

Ci gon de wah

AN ART PROJECT

Tisna Sanjaya

18 FEBRUARY – 24 APRIL 2011 **NUS** MUSEUM

Cigondewah: An Art Project

Buying a land and building a space called the Cultural Centre is unremarkable except for the ripple effect of what the venue has created. An advocate for the protection of the environment, Tisna Sanjaya's current on-going artwork centers on Cigondewah, a place west of Bandung, which reestablishes connections, makes relationships and a place that kindles meanings. The rapid growth of industrialisation and capitalism has affected the livelihood of the villagers and caused the environmental destruction of Cigondewah. While paddy fields and greeneries were part of Cigondewah's history; it has since faded from the residents' collective memory. Appropriating the role of a homeowner, Tisna Sanjaya's artwork, the Cultural Centre (2007 to present) is based on an understanding of a complex system rather than working and defining the exact art medium. Facts and processes are entwined in the effort to develop deeper intuitive relationship with the site, history and community. It includes other disciplines such as natural and physical sciences, industry, community and cultural activities. Tisna is clear with his aim of buying the land and building the Cultural Centre, a renegade approach to reclaiming privatised environment for the public realm. Like the avant-garde predecessors, the artist irreverently stretched the boundaries of art making, eroding the gap between art and life.

Tisna's work encompasses visual and conceptual public art, print, performance, urban and social intervention. His work process is based on the findings from his field research carried out in an organic manner, often having conversations with former farmers who had lost their livelihood after selling their land. Many of Tisna's works reflect these social concerns and situations and the choice of materials used are specific to convey an intrinsic value and message. These works existed within a given time and then ceased to exist. As a result, many of the works around the Cultural Centre are ephemeral except the Centre itself. The intention by the artist is to create an experience and awareness rather than a product. Cigondewah Cultural Centre erodes the distinctions between high and popular culture. It allows freedom to create without restrictions in form, style and materials and operates at the intersection of art, activism and media. He remixes the ordinary, restructures the fabric of the environment by exposing the everyday experience of the global industrialised world. Art here becomes a vehicle to understand the world. It creates relationships with people and encompasses the value of what life is.

Cigondewah Cultural Centre is not a connoisseurship model. It provides an intimate appreciation of the long-term larger scale environmental dynamics of the locale. It is a social examination of art as a collective action and explores the cooperative network of performers, community and along with the artist produce a work of art. Tisna has facilitated interactions between artists, students and the Cigondewah community, to expose new vistas and ideas. Taste, rarity, and market value are not the driving or important forces; documenting and representing Cigondewah land, culture and lifestyle are. Art is thus shaped by this collective activity. It evolves in parallel with the industrialised development paradigms that highlights

dynamic systems. The work is informed as much by the extended social conditions as by artistic traditions. The Cultural Centre and the works in the exhibition are conceived as alternative, if not revolutionary, vis-à-vis traditional curatorial and exhibition practices.

Tisna focuses on live actions and art ideas and the general ethos is as much a response to the events that has happened in Cigondewah as it is to a sense of serious even rational purpose. Every formal device of earlier art making, in all disciplines, is unravelled or thrown out; and direct interaction, visual or behavioural in real space, or imagined; is articulated in unexpected ways. His art permits involvement in a profound way with the self, society, nature, or a combination. The installation of the whole exhibition is half product and half performance with residues from the village. It presents an understanding of a complex system rather than simply knowing each component. For the Cultural Centre, the lack of generic specialisation becomes a way of breaking down the traditional structures that uphold the art market. Collaborative works, performances, and the use of alternative sites all resist the pressure to define oneself as a printmaker, painter or sculptor and even deny individual ownership of a work entirely. What developed are various overlapping artistic scenes, research that co-existed within a larger social and historical context. The Cultural Centre becomes an educational arena where people are inadvertently teaching one another all the time. Being there becomes an educational experience, simply from conversations with ex-farmers, neighbours and pigeon trainers, entrepreneurs, or simply walking along the village.

Cigondewah Cultural Centre is not just a geographical distinction but also a metaphorical one. It is an idealised image and a hope for nature to take root on a national scale. It has the potential in informal arts, creating social networks, relationships, strengthening bonds, and creating local, transnational and intergenerational ties. The work interrogates systems of accreditation, art market, and breaks down generic disciplines and directly engages with social-political issues. The Centre allows social inclusion among the residents and people from other parts of Indonesia and also overseas. It is a continuous evolution, with different practical challenges involving Cigondewah and the Centre's future. These past years between 2007 and the present are indisputably fertile ones and the Cultural Centre in so many ways, will and have, transformed Cigondewah's environment and culture then and now.

Karen Lim

Welcome To Cigondewah Cultural Centre



Cigondewah village, situated at West Bandung is an inspiring place for a new form of cultural tourism.

This attractive place lies on the banks of the Cigondewah River. There is something unique about this place, but at the same time, it is a paradox. Where a clean river once flowed, it is now filled with waste. Clear water has now been replaced with a rainbow of colours reminiscent of the moi indie paintings – red, yellow, green, brown and sometimes even black, depending on the toxic discharge from the factories upstream.

The river was a place where my friends and I used to swim and take *wudhu* (a wash taken before prayer). The river is now contaminated with industrial garbage and litter. Its waters can no longer be used to cleanse the body and have lost its function as a bridge to the religious spirit.

The view of fertile rice fields (*hawara geulis*) is now replaced with fields of plastic waste. Scenes of farmers tilling the land are gone and Cigondewah village has traded its green land for a slum area filled with industrial waste. The constant movements of huge container trucks overloaded with factory waste such as threads, cartons and plastic have become a common sight. The roads and streets are blocked with these vehicles and have caused severe damages and potholes on the roads. There are pollution and dust clouds during the dry seasons while huge potholes are filled with pools of water during the wet seasons. With the inconsistent official policies, the environment is threatened further with the continuous burning of plastic waste contributing to air pollution and the thinning of the ozone layer of our planet.

On the left side of Cigondewah Cultural Centre there is a place for pigeon racing. This is a meeting ground for pigeon lovers to socialise and organise activities such as the annual pigeon competitions. The competition is a national attraction which awards a prestigious prize for the winner. The winner takes home a motorcycle or even a new car. On the other hand, the women work three shifts of eight hours at a time to earn IDR \$25,000 to pick through plastic waste and support the family.

Separated by a street across the Cigondewah Cultural Centre, there is a factory for recycling plastic waste. The external facade of the factory looks the same as other factories around. The gate is never open and is oblivious to the environment and community outside its walls, it exploits workers and does not care about the negative impact it makes on people's lives and the surroundings.

At the back of the Centre flows the rainbow coloured Cigondewah river. Across the river is the Holis Indah housing complex for the middle income group. Here, stories of farmers who have sold their rice fields at a low price to speculative investors – a recurring narrative.

The building of Cigondewah Cultural Centre on a land of about 560m² is still in progress. Its soil which was previously covered in every inch with cloth and plastic waste has become fertile again. I am building a growing space. It is developing and being enriched by nature and the social environment. The latter is alive in a dynamic rhythm of a combination of people working hard, the never-ending noise from the factories, containers and trucks moving to and fro, the peaceful community of horse carts, coaches and trishaws as well as the community of pigeon lovers all contribute to the pulse of this reality!

Tisna Sanjaya

Acknowledgements

NUS Museum and Tisna Sanjaya wish to thank the following for making this exhibition and publication possible:

Molly Agustina
Prof. Dr. Setiawan Sabana MFA
Prof. Dr. Martinus Dwi Marianto MFA
Associate Professor Albert Teo
Agung Hujatnikajennong
Zico Albaiquni*
Aliansyah*
Deden Hendan Durahman
Rohaya Mustapha

Head of LPM (Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat)
Kelurahan Cigondewah Kaler and WK Ketua, Forum RW
Kecamatan Bandung Kulon
Usep Yudha Prawira

Camat Bandung Kulon
Drs H Bambang Sukardi MSI

Ketua RW 01 Cigondewah Kaler
Bapak H Mumu Jaenudin

Master of Pencak Silat Paguyuban Putra Siliwangi
Bapak Jalaludin

Performance Event held at Cigondewah Cultural Centre on
29 – 30 May 2010

Ackay Deni
Agung Jek
Anggawedhaswhara
Atieq SS Listyowati
Davit MT
Dinamokillig*
Fajar Abadi
Harax T-Shirt Community
Iip Ipan
Isa Perkasa
Mi-Ink and Kelas Ajag
Resiguru (Etza Meisyara*)
Roni Bron's
Rudi ST Darma
Soge Ahmad

Performance Event held at Cigondewah Cultural Centre on
8 – 9 Jan 2011

Aden
Ali Nurdin
Anggiat Tornado
Ayas
Chabib D.H.
Eka Sasmita
Etza
Fatchi*
Haji Eem
Hamdan
Irvan Aulia*
Joko Kumain
Kang Enoch
Ridwan AP
Rifda
Sendi*
Wahyono
Yadi Mulya

Pigeon Racing 8-9 Jan 2011

Ketua: Dobby
Wakil Ketua: Enjang
Sekertaris: Agus
Bendahara: Bagyo
Koor Lapangan: Apih Dadan
Inventoris: Enoch
Anggota: Asep Nunu
Ferry

Coor Maintenance Staff: Uwa Haji
Olang
Ujang
Yadi

Coor Penerbangan Staff: Amad
Dede
Hendra
Kipli
Enel

PR: Mang Alit
Security: Djarot
Koor Buser: Enjang
Staff: Enjang
Iyan
Epul
Aep
Amang RT
Acep

Cigondewah Mural Survey*

Agam Hanafish
Agung Nugraha
Aradea Nugraha
Indra Audipriatna
Kukuh Rizal Arfianto
Meizan Natadiningrat
R Ardiansyah AF
Prananda Lutfiansyah
Zusfa Roihan
KMSR (Keluarga Mahasiswa Seni Rupa)
The Class of 08 FSRD ITB

STV Studio: Si Kabayan Nyinteuk Crew

Kusnadi
Krisnandi
Dihona
Wawan S. Husin

Students from the University Scholars Programme, NUS

Pingasari Tandrawijaya
Wilson Tio

Students from the NUS Business School

Candy Ong
Dawn Ng
Hazel Chong
Valerie Chua
Vivien Cheng

IARU-NUS Global Intern

Marina Simakova

[*Students from Institut Teknologi Bandung]

ORGANISER

SUPPORTERS

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NUS MUSEUM



NUS MUSEUM

NUS Museum is a comprehensive museum for teaching and research. It focuses on Asian regional art and culture, and seeks to create an enriching experience through its collections and exhibitions. The Museum has over 7,000 artefacts and artworks divided across four collections. The **Lee Kong Chian Collection** consists of a wide representation of Chinese materials from ancient to contemporary art; the **South and Southeast Asian Collection** holds a range of works from Indian classical sculptures to modern pieces; and the **Ng Eng Teng Collection** is a donation from the late Singapore sculptor and Cultural Medallion recipient of over 1,000 artworks. A fourth collection, the **Straits Chinese Collection**, is located at NUS' Baba House at 157 Neil Road.

NUS Museum launched the NX Gallery in 2006. It is conceived as a contemporary art venue to showcase emerging artistic trends in Singapore, Southeast Asia and beyond, as well as to encourage critical curatorial and museum practices. For the NUS Museum, these aims afford an emphasis in partnerships within the University and beyond, underscored by the recognition that art and culture form a powerful nexus that connect different disciplines and institutional interests. Past exhibitions organised at the NX Gallery include *Picturing Relations*; *Simryn Gill and Tino Dujmini* (May 2007), *Bound for Glory: Wong Hoy Cheng* (September 2008) and *Encountering Cheong Soo Pieng* (February 2010).

NUS MUSEUM

University Cultural Centre
50 Kent Ridge Crescent
National University of Singapore
Singapore 119279
T: (65) 6516 8817
E: museum@nus.edu.sg
www.nus.edu.sg/museum/

Opening Hours
10am – 7.30pm (Tuesdays – Saturdays)
10am – 6pm (Sundays)
Closed on Mondays and Public Holidays

