



## Rudi Mantofani

*DALAM BAYANGAN (IN THE SHADOW)*

Estimate 500,000 – 700,000 HKD ▼ **LOT SOLD.** 1,000,000 HKD

### DETAILS & CATALOGUING

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Rudi Mantofani

B. 1973

*DALAM BAYANGAN (IN THE SHADOW)*

Signed twice, inscribed and dated 2009-2012 on the reverse

Acrylic on canvas

200 by 200 cm; 78 by 78 in.



## MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART EVENING SALE

04 OCTOBER 2015 | 5:00 PM HKT  
HONG KONG

CATALOGUE NOTE

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**I** “ have never elsewhere had such an opportunity to observe how much more beautiful reflection is than what we call reality. The sky, and the clustering foliage on either hand, and the effect of sunlight as it found its way through the shade, giving lightsome hues in contrast with the quiet depth of the prevailing tints, —all these seemed unsurpassably beautiful when beheld in upper air. But on gazing downward, there they were, the same even to the minutest particular, yet arrayed in ideal beauty, which satisfied the spirit incomparably more than the actual scene. I am half convinced that the reflection is indeed the reality, the real thing which Nature imperfectly images to our grosser sense. At any rate, the disembodied shadow is nearest to the soul.”

Nathaniel Hawthorne, THE AMERICAN NOTE-BOOKS, VOLUME II

There are those who see the world through rose-tinted glasses, yet the truth may be the opposite of what they see. Sometimes reality is colour-blind, veiled in nuances of grey, black and white. Rudi Mantofani's iconic landscape series provoke the mind with the blurry line between the truth and the imagined. When a reflection appears more real than reality, what does it mean? While Mantofani uses simple and easily recognisable imagery, in the present work this enigma comes from their unexpected combinations, which question the viewer's interpretations of everyday occurrences. The image of trees appears frequently throughout Mantofani's art, and in the present composition it occupies a large portion of the canvas, as a grove perfectly lines a riverbank while its corresponding reflection is mirrored symmetrically on the glass-like surface of the running brook. The unexpected juxtaposition, however, comes from the contrast between the muted black and white tones of the trees and surroundings of the world above and the rich lush greens of their reflection underneath.

It provokes the viewer to ponder upon a world that was devoid of color, where its reflection is more beautiful than reality, and perhaps dare to wonder if the world as we know it has ceased to exist. First conceived in 2009, it took the artist four years to perfect the present painting, titled *Dalam Bayangan (In the Shadow)*. A notorious perfectionist, Mantofani continuously and meticulously lavished the painting with detail after detail before declaring it complete. His supreme skill as a painter enabled him to expertly maneuver this complex composition and to make this mysterious vista both magical and believable.

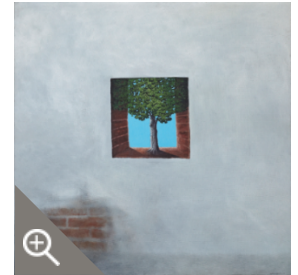
It is this poetic and soulful quality that makes his landscapes one of Mantofani's most popular and celebrated images. Like René Magritte, who was a genius at presenting subjects that are unsettling but beautiful, Mantofani often challenges the natural order of things and may even be one of the most intellectual artists expressing ideas and enigmas through visual language today. The evocation of colour and light coerce viewers to see the work as a reconciliation of opposites: dream and reality, past and present, perception and truth. The title of the present work hints at the artist's thoughts. Mantofani subtly and implicitly brings attention to what is found in the shadows, and what stands out amongst black and white. In the context of the painting, green, the reflection, takes precedence over black and white, the reality. Perception, then, can be more important than reality because in essence, perception is manageable and changeable, and it has the power to influence thought, action and ultimately outcome.

Mantofani's passion and ideal to live in a better world are expressed through pictorial narrative that cleverly incorporates his own Minangkabau traditions and affinity with nature. His landscapes represent a utopian world which has been disturbed by something inexplicable. However, regardless of the state of the world, how we see it can be the first step into changing it. For Mantofani, our humanity begins and ends with the choices we make.



**FIG. 1**

RUDI MANTOFANI, *Bayangan Merah (Red Shadow)*, 2009, Sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong Lot 41, 5 October 2013 for USD 469,404



**FIG. 2**

RUDI MANTOFANI, *Langit Yang Hilang (The Sky that Disappeared)*, 2005, Sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong, Lot 283, 6 April 2014 for USD 45,124



**FIG. 3**

RUDI MANTOFANI, *Pohonpohon Langit*, 2005-2007, Sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong, Lot 868, 6 October 2008 for USD 388,514



**FIG. 4**

RUDI MANTOFANI, *Bayangan Terang (Bright Shadow)*, 2005-2010, Sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong, Lot 72, 4 October 2010 for USD 141,783