

NATIONAL

■ FPI

Biennale without Anjas

A work of art has been withdrawn from a prestigious art exhibition. Accused of containing pornography, the matter has now become a legal issue.

A BOARD measuring 5 x 6 meters stood upright in a corner of the East Museum room of Bank Indonesia, Jakarta, on Friday last week. Its surface was entirely white without any picture whatsoever. Last Tuesday the exhibition's committee had already removed the display originally mounted there.

It was the artist Agus Suwage who compiled the half-naked pose of soap opera star Anjasmara and the beautiful model Isabelle Yahya. This photographic work of Davy Linggar was combined with a painting by Agus, depicting the ambience of a virgin forest plus various other objects. Agus's display titled *Pinkswing Park* was the "star" of the CP Biennale II exhibition.

But this was not just some minor exhibition. Conceived by the CP Foundation, CP Biennale II is an internationally recognized exhibition held once every two years which exhibits selected works chosen through a tight screening process. The curators for this year's Biennale are Jim Supangkat, Marco Kusumawijaya, Asmudjo Jono Irianto and guest curator Shin YinYang.

But then the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and others started making a fuss about the exhibition. On Thursday last week, around 200 FPI members arrived at the exhibition in the Bank Indonesia gallery in the Beos area of Central Jakarta demanding the removal of Agus's work. FPI Commander Ustad Jafar Sidik admitted to having reported their action to police the day before. According to Rozak, one of the exhibition's security guards, seven FPI representatives were received by the museum's manager while the remainder demonstrated outside the building.

Jafar added that as well as being received by the museum's building manager, also present were Taman Sari subdistrict staff, the Taman Sari Sector Police and the organizer of the exhibition. "At the time the photo was [of course] no longer there," Jafar told *Tempo*. The meeting, which went on for around 30 minutes, proceeded peacefully. "Not one



piece of work was damaged," said Rozak.

Not content with meeting the committee, FPI members then proceeded by truck to the Metro Jaya Police. At Police Headquarters the FPI's Legal Aid Front presented a legal opinion on the work. According to them, the photographs were taken with the intention of capturing the backdrop to the classic tale of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The visualization was determined to have hurt the feelings of the Islamic community. "For the publication of these photographs, Anjasmara, Isabelle, Davy Linggar and the organizing committee could be charged with violating Articles 156 A and 282 of the Criminal Code," said FPI Secretary, Soleh Mamud. Article 156 is related to insulting religion while Article 282 is concerned with pornography.

Jafar explained that the FPI supported the organization of the exhibition—which is being held for a full month—under the condition that it did not include pornographic pictures. Pornography he said, "should not be created for artistic reasons."

Is it true that pornography and an insult to religion were slipped into the

prestigious exhibition titled 'Urban/Culture'? Jim Supangkat rejects the view that the work contained an insult to religion. According to Jim, the concept behind the work had no relationship with the story of Adam and Eve. "Rather it is a picture of urban space [which] at this time is becoming so individualized," said one of the founders of the CP Foundation.

He gave as an example meeting rooms in apartments that are becoming increasingly isolated while in communal soci-

ety such things do not occur. A meeting room is not a private room. "So this nudity is a picture of an urban space which has become so private." With regard to the accusations of pornography, Jim conceded that the article in the Criminal Code could be interpreted in all sorts of ways. But he is convinced *Pinkswing Park* is not pornography because no genitals are visible. Moreover, when photographed, Anjasmara was actually wearing underwear. The impression of nudity was created by digital photographic enhancement.

On the matter of the withdrawal of his work from the exhibition, Jim says the reasons were not merely because of FPI's actions. He had seen that even before the FPI demonstrated news reports on the exhibition had already "taken on such a tendency." Many reports on the exhibition focused only on Anjasmara's nakedness. "We were concerned, that if it was left as was, it could end up being counterproductive," he said. So on Tuesday last week, the picture of the couple "Anjasmara-Isabelle" was withdrawn from display.

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