



PROCEEDINGS

SEMINAR ON AESTHETICS
NATIONAL GALLERY OF INDONESIA

2016

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PROCEEDINGS

SEMINAR ON AESTHETICS
NATIONAL GALLERY OF INDONESIA

2016



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GALERI
NASIONAL
INDONESIA

NATIONAL GALLERY OF INDONESIA
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CULTURE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

PROCEEDINGS

**SEMINAR ON AESTHETICS
NATIONAL GALLERY OF INDONESIA
2016**

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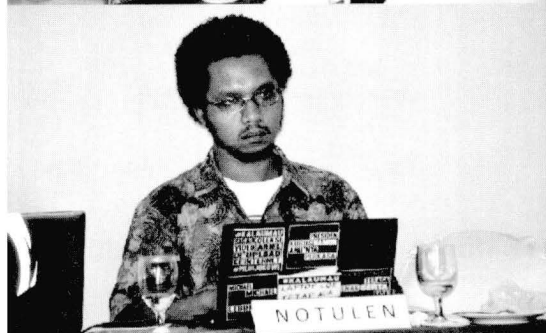
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PREFACE FROM

NATIONAL GALLERY OF INDONESIA

Within one last decade, Indonesian art has shown an outstanding development through many new kind of art creations, such as installation art, objects, video art, performance art, photography art, instead of conventional artworks that has been already well-known and accepted as a general rule as paintings or sculptures. In current global art situation, The National Gallery of Indonesia, as an institution under the patronage of the Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture, continues to open any possibilities of fruitful cooperation with any national or international art institution to develop the rich and inspiring modern and contemporary art in Indonesia. As a public art institution, the National Gallery of Indonesia becomes an important venue for many prestigious art exhibitions as well as a biennale or triennale organized by some Indonesian national or private art organizations, and becomes a well-known and attractive cultural site for public to visit. For every exhibition, the organizer of the event will coordinate some public programs such as discussion, artist talk, seminar and workshop also a sort of demonstration to educate as well as to entertain public deeper into every presenting artworks.

The National Gallery of Indonesia also cooperates with many national art academies in Indonesia to expand public knowledge on art, especially on Indonesian modern and contemporary art, implemented in public programs of every exhibition. We believe that any art should be developed, circulated, and understood within the frame of good and appropriate knowledge of its own nature. It is a good opportunity for us to work with experts and

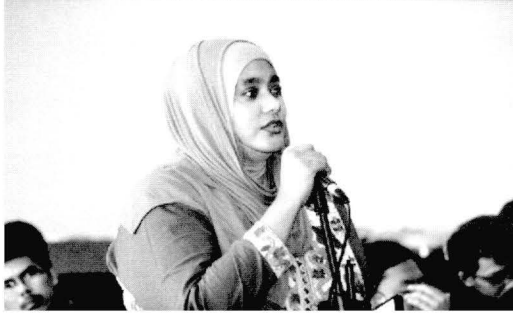
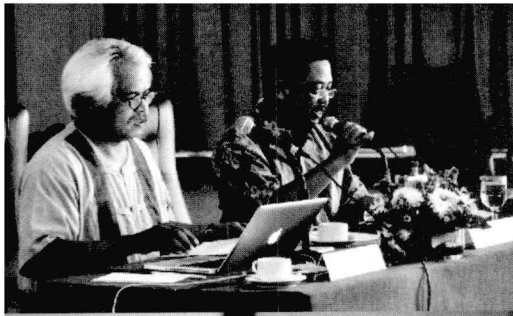
thinkers who dedicate their career to expand the knowledge of art in many perspectives of thinking such as art criticism, art theory, art history and aesthetics. This proceeding is a compilation of selected papers that were presented by the experts within the two years program of The "Seminar Estetik - Galeri Nasional Indonesia" in Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, and Denpasar (Bali).

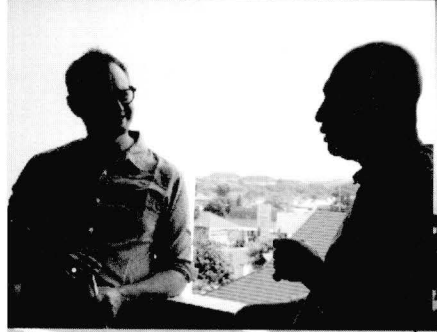
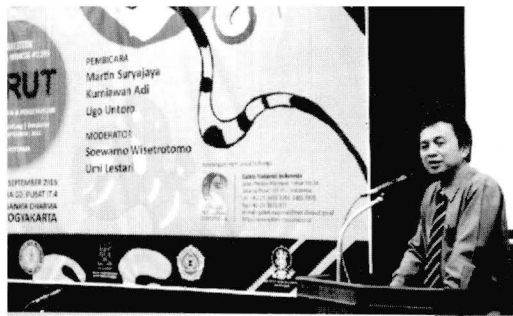
The National Gallery of Indonesia would like to convey gratitude and appreciation for all parties who supported and participated in our seminars on aesthetics programs within the last two years and we hope that we can continue our cooperation for the next programs. We hope that this English translation of the national proceeding will expand our objective to develop perspective on aesthetics in Indonesian modern and contemporary art for international audience. Thank you.

Jakarta, Oktober 2016

Tubagus Sukmana

Director of the National Gallery of Indonesia





**PREFACE FROM
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CULTURE
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE**

Assalaamualikum wr.wb

May God bless upon us

Within the diversity of culture and tradition of Indonesia we can understand the Indonesian art as an open understanding, as a challenge condition of the art development that should be re-defined or re-making its meanings related to dynamic meaning of its culture and society. The modern and contemporary art development in Indonesia is the key to understand how the modern and contemporary society has continued to form in Indonesia along with development of the urgency of individual ideas and expressions. Indonesia as a concept of a modern state and society can not be understood completely without one consider it within its range of ideas and expression in modern and contemporary sense. To understand the deep and extended meaning of every modern and contemporary art expression is to know how it is formed and expressed as a certain kind of language and knowledge that always develop and extend into the complex system of cultural values and meanings.

The program of “Seminar Estetik - Galeri Nasional Indonesia” is a way to extend public understanding on art within the perspective of Aesthetics that becomes a keynote knowledge for art. This seminar on aesthetics also becomes an open invitation for every expert, scholar, researcher, as well as thinker who are interested in art in Indonesia to investigate a tradition on aesthetics in Indonesian art context. In the global art context today to know the

local as well as the international context of art become an urgent issue to be understood and every effort to make it intelligible accepted will become a valuable opportunity to be implemented. We hope that the English translation of some selected papers in this proceeding will open the new possibility for cooperation between the National Gallery of Indonesia with any international experts on art and aesthetics to join this annual seminar in Indonesia.

We would like to convey our gratitude and our best appreciation to all parties who supported and participated in this program of seminar and hopefully we can continue to work together to develop the Indonesian art practices and its theoretical understanding in the future.

Thank you,
Wassalaamualikum wr.wb.

Hilmar Farid
Director General of Culture
Ministry of Education and Culture





SEMINAR ESTETIK
GALERI NASIONAL INDONESIA #2.2015

LARUT

SEMI, PENGALAMAN & PEMBENIHAN
Yogyakarta | Bandung | Denpasar
8 | 15 | 28 | SEPTEMBER | 2015

BAJANG PERTAMA

8 SEPTEMBER 2015
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FOREWORD

This proceedings compile selected papers from two program of seminar that was held in Jakarta (2014) and the other had been done simultaneously in Bandung, Yogyakarta, and Denpasar (2015). Theme of the first seminar was “OPPOSITION: Rethinking the logic of opposition in Indonesian modern and contemporary art” (2014). The seminar presented four speakers who delivered different range of problem in aesthetics and its relation with language, art history, art methodologies, and art theory. The four speaker were Prof. I Bambang Sugiharto (lecturer in philosophy), Jim Supangkat (curator, art critics, and writer), Dr. St Sunardi (lecturer in Philosophy), and Prof. Yasraf A. Piliang (lecturer in art and cultural theories). Theme for the second seminar was “DISSOLVED: Art, Experience, and Knowledge” (2015) and was organized by cooperation with major important universities in Bandung (Faculty of Arts and Design - ITB; Faculty of Philosophy - Parahyangan Catholic University), Yogyakarta (Faculty of Theology - University of Sanata Dharma; School of Visual Arts - Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta) and Bali (Faculty of Art and Design - Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Denpasar). The second seminar presented three speaker in every different forums, they are: Jim Supangkat, Dr. Benny Yohanes (lecturer in philosophy and theater studies), Dr. Fabie Sebastian Heatubun (lecturer in philosophy and theology) in Bandung; Martin Suryajaya, M.Phil (writer), Ugo Untoro (artist) and Dr. Kurniawan Adi (lecturer in culture and media studies) in Yogyakarta; Dr. IBG Agastia (lecturer in Balinese art and culture), Prof. Dr. Edi Sedyawati (lecturer in philosophy and anthropology), Mardohar B.B Simanjuntak, M.Phil. (lecturer in philosophy) in Denpasar, Bali.

The selection of these papers present the textural character of aesthetic problems in Indonesia modern and contemporary art today. Five papers are selected to present a range of problem in identifying, characterizing, and probing the aesthetic problem for current and plural art practices as well as its tendencies in Indonesian art.

Bambang Sugiharto, "*Various Perspective on Art and The Plurality of 'Languages'*" explore the new challenge and comprehensibility of the art of today within the shifting theoretical and cultural paradigm that had extensively demonstrated the force of 'new' language game and meaning. Bambang Sugiharto investigate any possibilities of new linkages of interaction and its meaning between aesthetics and today contemporary art practices. St Sunardi, "*Finding The Fundamentals of Fine Art Aesthetics Problems*" take an extremely important sample of the common denominator in Indonesian artists' creative process with his or her personalized aesthetics point of view. By reciting this common aesthetic attitude among the historical artist figure St Sunardi re-emphasize the importance of aesthetics awareness to be investigated and exerted by the future generation of the Indonesian artists.

Martin Suryajaya, "*The Impulse Toward The Participatory Aesthetics*" explore the current tendency in Indonesian contemporary art practice with its engagement with social context. Martin Suryajaya's perspective on participatory aesthetics setting up an understanding of the new shifting paradigm in contemporary art with its fundamental changes of the artist's role and the meaning of the artworks. Fabie Sebastian Heatubun, "*The Need for Fine Art Re-Mythologization*" reconsider the Indonesian contemporary art circumstances today by re-contextualizing

modern aesthetics thinking into a new context of contemporaneity urgencies. Fabie S. Heatubun re-examplize the role of the artist within a context of contemporaneity by recalling the nature of its character as a myth-makers. IBG Agastia, *“Padma of The Heart of The Beauty Goddess's Divine Palace”*

is another course of discourse in the aesthetics comprehension. It is an example discourse of the other 'aesthetic thinking' out side the modern aesthetics tradition. IBG Agastia represent the Balinese's way of thinking on art and beauty as an example of many other different 'aesthetics' perspectives in Indonesia that are linked with the fundamentals of cultural or religious tradition.

Rizki A. Zaelani



Various Perspectives on Art and the Plurality of 'Languages'

Bambang Sugiharto

'Art' is a mysterious phenomenon. From the western frame of mind, the definition of 'art' has exhaustively been researched through multiple perspectives: philosophy, aesthetics, art theory, empirical sciences, and even the artists themselves. Siding with ordinary and spontaneous wit, people naturally take artists as the ones who have the final say about art. Yet, in reality it is not that simple. Probably, it is due to the proximity of artists with their art-praxis, rarely do they take art to a paradigmatic level. Nor do they possess the theoretical-verbal skills needed to articulate their views in an abstract yet systematic discourse. Consequently, it is not unusual to see deeper and more comprehensive substantive views in philosophers, aestheticians, art critic, and empirical scientists than in 'art-people' themselves. This is the reality.

This paper aims to highlight the interaction of these various approaches, and also to foresee its consequences on problems in our today's art world.

Philosophy, Empirical Sciences, and Aesthetics

Aesthetics or '*aesthetica*', is actually a humble part of philosophy, the one in Baumgarten's thought (the 18th century) focuses on 'senses-perception' or 'senses-knowledge' –*cognitio sensitiva*; or in Aristotelian terms, *aisthesis*, or sensuous perception. 'Aesthetica' since Baumgarten in reality has been imbued with more extensive philosophical thoughts, despite the existence of art-world praxis. This problem emerged first in Plato, in that he stands the ground of ultimate knowledge concerning the general and the abstract–*noesis*, *epistème* –and certainly not sensuous

knowledge concerning the particular, or even 'the copy of a copy' or *mimema* in art. Baumgarten takes a different path: that sensuous knowledge is no less superior than –or on the contrary it may even outbest –intellectual knowledge, because this knowledge from our senses is the very concrete presence of particular reality –individual reality heavily charged with a sophisticated nexus of interrelatedness. *Cognitio sensitiva* is thus the *sui generis* knowledge concerning the reality of complexity itself. And this kind of knowledge assumes its embodiment in works of art. Therefore in this frame of thought what Baumgarten meant by 'beauty' –*pulchritudo* –is the 'perfect and complete entirety along with its complex interconnectedness' –*perfectio*, wholeness –and definitely not in the narrow sense of being pretty or physically attractive. That is why for Baumgarten *aesthetica* is 'the art of thinking beautifully', *ars pulchre cogitandi*: fully conscious thought that is completely aware of and sensitive to the concrete presence of an object in its wholeness of interrelated complexities.

For Immanuel Kant, the concept of 'beauty' turns into something different, even when Kant himself drew the inspiration from Baumgarten: 'beauty' is when an object is taken separately from its functional values, and it is solely regarded from its formal aspect **disinterested**-ly as something bearing 'purposiveness without purpose'. Artists are those who are able to subtly reveal beautiful works and the 'sublime', that is practically absent even in nature itself. That is why Kant addresses artists as a 'genius'. And since Kant took this stance, aesthetics has gradually recourse its path to philosophy of art, even further to 'formalistic' philosophy of art that is firmly echoed in theories like 'formalism' (C. Greenberg, Clive Bell, etc.).

This trajectory leading to philosophy of art became more explicit in Hegel's thought. Hegel philosophises that art is a disguised 'rational idea', which later assumes certain development more explicitly in 'religion', and eventually dismantles its guise to assume its true form as the ultimate 'idea' in 'philosophy'. In this process 'art' is thus experiencing the stage of **dematerialisation**, and it eventually dissolves completely, **the end of art**. This –the end of art –position is further embraced at the end of the 20th century by art theorists like A. Danto, V. Burgin and J. Kosuth.

Nietzsche then took philosophy of art to the next stage by showing other forgotten aspects: chaos and order, Dionysian and Apollonian. Art –especially plays on tragedy –are the blatant mirrored images of the never-ending struggle between the lustful Dionysian and the enlightened breath of orderly and rational Apollonian forms; between the chaotic real and orderly illusion taken as a prerequisite of what we call 'life'.

Since this Nietzschean departure point the presumably solid and rigid boundaries between aesthetics and philosophy of art have been completely blurred. The path taken by subsequent philosophers is more of art-philosophy than of the other direction. Further, since Baumgarten, Hegel, and Nietzsche, 'beauty' in the sense of 'physical niceness' is not the ultimate keyword or the centre of gravity in art and aesthetics discourses. This is especially obvious in the Heideggerian hermeneutic-phenomenology path of philosophy. And even since Heidegger laid the foundation art as 'the-setting-itself-into-work-of-truth', philosophers like Gadamer, Ricoeur, Ponty, Vattimo, Derrida, Deleuze, and even Badiou have consistently anchored art with the aforementioned '**truth**', that

the *truth* of the reality itself is always at large –immune to any attempts of scientific taming and subjugating; the *truth* that is complex, thickly and randomly layered, and ambiguous; the *truth* of the 'being' that will always lend its momentous presence in a fresh and surprising way through the lingering presence of high quality artworks. This Germanic hermeneutic-phenomenology tradition simultaneously takes Aesthetics to the next and novel stage of '**anti-essentialism**', whose dire consequence for art-discourse is the gradual insignificance of the prevailing trend concerning the ultimate discovery of the essence of art.

The fading stance of this 'fruitless endeavour' to define of art then became bolder when French post-structuralist philosophers like Barthes, for example, proclaimed 'the death of the author': every single work of art when publicly exposed becomes autonomous and can be understood/interpreted openly whatever the direction is without taking the original intention of the author/artist into account. Therefore the Kantian concept that artists are 'the genius', or the modern departure point that artists are the ultimate paradigm of the freedom of modern individuals, is on this account no longer the most compelling focus. Another philosopher, Derrida, through his deconstruction approach, even goes radically further. He shows that 'meaning' is actually not something steady, solitary and exclusive. 'Meaning' always finds its way taking layers after layers and chaining itself with endless texts; it keeps on changing as time passes. Or using Deleuze's term, meaning will always experience '**detritorialisation**'.

From the English Analytic Philosophy tradition, Wittgenstein's thought also imbues this anti-essentialism leaning with a slightly

different accent. Taking Wittgenstein's position on 'game' and 'language game' as his source of inspiration, Moris Weitz stands another similar ground claiming that 'art' bears its own 'logic' that is immune to any attempts to round it in a narrow and inclusive way. 'Art' itself in this vein resembles our common understanding of what a **'game'** is: different games –football, chess, card, hockey, or even swimming –are taken as 'game' just by its humble and loose **'family resemblance'**. And this is just exactly what is needed. This strain of thought is sometimes labelled as **'anti-theory'**.

In its latest stage, besides being constantly shaped by philosophy, aesthetics is also heavily influenced by recent findings in the fields of empirical sciences. In these farthest outposts the term 'aesthetics' has experienced both expansions and adjustments. In neuroscience, for example, Ramachandran offers **'Neuroaesthetics'** in his theory of taste, whereas his fellow theorist Semir Zeki proposes it as **'Bioaesthetics'**. There is also a new term introduced by Josephine Machone –**'Synaesthetics'** –defined as the continuum experience between different senses (the ear, the nose, the eye, and so forth), and as the continuum experience between the body and nature, which is taken as the prerequisite authentic experience needed to be able to grasp the contemporary intermedia works of art. In the mean time Katya Mandoki comes forward with her **Semio-aesthetics** or **Aesthesio-semiotics** as persuasive communication to appeal and impress, in line with the survival urge naturally embedded within the human species. In the world of biochemistry the term **'Esthetic'** has now begun to take the center stage even though its context concerns more with cosmetics, skin-care, and plastic surgery. From cultural studies the term **Cultural Anaesthesia** has been around in this

circle, in which it refers to the numbing of our senses caused by the excessive flooding of information and images. Apart from this surge of expansion, '**Anti-aesthetic**', which is promoted explicitly by postmodern thinkers—especially Hal Foster (along with Douglas Crimp, Kenneth Frampton, Edward Said, Baudrillard, and so forth), is nowhere to be taken lightly, in which it opposes Kantian 'disinterested' position, ahistorical perspectives of the Modern Aesthetics, the centrality of the artists in the paradigm of autonomous subjectivity, even the argument that art is an autonomous field with its own subversive criticality. Taking these into account now '**Multiple-aesthetics**' is to be hailed and celebrated: the belief that not only the perceptual skills but also the position and the very essence of art basically depend of the 'form of life' (Wittgenstein) and the various worldviews along with the broad range of cultural variety.

Philosophy, Empirical Sciences, Artists' Visions, and Art Theory

'Art theory', as an independent part of the art world, even when it has begun to take the spotlight since the second half of the twentieth century, actually started to take its shape in the Renaissance era. What is meant by 'art theory' in general is a theoretical discourse pertaining to 'art' in that its points of discussions are closer to various genres of specific art-praxis, and that means it is more technical and limited than philosophy (of art) and aesthetics. There are two central approaches in 'art theory': the **normative-evaluative** one (on when and why an artwork is taken as 'art'), which is heavily influenced by philosophy along with its powerful keyword: 'understanding' (*verstehen*); and the **descriptive** one (on what 'art' really is), which is profoundly influenced by empirical sciences along with its principal keyword:

'explanation' (*erklären*). But a rigorous discussion on how exactly both philosophy and empirical sciences change the course of art theory is not point of this paper. It is then sufficient to say that art theory which first appeared in the renaissance era like *'Della Pittura'* by Alberti is thickly inspired by Stoa philosophy and Cicero rhetoric. *'De Amore'* by M. Ficino, *'De Prospettiva Pingendi'* by Piero della Francesca, and even *'Trattato della Pittura'* by Leonardo Da Vinci, or *'Le Vite de Piu Eccelenti Pittori'* by G. Vasari, for example, are all heavily infused with the philosophy of Plato and Plotinus. In the romantic era, Delacroix and Baudilaire's ideas are inspired by the thoughts of J.J. Rousseau and Schleiermacher. Yet in the modern era, Clement Greenberg's theories and Duchamp's thoughts are shadowed by the philosophy of I. Kant, either positively or negatively. And we also know that the thought of Arthur Danto or E.H. Gombrich are reactions on Hegel's philosophy. But the most spectacular is how Karl Marx's philosophy gives a strong echo on the theories of Charles Fourier, Peter Burger, Walter Benjamin, Adorno, and Marcuse. The very climax of these, in the late twentieth century, in post-structuralism and hermeneutic-phenomenology, philosophy was deliberately juxtaposed with art theory itself (Barthes, Eco, Derrida, Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Badiou, Lyotard, and so forth).

From the realm of empirical sciences we can see how sociology is very influential on Pierre Bourdieu and G. Dickie art theories. Historiography heavily shapes the thoughts of Gombrich, Panofsky or Wölflin. Psychology has a deep imprint on Max Black, Zizek, Danah Zohar theories. Neuroscience literally drags Ramachandran, K. Mandoki and Semir Zeki into theorising art. Cognitive science is the building blocks of Mark Turner's art theory. Finally,

multi/interdisciplinary concoctions have given birth to the thinking of art in Susan Sontag, Kristeva, Cixous, R. Baidrotti, or Winckelmann.

Certainly, those who are primarily involved in art—the artists themselves—have also shaped the contour of art theory; the kind of theories that are characteristically more '**performative**', even though their primary role is to prepare the solid foundation and the subsequent steps are further taken by critics who articulate it into a discursive discourse. In fine art various schools that have sprung since the dawn of the Renaissance, yet especially since the beginning of the twentieth century, have shown such particular leaning: from Leonardo and Vasari (Renaissance) to Cézanne and Monet (Impressionism), Van Gogh and Gauguin (Post-impressionism, Expressionism), Picasso and Braque (Cubism), and to Allan Kaprow and Beuys (Happenings), etc.

Some Fundamental Problems

Along with the range of changes revealed by the interactive interplay of the various perspectives on art phenomenon mentioned above, it is then possible to see some essential problems as its consequences. One of the most crucial factors is on the 'meaning' of works of art, which has slowly but surely shifted and become more ambiguous. In fine art, from the Ancient Greece to the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, the very foundation of meaning/value of a work of art is its **syntactic structure** (the configuration of form): the classifications based on its perspective layers (Greek-Roman), flat plane configuration (Middle Ages), and geometric-mathematical perspectives (the Renaissance). From the Baroque era to the Romantic period, the

emphasis is more on **semantic structure** (the configuration of meaning and impression) –even when its syntactic aspect still plays an important role: the kind of semantic ground that leaves powerful impressions that are grandiose, colossal, energetic and very passionate (the Baroque era), or the kind of semantic footing that shows a strong imprint that is dramatic, tragic, and atmospheric (the Romantic period). But in the Modern Era, the most important factor is the struggle within the **medium**, the form, and even the **definition of 'fine art'** itself. Fine art goes deeper to a deeper layer, and at the same time the rate of changes from one school to another goes faster, even until it is not unlikely that one school 'cancels' another. In the Post-avant-garde Era the decisive factor is the '**idea**' itself along with its discursive discourse, whereas its physical forms can be anything, mostly anything that can 'surprise and baffle', or offer novel sensations. Works of art then become something ambiguous and difficult to grasp. At this point the role of curators is central and indispensable, because through their assistance can works of art be understood. Yet this triggers a new stage in the shift: the meaning of works of art tends to be perceived within their external-relations (from 'historical effects', 'social significance', 'sensuous breakthrough', until 'revolutionary truth' that can be revealed, and so forth), or the other way around, it is perceived in the **personal-biography** internal framework that is very particular, idiosyncratic, and quite demanding to get through (like some works of Beuys, for example).

Apart from the problem of 'meaning', the other compelling problem is: in the ongoing situation all perspectives concerning art –either philosophy, aesthetics, empirical sciences, art theory, or

artists' visions –in reality are heavily entangled, and further there is no clear-cut division between the two. Even the distinction between the art world and the ordinary daily life has become hazy and even tightly intertwined and interwoven. On one hand this situation tends to mislead us to the fallacy thinking or praxis, yet on the other this can be an opportunity to freshly and realistically reexamine the relationality between art and life in its broadest sense.

One interesting point revealed is the unearthed paradox dealing exclusively with 'aesthetics'. On one side, in philosophy, the aesthetic **meaning** is shrinking and even rejected: from the matters concerning 'cognitio sensitiva' with 'beauty' taken as a complex-unity (Baumgarten), to 'beauty' understood as 'disinterested' attitude with art as a mere 'form' (Kant), then to art as a mere disguise of an idea and its inevitable trajectory toward 'the end of art' (Hegel and the contemporary art), then directly to the 'death of the artist/author' (Barthes), and finally to anti-essentialism, anti-theory, and even to the complete end in anti-aesthetics. On the other, in empirical sciences, the **term** aesthetics is thriving into numerous fields: it becomes 'Neuroaesthetics' (Ramachandran), 'Bioaesthetics' (Zeki), 'Semio-aesthetics' (Mandoki), cosmetic aesthetics, 'Synaesthetics' (Machone), Cultural Anaesthesia, and even Multiple-aesthetics. This paradox actually conveys logical connection: the standpoint 'Anti-aesthetics' is essentially denying only one particular kind of aesthetics, that is, the western Modern Aesthetics; and when this kind of aesthetics lost both influence and meaning, then it is very logical that various forms of 'aesthetics' in the sense of 'perceptual skills' reach the surface and are taken as having their deep roots in

various cultures and 'forms of life', none other than Multiple-aesthetics itself. Exactly as the 'language game' is always in the plural sense, the same thing happens in aesthetics and art. At this point the perspective offered by Moris Weitz, that 'art' is only a loose categorising effort based on 'family resemblance', has become very interesting and reasonable.

Above all, what is more thought provoking is the reality that even when the world of discourse has its own colourful and complex development, in reality in the market and world of art, all kinds of art form –from whatever the school or period is –are always deemed valuable and treated as they have always been, with their own mysteries and wonders.

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Academic Journal

The British Journal of Aesthetics, Vol 42, No 4, October 2002.



Finding the Fundamentals of Fine Art Aesthetics Problems

St. Sunardi

“Once in Europe there was this critic who said this to me. The earlier part was generous compliment. And wham. The later part was invasive saying it would be better for this Indonesian painter if he could strictly limit his wild desire. So at that time I felt as if I was too wild and too free. That was, on the contrary, what I was looking for: wildness and freedom. If you're completely free then you go wild and crazy. Either positive or negative wildness isn't a big deal, but free. That was what I had been craving for, yet I was told to let it go. So it's like, I've a goal, and that means I am going that way, and then the critic said: “Mr Affandi please don't forget to not to go that way”. I cannot blame that, it was probably true. I respected his position, but I didn't just follow.”

Affandi

This confession-half-complaint from Affandi must be quite common among artists. Artists have their own saying about what is good and beautiful, yet critics have also their own opinion that often clashes with that of the artists. Among artists themselves it is not unusual to find them criticising each other. Apart from whether the criticism is right or not, in that either explicitly or implicitly we can find the belief about the ideal beauty that these

artists hold dearly. We can categorise the judgment by Sudjojono about the artists of his era or earlier in this respect. And we can also find the same thing in the writing of Ki Hadjar Dewantara about art. There we can find what kind of art he deemed beautiful. Aside from giving comments about the works themselves (usually they are about dances and music), Ki Hadjar never forgets to see the connection between those works of art with character or personality building.

This kind of discourse is what we usually call aesthetic discourse (even when it is systematic yet). And aesthetic discourse is often controversial. This aesthetic discourse often aimed at art in an era and from that kind of theory then criticism arises. This controversy arises when people –artists for example – cannot really take the theory or the criticism for granted. This controversy –as long as it is managed well –can result in the demise of a regime and the dawn of a new one.

When we analyse the development of (fine art) aesthetics and art practices, we can see that aesthetics and art practices are developing at the same time. This means there is a mutual relation between the two. Even though aesthetics at the beginning is not intended for art, this aesthetics also helps the artists to think about what they are doing and push them forward to explore. Another interesting phenomenon is that there are a lot of artists who are quite literate about aesthetics, either because they come from the academic circle, schools, or even they are self-taught. Yet I often got the message that with the experimentation the artists are oftentimes willing to consciously experiment with a certain kind of aesthetics paradigm. Here it is wise to not take it one-

sidedly: the artists are working according to the aesthetic view of their era. The opposite is also true: the aesthetics experts think and base their analyses on the art practices.

I. A Snapshot about the Birth of Aesthetics

Aesthetics as we see it today is actually not intended to discuss art problems. Kant, the person who gave the shape of today's aesthetics, at the beginning thoroughly discussed aesthetics in the research context about knowledge, both the theoretical knowledge about nature and ethical knowledge about morality. Aesthetics was born as a way to bridge the two types of knowledge.

So how can we be sure of claims like “The red magma is beautiful”? Is my statement about the feeling on the red magma is subjective or objective? Are these statements valid anywhere or just in a particular place? According to Kant, this is the kind of aesthetic statement, the kind of statement that comes from the taste, and neither subjective nor objective. This aesthetic decision is preceded by two decisions that are objective and subjective. For example, the statement “A volcano bursts red magma” is an objective statement. Then when I say: “I like red magma”, it is a subjective decision. The statement (or decision to be more precise) that “The red magma is beautiful” is an aesthetic statement that is neither subjective nor objective.

This kind of example may raise many questions and probably confusion. Yet from the example at least we know the direction that Kant is aiming for when discussing about aesthetics. This is the problem that Kant exhaustively wrote in his book entitled

Critique of Judgement. This work is actually divided into two parts, “Critique of Aesthetic Judgement” and “Critique of Teleological judgement”. The first part is still divided into two, “Analytic of Aesthetic Judgement” (even this is split into “Analytic of the Beautiful” and “Analytic of the Sublime”) and “Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgement”. When it comes to aesthetics, the part “Critique of Aesthetic Judgement” is the most relevant.

To at least give a big picture about how Kant argues about aesthetics, as an example we can take the fundamentals he mentions related to the beautiful that he discusses in “Analytic of the Beautiful”. In this writing I do not have any intention to thoroughly explain the ideas on beauty according to Kant, I on the contrary want show the complexity and comprehensive character taking place when Kant presents his analyses. Precisely from such fundamental analyses Kant is able to construct the formulaic prescriptions that have been used until now.

Kant analyses the beautiful by using four moments (quality, quantity, relation, and modality). The result can be seen in four propositions in which each is the summary of every moment:

(a) *Beautiful* (quality). “Taste is the faculty of judging an object or a mode of representation by means of a delight or aversion *apart from any interest*. The object of such a delight is called *beautiful*.” Here Kant shows how we can make our decision or judgement about the aesthetic experience. This skill is called “taste” by Kant, the object is called the beautiful, and the means is called pleasure. Right from this point Kant addresses the beautiful as disinterested pleasure.

(b) *Universal* (quantity). “The beautiful is that which, apart from a concept, pleases universally.” That beauty is something universal. It means, whoever who experiences the same thing tells that it is indeed beautiful. Yet it is important to note that Kant states that universality is not based on concepts but on taste.

(c) *The end in itself* (relation). Beauty is the form of purposiveness in an object, so far as this is perceived in it apart from the representation of an end.” Beauty is not to be measured from the ends decided from the outside, but solely from the form itself.

(d) *Necessity* (modality). “The beautiful is that which, apart from a concept, is cognized as object of a necessary delight.” Even when it is not based on concept, beauty appears as necessary pleasure.

This is how Kant then prescribes beauty. Beauty is anything that can invoke any pleasure without interest (disinterested pleasure), that is not determined by concept yet it is something universal, and has its aim in itself or in other words not instrumental. Aside from constructing his analyses on beauty, Kant also analyses the sublime. In general we can say that the experience of the sublime is a fuse between the exalted and horrified experience. Kant then divides the sublime into two types: the mathematical and dynamic sublime. The mathematical sublime is related to intangible splendour, whereas the dynamic sublime is related to the kind of splendour that renders us powerless before its presence.

From the previous snapshot about how Kant formulates beauty and the sublime, we can probably see how Kant provides us with a set of conceptual tools and about how we can construct our

arguments concerning the experience that we feel. Further, this kind of discourse in one way or another can give a strong influence to the art practice. This influence can be anything: it can either turn people to be more critical or, on the other hand, make people feel more restrained.

II. The Romantic Aesthetics: Not Just Being Nostalgic

The Kantian aesthetics as described before is also responsible in setting the direction of the art practice in his days usually known as neo-classical. This aesthetics is marked by a controlled type of beauty. This Kantian aesthetics however became the object of research and interpretation that produced the continuous art practices different from the model proposed by neo-classical aesthetics. One of the re-interpretations is obvious in romantic Aesthetics. This needs to be re-examined because, one of the reasons for example, this aesthetics emerged and developed at the same time with the interest of the European artists on the outside world, that is, the colonial world, and by this they represented this world through the paradigm of romantic aesthetics. Certainly the term 'romantic' does not refer to a single movement or aesthetic inclination. But at least we can observe some of the main characteristics.

(a) *Romantic aesthetics*. Romantic aesthetics was started and developed in France between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. This critical role of France is often perceived as something equal to that of Athens (as the centre of Classical Greek art and culture) and of Italy (its role in Renaissance). This phenomenon is rather unusual because during this period the aesthetic thought development in France was

slightly left behind rapid development in Germany. Probably because of this reason the art practice in France wanted to respond to the Kantian Aesthetics of Enlightenment that is very rational. If it is perceived from the Kantian aesthetics standpoint, this romantic aesthetics can be taken as wanting to elevate the aspect of the sublime with all of the paradoxical consequences. As mentioned earlier, in the sublime the audience can also experience the indirect pleasure, which is the feeling of pain. (It is important to note here that at the end of the eighteenth century a book by Edmund Burke analysing the problem of the sublime.) Romantic aesthetic does not also turn art to become part of power, especially religion and morality.

(b) *Romantic aesthetic and revolt*. The sublime as discussed above allowed extra space for the artists to produce works of art that suited their political aspiration. This can be seen in *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819) by Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) that depicts the humiliating tragedy of the sunken ship *Medusa*. This work depicts the life and death struggle of the surviving passengers when the ship crews have already saved themselves with the remaining lifeboats! Compare this agonising feature of this work with *The Oath of Horatii*. When it comes to loyalty, romantic aesthetics speaks blatantly about the true loyalty to fellow human beings and not to the state or religion. The same message can be seen in the other work by Géricault, *Madwoman with a Mania of Envy*, which depicts the fate of the poor who appear to be mentally suffered. We can also find the same tone in Delacroix's works that boldly embark on a politically different path; for example, the famous painting *Liberty Leading the People* that embodies Delacroix's vision on people's nationalism. Therefore,

romantic aesthetics is not the same as escapism imagination. Even further, mostly the themes of the painting are taken from the public figures or daily events taking place in the era, not taken from –like neo-classical style –from the distant past. We can contradictorily find the escapism nuances heavily charged with nostalgic memories in classical aesthetics! And above all, the thing that we need to pay attention to is that romantic aesthetics becomes the medium to explore political realities whose beauty is not readily available unless experienced through the feeling of pain. This is the aspect further theorised in later development by Zizek's antagonism.

(c) *Romanticism and colonialism*. Romantic aesthetics also becomes one of the forms of articulation between the artists and the colonial world and everything embedded within. Even though the romantic style is not the only school used in depicting this realm of colonialism, the style is the first artistic approach to portray it. Since romantic aesthetics embraces the aspect of the sublime, we can find this in their –the artists –encounter with the daily life in the colonial vassal. This exotization can be easily interpreted from this standpoint. The works of Delacroix on northern Africa shows the experience of the sublime when it was confronted with the Other. From their works we can also re-interpret what the meaning of exotization is –a label that is often given this kind fo works. For the time being the possible answer is that the exotization is an effect of the *beau idéal* that has to be presented in an artwork. Exotization is a name that refers to the distance between the artists and the Other coming from a different culture. This distance is an important prerequisite to create the sublime. The trace of *Nusantara* –Indonesia –has also

put a strong imprint in some of the romantic works of art, not only in the circle of Dutch artists but also in the French circle as well.

(d) *Keeping the distance*. The pleasure of romantic aesthetics actually lies on the numerous forms of tensions that are created through distance. This is the distance that further gives a strong space to create the imagination as vast as possible. This spatial distance sometimes can also evoke the impossibility, a glorification about love that is impossible because of something or another. In the romantic aesthetics movement in Europe, it once told that this romantic imagination is mostly adopted from royal poems portraying impossible love stories. This buried-yet-flaming passion that is never possible to make it come true is the path needed by those who seek the mystic soul; sexual desire paths the way to the divine. The same thing can also be seen in fine art. The need to mind the distance is none other than the strategy to present the sublime.

It is not surprising if this kind of romanticism takes the artists to realism as it is. In romanticism there are still the traces of distance and object beautification, in realism this distance tends to fade away. More importantly, aesthetic imagination makes people more reflective. It means that the moral and scientific paradigm (in this it means politically and socially) can be completely changed. Therefore, it is not surprising that “romantic” thinkers like Rousseau are taken as playing an active role in the French revolution.

III. Nietzsche and Romantic Aesthetics

Nietzsche (1844-1900), who lived in the era when Kant's

aesthetics started to be discussed and applied, is also an admirer of Kant. Related to art, Nietzsche proclaimed himself as a philosopher that was also an artist. Actually, not many people know that Nietzsche was a composer. If he was once a strong admirer of Richard Wagner and then criticised him, then he did it based on his knowledge on music and his philosophical perspective on art. Further, still related to art, he probably is a kind of philosopher who adamantly believes in art. He has unwavering faith in art and believes that art is the one that can salvation to human beings! In his lifetime Nietzsche gave a strong warning against the language of modernism that was used by people in his time to articulate history. Even the problematic concept of progress paraded by modern people was heavily criticised by Nietzsche. If he were to be taken as a postmodern prophet, then it would be very appropriate. He began his prophecy right at the time when people were overwhelmed by modernism. It is important to note here that the foundation used by Nietzsche to prophesy is his idea about art. The idea meant is the one that he developed from Kant's ideas especially about the sublime that was probably slightly overlooked by Kant who did not fully realise its explosive impact in judging modernity. He elaborates this idea in his book *The Birth of Tragedy*.

(a) *Beauty and the dynamic sublime*. As we have seen above, Kant introduced the ideas on beauty and also the sublime –that is, the mathematical and dynamic sublime. Related to his ideas on beauty, Nietzsche (as other thinkers do) criticises the problem of interest in aesthetics. He sees that it is impossible for people to make aesthetic judgement completely separated from various interests. Related to the idea about the sublime, he is mostly

compelled to the idea of the dynamic sublime. These ideas in turn became one of his both moral and aesthetic grounds. In short, when Kant discusses about science and morality, he on the contrary shows the limit of the two.

(b) *Apollonian and Dyonisian*. Based on his reading on Kant and his research on Greek tragedy, Nietzsche introduced two kinds of art or principles of art, that is, Apollonian and Dionysian. He argues that the Greek culture was made possible because of the two art principles. That means the Greek culture collapsed when the Greek retired the Dionysian foundation. The Apollonian feature (Apollo is the God of Beauty) is strongly visible in the clarity of vision or illusion or dreams that is so visible, whereas the Dionysian feature (Dionysos is the God of Wine) is the divine power that severs what has been closely tied and rebuilds what has been stately built. The role of the artists particularly lies on their ability to synthesise the two things that are deemed impossible to do so. This Nietzsche idea is actually interesting because he truly reformulates the Kantian principles of beauty and the sublime, while showing their position in the history of Greek tragedy. Nietzsche has done what both Winckelmann (the father of art history) and Kant achieved.

(c) *Romantic?* Nietzsche's work *The Birth of Tragedy* from certain standpoints can be called romantic. However, he even used this romantic style to improve the modern world (the time when he lived). Apart from the classification of this work, Nietzsche's ideas become the foundation of contemporary thinkers like Deleuze when he reinterpreted Kant's aesthetics.

IV. Intermission: Marcel Duchamp and the Revolt against Aesthetics

The revolt against Kantian aesthetics is undeniably obvious on the controversial point where Duchamp proposed objects that was not considered appropriate to be exhibited according to the Kantian category. The objects meant are the ones called ready-mades. In routine art practices that were still based on Kantian aesthetics framework, cunningly (or perhaps too cunningly) Duchamp proposed an exhibition object (*Fountain*) which is from one side he thought still following Kantian aesthetic principles yet from the other it far from most people's expectation. In short, the shocking event initiated by Duchamp is closer to aesthetic events (aesthetic revolt to be precise) rather than to artistic events. From that point many people were awoken from the dogmatic Kantian slumber.

V. Postmodern: Reformation of the Sublime

Art has been revived. If then art was revived with huge optimism as a useful medium to explore human life and nature, now on the contrary art is revived to show the inability of human beings to represent what is impossible to present. This is mostly experienced through the visual culture.

5.1. Lacan

In the discussion fine art aesthetics in particular and art in general, Lacan's ideas can be promisingly taken into account because Lacan in his own way tries to surface the problem of the sublime in relation to unconsciousness. Certainly Lacan is not the only who calls attention to this problem. Lyotard and Derrida also reread *Critique of Judgement* to interpret it for the (post)modern era. Lacan's ideas become interesting especially when we relate them

to the today's cultural development that is dominated by visual culture with its very advanced representation technology. In this kind of culture, according to Lacan readers, emerge new possibilities to be present that were previously impossible. In particular, these ideas are interesting for fine art because from the beginning Lacan has theorised on the mirror stage, which is a stage where someone knows her-or-himself through the mirror's reflection. New possibilities here are definitely linked with the possibilities to present the traces of unconsciousness.

(a) *The sublime and the real.* The sublime in Lacan can be connected with what Lacan called the real. If expressed in simpler terms, humans live in three worlds: the symbolic world (the world that we all live in), the imaginary world (the memory world where I recognise myself imaginarily), and the real world (the world that we cannot reveal its presence). Even when in reality we heavily employ signs in the symbolic world, the other worlds always penetrate our symbolic one. And why is it so? It is because in our symbolic world there is always something missing or we always have this lack of something. It means that even when we fulfil all the demand of the symbolic world, we always feel alienated. Even when all the laws of the world are fulfilled, it is not certain that humans will experience the joy of living (*jouissance*). Lacan argues that lack constantly appears because there is unconsciousness that has not been fulfilled.

(b) *Gaze.* So then how human beings can fulfil the lack? We all need to identify the *remains* that can *remind* us (*rem(a)inder*) the moments when we experience the completeness without missing any single thing. These remains are called *objet petit a* (object

little-a). From psychoanalysis, they can be female breasts, sound, and many others. This *remainder* can also assume its form in culture. In fine art, Lacan calls the remainder gaze. From *objet petit a* or to be more specific gaze can people move further toward the real. This move toward the real is called sublimation by Lacan. Sublimation can yield art, religion, or knowledge –it depends on the position of the subject that someone chooses. From this Lacan's way of thinking we can see that the experience of the sublime will strongly be determined by the experience of a person or a group of people.

(c) *The Kantian and Lacanian sublime and beauty.* The Kantian sublime is equal with the Lacanian *jouissance* in that both unite the experience of pain and pleasure at the same time. If it is explained in Freud's terms, then it can be said that the experience –also known as the sublime or *jouissance* –is beyond pleasure principle. And that means that even when it is painful human beings are still doing it. And what does that amount to? The new symbolisation process is based on the experience of a person's encounter with the real world.

5.2. The Aesthetics of the Sublime in Visual Art

It is that nowadays the culture is transforming into visual culture. What is then unique from visual culture? The public space is penetrated by things that are taken as personal. And on the contrary those that have usually been taken as a personal space are treated as public spaces. In other words, the division between the private and the public has become blurred. From the perspective of psychoanalysis, this situation can be called as Post-oedipal along with its various consequences.

(a) *The aestheticisation of the public space.* Lacan's ideas on the sublimation are interesting if we consider it along with the fact that the public and private space has penetrated each other, and that both spaces have been constructed through technology with all its side effects. Technology is able to change the status of things into signs so that the things that we use in the symbolic world (in Lacanian definition) also penetrate the world of the imaginary and the real.

(b) *Fetish and perversion.* Having seen the public space as described above, it is not surprising that we now enter the advanced fetish stage. This fetish is not only about goods or commodity but also “space-ing” and “time-ing”. This situation has a profound impact in the daily matters of our life, from education to politics. In the world of politics it is the time for us to incorporate the factors of emotion in general and pleasure in particular to change political directions. It is not impossible to see that the post-election campaign retaliation in the media is far worse than the ones usually happened because of the threat from radical groups.

(c) *The implication on the fine art world.* The responsibility of the fine art world to research and experiment through technology is not yet finished, and even every moment is felt like something beginning. In the political world so far it is common to talk about cultural citizenship, and even there are those who start talking about aesthetic citizenship. It is not that I want to pretend to be academic, yet I think that artists are also required in this regard to conduct their research.





The Drive toward
Participatory Aesthetics:
Finding the New Dimension of
Interconnectedness between
Fine Art, Experience, and
Knowledge

Martin Suryajaya

Aesthetics as a part of philosophy of art had experienced a lot of changes throughout the twentieth century. Since its presence made possible by the effort of Alexander Baumgarten from the 18th century until the end of the 19th century, aesthetics has often been understood as the philosophy of beauty or at least the kind of philosophy of art oriented toward the clarification of mere peripherals of beauty itself. The problems discussed in aesthetics usually concern these three major points:

- the aesthetic value of works of art (mostly pertaining to beauty and the sublime);
- aesthetic experience (in creating and understanding beauty);
- aesthetic evaluation (in appreciating works of art disinterestedly).

From the scope of the points of discussion, it is obvious that the traditional model of aesthetics tends to assign the problem of experience and knowledge inside the frame of beauty and the sublime. Aesthetic experience becomes something that is very personal, and it is not even unusual to deem the experience as a divine revelation bequeathed upon the artists themselves. At the same time aesthetic knowledge becomes something elitist, that is, it only belongs to a certain kind of people whose standard of taste has been “civilised”. This perspective has become problematic since the 20th century when fine art practice was no longer about the matter of beauty and the sublime, but it began to be in touch

with the realm of social relations and intervention into the surrounding environment.

This paper is intended to underline the gradual transformation of the fine art practices that are slowly but surely leaving the traditional aesthetics approach behind. The matters proposed by the new wave of contemporary artworks are no longer merely about beauty, but the change in sensibility in perceiving the reality (for example in the conceptual fine art since the 1960s) and the establishment of novel social relations (for example in street art and various community fine art practice). The outcome is social changes. In accordance with these changes, the role of the artists and the works of art as the subject and object of art respectively have also undergone gradual transformation toward a more participatory direction. Because works of art are no bigger than a humble pinch of social relation, then every person heavily involved in social relation creation or changes is an artist; and because of the same reason, art practices become participatory. This shift, certainly, requires a new perspective of aesthetics, and the model of aesthetics that is far more suitable with this contemporary fine art practice is the one that we are going to conclude at the end of this paper. And for that reason, we need to carefully read the changes in contemporary art and perceive the impact on the shift concerning the subject and object of art. We then begin by examining the dilemmas often surfaced whenever art practices are heavily connected with the problems of social changes.

The Dilemma of Emancipatory Art

Art and social changes are one of the oldest topics discussed in the history of aesthetics theories. This theme was even debated in

the Classical Greek period, around 500-300 BCE. People at that time mostly thought that good and proper works of art are those that incorporate moral values. Therefore, in this didactic framework, beauty cannot be evaluated separately from its social function. A beautiful work of art must also deeply incorporate social benefits. At this point, matters concerning art and social changes are thus naturally inseparable. Within this didactic tradition then the history of art in Europe developed until the Renaissance era in the 16th century.

This longstanding consensus was then heavily challenged in the Romantic era (the 18th and 19th century). In that time, some concerned arguments emphasising on the dismantling of beauty aspect in works of art from its functional property were voiced. Thus the good and proper works of art are the ones deemed beautiful when they are perceived disinterestedly. Aesthetics thinkers such as Earl of Shaftesbury, Immanuel Kant, Théophile Gautier and Oscar Wilde share their common ground on this principle. Since then, the dilemma of Modern Aesthetics arose and became the main points of aesthetic debates; and these are the tensions between:

- beauty and function;
- form and content;
- autonomy and involvement.

On one camp, various schools of aesthetics that are embedded in the Modernist tradition emphasise beauty, form, and autonomy above everything. This is reflected in certain movements of aesthetics such as formalism and aestheticism (whose maxim is “art for art”). On the other camp, aesthetics thoughts standing

their ground outside the Modernist tradition –that is, the realist aestheticians, the remaining of the Classic traditionalists, and some Marxist aesthetics thinkers –hold function, content, and involvement of art above all else. That was exactly what happened at that time, and ever since the 18th century there has been a gap between art and social changes –some have tried to bridge it, yet some have even celebrated it.

The Modernist tradition in aesthetics emphasises formal evaluation of artworks. The things that do not belong to the unique characteristic of the specific medium are not to be taken into aesthetic evaluation. Meaning and mimetic references, for example, are to be put aside in the field of painting evaluation (Clive Bell and Clement Greenberg). Lyrics and morality, another example, are to be left out in the field of music evaluation (Eduard Hanslick). Ideology, message, and context are to be discarded in the field of literature evaluation (René Wellek and Austin Warren). In various branches of art, the aspects of content, function, and intense involvement of the artist are taken as alien elements toward the works themselves. This tradition is usually accompanied by a kind of “beauty cult”, that is, a kind of belief that is almost religious saying that works of art are merely about beauty itself and nothing more. This is the belief that was paraphrased in the aesthetics slogan in the 19th century: art for art sake. This tradition is also normally accompanied by the cult of the purity of art and the artist: works of art are regarded as the result of pure contemplation (disinterested) of the artists that are so sublime until these masterpieces cannot be understood by common people. Here there is a strong dividing line between “art” and “non-art” things and between “artists” and “laypersons” –and

thus it naturally leads to the divide between “aesthetic” and “non-aesthetic” experience and knowledge.

On the contrary, the critical tradition toward Modernism usually bases its arguments on the classic understanding that art has always been intricately interwoven with moral and political matters and also with the economic and socio-cultural impact. This atonement concerning the intimate and intricate link allows thinkers being critical against Modernist aesthetics to appreciate the neglected aspects (function, content, and involvement). Here we can identify the two variants that are both critical toward Modernism. The first one can be addressed as “anti-Modernist” tradition, which consists of aestheticians who would prefer to emphasise the extrinsic over the intrinsic aspects in artwork evaluation. Thinkers like August Comte reduced the role of art to be an instrument in alleviating the society's moral standard. In similar manner bureaucrats like Andrei Zhdanov obliged every single work of art to portray workers' suffering under capitalism and their salvation within socialism while grounding the artwork on mimesis or on perfect representation of the reality through the senses while at the same time idealising it.

However, apart from the first approach, there exists the second variant that can be addressed as “Dialectic Modernism”. This is the main standpoint in the aesthetics thoughts of Georg Lukacs, Walter Benjamin, Frederic Jameson, and Terry Eagleton. Their thoughts are woven in a theme saying that the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of every work of art are essentially connected and inseparable. Certain artistic forms, for example a novel, are the consequence of the development of history, and because of

the development it is shaped by its artistic content. This reciprocal relation that is able to fuse the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of works of art is the reason behind artworks that can be formally regarded as high quality ones yet still retain their emancipatory trait.

What has been discussed so far is still limited to the problem of evaluating works of art, and it still does not treat any aspects related to producing the works. The “Dialectic Modernism” tradition that developed until the period of 1960s is actually able to resolve classical dilemmas concerning the evaluation of works of art. Even so, this tradition still cannot offer a kind of artistic practice approach that enables the creation of artworks that can meet aesthetic requirement while at the same time they contribute to social changes. The efforts to further resolve the art dilemma in the production stage are what have been proposed by the thinkers in aesthetics after the 1960s. Thus we can examine the development by observing the shifts that are currently taking place in two fields at once: the shifting of the meaning of “works of art” and “artist”.

The Shifting of Art Objects

Due to the advancement of technology, the meaning of “works of art” has shifted. In his classic essay in 1936, Walter Benjamin critically addressed symptoms of the drained “aura” of works of art due to their possibility to be reproduced mechanically and indefinitely. The disappearance of the aura means the loss of singularity or the uniqueness of works of art. The advent of photography and printing technology has desecralised art objects. Before the advent of imaging technology reproduction, every

object of art pretends to emanate mysterious and sacred enigma like an ancient sacred artifact sanctified in religious beliefs due to the fact that it is the only one and thus it is unique. The pivotal leap in reproduction technology gradually diminished the sacred aura. Yet contrary to common interpretation in Indonesia, Benjamin *did not* interpret the fading of the aura as something bad or regrettable. He contradictorily celebrated it since by having it this way works of art can be accessible to all and from this there began the socialisation of aesthetic experience. The demystification of artworks actually demonstrates that these works are not solely the fruit of an artistic ritual of a sublime artist that are completely distinguishable from the works of “laypersons”. By having their possibility to be mechanically reproduced, it is proven that the work of an artist can be taken as equal with that of a layperson –in that both are based on skills acquired by learning, and possess no sacred or mystical content whatsoever.

The meaning of works of art has also shifted: they are none other than the allocation of workforce to a certain object. Because of this, the essence of these works is not laid on the sublimity of the object itself, rather on the work division system that enables the production of the object. The social ground of this artwork definition was extended further by art institution theorists like Arthur Danto and George Dickie. They emphasise that an object becomes a work of art because that is how the object is acknowledged through the consensus made in the art circle. The powerful web of artists, curators, gallery owners, critics, collectors –in short, all of the members of the “artworld” –at the same time give their unanimous consent for the art status of an object.

Therefore, it is easy to see that the art status is not originated from the object itself, but it comes from the social relation that contextualises and baptises the object to become a work of art. This is why the urinal exhibited by Marcel Duchamp or Brillo boxes by Andy Warhol can be taken as artworks.

From the rising awareness that works of art can no longer be taken as artworks but rather as a set of social connection behind the object, there emerged strong voices urging for a new way of reading the relation between art and social changes. The old conception that reduces the definition of an artwork into its physical aspects merely leads to the dilemma between form and content –between the intrinsic and extrinsic aspect. With the shift toward the novel conception standing the ground that works of art is no better than a social web tangling an object, not a single dichotomy can then be erected between the intrinsic and extrinsic aspect. Since works of art are mere social consensus concerning an object, then the intrinsic aspect of the object (the whole formal-compositional aspect) is none other than the embodiment of the extrinsic aspect (the whole work division system that gives rise to the whole formal-compositional aspect). Right after it is realised, a work of art is no different than a product of social consensus, then the intrinsic becomes the impact of the extrinsic. This situation takes the relation between art and social change to a new level.

By firmly standing the new ground of awareness, now works of art are no longer contradicted to social changes. There is no more argument between art as an instrument or means of social changes and art as an autonomous field of activity. Because an

artwork can be accepted as an artwork as long as it is supplied by its social connection, and because the connection itself is never impervious to ideology and political and economic interests, then the autonomy of art is a mere empty myth. Whether it is being realised or not, or being acknowledged or not, art is a part of social changes. Here the criteria to evaluate the quality of works of art are also shift. We can no longer employ the evaluation criteria that are completely formal to read works of art, this is because once it is acknowledged that works of art are products of a consensus making in the society, then the problem of aesthetic beauty becomes secondary and it merely depends on the consensus of aesthetic taste within the related art public. The main criterion that now tends to be emphasised in artwork evaluation concerns how far the works of art can facilitate new social relations –creating new social realities. Because a work of art is essentially a kind of social connection, then the most intrinsic evaluation criterion pertaining to it is how far the work can represent the most intense experience concerning social relation.

In the West, this is the trend that surfaced in the post-conceptual art in the 1960s, whereas in Indonesia, it began to take the centre stage after *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru* (New Fine Art Movement) in the 1970s. There are a lot of conceptual artworks, the pieces by Barbara Kruger for example, that urge the spectators to discern everything that is being presented and because of that the works drive them to re-interrogate their longstanding beliefs and principles so that this will give rise to a new kind of social relation. A street artist like Banksy works in similar manner: presenting a new perception about reality right in the middle of public space so

that this perception will also push forward a new kind of social connection. The same thing can be found in “community fine art” that has been practiced by Moelyono in Tulungagung and Arief Yudi in the district of Jatiwangi, that is, to change the local social reality through the practice of participatory art that involves the whole village members. In addition to these we cannot put aside the practice of citizen journalism that is brought forth by Forum Lenteng through *akumassa*. The difference is if conceptual art and street art still regard the spectators as art object consumers transformed into agents of change in the society, the fine art community holds the spectators right from the beginning as the creators of “works of art” –that is, new social realities. Apart from the active or passive characteristic and participatory or non-participatory, the new art practices after the 1960s commonly undergo a pivotal shift from contemplative to transformative.

The Shifting of Art Subjects

The shifting of art objects happens at the same time with the shifting of art subjects or “artists”. The common perception dated back to the Romantic era that worships the “cult” artist as the sublime and supreme creator has gradually been abandoned in the contemporary art practice. This shift has also been made possible through the rise of awareness on the social root of every work of art. Right when works of art are taken as products of social recognition and because of this they are constructed through certain social connection, the artist's status as the creator is no longer necessary. The creator of an artwork is not the artist –but the society or the art public simultaneously. The artist just produces an object –yet it is the public that further baptise the object to become a work of art. Therefore, it is not too far to say

that the rickety conception about artists as creators has fallen apart.

With the shift, there emerges a kind of democratisation on artistic production processes. The creation of artworks is no longer a mere privilege of the artist; it belongs to every single member of the society. From this point there rises the awareness that every person is an artist. This awareness takes the spotlight, for example, in the participatory aesthetics of Augusto Boal concerning theatre art. Through art history analysis, Boal has shown that the theatre system based on character representation in the form of individual protagonist figure is not something natural or existed at the beginning of this art. The system of character representation was actually created by Thespis in the sixth century BCE. Before the system theatre plays were not performed by individual performers; those plays on the contrary were narrated and sung collectively by a chorus. If we go back further in time to the dawn of the theatre art practice, according to Boal, we will not find the difference between the performers and audience. The system that separates theatre artists from the audience, both in the choral and protagonist system, is only possible through an artistic *work division between the artists and the audience*. In reality, for Boal, early art theatre practices did not recognise this distinction. What is now called theatre performance at the beginning was people's celebration where *everyone* sings, plays, and drinks wine together. Because of this reason, Boal shows that essentially every person is an artist because the distinction between the artist and audience, between the “art expert” and “common people”, is not a historical inevitability.

Due to the awareness that every person is an artist, Boal then developed an art practice commonly known as “forum theatre” in which the stage becomes a venue for discussion between the performers and the audience concerning the ways that must be taken in order to have a better story ending. Here, there is no rigid distinction between the two because every person in the audience is able to interrupt the play and then offers a suggestion or even assumes the role of a character in the show. In the 1990s, Boal took this kind of artistic practice to the next level by extending its scope the field of political decision making –a kind of “legislative theatre”. If a forum theatre transforms the audience to become performers, then a legislative theatre transforms citizens to become legislators. When he took the chair as the mayor of Rio de Janeiro, he designated a special theatre stage where every citizen could promote a legal draft by performing a theatrical performance that fostered the proposed draft. There are dozens of laws which were ratified by Boal through this legislative theatre; for example, the legislative decision stipulating that 7th December would be commemorated as the Solidarity Day for the People of Timor Leste.

If everyone is an artist, then what is left for professional artists? Their role is to be an organiser. If everyone is the creator of an artwork, and if every artwork is none other than a mere social relation, then the role of a professional artist is to be an artistic hub –the one that coordinates the people as the creator of works of art so that she or he can be of assistance in establishing a new social relation; and, through this establishment, a new social reality. These ideas were later theorised under the banner of “relational aesthetics”, one of the examples is the writing of

Nicolas Borriaud. According to this kind of aesthetics paradigm, the art practices are essentially embedded within ordinary social space, and they are not confined to an enclosed space as imagined even by institutional art theorists –an elite space that is conceived by the interconnection between artists, curators, gallery owners, and collectors. Different from these confined spaces, ordinary social spaces means a social interaction field that commonly takes place in society: it can be urban spaces like hipster venues, urban poor suburbs, or even the community spaces at the village level. In these kinds of common space the contemporary and participatory artistic practices take place.

The intervention of the artists in transforming social spaces and all of the social relation embedded within is not realised through a kind of avant-garde aspiration that pretends to be agent of change and then lectures the people to change their social relations. This approach commonly found in political dignitaries and religious clerics cannot be accepted in relational aesthetics because this aesthetics starts from the assumption that everyone is an agent of social change so that the capacity of social transformation is not a mere privilege of an enlightened artist that “descend to earth from heaven”, but it actually is the collective capacity of the people themselves. The artist is involved in the process of mutual deliberation, giving advice, and actively taking part in achieving the collective agendas of the local society. The product can be anything, right from everything that still has something to do with “art objects” (for example the village level art exhibition as what was conducted by the Hysteria collective in Bustaman Village, Semarang, in an event called “Bok Cinta”) until any activities that do not have anything to do with “art objects” (for example the

independent economic movement that is resistant against capitalistic social-production relations). Whether the “art object” is present or not is no longer perceived as the goal of a relational art practice because this practice is based on a deep understanding that art is essentially a social relation and because of that it cannot be reduced to be a mere object. Even if this kind of non-object art practice is to be exhibited in a conventional art event (like solo exhibition or biennale), then what is often exhibited is the documentation of the collective process.

Conclusion: Toward Participatory Aesthetics

Therefore, we have seen how the breakthrough in artistic production managed to answer the classic dilemma concerning emancipatory art. Works of art can no longer be understood as “art objects”, but it is more of a new social relation. Artists can no longer be taken as “creators”, but they tend to be a kind of organiser that is actively involved in the society. These two shifts, both in art object and subject, demonstrate how the dilemma between form and shape, between beauty and function, and between autonomy and involvement, is resolved in practice. In this kind of artistic production practice, form is the *logical consequence* of content. Artistic forms are taken as long as there is a need to express something in a socio-historical specific context. The answer to why the art collective in Jatiwangi prefers clay as the main medium in their artistic process is because of the unique socio-historical background of Jatisura as the producers of shingles made of clay from generation to generation. The answer to why the art product constructed from clay is musical instruments is because of the background of the young men in the village who like to play music. That means the artistic form is not sketched

based on the sublime inspiration of a totalitarian artist, but based on the answers for the socio-historical need of the local people.

From our reading until this point, we can conclude at least three aspects of fundamental shifts in contemporary fine art practice:

- the shift of art subject: from an artist as a creator to an artist as an organiser;
- the shift of art object: from a work of art as a thing to a work of art as a social relation;
- the shift of aesthetics approach: from the preference of an artistic form based on formal-compositional to the preference of an artistic form as the answer for the socio-historical need of the society.

The three pillars in this contemporary fine art practice trigger the need for a new interpretation on aesthetics, especially concerning the dimension of experience and knowledge.

The three shifts voice the same theme concerning participation. Naturally, these require a kind of aesthetics that is participatory. Basically, the understanding about aesthetic experience and knowledge is also changing. Because artists no longer work as the creator of an art artifact, but they play their main role as the organiser of a social relation, then the aesthetic experience is also democratised. The experience is no longer limited the aesthetic experience in the enclosed mind of the artist and a handful of exhibition visitors, but it practically comes into contact with a wider range of people that are involved in contemporary art practices. The same treatment can be applied to aesthetic knowledge that has taken its form in the evaluation of works of

art. Here the technical evaluation on compositional beauty of a work is no longer needed, and the most important point is the evaluation on its impact on the lives of many people in society. Aesthetic knowledge, therefore, is no longer a specific science buttressed by the postulates of “art senses” or “an enlightened standard of taste” (as what happened in the aesthetic practice before the 20th century), but it becomes a part of the people's common knowledge in struggling for a better social reality around them. This dimension of involvement that marks the aesthetic knowledge and experience is the one that becomes the foundation of participatory aesthetics.

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The Need for Fine Art Re-mythologization

Fabie Sebastian Heatubun

*“...artist have a greater opportunity: to conquer the lie!
In battle with the lie,
art has always been victorious,
always wins out, visibly, incontrovertibly for all!
The lie can stand against much in the world
but not against art”.*

Status Quaestionis

The theme proposed by the committee for this event “Blending in the understanding of art, experience, and knowledge” –is a very important and compelling matter to discuss, to be deeply examined and to be thoroughly grasped. It is implied that there is something that must be cut and ripped open about the very essence of fine art that is supposed to be mutually understood. Sadly there is a kind of degradation in our way of understanding: starting from the very foundation of the artists (painters) themselves, to their creative process, and to the essence of their products as their sheer creation. Who are the painters essentially? This kind of question must be answered by the artists and the society they live in.

To thoroughly examine fine art today is by definition examining the identity of the artists. At the same time it is also questioning

the society as their appreciator; how and what the society thinks about the dignity of these people behind their works of art; where they belong in their social stratification? Are they taken as the respectable ones? Or they are merely taken as those who are unable to cope with society's demand to live a common and ordinary life like regular and normal people? Does being an artist mean having a way of living that is equal with that of celebrities, whose emphasis is heavier on how they look rather than on how they mature intellectually? Is an artist –she or he –just an artisan; painting artist is just a painter? Just a mere synonym for a parallel profession as a construction site worker –the only difference is just how heavy or how easy the workload is? Or the other way around, is it better to equal them with scholars, scientists or other intellectuals? So that these people –who create works of art –are in the same category as those brilliant academics, including their dignity as intelligent persons? That is, the only difference between the two is the artists' field of expertise. Therefore, when it comes to seeing their position in a gradual range, we can say that because aesthetics is also “a way of thinking” and also “a rule of creation”, the she-or-he-artist in reality has something to do with both her-or-his *multi*-discipline and *inter*-discipline characteristics in science. If that is so, then being an artist is not just something to be taken lightly. The artists then by definition possess the thought and taste and mind over common people with their common job preferences. And as we have known, aesthetics is directly in touch with philosophy, psychology, semiotics, history, society and culture, and even with politics. These are the scientific tools of the trade that have to be exhaustively mastered and intimately embraced by the artists.

The problem of today's aesthetics is not only with its philosophical concepts but also with the problematic society that is being plagued with artistic appreciation crises. There is an acutely degraded value of life that is merely content with superficiality, temporality, minimum sensibility, poor achievement standard, over-simplicity, and nihilism. Culture and technology have lured people into 'remote control' mental state that is extremely weak on the reflective side and into 'gadgetting' life-style that is only content with just the 'empty shell' and totally meaningless something yet wrapped in cheap but colourful packaging, the kind of life that disconnects them from the realm of transcendental meaning. In that particular situation, there is no room left for art. Culture and technology that has contained human beings in 'cyberspace' or virtual world has become an endless labyrinth until humans are powerless to escape from its claws. At the same time boundaries between illusions and the true reality, including the 'arthood' of daily life, disappear. At this very moment, as what was said by Walter Benjamin, art has lost 'its aura', its mysterious dimension, and its uniqueness. The society has demystified and is demystifying art, and is now desacralising their devotion toward the artists. Artists are taken as non-existent and redundant. Artists have lost their identity because their role is no longer required. Artists have died, and their death is not because they are killed but because they commit their own suicide. As what is echoed by *Op art* (Optic art) artist Victor Vasarely, even he himself is longing for a kind depersonalisation of the artist artiness. Art does not need artists and their ingenious works of art as its foundation. Let art be owned by the people, so that it can be perceived and felt as his or her artwork without having to refer to a particular artist. That is the reality.

Revoking the Essence and Identity of Fine Art

A humble seed has to completely die down and resolve into nothing to make way for a promising shoot and then the majestic tree. Death is just *transitus* toward resurrection and a fresh and novel stage of life. This is the 'eternal now' as believed by Nietzsche, a complete circle of eternal life. Retracing the steps to our reason of existence and to the fundamental picture of 'artist-ness' is the quintessential mission of '*renaissance*', the courage to be reborn. It may well be to repent. It could also be a new kind of awareness bold enough to challenge and break through the wall of crisis. It begins by revealing the meaning of one's self and artworks that are completely in line with the quintessence and dignity of 'arthood' itself –that is the kind of art that refers to the majestic, grand, and holy mind. It is thus another way to rephrase the word sacred and mysterious.

The quest to be reborn is none other than the re-mythologisation and/or deification of 'arthood'. Fine art is the creativity to realise the infinite into a finite medium; the effort to present the transcendent into an immanent medium; the works of art that concretises the universal reality into a particular medium. Beauty, truth, and virtue as transcendental attributes in Plotinos understanding are embodied in a work of art that is present in a specific space and time; that is also concrete in a cultural context requiring a kind of language that can be understood by appreciators. Yet it is inevitable that at this setting artists are prone to go down the slippery slope because they are tempted and yield themselves to the mercy of the appreciators (the art market itself). Artists busy themselves with ridiculously rigging their works and brands, just to meekly comply with the taste and

language of these appreciators. Apart from being honest, the artists in their creative process are also obliged to muster their brave resolution. This is “the courage to create” according to Rollo May. Going upstream against the flow, battling market temptation, and overcoming the mercilessly devouring and misleading zeitgeist are the kind of wisdom desperately needed by an artist.

To have a cutting edge identity that is imbued with sheer uniqueness, brilliance, popularity, and productivity that is in line with a long list of '*capolavoro*', or masterpiece, is the dream of every artist. Yet it is just merely a result of a cause. To come forward with fresh works that are spectacular, deep, eternal, visionary, and substantial, and to be newsmakers taking the media's front page and permanent features of art museums, these are also the longing of many artists. To completely possess an endless well of inspiration that is always fruitful and never running out of brilliant ideas is the ultimate hope. On the other unwanted hand, the complete inability to breathe new life into any single work is definitely the most horrific haunting demon. Looking for the most suitable form, style, and identity is considered given and natural. Talents, persistence, and tenacity, and also challenges, are the shaping force that perfect the whole thing. Consistency and timelessness in the artists' character and identity have always been the only inevitable threat. Fine art '*kīwári*' –nowadays –is metaphorically like the tiny David, a young soldier with his red blossom cheek and frail teenage body who is totally nothing compared to the giant Goliath, a seasoned warrior with his stout body and a giant and razor-sharp blade bathed in bloodlust and brandished intimidatingly for a crushing blow of merciless death. Goliath here can be globalism or imaging technology in

photography or graphic art that has been able to convincingly cope with the market taste, while at the same time it challenges the very existence of fine art. The courage to create is then the powerful wit that keeps David alive in the fearless duel with the now formless and overwhelmingly ubiquitous Goliath.

Coincidentia Oppositorum

An artist is supposed to be the grandeur of her or his time –she or he who has her or his keen taste and thought and finely tuned instinct. Intuition is actually something spiritual. Intuition plays its role when the body is free from emotion, desire, and lowly craving, a refined state that we usually call pristine body. Intuition as direct knowledge does not come from our internal self or from experience nor from our cognitive and erudite knowledge; it does on the contrary come from the mind. Intuition is both original and natural. Because it is something natural, frequently it is somatically called “gut feeling” (the 'feeling' of our intestines, toughness?). It is indeed a metaphor that is meant to show the kind of knowledge that does not come from the brain or the thought. An artist is supposed to perceive her or his reality intuitively. Artists must be able to be the guardian of wisdom that can reveal the wisest way to go when people are unable to comprehend the true reality and when the society is being heavily disoriented, she or he who possesses excellent competence to say and articulate something with her or his artistic-language medium whenever discourse-language medium is powerless to fathom. An artist is supposed to have the power over 'wisdom' that extends beyond the five-senses or any knowledge based on epistemological and rational categorisation, the kind of knowledge that is able to triumph over the duality of 'binary opposition' between

eros-pathos, the self-the works of art, and also between the 'frame of reference' of the artists and the appreciators.

Artists are to possess '*gnosis*', a kind of knowledge that is esoteric in its nature, knowledge that is obtained from mystical experience and from relentless effort in renouncing worldly delights, fasting, living ascetically, spiritual denial, or self-emptying in order to make way for transcendental power to intervene. It is a kind of wisdom that is refined from the blending in between knowledge or memory (*memoria*) and experience. Yet it is not the experience that merely comes from perception of the human senses, it is from the sensibility of our heart. In other words, it is the knowledge of the heart based on the logic of the heart in the terminology of Blaise Pascal, in which *intelectus* itself is inadequate to comprehend. *Gnosis* is a kind of *prajñā-pāramitā*, the wisdom revealed from something beyond our reach and understanding. The aesthetic experience becomes equal with religious or spiritual experience for her-or-himself and also for the spectators of the works. *Gnosis* knowledge is ideal for artists who characterise themselves as *grandeur*. When the civilisation has been distorted toward empty devotion that is rational, standardised, precise, and verifiable, it has significantly reduced the transcendental and mysterious dimension, and it also fails to reach the most essential level. This *gnosis* knowledge requires an idiomatic language that is 'understandable' by the appreciators. This is not a big problem, since the language of art is by definition *sui generis* with mythical representative and poetic language. Experiencing and expressing *gnosis* as a harmonious blend between knowledge and experience needs the power of the

artist's imagination. As Nelson Goodman said it, the language of art is symbolic, alegorical, denotative, and representative.

Coincidentia oppositorum is the terminology coined by Nicolaus Cusanus, a fifteenth century philosopher. Cusanus actually wants to explain that there is a huge gap between the godly and human world. There is a gap that is impossible to bridge and to cross. Rational human understanding will never be able to reach the complete and whole understanding. The mysterious, holy, and noumenal realm can only be understood when human beings transcend their rationality by blending into their metaphysical and mystical experience. From that mystic experience, a person will be in constant state of decategorisation. Everything is fused and relative. There are no longer opposite categories like long and short, vast and narrow, distant and close, abundant and meagre, smart and stupid, right and wrong, objective and subjective, and even godly and human. Everything is blended. The way is through meditating and contemplating to fuse and merge all the senses, thought, will, and desire that exist inside the human self. At that time, the whole senses merged completely thickly blended and centred to what is deeply contemplated.

An artist is essentially a kind of person that is supposed to be in the constant state of *coincidentia oppositorum*, when her or his experience and knowledge are blended in. In that special condition does the gestation process take place, in which this will give birth to all of her or his works. From this 'womb' are originality, authenticity, novelty, and uniqueness born. In that very condition can the artist be independent from the containment and

demand of the 'market', and even from the suppressing authority over her or his freedom to create. This also means to be free from the standardised-quality paradigm, the shadows of the cheasy 'kitsch' taste, and to the taste of art critics and curators. This even means to be free from the global-local, East-West, and central-periphery dichotomy.

In the creative process, expressing the fusion or 'blending-in' experience does not mean that she or he does not have to deal with endless temptations to prostitute and betray her-or-himself, and eventually to fall into the *kitsch* trap, cheap works of art (*l'art de pacotille*), 'junk'. In the terminology of Milan Kundera, it refers to works of art that are completely low in quality and 'cheap'. This is only possible because the artist is enslaved by the cheap, excessively common, and lowly artistic taste of the appreciator, the *kitsch* taste. This kind of banal aesthetic judgment is easily pleased by mere idiomatic expressions like "wow", "it's nice", or "it's good". It only makes its meaningless presence by the door and does not have any passion to go further inside the precious room that is treasured by countless mysteries and the extremely valuable life meaning. Art is indeed 'elusive', difficult to understand, and it takes time to contemplate it. In that situation honesty as the ultimate virtue and the meaning of life of a grandeur artist are always at stake.

Beyond Pragmatic Art

Following the foot-steps of John Dewey's thought, the pivotal figure behind pragmatism, definitely the appreciator or as it is usually called 'consumer' is closer to the centre stage than the artist as the producer. The works of art are supposed to come

from and refer to consumers' daily experience. The experience of the artist then has to be equal with the experience of the consumers when they are having their aesthetic experience. The absolute art lies on the experience of creating and getting in touch with the art objects. The foundation of an artwork is therefore not on the work itself. Art is unifying 'doing' and 'undergoing' (to create and to perform); the artists embody in them the consumers' way of doing things while they are creating the works. The meaning of the works of art is naturally *inherent* and 'built-in', and this in turn causes the meaning of the art objects to be gradually independent from the intention and aim of the artists. The works of art must be taken separately from the artist. There is something interesting about what Dewey quoted from Matisse, "When painting is finished, it is like a new born child. The artist himself must have time to understand it." Art does not have any theological dimension. The artists and their audience have to mutually interpret, understand, and find the meaning of the works. Even to be able to understand the 'baby' we have to be present at all times so that we can know her or him better. In this does the fusion stage take place, the blending-in stage between the artist and the society of art enthusiasts; or even art observers themselves are needed to be blended in with the artwork, being merged and united horizontally.

The terminology 'experience' that is used by Dewey in *Art as Experience* is actually understood as *erlebnis* (German: 'living' –*leben*–experience). The experience is the life itself, the real life experience –a context to undergo and to live something. The fusion or dissolve of the differentiation and objectification of objects around us is no longer something objective, but it has

become an integral part with the self. There is an 'intense rupture' between the object and the subject. It is like a wallet in your trousers back-pocket or the coffee cup that you use every day or the pillow that sleep on every night. Because of it this experience context is more personal and pre-reflective. This is in contrast with the term *Erfahrung* (a German word) which means 'experience'. In Kantian understanding the object is out there, and that means the subject has to 'go' (*fahre*) to reach it. Thus there is a dynamic activity between knowledge and memory; in this a cognitive judgment takes place and it is reflective, yet this process is still a fusion between object and subject. This is also the solid ground that can answer the dichotomy in aesthetics that is usually taken as subjective. An experience is essentially objective. We can even say that the dichotomy between subjective evidence and objective evidence are taken side-by-side by aesthetic experience, standing one by another at the same level.

The tension between the two poles, *theoria* and *praxis*, is possible in positivistic and rational discourses. But aesthetics can unite the two in a fusion and dissolve them into one. *Theoria* (theoretical knowledge) and *phronesis* (practical knowledge) are fundamentally equal. It does not mean that *phronesis* comes from or determined by *theoria* or the other way around. It does not also mean that *theoria* is something notionally and ideationally *an sich*. The etymology of *theoria* is the Greek word '*to theion*' (the divine one) or '*to theia*' (the sacred ones) and '*orao*' (which means I see); or to be more specific, it is 'I contemplate on something divine. I can also mean attending a play in a theatre. Therefore, at this theory is something aesthetic, a kind of activity concerning that enthral us, a process of understanding through sensing. When it

becomes a judgment, then it is automatically obtain from 'experience'. This is quite similar to phronesis as a way to know and understand something that later becomes knowledge or wisdom. In this the personal ability to filter out and gain what is precious or valuable to be done because it is proven in someone's experience is embedded. The idiom 'learning by doing' can further illustrate this context.

Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* explains about the balance between theories and practice or between theoretical and practical wisdom. Theoretical wisdom bases its abstraction on actions and the other way around. This practical wisdom is a sort of knowledge and capacity acting as a guiding action for the person her-or-himself or for other people. *Phronesis* acts as an umbrella for the cognitive capacity that coordinates judgment, understanding, and insight to perform affective actions. There is a fusion or dissolve between cognition and affection. *Phronesis* assists practitioners to correct and provide discretions in doing the exact, better, and right thing to do. *Phronesis* can also be of assistance in disentangling a disarrayed and aimless condition and in advising the steps needed to be taken in that situation. *Phronesis* is the force to realise words that are previously merely spoken. *Phronesis* bridges the gap between *episteme* (knowledge) and *mentis* (understanding). A *phronimos* is someone who possesses practical wisdom, she or he who has the ability to completely comprehend what is meant by goodness, truth, and beauty. This phronesis is by itself closely related to ethics and aesthetics. An artist as a phronimos will express her or his works by employing ethical discretion. Her or her prowess in dealing with moral issues is expressed in her or his creative process.

The most famous motto in Scholasticism is *Nihil est intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*; it means nothing in knowledge that is originated from experience. Knowledge and experience are taken as two different realities. Experience decides what knowledge is. Experience is the active sensing on an object, situation, or particular condition that always precedes knowledge. No knowledge without experience. Knowledge and understanding springs from experience. The term aesthetics definitely has something to do with the experience of sensing. Aesthetic sensibility and experience are something *sui generis*. Returning to 'experience' means placing aesthetics as the paradigm to thoroughly scrutinise the deepest meaning of goodness (ethics) and truth (logic, epistemology). In this context, it is just then natural to further inspect whether knowledge and experience cannot be simultaneously present or not surpassing each other or filling each other's gap. Experience and knowledge then must be one, and no longer distance or even oppose each other.

Ut unum sint, 'so that everything becomes one' is the dream we share when difference and conflict lead to suffering. The aim of our life is *eudamonia*, to find happiness. Therefore it is believed that only in the fusion of knowledge and experience can we find the solid ground for happiness. Two things dissolved into one and then it becomes many is the way of thinking of an 'alchemist'; the fusion between sulphur and mercury is a new material. Likewise, between a man and a woman, the fusion between a husband and a wife gives birth to limitless human descendants. Knowledge and experience are not something similar because they different in every respect, but their differences do not contradict the principle of 'dyad' or 'partnership'. They do complement each other; they

require each other. In alchemy fusion or blending-in is by nature to completely disintegrate or melt down. The one does not deny the existence of the other. They metamorphose: the essence is still the same even when the form has changed. It is probably better to recognise it as *anamorphosa*, to re-spawn. The artist who possesses knowledge and experience is naturally supposed to think in accord with the alchemist way of thinking, who is longing for sharing the wondrous result when there is a fusion between knowledge and experience. It is the fusion between divinity and self-humanity, when the spiritual is reifying in her or his body and daily life; the holy is merge with the ordinary. It is the fusion between her-or-his self and the works of art, the fusion between the self, works, and appreciators. What will fine art be? Will paint, colour, and canvas as ordinary implements be transformable to be the windows of eternity?

Through psychologically and utilitarianly Aristotelian perspectives can we see that the grand purpose of art is how beauty and meaning are emanated and expressed in works of art. Art is the practical virtue that has something to do the world of moral ethics; it can transform the spectator, and even further, the artist. They take mimesis as their aesthetic credo, and they do not just mimicking the current reality but the works must be expressive and meaningful. The role of art is to perfect the reality that is incomplete, imbalance, or even dysfunctional. The works of art becomes the expression of both the reality that is supposed to be and not supposed to be one. The presence of mere aesthetic or sensuous pleasure is not the final say, because the ultimate goal is intellectual and mental satisfaction. The joy from the five senses is just the very beginning. The catharsis art experience is unearthed

from the experience of *eleos* and *phobos*, creating pity and fear that strongly move the soul and the body. Mental and body participation are required until experiencing the fusion experience with works of art as the prerequisite. In this, works of art have the potential to reduce the intense heat, alleviate problems, and release the soul from tyranny and suppression. The same tone can be found in Jungian understanding that true awareness is the locus of 'shadow'; when persona has already been tainted, impure, damaged, disorganised and heavily cluttered, 'shadow' comes forward with its rescue signal. Art is in the realm of unconsciousness. When an acute mess is taken for granted as something usual, the unconscious is there to retaliate. It is like Deleuze's opinion on *khaos* that is turned into *khaosmosis*. Art will always revolt. Art has a critical role in creating transformative experience for the artist and the spectators or enthusiasts. This is the aim and the role of fine art: to accompany and guide those appreciators to the fusion experience with the ideal, supposed, and ultimate reality. Art can be the X-ray that can go through everything hidden beneath. And then art can show the way to deal with it. Art knows what to do when human beings are being trapped within the mud pond of *khaosmosis*.

Epilogue

Art and beauty are essentially the source and outcome of meaning, gist, and essence of life. Art becomes the media to reconcile with nature and also with the human her-or-himself that have been heavily tarnished and blemished. Whether it is a coincidence or not, Dostoevsky (died 1881) in his work *The Idiot* said that one day "The beauty will save the world". It is an *adagium* full of riddles, yet it implies a promising tread to follow

that may lead us to possible truth. Basically art and beauty are not just to refine the human soul so that it becomes more spiritual, as if it is only slightly higher than animals, yet at least according to Solzhenitzyn it elevates human dignity, relieves it from repression and exploitation, unites human beings as citizens of the world –therefore dismantling 'the West versus the East' and removing the pointless barriers in social divides, religions, and ideologies. Art and beauty have transcended brutality, corruption, vice, and lies.

This is the point where the artist has to be grandeur. She or he has to be ready with her or his majestic stratum to be united with the mysterious, the holy, or the transcendent. *Coincidentia oppositorum* is the path that has to be taken by the artist so that she or he can outreach the knowledge and experience that do not belong to the world of perception that has been tainted by deceit and deception. The hallowed dignity of the artists naturally leads them to create grand works of art, and to lead their spectators or 'enthusiasts' to appreciate the works according to their uttermost essence. Art and beauty are the holy attributes of the divine, and because of that they are powerfully embedded with the divine power of the holy.

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Padma of The Heart of The Beauty Goddess's Divine Palace

IBG Agastia

My Goddess as the solemn cloudy day in *masa* Kapat,
How beautiful to be gracefully seen;
Thou know not the heart tangled in countless love,
Sad it is since the eternal longing ever unfulfilled;
My Goddess here the painting and then the writing,
Sent by a humble someone deeply drowned in beauty itself,
Are to be taken onto Thy lap read and lovely felt,
Be it one into Thy divine tears.
(*Anyang Nirartha*)*

(1)

Mpu Nirartha, the author of Kakawin literature *Anyang Nirartha*, is widely regarded as a travelling author who likes to travel around the beaches of Bali. On the serene beaches this maestro erects a humble monument of solemn literature (*yasa*), takes the words deep within his soul (*bhasa*), and breathes along the lingering taste of meaningful soul-words (*rasa*), in the month (*masa*) of Kapat around October, which is usually called Kartika.

This *masa* Kapat is the *masa* usually chosen by the dreamers of utmost beauty (*mango*), to gracefully lay the strokes of the beautiful (*lango*) onto the humble surface of a *lontar* papyrus or a slate. The pandan flowers (*pudak*) with its delectable smell that

¹Translator's note: in Indonesian, the common synonym for both moment and time is '*masa*', which is different from the previous meaning of '*masa*' in Balinese—that is, 'month'.

are generously present –abundantly laid –on the vast beaches become his canvas of his undying imagination and creativity, both that take the form of deep passages (**wilapa**), and of paintings (**tika, prasi**). And these pudak flowers are then distantly flown by the messenger birds to the Goddess, his lover. *Masa Kapat* is then the moment and time (*masa*) that is full of infinite colours, and of flowers blooming beyond sight and solemnly spreading the ever-inviting delightful smell.

Kawi literature thoroughly memorises the endless flow of seasons with thorough lines of sentences. In the month of **Srawana** (July) the weather becomes dry, trees wither and lose their rejuvenating freshness, so that in the breezy month of **Bhadrawada** (August) leaves are falling from them. The month of **Asuji** (September) is rather balmy, water sources are gradually drained, the rivers are deprived of their water, birds slowly burst into tears and the streets are dusty. At the beginning of **Kartika** (October), the light downpour finally makes its way down to the earth, thunders roar from far away, and flowers of different tones sing their blooming arrival. In **Margasira** (November) the seeds are hailed away from petals, the cloud fills the sky, yet when it allows a humble taste of sunlight, then the day becomes hotter than usual. The fields are rendered wet in **Posya** (December) because the heavy downpour is heavier, whereas in the month of **Phalguna** (January) the sun and the moon stay hidden in the sky, and sometimes the buffalos are thoroughly bathed in mud. In the month of **Caitra** (March), the rain pours sporadically in different localised parts, whereas in **Waisakha** (April) the trees are blooming, save for the *angsana* tree that is still silent in reserve, as if waiting for the last rain to fall. In **Jiyestha** (May) is the roaring thunderous thunder heard, as if saying the last word good bye to a

lover. And in **Asadha** (June), the *kawi* start complaining about their annual and usual fever.

Mpu Tanakung once said that the month of Kartika as the “*amreta masa*”, the moment that gives birth to life or the vitality of life. A piece of his works is entitled *Bhasa Amreta Masa*, a sentimental *kakawin* literature that disentangles the beautiful moments of Kartika, especially when the moon attains its majestic fullness in the sky. Yet he takes the beauty of Kartika as the everlasting helping hand of his lonely heart relentlessly longing for the calming presence of his lover, the Goddess of Beauty. And after Mpu Tanakung gratefully depicts the heartbroken heart of a poet obstinately yearning for the love of his life, then he puts it all into these words: “When the full moon in Kartika with its whispering thunder reaches my ears from a distance, when the moonlight subtly enlightens the *angsoka* flowers with its brilliant and graceful light, and when the *kuwong* birds sing their lovely songs reaching the bottom of my heart, it is the time when Thy flawless beauty and splendour linger in my heart, oh my dearest Goddess.” That is how the month Kartika becomes the ever expected month by these dreamers of beauty, to preserve it in words and brushstrokes.

(2)

The self-portrait of a *kawi* (creator) portrays that he strongly desires the unquenchable thirst for beauty that is present and represented in countless forms. The unrelenting feeling of longing and loneliness, of being completely absorbed in beauty, and of becoming one with it, “the pleasure beyond any measure”, are safely preserved by him in several enduring words. Among them

are '*lango*', '*lengeng*', '*lengleng*', and also their derivatives ('*kalangwan*', '*kalangun*', '*angdon lango*', '*alanglang kalangwan*', for example). These words can be translated as “the feeling of being completely awed and overwhelmed”; the presence of *lango* in a person would turn her or him to be unconscious: she or he is *being completely enraptured by and blended into beauty* –this is where the subject and object become one.

He who yearns for beauty, who strives for the ultimate unification with beauty, calls himself *mango*. He is the *kawi* or the creator who loves to wander around beaches and mountains (*sagara giri, pasir wukir*). Mpu Tanakung gracefully depicts how sad The Goddess is –left without any words to alleviate her solitary presence by her lover that happens to be a *kawi*: “My love, how the time passes since you as a poet (*mango*) wander along to intimately embrace beauty by your side (*alanglang kalangwan*) ; have a heart, dear love, for your dearest who is left behind, who laments for endless longing, sadness, and burden of being alone in the empty heart of the park, is now lying faintly under the shade of the *nagasari* tree where lo above are the bees hovering aimlessly, yet they are bathed in sadness and hum in sorrow.” To this answers The Kawi: “For, my love, your dearest has left you behind in our throne of love, not that our throne is bereft of our humble flame of passionate love, yet the ardent urge to recapture beauty has surged within me, leaving me powerless to deny anything beauty has to offer (*saka ri harepku lalita nggurit lango*)”.

Objectively the word '*lango*' means a characteristic that has caused an object to appeal to aesthetic feelings. This is not because its beauty is crystal clear and solid enough to be touched

and grasped; on the contrary, it is beyond any reach, partly hidden, and visible yet impossible to see it closely; it is something suggestive, yet it denies revealing itself completely; it is heavily appealing, yet its treasure remains unexplored, rendering poets seeking it burnt by the craving and desire to unveil it. Thus the word '**lango**' is attributed to both the object and the subject. **Alango** means to be carried away and also "being able" to carry something away. In both the subject and the object we can find the same attribute.

The discussion above has at least implied something about "the religion of the seekers of beauty". Mpu Panuluh in his literary work *Kakawin Hariwangsa* wrote: "To the top of the mountain far beyond wander I to fulfil my praise, to quench my humble desire to be one with the realm of the Gods; my heart and soul are humbly Theirs, so that They may share Their holy presence in my heart, that is blooming like a lotus (*padma*). And my undivided devotion to the Gods through focusing all the thought I have is only for one single aim: that I can be the creator of a beautiful work (**kalango**), and that in creating it the Gods can lend me Their assistance in crafting a poem worthy of my being equal with those of the *kawi*. That is how Mpu Panuluh unyieldingly devotes himself praising to the Gods glorified in the *padma* of his heart.

Mpu Tanukung himself in the early part of his work *Kakawin Wrttasancaya* praises the Goddess of Beauty, which is also the Goddess of Knowledge, the Goddess Wagiswari: "The Goddess Wagiswari, I present my endless devotion to Thee, the Goddess that creates the Universe; I beseech Thee share Thy presence in the *padma* of my heart (**mungwing sarasija ri dalem twas**) ever in my praise: to mercifully bless me with Thy holy blessing, and to

ward off the sorrow and agony from Thy servant's life; and may Thy servant be allowed to be graceful with words, be their humble master, and spare the sadness". Thus the Goddess of Beauty is resided in the *padma* of his heart after being sought everywhere, and then She is persuaded to share a humble portion of the taste of beauty that is then preserved in his creative works. It is not unusual for the *kawi* to claim that they still cannot taste the ultimate beauty. Aside from Mpu Tanakung who unrelentingly begs the Goddess he prays so that She can share him something called *digjaya eng lango* or complete mastery of beauty, Mpu Prapanca also claims that he still cannot completely feel *lango* (*tan tame lango*). Mpu Monaguna proclaims himself as someone constantly trying to seize *lango*, after he imagines his praised God is hidden in dusty mist of divine words when his finger nails shape the earth scratching for them (*sang suksmeng kukus ing tanah kinikir kuku kari sedeng ing angregep lango*), and Mpu Nirartha also proclaims himself as a *kawi* deprived of the affection from the *kalangwan* (*sotaning kawi hurung hasihing kalangwan*).

Along with those contemplative confessions, the *kawi* is ever energetic and passionate in his creative process, still offering their fullest thought on the pedestal of the Goddess of Beauty.

(3)

Religio putae or the religion of the *kawi* is essentially a unification process. The very end of this long awaited process is to be one with and to completely dwell in the Absolute in its transcendental state, and then to embrace the total identification and ultimate freedom. For a *kawi*, this end is reachable through the way of beauty. For him, the Absolute takes the form of the God or

Goddess of Beauty. As the Absolute, They are omnipresent, yet the *kawi* only need to find Them wherever beauty shares its existence. For a *kawi*, the union with the Goddess of Beauty is both the way and the end. It is the way to the birth of a beautiful work. With the ultimate union the *kawi* is able to sow the seeds of beauty (***alung lango***), since he has been united with the Goddess none other than the beauty itself. And the union itself is the end, since if it is accomplished persistently, the *kawi* will embark upon the ultimate liberation everpresent within the fusion. The true freedom is the true happiness (**Anandam, Raso vai Sah**).

To be able to understand further, it would be better if we could see it through the theory of *rasa* –taste –as suggested by Bharata Muni in *Natya Sastra*. Accordingly there are nine kinds of *rasa* usually embraced by authors: ***sranggara*** (love), ***hasya*** (humour), ***karuna*** (sadness), ***raudra*** (anger), ***wira*** (valour), ***bhayanaka*** (fear), ***wibhatsa*** (blasphemy), ***adbhuta*** (greatness), and ***santa*** (peace). In the theory of taste the reader or the audience of a work of art is called ***sahredaya***, meaning someone who possesses the heart for the art. Only a ***sahdreya*** can understand literature well, or fully comprehend what *rasa* is. A ***shadreya*** in her or his pleasurable art experience is actually experiencing the *rasa* deeply and joyfully. The utmost pleasure is present in the stage of tasting of *rasa*, and at the very end the reader will be completely *absorbed* and unaware of other presence: she or he just experience the ultimate and pure experience. At this level she or he has reached the state of **ananda**, which means the highest or unlimited pleasure beyond any measure. Here is where the meaningful phrase **Raso vai Sah** or she or he who becomes the *Rasa* itself is very important.

The pleasure derived from works of art is different from the kind of pleasure given by ordinary things in daily life. The pleasure in the works of art is void of grief and sorrow, since this pleasure fully embraced by the audience makes her or him belittle other trivial matters. Mpu Panuluh said that by composing literary works the master wants to reveal the secret: to unearth the *rasa rahasya* that has been unearthed by the dreamers of beauty (**anemuaken rasa rahasyaning mango**). Adding to that, in another place the grandeur of his time Wararuci says that the majestic works of art will shape the taste intimately, including the secrets of thought (**antasakaning utama rasa makadi rahasya jnana**).

(4)

The dreamers of beauty address themselves as a **mango**, a *kawi* or a creator who harvests the time in the month (*masa*) of Kartika, when countless flowers in infinite colours overwhelm the presence of nature, to intimately consume lango. At that time, he is engulfed with the flame of passion looking for a Goddess whom he has been longing for.

The Goddess that is none other than the Goddess of Beauty is then invited to share Her presence in the padma of her heart (**padma hredaya**), endlessly praised in his complete offering of thought. Eventually, the union between him and Her takes place. At such precious time he begins to be aware of the presence of **Rasa**. This is the ultimate end that has been eagerly expected by a mango who believes that such colossal achievement can be made possible through the path of beauty. With this fusion, he is able to

reach the end of his journey, yet he is also shown the path to the birth of masterpieces and possesses the ability to further conjure the seeds of beauty (*alung lango*) because he has been unified with the Goddess that is none other than the beauty itself.

Rasa is the ultimate or unlimited happiness. In having the pleasure from beautiful works someone can also taste **rasa**. The pleasure arises in the “tasting of **rasa**” and at the highest point the audience tastes the blending-in of everything and at the same time takes no notice of other things; she or he only experiences the purest form of pleasure. **Rasa** is therefore not only made possible for a **mango** or the creator, but it is also available for the connoisseur of the works of art her-or-himself (*sahredaya*).

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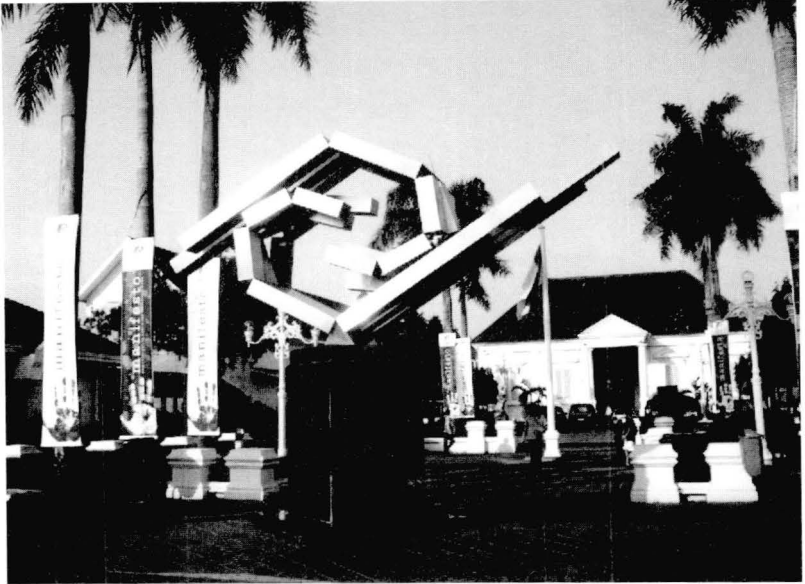
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PROFILE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF INDONESIA



National Gallery of Indonesia is an art museum and center for modern and contemporary art activities under the Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia. The institution was inaugurated on May 8, 1999, occupying $\pm 17.600\text{m}^2$ consists of various buildings and other public facilities, such as Temporary Exhibition Room, Permanent Exhibition Room, Multifunction Room, Library, Auditorium, Audio-Visual Room, Storage, Laboratory, Artists' House, Gallery Cafe, Gallery Shop, etc. National Gallery of Indonesia is strategically located in the center of the Capital of the Republic of Indonesia (Jakarta), adjacent to the National Monument, National Museum, National Library, State Palace, Gambir Train Station, Istiqlal Mosque, and Emmanuel Church. Precisely located on Jalan Medan Merdeka Timur No.14, Central Jakarta, Indonesia.



National Gallery of Indonesia permanently stores and exhibits artworks of modern and contemporary cultural expressions, including paintings, sketches, graphics, sculptures, photography, installation art, and others. Currently, National Gallery of Indonesia has a collection of about 1700 works of Indonesian and foreign artists, among others: Raden Saleh, Hendra Gunawan, Affandi, S. Sudjojono, Basoeki Abdullah, Barli Sasmitawinata, Poster, Popo Iskandar, Sudjana Kerton, Dede Eri Supria, Ivan Sagito, Lucia Hartini, Iriantine Karnaya, Heri Dono, Gunarsa, Made Wianta, Ida Bagus Made, I Ketut Soki, Wassily Kandinsky (Russia), Hans Hartung (German), Victor Vassarely (Hungary), Sonia Delauney (Ukraine), Piere Soulages (France), Zao Wou Ki (China), etc. In addition there are also artworks of artists from Sudan, India, Peru, Cuba, Vietnam, Myanmar, Malaysia, and others.

The role and function of National Gallery of Indonesia is to carry out acquisition, documentation, registration, analysis, preservation, conservation, security, presentation, dissemination of information, and educational guidance towards the work of art. The activities are exhibitions (permanent, temporary, traveling),



seminars, discussions, workshops, competitions, art performance, and other educational programs. Those various activities are to measure up the development and quality of Indonesian art also become places for Indonesian artists in international relations.

National Gallery of Indonesia in particular has 3 Temporary Exhibition Buildings allocated for solo as well as group exhibitions which are selected and carried out within a certain period between 2 weeks to 1 month. The exhibitions are held by the National Gallery of Indonesia or in cooperation with private galleries, foreign cultural centers, or other related institutions. Within a year, not less than 24 temporary exhibitions are held. There are some important exhibitions held in National Gallery of Indonesia, among them are: CP Open Biennale, Pameran Seni Rupa Nusantara, Asean New Media Arts Exhibition, OK Video, Jakarta Biennale, Pameran Besar Seni Rupa Indonesia: MANIFESTO, Indonesia Art Award Exhibition; Pameran Karya Anak-anak Berprestasi; Pameran The Jakarta International Photo Summit, etc. as well as other exhibitions featuring the works by Indonesian and international artists.



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"In the ongoing situation all perspectives concerning art –either philosophy, aesthetics, empirical sciences, art theory, or artists' visions –in reality are heavily entangled, and further there is no clear-cut division between the two. Even the distinction between the art world and the ordinary daily life has become hazy and even tightly intertwined and interwoven. On one hand this situation tends to mislead us to the fallacy thinking or praxis, yet on the other this can be an opportunity to freshly and realistically reexamine the relationality between art and life in its broadest sense".

Bambang Sugiharto, "Various Perspectives on Art and the Plurality of 'Languages'"

"The responsibility of the fine art world to research and experiment through technology is not yet finished, and even every moment is felt like something beginning. In the political world so far it is common to talk about cultural citizenship, and even there are those who start talking about aesthetic citizenship. It is not that I want to pretend to be academic, yet I think that artists are also required in this regard to conduct their research".

St. Sunardi, "Finding the Fundamentals of Fine Art Aesthetics Problems"

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