



Melati Suryodarmo

I am a Ghost in my Own House

June 12 —
October 30, 2022

Opening: Sunday, 12 June 3 pm
with performances by the artist

Press release, May 19, 2022

The Bonnefanten presents *Melati Suryodarmo* (1969, Surakarta, Indonesia) as the eleventh winner of the Bonnefanten Award for Contemporary Art (BACA). On 12 June, the museum is opening the exhibition *I am a Ghost in My Own House*, Suryodarmo's first big solo exhibition in Europe and the Netherlands. Suryodarmo is a versatile artist, but is particularly known for her compelling performances. In her work, she interprets strong political and social insights in a poetic and physical visual idiom. Awarding her the BACA is a welcome reason for the Bonnefanten to present Melati Suryodarmo to the public in the Netherlands and to pay tribute to one of the pioneers of performance art. Two performances will take place on the day of the opening: the four-hour performance *Transaction of Hollows* and, simultaneously, the performance *Sweet Dreams Sweet*. One week later, on 19 June, Suryodarmo will perform *I am a Ghost in My Own House*.

MELATI SURYODARMO, I'M A GHOST IN MY OWN HOUSE, 2012, PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST, PHOTO: RIKI ZOELKARNAIN

the BONNEFANTEN

I am a Ghost in My Own House

The title of the exhibition comes from Suryodarmo's performance of the same name, which lasts for twelve hours. In this performance, she grinds charcoal on a stone mortar for twelve hours, exhausting herself, while also drawing on the energy potential of the charcoal. Suryodarmo therefore sees the charcoal as symbolic of a life cycle that inevitably ends in death.

"For Suryodarmo, pulverising the charcoal symbolises her tiredness and physical exhaustion, which are coupled with her being uprooted and her return to Indonesia after living in Germany for many years. This explains the title I am a Ghost in My Own House."

Philippe Pirotte, guest curator

The works in the exhibition show the versatility of her artistry. Alongside performances, you also see video installations, photography and drawings. For her other work, Suryodarmo also takes inspiration from her lengthy performances, important elements of which are the focus on her body and the way she deals with or shapes time.

She regards her body as an archive and a landscape, and as her connection to the world. Her body is her familiar place of refuge, which is a greater constant than any physical space whatsoever. Time is essential to her work and the experience of it, as it transforms the performer, the audience and the space. Through aspects of her work like duration, slowness, observation, introspection and interaction, she aims to transgress the short concentration span of our individual, passive consumerism.



Melati Suryodarmo

Suryodarmo trained at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig, in Germany. A chance encounter brought her into contact with the famous Anzu Furukawa, with whom she studied butoh (a Japanese theatre form that combines different disciplines and techniques, such as dance, performance and movement), following which she took classes in performance art with the renowned Marina Abramović.

Suryodarmo's performances reflect her own ideas and cultural background, and concern the relationship between the human body, the defining cultural traditions to which the body belongs and the context in which it lives. She focuses on concepts like home, spirituality, family and personal history, interweaving them with socio-political, activist and mainly feminist ideas. Partly as a result of politics and gender discrimination, her work has long gone unnoticed. Through her indefatigable efforts to forge connections between art and artists and society, Suryodarmo has become a key figure in the cultural world of Indonesia. Nowadays, her name is widely known and acknowledged in South-East Asia and elsewhere, yet unaccountably her work has not received a great number of international awards or solo exhibitions.

In agreement with laureate Melati Suryodarmo, Philippe Pirotte (1972, Belgium) was chosen as the guest curator of the exhibition in the Bonnefanten. Pirotte is an art historian, curator and critic, and dean of the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste Städelsschule and of Portikus, a leading centre for contemporary art in Germany and elsewhere.

Publication

I am a Ghost in my Own House will be accompanied by the publication of an extensive monograph. The publication contains illustrations of Suryodarmo's oeuvre and essays by authors like Michelle Antoinette, Philippe Pirotte, Hendro Wiyanto and Catherine Wood.

Bonnefanten Award for Contemporary Art – BACA

The BACA is the most important international award of the Netherlands for artists from other geo-cultural regions. In 2022, it is being presented for the eleventh time. The focus on exciting, under-represented art practices that exceed or lie beyond the geographical and/or cultural boundaries of the dominant Western canon is in line with the Bonnefanten's profile. The museum deliberately chooses to collaborate actively with artists and curators who reinforce and underline the diversity of the museum's programme and collections.



SWEET DREAMS SWEET, 2013,
VIDEO DOCUMENTATION, ONE-CHANNEL HD, 17:16 MIN, VIDEO STILL, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

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The members of this edition's jury
(in alphabetical order) are:

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