



Ambasáid na hÉireann  
Embassy of Ireland



YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS  
**INDONESIA-IRELAND**  
Our Peoples, Our Connections, Our Future

**ISA** Art  
Gallery



## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### **Irish Legends Through Indonesian Eyes**

*A collaborative art exhibition blends Ireland's folktales with Indonesia's traditional craftsmanship.*



**Jakarta, 3 June 2024** – Embark on a curated exploration at the Irish Legends Through Indonesian Eyes, where the intricate threads of Indonesian and Irish heritage intertwine in a captivating display of cultural convergence. The art exhibition by the Embassy of Ireland for Indonesia, in collaboration with ISA Art Gallery and Jakarta Land, will run from 27 May to 14 June 2024 at the World Trade Center 2 building in Central Jakarta.

This meticulously crafted exposition serves as a homage to the enduring diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Ireland, established in 1984, and their profound impact on artistic expression.

Within this immersive showcase, visitors will encounter a kaleidoscope of batik creations that seamlessly fuse the rich narratives of Irish folklore with the intricate artistry of Indonesian textile traditions. From the iconic figures of St. Patrick, St. Brigid, and Queen Maeve to the timeless tales of Cu Chulainn and the Children of Lir, each batik masterpiece serves as a canvas for storytelling and cross-cultural exchange.



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At the heart of this exhibition lies the visionary work of **Vania Gracia**, whose award-winning creation of the official Embassy of Ireland batik exemplifies the harmonious synthesis of Irish nature and Indonesian craftsmanship. Collaborating with esteemed artisans such as **Cak Nur** and **Batik Pohon**, her creations transcend mere fabric.

**Vania Gracia** graduated from Institute of Technology Bandung majoring in Craft at the Faculty of Art and Design. Inspiration for her own work especially for this exhibition comes from nature and the Irish national symbol. The design includes Irish shamrock, gorse flower, hummingbird fuchsia, northern lapwing, sessile oak and sessile acorn.

She also incorporated traditional batik patterns from Indonesia heritage, such as *parang*, *kawung*, and *jaya kusuma*. Passionate about creating imaginative textiles and fashion designs, Vania aspires to carve a niche for themselves in the fashion industry. Motivated by a relentless drive for self-improvement, she eagerly embraces opportunities to learn and grow.

Vania intricately weaves Irish folklore characters like Queen Maeve, Aoibh and Lir, Finnegas, and more, imbuing her creations with profound insights and timeless allure. Her meticulously crafted batik patterns on silk not only display technical skill but also resonate with folklore symbolism, elevating her artistry. One of her batik works is inspired by St. Patrick with the pattern reflecting abundance and community.

In Jombang, Mochamad Nurcholis Ekoleksono, known fondly as **Cak Nur**, weaves together tradition and innovation through his passion for batik. With a Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture and a deep reverence for Indonesia's cultural heritage, Cak Nur established CV Charisma Batik Sejahtera (CBS) in 2016. Specializing in Natural Dye Batik, CBS honors centuries-old techniques, crafting each piece with meticulous care and a commitment to sustainability.

**Batik Pohon**, founded by Suroso and Candra Diana R., pioneers natural dye batik crafts. With twelve years of experience, they specialize in hand-drawn batiks using solely Indonesian natural dyes. They actively contribute to the Indonesian Natural Dye Association, conducting workshops to preserve traditional textile craftsmanship nationwide. Despite pandemic challenges, they persist in their artistic pursuits, advocating for cultural-based SMEs in Indonesia.

### **The Exhibition**

The exhibition started with three famous Irish folktales that, like many Indonesian folktales, include animals in the story, followed by three famous and notable legendary characters in Irish culture. **The Children of Lir** is a story of a family bond and love. In Irish legend, King Lir's children—Fionnuala, Aodh, Fiachra, and Conn—were cursed by their jealous stepmother Aoife, transformed into swans for nine centuries. Their



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enchantment led them from Lake Derravaragh to the Sea of Moyle and finally Inis Glora. Despite their avian forms, they retained their voices, informing their father of their plight. Aoife was banished, and after hearing a church bell on Inis Glora, they regained human form, only to perish soon after. Their tale is one of resilience, betrayal, and eventual redemption, a testament to the enduring power of familial love and forgiveness in the face of adversity.

**Fionn and The Salmon of Knowledge** telling a story about the River Boyne that holds a great mystery - the Salmon of Knowledge. It is believed that whoever catches and eats it will gain unparalleled wisdom. After seven years of trying, the poet Finnegas successfully caught it. While cooking it, Fionn, his apprentice, accidentally tasted it. Finnegas noticed the change in Fionn's eyes. From then on Fionn would put his thumb to gain wisdom. Empowered by this wisdom, Fionn became a respected leader in Ireland's Fianna. The legend of the Salmon and Fionn's enlightenment reflects the power of wisdom and self-discovery in Irish mythology.

**The Hero Cú Chulainn**, once Setanta, epitomizes valour. His saga begins at Culann's feast, where he earns the name "Hound of Culann" by defeating a guard dog using his hurley and sliotar (ball). Amid Queen Maeve's invasion, he defends Ulster single-handedly. Despite a curse on Ulster's warriors, he remains steadfast, embodying heroism. This tale is told in Ireland's national epic poem, the *Táin Bó Cuailgne*, the "Cattle Raid of Cooley".

After his glorious act, fate intervenes, and he meets his demise at the hands of avenging foes. Mortally wounded, he defiantly latches onto a stone and dies while standing and holding his sword, symbolizing honour and defiance. Cú Chulainn's enduring legacy embodies bravery and sacrifice, echoing through generations as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit.

**Saint Patrick**, Ireland's Patron Saint, introduced Christianity to the country, using the shamrock to represent the Holy Trinity. Shamrocks are now worn on St. Patrick's Day worldwide. To escape ambush, Patrick transformed into a deer while traveling to preach in Tara. At the Bealtaine festival, he ignited a fire before the High King, showcasing his power. The King, impressed by the fire's magic, converted to Christianity.

Patrick's most famous feat was banishing snakes from Ireland, symbolizing Christianity's victory over darkness. Since then, Ireland has remained free of snakes. This tale, along with his other deeds, cements Patrick's legacy as a pivotal figure in Irish history, celebrated annually on March 17th with festivities around the globe.

**Queen Maeve**, renowned as the formidable warrior queen of Connacht, embodied strength, beauty, and resilience. Her legendary courage and determination were



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celebrated far and wide. Despite boasts from her spouse Ailill of surpassing wealth, including ownership of the famed Brown Bull of Cooley, Maeve orchestrated a daring cattle raid, immortalized in Ireland's national epic poem. Her strategic brilliance and indomitable spirit solidified her legacy.

Maeve's mastery of magic was renowned, casting a temporary curse upon the men of Ulster to level the battlefield. She symbolizes gender equality, inspiring women to embrace their strength. Legend surrounds her resting place atop Knocknarea, where her tomb stands as a testament to her enduring spirit and unwavering resolve, inspiring generations to overcome adversity and achieve greatness.

**Saint Brigid**, honoured as one of Ireland's patron saints, embodies healing, fertility, poetry, and learning. Her feast day on February 1st marks spring's arrival, a time of renewal.

Since birth, Brigid's life has been intertwined with legend. A Druid's prophecy marked her as Ireland's future mother, symbolized by a protective blue cloak. In Bethlehem, she aided Joseph and Mary, receiving a wondrous blue cloak adorned with silver stars.

The cloak reappeared when Brigid sought land for her abbey, expanding miraculously to cover vast acres. Her legacy includes an ever-burning fire at her Kildare abbey, symbolizing divine protection.

Known for compassion, Brigid's story inspires resilience and faith. Her influence endures, shaping Irish culture and folklore, offering hope and inspiration to all.

Step into the curated narrative of the Batik Exhibition, where each motif and stitch reflect a shared heritage and a celebration of artistic ingenuity. Through this curated lens, visitors are invited to explore the intersection of tradition and innovation, forging connections that transcend borders and unite cultures in a tapestry of mutual understanding and appreciation.

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#### **ABOUT Embassy of Ireland for Indonesia**

The Embassy of Ireland for Indonesia (Instagram @irlandiadiindonesia) fostering connections and safeguarding Irish interests. It also engages with the Association of South East Asia Nations. Despite their differences, Ireland and Indonesia share complementary economies. The strengthening of ties benefits citizens and businesses, as seen in growing exports in both directions. The recent launch of the ASEAN Economic Union further enhances trade and investment prospects. Collaboration on global challenges, such as climate change, is vital. Ireland and Indonesia work together through the United Nations to find peaceful solutions. The Embassy provides support to Indonesians visiting Ireland and aids Irish citizens in Indonesia. Details of consular services are available on the website [www.ireland.ie/en/indonesia/jakarta](http://www.ireland.ie/en/indonesia/jakarta)

#### **ABOUT ISA Art Gallery**



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ISA Art Gallery (Instagram @isaart.id) is an art gallery and art consultancy firm based in Jakarta, Indonesia. Deborah Iskandar, the owner and President Director, has invested her network and experience in Southeast Asian art and has an intense passion for Indonesian contemporary art for over two decades. The gallery space at Wisma 46 focuses on exhibiting Southeast Asian artists. ISA Art Gallery also provides art consultancy services, assisting private and corporate clients in sourcing artwork for their desired spaces and maintaining a private viewing space at Jl. Wijaya Timur Raya No. 12. ISA is a one-stop solution to bridging the two worlds of art and design. Online gallery and upcoming projects are available on [www.isaartanddesign.com](http://www.isaartanddesign.com)

#### **ABOUT PT Jakarta Land**

PT Jakarta Land (Instagram @wtc.jakarta) is regarded as the catalyst of the development of Jakarta's central business district. As the owner and manager of The WTC Complex, they're committed to catering for the needs of their tenants by continually investing in infrastructure maintenance and upgrades that meet the highest international standards. Furthermore PT Jakarta Land also believes that art is an integral part of a creative and productive office environment. As part of their long-term commitment to the tenants, PT Jakarta Land is delighted to present an innovative art programme that will bring artworks from both Indonesian and foreign artists, presented in a variety of media, at the public areas of WTC.

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