

# Your Gold

# is not Our Glory

With work by Dito Yuwono, Jompot Kuswidananto, Ipeh Nur,  
Mella Jaarsma and Westfries Museum

Hotel  
Maria  
Kapel

Curatorial note by Mira Asriningtyas

## Curatorial note

"What we'll always have is something we lost." - Ocean Vuong

During our long-term research residency at Hotel Maria Kapel, Dito Yuwono and I spent our days wandering the city of Hoorn and encountering histories from multiple phenomenological dimensions. For us, it was an exercise and encounter with how a historical narrative was framed, constructed and translated in this city. The spatial-historic exploration became the starting point of our research into decolonizing (spatial) histories - specifically, how cities, as manifestations of collective memory and stories, can be renegotiated and reflected upon the partiality of the images we see daily.

In Hoorn, we are interested in looking into the city's so-called 'Golden Age' - a time of unprecedented prosperity in the 17th century, when the East India Company (VOC) was founded, and inhabitants such as J.P. Coen traveled the world for trade and colonization. The glory of the golden era in this city was translated into monuments that celebrate exploration, curiosity, and trade; as well as into the most mundane details in daily life, such as brand names of food packaging. But to whose expense?

Upon returning to Indonesia, we looked into other monuments within the same period. We found how histories are imprinted in the bodies and memories, as much as what was written and told. Dito Yuwono decided to start from the tip end of Dutch colonial rule in 1945 - 1949 by following the trails of the Van Mook Lijn or Status Quo Line and created two new works: a video and a series of photographs on textiles. The Van Mook Lijn is a demarcation line that divides the Indonesia region and legitimates Dutch settlement right after Indonesia declared its Independence in 1945. Dito retraced this spatial division through some underrated small-scale monuments or monument-look-like, which span around five hundred kilometers from Central Java to East Java. Those monuments are located where the military clash happened during the Dutch military aggression in 1948 or near the Status Quo Line stake and depicted through the memory of the people who experienced the conflict.

Alongside Dito's new works, the exhibition brings together other older works by Ipeh Nur, Jompet Kuswidananto, Mella Jaarsma, and a piece for the collection of the Westfries Museum to form a more multidimensional narratives.

1. Dito Yuwono, *Ingatan yang Perlahan Tertutup Lumut: Sebuah Tribut untuk Iksan Sulianto*
2. Dito Yuwono, *Yang Kelak akan Retak (Which Will Eventually Crack)* \* On view in the cinema. Follow the arrows on the floor
3. Mella Jaarsma, *Lords of the Tea I and II*
4. Mella Jaarsma, *A Blinkered View - High Tea, Low Tea*
5. Ipeh Nur, *The Day of Execution*
6. Jompet Kuswidananto, *War of Java, Do You Remember? #2 Raw footage*
7. Unknown artisan, 19th-century miniature ship made of clove

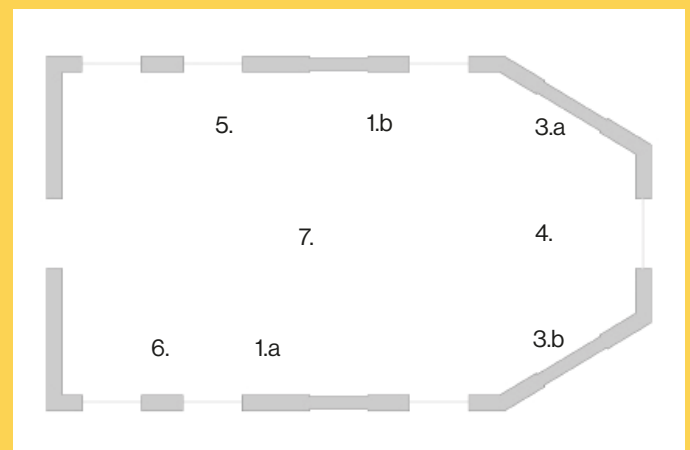
Jompet Kuswidananto presents a video of a man struggling to discover and control himself amidst the roaring machine of the sugar factory. His dance is similar to that of a Jathilan dancer, attempting to get into a trance-like state as a culmination of ecstasy, rage, and cathartic senseless behavior. In a trance, a Jathilan dancer's body becomes a vessel for the restless spirits of the past, the spirits of the defeated, and possesses an inhumane power. This type of mysticism often resulted from the wave of spiritual and religious beliefs that catalyzed rebellion that fueled revolutionary movements since the days of colonialism.

Ipeh Nur portrays the horror of the genocide in Banda Island on the orders of VOC Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen. The image depicts the execution of 44 orang kaya (rich people) in Banda on May 8, 1621. This hand-drawn batik is an interpretation of the painting *The Massacre by the Dutch on Banda in 1621*, which is now on view at the local museum on that island. This work is presented alongside a collection and project by a local Hoorn museum, Westfries Museum: a miniature clove-ship from the 19th century and the online exhibition *Pala - Nutmeg Tales of Banda*, that provides a multiple perspective of Dutch colonial history.

Mella Jaarsma collected packages of Javanese tea with designs derived from the colonial period, showing Dutch, Javanese, and Chinese graphic elements and the different languages. Some of these Dutch words remain in the vocabulary of the Indonesian language. At the same time, the best quality tea produced in Indonesia is still unavailable to the Indonesian people. Still, it is immediately exported and served to the upper classes worldwide. Through her video and costume installation, the artist explored how the different sides of this power construction are sometimes blurred or reversed.

The exhibition aims to investigate some crucial turning points in Indonesian history and look into ways of living history around the monuments of the past. The 'monuments' of the VOC's golden age in Indonesia are present not only as buildings and infrastructures such as railroads, sugar, tea factories, or colonial bungalows but also in language, custom, and collective trauma and memory of oppression, pain, and resistance. Monuments are no longer about what is manifested in physical forms but also in the act of remembering and marking the past: a ghost that lingers in daily life.

Mira Asriningtyas, curator



# Artwork descriptions

## 1. Dito Yuwono, *Ingatan yang Perlahan Tertutup Lumut: Sebuah Tribut untuk Iksan Sulianto (Faded by the Moss: A Tribute to Iksan Sulianto)*

It is generally known that history was written from the winner's perspective. At the same time, it is a contestation of memories of different parties. In Indonesia, the government often uses relief murals and monumental sculptures to commemorate a historical moment and build a solid manifestation of memories and history.

*Ingatan yang Perlahan Tertutup Lumut: Sebuah Tribut untuk Iksan Sulianto (Faded by the Moss: A Tribute to Iksan Sulianto)* are photographs of a monument located in Batu, East Java, which was built by the late Iksan Sulianto, who also fought during the military aggression in 1948. The monument was built in the 80's from his vivid memory and direct experience. The monument is located at the location of the clash, in front of the Status Quo Line, a demarcation line that divides Indonesia's region and legitimates Dutch settlement right after Indonesia declared its Independence in 1945.

As the town grew, the street where the monument is located became one of the busiest streets that connect two more prominent cities. The monument became easily missed and forgotten. It is hidden by the fast-moving vehicles that are passing the street. When one enters the monument and looks closer to the images, dark green moss starts to cover it, disguised as part of the monument's details that slowly fade over time. As the moss takes over the monument, the monument gradually changes its texture, shape, and color. Not to mention, all the electric cables and plants planted to beautify the site brought a different feeling: a distortion of memory. Slowly, Iksan Sulianto's memory that was carved thoroughly into a relief faded by the moss.



Photographs printed on textile, two pieces, 150 cm x 80 cm (2023)

## 2. Dito Yuwono, *Yang Kelak akan Retak (Which Will Eventually Crack)*

*Yang Kelak akan Retak* is an investigation on the Van Mook Lijn or Status Quo Line, a demarcation line that divides Indonesia region and legitimation of Dutch settlement right after Indonesia declared its Independence in 1945.

The division itself changed based on each agreement, and this specific line, Van Mook Lijn, was based on the Renville Agreement in 1948. The artist proposes particular research that is anchored in the idea of following the trails of the historical borders as an attempt to retrace the spatial division through some underrated small-scale monuments or monument-look-like which span around 500 kilometers from Central Java to East Java, Indonesia, such as *Monument Renville* (Banjarnegara, Central Java), *Tugu Renville* (Kebumen, Central Java) and *Status Quo Line* (Malang, East Java).

This timely project coincides with the Netherlands government's acknowledgment of Indonesian Independence in 1945. This shift changed a lot of historical narratives and the dynamic of the Indonesia-Netherlands relationship. The layers of complexities of its history interest the artist beyond its visual form, particularly its socio-political-historical context and understanding of the historical treaties after more than 70 years in the eyes of the local people.

*This video is a new work, commissioned by Hotel Maria Kapel - Hoorn.*



Video, 15 min 15 sec (2023)

### 3. Mella Jaarsma, *Lords of the Tea I and II*

In what way do we carry history with us? Mella collected packages of Javanese tea in search of an idiom to represent the past and present. The package designs, still used today, are derived from the colonial period, showing Dutch, Javanese, and Chinese graphic elements and the different languages.

Looking into tea cultures throughout the centuries, the artist found that tea was first introduced in Europe at the beginning of the 17th century. At the same time, the VOC was established. Later, in the 17th century, the VOC started shipping more significant quantities of tea to the Netherlands. That tea came from Batavia, where tea was brought from China. In the 18th century, drinking tea became common in the Netherlands, and the VOC started directly importing tea from Guangdong in China.

The title of the work was inspired by the novel *Heeren van de Thee* [English title: *The Tea Lords*] (1992) by Dutch writer Hella Haasse recounts the story of this plantation and the struggle of the 'planters'.

Until this day, the best quality tea produced in Indonesia is not available to the Indonesian people but is immediately exported. The first quality tea harvest produced at the Malabar tea factory is sold with the aim to be served to the upper classes around the world. For example, you can buy Malabar tea as the refined Pickwick Tea in the Netherlands. On the other hand, the tea we buy in Indonesian supermarkets and shops is a rough, big-leaf tea of poor quality, packaged in paper packaging with various designs shown in this work.



Embroidered emblems, wood, stainless steel, enamel tea sets, var. dimensions (2012)  
Photo: Bart Treuren, Hotel Maria Kapel, 2023

### 4. Mella Jaarsma, *A Blinkered View - High Tea, Low Tea*

*A Blinkered View* is about the power relations between suzerain and vassal (ruler and subject, the oppressor and the oppressed). The artist explored how the different sides of this power construction are sometimes blurred or reversed.

*Wikipedia: Around 1610, for the first time, a small quantity of tea was brought to the Netherlands and, in the first instance, got examined as a curiosity. Later, in the 17th century, the VOC started shipping more significant quantities of tea to the Netherlands. That tea came from Batavia, where tea was brought from China. In the 18th century, drinking tea became common in the Netherlands.*

By the 19th century, tea plantations in Java held many Assam tea trees from India. For her whole adult life, Mella's grandfather's sister and her husband and children lived near a tea plantation on the slopes of the Pengalengan plateau in the Malabar district near Bandung. The novel *Heeren van de Thee* [English title: *The Tea Lords*] (1992) by Dutch writer Hella Haasse recounts the story of this plantation and the struggle of the 'planters'.

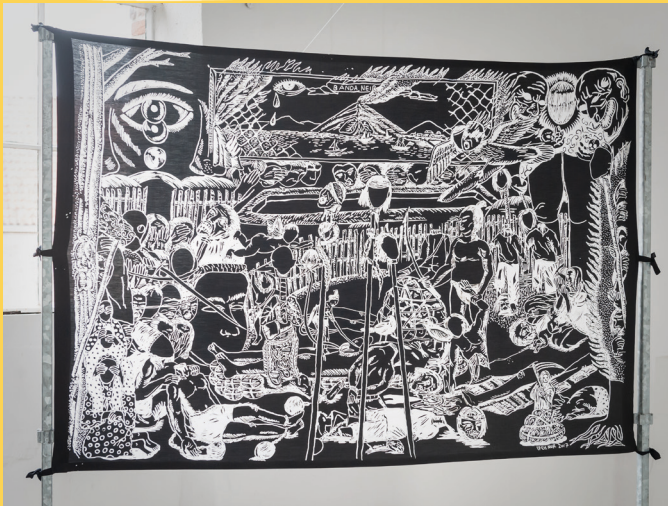
The artist traveled to the Malabar plantation and explored the area, the tea factory, and the Assam tea plants. Malabar is also the name of an area along the southwest coast of India, which was a Dutch colony from 1661 to 1795. It is interesting that not only Assam tea plants were brought to Java from India but also names of areas like 'Malabar.'

For the work *A Blinkered View - High Tea, Low Tea*, Mella worked with painter Anex from Jatiwangi, a village in West Java along the famous Java Great Post Road ['De Grote Postweg' in Dutch]. Dutch colonizer Herman Willem Deandels, governor-general at the time, commissioned the 1000-kilometer-long road in 1808. The road has various connotations. Deandels received praise because he built the road in a short period of one year, which enabled him to protect Java from British invasion. It carries historical meaning as it is considered the first infrastructure on the island of Java. But the road is also known as the 'bloody road' because Daendels used Javanese unpaid forced labor to produce the road, resulting in thousands of deaths.

The painter Anex from Jatiwangi painted various Mooi Indië ['Beautiful Indies'] landscapes on kettles, capturing the surroundings of Jatiwangi. Mooi Indië paintings derive from the colonial era and present a romanticized, exoticizing representation of reality. By referring to this historical style, *A Blinkered View* challenges its connotations and brings to light the unromantic daily life of the past and the cruelties that took place in the Jatiwangi area. At the Malabar tea plantation, Mella asked tea pickers working in the fields and factory workers and servants working at the former director's house to carry the kettles with Anex's paintings.



Two videos, 5 min. each. Paintings on kettles by Anex (2013)



Hand-drawn Batik on Fabric, 150 x 100 cm (2018)  
 Photo: Bart Treuren, Hotel Maria Kapel, 2023

### 5. Ipeh Nur , *The Day of Execution*

Using a hand-drawn batik interpretation of the painting *The Massacre by the Dutch on Banda in 1621*, the artist portrays the horror of the genocide in Banda Island on the orders of VOC Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen. The image depicts the horror of the execution of 44 orang kaya (rich people) in Banda on May 8, 1621. The artist would describe the image as follows:

*'A large circular bamboo fence built outside the Nassau fort, guarded by many soldiers. The chained prisoners were led to the bamboo fence. Except for the priest and the executioner, no one was allowed to enter the fence. The execution order was read aloud under the pouring rain. The bodies of eight rich Bandanese people were cut into two parts by six executioners holding samurai swords. They were beheaded, and the rest of their body was divided into four parts thrown to four different corners. The execution was gruesome, and they died without a fight— except one who asked, "Gentlemen, don't you feel guilty?" Their severed heads, as were their body parts, were stuck on bamboo poles.'*

A total of forty-four rich people were executed that day, and thousands were killed in a military campaign that lasted until the summer. After the genocide of the Banda population, JP Coen coordinated the arrival and enslavement of people from various regions, including Java, Bali, Bugis, and Sulawesi. The genocide became the starting point of the nutmeg monopoly and made Banda the first plantation and slave society in Dutch colonies.

The choice of hand-drawn batik as a medium was not without a reason. Before the Dutch monopoly, the Bandanese used a barter system to trade nutmeg with batik cloth from Java. Bandanese prefers Javanese batik to the wool provided by the Dutch in exchange for nutmeg. The artist stretched the batik painting with two poles, just like a wayang beber performance. Beber can be translated into 'to describe' or 'to reveal'.

### 6. Jompet Kuswidananto, *War of Java, Do You Remember? #2 Raw footage*

This video captured the moments when a man struggled to discover and control himself amidst the roaring machine of the sugar factory. He tried to keep his body movement synced with the sound of the gong and kenong beating vaguely inside his head to transform himself into a Jathilan dancer, a vessel for the restless spirits of the past, the spirits of the defeated.

The sugar factory is one of the most gigantic monuments to the defeat of Java in the Java war. At the same time, it is also the most dashing machine of the time of exploitation: Cultuurstelsel. It signifies how time ticks faster than before in Java: forests turned into cities, railroads penetrated ravines and mountains, turning independent farmers into slow and lazy workers.

Jathilan is a tattered body that repeatedly stumbles and gets back up again, perpetually trying to catch up with time, continuously dangled with the restless unease of the past.



Video, 09:30 min (2008)  
 Photo: Bart Treuren, Hotel Maria Kapel, 2023

## Public program

**27 October 2023, 13.00: Walking Tour through Hoorn with Mella Jaarsma and Julian Wijnstein**

Departing from a curiosity in spatial historical narrative and the overlapping of public and private domains, this part of the study encourages phenomenological investigation into 'spatial politics' of the 'political space'. Even if the infrastructure changes; the values, trauma, as well as memory of the subject perpetuate. The city becomes a portal that connects the past with today's perspective and the future; as well as becoming a site where political -narratives reside and where transfer of values, understanding, and experience are being made and contested. Through this walking tour, Mella Jaarsma and Julian Wijnstein will take the audience for a stroll along the city, discussing sights, findings, and shared history from different perspectives.



Collection of Westfries Museum - Hoorn  
Photo: Bart Treuren, Hotel Maria Kapel, 2023

### 7. 19th-century miniature ship made of clove, unknown artisan

Miniature clove ships were sold as souvenirs for European visitors of Maluku (Moluccas, also known as the Spice Island in the Dutch East Indies during the colonization era. Cloves, nutmeg, and mace were found on the island and sparked European colonial interest in the sixteenth century; who sailed the sea to the volcanic islands of Maluku to trade and acquire the spice. We find it interesting to display this tourist souvenir that simultaneously carries a narrative of the past– memorabilia of a shared history.

Alongside the miniature ship, we would like to display the online exhibition, *Pala – Nutmeg Tales of Banda*, intended for anyone looking for more background information and in-depth information about the events in 1621. In providing a multiple perspective of Dutch colonial history, the project involved experts from the academic world and the Moluccan community, initiated and organized by the Westfries Museum.

Ipad with information from the Pala project initiated by Westfries Museum. Access online via <https://pala.wfm.nl/banda/>



**Mira Asriningtyas** works as an independent curator and writer. She completed the Curatorial Program in 2017 at De Appel Arts Center in Amsterdam. The idea of learning back from polycentric knowledge rooted in local context as an attempt to decolonize the knowledge system, promote ecological sustainability, and further investigate the remaining trace of colonialism have been central to her current research practice. She has curated exhibition and public programs off-sites and in art institutions such as De Appel Arts Center (Amsterdam); Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (Turin); KKF (Yogyakarta); ISCP (New York); MAIAM Contemporary Art Museum (Chiang Mai); Our Museum (Taipei) among others. Her essays have been published internationally in books, exhibition catalogues, monographs, journals, and online publications including PARSE Journal, Stedelijk Studies, Ocula, and ArtReview Asia among others. In 2017, she initiated a biennale site-specific art project, '900mdpl' in Kaliurang—a historical resort village under Mount Merapi Volcano in Yogyakarta.

**Dito Yuwono** is an artist and curator focusing on the notion of collectivity, personal history as part of major historical narrative, and collective memory of a place. He uses a form of storytelling using a personal approach to subtly grasp the bigger picture of the socio-political environment, and his work often addresses social issues through the production of site-specific work, interventional project, video, photography, and audio-visual Installation. In the past five years, Dito did numerous residencies as part of his site-specific artistic practice at institutions such as The NCCA— Australia; Ruangrupa— Jakarta; Jatiwangi Art Factory— Indonesia; GOLEB & Het Wilde Weten— The Netherlands; TIFA Working Studios— India; and Collectif BONUS—Nantes. His work has been exhibited in Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art— United States, Jimei X Arles International Photo Festival 2017, JIPFEST 2022, among others; and solo exhibitions in KKF, Ruang MES56, ruangrupa Gallery, and Cemeti Institute for Art and Society— Indonesia. He is currently one of the co-directors of Ruang MES56 and the curator of the international Jogja Fotografis Festival 2023 titled *Mengukur Panjang dan Lebar Sebuah Bingkai (A Strategy to Measure a Frame)* in Indonesia.

**Ipeh Nur** was born in Yogyakarta and graduated from the Indonesian Institute of the Arts – ISI in Yogyakarta with a master's degree in graphic arts. Her work is inspired by everyday problems and by her personal experiences. Nur participated in several exhibitions, including *Beyond Masculinity* (2016) at the Ark Gallery, *The Beresyit!* (2016) in Krack! Studio in Yogyakarta, *Women, Art & Politics* (2016) at Footscray Community Arts Center – FCAC in Australia, WOW Fest in Melbourne, Australia (2017), *Pentagonal Icositetrahedron* (2017) at Cemeti Institute for Art and Society in Yogyakarta, *Pressing Matters* (2018) and *On the Nature of Botanical Gardens* (2020) both at Framer Framed in Amsterdam and *Kebun Sejarah (Garden of History)* (2021) at Zone2Source in Amsterdam.

**Mella Jaarsma** has become known for her complex costume installations and her focus on forms of cultural and racial diversity embedded within clothing, the body and food. She was born in the Netherlands and studied visual art at Minerva Academy in Groningen, after which she left the Netherlands to study at the Art Institute of Jakarta and at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta. She has lived and worked in Indonesia ever since. Mella Jaarsma's works have been presented widely in exhibitions and art events in Indonesia and abroad, including: the 20th Sydney Biennale (2016); *The Roving Eye*, Arter, Istanbul (2014); *Siasat – Jakarta Biennale*, Museum of Ceramics and Fine Arts, Jakarta (2013); *Suspended Histories*, Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam (2013); Singapore Biennale, Singapore Art Museum (2011); *GSK Contemporary – Aware: Art Fashion Identity*, the Royal Academy of Arts, London (2010); *RE-Addressing Identities*, Katonah Museum, New York (2009); *Accidentally Fashion*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei (2007); Yokohama Triennial (2005), and many others.

**Jompet Kuswidananto** started as a musician and produced records and performances while studying communications science at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta. The eclectically trained, polyvalent artist, who lives and works in Yogyakarta, remains profoundly attached to Indonesia and rendering its turbulent history. In his visual art, he has used his knowledge in traditional shadow theatre and other forms of performing arts to develop a personal style of multimedia specialisation. This spatialisation aims to provide both aesthetic pleasure and accounts of the changing identities that have shaped and indeed continue to shape individuals and communities' fate in Indonesia and beyond. His works have been presented widely in exhibitions and art events in Indonesia and abroad, including: Sharjah Biennial 14, Saudi Arabia (2019); *Sunshower*, Mori Art Museum, Japan (2017); Ural Industrial Biennale, Rusia (2015); Taiwan Asian Art Biennale, Taiwan (2015); Taipei Biennale, Taiwan (2012); Moscow Biennale, Rusia (2012), and many others.

**The Westfries Museum** is a regional history museum that tells the cultural history of Hoorn and West Friesland, with a specific focus on the 17th century and Hoorn's VOC past. Besides the permanent collection, there are changing exhibitions that shed new light on history and provide different socio-cultural perspectives. Due to a large-scale renovation of the building - the 1632 dating former Statencollege at the Rode Steen in Hoorn's city centre - the museum is currently closed and the extensive collection of paintings, furniture, porcelain, militia pieces and historical artefacts is currently not on public display. However, there are several activities online and in the city that continue to tell the story of Hoorn. The museum expects to reopen in 2024. [www.westfriesmuseum.nl](http://www.westfriesmuseum.nl)

# Hotel Maria Kapel

Korte Achterstraat 2a, Hoorn  
open: Thu.-Sat. 13:00-17:00  
[www.hotelmariakapel.nl](http://www.hotelmariakapel.nl)



het Prins Bernhard  
cultuurfonds