

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Asian monsters set to cleanse Hobart

Awe-inspiring demon-like sculptures will take to Hobart's streets as part of the Museum of Old and New Art's iconic Dark Mofo festival this June.

These monsters, called *ogoh-ogoh*, are large and colourful creations traditionally paraded through Balinese villages before being burned in a cleansing ritual that restores the natural balance between the 'seen' and 'unseen' worlds of Balinese Hinduism at the start of the new year. This year, they have come to Hobart for the Winter solstice.

The University of Tasmania has commissioned three Balinese artists (Ida Bagus Oka, Ida Bagus Antara and Komang Sedana Putra) to create two traditional guardian monsters to be brought to Hobart as part of the *ogoh-ogoh* project for Dark Mofo.

Now in residence at the Tasmanian College of the Arts (TCotA), the artists are creating Tasmania's own *ogoh-ogoh*, assisted by local artist Tristan Stowards and volunteer TCotA students. Once finished, the Tassie *ogoh-ogoh* will join its Balinese companions at Dark Mofo's new festival precinct, Dark Park at Macquarie Point, from Friday 12 June, 2015.

The Tasmanian community is invited to visit the *ogoh-ogoh* at Dark Park, and in a Tasmanian twist on this Balinese ritual, as part of the 'Purging' ceremony can write down their fears, worries and darkest thoughts, to be placed inside the Tasmanian *ogoh-ogoh*.

In the early evening on Sunday 21 June, all three *ogoh-ogoh* will lead the longest night's procession from Dark Park over to the City of Hobart Dark Mofo Winter Feast site at Princes Wharf for the 'Burning', where the Tasmanian *ogoh-ogoh* will be burned on a ceremonial pyre. Dancers will weave through the procession and choral performers from the Festival of Voices will add vocal magic.

Dr Kaz Ross, lecturer in Asian Studies, said that the project is aimed at increasing awareness of Asian cultures and highlights the importance of engagement with Asia.

"This project is important because it shows that people jump at the chance to learn about Asia and participate in Asia related activities. Putting a Tasmanian twist to this Indonesian tradition is a great way of demonstrating the value of cultural collaboration."

Three Indonesian artists have come to Tasmania for the event: Ida Bagus Oka, Ida Bagus Antara and Komang Sedana Putra.

The University's ogoh-ogoh project provides many opportunities for students of all ages to learn about Balinese culture, with more than 200 primary school students participating in workshops so far and around 70 high school students set to participate through the TCoTA award-winning *Machines* program.

Director of the TCoTA Art Program, Mr John Vella, said the project was an excellent educational opportunity, for both University-level and school-aged students.

"This will give participants a chance to be creative, learn about Balinese culture, and to play an important role in Tasmania's own cultural event, Dark Mofo. This event is a wonderful example of collaboration; with Indonesia, with Mona, and with our local community. The project will not only be illuminating culturally, it will be visually spectacular."

The procession leading to the Burning ceremony (Sunday 21 June) is an opportunity for the whole community to help cleanse Tasmania by either helping to carry a monster or by taking part in the noisy procession.

Cas Charles, an expert on ogoh-ogoh, says that traditionally the monsters were made with wire, bamboo and papier-mache but here in Hobart, anything goes.

"Monsters made of boxes, cardboard, and masks, as well as ready-made monsters, are all welcome in the procession. And we need people to bring horns, whistles, posts and pans – the more noise the better – we need to attract Tasmania's bad energies to the ogoh-ogoh for the burning. Come and join the monster squad," she said.

People can help carry the monster to the burning site or just join the procession crowd. Participants are encouraged to wear black and be prepared to make lots of noise, as ogoh-ogoh tradition dictates. People can register their interest via the [ogoh-ogoh page](#) on the University's website.

The ogoh-ogoh project is supported by the University's 125 Anniversary, the Museum of Old and New Art, the Asia Institute Tasmania and Katama Global.

For more information on the project, please visit: <http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/ogoh-ogoh-at-dark-mofo>

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