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OK.VIDEO

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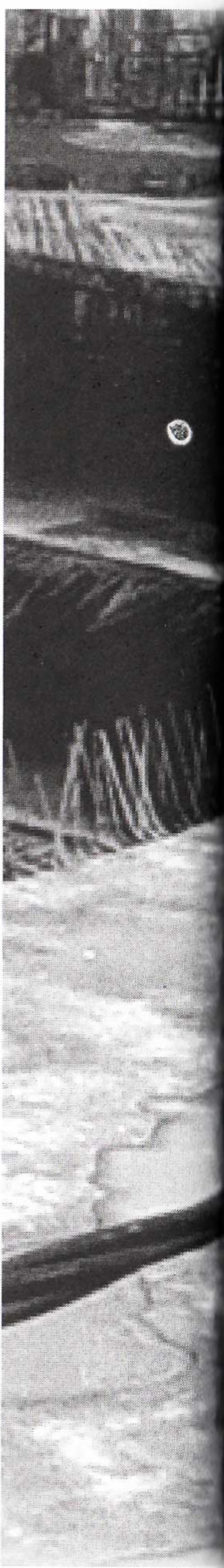
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INTRODUCTION

The O.K. Video – Jakarta Video Art Festival 2003 has run in July 7th – 20th 2003. As the first video art festival in Indonesia the event not only initiates a statement on the existence of a ‘new’ artistic practice, but also a representation of a social, political, economical and cultural circumstances that cannot be observed separately. The context of the activity can only be identified if we see it as a part of art phenomenon happening in a specific geographical setting in a specific time period as well.

The event, for *ruangrupa*, has left some important notes. A curatorial research that lead to the selection process involving more than 100 artists from different parts of the world; the opening ceremony attended by visitors from many different backgrounds; the public program followed by high enthusiasm; also many different response from the mass media, were just some of them. The most important thing is, perhaps, how we can read those notes and relate it with a wider and contextual discussion for the sake of development of art in Indonesia.



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INTROD UCTION

This post-event catalogue is published as an actualization of the objective above. Some essay composed in here are written by those who directly involved in the festival. Besides functioning as a documentation of the activities this catalogue is hoped to give beneficial contribution for those who want to deepen their knowledge about video art development in Indonesia in relation to the visual culture more generally.

ruangrupa wishes to extend a highest appreciation toward those who have given significant contribution to the publishing of this catalogue. Their direct involvement in the festival and contribution of ideas have been significant reference for the next festival. Our gratitude is dedicated to all institutions and organizations for their cooperation and supports to the festival and the publication of this event. Thanks to the writers: Hendro Wiyanto, Ronny Agustinus, Oliver Zwink, Katsuyuki Hattori, Kentaro Taki and Greg Streak, also to Agung Hujatnikajennong and Farah Wardhani as the editors who compose the material of this publication.

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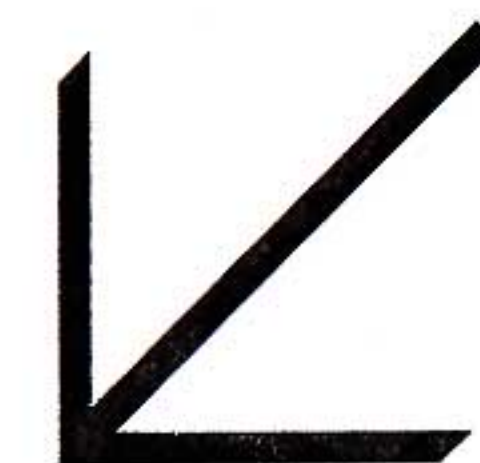
INTROD UCTION

ruangrupa considers the whole activities as a part of our attempts to directly involve in the art and cultural discourses that orientates to the public education more extensively. Any supports and responses from any sides will all the more stimulate us to hold the same festival continually.

Regards.

Ade Darmawan

Jakarta, January 2004





MEMORANDUM,

The primary intention of this catalogue publication is predestined to presents a series of critical discourse among artists, scholars, curators and critics subsequent to the O.K. Video – Jakarta Video Art Festival held by *ruangrupa* at the National Gallery of Indonesia, July 2003. The substance of each essay indeed varies and at the same time obviously represents different point of view and concern of each writer. Nevertheless, as a whole, this anthology is actually constructed referring to a wider comprehension on the same subject. Some essays are not just some written notes on the facts happened during festival, but furthermore also related to a historical and visionary examination toward the emergence and development of video as an art medium in Indonesia in relation to the realm of visual culture nowadays.

The execution of the O.K. Video – Jakarta Video Art Festival 2003 must be noted as an extraordinary achievement by *ruangrupa*. Through the activity, it was the first time throughout the history of National gallery of Indonesia as a representation of the development of 'national art', an international video art festival was held. All together the festival was divided into some sub-programs, namely Exhibition, Workshop, Special Presentation, Video Music Screening, Seminar and Artist Talk.

The exhibition, which became the highlight of the

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festival, involved 56 individual artists from 19 countries: France, Canada, Australia, The Netherlands, India, Finland, Indonesia, Germany, China, Brazil, Argentina, The United States, Denmark, Spain, Sweden, The Czech Republic, South Africa, Austria and Belgium, who mostly presented video work in *single-channel* format. The formation of the presented works represented the development of dominant themes applied by video artists. To acquire the works *ruangrupa* did some research and an open call for entries in Indonesia, besides building cooperation and networking with some festivals and centers for video art researches such as Montevideo – Netherlands Media Art Institute in Holland, International Media Art Award in Germany, Potluck Video Festival and The Danish Video Art Databank in Denmark. This has to be pointed out as a maximum attainment. With limited funding and human resources, *ruangrupa* was able to accomplish a curatorial work, which could indicate thoroughly the latest development of contemporary video art.

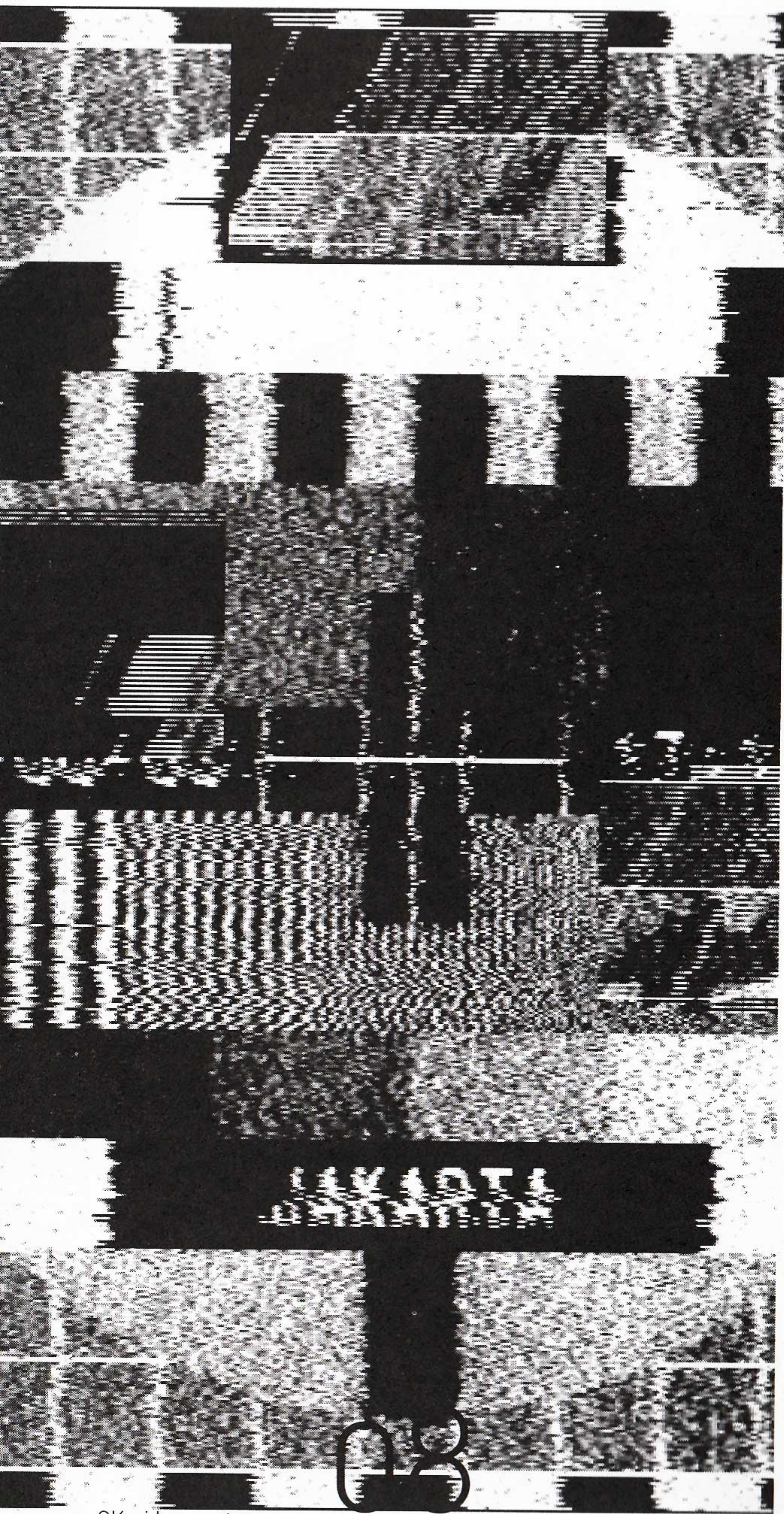
O.K Video – Jakarta Video Art Festival 2003 also became a forum that assembled the meeting between artists, curators, critics from different part of the world as a bridge toward exchange of ideas and collective work. For the Special Presentation section, *ruangrupa* invited three *artists run*

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initiatives that have significantly developed many video-based artistic practices from three countries, namely: PULSE (South Africa), Videoart Center Tokyo (Japan) and Videotage (Hongkong/China). Some of the representatives, Greg Streak from PULSE, Katsuyuki Hattori, Noriko Abe, Kobayashi Yasutaka, Akiko Nakamura, Kyoko Kawanishi and Kentaro Taki from the Videoart Center Tokyo, even had a chance to visit Jakarta and directly observe the festival.

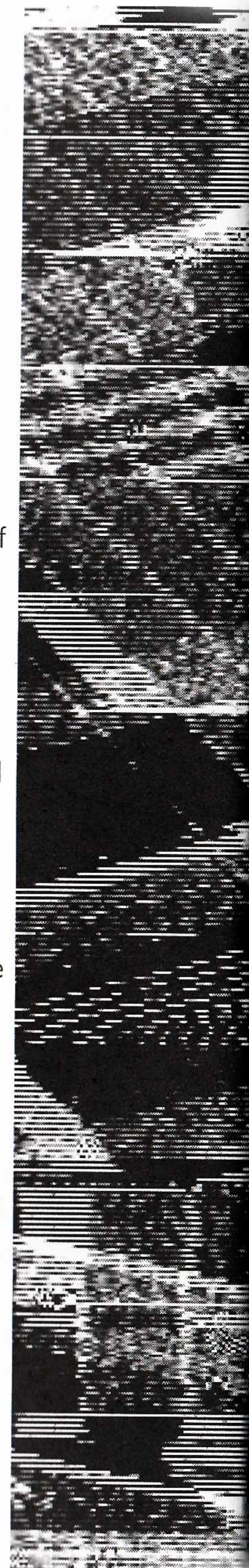
As a forum for exchange of ideas and information, the Seminar section presented two guests speakers Stephanie Moisdon Trembley and Greg Streak who spoke a lot about how the infrastructure that support the distribution of video art works is developed in their respective countries, France and South Africa. Stephanie is a curator and founder of '*bdv*' or *bureau des videos*, an organization based in Paris that actively manages the production and distribution of video art works. She explained how the *bdv* gives the best alternatives for those who want to collect video art works with reachable expenses. While Greg Streak in this catalogue also particularly writes about how the infrastructure in the Third World or developing countries emerged from "...the ingenuity and infinite stretch of lateral thinking that comes into play in the simplest of circumstances." What they explained in the

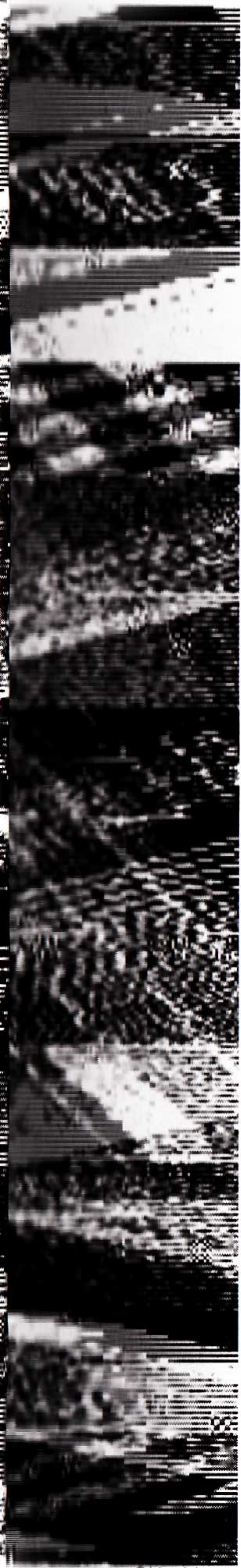
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presentation has given significant contribution—or impression at least—for the development of infrastructure of video art in Indonesia, which is notably still poor and needs special attention. In the workshop section, there happened a series of intense discussion and collective working that generated some video-based works with specific theme by some young Indonesian artists. Two workshops that were done separately—facilitated by German artist Oliver Zwink and Videoart Center Tokyo respectively—took some different artistic and conceptual approaches toward video as medium. Oliver was really impressed by the process of the workshop themed 'Urban Space' that focused on how video can be effectively used to deal with the matters related to urban spaces, even the urban life in wider extent. While Katsuyuki Hattori and Kentaro Taki tend to see the festival as a whole as an excellent space for exchanging ideas and discourse through a comparison to activities they have done in Tokyo so far.

At least since a decade in the past, there has been a dominant tendency to use the term '*new media art*' as an umbrella of many art practices that use technology-based medium such as computer, internet, video and film. The crisscrossing between art and science has for long been challenging the artists to create new idioms, overcoming the





outmoded conventional borders in fine art. In this new genre, there emerge many terms with new definition that have change the previous understanding about art. As written by critic and curator Hendro Wiyanto, the emergence of this genre can be identified in the early of nineties. His essay in this anthology reads and interprets further some of Indonesian contemporary art works that can be categorized into 'video' genre. The work that he tries to read as the early form of video art works is Heri Dono's installation "Hoping to Hear from you Soon" (1992). He writes, "Heri Dono for instance is a young artist who utilize audio visual equipment through many video recording services spread out in Yogyakarta to create silhouette effects as seen in wayang in his installation...". Hendro's review also takes some other Indonesian artists such as Krisna Murti and F.X. Harsono's works that appeared in the same era.

What have been inscribed by Hendro through his interpretations are not mistaken. Indeed, the early emergence of video usage in Indonesia can be identified in those works. However, at that time a specific discourse about the relationship between the medium and the ideas has not been questioned much. At that time the using of video was merely considered as a part of dominant tendency called as the emergence of 'contemporary art that dumped

modernism out'. It is interesting to observe Hendro Wiyanto's investigation compared to what Ronny Agustinus has written for this catalogue. While at the same time also refusing the statement asserted by the curator of the O.K Video festival, he considers that the emergence of new generation of video artists in Indonesia just exactly succeeded by the younger generation, as saying: "Those who make video art generally were born in 70's. They grew up amidst the mainstream of modernization. They experience television, Hollywood movies and Western music as daily reality, therefore: It is natural."

Ronny Agustinus' essay indeed presents an interesting and 'new' point of view. Instead of concurring the point of view of the curator of O.K Video festival—who also sees the video art development as inseparable symptoms of contemporary art development—he sees the history of film as an aspect that was neglected by the festival. He refuses the assumption that connects the emergence of video art in Indonesia with the resistance towards the TV culture. Such sharp criticism can even be obviously read in the title of the essay "*Video: Not All Correct...*" (compare it to the title of the main curatorial essay of O.K. Video exhibition: "*Video: All Correct...*"). The most interesting part of his essay is also when he deeply

investigates the coming of video and audio-visual technology as 'material without historical basis'. Apart from the contradiction of opinions as read in the essays, some writers seem to have some similar conclusion, especially about the significance of the continuity of the festival. Hendro and Ronny seem to have same opinion in the case of how the festival can stimulate a wider creativity and interest from people with different backgrounds, not only those from art discipline. The encounter—even interweave—between the art tradition and technology advancement is no longer a deniable fact today. The social, political and cultural circumstances that surround us nowadays have indeed brought a quite significant change toward the ambit of visual culture in Indonesia. Some opinions written here have to lead to thorough and deeper investigation and researches about video art in Indonesia.

This anthology of essays has only become possible by a beneficial contribution by those who have concerns toward the continuity of the event in particular and the art discourse in general.

Bandung, January 2004

Agung Hujatnikajennong
Chief Editor

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