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Mikke Susanto, GR. Lono L. Simatupang, Timbul Haryono



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**Editorial Office**

Indonesia Institute of The Arts Denpasar  
Jalan Nusa Indah Denpasar 80235  
Phone +62-361-227316 ext 159 Fax +62-361-236100  
E-mail : penerbitan@isi-dps.ac.id

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## Lekesan: Interdisciplinary Journal of Asia Pasific Arts

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### Curating the Painting Collection of the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Indonesia

Mikke Susanto<sup>1</sup>, GR. Lono L. Simatupang<sup>2</sup>, Timbul Haryono<sup>3</sup>

The Presidential Palace of the Republic of Indonesia's collection of art objects was started by Indonesia's first president, Sukarno. Today, this collection includes more than 2,500 paintings, and as such this institution has acted like a museum. Throughout the tenure of Indonesia's seven presidents, this collection has experienced diverse stories related to its curation by various individuals over time. This article will focus on the historical issues of this collection's curation using qualitative research methods, in the hopes of revealing various curatorial issues. More specifically, the qualitative research conducted for this study is related to art history. This article utilizes theory related to curation to discuss a number of topics, ranging from the role of the individuals responsible for the collection (i.e. curators), the systems of caring for and selecting works (curation), and the curatorial practices that have occurred until now. Elaborating on a number of archival documents related to this collection, this article examines the work of the collection's curators, from inventorization to opening the collection to the public. Over the course of 70 years, the Presidential Palace's collection has undergone various forms of curation, including acquisition, documentation, preservation, and exhibition. This research concluded that the role of the curator is very important and causes the collection to be preserved and more valuable. As such, this article suggests a special museum related to the paintings within the palace collection.

*Key words: curation, painting, presidential palace, collections*

<sup>1</sup> Performing and Visual Arts Studies Program  
(PSPSR)  
Graduate School, Universitas Gadjah Mada  
(UGM)  
Jl. Teknika Utara, Sinduadi, Mlati, Sleman,  
D.I. Yogyakarta 55281  
[dan\\_mikke@yahoo.com](mailto:dan_mikke@yahoo.com)

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## Background

The palace of the President of the Republic of Indonesia is administratively located under the Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia. There are six palaces and one guesthouse: the State Palace (*Istana Negara*) and Freedom Palace (*Istana Merdeka*) in Jakarta; the Bogor Presidential Palace; the Cipanas Presidential Palace; the Yogyakarta Presidential Palace; the Tampaksaring Presidential Palace in Bali; and the Tenjoresmi Guesthouse in Pelabuhan Ratu. Each is unique in regards to its historical architecture, the activities of its inhabitants (i.e. the president), and the artifacts located within. Also of relevance is each palace's cultural atmosphere and geographic location (Winarno & Dermawan, 2004).

Among the objects within these palaces that have yet to be researched in depth are paintings. During the colonial era, when the palaces in Jakarta, Bogor, and Yogyakarta were constructed, paintings already decorated their walls, as shown by a number of photos. Further, under the Republican government, paintings were used to decorate these sites as reminders of heroism and landscapes of the archipelago and to introduce Indonesian culture to other nations.

Table 1. The total number of objects in the art collection of the presidential palaces, dated 31 December 2010

No	Location	Paintings	Sculptures	Crafts	Total
1	Jakarta Palace	582	303	3.003	3,888
2	Bogor Palace	694	366	2.282	3,342
3	Cipanas Palace	335	264	423	1,022
4	Yogyakarta Palace	740	354	5.850	6,944
5	Tampaksaring Palace	291	278	210	779
6	Pelabuhan Ratu Guesthouse	12	2	2	16
<b>TOTAL</b>		2.654	1.567	11.770	<b>15,991</b>

Other paintings in these palaces—more than 2,500 in number—were collected by Indonesia's first president, Sukarno (Susanto, 2014). These paintings have had various stories over the seventy years since their collection. Over this period, no research has been conducted regarding efforts to care for this collection. This research was thus conducted to address this lack of information.

It must be understood that, in Indonesia, historical art studies are still rare, and are far outnumbered by the artworks and discourses produced. The majority of books published regarding painting collections in Indonesia have been related to the general development of Indonesian art history. In the writings of scholars ranging from Claire Holt, De Loos-Haxmaan, Astri Wirght, Helena Spanjaard, Adrian Vickers, to M. Agus Burhan, the paintings included in the palace collection are most commonly described as aesthetic objects, and as such they are seen not in relation to the presidential collection itself, but rather as artifacts of Indonesian art history. The need to explore the history of this collection's preservation within the palace is the underlying reason for this research.

## Central Research Question

Until now, how has the painting collection of the presidential palace of the Republic of Indonesia been curated?

## Research Methodology

This research is based on a combination of field research, library research, and discussion and interviews with a number of informants. To answer the questions above, the researcher utilized a qualitative research method, which is appropriate for developing a textual narrative and description of the phenomena that have occurred over the course of seven presidencies. It is hoped that this approach will reveal a number of themes related to the curation of the palace collection. This type of qualitative research can be considered part of (art) historical research, the study of past events through primary data such as the testimony of those involved, artifacts, and available documents. The artifacts used in this study include paintings, archives, and books containing documentation of the presidential collection, from Sukarno through Joko Widodo.

## Theoretical Background

This research is based on a study of the systems and curatorial practices used for curating the painting collection of the presidential palace. This study utilizes a number of theories related to curatorial practice. Within this research, a number of topics will be discussed, ranging from the involvement of those responsible for the collection (curators), the system of preservation and selection of works (curation), and the curatorial practices used for this collection until now.

Before delving into this research, the position of the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Indonesia must be reinforced. In the art world, the palace can be understood as an institutional collector, similar to a museum. However, until now the presidential palace has yet to be identified as or consider it-self a museum. This argument relates to the fact that museums are understood as holding cultural products,

and thus societal memories related to culture, dreams, and hopes (Ambrose & Paine, 2005: 6).

If we accept the theory proposed by Ambrose and Paine above, because the presidential palace is maintained by the state, it can be considered a government museum. As the objects contained within are aesthetic objects, the presidential palace may be considered an art museum. In terms of audience, we might say it is a public museum. In terms of display, we might say it is a history museum. Finally, it is relevant to consider the role of the palace within the context of the definition of museums put forward by *The International Council of Museums*:

A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, observes, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.

Within a museum, the role of curator is very important. According to *The Concise Oxford Thesaurus* (1995), a curator is traditionally defined as a keeper, custodian, conservator, guardian, caretaker, and steward. In other words, a curator is the individual responsible for the preservation, conservation, and protection of artifacts/objects. Further, according to Obrist, a curator acts as a catalyst combining two different substances. This individual acts to connect the artist and audience, as well as develop dialogue that synthesizes the elements of a single exhibition (Obrist, 1997: 87).

According to Hans Jorg Furst, the general curatorial process in museums can be used as an example of how to do curation (Jurg, 1989: 99). This process contains five elements: acquisition, documentation, preservation, storage, and exhibition. This process can be understood as a primary theory utilized within this study.

In short, curation can be understood as the work of “balancing space”: bringing together artists with the market, media, and public in a single space with discourse, atmosphere, and exhibition space. Within this space, all of these factors work together as a form of research related to the text, object, conceptualization, interpretation, planning, and promotion of an exhibition or collection (Susanto, 2014: 78). In relation to the presidential collection, the curator’s role is to assist with the preservation and promotion of the collection. This research, thus, will examine the role and curatorial process of the presidential collection.

### **Analytical Method**

This research is intended to examine the curation of the presidential palace’s painting collection. As part of this analysis, a number of stories related to the work of the indi-

viduals (curators) responsible for this collection over time will be discussed. The analytic model for this research is based on library research involving various documents and materials related to this collection. From the inventarization to the socialization of the collection, the work of these curators will be discussed in-depth. Through this analysis, the reader will be able to feel or understand each detail of curators’ work within the palace.

### **Discussion of the Curatorial Process at the Palace**

The artistic objects within the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Indonesia have undergone a lengthy curatorial process. This has involved multiple dimensions, ranging from providing referential and educational services to the socialization of the collection. The following section describes the general curation process in museums and can be used as a framework for understanding the work of curators (Jurg, 1989: 99). This process contains five elements, described briefly below:

Acquisition is the first step in the curation process, and is related to the addition of objects to a collection. There are several types of acquisition, including:

Purchase, a type of acquisition when an object (artifact, art work, etc.) is bought either first- or second-hand from a collector, who has usually come to acquire said object through purchase.

Grant (gift or donation), a type of acquisition in which an object is granted (privately or institutionally) through certain parties concerned with a particular field related to the objects or with the ability to make such donations.

Documentation is the work of recording data related to the objects acquired. This can include purchase certificates or gift agreements, provenance of objects, cultural background of objects, as well as physical and technical details that may be significant for analyzing objects.

Maintenance is the preservation of an object, which involves maintaining the accuracy and originality of objects so as not to change their original form (with respect to their physical state). Maintenance also relates to the determination of objects’ quality and potential appreciation (in terms of objects’ historic and sociological importance, etc.) to ensure an understanding of objects. The maintenance and preservation of museum objects and artifacts includes conservation, cleaning, repair, and restoration.

Storage is the keeping of a collection using storage system that includes categorization as well as regulations regarding the conditions most appropriate for specific objects. Storage space requires a number of physical characteristics, including clean air, controlled lighting, consistent temperature, and a relative humidity between 50% and



55%.

Exhibition is the last step of curatorial work, in which a museum's existing collection is presented for appreciation. The style and type of exhibition is dependent on the collection itself. The curation of an exhibition is limited by the museum's available collection and by the discourse surrounding the objects to be displayed.

The curatorial process is useful to describe the quality and quantity of works. Curation aims to discover details related to artists and the aesthetic factors within works. Curation is also useful for qualitatively determining various themes, as well as history of (a set of) works. In this regard, the study of paintings is most common. The curation of the presidential palace collection, parallel with Furst's theory above, has also involved acquisition, data collection, preservation, display, and socialization.

The works in the Presidential Palace Collection were acquired through varied means and have diverse backgrounds, since 1940 (Susanto & Dermawan, 2016: 46-52). Some were acquired during exhibitions, while others were purchased when the president visited artists at their studios. Others were specially ordered by ministers under the president's authority. Other works were gifted to the president by painters, by other state leaders, or from other institutions or people. The following diagram shows the different means through which works became part of the Presidential Palace Collection.

Diagram of the paintings acquisition by Presidential Palace of the Republic of Indonesia. Source by Mikke Susanto, 2016.

Data collection involves taking notes about important factors related to the collection. Maintenance includes the care, conservation, and restoration of each work. Display constitutes the process of determining the position of works and subsequently exhibiting them (such as by hanging paintings). Socialization relates to efforts to provide information regarding works within the collection, whether it is through communication to the public or through books, newspapers, television, and exhibitions.

The informal curation of the palace collection has been ongoing since the time of Indonesia's first President, Sukarno, and continued until now. This curation is described as "informal" as the palace itself has undertaken curatorial activities without creating the position of curator or executive curator. In general, such informal curation has been undertaken by individuals outside of the palace who are appointed specifically and informally by the palace, meaning that they lack any official position.

Such informal curation first began under President Sukarno, who appointed Dullah (1950–1960), followed by Lee

Man Fong and Lim Wasim (1960–1968) as palace painters. During the Suharto presidency, the task of maintaining this collection was given to the palace management unit. Under President Megawati Soekarnoputri, an inventory and management unit was established. During the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, curatorial consultants were appointed in 2008 and 2014. Finally, in 2015, the palace appointed a curator to manage the exhibition of the palace collection. The following is a detailed review of the curation of this collection.

In January 1946, the capital of the recently proclaimed Republic of Indonesia moved from Jakarta to Yogyakarta. This event also caused many artists to move to Yogyakarta. Sukarno's close relationship with artists, which began during the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) continued in Yogyakarta. One artist in particular that was very close to Sukarno was Dullah, then a member of the Indonesian Young Artists (Seniman Indonesia Muda, SIM), led by S. Sudjojono. Because of his relationship with Sukarno, Dullah was frequently invited to Gedung Agung, the palace where Sukarno lived. Dullah and Sukarno's relationship continued when the republic's capital was again moved to Jakarta. In 1950, Sukarno asked Dullah to join him at the palace. From then, he served as palace painter until 1960.

Throughout the 1950s, Sukarno fully supported Dullah as the palace painter. Because of Sukarno's activities as president and ability to negotiate with and be friend the leaders of other nations, the palace collection began to grow. After his visits abroad, Sukarno frequently returned to Indonesia with artworks, or sent artworks after returning. Unsurprisingly, during this decade thousands of works were added to the presidential collection, including paintings, sculpture, and other cultural objects.

The relationship between Dullah and Sukarno was very close. At times Sukarno would visit Dullah in his quarters while Dullah painted, where he would not only observe Dullah's process but discuss and debate issues of painting. Because Dullah was required to always be available, he frequently slept with his shoes on, to be ready if Sukarno called (Sudarmaji, 1988: 26–33).

As palace painter, Dullah was assisted by his brother-in-law A.R. Gapoer, the younger brother of Dullah's wife Fatima. Dullah and Gapoer first met when they were young and involved in scouting activities in Solo. When Dullah moved to Jakarta in 1943, Gapoer remained in Solo. However, Gapoer frequently visited *Jawa Hokokai* in Jakarta during the Japanese occupation, where he would help Dullah create posters for the revolution.

When Sukarno moved to Jakarta in 1950, Gapoer followed, becoming a staff member of the palace (Dullah: 1982). In 1957, he was promoted to Head of Art Division



**Figure 1 (left).** Sukarno, Dullah (squatting) and his brother-in-law as well as palace staff, A.R. Gapoer checking Garcia Llamas' painting *Wanita Bali Menyajikan Sesaji* ('Balinese Woman and Offering', 1951) at the Freedom Palace. (Documentation from the family of A.R. Gapoer).

**Figure 2 (right)** Sukarno and Dullah checking Basoeki Abdullah's *Pertarungan Jatayu dan Rahwana Memperebutkan Sita* ('Rahwana Stealing Sita'). In this photo, a palace staff member named Saleh is holding the painting (Photo documentation from the Bung Karno Foundation).

at the presidential palace. His job was to create an inventory of paintings and maintain the collection (Gapoer, 1962). He worked in the palace until 1967 (Gapoer, 1991: 168), when he was arrested under suspicion of being Communist. As this could not be proved, he was released under the supervision of Vice-President Adam Malik. It can be said that this accusation stemmed from his being close to Sukarno. It must be remembered that, following the events of 30 September 1965, officially described as an attempted coup, being associated with Sukarno was generally problematic.

During his first year as palace painter, Dullah received a valuable opportunity: the chance to live in Bali. Sukarno provided this opportunity so Dullah would be able to familiarize himself with various sectors of the art world, including those foreign artists who lived in Bali (Letter from Sukarno to Le Mayeur, 30 October 1950).

The relationship between Sukarno and Dullah continued to develop with trips abroad. Dullah was almost always invited on official state visits abroad. Between formal events, Sukarno always made time to visit museums, galleries, or institutions related to art. His aim was to create a comparative understanding of agriculture/gardening, interior design, city design, restoration, and museum management. Such opportunities were utilized to learn more about the management of collections and museums.

While he was in the United States between 16 May<sup>and</sup> 3 June 1956, Sukarno visited the National Gallery of Art in

Washington, D.C. (*Dunia Internasional* VII I, 2 April–May 1956). At this time, Sukarno, the painter Dullah and his son Guntur, were accompanied by the gallery's director David E. Finley. A number of the gallery's best works, including paintings by Édouard Manet and Edward Savage, were viewed.

When Sukarno travelled to Russia on 28 August 1956, he visited the Tretyakovskaya Gallery (Moscow Team, 1956). Likewise, when he travelled to China towards the end of 1956, Sukarno appears to have met Chairman Mao Zedong to see a collection and receive a catalogue published in Peking (*Tiongkok*12, December 1956).

The most essential and enduring of Dullah's works as the Presidential Palace Painter is his book *Lukisan-Lukisan Koleksi Ir. Dr. Sukarno* ('The Paintings in the Collection of Ir. Dr. Sukarno', released in several volumes from 1956 to 1961), and another catalogue of works in Sukarno's collection, titled *Ukiran-Ukiran Rakyat Indonesia* ('Engravings of the Indonesian People', 1961). These books were among the first art catalogs in Indonesia, and in terms of quality they remain unmatched.

The first two volumes of *Lukisan-Lukisan Koleksi Ir. Dr. Sukarno*, as prepared by Dullah, were published in September 1956, whereas volumes III and IV were published in 1961. It was released in four languages: Indonesia, Chinese, English, and Russian. This book lists 384 paintings by some 130 painters, both Indonesian and foreign, in the presidential collection.

This was Dullah's main contribution, as related to painting, as the palace artist. These paintings were displayed on the palace walls and inventoried, with this inventory being used for publication. This short discussion illustrates the dynamicity of the artistic activities in the palace. The paintings in the palace were maintained, and frequently subject of discussion among viewers.

After Dullah left the palace, Lee Man Fong and Lim Wasim replaced him as palace artist, serving from 1960 to 1968. Their duties were little different than those of Dullah and Gapoer. However, Lee Man Fong was unwilling to live in the palace, and would not be there every day. Rather, it was Lim Wasim who stood by at the palace. Lee Man Fong only came to the palace when he had work waiting for him there.

As palace painters, they were tasked with reinventorizing paintings and statues in Sukarno's collection. The four volumes prepared by Dullah between 1956 and 1961 were reworked by Man-Fong, who produced five volumes listing more works in the collection. Over the course of this process, Lee Man Fong also travelled to Japan to handle publication. There, he met and was accompanied by someone he had met when imprisoned in 1942, Takahashi Ma-

sao. This trip was supported by Sukarno's wife, Ratna Sari Dewi, who worked to promote Indonesia–Japan relations and the publication of the book.

After he completed the first five volumes of this book in 1964, Lee Man Fong was tasked with preparing another five volumes. This was initiated together with Lim Wasim, but, unfortunately, the following year the 30 September Movement coup occurred. The books went unprinted, with only dummies prepared. These dummies may possibly still be held by Lim Wasim's family.

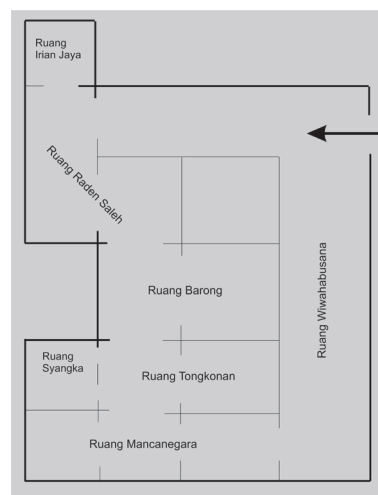
Another task entrusted to them was the restoration of two paintings in the palace collection: Raden Saleh's *Harimau Minum* ('Drinking Tiger') and an anonymous work titled *Keluarga Suci* ('The Holy Family'). These works were both restored intensively by Man Fong and Lim Wasim at the palace.

After the coup attempt, Lee Man Fong felt uneasy. He was not a political man, but he was branded with the stigma of "Sukarnoism". Those branded Sukarnoists were considered leftists and communist supporters, worthy only of arrest and detention. In 1967, Lee Man Fong ultimately left Indonesia for Singapore, and his name sank into the annals of history together with Sukarno's. In 1986, as the situation in Indonesia calmed, he returned to the country, where he died on 3 April 1988.

Meanwhile, Lim Wasim continued his duties at the presidential palace (Dermawan, 2001). During this time, he lived at the home of Lee Man Fong, and as such the latter could monitor Lim Wasim's work despite rarely going to the palace. Lim Wasim was also expected to accompany Sukarno when receiving state guests at the palace. As the president regularly attended art exhibitions when he had no other matters to attend, Lim Wasim frequently accompanied him to these.

Lim Wasim also painted models of all sorts while at the palace. These were often presented by Sukarno as gifts during his tours abroad. "He once brought five paintings of him I'd made during a trip. Each measured 80 x 60 cm, and was finished in oil. To save money, we used frames that had come together with foreign paintings, because the frames made in Indonesia were of poor quality," he explained. As such, Sukarno became famous and drew global attention. As such, Lim Wasim's paintings rapidly found places in some of the world's most important countries.

Following the 30 September Movement coup in 1965, the situation in the palace became unsettled. This incident also had a marked effect on Sukarno's collection. Since the 1940s, Sukarno had been collecting paintings and statues, which he intended to pass to the Indonesian people after his death, as he told the Indonesian press (*Pedoman*, 1960), his biographer Cindy Adams (Adams, 1960: 17),



**Figure 3.** Diagram of Puri Bhakti Renatama Museum, Presidential Palace of Indonesia.

Source: The book *Puri Bhakti Renatama*

and his youngest son, Guruh Sukarno Putra (Tempo.co, 2016). Unfortunately, following the 1965 coup d'état, his desire to establish a national arts museum failed. As such, after his death in 1970, the paintings and statues he had collected remained in the collection of the Presidential Palace (Njoto, 2017: 487).

By 1970, three years after the transition of power from President Sukarno to Suharto, the situation had negatively affected the collection, which went unmaintained. Only in 1971, under the direction of Siti Hartinah—the wife of President Suharto, known as Tien Suharto—was a museum established for the paintings and other artworks in the palace's collection. This museum is called Puri Bhakti Renatama (Ave, 1978).

On 4 June 1971, a meeting was held under the leadership of the Presidential Secretary, Brigadier General Sutikno Lukitodisastro. This meeting unanimously determined that it was necessary to establish a museum, and that all buildings occupied by the Secretariat be emptied for this purpose. The team was urged to work quickly, so that the palace museum could open on 17 August 1971. Ultimately, the Palace Museum was formally opened on 28 August 1971, during a state visit by Queen Juliana of the Netherlands.

The Puri Bhakti Renatama Museum was not located in a new building, but to the right of the State Palace in Jakarta. During the Dutch colonial era, this building was used as a barracks for the servants and aides of the governor general. Meanwhile, under President Sukarno, this building had been used by the Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia. This museum contained a number of works inherited from President Sukarno, as well as souvenirs received by President Suharto and his successors. Among the works in its collection were traditional arts (masks, statues, *wayang kulit*, silver crafts, tin crafts, wood carvings, as well as



crafts made of feathers, banana peels, and mosaics), modern art, weaving, traditional clothing, and ceramics.

This museum could not be organized using a chronological approach. Rather, the collection was presented using a “free approach” rooted in “character” and a sense of “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” (Unity in Diversity). The museum’s collection was organized into different thematic rooms, such as the Irian Jaya Room, the Raden Saleh Room, the Barong Room, the Tongkonan Room, the Syangka Room, the International Room, and the Wiwahabusana Room. The following figure shows the layout of the museum.

A number of paintings and other artworks were displayed at the museum. This included four works by Raden Saleh hung in the room that bore his name: *Berburu Banteng di Jawa* (‘Buffalo Hunt in Java’), *Pertarungan Mautdengan Singa* (‘Battle to the Death with a Lion’), *Harimau Minum* (‘Drinking Tiger’), and *Seorang Tua di Muka Bola Dunia* (‘Old Man and the Globe’). Also displayed in the Raden Saleh Room were a set of gamelan instruments with *pelok* and *slendro* tones called *Kanjeng Kyai Bundhet* (donated by KGPAA Mangkunegoro VII), as well as *dodot* in the Mataram style from Cirebon, *kremun* from Solo, and a carving of a woman. The Raden Saleh Room was intended to present a Javanese atmosphere.

One painting by Raden Saleh, titled *Penangkapan Pangeran Diponegoro* (‘The Capture of Prince Diponegoro’), has its own story. This painting, after being completed by Saleh, was given to the Kingdom of the Netherlands and hung in the Volkenkunde Museum, Leiden. In 1976, this painting was requested by the Museum of History in Jakarta. After a process of acclimation, a panel of experts—Stanley Bremen, Pietee TerKeurs, and Van Wieingen—stated that the Museum of History was capable of correctly keeping the work. Ultimately, approval was granted for the work to be sent to Jakarta. The transfer of this painting was between governments, represented by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Tourism, as represented by Minister of Tourism Joop Ave. The original painting was immediately given to the presidential palace, while the Museum of History only hung a reproduction. The painting was returned to Indonesia together with a number of other objects as part of a cultural collaboration between Indonesia and the Netherlands. The painting was formally given to the Indonesian President by the Dutch Ambassador during the opening of the exhibition *200 Tahun Museum Pusat* in April 1978, and since then the painting was held in the collection of the Puri Bhakti Renatama Museum (Wahono, 2016: 7).

Outside the Puri Bhakti Renatama Museum, there was a special space called the “Sanggar Lukisan” (‘Painting Studio’). Located only 20 meters from the museum proper, this space was used to display several paintings, limited to fifty in number owing to its small size. This space was or-

ganized to present a chronological concept of Indonesian art history, using the following periodization:

Beautiful Indies Period (1925–1938), including the works of Wakidi and Mas Pirngadi, Ernst Dezentje, Basoeki Abdullah, Jan Frank, Rudolf Bonnet, Walter Spies, Roland Strasser, Romualdo Locatelli, Theo Meier, and Le Mayeur de Mepres.

Persagi Period (1938–1942), including the works of Agus Djaja and S. Sudjojono

Japanese Occupation Period (1942–1945), including the works of Henk Ngantung, Basoeki Abdullah, Otto Djaja, and Barli Kartasasmita.

The First Five Years of Indonesian Independence (1945–1949), including the works of Affandi, Hendra Gunawan, S. Sudjojono, Kartono, Surono, Sudibio, and Harijadi S.

Indonesian Painting since 1950, including the works of Sunarto, Wardoyo, Fadjar Sidik, and Abas Alibasjah.

In this museum, Djoko Setiyohadi was made responsible for Sanggar Lukisan as the chief of museum. Museum coordinator under Nani Soeparni Sardjono. Only in 1978 was a book regarding the collection of the Puri Bhakti Renatama Museum published, under the editorship of Joop Ave, the chief administrator of the Indonesian presidential palaces. Unfortunately, this museum was not long-lived. In 2007, it was dismantled, and the building repurposed for President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s staff (Suhartono, 2007).

At the end of the late 1970s, the artworks in the palace collection were legally and formally under the administration of the Directorate of Art Development at the Ministry of Education and Culture. Ultimately, pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 8 of 1978 and Decree of the State Secretariat No. 36 of 1979, a unit (under the Secretariat) was established to administer the palace collection. Since then, responsibility for the collection was assumed by the Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, under which it has remained. At this time, the presidential chief of staff was Sampoerno, who served from 1979 to 1980.

In the decades between 1970 and 1990, greater emphasis was given to cataloguing the collection, using a system that adhered to the principles of museum inventORIZATION. This included the creation of catalog cards, an example of which follows below.

No.	: P.0004
Object	: Painting “ <i>Pertarungan antara Hidup an Mati</i> ” by Raden Saleh, dated 1870
Provenance	: Gift of Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, 1970
Size	: 265 x 193 cm
Medium	: Oil on canvas
Colors	: White, red, blue, black, and brown
Description	: Depicts a fight between a horseman and a lion. The horseman is holding a rifle that is firing, and is wearing short pants, a long robe, and a sarong. The lion is wounded on its front and its rear. Good condition.

During the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid (1999–2001), the collection of the palace changed little. President Abdurrahman Wahid did have some statues moved between rooms of the palace. Meanwhile, Vice President Megawati Soekarnoputri established a team to inventorize the collection acquired under President Sukarno, led by Levana Taufan Sukarno of the Bung Karno Foundation (1999–2004).

Only during the presidency of Megawati Soekarnoputri did significant change occur. The president, although hoping to bring back the interior atmosphere of the Sukarno era, also tried to give her personal touch to her own personal office. The paintings and other interior elements she displayed had a clear meaning and function. This included works by Spies, Roland Strasser, and Trubus Sudarsono, as well as a large work of ivory meant to symbolize her power. In this, she took Kris Danubrata on as a special staff member to help her (Susanto & Dermawan, 2016: 30).

Under President Megawati Soekarnoputri, another catalogue of the palace collection was published. This book, written by Bondan Winarno, Agus Dermawan T., and Nirwan Dewanto under the coordination of Guntur Santoso, was titled *Rumah Bangsa* (‘Home of the People’). This was expected to be the first volume in a series, to be followed by a second volume titled *Singgasana Seni* (‘Throne of Art’). Unfortunately, this second volume was never published by the time Megawati Soekarnoputri’s term as president ended (Winarno & Dermawan, 2004).

Under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, several important agendas as related to the palace collection were undertaken. Formal curatorial efforts began during this period, in 2008. Wahyuni Saptantinah, then the head of the Museum and Sanggar Seni Unit, was tasked with redistributing the works from the Puri Bhakti Renatama Museum following its closure.

During this redistribution, works were moved from the Presidential Palace to the palaces in Bogor, Bali, Cipanas,

and Yogyakarta. Curatorial consultation was necessary for this project. In accordance with Decree No. B. 1160/RT-K/D-1/11/2008, Mikke Susanto was formally appointed as curatorial consultant for this project, in charge of redistributing and curating objects from the palace collection (Susanto, 2005).

Other curatorial endeavors included making the art objects redistributed from the Jakarta palace available to the public. These were displayed at the Yogyakarta Presidential Palace and other palaces between 2008 and 2010 (Susanto, 2014). In 2016, the works were again made public through public exhibitions titled: “17/71: Goresan Juang Kemerdekaan” (‘17/71: Brushstroke for Freedom’) and “Senandung Ibu Pertiwi” (‘Songs of the Motherland’). These were held at the Indonesian National Gallery from 1–30 August 2016 and 1–30 August 2017, respectively.

For easier understanding of the various curatorial projects and processes undertaken, the following table summarizes the activities undertaken from Indonesia’s independence until now.

**Table 3.** Curatorial Process for Objects in the Presidential Palace Collection. Arranged by Mikke Susanto

No	Era / President	Management of Objects (Curation) of the Presidential Palace Collection
1	Sukarno (1945–1966)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before becoming president, 2,000 art objects (including paintings) had already been collected</li> <li>• Appointed Dullah (1950–1960) and Lee Man Fong and Lim Wasim (1960–1968) as palace painters</li> <li>• Publication of a catalogue of Sukarno’s collection, intended to reach 10 volumes (1956–1965)</li> <li>• Restoration of a number of paintings</li> <li>• Inventory of paintings created</li> </ul>

2	Suharto (1966–1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning in 1979–1980, administration of the palace collection (previously under the Ministry of Culture) was taken over by the Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia.</li> <li>• Establishment of Sanggar Lukisan at the Presidential Palace</li> <li>• Establishment of Puri Bhakti Renatama Museum.</li> <li>• Computerized inventorization of the palace collection, beginning in the 1990s.</li> <li>• Publication of books on the Presidential Palace.</li> <li>• Cleaning of paintings by Djoko Setiohadi, Guntur Siswoyo, and Warsu-Susilo</li> <li>• Establishment of room for nude paintings at the Bogor Palace</li> </ul>	6	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of Palace Administration Work Unit</li> <li>• Appointment of curatorial consultants, 2008 and 2014</li> <li>• Assessment of state assets (artworks), 2011</li> <li>• Establishment of “Balai Kirti” Museum at the Bogor Palace, establishment of the Yogyakarta Presidential Palace Museum, 2014</li> <li>• Restoration of Raden Saleh’s painting Penangkapan Pangeran Diponegoro, 2013–2014</li> <li>• Loaning of paintings by Raden Saleh for exhibitions outside of the palace</li> </ul>
3	B.J. Habibie (1998–1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned (but failed) preparation of catalogue</li> </ul>	7	Joko Widodo (2014–2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of Palace Administration Work Unit</li> <li>• Exhibition of works from the presidential palace collection at the National Gallery of Indonesia, 2016 and 2017</li> <li>• Publication of the book 17/71 Goresan Juang Kemerdekaan</li> <li>• Addition of exhibition space at the Presidential Palace of Yogyakarta Museum</li> </ul>
4	Abdurrahman Wahid (1999–2001)	-			
5	Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001–2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of Palace Administration Work Unit</li> <li>• Establishment of a team for inventorizing and administering the palace collection</li> <li>• Restoration of works by Makovsky and others as part of a preservation program.</li> <li>• Publication of the book Rumah Bangsa</li> <li>• Establishment of a museum for artworks from the presidential palace (previously Binagraha)</li> </ul>			

## Conclusion

The process through which the collection of the Indonesian Presidential Palace is curated has experienced its ebbs and flows as a result of the diverse policies and regulations enacted by Indonesia’s presidents during their terms. In the Sukarno era, paintings in the collection were kept in good condition, both because many were newly completed and because they were maintained by individuals with considerable knowledge of art and art conservation. In this era, works in the collection were inventorized and books on the subject were published, even though no public exhibitions were held. This changed in later years, when some paintings and other artworks in the collection were displayed in the palace and maintained regularly, while others were held in warehouses without any concern shown for their fates.

Only under President Joko Widodo, more specifically in 2016 and 2017, were some parts of the collection displayed on a national scale. Previously, some paintings had been exhibited, but not nearly as many as in these two years. As such, exhibitions and book publications under President Joko Widodo have infused the history of the presidential palace collection with new color.

This means that curators have significantly contributed to the public's education and socialization of the Presidential Palace Collection. Although the state has yet to create a dedicated museum for this collection, through past curatorial activities, from those of Dullah and Lee Man-Fong to those of the National Gallery curators in 2016 and 2017, the Indonesian people have been able to enjoy the collection. As such, Sukarno's dream that his collection could be enjoyed by the public has been realized, to a certain extent. This is the essential and important role played by the curators of the Presidential Palace Collection.

### Recommendations

This research has traced the history of the works in the presidential palace collection over more than seventy years. Many members of Indonesian society have expressed curiosity regarding this collection. As such, although this article has noted a number of curatorial processes already undertaken, there is still considerable opportunity to satisfy public curiosity by making the collection more available. It is thus recommended that the works in the collection be publicly displayed as frequently as possible, perhaps at a museum established especially for works from the palace collection.

Such public availability will prove beneficial for cultural education, character building, and nationalism development in Indonesia. Likewise, the international community will benefit by gaining greater access to information on Indonesian art, which has received global recognition. Such a (palace) museum and its collection would be important not only as an artifact of the history of the Indonesian people, but also as a form of international cultural collaboration. The works could thus be preserved and enjoyed by all.

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