

minates regional auctions



YSRI

Villems Order (left) by Raden Sarif Bustaman
October auction in Singapore, while a paint-
ing of the works included in YSRI's auction.

JAKARTA (JP): Although art auctions have been held in Southeast Asia, only in 1996 did Indonesia feel their effect.

In February this year, Christie's held its first auction in the country to dispose of the estate of Dutch-born banker Adrian Noe. The following month, Indonesian collectors competed to buy a magnificent Raden Saleh painting, which was sold by Christie's for S\$2.8 million.

In Amsterdam last April, Sotheby's and Christie's offered paintings depicting Indonesia. The world's two largest auction houses also opened representative offices here. In late June, Dutch auctioneer Glerum opened in Singapore, offering Indonesia-related paintings. In mid-August the Indonesian Fine Art Foundation took in more than Rp 2 billion at their annual auction, this time offering paintings from the collections of prominent collectors.

The following month, the appearance of a Raden Saleh from the National Museum collection in a Christie's catalog shocked the nation. Sotheby's held its very first Southeast Asian painting sale in Southeast Asia in early

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October, when it sold an awesome Hendra Gunawan for S\$200,000. The next day Christie's held its second Singapore auction of the year. The stolen Raden Saleh and a number of paintings were withdrawn.

In Amsterdam, in late October and early November, Glerum, Christie's and Sotheby's held sales within a period of one week. A fourth auctioneer, Bonham, entered the Southeast Asian market in Singapore with its small offering of paintings of Indonesian subjects by Singaporean painters.

It is likely that this auction house will increase its profile in the region in years to come.

The Bimantara Foundation auctioned off 15 paintings, four of which were of Indonesia, by Chinese master Wu Guanzhong in November. In an hour, the paintings were all sold, fetching US\$2.23 million.

In Melbourne, Sotheby's and Christie's held sales which included items of

Indonesian subject matter first in August and November.

Glerum held its second Singapore auction in December. A week later in Jakarta, the Biennial Committee and the Jakarta Foundation for the Arts held an auction of the works presented in Biennale X.

The number of auction houses operating in Singapore increased from one to four. Two opened representative offices in Jakarta this year.

Even the closing of Biennale X was marked by an auction of the artists' works, although it was not very successful. In the past, some members of the Jakarta Council for the Arts have considered it taboo to hold auctions within the art center's premises. The organization of the auction indicates a change in the way of thinking of the council and the biennial's committee.

The number of auctions is perceived by many as being indicative of the increasing interest in and commercial value of paintings. Another indication of the development of fine art in the country can be seen in the increasing number of quality art exhibitions and art activities.