

Wara Anindyah reflects Chinese culture in art

By M. Dwi Marianto

YOGYAKARTA (JP): "Chinese in reflections" is the theme of Wara Anindyah's seventh solo painting exhibition being held at Bentara Budaya Yogya-karta between Aug. 4 and Aug. 10.

All her paintings reflect the same strange, mysterious, odd, imaginative, enigmatic and ironic looks.

The people depicted in her works are wearing Chinese-style outfits, have slanting eyes and an unfocused sleepy or drunken look. But they all enthusiastically hold on to their glasses of alcoholic beverages.

Her women are adorned with numerous accessories, thick make-up and full red cheeks while the men come with long, straight plunging moustaches, beards, or caps, or are balding at the front.

Most of the paintings show them involved in similar activities, dining in a restaurant, gambling in a room, peeking from under a table or whispering to each other.

In one of her paintings, a nude woman with mouth wide open, giving the impression of a woman giggling, makes the painting appear to produce a burst of laughter.

Her red dominated 200 by 145 centimeter work, produced

in 2001 and titled *Wedding at the edge of history*, defies the general expectation in the painting of its subjects.

It is a picture of a wedding reception in a restaurant with guests dominating the foreground and background at the right — and all are busy with their food, drinks and gossip.

What is significant is that the guests seem heedless of and to be ignoring the couple entering through the door in the center.

Instead of paying attention to the couple, these guests look at us, as if inviting us to join in their laughter at the couple, which is very ironic.

Wara always views one of the cultural activities from another angle. This is one of her characteristics, or part of her conceptual orientation: a kind of willingness to follow the wanderings of her imagination, albeit sometimes discarding the normally accepted structures and esthetics.

She does not beautify her subjects. On the contrary, she depicts them in an enigmatic context.

Wara displays two similar works on nude women in the exhibition — neither of them have a single hair on their naked bodies.

The first one is *The Most Beautiful Woman* — a 200 by 145 centimeter picture produced this year — portraying a woman lying on her side facing us.

Though completely naked, she still has her shoes on. The body is a sight of wrinkles and bulging spare tires. Lying in the open, greenery as the background, she has a red flower-like adornment on her head. Her cheeks are rouged. She lacks eyebrows. Her left hand is folded behind her body. Her wide open mouth leads us to believe that she is giggling.

The second one is *Shy Girl*, 2001 where the naked woman is bending down, carrying a handkerchief in her right hand while her left hand covers her breasts. She is surrounded by pillars with dragon ornaments.

Share time

Born in Magelang in 1969, Wara is surely one of the few full-time painters in Yogyakarta who manages to combine a tight schedule with raising four children.

During her exhibition, she even had to carry the youngest, still only one year old, and as stated in the catalog written by herself, she is proud of her role as a mother and a wife.

A graduate of the School of Fine Arts in Yogyakarta, plus a year spent at the Indonesian Institute of Art Yogyakarta, Wara has deepened her sense of art through observation, a lot of reading and seriously practicing her painting abilities.

Her Chinese theme is influenced by the novels of Pearl S. Buck, who once said "the arrival of a new book always evokes a new idea ...".

Wara's paintings in this exhibition were completely different to her works from 1994-1997 when they contained more scenery and western situations as influenced by the western novels she read at the time.

Then, between 1990 and 1994 her works began to take on a more Javanese and Indonesian feel.

Her works are the product of her own imagination and her in-terpretation of Chinese culture.

Despite that her works are based more on imagination than anything else, it would be

advisable for Wara to study Chinese customs and beliefs in more detail, including their superstitions.

The traditional Chinese believe that being toothless is "fortune-less", because good

fortune and prosperity will just pass you by. Nonetheless, you will often find that Wara's Chinese subjects are toothless.

Another bit of advice is that Wara should pay more attention to the anatomy aspect in

relation to body movement, so that the charm and character of her subjects can be represented to the optimum. The same also applies to the way the costumes of her subjects should naturally fall.



Wara Anindyah

Pernikahan Di Tepi Sejarah (Wedding at the edge of history)