

Second-hand goods are a new art for Bambang

YOGYAKARTA (JP): "VCD player, 100 percent new, Rp 345,000. Blue jeans, trousers, original Levi's, Rp 60,000." Has Cemeti Art House turned into a pawnshop?

No, definitely not.

It's a new creation from young local artist Bambang "Toko" Witjaksono, which has given a "shop" look to the gallery located on Jl. Panjaitan since Sept. 5.

Bambang will display his collection of second-hand goods, including electronics, household goods, antiques and clothes, until Sept. 30.

Each of the items has a small note attached which informs of the price. Some of them even say "sold".

The goods all belong to Bambang and he is seriously offering them to visitors who wish to buy them.

"He means it! You can buy those goods if you like. My staff will settle the things if you are serious," artist Mella Jarsma, who is also the Cemeti Art House manager, said.

"Several people have ordered Bambang's goods, but it's quite difficult to explain that they can only take the goods after the exhibition ends on Sept. 30," Mella added.

Two art awards, which are

Text and photo
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displayed among the other items, are probably the most astonishing things.

Both trophies belong to young painter Agung Leak Kurniawan from the Yogyakarta Art Institute (ISI). One is an award for Agung's victory in a national art competition. Another trophy is the Philip Morris Art Award won by Agung in 1996.

"The Philip Morris Art Award was sold at Rp 12,000," Mella said.

Bambang uses a funny way to express his daily life experience in his works. One of his drawings on a zinc plate describes the Cemeti Art House's staff bargaining with an artist on the price of the artist's works.

Entitled *Mas Makelar* (The Broker), the painting carried Bambang's satirical message: "Art works, art products and art things are not sacred things. They are just like any other object or merchandise which even needs the help of art brokers and art collectors if the artists or owners of the stuff want to sell them."

Mella said: "He wants to question the sacredness of art. He also wants to bypass the boundaries between art works and other objects."

Bambang has the right to do so. The 1997 ISI graduate is not only an artist but also a broker who tries to earn money from selling second-hand goods. He is also a lecturer at the Graphic Arts Department at the institute.

His experience in brokering has influenced his way of viewing the arts, the art works and artists. He realizes that artists, like other professionals, need money to survive. But on the other hand, he doesn't forget that the meaning of art is to convey the artists' idealism and moral messages which are considered as "pure and sacred".

"He uses, the artists, not to be hypocritical in our professions," Mella said.

It appears that Bambang's strategy in promoting his exhibition has worked very well as people have visited the gallery after reading a huge banner stating that second-hand goods are on sale.

Mella said the banner invited people to buy the goods at the gallery.

"Art exhibitions don't have to be exclusive," she said.



Cemeti Art House in Yogyakarta displays Bambang Witjaksono's exhibition of possessions, which transforms the gallery into a second-hand shop.