

## Printmaking Triennial as a Parameter for The Development of Indonesian Printmaking

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**Abstract.** The Indonesian Printmaking Triennial is a competition held in a three-year period by Bentara Budaya as the organizer. Bentara Budaya chose printmaking as the main focus in organizing this competition because its existence is seen as something important and needs to be observed considering that printmaking itself has become an important part of the development of Indonesian modern art since the 40s. The printmaking triennial has been held six times, in 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and most recently in 2018. The competition is open to the public, both nationally and internationally (for 2015 and 2018).

This research aims to look at the Triennial printmaking competition by Bentara Budaya as a parameter for the development of printmaking in Indonesia. By using a descriptive quantitative method by looking at the dynamics of participants, finalists and winners of the competition towards the quantification of the type of print technique and the quantity of appreciation.

This research found that relief print is a popular technique for Indonesian printmakers. Meanwhile, the lithography technique should be taken into consideration by reflecting on the last event, where all the winners from other countries used the technique when the competition was opened internationally.

**Keywords:** *art competition; development; indonesian printmaking; parameter; triennial.*

### 1 Introduction

The dynamism of the value of a work of art is quite difficult to measure numerically considering that the matters in the work of art are subjective. Unlike the exact sciences, there is no right or wrong variable that determines the final result in the field of fine arts. However, this can be answered through a form of competition. An art competition is an event that brings together various parties to reach an agreement on the best work according to the context it carries. The various parties in a competition at a glance are similar to the elements contained in the ecosystem of the art social field, such as: artists as participants with their best artworks, then there is a jury (experts, art observers) as the party that will later assess the work of the artists - according to the context of the competition itself and the organizer as an institution that has the ability to accommodate the

event. In another view, art competition can also be seen as a parameter of the development of the field (or sub-field) of art. Because the assessment done by the jury should be able to represent the best achievements of the artists' works in a more measurable and accountable way to the general public.

The Indonesian Printmaking Triennial (Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia) is a competition held in a three-year period by Bentara Budaya as the organizer. Bentara Budaya is a cultural institution owned by Kompas Gramedia that has a network in Yogyakarta, Jakarta, Solo and Bali. In addition to facilitating spaces and programs, Bentara Budaya also collects works of art. As Mulyadi wrote in [1], Bentara Budaya chose printmaking as the main focus in organizing this competition because its existence is seen as something important and needs to be observed considering that printmaking itself has been an important part of the development of Indonesian modern art since the 40s. The printmaking triennial has been held six times, in 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and most recently in 2018. The competition is open to the public, both nationally and internationally (the nature of the competition that was opened to international artists was carried out in the last two events, namely in 2015 and 2018).

In the historical aspect, especially in Indonesia, printmaking also plays its own role. Siregar wrote in [2], that Mochtar Apin in 1948 published a series of lino-cuts containing approximately 12 titles on 16x21 cm paper.

*"In that publication, Mochtar Apin proposed printmaking as an understanding. Previously, such intentions had been made through a joint project between him and Baharuddin Marasutan. The project was done to celebrate the anniversary of independence in August 1946. According to Mochtar Apin, the idea originated from Baharuddin and according to Sanento Yuliman's observations (Yuliman, 2001: 123-124). The Secretariat of the then Minister of Youth Affairs had long taken an interest in Baharuddin's idea. As a result, many lino prints representing the situation of the nation's struggle were distributed to various countries that recognized Indonesia's sovereignty. It was clear that the project was government propaganda. And the printmaking, or in this case the woodcut technique, was the technique most closely associated with that interest".*

In addition to these historical traces, printmaking is also a studio option at art education institutions in Indonesia which to this day contributes to the national and international art social scene through its graduate artists, including: Setiawan Sabana, Haryadi Suadi, T. Sutanto, Tisna Sanjaya, Ay Tjoe Christine, Agung 'Leak' Kurniawan, Ade Darmawan, Devy Ferdianto, Syahrizal Pahlevi, Theresia Agustina Sitompul and others.

## 2 Method

This scientific paper will explain the development of Indonesian printmaking as an offer of practice in the realm of fine arts that is reviewed through the largest event in the social field of Indonesian printmaking itself, namely the Indonesian Printmaking Triennial held by Bentara Budaya. The aspects that will be examined further are limited to the number of participants, the number of works, the number of finalists, the number of finalists works, the ratio of finalists, the ratio of winners, and the printing techniques used by the participants in this competition. With a lot of statistical data, the research method of this scientific paper will use quantitative methods that are sourced from existing data chronically.

### 2.1 Library Research

The data in this scientific paper are quantitative statistics sourced from a search of the reference literature published in the event, namely the exhibition catalogs of the Printmaking Triennial from 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 to its most recent implementation in 2018. Data collection is carried out by analyzing and recording data in the catalog, then making graphs as statistics. Thus, the data exposure will be clearly readable and can be qualified based on the needs of the variables involved. In addition to these catalogs, several other books related to the development of printmaking in Indonesia were also used.

## 3 Analysis and Results

### 3.1 Indonesian Printmaking Triennial 2003

The first Indonesian Printmaking Triennial was held in 2003. The event was attended by 146 artists who submitted 286 works. The composition of the jury at this first event was Enin Suprianto (chairman), T. Sutanto, G. Sidharta Soegijo, S. Prinka, Bambang Bujono, Efix Mulyadi and Ipong Purnama Sidhi. After selection by the jury, 35 artists were selected as finalists with 46 print works exhibited at the first Indonesian Printmaking Triennial.

The jury's decision brought Yogyakarta-based artist Agus Prasetyo with his intaglio work entitled '*Manusia Rongsokan*' (2003) as the first winner of the first printmaking triennial event. Followed by Agus Yulianto, also from Yogyakarta, with his woodcut titled '*Reflections in Contradiction*' (2002) as the second winner, and the third winner was Sri Maryanto with his woodcut reduction titled '*Mati Tersenyum*' (2003). All three winners of this first event were from the city of Yogyakarta. Instead of woodcut, which is a popular technique in the history of Indonesian printmaking, it worked using intaglio print techniques that won this competition.



**Figure 1** Agus Prasetyo's work, *Manusia Rongsokan*  
(source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2003)



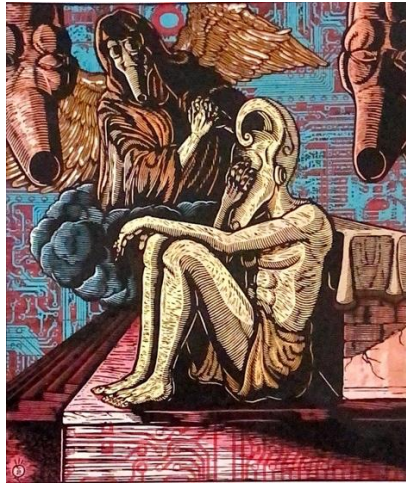
**Figure 2 & 3** Agus Yulianto's work, *Renungan dalam Kontradiksi* & Sri Maryanto's work, *Mati Tersenyum* (source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2003)

### 3.2 Indonesian Printmaking Triennial 2006

The second event took place in 2006. In this year there was a natural disaster of earthquake that hit the Yogyakarta area, where printmaking and its activists grew in the area. This caused a decrease in the number of participants who sent their works to participate in this competition. There were 93 printmakers who submitted 164 works, and the finalists were 23 participants with 29 works. In this second triennial, Enin Supriyanto was again asked to be the head of the jury, while the members included: Bambang Bujono, FX Harsono, Ipong Purnama Sidhi, Ong Hariwahyu, Setiawan Sabana, and Tisna Sanjaya.

The works that passed this second Triennial were quite diverse and unique, in the sense that discussing printmaking issues certainly did not escape the technical discussions and conventions. But instead of being strict with these conventions, this second triennial allowed the use of digital printing techniques, which as is known, the work of making the print reference is not the result of the artist's hand

skills, but is made with the help of machines. In fact, the first winner of this event, Andre Tanama from Yogyakarta, utilized digital printing technology as a technical technique for his work ('Hegemony of Technology', 2006). The second place winners were Agus Prasetyo with his intaglio work entitled 'Growing and Contaminated II' and Agus Suwage with his ukiyo-e plus work entitled 'Super Omnivore'.



**Figure 4** Andre Tanama's work, *Hegemoni Teknologi*  
(source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2006)



**Figure 5 & 6** Agus Prasetyo's work, *Tumbuh dan Terkontaminasi II* & Agus Suwage's work, *Super Omnivore* (source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2006)

### 3.3 Indonesian Printmaking Triennial 2009

In this third edition, the number of entries and submissions almost doubled from the previous edition. There were 166 artists with 309 works submitted. The jury



selected 41 finalists and 50 works. This third event had the following jury composition: Aminuddin T.H. Siregar (chairman), Efix Mulyadi, Enin Supriyanto, Hendro Wiyanto, Ipong Purnama Sidhi, Irwan Julianto, Putu Fajar Arcana.



**Figure 7** Winarso Taufiq's work, *Imaji Tentang Kerusakan Alam* (source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2009)

The first winner of the competition was Winarso Taufiq, an artist from Yogyakarta with his work titled 'Imaji Tentang Kerusakan Alam' (Imagery about the Destruction of Nature) done with intaglio techniques (drypoint, etching and aquatint) presented in a book-like presentation. The second-place winner was Irwanto Lentho with his hand-coloring woodcut entitled 'Engraver Family with Their Dog Tracker' and the third place was Anggara Tua Sitompul with his woodcut on canvas entitled 'Cakra Kala'. All three winners are from the city of Yogyakarta. Judging from the works of the finalists, it seems that this triennial again carries technical benefits as one of the main assessment points considering that techniques such as digital printing and the formation of works that lead to installations as in the previous year cannot be found in the line of finalist works in this third event.



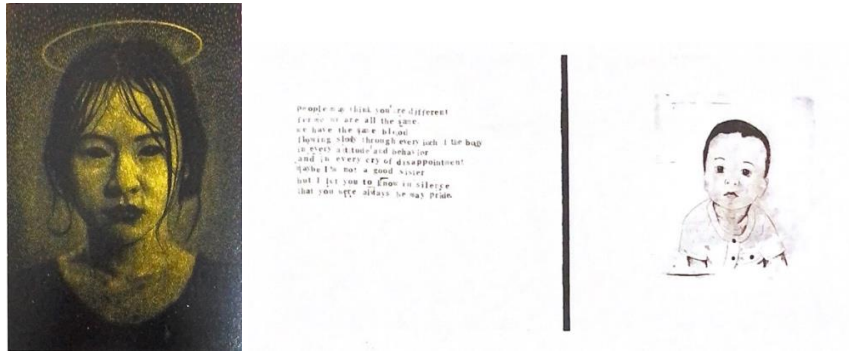
**Figure 8 & 9** Irwanto Lentho's work, *Engraver Family with Their Dog Tracker* & A.T.

Sitompul's work, *Cakra Kala* (source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2009)

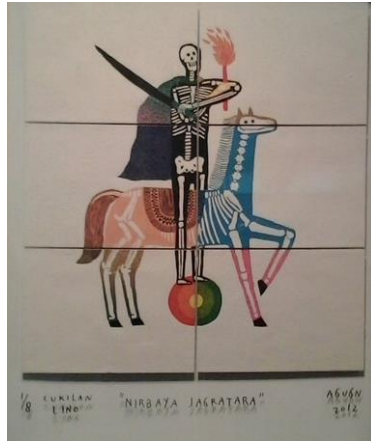
### 3.4 Indonesian Printmaking Triennial 2012

The fourth printmaking triennial was held in 2012. This event again showed a significant development in the development of printmaking in Indonesia. The number of printmakers who submitted their works amounted to 224 people with 405 proposals. In the judging stage, 42 finalists with 51 works were selected. Aminuddin T.H. Siregar was again appointed as the head of the jury, while in the composition of the jury members there were several names added and became the largest number of members during the organization of this competition, namely: Hariadi Saptono, Hendro Wiyanto, Ade Darmawan, Ipong Purnama Sidhi, Efix Mulyadi, Frans Sartono, G. Sindhunata, Hermanu, Ardus M. Sagewa, Hari Budiono and Warih Wisatsana. It is possible that this (large number of members on the jury) was necessary given that the number of proposals received in the initial selection was also the largest during the implementation.

Agung Prabowo's linocut 'Nirbaya Jagratara' emerged as the first winner of the competition. Breaking the previous fact that the first winner always comes from the city of Yogyakarta. In second place was M. Fadhlil Abdi with a woodcut entitled 'Art, Girl and Munder'. Meanwhile, Theresia Agustina Sitompul won third place with her intaglio book entitled 'Book, Prints and Memory'. This fourth event reaffirmed the understanding of printmaking conventions that had been instilled in the previous event. There was a significant increase in intaglio, lithography and screen-printing techniques, although relief print remained the dominant technique - by 50%.



**Figure 11&12** M. Fadhlil Abdi's work, *Art, Girl and Munder* & Theresia Agustina Sitompul's work, *Book, Prints and Memory* (source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2012)



**Figure 10** Agung Prabowo's work, *Nirbaya Jagratara*  
(source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2012)

### 3.5 Indonesian Printmaking Triennial 2015

The fifth running of the Indonesian Printmaking Triennial marks a new chapter in its development. The nature of the competition, which has been running nationally for 12 years, has evolved into an international competition. Siregar wrote in [3], In addition to upholding and maintaining conventional printmaking, the reason behind the internationalization of printmaking must be seen as a reflective event for (Indonesian) printmakers in the middle of the world printmaking scene, absolutely treated so that Indonesian printmaking scene are not isolated.

There was a decrease in the number of submitted proposals from printmakers this year, namely 198 names of participants with 355 works, which were finally filtered at the judging stage to 26 finalists with 30 works. At this finalist stage, the host country Indonesia only managed to qualify 7 participants. The rest are international printmakers from Australia, Argentina, Canada, India, Italy, Puerto Rico, Thailand, Turkey.

The jury for this event is still chaired by Aminuddin T.H.Siregar. The members are Tisna Sanjaya, Bambang Bujono, Devy Ferdianto, Syahrizal Pahlevi (Additional: FX Mulyadi, Ipong Purnama Sidhi, Hariadi Saptono). The jury's decision resulted in Indian artist Jayanta Naskar's 'Reinvention of Myself' (2014), a color intaglio work, winning first place. Second place went to Puritip Suriyapatarapun from Thailand with his lithographic print entitled 'Our Whole Life Searching' (2014). Meanwhile, Indonesia as the host was represented by



Muhlis Lugis with his woodcut titled 'Addiction'. The composition of the technical offerings in this competition is diverse and impressive, as can be seen through Puritip's work for example, the dexterity and foresight in processing color lithography makes his print work feel like a work produced by painting techniques.



**Figure 13** Jayanta Naskar's work, *Reinvention of Myself*  
(source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2015)

With the internationalization of this competition, it is clear that foreign printmakers and their works have proven to have high quality-whether it is seen from the aspect of print techniques or themes. This is in contrast to our printmaking works which have weaknesses here and there [ibid].



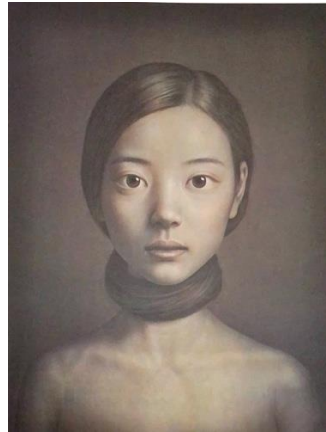
**Figure 14 & 15** Puritip Suriyapatarapun's work, *Our Whole Life Searching* & Muhlis Lugis's work, *Addiction* (source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2015)

### 3.6 Indonesian Printmaking Triennial 2018

This event marks the long journey of the Indonesian printmaking competition in its 18th year. Still carrying the format open to international printmakers, the participants who submitted their works in the first stage amounted to 161 people from 26 countries with 317 works, then 30 finalists and 30 works from 12 different countries were selected (there were only 3 works from Indonesian printmakers). There was a slight decrease in the number of submissions both in terms of the number of artists and the number of works compared to the previous event. In addition, there was a change in the composition of the jury involved. Ipong Purnama Sidhi is responsible as the head of the jury, and the members are M. Dwi Marianto, Edi Sunaryo, Devy Ferdianto, Theresia Agustina Sitompul.

The first winner of the competition was Chinese artist Hui Zhang with his work titled 'Gaze Toward the Light 2'. The second and third winners are both from Thailand, Nuttakarn Vajasut with 'Depressed' and Chalita Tantiwitkosol 'Supernumerary (Ploy)'. What's interesting is that all three winners use lithography flat printing as their technical technique. This phenomenon is inversely proportional to the reality that exists in the condition of printmaking in Indonesia.

The popular printmaking media in Indonesia is still limited to intaglio print, relief print and screen print. Whereas it is lithography (planography print) that stands out in this event; in other words, lithography in the VI 2018 Indonesian Printmaking Triennial event is the most dominant group of print media. As Marianto, *et.al* wrote in [4], it can also be interpreted that in the context of global printmaking competition, lithography is one of the printmaking techniques that cannot be ignored. Its existence seems to be an important keyword in the world printmaking scene. Therefore, the phenomenon of organizing this event can be a critical reflection for the portrait of Indonesian printmaking to improve in the future.



**Figure 16** Hui Zhang's work, *Gaze Toward the Light 2*  
(source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2018)

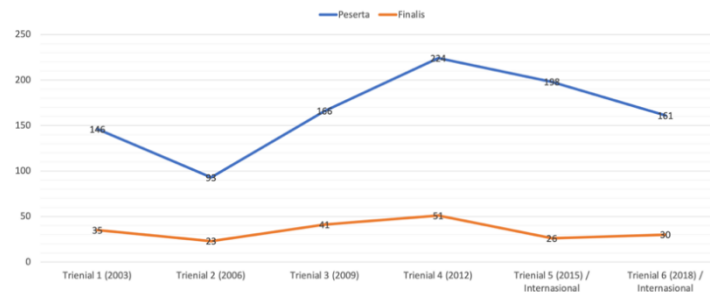


**Figure 17&18** Nuttakarn Vajasut's work, *Depressed* & Chalita Tantiwitkosol's work, *Supernumerary (Ploy)* (source: catalogue of Triennial Seni Grafis Indonesia 2018)

#### **4 Development Chart**

As a research that uses a quantitative approach, this section will present several graphs related to the development of Indonesian printmaking practices through the Indonesian Printmaking Triennial event from 2003 to 2018

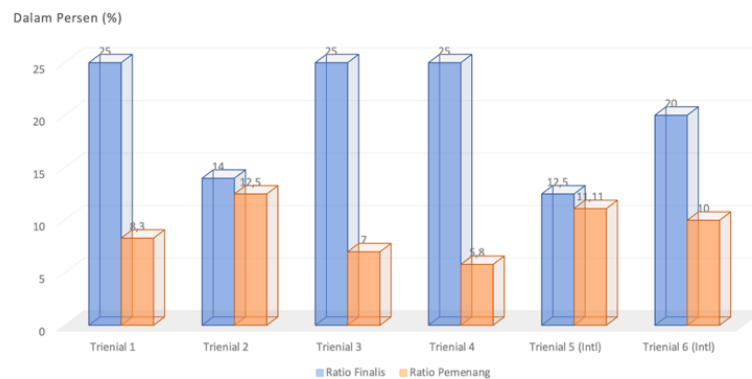
CHART 1 NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND FINALISTS



This chart contains data on the number of participants and finalists in the Indonesian Printmaking Triennial event for the six times it was held. The participants referred to in this section are artists and printmakers who sent their work proposals to the organizing committee. Meanwhile, the term finalists is used to refer to artists who successfully passed several stages of selection by the jury and their works were included in the exhibition.

It can be seen that a significant decrease in the number of participants occurred in the second Triennial in 2006, which has been explained in the previous section that there was a force majeure in the form of a natural disaster in the form of an earthquake that occurred in Yogyakarta, resulting in many printmakers from regions that produce many printmakers not being able to participate. The highest number of participants occurred in 2012 at the fourth event, but in the next two events (2015 and 2018) there was a significant decline. This can happen because in both events, this event developed into an international competition.

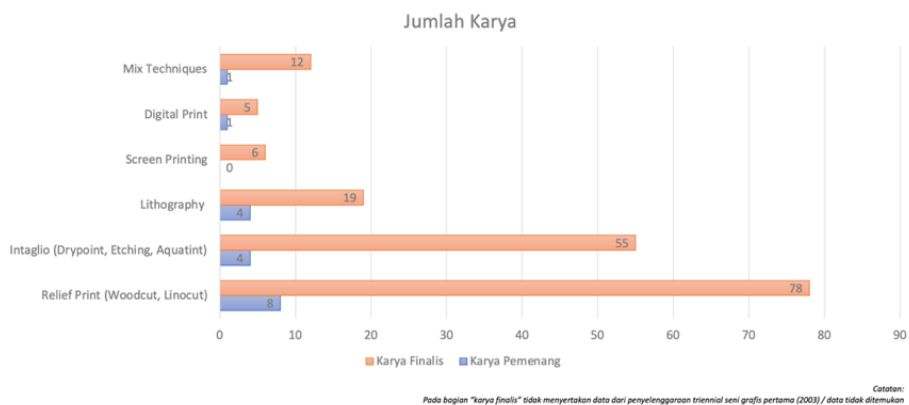
CHART 2 CHANCE RATIO OF FINALISTS AND WINNERS



The chance ratio in this graph is still related to the previous graph. Since this event is a competition, there are variables called finalists and winners so that the development of printmaking practice in Indonesia can be more easily observed. The probability of being a finalist is the number of participants (submitters of work proposals) divided by the number of finalists determined by the jury through the judging stage. Meanwhile, the probability of being a winner is the number of finalists divided by three (according to the three positions that are contested as winners).

It can be observed that the highest percentage of finalists was in the 3rd triennial; 2003, 2009 and 2012 at 25%. While the lowest chance was in 2015 at 12.5%, when the competition began to be opened to international printmakers. The highest percentage of finalists was during the second triennial in 2006, when the overall number of submissions decreased drastically (due to the natural disaster in Yogyakarta) by 12.5%, while the lowest percentage was during the 2012 triennial, when the number of submissions was the highest in the competition's history at 224, resulting in a percentage of 5.8%.

CHART 3 TRENDS IN THE USE OF PRINTING TECHNIQUES IN FINALIST AND WINNING WORKS



The discussion about printmaking cannot be separated from the discussion about the printing techniques used to produce the artworks. In this chart, it can be seen that in the realm of finalists and winners, the most common technique is relief printing, which is indeed a facility and the existence of materials and supporting facilities that are easily accessible to artists, especially in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the least technique used by the finalists is digital print (5 works), considering that in the second organization in 2006 the jury was very liberating in the interpretation and exploration of printmaking in this event.

Meanwhile, in the realm of winners, there has never been a work that passes by using screen printing techniques in it. This is a phenomenon in itself because screen printing is one of the most popular printing techniques in the community apart from relief printing. However, the use of planography printing techniques (lithography) in this printmaking triennial event needs to be contemplated again, especially in Indonesia, considering that at the 2018 event (The Sixth Indonesian Printmaking Triennial International Competition) the three winners used the same variety of techniques.

## 5 Conclusion

Bentara Budaya's Indonesian Printmaking Triennial Competition is the only event that focuses on the development of printmaking practice in Indonesia. This event was held in 2003 for the first time, then successively held during 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018. The nature of the competition (there is a set of participants and a jury) can be used as a benchmark for the development of printmaking practice in Indonesia.

Relief print is a technique that is favored by printmakers to be used as an expression of their work, considering that supporting facilities and materials are easily found in Indonesia. Meanwhile, lithography technique should be taken into consideration by the national printmaking practitioners by reflecting on the last event, where all winners from other countries used the technique. Other than that, Yogyakarta is the most productive city to produce printmakers in this competition, followed by Bandung and other cities, especially those that have art education institutions related to printmaking.

Indonesian printmaking still have to catch up with the development of printmaking by other countries, as showed by the statistics in the last two events in 2015 and 2018 as an international competition.

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