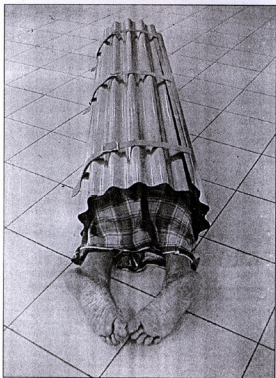


# Biennial Yogyakarta VII takes on a new look



JH/Terko Sudarmo

Mella Jaarsma's Rubber Time 2

After a four-year absence, Biennial Yogyakarta VII 2003 is finally being held and presents over 20 individual or group works of over 30 local artists.

Among the participating artists include Agus Suwage, Anusapati, Dadang Christanto, Heri Dono, Mella Jaarsma, Hanura Hosea, Bambang Toko Witjaksono, Bunga Jeruk Permata Pekerti, Pius Sigit Kuncoro, S. Teddy D., Sekar Jatiningrum, and Ugo Untoro.

The biennial is being held at Societet Building on Jl. Sri Wedani until Oct. 31.

There is at least one big difference between the Biennial Yogyakarta VII 2003 and the previous ones.

Unlike the previous biennials that were managed and organized almost solely by the state-owned TBY (Taman Budaya Yogyakarta) Yogyakarta Cultural Center, this year's biennial has involved private sponsorships to finance the event.

It has also invited a non-profit art project group, Antena Projects, whose management comprises of local artists, including noted artist Entang Wiharso to help organize the event.

Antena Project has been given more authority to select the theme, the selection process of the participating artists, manage the technical matters, and conduct the fund raising activities.

"You may say that *Country-bution* is basically the result of collective work between the Yogyakarta art community, art lovers and experts, and the artist community in general on one hand with TBY on the other hand," TBY director Suprpto said, referring to the central theme of this year's Yogyakarta biennial.

According to Suprpto, since it was first held in 1988, Biennial Yogyakarta could not be separated from the TBY.

Before it was named so, the event was initially a fine art exhibition jointly held biennially by TBY in cooperation with the Association of Indonesian Fine Arts (HSRI) since 1983.

It was later changed to Biennial Yogyakarta in 1998 with the hope that, like other

biennials in the world, would be considered the peak of the development of fine arts in the city that had long been known as the city of culture.

"Experience has shown that from time to time, the event has won the people's attention. The fact is that we always receive numerous critics, suggestions, and inputs from the community is proof. It also shows that the biennial has become parts of the community. It belongs to them," Suprpto said.

Suprpto also said that the decision to invite private institutions to organize the biennial was mostly due to the change in the government's policy following the implementation of the government's regulation on regional autonomy.

The regulation had prompted the central government to provide fund for TBY to continue holding the biennial activities. That explained why it was unable to hold the Biennial Yogyakarta VII on schedule in 2001 and forced it to seek for ways to revive it.

"Concerning about the uncertainty of the biennial existence in the future, we then established this partnership (between TBY and Antena

**Sri Wahyuni**  
The Jakarta Post  
Yogyakarta

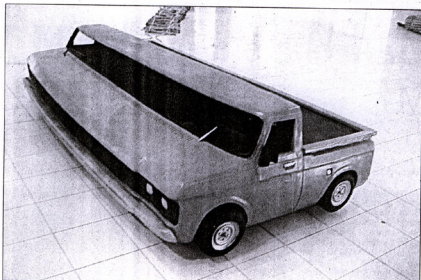
na Projects). It is through this partnership that we are developing a new system that will hopefully enable the event to be continuously held in the future," Entang said.

It is also for the same reason that the organizer also planned to make a comprehensive documentation of whole art project so that anyone would be able to analyze and evaluate the event for a worthwhile organization of the biennial in the future.

Another difference in this biennial, according to Suprpto, is the central theme given to this year's biennial. None of the six previous biennials, held consecutively in 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, and 1999, he said, was given a theme.

According to the biennial's curator Hendro Wiyanto, such a theme was important because it was the theme that gave the biennial an identity. *Countrybution*, which is formed from two English words of "country" and "contribution", according to Hendro, was an agreed framework between the biennial's curator and a participant selection team to provide the event with a social context.

By doing so, he said, the multi-dimensional crisis that



JP/Riko Sudarmo

#### Ugo Untoro's *Father And Son*

the Indonesian community had been dealing with would become the base carpet for the event that would further form the first base for the correlation between various art exercises and their social context.

"It will also form the relevance between the existence of the biennial itself and the surrounding community," Hendro said.

Entang Wiharso as coordinator of the biennial, similarly, considered *Countrybution*

as a path for the community to appreciate the event and interact in it. The meaning of *Countrybution* contained in the theme, he said, had created a relation between the spirit of the art creativity and the community.