

Antonius Kho – Building Bridges in the International Contemporary Art World.

Art is a people business. Not only in its narratives and imagery does it reveal how people view the world, yet also in how the artists themselves learn to interact with others. Nowadays an artist's ability to develop strong relationships within large networks is one of the key fundamentals to success.

Accessible modern technology has contributed greatly and has allowed enormous opportunities for art commerce, not to mention the global development of contemporary art.

Javanese contemporary artist Antonius Kho (b. 1956, Klaten, Central Java) is one artist who understands the value of networking and communication in building his career as an international artist.

Kho is increasingly becoming a key figure in the contemporary art world in Bali and since 2004 has been instrumental in the organization of numerous intercultural art exchange programs between Indonesian artists and their colleagues throughout S.E Asia. As a direct result of his dedication more than 50 Indonesian artists have been benefactors of the events Kho has co organized with other international S. E. Asian art event organizers.

“International audiences are gaining greater appreciation for the Indonesian contemporary art,” says Kho, who recently returned from Langkawi, Malaysia as an exhibitor in the 1st Langkawi Art Biennale, 12 – 21 October. “Interaction with foreign landscapes, cultures and artists is essential for the development of Indonesian contemporary art.”

During 2014 Kho has made numerous trips to Malaysia to help in the organization of events for local artists to participate in, as well as personally taking part. He has visited Chiang Mai Thailand for an inter cultural exchange event, while also exhibiting his work in international exhibitions in Macau, Greece and Portugal.

“I am very enthusiastic about helping to expose emerging Balinese artists and inter cultural art exchange programs are the perfect vehicle to do this,” he says. “Such events become a stepping stone for young artists who are not only exposed to new learning opportunities, yet also opportunities to exhibit and build their own networks outside of Indonesia.” Kho cites the internet, email and social media platforms, such as Facebook as being invaluable tools in developing and capitalizing from his international network.

Kho's career has benefited enormously through his interactions with the international art world. Aged 21 he moved to Germany to study art and design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cologne, where he resided for 14 years. His experience in the multi cultural and vibrant city enabled him to develop a strict work ethic, and that, including the education he had already received at Academy of Fine Arts Bandung, West Java, was to provide him with a positive foundation to build upon his career. He exhibited widely within Germany and in other European countries while developing relations with artists, galleries and collectors that he still benefit from today.

Of mixed Chinese Javanese heritage, Kho's mixed media paintings and sculptures tell of his journey through life, issues of identity, love and the beauty of women and animals. His paintings are highly textured and often appear as a mosaic of imagery inspired by human archetypes, and Indonesian masks and batik designs.

In 1994 Kho returned to live in Indonesia, residing in Ubud, Bali where he quickly established himself in the contemporary art scene, not only finding new inspiration in his homeland, yet also opening his own gallery. In 2003 while attending an international art exhibition in Malaysia he met foreign artists and event organizers, some of whom he has collaborated with to create inter cultural art exchange programs in the S. E. Asian region.

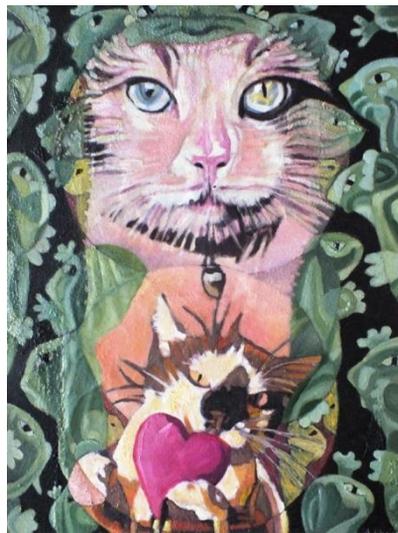
These programs involve a group of local artists travelling to the host country and staying for one – two week as guests of the foreign artists. The activities include art workshops, collaborative projects, visits to galleries, studios, museums and tourist sites, as well as exhibiting works along side the host artists in group exhibitions. Following this the foreign artist then travel to and participate in a similar programs in Bali with Kho and his fellow local artists as their hosts. So far Kho has organized and participated in such events in Malaysia, La Reunion, Thailand, Myanmar and the Philippines. Next year Kho along with other Indonesian artists will visit Iran in May for an intercultural exchange program also featuring artists from Korea, Malaysia and Iran.

2014 has been a landmark year for Malaysian contemporary art with four major events that are the initiative of Art Malaysia Association, sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture of the Malaysian government. Three of these events have proved to be a boon for the invited Indonesian artists who have, not only been fully sponsored to participate, yet also sold work and generated many future opportunities. While Indonesian contemporary art suffers from the lack of infrastructure and support from the government, Kho states he is very grateful for the local support from Bentara Budaya Bali Cultural Center and Maha Art Gallery in Denpasar.

Ever active in his studio painting, meeting people or working on the coordination of events, the final months of the year entail more overseas trips for Kho. Later in the month Kho along with another group of Indonesian artist will travel to Malaysia to participate in the 1st Malacca International Contemporary Art Festival 2014 (MICAFA) 27-30th November. Ever mindful to meet other foreign artists while abroad and to find more opportunities to establish his career, Kho is succeeding in building new relations in other foreign countries. In December Kho will be fully sponsored to participate in the Kala Nirvana International Artist's Residency in India from 9 – 21 December.



Antonius Kho, Amok 2013, mixed media on canvas, 140x70cm. image by Richard Horstman



Antonius Kho, I Love You, mixed media, 2014, 120x60cm. Image Richard Horstman



Antonius Kho, profile image by Richard Horstman