

Panorama without Distance

“If the eye were not sunny, how could we possibly perceive light? If God’s own strength lived not in us, how could we delight in Divine things?”

- Plotinos

“Art is not chaos but a composition of chaos that yields vision or sensation, so that it constitutes... a chaosmos, a composed chaos – neither foreseen nor preconceived”

- Arthur Danto

Ay Tjoe Christine is drawn towards ideas of body-material spirituality. She uses daily objects to illustrate the human quest for and openness towards a transcendent or greater singular reality. For *Art Futures, Art Hongkong 2009*, she proposes a brutally honest project: *“...today I kill the first layer, and I find other layers living as Landscape, Landscape, Landscape...”*

Two ancient typewriters – one large, one small – are placed upon a pedestal with feet. A pair of dead bees inhabits holes in books. A tattered, mysterious miniature doll is composed of a pair of humanoid figures that seem to merge with one another. A monochromatic tone pervades all these objects.

This installation is interactive. The audience is invited to, among other things, kneel upon a wooden platform with rubber protrusions that gives a feeling of discomfort when used. The audience is invited to type onto a sheet of aluminium foil that has been loaded onto the typewriter. The letters that normally occupy the typewriter’s keyboard have been dismantled, replaced by a numeric system consisting of the numbers 0 to 9. But when one types on it, what is imprinted onto the roll of aluminium foil is not the corresponding numbers, and not whole letters either, because almost all the text imprinted has been tortured beyond recognition. There are only three letters that remain readable, and these are indeed meaningful letters selected by the artist, the intended answer to be discovered by those responding to the invitation to type: *G – O – D*. A parody of the cryptic, whimsical typing in our digital era: type bla bla bla, space, REG, space ...
ABRACADABRA ... bla bla bla...

No matter how softly, the tapping on the typewriter will be amplified by a pair of

loudspeakers, perhaps alluding to the potential of chaos in any quest – another different projection of the sensations surrounding the quest. But will the noise produced by the tapping of the defaced keys be different from the sound of the three whole letters striking? Can such absurd reality be captured by our senses?

“We hear the sound long before viewing or discovering something,” says Christine. We remember: in the beginning there was logos, commandments, speech, sound... The artist, it seems, is inviting us to experience these small sensations from the noise of our journey so vague and distant: from speech to text, from text to events, from events to objects.

A strange “panorama” panel is hung on the wall. This thick panel of stainless steel contains the incisions of an object’s image. The audience is only given a palm’s-width distance from which to make an observation. The impression is one of entering a baited trap to “see”, to absorb and experience without fully seeing, without distance. Everything is always enveloped by something else, the embodied by that which is free of physicality, sensations by hyper-sensation. Is this idea pantheistic? The sun’s brightness to the eye gazing upon light, the subject absorbing an object, God encompassing all the objects and panorama that we grasp.

“A panorama is something undefined. A panorama is the representation of beauty, but beauty itself is indefinable, we cannot capture beauty. The objects that I make, the books and doll figures are subjects that kill... [the indefinable” says Christine. Ideas about the subject of beauty, it would seem, are transcendental in nature. Christine explores the language of noumenal reality in this “... *today I kill...*” project.

Only by going beyond daily symptoms, perhaps also by destroying its phenomenal forms, can a screen to another reality be discovered. Only by going beyond the chaos, without denying it, can we encounter the cosmos, a cosmos that contains chaos or a chaosmos. Perhaps this is the spiritual notion underlying Ay Tjoe Christine’s visual arts project. +++

Kurator independen, tinggal di Jakarta.
ah_hujan@yahoo.com

Translated and edited by Kadek Krishna Adidharma