

'Colors of our souls'

captured by Kemang 104



In all the mayhem and racy commercialism of the world today, there is little time or inclination for one to step off the spinning wheel of life and reconnect with one's innate and pristine soul.

However, when one visits the Kemang 104 art group, the restive calm is poignant in the atmosphere, as each of the 10 artists attempts to draw out their soul on colorful easels with a profusion of creative artistic materials.

In 1992 a group of five inspired women started painting in Kemang Raya House No. 104. Their number has expanded to include other young and talented women; however the group has managed to maintain its intrinsic spirit — the pure and joyful love of color and art.

"Painting together is a creative activity we indulge in just for ourselves, as a means of enriching our spirit and not for any commercial perk or benefit," explained Tina Sutanto and Listia Rahardjo, acting as spokespersons, to *The Jakarta Post*.

"That is perhaps the reason why the last time the Kemang 104 exhibited was almost a year ago."

The versatile group of women at Kemang 104 are gearing up for their annual exhibition opening on 29 April, aptly titled *Colors of our souls*.

Although the group thrives on suggestions and criticism from one another, each has a different journey to take on the road to discovering their innermost soul and hence each artist is worthy of individual comment.

Tina Sutanto is a versatile and adventurous artist, whose works reflect the energy, color and rhythm of lines, with spirits derived

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from her imagination and love of adventure. She felt inspired by the traditional Indian *bandhini* (tie-dye) technique and has used the cultural fusion in her semi-abstract figurines.

Also using mixed media is Astralita, who is fascinated by the innocence of childhood, which is not surprising, as she is also an art teacher at the Mitra Hadi Prana school of art.

All her paintings are small and have chubby and cute faces of children showing a variety of expressions, ranging from shy to embarrassed.

Uh-Oh (20cm x 30cm) shows a girl about five years old cupping her mouth in embarrassment as she has just broken a taboo set by a parent.

Wayan Handoko is the third artist using mixed media and is also a teacher at Mitra Hadi Prana school of art.

She seems dedicated to exploring the traditional life and moralistic approach to life of the Balinese people in a contemporary fashion.

Wayan sends a strong moral message in the abstract painting *Put Your Crown Under* (70cm x 70cm), which conveys the message that people should keep their pride and ego at the bottom of their personalities.

Small is beautiful for artists Eileen Widjaja and Listia Rahardjo. Eileen Widjaja expresses her desire to break the shackles of conformity and break through into new thoughts and emotions. A small easel painter and also the hostess of the Kemang 104, it seems Eileen

revels in the miniature and mystery of artistic etiquette.

Blue room (15cm x 20cm) is a tiny, yet intriguing painting, which shows the back of a woman in a blue room looking out onto the scene below through a large window.

Listia Rahardjo indulges in small paintings in simple earth tones of browns and beiges showing statues at Angkor Wat.

Exploring an individual sense of tradition, Listia creates a vibrancy through detailed work that shows etchings on stone to create figures and stone facades and pillars.

In *Laxmi's Sarong* (25cm x 35cm) there is the figure, from pelvis down, of a woman in an intricate sarong. What lies above? Who is this damsel? Such is the intrigue Listia attempts to provoke in the onlooker.

While some prefer small paintings, others, such as Sasya Tranggono and Gina Santoso, express themselves in larger-than-life works.

Sasya Tranggono is a well-established aqua-colorist and perhaps the only one in the group with a world tour to her credit.

Best known for her conceptualized, perfectly balanced layouts, Sasya ventures out to display a couple of landscapes in oil media.

Her painting, *Don't ask the Reason Why*, (75cm x 55cm) is in warm, earthy shades of rich and vibrant watercolors and portrays a wooden horse with a vividly balanced background.

Gina Santoso is an oil medium painter whose creative genius perhaps lies in the dream-like, semi-abstract concept, which she uses to portray the innate corners of her soul. She confesses to being obsessed with the complexity of lines in a rose and the outward beauty it represents.

Circle of reflection (160cm x 120cm) shows a dreamy sequence in which three women lie in reposeful positions around the delicate petals of a gigantic rose.

The evolution and progress of a woman's life are somewhat captured in her reflection of an endlessly revolving path of life.

Lenny Adisuria looks at her painting skills as an adventure in color. Big oil close-ups of brightly colored cockerels in *Chatting* (70cm x 70cm) are classified as abstract-realism.

For Roelijati Soewarjono, the eldest of the group and teacher to some of the members, the black and white hues are all it takes to express the values of the journey of her soul. Her best work is *Expatriate Ladies' Monthly Morning* (90cm x 70cm).

Seemun Suparno is perhaps the most articulate minimalist — speaking volumes for her art and talent with minimal strokes of the brush. *Figure* (70cm x 50cm) is perhaps her ideal way of saying “less is more”, which expresses the rhythm, movement and simplicity of lines.

And last, but not least, is Ludwina Ismail, the modern art exponent who takes on her life and easels with the same passion and enthusiasm. Her painting, *Girl with Guitar*, is full of bright, happy colors and shows her love for life and all that is beautiful.

The wide range of emotive perceptions that the exhibition promises to deliver is something only an onlooker can feel.

A visit would perhaps touch one's soul, even if it is for a moment only.

The exhibition is on from 29 April through May 12 at New Koi Restaurant, Sabero House, Jl. Kemang Raya 10A, South Jakarta.