 360° spatial dimension. The public can independently explore the exhibition spaces and also choose which artworks and information they want to know.

The Head of the National Gallery of Indonesia, Pustanto said, "This exhibition is not only presenting artworks to the public, but also 'rediscovering' the works of the nation's artists that are away from their own 'home'." These works have been successfully restored so that they are safe from loss and damage, which amazed us even more. "The National Gallery of Indonesia would like to thank-you for the restoration efforts that have been carried out by the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow, so that now we can pleasantly and proudly enjoy these paintings with a populist aesthetic pattern which are valuable to the Indonesian people," he said.

By presenting these works, Pustanto hopes that information or knowledge about these artworks made in the early period of Indonesian independence can be spread widely. "Furthermore, it is hoped that more in-depth studies and discourses that aim to further complement the journey of modern art in Indonesia will emerge," he said. This exhibition is also expected to act as a multidisciplinary educational medium, in the fields of art, history, culture, social, and other fields. In addition, this exhibition is expected to be cultural diplomacy that further strengthens the network of connections and diplomatic relations between the two countries, namely Indonesia and Russia, through visual arts activities.

Painting Exhibition from the Collection of the National Gallery of Indonesia and the Museum of Eastern Art, Moscow "the Period of Transition" is organized by the National Gallery of Indonesia, Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education, Culture,

Research, and Technology in collaboration with the State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow; Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Moscow; Embassy of the Russian Federation in Jakarta; and the Indonesian Heritage Society, Jakarta. This exhibition will open on November 23, 2021, at 7.30 PM (Jakarta Time) on Zoom and live on YouTube Galeri Nasional Indonesia. Zoom Link: bit.ly/ZamanPeralihan2021. The exhibition can be visited on <https://galnasonline.id/>.

Jakarta, 22 November 2021

National Gallery of Indonesia

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