

The financial crisis that hit the world at the end of 2008 was initially a blow to the arts scene, but turned out to be a blessing in disguise. All parties in the Indonesian contemporary art scene — artists, galleries, collectors, auction houses and serious art lovers — were intent on keeping the art world standing tall by working harder and focusing on quality instead of quantity.

A craze of creative activity was tangible with exhibitions abounding — sometimes as many as three running simultaneously.

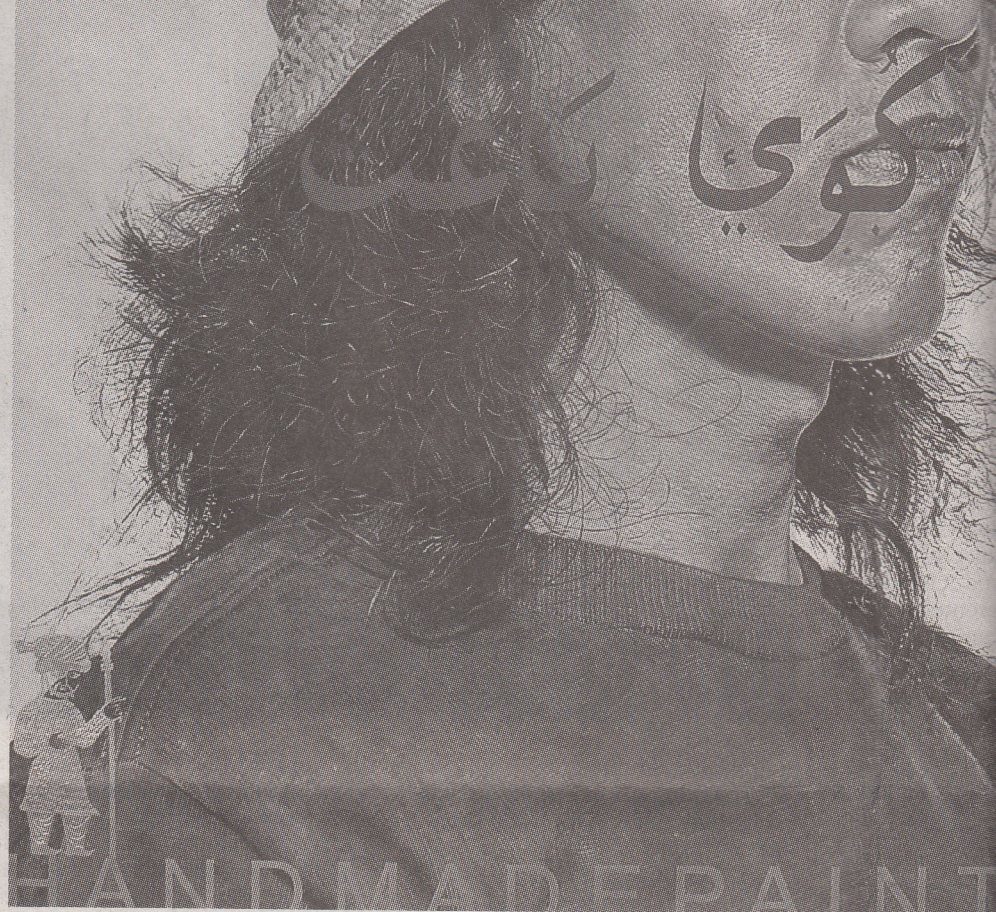
Bandung artists emerged on the scene, culminating in the Bandung Art Now exhibition at the National Gallery in Jakarta.

Photographers also took on a more artistic direction with Oscar Motuloh still pondering life and death. Mini art-fairs exploded across Jakarta, exploring the feasibility of the city hosting an international art fair.

C-Arts magazine ran an art show, which turned out to be a mini art-fair held in cooperation with the Indonesian Galleries Association in Grand Indonesia mall.

Shortly after, *Harper's Bazaar* Indonesia organized an even larger fair at Pacific Place. It was during this exhibition that BMW Indonesia launched its first auction of miniature BMW cars decorated by some of Indonesia's best artists including Agus Suwage and Ugo Untoro, as well as fresh new talents like Nus Salomo, Radi Arwinda and Rangga Oka Dimitri.

An interesting attraction at the Pacific Place art event was Lawang Wangi Gallery's exhibition, which signalled a revival of exploratory efforts to define Islamic contemporary art and its development in Indonesia.



Islamic contemporary art: *Self Portrait*, 2009, by Asmudjo Jono Irianto. Asmudjo, with his self-portrait, revealed the tendency to view Arabic script or calligraphy as holy script. The script across his portrait is handmade, *uang kembali and ini gua banget* meaning “money back if this is not handmade” and

The gallery — which has not opened yet — operates under the auspices of ArtSociates, headed by the energetic Andonowati.

In tandem with artists' creative urges, new art spaces burst to life, d'Peak in South Jakarta with hundreds of participating artists at its opening and Umah Seni in Menteng, while Canna Gallery was transformed from its quaint rukostyle layout to a modern four-storey

building of contemporary art.

New creativity was seen from both senior and up-and-coming artists. Veteran artist Teguh Ostenrik, for instance, crafted contemporary art from scrap metal, while famous choreographer and dancer Sardono W. Kusumo employed his talents to make paintings by dancing on large paint-covered canvases.

On the other hand, young upcoming artists drew on imaginations be-

fitting the press. Bestrizal Best revealed the h in the beating ccess, the mall.

Meanwhile resident of 25 had a solo exhibit works at the N ta and at Selas ung; Edwin's 25th jubilee wi