

# Mason's works on display at South Jakarta gallery

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**O**n Jan. 25, a solo show of works by Robert Mason will open at Edwin's Gallery in Jakarta. As the gallery has so far mostly scheduled exhibitions of Indonesian and Chinese artists' work, the Mason show comes as a pleasant surprise.

Robert Mason is best known for his dramatic paintings based on construction work in progress in one of London's largest areas of redevelopment, Broadgate.

In a combination of drawing, photography and painting, Mason captures the process of dissolution of the old and construction. A first impression would be that of a world in turmoil, of perilous surroundings, and of spaces set afire. But a closer look reveals figures emerging from the layered paint.

His works at Edwin's have a similar dramatic effect, with light and shadow enforcing the accents, and flashing yellows and reds stirring emotions to the boiling point.

Through the paintings, which are based on his studies in Jakarta, one may be led to imagine a construction

process along the lines of Broadgate, or a kampong site on the periphery of the city.

In some of these paintings, photography has clearly been an important medium, but imagery and paint were able to transform the photographic picture into abstract structures with semi-realistic elements, which bring to mind some of Indonesian painter Dede Eri Supria's works on urban life.

On the other hand, his still-life works have an air of antiquity, of the other world, of dramatic clashes, violence and intense tragedy.

Mason was born in Yorkshire, 1946. The death of his parents, brother and sister when he was young deeply influenced his paintings, which feature human skulls, animal carcasses and crouching figures in an atmosphere of profound melancholy and a sense of tragedy.

He felt drawn to ruins and archeological excavations reminded him of the mystery of life and death, and of the cycle of destruction and transformation.

Mason's works in oil or acrylic are further marked by his mastery of space and dimensions, something very important in sculptural

works. Not surprisingly, as he began his artistic career as a sculptor.

In his country, artists like Francis Bacon, Lucien Freud and Frank Auerbach are often mentioned as the first generation of the School of London, says Edwin Rahardjo, the gallery's owner.

Mason is often said to belong to the second generation of the London School.

Mason's art education runs from the Harrogate School of Art (1963-65), through the Hornesey College of Art (1965-68), to the British School in Rome (1968-70).

His curriculum vitae states two periods in which he was a full-time artist: 1987-93, and now since 2003. He has been awarded various scholarships and prizes, has been a visiting lecturer at various universities and institutes, and has held solo and groups exhibitions around the world.

His works have been collected by public institutions and private companies.

Monument and Myth  
*Solo exhibition by Robert Mason at Edwin's Gallery on Jl. Kemang Raya 21, Kemang, South Jakarta.*  
Tel. 7194721  
*from Jan. 25 to Feb. 8*