

Seniman arca bertaraf dunia

Pemuda kacukan Melayu-Jepun muncul pemenang agung seni awam sempena pesta Kobe Biennale



SALJANA MATA MEMANDANG: Arca berbingkai seberat 2,000 kilogram yang dihasilkan Encik Muhammad Nur Faris menjadi tumpuan kerana membolehkan pengunjung bergambar dengan latar belakang laut Kobe di Jepun. – Foto Ihsan MUHAMMAD NUR FARIS

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SENIAMAN muda, Encik Muhammad Nur Faris Nakamura Mohamed Salim, sentiasa mengisi ruang besar dalam berkarya.

Ini memandangkan beliau biasanya selesai dan teruja membina arca atau seni pemasangan "rakassa" yang tampak gah dipandang mata.

Situasi ini, bagaimanapun, payah diperolehi di Singapura kerana keterbatasan ruang yang turut menjadi keprihatinan ramai artis setempat.

Encik Muhammad Nur Faris, 26 tahun, tidak berputus asa dan mencari ruang alternatif bagi menjadikan impiannya itu satu kenyataan.

Temannya yang mengikuti kursus penguasaan seni menyarankan agar beliau mengembangkan bakat seninya dengan menyertai Peraduan Antarabangsa Seni Shitsurai (Seni Awam) sempena pesta seni besar-besaran Kobe Biennale, di Jepun.

Hasilnya, arca berbingkai pemuda ini, yang diperbuat daripada besi dan konkrit, dikirif sebagai pemenang agung Seni Shitsurai di Kobe Biennale baru-baru ini.

Beliau menerima hadiah 2 juta yen (\$23,251).

Saingannya ialah sekitar 40 seniman lain daripada serata dunia.

Tahun ini, pesta seni dua tahun sekali itu memberi tumpuan kepada usaha mendefinisikan semula idea tradisional mengenai seni. Kekuatan budaya di kota itu, yang membantunya secara kolektif dalam membangkitkan setiap masyarakat daripada kesuraman musibah gempa bumi 20 tahun lalu, cuba diselenggarakan seiring dengan daya keusahawanan anak mudanya.

Ketika ditemui *Gah!* di Maktub Seni Lasalle baru-baru ini, Encik Muhammad Nur Faris, yang kini eksekutif operasi di Muzium Seni Singapura (SAM), berkata:

"Selepas tamat pengajian ijazah seni halus di Lasalle, saya menetapkan dua misi iaitu mencari pekerjaan tetap dan menebar-kan sayap seni ke peringkat antarabangsa. "Temannya yang menyarankan agar saya rajin melungsur Internet bagi mencari peluang memamerkan karya saya."

"Selain di Jepun, saya turut melihat peluang berkarya di Australia dan London. Sayangnya, kedua-dua tempat itu merupakan program bekerja sambil berseni yang memakan masa lebih sebulan, sesuatu yang tidak mampu saya lakukan kerana tugas sepenuh masa saya."

Mengenai kemenangannya itu, Encik Mu-



TEBAR SENI PEMASANGAN KE JEPUN: Encik Muhammad Nur Faris, warga Singapura yang mempunyai darah Jepun, teruja memenangi Hadiah Agung di Peraduan Seni Awam sempena pesta seni gah, Kobe Biennale. – Foto KHALID BABA

hammad Nur Faris, anak ketiga dalam lima beradik, terharu jerih payahnya selama lima bulan menghasilkan arca itu membawa hasil.

"Banyak perkara tentang cara menghantar karya yang berat lagi besar tidak saya ketahui."

"Sebabnya arca ini diukir di sini dan bukan di Kobe. Saya perlu mengkaji cara terbaiknya membawa karya ini ke Jepun."

"Beratnya ialah sekitar 2,000 kilogram. Saya juga perlu membelanjakan \$6,000 bagi kos pengangkutan. Nak pasang roda pada arca itu turut menimbulkan kesulitan. Saya yang terbiasa dengan arca kayu pula perlu menyesuaikan diri saya dengan bahan konkrit dan besi."

"Mujurlah, segala penat lelah ini berhasil," katanya lagi.

Simbolisme struktur arca ciptaannya terletak pada keupayaannya menjadi bingkai merakam foto indah pemandangan sekitar laut Kobe.

"Pihaik pengadil gembira melihat arca saya ini mampu menjadi bingkai bagi orang ramai yang lalu-lalang memetik foto tiga ikon iaitu Pelabuhan Kobe, Hotel Oriental Kobe dan roda Ferris."

"Saya pula tersentuh kerana sebuah negara seperti Jepun yang kaya nilai estetika seninya dapat menghargai bakat saya. Tambahan pula, darah Jepun ada mengalir dalam tubuh saya. Ia suatu pencapaian yang meng-

gembirakan," katanya lagi.

Buat masa ini Encik Muhammad Nur Faris gembira dengan pekerjaannya yang membolehkan beliau berinteraksi dengan ramai artis muda.

"Kebanyakan seniman muda ini masih teragak-agak dalam memikirkan masa depan mereka sebagai seniman. Mereka bimbang ibu bapa mereka tidak menyokong kerjaya mereka atau tidak banyak pendedahan diberi kepada seniman muda di Singapura."

"Saya, bagaimanapun, memberi mereka jaminan bahawa kalau ada ketamahan, pasti ada jalan," jelas Ihsan Sarjana Muda Sastera (Kepujian Kelas Pertama) dalam Seni Halus daripada Maktub Seni Lasalle itu.

World class sculptor

Malay-Japanese youth is the winner of public art grand prize at Kobe Biennale.

AS FAR AS THE EYES CAN SEE: A sculpture of frames weighing 2,000 kilograms produced by Mr Muhammad Nur Faris has become a focal point because it allows visitors to take photographs with the sea off Kobe in Japan as a backdrop. – Photo courtesy of MUHAMMAD NUR FARIS

BRINGING INSTALLATION ART TO JAPAN: Mr Muhammad Nur Faris, a Singaporean who has Japanese ancestry, is excited about winning the grand prize for public art at the Kobe Biennale. – Photo KHALID BABA

Young artist Mr Muhammad Nur Faris Nakamura Mohamed Salim always thinks big for his works.

This can be seen from the fact that he is usually comfortable with and excited about creating "gigantic" sculptures or art installations that look magnificent.

However, it is hard to do so in Singapore due to space constraints, and this is also a concern for many local artists.

Mr Muhammad Nur Faris, 26, did not give up and has found an alternative space to make his dream a reality.

His friend, who is taking BA(Hons) Arts Management at LASALLE College of the Arts, encouraged him to hone his artistic talent by taking part in the Shitsurai Art International Competition (Public Art) held in conjunction with the Kobe Biennale art festival in Japan.

His work, a sculpture of frames made of steel and concrete, was awarded the grand prize for Shitsurai Art at the recent Kobe Biennale.

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He received a prize of two million yen (S\$23,251).

He competed with around 40 artists from all over the world.

This year, the biennale focused on efforts to redefine traditional ideas about art. The strength of culture in the city, which collectively helped its society rise from the gloominess of a calamitous earthquake 20 years ago, was explored along with the entrepreneurial spirit of its youth.

When *Gah!* met with Mr Muhammad Nur Faris at LASALLE College of the Arts recently, Mr Muhammad Nur Faris, who is an operations executive at the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), said:

“After finishing BA(Hons) Fine Arts at LASALLE, I set for myself two missions, that is, to find a permanent job and to bring my art to the international level.

My friend encouraged me to surf the internet diligently to look for opportunities to display my works.

Besides Japan, I have also looked at producing work in Australia and London. It’s a pity that the two places offering working artist programmes are more than a month long, which is something that I cannot afford to do because of my full time job.”

Regarding his win, Mr Muhammad Nur Faris, the third child among five siblings, is moved that his five months of hard work have paid off.

“There were many things that I didn’t know about shipping a large and heavy work of art. That was because the sculpture was produced here and not in Kobe. I had to find the best way to ship the work to Japan. It weighed around 2,000 kilograms. I also had to spend S\$6,000 on transportation cost. Even installing wheels on the sculpture posed difficulties. I also had to get used to working with concrete and steel as I am more familiar with creating wooden sculptures. Luckily, all my hard work paid off,” he added.

The symbolism of his sculpture lies in its ability to be a frame for beautiful photographs of the sea off Kobe.

“The judges were happy to see that my sculpture can be a frame for passersby to take photographs of three landmarks, that is, Kobe Port, Oriental Kobe Hotel and the Ferris wheel.

I am touched because a country like Japan which is rich with aesthetic values can appreciate my talent. Furthermore, I have Japanese blood. It’s an achievement that makes me happy,” he added.

For now, Mr Muhammad Nur Faris is happy with his job as it allows him to interact with many young artists.

“Many young artists are still unsure when they think of their future as artists. They worry that their parents will not support their career or there is not enough exposure given to young artists in Singapore.

However, I gave them the assurance that when there is a will, there is a way,” explained the BA(Hons) Fine Arts First Class Honours graduate from LASALLE College of the Arts.