

Art summit bridging boundaries

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It may be strapped for cash, but the Art Summit Indonesia and its roster of local and international artists will allow exploration into the meaning of contemporary performances, with a particular focus on visual arts during the month-long event.

Organized every three years in the hope of forging intercultural understanding among nations in the spirit of world peace, the 4th Art Summit Indonesia 2004 International Festival on Contemporary Performing & Visual Arts is scheduled to run at three different venues from Sept. 11 to Oct. 10.

Fifteen internationally renowned groups will offer dance, music and theater performances, while the works of visual artists — paintings, sculptures, photographs and installation pieces — promise to soothe the soul while pleasing the eyes.

"Criteria for (participation in) this year's festival is the latest and the best," explained Putu Wijaya, the chairman of the festival's artistic board.

"But again, in selecting the participants, we often find a problem with their tight and full schedules and our inability to provide facilities."

This year's festival boasts the biggest number of participating countries ever, with artists from 14 countries. As well as the host nation, they are from Australia, Britain, Egypt, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Korea, Russia, Thailand and

the United States.

The first festival in 1995 presented 15 groups from 10 countries, while the second festival in 1998 had 17 groups from nine countries, and 17 groups from 10 countries in the third festival in 2003.

The performances of the seven dance groups, six theater troupes and three music groups will draw art lovers to Graha Bhakti Budaya (GBB) at Taman Ismail Marzuki arts center and Gedung Kesenian Jakarta (GKJ), both in Central Jakarta.

The festival also marks the inclusion of visual arts for the first time this year. The first festival in 1995 only focused on music and dance, while the second and third festivals in 1998 and 2001 added theater performances.

Some 25 noted artists, both local and international figures, will display their works during this year's festival at Galeri Nasional Indonesia in Central Jakarta.

They include Agus Suwage, Anusapati, Arahmanti, Heri Dono, Mella Jaarsma, Nindityo Adipurnomo, Krisna Murti, Oscar Matuloh, Tisna Sanjaya, Nyoman Erawan, Made Wianta, Dolorosa Sinaga, S. Teddy D. from Indonesia; Eliza Hutchinson and Darren Siwes of Australia; Rashid Rana of Pakistan; Masuda Hiromi and Majima Naoko of Japan; Sutee Kunavichayont of Thailand; Bruno Samper and Pierre Giner of France.

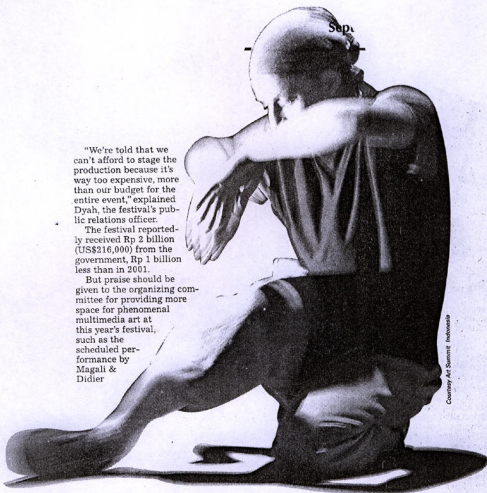
"In the first festival, there was only dance and music, and the next (two) festivals added theater. Now (we'll) have visual arts. Maybe in the next development, film will be included. This is just a development, because the art summit does cover the entire arts field," Putu said.

An international seminar on performing and visual arts will also be held from Sept. 12 to Sept. 14 at Treva Hotel in Central Jakarta. The seminar will highlight various issues, from dance, music, theater and visual arts, with both local and foreign artists and experts listed as speakers.

Scheduled performances are mostly ones that have been done before, such as I Wayan Sadra's compositions *Otot Kawat Balung Besi* (Wire Muscle Iron Bone), *Beringin Kurung* (Caged Banyan Tree) or *Daily*, and *Dindon & Teater*.
 Kubur's 14-year-old play *Sirkus* (Circus) and *Anjing* (Dog).

And most of the foreign artists are stopping here as part of a world tour.

A major disappointment is that the avant-garde theater production *I Le Galigo* will not be staged. The show premiered in Singapore in March this year before touring many world cities, but has yet to be shown in its country of origin.



"We're told that we can't afford to stage the production because it's way too expensive, more than our budget for the entire event," explained Dyah, the festival's public relations officer.

The festival reportedly received Rp 2 billion (US\$216,000) from the government, Rp 1 billion less than in 2001.

But praise should be given to the organizing committee for providing more space for phenomenal multimedia art at this year's festival, such as the scheduled performance by Magali & Didier

ROBERT HYLTON-URBAN CLASSICISM

Mulleras Dance Company of France that will blend dance, images and multimedia in their show.

Explorations into contemporary performances will also be evident in the scheduled performance of Robert Hylton-Urban Classicism that promises to deliver a

fascinating eclectic mix of jazz dance, hip-hop, high-kicking capoeira as well as contemporary and classical dance.

The theme of women's issues will be highlighted by choreographers Elly Luthan in her piece on the plight of Acehese women, and Har-

tati, who is scheduled to stage *The Self Rites: Ode for Woman*, reflecting on women's bargaining power in the uneasy ground between traditionalism and modernism.

So take your pick from everything on offer, and treat yourself to a culture fix.