

## Masriadi 2016

Nyoman Masriadi's story reads unlike any other within the history of Indonesian art. It charts the phenomenal rise of a talented painter, who in 2008 at the age of 36 achieved the prestige of being the first SE Asian artist with works topping USD \$1 million at auction. A feat that immediately propelled him into the international art spotlight.

Aspiring Singaporean art dealer Jusdeep Shandu stumbled across Masriadi in his studio in Yogyakarta in 1996, commenting on the painter's self portrait 'Pulau Bali' ('Island of Bali'), "It was a departure from anything else I had ever seen." Shandu became instrumental in Masriadi's career development via his Gajah Gallery in Singapore.

Born 1973 in Gianyar, Bali Masriadi moved to Central Java to study art at the Institute Seni Indonesia (ISI) Yogyakarta in 1991. In 1999, however, he left before his final assessment due to his interests conflicting with the teachers and curriculum.

In 1997 Masriadi returned to Bali with his wife to be, and for a year worked feverishly churning out souvenir paintings of Balinese mythological figures. This led to the development of his first super hero characters. With his new family he returned to Yogyakarta as Indonesia was undergoing a turbulent transition. Following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and the fall of General Suharto in 1998, ushering in the Reformasi movement, the Indonesian art scene's interests shifted, almost overnight, from conservative expressionist paintings with traditional themes to inspiring socially engaged art. That year Masriadi was enormously productive. His works addressed themes of social injustice, corruption and military abuse, flavoured by his satirical wit and his bold figurative style.

In 2006 a Masriadi painting sold for USD \$10,000. It wasn't until in May 2008 when "Sudah Biasa di Telanjangi" ("Used to Being Stripped") - depicting a black-skinned, muscle bound man wearing pink bikini briefs around his ankles, covering himself with hands bound by rope - sold at auction for \$540,000 at Christie's Hong Kong. Prior to this interest in Indonesian art at regional auctions was confined to old masters such as Hendra Gunawan and Affandi.

"I don't understand what all the fuss is about," the art-school dropout said about his rising popularity.

Masriadi's stratospheric ascent had only begun. October 4 2008 at Sotheby's Hong Kong, "Sorry Hero, Saya Lupa" (Sorry Hero, I Forgot) set another record, at \$619,000. Only two days later "The Man from Bantul" (Final Round) sold at Sotheby's in Hong Kong for US\$1,000,725. "Low estimates were a major factor in Masriadi's initial market acceleration, since they paled in comparison with many other Asian artists' prices at the time," Shandu said.

"Masriadi: Black Is My Last Weapon," his first solo exhibition held at the Singapore Art Museum, 22 August – 9 November 2008 showcased his oeuvre to a growing international audience. Co organized by Shandu and spanning Masriadi's 10-year career and exploring the evolution of his signature black-skinned characters that are inspired by his love of comics and video games, that make satirical and poignant statements about national and global issues. The show not only highlighted his technical excellence, yet his ambivalence toward the art world as well.

During this exhibition the Paul Kasmin Gallery of New York expressed interests in working with Shandu to bring Masriadi to the US. Following on from the 2011 “Nyoman Masriadi – Recent Paintings”, his latest exhibition “Nyoman Masriadi” opened 28 April 2016 in New York featuring five new paintings, and never-before-exhibited works from 2012-14 along with a series of five 91.4 x 129.5 x 76.2 cm bronze sculptures - “Piglet”.

“The gallery has primarily focused on placing Masriadi in American and European collections. The more audiences in the west get to see the paintings in person, the more deeply they engage,” said Senior Director of Paul Kasmin Gallery, Nicholas Olney. “Its very rare for him to have a gallery show and sales have been excellent. Masriadi’s position as a truly internationally artist has been cemented.”

“There is a growing awareness in the US in Indonesia as a destination, and as a fertile art community,” Olney adds. “I’m looking forward to spending more time in Yogyakarta and Bandung to see what the younger generations of artists are working on.”

Through his success on the global arena Masriadi draws increasing attention to Indonesia, home to many young artists of international standard yet to be exposed abroad. As technology progressively collapses the borders while facilitating access the artists are in the drivers seat. Three international events highlight the 2016 Indonesian art calendar, ArtJog9 in May/June, Bazaar Art Jakarta 2016 and Art Stage Jakarta, both in August, all showcasing home grown names and fresh talent for local and international collectors.

Will Indonesia witness another sensation like Masriadi? Such a meteoric rise maybe unlikely, yet art markets are cyclic, and while the future is unknown it is ripe with opportunities.

Nyoman Masriadi continues through to 28 June 2016

Paul Kasmin Gallery

293 Tenth Avenue, New York

[www.paulkasmingallery.com](http://www.paulkasmingallery.com)

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- Is Masriadi capturing increasing attention in North America & Europe?



Nyoman Masriadi Installation at Paul Kasmin Gallery - Photo courtesy of the artists & Paul Kasmin Gallery



Masriadi installation at Paul Kasmin Gallery. Image courtesy of the artist & Paul Kasmin Gallery



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Nyoman Masriadi Installation T PAUL KASMIN GALLERY. Image courtesy of the artist and Paul Kasmin Gallery



Piglet- Nyoman Masriadi - Bronze. Image courtesy of the artist & the Paul Kasmin Gallery