

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Malay Matchlock Gun (Istinggar)

Probably Indonesia, 18th or early 19th century

169 cm long

Wood and cast brass

Stock no.: A3720

Also known as the *satingar* or *padri* in Dutch sources, the *istinggar* is a long gun with matchlock mechanism. The word '*istinggar*' may derive from the Portuguese *espingarda* ['shotgun'].¹ The buttstock is short with a lobed heel, reminiscent of Japanese matchlock weapons. It has a long, heavy barrel which would have to be supported by a rest when used. They do not have a ramrod, rather, the butts were stomped on the ground after firing.²

An *istinggar* in the Royal Armouries, Leeds (no. [XXVIF.163](#)), is dated to 18th century, Malaysia. Another similar example is in the [Muzium Warisan Melayu](#) (Malay Heritage Museum) in Selangor, and attributed to the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra.

A gold-mounted Malayan matchlock gun, ca. 1700, is in the Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait.³ Another in the Westenenk Collection was published by J. E. Jasper in 1930.⁴

Several examples are held in collections in the Netherlands, likely collected during Dutch intervention during the Minangkabau War in the early 19th century, including the Nationaal Museum van

Wereldculturen (nos. [TM-886-52](#), [WM-19311](#)) and the Museon Omniversum (nos. [7040](#), [7868](#)).

- [1] Blackmore, Howard L. *Guns and Rifles of the World*. New York: Viking Press, 1965, p. 16.
- [2] Gardner, G. B. *Keris and Other Malay Weapons*. Singapore: Progressive Publishing Company, 1936, pp. 97–99.
- [3] Elgood, Robert. *Firearms of the Islamic World*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1995, pp. 188–189, cat. 129.
- [4] Jasper, J. E. *Inlandsche Kunstnijverheid In Nederlands Indië*, vol. 5. The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1930.