



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 the collective’s founding and their fight against the Suharto dictatorship. Chapter 2 turned to their commitment to the struggle for land justice and workers’ rights. This final chapter looks at Taring Padi’s recent practice. Over the last few years, the collective have worked increasingly beyond Indonesia, alongside other artist collectives around the world, to build progressive alliances.

On display are two banners from *People’s Justice*, a series of works made between 2023 and 2026. The series takes its name from an earlier banner entitled *People’s Justice*, made in 2002, which addressed the enduring legacy of anti-communist violence and militarism left by the Suharto regime. Its first presentation in Europe, at documenta fifteen in Kassel in 2022, ended in controversy when elements of its imagery were criticised as antisemitic, and the work was taken down. Taring Padi maintained that the imagery was rooted in their experience of state violence in the Suharto era, but apologised for the hurt that was caused. Rather than set the banner aside, the collective began a process of dialogue and repair, asking what the work could become. The first answer came from São Paulo, when Taring Padi were invited by Casa do Povo, a progressive Jewish collective, who in turn connected them with the Landless Workers’ Movement (MST). This partnership produced the first banner in the series. From there, *People’s Justice* grew through collaborations with artist collectives, Indigenous communities, and movements across continents, from Brazil to Australia, the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as at home in Indonesia.

Of the two banners on display, one was made with Sedulur Sikep, a peasant community in Central Java with whom Taring Padi have worked alongside for two decades. The other emerged from dialogue with Indonesian exiles in the Netherlands who fled the Suharto regime’s mass killings of 1965–66. Like every work in the series, both were made collectively. The medium of the large-scale banner allows many hands to contribute to a single canvas, building alliances and unity along the way, guided by Taring Padi’s principle of ‘learning and working together’. The *People’s Justice* series reaffirms their commitment to art as a political tool, emphasising the use of their banners as instruments of protest and collective resistance that carry solidarity across borders.

List of works



De Levende Erfenis van Koloniaal Geweld
Stop Evolusi Kekerasan Kolonial
Stop the Evolution of Colonial Violence
People's Justice series no. 4, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
450 × 450 cm

Conceived for Taring Padi's 2023 exhibition at Framer Framed in Amsterdam, this is the collective's first banner to address Indonesia's colonial history directly. At its centre, a sixteenth-century Dutch ship sails in from the open sea and up a blood-red river. Above it, an iron bridge spans the water, painted with the work's call to stop the evolution of colonial violence. The banner traces the legacy of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia and, in keeping with Taring Padi's pictorial approach, divides the canvas between representations of oppression and resistance. On the left, colonial officers give way to uniformed generals, while tanks, warships, and an excavator tear into the earth. The work comments on how militarism and extractive capitalism took hold under Indonesia's development-driven regimes after its 1945 independence. To the right, communities farm, dance, and feast among scenes of nature and village life, and gather beneath a *People's Justice* banner in solidarity and struggle. In the foreground, a man on the left reaches across the river towards a woman and child. They are a family separated by the Suharto regime's anti-communist killings of 1965–66. The father was exiled to the Netherlands, a country he had fought against during the independence period, while his wife and son remained in Indonesia. Behind them, protests call for a people's tribunal.



Kendeng Lestari, Nyawiji Kanggo Ibu Bumi
Nurture Kendeng, Being One with Mother Earth
People's Justice series no. 5, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
450 × 450 cm

Panji of Kendeng Lestari, 2023
Series of 10
Screen print on fabric with hand colouring
60 × 100 cm each



Rontek of Kendeng Lestari, 2023
Series of 24
Acrylic on canvas
60 × 100 cm each

At the top of the banner, two cupped hands pour water down a mountainside, dividing the canvas between a grey landscape and a lush green forest. Below, a mountain-shaped offering of *ketupat* (rice cakes woven in coconut leaves) rises above a torchlit procession. This is *lamporan*, a night-time march to springs and rice fields to ward off misfortune, where *ketupat* are paraded in the evening around the village to give thanks to Mother Earth. The ritual belongs to Sedulur Sikep, a peasant community in Central Java whom Taring Padi have worked alongside for two decades. Also known as Saminists, they are a non-violent, anti-colonial movement that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. Believing that water and soil are essential to life, they fight to protect the Kendeng Mountains against a state-owned cement factory planned on their land. On the left side of the banner, rendered in grey, police and soldiers are depicted among government buildings and factories, while an officer holds a permit that opens the land to industry. To the right, in green, village life flourishes. In the foreground, villagers in capings (traditional cone-shaped hats) marked 'Reject the Cement Factory' bring their rice-pounding poles down on rifles. Among them, two figures sit with their feet set in blocks of cement, referencing the community's silent sit-in outside the Presidential Palace in Jakarta in 2016.

The *Kendeng Lestari* banner is accompanied by *panji-panji* (pennants) inscribed with Sedulur Sikep's songs and prayers, as well as *rontek* (small banners) created by members of Taring Padi. The combination of these three elements represents Taring Padi's artistic formula in their direct political actions. Protestors carry *panji*, *rontek*, woodcut posters, and cardboard puppets during street demonstrations. In the exhibition space, this assemblage represents the people who gather under their banners.

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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