

Art, Society and The World Now

“There is a relationship between bringing the world into the Biennale, and to take the Biennale out into the world”.—Charles Esche

Arts may have the tendency to be perceived as something inaccessible to those who are not familiar to its many layers and facets. Why artists produce art works, what are they talking about when they discuss particular issue through a sculpture, or what are they arguing about when they talk about art practice, structure, and discourse in exhibitions and Biennales.

WHY IS ART IMPORTANT—AT ALL?

The questions above serve as trigger to a much wider exploration of art practices in contemporary world and how it contributes to society. How arts have been intertwined in our history as society and it reflects the dynamic of our humanity. Artists have been using various media to analyse their current surroundings, and art projects and exhibitions have been a contributor in allowing the formation of spaces for cultural exchange.

In order to explore the issue, and to introduce Jakarta Biennale, British Council Indonesia is working with Jakarta Biennale to conduct series of public lecture by **Charles Esche**, **Nirwan Ahmad Arsuka**, and **Hilmar Farid**, in Jakarta and Makassar. The public lecture will discuss contemporary art practices in international scope, as well as in Indonesia.

LET’S IMMERSE IN EXCITING DISCUSSION ABOUT ART AND SOCIETY!

The role of arts in society will be presented through the artistic practices of producing and exhibiting arts throughout the world, especially through Biennales, exhibitions and arts projects. The public lecture will also explore and present cultural impact which has been produced in the UK and wider Europe. More importantly, the speakers will present their observation regarding Indonesia’s position in this whole constellation of the art world. How the practices in Indonesia differ from other parts of the world, what have we achieved and how we could move forward?

The UK and international perspective will be presented by UK-born awards winning curator and writer, Charles Esche. In Jakarta, Charles Esche will partner with Hilmar Farid who will discuss art practices in Indonesia and its relation with history and social-political movement. In Makassar, the lecture will slightly shift its focus to the comparison of international art practices and Indonesian, as well as in Makassar.

WHERE AND WHEN?

The public lectures are going to be held in two cities, Jakarta and Makassar. Mark your calendar!

Jakarta	
Where	Auditorium Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia, Jakarta
When	Monday, 1 June 2015 (13:00–17:00 WIB)
Speakers	Charles Esche (curator) and Hilmar Farid (historian)

Makassar	
Where	Room H 33, Faculty of Literature, Hasanuddin University, Makassar
When	Friday, 5 June 2015 (14:00—17:00 WITA)
Speakers	Charles Esche (curator) and Nirwan Ahmad Arsuka (writer)

WHO ARE THE SPEAKERS?

Charles Esche is a British curator and writer, currently working as the Director of the Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven, Netherlands. In 2012, he received the European Cultural Foundation's Princess Margriet Award and in 2014 he was awarded the CCS Bard College Audrey Irmas Award for Curatorial Excellence. He has curated a number of international contemporary art biennales and other events around the globe, such as: RIWAQ Biennials, Ramallah, Palestine (2007 and 2009); Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2005); Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2002), and São Paulo Biennale, Brazil (2014). His main work has involved working on the constitution of art institutions, most recently the museum but also the qualities of the art centre or biennial. His writings on institutional possibility and policy are useful aids to rethinking the relation between art and social change. Along with Will Bradley, he co-edited *Art and Social Change* published by Afterall and Tate Publishing.

Hilmar Farid is a historian, lecturer and activist. He co-founded Jaringan Kerja Budaya (Cultural Network) with fellow artists, researcher, activist, and cultural practitioners in Jakarta in 1994. He also founded Indonesian Institute of Social History in 2002. His writing on history, arts, culture, film, and politics, were published in various journals, magazines, newspapers and books. He is part of Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA) and Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society as co-editor. He has also been invited to speak at National Tsing Hua University (Hsinchu, Taiwan), Shanghai University, China Academy of Art (Hangzhou), Sungkonghoe University (Seoul), University of the Philippines, Australian National University, Leiden University, University of Amsterdam, Centre for the Study of Culture and Society (Bangalore), University of California Los Angeles and University of California Berkeley. In 2014, he gained Ph.D from National University of Singapore with dissertation titled *Rewriting the Nation: Pramoedya and the Politics of Decolonization*.

Nirwan Ahmad Arsuka is a writer on arts and culture who has background in nuclear engineering. His writing on science, literature, theater, visual art, music, film, equestria and religion were published in several publications. Most of his writings appear in Kompas. He used to work as visiting editor for Bentara-Kompas Cultural Supplement and member of board of curator at Bentara Budaya Jakarta (2000-2006). His English pieces were published in International Journal of Asian Studies and Journal Inter-Asia Cultural Studies. From 2012

to 2014, he was the Director of Freedom Institute. His project in rewriting I La Galigo in three parts (Black Book, Yellow Book and Red Book) has been ongoing since 2011. In 2014, he initiated *Kuda Pustaka* and *Perahu Pustaka*, to disseminate knowledge in remote area.

I'VE STILL GOT MORE QUESTIONS

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ABOUT BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide. We work in more than 100 countries and our 7000 staff – including 2000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the Arts and delivering education and society programmes.

The British Council's Arts and Creative Economy programme strives to grow the creative relationship between the UK and Indonesia, with a focus on new innovative work; collaboration with partners and new ways of experiencing and learning in the arts. To do this we bring world-class art to Indonesian audiences through screenings, gigs and performances; we support the development of creative talent and professional skills through training and mentoring programmes such as Indonesia Fashion Forward; Film Microschool; and we support the development of the creative economy and arts sector leadership, entrepreneurship and policy through programmes such as YCE and Elevate.

For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org.id/arts. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through <http://twitter.com/idbritisharts>

JAKARTA BIENNALE

Jakarta Biennale is a biannual international art exhibition. It was pioneered by Jakarta Arts Council (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta) since 1974. It is now organized by Jakarta Biennale Foundation, an independent institution founded in 2014 by art practitioners consisting curators and artist, who has experience managing art organization in Indonesia for many years.

The duties and function of the Jakarta Biennale Foundation is to carry out the biannual international art exhibition, as well as supporting educational activities and the development of the art scene in Jakarta and Indonesia.