



Media Information

December 21, 2009

## **BMW and Eko Nugroho: *Kings of the Street.***

**Curated by Enin Supriyanto.**

Eko Nugroho's comic inspired work is a storytelling journey with different audience at different sites. Made using thick black lines (often on a white background), and applying color only when absolutely necessary, his images may seem simple and straightforward, while possessing the ability to convey a multitude of messages and content. The issues that he addresses are often inspired by his surrounding environment, from violence in society, corruption to questions about the human condition.

The versatility and tone of his wide-ranging messages are informed by visual references from childhood such as *wayang*, superheroes, local comic strips, animated films and cartoons. In many ways, his work pays homage to the past, it is where the 'old-skool' converges with the futuristic.

Eko's messages are rarely clear-cut, he tends to juxtapose numerous visual elements and languages that simultaneously draw the attention of his audience and disrupt their cognitive senses. There are numerous motifs and figures that populate Eko's world, from his signature 'self-portrait' wearing a helmet, headgear and mask, to common everyday objects and unidentified strange, alien forms.

This playful tendency or *sempurna*, is further evident when he incorporates text in his narrative. He has the innate ability to disregard the rules of language, gleefully constructing absurd sentences made up of English, Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese words. He adopts a similarly agile approach towards medium and materials in his art-making, freely moving back and forth between comics, to paintings and murals, stickers and t-shirts, animation, installation and even live performances.

Through his absurd (*kengawuran*) grasp for form and language –or non-sequitur ability- Eko is encouraging us to transgress (our reading of his art). It is as though he is asking us to be prepared to question or debunk established and accepted viewpoints as well as events that take place in our surrounding.

Since the early days of his career, Eko has maintained an open engagement with the public. From 2000 onwards, he published *Daging Tumbuh* with a group of friends, an independent comic with a cult following especially among the art community. At the same time, he regularly transforms the walls of Yogyakarta into a public space, using the empty spaces as the ‘canvas’ of his murals. For Eko, there is no great distinction between high and low art, art in the gallery between art on the street, or around the city.

Pairing up Eko Nugroho’s art with the new BMW X5 M makes perfect sense. Just as the X5 model has become an icon among BMW’s range of automobiles, Eko Nugroho is also quickly becoming an icon among Indonesia’s contemporary artists in the international art scene. Within the short span of a year, his work has been seen in Jakarta, Beijing, Zurich, New York, Lyon, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Yokohama and The Hague.

The relationship between BMW and contemporary art has been ongoing since 1975 when BMW introduced the BMW Art Car series, collaborating with some of the most renowned artists in the world. The culmination of these collaborations can be seen in the BMW Art Collection, with works by Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, A.R. Penck, David Hockney and Jenny Holzer among others.

Recently, the BMW Art Car project has moved into the multimedia realm, commissioning a new group of contemporary artists to work with BMW’s automobiles. From 2005-2007, Olafur Eliasson’s work, *Your Mobile Expectation* (2005-2007) amazed the art and automotive world, featuring BMW’s prototype hydrogen powered engine, H2R. Later, in 2008, BMW invited young South African artist, Robin Rhode to create a giant painting—the size of a football field—by using the BMW Z4 as a ‘spray-paint machine’. This work was known to the world as *Expression of Joy* (2008).

And now, albeit on a smaller and humbler scale, BMW Indonesia is bringing the tradition of BMW's collaboration with art to our shores. Eko Nugroho, an artist who has brought Indonesia's particular brand of 'street art' to the international arena, will come face to face with the 'street king' produced by BMW. It is by no coincidence that both parties are driven by their belief of bringing joy to people through their work and creation. It seems fitting that Javanese saying: *Seneng kuwi larang regane* (Joy comes with a price) is chosen as the title for this special presentation of the BMW X5 M.

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### **The BMW Group**

The BMW Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 24 production facilities in 13 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

The BMW Group achieved a global sales volume of more than 1.43 million automobiles and over 101,000 motorcycles for the 2008 financial year. Revenues for 2008 totalled EUR 53.2 billion, with earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) of EUR 921 million. The company employed a global workforce of approximately 98,000 associates on 30 September 2009.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last five years.

### **BMW in Indonesia**

PT. BMW Indonesia is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bayerische Motoren Werke (BMW) AG, the world manufacturer of BMW vehicles based in Munich, Germany. The establishment of this subsidiary in April 2001 reflects the BMW Group's confidence in the long-term future of Indonesia and its commitment to maintaining and extending BMW's leading position in the premium market segment. PT. BMW Indonesia's activities cover the wholesale of BMW cars, spare parts and accessories, as well as the overall planning of sales, marketing, after-sales, and related activities in Indonesia. Its dealership network covers 11 new car dealers and 1 used-car dealer spread out in various cities in Indonesia. Selected models of the 3 and 5 Series sedans are also assembled in Indonesia by a local partner. More information about BMW Indonesia may be found online at [www.bmw.co.id](http://www.bmw.co.id).

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