

Young ceramic artist shares her tale of life in works

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Ceramic as a handicraft product is very popular in Indonesia, and handicraft centers can be found in most parts of the country.

Ceramic as art work, however, is still a rarity as are the artists. The courage of young artist Jenny Lee to enter ceramic art world, therefore, is commendable, especially as the infrastructure for developing it here is considerably far below that of, say, painting.

At the national level, for example, there are not periodic events or exhibitions that feature ceramic art.

Most of the galleries in the country, too, prefer to exhibit paintings or other fine art. In other words, there has not been enough space for ceramic craft artists in the country to promote their work, which probably accounts for why there are only a few of them around. Jenny, however, does not see it as discouraging.

"I've been in love with artistic craftwork ever since I visited F. Widayanto's exhibition when I was still a junior high school student," the Surabaya-born emerging ceramic artist said, referring to the country's leading ceramic artist.

Jenny was speaking to *The* *I Miss Him*

Jakarta Post on the sidelines of her first solo art craft exhibition being held here at Via-Via Cafe on Jl. Prawiro-taman until Sept. 26, 2004.

After graduating from high school in 1994 in Surabaya, she eventually enrolled, in 2001, in the Indonesian Institute of Arts (ISI) in Yogyakarta. It took more than five years to get away from home, thanks to her overprotective mother

who did not want her to leave.

"I ran away to Yogyakarta in 2000," said Jenny who was forced to study pharmacology at Windya Mandala Catholic University, and later architecture at Petra Christian University — both in Surabaya. She did not finish either of those.

After finishing a one-year program at the Yogyakarta Modern School of Design in



Via Via Cafe

2001, the then 25-year-old Jenny finally enrolled at ISI Yogyakarta and was accepted as the student of the institute's Diploma 3 program in the ceramic souvenir craft department. She just finished her coursework a few weeks before the official opening of the month-long exhibition at Via-Via Café.

"I've made up my mind to become a ceramic craft artist and hope that someday my works of art will contribute something to the artistic craft world, as something enjoyable, emotionally touching and inspiring for others," exclaimed Jenny.

Officially opened on Aug. 27, 2004, the exhibition has on display 14 of Jenny's latest pieces, mostly made with stoneware, fabric, wood, or a combination of those as the supporting materials. Some pieces are complemented by *engobe*, which is a sort of porridge of clay mixed with ceramic coloring agents.

For the finishing touch, Jenny mostly uses glaze or other ceramic colors.

"I'm presently still in the process of experiencing many styles and techniques as part of my stage of finding (the most suitable styles and techniques). But for the theme, the concept, I'm interested in human interest issues," Jenny explained.

For the exhibition entitled, *Saat Detik Detak*, (or a Moment in Time) for example, Jenny tries to speak about time, vis-a-vis the relationship between men and women, not necessarily between lovers, in which there is sometimes a time of romance, of sadness, of longing, etc. "I also speak about the relationship between members of a family, such as between a father and a daughter," Jenny said.

In *I Miss Him* (*engobe*, ceramic color, 104cm by 104cm, 2004), a two-dimensional ceramic artwork, Jenny alludes to the feelings of a daughter who is longing for her father.

In *Menanti* (stoneware, wood, ceramic color, 24cm by

18cm, 2004), another two-dimensional, wall-hung piece, she explores the feelings of a girl who is waiting for a true love, a man of her dreams.

The three-dimensional *Potret Keluarga* (stoneware, glaze, 41cm by 15cm by 11cm, 2004) depicts the portrait of a family, which normally comprises a father, a mother, and their kids, but Jenny shows how it also consists of the other woman of the head of the family and her children.

Communication, another three-dimensional work, highlights how difficult communication is, even between members of the same family.

"You see, such things are happening around us. I'm interested in exploring the

theme because I myself personally experience it in my family, my broken-home family," said Jenny, adding that *I Miss Him* described her own feeling towards her own father.

Jenny said she found it very difficult to communicate with her father. "I often see him as so resentful. Still, I love him, and miss him. He is still my father. I cannot just let it go.

I want a much friendlier atmosphere between us, and so does my father I suppose," said Jenny, hoping that by expressing so through her art works she would someday gain energy to mend her relationship with her father and create good communication between them.