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VANISHING ART FORM CAPTURED IN HORNIMAN PHOTO EXHIBITION

Vibrant portraits of one of the last remaining nomadic theatre troupes in Indonesia are on display at the Horniman Museum in Gardens from Saturday 3 October, showing performers in traditional costumes of Ketoprak – a type of Javanese theatre – posing in modern-day settings.

Project Tobong captures the Ketoprak Tobong Kelana Bakti Budaya, a troupe currently based in Yogyakarta, Java, in a series of constructed photographs showing its performers removed from their original context and placed in a new one.

British artist Helen Marshall and Indonesian artist Risang Yuwono worked with this community of travelling players over an intensive period, for the collaborative photographic project supported by Arts Council England and the British Council.

Helen Marshall says: 'With the spread of modern media, interest in traditional storytelling has been eroded and audiences for Ketoprak are dwindling. Project Tobong explores the players' predicament by presenting a series of living pictures which use the language of Ketoprak (the costumes and postures of performance) to reference its own threatened status. This project brings a unique view of a vanishing art form and traditional community to a new audience.'

Ketoprak troupes perform traditional musical dramas through spoken soliloquy, dialogue and singing, using as their stage the tobong – a portable bamboo structure. The stories, drawn from Javanese history and romances, are performed in costumes evocative of those worn by legendary figures from centuries gone by.

Alongside Project Tobong, the Horniman will be displaying an Indonesian mask – decorated with peacock feathers and worn during the traditional rejog dance. The mask has been in the Horniman's anthropology collection since 1965 and will be accompanied by film and photographs of a rejog performance in Ponorogo, East Java taken by Helen Marshall earlier this year.

Project Tobong, and the rejog mask, can be seen from Sunday 3 October to Saturday 10 April 2015. Entry to the exhibition is free.

Ends

Image attached - 12. THE AIRPORT, Helen Marshall & Risang Yuwono, Project Tobong, MEDIA / INNOVA Semi-Matt Giclée (1200 x 800mm), 2012

Notes to Editors:

- **Project Tobong** is supported by Arts Council England and the British Council and has been presented at SOAS University of London and co-hosted with ARTi UK as part of Indonesia Kontemporer 2012. The first photographs were presented at iCAN in Indonesia January 2013. The second stage of the project was hosted in London at Gasworks. Since then the project has been represented at the Rich Mix, Photovoice PICS Festival, Delhi Photo Festival 2013 and the Kuala Lumpur Photo Awards 2014. For the final stage of the project two exhibitions have been held in the UK, at Open Eye Gallery in Liverpool and at the Horniman. See www.projecttobong.com for more information.
- **Helen Marshall** is a British artist who often uses photography as her medium and collaborations in her practice. Further information about Helen and her work can be found at www.helenmarshall.co.uk.
- **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, anthropology, music and an acclaimed aquarium. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from food and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. Our visitors come time and again to participate in our exciting range of events and activities, sample the tasty delights from our popular cafe, and shop for interesting gifts in our gift shop. We also make our spaces available for hire including our stunning Grade II listed Victorian Conservatory built in 1894 and modern Gardens Pavilion.
- The Horniman Museum and Gardens is core-funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its Major partner museums.
- **Opening times and admission.** The Horniman Museum is open daily 10.30am-5.30pm, except 24 - 26 December, when it is closed. The Gardens open at 7.15am Monday to Saturday and 8.00am on Sunday and Bank Holidays, and close at sunset. Entry to the Museum and Gardens is free but charges apply for the Aquarium and some special exhibitions and events. Horniman Members go free – www.horniman.ac.uk/members.
- **Access.** The Museum and the Gardens are both wheelchair and pushchair friendly with accessible toilets. Limited on-site parking is available for disabled visitors – call 020 8699 1872.
- **Travel.** The Horniman is situated on the South Circular Road (A205) in Forest Hill, London. It can be reached easily by train to Forest Hill from Highbury and Islington, Whitechapel and Canada Water (on the London Overground line), London Bridge (15 minutes), London Victoria, Clapham Junction and East Croydon, and by local buses (176, 185, 197, 356, P4).