

# Video art, a new media

Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta, three major cities that world-famous researcher Claire Holt considered important points on the map of Indonesia's modern art development, have witnessed an increasing number of video art performances over the past two years.

Video art is a new art medium, which gained popularity in the U.S. in the first half of the 1960s and in Europe in later years, along with the emergence of contemporary art. Nam June Paik - a Korean American and member of the Fluxus movement - was the first person to introduce the work, which later became popular under the name of video art at A-go-go Cafe in New York.

Just like the works of other members of the Fluxus group, Paik's are deemed progressive in that they remove boundaries in art. Form, sound,

movement, smell and everything else are blended in a single work.

The general theory of esthetics no longer seems able to identify this phenomenon. Anybody is free to construe it as art or just anything else: anything goes, that's the spirit. It is this reality that critic Arthur Danto fears will be the end of art.

Today, video art is no longer an experiment or a form of resistance, but it has begun to be accorded a place in important international contemporary art forums.

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Paintings, which in the past would dominate an exhibition room, have been replaced by video art works. A previously silent and solemn museum hall has now become noisy and displayed various images of the new media yet to exist previously. Prestigious forums such as biennale, triennial and the like, have now been highlighted by video and new media works.

The emergence of video art works in a number of exhibition rooms or performance halls shows a new development in our contemporary art. In 1993, Krisna Murti, a contemporary fine artist, for the first time introduced his video work, *12 Hours in the Life of Dancer Agung Rai* in the exhibition room of R-66, Bandung.

Then in 1997, he displayed his other video work, *My Ancestors were the People from Sangiran*, among others at Lontar Gallery, Jakarta, Red-Point, Bandung and the Art Park in Solo. In Bandung Art Event 2001, his other work, *Wayang Machine* was also featured. Krisna is lucky as a number of his other video works have

taken part in a number of international art events: Biennale Havana, Triennial Fukuoka, KIASMA- Helsinki and so forth.

In Jakarta, video art presentations now have a place among art observers. In June 2001, Ruang Rupa, a group of young artists interested in the new media, cooperated with The Japan Foundation to organize *Silent Forces*, a multimedia video art presentation featuring four video artists, namely Anne Mie Van Kerckhoven (Belgian), Adrianto Sinaga (Indonesian), Sebastian Diaz Morales (Argentine-Dutch), Aditya Satria (Indonesian).

In September 2001, the Goethe Institute presented video art in *Quobo* exhibition at the National Museum. In May and June 2002, fine artist Teguh Ostenrik, in collaboration with composer Tony Prabowo, presented his video work at Goethe House. Then eight video artists from Finland showed the latest Finnish video art works at Lontar Gallery, Utan Kayu.

Video art and the new art media have enjoyed great progress in our community because the supporting instruments such as handycams, digital cameras, computers and the Internet, are easier to come by now. Besides, the reality now better known as the virtual world and presented by means of these electronics devices are close to our daily lives.

International exchanges through the Internet or by other means, which are now widely open to artists, also constitute an important factor. These facilities are great opportunities for present-day artists and were not available in previous periods.

The presence of the new media has not only led us to question the boundaries of art but also made us aware of the great diversity of media in contemporary art.

In *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art*, Michael Rush, a media observer, includes as items of the new art media not only the video art but also performance art, video installation, digital art, web art and so forth. However, the latest development in various "events" in the world is the blending of these new media, as seen in the works by Milica Tomic (Yugoslav), Shigeo Kubota (Japanese-American) and Araya Rasdjarsfearnsook (Thai). They blended performance art with video art and call the combination a video performance, of which the production is completely different from the documentation of a performance.

Bavf-NAF festival (Bandung video, film and new media art forum, held between Aug. 7 and Aug. 11, 2002 at the Nusantara House, Bandung) seems to try to accommodate these fresh developments.

That's why the festival also featured performance art, video art and so forth. This festival, which was linked with the new media, is a strategic step because the new media are yet to be mapped out in the development of contemporary art.

An interesting aspect that stood out from these activities is how artists from various cities and countries get along together. A number of participants come from Japan, Australia, Germany, Holland, Norway, Britain, Cuba, the United States and Spain. The diverse group does not include participants from Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surakarta and Bali.

Video art and new art media like this may need bigger opportunities to be exposed to the community. In this way, our minds expand responding to today's art phenomenon, a genre of art gaining greater currency in important international forums.

## Graphic art

when I first started the work; two years from now at the latest," said Angga.

Angga, who claims to have been strongly inspired by American graphic artist Keith Haring for his comical characters and Italian graphic artist M. Escher, for his works' interactivity, likes to create simple things.

"I don't like talking about complicated things. That's why my works are all simple," he said.

Angga wants everything he creates to be interactive and to appeal to both adults and children.

The exhibition at Yogyakarta French Cultural Center (CCF), Jl. Sagan No. 3 (tel. 0274-566520) will run until Aug. 31, 2002.