

# RUANG PER RUANG

## SPACED OUT IN JOGJA

by Michelle Chin

Yogyakarta is simultaneously a centre of traditional Javanese culture and contemporary Indonesian art. Full gamelan ensembles create soundscapes from the past, classical and contemporary Javanese albums exhibit beautiful control and precision, while (choreic puppet performances keep faces and voices contained. It is as if the city itself has an extraordinary life force and pulsating energy.

Contemporary art has grown in the fertile soil of Yogyakarta's sophisticated culture. The Indonesian Institute of Arts (ISI Yogyakarta) is an important centre of arts and Yogyakarta itself has grown to cater to an important school of artists.

and contemporary art in Indonesia.

The Ruang per Ruang project

a Yogyakarta showcases contemporary art in an alternative space.

According to George Indygich,

one of the original participants of

the first Ruang per Ruang project

held in 2002, "The Ruang per

Ruang project was a cheeky little

idea that decided it was bigger

than its nameplate. So it burst

out of our heads and into our

lives. In 2002, Sabharwal became

its first artist, each room in the

house of the many of its artists,

each form and future for space

to its artistic manifestations.

These artists were selected to

respond to an area within the confines of Sabharwal. Responses ranged

from the emotional to the literal, sometimes in contrast, but all of them

revolved around the idea of a lantern-filled work, a repetitive task, a

spiral dance, a talking table and a talking hallway were the resulting

manifestations of abstract reactions to the space assigned.

"Responses elicited from visitors to Sabharwal, by their height,

depth, or follow students, ranged from mild bewilderment to

unbridled delight. Many came to ponder on the house's abstract

energy, interacting with – and in doing so unknowingly adhering to

its constantly shifting dynamics. Others just came to chat, laugh and

drink tea."

The current project and exhibition is the second time that the

Ruang per Ruang project has been held in Yogyakarta. In September

November 2004, a focus on the strong traditions of Yogyakarta played host to yet another beautiful exploration of space. The relationship between the private and the public, face of the dwelling, its physical and its spatial dimensions, its ability to inspire and create were important considerations as five artists revealed their art works.

The resulting exhibition features the work of 11 young Indonesian artists who created art works in response to the environment in and around the house. The art works are best described as "indoor outdoor art" – mixed media sculptures and installations, a wall mural, a

traditional Javanese chess game incorporating bamboo cane sculptures, and video art. The linkages between the traditional architecture of this Javanese jogja house and the contemporary art works that the artists created is particularly striking. It is also

interesting to see how the artists coped with the challenge of incorporating the existing art works on display at the house – paintings, sculptures, posters and more furniture – into their own creations.

The exhibition will be held between 17 December 2004 to 26 January 2005 at Michelle Chin's house at Jalan JI Pajajaran No 63, Suren, Kerucil, Yogyakarta in the vicinity of the Indonesian Institute of the Arts campus. For directions to the house, please contact Sabharwal Made Awar at 081 8776506 or Michelle Chin at 081 738839 or email: michellechin@cc.uin-suka.ac.id.

The exhibition will be opened by Dr. Gai Hong Zhen on Monday 13 December 2004 at 6.30pm, with special guests including Dr. Faridul Hossain, Chairman, Singapore Art Museum and Melissa Chee (Director, GFTSingapore 2005), Participating Artists: Arya Pandjito, Soedjono, Satrio Widiyanto, Dinar Cakra Jati Suparto, I Made Awar, Agi, I Made Datta Surodharmo, I Made Widya Djayanti (Kumpung), Ika Raga, Prita Winandana (Gardis), Nur Alam, Rani Widada, Wina A Bayana, Nani Juliana.



November 2004: Sabharwal House, Yogyakarta. Curated by Michelle Chin.

Image: Michelle Chin

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