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Indonesian modern art historiography: national and transnational perspectives

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FIGURE 2.1.
The cover of *Tempo*, 11 September 1976. Illustrator: Cahyono.

Collection of Leiden University Library
Photo by Aminudin TH Siregar

Chapter Two

On Raden Saleh

The cover of the 11 September 1976 issue of the Indonesian weekly magazine *Tempo* depicted a "hidden contest" between Raden Saleh and S. Sudjojono, two well-known painters in Indonesian art history (Fig.2.1). The latter is seen warmly putting his arm around Raden Saleh, as if they are engaged in conversation or simply joking. Raden Saleh sits upright and proud, his gaze suspiciously fixed on S. Sudjojono. Both artists have medals on their chests, but unlike Raden Saleh, S. Sudjojono's chest only has a badge that says "Seni Rupa Indonesia (Indonesian Art)." Their clothing is also eye-catching. S. Sudjojono appears to be on a beach picnic in his rose motif shirt. In contrast, Raden Saleh is dressed in his official, elegant black attire. His chest is adorned with symbols of the glory of the Dutch kingdom. Despite its appearance, the illustration has a serious recommendation because it represents one of Indonesian art history's latent debates concerning pioneer figures: who deserves to be regarded as a forefather in the history of Indonesian modern art?

The illustration of *Tempo's* front cover, including the reviews in the magazine, published in association with the *Se-Abad Seni Rupa Indonesia* (A Century of Indonesian Art) exhibition, opened up a heated debate concerning the pioneering artist in art history. Art critic Jim Supangkat evaluated this later as follows: "In 1976, the view that Raden Saleh should be placed at the beginning of the development of Indonesian painting suddenly emerged."¹ Supangkat's indication can be justified, considering that Raden Saleh was inducted as a pioneer on the opening day of the 1976 exhibition.

Having a role as Chairman of the Selection Board for the exhibition, Kusnadi even designated Raden Saleh as a period in art history. He commented, "The show historically begins with the Raden Saleh (1807 – 1880), which was around 1876 – 1937. This period was filled with Raden

¹ Jim Supangkat, *Titik Sambung: Barli Dalam Wacana Seni Lukis Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Etnobook, 1996), p.11.

Saleh himself."² To *Tempo*, critic and painter Baharudin Marasutan stressed that modern Indonesian painting should start with Raden Saleh, considering he was the first person from Java to "paint canvas with oil paints."³

In contrast, as quoted by *Tempo*, Sudjojono insisted on not acknowledging Raden Saleh as a pioneer. For him, PERSAGI - the group of artists formed by himself with Agus Djaya and several others, deserves to be the first milestone of modern Indonesian painting. The reason is that the spirit and soul of PERSAGI departed purely from the Indonesian people. As for Raden Saleh, stated Sudjojono, he did not consciously make art for his people.⁴ In other words, Raden Saleh has no "national consciousness."

Several years after the exhibition, Sudjojono reiterated in 1984 that Raden Saleh "did not deserve to be a pioneer of modern Indonesian painting because he was a coward." He expressed: "I do not agree, if a native painter from Indonesia paints his hero (Diponegoro) at the moment of his capture by the Dutch in a state of resignation, sluggish, without energy. Moreover, this hero and the other figures are portrayed in disproportionate anatomy, in an ugly state. It is not appropriate to turn a coward into a leader, let alone a pioneer."⁵

Sudjojono's attitude toward Raden Saleh is ambiguous, if not inconsistent. On another occasion, Sudjojono criticized most of Raden Saleh's paintings for being subdued; everything was as "happy" as heaven. However, "in a state of calm, safety, and comfort, a passive soul, an old soul, falling out of the wickedness of its time, has neither a motorbike nor a battery to propel it forward, nor an adventurous life." In turn, Sudjojono accused Raden Saleh of lacking the courage to "revolt to destroy the chain."⁶ For him, Raden Saleh

² *Tempo*, "Mengapa Sebuah Balai Pajang" in *Tempo*, 11 September 1976, p.15. Kusnadi's reference to determine the centennial (1876-1976) could have been more specific. I found no clues regarding peculiarities related to the year 1876 that could warrant functioning as the starting point for this period, not in the life of Raden Saleh, nor concerning a particular work connected to that date.

³ *Tempo*, "Suara Sekitar Balai", *Tempo*, 11 September 1976, p.14.

⁴ *Tempo*, "Suara Sekitar Balai" in *Tempo*, 11 September 1976, p.13-14.

⁵ Ipong Purnomo Sidhi "Komitmen Pak Djon pada Sang Penyanyi" in *Kompas*, 25 May 1993, p.16. "Saya tidak sependapat, bila seorang pelukis pribumi yang berasal dari tanah Indonesia melukiskan pahlawannya (Diponegoro) pada saat ditangkap Belanda dalam keadaan pasrah, loyo, tidak bertenaga. Apalagi pahlawan itu, beserta figur-figur yang ada digambarkan dalam anatomi yang tidak proporsional. Dalam keadaan yang jelek. Tidak pantas seorang pengecut dijadikan tokoh apalagi pelopor." From this quote, I think Sudjojono's assessment tends towards Pieneman's painting, not Raden Saleh's.

⁶ S. Sudjojono, "Djaman Raden Saleh Dibandingkan dengan Djaman Pelokis-pelokis Angkatan Moeda" in S. Sudjojono, *Seni Loekis, Kesenian, dan Seniman*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Indonesia Sekarang, 1946), p.47.

serves "as a reflection of Indonesia's historical past." By saying that, he wants to underscore the obsolescence of Raden Saleh's era.

Nevertheless, Sudjojono also acknowledged the figure of Raden Saleh, "who stands alone as a painter in the midst of the dark life of our nation."⁷ S. Sudjojono once even confirmed that Raden Saleh is "an Indonesian" who deserves high respect because he has carried the baton of art that the next generation must continue. Sudjojono wrote:

And every time I hear the name of *Taman Raden Saleh* (the Raden Saleh Garden) mentioned by people, or written in the newspapers because what's in the park, can say in their heart: my blood. Likewise, for every Indonesian son who likes to paint or draw, the name will be alive in his soul and the name is still vibrating as a living statue in the fantasy to be used as a measure of work, harder, more powerful, because the first stone that is what must be surpassed to rise to the top of Indonesian art.⁸

Given the difference in time between their colonial periods, it is highly problematic, if not unfair, to thoroughly compare these issues. Raden Saleh lived in the nineteenth century before the awakening of nationalist movements, and the concept of Indonesia as a political ideology had not yet emerged. In contrast, S. Sudjojono grew up in the twentieth century, coinciding with a new phase in the Dutch East Indies with "progress" as its motto. Words signifying "progress," like *voortgang*, *opheffing* (elevation of the people in the sense of education), *ontwikkeling* (development), and *opvoeding* (education), filled the language of the times, together with *bewordering van welvaart* (advancing prosperity).⁹

⁷ S. Sudjojono, 1946, p.46. "Raden Saleh hanya katja dari hidoep djamannja. Raden Saleh sebagai peloekis memang besar. Dan Raden Saleh sebagai katja doenia Indonesia didjaman jang lampau tetap menetapi djandji pekerdjaannja dan berdiri sendiri sebagai peloekis ditengah-tengah hidoep gelap bangsa kita."

⁸ S. Sudjojono, 1946, p. 55. See also S. Sudjojono "Taman Raden Saleh" in *Pandji Poestaka*, 9 January 1943, p.43. "Dan tiap-tiap kali kalau mendengar nama Taman Raden Saleh diseboet-seboet orang atau ditoelis dikoran-koran sebab ada apa-apa ditaman tadi, bisa berkata dalam hatinja: "Darahkoe." Begitoe djoega bagi tiap-tiap poetera Indonesia jang gemar meloekis atau menggambar, nama tadi akan lebih hidoep disanoebarinja dan teroes nama tadi menggetar sebagai patoeng hidoep dalam angan2 oentoek bisa dipakai sebagai soeatoe oekoeran bekerdja, lebih keras, lebih hebat, sebab baroe batoe pertama itoelah jang haroes dilampaui oentoek naik kepoentjak goenoeng seni-loekis Indonesia."

⁹ See Takashi Shiraishi, *Zaman Bergerak: Radikalisme Rakyat di Jawa 1912-1926*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1997), p. 35

The artistic concepts of S. Sudjojono were inspired by the era of national consciousness, specifically during the prevalent acceptance of the term "Indonesia," marked by the Youth Pledge (*Sumpah Pemuda*) in 1928.¹⁰ In the 1930s, he joined the political movement as a member of *Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia* or GERINDO (Indonesian People's Movement) - a left-wing and nationalist political party.¹¹ Raden Saleh was likely aware of the name Indonesia, as by 1850, the term "Indonesia" had already been mentioned in an ethnology journal by G.W. Earl and J.R. Logan. In this journal, "Indonesia" was used as a geographical term that meant the same as "Indian Archipelago." The term "Indonesia" is attributed to the two English scholars recognized as originators. Nevertheless, it was not until the initial twenty years of the 20th century that the name Indonesia became an "active community" imagined as a unity hoping to become a nation.¹² Consequently, it stands to reason that, in colonial literature, he was frequently denoted as a "Javanese Painter."

This chapter comprises two sub-chapters: *Debating the Pioneer* and *The Missing Chapter*, which ends with *Concluding Remarks*. The first sub-chapter emphasizes the need to critically analyze beliefs held by some that Raden Saleh is a nationalist, proven by how he composed resistance marks in his paintings. This is an essential aspect of his identity, and understanding it is crucial for a balanced view. Meanwhile, other opinions tend to reject it, arguing that the painter has expressed his loyalty to the Dutch Government on various occasions. Apart from these disputes, this sub-chapter suggests a broadened perspective on studying Raden Saleh, considering that he lives at the intersection of two distinct spheres: The Western and Eastern worlds.

The second sub-chapter analyzes the period following Raden Saleh's era, called an 'empty period.' Art historians believe it dates from Raden Saleh's demise in 1880 until the emergence of the next Indonesian painter in the 1930s. Is this devoid period accurate? Were there no painters after Raden Saleh passed? Did he have students? If so, did they learn directly from him?

¹⁰ The Youth Pledge propagated the ideal of 'One Archipelago, One People, One Language' (Satu Nusa, Satu Bangsa, Satu Bahasa). The threefold declaration of unity of nation, homeland and language, was made at a congress of nationalist youth organisations in Jakarta at the end of October 1928. See Keith Foulcher "Sumpah Pemuda: The Making and Meaning of a Symbol of Indonesian Nationhood" in *Asian Studies Review*, Volume 24 Number 3 September 2000, pp. 335-34.

¹¹ See Gunseikanbu, *Orang-orang Indonesia Jang Terkemoeka di Djawa*, (Djakarta: Gunseikanbu, 1943), p.426.

¹² For further discussion regarding these matters, see Jan B. Ave, "Indonesia," "Insulinde" and "Nusantara": Dotting The I's and Crossing the T*, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 145 (1989), No. 2/3, Leiden, pp.220-221.

Beyond Raden Saleh's circle, who else could be noted to fill the void? This subchapter will elaborate on these questions by presenting a compilation of narratives from various sources.

Debating the Pioneer

The narrative on Raden Saleh following his return from Europe needs to be expanded upon. He arrived in Java in February 1852.¹³ Based on a letter from 1849 that I found in the Leiden University Library, Raden Saleh once mentioned his return. He declared, "*Tahoen 1850 saya maoe balik ke Java* (In 1850, I want to return to Java)" - without mentioning the reason (Fig.2.2). From the letter, he seemed to have planned his return about three years in advance.

After returning from a long peregrination in Europe, Raden Saleh lived in 19th-century Java, where the creative environment was not yet developed and being an artist as a career was not a priority among people at the time. There were no art events or talks. Instead, as Raden Saleh complained to his guests who came to his house, in French: "*Café et sucre, sucre et café, sont tout-ce qu'on parle ici. C'est vraiment un air triste pour un artiste* (Coffee and sugar, sugar and coffee, is all we talk about here. It is a dreary atmosphere for an artist)."¹⁴

Despite expressing discontent regarding the prevailing conditions, it is noteworthy that Raden Saleh, in May 1862, managed to organize his successful exhibition within the Weltevreden Palace in Batavia. According to the *Java Bode* newspaper, the people of Batavia were so enthusiastic to see the two paintings¹⁵ that the exhibition had to be extended.¹⁶ The editor of *Java Bode* praised the show as a watershed moment in history because it captured the pulse of art in Batavia.¹⁷ This first solo exhibition created by the

¹³ "Aangekomen Vreemdelingen te Batavia" in *Javasche courant*, 25 February 1852, p.9.

¹⁴ W. Basil Worsfold, *A Visit to Java - With an Account of the Founding of Singapore*, (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1893), p.48.

¹⁵ One of the paintings portrays a moving humanitarian drama enacted by the Javanese people during a flood disaster, while the other captures the serene landscape of Megamendung in West Java. The paintings are *De Watersnood in 1861 op Java* and *Een gezigt op den Megamendung (het gebergte tusschen Buitenzorg en Tjiandjoer)*. See "Kolonien" in *Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's Gravenhage*, 29 June 1862, p.2.

¹⁶ *Nederlandsch-Indië: Batavia* in *Java-bode: nieuws, handels-en advertentieblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 14 May 1862, p.4.

Dan lagi lain tahun 1850
saja, mave balik ka Jawa
dan saja. nanti datang
sama. Tera. Gaset kasji
tate adang

Daris Tera sweng
sabat janyanet guta
dan Horuat Nama
Cama

Mada Saleh

Luzer 29. Aug.
1849.

FIGURE 2.2.
Raden Saleh's letter, 1849.

Leiden University Library Collection
Photo by Aminudin TH Siregar

¹⁷ Java Bode, 1862, p.4.



FIGURE 2.3.
Raden Saleh standing with his hands on his hips on the second-floor terrace of his Batavia house circa 1865.

Leiden University Library Collection
Photo by Woodbury & Page

local painter has received limited attention from historiographers, excluding Werner Kraus. According to Kraus, the exhibition occurred at Raden Saleh's home (Fig.2.3), as mentioned in *Kunst op Java* (1863).¹⁸ However, after thoroughly examining the article, it is critical to note that the precise location of the exhibition is not explicitly indicated.¹⁹ In addition, some local newspapers reported that the show was held at the "Paleis te Weltevreden." I assume it was the Governor General's residence rather than Raden Saleh's.²⁰ The assertion is supported by the album *Vues de Java: Photographies par Woodbury & Page* (1863 - 1866). The Weltevreden palace is depicted in this album as the residence of Herman Willem Daendels²¹, the Governor General, whom Raden Saleh once painted (Fig. 2.4).

¹⁸ Werner Kraus, *Raden Saleh: His Life and Work*, (Jakarta: KPG Gramedia, 2018), pp.405-406.

¹⁹ See Gerard Keller (ed.), "Kunst op Java," *Kunstchronijk*, Nieuwe Serie-Vierde jaargang, Te Leyden: A.W. Sythoff, Directeur der Houtgraveerschool, 1863, p.16.

²⁰ "Advertentie" in *Bataviaasch handelsblad*, May 10, 1862, p.6; "Advertentie" in *Bataviaasch handelsblad*, 17 May 17, p.3; and "Advertentie" in *Java-bode: nieuws, handels-en advertentieblad voor Nederlandsch-Indie*, 24 May 1862, p.3.

²¹ See *Advertentie Woodbury & Page* in *Bataviaasch handelsblad*, 3 June 1863, p.2.



FIGURE 2.4.
Paleis te Weltevreden.

Leiden University Library Collection
Photo by Woodbury & Page

Several authors suggest Raden Saleh experienced identity uncertainty. De Loos-Haaxman portrayed Raden Saleh's arrival in Batavia as "becoming a Javanese who did not live in Java nor did he become a European and reportedly lonely and failed to be a 'European'."²² However, Harsja Bachtiar called him a modern man²³ who was not 100% Javanese,²⁴ Werner Kraus writes that he was not prepared to live a new life in his homeland as an "inlander."²⁵ The testimony of José Emilio Pardo, a Spanish sailor who encountered Raden Saleh at his residence in Batavia in early 1867, presents an additional intriguing perspective to consider. Pardo acknowledged, "*El Raden habla mucho de Europa, y todo su afán y todo su anhelo tiraba á demostrarnos que él era más europeo que javanés*" (Raden talks a lot about Europe, and all his eagerness and longing for him tended to show us that he was more European than Javanese).²⁶

²² J. De Loos-Haaxman, *Verlaat Rapport Indië*, ('S-Gravenhage: Mouton & Co. Uitgevers, 1967), p.74.

²³ Harsja Bachtiar, *Raden Saleh: Bangsawan, Pelukis dan Ilmuwan* in J.J. Rizal (ed.), *Raden Saleh: Anak Belanda, Mooi Indië dan Nasionalisme*, (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2009), p.45.

²⁴ H. J. de Graaf "De Tentoonstelling: Nederlandse Schilders en Tekenaars in De Oost" in *Tong Tong*, 17 November 1972, p.6.

²⁵ Werner Kraus, 2005, p.277. See also G.H. von Faber, 1949, p.4.

²⁶ Thebussem (ed.), *José Emilio Pardo de Figueroa y de la Serna: Algunos escritos del teniente de Navio*, (n.p.), 1873, p.182.

The assignment of Raden Saleh as the "King's Painter" by King Willem III in 1849 may have been motivated by a particular reason related to this matter. Harsja Bachtiar interpreted that the assignment of this honorable title was not based solely on Raden Saleh's extraordinary mastery in painting but also on the King's intention of aiding the painter's seamless reintegration into the social structure of his Javanese relatives.²⁷ Raden Saleh can now live his new life in Java without any embarrassment as a native, thanks to this title. On the other hand, this title reflects Raden Saleh's comfort in being privileged as "more European than Javanese."

Nevertheless, one may question the rationale behind Raden Saleh's decision to return to Java despite being aware of his homeland's underdeveloped and financially unrewarding artistic environment. Historians have not yet properly investigated the precise reason for this matter. Soekanto assumed that the return of Raden Saleh was because the Diponegoro War (1825-1830) was over, where Raden Saleh's family was involved in the war. Therefore, Raden Saleh was no longer a "dangerous figure" because he was surrounded by "Europeesche Kringen (European Circles)."²⁸

Scholar I Ketut Winata has a different opinion. According to him, the painter's decision to return was related to a deep yearning and affection for his homeland.²⁹ However, Winata quotes French historian Bernard Dorleans³⁰, which is worth questioning because Dorleans does not disclose the source's origin. Apart from these factors, Werner Kraus assumed that the Dutch government wanted Raden Saleh to return to Java for administrative work in the government office, perhaps as a map draftsman. At the same time, to continue with Kraus, Raden Saleh developed a longing for his land of birth. His mother was still alive and sent him several letters. Raden Saleh also received letters from his other relatives urging him to return home.³¹

Raden Saleh returns home to face new challenges and ambiguity in various areas. His adventures over the years have shaped him into a man who thinks like a European but lives in Java. Because of his dualistic attitude and

²⁷ Harsja Bachtiar "Raden Saleh: Aristocrat, Painter, and Scientist" in *Indonesian Journal of Cultural Studies*, No.3, Volume VI, Agustus 1976, p.44.

²⁸ Dr. Soekanto, *Dua Raden Saleh*, (Jakarta: N.V. Poesaka Asli, 1951), p.18.

²⁹ I Ketut Winata, *Lukisan-lukisan Raden Saleh - Ekspresi Anti-kolonial*, (Jakarta: National Gallery, 2007), p.97.

³⁰ See Bernard Dorleans, *Orang Indonesia Dan Orang Prancis: Dari Abad XVI sampai dengan Abad XX*, (Jakarta: KPG, 2006), p.47.

³¹ Interview with Werner Kraus, Electronic E-mail, Saturday, April 8th, 2017, 10:53 PM.



FIGURE 2.5.
Zuber Usman, "Sedikit Pembitjaraan Tentang Seni Lukis Indonesia,"
Mimbar Indonesia, 16 October 1948.

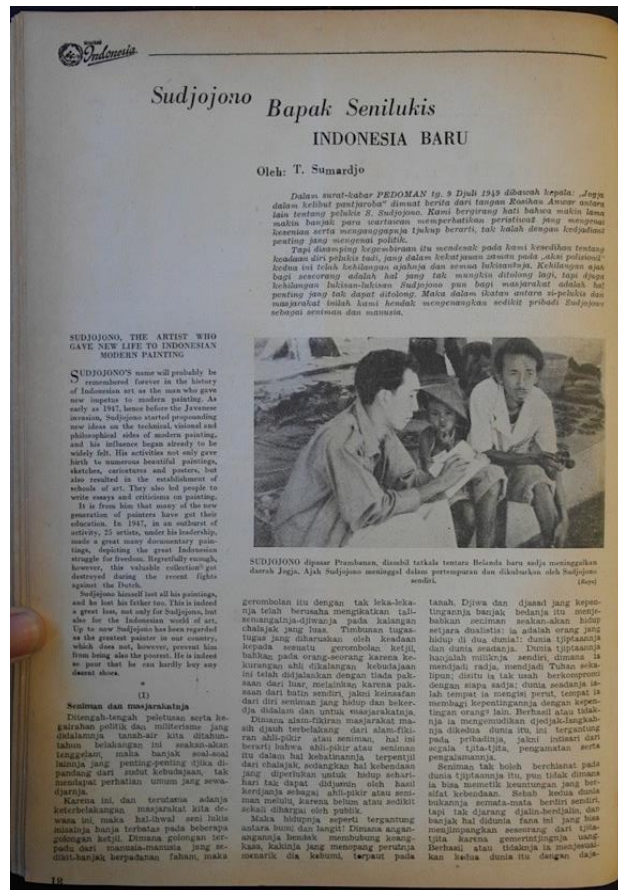
Leiden University Library Collection

Photo by Aminudin TH Siregar

his self-focus, nationalist art critics question his patriotism. They set the standard that the ideal Indonesian pioneer artist should inspire future generations and leave a lasting impression in their fields. Raden Saleh only partially embodied these characteristics, while S. Sudjojono was considered the ideal artist.

Figure 2. 6.
Trisno Sumardjo's article on *Sudjojono Bapak Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru*
(Source: *Mimbar Indonesia*, 8 October 1949, p.18)

Leiden University Library Collection
Photo by Aminudin TH Siregar



Raden Saleh or S. Sudjojono?

The need for a hero in post-colonial Indonesia grew amid the spirit of decolonization, encouraging artists and art critics to formulate recommendations for pioneers of Indonesian art history. Two candidates, Raden Saleh and Sudjojono, have been considered to have made significant contributions. There were three successive articles in *Mimbar Indonesia's*

magazine³² on this subject. The first is an article by critic Zuber Usman in the October 1948 issue, where he writes about three phases of Indonesian modern art history and places Raden Saleh as a pillar: *Raden Saleh*, *Generation After Raden Saleh*, and *New Generation* (Fig.2.5). Usman argued that "Raden Saleh Syarief Bustaman started the history of Indonesian painting" even though "he at his time was unable to encourage the emergence of new generations of Indonesian painters." However, Usman continues, Raden Saleh is credited with introducing his nation to the art of painting and representing it on the world stage.³³

A few months later, in the July 1949 issue of the same magazine, artist Suromo offered his version of the pioneering work in art history in the same magazine. He stated that new Indonesian painting originated in the pre-World War II era by young, modestly educated youth living in Jakarta and Bandung. Despite being poor and coming from various regions, they struggled to make a living and had limited access to art tools. Despite the absence of educational institutions, these artists persevered in pursuing art despite the challenges they faced at that time.³⁴ Suromo's statement targeted PERSAGI painters, contrasting their lower-class struggle for painting equipment with Raden Saleh's aristocratic upbringing and his opportunity to explore Europe for artistic exploration.

The third article in the *Mimbar Indonesia* magazine, in the issue of October 1949, published three months after Suromo's, holds immense historical significance as it unequivocally credits Sudjojono's unparalleled prowess in pushing the boundaries of Indonesian art (Fig.2.6). Interestingly, the article opens with paragraphs in English, perhaps to attract international readers to Sudjojono's role in developing Indonesian modern painting:

"S. Sudjojono: the artist who gave new life to modern Indonesian painting. S. Sudjojono's name will probably be remembered forever in the history of Indonesian art as the man who gave new impetus to modern painting. S. Sudjojono started propounding new ideas on the technical, visional and philosophical sides of

³² Further reading about *Mimbar Indonesia*, see Els Bogaerts, "Whither Indonesian culture? Rethinking 'culture' in Indonesia in a time of decolonization" in Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H.T. Liem (eds.), *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian 1950-1965*, (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012), pp. 223-248.

³³ Zuber Usman, "Sedikit Pembicaraan tentang Seni Lukis Indonesia" in *Mimbar Indonesia*, No.42, 16 October 1948, p.17.

³⁴ Suromo, "Timbul dan Tumbuhnya Seni Lukis Indonesia" in *Mimbar Indonesia*, No.27, 2 July 1949, p. 19.

modern painting and his influence already began to be widely felt. He also resulted in the establishment of a school of art, also led people to write essays and criticisms on painting under his leadership made a great many documentary paintings, depicting the great Indonesian struggle for freedom. Up to now, S. Sudjojono has been regarded as the greatest painter in our country.”³⁵

According to Trisno Sumardjo, who wrote the article, the attribution of Sudjojono as the “Father of New Indonesian Painting” can be seen as a recognition of his innovative approach to painting techniques within a contemporary context. Sudjojono's influential impact on other painters stems from his unwavering perspective in promoting Indonesian painting by portraying distinctly Indonesian subjects. Furthermore, he founded a studio, which can be considered a non-formal educational institution, under the auspices of PERSAGI to nurture aspiring painters. Sumardjo continues:

“S. Sudjojono 101 - so he calls himself - is a person who consciously understands the essence of art in general and painting in particular, and the first person in Indonesia who produces the fruits of painting according to new techniques and styles and visions according to the spirit of the times. At a time when the Indonesian people fell asleep in the arms of colonization, when Indonesian artists mostly sold and claimed to be artists, when some talented young men hesitantly groped the slippery art path, Sudjojono's soul grew and grew, as the fruits that open a new page in the history of Indonesian painting.”³⁶

A month after Sumardjo glorified Sudjojono as a father of modern Indonesian art, painter Soemarno Soetosoendoro made a provocative statement in *Indonesia* - a cultural magazine, claiming that Indonesian painting is merely a process of imitating Western painting. Consequently, Raden Saleh's designation as a pioneer makes more sense. Soetosoendoro overlooks the contributions of new-generation artists such as S. Sudjojono and PERSAGI. Soetosoendoro concluded, "We need to mention an Indonesian, Raden Saleh,

³⁵ Trisno Sumardjo “S. Sudjojono: Bapak Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru” in *Mimbar Indonesia*, III/4, 8 October 1949, pp.18-21.

³⁶ Trisno Sumardjo, 1949, p. 18.

who at the beginning of the history of new Indonesian painting, because at that time he was not only famous among the Indonesian people, but also famous among Western society in Indonesia (and in the field of painting in Europe)."³⁷ Soetosoendoro used Raden Saleh's popularity as a central argument. He went on to say that for a long time, reproductions of Raden Saleh's paintings such as *The Flood in Java*, *Boschbrand*, and *Op Leven en Dood* served as references: "Every Indonesian child who has attended school will still remember those reproductions," Soetosoendoro recalls.³⁸

The debate did not occur again until later, in 1954, when the critic Rivai Apin strengthened the idea to promote Sudjojono as "a pillar of Indonesian painting." Apin opens his writing by saying: "In Indonesia the person who started painting is Sudjojono." He argued that, compared to Raden Saleh, Sudjojono succeeded in sublimating Western techniques to encourage Indonesian painting "as a new understanding (*sebagai sebuah pemahaman baru*) for Indonesian painters." In addition, Sudjojono is considered to have successfully created the art of painting as a matter of life by placing historical awareness as a reference to advance the circumstances around him. In other words, Sudjojono's persona and his works have strongly influenced other painters.³⁹

The influence of recommendations provided by critics and artists in magazines on shaping opinion is significant, although it is challenging to ascertain how far it influences public decisions. What is interesting is that the state later took its stance in this debate. Seminar 1956 was the pinnacle of the "formal legalisation" of the pioneer, as described in Chapter 1. Kusnadi, from the government, classified Raden Saleh as a novice in modern art. Simultaneously, Sumardjo proposed PERSAGI (or Sudjojono) in a discussion session of that seminar, which did not appear to be well received. Trisno Sumardjo then wrote his critical version of art history in 1957, potentially motivated by his discontentment with the seminar's outcomes. The article, titled *Kedudukan Seni Rupa Kita* (The Position of Our Art) was published in

³⁷ Soemarno Soetoesoendoro, "Seni Lukis Kita dalam Mencari Jalan" in *Indonesia*, No.10, November 1949, p.589. "Seorang Indonesia yang pada permulaan sejarah seni lukis Indonesia baru, perlu kita sebutkan, karena pada waktu itu tidak hanya termasyhur dikalangan bangsa Indonesia, akan tetapi terkenal pula di kalangan masyarakat Barat di Indonesia (dan dilapangan seni lukis di Eropa) ialah Raden Saleh."

³⁸ Soemarno Soetoesoendoro, 1949, p. 589. See also G.A. Warmansjah, *Raden Saleh: The Well-Known Forgotten Artist*, (Jakarta: Government of DKI Jakarta Museum and History, 1979), p. 15. Warmansjah says that the name of Raden Saleh has been introduced to children at the elementary school level since Dutch, Japanese and Independence times because the reading is available to them.

³⁹ Rivai Apin, "Catatan-Catatan di Malam Tenang" in *Siasat*, 14 March 1954.

the *Almanak Seni* (Art Almanack). Sumardjo firmly denies Raden Saleh's role as a pioneer of modern Indonesian art in this lengthy essay. Instead, he put forward S. Sudjojono and his group PERSAGI.⁴⁰

Fast forward to 1979, when the Government finally published the authoritative book *Sejarah Seni Rupa Indonesia* through the Ministry of Education and Culture. The outline of historical periodization in this first official history book has changed very little from the text that Kusnadi once gave at the seminar. This book places Raden Saleh as a pioneer, not S. Sudjojono nor his group PERSAGI.

The debate continued between Sudarmadji and Dan Suwaryono. In his book, *Seni Lukis Jakarta dalam Sorotan* (Jakarta Painting in the Spotlight), Sudarmadji paraphrased Suwaryono's statement regarding his proposition to place Raden Saleh as a pioneer. According to Sudarmadji, Suwaryono established Raden Saleh as the pioneer of modern Indonesian art since he was the first Indonesian painter to express his ideas and thoughts in a Western way, painting realistically by taking on new techniques and styles. In contrast, Sudarmadji expressed his disagreement. Considering the magnitude of S. Sudjojono's influence in the effort to lay the foundations of modern painting in Indonesia, Sudarmadji argued that the pioneering of Indonesian art began with S. Sudjojono.⁴¹

However, if I look closely at Suwaryono's texts published in 1970, he offers a fundamental argument suggesting inclusivism in historical writing. According to him, the perspective for studying Raden Saleh and his works must be broadened by uncovering "complex and problematic relationships and influences."⁴² Reading Suwaryono's thoughts on Raden Saleh, I assume he was trying to offer a historical perspective not entangled by nationalism. Instead, he provided ideas to assess Raden Saleh from a broader art historical framework since the painter lived in an international network. At that time, Suwaryono's ideas - which I interpret today as a transnational art history perspective, were still unfamiliar to the art world.

⁴⁰ Trisno Sumardjo, "Kedudukan Seni Rupa Kita" in Zaini (ed.), *Almanak Seni 1957*, (Jakarta: BMKN, 1956), pp. 127-132.

⁴¹ Sudarmadji, *Seni Lukis Jakarta dalam Sorotan*, (Jakarta: Dewan Kesenian Jakarta, 1974), p. 8. In a previous instance, Sudarmadji tried to persuade the art community to acknowledge Sudjojono as a pioneer in modern Indonesian art, as opposed to Raden Saleh or Affandi. Sudarmadji formulated the proposition above as a reaction to the Government's exclusion of Sudjojono from the list of artists to be awarded. See "Jang Dilupakan: S. Soedjojono - Peletak Dasar Seni Lukis Indonesia Modern" in *Sinar Harapan*, 10 December 1969.

⁴² See Dan Suwarjono "Eksistensi Seni Lukis Indonesia (Penghampiran Historis)" in *Kompas*, 23 February 1970.



FIGURE 2. 7. Raden Mas Pirngadie, circa 1925.

Leiden University Libraries Digital Collections.

Apart from the contestation among artists and art critics to determine the pioneering nature, either Raden Saleh or Sudjojono, an exciting and essential offer to ponder was offered by Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana in *Mas Pirngadie: Ahli Gambar Bangsa Indonesia* (Mas Pirngadie: An Expert Draftsman of the Indonesian Nation). Alisyahbana wrote that the role and contribution of Mas Pirngadie (Fig.2.7) as a painter deserved to be a historical milestone, as he put his mark on Indonesian painting in the early 20th century, which, according to Alisyahbana, "struggled to leave the darkness and move towards the glittering dawn" and because Pirngadie's

significant contribution to Indonesian painting is "a movement in the arts that is no less important than a political movement."⁴³

In his writing, Alisyahbana did not explain in detail what "a movement in the arts" meant. But I suspect it relates to Pirngadie's popularity in the colonial art scene since the beginning of the 20th century compared to his contemporaries such as Abdullah Suriosubroto. For example, in 1904, Pirngadie's name was already known because he had the honorable task of accompanying J.E. Jasper on various trips around remote areas to collect materials for standard works on indigenous arts and crafts that the government published as monumental books under the title *De inlandsche kunstnijverheid in Nederlandsch Indië* (The Indigenous Arts and Crafts in the Dutch East Indies) in five volumes between 1912 and 1930. For this project, Pirngadie produced around two thousand drawings. Besides this project, he was known as a member of the prestigious institution *Koninklijke Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* (Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences) and actively exhibited his artworks in various mediums, such as etching, painting, and watercolor.⁴⁴ Especially for etching, I argue that he should be considered a pioneer, considering that he had already exhibited this print technique in 1920.⁴⁵

Alisyahbana was quite reasonable when he named Pirngadie as a pioneer. Throughout his career, Pirngadie's name was very well known for the many awards he received for the achievements of his works and the exhibitions he organised.⁴⁶ Ironically, as discussed in the next chapter, later art historiographers mostly placed Pirngadie into the antagonist frame with the label "Mooi Indie painters" and gave way to his student, Sudjojono, as the protagonist.

Was Raden Saleh Patriotic?

A central point of discussion in deciding whether Raden Saleh could be considered the pioneer of modern Indonesian art was whether he was sufficiently patriotic – or nationalist in the Indonesian sense. In addition to

⁴³ S.T.A., *Mas Pirngadie: Ahli Gambar Bangsa Indonesia in Poedjangga Baroe*, Th. 1, July 1933 – July 1934, p. 161-166 and No.2, Juli, p. 236 – 248.

⁴⁴ See "Mas Pirngadie" in *De Indische courant*, 8 April 1936, p.14.

⁴⁵ See "Kunst en Letteren - Schilderkunst. Het Indisch pallet op de Jaarbeurs te Bandoeng" in *De locomotief*, 22 May 1920, p.2.

⁴⁶ For further reading about Pirngadie, see H. Van Meurs "A Javanese Artist Painter" in *Sluyters' Monthly – East Indian Magazine*, Number 2, February 1922 pp.134-135.

his prominent position in Indonesian art history, Raden Saleh is registered as a Dutch painter and this attribution to two worlds cast doubt on his “nationalism.”⁴⁷ Werner Kraus, for instance, believed that uncertainty (about his identity) permeated Raden Saleh's existence and during his time in the Netherlands, France, and Germany, the painter thought he could blend his East and West identities while merging the values of his native Java with those of Europe.⁴⁸ However, Kraus believed that a few years before his death, a drastic change in attitude indicated that his spirit was leaning towards Europe. In a correspondence addressed to his friend Ernest II, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Raden Saleh expressed his uncertainty about staying physically in Java, whereas his consciousness remains rooted in Europe. He encountered stunning natural landscapes, but he felt uncomfortable with the people.”⁴⁹

Up to this point, I think Raden Saleh experienced tension due to inhabiting two realms, East and West, which is difficult for him to overcome. Therefore, discussing him necessitates understanding and embracing the complexities of these contrasting worlds. He may know that traditional Javanese art has been intricately linked with spirituality and a deep respect for customs. As the heir apparent to this lineage, he may have been confronted with the ethical quandary of reconciling individualistic artistic manifestation with compliance with societal norms and expectations. Conversely, he must have had a profound understanding that throughout history, European painters have embraced individualism and the liberty to defy conventions, presenting them with an opposing array of ethical dilemmas centered on genuineness and innovation.

The tension of identity as a painter living in two worlds is a complex matter since it influences the artist's sense of self. Furthermore, this aspect must be investigated more deeply rather than confining it to the cage of nationalism. When an artist lives amidst two opposing artistic worlds—one might consider societal norms and the other considering artistic freedom—

⁴⁷ See Christiaan Kraam, *De levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche kunstschilders, beeldhouwers, graveurs en bouwmeesters, van den vroegsten tot op onzen tijd*, (Amsterdam: Gebroeders Diederichs, 1857-1864), p. 1337. See also Alb. Plasschaert, *Korte Geschiedenis Der Hollandsche Schilderkunst van af de Haagsche School tot op den Tegenwoordigen Tijd*, (Amsterdam: Nederl. Bibliotheek, 1923), p. 302.

⁴⁸ Werner Kraus, “Raden Saleh di Jerman” in *Jurnal Kebudayaan Kalam*, No.21, 2004, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Werner Kraus, 2004, p.9-10. „Percayalah Yang Mulia, hanya tubuh kami yang berada di Jawa, jiwa dan pikiran kami masih tertinggal di Eropa. Di Jawa kami dapati alam yang indah, tapi mencintai masyarakat seperti ini tidaklah alamiah, bertentangan dengan alam.”

their sense of self inevitably faces conflicts and contradictions. The cultural dichotomies that artists must navigate further intensify this tension. Artists often struggle with different values, aesthetics, and cultural expectations. Their artistic identity simultaneously merges and confronts the diverse perspectives of their upbringing, their education, and the communities they belong to. This negotiation of cultural influences and artistic inclinations can lead to fragmentation within an artist's identity, as happened to Raden Saleh, making it difficult to establish a coherent creative expression rooted in their two worlds.

Moreover, the emotional aspect of this struggle cannot be overlooked. This constant assessment of their work and personal identity can instigate an intricate range of emotions, such as self-doubt, anxiety, and even confusion about their place within the art world - a world that Raden Saleh did not discover while in Java. The resulting emotional turmoil further adds to the tension of the artists' identity as they grapple with their perceived inadequacies and the need to establish their artistic voice among societal expectations. I think Raden Saleh's writers seem to have paid little attention to these issues. Soekanto, for example, asserts in his book *Dua Raden Saleh* (Two Raden Saleh) that Raden Saleh, despite his prolonged residence in Europe, possesses a patriotic spirit. He suggests that Raden Saleh's persistent awareness of the plight of his people can be attributed to his ancestral ties to a revolutionary dynasty and his familial relationship with Prince Diponegoro.⁵⁰

Of course, Raden Saleh knows that his family played a role during the Java War, just as he is also aware of the risks of being part of a family that is indicated to have joined the rebellion. Nevertheless, Soekanto's assumptions do not necessarily confirm Raden Saleh's loyalty towards his origin, the Indies (or Java), or Europe since there is little evidence to support one of the two directions.

The lack of clarity in Raden Saleh's stance on colonialism was a significant factor leading to reluctance on the part of opponents of his candidacy for pioneers to acknowledge him as a prominent figure in modern Indonesian painting. Art critic Enin Supriyanto stated, "First of all, Indonesia does not yet exist, so where would such nationalism refer to? Second, how can we claim that Raden Saleh was a nationalist just by looking

⁵⁰ Dr. Soekanto, *Two Raden Saleh/Dua Raden Saleh*, (Jakarta: N.V. Poesaka Asli, 1951), pp. 9-20.

at one painting and not observing his possibly hundreds of others? How can we make a comparison?"⁵¹

In the same tone as Supriyanto, Agus Dermawan T. challenges Raden Saleh's notion of nationalism on the grounds of anachronism. Dermawan contends that the national awakening in Indonesia can be traced back to the early 20th century, specifically with the emergence of Boedi Oetomo's movement in 1908. It is important to note that Raden Saleh's demise predates this significant historical development by several years.⁵² In contrast, to underscore Raden Saleh's lack of patriotism, Dermawan bases his argument on Raden Saleh's admission of loyalty to the Dutch when he was accused by the court of instigating a riot in April 1869 in Bekasi or *De Bekassische onlusten*. *De Bekassische onlusten* requires examination here, considering that there were accusations of Raden Saleh's involvement in the bloody riot, which led to him being questioned by the authorities.

In his paper "Agrarian Radicalism in Java: Its Setting and Development", social historian Sartono Kartodirdjo begins the riot story with someone named Arpan, who discovers that his ancestors owned land in the Bekasi regency of West Java. To prove his claim, Arpan refers to copper plates. He then meets Bapa Rama, who also claims the land. Both agreed that the land would be divided between them. To substantiate their claims, they asked the famous Raden Saleh for help through the intercession of a certain Bapa Kollot. However, it turned out that the copper plate had nothing to do with the land they claimed. Arpan disappeared from the scene, while Bapa Rama and Bapa Kollot (or Bassa Kollot) united in upholding the claim namely of Bapa Rama). For that, they went to visit Raden Saleh in Surakarta. The story of this visit spread widely among the local farmers and increased their prestige. An older man from Bekasi confirmed Bapa Rama's claim on the land. At the end of 1868, Bapa Rama and Bapa Kollot gathered many followers who believed in them. They declared that the land between the Tjitarum and Tjidani rivers belonged to these two men and that the lease on land that the government had used had expired.

Kartodirdjo continues that some meetings then took place. This group grew more prominent and vowed to forcefully take back the land between the

⁵¹ This quote is from the interview of Budi N.D. Dharmawan with Enin Supriyanto. See Budi N.D. Dharmawan, "Pionir di Celah Dua Loka", in <https://nationalgeographic.co.id/feature/2012/05/pionir-di-celah-dua-loka/6>, accessed on 17 March 2017.

⁵² See Agus Dermawan T., "Indonesian Fine Arts and Economic Waves" in *Paradigm and Market: Aspects of Indonesian Visual Art*, (Yogyakarta: Cemeti Art Foundation, 2003), p.57 and Tempo (ed.), *What and Who Some Indonesians*, (Jakarta: Grafiti Pers, 1981), p.97.

Tjitarum and Tjidani rivers. All adherents of the movement were promised exemption from compulsory service (*kerdja kumpeni*) and taxes (*tjukai*). It was decided to simultaneously raid the towns of Tambun, Bogor, and Depok. The leading insurgents would attack Tambun, set free any prisoners held there, and head for Bekasi. From there, they would proceed through Putjang Bay to Meester Cornelis (Djatinegara), where they would wait for the other rebel groups from Bogor and Depok, headed by Bungsu, Arsain, and Bapa Kollot. Then, they would all head straight for Batavia and overrun the city.⁵³ The local authorities were aware of the rebellion's plot. Despite this, the farmers continued to attack, with several Dutch people being killed as a result. Meanwhile, the uprising had been crushed. Some were apprehended and sentenced to death by hanging.⁵⁴

From the description above, one might conclude that Raden Saleh was involved in the Bekasi insurrection because of his alleged support. Indeed, he and Bapa Kollot knew each other. However, the purpose of their encounter was not to strategize a rebellion but rather to engage in the pursuit of antiquities. Unfortunately, Sartono does not explain this critical context, which places his description in another light.

Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië publishes articles written by Raden Saleh himself. On pages 306-313 of the magazine, published in 1873, Raden Saleh conveyed his chronology and clarification regarding the Bekasi incident (Fig.2.8). In introducing Raden Saleh's writing, the magazine's editor acknowledged that the article's publication aimed to express sympathy and appreciation for the painter. The editorial team disclosed that Raden Saleh was distressed by the riot as he was under grave suspicion due to accusations from multiple irresponsible individuals.⁵⁵

Raden Saleh begins his writing by elucidating that, in 1867, he received authorization from the *Koninklijke Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* (Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences) to undertake scholarly investigation and acquisition of antiquities for this Society. Raden Saleh graciously accepted the assignment. On one occasion, he received a visit from someone who had been informed about his pursuit of antiquities. He extended his assistance to Raden Saleh. Raden Saleh wrote: "Sometime before

⁵³ Sartono Kartodirdjo, "Agrarian Radicalism in Java: Its Setting and Development" in Claire Holt, et al., *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 103-105.

⁵⁴ See also Mulyawan Karim, "Cerita Eksekusi di Alun-alun Bekasi" in *Kompas*, 23 April 2009, p.21.

⁵⁵ Editor "Raden Saleh en de Bekassische onlusten" in *Tijdschrift voor Nederlands - Indië*, 1 October 1873, p. 306.

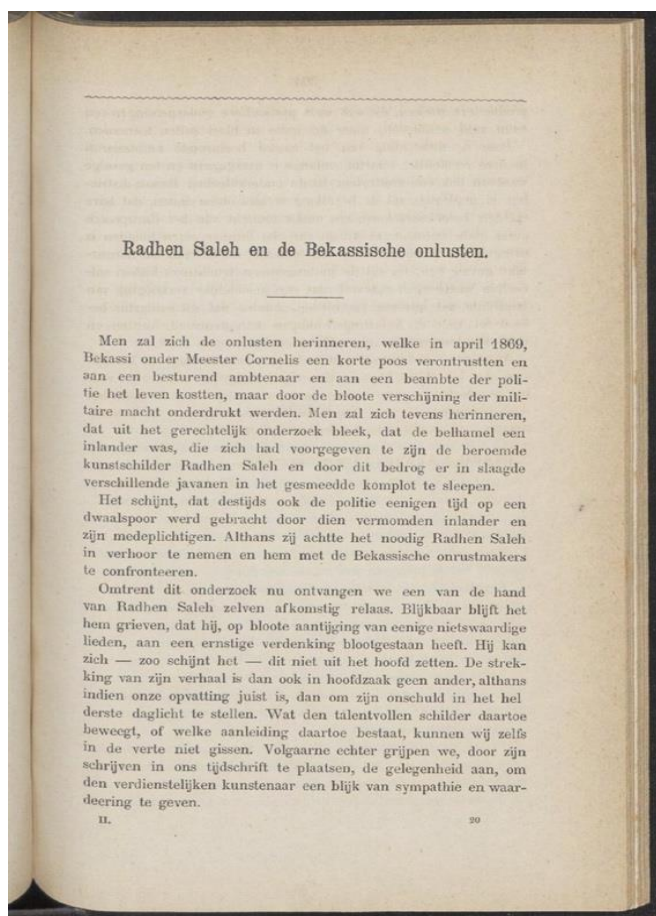


FIGURE 2.8.
First page of *Raden Saleh en de Bekassische onlusten*, 1873.
Leiden University Libraries Digital Collections.

I departed for Java, Djogja, the place where I was to be married, a native came to me and told me that he had heard that I was looking for antiquities and, if I would make use of his help, he was willing to cooperate)."⁵⁶

It is clear that Raden Saleh was willing to acquire antiquities from local inhabitants through purchase or replication, for it is known that shortly afterward, Raden Saleh received numerous offerings for acquisition, for instance, manuscripts and banners. He engaged in restitution by returning various objects while concurrently endeavoring to procure artifacts in manuscripts or bronze inscriptions. Raden Saleh continued that an individual, accompanied by two others, appeared and presented him with three bronze plates adorned with inscriptions in "Buddha script." Raden Saleh expressed satisfaction with this generous gesture. Regrettably, the

⁵⁶ *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1873, p. 306. "Eenigen tijd vóór mijn vertrek naar Java, Djogja, de plaats waar ik in den echt zou treden, kwam zekere inlander bij mij en zeide mij dat hij had vernomen, dat ik oudheden opspoorde, en, zoo ik van zijn hulp gebruik wilde maken, hij bereid was daartoe mede te werken."

proprietor did not have the intention to sell the item. Raden Saleh subsequently sought consent to borrow the item for replication, a task undertaken by the grandson of his nephew, Raden Salikin.⁵⁷

One of the proprietors of the bronze plates, namely Bapa Kollot, informed Raden Saleh that he was permitted to acquire more antiquities. To facilitate the search and collection process, Bapa Kollot subsequently requested the preparation of an authorization letter in the name of Raden Saleh. Raden Saleh then wrote a letter: "Below, I, Raden Saleh, a draftsman from the King of the Netherlands, instruct a Muslim named Bassa Kollot to look for Buddhist objects or writings to draw or buy for the needs of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences. The Honorary Member of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences. Signed Radhen Saleh."⁵⁸

Raden Saleh then left for Yogyakarta, intending to get married, and he returned to Buitenzorg (Bogor) in 1868. On certain occasions, Bapa Kollot visited Raden Saleh's residence in Bogor, presenting a collection of antiques, one of which was a cannon. Approximately three days later, he returned accompanied by his offspring. Bapa Kollot expressed his intention to hold a gathering to commemorate his son, who had recently recovered from a severe illness. Raden Saleh recalls paying little attention to Kollot's story, mainly due to his preoccupation with creating paintings depicting tigers and other subjects he had envisioned extensively during that period. Approximately ten to twenty days after the period mentioned, Raden Saleh stated he was informed about the riots in Bekasi by someone - Raden Saleh did not mention the name - who came to his residence.⁵⁹

Raden Saleh expressed, "Nevertheless, owing to my limited agency, I diligently persisted in the pursuit of my artistic endeavor, dedicating extensive hours from dawn to dusk. Subsequently, as a consequence of excessive strain, I experienced a debilitating headache, impeding my creative output for a duration of six days. On the seventh day, I underwent a therapeutic treatment involving the application of leeches."⁶⁰ On that day, as

⁵⁷ *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1873, p. 307.

⁵⁸ *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1873, p. 307. "*Die bawa inie, Saija Radhen Saleh, Juroe Gambar dari 'Srie Maha Radja Wolanda, Mengakoe Soeroe pada sa orang' Islam, bernama Bassa Kollot, mentjarie barang atawa tulissan Buddha, boewat di Gambar atawa die blie boewat Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences. Het Eerelid van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen. w.g. Radhen Saleh.*"

⁵⁹ *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1873, p. 308.

⁶⁰ *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1873, p. 308. "Aangezien ik echter aan dergelijke zaken niets kon veranderen, zoo bleef ik vol lust van den morgen tot den avond aan mijn schilderij doorwerken, tot dat

mentioned earlier, as stated by Raden Saleh, the representative of the Resident of Batavia arrived bearing a letter as follows: "Radhen Saleh! Kindly inform me of a note you gave to a native and bears 'your signature.' The Resident of Batavia, signed Hoogeveen."⁶¹

In the courtroom, the authority then asked all the witnesses whether Raden Saleh was the same as Raden Saleh, who was present on the night of the rebel's meeting. However, all witnesses stated that Raden Saleh in the courtroom was different from the one who attended the rebel's meeting. Raden Saleh was declared innocent after being examined and confronted with several witnesses. Moreover, he was a victim of identity theft committed by Bapa Kollot or Raden Malan.⁶² Ending his letter, Raden Saleh expressed his loyalty to the King:

After twenty-three years in civilized circles in Europe, would I stoop here to mingle with bandits and rioters and, what's more, conspire with such rabble to pit myself against the government, that, to this day, still showers me with mercies. Anyone who knows me intimately cannot possibly believe this. Nay, to my last gasp, till I lie prostrate on my bed to appear before the judgment seat, my motto will always be: "Reverence to God and faithfulness, obedience and gratitude to my King, the government, and the Dutch nation."⁶³

ik eindelijk, door te vele overspanning, duizelingen kreeg, die gedurende 6 dagen aanhoudend mij in mijn werk verhinderden, zoodat ik mij den zevenden dag bloedzuigers liet zetten."

⁶¹ Raden Saleh Letter in W. R. Baron van Hoëvell, "Raden Saleh en de Bekassische onlusten", *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1 October 1873, p.308-309. "Radhen Saleh! "Wees zoo goed mij inlichting te geven wegens een briefje dat U aan een inlander gegeven hebt en dat voorzien is van "uwe handteekening. De Resident van Batavia, w. g. Hoogeveen."

⁶² Kollot wore several medals or coins, imitating the royal badge that adorned Raden Saleh's chest. "Nederl. Oost-Indië (Per Overlandmail), Batavia, 20 April 1869" in *Het Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's Gravenhage*, 1 June 1869, p.3., "Nederlandsche Kolonien – Batavia, 20 April" in *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 1 June 1869, p.1.

⁶³ See the statement in W. R. Baron van Hoëvell, "Raden Saleh en de Bekassische onlusten", p.313, "Raden Saleh en de Bekassische onlusten" in *De locomotief: Samarangsch handels-advertentie-blad*, 26 November 1873, p. 3 and Harry A. Poeze, C. van Dijk, and I. van der Meulen, *In het land van de overheerser I: Indonesiërs in Nederland 1600-1950*, (Leiden: Brill, 1986), p. 15. "Zou ik na 23 jaren lang in Europa in beschaafde kringen te hebben verkeer, mij hier verlagen om mij in gezelschap te mengen van bandieten en oproermakers, en wat meer zegt, samen te spannen met zulk gespuis om mij op te werpen tegen het gouvernement dat mij tot den huidigen dag nog steeds met weldaden overlaadt? Ieder die mij van nabij kent, kan zulks onmogelijk gelooven. Neen, tot mijn laatsten snik, tot ik uitgestrekt zal liggen op mijn sponde om voor den rechterstoel te verschijnen, zal nog steeds mijn leus zijn: "Eerbied aan God en trouw, gehoorzaamheid en dankbaarheid aan mijn Koning, het gouvernement en de Hollandsche natie."

atawa die gantug, seperti Pacan R. 16.
 apa sebab? tida ada lain sebab saya poe-
 nja nama die Europa banyak Orang taoc
 dan denger, tambahkan saya pake banyak
 bintang ja' darie adjaranya bangsa Belanda
 dan Gouvernemennd banyak toeloeug dan
 piyara sama sama saya. jadi tida ada
 lain bentiinja sama saya i perkarade-
 ri saya poenja Reputasien dan bintang
 bintang, sebab tida bijaya denger dan liat
 njang saya begitoe bentoeng sebab dia Orang
 poenja mase Orang yawa biar tinggal
 yawa
 Tetapie saya poenja attie slamanya pegang
 tetep banyak trima kasih dan hormat
 kapada Gouvernemennd dan bangsa
 Belanda sampe mattie tida lah bole
 loepa. dan slamanya saya ada die yawa
 23 tahun tida lah ada satae Orang njang
 bole bilang apa apa darie saya poenja ha-
 hat attie sama satae Orang apa lagi ke-
 rang trima kapada kita poenja Gouver-
 nemend dan bangsa Belanda apa lagi
 tida taoc Octang wang satae Cent. R.
 saya dan badenayoe Minim banyak
 tabe
 En Geloeft mij te zijn
 Voor u welkom te zijn
 Raden Saleh
 Coburg 8 Januari 76.

F.R.H. menggoer-
 waag saya gambar
 (Sareu)

FIGURE 2.9.

Raden Saleh expressed his loyalty to the

Dutch in his letter written in 1876.

Haags Gemeentearchies, BNR.8007-01, inv.nr.85

Photo by Aminudin TH Siregar

Reports in the news mention Raden Saleh's commitment to preserving his integrity and honor by abstaining from involvement in the rebellion.⁶⁴ In the subsequent years, Raden Saleh continued to experience profound distress in response to the grave allegations against him. The accusations and the compelling sequence of legal proceedings remained firmly ingrained in his thoughts.⁶⁵ In one of his letters in 1876, Raden Saleh emphasized his loyalty to the Dutch. He wrote: "Saya poenja attie slamanya pegang tetep banyak trima kasih dan hormat kapada gouvernemennd dan bangsa wlanda sampe mattie tidaklah bole loepa. (I always thank and express my respect to the Dutch government and the Dutch people. Until I die, I won't forget it)." (Fig.2.9).

⁶⁴ "Overzicht van den inhoud der Indische bladen" in *De locomotief: Samarangsch handels en advertentieblad*, 21 April 1869, pp.1-2.

⁶⁵ W. R. Baron van Hoëvell, "Raden Saleh en de Bekassische onlusten", p.305-306.

Raden Saleh's patriotism towards his country - whatever that country was, considering that at that time it was not yet called Indonesia - or, at least, the painter's firm anti-colonial attitude represents an aspect that is always the subject of debate rather than his artistry. To this day, I have not found definitive historical evidence that has reached a consensus to validate the painter's patriotism. Raden Saleh's expression of loyalty to the King of the Netherlands in the courtroom regarding the riots, or as contained in his letter as discussed above, still cannot be used to determine the level of his patriotism. Of course, if he were proven to have been involved in the riot, prejudice against him would become more accessible. However, his expression of loyalty in the courtroom strengthened the perceptions of those who doubted the painter's patriotism. On the other hand, those who believe in his patriotism will argue that Raden Saleh was defending himself because he was not involved in the riot. He expressed his loyalty as his self-defense mechanism and reminded local authorities that he was, in fact, the King's painter.

Nationalist Prejudices

Art has long been a medium through which individuals express their identity, culture, and experiences. However, as commonly understood, the interpretation of art can be influenced by various factors, including nationalist prejudices. After examining some Indonesian fine arts literature, I can feel how nationalist prejudices are deeply ingrained beliefs and biases that promote and prioritize one's nation or culture over others. In this part, I will explore how nationalist prejudices can impact the interpretation of artworks and the implications of such biases.

Nationalist prejudices often lead to the misinterpretation of artworks, perpetuating cultural appropriation and stereotyping. A striking example is the interpretation of buffalos in Raden Saleh's painting as "people of Indonesia," and lions as "Europeans - or the Dutch colonialism." In my extensive review of various publications, I have found numerous interpretations of the animals depicted in Raden Saleh's paintings. However, it is noteworthy that only a few of these interpretations offer convincing arguments backed by art history research, casting doubt on the prevalent notion that certain Raden Saleh paintings are motivated by anti-colonial expressions. On the other hand, the motives for interpreting Raden Saleh's paintings are primarily nationalist prejudice.

One of the few is the study shown by Marie-Odette Scalliet when analyzing *Boschbrand's* paintings. For example, Scalliet offers views related to the issue, namely Saleh's representation of a burning forest, the starting point of his inspiration, the implications of the animals selected, and his choice of such a subject within the context of his European studies. Scalliet hinted at the possibility that Raden Saleh was inspired by the Renaissance artist Piero di Cosimo (1461–1522), who painted a work with the same title: “The Forest Fire” (c. 1505). However, Raden Saleh emphasizes a theatrical and spectacular composition, while Cosimo's realization is entirely undramatic; the flames are not threatening, and the animals amble away.

Scalliet also delved into other potential relationships. When Raden Saleh settled in Dresden, where he resided and pursued his studies for over four years, he may have encountered the landscape and animal painter Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Wegener (1812–1879). Wegener, a pupil of the renowned landscape painter Johan Christian Clausen Dahl (1788–1857), coincidentally became Saleh's mentor. One of Wegener's paintings, a depiction of a forest fire with fleeing animals in North America's interior landscapes, was exhibited at the Dresden Salon in 1846 and received praise. This connection to Wegener, and by extension, Dahl, could potentially provide insights into Saleh's artistic journey. However, as Scalliet pointed out, the painter's motivations remain a tantalizing enigma beyond these artistic relationships, even though 'Forest Fire' could be interpreted as symbolizing the forces of evil unleashed by a colonial system.⁶⁶

Several cases of this interpretation below show that most interpreters view the images through the lens of nationalism and only focus on elements that reinforce their own beliefs that Raden Saleh was patriotic. Interpretation based on his painting is rarely done with a view to the contrary. Hence, Raden Saleh was forced to sign into the frame of Indonesian nationalism.

The two painting images discussed are the most frequently used by artists or historians to interpret Raden Saleh's patriotism among his many works: *Een Strijd op Leven en Dood* (Fighting Between Life and Death) or also known as *Buffle d'Afrique attaqué par deux lions* (African buffalo attacked by a pair of lions) and the only historical painting that Saleh ever made titled *Historisches Tableau, die Gefangennahme Des Javanischen Hauptlings Diepo*

⁶⁶ One of them is the study shown by Marie-Odette Scalliet when analyzing *Boschbrand's* paintings. See Marie-Odette Scalliet “The Javanese Painter Raden Saleh (c. 1811– 1880): A Star in the Firmament of Indonesian Modern Visual Art” in Low Sze Wee and Patrick D. Flores (eds.), *Charting Thoughts: Essays on Art in Southeast Asia*, (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2017), pp. 60-77.

Negoro (A Historical Tableau, the Capture of the Javanese Leader Diepo Negoro).⁶⁷

In 1851, Raden Saleh presented *Een Strijd op Leven en Dood* to Dutch King Willem III. Painted in 1848, this artwork was considered to date from "the Algiers time; where he made numerous studies and sketches concerning desert life."⁶⁸ Regrettably, in 1931, half a century after its creation, the Dutch pavilion in which the renowned painting was housed caught fire during the Paris Colonial Exposition. Alongside numerous other esteemed works by Dutch masters, this legendary painting met its demise.⁶⁹ It is worth noting that a newspaper at the time dismissed the artistic significance of the work, asserting its lack of substantial artistic merit.⁷⁰ Interestingly, it was believed that there was a copy of the painting, which means that Raden Saleh had painted *Op Leven en Dood* twice. Historian S. Kalff suspected that the burned painting was from a collection from Edam, and another painting is still stored in the Rijksmuseum or vice versa.⁷¹

One thing I want to emphasize is that nowadays photo reproductions of *Op Leven en Dood* are easily found and have circulated across diverse media platforms, including magazines, newspapers, books, academic papers, and search engines. However, the availability of photos of the painting is unsatisfactory because it is black and white and of low-quality photo reproduction. From this standpoint, it can be questioned how far a painter's patriotism can be evaluated by relying on such materials.

⁶⁷ See I Ketut Winaya, 2007, pp. 84-95 and pp.126-127. See also Werner Kraus, 2005, p. 288. Kraus assumed that Harsja Bachtiar failed to read the symbolic meaning of the painting. See Kraus, *ibid.*, P. 287. See also A.D. Pirous, *Seni Pariwara sebagai Alat Propaganda Perjuangan*, 1964, Fine Arts Department, Institut Teknologi Bandung, pp.24-25.

⁶⁸ See Si Omong "Raden Saleh: Een Merkwaardige Inlander" in *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 22 April 1930, p.17. Some biographies claim that Raden Saleh traveled to Algeria with Horace Vernet without providing any evidence of their claims. However, Claude Guillot and Pierre Labrousse denied this belief. There is no historical evidence that Raden Saleh had ever been to Algeria. See Claude Guillot and Pierre Labrousse "Raden Saleh, un artiste-prince à Paris" in *Archipel*, Volume 54, 1997, *Destins croisés entre l'Insulinde et la France*, p.144.

⁶⁹ "Een Nationale Ramp" in *Nieuwe Langedijker Courant*, 30 June 1931, p.2, "Indrukken van de Parijsche Koloniale Wereldtentoonstelling" in *Vlissingsche Courant*, 28 mei 193, p.2, and "Hoe het was" in *Leeuwarder nieuwsblad: goedkoop advertentieblad*, 30 June 1931, p.10.

⁷⁰ "De ramp te Vincennes" in *Twentsch dagblad Tubantia en Enschedesche courant*, 3 July 1931, p.21.

⁷¹ See S. Kalff "Eene Schilderij van Raden Saleh" in *De Indische Verlofganger*, 17 July 1931, p.3. See also "De Schilderijen van Raden Saleh" in *De koerier*, 7 August 1931, p.6, "Kunst en Wetenschap. De Schilderijen van Raden Saleh" in *Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 27 August 1931, p.17, and "De Schilderijen van Raden Saleh" in *Soerabaijasch handelsblad*, 5 August 1931, p.5. In connection with Kalff's assumption, I have traced them by contacting the municipality of Edam-Volendam and the conservator of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Both declared they didn't keep the painting.



FIGURE 2.10. Raden Saleh, *Een strijd op leven en dood*, (1848) painting's reproduction in H. Colijn, *Neerlands Indie, Land en Volk, Geschiedenis en Bestuur, Bedrijf en Samenleving*, (Amsterdam: Uitgevers-Maatschappij-"Elsevier", 1913).

Repro by Aminudin TH Siregar

During my research for this chapter, curiously, because I always found black and white reproductions, I finally found a color reproduction of the painting *Op Leven en Dood* in H. Colijn's book entitled *Neerlands Indie, Land en Volk, Geschiedenis en Bestuur, Bedrijf en Samenleving*, published in 1913. This finding is essential in the study of Raden Saleh for the reasons above, considering that the original painting was destroyed by fire at the 1931 Paris Colonial Exhibition (Fig. 2.10).

At first glance, *Op Leven en Dood* depicts an ongoing battle in the desert between a bleeding "African buffalo" - I think it is not an "Indonesian buffalo" - and a pair of lions. The buffalo's eyes glare as it thrusts one of its horns into the body of a roaring lioness sprawled out with its body leaping. The other lion charges. The fangs and nails dig into the shoulders of the buffalo to maintain the speed. Raden Saleh painted the blood from the buffalo's ribs as pouring profusely. The deadly combat took place in balance, and both were equally strong - even though the buffalo seemed to be grunting toward death. The three animals dominate the entire canvas and create a narrow space. With this perspective, Raden Saleh wanted to express the colossal effect of the fight frontally attacking the viewers.

Using black and white reproductions in his research papers, art scholar Abdul Djalil Pirous interpreted the painting as having a nationalist motif through the images of "lions" and "buffalo." Pirous claimed that these

animals represented the struggle of the Indonesian people. Consequently, the painting could not be considered a typical and ordinary reflection of European romantic themes because Raden Saleh, as an Eastern painter, indeed conducts his symbolic values when creating works of art. Pirous argued that the bull in the painting is *Banteng Ketaton* (a wounded wild buffalo), which has long been a symbol of manhood in the Indonesian wayang.⁷²

Similar to Pirous, the author of *Raden Saleh (1807-1880): Pioneer of Painting in Indonesia*, Baharuddin Marasutan, proposes almost the same interpretation concerning the painting by saying:

“Saleh captured the climax of the fight between life and death with colors that matched the extraordinary tension. The tendency to judge this picture from a symbolic political standpoint is that the lion (the colonizing Dutch emblem) and the bison (the colonized) here are acceptable. However, no more important than the full artistic appraisal of the work. Whatever, we have only one opinion, namely [about] the creative ability; if it cannot be said to surpassing the capacity of Western painters, it is [in any case] equal to it.”⁷³

Marasutan believed that the painting marks the flames of the French Revolution that Raden Saleh reportedly experienced. He restated that the image represents "the symbols of the great acts between the colonizing party and the colonized."⁷⁴

Pirous and Marasutan's interpretation is that the painting contains Raden Saleh's anti-colonial expression, symbolizes lions representing the West, and the buffalo is Indonesian, which requires more exploration. Indeed,

⁷² A. D. Pirous, 1964, p.24-25.

⁷³ See Baharudin's commentary in Sudarmadji, (1974), p. 8. "Saleh di sini berhasil mengabadikan klimaks dari pertarungan antara hidup dan mati dengan warna yang sesuai dengan ketegangan luar biasa. Kecenderungan untuk menilai lukisan ini dari sudut politis simbolis ialah karena singa (lambang Belanda yang menjajah) dan bison (yang dijajah) disini sebenarnya dapat diterima. Tetapi, tidak lebih penting dari penilaian mutlak artistik karya tersebut. Bagaimanapun sifat cerita yang terjalin dalam lukisan ini, namun hanya satu saja pendapat kita, ialah kesanggupan daya cipta seorang Indonesia di kala itu: kalau tidak dapat dikatakan melebihi, sejajar dengan kesanggupan pelukis Barat." I have not found evidence of whether Marasutan ever saw the *Op Leven en Dood painting* in color reproduction, so he mentioned "colors that matched the extraordinary tension" in his assessment.

⁷⁴ Baharuddin Marasutan, "Revolusi Februari di Paris: Menginspirasi Raden Saleh?" in *Sinar Harapan*, March 29, 1975.



FIGURE 2. 11.
Raden Saleh, *Wild Bull Hunt*, 1855.
(Sources: <https://www.gazette-drouot.com/en/article/raden-saleh-3A-a-francophile-indonesian/4897>)

Raden Saleh was familiar with the images of the lion and the buffalo, having spent decades in Europe. Furthermore, he had seen and studied European romantic paintings depicting hunting in the wild African nature – primarily through visiting painter Horace Vernet's studio in Paris. In addition, the specific "Banteng Ketaton," as Pirous interpreted it, referred to the proverb "like Banteng Ketaton," which means a bull (or buffalo) that is injured and then goes on a rampage, fighting to defend itself.

Pirous interpreted the bull in the *Op Leven en Dood* painting into a particular meaning to emphasize the symbol of Indonesia's struggle against colonialism. Nonetheless, applying a nationalistic bias to art interpretation can be a risky endeavor. While viewing artworks through one's cultural lens is natural, it is critical to approach paintings with an open mind and avoid imposing preconceived notions based on nationality. The meaning of the bull in Raden Saleh's paintings could be more stable. He not only painted bulls in that painting but also in various situations in his hunting-themed paintings. He once painted two scenes of buffalo hunting in the savanna in which Javanese hunters surrounded a drooping buffalo (Fig.2.11). Thus, if the term "buffalo" here also refers to "Banteng Ketaton," which translates as "Indonesian people," doesn't this imply that Raden Saleh is describing "Indonesian people" hunting "Indonesian people"?

Despite this, lions have been symbols in Asia, Africa, and Europe for centuries. They are referred to as the "king of the jungle" or "king of animals." This animal symbolizes strength, bravery, and nobility, so it frequently appears in national symbols, particularly those of royalty. This

ancient symbol represents strength, bravery, and majesty in Arabic literature, as it does in the literature of other languages.⁷⁵ The "conquering lion" concept dates back to ancient Mesopotamia and Iran, and has acquired numerous meanings over the centuries. The lion fights with a large animal, typically a buffalo but sometimes a stag or a deer of the lion's size, to create the illusion of a battle between two equal powers, symbolizing the summer-winter cycle. In Byzantine art, the motif is slightly modified to depict a lion attacking a large horse.⁷⁶

The lion is a universal symbol across cultures and civilizations, known for its majestic presence and assertive demeanor. From ancient times to today, this magnificent creature has captured the imagination of humanity and held a significant place in art, literature, mythology, and religion. In European painting, the lion has been a recurring motif throughout history, representing various meanings and interpretations. Painters like Eugene Delacroix, admired by Raden Saleh, used lions to illustrate exoticism and adventure in their paintings.

The depiction of lions engaged in hunting or resting emerged as a widely embraced theme among Romantic painters, who endeavored to encapsulate the untamed splendor of the natural world. Hence, it is worth contemplating whether it is more logical to regard *Op Leven en Dood* broadly as Raden Saleh's portrayal of the existential challenges' individuals encounter universally rather than exclusively about the Indonesian people. Ultimately, an intriguing perspective to transcend the nationalist paradigm comes from the Jakarta Museum and History Service:

"Our tendency to judge this painting from a political-symbolic point of view as a rise in conflict between the colonizers (the lions) and the colonized (the bison) is acceptable. However, another aspect that is not less important is the judgment based on the artistic quality of the work that relates to how the stories intertwined in the painting. In turn, the picture represents the creative abilities of Indonesians at the time that exceed or at least equal the artistic qualities of Western painters."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Lion-Gazelle Mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar", *Muqarnas*, 1997, Vol. 14 (1997), p.15.

⁷⁶ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, 1997, p.13.

⁷⁷ Dinas Museum dan Sejarah, *Raden Saleh: Pelukis Terkenal yang Dilupakan*, (Jakarta: Pemerintah DKI-Jakarta Dinas Museum dan Sejarah, 1979), p.19.



FIGURE 2.12.
Raden Saleh, *a historisches Tableau, die Gefangennahmen des Javanischen Hauptling Diepo Negoro*, 1857.

Collection of Presidential Palace - Jakarta



FIGURE 2.13.
On 15 August 1977, the painting "The Arrest of Prince Diponegoro" by Raden Saleh was handed over from *Stichting Historische Verzamelingen van het Huis van Oranje Nassau*, to the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr. Sutopo Yuwono, at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in The Hague.

Collection of Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
Repro by Aminudin TH Siregar

Below, I will discuss the next painting, *Ein Historisches Tableau, die Gefangennahme des Javanischen Hauptling Diepo Negoro*/A Historical Tableau, the Capture of the Javanese Chief Diepo Negoro painted in 1857 (Fig.2.12), abbreviated below as *Gefangennahme Diepo Negoro*. This is the third painting that returned to Indonesia in 1978 after *Fighting with Lions* (1870) and *Bulls Hunting in Java* (1851), which had been gifted to Soeharto by Queen Juliana in 1970 – as mentioned in Chapter 1. The return of *Gefangennahme Diepo Negoro*'s paintings to Indonesia in 1978 was inseparable from the role of the former Indonesian cultural attaché to the Netherlands, Koesnadi Hardjasoemantri. The story began when Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs Adam Malik sent a letter to Soetopo Joewono, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia. The Minister wants the historic painting, which belonged to the House of Orange Nassau, to return to his homeland. Coincidentally, Hardjasoemantri is a friend of Robert Hotke, director general of cultural affairs at the Ministry of Culture, Recreation, and Social Work of the Netherlands. Hotke helped to realize the repatriation of the painting (Fig.2.13).⁷⁸

The absence of archives telling us about the creation of this painting poses a challenge in ascertaining the intended message of Raden Saleh. The picture, nonetheless, has elicited a deliberate interpretation to assess Raden Saleh's level of patriotism. In 1953, the *Gefangennahme Diepo Negoro*, which was located in the Netherlands at the time, was officially inducted by the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia, Muhamad Yamin, as a testament to Raden Saleh's nationalistic sentiments towards the country.⁷⁹ Ultimately, the painting, which had long been regarded as a myth, made its inaugural public appearance before the Indonesian populace in May 1978, when it was showcased at the National Museum in Jakarta.⁸⁰ Historian M.C. Ricklefs believed that *Gefangennahme Diepo Negoro*'s painting is “the first history-themed painting in the world” that represents the final scene of the so-called Java War (1825-1830). The bloody conflict claimed the lives of 8,000 European soldiers, 7,000 natives, and 200,000 Javanese.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Koesnadi Hardjasoemantri, “An Observation of Raden Saleh’s View” in *Raden Saleh Bulletin*, No.1 / 1996, (Bandung-Berlin: Peter Sternagel and Machmud Buchari, 1996), pp.38-39.

⁷⁹ “Raden Saleh, kunstenaar, nationalist en idealist, geëerd door nageslacht” in *De nieuwsgier*, 10 September 1953, p.3.

⁸⁰ See “Setelah 150 Tahun Lebih Sang Putri Kembali” in *Tempo*, 6 May 1978, pp.46-47.

⁸¹ M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia: C. 1300 to the Present*, (Stanford (Ca.): Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 116-117. Ricklefs does not seem to consider Nicolaas Pieneman's painting as the first one depicting the Java War's climax.



FIGURE 2.14.
Nicolaas Pieneman, *The Submission of Prince Diponegoro to General De Kock*, ca.1830-1835.
Collection of Rijksmuseum – Amsterdam

Raden Saleh attempted to decipher the war drama depicted in this painting by directing his attention away from the tangible elements of the conflict and instead focusing on the decisive moment that ended the struggle. The decision to select this aspect may be deemed less heroic, given the vast magnitude of the war and the substantial amount of time it would entail. Raden Saleh may have intended to respond to Nicolaas Pieneman's painting, which depicted the arrest of Diponegoro many years before. Nevertheless, there is a lack of compelling historical evidence to elucidate this motive.

Could Raden Saleh, for example, have produced a superb painting depicting the intense conflict? Undoubtedly, he possesses the capability to accomplish that. However, he needed to carry out research to achieve this objective, considering that he had no personal experience of the war that had long passed. In his review of the Java War, historian Peter Carey revealed that Raden Saleh prepared a proposal to return to Europe a year after returning to Java to make sketches for the painting surrounding Diponegoro's capture. Then, in 1857, he submitted his proposal and promised to present the picture to King Willem III of the Netherlands, but the authorities rejected Raden Saleh's proposal. As a result, Raden Saleh allegedly created the *Gefangennahme Diepo Negoro* in his Batavia studio.⁸²

⁸² Peter Carey, 2001, p.153. I have not found strong evidence to explain why Raden Saleh went to Europe to make sketches. It is also uncertain whether the plan to go to Europe was related to his intention to study Pieneman's paintings.

As mentioned earlier, in *Gefangennahme Diepo Negoro*, Raden Saleh painted his version of the drama even though still in correspondence with Nicolaas Pieneman's painting, *De onderwerping van Diepo Negoro aan luitenant-generaal baron de Kock/The Submission of Diponegoro to Lieutenant General Baron de Kock*, c. 1830-1835 (Fig.2.14) - currently on display at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, it was a commissioned painting. The painting was in the collection of Baron F.L.W. de Kock in The Hague and was gifted to the Rijksmuseum in 1907. Soon after the Java War ended, Lieutenant General Baron de Kock asked Pieneman to compose the triumph of the Dutch in the war. Meanwhile, many years after Pieneman, Raden Saleh created his version in 1857 after he arrived in Java. When Raden Saleh finished the painting, he sent it to King Willem III in the Netherlands as a present. Some questions are difficult to answer here regarding when, where, and how Raden Saleh saw Pieneman's painting, to trigger him to allegorize or parody it.⁸³

If the two paintings of Raden Saleh and Pieneman are compared, as Kraus and Carey did, quite a lot of differences can be seen immediately. In the Raden Saleh version, the drama depicts the arrest of Diponegoro more critically and appears utterly opposite to the earlier version of this theme by Pieneman. Raden Saleh flipped the perspective, altered De Kock's anatomy, and portrayed Diponegoro as angry. Moreover, Raden Saleh removed the Dutch flag that flies colonially on the roof of the building in Pieneman's version. Concerning the mood, the morning's bright, orderly, and controlled atmosphere in Pieneman's painting has now turned sad, confused, and tense. In short, Raden Saleh wished to invert all impressions and perceptions derived from Pieneman's version - if indeed he saw that painting.⁸⁴ Moreover, in contrast to Pieneman, who emphasizes the attribute of "submission" or "surrender," Raden Saleh gives his painting a bold and political title with the word "capture" - as commonly interpreted among scholars.

Peter Carey argues that Raden Saleh presented *Gefangennahme Diepo Negoro* to King Willem III as a token of gratitude for his education and

⁸³ According to Werner Kraus, Raden Saleh had probably seen Nicolaas Pieneman's pictures in the Netherlands and had even known him. See Werner Kraus, "Raden Saleh's Interpretation of the Arrest of Diponegoro" in *Archipel*, No. 69, 2005, p. 282 and 285. Peter Carey also conveyed the same on this issue. See Peter B. R. Carey, "Raden Saleh, Dipanagara and the Painting of the Capture of Dipanagara at Magëlang (28 March 1830)" in *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1982, Vol. 55, No.1 (242) (1982), p.1. However, I think, these opinions are still speculative.

⁸⁴ Kraus is quite certain that Raden Saleh did, mainly, it seems, on the basis of an earlier drawing that is even more in line with the painting of Pieneman.

training as an artist for 23 years in Europe.⁸⁵ Harsja Bachtiar interpreted the gift as a sign of Raden Saleh's unpatriotic attitude. Bachtiar wrote: "The death of Diponegoro inspired Raden Saleh, the man who had seen many historical scene paintings while in Europe, to paint *Ein Historisches Tableau, die Gefangennahmen des Javanischen Hauptling Diepo Negoro*, painted specifically for the King of the Netherlands, a unnationalistic attitude, but in essence in accordance with an artist's relationship with the patrician who is his patron, the relationship between a palace man and his king."⁸⁶ However, John Clark has a different opinion. According to him, Raden Saleh's anti-colonial expression is contained in this painting and received its context when he gave it to King Willem III. By providing the painting, Clark argued, Raden Saleh conveyed a message: "You did this to us, but we are still us."⁸⁷

There are a few indications that point to Raden Saleh's anti-colonial attitude before making this painting. While still in Europe, Raden Saleh was blamed for the sensational accusation that appeared in a French newspaper in January 1848 while Raden Saleh was in Paris. It revealed a complaint about the bad treatment of Diponegoro by the Dutch government after the Java War. According to Carey, after Diponegoro was arrested, exiled to a small prison, tortured, and denied access to his family, Raden Saleh stepped in to defend and sympathize with the Javanese prince. In January 1848, a report in the French press revealed a complaint about Diponegoro's inhumane treatment in exile by Dutch officials. According to the information presented to the king by Dutch Colonial Minister J. C. Baud (1840-1848), Diponegoro was imprisoned in a small room within a fortress in Maluku.⁸⁸

Baud was enraged and flatly denied the French press report.⁸⁹ He immediately wrote to the Dutch King, who informed him that Diponegoro had been placed in a massive fortress, Rotterdam Fort in Makassar, with his family rather than in Maluku. Diponegoro was also provided with the needs of everyday life. Baud directed that the Dutch ambassador in Paris sue the press. Carey is convinced that the "fake news" spread by the French press in

⁸⁵ Peter Carey, *The Origins of Java War: Sepoy Rebellion and Raden Saleh Painting* (Yogyakarta: Publisher LKiS, 2001), p. 149-150.

⁸⁶ Harsja W. Bachtiar, "Raden Saleh: Aristocrat, Painter and Scientist" in A. Day and A. Lopian (ed.), *Papers of the Dutch-Indonesian Historical Conference*, p. 48. See also Harsja Bachtiar, "Raden Saleh: Aristocrat, Painter, and Scientist" in *Indonesian Journal of Cultural Studies*, No.3, Volume VI, August 1976, p. 45.

⁸⁷ John Clark, *Modern Asian Art*, (Sydney: Craftsman House, 1998), p. 241.

⁸⁸ Peter Carey, 2001, p.150.

⁸⁹ Minister J. C. Baud once wrote in 1838: "This child (Raden Saleh) can make a mess when holding office in the colonial bureaucracy." See Kraus, 2005, p.14.

1848 had come from a specific source, someone who was aware of Diponegoro's whereabouts after his arrest. Carey is suspicious that Raden Saleh spread the fake news because "only a candidate, Raden Saleh himself, has raised the possibility of doing so."⁹⁰

Baharudin Marasutan adds to the ranks of those who believe that the painting about the climax of the Java War, which changed the colony's political landscape, clearly reflects Raden Saleh's anti-colonial attitude. It is important to note that the Dutch government did not commission the historical painting; rather, it prevented Raden Saleh from visiting Yogyakarta in 1852 to make study sketches.⁹¹ Baharuddin confirmed:

"The association of the title, through the word "arrest," truly suppresses our feelings as Indonesian. In essence, Raden Saleh does not perpetuate the Dutch 'victory,' nor the Indonesian nation's total surrender at the time. Raden Saleh, on the other hand, has psychologically imposed the event in the composition of a scene that departs from the mind of a national painter who can no longer be questioned. Raden Saleh has succeeded in recreating the dramatic atmosphere through reasonable attitudes and friendliness emanating from the emotion of Prince Diponegoro's loyal followers, in stark contrast to their leader, who in no way shows an inferior but superior attitude challenging Dutch pride - the Dutch who had tricked him through deceitful duplicity. Raden Saleh portrayed the Dutch as dolls in terms of expression and anatomy."⁹²

⁹⁰ Peter Carey, 2001, p.152. Carey's suspicion underlies the assumption that since 1845 Saleh has been pacing between Dresden and Paris.

⁹¹ Baharuddin Marasutan "Mencari Identitas Raden Saleh" in *Sinar Harapan*, 24 April 1976. See also J. De Loos-Haaxman, 1967, p. 66.

⁹² Baharudin, 1976. "Asosiasi yang ditimbulkan oleh judul itu, melalui kata 'penangkapan', sungguh menekan perasaan kita sebagai bangsa Indonesia. Pada hakikatnya Raden Saleh (di lukisan itu) tidak mengabadikan 'kemenangan' Belanda, juga tidak penyerahan total dari bangsa Indonesia dimasa itu. Akan tetapi, Raden Saleh secara psikologis telah menegaskan peristiwa (pengkapan itu) itu dalam komposisi sebuah adegan yang benar-benar bertolak dari batin seorang pelukis Nasional yang tidak usah disangsikan lagi. Dalam karya itu, Raden Saleh telah berhasil menciptakan kembali usasana dramatis itu melalui sikap dan kemasugulan yang wajar, memancar dari rasa keterharuan para pengikut setia Pangeran Diponegoro, yang sangat kontras dengan sikap pemimpin mereka, yang sama sekali tidak menunjukkan sikap yang inferior, tetapi superior memantang keangkuhan Belanda-Belanda, yang telah menjebaknya melalui tipu daya yang licik. Hal itu dilukiskan Raden Saleh bagaikan boneka-boneka, baik dalam ekspresi maupun dalam anatominya."

The word "arrest" in the title, according to Baharudin, indicates that the painting was not a Dutch glorification of the Java War. Instead, the image represents the psychological environment that rages around Raden Saleh, manifesting his "sympathy, loyalty, and patriotic attitude" toward Diponegoro.⁹³

I Ketut Winata added some detail to this discussion. He speculated that Raden Saleh may have depicted Diponegoro's turban in red and white colors, although only slightly visible and more dominated by green, to represent the Javanese struggle against colonialism. Raden Saleh, Winata suspected, had known the sacred meaning of the two colors since the Hindu and Islamic eras in the archipelago. Winata posits that Raden Saleh was aware of the utilization of red-and-white hues by the troops of Prince Diponegoro during the Java War. To understand the meaning behind the red-white color on this turban, Winata referred to the research conducted by historian and politician Muhammad Yamin. In his famous book *6000 Tahun Sang Merah Putih*, Yamin asserted that the red-white Indonesian flag has a historical background dating back 6,000 years.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, due to the lack of compelling historical evidence presented by Yamin, the assertion that red and white served as national symbols in the archipelago for 6,000 years becomes highly ambiguous.

It is necessary to consider the possibility of anachronism in Winata's interpretation, given that red and white had not yet become a color combination that symbolized Indonesia as a nation and state during the Java War. Aside from that, Winata left his interpretation of the green color on the turban - which reminds the turban colors from Muslim countries in Africa, South Asia, or Turkey in the 19th-century orientalist painting. This green color cannot be ignored, considering that it appears dominant on Diponegoro's head rather than the red and white, which only appears slightly on the back. Also, if I look closely, the color of Diponegoro's turban in Raden Saleh's painting is no different from Pieneman's. Therefore, Raden Saleh kept the color of the turban the same, as if he did not want to create a new meaning.

Werner Kraus's interpretation focuses on the heads of Dutch officers enlarged by Raden Saleh as slightly out of proportion. For Kraus, "this 'error' is not an error but a message: the heads of the Dutch officers are the heads of

⁹³ Drs. Koesnadi Hardjosoemantri, 1996, p.40.

⁹⁴ I Ketut Winata, 2007, p.112. See Muhammad Yamin, *6000 Tahun Sang Merah Putih*, (Jakarta: Siguntang, 1954), p.157.

raksasas, of monsters." Therefore, Kraus continues, "The painting has two levels, two meanings: an upfront meaning for the Dutch viewer and a second clandestine meaning for a Javanese public. For Dutch eyes, De Kock is painted as a polite and almost fatherly officer. For Javanese eyes, De Kock is a female *raksasa*, a monster with a monstrous head. Since the Dutch could not comprehend the hidden meaning, the big heads revealed to them the artists' incompetence." According to Kraus, historian H.J. de Graaf fell into this trap by saying the painting lost its beauty because of the overwhelming depiction of the Dutch heads.⁹⁵

It is evident that, unlike Nicholaas Pieneman's rigid and formal paintings, Saleh's paintings feature a thrilling psychological atmosphere when Prince Diponegoro is asked to enter the horse-drawn carriage. Raden Saleh has romanticized the event by incorporating a tragic drama. But, which version, Raden Saleh's or Nicolaas Pieneman's, is historically correct? De Graaf believed that the Raden Saleh version was mistaken in describing the location of the arrest. Prince Diponegoro was apprehended in the room, not on the terrace of the building.⁹⁶ Peter Carey supports the historical inaccuracy. He proposes that Raden Saleh fails to successfully capture and illustrate Diponegoro's attitude of resignation and calmness. Saleh's version depicts Diponegoro's head as challenging the commander who arrested him, Hendrik Merkus de Kock. Inaccuracy also can be seen in that Raden Saleh presents himself through two figures.⁹⁷

The sole historical painting executed by Raden Saleh, the depiction of the significant conflict between the Dutch and Javanese that transpired in the 19th century, continues to be shrouded in enigma. The question of challenging his patriotism remains subject to varying interpretations. I think Saleh has effectively conveyed his opposition by reversing Pieneman's version's painting format - if when and where he saw Pieneman's painting can be ascertained. Apart from that, as Kraus has suggested, it is likely that Raden Saleh adapted the composition of the painting *Abdication of Charles V* from the Belgian painter Louis Gallait. Kraus, in his study on *Die Gefangennahme Diepo Negoro*, believes that Raden Saleh saw the painting in Dresden. Kraus then linked it to nationalism by saying, "The abdication of Charles V was the turning point of Dutch/Belgian history. Shortly after

⁹⁵ Werner Kraus, 2005, p.285. See H.J. De Graaf, "Raden Saleh's leertijd in Holland" in *Moesson*, 22, 1 (1978), p.15.

⁹⁶ H.J. De Graaf, 1978, p.15. See also Werner Kraus, 2005, p.285.

⁹⁷ Peter Carey, 2001, p.148.

Phillip II ascended the throne, the Dutch revolt against Spanish rule began. It was the beginning of the end of foreign law."⁹⁸ Thus, Kraus wants to emphasize that the Gallait painting aroused the national and revolutionary spirit in Raden Saleh.

Moreover, assuming Carey's assertion suggests that Raden Saleh's rendition of the image lacks historical accuracy compared to Pieneman's, it would bolster the notion that Raden Saleh conveyed a "patriotic message." Raden Saleh's artistic endeavors can be interpreted as a form of resistance against the prevailing narrative, as he employs deconstruction techniques to challenge the established structures and shed light on the perceived injustice surrounding the arrest of the esteemed Javanese Prince.

Many important issues are overlooked whenever Raden Saleh is discussed since the discussion is always focused on the issue of the painter's patriotism. As has been discussed, this issue of patriotism is critical because it impacts its pioneering position in modern Indonesian art history. It is pretty impossible to guess Raden Saleh's patriotism through his minimal paintings and letters - as several scholars have done. I want to contribute to the discussion of Raden Saleh by looking at the figure of the painter who once lived between two realms, West and East, which he did not want to oppose but instead wanted to unite in harmony. Whether this harmony is successful or not, since there are no accurate parameters to measure its success, perhaps it is crucial to consider Raden Saleh's identity outside of a nationalist framework. It is not impossible; he was a painter who always sought experience and challenges, a 19th-century painter who wanted to break through and open new perspectives by encouraging himself to embrace universal themes such as historical painting and engage with various artistic influences such as Romanticism, Realism, etc., blurring reinforced boundaries by his nationalism.

As an artist, it was natural that Raden Saleh saw an opportunity to create historical paintings by using the famous Java War as his background. He certainly understands the opportunity to contribute to the art world constellation through historical paintings that originate from contexts he knows intimately. Even though it had been over for more than 25 years, The Java War is an important theme and deserves to be expressed through painting. Raden Saleh may want to provide his perspective there, and it is clear that courage is needed, considering that war is a sensitive issue. But he

⁹⁸ Werner Kraus, 2005, p.292.

did this, which shows an attitude that does not necessarily have to be confined within the framework of nationalism. Courage is related to his desire to establish himself as an autonomous artist by expressing his freedom to create concepts, aspirations, and perspectives. His artistic approach, characterized by depicting people in specific scenes, allows him to explore the breadth and depth of human emotion, further enriching his paintings with meaning.

The painting *Die Gefängennahme Diepo Negoro* reflects Raden Saleh's attitude of freeing art from all forms of restraints or limitations, advocating a creative process not limited by rules or regulations. Therefore, in discussing Raden Saleh, we must look beyond his nationalism to reach a broader interpretation.

The Missing Chapter

Upon Raden Saleh's demise, concerns arose among the populace regarding the absence of a suitable successor to fill his void. The sudden death of the painter in Buitenzorg, Dutch East Indies, in 1880, was documented by the daily newspaper *Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's Gravenhage* in The Hague. There are allegations that the housekeeper may have administered poison to the maestro. The physician arrived and conducted a thorough examination, yet no evidence of poisoning was detected. However, the maestro was pronounced deceased due to a ruptured blood vessel. What is interesting about the news of Raden Saleh's death is the pessimistic expression of the newspaper editor with a prediction, "*Met hem sterft de Indische schilderkunst* ('Indonesian' painting dies with him)."⁹⁹ This prediction seems to have been widely accepted by numerous historians in subsequent centuries.

The period between 1880 and the 1930s, or the "post-Raden Saleh period," has been widely recognized by art historians as the "empty period." This period refers to the time between the passing of Raden Saleh and the rise of the subsequent Indonesian painters in the 1930s. For example, Kusnadi declared: "The chain of successors to modern Western painting since Raden Saleh's death in 1880 has discontinued and was only continued decades later through Raden Mas Pirngadie, Wakidi and Abdullah Suriosubroto."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ "Nederlandsch Oost-Indië" in *Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's Gravenhage*, 2 June 1880, p.5.

¹⁰⁰ See Kusnadi, et al., *Sejarah Seni Rupa Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1979), p.148. See also Sudarmadji, *Dari Saleh Sampai Aming: Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru dalam Sejarah*

Like Kusnadi, Claire Holt suggested the same expression by saying that Indonesian art took more than fifty years after Raden Saleh's death for the next generation to emerge: "Raden Saleh died without having initiated a new school of Indonesian painting. Nonetheless, no Indonesian writings fail to mention him as the solitary precursor of those now regarded as the "fathers" of the present modern art movement, and more than half a century elapsed after Raden Saleh's death before such a movement got underway." Holt also mentioned the rise of the famous trio, namely Abdullah Suriosubroto (1879-1941), Raden Mas Pirngadie (1875-1936), and Wakidi (1889-1979), fifty years after Raden Saleh.¹⁰¹

This assertion was supported by M. Agus Burhan and Agus Dermawan T. Burhan, among others, who found in their research that "when Raden Saleh returned to Java and died in 1880, there was a lengthy absence of native painters."¹⁰² In the meantime, Dermawan declares dramatically that after Raden Saleh, "Indonesian painting entered a period of darkness and emptiness."¹⁰³ Conversely, Dutch historians Ruud Spruit and J. de Loos-Haaxman endeavored to fill the historical void by centering on European or Dutch artists.¹⁰⁴ Is it true that no one could mention any Indonesian artists between 1880 and 1930?

Raden Saleh's Pupils

When Agus Dermawan T. stated that after Raden Saleh, "Indonesian painting entered a period of darkness and emptiness," Sanento Yuliman appeared to refute this viewpoint. In his writing, Yuliman suggests Raden Mangkoe Mihardjo (Miardjo) and Raden Soma (Somo) as candidates for Raden Saleh's throne. They were both considered to be "Raden Saleh's

dan Apresiasi, (Yogyakarta: STSRI-ASRI, 1974-1975), p.8.

¹⁰¹ Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 192-193.

¹⁰² M. Agus Burhan, *Perkembangan Seni Lukis Mooi Indie sampai Persagi di Batavia 1900-1942*, (Jakarta: Galeri Nasional Jakarta, 2014), p.2.

¹⁰³ Sanento Yuliman, "70 Tahun Seni Lukis Indonesia di Mon Décor" in *Kompas*, 16 April 1989, p.10.

¹⁰⁴ See J. de Loos-Haaxman, *Verlaat Rapport Indie*, (Den Haag: Mouton & Co, 1968); Marie Oddet Scalliet, et al., *Pictures from the Tropics: Paintings by western Artists during the Dutch Colonial Period in Indonesia*, (Amsterdam: Pictures Publishers, Wijk en Alburg, 1999); Ruud Spruit, *Artists on Bali*, (Amsterdam: Pepin Press, 1996); Ruud Spruit, *Indonesische impressies. Oosterse thema's in de westerse schilderkunst. Indonesian impressions. Oriental themes in western painting*, (Wijk en Aalburg: Picture Publishers, 1992); then Jeanne Terwen-De Loos, *Nederlandse schilders en tekenaars in de Oost. 17de-20ste eeuw*, catalogue, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, 1972.

students."¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, Yuliman did not provide a comprehensive account of their personal experiences or the creative output they had generated. Undoubtedly, the scarcity of information regarding Mihardjo and Soma has likely resulted in their relative obscurity within the historiography of modern Indonesian art.

Yuliman was not the sole believer in the existence of Raden Saleh's students—historians such as S. Kalff, Victor Ido van der Wall, Herman F. C. Ten Kate and Werner Kraus examine the ongoing nature of history following the passing of Raden Saleh. According to Kraus, Raden Saleh adopted another individual named Raden Salikin, who was considered his "student" in addition to Mihardjo and Soma. Raden Salikin was the nephew of Raden Saleh. The two had such a close relationship that Salikin was suspected of being involved in the Bekasi riots (*De Bekassische onlusten*).¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, as elucidated in this chapter, Salikin replicated artifacts, including manuscripts that Raden Saleh acquired from the local inhabitants. Regrettably, additional information regarding Salikin is required, similar to the case of Mihardjo and Soma. Why are these "disciples" so unknown that information about them is limited? S. Kalff hypothesizes that the lack of popularity among Raden Saleh's students could be attributed to the subpar quality of their artwork. Conversely, Van Der Wall maintains a perspective contrasting Kalff's.¹⁰⁷

Van der Wall's writings and activities offer limited insight into Mihardjo and his work, without fully disclosing the entire story. He curated an exhibition in 1942 featuring prints, watercolors, and sketches by West European and Dutch East Indies painters who had been active since the nineteenth century. He exhibited three landscape paintings by Mihardjo in the *Oost en West op z'n Best* exhibition.¹⁰⁸ In his article *Oost en West*, published in *Onze XIX de Eeuwse Teekenkunst*, he asserted that Mihardjo was Raden

¹⁰⁵ Sanento Yuliman, 1989, p.10. See also Sanento Yuliman, *Genese de la Peinture Indonesienne Contemporaine: le Role de S. Sudjojono*, Thesis, Ecole Des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1981, pp.52-53.

¹⁰⁶ Werner Kraus, *Raden Saleh Kehidupan dan Karyanya*, (Jakarta: KPG, 2018), pp.189-190.

¹⁰⁷ S. Kalff, "Een Schilderijmuseum ook voor Indië " in *Vragen van den dag: maandschrift voor Nederland en koloniën*, jrg.41, vol. 8, 1926, p. 489. S. Kalff had questioned why Mihardjo and Soma's careers were less bright than their teacher's in an article published a year earlier (1925). It is also worth noting that this is the first time Mihardjo and Soma have been mentioned. See S. Kalff, "Inheemsche Schilderkunst op Java" in *Oedaya Geïllustreerd Tijdschrift*, No.21 February 1925, p.202.

¹⁰⁸ See Victor van der Wall, "Oost en West geteekend op z'n best – Tentoonstelling van prenten en schetsen uit de XIX eeuw", Koloniaal Museum Amsterdam, 16 Augustus – 16 October 1942, p.10. See also "Oost en West getekend" in *Het volk: dagblad voor de arbeiderspartij*, 14 August 1942, p.2.

Saleh's most exceptional pupil. Although Mihardjo did not have a formal academic education, he adeptly showcases his proficiency in drawing techniques and methods. Van Der Wall also provides a monochrome reproduction of Mangkoe Mihardjo's landscape painting to offer readers a comprehensive depiction.¹⁰⁹

In *Schilder - Teekenaars in Nederlandsch Oost - en West - Indie en hun Beteekenis voor de Land- en Volkenkunde* (Painter - Draftsman in Dutch East and West - Indies and their Significance for Land and Ethnology), Herman ten Kate verified the details regarding Mihardjo's works that depict trees and landscapes to serve educational objectives.¹¹⁰ This statement aligns with the newspaper report stating that Mihardjo was employed as a drawing instructor for secondary education.¹¹¹ Subsequently, I searched and successfully located three artworks by Mihardjo that corresponded to the descriptions provided by Ten Kate and Van Der Wall. The works have been incorporated into the collection of the Tropen Museum (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam). The paintings portray the anatomical structure of trees and their fruits in detail, skillfully rendered by Mihardjo with exceptional craftsmanship akin to that of his teacher (Fig. 2.15).

Additional information can be found in newspapers printed in Java, which contain concise accounts of Mihardjo and Soma's involvement in activities related to Raden Saleh. In 1889, the Java Bode newspaper suggested that the teacher's impact on his two students could have been more significant.¹¹² Similarly, Mihardjo and Soma possess expertise in depicting plants and animals through their drawing abilities, just like the teacher. One year later, a newspaper analyzed the subjects of Mihardjo's and Soma's artworks, which depict a peacock displaying its plumage, a slumbering tiger, and a leaping squirrel. In addition, Mihardjo and Soma were notified of their involvement in the International Colonial and Export Exhibition in 1883 in Amsterdam, where several of Raden Saleh's artworks were also showcased.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ V.I. van de Wall, "Oost- en West-Indië in Onze XIX de eeuwse teekenkunst" in H. Hoogenberk, *Cultureel Indië: Bloemlezing Uit de eerste zes jaargangen 1939-1945*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1948), pp.177 and 175 for the reproduction.

¹¹⁰ Herman F.C. ten Kate, "Schilder - Teekenaars in Nederlandsch oost - en West - Indie en hun Beteekenis voor de Land-en Volkenkunde" in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1 January 1913, Vol.67(4), p.475.

¹¹¹ See "Nederlandsch Indië" in *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 2 July 1889, p.1.

¹¹² "Eene bladzijde kunstkroniek" in *Java Bode*, 18 Januari 1889, p.1. "Raden Saleh had een paar leerlingen, raden Mihardjo en raden Soma, maar diep is zijn invloed niet gegaan."

¹¹³ "Schetsen uit Oost-Java", in *Java Bode*, 15 Juni 1892, p.5. See S. Kalff, 1926, p.489.



FIGURE 2.15. Raden Mangkoe Miharjo, *Fruits De Java*, watercolor on paper, before 1900.

Collection of Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen
Photo by Aminudin TH Siregar

A little information regarding Raden Soma and his works was written in Dutch newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad*. It provided a concise review of Soma's paintings, although it did not include any photo reproductions. The newspaper detailed Soma's adeptness in painting, capturing the ambiance of a tea plantation with an imposing residence on a mountainside. The artwork depicts a breathtaking farm landscape located in the Preanger region of West Java. Another image portrays a meticulously rendered scene of a factory room. *Algemeen Handelsblad* states that Soma's painting accurately depicts a machine used for making tea, milling coffee, and operating a sawmill. Soma was reputedly adept at showcasing the intricacies of the sculptures in the chamber.¹¹⁴

Raden Saleh's followers were not only Salikin, Miharjo, and Soma. Other painters like Raden Kusuma di Brata and Lie Kimhok also painted. I found only a few sources about Raden Kusuma. He participated in the 1883 colonial exhibition in Amsterdam with Miharjo and Soma.¹¹⁵ Kusuma's oil

¹¹⁴ "Nederlandsche Koloniën" in *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 23 January 1883, p.5.

¹¹⁵ "Bekrooningen van indische inzenders op de Amsterdamsche tentoonstelling, 1e afdeeling" in *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 29- October 1883, p.2.

painting, *Portrait of Bandung Patih Raden Wangsajoeda* (1888), adequately describes his technical skills in painting portraits, which are now stored in the collection of the Tropen Museum (Fig.2.16). Furthermore, several sources revealed that Raden Kusuma was once recorded as a drawing teacher at a teacher training school for natives (*kweekschool voor Inlandsche onderwijzers*) in Bandung.¹¹⁶

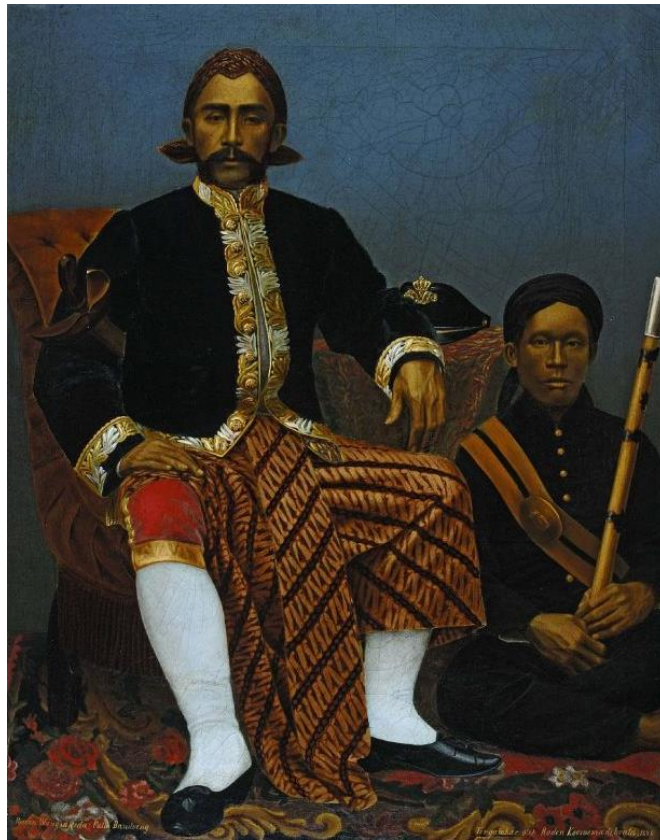


FIGURE 2.16. Raden Koesoema di Brata, *Raden Wangsajoeda Patih van Bandoeng in gala kleding*, oil on canvas, 1888.

Collection of Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen
(Sources: <https://collectie.wereldculturen.nl/?query=search=&TM=1846-1#/query/8b00edee-acb8-4f51-afd0-932c3bb1e7a2>)

¹¹⁶ "Personalialia" in *De Telegraaf*, 3 March 1897, p. 1., "Officiëel" in *De Preanger-bode*, 16 November 1905, p. 3, dan *Regeerings Almanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië 1890 - Twedee Gedeelte: Kalender en Personalialia*, Batavia, 1890, p.351. Sumber lain menyebutkan bahwa Raden Kusuma di Brata juga terdaftar sebagai guru di sebuah sekolah untuk pegawai negeri sipil (*Opleidingsschool voor Inlandsche Ambtenaren*) di Bandung. See *Gedenkboek M.O.S.V.I.A. 1879-1929 uitgegeven ter herdenking van het 50-jarig bestaan der middelbare Opleidingsschool voor Inlandsche Ambtenaren te Bandoeng*, 1929, p.44.

Lie Kimhok (1853-1912) was a talented painter, but he is better known as a pioneer of Chinese-Malay literature in the Dutch East Indies. People in Bogor know Kimhok because of his ability to paint, according to Tio le Soei, Kimhok's biographer. His paintings were attached to the walls of his house until, one day, they caught the attention of Raden Saleh, who lived in the same city at that time. When Raden Saleh saw two paintings of portraits of Chinese emperors and a still life with a golden banana comb on a plate, he recognized Lim Kimhok's talent. Raden Saleh was then eager to accept Lie Kimhok as a student. Furthermore, Saleh was willing to assist Kimhok in traveling to Europe to study painting. However, this plan failed. Kimhok's mother, Lie Han Tjouw, opposed the idea because she did not want to part with her eldest child.¹¹⁷

In light of the preceding explanation, it is pertinent to include some additional remarks. As information regarding the timing, location, and manner in which Raden Saleh imparted his teachings is lacking, I contend that labeling the individuals as "Raden Saleh's students," as some scholars have done, maybe somewhat inaccurate. Instead, I propose considering them as the cohort of painters succeeding Saleh, active during the 50 years between 1880 and 1930. Beyond Raden Saleh's circle, unidentified painters in the 19th century were engaged in artistic pursuits, drawing on wayang characteristics and narrative styles. Likewise, artists who veered away from the wayang motif in their art likely operated during the late 19th century. Thus, identifying these individuals presents a challenge in art historiography (Fig.2.17).

As a final point, I want to highlight the work of Balinese painter I Ketut Gedé—only a few pieces of information about him. However, several of his works, dating to the 1880s, can be found in the prestigious H.N. van der Tuuk collection at the Leiden University Library (Fig.2.18). Van der Tuuk had been a resident of North Bali since 1870. One of his main interests was amassing dictionaries, in pursuit of which he visited various locations in Bali and Lombok. He would give local artists commissions for new works whenever he came. The images Ketut Gedé created depicted commonplace Bali occurrences rooted in traditional tales. His paintings indicate that he had a vast knowledge of stories, was probably a puppeteer, and was literate since he added identifications of characters in Balinese to his images.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Tio le Soei, *Lie Kimhok - 1853-1912*, (Bandung: L.D. Good Luck, 1958), p.41.

¹¹⁸ Adrian Vickers, *Balinese Art – Paintings and Drawings of Bali 1800-2010*, (Tokyo-Vermont-Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2012), p.100.



FIGURE 2.17. Unknown painter, *Soenan Mas delights in the sight of the punishments and cruelties ordered by him*, 1703, Collection of Leiden University Libraries



FIGURE 2.18. *I Ketut Gedé, An Offering to Appease the Demons*, circa 19th Century.

Collection of Leiden University Library



FIGURE 2.19.
Two landscape paintings by the Kartini sisters with
Jepara carved frames were given to Queen
Wilhelmina in 1898.

(Sources: Rita Wassing-Visser, *Royal gifts from Indonesia: historical bonds with the House of Orange-Nassau (1600-1938)*, (Zwolle: Wanders, 1995), p.188.)

Repro by Aminudin TH Siregar

The Kartini Sisters and Their Brother

Art critic Enin Supriyanto provides an alternative viewpoint to address the absence resulting from Raden Saleh's demise. In contrast to Sanento Yuliman, who put forward Mihardjo and Soma, Supriyanto proposed Raden Ajeng Kartini in his article from 2007. Supriyanto, I believe, needs to be made aware of the roles of Mihardjo, Soma, Koesoema di Brata, and Lie Kimhok as Raden Saleh's successors. It seems that Supriyanto's observations specifically focus on the lack of "female artists" in post-Saleh art historiography. Consequently, Supriyanto maintains that Kartini's name merits

remembrance. Supriyanto suggested that Kartini be given the title "the Mother of Indonesian art" due to her efforts in promoting art in Java.¹¹⁹

Supriyanto reached this conclusion upon perusing *Panggil Aku Kartini Saja* (Just Call Me Kartini), a literary work authored by the renowned novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer. In that book, Ananta Toer asserts that Kartini was an artist. Ananta Toer explores the theme of Indonesian women's liberation from a unique and lesser-known viewpoint, that of a painter, by drawing upon Kartini's correspondence.¹²⁰ Kartini once depicted a pond adorned with flowers and graceful swans gliding through its waters. In 1898, Kartini and her two sisters, Rukmini and Kardinah, gifted Queen Wilhelmina two landscape paintings (Fig.2.19).¹²¹ It was not just Kartini who was interested in art. Rukmini, her younger sister, also expressed a liking for art. Her works are conveyed to have attracted the attention.¹²² She was enthusiastic about continuing her art education in the Netherlands.¹²³ Kartini also backed this aim by commenting, "Roekmini has a good intellect and is capable of learning how to draw; her ambition has always been to become a good artist. This employment required her to study in Europe, but she was unable to do so." Rukmini failed to go to the art academy. However, Sosrokartono, their brother, attended normal education in the Netherlands later on.¹²⁴

Sosrokartono was the first Indonesian student to arrive in the Netherlands. He enrolled at the Polytechnische School Delft on 19 September 1896. Due to his growing interest in language and culture, he subsequently transferred to Leiden University. His reputation soared in 1899 after delivering a lecture at the Dutch Language and Literature Congress in Gent, Belgium.¹²⁵ Unfortunately, I have not uncovered any evidence of

¹¹⁹ Enin Supriyanto, "The Mother of Indonesian Art?" in Carla Bianpoen, et al., *Indonesian Women Artists: The Curtain Opens*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Seni Rupa Indonesia, 2007), pp.15-20.

¹²⁰ For Kartini's letters F.G.P. Jacquet, *Kartini: Surat-surat kepada Ny.R.M. Abendanon-Mandri dan Suaminya*, (Jakarta Penerbit Djambatan, 1987).

¹²¹ Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Panggil Aku Kartini Saja*, (Jakarta: Lentera Dipantara, 2003), p.179 and 186. See the reproductions in Rita Wassing-Visser, *Royal gifts from Indonesia: historical bonds with the House of Orange-Nassau (1600-1938)*, (Zwolle: Wanders, 1995), p.188.

¹²² See M. Vierhout, *Raden Adjeng Kartini: 1879-1904 Een Javaansche over de nooden en behoeften van haar volk*, (Den Haag: N.V. Uitgevers-Maatschappij "Oceanus", 1944), p.30.

¹²³ The letter of Surat Rukmini dated 23 Juni 1902 in F.G.P. Jacquet, 1987, p. 284. See also Werner Kraus, 2018, p.192.

¹²⁴ Empat Saudara, *Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang: Boeah Pikiran Raden Adjeng Kartini*, (Weltevreden: Balai Poestaka, 1922), p. 147. See also Hurustiati Subandrio, *Tjerman Kehidupan: Kartini*, (Amsterdam-Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan, 1950), p.9.

¹²⁵ For an introduction of Sosrokartono in Europa, see H. Bouman, *RMP. Sosrokartono di Eropa*, 1989,

Sosrokartono's artistic involvement. Nonetheless, between 1915 and 1916, Sosrokartono posed for painter Isaac Israels, who painted this Javanese aristocrat several times.¹²⁶



FIGURE 2.20. Raden Ngabehi Sastrowisardjo in his studio.
(Sources: *Inter-Ocean-A Dutch Indian Magazine Covering Malaysia-Australasia*, Volume 7, Number 9, September 1926)
Repro by Aminudin TH Siregar

Others Filling the Void

Abdullah Soeriosoebroto, son of the national movement leading figure Wahidin Sudirohusodo, came to the Netherlands after Sosrokartono. There are not many references available regarding Abdullah. He studied at STOVIA (*School tot Opleiding van Indische Artsen*) in Weltevreden, Batavia, because his father wanted him to become a doctor. Instead of listening to lessons in the classroom, Abdullah often painted his teacher. His father then sent Abdullah to the Netherlands to attend art school.¹²⁷

unknown publisher. I found the copy in the Leiden University Library. For Sosrokartono's lecture in Belgium, see *Het Nederlandsch in Indie: Redevoering uitgesproken door Radhen Mas Pandji Sosro Kartono op het XXV Nederlandsch Taal en Letterkundig Congres*, Neerlandia, October 1899, pp.1-3.

¹²⁶ See Kartono's portrait in J.P. Glerum, *De Indische Israels*, (Zwolle: Uitgeverij Waanders b.v., 2005), p.63.

¹²⁷ See Soebaryo Mangunwidodo, *Dr. K.R.T. Radjiman Wediodiningrat: Perjalanan Seorang Putra Bangsa 1879-1952*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Dr.K.R.T. Radjiman Wediodiningrat, 1994), pp. 22-23.

In the historiography of modern Indonesian art, Abdullah's name was later "denigrated" as an exponent of the Mooi Indië painters. Helena Spanjaard stated that Abdullah continued his studies at the Hague Art Academy¹²⁸, although this information still needs to be proven. Without mentioning the exact name of the academy, another source stated that Abdullah had studied at an art academy in Amsterdam. Another source noted that Abdullah attended Leiden's "*voorbereidende teekenschool*" program. However, more in-depth information about the academy and program has not been found.

According to historian Harry A. Poeze, Abdullah arrived in the Netherlands in 1898 and lived with the Petit family - employees of the Leiden University Library. From here, Abdullah's story is connected with Abdul Rivai, a doctor and journalist who founded the magazine *Bendera Wolanda*. Together with Sosrokartono, Abdullah worked at the magazine as an illustrator. His works appeared in several numbers. However, this job as an illustrator lasted only a short time. After the eighth edition, his name was no longer listed in the magazine's editorial ranks. Abdullah left his job as an illustrator and possibly returned to his homeland, although evidence has yet to be found precisely for when this happened.¹²⁹ He was asked to return to his homeland at the insistence of his father, who was worried that Abdullah would lose his spirit of patriotism and customs. Abdullah is estimated to have lived in the Netherlands for approximately nine years.¹³⁰

The relationship between Sosrokartono and Mas Abdullah continues in Java through his son Basuki Abdullah, who is a talented artist. Once, before continuing his studies in the Netherlands in 1933, Basuki showed his painting to Sosrokartono, who praised it. Sosrokartono favored Basuki's decision to attend an arts academy in the Netherlands - the Catholic Mission then funded Basuki Abdullah's studies at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague.¹³¹

As previously stated, after Raden Saleh's death, Indonesian painters such as Mas Pirngadie, Abdullah Suriosubroto, and Wakidi emerged in the 1930s. However, it's essential to acknowledge that other names, often excluded from the standard narrative, may not be familiar to all. Raden

¹²⁸ Helena Spanjaard, 1998, p. 36.

¹²⁹ See Harry A. Poeze, *Di Negeri Penjahaj: Orang Indonesia di Negeri Belanda 1600-1950*, (Jakarta: KPG-KITLV-Universitas Leiden, 2014), pp.38-39.

¹³⁰ Taman Siswa, *Almanak Pergoeroean 1942*, (Jogjakarta: Perpoestakaan Taman-Siswa, 1941), pp.128-129.

¹³¹ Solichin Salam, *Biografi R. Basoeki Abdullah Sang Maestro*, (Jakarta: Keluarga Basoeki Abdullah, 1994), p.37.

Ngabehi Sastrowisardjo, Raden Bekel Atmo Sadewo, and Frederik Kasenda are among these lesser-known painters, and their stories are equally important to the history of Indonesian art. There are not many references to Sastrowisardjo (Fig.2.20). He etched as well as painted.¹³² Sastrowisardjo, born in Surakarta, also participated in the *Bandung Jaarbeurstentoonstelling* in 1920.¹³³ *Bintang Hindia* magazine had a reproduction of Atmo Sadewo's painting of Javanese sultans (Fig.2.21). I have not yet found any information about him.



FIGURE 2.21.
Sultans of Yogyakarta painted
by Raden Bekel Atmo Sadewo.
(Sources: *Bintang Hindia*, No.13.,
TH.III, 1905)

Repro by Aminudin TH Siregar

Little information is available about Frederik Kasenda (Fig.2.22.), a painter from North Sulawesi's Minahasa. Kasenda was actively exhibiting in the 1920s, and his paintings were primarily landscapes. His short biography was published in the magazine *Bintang Hindia* in 1925. The editor revealed that Kasenda studied under A. J. Lassut and W. Kindangan, whose identities are unknown. They taught Kasenda drawing and perspective. J.E. Jasper, known for his book *De inlandsche kunstnijverheid in Nederlandsch Indies* (1912), illustrated by Mas Pirngade, played an essential role in Kasenda's career because he brought the young painter from Sulawesi to Java in 1908. Kasenda then worked as a painter in this new location, explicitly receiving orders to enlarge portraits of figures. One commission was to paint R.A. Kartini.

¹³² "Advertentie Kunsthandel Artistorakel" in *De Preanger-bode*, 15 February 1922, p.11.

¹³³ "Kunst en Letteren-Schilderkunst:Jaarbeurstentoonstelling" in *De locomotief*, 18 May 1920, p.2.



FIGURE 2.22. Frederik Kasenda and his exhibition in Batavia in 1925.
Source: *Bintang Hindia*, 31 October 1925, p.690.

Collection of Leiden University Library
Photo by Aminudin TH Siregar



Kasenda relocated to Surabaya in 1911. He established his career as a painter in this city by participating in several exhibitions. He then returned to North Sulawesi in 1915, holding a solo exhibition in Manado, a large town in the region. He also constructed his studio there. The Kasenda exhibition in Manado represented the city's artistic life at the time. As far as can be determined, this was the first exhibition in Eastern Indonesia. According to an editor at *Bintang Hindia*, Kasenda's career as a painter in Manado was well-established. Kasenda, on the other hand, wanted to find new challenges to progress his career. He decided to return to Java in 1920. His solo exhibition in the city of Solo in 1923 was a success. He had a further success two years later when he exhibited in Cirebon. The Editor emphasized that, despite the scarcity of Indonesian painters, Kasenda should be remembered as someone who "has made the Indonesian nation proud."¹³⁴ His painting ability has "connected the traces left by Raden Saleh."¹³⁵

It is noteworthy to present other stories here. Chapter One delves into Noto Soeroto's pivotal role in *Oedaya* magazine. This publication, with its diverse sections, including '*van kunst en kunstenaars*' (art and artists), serves as a testament to the Noto Soeroto network's significance among Dutch and Javanese artists. A prime example is Raden Mas Jodjana, a celebrated dancer whose name, despite his talent as a printmaker, remains largely unknown in the history of modern Indonesian art.

¹³⁴ M.G.T., "Kunstenaar Indonesia: Frederik Kasenda" in *Bintang Hindia*, 24 October 1925, p. 676.

¹³⁵ M.G.T., "Frederik Kasenda" in *Bintang Hindia*, 31 Oktober 1925, p.690.



FIGURE 2.23.
Woodcut by Jodjana
(Source: Noto Soeroto, *Lotos en Morgendauw*, 1920)

Repro by Aminudin TH Siregar

Jodjana, who initially went to the Netherlands in 1914 to study economics in Rotterdam, made a significant shift in his career path. Not long after, he decided to leave his studies and visit The Hague more often to immerse himself in art. In that city, Jodjana formed a friendship with Isaac Israels, became an artist's model, and learned to paint from him. He also studied woodcuts from the anarchist artist Joris Johannes Christiaan Lebeau.¹³⁶ Jodjana's woodcut works, in particular, hold a significant place in his artistic journey. These works, characterized by their intricate details and bold use of lines, were instrumental in shaping modern Javanese art. Unfortunately, references to Jodjana's works of art are still minimal. However, one representative source is the four reproductions of Jodjana's woodcuts, which appear in Nico Oosterbeek's article in the *van kunst en kunstenaars* column of *Oedaya* magazine. In his writing, Oosterbeek introduced Jodjana as an "Indonesische kunstenaar (Indonesian artist)" who succeeded in attracting the attention of the Dutch public because his inspiration and awareness laid the foundation for pure modern Javanese art (*een zuivere moderne Javaansche kunst*).¹³⁷ Several of Jodjana's woodcut works can also be seen in the book by Soeroto *Lotos en Morgendauw* (Fig.2.23).¹³⁸

¹³⁶ For further reading, see Marcel Bonnef & Pierre Labrousse "Un danseur javanais en France: Raden Mas Jodjana (1893-1972)" in *Archipel*, 1997, Vol.54(1), pp. 225-242. For Chris Lebeau, see Rudolf de Jong, *Chris Lebeau: kunstenaar en anarchist*, (Amsterdam [etc.]: Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuisfonds, 2011).

¹³⁷ See Nico Oosterbeek, *Raden Mas Jodjana* in *Oedaya*, No.25, June 1925, pp.4-5.

¹³⁸ See Noto Soeroto, *Lotos en Morgendauw*, (Amsterdam: Hadi Poestaka, 1920).



FIGURE 2.24.
Iko and J. Schmutzer.
(Source: J. Schmutzer, J.J. Ten Berge and W. Maas, *Europeanisme of Katholicisme*, (Utrecht: De Gemeenschap Xaveriana-Leuven, c.1929)

Repro by Aminudin TH Siregar

Soeroto wholeheartedly commended Jodjana, a Javanese artist residing in Europe, for innovatively synthesizing Eastern and Western art while steadfastly upholding his cultural heritage. Through Jodjana's works, Soeroto has established a definitive standard for achieving a harmonious balance between the two artistic influences.¹³⁹

During the 1920s and 1930s, art-making in Indonesia experienced significant growth with the support of religious channels. This aspect offers an intriguing and often overlooked dimension in the canon narrative, as I will examine below. It relates to the Catholic mission networks in Java, which fostered the development of "Javanese Christian Art."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ See Oedaja, Nr.21, February 1925, pp. 202-203.

¹⁴⁰ For further reading, see Volker Küster, Karel Steenbrink, et al., Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p.925-949, J. Schmutzer,

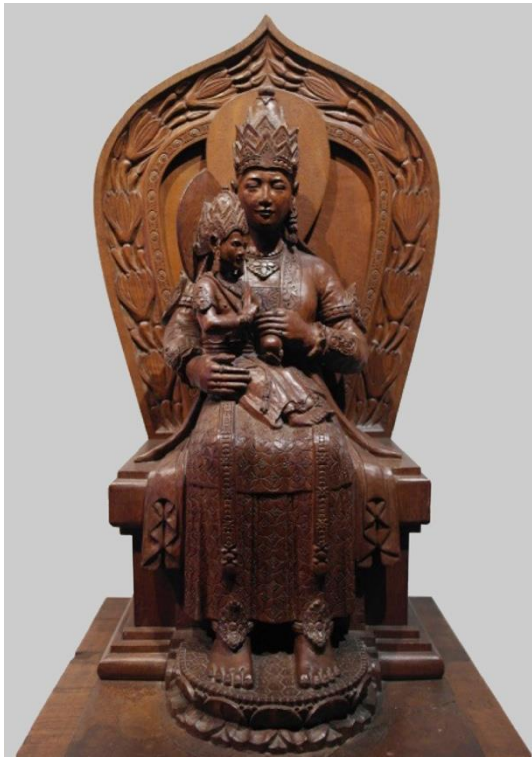


FIGURE 2.25. A-B. Iko's sculptors in the Mission Museum in Steyl.

Collection of The Mission Museum in Steyl
Photo by Aminudin TH Siregar

The Sacred Heart Church in Ganjuran Yogyakarta is a captivating example of the fusion of Catholic (Western) and Javanese art. Both the architecture and the statues in the interior evoke a unique syncretism. Joseph Schmutzer, a geologist, politician, and art enthusiast, played a crucial role in this artistic blend.¹⁴¹ He collaborated with Iko to create statues for the church's decoration (Fig.2.24).¹⁴² This blend can be seen in Iko's works, some of which are now in the Mission Museum in Steyl (Fig.2.25. A-C). In his article "Christelijk-Javaansche Kunst," which became a reference for this art genre in the colonial period, Schmutzer observed and believed that the richness of classical art in Java was a source of inspiration. He underscored the importance of examining and utilizing these old cultural elements to give rise to new life in Javanese art, which was gradually becoming modern.¹⁴³

"Christelijk-Javaansche Kunst" in J. Schmutzer et al., *Javaansche Kunst*, n.p., n.y., p.59-89. Another version of *Javaansche Kunst*, published in 1929, has exactly the same author and written material. It is entitled *Europeanism of Catholicism*. See J. Schmutzer, J.J.Ten Berge and W. Maas, *Europeanisme of Katholicisme*, (Utrecht: De Gemeenschap Xaveriana-Leuven, c.1929). See also Joh's article. Hellings and Sepp Schuller, in a special issue on the development of Christian art in *Het Gildeboek, gewijd aan kerkelijke kunst en oudheidkunde*, XXle Jaargang, Aflevering 2, April 1938, pp. 42-62.

¹⁴¹ Djoko Soekiman, 2011, p. 57.

¹⁴² See J. Schmutzer et al., 1928, pp. 68-71.

¹⁴³ J. Schmutzer et al., 1928, p. 60.

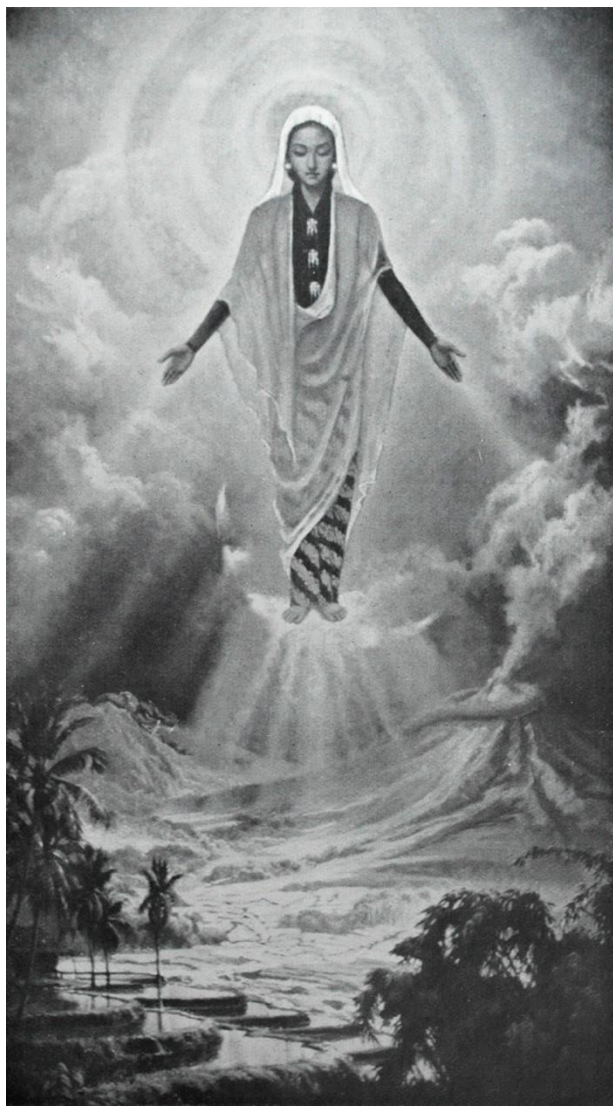


FIGURE 2.26. Basuki Abdullah, *Maria Assumpta*, 1935.
(Source: Magazine Sint Claverbond: uitgave der Paters Jezuïeten ten bate
hunnen missie op Java, Nijmegen : Centrale Drukkerij, 1935, p.221)

Repro by Aminudin TH Siregar

One of the early specimens of Catholic expression using conventional Javanese techniques is the image of the Trinity executed by Raden Mas Joesoef Poerwodiwirjo. He entered Schmutzer's Gondang Lipoero sugar plantation elementary school - which opened in 1920. After completing elementary school, he converted to Catholicism. He continued his courses in religion and became a catechist. According to Schmutzer, Poerwodiredjo drew on his initiative.¹⁴⁴ Several names emerged from this Catholic mission circle who created, as Schumtzer called it, “Christelijk-Javaansche Kunst (Christian Javanese Art),” including Basuki Abdullah (Fig. 2.26)¹⁴⁵, Father

¹⁴⁴ Volker Küster, et al., 2008, pp. 926.

¹⁴⁵ The Catholic mission provided Basuki Abdullah with a scholarship to study in the Netherlands. A recommendation from Pastor Koch, S.J. plays an important role here. Departing for the Netherlands in

M. Reksaatmadja¹⁴⁶, Fr. X. Djoemingin, and Raden Mas Joesoef Poerwodiwirjo.¹⁴⁷ Their works artistically appear to offer novelty by showing depictions of the Catholic Holy Trinity in physical form and Javanese cultural imagery.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has shown various issues surrounding Raden Saleh, which are related to the doubt or belief of a group of artists and scholars in his patriotic attitude. It also discusses his successor painters, who have filled 50 years that are believed to be empty in the history of modern Indonesian art. The rejection of Raden Saleh's status as a post-colonial symptom has become a contentious issue for nationalist critics and artists. They dismissed Raden Saleh, citing his letter of loyalty to the Dutch king and the privileges he enjoyed. However, the painting *Die Gefangennahme Diepo Negoro* has effectively challenged this narrative. With its reversal of Pieneman's composition, this work has not only sparked a reevaluation but also significantly altered the narrative. It suggests that Raden Saleh may have been more than just a painter; he was a patriotic and partisan figure in his country. In this chapter, I propose that Raden Saleh should not only be confined to the frame of nationalist ideology but reassessed as a painter who drew inspiration from his long journey and transcended geographical boundaries.

Of course, anyone could rank him as "the first modern Indonesian painter" at any time. Instead, I would like to place him similarly to how we place Picasso globally: based on his artworks without bothering about where he came from. In the end, what matters is the works of art he created. More often, the writers' preoccupation with determining the status of Raden Saleh's nationalism and his pioneering in modern Indonesian art history obscures

1933, Abdullah studied at the *Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten Den Haag* for two years and two months (1935-1937). See Solichin Salam, 1994, 39. Abdullah was preparing to establish a "Javanese Christian art school" as part of the mission's goals. However, upon his return to his homeland, Abdullah pursued a more conventional artistic path, deviating from the mission's original intentions. See Volker Küster, et al., 2008, p. 931.

¹⁴⁶ For reproduction photos of works, see *ST. Claverbond - Uitgave der P.P. Jezuiten Ten Bate Hunner Missie op Java*, Jaargang 47, Afl. 2, February 1935, Nijmegen: N.V. Centrale Drukkerij, p.57 and 59.

¹⁴⁷ For reproduction photos of works by Raden Mas Joesoef Poerwodiwirjo, see Volker Küster, et al., 2008, p. 926.

the significance of Raden Saleh's artistic achievements and how his works link to the global painting constellation, a term I use to refer to the interconnectedness and influence of various art movements and artists across different countries and cultures. Thus, broadening his networking is essential for future studies on Raden Saleh. In line with this, I want to quote what former Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture Muhammad Yamin declared when he made a speech at Saleh's grave in Bogor in 1953. At that time, Yamin believed, "Raden Saleh was first seen as a painter and artist, then as a nationalist and finally an idealist."¹⁴⁸

Raden Saleh is not a painter who only became known or established as a pioneer in 1976, as Jim Supangkat mentioned above. For a long time, he had become a phenomenon during his lifetime and became a myth after his death. No painter from Java has received as much attention as him, a clear testament to his pioneering recognition in the history of modern Indonesian art. His transnational popularity soared in the early 20th century, surpassing his contemporaries. His enduring impact is evident in the numerous writings from his admirers, who have elevated him to a position of honor as a beginner in art history.

In an article titled "Schilderkunst in Indië" (Painting in the Indies), published in 1902, the writer and musician Hans van de Wall (Victor Ido) expressed his eagerness to begin art history with Raden Saleh, stating, "If I were a writer of this part of art history, I would start with Raden Saleh, the man who only painted his own country and people with such artistic sensibility."¹⁴⁹

Some Indonesian writers also contributed to constructing Raden Saleh as a myth. After Van de Wall's writings were published in 1902, publications about Raden Saleh began to appear. Among these, I discovered M. Adiwidjaja¹⁵⁰, who holds a significant place as the first Indonesian to write

¹⁴⁸ "Raden Saleh, kunstenaar, nationalist en idealist, geëerd door nageslacht" in *De nieuwsgier*, 10 September 1953, p.4.

¹⁴⁹ Hans van de Wall, "Schilderkunst in Indië" in *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 7 May 1902, p.5. "Ware ik een schrijver van dit deel der kunstgeschiedenis, ik zou beginnen met Raden Saleh, den man die uitsluitend zijn eigen land en volk op doek bracht met zoo veel kunstzin."

¹⁵⁰ I have not found any further information about this author. However, there was a connection between Adiwidjaja and Tirta Adhisurjo through the *Soenda Berita* newspaper, published in the early 20th century. In this magazine, founded by Tirta Adhisurjo, Adiwidjaja has written several articles on geography, housing, history, and Islamic issues. See M. Adiwidjaja, "Roemah" in *Soenda Berita*, 11 April 1904, p.6, M. Adiwidjaja, "Perasa-Pikiran" in *Soenda Berita*, 24 April 1904, pp.5-6, dan M. Adiwidjaja, "Ilmu Boemi" in *Soenda Berita*, 1 Mei 1904, pp.3-6. For further reading of the Tirta Adhi Surjo as the pioneer nationalist, see Pramodya Ananta Toer, *Sang Pemula*, (Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 1985).

Raden Saleh, marhoem.

NJATALAH ta⁵ ada pematja „B. H.“, jang beloem perenah mendengar nama: „Raden Saleh“.

Siapakah Raden Saleh itoe? Raden Saleh ialah seorang boemi-poetera Poelau Djawa, jang mashoer didalam Doenia-gambaran.

Kepandaiannya itoe diperolihnja dari pada „hidajat“, disertakan dengan „toentoetan“. Katanja koenoe: kepandaiannya menggambar itoe sangatlah adjaib.

Oepamanya: ada orang menjeroeh menggambar soeatoe hoetan atawa padang, tetapi Raden Saleh loepa, betapa keadaan jang hendak digambarkannya itoe. Maka Raden Saleh poen meroep pasir dengan tangannya dan dilontarkan keatas.

Dengan segira djoea dapatlah ia menggambar sebagai jang dikendaki olih orang tadi.

Banjak koenoe kabarnya handai-tolan „Raden Saleh“, jang atjap kali dipermain-mainkannya dengan gambarannya.

Diboeatnja gambaran seekor lalat, jang sebagai lalat hidoep roepanja. Maka olih tetamoenja dioesir lalat itoe, kerena disangkanya, behoea sesoengnjalah ada lalat pada tempat itoe. Beberapa kali koenoe dioesir-oesirnja lalat itoe, tetapi tidak djoea ia terbang. Baroelah diketahoenja jang lalat itoe hanjalah gambaran.

Boekan mata menoesia sadsja, jang dapat didaja R. S. dengan kepandaian gambarnya, tetapi mata binatang poen dapat dikitjoenja. Diboeatnja gambaran setangkai boeah anggoer, seperti boeah anggoer jang masak roepanja. Maka boeroeng² poen mengampiri gambaran itoe, kerena disangkanya, behoea penglihatannya itoe sesoenggoehnjalah boeah anggoer.

Banjaklah lagi kemashoeran Raden Saleh. Saja serahkan kepada ankoe² pematja „B. H.“, kerena kemashoerannya itoe tidak tersemboeni, tetapi diketahoei orang semoea.

M. ADIWIDJAJA.

RADEN SALEH SARIEF BASTAMAN. DE BEKENDE JAVAANSCH E SCHILDER.

Raden Saleh Sarief Bastaman, geboren te Semarang omstreeks 1814, overleden te Buitenzorg 23 April 1880, stamde uit een voorname regentenfamilie. Op jeugdigen leeftijd kwam hij in kennis met den schilder Payen, die zijn aanleg voor de teekenkunst opmerkende, hem uit eigen beweging onderricht gaf. In 1830 ging R. Saleh met den Inspecteur van Financiën, de heer De Lange, naar Europa, waar hij zijn aanleg kon ontwikkelen. Daarna doorreisde hij een groot gedeelte van Europa, woonde 5 jaar in Dresden, vergezelde Horace Vernet naar Algiers en was in 1848 te Parijs getuige van de Februari-omwenteling. In 1851 of '52 keerde hij naar Java terug. Ter koloniale Tentoonstelling van 1883 te Amsterdam was een aantal schilderijen van Raden Saleh aanwezig, dieren en dierengevechten, jachten en landschappen. (Zie Encyclopaedie van N. I.). In 't Rijks-Museum te Amsterdam bevindt zich een schilderij van R. Saleh, een leeuw voorstellende. Door ons buitenlandsch verblijf is het ons thans niet mogelijk, een nadere aanduiding van de plaats dier schilderij te geven.



P. j. m. Raden Saleh, marhoem.
(Kiriman M. Adiwidjaja.)

itoe kami wartakan didalam soerat-tjerita kami.
Didalam karangan toean Schmalhausen

FIGURE 2.29.
M. Adwidjaja, *Raden Saleh, Marhoem in Bintang Hindia*, 15 June 1903.

Collection of Leiden University Library
Photo by Aminudin TH Siregar

about Raden Saleh. His writings, although brief, were published bilingually in the *Bintang Hindia* magazine in 1903 under the title "Raden Saleh, Marhoem - Raden Saleh Sarief Bustaman: De Bekende Javansche Schilder" (Fig.2.29). This article aims to introduce readers to the artist's miracles. Raden Saleh, for example, can paint anything with a handful of sand sprinkled in the air. Raden Saleh is believed to have once drawn a fly on a plate for his guests to eat until he realized it was just a "picture."¹⁵¹

The newspaper *Medan Prijaji*'s turn came after *Bintang Hindia*. In its 1910 edition, *Medan Prijaji* published Tirto Adhi Surjo's essay about Raden Saleh to highlight the painter's reputation, which made the country proud.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ M. Adiwidjaja, "Raden Saleh, Marhoem (Raden Saleh Sarief Bustaman: De Bekende Javaansche Schilder)" in *Bintang Hindia*, 15 Juni 1903, p.123.

¹⁵² See Tirto Adhi Surjo, "Raden Saleh" in *Medan Prijaji*, 26 February 1910, p.11.

Eventually, in 1913, Noto Soeroto came with his writings “*Bij het 100ste geboortjaar van Raden Saleh* (On the 100th Birthday of Raden Saleh)” in Dutch about Raden Saleh with some primary photo reproductions of his paintings such as *Boschbrand*, *De Tijger en Zijn Prooi*, *Een Jagt op Java*, *Overstroming op Java*, *Op Leven en Dood*, Raden’s Saleh portrait and his palace in Batavia.¹⁵³

Unlike Adiwidjaya and Adhi Soerjo's, Soeroto's writing was more structured and had broad dimensions. Interestingly, Soeroto wrote specifically for educated people, particularly those involved in the national movement at the time, since he suggested Raden Saleh's intellectual maturity made the painter an ideal national role model. Unlike critics or artists who doubt Raden Saleh's nationalism, in this article, Soeroto even proposes Raden Saleh as a role model for the nationalist movement. He knew that information about Raden Saleh was scarce among ordinary Indonesian people and intellectuals. Meanwhile, as national consciousness grew, movements such as Boedi Oetomo required someone to instill confidence. Soeroto suggested that the figure should be someone who commands respect and is well-known in the community. Therefore, according to him, Raden Saleh deserves to be recognized as someone who has the ability and has contributed to establishing Indonesians on an equal footing with people of other nations. With Raden Saleh as a generator of national awareness, Soeroto also wants to "help Javanese interests to awaken national art from the doom of indifference."¹⁵⁴

Soeroto's writing emphasizes the importance of respecting Raden Saleh and suggests a few ideas for achieving this goal. He proposes printing the painter's works in an album, organizing an exhibition of his works, and building a museum dedicated to Raden Saleh. Soeroto also suggests investigating Saleh's hidden or dispersed works to ensure they are properly preserved.¹⁵⁵

All of the above findings indicate that Raden Saleh has been acknowledged and debated for two centuries. Thus, the claim by Monika

¹⁵³ Noto Soeroto, *Bij Het 100ste Geboortjaar van Raden Saleh: Javaansch Schilder Geb. Te Semarang 1814, Gest.te Buitenzorg 1880*, Reprint from *het Nederlandsch-Indische Huis Oud en Nieuw*, 1914, p.219-229.

¹⁵⁴ Noto Soeroto, “Bij het 100ste geboortjaar van Raden Saleh: Javaansch schilder geb. te Semarang 1814, gest. te Buitenzorg 1880” in *Het Nederlandsch Indische huis, oud en nieuw*, November 1913, Weltevreden: Architecten-bureau Hulswit, p.221. “Dit opstel wil mede helpen wekken de Javaansche belangstelling in de nationale kunst uit den dommel van onverschilligheid.”

¹⁵⁵ Noto Soeroto, 1913-1914, p.221.

Griebeler and Werner Kraus several years ago that "Raden Saleh was underappreciated or forgotten by his nation" is only partially accurate.¹⁵⁶ I also want to underline that the period following Raden Saleh's death in 1880 until the 1930s was not as devoid of artistic activity as some historians believed. The accounts mentioned above indicate that various painters were involved in political, educational, and religious missions during these years, demonstrating that artistic activities continued.

¹⁵⁶ See Monika Griebeler, *Indonesian artist is finally honored in his homeland* dalam <http://www.dw.com/en/indonesian-artist-is-finally-honored-in-his-homeland/a-16038975>, accessed on 20 September, 15.27 PM. See also interview between the journalist Niken Prathivi with Werner Kraus in *An Encounter with Raden Saleh*, The Jakarta Post, 13 January 2013, p.6.

