

## BLEDOG ART GALLERY



Juniadi Kenyut and Anas Etan

The famous Pita Maha Artists Cooperative, established in Bali in the early 1930's by the King of Ubud, Tjokorda Gede Agung Sukawati, renown Balinese artist and architect Gusti Nyoman Lempad and two foreign artist, Walter Spies and Rudolf Bonnet revolutionized Balinese traditional painting and wood carving. It has served as a 'model' to inspire other Indonesian artist collectives and communities which have made and continue to make valuable contributions in the development of modern and contemporary art within the Indonesia.

Initially, Anas Etan and Djunaidi Kenyut, two young contemporary artists born in the East Javanese city of Surabaya wished to create a private art studio, residence and one room gallery at their rented location in Teges Kangin, Pelitan, Ubud 18 months ago. However by the end of the renovation of the space, which includes 3 separate levels, the duo decided to change the concept from a private art studio to that of an art space open to the local art community.



Collaboration with Reunion artist at Bledog Art Space

"Why not? Both Kenyut and I had a dream of making a space for the growing community of Indonesian and foreign expat artists that gravitate to Bali's cultural and creative center, the renown artist village of Ubud. Many friends and fellow artists approached us and encouraged us, in a way they shared our vision and help create it too," says Anas.

"We came up with the name Bledog Art Space for the gallery. Bledog means baby elephant in the Javanese language. The name seemed to make sense since we are located on Jalan Goa Gaja—the road that leads to Ubud's Elephant Cave temple. The second reason the name fits is because although our space is small, we, like a baby elephant are able to grow larger over time."



AS Kurnia preparing for exhibition OPEN SPACE

Bledog Art Space officially opened on the 26th July 2010 with a group exhibition of artists from the Ubud area. Titled, 'Open Space' the event included American, French, Japanese, Australian, German, South African as well as Indonesian artists originally from Sumatra, Java and Bali; a reflection of the areas multicultural community. 16 different artists presented their contemporary expressions through paintings and mixed media collage, sculpture, installations and video art. Some of the works were of the genre of 'experimental' art.

The art space features an outdoor garden setting and 8 rooms of varying sizes, set over 3 levels that functions as areas for people to view and create art as well as to socialize. During 'Open Space' a live dj performance, light show and video art projections by American d.j Skana and Indonesian d.j Garuda entertained the guests with ambient funky and a cultural hybrid of 'grooves' well into the evening.



exhibition from FILL UP THIS BOX

"Avant Garde art is generally misunderstood and not well accepted within Indonesia," says Kenyut. "Therefore very few fine art galleries wish to represent it. It is easier to sell to local buyers conventional and trend driven art that is thematically more accessible within the market place. The Indonesian modern art market is still quite 'immature and unsophisticated' due to its short history within the country, however traditional art has been well embraced. And has a much larger market. Avant Garde and new conceptual art pushes the creative boundaries of the artists and the genre of contemporary art.



Art performance at Bledog Art Space,  
by Rehanne Abraham

Much of it is of a very high standard yet it is difficult to sell and therefore it can be difficult for experimental artists to find venues to exhibit their works," adds Kenyut. The relevance of such a venue to the art community cannot be overstated as Bledogs focus is nonsales orientated.

In response to last years Mt. Merapi volcanic disaster in Yogyakarta Central Java, Bledog Art Space held a charity fund raising event titled, 'Fill Up This Box'. The exhibition featured works by 77 artists with special price tags ranging from Rp. 20,000 to Rp. 1,000,000 (USD \$ 2 - \$100). Opening on 28th of November until the 5th December 2010, participating artists included the budding 10 year old Japanese/Indonesian painter Kayoku and the most senior of the artists, Javanese realist painter Linthon Paul, 61 years of age. Funds raised from this event were directed to the Kompas Newspaper groups' donation campaign for disaster relief.

Driven by the fundamental philosophy of sharing, Bledog is a space available for creation, expression, experimentation, discussion, play, and art appreciation catering to the needs of the local art community. "It is valuable to have a creative space such as Bledog that is free from the pressures of the market or opinion where you can just explore and play with other artists. I'm not only putting my energy out to make an art work I am also receiving energy from the creativity produced by the creative synergy," says South African performance artist and Ubud resident, Rehanne Abrahams, who is the volunteer creative Director of the Theatre Firefly. "For me an independent art space that is not about self promotion but rather about community and what comes out of a community is great.

It's a space to share and to show what you normally wouldn't and a free space to do things without censure. Its also a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with different people you'd never work with." Rehanne performed with another dancer and musician during the 'Fill Up This Box' event at Bledog and has also utilized the space for performance art photo shoots for other productions. Theatre Firefly is a multicultural collective of theatre makers and interdisciplinary artist based in Bali who create innovative site specific intercultural theatre.

Bledog also serves to encourage and facilitate the growth of new genres of art expressions that are generally the domain of the youth. An artist discussions planned for early in the year will be on 'Indie' urban street art and comic art from Java. This genre is rapidly developing on the neighboring island however is still in its infancy on Bali and is predominantly popular with students. Young experimental artists are a generation rapidly evolving inline with globalization and the development of science, technology and the cyber world. Their creativity in essence is a reflection of the spirit of the times and the conditions these people feel and experience today.

Specific inter cultural collaborations/art projects are also another method to share ideas and to promote relations and cultural understanding. Recently two artists from the French island of La Reunion, Kristof Nenmont and Steven Kingley joined with Kenyut and Anas at Bledog for an afternoon of spontaneous creativity producing numerous mixed media works on paper that will be exhibited in June 2011, at the French Cultural Center in Surabaya.

Kenyut and Anas communicate regularly with Galleries and artist communities in the East Javanese capital and draw from and assist their network. Again Bledog functions to provide opportunities for exposure for artists from outside of Bali. The current exhibition running at the Art Space, 'Scratches of the Imagination' open from the 26th December 2010 until the 26th January 2011 features 4 artists from Surabaya, Andreas Widago, Betara Gludug Banyu Murti, Najzil Layin and Romy Setiawan who's work is in the medium of lead and color pencil.

Bledog plan 6 main exhibitions throughout 2011, however in between these events the art space will host various other events. Each Sunday evening it is open to the public specifically for the screening of films with subject matter as diverse as environmental awareness, cultural themes, social observations and criticism, as well as art films from both a contemporary and historical perspective. The gallery is located on Jalan Goa Gajah, Teges Kangin, Pelitan, Ubud, Bali and is open daily from 9am until 6pm, however it is regularly open during the evening for events and friends and members of the arts community to drop by and socialize. For further information and exhibitions and events schedules go to: [www.bledog.multiply.com](http://www.bledog.multiply.com)

“The word community is derived from the Latin root, munus, meaning to share amongst the people. Bledog’s door is always open for our friends and ‘new’ friends who want to join us and fill this space with any kind of creative expressions, not only performance art, discussions, poetry, music, installations, film, painting and sculpture - however an artists feels free to express themselves,” adds Anas.

Jalan Goa Gajah Teges Kangin, Peliatan, Ubud, Bali.

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