



THE GREAT INDONESIA EXHIBITION

DE NIEUWE KERK
AMSTERDAM

UNTIL
1 APR
2024

THE GREAT INDONESIA EXHIBITION

PRESS RELEASE - OCTOBER 2023



Unknown photographer, Studio portrait of Pakoe Boewono X, Susuhunan of Solo, and resident Willem de Vogel, Surakarta, ca. 1897. Collection Wereldmuseum, Amsterdam.

DE NIEUWE KERK SOON OPENS LONG-AWAITED INDONESIA EXHIBITION

On Saturday 21 October, De Nieuwe Kerk will open *The Great Indonesia Exhibition*. Although there have been a number of exhibitions about Indonesia in the Netherlands, this one promises to be special. Earlier exhibitions often dealt with specific periods or art-historical themes from the long history of the world's largest archipelago. The exhibition in De Nieuwe Kerk on Amsterdam's Dam Square expressly opts for the larger story, from a contemporary perspective. A story that still gets too little attention in Dutch school textbooks.

The exhibition gives an impression of the eventful history and rich cultures of the country and its inhabitants down through the centuries, from the heyday of the legendary Majapahit Empire, colonial rule as opposed to Indonesian independence and the Second World War to the revolution and the proclamation of the republic by Sukarno, the Suharto era, and today's Indonesia with all its promises and challenges. The exhibition is an ode to the great cultural diversity that has characterized the archipelago for centuries. Compiled as a polyphonic biography with attention to known and unknown facets, diverse perspectives and traumatic experiences. De Nieuwe Kerk intends the exhibition to interest a broad public that would like to know more.

A picture is painted of that long history with the help of hundreds of objects and countless stories. Each is expounded upon personally in audio and text by representatives of various communities in Indonesia and the Netherlands. The exhibition is a place for new stories and suppressed histories. We share a past, but that same past divides us. Resonating throughout the exhibition, therefore, is a dialogue that is far from over.

For this extensive exhibition, De Nieuwe Kerk is collaborating with a large number of historians, artists, students, museums, eyewitnesses and hands-on experts from Indonesia and the Netherlands. *The Great Indonesia Exhibition* will run for six months, until Monday 1 April 2024.

Museums, archives and contemporary artists

More than 300 objects will be on display, ranging from centuries-old archaeological finds, sculptures, historical documents and applied art to masks, wajang puppets, textiles, jewellery and fashions, as well as paintings, photographs and films. They come from dozens of museums and private collections. From the Netherlands collection pieces are coming from Wereldmuseum, the National Archive, Rijksmuseum, NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies and other collections. From Indonesia comes an extensive contemporary art collection that is at the heart of the exhibition. The chosen artists reflect on contemporary themes such as gender and climate change, and mostly make use of traditional techniques. On view soon will be works by Alfiah Rahdini (1990, Bandung), Citra Sasmita (1990, Bali), Eko Nugroho (1977, Yogyakarta), FX Harsono (1949, Jakarta), Heri Dono (1960, Jakarta), Timoteus Anggawan Kusno (1989, Yogyakarta) and many others.

Purpose and themes

The exhibition starts with a mini lecture about the country. Visitors then enter the colourful and multifaceted world of Nusantara, the centuries-old name for the place now known as Indonesia, with attention paid to its stunning natural environment and its biodiversity, but also to the challenges it faces, such as pollution and deforestation. The next focus is on ancient empires, with their centuries of trade, their world religions and their legendary dynasties, followed by a look at death rituals and ancestor worship within various communities, including those of the Moluccas and Papua. Then comes the Second World War, the Revolution and the young Republic of Indonesia, with a breathtaking layout portraying a tumultuous period in the struggle for independence. The exhibition then takes a closer look at resistance to Dutch oppression, which goes far further back than the familiar revolutionary period, telling of the many resistance fighters and the impact of the rise of nationalism. After that, the history shared by Indonesia and the Netherlands is central, from the sixteenth century when the first Dutch people sailed to the archipelago under the flag of the United East India Company (VOC) to the nineteenth century, when the Dutch fought numerous wars to extend their power further by violence. The fact that hundreds of thousands of people were enslaved during Dutch colonial rule is far from common knowledge.

When we come to the final theme of the exhibition, today's Indonesia takes centre stage, and the younger generation has a chance to speak. Young people express their wishes for the future of their country, surrounded by contemporary artists who, in their work, reflect and criticize but also present hopeful prospects.

Slavery in the East

Few people realise that the Dutch history of slavery was not just about the transatlantic slave trade. In the former Dutch East Indies, hundreds of thousands were enslaved, traded and held in captive. However, Dutch history teaching on the slavery past is generally limited to the West. The fact that slavery in the East does not (yet) have a place in the collective memory prompts De Nieuwe Kerk to develop a special guided tour in collaboration with writer Reggie Baay. The tour on the history of slavery in the East can be booked not only for secondary schools and colleges, but for all visitors.

Collaboration

De Nieuwe Kerk is collaborating not just with different communities in Indonesia and the Netherlands but with many historians, students, artists, museum experts, archivists, collectors, writers, hands-on experts and eyewitnesses at home and abroad. The exhibition has been made possible by an exchange of knowledge and stories. A special collaboration with Museum Sophiahof in The Hague enables eyewitnesses and family members with diverse Indonesian backgrounds to have their say. Among other things, they talk about the Japanese occupation.

An extensive programme is being developed to accompany the exhibition. Various special evening events will be organized, in which well-known authors such as Reggie Baay, Thom Hoffman, Dido Michielsen and many others will tell stories about Indonesia.

The Great Indonesia Exhibition runs from Saturday 21 October 2023 to Monday 1 April 2024 in De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam.

Note for editors, not for publication:

Images are available on request at pressoffice@nieuwekerk.nl.
The images can be used free of copyright only in publications about *The Great Indonesia Exhibition*.

Opening for the press

The opening for the press is on Thursday 19 October at 10.00 a.m. in De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam. You can register to attend via pressoffice@nieuwekerk.nl.

CONTEMPORARY ART IN INDONESIA EXHIBITION

Artists from Indonesia put current issues on the map at De Nieuwe Kerk

For *The Great Indonesia Exhibition*, De Nieuwe Kerk is collaborating with more than ten contemporary artists from Indonesia. They are artists whose work reflects on themes such as gender, violence, protest, colonialism and climate change. Especially for the exhibition, several masterpieces will be brought to the Netherlands by De Nieuwe Kerk. Together, they represent the artistic dialogue as it is taking place in Indonesia today. The contemporary art collection is at the heart of the exhibition. On show are works by Alfiah Rahdini (1990, Bandung), Ari Bayuaji (1975, Bali), Citra Sasmita (1990, Bali), Eko Nugroho (1977, Yogyakarta), FX Harsono (1949, Jakarta), Heri Dono (1960, Jakarta), Mangmoel (1984, Bandung), Mella Jaarsma (1960 Emmeloord/ Yogyakarta), Nadiyah Bamadhaj (1968, Yogyakarta), Octora (1982, Bandung) and Timoteus Anggawan Kusno (1989, Yogyakarta).

The voice of contemporary art has its own special opening in December. The exhibition will then take on an extra dimension with the installation of nearly 10 new contemporary artworks currently on their way to the Netherlands. These will be added to the contemporary collection already on display from the opening on Saturday 21 October. Amid ancient archaeological finds, sculptures, historical documents, wayang dolls, painting and photography, the artists each reflect on current themes from Indonesia's histories and cultures.

Collection

Mella Jaarsma is a Dutch artist living and working in Yogyakarta. Through her work, Jaarsma reveals the voice of another artist, that of Papuan Agus Ongge. He talks about the history of visual art in Papua and how it relates to colonialism, the arrival of missionaries and policies under various Indonesian presidents. Two other artists reflect on the Suharto era. FX Harsono powerfully depicts the loss, memory and ongoing struggle to maintain one's own Chinese identity during the regime. Artist Octora's work refers to the meaning of protection through transparent uniforms made of iron mesh and brass. They symbolise the use (and abuse) of violence in the name of protecting the people. Artists Mangmoel and Ari Bayuaji's work addresses current issues related to climate change. Both work with recycled materials. Two objects by Alfiah Rahdini will soon be on show. Rahdini uses art to discuss the position of Muslim women in present-day Indonesia. Artists like Heri Dono and Timoteus Anggawan Kusno reflect in their own way on the colonial occupation and the effects of colonialism. In her work, Citra Sasmita unravels myths and misconceptions within Balinese culture in which the position of women plays an important role. From Eko Nugroho comes a series of contemporary wayang dolls referring to the potential violence that lurks behind human beings. Nadiyah Bamadhaj's video artwork deals with nationalism, fear and the awareness of women's empowerment in Indonesia.

The Great Indonesia Exhibition is on view from Saturday 21 October 2023 until Monday 1 April 2024 at De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam.

THE GREAT INDONESIA EXHIBITION

BACKGROUND STORY

STATUSQUO L'JN
M 22



Indonesian (TNI) and Dutch military near Mojokerto status quo line, 1948. Photo collection Service for Army Contacts Indonesia/Scheidema via National Archives.

BACKGROUND STORY THE GREAT INDONESIA EXHIBITION

The exhibition tells the long and mesmerising history of the largest archipelago nation in the world, with its countless inhabitants and rich cultures, viewed from the perspective of today. Nine themes take visitors on a journey through time and throughout the country. It is a biography of Indonesia, told in a multitude of voices, addressing various perspectives, suppressed histories and traumatic experiences. This text summarises each theme, explaining what can be seen and heard.

NUSANTARA

The exhibition begins with a brief lecture on the country. Visitors then enter the wondrous world of Nusantara, the ancient name for the region now known as Indonesia. Its overwhelming nature and spectacular biodiversity are delved into. Its fauna includes 1600 bird species and 500 different species of mammals, many of them rare or even unique. Various loans from Naturalis are exhibited here, including a painting of a blooming *Rafflesia Arnoldii*, one of the national flowers of Indonesia. Measuring a metre in diameter and weighing ten kilograms, it is the largest flower on earth. There is also a work on display by the contemporary artist Mangmoel (b. 1984), called *LUNA 9* (2023). It depicts an exuberant fantasy world, brimming with brightly coloured plants and corals, made from recycled materials. Mangmoel wants to inspire people to show more respect for nature and one another. The exhibition also addresses the major challenges related to nature and the environment, such as pollution, deforestation, intensive agriculture and the palm oil industry.



Mangmoel, *LUNA 9*. Yarn, cable wire, dacron, plastic net, 206 x 50 x 44 cm. Courtesy Mogus Studio.

Plans for a new capital

With 10 million inhabitants, Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, is overcrowded and polluted. It is also in constant danger of flooding due to the combination of subsidence and rising sea levels. A new capital - Nusantara - has been planned to relieve Jakarta, which is intended to become a lively centre of economic activity and innovation, featuring cutting-edge architecture. This major project is also cause for concern, however, since it will be constructed in the midst of nature on the coast of Kalimantan.



Artist unknown, *Pig mask*, 1880-1900. Wood, porcelain, 40 x 13,5 cm. Collection Wereldmuseum, Leiden.

Divine nature

According to the traditional belief systems in Indonesia, various natural phenomena have a soul, while objects do so as well. Gods represent natural forces and can assume various guises, such as a person or animal. The powerful tiger, for example, is seen as an apparition of an important ancestor, while there are also ceremonies in which offerings are made to a volcano. Rice also has a special significance, seen as a gift from the gods or the ancestors. In the exhibition, a pig's mask from the collection of the National Museum for World Cultures is on display. The Kayan people in Kalimantan wore this mask during ritual dances intended to ensure a good rice harvest.

The 'Nusantara' theme was made possible with contributions from, among others, the writer and artist Marion Bloem and Jet Bakels, anthropologist and writer.

ANCIENT EMPIRES

Indonesia has been at the crossroads of trade routes and cultures for centuries on end. At least since 200 BCE, goods from countries including Vietnam, China and India have reached the archipelago. The trade also introduced new ideas and religions to the region, such as Buddhism, Hinduism and later Islam. Today, the majority of the population is Muslim.

Archaeological finds and traditional tales provide an impression of the ancient empires of Indonesia. One of the oldest kingdoms was the Hindu Kutai Martadipura (4th century) on East Kalimantan. In the 7th century, Srivijaya, an empire based in South Sumatra, was an important Buddhist learning centre. Hindu-Buddhist empires like Mataram (8th-10th century), Singosari (13th century) and Majapahit (c. 1293 to c. 1500) still stir the imagination in today's Indonesia. Unique objects from these legendary empires exhibit true craftsmanship. Objects on display include a gold headdress with spiral curls (first half of 10th century) and a special statue of Buddha (700-900), depicted as a monarch on a throne richly decorated with regal symbols such as lions and elephants.



Artist unknown, *Ritual head dress*, 1300-1500. Gold, 15,5 x 14,4 cm. Collection Wereldmuseum, Leiden.

Old gold

Thanks to gold being found on Sumatra, Kalimantan and in the Philippines, the Javanese elite were able to procure gold early on, although only prestigious individuals such as rulers and priests were allowed to wear it. Goldsmiths created jewellery, luxury items and ceremonial objects with it. Various gold objects are on display in the exhibition, including a piece of jewellery (1350–1400) from the Majapahit period, depicting a monster's head intended to protect the wearer from evil.

Hinduism

Bali today is the only Indonesian island where Hinduism is still the most important religion. In addition to the three major Hindu gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva), the Balinese also worship ancestors and native gods. The gods live in the world above, the demons in the underworld. In order to maintain equilibrium in the cosmos and the balance between good and evil, the Balinese make offerings. Balinese art often features illustrations of gods and animals from classic Hindu epic poems. Various objects illustrate Hinduism in Indonesia, such as a richly decorated palanquin (1800–1900) from Bali. This was used to transport statues of gods to the sea to be ritually cleansed.

Islam

From the end of the 13th century on, traders and scholars brought Islam to Indonesia. The religion spread throughout vast parts of the archipelago, and throughout the centuries traditions became mixed, such as commemorating ancestors. Ceremonies became entwined with Sufism, the mystic form of Islam, in which persons and objects possess supernatural powers. On display is a colourful coat (1855–1877) from the sultans of Yogyakarta. It is a copy of the holy coat gifted by the prophet Muhammad, which is why it is said to have magical powers. The divine origin of the coat lent extra weight to the sultans' authority.

Borobudur

In the 8th century the Borobudur was constructed in Central Java: an impressive pilgrimage site featuring 500 life-sized sitting Buddha statues. Pilgrims from many parts of Asia journeyed there and viewed scenes from the life of Buddha on the relief plates. In the early 20th century, restoration of the complex took place. Over the centuries, the stupa had become overgrown by the jungle, subsiding to a dangerous degree and buried under a layer of volcanic ash. Just 30% percent of the Buddha statues were unscathed, 62% had been damaged (many missing their head), while the rest had disappeared. Colonial collectors stole the Buddha heads because they were popular as 'busts'. In the exhibition, eight antique Buddha heads in the style of Borobudur from the collection of the National Museum for World Cultures are on display.

Wayang

Wayang has many traditions and depicts all sorts of stories, ranging from ancient Indian epic poems and tales of legendary kings, to Islamic narratives and even ones about recent political developments. Wayang is a type of theatre dating back centuries and is always about the battle between good and evil. Balance is disturbed, and at the end of the performance it has been restored. A complete wayang kulit set includes hundreds of puppets. A beautiful wayang collection is on display,



Artist unknown, *Dancing mask, wayang topeng, representing Dewi Candra Kirana, 1800 - 1900.* Wood. Collection Wereldmuseum, Leiden.

including both antique and contemporary puppets. A special 'dance mask' from 1800-1900 is also on show, which belongs to the role of Princess Kediri, the wife of Prince Panji, the hero of the Panji legend. She is revered as a manifestation of Dewi Sri, the rice goddess.

The 'Ancient Empires' theme was made possible with contributions from, among others, the historians Adrian Perkasa and Louie Buana, writer Jan Brokken and batik expert Sabine Bolk.

ANCESTORS

The most important spiritual authorities in Indonesia were ancestors. They were responsible for a good harvest, wealth, and protection from sickness and war. But death was also their prerogative. The living honoured them with all sorts of rituals. Ancestral worship still exists in Indonesia today, but plays a less prominent role.

An impressive collection of ancestral statues from Nias (an island off Sumatra) is on display in the exhibition. They radiate power, with their head-on pose and impressive headdresses. They played an important role as intermediary between the living, the dead and the gods. A gold headdress is also on exhibit. The vertical fern leaves with flowers and the horizontal bar made of round disks balance each other, like cosmic unity. They symbolise heaven and earth, the world above and the

underworld, male and female, death and life. Noblewomen and priestesses on Nias wore such a headdress during ceremonies for ancestors, harvest celebrations and wedding festivities. The manuscript of La Galigo is also on display, a loan from Leiden University. It is the first part of the lengthiest epic poem in the world, telling the creation tale of the Bugis (seafarers) from South Sulawesi. The manuscript belongs to Unesco World Heritage.

Death rituals

The death rituals when someone has died are important. They confirm the deceased's new status as an ancestor. This gives people who meant a lot to the family and society a place in the collective memory. There are various traditions related to death rituals in Indonesia, such as erecting monuments and ancestral statues and creating home altars. Rituals were influenced by the introduction of Islam and Christianity, with new and old rituals intermingling.

Various objects on display in the exhibition were used during death rituals, including a 'magic horn' (1800-1844) and a 'divination book' (pre-1888). A priest used these in various roles: as a negotiator between ancestors and the living, as ceremony master, as healer and as oracle in countless affairs. Various pieces of gold jewellery can also be admired, such as gold pendants in which the omega sign can be discerned, acting as a metaphor for the end of life.

Maluku Islands

Ancestors have played an important role on the Maluku Islands since days of old, but the conversion of many of its inhabitants to Christianity led to countless statues being destroyed, looted or traded. These statues no longer play a religious role today, yet still form a tangible connection with the past. On display is a two-metre tall 'heavenly god' (1919) in which the heavenly god and the earthly goddess are united. According to the inhabitants of Rotnama in Southwest Maluku, all life on earth originates from this.

Papua

In New Guinea, ancestors are a source of power and identity. The rituals related to death are important moments of commemoration and celebration. The rituals ensure that the dead are able to depart from our world, after which the mourning period may end and the community can resume daily life. Contact with the ancestors is still maintained via various objects, including wooden statues. A number of examples can be seen in the exhibition.

The 'Ancestors' theme was made possible with contributions from, among others, historian Louie Buana and the writers Alfred Birney, Sylvia Pessireron and Marion Bloem.

REVOLUSI

'Kami bangsa Indonesia dengan ini menjatakan kemerdekaan Indonesia'

'We, the people of Indonesia, hereby declare the independence of Indonesia'

When the nationalist leader Sukarno spoke these words on 17 August 1945, the *Republik Indonesia* became independent. The red-and-white flag was raised, which had hastily been sewn the night prior by Sukarno's wife. This was two days after the Japanese capitulation that ended the Second World War in Asia. After over three centuries of occupation, Indonesia was no longer tied to the Netherlands. Hundreds of people cheered independence, chanting *Merdeka*: freedom. The 17th of August is a national holiday: *Hari Kemerdekaan*, Independence Day.

After declaring independence - the *Proklamasi* - Sukarno was appointed president and Muhammad Hatta vice president. The Netherlands refused to recognise Indonesia's independence and a bloody war ensued. It was only after strong international pressure that the Dutch government recognised Indonesia's sovereignty in late 1949. This was with the exception of western New Guinea, which the Netherlands only 'handed over' to Indonesia in 1962. In 2020, King Willem Alexander apologised on behalf of the Dutch government and expressed his regret for 'the rampant violence perpetrated by the Dutch' during the war of independence.

Revolusi in the arts

Art is a political instrument which was used to disseminate Indonesian independence aspirations. Artists not only portrayed the positive aspects of the revolution - like camaraderie, a lust for freedom and fighting spirit - but also the violence, sadness and destruction. Kusama Affandi (1907-1990) designed posters calling for resistance. He was in close contact with the Republic's political leadership. At the invitation of Sukarno, he would breakfast at the presidential palace together with other artists' families. A number of works of Affandi are on display,

including a 1948 self-portrait entitled *Dissatisfied Mood* (World Cultures Collection) and a 1947 painting called *Captured Spy* from the collection of the Affandi Museum in Yogyakarta. The latter work depicts a boy sat huddled on the ground. Affandi had seen how he was beaten up by Indonesians because he was suspected of being an 'enemy spy'. Affandi was not concerned with whether he was guilty or not. He wanted to depict human suffering in times of war.



Affandi, *Captured spy*, 1947.
Courtesy Affandi Museum.

War of independence

The Netherlands' answer to the declaration of Indonesian independence was a violent attempt to reconquer the country. The two major military attacks - for years referred to euphemistically as 'police actions' - led to a bloody war. In the independence war that broke out, nationalist Indonesian youth made their mark. Some of them had received military training from the Japanese during the Second World War, which focused on glorifying military violence and hatred of Europeans. These youth - pemuda - longed for an independent Indonesia. Sukarno's army also fought against the Dutch invasion and attempted to dismantle bridges and other infrastructure. Civilians suffered heavily from the violence. This violent period is further described later on in this piece.

Eleven-year-old Muhammad Toha painted battle scenes. Four of his paintings are on display. Various documents from the NEFIS archive (part of the Dutch National Archives) can be viewed here. These include reports compiled by the Dutch intelligence service that illustrate the horrifying working methods of this organisation.

Information war

In pamphlets and on posters and banners, the revolutionary message was spread. But this was not just a single message. There were various factions - including the Republican army (TNI), communists, Islamic fighters and pemuda - all with their own mission. The pamphlets and propaganda posters exhibited here are facsimiles of original ones held by the NEFIS archive, among others. In their hunt for information about the Indonesian 'enemy', the military intelligence service confiscated all sorts of material which was brought back to the Netherlands. This finally ended up in the NEFIS archive. This autumn, the Dutch Council for Culture is expected to advise on the possible return of such archive material to Indonesia. Although as of yet their ultimate recommendation is unknown, De Nieuwe Kerk has chosen to display facsimiles since the rights-holders (who may or may not give permission to exhibit these) of the original items are unknown. The posters are being shown in the historical context of the struggle for independence; they are a direct source that bear witness to the rallying calls of the Indonesian freedom fighters.

Violence

On 15 August 1945, Japan capitulated and the Second World War in Asia ended. Two days later, Sukarno proclaimed the Republic. When British troops arrived in September, along with a few Dutch troops, violence erupted in a number of places. Indonesian militant groups attacked Europeans, Indo-Europeans, Chinese, Moluccans and members of the local administrative elite who had collaborated with the Japanese. Indonesians who were suspected of being loyal to the Netherlands also fell victim to violence. The Republican government had no control over the armed revolutionary groups. Many ex-detainees remained in the former Japanese internment camps, hoping that this would be safer. In the Netherlands, this violent period - which lasted until October 1946 - is often referred to as the *bersiap*.

Bersiap means 'remain vigilant' and 'Attention' (the drill call). At the time, the term was used by Indonesian paramilitary groups as a battle cry or command; however, the term is not used in Indonesia to designate the

violence used during the Indonesian struggle for independence. There is fierce debate about using the term. Organisations like the Dutch Honorary Debts Committee Foundation (KUKB), which promotes the interests of victims of Dutch colonialism, consider the term to be racist and insulting. Other organisations, such as the *Federatie Indische Nederlanders* (Indos Federation), feel that not using the term downplays the violence used in this period against Indos (Dutch Indonesians). The term and the current debate are addressed in the exhibition audio tour.

The 'Revolusi' theme was made possible with contributions from, among others, writer Amir Sidharta, editor Feba Sukmana and the historians Hans Goedkoop and Anne-Lot Hoek.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION

On 8 March 1942, the Dutch East Indies capitulated to Japan and the Japanese occupation began. The Japanese ended Dutch colonial government and the Dutch East Indies ceased to exist as an entity. The 65,000 colonial army soldiers of the KNIL became prisoners of war and 100,000 Dutch citizens were interned in camps. The living conditions were extremely dire and thousands of people lost their lives. The Indonesian population also suffered from the Japanese occupation. Indonesian forced labourers, known as romushas, were made to work in the Japanese war industry under horrible circumstances. The Indonesian government has estimated that some four million people died during the Second World War, particularly due to famine.

In collaboration with Museum Sophiahof in The Hague, eyewitnesses and family members with various Indonesian backgrounds can be heard in the exhibition. They speak about the war, the Japanese occupation and the internment camps.

RESISTANCE

For centuries there was resistance to Dutch rule and self-determination was fought for. In the 19th century, this mainly took place at local and regional level, but when nationalism took off in the 20th century, the battle for an independent Indonesia also took on a national guise.

Bahasa Indonesia

Representatives from various youth organisations from across the entire archipelago convened in Batavia on 28 October 1928 for a congress. There are hundreds of different languages, scripts and dialects in Indonesia. At the congress, the youth proclaimed 'Bahasa Indonesia' - a language based on Malay - to be the language of a future independent Indonesia. The youth also made a historic pledge, the 'Sumpah Pemuda': one motherland (Satu Nusa), one nation (Satu Bangsa) and one language (Bahasa Indonesia). The congress was concluded by singing the new national anthem, 'Indonesia Raya', which is still Indonesia's national anthem. It was a historic moment in which the wish for national unity in the archipelago was voiced.

National Heroes' Day

On 10 November, Indonesia celebrates National Heroes' Day: 'Hari Pahlawan'. On this day, Indonesia's resistance fighters are commemorated. The title of 'Pahlawan Nasional Indonesia' (National Hero of Indonesia) is given to individuals - after their death, and also to people from the distant past - who provided an extraordinary service to the Indonesian state and society. There are 36 portraits of resistance fighters on display here in the exhibition.

Resistance in the 19th century

The colonial army was constantly being deployed to quell uprisings. Between 1817 and 1822 there were revolts on West Java, in the Maluku Islands and on Sumatra, for example. Two bloody wars are notorious - the Java War and the Aceh War - where the population rebelled against the colonial government, led by the resistance fighters Prince Diponegoro and Teuku Uma. In brutal fashion, the Netherlands managed to strengthen its authority across the archipelago, at the cost of many lives.

Aceh War (1873-1914)

The events that later became known as the Aceh War were actually a series of wars that took place between 1873 and 1914, in and around Aceh. The vast majority of the population refused to be subjected to colonial rule. The violence continued under an array of colonial army generals who only managed to take a degree of control of the area by resorting to massacres and torching kampongs (villages). The cruelty inflicted by the KNIL, the colonial army, but also by the Aceh rebels, led to fierce debate between supporters and opponents. The exhibition includes an Islamic shoulder sash. Wearing it symbolised resistance. A coat of Teuku Umar (1854-1899) is also on display.

Java War (1825-1830)



Babad Dipa Nagara, 1866. Collection Leiden University Library.

The leader in the Java War, Prince Diponegoro, is a beloved resistance fighter. In 1825, the colonial government moved a sacred grave on the prince's land in order to construct a road. This was one of the main reasons that a brutal war broke out, which took on a sacred guise. Diponegoro received support from an important part of the Javanese nobility and was popular with the general population. The war became infamous due to the many victims and the treacherous imprisonment of Diponegoro during peace negotiations. He was invited to these and subsequently taken prisoner and exiled. A richly decorated manuscript is on display, which describes the conflict from the perspective of Prince Diponegoro. The loan from Leiden University is part of Unesco World Heritage.

Women in the resistance

The exhibition shows that many women were also in the resistance. One of them was the Moluccan freedom fighter Martha Christina Tiahahu (1800-1818). She was a heroic participant in the Pattimura Rebellion against Dutch rule. Raden Adjeng Kartini (1879-1904) was a Javanese advocate of women's emancipation. Her birthday is an official holiday. Letters written by Kartini can be seen in the exhibition. The life of Tjut Nja Dinh (1848-1908), the wife of Teuku Umar, is also described. For 25 years, she led large groups of guerrilla fighters resisting Dutch rule.

The 'Resistance' theme was made possible with contributions from, among others, the writer Thom Hoffman and historian Anne-Lot Hoek.

REPUBLIK INDONESIA

The Bandung Conference in 1955 was an important event for President Sukarno. He took the initiative for it, together with Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian prime minister. Asian and African nations that had just become independent convened. It was a historic moment, with important agreements being reached on promoting economic and cultural collaboration, and resisting colonialism and neocolonialism.

Suharto regime

In 1965, General Suharto suppressed a coup by leftwing military personnel. This led to communists being hunted down and the mass murder of an estimated half a million people. The Communist Party was forbidden. In 1967, Suharto was appointed president. He called his regime *Orde Baru*, The New Order. While this led to major economic and social development, it also involved repression and corruption.

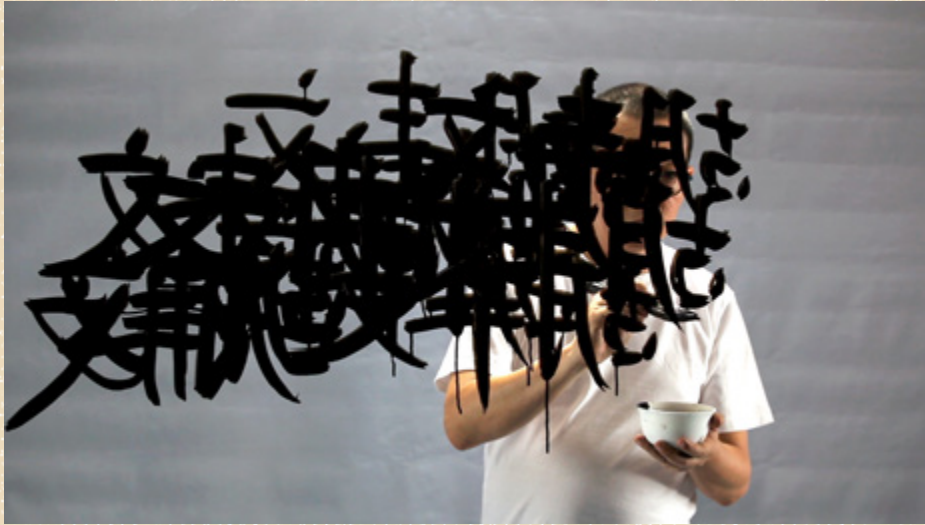
First state visit

In 1970, Suharto visited the Netherlands. The following year, Queen Juliana became the first Dutch monarch to visit Indonesia. She received a warm and hospitable welcome. The visit marked the beginning of improved relations between the Netherlands and its former colony. A drawing can be seen in the exhibition of the state visit of Juliana and Bernhard in 1971, made by the famous artist Agus Djaya (1913-1994). It was recently donated to the World Cultures Collection.

Reformasi

The corruption of the Suharto regime was tolerated for many years, until a monetary crisis broke out in 1997. Students demanded political, economic and legal reforms, and the departure of President Suharto.

Looting and arson took place. The Chinese community in particular was victimised. Suharto finally stepped down. Vice President Habibie succeeded him and introduced democratic reforms during the *Reformasi*.



FX Harsono, *Writing in the rain*, 2011. Courtesy the artist.

A contemporary video work of art by FX Harsono called *Writing in the rain* (2011) can be seen in the exhibition. The name FX Harsono, which he writes with a large brush in ink on the glass, is slowly washed away in the rain. It is a potent evocation of loss, memory and the constant struggle to retain a personal Chinese identity. Under the Suharto regime, everyone of Chinese heritage was forced to change their name into an Indonesian one. Work by the contemporary artist Octora (1982), *My Dear Gentleman - Oh Insignia!* (2015), is also on show. It comprises uniforms that seem transparent, yet which are made from wire mesh and brass, complete with medals. The artwork cynically refers to the meaning of protection, while the uniforms symbolise the use of violence claimed to be on behalf of protecting the people.

The 'Republik Indonesia' theme was made possible with contributions from, among others, Indonesia expert Nico Schulte Nordholt. The voice of Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who was imprisoned by Suharto, can also be heard.

INDONESIA AND THE NETHERLANDS

Indonesia and the Netherlands have shared an intensive history for over three hundred years. In the late 16th century, the first Dutch arrived in the archipelago, in search of spices like nutmeg, pepper and cloves. Working together in the famous United Dutch East India Company (VOC), they acquired trade monopolies, with the aid of violence, war, murder, coercion and diplomacy. Initially, most of the archipelago's inhabitants hardly noticed the presence of the Dutch. This changed in the 19th century, when the Dutch extended their authority, using violence and fighting countless wars.

Trade and violence

In the 17th century, the VOC built an enormous international trade network, using their own army. They viewed Asia as an extensive area to be exploited for gain and to conduct trade in. The exhibition shows the methods used by the Dutch, who used brutal violence to take over power and trade.

An 18th-century print called *View of Banda* tells a gruesome tale. At the instructions of Jan Pieterszoon Coen, a VOC army murdered an estimated 14,000 inhabitants of the island of Banda when they refused to agree to a Dutch trade monopoly on nutmeg. Only 1000 Bandanese survived the genocide. Some of them were enslaved. At the time, Banda was the only place where the nutmeg tree grew. The exhibition includes a gilt nutmeg seed on scorched wood, made by the Indonesian artist Titarubi (1968). The work refers to the negative aspects of the trade in nutmeg:

the genocide inflicted by the VOC on Banda in order to gain the nutmeg monopoly.



Jan Brandes, *Silhouette portrait of Bietja*, 1780–1785. Paper, pencil, ink, 14,2 x 12,6 cm. Collection Rijksmuseum.

Slavery in the Dutch East Indies

Few people realise that Dutch involvement with slavery was not restricted to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery in the Caribbean and Americas. Hundreds of thousands of people were enslaved in the Dutch East Indies, where they were traded and kept in slavery. Yet the history curriculum in Dutch schools generally only addresses slavery in the Caribbean and Americas. The

fact that slavery in the Dutch East Indies does not (yet) have a place in the collective memory is the reason that De Nieuwe Kerk developed a special tour, working together with the writer Reggie Baay. The *Slavery in the Dutch East Indies* tour is not only intended for secondary school students: it is meant for all visitors.

In the exhibition, the slave trade in the Dutch East Indies is illustrated by a number of objects. There is a pencil drawing (1824) of Si Matiara, an enslaved woman from Makassar (South Sulawesi). There are also two 18th-century silhouette portraits of two enslaved women, Bietja and Flora, made by their 'owner' Jan Brandes. These two portraits are from the collection of the Rijksmuseum. On loan from the Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar is a 17th-century portrait of a wealthy VOC merchant, Wollebrand Geleynssen de Jongh. In the background, slavery is distressingly depicted. There is no clue who the people behind De Jongh are: their names, heritage, relatives and age are all unknown. They are soberly dressed and everything they are doing is for the benefit of De Jongh's prestige. They hold a parasol - symbol of authority - above his head and carry his clothing and sabre.

Wielding power in the colony

In order to rule over millions of Indonesians, the Dutch government created a dual system. In brief, there were two governments: one for the Europeans and one for the Indonesian population, which was under the supervision of the European government. At the head of the central government was the governor-general, based in Batavia, today's Jakarta. The Dutch East Indies was divided into residencies, headed by a Dutch official called a resident. Residents collaborated with Indonesian regents in governing the Indonesians, and with an assistant resident in governing the Europeans. Using various portraits and objects presented as gifts, the colonial government - as well as the colonial society - is explained and illustrated. Among these is a portrait of the Javanese Prince Mangkunegara VII (1922) by Isaac Israëls - from the collection of the Frans Hals Museum. The Cultivation System (*cultuurstelsel*) is explained, illustrated by a portrait of the Governor-General Johannes van den Bosch. In 1830, he introduced a new taxation system, which meant that farmers were required to use part of their land to plant export crops that made huge profits in Europe, such as coffee and indigo. The Dutch writer Multatuli is also addressed here.



Isaac Israëls, *Portrait of Pangeran Adipati Ario Praboe Mankoenegara VII*, 1922. Collection Frans Hals Museum. Photo: Thijs Quispel.

The 'Indonesia and the Netherlands' theme was made possible with contributions from, among others, the historian and cultural activist Hilmar Farid, heritage specialist Hasti Terakat, researcher Adieyatna Fajri and the writers Thom Hoffman and Alfred Birney.

My time

The exhibition's final theme focuses on Indonesia today, with the younger generations having their say. They speak about their wishes for the future of their country, amidst contemporary artists who use their work to reflect and criticise, but also to offer a perspective.

On display is an impressive collection of contemporary wayang dolls made by Eko Nugroho (1977). Nugroho is one of the most well-known artists in Southeast Asia, who creates vibrant and playful sculptures influenced by Javanese culture and daily life. There is also a video artwork by Nadiah Bamadhaj (1968) which has nationalism as its theme. There is a striking work by Citra Sasmita (1990), in which she portrays the role of women in Balinese society, as seen through the eyes of the artist.

The 'My time' theme was made possible with contributions from, among others, historian and curator Sadiyah Boonstra and Abigail Limuria, co-founder of What Is Up Indonesia.

THE GREAT INDONESIA EXHIBITION

SELECTION CONTEMPORARY ART



Alfiah Rahdini, *Sailor Moonah #2*, 2022.
Fiberglass, 190×120×120 cm, ARTJOG MMXXII.

ALFIAH RAHDINI

1990



With thanks to the artist.

With her work, Rahdini, a sculptor, not only interrogates stereotypes, but wants to engage in dialogue too. She also investigates what it means to be a potent and articulate Muslim woman in today's society. Rahdini's sculptures engender a feeling of hope for Muslim women by normalising their presence in the public arena.



Alfiah Rahdini, *Sri Naura Paramita* (2021).
With thanks to the artist.

Sri Naura Paramita

2021

The sculpture depicts a woman mediating on a yoga mat while wearing a hijab. The lotus throne, a traditional base for Buddhist statues, reminds us that yoga, which began as a Hindu and Buddhist religious practice, is now recognised across the world as a sport. With this sculpture, Rahdini intends to normalise wearing a hijab during ordinary daily activities.

This artwork welcomes the visitors into the exhibition

Sailor Moonah #2

2022

This life-size statue of a Muslim woman is powerful, depicting an assured woman enjoying life and unafraid of sharing her personal identity. This sculpture is one of a series which usually is intentionally displayed in public spaces. In doing so, Rahdini aims to encourage dialogue on the position of Muslim women in society.

On display in the section *Ancient empires*



Alfiah Rahdini, *Sailor Moonah #2* (2022).
With thanks to the artist.

MANGMOEL

1984



©Courtesy of Studio Mogus

With his work, the artist wants to inspire people to show more respect for nature and for one another. His colourful knitted and crocheted creations symbolise the stunningly beautiful nature under threat. The bright colours are in stark contrast with reality, since today coral reefs are actually being bleached.

LUNA 9

2023

An exuberant fantasy world, brimming with brightly coloured plants and corals. Mangmoel's installation plays on the human desire for a beautiful place where you feel safe. His work – which he often makes from waste or recycled materials – focuses on global climate issues.

On display in the section *Nusantara*



Mangmoel, *LUNA 9* (2023).
©Courtesy of Studio Mogus.



ARI BAYUAJI

1975

With thanks to the artist.

Bayuaji collects found objects from all over the world for his art installations. He uses these to portray aspects of daily life in various cultures. With his work made from old objects, he attempts to address new, contemporary issues.

One eye Rangda

2023

The Rangda is a sculpture 70% of which is made from upcycled plastic rope and twine. Rangda - also known as an incarnation of Calon Arang, a witch in Javanese and Balinese folklore - represents the difficult times during the pandemic and the creativity of the Balinese population in surviving.

On display in the section Nusantara



Ari Bayuaji, *One eye Rangda* (2023). With thanks to the artist.

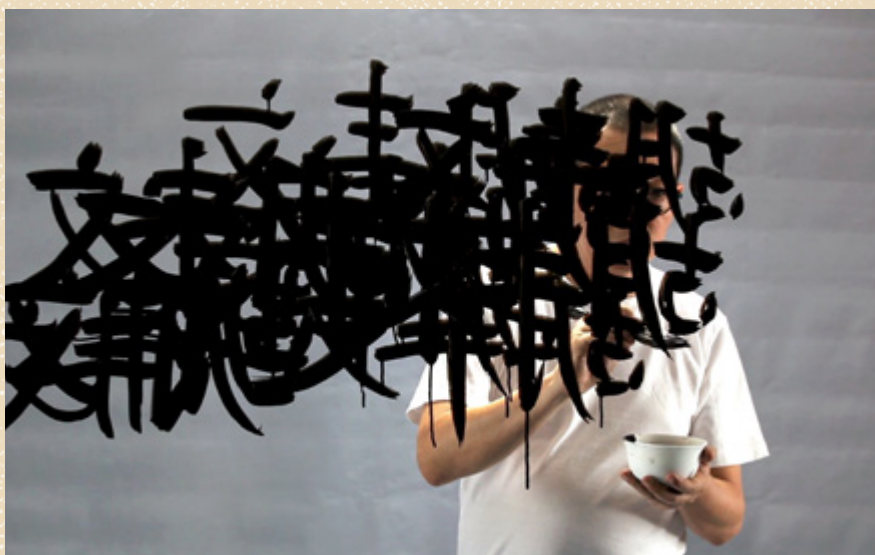


FX HARSONO

1949

Harsono is one of Indonesia's most highly respected contemporary artists, constantly investigating the role of the artist in society, viewed in relation to history. During the Suharto regime, his installations were a powerful form of protest against government repression.

FX Harsono
(-/A.Kurniawan Ulung)



Writing in the rain

2011

In this video artwork, the name FX Harsono, which he writes with a large brush in ink on the glass, is slowly washed away in the rain. It is a potent evocation of loss, memory and the constant struggle to retain a personal Chinese identity. Under the Suharto regime, everyone of Chinese heritage was forced to change their name into an Indonesian one. This was to the detriment of their personal identity and sense of connection to their Chinese cultural background.

On display in the section Republic Indonesia

FX Harsono, *Writing in the rain* (2011). With thanks to the artist.



Photo ©Courtesy of the artist and Studio Kalahan

HERI DONO

1960

Installation artist Heri Dono makes impressive work using simple materials. His sources of inspiration include traditional Javanese wayang. With a contemporary take on traditional techniques, Dono ingeniously emphasises sociopolitical issues.

Melawan Kapten Tak

2008

The painting depicts a VOC officer, Captain François Tack, being killed in Mataram Palace in Kartasura. Heri Dono uses this archaic story to show that Indonesia was able to take on its colonial enemy and defeat it too.

On display in the section **Resistance**



Heri Dono, *Melawan Kapten Tak* (2008). With thanks to the artist.



Photo ©Andreas Erwin

TIMOTEUS ANGGAWAN KUSNO

1989

Kusno is a visual artist, researcher and filmmaker. His work investigates the lasting effects of colonialism, using installations, drawings and kinetic sculptures. In a powerful manner, Kusno unveils the violent legacy of colonial history.

In A Landscape: Our Beautiful Indies

2019

This series of charcoal drawings on paper depicts the fragmented memories of individuals. Kusno uses charcoal in an attempt to portray the fear and uncertainty of the stories told, to commemorate the fading echoes of the painful past.

On display in the section **Indonesia and The Netherlands**



Timoteus Anggawan Kusno, *In A Landscape: Our Beautiful Indies* (2019). With thanks to the artist.

NADIAH BAMADHAJ

1968

Among the common threads in Bamadhaj's oeuvre are her genuine commitment, her sense of justice and her attention to humankind, to others. Her artworks are often concerned with marginalised communities and their histories and with sociopolitical topics. In her work, Bamadhaj applies various drawing techniques, although she also works in digital media, and creates sculptures and installations.



Photo ©Vivien Poly

Terpesona dengan kegelisahan

2022

Bamadhaj's video artwork uses romantic texts, yet these are sung by military personnel. The work is about nationalism, but also about the feeling of fear.

On display in the section *My era*



Nadiah Bamadhaj, *Terpesona dengan kegelisahan* (2022). With thanks to the artist.

CITRA SASMITA

1990

In her work, Sasmita focuses on unravelling myths and misconceptions within Balinese art and culture. Gender and the position of women in society also play an important role in her artistic approach.



Citra Sasmita, *Timur Merah Project VII: The Garden of Earthly Delights* (2021). With thanks to the artist.

Timur Merah Project VII: The Garden of Earthly Delights

2021

This work illustrates the role of women in Balinese society as seen through the eyes of the artist. Sasmita tells her own story, one in which women are given the leading role. These are old stories - ones in which the role of women was indeed very limited - which have been rewritten by the artist on traditional scrolls.

On display in the section *My era*



©Niskala Studio



©Regina Sari Dewi. Courtesy of Studio Eko Nugroho

EKO NUGROHO

1977

Nugroho is one of the most well-known artists in Southeast Asia, creating vibrant and playful sculptures influenced by Javanese culture and daily life.

Hidden Violence

2008

A series of contemporary wayang dolls in which Nugroho melds old and new. The artist collaborated with local wayang makers and craftsmen. Together they created this wayang series in which the characters are part human and part machine. In this work, Nugroho reveals the potential violence that people conceal.

On display in the section *My era*



Eko Nugroho, *Hidden Violence* (2008). Collection Wereldculturen.

THE GREAT INDONESIA EXHIBITION

IN COLLABORATION WITH

Isaac Israëls, *Portrait of Pangeran Adipati Ario Praboe Mankoenegara VII*, 1922. Collection Frans Hals Museum. Photo: Thijs Quispel.

The team at De Nieuwe Kerk has collaborated with numerous individuals and organisations in Indonesia and the Netherlands. This exhibition comes about in co-creation.

LENDERS

Stichting Atlas van Stolk
Affandi Museum
Collectie ABN Amro
Frans Hals Museum
RBINS
Koninklijke Verzamelingen
Museum Omniversum
Collectie Nationaal Archief
Nationaal Militair Museum
Wereldmuseum
Naturalis Biodiversity Center
Instituut voor Oorlogs-,
Holocaust- en Genocidestudies
Rijksmuseum
Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar
Universitaire Bibliotheken Leiden
Collectie Vrijheidsmuseum
Museum Catharijneconvent
Etc.

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

Alfiah Rahdini
Ari Bayuaji
Asha Darra
Auguste Soesatro
Citra Sasmita
Edward Hutabarat
FX Harsono
Heri Dono
Mangmoel
Mella Jaarsma
Nadiah Bamadhaj
Octora
Timoteus Anggawan Kusno
Toton

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM

Abigail Limuria
Adrian Perkasa
Alfred Birney
Amir Sidharta
Anne-Lot Hoek

Benjamin Caton
Dido Michielsen
Feba Sukmana
Hans Goedkoop
Hasti Tarekat
Hilmar Farid
Jan Brokken
Jeftha Geluk
Jessica Manuputty
Jet Bakels
Kevin Kwee
Lina Sidarto
Louie Buana
Marion Bloem
Miko Flohr
Nico Schulte Nordholt
Rizky Kalebos
Sabine Bolk
Sadiyah Boonstra
Sven Peetoom
Sylvia Pessireron
Thom Hoffman
Vanessa Oostijen
Etc.

PUBLICATION

Ad van Liempt
Adieyatna Fajri
Anne-Lot Hoek
Arjan Onderdenwijngaard
Caroline Drieënhuizen
Dick Jansen
Dido Michielsen
Erik Somers
Fenneke Sysling
Francine Brinkgreve
Frido Ogier
Guus Veenendaal
Henk Schulte Nordholt
Henry Timisela
Jeroen Bos
Jet Bakels

Jim van der Meer Mohr
Kester Freriks
Mátyás Bittenbinder
Mirjam Shatanawi
Ni Made Frischa Aswarini
Ni Ketut Sudiani
Paul Brood
Pauline Broekema
Rémon van Gemeren
Ron Guleij
Sabine Bolk
Thom Hoffman
Vanja van der Leeden
Vincent Kuitenbrouwer

SLAVERIJ IN DE OOST (EDUCATIE)

Reggie Baay

IN COLLABORATION WITH MUSEUM SOPHIAHOF

Han Grünewald
Insos Ireeuw
Helen Aponno
Nora Valk
Patricia Tjiok-Liem

ADVISORY COLLABORATIONS

Anne Marie Woerlee
Bonnie Triyana
Francine Brinkgreve
Lany Pradjarahardja
Marjolein van Asdonck
Simone Berger
Culture Lab Consultancy
Etc.

DESIGN

Caspar Conijn
Mariola Lopez Mariño
Roderik van der Weijden

This list is still subject to change.



President Sukarno at the Elysée Palace on 3 July 1966 in Paris, France.
Photo: Keystone-France/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images.

TITEL EXHIBITION

The Great Indonesia Exhibition

DATES

21 October 2023 – 1 April 2024

LOCATION

De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam

OPEN

Open daily, 10 – 17 hr

EXHIBITION CLOSED

25 December & 1 January.

More information: nieuwewerk.nl

INFORMATION

020 638 69 09

WEBSITE

nieuwewerk.nl

PROGRAMMING

Extensive programming has been developed to accompany the exhibition. These include several special evenings in which well-known writers such as Reggie Baay, Thom Hoffman, Dido Michielsen and many others will tell stories about Indonesia. More information at nieuwewerk.nl.

MUSEUM SHOP

Open when the exhibition is open

CAFÉ RESTAURANT

't Nieuwe Kafé, open daily from 8.30 until 18 hr

GUIDED TOURS

Group visits are possible after registration. You can book one of De Nieuwe Kerk's professional tour guides. Registration and booking via 020 626 81 68 or rondleidingen@nieuwewerk.nl

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

10 minutes from Central Station

Trams: 2/4/11/12/13/14/17/24

Metro: Metro 52, stop Rokin (4-5-minute walk)

PARKING

Parking garages near Centraal Station, next to De Bijenkorf, by Rokin and at Nieuwezijds Kolk

ACCESSIBILITY

The entire building is easily accessible for wheelchairs and walkers.

ADMISSION PRICES*

Full price	€22,50
Museum card	€3,00
Children up to 11	free
Youth (12 to 17)	€12,50
Students	€12,50
CJP/Stadspas	€12,50
VriendenLoterij VIP-card	free
Amsterdam City Card	free
ICOM Card	free
Friends of De Nieuwe Kerk	free
Groups (minimum 15 people)	€19,50

*Free audio tour with admission ticket

Beware: these prices are subject to change

PUBLICATION (DUTCH ONLY)

Atlas van Indonesië

WBOOKS

ISBN 978 94 625 8573 7 | NUR 680

€ 29,95

FOUNDER

VriendenLoterij

MADE POSSIBLE BY

Mondriaan Fund

Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds

Nico Nap Foundation

PARTNERS

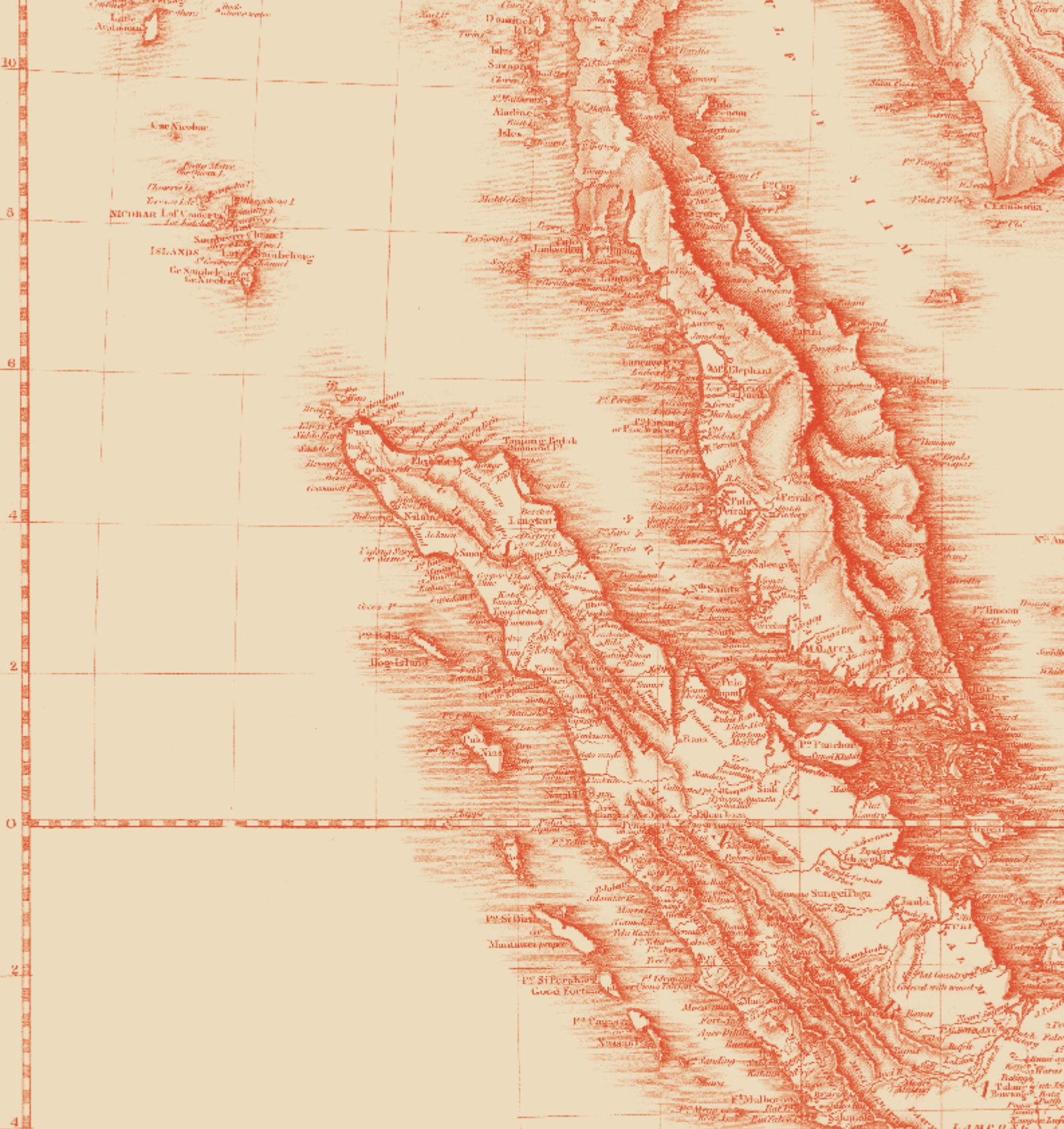
Deloitte

SRC Reizen

WITH THANKS TO

Private Donors

Stichting Vrienden van De Nieuwe Kerk



CONTACT INFORMATION

Department Press & Marketing Communications
Madeline van Vliet, Stella Kùgùksen
& Fleur Vroegindewey
+31(0)20 626 81 68
pressoffice@nieuwekerkerk.nl

ADDRESS

De Nieuwe Kerk
Dam Square, Amsterdam
nieuwekerkerk.nl/en/

Download images via nieuwekerkerk.nl/en/press

Map: John Pinkerton, 1813, David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.