

### **The Biennale Jogja XII Equator #2 Programs**

1. Main exhibition accompanied by an artist residency program.
2. Side Programs:
  - a) Parallel Events: Art events creation competition program.
  - b) Equator Festival: A city festival which pushes the boundaries of the community's creativity.
3. Supporting program consisting of international symposia, artists talks and workshops.
4. The Biennale Jogja Awards Program.
5. Volunteer and Internship Program.

### **Indonesian Encounter with Arab Countries**

Interactions between Indonesia and the Arab countries have occurred since the 7th century, when there were crowded links of international trades through the Malacca Strait that connected various cultures (such as China, Sriwijaya Kingdom and the Banni Ummayah). The spread of Arab cultures and Islam occurred through trading relations. The construction of Indonesia as the country with the biggest Muslim population in the world today is inseparable from the historical fact of the interaction between the locals and the Arab culture at that time.

Today, the issues of relations between Indonesia and the Arab countries become more significant for discussion. In the context of global culture, the dynamic contemporary art development in the Arab peninsula and South East Asia have become prominent factors to motivate building a stronger bond between Indonesia and the Arab countries. The two regions are not regarded as the mainstream of modern art that is centered in Europe and US. Following up current economic and political changes in the world, there has been a new awareness among art practitioners in the peripheral areas, including the ones from Asia-Pacific and the Arab regions, to initiate international-scale exhibitions, art fairs and artists residency programs that eventually construct a new topography on the international art map. Contemporary art practices in Indonesia and Arab countries have potential as a new category that challenges existing stereotypes —such as the category of 'art from the Islamic world'—that has so far resulted from the dominant system of representation in the global art scene.

Since early 2000s, the organizing of international-scale exhibitions, whether in Indonesia and the Arab countries, have not only been individual efforts to build new infrastructure for local art development. The exhibitions should be seen as a collective strategy to negotiate identity among the dynamics and complexities of the global art scene. Biennale Jogja in Indonesia, and a number of big events that have occurred in the Arab regions like Egypt, UAE, Dubai and Qatar – such as Art Dubai and Sharjah Biennale – have become important hubs to define the localities of the regions, apart from so many international events in Europe and America. Such initiatives must be understood as a strong assets at the local level, and should be developed further to become more concrete programs, which could serve to encounter the art practices from the two regions more intensively and deeply. Biennale Equator #2 is a way to achieve that goal.