

## Press Release

*Abdi Alam*

*Alexander Sebastianus*



ISA Art & Design is honored to present *Abdi Alam* part I, by weaver and ethnographer, A. Sebastianus Hartanto. Debuting his studies of forest ruminations as woven Lurik, he recontextualized traditional cloth into sacred guardians of forest throughout Java in response to the climate change that is worsening due to human activities.

### ABOUT ARTIST

A. Sebastianus (b.1995) was born and raised by Javanese & Manado-Chinese parents. He grew up during a pivotal cultural change of Westernization and Modernization in Indonesia. Thus, allowing the duality of cultural values to struggle within coexistence, one of which is the value of “Art/Kunst”.

Using experiential ethnography, A. Sebastianus studied weaving as an inquiry to understand and reclaim indigenous values in the midst of the contemporary. In his manifesto, “There is no word for art in Javanese, yet there is Sani (not Seni), which is a practice of search, unknowing and unmaking, a becoming” (2018). Mastering the art of weaving in 2017, A. Sebastianus has a vision to continue this practice, which the final product may not be painting, performance or an exhibition, but rather as an artifact, a ritual or a pilgrimage.

A. Sebastianus recognition includes the William Daley Award for Excellence in Art History and a Craft Field (2017), and the Massachusetts College of Art & Design: Fiber Arts Departmental Honors (2018).

### EXHIBITION

*Abdi Alam* pt.I exhibits remnants of a weaver’s forest ruminations during his pilgrimage at Merubetiri National Park and Gunung Gede Pangrango in 2017 and 2021, respectively . In the artist’s words, “[the] abandonment of roots,” “deforestation of a family,” as well as “[the] inevitable shedding of change,” are all epiphanies from his pilgrimage, represented throughout his cyanotype prints and woven studies. “A line represents a single tree, a woven cloth embodies a whole forest.”

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The traditional lurik weaving motif, *telupat*, symbolizes the sacred barrier worn by the loyal servant to protect the royal palace. Abdi Hutan (2021 - end) is an ongoing installation that resacralize lurik weavings as forest guardians at the age of the Anthropocene. Wrapped and armored in hues of Indigofera, trees are protected and blessed from illegal loggers at the borders of an endangered forest.

From the 17th of August onwards, the pilot of this exhibition, Abdi Alam pt.I, will be installed in ISA Art Incubator Gallery at Omah Budoyo, Jalan Karangajen MGIII/793, Mergangsan, DIY, 55153. It's a home to a collective of the best local artists, designers, and craftsmen. A. Sebastianus's exhibition will dot the Javanese landscape, expanding throughout several forest conservators across Java, starting with Merubetiri National Park.

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