

Streetworks: Inside Outside Yokohama



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Notes from the Beijing Art Biennale

Ellen R. Tunggono , Contributor , Beijing | Sat, 08/30/2008 6:28 PM | Lifestyle

"Colors and the Olympics" was the theme of the 3rd Beijing International Art Biennale (BIAB), which displayed artwork from over 700 international and Chinese participating artists.

The artwork was displayed for public viewing at the National Art Museum of China and the Gallery of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing for over a month, until the closing of the Olympic Games last Sunday.

Besides housing the main exhibition, the biennale also houses five other special exhibitions.

There are 81 countries participating in the main and special exhibitions, involving 701 artists and 747 works of art.

The "Survival of Serena" by Carole A. Feuerman from the United States was announced as the best piece of artwork. "Survival of Serena" shows the figure of a woman wearing a swimming costume, asleep, holding onto a black rubber tire.

The works on display at the main exhibition showed that the participating artists have consciously created works following the selected theme, "Colors and the Olympics".

Argentine artist Beatriz Olivera Querol put forward "Shared Emotions", which portrayed a wide variety of colors symbolizing the large diversity of countries sharing experiences in Beijing.

However, the themes of the works on display was not confined to colors or depicting sports.

Instead, various kinds of artistic styles and techniques -- from classic, modern, realistic and abstract to surrealist -- were adopted to express the Olympic spirit.

The biennale normally takes place every two years and it should have taken place last year. However, with Beijing hosting the Olympics, the Biennale was postponed for one year to coincide with the Games, in the hope of promoting the development of contemporary art in China and globally.

Indonesia is represented at the 3rd Beijing International Art Biennale by 10 artists -- Innes Indreswari Soekanto, Ary Dananjaya Cahyono, Joko Apridinoto, Agus Cahaya, Ida Bagus Indra, I Putu Edy Asmara Putra, Sigit Raharjo, Polenk Rediasa, I Wayan Sujana (Suklu) and Grace Tjondronimpuno.

Despite the superb exhibition, the organizational processes did not run so smoothly for the Indonesian artists.

Three artists -- Ines Indreswari, Ary Dananjaya and Joko Apridinoto -- arranged shipment of their artwork themselves, hoping to receive reimbursement once they were in Beijing for the opening ceremony. The committee promised to look into the matter but there was no response up their departure from Beijing.

"Had they given the reimbursement money for sending my artwork, I would have used it to return to Beijing

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for the opening of the Olympics Fine Art exhibition," said Innes, who, along with Ary, decided to donate their artwork to the BIAB to be collected by the museum.

The Olympic Fine Art (OFA) 2008 kicked off on Aug. 11 and lasts for one month. The OFA exhibition is an art exhibition that is held every four years in whichever city is hosting the Games.

Several artists were invited to represent Indonesia in OFA 2008, including Innes Indreswari Soekanto, Tiarna Dame Ruth Sirait, Neneng Ferrier, Grace Tjondronimpuno, Adi Gunawan, Tatang BSP and I Wayan Sujana (Suklu).

However only artists Tiarna Sirait and Neneng Ferrier could be present in Beijing for the OFA 2008 opening ceremony.

Tiarna Sirait said that although OFA had already been officially opened, the display of artwork was still incomplete -- a number of sculptures on display had no information about the sculptor, name of artwork or country represented.

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