

Local artist laments May calamity in esthetic language

BANDUNG (JP): In the language of esthetics, well-known fine artist Sunaryo is bewitching art lovers with his works that lament the May tragedy.

The works scream their messages out loud without verbal or written rhetoric. They are an exploration of ideas through the language of esthetics.

Paintings hang randomly on the walls, sculptures lie all over the floor — all wrapped in black cloth knitted, folded or tied up. Some of the clothing is torn up or slashed with a knife. Black cloth symbolizes grief, darkness, the state of being oppressed and being marginalized.

Sunaryo, 55, a famous sculptor, painter, graphic artist and a teacher of fine arts at the Bandung Institute of Technology, presents a major installation works — his reinterpretation of the current tragedies.

His works are grouped in an exhibition titled *Titik Nadir* (Nadir Point) at his museum, *Selasar Seni Sunaryo*, in Bukit Pakar Timur, Bandung. The display started on Sept. 5 to coincide with the opening of the museum and will last until Sunaryo believes that the crisis is over. So it could run for one month, one year, five years or even longer.

This show brings the artist back to the limelight after he absented himself from society

By Ipong Purnama Sidi

for the majority of this year because, he says, he was crippled by a "deep anxiety".

Sunaryo has his own style of wrapping objects. It's different from Christo's style because each artist has different philosophies and concepts. For example Christo loves gigantic projects, such as wrapping a bridge, a legislature or a beach with the help of civil engineers.

Sunaryo, on the other hand, creates one representation upon another representation. In this case, behind the black cloth there is a representation of acrylic paint work on the canvas. The black cloth is the second layer. The combination results in a shift of value from existential (acrylic work) to essential (new meaning brought about by the black cloth).

Among his works are *Metal Log* (1997) — a sculpture of harmony built from materials of different characteristics: rock, wood and computer chips. After being wrapped with a black piece of cloth and slit with knife, it is associative to the mass rapes of the mid-May riots in Jakarta and other major cities. It creates an atmosphere of terror and fear.

A similar atmosphere is gen-

erated by *TV Log* (1998), which reflects Sunaryo's concern about the devastated humanism values in Indonesia.

Sunaryo divides the space into four: hunger, injury, religion and rebirth. Hunger is symbolized by unhusked rice, a rice bag and a paddy cutter in *Negeriku 1998* (My Country 1998). Injury is about the rapes, lootings and burnings known as the May Tragedy. The Religion is represented by an open Kaaba as an alternative for spiritual grounds. Rebirth, or incarnation, is signified by a wall wrapped in a piece of black cloth with a small opening overlooking a small mosque. This symbolizes the spirit of change.

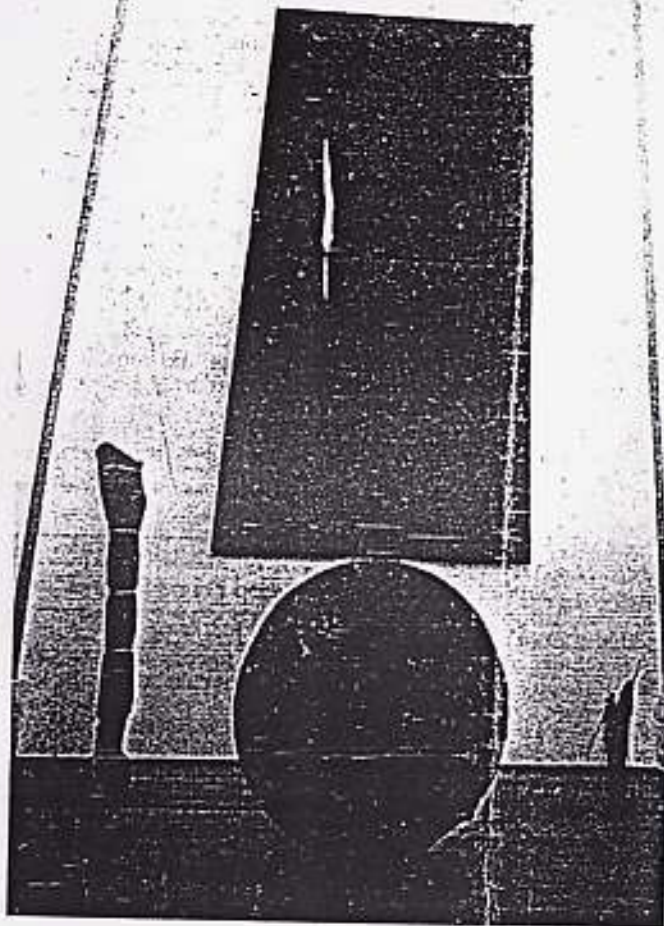
Sunaryo's works are meaningful because they raise issues related to the turmoil plaguing Indonesia and present the spirit of reform in the language of esthetics.

The museum he built on his own account is expected to make his dream of providing a place for young talents come true. Besides, it is also intended as a center for contemporary fine art studies.

His effort should be widely applauded because the building provides a basic facility for artists, critics, art dealers, gallery managers and collectors.

The museum is expected to play an important role in art development.

— The writer is a fine art observer



Two (left and above) of Sunaryo's works on display in his new gallery. The artist voices concern over tragedies in art aesthetic language.

Selasar Seni Sunaryo

Selasar Sunaryo Art Space

Nama Media : HU The Jakarta Post
Tanggal : Minggu, 13 September 1998

Kode :