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November 25th, 2011 Yanda

THEARTISTANDHISMODEL

Conversations: Christine Ay Tjoe

# **On the 18th of October 2011, Third Floor-Hermès celebrated the opening of Christine Ay Tjoe latest site specific installation, The Famous One From Lucas # 1. We speak to the artist, whose work has always intrigued and delighted us.**

One of the few female artists in Indonesia, Christine Ay Tjoe's artistic explorations has ranged from paintings and drawings, to print-making and sculptures, to even photography and installations. A much loved art figure in her community, she has exhibited internationally and is respected in the art world beyond her own regional shores. Her appeal lies not just within her vast bodies of works, but within her own personality as an artist. Known to be reserved and introverted, a quiet emotional depth can be observed within each of her artworks— a constant dialogue of struggle and exploration that truly connects with its viewers.

By her meticulous hands, the art space of Hermes' iconic Liat Towers location was transformed into a cocoon shaped environment. Soft fabric sculptures made out of goose-feathers and tulle fabrics wrapped around the walls as visitors were led into a haunting space of discovery. Stirring and intriguing, Ay Tjoe's installation left a lingering scent of hope and entrapment, and many questions to the deeper thoughts of the artist. We were lucky enough to find out more.

**Who are you and what interests you / your work?**

Christine Ay Tjoe: I'm an artist based in Bandung and Yogyakarta Indonesia. I'm interested in the universal human experience and explore these conceptual dialogues in my artwork.

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**Was an art 'career' something you stumbled upon, or something you've always wanted to do?**

I had always been creatively inclined even as a child, for me to pursue art had always been natural.

**You started your artistic journey drawing and painting— more graphic art. You've since moved on to textile and sculptures. How did that come about?**

My creations are either triggered and/or shaped by my conceptual investigations of my physical and metaphysical environments. As an artist, one also searches for the best way to present these concepts therefore I use different materials (textiles, paint, charcoal, etching, installation) and methods (drawing, painting, sculpture) which results in interesting, unconventional work such as my recent installation, "The Famous One from Lucas #1" at Third-Floor Hermès.

**As one of the few female artists in Indonesia, does your gender play any kind of influence in your work? They don't necessarily look feminine but some might assume there are underlining female characteristics in them. A sense of patience perhaps, within your work involving needles and sewing.**

I'm not conscious if this is feminine or non feminine art, what's more important is that the artwork is honest and authentic. Patience is not an exclusive feminine trait, there are many art disciplines such as sculpture, painting and printmaking that require patience and tenacity.

**What is your method with your work process? Do you do a lot of prior thinking and researching? Or do you prefer trial and error instead?**

My earlier artworks were mainly drypoint etchings, because I like its immediacy where I can translate my ideas by drawing with a needle on a copper plate and print it straight away. Then it developed into greater explorations and experimentations with different materials and methods.

My sources of inspiration are derived from my surroundings, the books I read, my observations and interactions with society – I work naturally, exploring my ideas or thoughts using a range of medium and disciplines.

**How do you go about finding inspiration?**

I'm constantly thinking and observing my surroundings which provide fertile grounds for my imagination and artistic investigations.

**Everything you do seems, to us, to be based on instinct as opposed to what you might have learnt from formal education. What are your thoughts on education versus natural instincts?**

Instinct and education are not necessarily exclusive, for instance our instincts are probably influenced by what we learn of ourselves and the world.

Education is life long and goes beyond the confines of the classroom.

**You're often called an influence in the art scene of Indonesia and your bodies of works are respected and loved by both collectors and curators. What is most important to you as an artist?**

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What would be more meaningful than influence is the connection my works have with audiences, if they can relate to and are touched by my artistic creations.

**Thank you Christine Ay Tjoe for taking time and thank you Alli Sim of Hermes for the invitation**

*- Text and Interview by Shannon Elizabeth Wee and Yanda*