

PRESS RELEASE

ON THE NATURE OF BOTANICAL GARDENS

Contemporary Indonesian Perspectives

24 Jan – 26 Apr 2020

Location: Framer Framed

Address: Oranje-Vrijstraatkaade 71, 1093 KS Amsterdam

Preview: 23 January, 17:00h at Framer Framed

Opening: 23 January, 18:00h at Framer Framed

CURATOR: Sadiyah Boonstra

ARTISTS:

Zico Albaiquni, Arahmaiani, Ade Darmawan, Edwin, Samuel Indratma, Lifepatch,
Elia Nurvista, Ipeh Nur, Sinta Tantra

Botanical gardens exist around the world and have become associated with idyllic and exotic nature. This exhibition looks at botanical gardens from another angle and regards botanical gardens as a key site in which colonial power was literally rooted. It investigates how the colonial quest of products, profits and power around the world formed the context for the establishment and consolidation of botanical gardens.

On the Nature of Botanical Gardens (2020) features nine contemporary Indonesian artists who look critically at botanical gardens, colonial power, knowledge building and the economics of nature, its legacies and current consequences of approaching nature and plants. The exhibition seeks to decolonise the concept of botanical gardens and their role in building a Dutch colonial empire in Indonesia.

But it also seeks to go beyond decolonising the concept of botanical gardens by offering insight into knowledge systems of nature that existed prior to the advance of colonialism in Indonesia. Such knowledges were usually ignored, orientalised or destroyed which created a hierarchy of knowledge of nature. The exhibition also suggests fresh perspectives on representing nature by providing an entry-point to the myriad ways of thinking about and being with and in nature in contemporary Indonesia.

EXHIBITION SPACE /
OFFICE
Oranje- Vrijstraatkaade 71
1093 KS Amsterdam
The Netherlands

OPEN
Tue-Fri 12:00 - 19:00
Sat-Sun 11:00 - 18:00

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The knowledge of specific plants and their environments was crucial for their transplantation from one part of the globe to the other and contributed to the development of the massive plantations that were important for the colonial economy. With this exhibition, Framer Framed tries to shift from a more traditional compartmentalised gaze to a layered and deeper perspective on botanical gardens and connects with the contemporary art in Indonesia:

Zico Albaiquni (b. 1987) creates large scale colourful paintings that question colonial history. He creates new colours based on the pigment palette used during colonial times. Zico was commissioned to make new work *Ruwatan Tanah Air Beta, Reciting Rites in it's Site* (2019) in which he subtly layers historical references of Indonesian history and art history in an attempt to re-appropriate the history of Kebun Raya Bogor, Indonesia's largest botanical garden.

Arahmaiani (b. 1961), one of the most respected and iconic contemporary Indonesian artists, focuses on the values that form the basis of our respect for nature. Her large installation *Memory of Nature* (2013) refers to the basic shape of the Borobudur mandala as a cosmic formation that portrays the universe with all its inhabitants. The work is made of natural materials like wood, soil and vegetation and will grow into a living, green mandala over the course of the exhibition. As part of the work visitors are able to create their own mandalas.

Ipeh Nur's (b. 1993) large mural [*Untitled*] (2018) is drawn on sacks of rice and comments on the violent colonial history in connection to nutmeg. Banda Islands were the only place in the world where under unique climate and geological circumstances nutmeg grew naturally. To obtain the monopoly on nutmeg trade J.P. Coen massacred the Banda population to replace them with slave labour from other islands. Ipeh's drawings imagine the violence and cruelty with a rawness that makes it urgent for today's viewer.

Curator

Sadiyah Boonstra is a scholar-curator. She received her PhD from Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam with the dissertation *Changing Wayang Scenes. Heritage Formation and Wayang Performance Practice in Colonial and Postcolonial Indonesia* (2014).

She is currently Asia Scholar at The University of Melbourne and Curator of Public Programmes at Asia TOPA, Melbourne. Her research and curatorial interests focus on the cultural history, heritage and performing arts of colonial and contemporary Indonesia in relation to the Netherlands and their representation in museums.

More info:

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