

AN INTRODUCTORY REMARK
OPENING
RITA WIDAGDO'S SCULPTURE EXHIBITION

Jakarta, the 15th of April 2005

Rita Widagdo is not just a name to help confirm the identification of a person; it resembles a waving flag over a great number of works excelling in so many respects. And the person represents an amalgamation of *homo academicus* and *homo aestheticus*; this is obvious in her lots of works simultaneously reflecting both dimensions of intelligence and intuition. Having accomplished a number of works that increasingly reinforce her existence as an artist, she is worthy of – more than recognition – high appreciation from art lovers in general. It is Rita who has brilliantly succeeded in giving forms to various ideas in her masterpieces that include “*Kesinambungan*” (Depdiknas); *Monumen Koperasi* (GKBI, Semanggi), PUSRI monument (Palembang), a relief at TIM Theater (Taman Ismail Marzuki Art Center), and “*Parameswara*” sculpture in Palembang.

An artistic form is an artist's creation in working on a certain matter; imaging a form implies, perhaps, a greater freedom than does working on matter. The crux of a work of art is the artist's ability to materialize the integration between the form and matter she/he works on and with: an all-iron matter can hardly represent a tiny and soft form. Beyond the harmonious blend between the form and the matter, there is another significant requirement a work of art is to fulfill concerning its extent of originality. Again, there is the notion of relating the value of a work of art to its capacity for inflaming the viewers. This idea, offered by Leon Tolstoi, is also worth considering. It is out of such capacity that a work gets its stunning character (*Aufforderungscharakter*), as if invited us “to converse” with it.

In history there are so many views offered already concerning art as human expressions. It must be out of place to describe here the various perspectives ever emerging so far in line with developments in artistic creativity. Suffice it to say that we know how those viewpoints are very far from being homogeneous as our discussions

should, eventually, touch on the issue of beauty as one among cultural values.

This esthetic value provides references in discovering some special quality in a work of art. Only human beings care for the value of beauty that accompanies their existence. Consider how human beings – both as individuals and humanity – have throughout the history been trying to adorn the world and themselves. From this standpoint, art is not redundancy but, instead, a human expression the channeling of which is impossible to check or clog up.

Human beings are creatures that are fascinated by the value of beauty, because they represent the only society that develops as the incarnation of the history of culture and civilization. Human's life is not guided by the instinct for just survival but for making out of their being a chance to generate meaningful projections for their existence. Humans continuously transcend their being. In relation to this, one can understand what F. W. Nietzsche has meant by saying that human beings are the only creatures that are not well-established or not final as yet. They are *being* that are continuously *becoming*; yes, *Sein-im-Werden*. Just because of this distinctiveness human beings have the opportunity to keep shaping themselves and to enter the world of possibilities including the possibility to generate works of esthetic dimension.

It is in such reality that for human beings there is an open free space to make choices in order to give signification to their existence. Therefore, the appropriate motto for them should not be just to know about their *being* but to realize the necessity to make choices for the sake of giving signification to their life; it is not just *cogito ergo sum* but, rather, *eligo ergo sum*. Then one's dedication to art ought to be taken as a choice to give signification and to be responsible as a creator. Rita has asserted her choice and she confirms it through her entire works. This solo exhibition of hers will surely highlight her prominence as an artist with fertile ideas to transform into works of creative art.

Fuad Hassan.