



Introduction

I am honored to introduce Ms. Susanna Herttunen to our local art community on the occasion of her maiden solo art exhibit at Galeri Seni Mutiara, Penang. The theme of the exhibit - Nature in Transformation is Susanna's artistic debut in Penang art scene.

One cheerful morning in 2008, Ms. Alwyn brought her to my studio to view my work. I welcomed them as I always do with all artists - local and international because we have common interest. Likewise Susanna reciprocated, inviting me to her soigne penthouse, to view and critique her work and followed by delicious dinner. My last visitation was to assess and select a body of her work for this exhibit. Unexpectedly, not only Susanna prolific output is impressive, her work has undergone progressive sublimable transmutation - much more dramatic, organized, intense palette and expressive.

Born in 1952 in Geraldton, West Australia of Finnish parentage, Susanna followed her parents back to their roots in Finland four years later. They decided to settle in the pristine, lush countryside surrounded by beautiful trees and foliage - living or growing up in such unspoilt natural environment has undeniably inculcated in young Susanna a deep reverence and love for trees and nature, so much so that she has turned out to be a philodendron and environmentalist.

Susanna's talent was discovered by her art teacher, a famous local artist Justus Sarisalo at a very young age. Justus has impacted her life as an artist. She then further continued her art education at Simons Center of Fine Arts, Charleston, South Carolina from 1989-91. In 2001, University of Aarhus, Denmark conferred her a degree of Master of Arts.

Since then, Susanna has become a very active artist, having held several one-person and group exhibits from Sweden to China to Finland to Denmark and finally Malaysia.

Married to Mr. Carsten L. Sorensen with two lovely daughters, Susanna has been following her husband for the past many years wherever his work takes him to. They have traveled and lived in many parts of the world. Their last sojourn is in Sweden before they ultimately decided to live in the enchanting tropical island - Penang. Needless to say they love it.

Susanna's artistic expression is the process of crystallization of the globalized experiences. Like some artists, she sees the world analytically, intellectually and emotionally. Traveling to her has become a modus vivendi for it enriches all her senses - especially, her sense of sight. Her experience with each place is internalized and translated into abstract images of memories. She makes no reference in her motifs of operandi unlike realist or impressionist.

Nature in Transformation addresses critical issues of immediacy - global warming, deforestation, water and air pollutants are but some that Susanna is abysmally concerned about. The coexistence between man and nature is her pivotal promulgation.

Susanna works in the style of Abstract Expressionism, known also as New York School as it was invented in New York in the late 1940's, and it became the world dominating sanctionous genre of art for a long time. Its important influence is Carl Gustav Jung who posited that archetypal symbol-generating emotions and behavior can be found in every psyche and culture.

Working subconsciously for symbols of universal meaning and emotions, Susanna's large canvases are laden with powerful vigorous physical gesture, psychic energy, incidental marks and contrasty dark colors. Her brushmarks are expressively vibrant. The color and form are her invention.

Susanna's trademark style - intense black outlines, dark contrasty color, free sweeping gestural brushwork - are found in the schematized canvases.

Susanna's art would inevitably leave an indelible mark in Penang art scene.

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