

Mara Karma

This paper stems from many questions or statements made at this Biennale. As you would know, at the opening there were a number of state officials, senior government officials, three ministers and one Governor. A number of prominent Jakarta community figures also attended. When they were invited on a tour of the works in the Biennale, the respected guests said they did not understand and had only lay knowledge of the art. They asked the artists what their art was about. From the looks on their faces, they honestly had no idea what it was all about.

Mr Wardiman, the Minister of Education and Culture even said on TV that he was a layperson. This would have been heard by many people, not only in Jakarta but all over Indonesia. The issue of not comprehending art and 'lay knowledge' inspired me to take a closer look. How should we understand these sorts of questions? Was it a veiled joke that was actually discrediting the artworks because they didn't understand? Or did they really not understand them? These were senior people who said they did not comprehend the art, and many others said the same. This must be seen as a wider issue about society's appreciation of fine art.

We are always talking about improving society's appreciation of art. At the same time, we also keep saying if society doesn't understand, then they have low aspirations. This can also be interpreted as saying we are progressive, while the rest of society is not. At the same time our aim is to increase appreciation, art itself is also continuously changing.

Actually, is this aim achievable? This is a question for the whole of society, about modern and contemporary art such as what is seen in this Biennale. Meanwhile, the art world is constantly changing and progressing.

There are a number of positions we can take on this. We could say that this is a classic problem, and a normal reaction to new artwork. We could also say that comprehension is their problem.

If this is so, then more questions arise, is this the right position to take? Can we look at the other side of the coin? Is this art incomprehension actually caused by the ineffectiveness of art critics in providing explanations, reviews, analysis to inform society? Art appreciation is not something that should only be improved among art critics. Now, this is not to shift the blame of the lack of art comprehension on to the art critics. But to ask how effective art

critics have actually been? This is one issue we need to look at. The next issue relates to the actual artworks. Is the issue of art comprehension also related to artistic capacity, or the strength of the aesthetic in the artworks?

Now, if we are to discuss weaknesses in the artworks that cause such incomprehension, then we have to provide strong arguments about where the weaknesses lie. These are a number of issues related to the issue of comprehension of artwork. What first appears simple can become complicated and so to believe that a government minister does not understand art is just out of the question. It is possible, however to have a different understanding: theirs and ours.

We can say that the Minister is, if we look at his age, well, let's just say that he is younger than me. The majority of the Biennale artworks were produced by young artists, and so maybe the Minister wasn't attuned to them and they seem out of focus to him. And so if the Minister and the others were looking at these artworks, they would have to use the appropriate lens in order to comprehend them. Now, this lens is both literal and symbolic. If the Minister and others who didn't comprehend them were drawing on outdated art theory, then obviously this was not the appropriate lens to understand the art. So we can see how their incomprehension came about. In regards to people not comprehending art, this will always happen if they don't approach the art with the current lens or perspective. Because art is always developing, values continue to change and if you don't keep up to date then of course you won't be able to comprehend it.

Perhaps my example about this issue of comprehension isn't relevant. Maybe it is, but relates to values. I have a grandchild, in first year of high school. My grandchild wears oversized t-shirts and pants and boys shoes, even though my grandchild is a girl. I said 'Hey, why can't you wear something else? She retaliated 'Grandpa, you don't understand the times, this is the fashion nowadays'. Just like that, I saw that her values and my values in regards to fashion differed.

New values demand that I understand. If I still don't understand, perhaps there are other reasons. Maybe I'm using an old value system. Is this relevant to view new works of art? Or is there another way? I think there is.

Earlier I said that we all have some stake in art appreciation. We are concerned about art and want the relationship between art and society to prosper, not only modern art which is said to be disconnected from society but also because a lot of art is misunderstood by society. Now, we wish to reunite art and the

society. The issue of comprehension becomes an issue we have to address. Comprehension needs a point of departure and we can say that this point of departure is in the developments of art.

Secondly, I have problematized the issue of art comprehension so we don't continue to blame society that doesn't understand the art; or the artists who make strange works, that are not understood by the people; or the critics that do not do enough to increase art appreciation; or the artists who do not produce works of art that are appreciated by society.

We might all have different perspectives on the issue, but the issue itself remains: how to improve society's relationship with art.

I want to try to expand on possible reasons behind the lack of art comprehension. Some consider the main reason that these senior guests didn't comprehend the art was that they were of the wrong attitude and were hesitant to change their outdated views on art. Art is something that cannot be taught, they said. Art is a gift. Somebody cannot become an artist without this innate talent. This is one perspective. The issue of knowledge, is said to be a mere addition, and sometimes unnecessary. For example, some of the big names in art arrived there from their own efforts and had never studied. Those who are not artists but are art observers, collectors and the like, also hold this point of view. Not all of them, but some of them.

These people acknowledge having an elevated sense of art. Although they themselves do not create art, they have a sense of art. They know what is good art and what is not good art. Although they didn't study it, they have it, but it is not a type of gift. They often say "I don't understand art, but I have some sort of innate talent to sense what the artist has put on the wall. Where the beauty is and so on." So it seems that this person does actually believe in innate talent.

Similarly, there are people who say, "Art is not something to be understood but to be felt". Although this is a controversial opinion at the moment, most of society, including artists themselves would agree with this perspective.

Following this line of thinking is the book "History of Modern Art". Sheldon Cheney says in looking at art our intuition needs to be awakened and the intellect is not important. Science does not actually help in art comprehension. When you try to use your intellect to look at art, you ruin everything. "Just look at it, do it

calmly with a contemplative state of mind” To do this, you need your intuition.

Now there are other perspectives, but I will just outline the important ones that relate to art. One perspective is that art is knowledge, the same as politics, economics and social knowledge. The motivation to create is not only dependent upon innate talent and intuition but there is also an element of study in mastering their craft. This perspective is not giving up completely on the idea of innate talent. However, in modern art the role of innate talent is said to play an ever-decreasing role.

To see this dynamic, let’s look at the artist, Nyoman Nuarta who made a sculpture that stood a hundred metres tall in Surabaya. To make such a colossal artwork, he needed not only innate talent, intuition, or sculptural art know-how but other knowledge, outside of art knowledge.

Now, contemporary art is known for its ‘extended meaning of art’; where art has multiple understandings. Those who believe that art is knowledge say that to comprehend, appreciate and evaluate art then an artist also has to have sufficient knowledge. Now it is said that a person cannot just enjoy, appreciate, or listen to art, but has to have a certain talent, or artistic aesthetic in order to understand it. This perspective is now regarded as absurd and is no longer relevant. Or at the very least, is only relevant in relation to certain types of art, and does not hold for the majority of contemporary art. Nowadays, what one person considers art will vary from the rules of art in the past. Like I said before, if you don’t have the right lens, then you will be looking at it differently. The old rules cannot be applied to contemporary art, because the social-cultural field is very different. And the prerequisites to become an artist are also different, along with new developments and demands.

Nowadays, what is considered art has very different rules to the rules of art made in the past. And because of this, the conditions of the social –cultural field are very different. The prerequisites to become an artist are also different and new developments take place all the time.

Now, let’s go back to the issue of enjoying art. To be able to enjoy an artwork, a person must first understand order as well as what makes a good artist. A person will never be able to enjoy art and will remain a layperson without a sufficient knowledge about how an artwork is created, the differences of technical skill, an artistic sensibility or aesthetic.

From what I’ve talked about so far it would seem that we are getting closer to a definition of art comprehension. Whether or not we agree

with these perspectives, at least they provide a person a way of coming up with their own perspectives. The first perspective believes in innate talent; that art is a gift and you can't be an artist without it. This is a passive attitude towards art and one that is disinterested in new developments.

The second perspective believes strongly in intuition. A majority of Indonesian artists believe this. They believe that intuition is a part of creativity, rather than innate talent. The creativity of these artists is often influenced by their world-views and often comes from their own personal experiences. It is not uncommon that they are influenced by their political views. But their artistic perspective dominates over the threads of political perspectives, rather than the other way around. This group of artists view art as knowledge and are very responsive to new developments. Meanwhile, the group that believes in intuition and aesthetics is decreasing.

From these different perspectives, it is clear what we mean by not comprehending art, or being a layperson in this context. It is not directed at all art, but certain artworks that can't be comprehended. In other words, if the Minister said he didn't understand the art, it's not because he is a layperson, it is because he has a different outlook or perspective on art or was using an outdated perspective.

What alienates a person from new art? The answer doesn't appear in these perspectives above. Another reason why art alienates people is the rapid pace with which art moves. This is a factor unrelated to opinion. Sometimes developments take place so rapidly that no sooner has something appeared and, before we even have a chance to get to know what it is, something else appears. And so on it goes on, and opportunity to understand the zeitgeist is lost.

Nowadays, confusion arises not only because of art's multiple meanings, but also because of the abundance of different art forms. To even ask 'what is art?' is regarded as no longer relevant in order to understand art. It is impossible for one idea to encapsulate all 'art'. What constitutes art is not definitive. One theoretical qualification differs from another and so it is just not possible that we make a standard qualification about what art is that accepted by everybody.

There are four main theories: formalism, volunteerism, intellectualism, intuitivism, organism. They each have their own qualifications about art. They are each complete and clear about the elements that a piece of art must have. And each theory says they are right. This is what happened in the development of modern art. In his book 'The Rule of Theory in Aesthetics', Morris Weitz rejects the base claims to truth in these theories.

Each of these theories has separate frameworks. And thus it is impossible that you can formulate a truth of what defines a piece of art that is accepted by everybody. To establish a set of prerequisites is not acceptable. To say that if art doesn't meet a set of predefined prerequisites, then it isn't art. This is a closed concept. Art demands an open concept, one that can change and be changed.

Weitz considers the most important thing is the use of a concept, and to provide a logical description about its actual function. This model is taken from psychology, and in his book "Philosophical Investigation" Wittgenstein (42:02) provides the illustration of "What is a game?"

Let's return to our first problem, about comprehension and lay knowledge. This question is also relevant for visual art everywhere in this modern era. It's proven now that art isn't as easy to understand as in the past. New types of art are being created all of the time such as noisy sculpture, moving sculpture, collage and objects.

And so if we consider that Mr Murdiono, Mr Wardiman and Mr Suryadi Sudirjan consider themselves laypeople, this isn't about the art that they are looking at. But actually they are happy people and if it didn't confuse them completely, perhaps it is appropriate to use the Dutch saying "Ignorance is Bliss"

A lot of artists, including myself, I'm letting you in on a secret here, actually don't understand art either, just like Mr Wardiman and Mr Murdiono. They also don't try to understand. Why? Because as soon as you understand, the art is gone, the excitement is gone. And that is the secret to enjoying art.

A friend of mine came up to me, grumbling, "Hey, what's wrong with you" I asked, "Oh, it's my wife" "What about your wife", "Oh you know"... "But you love her right?", "Oh certainly I love her". Now, this is kind of how the relationship between art and society should be, between artist and art.

Jim Supangkat

In order to make sense of all of this, I have to explain again that the artwork in this 1993 Jakarta Biennale is Indonesian contemporary art. Not post modernism, or installation, or experimental art. It is up to the viewer themselves to designate it as crazy art, or as satirical art. But I just want to make clear that this exhibition was formally put together to reference Indonesian contemporary art.

Note the way I put this term - Indonesian contemporary art - you can't switch this around to contemporary Indonesian art, which

infers that contemporary art developed from traditional Indonesian art. The most popular term in English is *Contemporary Indonesian Art*. The meaning behind this term connotes that Indonesian contemporary art - the term I prefer to use- does not exist.

However, Indonesian contemporary art does exist and you can't say that this is a continuation or development of Indonesian modern art, because that is something else. Both of these art forms, modern and contemporary can each be analysed for their unique characteristics. So long as you believe in the plurality of both international and local cultural influences existing in art everywhere and not that there is only one standard of art, that is modern art without any references. If that was right then you could say that contemporary art is without references in its development.

Although it is a continuation of modern art, contemporary art sees the patterns of developments differently. Modern art has a familiar pattern of linear development style, pattern and the tendency to relate one thing to another as a continuum based on influences or contradictions. Contemporary art departs from this pattern of linear development. As long as we use the term contemporary art that began in 1973, considerations that differentiate between linear development and non linear development can't be ignored. Incidentally, our moderator Mr Sidharta Sugijo started and introduced the term contemporary art.

Contemporary art reassesses all of the understandings that underlie the foundation of art. This reexamination is known as discourse, to re-examine the strengths of the foundations is a process. And so in contemporary art a number of concepts have been redefined or 'de-defined'. Both aesthetically and personally. One of the issues reexamined is that modern art that believes in the supremacy of painting, sculpture, and graphic art as the media of art. In this context, a number of traditional art mediums has been ruled out.

And so contemporary art has a new standard of pluralisation. In a way, contemporary art is a plural phenomena. It differs from modern art tends to look at developments based on one standard. As such it is not possible to look at contemporary art through one concept alone, as one set of developments, or one dominant line. For Indonesian contemporary art, the concept of contemporary is closer to the reality of Indonesian art because of the sense of heterogeneity. And so contemporary art is a more appropriate term than modern art. Even in Euro-American understandings, international modern art has one standard. In Indonesia, the difference between Indonesian modern art and something else is often dependent on the influences of international art and the local cultural situation.

And so I emphasise again that the trends that appear in this 1993 Jakarta Biennale constitute only a part of contemporary art in Indonesia. These trends are a part of Indonesian contemporary art that have many characteristics. This is what I wrote about in the Biennale exhibition catalogue, but one misinterpretation continues. Somebody even commented to me that I was concerned that the development of installation works would kill off other art developments. This concern does make sense because in modern art, only style can be dominant.

On the other hand, there are those that hold up one standard as the truth. And if each group demands there is only one artform and others don't exist, then this would be regarded as a slur on other artforms.

So the concern that the trends in this Biennale will continue to dominate contemporary art is without any base. The presence of these artwork has relatively little impact, compared to the art that is in centres and private galleries.

These artworks have no real business quality because of their commitment to idealism. These artworks have been subsidised by the artists themselves, who are categorically poor. So if the subsidies stop, their work often also grinds to a halt.

To recognize a trend in contemporary art, one must understand its foundations, without getting mixed up in other contemporary art trends.

In Indonesia, the discourse of modern art is influenced by local factors, social factors and a decorative sensibility that has its roots in traditional aesthetics. In the modern art trend, modernism is not a main factor. In this sense, modern art is perhaps more appropriately termed contemporary art.

The curatorial deliberations that I have written about in the 1993 Jakarta Art Biennale is a theoretical discourse about contemporary art trends that started in the mid-1980s. One of the emerging trends is our contemporary art. For the time being, only the 1980s provides us with enough material to examine in a theoretical discourse. This art comes from, what I mentioned in my Introduction, as the rebellious decade of the 1970s. I also added that art developments of the 80s are not distinct from the developments of the 1970s. And in the rebellious decade of the 1970s, multiple reassessments were undertaken. I call it a discourse, of reexamining previously held understandings in modern art at that time.

Naturally, contemporary art trends still need to be examined one by one at some other point. The 1980s are considered the clearest indication of the growth of Indonesian contemporary art. The friction that is at the base of this development makes the 1980s art substantially different to prior developments. I think we are of the same opinion that using the term contemporary art is not just semantic. It requires some deliberation. To me, it is already late that we see a contemporary art paradigm within our art development. Even internationally, where the term originated in the 1980s, it was not immediately obvious what the term, contemporary art, meant. Not only here but internationally too, a debate has occurred about what actually defines contemporary art.

The characteristics of contemporary art include redefinitions and definitions, the end of linear development and the appearance of new concepts, such as *minimal art and conceptual art*. The main characteristics of contemporary art are redefinition and definition. The end of the development of linearism in our modern art has gone from one -ism to another -ism. This has come to a close with the emergence contemporary art because of the discourse of new concepts in art that reference minimal art, conceptual art, land art, pop art and so on. But this also does not explain what exactly contemporary art is. These foundational changes become clearer when we look at the debate about modernism, particularly in the 1970s, when post modernism in art was influenced by new thinking in philosophy and social science.

My considerations in curating the 1993 Jakarta Biennale occurred in this context; to identify contemporary art conceptually through postmodern phenomena. However, I must stress that post modernism studies here only relates to art. The labyrinth of post modernism problematizes the term. It has multiple dimensions and so post modernism in art is not the same as in other fields, although there are some similarities. Postmodernism in art doesn't hold the same meaning of post modernism in its totality. And so I will focus on scope in the context of art only. Although don't hold onto the hope that post modernism in art has a clear definition, like I said before, this term is very problematic. For three decades, it developed in architecture and art and the meaning has undergone changes. And so from this unclear context, I feel it is totally absurd that postmodernism is an understanding or an ideology that has been imported and colonizing Indonesia; or that it is a reference to be memorised and practiced.

The understanding of post modernism that I've used in my deliberations curating this 1993 Jakarta Biennale, in one sense does not signal modernism. But this is the closest we come to contemporary art. Generally, contemporary art attempts to avoid the predicates of modern art. But there is no sharp tension. From

another angle, the understanding of post modernism has the connotation of pluralism, and so it is not simply anti-modernism. Problematizing post-modernism, such as I have in curating this exhibition and in my writings in the mainstream media, is to problematize the position of our art in the international art scene. This is an issue I feel important to emphasize. In my commentary I reexamine universal understandings of one standard of art in the world that tends to ignore a developing country's art, including ours. I find example after example of Indonesian art rejected in America. This is a big problem in our review of postmodernism. Without looking at postmodernism within the international context, there is no point in looking at it at all. And I think this is also the idea behind holding the 1993 Jakarta Biennale, in anticipating the emergence of the development of contemporary art in a number of alternative galleries, who broke onto the international art scene all by themselves. Most recently, we saw the brilliant line-up in the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art di Brisbane, Australia.

In closing, I need to say that it is not possible to presume that the art of the 1980s is influenced totally by contemporary art developments. The same can be said about a number of postmodern trends. And so when we look at an installation, that same installation is also discussed in Australia, and in international forums. This emerges as a consequence of contemporary art developments. Yes, of course an artist or critic may say that the installation came from their own inspiration or from the local reality. But I think this is pretty hard to believe. But there is another side. There are a number of basic principles in the development of 1980s art that are rooted in local conditions. The rebellious art of the 1970s clearly emerged from our local conditions, and not something imported from overseas.

This is not an issue of international theory that has been adopted from overseas. A number of works that have appeared recently constitute the basis of the development of 1980s art. And these came about because of our own domestic issues. And so we can't say that the art of the 1980s came about only because of the influence of international art.

Perhaps what I'm trying to say is that the critique of postmodernism and the works of this Biennale, are analysed using a very narrow frame about the concern of foreign influence, about importing ideas and so on.

My main message is that I hope we don't continue to use the cultural polemic of the 1930s, which is more than half a century ago. I see this as a sort of stuck nationalism. And thus to be concerned about foreign or international influences, or that everything that is foreign will damage us, this is due to an ongoing trauma. I think that

the development of 1980s art illustrates a new reality, bravery. I term this a new reality. When I attended the Triennial in Brisbane, I was suspicious of myself that I was valuing the Indonesian works as over reactionary, or something. But after it was published in international journals, particularly the two journals, Asia Pacific Art in Australia and Asian Art News in Hong Kong, I then realised that they had also felt that the Indonesian works stood out compared to other works. So from there, we can translate this as a new nationalism. It is not a nationalism that is stuck, but a nationalism that is expansive and tries to build or provide a contribution in international concepts. One that is able to sit at the table of international art and has a role to play.

Bambang Bujono:

My topic is not directly related to this exhibition or about thoughts on art, but is about a central supporting element of the life of the arts, and that is the galleries.

In the introduction of this catalogue, it was mentioned that this is a new discussion happening for the first time in Indonesia. I don't think that it is, and some people might get upset about this. Agus Darmawan has recently written about Indonesia galleries in an Australian magazine called Art Link. Although it is not available in Indonesia, I cannot claim that this is the first time that this issue of galleries has been discussed in Indonesia.

When I wrote this, I tried to visit Ubud, Yogya, and Bandung, but I didn't have enough time, and so I asked some friends from Tempo who were based in these cities to report back to me. I have some thoughts on these places, which I couldn't elaborate in the catalogue, although I touched upon them.

For example, about the demand for art in the middle of the 1980s. And why was it in demand? We could theorise but according to the gallery owners in Ubud and Bandung, it is linked to our economy. During 1988, a bank regulation was passed that made it very easy for people to borrow money, and so there was an extraordinary amount of money circulating in society, which was then clamped down upon by the government. And so what happened was, and who knows if this is because people were actually interested in art or just because it was a fad, but an extraordinary amount of art was bought and sold.

And so when this happened, I thought if the galleries do in fact have influence over the art world. I first concluded that, in a number of galleries, that to be exhibited or sold by the gallery was dependent upon the owner's tastes. Very few tried to bridge an artist or art expert to provide suggestions about how to sell work. Andi's Gallery

and Santi gallery were of the very few who did this. But generally, galleries that are managed by the owners. I can understand this, because they are traders, in essence. They prioritise who will sell. And as a trader, I have to acknowledge that the scent of a sale is extraordinary among traders. And so, the profit made by somebody like Agung Rai in Bali is astronomical.

Around 1988-89, even though they don't have notes on this, I'm quite sure that they're not lying. On average in one day, the least they will sell is forty paintings. So imagine, in one year, and say there's 300 days of business, and then in two years, how much would they make. And so it makes sense that Seteja Neka could even open a museum, Agung Rai as well, and another one, I've forgotten their name, founded a gallery, paid for the building and bought the land, that is millions of Rupiah.

Now, is this capital balanced with their contributions towards creativity in art? I am a bit pessimistic, because the making money is the priority and they have difficulty in seeing other perspectives. If there were events that supported creativity, they are few and far between. For example, Seteja Neka exhibited once in his museum, an exhibition of five installations, if I'm not wrong, and organised by Krisna Murti, who is a participant in this Biennale and will speak tomorrow. But I asked everywhere in Ubud, and this exhibition didn't really have much influence. What became more of an issue was the price of paintings, 'Wow, that's worth 20 million Rupiah now, even thought it was only 5 million before.' That's what people were talking about there. But I think this is ok, if it turns out that it injects some life into our art world.

We can't aspire to our galleries becoming like those in America for example. According to one study, the emergence of around 70% of abstract expressionism is due to gallery support. After WWII, in America and mainly New York, a number of galleries were founded to create American art. Until WWII, if I'm not wrong, fine art was dominated by Europe. At that time, America did not have any defining characteristics that were acknowledged internationally. Now if we look at a number of galleries and a number of varied painters, the galleries only wanted these particular ones. There was not a lot but they were influential. And, as we know, abstract expressionism was acknowledged as art that emerged in America. And these galleries were not only artistically successful, but also financially successful. The research showed that during the 1950s, an abstract expressionist painting sold for 1-2 million Rupiah, and then five years later, sold for 10 or even 15 times more. Now can we honestly have aspirations like that even if we look at a couple of exceptional galleries?

We know that in Yogya, our friend Nindityo and his wife established Cemeti Gallery, and compared to the public galleries, they are noteworthy. They certainly did not have commercial considerations in setting this up, but rather they have simple plans; they wish to provide an exhibition space where Yogya painters and sculptors can put on exhibitions easily. Buildings such as Sonobudaya and the others are so bureaucratic and complicated. Nindityo wants to have an exhibition space without bureaucracy. Anybody can exhibit here. Anybody who is interested in art, that is.

In Jakarta and Denpasar, there is C-Line Gallery, managed by Teguh Ostenrik and Restu Imansari. The Denpasar one is managed by Sandy, I've forgotten his last name. And then in Bandung, the newest one is called studio R66. Now can we hope that these three galleries will become like the galleries in America after WWII? I'm putting quite a lot of expectation on these three galleries, but we need ongoing research into this. Cemeti created Heri Dono, Eddie Hara, Dadang and also Nindityo. I say created not because their work was there and then it was Cemeti that exhibited them. It's not that. But it's that it was through Cemeti that Heri Dono, Eddie and so on became known nationally. Perhaps Eddie Hara was already known internationally, because he had lived in Europe for a long time. I don't know. The way to forge society's sense of artistic ownership is by having exhibitions them to society. If, for example, a painter paints but then stows it away, well, we won't come to understand it.

Then C-Line for example held an exhibition of Anusapati's sculptures and others. Then R66 held an installation exhibition of Krisna Murti. But my expectations about galleries supporting the art industry is very vaguely optimistic. Because if go back and look at the creation of abstract expressionism, was not only supported by the galleries. I don't feel that we have the support frameworks such as those that fortified fine art in American society.

At that time, the galleries became successful and could survive in America because of a simultaneous campaign. There were magazine, there were books, there were discussions, there were even special auctions for abstract expressionism. Then there were museums differentiated between these people with older works. The comparison is important, how can we say there is a new trend if we don't know what went before it? And in Indonesia, as I've said here before, this is very difficult. If I'm writing about an exhibition and I'm trying to find data on somebody, this takes time. It's not easy. How can we develop if these foundations are weak?

In looking at all this, it is clear why a special team is so important to monitor all of these phenomena. Because our galleries are not yet supported by art magazine or museum and the galleries we do have

are too financially orientated. But then, are we just going to forget about all of the galleries that do exist? There are so many I can't even count them. Actually, and this is the relationship with the new art trends, is our art (and I don't really understand this term, so don't ask me) is deconstructionist? If you go to TUK, it's not only the paintings, but there is also Sudjojono and also Srihadi, so it's all in there together. So I remember 25 years ago, there was a group of ASRI students who exhibited at the Night market in Solo with Himpunan Budaya Surakarta. Now, these artworks at the Himpunan Budaya Surakarta are works that show prostitutes and beggars. At that time, the committee wanted to show the works of the ASRI students together with the Himpunan Budaya Surakarta but Muryoto protested. He considered this inappropriate. 'But why?' 'Because these works are not of quality. They don't have anything, meanwhile our works are very wholesome.. "Oh, really?"

In the end, they reached a compromise and split the room into two. We reacted negatively to combining these all of the works together. We meaning, Muryoto and Harsono, I wasn't there. And so there was discord about the appropriateness of showing it all together. Strangely, it wasn't long after that Muryoto exhibited in Balai Budaya with these works that he had such a reaction to. And so this really is progress.

If the galleries emerged because of the sudden availability of capital in Indonesia and then it disappeared, would that mean an end to the galleries? An inconclusive answer would be yes. So these galleries that emerged and survived because of all this capital, would most certainly struggle if the money disappeared. For example, would the sale of works just disappear like that? Or would he hope that in five or six years, if he sold his collection, that it would increase in value. Edwin Raharjo (Edwin's Gallery) is optimistic in that a group of people who still remain loyal consumers of fine art who don't just attend openings but will also buy the art. I hope that this is right and our art will be nurtured.

Hardi

First off, I would like to toast Jimmy (Jim Supangkat) who created this show, because exhibitions such as this one have been a rarity over the years 1975-1980. Things are happening now, and I suggest that more exhibitions like this will be put on, not with the same committee, but perhaps with individuals who want to put on their own shows. Because like what's already been discussed, we are looking for a way to break into international forums. I believe this is a struggle for each individual. Because the mechanism by which to become a competitive conceptual or installation artist in the west, you have to be sophisticated, speak English well, and have an

intriguing concept. If you only have trashy concepts, then I don't think you will make it as an artist.

I feel like our friend Jimmy is going to fatigue in taking these artists to the top, to compete in very competitive international forums. Meanwhile the government cannot yet support us, because while in Europe or America, the president's change, ours has yet to change. And so this also means that issues related to art are not being respected.

In relation to post modernism, I agree with what Jimmy said before. He only put forward eight works as contemporary art. If this is not too out there, then this is great. And so we're not stuck in discussions of postmodernism of philosophical problems. There are certainly these trends in fine art, but they are not that obvious and we don't need to dwell on them. And so postmodern observers are also wrong to normalize it and our friend Jimmy also has to understand the new knowledge in Indonesia is now in fashion.

Why isn't Semsar Siahaan speaking tomorrow? I think that he is the only one who can explain his artwork. I have been coming here for the last two weeks to look at this exhibition over and over again, and I haven't once seen one artist. They pale in comparison with Jimmy's gang: Harsono, Gendut, Riyanto. Or did they only appear for the sake of the minister. If you just turn up for the minister, there's no point to all of any of these big ideas. Now, these are just small issues, but if we aren't capable in these small issues, how can we compete internationally? If these artists can't show their faces, then how can we know their ideas?

FX Harsono

Installation art that has developed since 1975, is a form of expression used by artists to create works with a number of orientations and issues. In the new art of 1975 at TIM, any number of issues, social, cultural, religious or other issues were exhibited. In an exhibition of new art in 1975, we could see a plastic M16 machine gun that illustrate strength or power of the military that controlled people movements at that time. Then a mattress with chains around it, plastic flowers to illustrate the domination of dishonest industry. The crown of puppets, or the reproduction of traditional sculptures illustrate cultural conflict between tradition and modernity. Unusual objects don't have the same meanings in paintings. They are not made into sculptures but just appear as an element in a 3D art work. Also to use a real room, the dimension of the room and the way of constructing the objects. All of this stirs up the conventional painters and sculpters who say this does not

illustrate seriously creating a work. The desire to depart from confines of High Art which is based on the ideology of modernism, becomes the motivation to create a work of art where the process is completely different to modern art.

The process of creating modern art is dependent on categories. You can't make anything outside the box of painting, sculpture, graphic art. Education, art institutes and art criteria is an extension of the domination of modernism of that time. A number of issues were put forward to create pressure to create an artform that has alternative characteristics, for example national identity which is formal and very political. National development was felt to be too eastern and decorative, for example. This is the most general issue where we can apply pressure. Even though it has to be acknowledged that the development of the art work also influenced the emergence of installation art in Indonesia, however only in form, not in thinking. In education institutes where I studied, the concepts about art installation through Dada's thinking and so on, was not taught clearly or in a detailed way at that time. And so what we learnt only from the images in the books, and were limited by language.