" BAGIAN DOKUMENTASI DEWAN KESENIAN JAKARTA CIKINI RAYA 73, JAKARTA "

	KOMPAS		YUDHA		MERDEKA		POS KOTA		HALUAN		MUTIARA
	PR.BAND		A.B.		BISNIS IN.		WASPADA		PRIORITAS		
	B.BUANA		PELITA		S.KARYA		S.PAGI		S.PEMBARUAN		H.TERBIT
	H A R I :				TGL :				HAL :		NO :

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Winds of contention blow through Jakarta art world

By Margaret Agusta

JAKARTA (JP): What seemed to be a "tempest in a teacup" is threatening to develop into a fullfledged huricane in Jakarta's art circles.

The clouds actually began gathering on the fine arts horizon around 10 years ago with the emergence of the *Seni Rupa Baru* (new arts) movement. However, it was not until the June 15 opening of the *Pasar Raya Dunia Fantasi* exhibition at the main exhibit hall at the Ismail Marzuki art center on Jl. Cikini, Central Jakarta, that the storm really began to take on appreciable dimensions.

The exhibition, which has been described by visitors as almost everything from 'interesting' to 'confrontative' and 'artistic anarchy,' is on through June 30.

The *Seni Rupa Baru* movement has been slow in developing. After controversial presentations in the late 1970s the group seemed to die away. Not much was heard from them at all, except a dubious report that the group had dissolved in the early 1980s. Apparently there was just a lull in the storm as the winds of contention are blowing at full speed now.

The group proclaims in large posters placed just outside the exhibition hall that the "freedom art" they are advocating is based on their awareness that "a redefinition of the fine arts is required." They announce their main principle as being "the arts are a plurality that are based in a variety of frames of references."

They further maintain that "the definition of fine arts in use today allows for only painting, sculpture and graphics." They are of the opinion that this view needs changing, and that "the artists, as well as the critics, involved in Indonesia's modern art movement have in all truth, become blind and conceive that the modern arts — painting, sculpture and graphics — are the only possible art. Whatever is outside of that is not art."

Their posted manifesto then declares that "The thinking on the fine arts in Indonesia has gone bankrupt." They therefore demand that a new definition of art be sought to include what they term as "daily art," or the objects that the general public surround themselves with, such as stickers, T-shirts, posters and comics.

The exhibition, both outside and inside Ruang Pameran Utama, at the art center is clearly based on the assumption that these things are indeed art.

A several-meter-high cut out of a well-formed female diarobing, with the words *sabar dong* (patience please) inscribed below, greets people outside the hall. Inside the exhibition site one finds out that the brightly colored cut-out is based on a sticker that is currently popular in the city.

The huge hall is filled with displays of stickers, posters and huge reproductions of comic strips; and stacked high with empty soft-drink cans, dummy boxes of laundry detergent and crowded with rows of mannequins swathed in garishly colored textiles, or garbed in radically styled clothing. The total effect is the feeling one is having a bad dream in a deranged department store.

Confrontive

"Oh I agree that this is art, in the sense that a beautiful woman, or a building have aesthetic points," Adi Munardi, a painter who viewed the show said. "Fine art is not a narrow concept, but that doesn't mean that we can do just any old thing and call it art. What we do has got to be good."

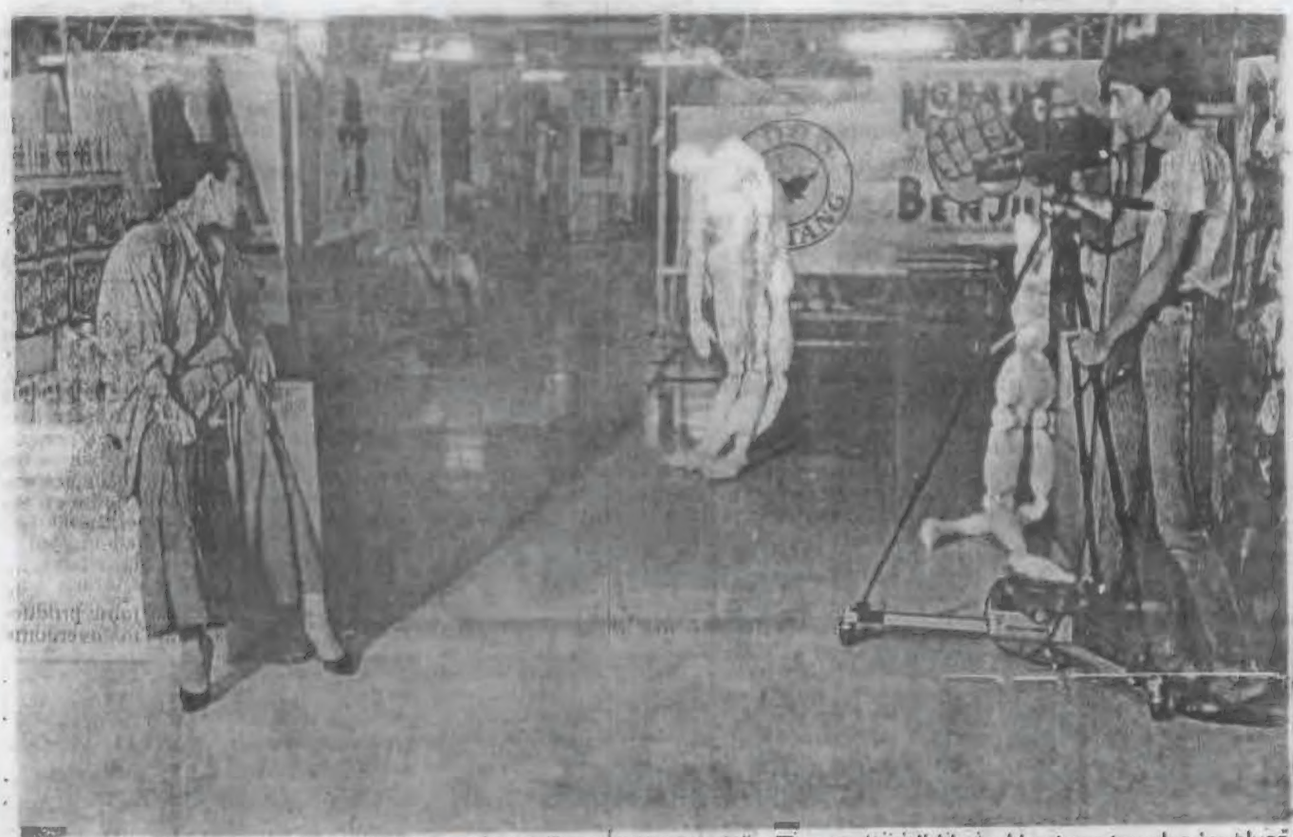
Adi was of the opinion that, "A work of art is good if you can interact with it. It shouldn't be confrontive, so that the viewer feels like he is being force fed. Art is something you voluntarily partake of. Their (the new art movement) view of art is really primitive," he said.

"Ten years ago their way of expressing their concepts was better, now this exhibi-

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The current *Pasar Raya Dunia Fantasi* multi-media exhibition at the Taman Ismail Marzuki art center also involves video documentation. *(JP/Erik Sumarauw)*

tion just doesn't work. It hasn't been well done."

Arsono, a noted sculptor and a member of the Jakarta Arts Council agreed somewhat. He felt that the Seni Rupa Baru movement's latest exhibition "is disappointing. They didn't deal effectively with the space. The lighting isn't effective. The stickers lost their artistic element at their hands."

"I had hoped to see a creation as a creation. Their concept is clearly going to become a boomerang for them," he said.

Adi Munardi then said, Empty cans make the most racket." And Arsono replied, Yeah, they say a lot, but didn't do much at all."

Leon Agusta, secretary for the Jakarta Arts Council commented, "They talk about freeing art, but they are actually limiting it."

In fact it appears that in their attempt to redefine what should be considered art the Seni Rupa Baru movement has said very little about how the form of art currently dubbed the "high arts," which encompasses all the works of some of the world's finest artists should be dealt with.

Accusation

Their accusation that the current Indonesian art scene is elitist and caters to a specific segment of society rather than communicating with the general public is perhaps valid, but definitely overstated. The *Seni Rupa Baru* movement doesn't seem to leave much room for the idea that just maybe there is a series of levels in the arts and in the concept of aesthetics. Their exhibition and their manifesto convey a picture that is far too black and white. There are lots of shades of grey and a rainbow of other colors in aesthetic and artistic concepts.

Their accusation that the current generation of art critics in Indonesia is imposing too narrow an aesthetic view on artists and the general public has some foundation, but on the other and, there must be some criteria for determining what has aesthetic and conceptual value, and to what extent beyond himself and the work of art. They have yet to touch on this issue in either their manifesto or their exhibition, particularly not in the exhibition

Aesthetics

If one starts with the very basic aesthetic concepts outlined by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgement* (1790), the basis for much modern thinking about the arts, then the *Seni Rupa Baru* movement's declaration that the everyday objects people use to brighten their environment are "art" seems valid. Kant, at a very basic level described aesthetic judgements as," of a different class from cognitive judgement and do not merely differ in degree of clarity. They are therefore subjective judgements by definition. They are defined as the class of judgements which refer to our satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the perception of things."

On this very basic level the exhibition now on at the Taman Ismail Marzuki art center can be defined as presenting art. There is lots of color and form, although the space, particularly the ceiling and flour space, is inadequately used and the lighting is very poor, with the slide show apparently only operative a small part of the time.

There are posters parodying advertisements and government slogans. There are all kinds of packaging designs and indeed fashions and textiles, everything one would expect to find in a supermarket or department store or a small roadside kiosk. And yet in terms of art and aesthetics as not merely a pleasant experience, but also as an expanding one, there definitely seems to be something lacking

A given work provides a viewer the opportunity to expand.