

Welcome to “The Many Colors of Islam!” Selamat datang ke “Islam Berwarna-warni!”

In 2004, children from four prominent art organizations in Indonesia were invited to participate in the “Islam Berwarna-warni: The Many Colors of Islam” exhibition project. The purpose of the project was to introduce American children and their families to the lives of Muslim children in Indonesia through artistic expression.

The Indonesian children were asked to create their self-portrait and write a personal anecdote about themselves. Over 100 Indonesian children enthusiastically participated. This exhibition of children’s artwork and stories thus provides a window into their world: their lives in Indonesia, their values and beliefs as well as their cultural traditions.

The children of Indonesia use the international language of art to illustrate our common humanity while demonstrating the individual and diverse characteristics that make their culture unique. They invite you to explore and enjoy “Islam Berwarna-warni: The Many Colors of Islam.”

Participating organizations:

Pustaka Loka Rumah Dunia (“The House of the World”) Cultural Center is located in Serang, Banten, Indonesia. Rumah Dunia opened its doors in 2002 with a small collection of books available free to neighborhood children. Today, its facilities include over 6,000 books organized in separate children and adult libraries, a public theater space and bookstore. Weekly class offerings include art, music, writing and theater workshops for local children. Twice per year the children of Rumah Dunia organize a public theater performance and exhibition of their art. Fifty-eight students from Rumah Dunia participated in the “Islam Berwarna-warni” art exhibition project.

Galeri Anak Nareswari Sekartaji Children’s Art Gallery is located in Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. Galeri Anak is a private art gallery that is dedicated exclusively to the exhibition of children’s art. The gallery also provides art classes to children, ages 3 - 16. The network of children’s galleries in Yogyakarta has increased recently to include eight studios where children may enroll in music, art, and dance classes. Sixteen students from Galeri Anak participated in the “Islam Berwarna-warni” art exhibition project.

Mitra Hadiprana Art Class at Galeri Hadiprana is located in Jakarta, Indonesia. Galeri Hadiprana is a private art gallery that opened their facilities in June 1998 to two art teachers instructing a handful of students. Today, there are 16 art instructors and over 200 young art students who gather at Mitra Hadiprana Art Classes on a weekly basis. The mission of the gallery is to instill in their young students a general appreciation for the arts in Indonesia as well as to encourage a unique artistic sense and style. Galeri Hadiprana exhibits the students’ artwork twice per year. Thirteen students from Mitra Hadiprana Art Class participated in the “Islam Berwarna-warni” art exhibition project.

Al-Azhar Islamic School is located in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Al-Azhar Islamic Schools are a network of private elementary, middle and high schools in Indonesia. The schools provide a traditional religious education alongside an ordinary modern school education based on the Western model. The main branch is located in Jakarta. Over 2,000 students are enrolled in the elementary and middle schools where art is offered as an extracurricular activity once per week. Fifty students from Al-Azhar Islamic School grades 3-7 participated in the “Islam Berwarna-warni” art exhibition project.



Special thanks is extended to *all* of the beautiful, talented children in Indonesia who so graciously expressed their artistic vision. I learned so much from them and will treasure forever the creativity, laughter, kindness and joy they shared with me.

I would also like to thank the following key people from each of the participating organizations:

Hery Kustriyatmo, Gallery Director and Art Instructor at Galeri Anak;

Tias Tatanka and **Gola Gong**, Managers at Rumah Dunia and Art Instructor **Indra Kesuma**;

Puri Hadiprana, Gallery Director at Hadiprana Art Gallery and Art Instructors **Ria Andaryanti**, **Mrs. Altri**, **Mr. Benny** and **Ms. Astralita**; and

Headmaster **Dr. Muhidin**, and Vice Headmaster **Mr. Safrudin** at Al-Azhar Islamic School and Teachers **Mr. Natsir** and **Ms. Adelia**.

This project would not have been possible without their energetic support and creative spirit!

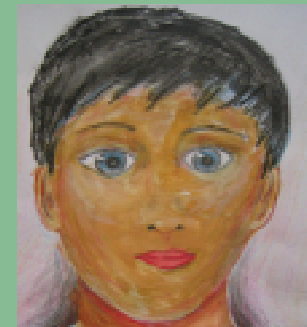
Thank you also to the following organizations for their generous support:

Council on American-Islamic Relations (San Francisco Bay Area)
Muslim Community Association
Bapak Nur and Ibu Nani Rahardjo

I also wish to thank members of the Muslim Students Association at San Francisco State University, the Islamic Networks Group and Achmad Reza Maulana for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of the text in this exhibit. Other individuals associated with this exhibition are too many to name, but special recognition should be given to Farida, Devi, Nur, Dewi, Herlily, Daromir, Cindy, Jessica and Tyler. Each contributed in their own special way to the success of this project.

TERIMA KASIH BANYAK!
Thank you very much!

Anissa J. Paulsen
Curator



Where is Indonesia?

Di mana letak Indonesia?

Indonesia is a country in Southeast Asia. Our country is an archipelago. This means it is made up of many islands. In fact, there are over 17,000 islands in our country, but only about 6,000 of them are inhabited. The total length of Indonesia is bigger than the continental United States.

Graphic from USINDO website: www.usindo.org



You may have heard of the island of Sumatra in the news recently. The devastating tsunami of December 2004 hit the northern end of that island. All of us who participated in this exhibition, however, are from the island of Java. Java is the most densely populated island in Indonesia.

Can you find the island of Java on the map?

Now, see if you can locate the cities where we are from: Serang, Jakarta, Yogyakarta.

Perhaps you can also discover the name of the capital city of Indonesia?



Indonesia is a country of over 230 million people making it the fourth most populous country in the world!

Almost 90% of our population is Muslim (people who practice and believe in the Islam religion). Indonesia is considered the world's largest Muslim democracy even though many people of other religions, including Protestants, Catholics, Buddhists, and Hindus, live here too.

There are Muslim people in all corners of the world including 200,000 right here in the San Francisco Bay area. Locate the place where you live on the map.

What percentage of Muslims lives in your country?

Islam is a way of life. Therefore, the way Muslims practice Islam may be different from region to region. Keep in mind that while you visit this exhibition and learn about our Islamic traditions in Indonesia, there are also many different traditions of Islamic practice in other parts of the world.



Graphic from *What do we know about Islam?* by Shahrukh Husain, 1996.

In Indonesia, many of us learn to speak two languages as children: the national *Bahasa Indonesia* [Indonesian language] as well as a local language such as Javanese or Sundanese. Some of us also study English and Arabic at school. In this exhibition we will use *kata-kata Indonesia* [Indonesian words] to describe many traditions.