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## STPI Gallery's first Indonesian group show

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The satirical works of three master artists are on display in STPI Gallery's first Indonesian group show

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In STPI Gallery's first Indonesian group show, star artists Eko Nugroho, Entang Wiharso and Heri Dono are presented as modern-day dalangs or puppet masters in their playful approach to art.

*Allegories & Identities*, which runs until Dec 23, showcases nearly 40 works mostly created during the artists' individual residencies with the STPI Creative Workshop between 2012 and 2015.

All had solo shows after each residency - Nugroho in 2013, Wiharso in 2015 and Dono last year - and this joint exhibition celebrates the 50th year of Singapore-Indonesia bilateral relations.

Curator Tessa Chung says: "Eko, Entang and Heri are prominent Indonesian artists whose collaborations with the Singapore-based workshop reflect this very partnership we're celebrating.

"Their works engage in a dialogue with a context and community beyond their 'Indonesian-ness', albeit through a mixture of means that includes traces of traditional Indonesian methods."

All three artists employ dramatic visuals and draw on comic books and their heritage. Their works are usually satirical commentaries on the world today, making them present-day dalangs, just as traditional masters of shadow puppetry used their tools to engage and provoke their audience.

Dono, 57, welcomes this comparison. The Jakarta-born artist dropped out of the Indonesian Institute of Arts and trained with the famous dalang Sukasman instead. His sources of inspiration range from comic books to wayang kulit. He says: "Flash Gordon and the Mahabharata, animation and wayang, have similar themes. It's about how to manipulate figures. It's stories of kings, gods, goddesses and heroes."

His creations mash myths with modern whimsy. A mixed-media sculpture displayed here, titled *Kuda Binal* (Wild Horse), depicts a mythical flying creature with a sail for a tail.

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A flying bull with a wheel and human legs inhabits screen print *The Clown Who Lives In A Chaos Macro Cosmos*. Like his fellow artists, Dono grapples with questions of identity in a globalised world.

In *Black Goat Vs Identity Crime And Aesthetic Crime: Comic Book Series*, Wiharso puts himself as an outsider in a world where organs exist outside the body and demonic figures co-exist with ordinary humans.

Nugroho's *Eruption Of Corruption* photo series presents people in odd masks who fail to arouse the curiosity of passers-by in public spaces.

This is the danger of people's hyper-connected lives, Dono points out.

Today, he can have a show in Yogyakarta and stream it live for his friends in Sulawesi, but it is also easy to flood social media with fake news so that people believe in events that did not occur.

Just like, he says laughing, when he saw television footage of astronaut Neil Armstrong land on the moon in 1966. He was unable to truly believe it happened because "Flash Gordon was more real to me than the moon".

It becomes more important for artists to engage with others in real life. Therefore, a group show is a good thing, he says.

"You learn from one another."

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