



Batik: The Heritage of Indonesia

by Tri Purnajaya

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The 2008 world tour of the *Batik:Heritage of Indonesia* came to New Zealand in April. The highlight of the tour was a *batik* fashion show at Auckland's Hyatt Hotel on 24 April.

Launched by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the tour provided an opportunity for New Zealanders to admire the creation of Indonesia's modern and elegant *batik kebaya* blouses by a renowned *batik* designer, Adjie Notonegoro.

The show was hosted by the Indonesian Ambassador, HE Amris Hassan and his wife Mrs Afi Shamara. Taking to the catwalk were ten stunning models from Indonesia.

New Zealand's leading fashion designer, Kevin Berkahn, lent his support to the show. Beyond Exposition, Garuda and ITS were among the strong line of corporate sponsors.

Among the 300 invited guests were Minister of Education Hon. Chris Carter, other members of Parliament and celebrities from the local fashion, design and textile community.

In his welcoming address, the Indonesian Ambassador declared that the fashion show was a gift to the New Zealand people to celebrate fifty years of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and New Zealand. He hoped that the show would foster bilateral friendships through cultural understanding and people-to-people contacts, besides showcasing *batik* as an intricate part of the Indonesian fashion.

In reply, Mr Carter reiterated the excellent bilateral relations enjoyed by the two countries. He acknowledged that the art of *batik* had been perfected in Indonesia, and he hoped that Adjie's visit would encourage New Zealand designers to look to the east for inspiration.

That evening, a dress donated by Adjie was auctioned for charity, fetching \$1500 for the New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation. At the close of the show, Adjie received a standing ovation.

The staff of the Indonesian Embassy worked long hours to ensure the fashion show was an astounding success. It was heart-warming to learn that the show had received extensive coverage from the major television channels, TV1 and TV3, and a raving review in Auckland's leading newspaper, The NZ Herald.

Prior to the fashion show, Adjie met with twenty fashion retailers in the Newmarket suburb. Cameron Brewer, Chair of the Newmarket Fashion Retailers Association, expressed his hope that Adjie's visit would open up opportunities for cooperation between Indonesia and New Zealand's fashion industry.

After the show, some members of the tour group flew to Wellington to join the Ambassador and his sixty invited guests for an afternoon tea. They once again dazzled the crowd with a spectacular fashion parade.