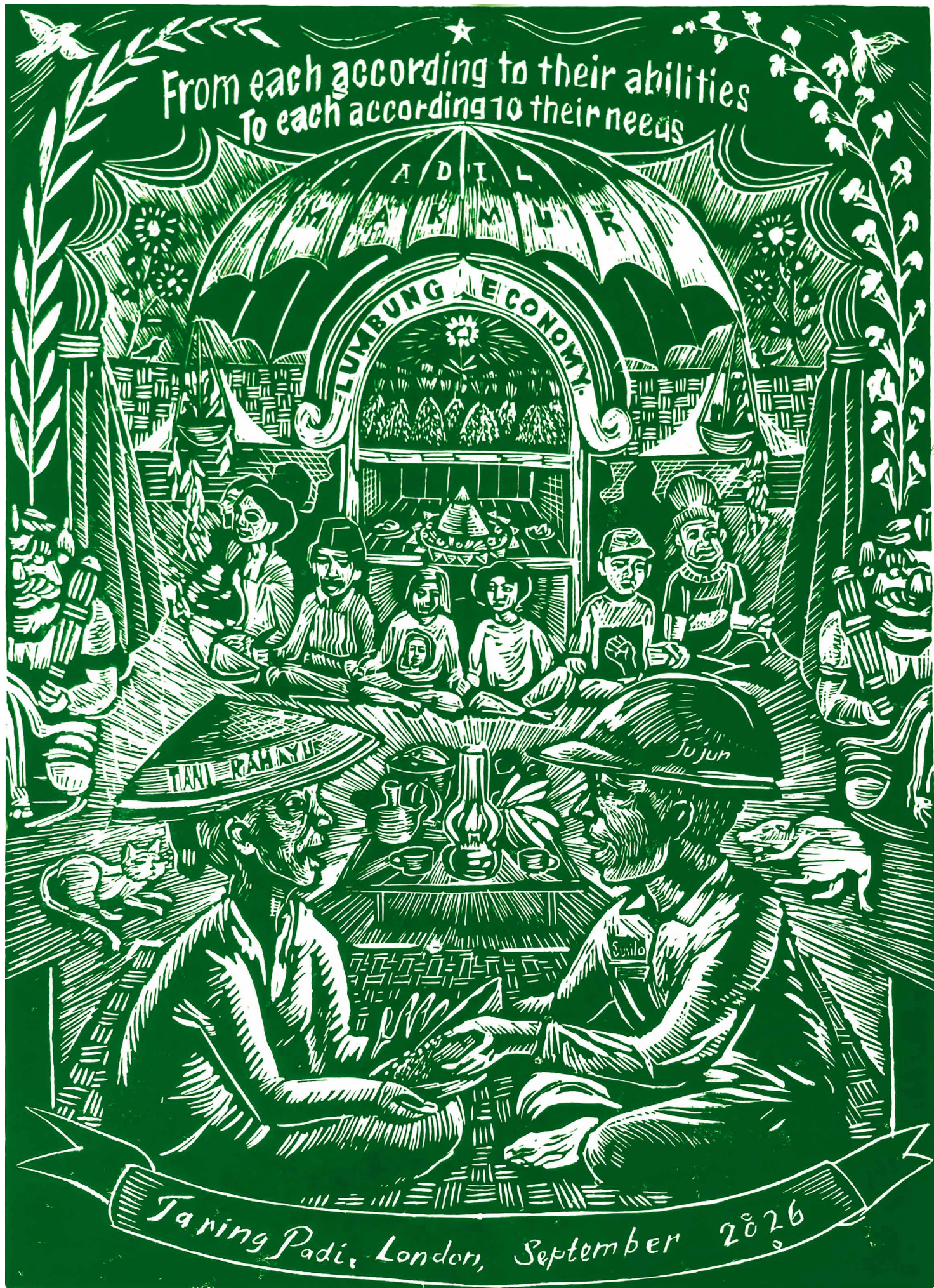


From each according to their abilities
To each according to their needs



Rakyat Pasti Menang *Taring Padi*

Taring Padi is a collective of art workers founded in Yogyakarta in 1998. Working together, they produce large-scale banners, woodcut prints, posters, and cardboard puppets, approaching art as a tool for political education, mobilisation and collective struggle.

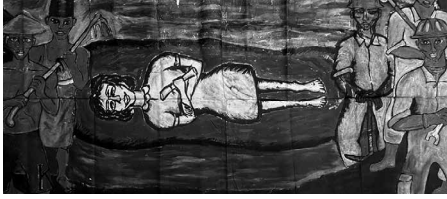
Rakyat Pasti Menang, Bahasa Indonesia for ‘the people united will never be defeated’, is an exhibition organised in three chapters. Chapter 1 focused on their founding moment and their opposition to the Suharto dictatorship. Chapter 2 turns to Taring Padi’s political imagination, centred on two core principles which inform their work: land justice and workers’ rights. The figures of the peasant and worker are recurring themes which appear throughout their practice. They represent the communities that the collective strives to work alongside and organise with.

This solidarity is shaped by a longer political history in Indonesia. By the mid-1960s, the PKI, Indonesia’s Communist Party, had grown into the third-largest communist party in the world, its affiliated unions and cultural wings organising millions across the country. Suharto’s military-backed regime, which was in power from 1967 to 1998, violently crushed this movement. Despite this, Taring Padi’s own structure in their early days was inspired by Lekra (Institute of People’s Culture), the PKI-linked cultural organisation whose members included artists, writers, and teachers across the nation.

The fight for labour rights runs through much of Taring Padi’s practice, calling for the unionisation of factory and domestic workplaces, and addressing discrimination, union-busting and the mistreatment of workers. Rooted in solidarity with working people, Taring Padi regularly take part in protests in Indonesia and internationally. Land justice and food sovereignty are equally central to their practice, with many members coming from farming communities. This commitment also speaks to a present-day Indonesia where land grabbing for tourism and hospitality development remains widespread, alongside large-scale deforestation for palm oil plantations in Sumatra, Kalimantan and West Papua.

While Suharto’s dictatorship came to an end, the economic and political structures that had sustained it remained largely in place. Land stayed concentrated in the hands of the state and corporations, and workers continued to face precarious conditions. Chapter 2 speaks to Taring Padi’s work within these ongoing struggles.

List of works



Marsinah, 1997-1998
Acrylic on canvas | 120 × 290 cm

This banner commemorates Marsinah, a young Indonesian trade unionist, who was forcibly disappeared and murdered in 1993. She had been leading strikes for fair wages at a watch factory in Sidoarjo, East Java and her shocking killing exposed the brutal suppression of labour organising under Suharto's regime. She is depicted lying down in a blood-red grave, her clenched fist holding a scroll, a symbol of the workers' demands she fought for. On either side of her, farmers and factory workers defiantly brandish their tools. For Taring Padi and many others, Marsinah is an enduring symbol of workers' resistance. Taring Padi's own exhibition space in Yogyakarta is named after her.



Rebut Kembali Hak Rakyat Atas Pengembangan Kebudayaan Rakyat, 1999/2022
Reclaim People's Right to a People Oriented Culture
Acrylic on canvas | 295 × 477 cm

This work portrays a festival of the traditional memedi sawah, or scarecrow, in Delanggu, Central Java, the first peasant community which Taring Padi worked with in 1999. The composition features a scarecrow at the centre of a lively village scene with crowds of farmers, artisans, musicians, and activists. The banner reading 'Solidaritas' speaks to the people's demand to return to traditional farming practices and to end the use of toxic pesticides. The work highlights the pressures facing rural communities and their traditions, and positions ecological and collective practice as forms of resistance.



Buruh Bersatu, 2003 (top)
Workers United



Tanah & Petani Merdeka Menghidupi Semua, 2003 (bottom)
Farmers Give Life to All
Woodcut prints on canvas | 270 × 130 cm each

These two works are the first woodcut prints collectively made by Taring Padi, in a similar manner to their large-scale banners. In vivid detail, they portray the violence of capitalist systems and affirm the power of land and people.

Buruh Bersatu calls for the unionisation of urban and industrial workplaces, particularly in factories and domestic work. It addresses issues such as discrimination and union-busting, and highlights the added oppression faced by disabled workers (bottom left) and women (bottom right). It also speaks to the migration of rural populations into cities as cheap labour, who are often unaware of their workers' rights. Marsinah, a trade unionist who was killed in 1993 for her activism, is depicted in the centre right of the print.

Tanah & Petani Merdeka Menghidupi Semua features a monumental farmer standing rooted in a landscape of terraced rice fields, mountains, and rivers. Below him, an abundance of locally grown staples, including corn, tapioca, and taro are shown. Twelve circular vignettes frame the composition, each depicting a facet of the struggle for land justice. The work was made in solidarity with farming communities, and calls for food sovereignty– self-sufficient farming over dependence on imported staples.



Naikkan Upah Buruh, 2008
Raise Workers' Wages
Woodcut print on canvas | 140 × 240 cm

At the centre of this surrealist composition, a female figure representing Mother Earth stretches upward, her body held to the ground by roots. To the left, grotesque figures of industrialists and bureaucrats recline and are guarded by a military tank, their motives laid bare by a sack of money marked with a dollar sign. In the background, workers raise a banner reading 'welfare of workers', set against a landscape of polluting factories and widespread urbanisation. To the right, a defiant worker raises a hammer, poised to strike, representing the collective's refusal to bow to the weight of capital.



Seni Membongkar Tirani, 2012
Art Smashing Tyranny
Acrylic on fabric | 500 × 371 cm

Made on the occasion of the launch of Taring Padi's first book, *Seni Membongkar Tirani*, this monumental banner features the collective's name emblazoned across a radiating orange sky, above their guiding conviction: art smashing tyranny. A vivid red star anchors the composition, flanked by two monumental raised arms – one hand open, and hand clenched into a fist. Across the canvas, a dense crowd of faces fills the banner, rendered in fine detail: workers, farmers, students, and activists standing shoulder to shoulder. The work embodies Taring Padi's vision of the people as the protagonists of political struggle.

Artist Biography

Taring Padi was founded in Yogyakarta in 1998 by a group of progressive art students and activists in response to the sociopolitical upheaval of the Reformasi era. The collective's commitment to anti-militarism and anti-fascism is informed by their experiences under a brutal military dictatorship. Since their founding, Taring Padi's artistic practice has been an integral part of sociopolitical and cultural actions, supporting marginalized communities and various social groups in Indonesia and globally. Their works and acts of solidarity take the form of collective creations such as large-scale banners used in street protests, woodcut prints, posters, cardboard puppets, music and performance. Their artistic mediums are reproducible and can be widely distributed, founded on their collective principle of art as a tool for education, activism, and social transformation.

Recent exhibitions include "People's Liberation" at Sale Docks in Venice in 2026, as well as "Organise – Educate – Agitate" with Cantadora Gallery in Rome in 2025. In 2024, Taring Padi presented the exhibition "Tanah Tumpah Darah / The Land Where We Spill Our Blood to Defend It" at the Griffith University Art Museum in Brisbane, showcasing a banner created in collaboration with the First Nations art collective ProppaNow. They also held a major exhibition at Framer Framed in Amsterdam, "Tanah Merdeka / Liberated Land" (2023), featuring a large banner made in collaboration with the Brazilian Jewish diaspora organization Casa do Povo and the Landless Workers' Movement (MST). In 2022, Taring Padi took part in documenta fifteen, presenting two decades of artefacts related to direct political action. Titled "Bara Solidaritas / Flame of Solidarity", the presentation in Kassel, included over 1,000 cardboard puppets created in collaboration with communities in Indonesia, the Netherlands, Germany, the United States, and Australia, who participated in collective workshops.

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