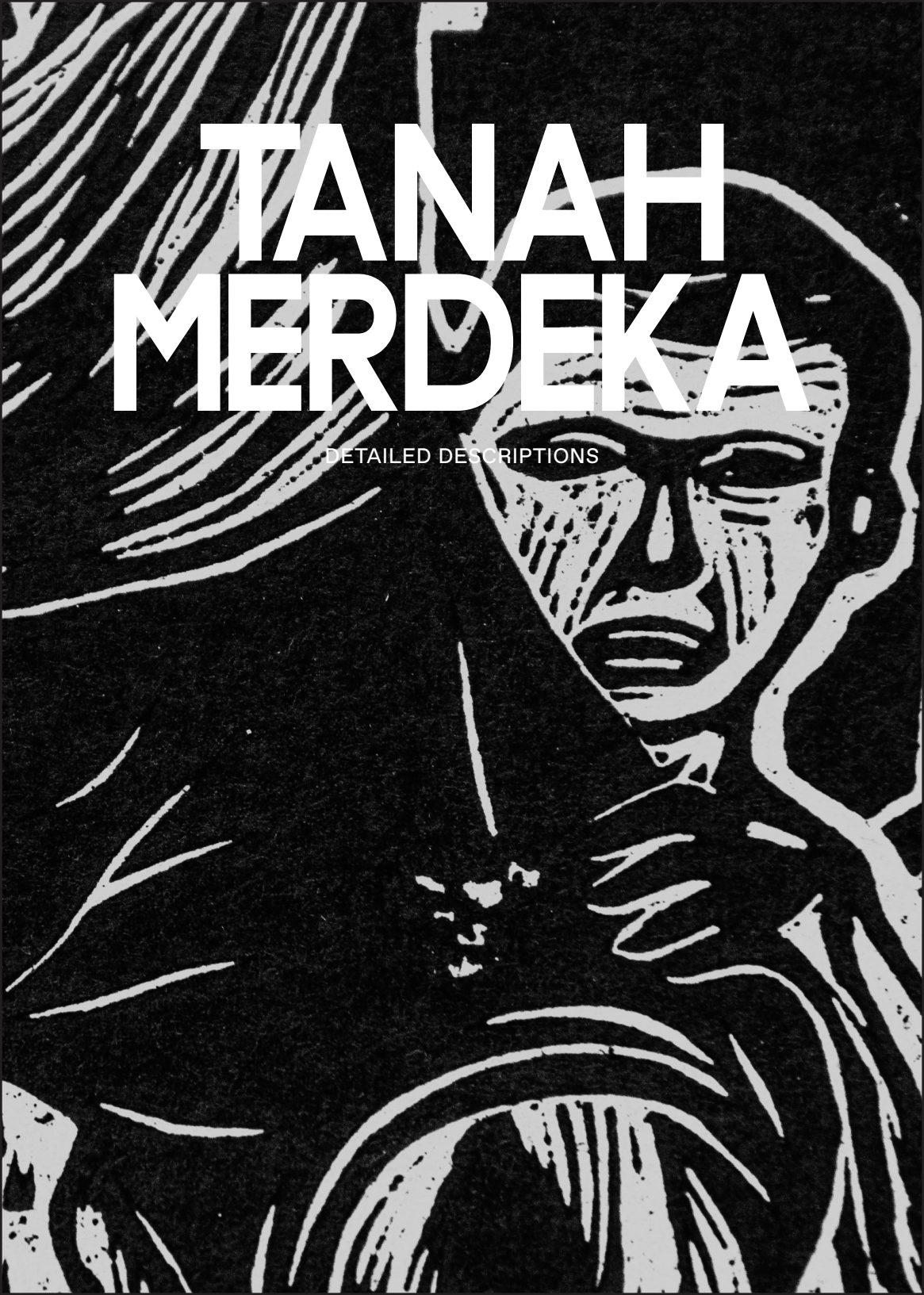
TANAH MERDEKA

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS



FRAMER
FRAMED

EXHIBITION DATES

25 JUNE–
10 SEP ’23

BY COLLECTIVE

Taring Padi

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
Not Native Native

EXHIBITION DESIGN
Kevin van Braak

Taring Padi often state that they are not artists, but are art workers who aim to foster ‘openness, social prosperity, the sovereignty of the people, justice among generations, democracy, human rights, gender perspectives, the reformation of global relations, and the preservation of the environment.' (Taring Padi, Manifesto, 1998)

Over the past 25 years, the collective has been utilising large scale banners, woodcut posters, wayang kardus (life-sized cardboard puppets) as artistic formulas to agitate, educate, and organise themselves, their community, and diverse solidarity actions they are involved in. Through conversations, storytelling, and co-creation, many people have collaboratively created a variety of works together with Taring Padi.

For example, in the large-scale banners, local socio-polit- ical issues are conveyed through different compositions and figures based on mutual exchange. While certain depictions carry particular stories and historical incidents, the figures depicted in the banner are also often non-specific; instead, they intend to represent and connect with a broader network of communities who share similar values and invite a wider public to position themselves in the struggle and solidarity of the works.

Based on a series of interviews, we learn from Taring Padi and their comrades the rich stories behind the making of these large-scale banners and woodcut prints presented in Tanah Merdeka, and share with you an impression through this handout.

FEATURED WORKS

Lukisan Tokoh Masyarakat Adat (2021)
Painting Series of Indigenous People

Acrylic on canvas
62 x 82 cm



Lukisan Tokoh Masyarakat Adat | Photo: Bora Şekerci, Framer Framed

This painting series showcases the Indigenous Indonesian Peoples from various regions, including Maluku, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Toraja, East Nusa Tenggara, and Papua. Taring Padi had the opportunity to directly meet with these leaders during the Indigenous Peoples Congress in Tobelo, North Halmahera in 2012. The artworks serve as a demonstration of solidarity with indigenous communities, featuring portraits of significant representatives such as Yosepha Alomang, Rukmini Paata Tokehe, Aleta Baun, Apay Janggut, Elliza Kissya, and Den Upa Rombelayuk.

—

Sekarang Mereka, Besok Kita (2021)
First They Came for Them, Then They Came for Us

Acrylic on canvas
400 x 800 cm



First They Came for Them, Then They Came for Us | Photo: Bora Şekerci, Framer Framed

This banner was created in particular for *documenta fifteen* in Kassel, Germany. Its poetic inspiration is interpreted as a call for solidarity for issues related to forms of injustice, particularly the urgency of climate injustice, as depicted through the lying white skeleton that holds a growing tree **(centre)**. The banner targets the exploitative industries of mining, especially the Freeport mine, the greed of the global capitalist oligarchy, over-extraction of natural resources, as well as the suppression of freedom under constant state surveillance. However,



Deatail of *First They Came for Them, Then They Came for Us* | Photo: Bora Şekerci, Framer Framed

these denunciations constitute a very small part of the banner. The banner is mainly a celebration, depicted as a popular protest march. It celebrates the work of Taring Padi in the context of popular movements, as exemplified by the main figures of the march, which are wayang-inspired puppet figures **(centre-left)** holding the collective's classic cardboard puppets.

The cardboard puppets have been a present figure in the demonstrations Taring Padi have been a part of. The puppets serve as tools for agitation, and (more practically) as self-protection from police and other authorities. While the figures among the crowd are non-specific, they are inspired by comrades and activists the collective has worked with in the past. The banner, with its bright and vibrant colours, highlights the dynamic nature of political organising and the collective's work in agitating, educating, and organising people and communities on issues affecting their existence.

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Tanah dan Petani Merdeka Menghidupi Semua
Farmers Give Life to All **(**2021)

Woodcut print on fabric
122 x 242 cm



Tanah dan Petani Merdeka | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

These two banners are the first linocut prints created by Taring Padi in a collective manner, similar to how they work for the large-scale banners. During the process, they discuss the steadfast socialist theme of solidarity with and within farmer and worker communities. *Tanah dan Petani Merdeka Menghidupi Semua* (*Farmers Give Life to All*) touches on themes of land ownership and respect for food systems that do not rely on global capitalist imports. Heavy imports of goods such as grains and rice have made countries like Indonesia dependent on foods that are not produced endemically. These endemic staple



Detail of *Tanah dan Petani Merdeka* | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed



Buruh Bersatu | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

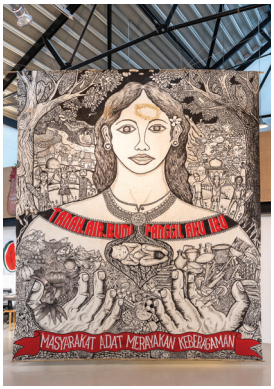
foods, such as corn, tapioca, taro, sago, and other fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables **(bottom left)** are more sustainable for the surroundings and the diet, while also supporting the labour and produce of local farmers. Land ownership for farm workers is difficult as many work for large landlords, and are often violently suppressed by military and police when they peasant occupations of farmland to avoid corporate land-grabbing.

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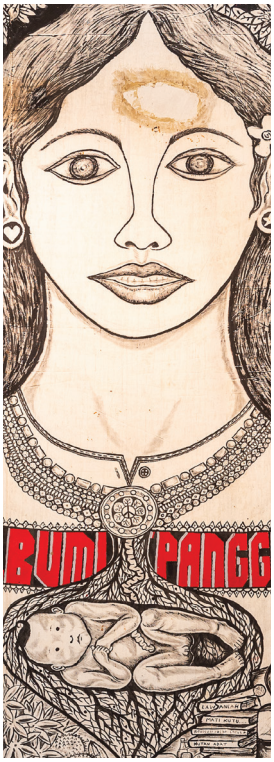
***Buruh Bersatu* (2021)**
Workers United

Woodcut print on fabric
122 x 242 cm

Buruh Bersatu (Workers United) calls for the unionisation of urban and industry workplaces, especially in the realms of factory and domestic work. It touches on issues of labour rights specifically for those who are further oppressed in the working class, namely the disabled **(left bottom)** and women **(right bottom)**. It addresses issues of workplace discrimination, union busting and the collusion of local unions with factory owners, and the disrespect of human rights on the factory and warehouse floors. It also discusses the internal migration of rural populations to urban areas to be hired as cheap labour as a result of their limited opportunities to learn of their rights. One main figure in this work is Marsinah, who was an organizer based in Sidoarjo, East Java. She disappeared and was presumably killed by state forces in 1993. From there she became a figure to rally behind for many unionised workers throughout the archipelago. Both banners discuss the violence of capitalist systems and the physical destruction of land and people upheld by the profit desires of cronies and corporations.



Ibu Bumi | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed



Detail of *Ibu Bumi* | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

Ibu Bumi (2014)
Land, Water, Earth, Call Me Mother

Acrylic on canvas
480 x 575 cm

Taring Padi was contacted by the National Congress of the Indonesian Alliance of Indigenous Communities more than a decade ago, and from then on they maintained a long standing relationship. For the collective, it was crucial to deepen their understanding of climate justice and the impacts of resource extraction from those most affected by the encroachment of multinational corporations and local oligarchies.

Here in this banner, the indigenous people of the archipelago are depicted behind the woman in the smaller figures and their traditional homes. These are **(from left to right)** Orang Dayak (Kalimantan), Papua (Papua Barat), Jawa (Java), Toraja (Sulawesi). The figure of the woman is the manifestation of Mother Earth, as the banner on her chest reads 'Land, Water, Earth, They Call Me Mother'. In many indigenous knowledge systems, the Earth is embodied by a woman. This banner represents this notion, but goes further to include a feminist perspective on the question of labour. If the earth is depicted as a mother, then the role of the mother must also be examined.

The bottom half of the banner consists of fruits, vegetables, and other produce **(left)** and household items **(right)**. These are to signify the (domestic) labour taken on by women and mothers, as well as the laborious work of Mother Earth to create the various beings existing alongside us. These types of labour are often viewed as inherent to the existence of a woman, but this banner contradicts this assumption by showing that these types of labour must be acknowledged, understood, and advocated for in the same way as the labour of the working people.



Retomar Nossa Terra | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

Retomar Nossa Terra / Rebut Tanah Kita
(2023)
Reclaim the Land

Acrylic on canvas
480 x 600 cm

Created in the context of Taring Padi's Brazilian residency in collaboration with MST and Casa do Povo, this banner encapsulates Taring Padi and MST's joint solidarity and struggles against the exploitation, extraction, and commodifi- cation of land. Similar to other works of Taring Padi, the banner aims to celebrate the resilience of the people fighting for their land by depicting a collective march. At the same time, we see animals and plants alongside the people, whose livelihoods cannot be separated from the human struggle. What cannot be missed is the mother tree **(centre)**, representing the biodiversity in Brazil and Indonesia in preservation efforts and returning colonised stolen land. On the right side of the mother tree depicts the monument created in memory of the Eldorado do Carajás massacre, where landless farmers were killed by the millitary police in 1996.



Detail of *Retomar Nossa Terra* | Photo: Bora Şekerci, Framer Framed

There are also important figures from both locales, who represent their guardianship over the land and their community. Specifically agreed amongst the participants to be depicted is activist and environ- mentalist Raoni Metuktire (b.1932-) **(lower centre)**, a living symbol of the fight for the preservation of the Amazon rainforest and indigenous culture. In front of him stands revolutionary Indonesian author, Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925-2006), a founding member of socialist art organisation Lekra and a key figure in the anti-colonial movement in Indonesia. Next to him is German born Jewish Brazilian activist Olga Benario Prestes (1908-1942) **(centre left)**, an important female member of the communist party in Germany. Sent to Brazil by the Soviet Union to help the insurrection, Olga married Prestes (one

of the most important political figures in Brazil) and was eventually arrested, brought back to Germany and killed in the concentration camp in 1942.

While the participants decided to highlight important historical figures, the march also represents the society as a whole, from indigenous people, activists, farmers, factory workers, to the wildlife and nature that sustains and holds us together. The banner also introduces the contradictions that exist within a struggle — for example people **(right)** painted in grey shades having to work for extractive companies to earn a living despite being part of the MST movement.

The right side of the banner represents capitalist greed and the control of agro-industry and other extractive industries. The octopus-shaped machine **(upper right)** represents imperialism and the capitalist system spreading their tentacles in all directions and 'choking' the land with a tight grip. Nearby is the capitalist cow dressed in a suit representing the capitalist industrial exploitation of land. The pose of the cow depicts the hand gesture commonly used by the former extreme right president Jair Bolsonaro. In Brazil, the followers of the extreme right were often symbolised as cows because of their blind way of following Jair Bolsonaro's leader- ship, associated with the killing of many indigenous people and the exploitation of land with agro-businesses. All of these is diminished by the power and unity of the people and their more-than-human comrades. During the conversation with Taring Padi, members stated: "Land equalises all of us: we live on the land, we come from the land, it feeds us and it keeps us alive". This banner exemplifies that there is a great need for talking about land strug- gles and promoting new forms of relation- ship with land, based on mutuality and reciprocity.



Poster Cukil | Photo: Bora Şekerci, Framer Framed



Poster Cukil | Photo: Bora Şekerci, Framer Framed

Poster Cukil (1998 - 2023)
Woodcut Posters

Woodcut prints
Variable dimensions

Woodcuts are one of the primary mediums employed by Taring Padi as political tools in their artwork. These woodcuts are printed on fabrics and papers, and they are often created in direct response to significant political events, such as general elections, fluctuations in petrol prices, or the pressing issue of climate change.

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Detail of *Tenda Pecel Lele* | Photo: Bora Şekerci, Framer Framed

Tenda Pecel Lele **(2005)**
Everyone is Entitled to a Decent Livelihood

Acrylic on canvas
575 x 480 cm

In contrast to the agrarian and rural focus of Taring Padi's political actions and works, this banner depicts the people's struggle in the more urban locales of Indonesia. The banner's chaos mirrors the political chaos at the time (2005), with many upheavals following the 1997 economic crisis and the tran- sition from authoritarian government to a promised democracy post 1998. The struggle embodied in the banner is the increase in the cost of living. As a part of the rush to adopt neo-liberal economic policies, the government welcomed the privatisation of different sectors includ- ing public utilities such as water. These interventions were often in cooperation with foreign interests and local oligarchs **(top right)**, which in turn put money in the hands of the middle classes and encouraged over-consumption **(bottom right)**. While this may read as prosperity, this is without the consideration of the lives of urban poor workers, who strug- gled to keep up with the rising costs and found themselves priced out of urban areas despite needing to remain there



Tenda Pecel Lele |
Photo: Bora Şekerci,
Framer Framed

for their work and livelihoods. One can see the gathering of the disenfranchised and their protest **(left)**, against the capitalist reactions to global demands of democratization and an open and free market. The protest signs on the left side are decrying the privitatisation of basic needs, demanding an end to the eviction of urban poor populations and the recognition of their right to security and equal access to livelihood. Following these protests, the privatisation of water access was deemed illegal by an Indonesian court in 2015 on the basis of neglect from private holders, and returned to public control.

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Hak Asasi Manusia |
Photo: Maarten Nauw,
Framer Framed

Hak Asasi Manusia (2012)
Human Rights

Acrylic on canvas
300 x 300 cm

This banner depicts the Tugu Selamat Datang, a statue in the centre of Jakarta in the middle of the rapid transit station Bundaran HI. The statue was built in 1961 under the rule of Soekarno, and originally commissioned for the sixth Asian Games. The imagery of the couple holding hands and welcoming guests to the country is heavily derived from socialist realism, a movement introducing the principle of politicising culture and art to serve a societal purpose. The statue became the site of many histor- ical protests, both brutal and non-violent.



Detail of *Hak Asasi Manusia*
| Photo: Maarten Nauw,
Framer Framed

This banner shows the monument's political and social history, as a work of public art that has united people since its establishment. It celebrates the many demonstrations fighting against imperialist and capitalist injustices through a large march, with many signs announcing the calls to action that Taring Padi has participated in throughout the years. These signs call for the respect of the land, respect towards religious minorities, and a general strive for peace. Some of them decry the imperialist system and

its impacts on nature and people alike **(centre)**, as well as the violence of state bodies such as the police **(right)**.

The many groups that Taring Padi has worked with since their inception are present in the march, with their arms and signs raised towards the sky like the figures from the *Tugu Selamat Datang* **(front)**. Throughout the crowd, one can find indigenous people, workers, farmers, religious people, domestic workers, and all those that constitute the oppressed classes in Indonesia and beyond. Looking to the future, they are united by the struggle for their rights, and are memorialised in their solidarity.

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***Bumi Manusia* (2021)**
The Earth of Mankind

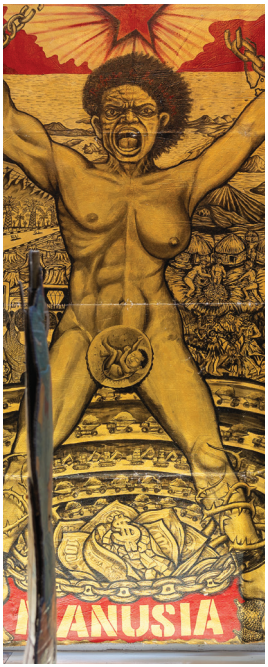
Acrylic on canvas
300 x 300 cm



Bumi Manusia | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

This banner is part of the same series as *Hak Asasi Manusia*, further exploring the many socialist realism style statues commissioned by the Soekarno administration in the 1960s and their relation to human rights. The central figure is inspired by the monument Patung Pembebasan Irian Barat, representing the Papuan people in their struggle for freedom. It is a monument to the decolonisation of Netherlands New Guinea in the 1960s and the transfer of their sovereignty to the Indonesian state.

However, in this banner the collective confronts the abuses of the West Papuan territory as a result of this false autonomy, many of which are rooted in the introduction of multinational capitalist interest through the signing of the PT. Freeport contract by Soeharto **(left)** in 1967. The Freeport mine **(bottom)** is a common symbol throughout the works of Taring Padi as it is symbolic of the destruction of land throughout the archipelago for



Deatil of *Bumi Manusia* | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

the extraction of resources such as gold, oil, palm oil, rubber, and coal. The contract led to the destruction and militarisation of Papuan land and the violation of their rights to their own resources and indig- enous practices. The Papuan people have been subjected to brutal military and state violence since the 1960s, all in the pursuit of their natural wealth by the local oligarchy and international corporate stakeholders from the UK, US, and Australia.

This banner also depicts the cultural heritage of Papua, such as the craftsmanship **(left and right totems)** and traditions (such as the noken bags behind the figure) typical to the region. These cultural themes demand respect for Papuan existences beyond an extractive and capitalist view — to instead view West Papua and its inhabitants as they are.

—

Evolusi Kekerasan Kolonial (2023)
The Evolution of Colonial Violence

Acrylic on canvas
480 x 600 cm

This new banner is created specifical- ly for this exhibition and as part of the ongoing collaboration between Framer Framed, Casa do Povo, and Taring Padi. The banner was conceptualised alongside migrant communities in the Netherlands with a focus on the theme of colonial violence, and the experiences that coloniality has historically margin- alised. It highlights the violent legacies of the Dutch colonial era, particularly those experienced by different migrant communities from former and current colonies. On the left hand side, the banner traces the lineage of contemporary militarism and violence to the milita- rist rule of the colonial administration. It depicts the migrant experience with the two separated figures **(bottom centre)** and the ships **(centre)** representing the hundreds of thousands who have left their home countries. These migrants leave for many reasons, but



Evolusi Kekerasan Kolonial | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed



Evolusi Kekerasan Kolonial | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

are then separated from their cultures and expe- rience vicious coloniality in the Nether- lands, such as the systematic erasure of their struggles and the glorification of their oppressors.

The right hand side imagines a joyous and peaceful life beyond the violence perpetuated by colonial legacies, referencing the Bandung Conference of 1955 **(top right)** as one attempt to unite the (formerly) colonised. It encourages (formerly) colonised people to learn from one another, whether they are part of a diaspora or remain in their home country, to oust the continued rule of colonialism over their land, their bodies, and their minds. The collective aims to explore further as they develop the design alongside more groups from the former and current colonies throughout this exhibit. It is possible that you will see this banner change and take new forms as the exhibition progresses, with input from visitors and participants in future programming, which is the very nature of a Taring Padi project. We invite you to join us to complete the banner later this summer 2023.

More information will follow on our website and our social media channels.

—

Mereka Yang Bertanggung Jawab (2000)
Those Who Are Responsible



Mereka Yang Bertanggung Jawab | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

Acrylic on canvas
300 x 300 cm

These two banners were created in the early days of the collective, when they were very active in the demonstrations to topple the dictator Soeharto. The oldest banner is the very first banner created by a member of the collective, as a demonstration banner. It was created by then president of Taring Padi, Yustoni Volunteero. It depicts a mass grave and decries state violence against the oppressed classes, and

a protest against certain issues with political nepotism and cronyism at the time. It is the inspiration for the banners that follow, as the collective noted their effectiveness in agitation, education, and organisation of the people.

—

Adili Soeharto dan Para Jenderalnya (2000)
Bring Soeharto and His Generals to Trial

Acrylic on canvas
300 x 300 cm



Adili Soeharto dan Para Jenderalnya | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

The other banner continues the struggle against the Soeharto regime (he is pictured as the large figure on the left). It was created the year after he was ousted as a protest against his protection by the military and by many of his cronies. His appointees in local and federal governments remained in their positions, especially within the military (the figures tied around him). It protests the lack of systematic changes following the regime's downfall as a result of the legacies of Soeharto remaining in power and remaining the political norm. These banners mark the beginning of the collective banner making for Taring Padi, a tradition which continues to this day as a means of political art making.

—

Wayang Kardus (1998-2022)
Cardboard Puppets

Acrylic on cardboard
Variable dimensions



Wayang Kardus | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

The 'banner' of cardboard puppets was designed by members of the Taring Padi collective here in the Framer Framed space. It shows all of the puppets which were placed in Friederichplatz during *documenta fifteen* in Kassel, Germany. It is a compilation of the many people



Detail of *Wayang Kardus* | Photo: Maarten Nauw, Framer Framed

and communities that Taring Padi has taught and has learned from, documenting their learning process from everyday people and their struggles. It shows how many people have come together to fight for justice throughout the years they have worked, and the impact their stories have had on the collective's idea and understanding of what the struggle for justice should look like. Contrasting this cardboard puppet banner to their first banners, the evolution of their co-creation practice is clear — while they first endeavored to serve the people as activists and through political demonstrations, the people have now become an inseparable part of Taring Padi, collective agenda setting and their trajectory into the future.

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