

## Features: The Arts

# Old and new combine artist's powerfully symbolic sculptures

By R. Fadjri

YOGYAKARTA (JP): Hedi Hariyanto is famous for using second-hand objects in his installation works. The objects are integrated through simple formations — iron ingots and pieces of wood are among the elements in his works — which dominate his two installation works now on exhibit at Cemeti Gallery until March 30.

The works of this graduate of the ISI School of Fine Arts in Yogyakarta tend to represent constructions. Hedi, 33, is a sculptor of the younger generation to be reckoned with. His sculptures and installation works depart from the idea of conflicts between natural and artificial elements, which are realized by the use of natural materials (stones or wood) and man-made materials (iron, plastic, polyester, or a combination of used products). For Hedi, nat-

ural materials are a symbol of old values, while man-made materials denote new values. The meeting of natural and artificial materials is a symbol of the conflicts in social life.

His work *Dinner*, for example, consists of a wooden dining table measuring two meters by one meter. The table is supported by four iron legs. On it the dinner ware is displayed together with a variety of edibles, a pair of transparent plastic spoons and a fork on transparent glass covered with a map of Indonesia in the corner, a soft drink can, a bowl of water with two small fish.

Hedi explores the table surface by letting his wild

imagination wander in non-functional forms. Iron sticks are screwed into the table or on the table sides in the form of handles. There are also square forms of transparent fiberglass which carry red, blue and yellow clods, and red chilies caught in the center of another square. It seems that he wishes to express cynicism on monopolistic practices in certain commodities.

The largest chair is made of iron wire, reminding us of the vanity of a powerful authority. In front of the chair a pistol is placed with a plastic hose around it containing a blood-colored liquid. There are three other small chairs made of wood and iron wire that imply fragility.

All of the objects or groups of objects in this work seem to symbolize the greed-

ness of people enjoying the power as reflected by the large chair. All is "gobbled down", from big objects to the small fish in the bowl. It reminds us of conglomerates which take everything, upstream to downstream, while being foster fathers to children in possession of the insignificant. In short, a dinner reflecting greed.

True to the narrative characteristic of installation art, Hedi Hariyanto fills his work with the problems of everyday people. A pistol, a chair, a table are symbols of power, greed and violence. Contemporary art, which justifies the use of any medium, has given more latitude to artists to use any language of expression to narrow the communication gap between the artist's ideas and the public's perception.

Here the arts is no longer

indifferent to collective matters. The artist's sensitivity is no longer limited to esthetic phenomena, but divided into collective phenomena to be shared with the public. It must be noted, however, that often the symbols appearing in an installation work widen the communication gap due to their abundance and vagueness.

In his second work *The oppressor and the oppressed*, Hedi hangs ten pieces of sharpened wood as if penetrating the square objects in the middle. There is a piece of wood full of nails, another with transparent fiberglass containing something inside, and still another is decorated with a planted triangular iron bar. Although the pieces of sharpened wood give an unstable impression, Hedi has provided a long iron bar which forms a solid construction frame. In this work Hedi is absorbed with forms which have a tendency to bring out esthetic elements.

Through this work Hedi wishes to convey that the little people may be helpless but they are also capable of individual or collective violence as a result of pressures in their environment. The widening gap between the rich and the poor has given rise to social envy which can lead to social unrest. The sharpened pieces of wood can at any time thrust forward and destroy anyone underneath. Social riots based on prejudice can explode as soon as somebody