

From The Editor

This issue of *Wacana Seni* covers a broad range of topics regarding the traditional and newly created arts and design of Africa and Asia. Sweet Ufumwen Ebeigbe's article "The Rhetorical Function of Portraits from Benin (Nigeria)", shows that the Benin portraits of Africa have unique styles, aesthetics, iconography and functions, that make them different from Western portraits. Through this study, Ebeigbe affirms that African art is not devoid of portraits as some would argue.

Muhammad Irfan Nyia Abdullah and his co-writers study the changes that have occurred in Rodat, a traditional musical dance form performed for entertainment, festivals, and state functions in Kuala Terengganu. They make detailed descriptions of the origins, functions, costumes, songs, lyrics and performance structure, and provide ideas about how to revitalize the form.

In her essay, "Music of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) Forum 2 Finalists: Reflections on Malaysian Multiculturalism", Lena Lie examines the compositional styles and approaches of the new Malaysian composers Mohd Yazid Zakaria, Ng Chong Lim, Teh Tze Siew and Yii Kah Hoe. By combining Malay traditional elements (such as dance rhythms and ritual concepts), Chinese aesthetics and Western compositional techniques, the new compositions represent the "multicultural vibrancy" of Malaysia.

The article "Ortografi Multigrafik dalam Wacana Iklan Produk Kecantikan Berbahasa Jepun" by Maserah Shabudin dan Idris Aman, investigates the beauty product advertising strategies

in Japan. The authors illustrate that the use of four types of orthography, (namely kanji, hiragana, katakana and the Roman alphabet) and foreign loan words in Japanese beauty product advertisements, have not only attracted the attention of potential buyers in Japan, but helped the products to penetrate the international market.

We have two reviews in this issue. "A Musical Journey of Poetic Endearments" by Lena Lie is a short assessment of the acoustic guitarist-composer Az Samad's solo finger style guitar performance held in conjunction with the George Town Literary Festival 2011 in Penang. This is followed by Suryadi's review of Andrew N. Weintraub's book *Dangdut Stories: A Social and Musical History of Indonesia's Most Popular Music*, published by Oxford University Press.

It is with great pleasure that we announce the introduction of a new section called Creating Art Works where performing and visual artists or designers can impart knowledge about their original techniques and approaches in conceiving new art works, designs, choreographies or musical compositions. In this issue, Elham Shafaei and her co-writers disclose the method of making durable art papers from the fibres of the bark of the *mengkirai* tree in their article entitled "Handmade Paper for Drawing and Painting". From their experiments, the writers contend that art paper made from the *mengkirai* bark is not only strong and flexible, but can be used with a broad range of drawing media.

Wacana Seni would like to invite artists to share their approaches, methods, philosophies and concepts of making new art by writing short essays with image examples for this new section. We also welcome transcribed interviews with well known artists and producers about their contributions to the art world which can inspire the younger generation.

Tan Sooi Beng
Editor-in-Chief