



ara

PĀṬHA

solo exhibition ENGGAR RHOMADIONI

exhibition text by PUTU SRIDINIARI

main gallery, 15.08—13.09.2026

A Knight's Recitation

by Putu Sridiniari

The knight stands at the center of Javanese courtly imagination: refined, emotionally impenetrable, spiritually invulnerable. He is the idealisation of a “complete” man, the exception that grounds the rule of Javanese masculinity. Enggar Rhomadioni has previously explored *Ksatria Jawa Paripurna*, the conception of an idealized Javanese knight whose identity is defined by the flawless possession of five courtly elements: *wisma* (the house that anchors his lineage), *wanodya* (the wife who secures his dynasty), *turangga* (the horse that signifies his noble action), *kukila* (the pet bird that refines his soul), and *curiga* (the kris dagger that holds his spiritual power). But what happens to the perfect knight when he collides with the inevitable? What happens when he loses his mother? When he begins to question not only his role in society, but the very categories of “masculine” and “feminine” that society has handed to him?

Rhomadioni occupies an ambivalent position, a space of productive ambiguity. During our conversation at his studio in Yogyakarta, he acknowledges his role in society: gatherings within the kampung, Independence day plannings, visiting his neighbours, and participating in night patrols, among others. He discovered that his community taught him the deepest lessons about life.

Rhomadioni recalls a passage he once read, though he cannot remember its author. It states: “*Indonesia is inside my village.*” A statement that captures how his life’s largest questions have always been answered by the smallest, most intimate encounters. Yet simultaneously, he questions the very foundations of his society. What does it mean to be masculine? What does it mean to be feminine?

These questions materialize as embodied negotiations, performed through the loss of his mother and his persistent attraction to the feminine that permeates his world.

He calls this departure *Pustaka Wanita: Pāṭha*. An archive of feminine curiosity and ongoing effort to understand what lies beyond the totalizing masculine. This exhibition marks Rhomadioni’s conscious departure from the *paripurna* or ideal. It is an exploration of what lies outside the stoic ethics of *nrima* (total acceptance). “I draw inspiration from women, especially my late mother and my wife,” the artist stated. “I am attracted more to the alluring feminine qualities around us.” The loss of his own mother, opened a wound that could not be healed by knightly stoicism. That wound became the source of his inquiry. The allure of the feminine, its mystery, its emotional depth, its refusal to be fully captured, became the gravitational center of his artistic practice. Rhomadioni speaks with this mystery. His works are filled with forms often culturally coded as feminine: breasts, curves, uterus: breasts, curves, uterus, often rendered with realistic precision or sometimes deformed, abstracted and placed in surrealscapes.

PUSTAKA WANITA

Rhomadioni somehow positions himself not as a *dalang* (puppeteer who controls the narrative) but as a *pawarta*, a witness, a reader, a curious student who approaches the feminine with humility rather than mastery. His rendering of flesh and form reflects the act of close reading, the attempt to grasp the details clearly.

The surreal backgrounds, the floating bodies, the impossible spatial relationships, reflect the act of reading itself.

Rhomadioni invited us to grasp fragments, but the overall meaning remains elusive, excessive, always just beyond our reach. *Pustaka Wanita* translates to “The Woman’s Archive” or “The Library of the Feminine.” The feminine as text, like all great literature, cannot be fully captured. However, Rhomadioni does not claim to understand femininity. He claims only to be curious and this curiosity becomes an ongoing effort that will never reach completion, because the text he reads is infinite.

This exhibition marks the beginning of his study of what Rhomadioni calls as an “ongoing effort to learn about the feminine.” Rhomadioni inhabits an ambivalent position, a Javanese man shaped by traditional masculinity drawn toward the feminine with a longing that refuses neat categorization. His works enact this tension. Traditional artistic practices and symbols such as carvings, ornaments, and wayang geometries sometimes frame the feminine body, attempting to contain it within a familiar cultural grammar. But oftentimes containment fails. The feminine then exceeds the form, bleeding into a soft, mystical, dramatic palette, featuring deep crimsons, reflective silvers, oceanic blues, and shifting golds, as if to archive what cannot be archived.

PĀṬHA

Unlike *Pustaka*, the static, complete, spatial archive or library, *pāṭha* is alive, temporal, and perpetually unfolding. The word carries a dual meaning: *pāṭha* as recitations, the oral performance of sacred texts and the path, the journey itself. Rhomadioni received this term from his spiritual teacher, though he acknowledges he has never had the chance to delve into the associated texts. The word beguiles him hence the exhibition itself becomes a recitation, its weight and mystery are enough.

Grief, too, is a *pāṭha*. Does grief ever end? In this sense, *pāṭha* acknowledges the journey (the *pāṭha* as path) without promising arrival. During our studio visit, Rhomadioni shared which painting he began first and which he finished last for this exhibition. The first painting, titled *Sabana Bai'at Mitokondria*, is geometrical in its lower half; shades of blue, green, ocre, clinical white, somehow always meet with grey-darker forms or gradually transitioning towards darker tones; a tired, drooping eye in the center and fragmented human muscle along the right. Rhomadioni recalls his experience in the ICU, where he holds his mother as doctors pumped her heart before passing away. He recalls feeling the slow change in her skin’s temperature, the warmth slipping away like something he had failed to hold, leaving only the vast, silent abyss he could not cross. The last painting he painted, *Puncak Plasma Rudira*, stands in contrast: dominated by red and gray-ish hue, stairs on bottom left, cubist fragmentation, deconstructed hair and face, and wings emerging from the chaos. Between the first and the last, we witness the arc of grief. Rhomadioni moves from the static, complete ideal version of *Ksatria Jawa Paripurna* towards incompleteness, vulnerability, and curiosity.

Throughout the body of works in this exhibition, Rhomadioni repeatedly questions what it means to be masculine and what it means to be feminine. He acknowledges his role in society—the expectations placed upon him as a Javanese man, as a bearer of tradition, as a son who must perform his grief within acceptable boundaries. Yet he simultaneously refuses to accept these categories as fixed. The Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell's foundational work on gender and masculinity provides a powerful framework for understanding the artist's position. Connell argues that masculinity is not a singular, monolithic essence but a configuration of practice: something that is performed, contested, and constantly reshaped within structures of power. There is no single "masculinity"; there are masculinities, which are multiple, hierarchical, and historically contingent. Hegemonic masculinity exists alongside subordinate, marginalized, and complicit masculinities.

Rhomadioni's departure from the ideal of *Ksatria Jawa Paripurna* is not a rejection of masculinity itself but a reconfiguration of it. The artist's exploration of the feminine is therefore inseparable from his exploration of the masculine. He cannot understand one without the other. He is reaching toward a more integrated, more human subjectivity that refuses to be constrained by rigid binaries. Rhomadioni is drawn to the feminine not as an object of heterosexual conquest but as a source of knowledge, wisdom, and emotional truth. This complicates any simple reading of his work as heteronormative. In Connell's terms, the artist is engaged in a project of gender practice—the ongoing, never-completed process of becoming a gendered subject. His paintings are records of this practice, documents of his struggle to inhabit a masculinity that is open, questioning, and receptive to the feminine.

A critical reader might observe that the fact that Rhomadioni's inquiry grounds from artist's late mother and his wife (the maternal and the domestic) risks essentialism or the reduction of the feminine to biology, to the reproductive body, to a fixed essence. Rhomadioni is aware of this risk. By moving from realist depiction to abstract fragmentation, he moves from a culturally Javanese conception of the "feminine" as a fixed essence toward a territory where grief, curiosity, and artistic form are shared between bodies rather than owned by one gender, one subject, or one tradition. His adoption of cubist-surrealist fragmentation is actually a visual ethics of humility. He is admitting that the "feminine quality" he seeks is not a thing to be conquered or depicted, but a structural gap in his own Javanese-masculine subjectivity. The abstraction is him leaving space for the Other, rather than filling it with his own projections.

In the Javanese tradition, the highest state is not rigid strength but *waskita* (clairvoyant wisdom) and *semedi* (deep contemplation). Rhomadioni's work does not resolve the tension between tradition and curiosity, masculine and

feminine, archive and recitation. It inhabits that tension. And in that inhabitation, he finds a deeper way of asking. Therefore, this exhibition constitutes Enggar Rhomadioni's body of work which has traded mastery for mystery and through it, Rhomadioni found himself even more complete in his incompleteness.

Putu Sridiniari

August 2026



Putu Sridiniari (b. 1991) is a researcher and curator based in Bali, Indonesia, who approaches her work by engaging with what is complex, unfinished, or at risk of being forgotten. She holds a degree in Cultural Studies from Universitas Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, and draws on a background in Visual Communication Design, as well as previous teaching experience at Universitas Pelita Harapan.

Her work sits at the intersection of visual art, archival practice, and memory. Recent projects include co-authoring the prologue for the forthcoming republication of Indonesian New Art Movement (1979), continuing research on Seniwati Art Gallery for Women, and co-curating the annual Foto Bali Festival (2026). She has presented at the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival (2025), São Paulo Bienal (2025), Salt Galata, Istanbul (2024), and China Art Academy, Hangzhou (2024), with writings featured in publications in Indonesia and abroad.





Tebing Mandra Bedaya, 2026
oil on canvas
180 x 143 cm



Sabana Bai'at Mitokondria, 2026
oil on canvas
155 x 115 cm







Banjaran Materka, 2026
oil on canvas
130 x 100 cm

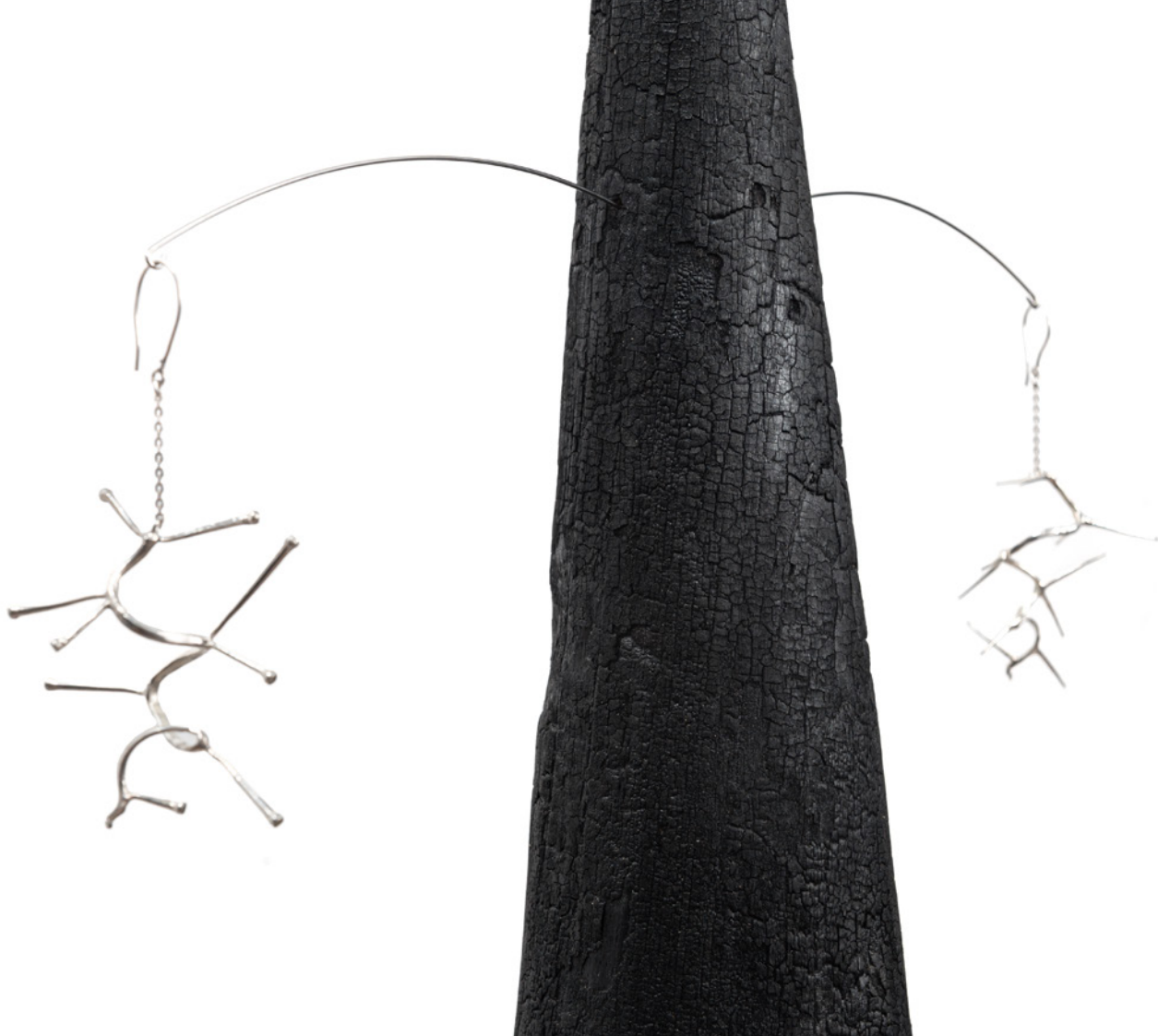


Puncak Plasma Rudira, 2026
oil on canvas
130 x 100 cm



Tula Rasi Prabasiwi, 2026
charcoal and silver earrings
150 x 35 x 30 cm









Rong Alaga Bunga Api, 2026
oil on canvas
22,5 x 17,5 cm (unframed)
35 x 28 x 4 cm (framed)



Prosa Taman Rahim, 2026
oil on canvas
40 x 30 cm (unframed)
53 x 42 x 5,5 cm (framed) (3 panels)









Saresmi Kuda Jantan, 2026
oil on canvas
76 x 75 cm (unframed)
84 x 80 x 6 cm (framed)



Serat Sendang Hayat, 2026
oil on canvas
40 x 30 cm

IDR 14,000,000



Siraman, 2026
oil on canvas
40 x 30 cm

IDR 14,000,000



Urat Mata Telaga, 2026
oil on canvas
40 x 30 cm

IDR 14,000,000





Tunggak Semi, 2026
oil on canvas
40 x 30 cm

IDR 14,000,000





Mulat Sarira, 2026
wooden box with hand-tooled copper
28 x 38,5 x 10 cm





Pranata Wisma, 2026
oil on canvas
28 x 25 cm



Ismanti, 2026
oil on canvas
28 x 25 cm



Silap Netra, 2026
oil on canvas
28 x 25 cm



Jelaga Sukma, 2026
oil on canvas
28 x 25 cm



Rona Bunga Maya, 2026
oil on canvas
28 x 25 cm



Mundri Handayani, 2026
oil on canvas
28 x 25 cm



Syair Gama Pati, 2026
oil on canvas
28 x 25 cm

Enggar Rhomadioni

b. 1992, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

He utilizes the act of creation to process experiences, both glorious and tragic. These records of life's events are often imbued with his perspectives in relation to cultural narratives. By investigating histories and narratives, his works employ artistic juxtaposition intended to provoke conversations within ourselves and with others. His surreal paintings embody the concept of 'intersubjectivity,' where the elements within his paintings encourage us to see ourselves through the experiences of others, fostering a shared exploration of identity and experience.

Education

2010-2017

BEd, Yogyakarta State University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Solo Exhibitions

2026

PĀṬHA, ara contemporary, Jakarta, Indonesia

2023

Kanda Laya, Kiniko Art Space, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2021

KALABENDA, Ace House Collective, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2019

Retrieval, ARTOTEL Wahid Hasyim, Jakarta, Indonesia

Group Exhibitions

2026

Art Jakarta Papers, ara contemporary, Jakarta, Indonesia

2025

Art Jakarta, ara contemporary, Jakarta, Indonesia

Temu Tamu, TFNYT Advisory, Paris, France

Telluria, Appetite, Singapore

We Begin with Everything, ara contemporary, Jakarta, Indonesia

2024

Art SG, Sullivan+Strumpf, Singapore

Kolom #2 Warta Project, Kiniko Art, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Welcome to the Road, John Hardy Space, Bali, Indonesia

2023

Art SG, Sullivan+Strumpf, Singapore

Art Jakarta, Sullivan+Strumpf, Jakarta, Indonesia

S.E.A Focus, Sullivan+Strumpf, Singapore

2022

S.E.A Focus, Sullivan+Strumpf, Singapore

2021

S.E.A Focus, Sullivan+Strumpf, Singapore

Broken White Project: Touch Down Jkt, Ruci Art Space, Jakarta, Indonesia

Broken White Project #1, Ace House Collective, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

In Our Image, After Our Likeness, Gajah Gallery, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2020

Art Jakarta (virtual), Sullivan+Strumpf and Edwin's Gallery

Ko(n)disi, Ruang Dalam Arthouse, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Nothing Lasts Nothing's Finished, Sullivan+Strumpf, Singapore

Use Your Illusion, Edwin's Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia

Obstacles, Greenhost Boutique Hotel, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

2019

Post a Picture, Perupa Muda #4, Bale Banjar Sangkring, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Kontraksi: pasca tradisionalisme, National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

The New Now III: Convergence, Gajah Gallery, Singapore

2018

Ring road, Perupa muda #3, Bale Banjar Sangkring, Yogyakarta

2017

Rest Area, Perupa membaca Indonesia, National Gallery of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

Residencies

2024

Metis Residency, Bali, Indonesia

Collections

Tumurun Private Museum, Solo, Indonesia





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