

Three generations of artists meet

JAKARTA (JP): Three artists, Ida Hajar, 58, Dwijo Widiyono, 42, and I Made Hantaguna, 28, had an impromptu rendezvous somewhere along the crowded and noisy road of Indonesian art.

Their joint exhibition at Ina Gallery on Jl. Simprug Garden in Pondok Indah, South Jakarta, called *Rendezvous at the T Junction*, began on May 13 and will run until May 27.

Ida has been a successful artist since the 1970s, Dwijo came to prominence in the 1980s and Hantaguna realized his great potential in the 1990s. This joint exhibition brings together the different forces and patterns of three decades. Visitors can see what the artists have in common and where they differ, or discover whether there are certain characteristics marking their three different eras.

It is interesting to note that each artist holds a unique position in their respective eras, and can be considered a "sign of the times".

Humanity

For Ida Hajar, painting is an instrument of war or defense. She believes she can survive only through her paintings, and she hopes her works will help the people around her survive.

"My paintings expose the values of a struggling humanity and dwell on people fighting for these values," Ida said.

A recipient of the Wendy Soresen Memorial Award New York and the Canting Emas Yogyakarta, Ida deeply appreciates the powerful vision in the social realism of Mexican paintings, like the works of Diego Rivera or José Clemente Orozco. She also holds a principle very similar to one held by Pablo Picasso, a master she truly admires.

"Paintings are not made to decorate apartments. They are an instrument of war, for attack, for defense against the enemy," said Picasso.

"I'm the chief supporter of this idea. Yet my works are still artistic and can be hung on any wall," said Ida, a Wonosoboborn graduate of the Indonesian Fine Art Institute (ASRI) in Yogyakarta.

Her works depict life's bitter and sweet stories, such as her painting of boat people. Thousands of women and children, previously happy and

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peaceful, suddenly drifting on the ocean. In his painting, the current is dragging their fate far into the horizon. Another part of the painting depicts a shady world. A mother is singing *Ilir-ilir*, a traditional Javanese song, to her happy children. Then he shows the birth of a baby with a winged angel keeping guard.

Ida has been influenced by the (social) realism of the paintings of the 1960s. This theme is also present in her batik paintings.

Balinese Tradition

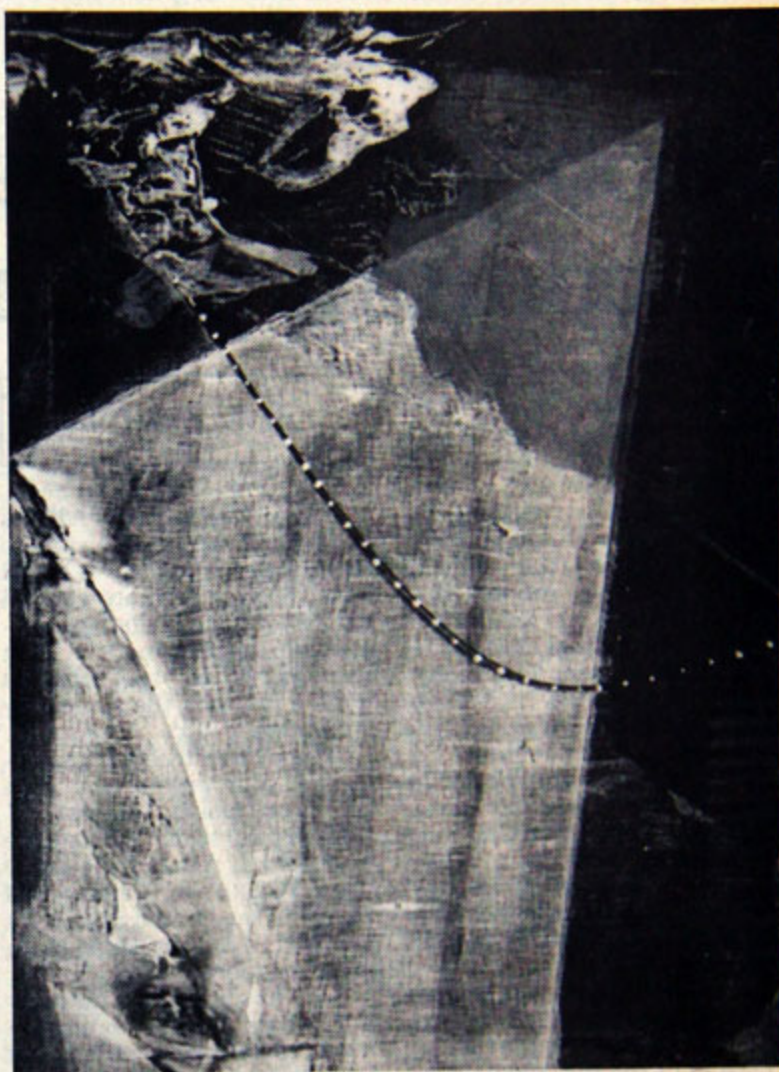
Young Balinese painter I Made Hantaguna is a graduate of Denpasar Art College in Bali. His works were twice exhibited at the Mitra Hadiprana Gallery in Jakarta. He has also had solo exhibitions in Singapore, Australia and Slovenia, and he was a finalist in the Philip Morris Indonesian Art Award contest.

Hantaguna is part of the Balinese tradition. His works show his struggle to conserve this tradition. He is greatly attracted to old cloth, for him a cultural legacy and a symbol of a cultural journey. He is impressed by *gringsing* cloth, easily available in Tenganan village, *cepuk* cloth from Nusa Lembangan, *polong* cloth and cloth decorated with Balinese calligraphy, the kind usually found being worn during Balinese rituals. He includes renderings of these cloths in his works or manipulates them in collages.

As he learns the history of the cloths, he discovers "the history of a cultural struggle" and know more about man. His latest works dwell symbolically on man's social world in the eyes of a Balinese artist, with the symbols being turned into abstract motives.

He paints the boats of Kusamba fishermen wriggling in the wind — a rite of the sea on a blue-dominated canvas. He depicts a staggering Balinese, a symbol of the eroded Balinese culture. His canvas is a strong harmonization of established colors. Here he depicts two cultures, Western and Balinese, which may blend or may be in conflict.

Born in Temanggung, Central Java, Dwijo Widiyono, a gradu-



Galeri Ina

Dari Tradisi Bali (From the Balinese Tradition), by I Made Hantaguna.

ate of ASRI, is quite famous after exhibiting his works for over 20 years now. Some of his works were included in a roving exhibition across the countries of ASEAN, an event organized by the ministry of education and culture about a decade ago. Dwijo has also earned a number of art awards.

His works reveal his unique technique. He explores and discovers various nuances on his canvases, which present concrete and pseudo textures and unexpected color effects. After his explorations, he exploits the element of his art.

"I believe the highest quality in art can be found through technique," he said.

This means technical explorations and discovery will make the artistic content of his paintings more easily digestible for the public. That is why the theme is never the most impor-

tant element of his paintings. He needs no great stories. We can find simple themes: orchids, a procession of ducks, *arowana* fish, aquarium fish and so forth. He reminds us of Claude Monet, who painted only a lotus pond, a rye field, a coast and so forth. Yet these simple objects are presented in a uniquely artistic manner. They are no imitations of reality, but form a new reality themselves. In a number of his works, these objects emerge in beautiful abstraction.

This does not necessarily mean his works are devoid of philosophical aspects. They often symbolize the impermanence of this world and the transitoriness of objects and living beings. He wants to tell people that existence will finally become nonexistence.

The writer is a art critic based in Jakarta.