



Jakarta's contrasting worlds: Ken Pattern's stone lithograph *Benhil*, on display during the opening of his charity art exhibition at the Grand Melia Hotel on April 26, 2010, which was organized by the Canadian Women's Association, portrays the contrast between Jakarta's two faces, modern and traditional.

The COLORS of A GOOD CAUSE

Dian Kuswandini

THE JAKARTA POST/JAKARTA

"Just by seeing his artworks, I really feel that he loves Indonesia and Indonesian people — and that's why I love Ken Pattern and his works in the first place," said self-confessed art lover, Velichka Bellamy Kasim, on the opening night of the exhibition in Jakarta.

Bellamy also had good reason to be enthusiastic: The paintings are up for sale, the proceeds of which will flow to various Indonesian charities. Having spent for more than two

decades in Indonesia, the Canadian artist is giving back. Over recent years, Pattern has been working with the Canadian Women's Association (CWA) to direct the proceeds of his art to a good cause.



For charity: Invitees to the opening of Ken Pattern's art exhibition look at reproductions of some of his lithographs displayed on a table.

"Pattern has developed a great love of Indonesia and the Indonesian people," said Paula Bowers, wife of the Canadian ambassador to Indonesia, during the exhibition opening last week.

Seeing hundreds of Pattern's works — mostly lithographs — he has created since the 1980s, gives you a sense of his depth as an artist. Capturing contrasting souls in Jakarta — the black and white, the yin and yang, Pattern portrays a unique interpretation of the city, one that is imbued by a longing feeling for Jakarta's "traditional" life.

"What I love about Jakarta is that it is about two different worlds — the poor and the rich, the old and

the new," Pattern told *The Jakarta Post*. "Jakarta is just black and white. There's so much contrast blended all together."

Carrying his small digital camera as he wanders around Jakarta's *kampungs*, Pattern says he loves capturing traditional elements, such as *kampung* landscapes and street vendors because he believes that someday, modernization and eviction will wipe them out.

And these two contrasting souls — modernity and traditional culture, are what he portrays in almost of all his drawings and paintings. In one way, he depicts the lives of ordinary people — the vendors with their *gerobak* (carriages) and *bakul* (rattan baskets), as well as drivers of *bajaj* (three-wheeled vehicle) and *becak* (pedicabs), while in another way, he conveys a message of how Jakarta is losing its "true colors" due to modernization.

His exquisite masterpiece titled *Eyewitness*, for example, shows an old man sitting in front of his house in an alley of a *kampung* area looking at the glass and steel skyscrapers that soar above him.

"The old man didn't know I was taking his picture," Pattern recalled. "I became interested in him because he's an old man who has lived longer than that building. He has seen so many changes; the *kampung* he's living in is getting smaller and smaller."

What Pattern calls "the disappearing Jakarta", was something he accidentally discovered 20 years ago when he first inspired by the city's *kampungs*.

Taking photographs as well as rough sketches of scenes as references for his paintings, Pattern unwittingly recorded historic changes in the landscape.

"It was some many months between the first time seeing a scene and getting down to actually draw-

ing the image," he said. On one of the occasions when he returned to the scene, however, he found an empty space where some months before had stood a thriving busy community.

"Soon I realized that much of what I was recording was literally disappearing before my eyes," Pattern said. "This prompted me to begin recording traditional scenes across the city including those portraying the contrasts of Jakarta," he added.

Wandering around Jakarta's *kampungs*, Pattern revealed, had always been enjoyable, as he met people who were curious about foreigners.

"I always stop and talk to people," he said and smiled while adding, "I met people who were curious about what a *bule* [foreigner] was doing there?"

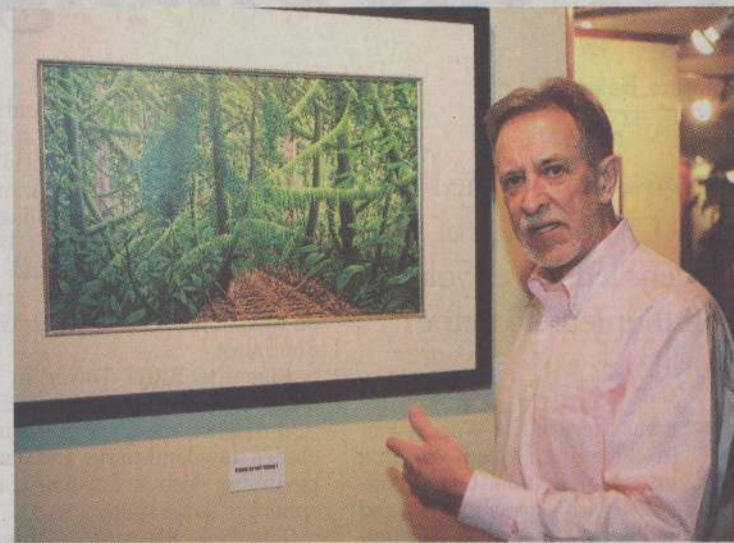
"I told them: 'I'm an artist and I'm looking for inspiration.'"

Pattern doesn't speak Indonesian fluently, but says he knows enough for small talk. Pattern's love affair with people and their changing surroundings perhaps grew from his earlier interest in the conflict between humans and their environment.

His early works, in fact, revolved around environmental themes, reflecting his involvement in environmental movements in Canada in the 1970s.

"I've made statements about the environment in my art," said Pattern, who usually leaves for Vancouver every June to finish his lithography works at Malaspina Studio. And most recently, he went on, "I've returned to my long-held interest in the power of nature."

His most recent oil painting titled *Eviction Notice*, for example, reflects human greed in destroying rainforests for the sake of modernization.



Human greed: Ken Pattern shows his painting *Eviction Notice*, which reflects human greed in destroying rainforests for the sake of modernization, during the opening of his charity exhibition at the Grand Melia Hotel, Jakarta.



Soon to disappear: A woman looks at Ken Pattern's stone lithograph *Home on the Ciliwung*, at the opening of his art exhibition. The exhibition will run until May 22, 2010.



Shrinking 'kampung': People discuss Ken Pattern's stone lithograph *Eyewitness*, showing an old man sitting in front of his house in an alley of a *kampung* area, looking at the glass and steel skyscrapers that soar above him.

"The idea is about the last habitat," said Pattern. "It happens everywhere in the world — it's a universal problem. It's about how stupid humans are for not thinking about the future," he added.

Pattern's sensitivity about issues of people and environment — as well as the changing Jakarta — is indeed what sets him apart from other artists. As his fan Bellamy pointed out, Pattern depicts the true beauty of Jakarta in a very inspiring and simple way.

"The first time I saw his works I fell in love with them," said Bellamy, who first saw Pattern's works in a calendar.

"I was so impressed with his drawings that I had the pictures in the calendar framed and hung on my walls," she laughed.

"All of my children and grandchildren truly love them. They told me they had never seen such interesting and beautiful *kampung* places in Jakarta."

Whatever the future holds, it seems the memory of Jakarta's *kampungs* will survive.

— PHOTOS BY JP/P.J. LEO

KEN PATTERN CHARITY ART EXHIBITION

Until May 22, 2010
Open daily from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Gran Melia Hotel
Lobby level 1
Jl. HR Rasuna Said
South Jakarta