

Yogya Perek artists

raise plight of women

Gloom and doom reigns at the British Council in Jakarta.

The mood has been created by an art exhibit that draws attention to the misery of women as represented by women figures in a depressing state: poignant, nude, abandoned and even headless.

The art works, paintings, drawings, sculptures and in-

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stallation pieces are the work of Yogyakarta female artists grouped under Perek. Set up last year, Perek comprises local art students and expatriates

who want to express themselves through art.

Perek aims to make the plight of women heard. It is named provocatively after a local derogatory term shortened from *Perempuan Eksperimen*, or "experimental women", which simply means prostitute.

"We want to give a new meaning to the term *perek*, women eager to experiment in art," A. Lenny Ratnasari AS, a Perek member said.

The works, however, do manage to get the message across — expressing the artists' concern over the stereotyping of women.

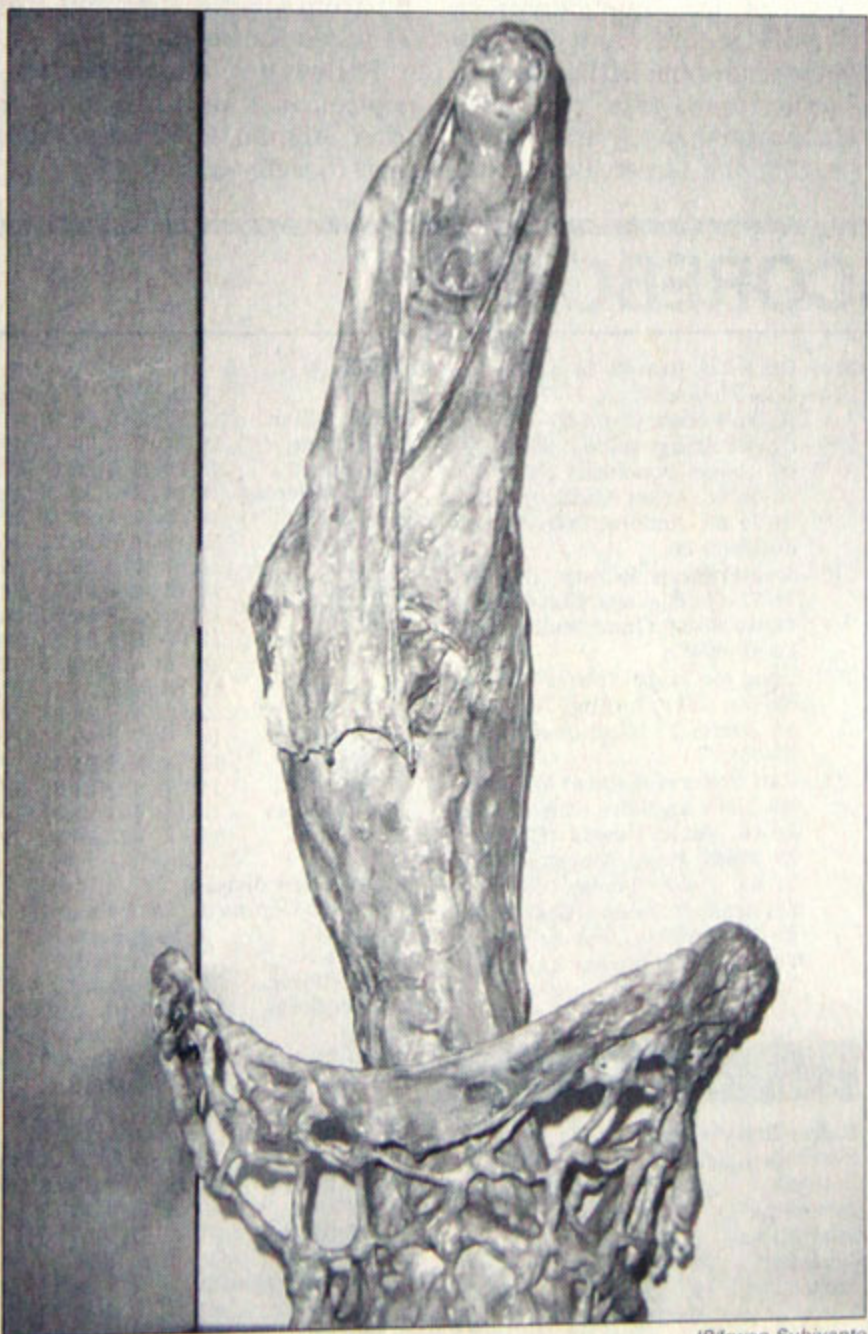
One untitled painting by Sri Ambarwati Lestari is a seated naked woman wearing an expressionless mask with a big chain on the back of her neck. Next to her, a woman's head is staring at her while on the chained woman's other side, a big hand is holding a mask of a beautiful face of a woman.

Other pieces by the 29-year-old artist, a student of the Yogyakarta-based Indonesian Institute of Arts who has taken part in several exhibitions, are just as interesting.

An untitled one features a bald woman clad in a low-cut dress looking at a white board with a circled question mark on the board.

The two paintings portray women who have been denied freedom of expression and are victims of chauvinism that places them in a position inferior to men.

Sculptures by Lenny Ratnasari show the artist's unique, but direct representation of women, such as in one titled *Pengantin Tunggal* (Single Bride), or a wooden statue of a headless pregnant woman titled *Bisa Tidak Laki-Laki*



JP/Irwan Subiyanto

Pengantin Tunggal (Single Bride) by Lenny Ratnasari