

From the Editor

This issue of *Wacana Seni* highlights articles about the signification and meanings of the visual arts and film. In their essay, "Expressions of Hybridity as Strategy for Malayan Nationalism", Emilia Ong and Izmer Ahmad explore the notion of hybridity in the works of Chinese artists in Malaya during the 1950s and 1960s as a tactic for constructing their identity in the new nation state. The authors argue that by employing "non-essentialist concepts of identity based on otherness", these artists promote cultural exchange at a horizontal level that neither privileges Western nor Chinese cultures.

Kanwal Syed and Sarena Abdullah analyse the four phases of modern art history in Pakistan showing that the art works are influenced by political factors in their manuscript entitled "Chronicling Pakistan's Art Movements from Traditional to Contemporary: 1960–2011". They contend that the globalization of the contemporary art movement and the 9/11 catastrophe have helped to promote the international recognition of contemporary Pakistani art that uses popular imagery to convey political messages.

Conversely, Zainurul Rahman, Nasya Bafhen and Juliette Peers examine the visual imagery of selected covers of *Wanita* Magazines that were published from 1969 to 1980. The visuals illustrate that the mass-circulated magazines were catalysts in presenting women's voices, their notions of modernity, and their narratives of nationalism and feminism in Malaysian society during the two decades.

We also feature two articles on Yasmin Ahmad, the film maker who has passed away but whose works continue to make an impact in Malaysian cinema today. Through an analysis of her cinematic styles and content, Lee Yuen Beng argues that Yasmin Ahmad is an auteur; she emphasises cosmopolitan values such as "humour, love and humanism" and the everyday experiences of common people across ethnic, gender and other boundaries.

In the essay, "Representation of Multiculturalism and Religion in Yasmin Ahmad's *Muallaf*", Ngo Sheau Shi and Harith Baharudin conduct a textual analysis of *Muallaf*, a film that invited controversy in the country. By looking at the texts and visual frames, they demonstrate how Yasmin had constructed an alternative discourse of Islam in contemporary Malaysia.

In the section on *Creative Methodologies*, we publish a paper by Jinky-Jane Simeon who has created a new bamboo instrument called the U9 Xylophone for teaching music to children under nine years of age. The xylophone is based on the *gabbang* (xylophone) and the *kulintangan* gong chimes of the Kinabatangan area of Sabah.

This volume also includes a short biography of the late Jose Maceda, the pioneer of ethnomusicology in Southeast Asia. Based on interviews with well-known ethnomusicologists and archival materials, Thiti Panya-in describes the significant role that Maceda played in music education, research and creating a network of ethnomusicologists in Southeast Asia in the late twentieth century.

Finally, we have two reviews of art exhibitions: "Works of Fifteen Artists" organised by Fergana Art Space, and "*Hidup Terlampau Selesa*" (Life is Too Comfortable) curated by Izat Arif and Rizal Sufar. Reviewed by Sarena Abdullah and Cheryl C. Thiruchelvam respectively, these exhibitions focus on current issues relevant to Malaysian society.